

REPORT

FAST Platforms Outpacing Cable/ Satellite in the Race for Viewers



angus reid group™

More people are watching FAST platforms than cable/satellite: How free ad-supported streaming TV platforms are gaining ground.

The entertainment industry has reached an important milestone: Based on a sample size of 1,550 American adults, more Americans now watch FAST platforms than cable and satellite TV.

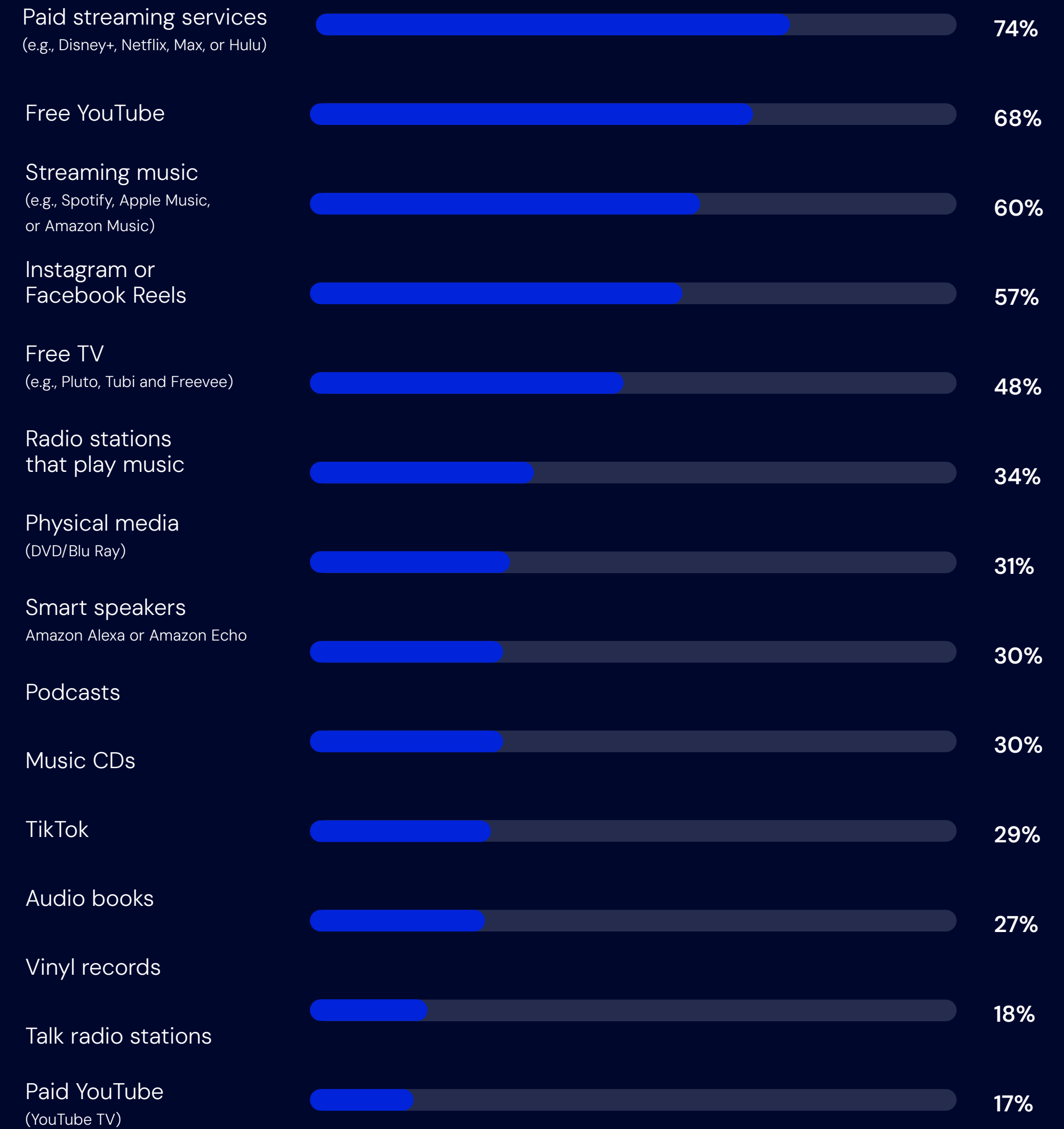
Also known as “free ad-supported streaming TV,” FAST platforms include Pluto, Tubi, Roku, Freevee, and others. Almost half of Americans surveyed (48%) say they watched FAST platforms (which include both linear channels and on demand titles) in 2023. This has surpassed the number of Americans who watched cable/satellite (43%).



