

# US adults will consume almost as much media in 2021, but TV viewing will backslide

Article

Last year, the average US adult spent more time per day with most media formats and devices, including TV. Although adults will spend nearly as much time with media this year,

their TV viewing time will drop below pre-pandemic levels.

We estimate that average daily time spent with media increased by almost an hour (58 minutes) in 2020, to a new high of 13 hours, 21 minutes (13:21). Some traditional media formats like TV and print newspapers saw growth for the first time in years, while time others fell slightly.

### Average Time Spent with Media in the US, by Media, 2019-2023

hrs:mins per day among population

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Digital</b>	<b>6:49</b>	<b>7:50</b>	<b>7:59</b>	<b>8:09</b>	<b>8:20</b>
—Mobile (nonvoice)	3:45	4:16	4:23	4:29	4:35
—Audio	1:07	1:10	1:16	1:19	1:22
—Social networks	0:52	1:03	1:03	1:03	1:04
—Video*	0:42	0:49	0:51	0:53	0:55
—Other	1:05	1:15	1:13	1:14	1:14
—Desktop/laptop**	1:54	2:03	1:59	1:56	1:56
—Video*	0:23	0:26	0:26	0:25	0:25
—Audio	0:16	0:20	0:20	0:20	0:20
—Social networks	0:07	0:07	0:07	0:06	0:06
—Other	1:08	1:09	1:06	1:04	1:04
—Other connected devices	1:10	1:30	1:38	1:44	1:49
<b>Traditional media</b>	<b>5:33</b>	<b>5:31</b>	<b>5:13</b>	<b>4:57</b>	<b>4:45</b>
—TV***	3:27	3:33	3:17	3:02	2:51
—Radio***	1:35	1:28	1:26	1:26	1:25
—Print***	0:19	0:19	0:19	0:18	0:17
—Newspapers	0:10	0:10	0:10	0:10	0:09
—Magazines	0:09	0:09	0:08	0:08	0:08
—Other traditional media	0:12	0:11	0:11	0:11	0:11
<b>Total</b>	<b>12:23</b>	<b>13:21</b>	<b>13:12</b>	<b>13:06</b>	<b>13:05</b>

Note: ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; \*excludes time spent with video via social networks; \*\*includes all internet activities on desktop and laptop computers; \*\*\*excludes digital

Source: eMarketer, April 2021

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That increase in overall media time will be almost fully sustained in 2021. Adults will spend 9 minutes less with media per day this year, for an average of 13:12, and slightly less each year through the end of our forecast in 2023. The stickiness of increased engagement is impressive nonetheless, given how significantly media consumption grew during the pandemic in 2020.

Digital media will account for the majority of sustained time spent increases from 2020 and will continue to grow in 2021. This year, US adults will add an average of 9 minutes to their daily time spent with digital media—even after adding more than an hour (1:01) in 2020.

Increases in digital media time spent will be modest this year and through 2023, given how much growth was unexpectedly pulled forward into 2020. Average time spent with digital media will increase by 2.0% year over year (YoY) in 2021, a deceleration from 2020's 14.8% surge.

But average time spent with traditional media will decrease by 5.7% in 2021, a decline largely attributable to people spending less time watching traditional TV. The average US adult will spend 18 less minutes consuming traditional media this year—16 of which will come from declines in TV viewing time. US adults will also spend slightly less time than last year listening to radio and consuming print media this year.

Ultimately, 2020 was an anomalous year for TV. The medium picked up minutes for the first time since 2012, as people spent more time watching TV news about the pandemic, US elections, and social unrest.

This year, however, TV will reverse its 2020 growth and fall below 2019 levels. We expect that time spent watching TV will continue to contract: The average US adult will spend another 15 minutes less with the medium in 2022, and 11 minutes less in 2023.

While the decline in TV viewing time is partly due to consumers watching less linear programming amid more on-demand streaming options, cord-cutting is also cutting down on the number of TV viewers.

To learn more about changes in the digital media usage of US adults after 2020, Insider Intelligence subscribers can read our recent report:

**Report** by Audrey Schomer May 27, 2021

## US Time Spent with Media 2021

