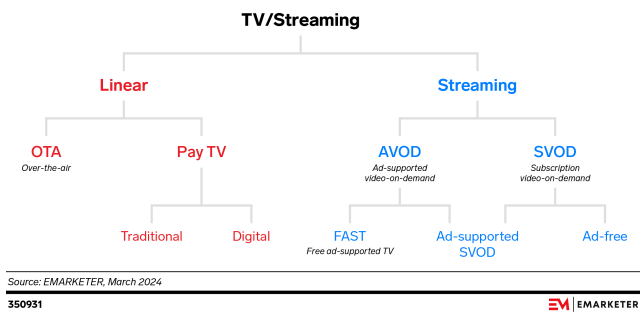


Linear, streaming, AVOD, and beyond: What do common TV terms mean?

Article

As the TV and streaming landscape becomes increasingly fragmented, the terms used to describe different ways to watch are multiplying. We've already broken down the difference between [connected TV \(CTV\) and OTT](#). Now let's look at the landscape at large.



Linear: Television content that is scheduled and viewed via satellite or cable networks according to set programming times, rather than being streamed on-demand to individual users.

- Linear TV ad spend will total \$58.99 billion this year, according to our March 2024 forecast.
- Live sports events like the Olympics and news events like the US presidential election tend to give linear TV a boost, but linear TV ad spend is on the decline as streaming takes over.
- Linear TV is composed of two sub-categories—over-the-air (OTA) and pay TV.

OTA: Free, broadcast television. This is network TV that people access via antenna.

- 39.9 million US adults or 14.9% of the population are OTA TV viewers, per our February 2024 forecast.
- TV stations like CBS, NBC, and ABC all have OTA channels.

Pay TV: Sometimes called cable TV, pay TV refers to TV bundles and digital live TV services. In 2024, 157.1 million people will be pay TV viewers, per our February 2024 forecast. These are divided between traditional and digital pay TV viewers.

Traditional: TV bundles sold by cable, satellite, and telecom companies.

- 111.1 million US adults or 41.5% of the population will be traditional pay TV viewers this year, per our February 2024 forecast.
- That figure is declining as people swap out traditional cable bundles for digital pay TV and streaming.

Digital: Digitally delivered live TV services, sometimes called [virtual multichannel video programming distributors](#) (vMVPDs).

- 46.0 million US adults will be digital pay TV viewers this year, or 13.4% of the population, per our February 2024 forecast.
- That figure is increasing as people adopt vMVPDs.
- vMVPDs include YouTube TV (21.5 million US viewers), Hulu + Live TV (11.4 million US viewers), and Sling TV (5.1 million viewers).

Streaming: On demand programming delivered via the internet.

- US subscription OTT ad spend on CTV will total \$9.48 billion this year, an increase of 31.1% over 2023, per our March 2024 forecast.
- Streaming consists of ad-supported video on demand (AVOD) like The Roku Channel and **Netflix** Basic with Ads and subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) like Netflix.
- An increasing number of platforms are adopting a combined model in the form of ad-supported SVOD.

FAST: TV content delivered via the internet that viewers do not need to pay for, including Pluto TV, The Roku Channel, and Tubi.

- There will be 111.5 million FAST viewers this year, per our February 2024 forecast.
- That number is growing as platforms like Amazon Freevee attract new users.

Ad-supported SVOD: Any subscription streaming platform that includes advertisements. All major SVODs now have ad-supported tiers, including **Amazon** Prime Video, Hulu, Disney+, Max, and Netflix.

Ad-free: Streaming platforms that don't feature ads, usually for a premium subscription price. These also include all major SVODs, including Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Disney+, Max, and Netflix.

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