

# Canadians Value Home Internet Connection More Than Other Media Devices

April 12, 2011

## Key findings:

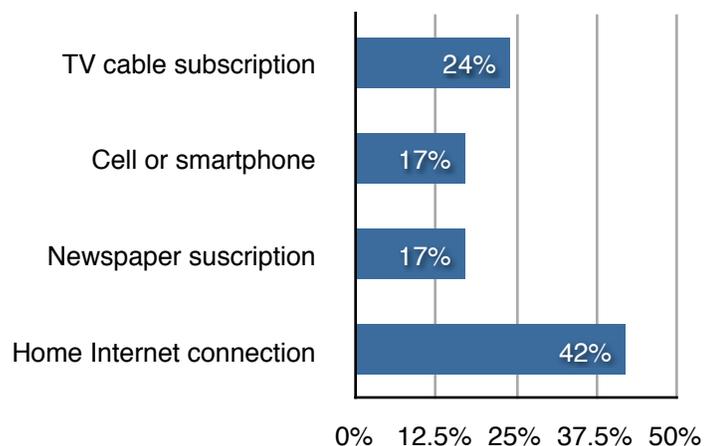
- Canadians prefer TV for news and information (38%).
- 42% of Canadians say their home Internet connection would be the last media device they would be willing to give up.
- 17% of respondents each say they would be least willing to give up their mobile or newspaper subscription.
- Men prefer accessing news via computer (36%), while women prefer television (43%).
- 18-to-34-year-olds have roughly the same number of computers per household (2.5) as televisions (2.4).

## Overview

Canadians value their home Internet connection more than any other medium and younger Canadians have already begun to access most of their information and entertainment programming online.

Of all the devices with which Canadians access news and information, two-in-five would be least willing to give up their home Internet subscription, a recent Canadian Media Research Consortium (CMRC) poll has found. In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,682 Canadian adults conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion, 42 per cent of respondents say they would be “least willing to give up” their home Internet connection, while 24 per cent claim they would be least willing to give up their television cable subscription; 17

Figure 1: Which would you be least willing to give up?



per cent each say the same about their mobile phone or newspaper subscription. (See Figure 1.)

### Television is still preferred for news and information

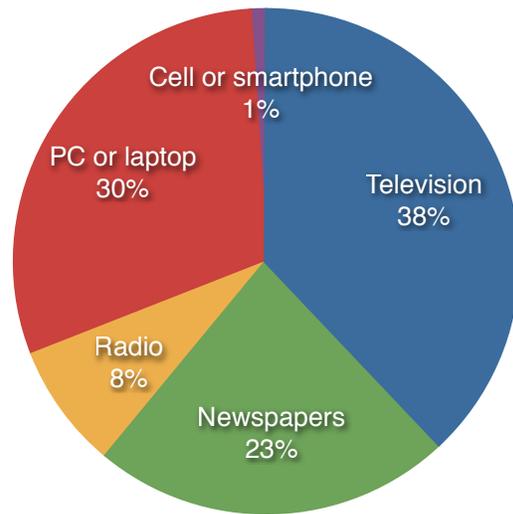
Access to news and information is not the only reason why Canadians would least be willing to give up their home Internet subscription. Other services such as e-mail, home banking, gaming, and home entertainment – including watching TV online – should also be considered when judging why Canadians value their home Internet above all other media devices.

When comparing media for accessing news and information, television is still preferred by a slight margin of Canadians. Thirty-eight per cent say television is the format they “prefer for news and information,” while 30 percent of respondents say a computer is their preferred device. Newspapers (23%), radio (8%), and mobile phones (1%) follow. This preference for television is evidence of the continuing power of visual images. Given that the reach of television news will only increase with online access, these data indicate that TV news is poised to gain an even larger share of the news market in the future. (See Figure 2.)

