2025 Media Preferences of Older Adults

May 2025

Survey Overview

As the Medicare market has grown to more than 68 million Americans, understanding how older adults navigate both traditional and digital media is more important than ever.

Our 8th annual Media Preferences of Older Adults survey provides fresh insights into evolving media habits, comfort with digital environments, and the enduring value of established channels.

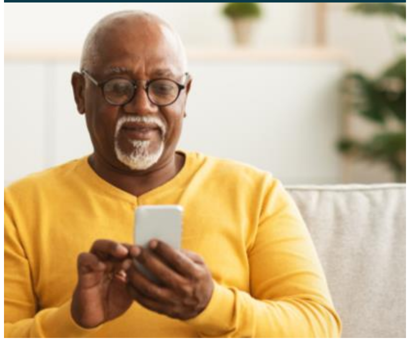
This survey, conducted 4/10/25-4/18/25 with 648 people ages 63-75, offers a current snapshot of behaviors, preferences, and trends shaping how older adults consume media today.

648: 641 completes + 7 partials
CMS Medicare Monthly Enrollment, Jan 2025

Topics Covered in the 2025 Study

Digital Confidence & Technology Adoption

Media Consumption Patterns



Online Behaviors, Motivations & Attitudes

Health Management & Insurance Engagement

Executive Summary

Key Findings

This survey data reveals older adults as **tech enthusiasts** who have **embraced digital technology**, while still exhibiting unique preferences that distinguish them from younger audiences.

Older adults demonstrate **surprising digital confidence**, with over one-third rating their tech skills in the top tier. Smartphone adoption is robust at 89% and slightly outpaces computers/laptops as the primary internet access device.

Media consumption shows distinctive patterns with **television dominating both time spent** (53% watch 4+ hours daily) **and influence** (74% cite TV as their primary product discovery channel). While streaming services have gained significant adoption (62% subscribe), **traditional media formats remain influential**, particularly for news consumption, where network TV (51%) and cable news (48%) lead digital alternatives.

Social media engagement shows **high Facebook adoption and frequency** (88% weekly usage) but limited engagement with other platforms. **Both connection and entertainment drive their engagement**; in general, older adults have a positive perspective of the platform.

When it comes to Medicare plans, older adults maintain clear communication preferences, strongly **favoring direct phone conversations** (61%) over in-person meetings when communicating with company representatives. Health management behaviors reveal a preference for basic maintenance activities rather than proactive health management.

Implications for Marketers

The survey findings translate to several critical implications for marketers targeting the 63-75 demographic:

- **Television remains the dominant advertising channel for this demographic**, with nearly ¾ of participants citing it as their primary new product discovery source. **However, marketers should recognize that the response pattern typically involves delayed action – 38% research products later rather than taking immediate action after viewing ads.** This necessitates cohesive cross-channel strategies that reinforce messages and provide multiple touchpoints.

- Digital marketing strategies should emphasize practical benefits and utility. With 82% handling bills online and 68% using apps regularly, older adults are digitally capable but motivated differently than younger demographics who tend to prioritize entertainment and social connection. **Their online journeys center around email, social media, and financial activities, suggesting that digital marketing should focus on these practical entry points.**

- Social media strategies should be Facebook-centric, with interest far exceeding any other social network. However, while older adults are unlikely to follow healthcare providers or plans on social media, **it's important to maintain content, presence and respond to posts. They may not be active followers, but many look at all social channels when researching a brand.**

Implications for Marketers - cont'd

- **Traditional response channels need to be offered within healthcare marketing tactics, recognizing older adults' preference for phone conversations when engaging with healthcare providers.** The survey shows older adults strongly prefer phone calls for Medicare information, with most rejecting both virtual (57.5%) and in-person meetings (55.9%). Financial incentives represent the strongest motivator for engagement (27%), suggesting that cost savings should be prominently featured in healthcare marketing materials.

- **Multi-channel strategies are essential, as older adults demonstrate distinct channel preferences for different purposes** – digital and streaming for entertainment, traditional media for news and information. Effective marketing to this demographic requires recognizing these purpose-driven media choices and deploying messages accordingly across platforms.

Digital Confidence & Technology Adoption

Digital Confidence & Technology Adoption Highlights

- Older adults demonstrate **surprisingly high levels of digital confidence**, with a bell curve skewing positive.

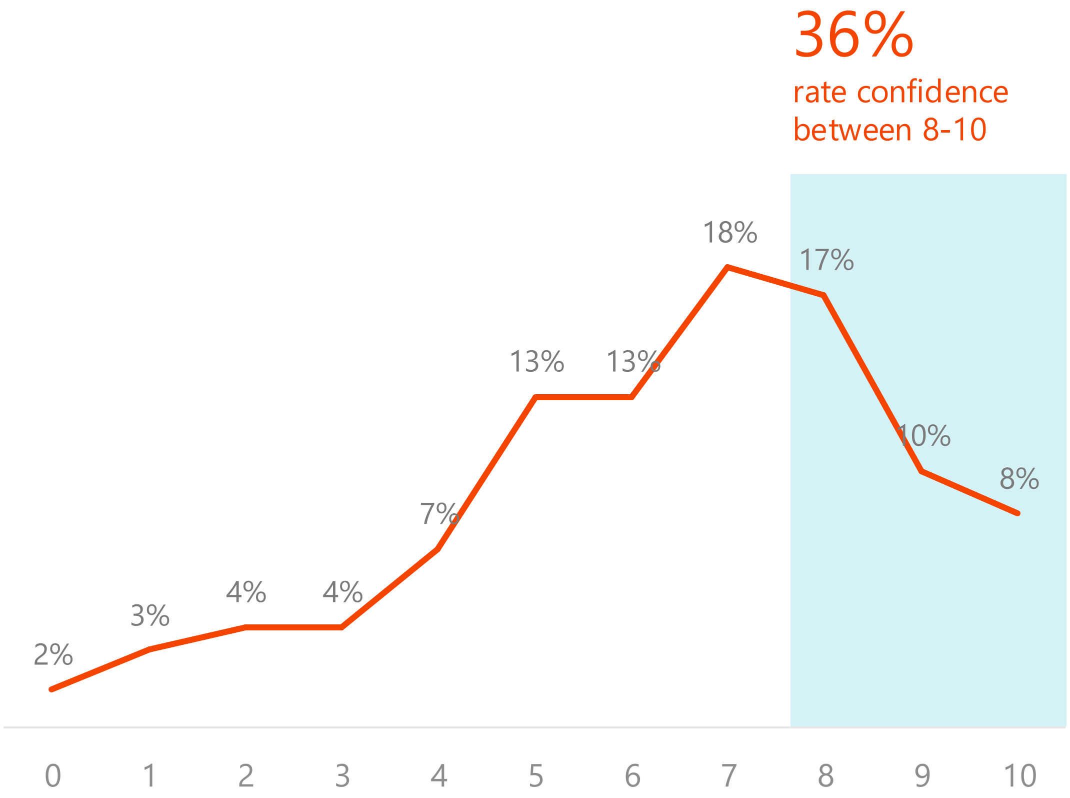
- **Digital activities reveal practical adoption patterns, with financial transactions leading** (82% have paid bills online). App usage is strong (68%), and significant adoption of video conferencing (40%) suggests comfort with more complex digital interactions. Gaming shows surprising traction, with 47% playing digital games in some form, predominantly on mobile devices (35%).

- Device ownership shows strong smartphone adoption (89%), with these devices slightly edging out computers/laptops as the primary internet access method. **Television remains the most commonly-owned device (92%), but its usage context differs significantly from digital devices.** Smart speakers show limited but focused adoption (28%), primarily for basic functions like music, information queries, and weather updates.

