

FAST: FULL THROTTLE

How FAST services fit into the TV ecosystem, and how to leverage them

APR
2026



ENTERTAINMENT
RESEARCH

EXCERPT OF FINDINGS



FAST viewing hours surged 43% year-over-year

ComScore reports that total hours watched across major free ad-supported streaming services increased **43% year-over-year**, highlighting FAST as one of the fastest-growing segments in streaming as consumers seek lower-cost options.





Global FAST viewership continues double-digit growth into 2026

Amagi data shows FAST viewership grew **21% year-over-year in Q4 2025**, alongside a 27% increase in ad impressions, signaling both rising consumer adoption and expanding advertiser demand.

FAST viewership rises 21% in Q4 2025 amid continued growth in ad-supported streaming

By NCS Staff • March 13, 2026

Market Research Reports & Industry Analysis

Streaming





Major media companies scaling FAST platforms to profitability

Fox-owned Tubi reached **~100 million monthly active users** and **over \$1.1B in revenue in 2025**, turning a profit in early 2026 while continuing to invest in AI-driven personalization to compete for younger audiences.

CIO JOURNAL

Why Tubi Is Betting on AI to Win Over Gen Z Viewers

The free, ad-supported streaming service is leaning on the tech to take on bigger players and retain young audiences

By [Belle Lin](#) [Follow](#)

April 9, 2026 7:00 am ET

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Subscription fatigue is pushing consumers toward ad-supported models

A 2026 survey found **36% of U.S. consumers are willing to watch more ads to reduce costs (up from 24% in 2024)**, reflecting a broader behavioral shift that directly benefits FAST and other ad-supported streaming models.

Streaming viewers are OK with double the commercials as 'subscription fatigue' sets in

As streaming costs go up, viewers are looking for better deals – and many say they'd watch more ads for lower prices, a new survey shows

By [Lukas I. Alpert](#) [Follow](#)

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THE GOAL OF THIS RESEARCH:

How do FASTs fit in the TV ecosystem?

What drives FAST viewership and growth?

How can FAST services be leveraged in the marketing flywheel?





WE SURVEYED 3,009 TV CONSUMERS

- 2,500 monthly FAST users and 509 TV viewers who don't use any FAST services

All respondents met these requirements:

- Age 16-74
- Watch at least five hours of TV per week
- Have high-speed internet
- Data collected in February 2026



WE ALSO CONDUCTED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH A CROSS SECTION OF FAST USERS



- 5 monthly FAST users across the US
- 30-min in-depth interview

Participants were:

- Age 16-64
- Watch 5+ hours of TV per week
- Interviews conducted April 2026



In this report “FAST users” are viewers who watch one or more of the following services at least once a month:

tubi

Roku
Channel



Samsung
TV Plus

FANDANGO
AT HOME

STIR

XUMO
PLAY

FILMRISE

pluto tv

local
now

plex

CH
LG Channels

Watch
Free+
vizio

prime
Watch for Free

sling
free stream

MyFree
DIRECTV



The report also includes data on

- **FAST non-users:** TV viewers who don't use any free ad-supported streaming services

Monthly users of...

- MVPD/VMVPD bundles
- Paid SVOD services
- OTA Antenna
- YouTube
- Social/Creator video





