

# THREE WAYS MEDIA CONSUMPTION IS CHANGING DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

The Coronavirus pandemic has radically changed consumers' behavior. The majority of the U.S. workforce is temporarily working from home, parents are suddenly homeschooling their children, and everyone is adapting to the guidelines of "social distancing" while trying to find ways to stay busy. In the midst of this massive upheaval, media consumption is increasing—but more for some channels than others.



## Video consumption will increase, but what people are consuming will change

- With sports, live events, and scripted programs on hiatus or cancelled altogether, individuals are finding other content to consume in their place and are shifting toward local newscasts, old programming, and "bingeworthy" content available through OTT/streaming services. Additionally, Nielsen reported an 80% increase in game app downloads in China during the month of February.
- Hollywood studios like Universal Pictures are exploring alternative solutions for reaching the public in light of movie theater closures, with some releasing new movies directly to the streaming-at-home market, as was the case with Pixar's recently released computer-animated fantasy film, "Onward."
- According to Nielsen projections, we may see a 60% increase in the amount of video content—channel agnostic—consumed in U.S. homes as a result of COVID-19.
  - *Example: Seattle/Tacoma DMA, where the initial outbreak was originally most severe in the U.S., reported a 22% increase in total TV usage for the week of 3/16 compared to the week of 3/9.*
- Local news outlets will offer unique perspectives—both on the status of the virus in their communities as well as vignettes showcasing regional "feel good" stories that viewers crave.



## Digital consumption—especially social media—is likely to increase

- While in early 2020, trust and positivity toward social media was declining, new regulations regarding self-quarantines and social distancing have allowed this tactic to surge, offering both entertainment and an opportunity to stay connected with others.
- Brands and celebrities are pumping out content on social media as a way to give back to their fans. Musicians are doing concerts from their homes, celebrities are reading children's books aloud, and athletes are sharing workouts and offering behind-the-scenes content like never before.
- Individuals are going to their mobile devices for updates on the rapidly changing global situation and are also spending considerable time with national news outlets.
  - *22% increase in Instagram impressions February to March.*
  - *27% increase in TikTok engagement February to March.*
  - *20% increase in time spent on mobile devices in China since the outbreak.*
- Search engines continue to be a source of information. Since February 16<sup>th</sup>, Google Trends reports that U.S. searches for "COVID-19" have scaled more than 100x. It will continue to be a source for information related to health, education, and new forms of entertainment.



### The jury is still out on print, but the short-term outlook is not positive

- Newspapers are most frequently consumed by adults 65+—those who are at greatest risk of infection from the virus. For those with in-home subscriptions, consumption is not likely to change.
- However, with fewer people leaving their homes, newspapers may see an overall decline in readership—particularly in major cities with transport hubs where newspapers are often sold, as work-from-home policies eliminate commuter readership. For those who are still commuting, consideration for what they touch and pick up may also be a deterrent for the purchase of papers and even magazines.

Stay healthy and stay safe. #btdoingourpart

## REFERENCES

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