48%

of Americans surveyed say they watched FAST platforms in 2023

Which of the following, if any, do you use for entertainment in your home?



While the majority of Americans surveyed (74%) still use subscription streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, FAST platforms’ rising position among various forms of home entertainment is worth paying attention to. In this report, we’ll unpack how the free, ad-supported television space now occupies a firm middle ground between streaming subscriptions and cable/satellite.

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METHODOLOGY

Angus Reid USA conducted an online survey from November 14–20, 2023 among a representative randomized sample of 1,550 American adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum USA. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by Angus Reid USA. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.



Quick facts about FAST platforms, PAID streaming, and cable.

Roku, Freevee (Amazon), Pluto (Paramount), and Tubi (Fox) are currently dominating the FAST platform market, but Crackle (Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment) and Vudu Free (Fandango Media) are also players

1

Half of Americans (48%) watched FAST platforms in 2023

2

Two-in-five (41%) people who subscribe to paid streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video say they've canceled at least one in the past six months

3

Almost half (44%) of people who have cable or satellite TV are planning to cancel it soon

4

Less than half of Americans (43%) still have cable or satellite TV

5

Almost half (43%) of people who cancel their cable or satellite TV service say it's because they're not getting good value for their money

6

Almost a third (31%) of 18-to-34-year-olds have never subscribed to cable or satellite

7



FAST platform growth versus paid streaming cancellation

People of all ages are watching FAST platforms. While paid streaming services and YouTube are still dominant entertainment platforms among people of all ages, more than half (52%) of people surveyed between the ages of 35–54 are watching on FAST platforms.

That being said, FAST platforms, paid streaming services, and YouTube still face stiff competition from shorter form content like Instagram or Facebook Reels among people aged 18–34—75% of people in this age category watch them. Almost half of this same cohort also spend their time on TikTok and podcasts (43% and 46%, respectively).

Which of the following, if any, do you use for entertainment in your home?

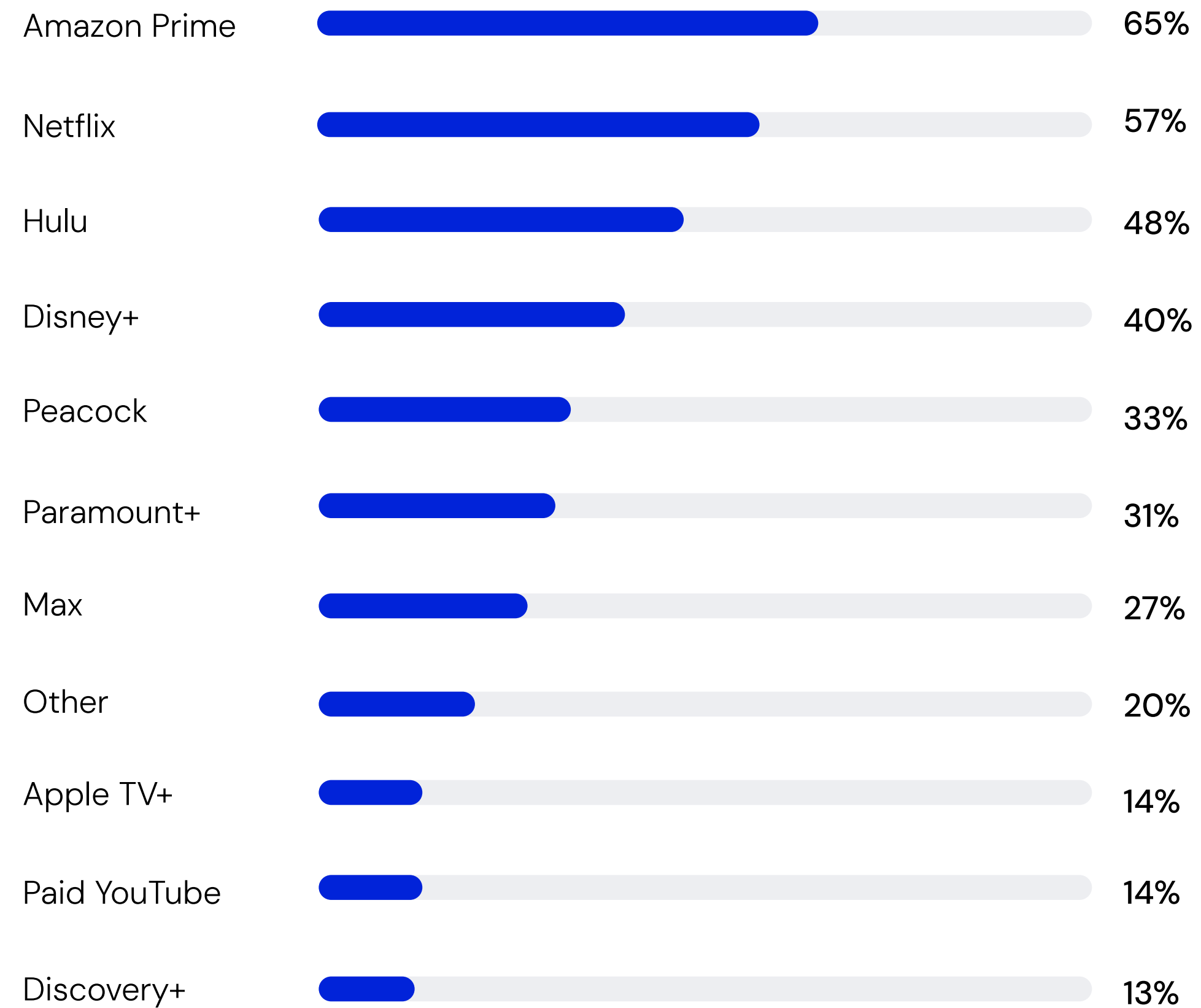
LABEL?	AGE			
	Total (n=1,550)	18-34	35-54	55+
Paid streaming services (e.g., Disney+, Netflix, Max, or Hulu)	74%	86%	80%	59%
Free YouTube	68%	80%	72%	55%
Streaming music (e.g., Spotify, Apple Music, or Amazon Music)	60%	80%	63%	42%
Instagram or Facebook Reels	57%	75%	59%	42%
Free TV (e.g., Pluto, Tubi and Freevee)	48%	45%	52%	48%
Radio stations that play music	34%	27%	34%	40%
Physical media (DVD/Blu Ray)	31%	37%	32%	25%
Podcasts	30%	46%	30%	17%
Tik Tok	30%	43%	33%	16%
Smart speakers Amazon Alexa or Amazon Echo	29%	29%	31%	27%
Music CDs	27%	21%	26%	33%
Audio books	18%	24%	19%	13%
Vinyl records	17%	18%	16%	17%
Talk radio stations	14%	8%	14%	19%
Paid YouTube (YouTube TV)	13%	17%	13%	8%

