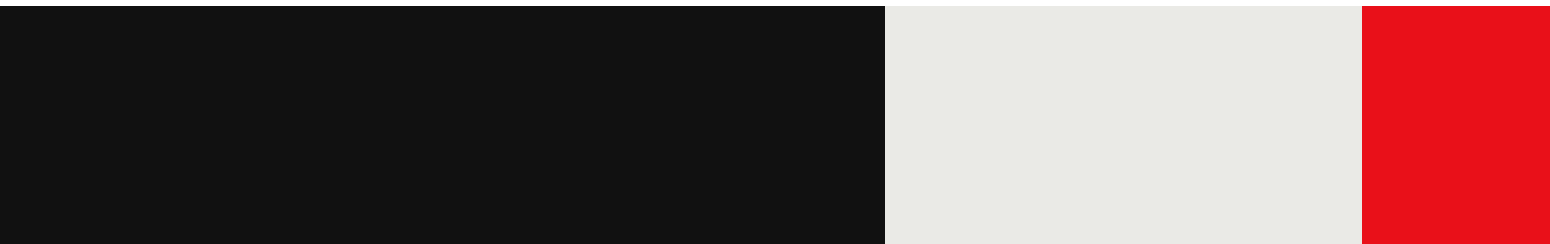



# Almost half of YouTube viewership happens on TV screens

## Article



**The news:** Nearly half (45%) of all **YouTube** viewership takes place on TVs, according to internal figures, up from below 30% in 2020. The fast growth has propelled YouTube from a digital-only platform often left out of the conversation of broader entertainment and TV advertising to a direct, major competitor with the world's largest streaming services.

- **Time spent watching YouTube on TVs now exceeds any other individual network or streaming service**, according to Nielsen data cited by The Information.

**A TV powerhouse:** YouTube's viewership on TV screens likely increased as a result of pandemic lockdowns, but it's far from a fad. The company has been making moves to [capture a greater share](#) of connected TV (CTV) audiences, and even before the pandemic, viewership was on the rise.

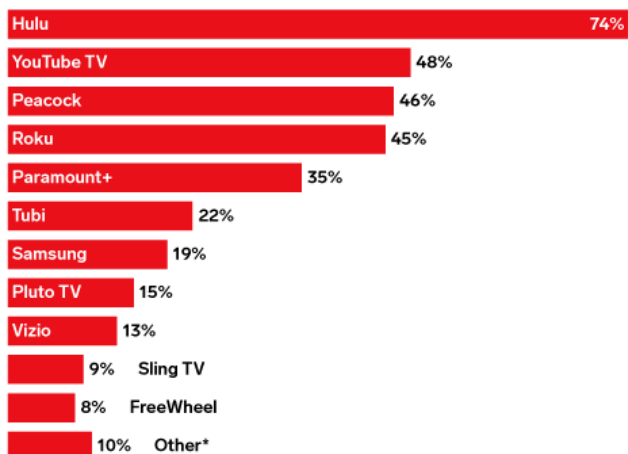
- In March 2020, YouTube viewership on TV screens was up 80% from March 2019, and ad spend was similarly rising. Since then, YouTube has launched a number of quality-of-life features to make the viewing and search experience on TV screens easy, such as allowing the YouTube mobile app to be used as a remote.
- Growth isn't just being driven by YouTube TV, the company's pay TV offering. In fact, **the majority of TV user growth is coming from YouTube's free, standard service.**
- User acquisition is extremely costly for streaming services, requiring spending on original content. But that's an expense YouTube doesn't have to spare since it's a user-generated content platform.

**Zero to hero:** YouTube was often left out of the discussion by advertisers and analysts when comparing streaming services, but a notable change has happened this year. Advertisers expect to spend a larger share of their budgets on YouTube, both across its standard service and YouTube TV.

- Though "standard" YouTube is the main driver of growth, even YouTube TV is attracting significant attention. YouTube recently spent **a reported \$14 billion** to [acquire the rights to the NFL Sunday Ticket](#), driving an enormous share of the country's most-watched sport to YouTube TV (YouTube's pricing makes the weekly game more expensive to view, but it's [cheaper if you subscribe to YouTube TV](#)).
- That's a chunky purchase at a time when streamers are reeling in spending, but the cost is offset by YouTube's massive overall advertising growth (\$15.1 billion in 2019 to \$29.2 billion in 2022) and the fact that advertisers are already paying to get on board.
- YouTube TV was ranked second (48%) behind **Hulu** (74%) in an iSpot survey asking advertisers which platforms they planned to allocate spending to during upfront season. According to reporting from [The Information](#), YouTube could land \$7 billion in ad commitments during the upfront season.

## Streaming Platforms to Which US Brand/Advertising Professionals Are Allocating Upfront Spending, March 2023

% of respondents



Note: \*includes Amazon, CW, Discovery+, Disney+, ESPN+, Apple+, HBOMax/Warner, Facebook/Instagram, Snap

Source: iSpot.tv, "2023 Upfronts Survey Results," April 20, 2023

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**Our take:** It's a tough time for streaming, but YouTube's unique benefits like user-generated content make it exempt from the challenges competitors are facing like slower revenues and a major writers strike.

- But while YouTube is soaring, its ever-growing share of TV ad spending may catch negative regulator attention. Its extreme price hike on NFL Sunday Ticket and already-huge share of the overall ad market could spark regulator inquiries.