Older Adults Feel Tech-comfortable

Over 1/3 rate their digital technology skills in the Top Tier (8-10), while only 9% report very low confidence (0-2)

Q. Using the scale below, in general, how confident are you with digital technology (e.g., smartphone, internet, apps)?



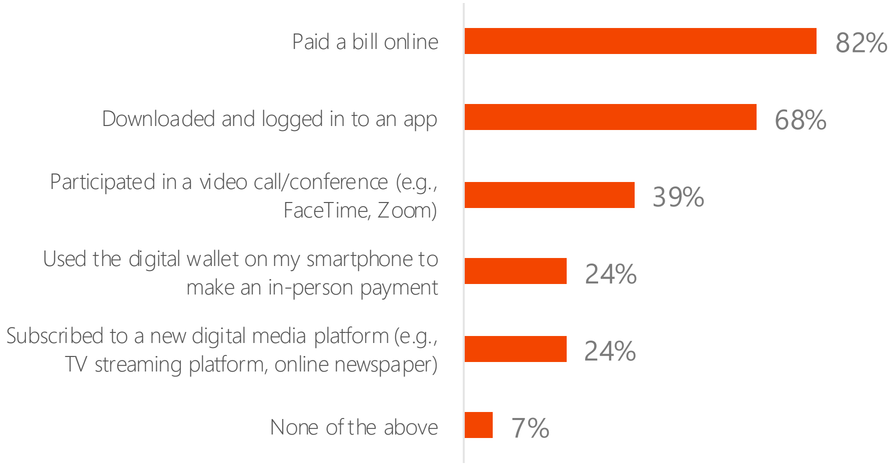
Older Adults Confidently Embrace Digital Activities

Over 80% handle bills online and nearly half (47%) play digital Games, with app-based gaming leading at 35%

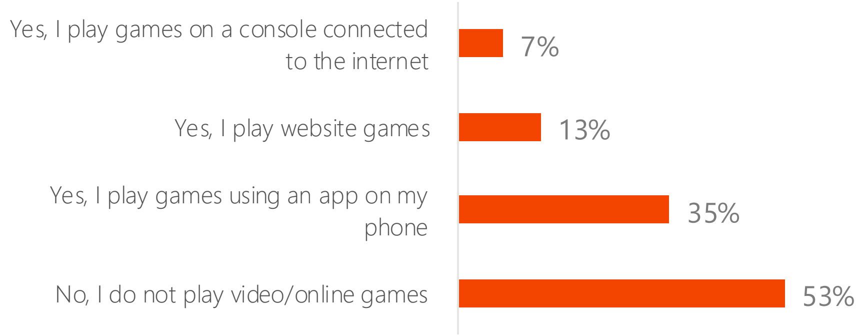
Q. Which of the following digital activities have you done on your own in the past 6 months? Please select any that apply.

Q. Do you play video/online games? Please select any that apply.

Digital activities done on their own



Playing video/online games

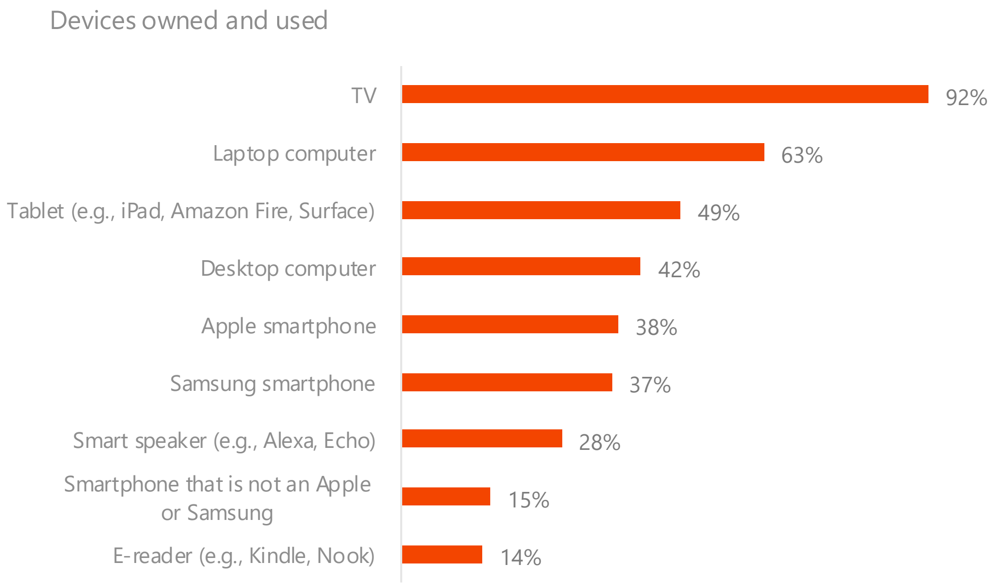


Older Adults Use Internet-connected Devices

The majority have smartphones; in fact, smartphones edge out computers for how they access the internet

Q. Which of the following devices do you currently own and use? Please select any that apply.

Q. What device(s) do you tend to use for your online/internet activity most often? Please choose the 1-2 device(s) you use most often.



Their smartphone is the top way they access the internet* (count)

Smartphone	n362
Computer/laptop	n337

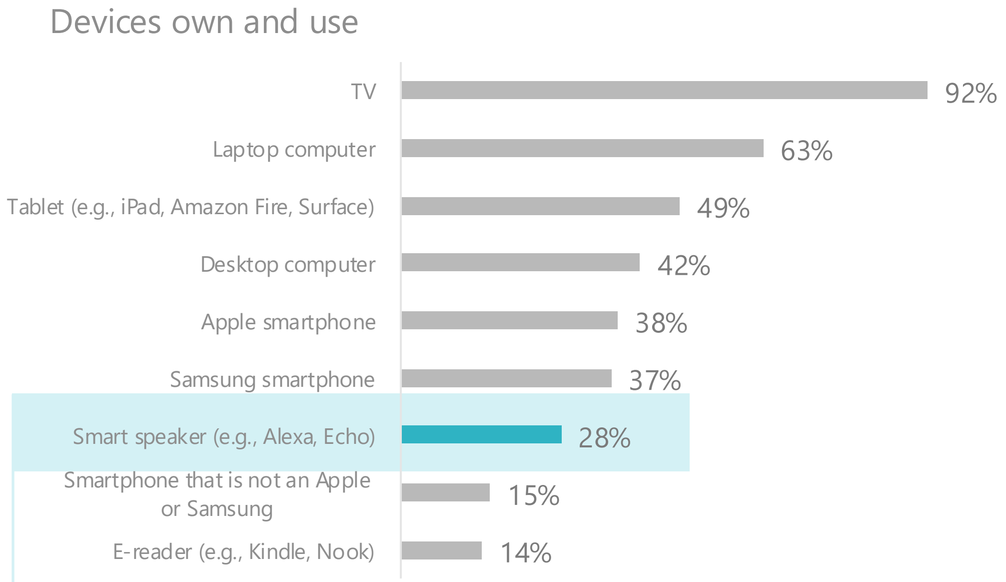
*Smartphone is directionally higher; the devices are statistically tied

Basic Functionality Dominates Smart Speaker Usage

Of the 28% that own smart speaker, they are selective in their usage, focusing on simple, practical functions rather than more advanced features

Q. Which of the following devices do you currently own and use? Please select any that apply.

Q. Earlier you mentioned that you currently own and use a smart speaker. What do you use it for? Please select any that apply.



Top reasons to use their Smart Speaker

Listen to music	73%
Ask questions/get information	59%
Get the weather	57%

Media Consumption Patterns

Media Consumption Patterns Highlights

- **Time spent across media channels reveals screen dominance, with television leading** (53% watch 4+ hours daily) **followed by internet usage** (30% spend 4+ hours online). Traditional print media receives minimal engagement, with most spending under an hour with newspapers (43%) and magazines (46%). **Podcasts show the lowest engagement**, with 61% not using them at all.