So where do paid subscription streaming platforms stand?

Buoyed by the Amazon Prime universe, Amazon Prime Video is the number one paid subscription streaming platform in American homes. (Note that these data represent the number of Americans who say they or someone in their home has a subscription to each service.) 65% of Americans surveyed say they subscribe to Amazon Prime Video. Netflix comes in second at 57% despite adjustments to pricing and user terms. The Netflix subscriber base has seen growth since the platform proactively mitigated password sharing.

Other high-profile streaming services have less penetration, including Apple TV+. (Apple TV+ and YouTube's paid version are on par.) Confusion surrounding HBO Max's recent rebranding as Max may explain why the Max numbers are lower than expected.

I subscribe to / Someone in the household subscribes to



As many platforms experiment with non-premium packages that include ads, some streaming services are seeing more adoption of this model than others. Netflix users are more likely to remain ad-free—only 14% of people who subscribe to Netflix do so with ads—while a much higher proportion of Hulu and Peacock users are likely to subscribe to ad-supported versions (28% and 21%, respectively).

14%
of people who
subscribe to Netflix
do so with ads

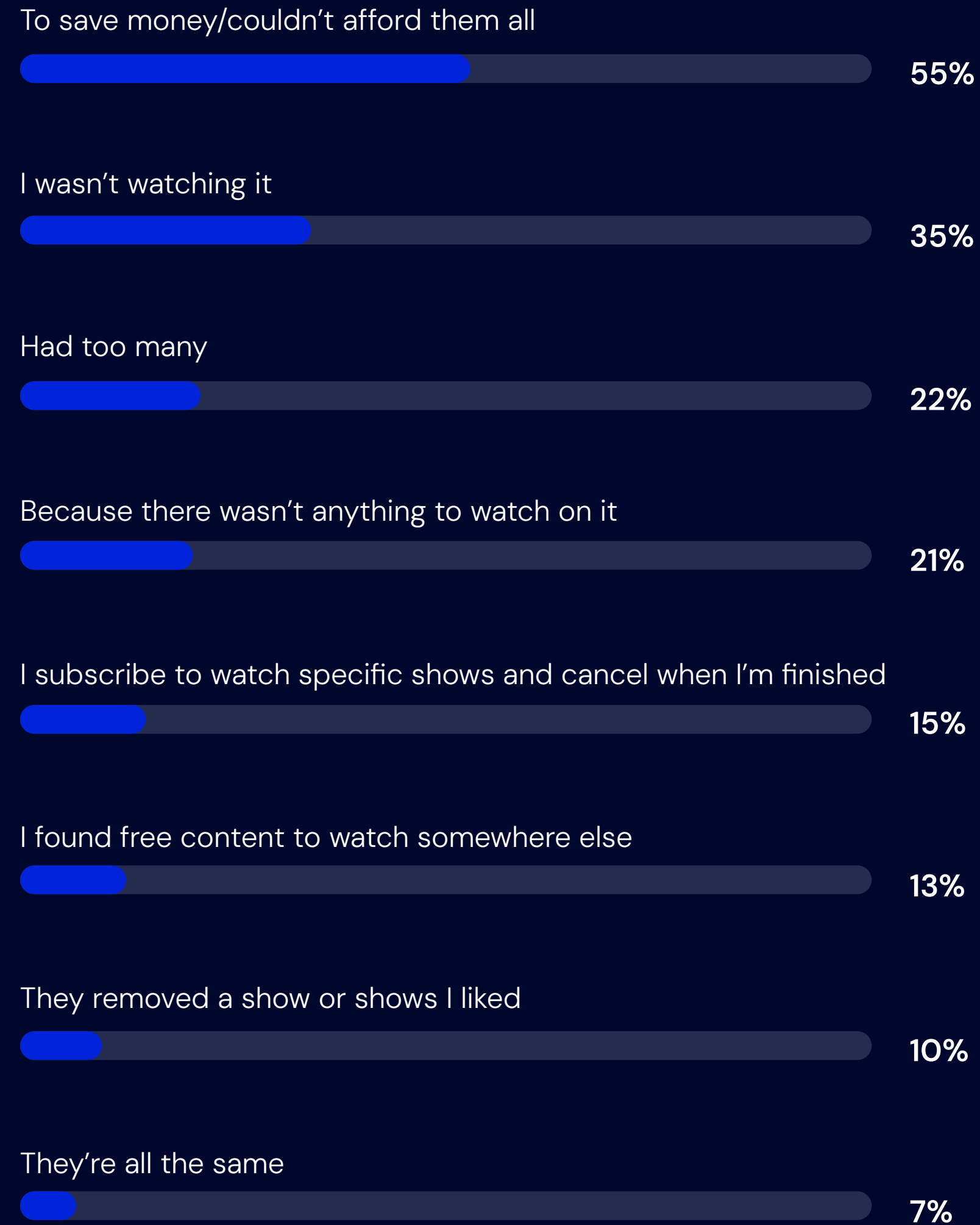


Why are people canceling paid streaming services?

