

College-Age TV Watchers Have No Cords To Cut

Contributed by eMarketer
Friday, 16 December 2011
Last Updated Friday, 16 December 2011

Rather than debate cord-cutting, these millennials already get TV shows they want without cable

College-age millennials still want their TV. They spend considerable time watching TV programming—but not necessarily on a TV screen.

For example, according to a Chegg study they spend 10 hours a week watching TV, showing the old-school medium is still popular among youth today.

A study by youth marketing research/information firm Youth Pulse (YPulse), mentioned in MediaPost's Media Daily News, found that 46% of college students view TV shows on a traditional TV set.

Different results were uncovered by agency Mr Youth, which asked what methods this group used to watch video. Some 38% of college students said they take in TV through basic cable and 31% said they did so through a premium cable service.

But a whopping 91% view video on their laptops, while a majority watch on their smartphones or desktop PCs. More than one-third watch video content via a gaming console connected to a TV—more than had premium cable and nearly as many as had basic.

These high percentages indicate not that millennials are cutting the cable cord en masse, but that they are leading the media users and adopters who are spearheading the movement to cutting the cord," said Christian Borges, vice president of marketing at Mr Youth.

One reason for viewing via multiple screens is that many college students don't have money in their budgets to pay cable bills. Another reason is they are comfortable consuming content without going through customary channels.

Also, pointed out David Yarus, Mr Youth's marketing manager, "the chemistry of their communities is such that the adoption of these technologies is accelerated." They are interacting with so many of their peers online and offline that they are adopting these technologies fast and are pushing them ahead. By watching what would formerly be considered simply "cable TV" through multiple devices, college-age millennials are not conforming to the old ways that most consumers adhere to," Borges explained. "They look at it as content where I want, where I want—not when you want. That's something that most cable companies and most networks are still struggling with in regard to programming."

The takeaway for marketers goes beyond merely advertising across multiple platforms. "Brands need to understand that it is a social conversation that they are entering," advised Nick Fuller, senior director of marketing at Mr Youth. He said that even while watching long-form video, college students are socializing—tweeting with their friends, sharing on Facebook. "Knowing that they have these communications at their fingertips, brands should really understand how to enter into a conversation to create a deeper experience around the platform."

15 December 2011