

# THE STATE OF VIEWERSHIP

H1 2023 | U.K.

ANALYSING APPROXIMATELY 9 BILLION HOURS OF LINEAR AND STREAMING



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# Opportunities abound with AVOD and BVOD growth

With the first half of 2023 behind us, advertisers are seeing real-life rewards on streaming and broadcaster video-on-demand (BVOD), with better managed audience reach and frequency. The final months of 2022 ushered in Netflix ad tiers and consumer response is becoming clear: the ability to personalise subscriptions allows us to watch more of our favourite shows when we want, how we want. Advertisers are also tapping into free, ad-supported BVOD options to strike the right balance to reach every imaginable audience.

Amidst this shifting paradigm, it's essential for advertisers to exact targeting precision in both creative and placement. With the omniscreen future upon us, advertisers need to tear down the silos between TV and digital to have one clear view of viewership behaviour.

Data from 2023 shows a strong link between bingeability and retention, while the fight for attention has shifted into a full-scale retention effort as consumers move between streaming services. Meanwhile, connected TV (CTV) ads are proving much more effective than linear at managing frequency. Add a second screen to the mix, and the opportunities for direct calls-to-action are endless.

The future of measurement is here. Advertisers and streaming platforms who follow the data will be well positioned to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.



Team **Samba**

## Methodology

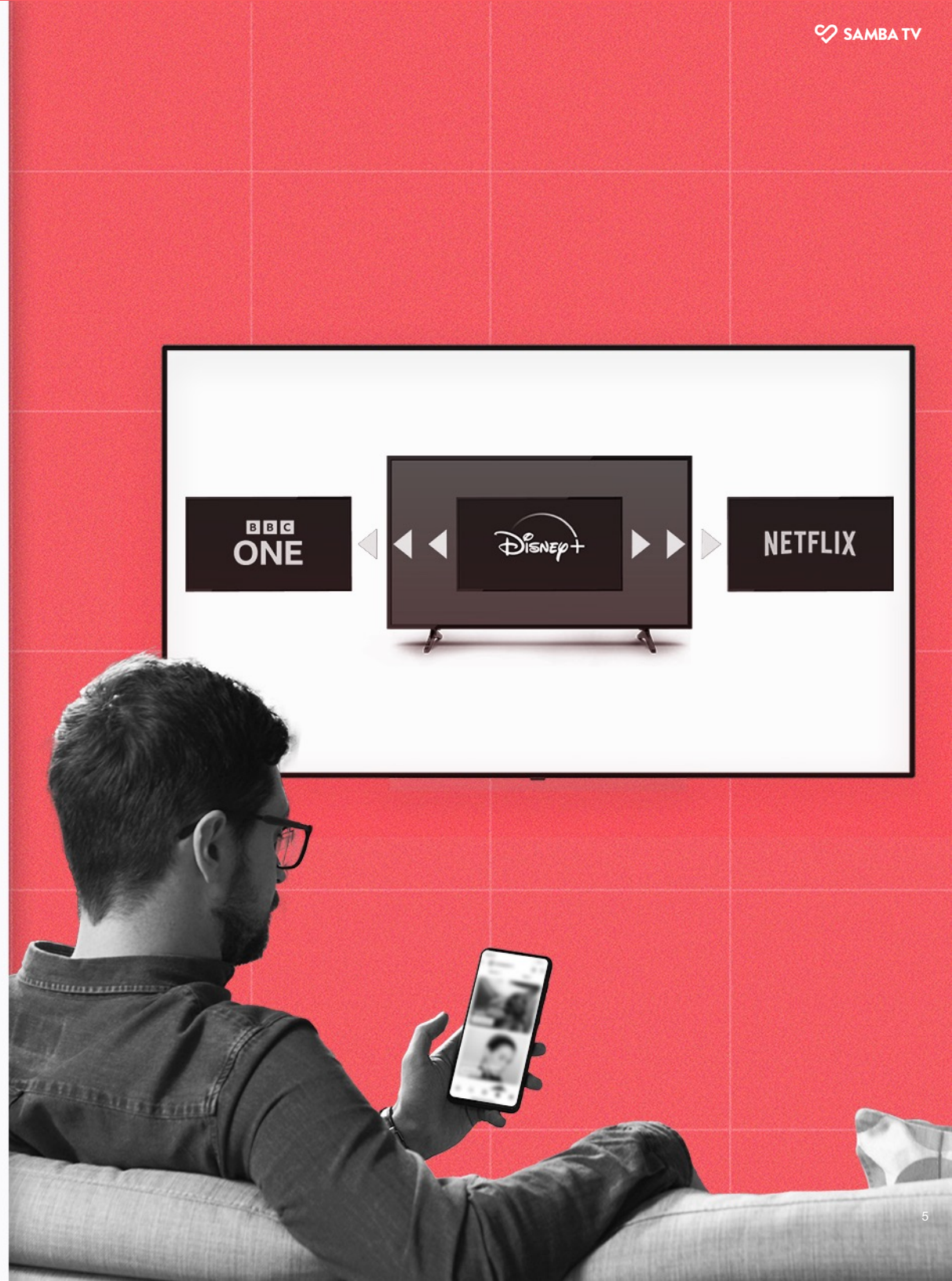
Samba TV gathers viewership data via its proprietary Automatic Content Recognition (ACR) technology from tens of millions of opted-in Smart TVs. Samba TV's ACR is integrated at the chipset level across 24 of the top Smart TVs sold in more than 100 countries globally and captures content that crosses the TV screen, regardless of source. This results in unbiased, comprehensive viewership insights from around the world.

