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Summer of Streaming: Video Subscription Numbers Are Back at Their Peak, but Is It Here to Stay?

Image Credit: Shutter Speed via Unsplash

CivicScience contact@civicscience.com · Published: August 5, 2026

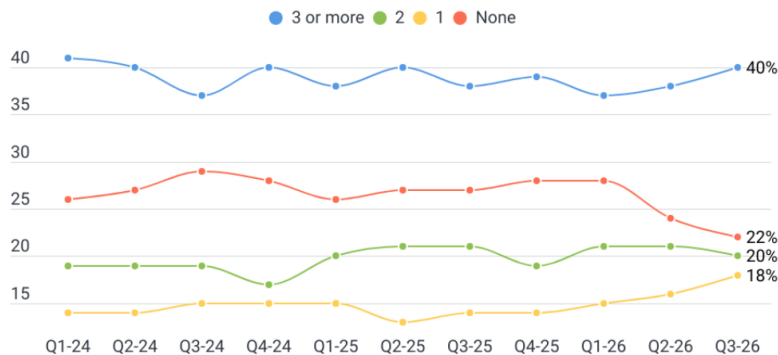
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Streaming subscriptions have reached a point where, for many, they're built into monthly budgets alongside groceries or gas. Even so, consumers continue to reassess which services are worth keeping as persistent inflation and broader economic uncertainty put pressure on discretionary spending.

Recent consumer-reported data from CivicScience show that Americans' use of video-on-demand streaming platforms (such as Netflix and Hulu) is markedly resilient amid ongoing inflation and broader cuts to [entertainment budgets](#). The percentage of Americans who say they have at least one such subscription is up from 72% in Q1 2026 to 78% through the end of July. Additionally, **the share with three or more of these subscriptions has climbed to its highest level since Q2 2025 (40%)**. Just 22% don't have any of these subscriptions at all right now, the lowest quarterly percentage observed in CivicScience tracking to date.

How many subscription video-on-demand services (like Netflix or Hulu) do you currently have? – Quarterly Percentages



54,508 responses from 01/01/2024 to 07/31/2026
Weighted by U.S. Census 18+
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Subscription Fatigue Grows as Streamers Churn Through Subscriptions More Often

Beneath the surface, however, streaming subscribers are feeling the strain, suggesting these retention rates may not last long. Self-reported consumer data show that just 24% of video streaming subscribers haven't experienced subscription fatigue recently, a sharp decline from the 37% who said the same in 2023. Notably, nearly 1-in-5 (19%) indicate they plan to cancel at least one service specifically due to these feelings.

As consumers feel overwhelmed by the number of streaming subscriptions they have, longer wait times between seasons may add friction and contribute to rising churn rates. Notably, 32% of streamers report they've signed up for a service just to watch a specific title, only to pause or cancel after finishing it three or more times in the past year alone, compared to 22% in 2023. And the share of streamers who have 'never' done this has fallen nine points over the same period.

How many times in the last year have you signed up for a video streaming service to watch something, and then canceled/paused your subscription after you finished watching it?

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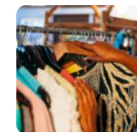
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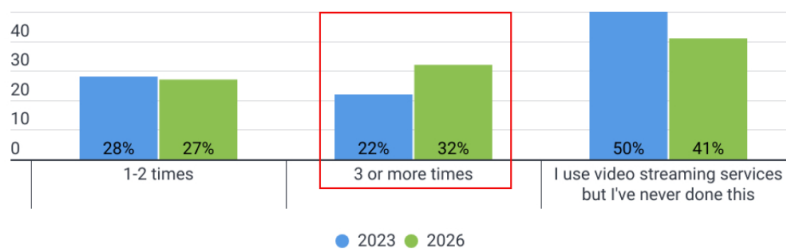


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8,378 responses from 04/12/2023 to 08/05/2026
 Rebased excluding non-streamers
 Weighted by U.S. Census 18+
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Openness to Ad-Tiers

Of course, canceling isn't the only option available for streamers, especially those leery of the cost of carrying multiple subscriptions. Turning to lower-cost ad-supported tiers and bundles offers another avenue. When CivicScience asked paid streaming subscribers to select all the actions they've taken in the past six months regarding streaming, 30% say they've subscribed to one or more services, while 25% have canceled one. Additionally, 34% have either downgraded (19%) or upgraded (15%) to an ad-supported tier, while 14% subscribed to a bundle package.