- There's a clear division between entertainment and news consumption preferences. **Streaming TV (63%) leads for entertainment,** followed by internet websites (60%) and social media (55%). **For news, traditional sources dominate**: network TV (51%), cable TV (48%), and radio (45%).

- Streaming now leads over cable for television services, with 61% subscribing compared to 43% for cable. **However, price sensitivity is strong – many choose ad-supported tiers over-paying for ad-free experiences**, and some may not clearly understand the differences between subscription levels.

Media Consumption Patterns Highlights

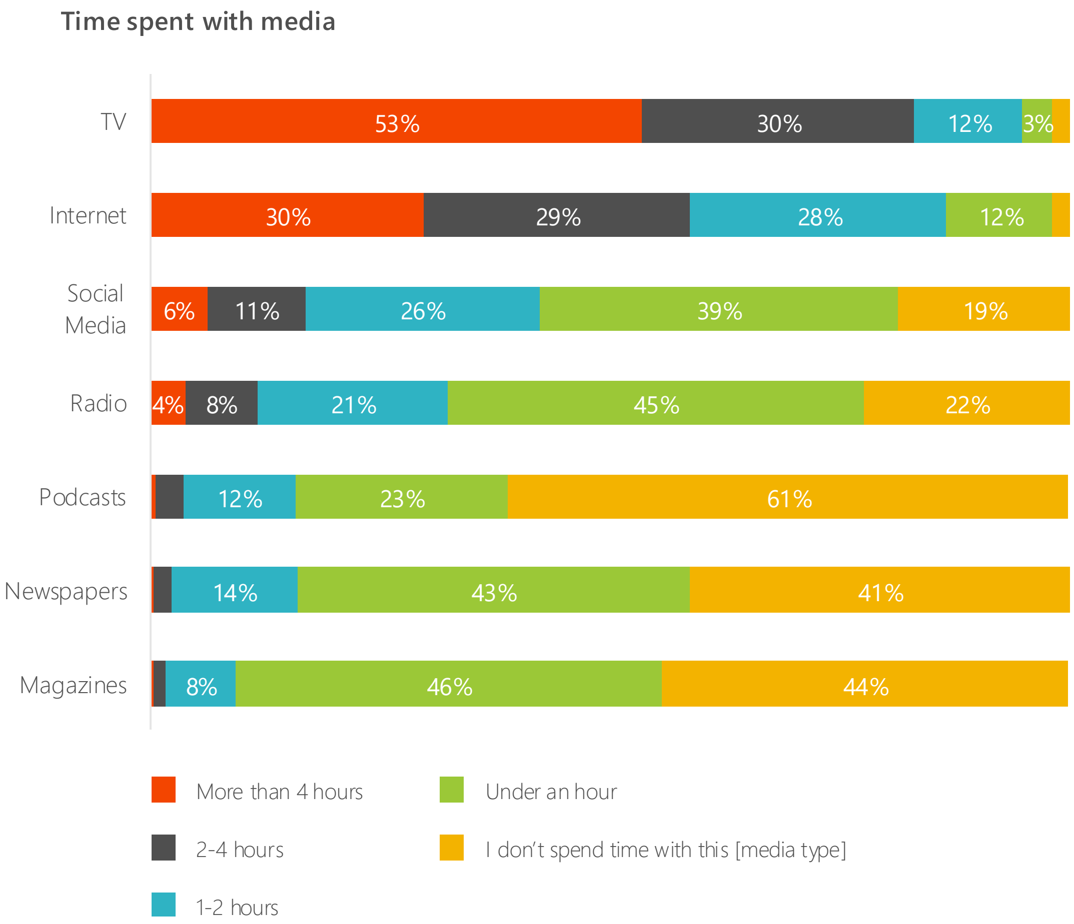
- **Social media engagement shows platform-specific patterns with Facebook dominating: 73% use it daily and 88% use it weekly.** YouTube (38% daily, 62% weekly) and Instagram (21% daily, 31% weekly) show lower adoption. Primary motivations center on connection with others (60%), entertainment (47%), and keeping up with current events (40%).

- **Radio listening remains largely traditional, with 81% tuning into AM/FM stations** and only 27% using streaming platforms despite growing digital options, suggesting they are selective about paid subscriptions.

- Print media consumption shows an interesting transition point, with **digital and print newspaper formats reaching near parity among subscribers suggesting older adults are adapting to digital formats – and showing that print, is in fact, "not dead."** Of the 59% who say they read the newspaper daily, only 54% say they subscribe – suggesting pervasive consumption of free content.

