

What Difference Does Cable Make?

Contributed by eMarketer
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Cord cutting may have little effect on content viewed

TV advertisers and other stakeholders, including cable companies and content producers, fret over the future of TV: Are people cutting the cord, or not—and if they are, what does it mean for the future of video content?

In August, consultants Altman Vilandrie found that US subscribers and nonsubscribers to cable TV were almost equally likely to use online video subscription services, at 49% and 48%, respectively.

There was little difference in the selection of services they used, with Netflix coming out strongly on top for both groups. One significant difference was a 50% higher likelihood that cable subscribers would also subscribe to Amazon Prime, compared to nonsubscribers.

When the firm asked internet users about how much time they spent with TV, however, differences were more evident. Cable subscribers spent a total of 59.5 hours that month watching TV shows and movies on a variety of devices, vs. only about half as much time for nonsubscribers.

And cable subscribers watched more on every device studied: nearly 2.5 times as much time watching traditional TV, 1.6 times as much watching over-the-top internet TV, 2.4 times as much watching mobile video and even half an hour longer watching TV on a PC.

This suggests that nonsubscribers, whether they have cut the cord or simply never signed up for cable in the first place, are less connected to television content overall. They are just as likely to use the same services to watch a variety of content over the internet, but don't spend as much time watching TV and movies in general—making a cable subscription less worthwhile to this segment.

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