### Respondents find more interesting news online

When asked where they find the most interesting news and information, a majority of respondents (52%) reply that, in general, they find more news and information that interests them on the Internet. Twenty-seven per cent select television, whereas 15 per cent and six per cent choose printed newspapers and radio respectively. Because the sample does not include Canadians not online, the numbers for the general population may be somewhat lower, but the increasing migration of content from print, radio, and television to the Internet is a strong indication that audiences will gravitate online for most of their news consumption. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 2: Preferred for news and information.



### Inverse relationship between young and old

As numerous studies have shown, younger Canadians have adopted online platforms as their preferred means of accessing media. Legacy media use among youth has already fallen far behind new media. As expected, when asked which medium they were “least willing to give up,” commitment to web access correlates strongly with age. Fifty-three per cent of respondents aged 18 to 34 list home Internet as their first choice, compared to 43 per cent of respondents aged 35 to 54 and 32 per cent of respondents aged 55 and older.

The relationship for newspapers is inverse: 15 per cent of 18-to-34-year olds, 22 per cent of 35-to-54-year-olds, and 33 per cent of respondents aged over 55 prefer accessing news and information by way of a printed newspaper. And while 41 per cent and 44 per cent of Canadians aged 35 to 54 and over 55 respectively prefer TV for news and information, only 27 per cent of respondents aged 18-to-34 say the same.

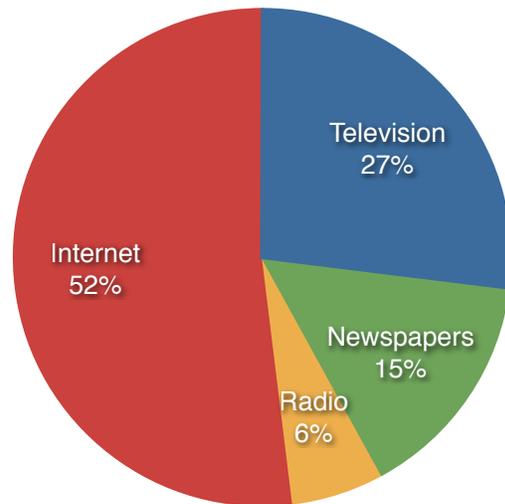
The relationship between respondent age and preferred medium for news and information is also robust. Preference for television increases with age. Twenty-seven per cent of Canadians in the 18-to-34 age group, 41 per cent of respondents aged 34 to 55, and 44 per cent aged 55 and over

prefer accessing news and information via TV. In contrast, 48 per cent of Canadians aged 18 to 34, 26 per cent of respondents in the 35-to-54 age group, and 17 per cent of Canadians aged 55 and over prefer home Internet when accessing news and information.

When considering where they find the most interesting news and information, the correlation between age and medium is even stronger. Only 13 per cent in the 18-to-34 age group find television content most interesting, compared to 32 per cent in the 35-54 group and 55 per cent of those 55 and older. The range of choice available online appears to have a strong appeal, especially to younger Canadians.

A staggering 77 per cent of 18-to-34-year-olds say they find the most interesting news and information on the Internet, while 48 per cent of 35-to-54-year-olds and 36 per cent of adults aged over 55 say the same. Each age group finds more interesting news and information on the Internet than on any other medium. Only a very small percentage of respondents aged 18-to-34 (7%) say they find the most interesting news and information in newspapers. Twenty-five per cent of online Canadians aged over 55 remain committed to newspapers.

Figure 3: Most interesting news and information.



### Television, the Internet, and gender

Gender continues to be a factor in media preference. Women prefer television for news and information over other devices, with 43 per cent of female respondents saying that TV is the format they prefer, compared to 32 per cent of male respondents. Men continue to be more comfortable with computers. More than one in three men prefer accessing news and information by computer (36%), compared to 24 per cent of women.

When asked where they find news and information that interest them most, men are more likely to prefer the Internet (59%) than women (45%). Women find more interesting news and information on TV (31%) than men (23%). Eighteen per cent of women say that they find the most interesting news and information by way of printed newspaper, while 12 per cent of men say the same.

