
Average American watches 5 hours of TV per day

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Children aged 2-11 watch over 24 hours of TV per week, while adults aged 35-49 watch more than 33 hours, according to data from Nielsen that suggests TV time increases the older we get. (ANDREY POPOV/GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO)

The average American watches more than five hours of live television every day.

More if you're African American. Quite a bit more.

Less if you're Hispanic or Asian American.

For all ethnic groups, TV viewing time increases steadily as we get older, according to the March 2014 "Cross-Platform Report" released by the Nielsen media ratings company.

Once we pass 65, we watch more than seven hours a day.

The average American then spends another 32 minutes a day on time-shifted television, an hour using the Internet on a computer, an hour and seven minutes on a smartphone and two hours, 46 minutes listening to the radio.

Work, sleep, meals, family - eh, who needs 'em?

The Nielsen report suggests that our media habits have remained fairly steady over the last few years, though smartphone usage and time-shifted television are growing.

The report also confirms a familiar pattern in television viewing.

We watch a lot of television while we're young and mostly at home. Our viewership drops when we hit our teen years and start to develop more outside interests.

But after that our viewing then rises in pretty much a straight line for the rest of our lives.

Specifically, says Nielsen, here's the average weekly usage for ascending age groups:

2-11: 24 hours, 16 minutes.

12-17: 20 hours, 41 minutes.

18-24: 22 hours, 27 minutes.

25-34: 27 hours, 36 minutes.

35-49: 33 hours, 40 minutes.

50-64: 43 hours, 56 minutes.

65-plus: 50 hours, 34 minutes.

By ethnic groups, Nielsen finds that African Americans watch an average of 218 hours of television a month. Whites watch 155.3 hours, Hispanics an average of 123.2 hours and Asian Americans an average of 92.3 hours.

Radio listening also increases through most of our lives, though it drops off when we pass 65 – perhaps, it has been suggested, because almost no radio stations program for seniors.