1

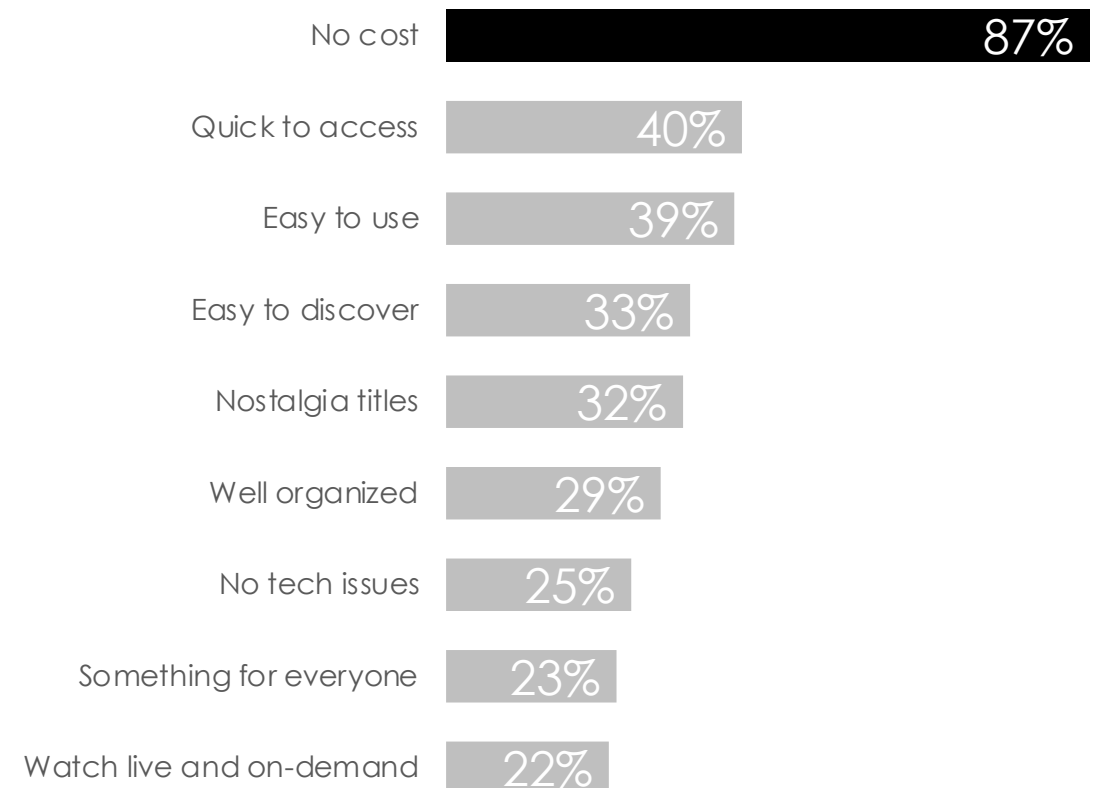
KEY FINDINGS

NO SURPRISE: FREE ACCESS IS THE TOP REASON PEOPLE USE FREE STREAMING SERVICES



87% of FAST users mention “no cost” as a competitive advantage: more than twice as high as the next most mentioned reason.

What are the benefits of free streaming vs. other services?
- Among FAST Users -



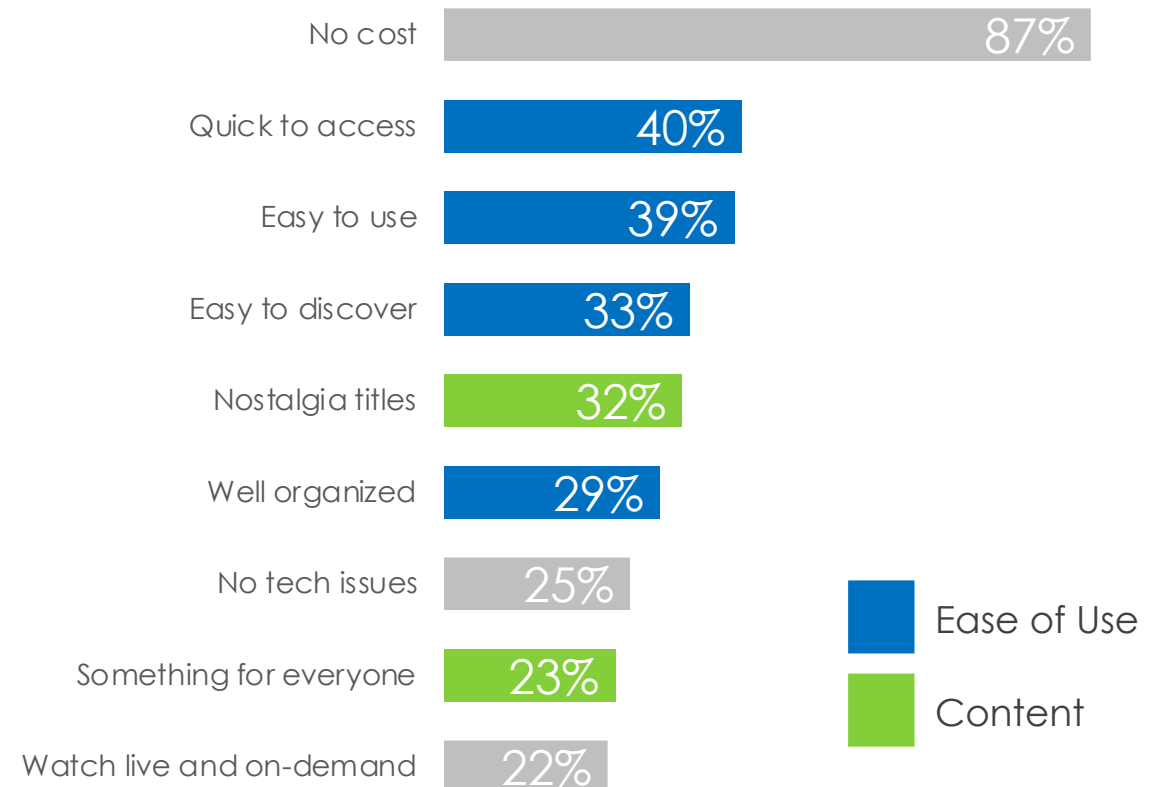
BUT THEIR “INSTANT ON” USER EXPERIENCE ALSO MATTERS



