

# Cord cutters feel weight of too many subscriptions

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USA TODAY

Three streaming video subscriptions seem to be the ticket for cord cutters and binge watchers. But many consumers are beginning to feel weighed down by too many subscriptions, a new survey finds.

The average consumer now subscribes to three streaming video services – the same level of commitment as last year, consulting and advisory firm Deloitte found in its Digital Media Trends survey published Tuesday.

Overall, more people are subscribing to streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, with 69 percent of consumers saying they subscribe to at least one, up from 55 percent last year, according to Deloitte.

Even as more consumers subscribe to video delivered over the internet, nearly half (47 percent) of those surveyed say they are experiencing subscription fatigue., according to the survey of 2,003 U.S. digital consumers conducted Dec. 2018 to Feb. 2019.

There's now more than 300 streaming services to choose from – up from 200-plus a year ago – and consumers may be feeling overwhelmed, says Kevin Westcott, Deloitte's vice chairman for U.S. telecom, media and entertainment.

“Well over half (of consumers) say they are frustrated when shows they like disappear or are no longer on a streaming service and that they have to have multiple subscriptions to get what they want,” he said. “So there is a little bit of subscription fatigue.”

Those consumer sentiments could concern a marketplace that's bracing for the arrival of two major players later this year – a Disney+ subscription service with Disney, Pixar, Lucasfilm and Marvel movies and original TV series, and an AT&T offering with HBO and other Time Warner content – and an NBCUniversal subscription service in early 2020.

Also growing: subscriptions to streaming music services such as

Spotify and Apple Music (41 percent, up from 26 percent a year ago), and video game services including Xbox Live and PlayStation Plus (30 percent vs. 26 percent last year).

These consumer behaviors could lead streaming providers to develop “the next generation of the home entertainment platform,” Westcott said. Such services would have coveted original content, but also “a broad swath of entertainment options inclusive of music and games,” he said. “It may not be their own content, but they have to have that available to try to keep me under their umbrella.”

Subscriptions to traditional pay TV remained flat at 65 percent, says Deloitte, which changed the way it asked about pay TV, so the 2017 data is not directly comparable to 2018's.

Many households (43 percent) have both pay TV and a streaming subscription. More than half (52 percent) of Generation X consumers (ages 36-52) do.

Traditional pay-TV subscriptions do continue to trend downward. Last year, the major pay-TV providers lost about 2.9 million subscribers, after accounting for about 640,000 new subscribers to streamed live TV services such as Sling TV and DirecTV Now, according to Leichtman Research Group. Overall 89.1 million subscribe to pay TV, down from 92 million in 2017, the research firm says.

Other factoids from Deloitte's survey:

■ Nearly half (46 percent) say they use a video game console to stream TV and movies, up from 40 percent a year ago.

■ Millennials (ages 22-35) are the biggest binge watchers with 37 percent saying they weekly watch four hours in a sitting.

■ Even though half of respondents (49 percent) think they are the party most responsible for protecting their data, eight out of 10 (82 percent) say they don't think companies do enough to protect personal data.

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