TV and Internet Dominate Older Adults' Time

Q. In a typical day, how much time to you spend with…

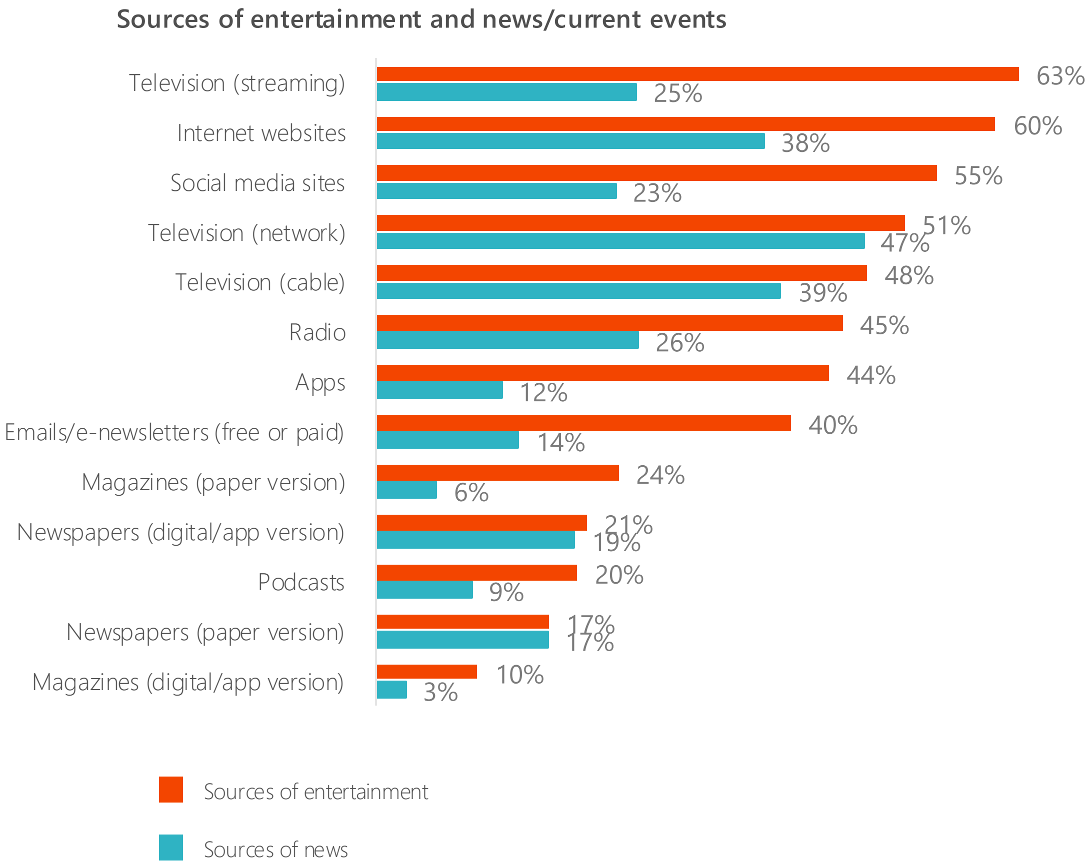


Streaming for Entertainment, Network TV for News

The digital-traditional split: media purpose determines platform choice

Q. First, which sources for entertainment do you use on a frequent basis? Please select any that apply.

Q. Next, where do you tend to get your news/information about current events? Please select any that apply.



Streaming Dominates, Including Ad-supported Models

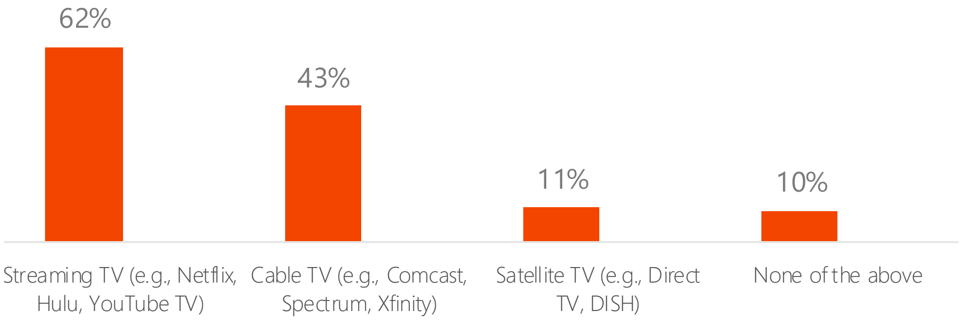
As streaming platforms move toward introducing ad-supported bundles, older adults appear willing to adopt these options

Q. What TV services do you subscribe to? Please select any that apply.

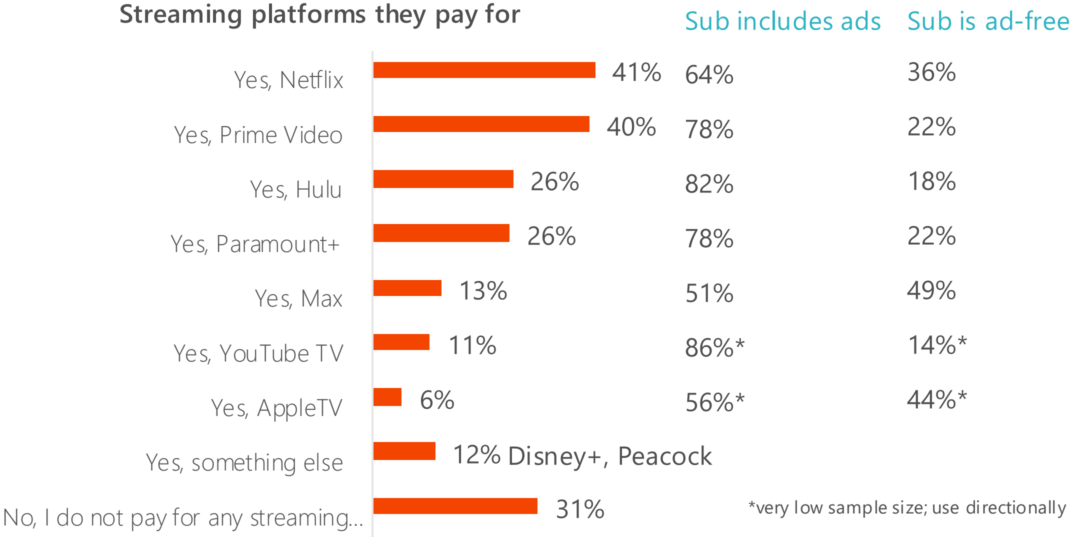
Q. Do you pay for a subscription for any of the following streaming platforms?

Q. For the streaming services you currently pay for, do you have a subscription that includes ads or is it fully ad-free?

TV services they "subscribe" to



Streaming platforms they pay for



*very low sample size; use directionally

Q. What show or shows are you enjoying these days?

Viewership Trends: Popular Drama, Reality & Game Show Programming

NCIS
NAVAL - CRIMINAL - INVESTIGATIVE - SERVICE

CHICAGO FIRE

CHICAGO MED

CHICAGO P.D.

TRACKER

OUTWIT · OUTPLAY
SURVIVOR
OUTLAST

Matlock

JEOPARDY!

WILL TRENT

CBS ORIGINAL
THE FBIs

ELSBETH

LAW & ORDER

REACHER

THE ROOKIE

BOSCH

YELLOWSTONE

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

THE MASKED SINGER

American Idol

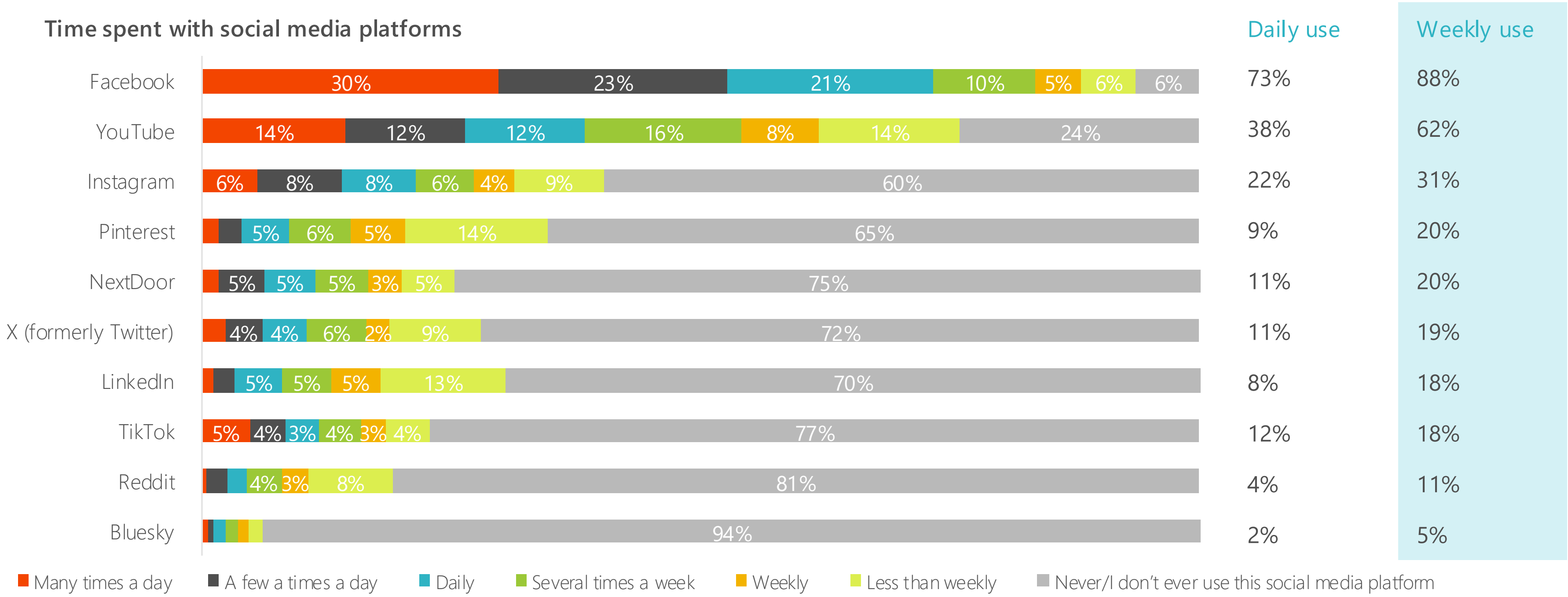
News Content is Compelling Across All Channels

Multiple Q:
types of television program, types of podcasts, genres of radio programming, kind of magazines

	TV 98% watch TV programming	**Radio** 78% listen to radio programming	**Podcasts** 39% listen to podcasts	**Magazines** 56% read magazines
#1	Dramas (56%)	Classic rock (49%)	News (48%)	News (36%)
#2	News (46%)	Country (26%)	Sports (27%)	Entertainment (33%)
#3	Comedies (41%)	News/talk (24%)	Comedy (23%)	Lifestyle (28%)
#4	Sports (41%)	Contemporary (17%)	True Crime (22%)	Health (27%)
#5	Documentaries (27%)	Sports (15%)	Society/Culture (19%)	Senior (25%)

Facebook and YouTube Dominate Social Media Usage (*but Instagram is growing*)

Q: How much time do you spend using the following social media platforms?



