

PRESS RELEASE

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TV Viewing Habits in 2020: TV becomes essential in an extraordinary year

Impacted by an unprecedented health crisis caused by the global Covid 19 pandemic with dramatic human, economic and social consequences, the year 2020 is likely to live long in the memories.

In this unprecedented context, the medium of television has imposed itself and proved indispensable in supporting French people throughout the crisis and beyond. The daily Television viewing time thus reached **3 hours 58 minutes**, a historical record. French people mainly gathered together to watch the news each day, but they also had a greater need for family entertainment.

“By adapting to the constraints imposed by the situation, television channels have invented and created concepts that have found and won over audiences looking for escape”, says Laurence Deléchant, Director of the Television Department.

“Médiamétrie aims to provide a consolidated and accurate view of media consumption. In this very particular year, adding to the existing growth of the non-linear offer, the viewing of video content has risen sharply. TV programmes watched live on TV were the main beneficiaries of this growth. The health crisis has created new needs for social connection, information and entertainment, to which television has responded perfectly”, adds Julien Rosanvallon, Executive Vice-President in charge of Audience Measurements.

French people and TV: ever stronger ties in a historic year

In 2020, French people each spent an average of nearly **4 hours** a day watching TV programmes, which is **18 minutes** more than a year earlier. This historic viewing time is linked to both an increase in the number of daily viewers, which this year amounts to **44.3 million** (+8% compared with 2019), and to the time spent by everyone watching TV (+3% compared with 2019); all audiences are affected by this increase, particularly people in the upper SPC, who spent **34 minutes** more each day watching TV, or even young people aged 15 to 34 years (+14 minutes).

While all European countries have seen an increase in TV viewing time, *“in this year's curve, it is interesting to see, beyond the significant increase linked to the first lockdown period, that viewing time remained at a level above that of 2019 throughout the year”*, says Laurence Deléchant.



▶ Live TV at the forefront

The increase in television viewing time was largely driven by live TV, which increased by **22 minutes** in 1 year.

In fact, French people needed to follow the news “in real time”, as and when the health situation developed. They were therefore particularly numerous and regular in terms of watching television news (**21.2 million** TV viewers each evening) and news channels (**16.7 million** daily TV viewers), which each gained **4 million** TV viewers compared to last year.

Without forgetting the massive and historic gatherings to watch the presidential addresses, with an unprecedented record for Emmanuel Macron’s speech on 13 April 2020, which was watched on television by **36.8 million** French people.

When we mention Live TV, we also think of Sport, a great way for people to get away from it all. And despite the disrupted schedules of major competitions, fans have been able to watch broadcasts of their favourite sports. The Tour de France and the French Open tennis tournament, which were both postponed to September, each attracted nearly **8 million** extra viewers this year.

▶ Feel good, agile and bold TV that appeals to an audience in search of direction

Beyond its unifying power to provide information on the daily situation, TV has also largely brought families together to watch entertaining programmes, well known for the most part, or even cult for some, like the *Harry Potter* or *James Bond* sagas broadcast on TF1 and France 2 respectively. Similarly, films which are a part of the heritage of French cinema, such as *Le gendarme se marie* (M6) or *Les Visiteurs* (TF1), which have already been broadcast many times, broke their own audience records. Some family entertainment programmes also scored highly: *Miss France* on TF1 (**8.8 million** TV viewers, best audience since 2006) or *La grande soirée du 31 à Versailles* on France 2 (**5.3 million** TV viewers, best audience for a New Year's Eve since 2010).

Moreover, TV has demonstrated creativity in adapting to the new schedule of the French people, who were forced to stay at home for part of the year. Primary schoolchildren and secondary school students were able to discover home schooling with *La Maison Lumni* on France 4. Some channels also allowed viewers to educate themselves or play sports without leaving their living room. To overcome the impossibilities of filming, broadcasters gave their flagship hosts the opportunity to film shows from their homes (*Touche pas à mon poste* on C8) or in new formats, such as *Au secours, Bonjour !* on France 2 or even *Tous en cuisine, en direct avec Cyril Lignac* on M6, which lasted beyond the lockdown.



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More and more content available around the clock

Fans of video content more than ever this year, French people were able to discover, watch on-demand programmes available on all screens (TV, computer, smartphone and tablet).

Already familiar with non-linear TV for several years now, this year, viewers were able to enjoy programmes available on catch-up services, sometimes up to 28 days later.

This opportunity has allowed certain programmes to boost their audiences. This is the case for some episodes of the *Prodigal Son* series on TF1 or *Why Women Kill* on M6 for example, for which catch-up viewing accounts for nearly **27%** and **34%** of the programme's total audience respectively. As for *La Flamme*, a drama broadcast on Canal+, it achieved nearly **80%** of its audience through catch-up viewing.

Although TV sets are mainly reserved for the viewing of TV programmes, they are also popular for other activities, such as video games for example or viewing content on SVoD platforms; these other uses represent **20%** of the total time spent on TV sets.

8.3 million French people watched an SVoD programme every day, across all devices. And this on-demand viewing represents an average of **26 minutes and 30 seconds** of daily viewing time across all screens.

As fans of TV series, the French prefer these platforms when it comes to watching American series, which lead the way in the rankings. But at the same time, viewers also widely gathered in front of their televisions to follow French dramas, which are still popular and represented over 2/3 (**68%**) of leading prime time dramas.

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About Médiamétrie

The French industry leader in media research, Médiamétrie monitors, measures and analyses audience behaviour and market trends, and fosters the emergence of a benchmark for media data in France. Created in 1985, Médiamétrie is expanding its activities in Television, Radio, the Internet (computer, smartphone and tablet), Cinema and the Cross-media sector in France and abroad.

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