

# Has online video begun affecting TV ratings?

A look at what the experts from the industry have to say. By Suraj Ramnath

**PARTHO DASGUPTA**,  
chief executive officer,  
BARC India



**TELEVISION HAS ONLY BEEN A GROWTH STORY. LET'S LOOK AT IT FROM THE TV VIEWERSHIP POINT OF VIEW - THE AVERAGE VIEWERSHIP FOR TOTAL TV IN**

2015 stood at 21.2 billion impressions, which currently stands at 29.2 billion. Apart from that, even the youth (15-30 year olds) that are considered to be the highest consumers of OTT content, contribute 32 per cent of total TV viewership, the highest amongst all age groups. This too, has been growing year-on-year. In fact, youth continue to engage increasingly with TV. As TV penetration increases, we can only expect this to go higher and the potential for this growth, in a country like India, is humongous.

Yes, consumption of OTT platforms is increasing, but there are still challenges, including bandwidth issues. According to reports, the country currently has 300 million internet-enabled mobile phones and 250 million viewers consuming online content. When compared with TV viewing individuals, there is still a long way to go for digital consumption.

Increasing Average Time Spent per Viewer on TV (currently standing at 3 hours 43 minutes), new channel launches and growing ad-ex are just a few indicators which demonstrate robust TV growth.

**SAMEER NAIR**,  
chief executive officer,  
Applause Entertainment



**NOT YET, BUT IT IS BEGINNING TO DISTRACT PREMIUM AUDIENCES AND ATTRACT MASS AUDIENCES. LET ME TELL YOU HOW...**

**Distraction** - The recent release of Sacred Games competed for attention with World Cup Soccer, Wimbledon and yes, Sanju. Who won? It's hard to say, but attention was divided.

**Attraction** - My 84-year-old mother tells me over breakfast one day - 'I want Amazon Prime'... on further investigation, I discover she saw a Breathe promo on Colors and since Madhavan is one of her favourites, she wanted Prime, to watch the show.

Recently Hotstar reported that they broke a world record in simultaneous concurrent video streams, and yet, the advertising revenues for the 2018 IPL broadcast grew YOY. Finally, my driver informed me that other drivers and security staff at my place of work have and are watching pirated episodes of Sacred Games. Good news - the content has wide appeal. Bad news - it's being pirated.

Gradually, as consumers realise that OTT frees them from the tyranny of the broadcaster's schedule and the TV-set's immobility, they will wonder how they managed in the first place.

But all of that is in the future. Meanwhile, no, I don't think OTT is affecting television ratings yet, but I believe it will.

**GIRISH MENON**,  
partner and co-head, media and entertainment,  
KPMG India



**THE RAPID UPTAKE OF DATA CONSUMPTION, ESPECIALLY ON MOBILES, HAS LED TO A SURGE IN BOTH THE NUMBER AND USAGE OF OTT APPS IN INDIA.**

The industry has been cognizant of this pattern, resulting in a wave of OTT-first content being produced in India in the last six to eight months.

However, TV still remains the dominant mode of media consumption in the country. With more than 500 channels, with daily original programming available to the consumers for anywhere between ₹200-250 per month, TV retains a strong value-for-money proposition.

Long form content consumption on OTT will take some time to evolve given the current low level of wireline internet penetration in India. Further, continued investment by traditional broadcasters on television seeks to ensure that a large volume of original content is available across TV channels on a daily basis; volumes that OTT platforms are not able to match currently.

Thus, in the near to medium term future, television is not likely to be under threat from OTT, with a complementary co-existence being the most likely scenario.