After cost, FASTs are seen as quick and easy to use (a hallmark of apps that often don't require even a login).

This low friction experience differentiates FASTs more than their content.

What are the benefits of free streaming vs. other services?
- Among FAST Users -



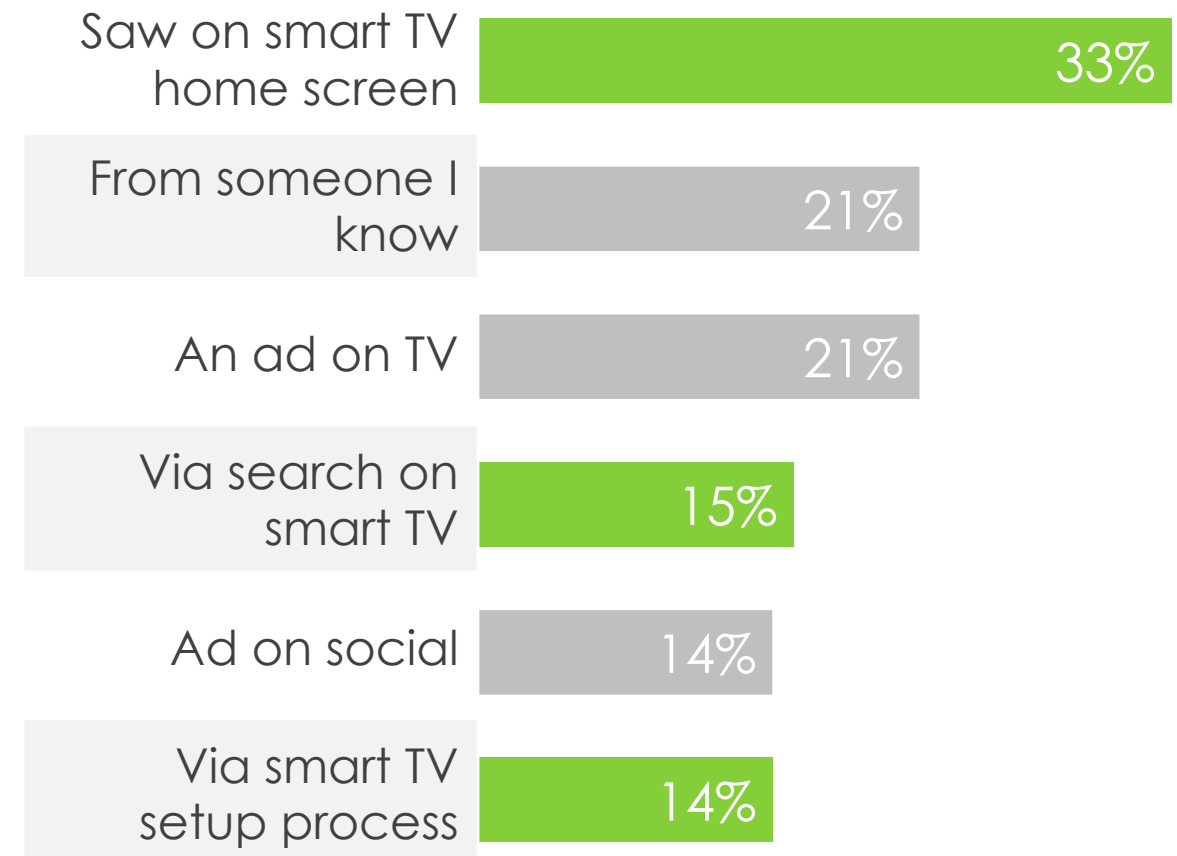


SMART TVS ARE THE BIGGEST DRIVER OF FAST DISCOVERY

The home screen of a smart TV is the most common way people discover new FAST services for the first time.