Social Media is a Relevant Source of New Product/Service Information

55% say "social media is a place I find out about new products or services"

22% say yes, in the past 6 months they've made a purchase decision based on an ad they saw on social media

47% say "social media provides me with advertising that is relevant to me and my life

61% say "If I were selling a product to people like me, I would definitely use social media to tell people about it"

Q: How much do you agree with the following statements about social media?

Q. In the last 6 months, have you made a purchase decision based on an ad you saw on social media?

t2b: strongly + somewhat agree

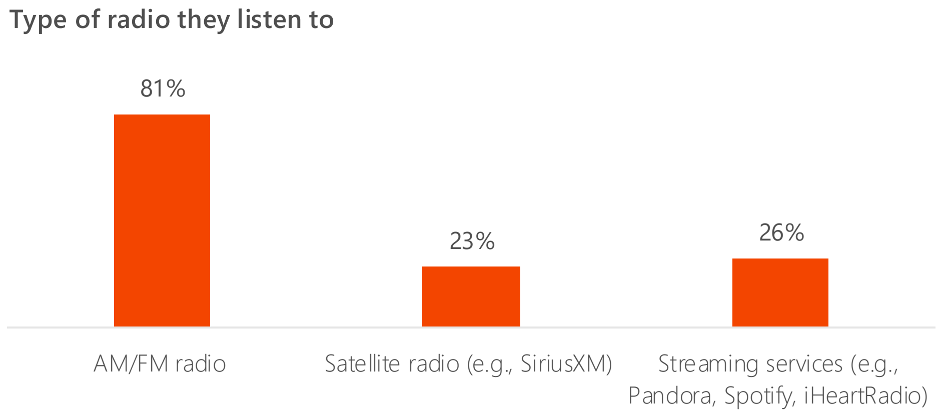
Traditional Radio Remains Popular Despite Streaming Options

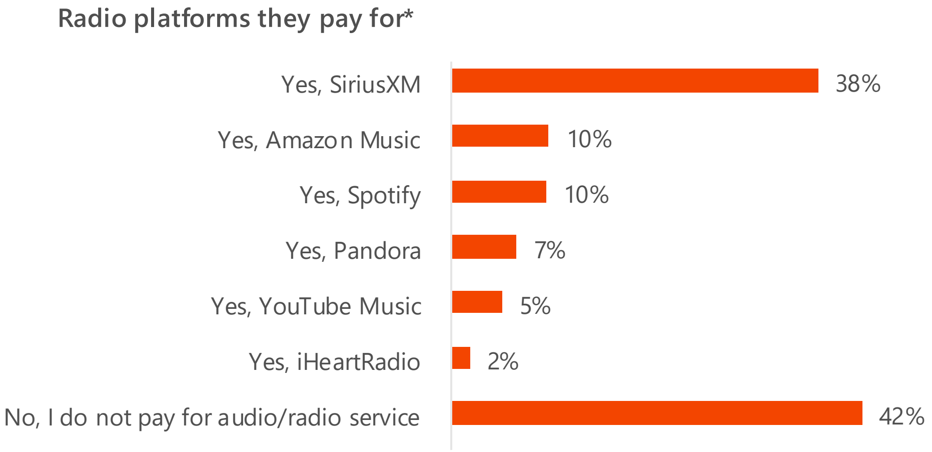
While the older generation has adopted streaming TV, we don't see the same interest in streaming music

77.6% listen to radio programming in a typical day

Q: What type of radio do you listen to? Select any that apply.

Q. Do you pay for a subscription for any of the following streaming radio platforms?





*We also asked if they subscribe with or without ads, but the sample sizes are too small to report

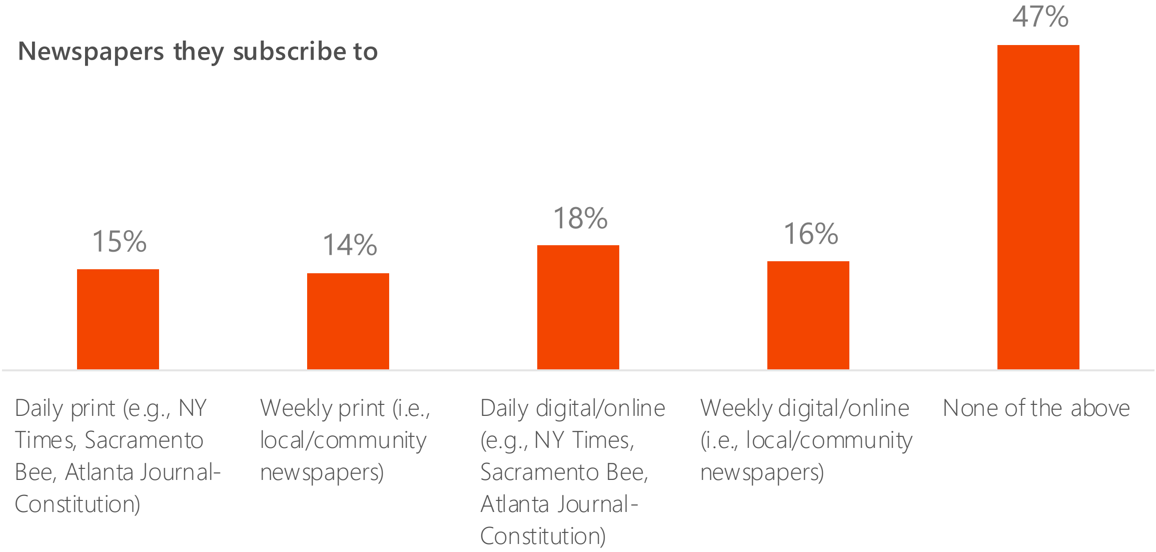
Newspaper Subscribers Split Between Print and Digital

Q: In a typical day, about how much time do you spend reading the newspaper (print or digital)?

Q. What kind of newspapers do you read or subscribe to? Please select any that apply.

59% say they read the newspaper (print or digital) in a typical day

Of that audience, 54% of them say they subscribe to some sort of newspaper



Online Behavior, Motivation & Attitudes

Online Behavior, Motivation & Attitudes Highlights

Online Behavior

- Older adults have adopted to internet across all aspects of their life – from practical utility like banking/financial activities (56%) and weather (46%) to entertainment activities like social media (56%) and games (32%)
- Primary social media motivations center on connection with others (60%), entertainment (47%), and keeping up with current events (40%).

Advertising & Product Discovery

- Television has an enduring influence, with 74% citing it as their primary source for new products or services. Social media ranks a distant second (23%), while traditional media channels show minimal influence: AM/FM radio (13%), print magazines (8%), and print newspapers (7%).

