

From one screen to another: the rise of online TV

A new survey released this week, commissioned by the European Interactive Advertising Association, found that 57% of Europeans regularly access the internet, spending on average nearly 12 hours online a week, with nearly a third spending upwards of 16 hours.

The survey, gathering data from over 7,000 respondents in 10 European countries, shows that the internet is becoming a hub for all media. Among the fastest growing ways that people spend their time online is watching TV, video clips or films. The survey estimates it has grown in popularity by 150% since last year, an increase accelerated by broadband penetration – 8 out of 10 of the people surveyed connected to the internet via broadband.

Watching TV online requires fairly standard hardware and software from users as well as a broadband internet connection. Many TV channels allow users to watch TV online directly from the channel's homepage, allowing users to watch programmes streamed in real-time, including news, sports, comedy, drama and factual programming. The sites also aim to be user-friendly and will provide troubleshooting guides should connecting to the service prove to be problematic.

Some TV channels also have a catch-up feature whereby online users can watch recent screenings of their favourite TV shows for free on demand. With work, family and other commitments taking up much of our time, it might not always be possible to tune in to our favourite TV shows every week, and this has proven to be a popular feature. Certain programmes will be available for download or "rent"; that is unlimited access to watch programmes for a limited time period for a small fee.

What this means for consumers is even more choice in what to watch and how to watch it. In addition to the TV channels themselves, other content owners have adopted online streaming to reach their audiences. For example, Arsenal FC is offering clips and streams of matches directly from their website for one-off fees or subscription rates. For TV channels, providing consumers with a service to [watch TV online](#) is a necessary response to increased competition for consumers' leisure time. In any case it is a trend that is unlikely to change anytime soon, and is likely to improve as technology improves and licensing agreements allow more programmes to be streamed online.

So whether you're a confirmed technophile, a casual TV viewer or looking to catch up on your favourite programmes, go online today to see how easy it is to watch TV on your PC.

About the Author

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