



VAB EXAMINES HOW MEDIA IS HELPING AMERICANS COPE DURING PANDEMIC IN NEW AS TIME GOES BY CUSTOM STUDY

*NEW YORK – April 30, 2020 – With U.S. television viewership and other media usage increasing during the coronavirus pandemic, [VAB](#) is releasing findings from a new custom consumer study, **As Time Goes By: How Media Consumption is Helping America Cope**, evaluating current consumer media use behavior, social interactions and how these changing behaviors impact brands. Additionally, *As Time Goes By* answers a variety of marketers' most frequently asked questions related to the pandemic.*

“Since the stay-at-home restrictions were put in place, we have been analyzing how TV viewership has grown during the pandemic, but our new custom study digs deeper into the nuances of behaviors,” said Danielle DeLauro, executive vice president at VAB. “As Time Goes By is an examination of why consumers are engaging more with media and includes new insights to help brand marketers make fully informed, real-time decisions during this time of crisis.”

A selection of VAB's findings follow.

Where has the sports viewer gone?

- **Even with the absence of live sports, sports fans are watching more television**
 - *Seventy-four percent of sports viewers say they are watching the same or more TV than before (page 23).*
- **Sports viewers have simply migrated to other TV programming, creating opportunities for marketers to continue to reach and engage them in other content.**
 - *Those who are replacing their sports TV viewing with news skew male, older, and tend to be more affluent (page 26), while younger audiences are more often watching entertainment programming (page 27).*

With news viewership on the rise, how does news consumption differ during the pandemic?

- **Not only are people turning to TV news right now, they believe TV is the most reliable source for news.**

- *Eight out of ten adults (80%) are choosing television as their primary source for acquiring news during the pandemic (page 31), compared to other platforms such as social media (50%) and newspapers (32%).*
- **Due to the heightened interest in news, viewers are trying new sources for information, increasing the opportunity for brands to reach and engage viewers.**
 - *Young adults are still searching for their go-to news source with over half of 18-24-year-olds (54%) and 66 percent of 35-44-year-olds saying they've switched news sources or added another news source to stay updated (page 33).*

Has the pandemic had an impact on new technology adoption and streaming?

- **Looking for ways to deepen their media experience, consumers are actively exploring new media devices and technology.**
 - *Eighty-four percent of respondents over the age of 18 say they have more time currently to watch, listen and read media (page 14).*
 - *Nearly 7 out of 10 consumers say they are more open to trying new media (66%), while over half (54%) have learned how to use more features on their smart TV or TV-related devices and platforms (page 14).*
 - *Sixteen percent of affluent respondents are using podcasts to learn something new (page 20).*
 - *The majority of Hispanics and African Americans are learning to use more features on Smart TVs or TV-related devices (63% and 66% respectively - page 20).*

“With more time on their hands and an increasing reliance on technology, people have expanded outside their comfort zones exploring new media and discovering the full functionality of their existing devices such as their smart TV,” said Kathy Grey, SVP research innovation at VAB. “For marketers, this creates an opportunity to connect with audiences in new, unexpected ways.”

- **Looking for fresh premium video content to supplement their live viewing, consumers have added both ad-supported and subscription services (page 16).**
 - *Four out of ten consumers (37%) are watching a free streaming service, such as Pluto TV, Roku or Tubi.*
 - *Thirty-six percent have expanded their media choices by adding a new streaming service as a viewing option.*
- **Social distancing is motivating people over the age of 18 to use social media and new telecommunications services to stay connected with friends and family (page 19).**

- *Eight out of 10 people over the age of 18 are using their mobile phones more frequently, with eight out of 10 respondents also saying social media is essential to staying in touch with friends and family (78% and 76% respectively).*
- *Half of respondents (51%) have tried a new service for the first time to communicate with friends or family during the crisis (e.g. Zoom, Skype, etc.).*

How are consumers responding to brand messages at this time?

- **Despite marketers rethinking their media buys to avoid advertising in proximity to coronavirus-related content, VAB's study indicates they are safe to do so.**
 - *Consumers, including millennials (66%), are comfortable with brands advertising in COVID-19 news programs (page 36).*
 - *Seventy percent of respondents over 18-years of age feel it is appropriate for companies to advertise in COVID-19-related news programming (page 35).*
 - *Three out of four (75%) also wouldn't boycott a company because it advertised in COVID-19-related programming (page 35).*
- **Companies sharing positive messages and helping communities during this crisis are rewarded.**
 - *More than half of respondents (52%) said companies with specific COVID-19-related advertising messages positively impacted their perception of the brand (page 37).*
 - *Fifty-five percent said they were more likely to purchase a product or service from companies that are lending resources or helping local communities during the crisis (page 38).*

Methodology:

VAB commissioned Lucid to conduct an online survey of 1,004 U.S. adults over 18-years of age in households subscribing to cable, telco, internet TV or satellite TV, April 1 through April 3, 2020. The respondents cover all age groups, races and ethnic backgrounds.

About VAB

VAB is an insights-driven organization that inspires marketers to reimagine their media strategies resulting in smarter, more educated decisions. VAB develops unique market insights and answers questions from a marketer's perspective, tackling the toughest issues with fresh thinking and supporting data.

Note: Access to VAB's complete Insights library is complimentary to members of the press by creating an account [here](#).

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