

Why do you watch TV?

CONSUMER EDINBURGH TELEVISION

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If ‘hold the door’ means anything other than literally holding a door open - then you’ve probably been taking part in the Game of Thrones phenomenon. Although it’s been the most popular TV show of the 21st century, I’ve happily let it pass me by whilst I await the return of Love Island. We all pick TV programmes for different reasons and Thinkbox recently visited us to discuss ‘The Age of Television’, a research study which aimed to discover more about why and how we watch video.

Thinkbox (the marketing body for UK’s TV broadcasters) commissioned a study to analyse

the different reasons people watch live TV, broadcaster on-demand TV and subscription services like Netflix or Amazon Prime. As well as looking at why they use online platforms such as YouTube.

The research found that we watch different types of TV to fulfil different viewing needs and that our motivations could be easily categorised into eight different '*need states*' namely: unwind, distract, do, indulge, escape, experience, in touch & comfort.

Anyone wanting to read the full report can find it [here](#) but below I've picked out the key findings for each '*need state*':

- The most common reason to watch video is to **unwind** and this makes up 26% of all viewing time. Viewers in this '*need state*' are often tired and are looking for easy to watch, light hearted content. Linear TV is generally the first destination for this type of viewing with playback, broadcaster VOD and subscription VOD following close behind.
- Online videos meet both the **do** & **distract** needs particularly amongst 16-34 y/o. **Do** is the need to find useful information that can be practically applied to any area of life. **Distract** is the need for instant gratification to fill time, counter boredom or provide a short break from other tasks. **Distract** viewing is the second largest type of viewing and accounts for 18% of all viewing time.
- The need to **indulge** accounts for 9% of all viewing time and spans all forms of video, including VOD. This need state can either be about pursuing individual hobbies and passions (eg, wildlife documentaries or make-up videos) or indulging in guilty pleasures, for example reality TV.
- **Escaping** into content drives on-demand viewing and makes up just 7% of all viewing time. This is the need to lose yourself in another world and become immersed in involving and engaging content. Box sets tend to fuel this need and platform choice is generally driven by where the content

is available to view.

- When people need to be **in-touch** and be aware of what's happening in the world, live TV is still their first go to video platform. **In-touch** viewing accounts for 12% of all viewing time and live TV excels at this particularly with older audiences.
- The **experience** need state stems from the desire people have to be part of a shared experience and not 'miss out'. Viewing based in this need (10%) is not age or gender specific and is generally done via Live TV. Big drama's and sport events are typical examples.
- **Comfort** viewing accounts for 16% of all viewing and is often served by familiar programmes which can cater to everyone. Linear TV's EPG is often the first port of call with broadcaster VOD the secondary destination for missed episodes.

All this got me thinking about what I watch and why. Now not only has advertising been ruined by the constant thoughts in my head – why am I being targeted with that, I am not in the target audience so that's a waste of their social spend? Or is that a TV ad or a Sky Adsmart ad? ...THE CONSTANT THOUGHTS! Now I have one more question to add to my mind: what '*need state*' am I fulfilling by watching Real Housewives? Is it to **indulge** or **distract**? ... as I never quite manage a full episode I want to say **distract** as opposed to admitting it is **indulge**!

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