

# How China's recent pandemic lockdowns impact time spent with media

Article

**The forecast:** China's zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy forced some cities into lockdowns in early 2022 in an effort to mitigate omicron variant transmissions. More time spent inside

means more time spent with media, and **we've increased our time spent with TV, time spent online, and time spent on smartphones forecasts to reflect these changes.**

**Dive deeper:**

- **Time spent with TV** will total **2 hours and 22 minutes** per day in 2022, on average. This is an uptick from our previous estimate by about **1.6 minutes**, following an increase in TV time attributed to the Beijing Winter Olympics and lockdown orders in cities like Shanghai. Time spent with TV will **decrease by 2%** from 2021, as viewership still won't keep up with 2020's widespread lockdown behaviors.
- Adults in China will spend about **4 hours and 50 minutes online** each day in 2022, **up 20 minutes** from 2021. Lockdowns definitely played into this growth. We increased our estimate by **9.2 minutes** due to omicron variant-related lockdowns. Still, growth has remained positive over the past few years, and time spent online will continue to grow as internet habits developed during the pandemic, including ordering food, listening to digital audio, livestreaming, and watching connected TV, stick around.
- **Time spent with smartphones** is also on the rise in China, and much like time spent online, lockdown-related behaviors are here to stay. Adults in China will average **3 hours and 37 minutes** on smartphones each day, up **10.4%** from 2021. Smartphones are the leading device for accessing the internet in China, and time spent will continue to increase as people spend more time gaming, following a nine-month ban on releasing new games that ended in April 2022.
- Like anywhere, time spent online in China is spread across activities, but **Douyin** in particular has a massive draw among smartphone users. Upon its introduction in 2016, just **1%** of China's internet users accessed the **TikTok** sister app. That figure will hit close to **71%** this year and will rise to an overwhelming **81%** by 2026.

**Looking ahead:** As time spent with TV declines slightly, time spent online—specifically on smartphones—continues to boom. By 2024, about **2 in 3 minutes** spent with media will be spent online in China, though these figures could change as China's lockdown strategies evolve.