Online Behavior, Motivation & Attitudes Highlights

Advertising & Product Discovery

- Response to advertising reveals a delayed action pattern, with **"research product/service at a later time" being the top response for both TV (38%) and radio/podcast (36%) advertising.** Direct website visits rank second (TV: 32%, Radio: 30%), with about 25% searching for products after seeing/hearing ads.
- QR code adoption shows limited traction despite awareness. **While 84% know what QR codes are, only 7% use them regularly**, explaining their low ranking (5%) as a response to TV advertising.
- AI attitudes reveal a significant awareness-usage gap. **While 94% are aware of AI, only 16% are actively using it**, with 33.5% knowing about AI but expressing no interest in using it. Concerns dominate attitudes (55%), while only 24% find AI exciting or amazing. **Many (33%) are just starting to learn about AI, suggesting an educational opportunity**.

Internet Use Plays a Strong Role in All Aspects of Life

Q. On what activities/topics do you tend to spend time online/on the internet? Please select any that apply.

Q. Of the topics/activities that you chose, what are the top 3 ways you spend time on the internet?

Q. What device(s) do you tend to use for your online/internet activity most often? Please choose the 1-2 device(s) you use most often.

How they spend time online/on the internet (Choose any)

Top 5 ways they spend time online (pick 3)

Devices used for internet activity (choose 1-2)

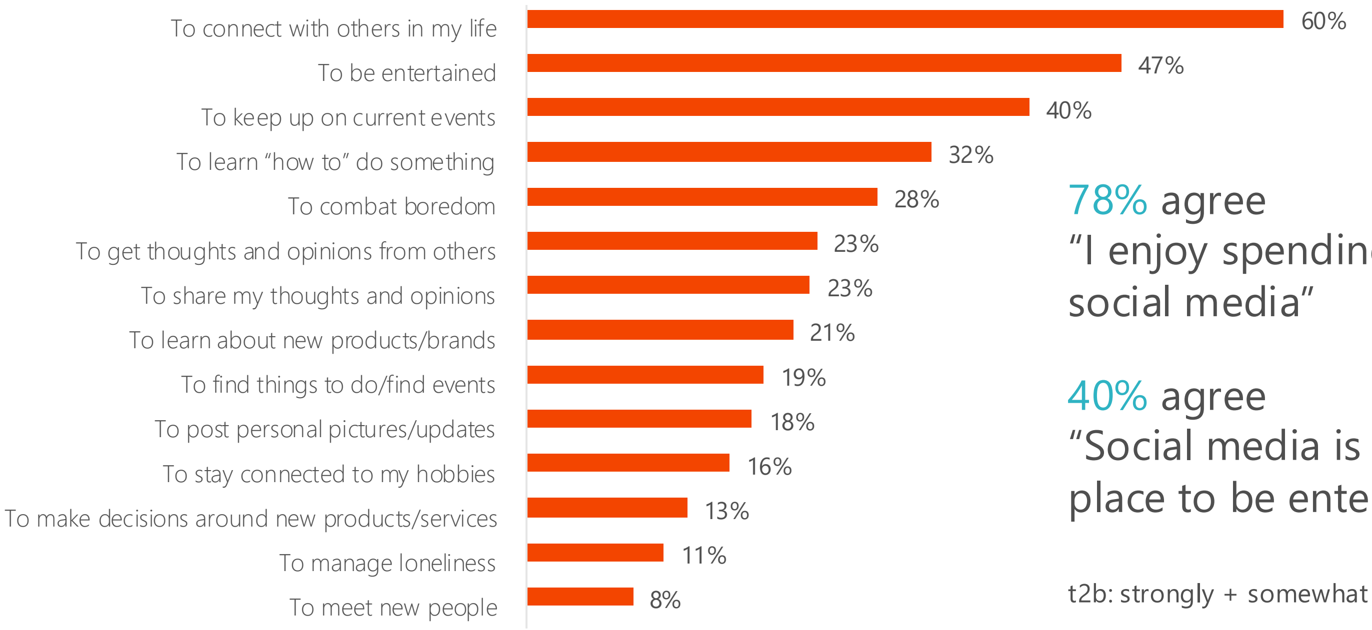
1. Smartphone (57%)
2. Computer/laptop (53%)
3. Tablet (21%)
4. Smart TV (11%)
5. E-reader (1%)

Connecting With Others is the Primary Reason for Social Media Use

Q. When you think about the time you spend using social media, what are your motivations/benefits? Please select any that apply.

Q. How much do you agree with the following statements about social media?

Social Media Motivations/Benefits (Choose any)



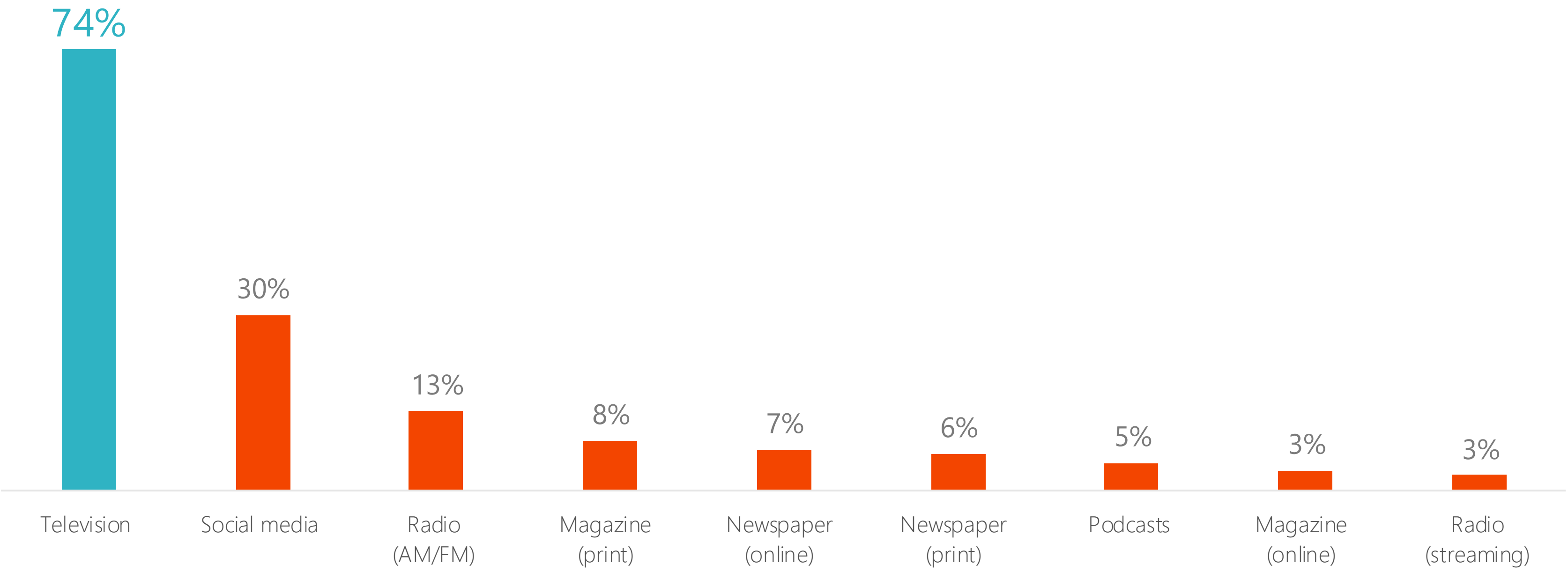
78% agree
"I enjoy spending time on social media"

40% agree
"Social media is my favorite place to be entertained"

t2b: strongly + somewhat agree

Television is Still the Primary Channel for Discovering New Products and Services

Q. We talked about a number of different types of entertainment and media today. And all of those types of media have advertising that tells you about new products or services. Which place do you think you are most likely to learn about a new product or service that interests you? Please select up to 2.



Reactions to Advertising

Q. Imagine you saw a product or service on a television commercial that interested you. How would you most likely respond?

Q. Imagine you hear about a product or service on a radio or podcast commercial that interests you. How would you most likely respond?

