

Most Canadians Not Willing To Cut The Cord On Cable

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Only Two in Five (43%) of All Canadians Would Cancel Cable Before Internet; A Majority (64%) of Canadians 16-34 Would Choose Internet Instead

As alternatives to traditional TV increase in popularity – such as free streaming TV and full length episodes of shows available for direct download – some Canadian consumers are wondering if they can do without their cable TV subscription, opt for Internet access only, and “cut the cable”.

However, research shows that “at least in the short term” this threat to cable TV companies may be exaggerated, as most Canadians are not willing to make the switch.

According to the latest issue of the Ipsos Canadian Interactive Reid Report, fewer than half (43%) of online Canadians agreed they would cancel their cable TV subscription before they cancelled their Internet service (only 24% strongly agree with this statement). At the same time, a traditional television screen is the most popular device used to watch shows and movies, with 88% doing so on a weekly basis. Only half (56%) watch video content on a laptop or desktop in the same time period.

“Canadians don’t have access to as much quality, free content as Americans, which may be holding Canadians to more traditional forms of media,” says Catherine Dawson, Senior Vice President with Ipsos Reid in Vancouver. “Until a similar variety and selection is available, walking away from cable isn’t a realistic decision for most Canadians.”

Some websites that offer high quality, free TV shows, movies, and video clips – such as hulu.com – are not accessible north of the border, limiting the ability of Canadians to stream content online. In addition, the introduction of Netflix to Canada in 2010 has not captivated a large portion of the population (only one quarter (24%) use a streaming platform on a weekly basis), likely due to the limitations on movies and TV shows offered in Canada.

When looking at specific age groups, younger Canadians are much more willing to cut their cable subscription in favour of Internet access than older Canadians. Among those aged 16 to 34, six in ten (64%) would keep their internet over cable, compared to those aged 35 to 54 (41%) and those aged 55+ (28%). A far more tech savvy generation, younger Canadians have the knowledge and ability to access free content online more easily than older generations.

“It is not surprising that younger Canadians are more inclined to give up cable TV for Internet access,” adds Dawson. “It’s clear that loyalty and preference to access video content online is partly affected by age, indicating that the future trend in this industry is to move further away from cable subscriptions.”

This release is based on the findings of an Ipsos Reid syndicated study, The Ipsos Canadian Interactive Reid Report, fielded March 16th to 21st, 2012 and released in 2012-Issue 1. This online survey of 886 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos Online Panel. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

For more information on the Ipsos Canadian Interactive Reid Report, please visit www.ipsos.ca/reid/interactive.

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