Many also find them while searching for content on a smart TV or setting up their set for the first time.

How did you first find out about that FAST service?
- Top 6 answers -

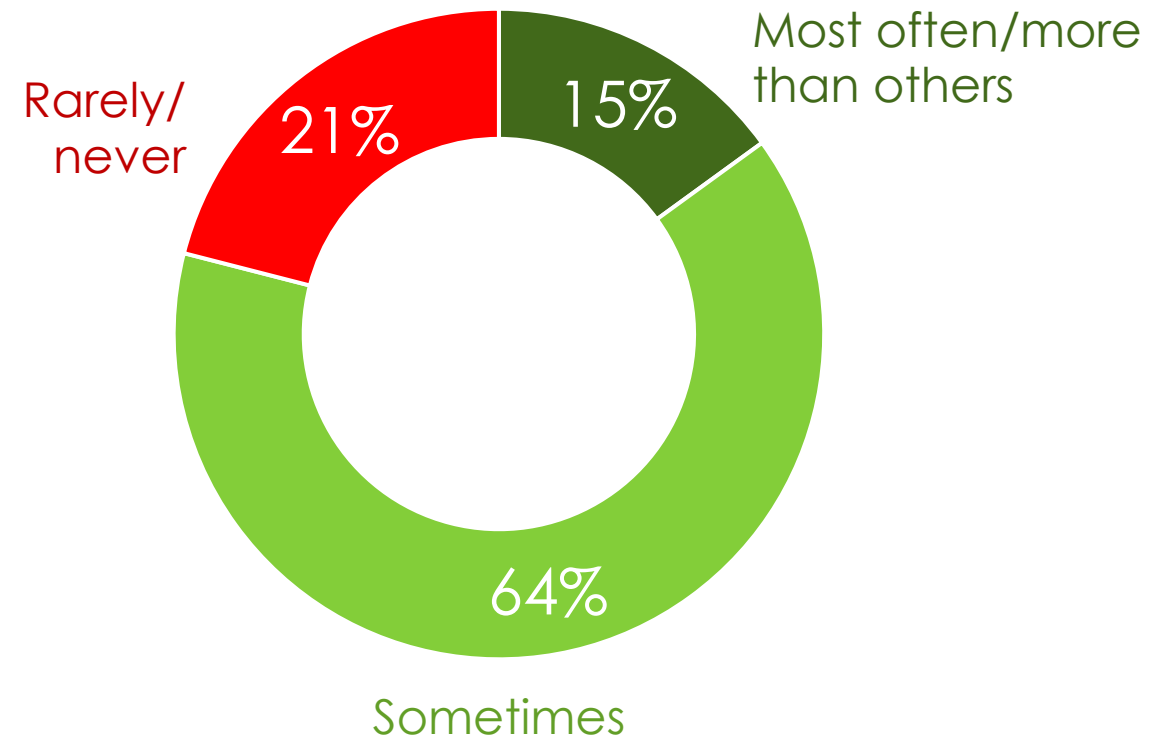




FAST CAN BE A MAJOR DISCOVERY ENGINE

FASTs are known for older content, but most viewers still use them to find something new—and for some (15%), they're the first place they look.

How often do you turn to FASTs when looking for **something new to watch**?
- Among FAST Users -



UNLIKE PAID PLATFORMS, FAST CONTENT IS MORE OFTEN DISCOVERED DIRECTLY ON THE TV



Almost 90% say they discover titles on FAST platforms through the FAST app or their smart TV home page – significantly more than those who discover them from an outside source.

86%

of FAST users regularly discover content **when it's surfaced on their TV set**

56%

regularly discover from an **“off-TV” source**, like word-of-mouth, an ad, or a push notification