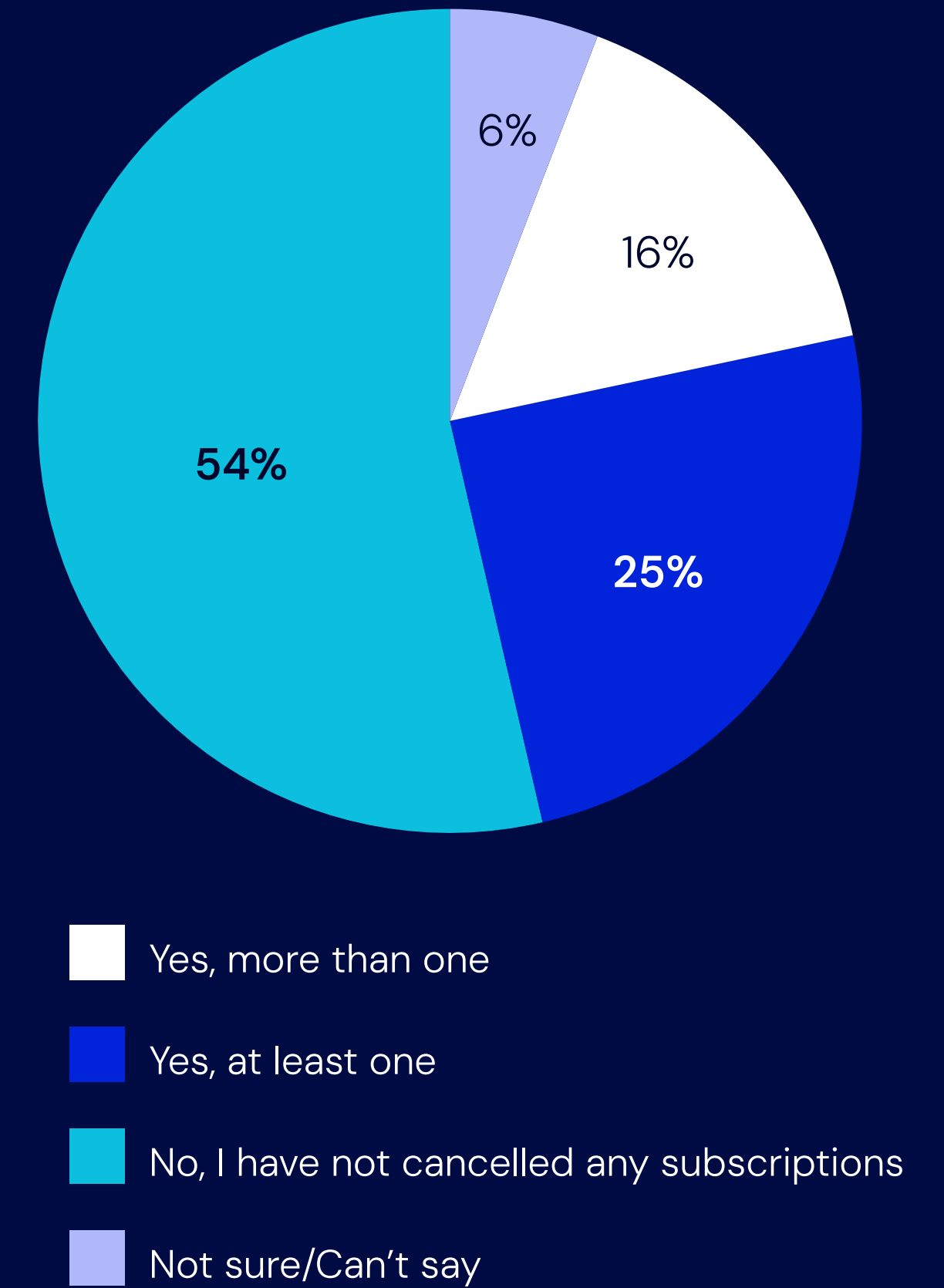
While cost is the top reason to cancel, over-subscribing, lack of content, and binge-watch-cancel cycles are also contributors. Notably, 13% of people who cancelled paid subscriptions say they found free content elsewhere. This suggests that some people don't mind watching ad as long as the service is free.

As the market changes, subscription service companies are increasingly worried about cancellation. And they have reason to be—two in five (41%) of those who have subscribed to any subscription service say they've canceled at least one in the past six months.

Why did you cancel your subscriptions to those services?



Have you cancelled any of your subscriptions to streaming services in the last six months?*



*Among those who have had a subscription service

The decline of cable and satellite TV

More people are cutting the cord and switching from cable and satellite TV to paid streaming services. According to our survey, only 43% of Americans still have cable or satellite TV, and this number is even lower among younger generations.