### Mobile access creates regional divide; Ontario goes online

Commitment to mobile devices is strongest in Ontario and B.C., where approximately one in five Canadians name their mobiles as the device they would be least willing to give up. The national average is 17 per cent.

Preference for television news is strongest in Atlantic Canada (49%) and Quebec (50%), while more Ontarians are likely to prefer accessing news and information via computers (35%), which is actually higher than their preference for television news (31%). Ontario is the only province where TV is not the preferred news medium. This may reflect better access to high-speed broadband in Ontario and the range of services that go with it.

Where Canadians find the most interesting news and information also varies by region. Respondents from Manitoba and Saskatchewan (37%) and Quebec and the Atlantic provinces

(35%) are most likely to say that they find more interesting news and information on television. Twenty-four per cent of Ontarians, 23 per cent of British Columbians, and 16 per cent of Albertans say the same. Interest in printed newspaper news and information is highest in Alberta (22%) and Ontario (18%). That said, Canadians are overall more likely to find more interesting news and information via the Internet (52%), with British Columbian respondents leading the way (59%). B.C. also has a high level of access to broadband services.

There is also a slight difference in interest when comparing respondents from urban and rural areas. Fifty-four per cent of urban respondents say they find the most interesting news and information on the Internet, while 44 per cent of rural respondents are likely to agree. Conversely, 34 per cent of respondents from rural areas are likely to say that they find the most interesting news and information on TV, compared to 26 per cent of urban respondents.

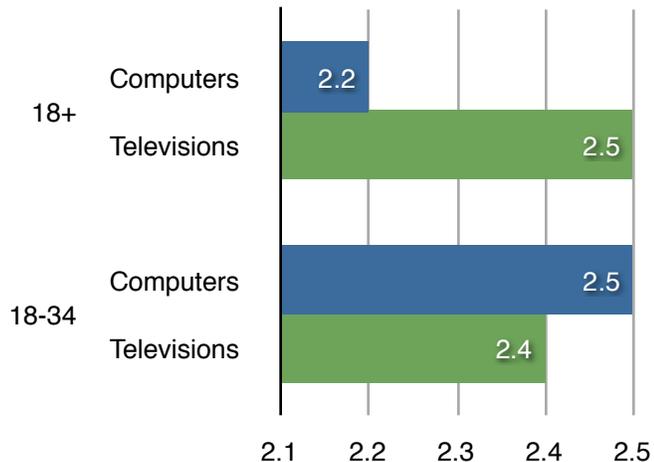
### More televisions than computers at home

Computers are nearly as common in the home as television sets. Canadians average 2.5 televisions and 2.2 computers per household. Moreover, 18-to-34-year old respondents already average slightly more computers per household (2.5) than TV sets (2.4). (See Figure 4.)

British Columbians, Albertans, and Ontarians average the most computers per household (2.4), and Quebecers the fewest (1.9). Men have on average more computers at home (2.4) than women (2.0). And as expected, Canadians aged 18 to 34 (2.5), earning over \$100,000 per year (2.8), or university educated (2.4) are most likely to have a greater number of computers in the household.

Taken together, these data show that a preference for online media is clearly developing among Canadians. The availability of rich media content and services accessible through home Internet and mobile devices – smartphones and tablets – is increasing. More television and radio content is becoming easily accessible online at a rapid pace. These developments make it clear that audience preferences for online media will continue to grow. No matter if they choose to provide audio, visual or text-based news formats, news and information providers that fail to focus on providing content for computers, tablets, and smartphones will be left behind.

Figure 4: No. of TVs and computers in household.



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*This is the second in a series of CMRC reports that looks into the changing news consumption habits of Canadians. The next report, which examines how Canadians use social networks, will be released in two weeks.*

*From August 26 to August 30, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,682 randomly selected Canadians adults, including 400 Francophones. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The results were statistically weighted according to the most current Statistics Canada data on age, gender, region, and education to ensure a representative sample. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. Respondents were recruited from the Angus Reid Forum, Canada's premier national access panel of online respondents.*