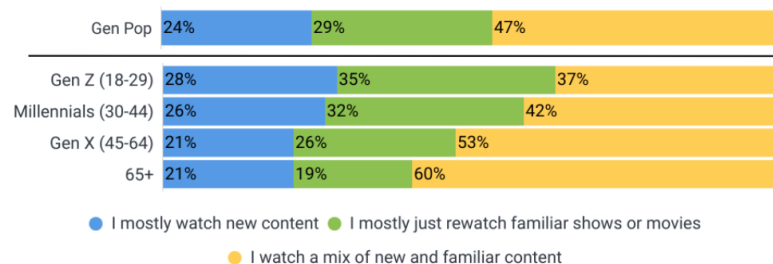
It's also worth noting that those who primarily stream via ad-supported plans are slightly less likely to report feeling subscription fatigue than the average streamer. They are also slightly less likely than average to churn from a subscription after watching their desired content (56% vs. 59%, respectively).

Beyond the Subscription: What Streamers Are Watching This Summer

Active U.S. video streaming subscribers are fairly divided between familiar and new content. Overall, 29% of subscribers indicate that they mostly rewatch familiar movies and shows, aligning with [previous CivicScience findings](#) on comfort media as a key stress-reliever. In comparison, 24% lean primarily toward new content, while 47% watch a blend of both.

Younger streamers are more likely to focus primarily on either familiar or new content. Among subscribers aged 65 and older, 60% opt for a mix of old and new content, followed closely by 53% of Gen X, making both groups comparatively less likely than their younger counterparts to seek new streaming content.

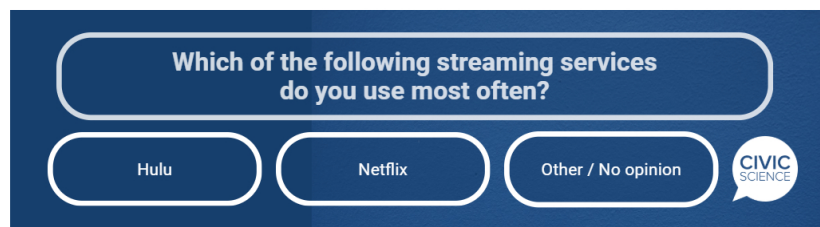
Which of the following best describes your video-on-demand streaming habits? by Age



864 responses from 08/03/2026 to 08/05/2026
 Rebased excluding non-streamers
 Weighted by U.S. Census 18+
 © CivicScience 2026



As far as the genres Americans are watching right now, mystery, suspense, and crime, as well as comedy, are most popular. While lifestyle and entertainment content are less popular, more than a quarter of U.S. adult respondents still cite either. Zooming out to the bigger picture, CivicScience data indicate these preferences have held relatively stable over the past year.



As consumers weigh cost against convenience and comfort, today's streaming subscriber is more deliberate and less loyal. Ad-supported tier users, meanwhile, exhibit slightly lower rates of fatigue and churn, giving platforms that lean into comfort viewing and lower-cost options a potential opportunity in a more deliberate, less loyal market.

Preferences shift by the day. Meet consumers where they actually are, and know who's ready to buy, and why.

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How many streaming services have you subscribed to over the past six months?

- ☐ Zero
- ☐ One
- ☐ Two or three
- ☐ More than three
- ☒ Other / No opinion

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