Imagine you saw/heard about a product or service that interested you; how would you most likely respond?	TV	Radio or podcast
Research product/service at a later time	38%	36%
Go to website shown/mentioned	32%	30%
Search product/service	27%	22%
Scan QR code	6%	n/a
Call number shown/mentioned	5%	7%
I wouldn't do anything	*27%*	*27%*

Older adults are methodical in their approach – preferring to go at their own pace rather than taking immediate action.

Audience Insight:

45% Know What QR Codes Are but Choose Not to Use Them

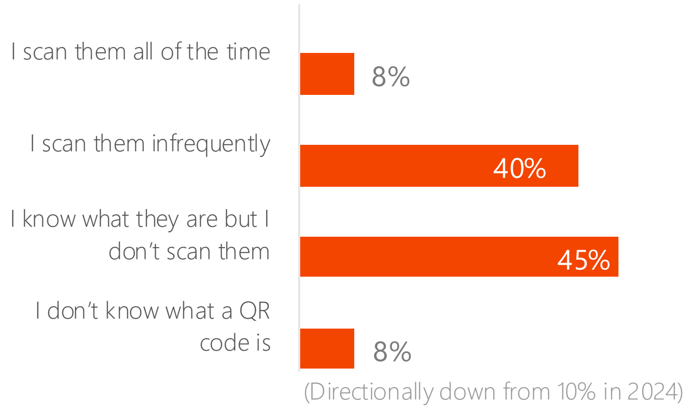
Q: Imagine you saw a product or service on a television commercial that interested you. How would you most likely respond?

Q. Imagine you hear about a product or service on a radio or podcast commercial that interests you. How would you most likely respond?

Q. And finally, which of the following best describes your experience with QR codes?

Imagine you saw/heard about a product or service that interested you; how would you most likely respond?	TV	Radio or podcast
Research product/service at a later time	38%	36%
Go to website shown/mentioned	32%	30%
Search product/service	27%	22%
Scan QR code	6%	n/a
Call number shown/mentioned	5%	7%
I wouldn't do anything	27%	27%

Experience with QR codes



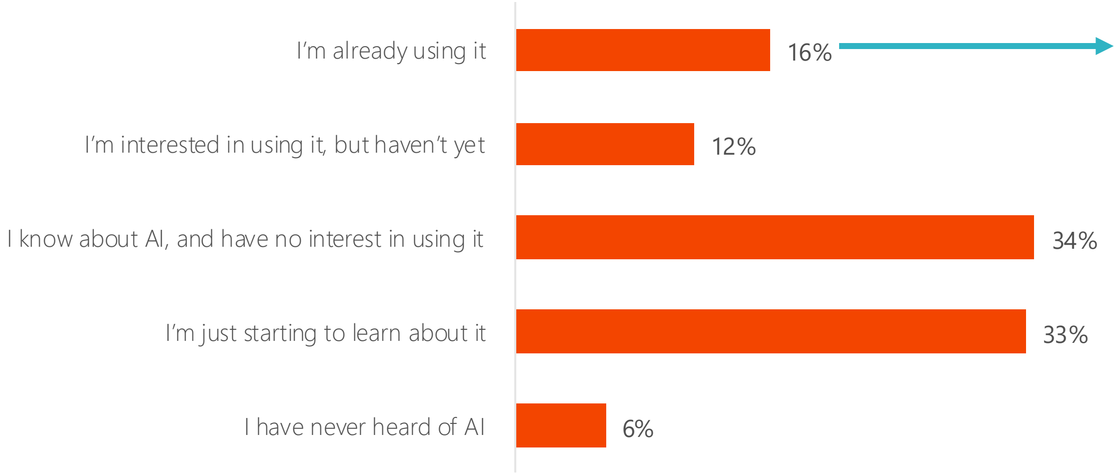
AI Awareness Doesn't Necessarily Lead to Adoption

Q. In general, which best describes your experience with AI (artificial intelligence)?

Q. .Which of the following AI services, if any, have you used in the past 12 months?

Q. And what best describes your attitude about AI (artificial intelligence)? Please select any that apply.

Experience with AI



AI services used in the past 12 months

1. ChatGPT
2. Gemini
3. Copilot

55% say
"I'm concerned about AI"

29% say
"I don't understand why we need AI"

24% say
"I think AI is exciting/amazing"

Health Management & Insurance Engagement

Health Management & Insurance Engagement Highlights

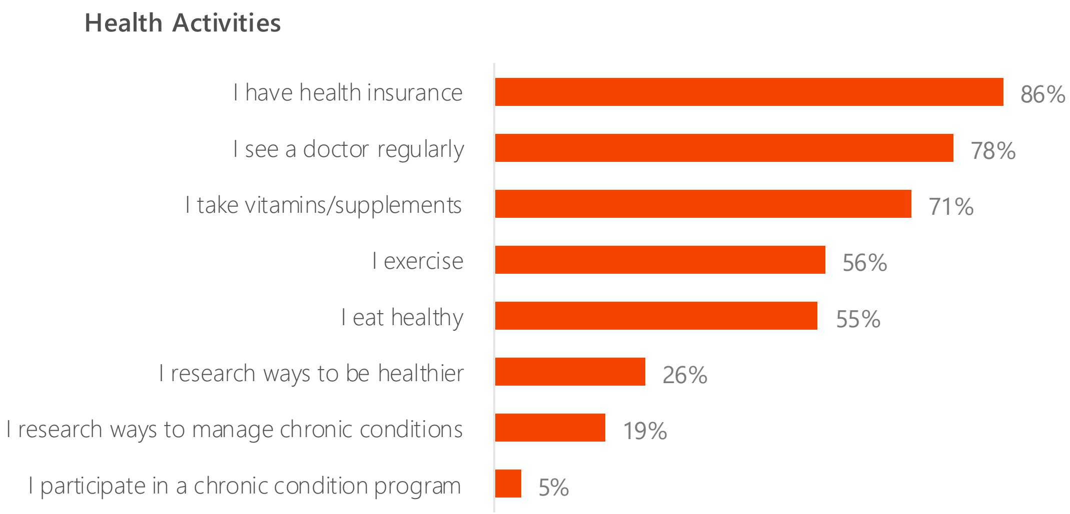
- **Health activities reveal a focus on basic maintenance rather than proactive management.** Most see doctors regularly (78%) and take vitamins/supplements (71%), but far fewer research health improvements (26%) or manage chronic conditions (19%). Insurance coverage is high (86%), with Medicare dominating (82%).

- Healthcare communication preferences strongly favor direct, personal interaction. **For Medicare information, 61% prefer phone calls with representatives, while most reject both online meetings (58%) and in-person meetings (56%).** Social media engagement with health plans faces significant resistance (77% unlikely to follow), with only financial incentives (27%) showing meaningful appeal as a motivator.

How Older Adults Are Caring for Their Health

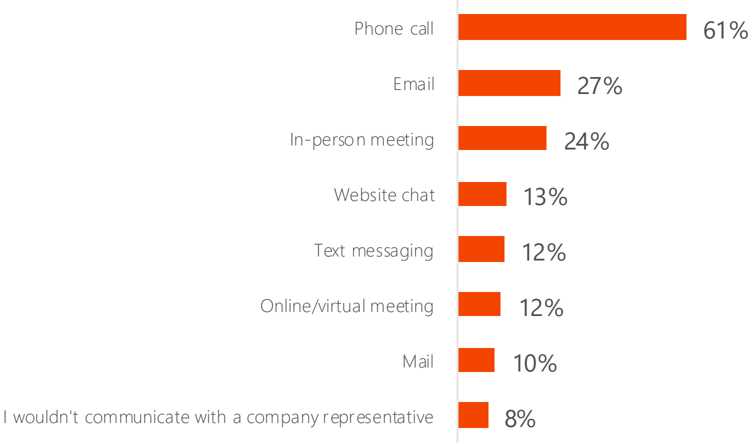
Q. Which of the following ways do you care for your health? Please select any that apply.