As is standard industry practice, we analyse our large proprietary dataset to project household level TV viewership. We do not estimate viewership on non-TV devices, nor do we estimate co-viewing (number of people watching). We weight individual households in our dataset to create a research panel that we believe accurately represents viewership behaviours.

## 01

## TV Trends

New viewing habits around TV consumption are emerging thanks to changes in streaming platform offerings and the rise of over-the-top (OTT) and BVOD consumption. For instance, many viewers are demonstrating a preference for bingeing, giving streaming platforms new ways to retain audiences. Above all, advertisers now have more opportunity to connect with those valuable and elusive audiences, especially through free, ad-supported offerings.



# Linear consumption continues to decline, while BVOD and streaming see a boost

The way U.K. viewers engage with TV continues to change, with the total hours of linear watched throughout the first half of 2023 dropping below 9 billion, the lowest it has been in the last two years. Meanwhile, linear's average daily reach remained in line with last year, at about half of U.K. households (14M). As viewers spend less time with linear TV post-Covid, eyeballs are turning to BVOD and streaming platforms. With BVOD penetration increasing by 6% year-over-year, advertisers relying on linear to reach audiences should switch gears to engage with consumers who have shifted away.

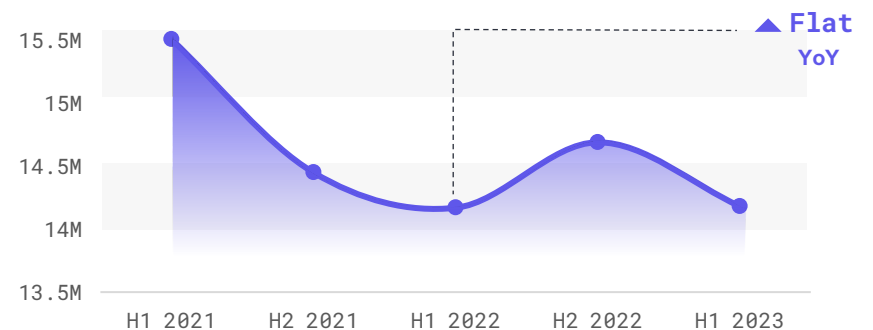
**+6%**

BVOD penetration increased by 6% between 2022 and 2023\*

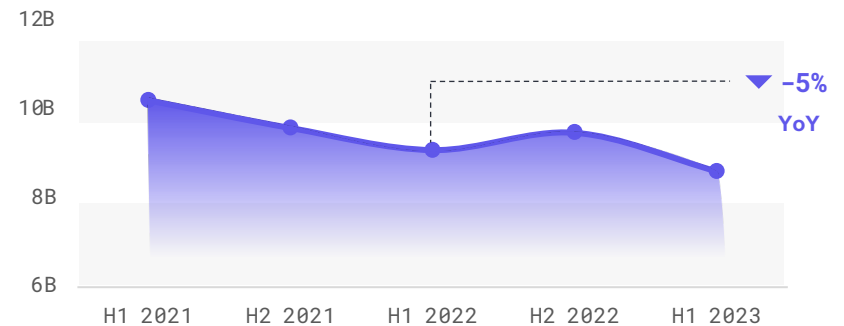
**-5%**

Linear hours watched during H1 2023 declined 5% year-over-year

Average daily household reach: H1 2021 – H1 2023



Total hours watched across households: H1 2021 – H1 2023



\*Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer

# Nearly 60% of streaming households watch three or less services

As streaming becomes the norm among U.K. households, data still indicates that budget-conscious consumers are unwilling to maintain endless subscriptions. However, an increase in advertising-based video-on-demand (AVOD) offerings by the likes of Netflix and soon Disney+ are contributing to more consumers opting to watch three or four services as opposed to one or two. Throughout the first half of 2023, about 4 in 10 U.K. households watched two or less streaming services, while the majority watched three or less. Despite limitless options of content to watch across platforms, people remain unlikely to watch more than a few services over the course of a six-month period. With more AVOD offerings coming to market, this number may continue to grow over the coming months.