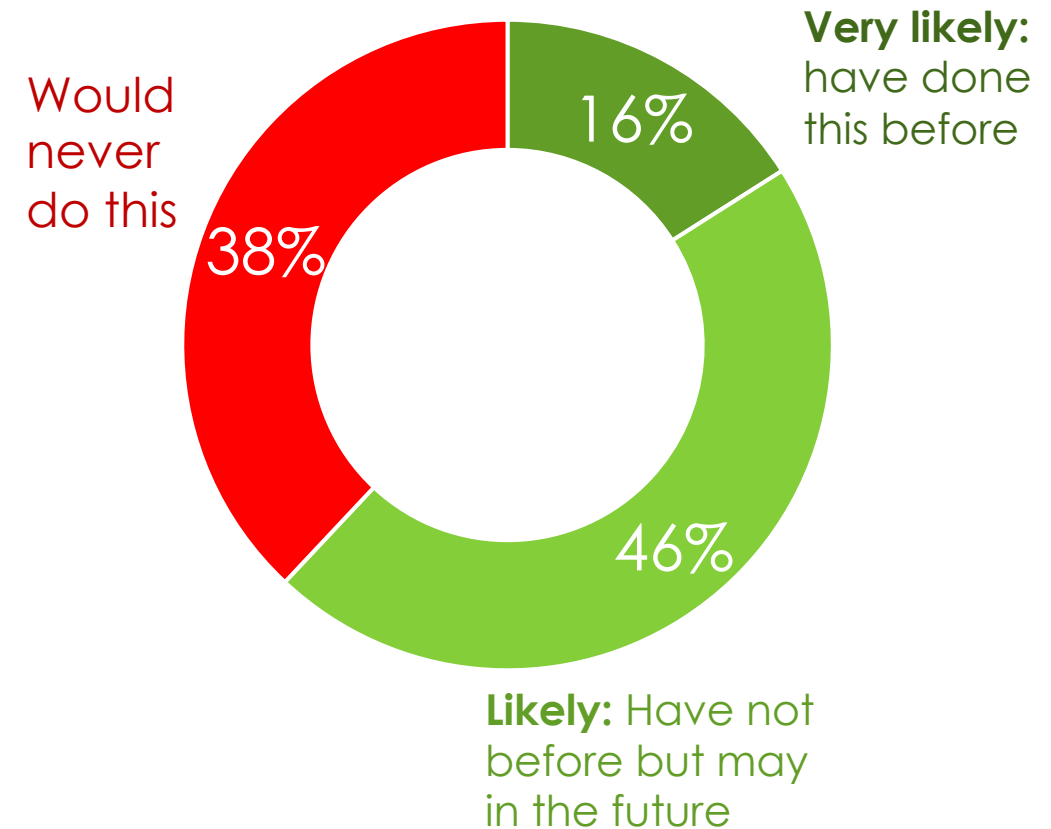
THE FAST FLYWHEEL: CAN FAST SERVICES GENERATE PAYING SUBSCRIBERS?



Yes: more than 60% of FAST viewers say they'd be at least somewhat likely to sign up for a paid subscription to watch more of a show they watch on a free streaming service.

How likely are you to sign up for a paid service to watch more of a show you watch on a free service?

- Among FAST Users -

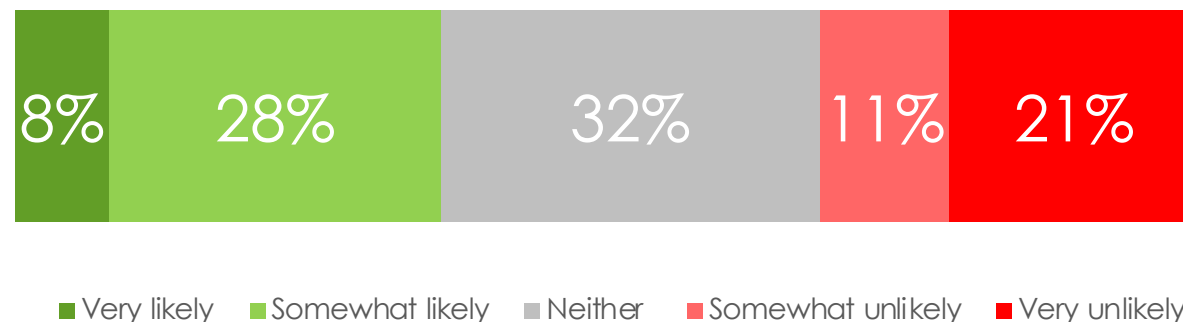


SOCIAL CREATOR CONTENT CAN ATTRACT NEW AUDIENCES



More than a third (36%) of viewers who *don't* use FAST services say they would be at least somewhat likely to try them if they offered content from a creator they follow.

Would you watch content from a favorite creator of social video on a FAST TV platform?
- Among Non-Users-



BASE: NON-USERS (n=509).

Q28r1 Now, think about a YouTube channel or a personality you really enjoy on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or social media platforms, how likely are you to: Start watching a free streaming TV service that offered more of their content.



2 | CONCLUSIONS



#1

The most common reason viewers choose FASTs is that they are free (but that's not the only reason).

#2

They're also exceptionally low-friction to use (with many not even requiring a login).

