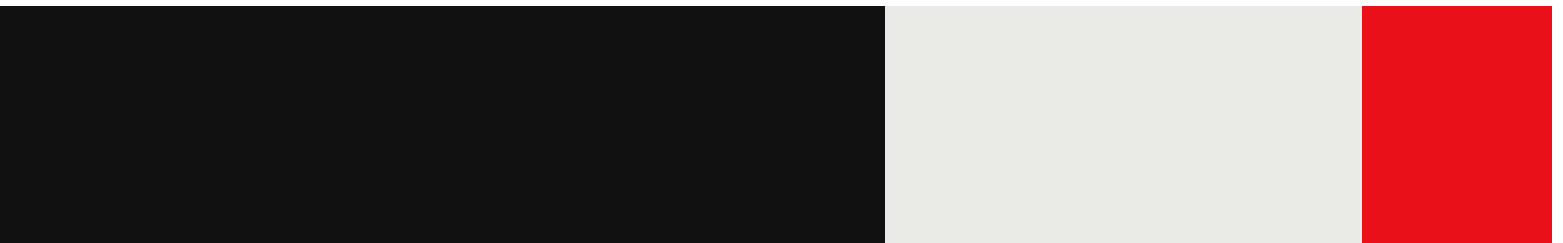


# Streaming viewership passed cable for the first time ever in July

## Article



**The news:** Time spent watching streaming services surpassed both broadcast **and cable** for the first time ever in July, [per](#) Nielsen.

- Streaming made up **34.8%** of all viewing time, barely eking past cable at **34.4%** and soaring well above broadcast at **21.6%**.

## By the numbers:

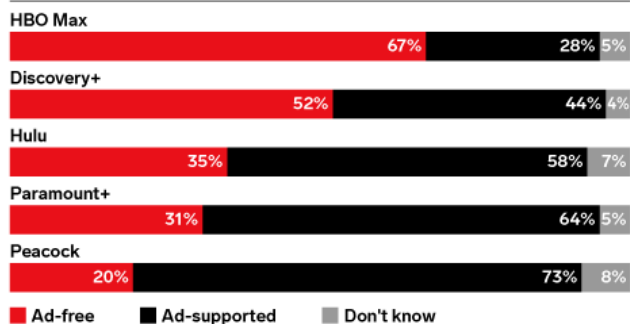
- Viewers spent an average of **190.9 billion minutes** streaming content per week, far above April 2020's **169.9 billion**, strong proof that streaming rode the pandemic to establish a [grip on entertainment](#).
- TV consumption was nearly identical to June and July of 2021, while streaming's share increased 6.5% year over year.
- Sports viewing dropped 41% year over year due to the dearth of sporting events compared with July 2021.

**What this means:** Streaming's viewing time can mostly be attributed to the lack of sports broadcasting events, but this will be far from the last time streaming comes out on top.

- July 2021 featured the NBA and NHL playoffs, as well as the Olympics. A return to major sports events like the **FIFA World Cup**, the tail end of the Major League Baseball (MLB) season, and the return of the **NFL** will give TV a boost—but even those staples are starting to transition to streaming.
- For MLB and NFL viewers, the digital sports experience is fractured and messy. Rights for certain games are split among services like **YouTube**, **Amazon Prime Video**, and **Apple TV+**, and even more players are entering the field. But the [NFL's own dip into streaming](#) and steady increase of digital sports viewership could lead to some cleaning up of the viewing experience.
- Streaming services are now the homes of the most-watched and -discussed TV shows. Viewers spent **18 billion minutes** watching “**Stranger Things**” on **Netflix**, per Nielsen, and shows like Apple TV's “**Severance**” and HBO's “**The Rehearsal**” have dominated [awards](#) and online discussion.

## US Streaming Video Service Subscribers Who Have the Ad-Free vs. Ad-Supported Version of Select Subscription Video-on-Demand (SVOD) Services, April 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 16-74 who watch at least 1 hour of TV per week; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: Hub Research, "Best Bundle," May 11, 2022

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**Looking forward:** The growing streaming audience has streaming services and advertisers alike racing to seize the opportunity.

- Netflix and **Disney+** have been locked in a competition to see which will have the more successful ad-supported subscription tier, but while Disney may have beaten Netflix to the punch, Nielsen data shows that Netflix is still the leading streamer by far with **8%** of streaming time compared with Disney's **1.8%**.
- **HBO Max** is also trying to capture a larger share of streaming viewership. The streamer will merge with Discovery Plus in 2023 and renew its focus on unscripted, reality content that's given Netflix and others a boost in viewing time.

**The big takeaway:** Streaming may have barely overtaken its legacy competitors last month, but it's still a landmark moment that's sure to repeat itself in the future as more high-value content moves to digital platforms.