


CNN and Roku lean deeper into FAST channels

Article



The news: CNN and Roku are launching free ad-supported streaming (FAST) channels to capitalize on rising consumer demand for unique content.

- **CNN Originals** features exclusive shows like “Chasing Life with Dr. Sanjay Gupta,” and “Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown.”
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- **Roku Sports Channel**, to debut August 12, will be a hub for premium content owned and licensed by Roku. It will include **Major League Baseball** games, talk shows, **Formula E** races, and original programs tied to the NFL and wrestling.

CNN said Originals, joining current FAST offerings **CNN Headlines** and **CNN Fast**, is available on **Amazon Prime Video**, **Freevee**, **Fire TV**, and **Plex**. Roku Sports Channel will be accessible on Roku devices, Fire TVs, and **Samsung** and **Google** TVs.

Why it matters: Cost-conscious consumers are thirsty for niche content and more affordable options, especially as major streamers like [Disney raise prices](#) for their subscription-based services.

FAST is a fast-growing segment used by nearly one-third of the US population, with the number of viewers due to climb to 125.5 million by 2028, per our forecast, as time spent with services like **Paramount's Pluto**, **Fox's Tubi**, and Freevee increases.

- Roku is [betting on sports](#) to gain viewers and has grown significantly in wake of content deals with MLB, the **NBA**, and other leagues.
- And CNN CEO **Mark Thompson** is trying to transition the iconic brand away from its cable roots into a digital business. In July, CNN [cut about 100 positions](#), or 3% of its workforce.

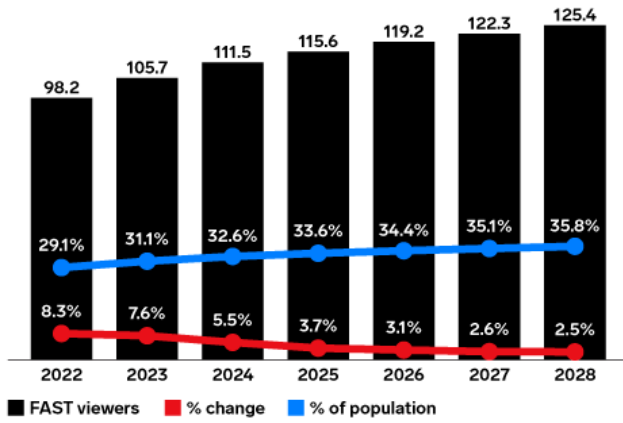
FAST saves advertisers money as well. CPMs (cost to reach 1,000 users) for FAST inventory are typically \$10 to \$15 and can be even lower if purchased on a non-guaranteed basis, per Digiday. By comparison, CPMs on subscription streaming services like **Hulu** and **Netflix** range between \$25 to \$47, according to our KPI forecast.

Our take: CNN Originals and Roku Sports Channel are the latest entrants into a TV segment that is gaining prominence with both consumers and advertisers. As these channels proliferate, they provide more opportunities for marketers to get their messages in front of viewers.

Go further: For more on FAST services, check out our [FAQ on Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV](#) report.

US Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV (FAST) Viewers, 2022-2028

millions, % change, and % of population



Note: individuals of any age who watch videos via app or website at least once per month on a free-to-access ad-supported platform that primarily offers professionally produced content; examples include Pluto TV, The Roku Channel, and Tubi; excludes services like Hulu, YouTube, and Twitch
Source: EMARKETER Forecast, Feb 2024

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