#3

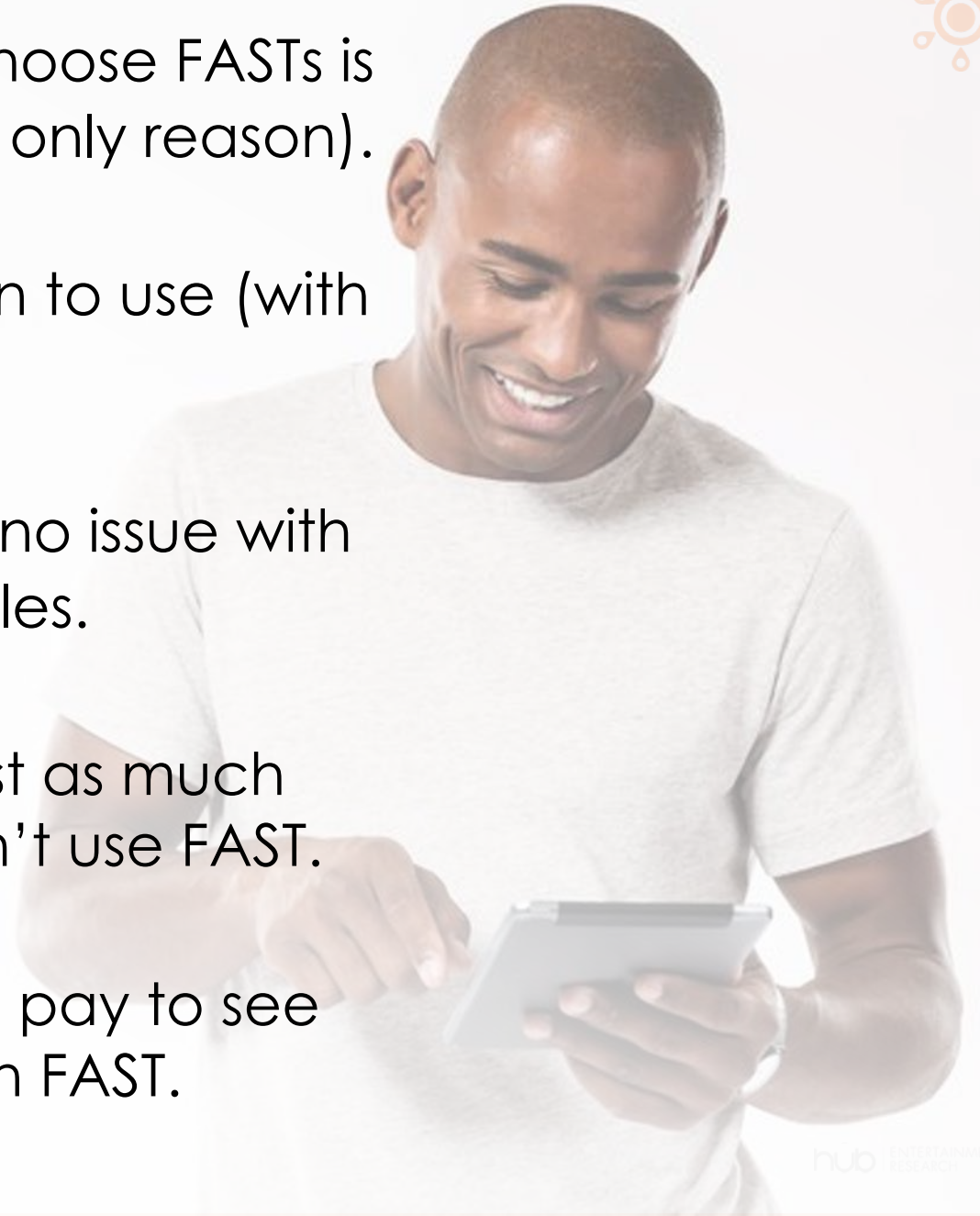
FAST users look for movies and have no issue with library content titles or rewatching titles.

#4

FAST viewers love TV – they spend just as much time and money as people who don't use FAST.

#5

The FAST flywheel is real: ~60% would pay to see more of a show they watched first on FAST.



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A hand is raised in the air, palm facing forward, with fingers slightly spread. The hand is wearing a watch with a dark strap and a metal case. The background is a blurred crowd of people at night, with warm, out-of-focus lights creating a bokeh effect. A vertical white line is positioned to the left of the contact information.

QUESTIONS?

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