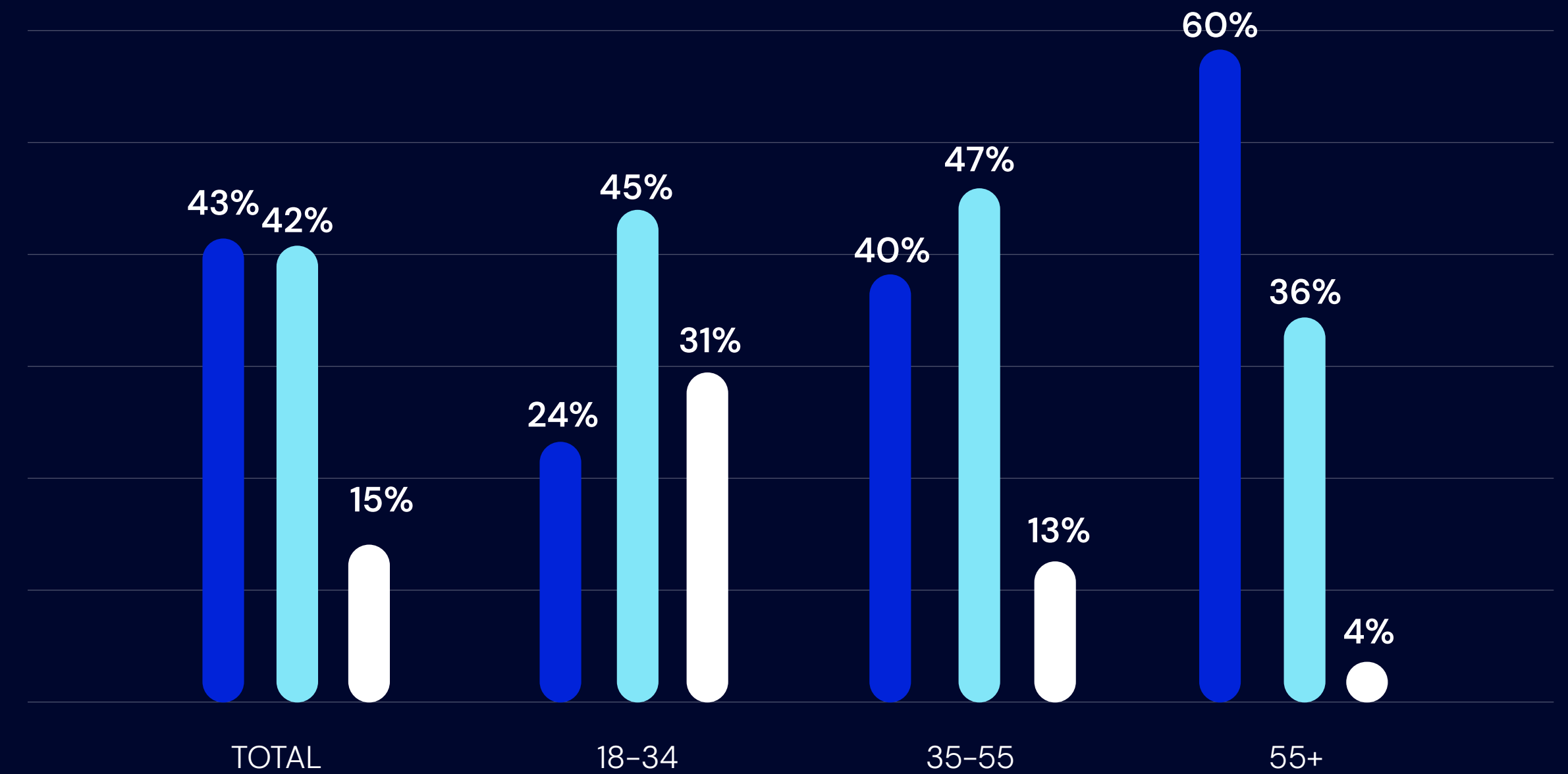
Cable and satellite providers are also contending with the existence of “never-cablers,” who are mostly younger people who have never subscribed to a cable or satellite TV service. Almost a third (31%) of 18-to-34-year-olds fall into this category, and cable and satellite TV providers are doing more to focus on this cohort.



43%

of Americans still have cable or satellite TV

Experience with Cable



● Yes, currently have

● Used to, but don't anymore

● Have never had this service

The decline of cable and satellite TV

While cable and satellite TV are sliding, there are still reasons why people keep these services, such as:

- The perception they offer programming that people feel they can't get elsewhere, like sports
- They are used to cable / satellite TV and are comfortable with these services
- They have cable / satellite TV services as part of a bundle with other services (Phone, WiFi, etc.)
- They like access to local news or having TV on in the background



40%

stick with cable/satellite because they feel that there's programming they can't get elsewhere, like sports.

What are some of the reasons you continue to subscribe to cable or satellite television?



Value and affordability lead cancellation reasons

Value for money is the number one reason people cancel their cable or satellite TV service. In this case, "value for money" encompasses both the idea that people don't feel they get their money's worth and/or that they simply couldn't afford these services. Given these reasons, there may be an opportunity for cable and satellite TV providers to revisit their pricing models and bolster their unique content offerings to improve the customer experience.

Why did you cancel? (Base: had cable/satellite but canceled)



Takeaways

1

Free, ad-supported streaming TV platforms are growing at a rate worth paying attention to—almost half of Americans watch them

2

Amazon Prime Video and Netflix are the two most subscribed streaming services

3

Netflix users are more likely to remain ad-free compared to Hulu and Peacock users

4

Two-in-five Americans have canceled at least one paid streaming service within the past six months

5

Among people who still use cable or satellite TV, a significant portion say they are considering cancellation due to lack of value

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