Q. When it comes to health insurance, which of the following best describes your situation? Please select any that apply.

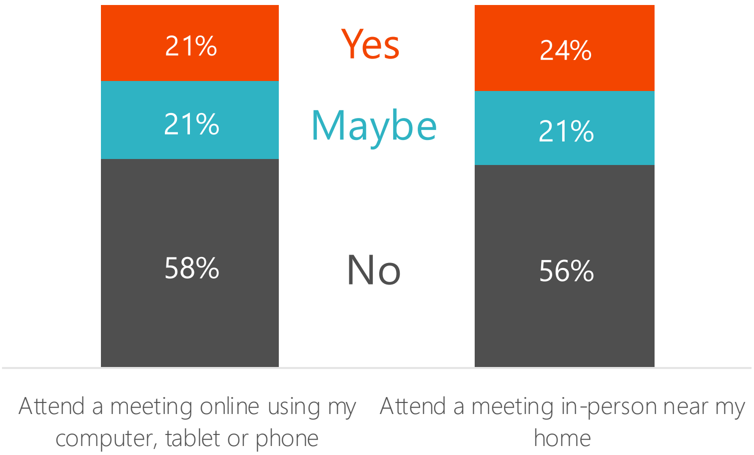


Phone Calls Are the Preferred Method of Communication for Medicare Education

Q. To learn about a Medicare plan you might be considering enrolling in, how would you prefer to communicate with a company representative?



Q. To learn about a Medicare plan you might be considering enrolling in, would you be interested in attending a meeting in-person or online-virtual?

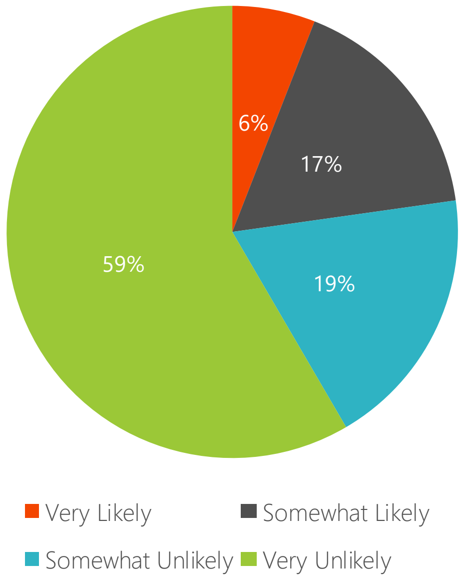


Most Won't Follow Health Plans on Social Media

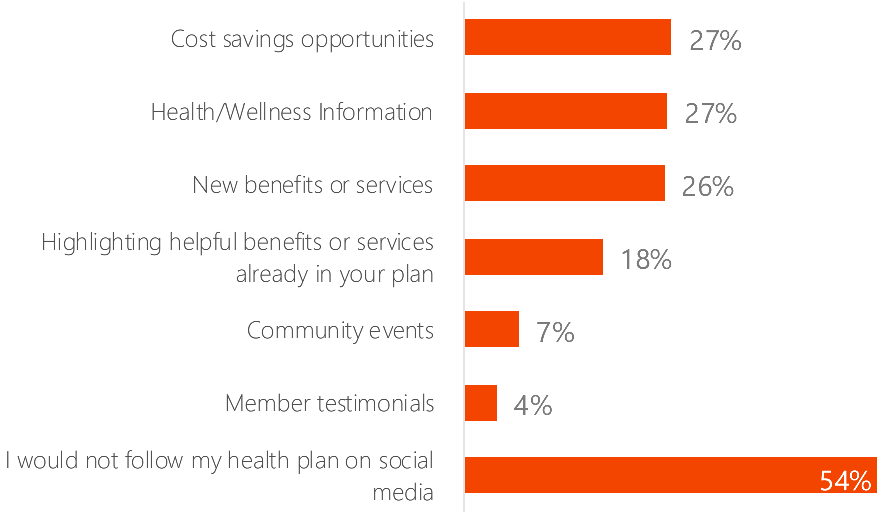
Q. How likely are you to follow your health plan on social media?

Q. Which of the following topics would encourage you to follow your health plan on social media? Please select any that apply.

Likely to follow health plan on social media



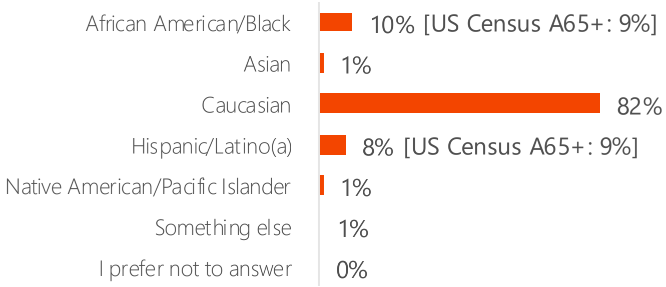
Topics that would encourage them to follow their health plan on social media



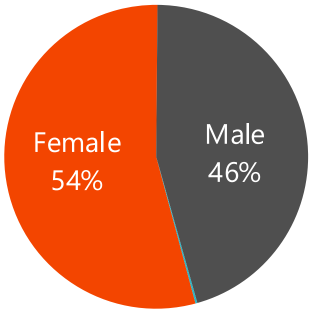
A Closer Look at Our Respondents

Age

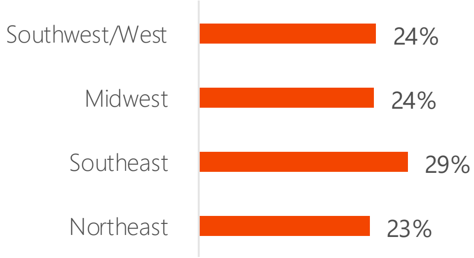
Ethnicity



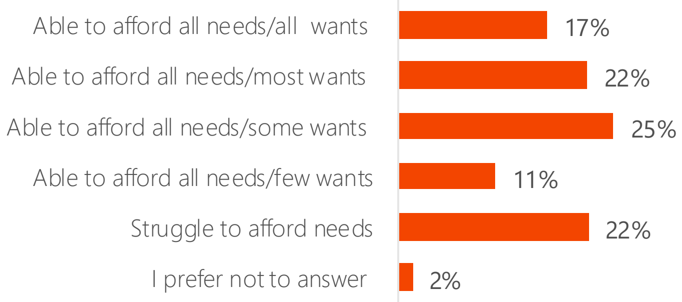
Gender



Geography



Affluence



About Consumer In Sight

Consumer In Sight (CIS) is an investigative research series conducted by Media Logic with the aim of gaining new insights into consumer preferences and behaviors in the healthcare and financial services industries. Using an industry-leading software platform, we survey geo-targeted and national panels to track the changing marketing landscape and support clients in connecting with consumers through creative executions and multichannel media.

CIS Consumer In Sight
By media logic

About Media Logic

Media Logic is a national leader in healthcare marketing – providing strategic, breakthrough solutions that drive business. Media Logic offers deep experience in branding and lead generation and is an expert in turning research and segmentation data into actionable plans. Leveraging more than two decades of health plan marketing knowledge, Media Logic understands the nuances of Medicare, group and individual exchange prospects. From traditional ad campaigns to retention efforts to content marketing, everything Media Logic does is focused on generating results for clients…giving them an edge in a competitive, constantly changing environment.

Learn more about Media Logic at medialogic.com and subscribe to our healthcare marketing newsletter at medialogic.com/newsletter.

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Thank you

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