**71%**

of the U.K. population watches OTT video content\*

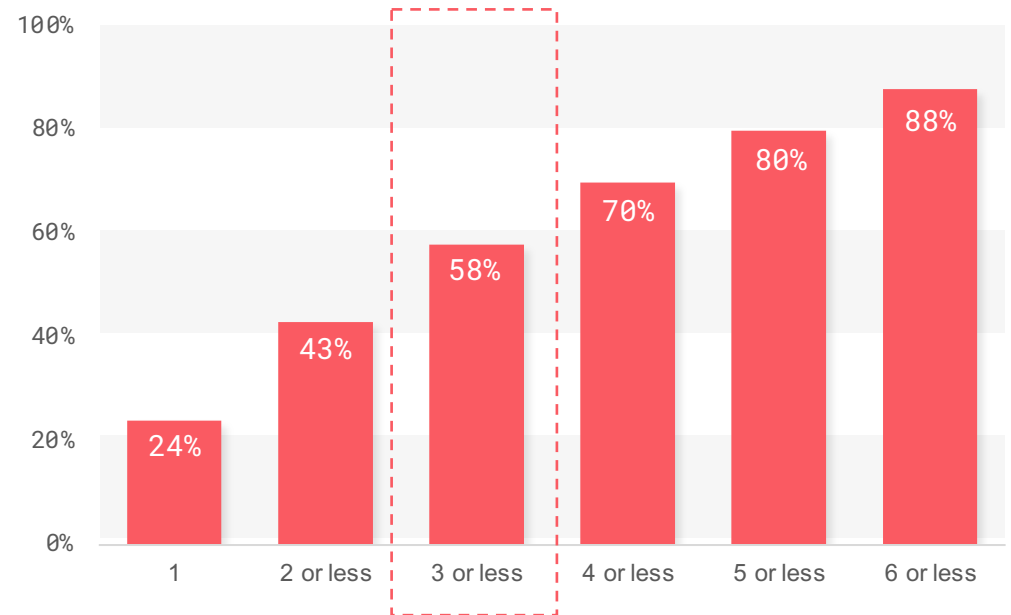
**59%**

of the U.K. population watches BVOD content\*



## Percentage of streaming households that watch multiple services

H1 2023



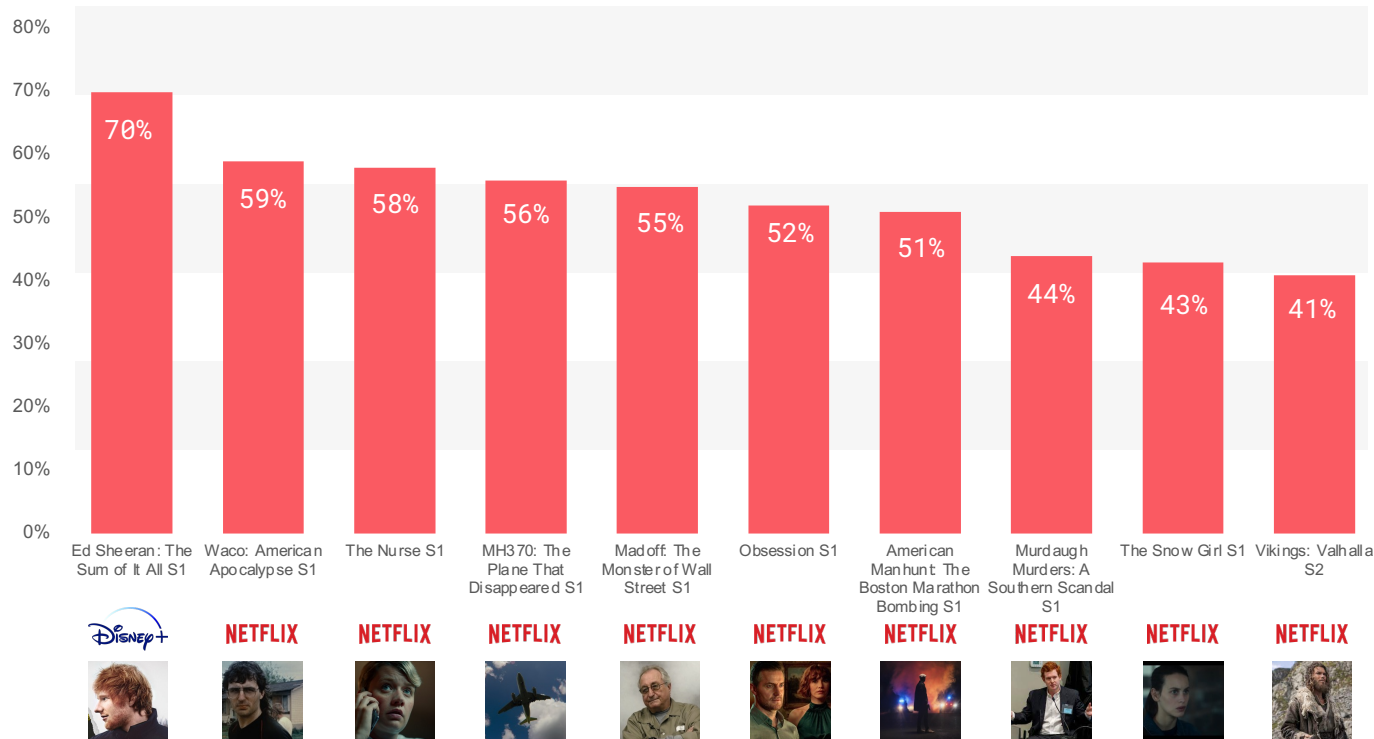
\*Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer

# When episodes are released in bulk, viewers will binge them

With streaming platforms competing for limited consumer attention, one differentiator has become the release model: Netflix and Amazon generally adhere to the bulk or multi-part drop, while Disney+, AppleTV+, and others favour weekly episode releases. Over half of U.K. viewers watched many of the top bulk-release shows of H1 2023 in the first five days after premiere. A majority of the most binged shows were miniseries with three or four episodes, led by Disney+’s Ed Sheeran: The Sum of It All and Netflix’s Waco: American Apocalypse. Longer shows with previous seasons, such as Vikings: Valhalla, had a high share of bingers tuning in as well.



**Top streaming shows with multi-episode releases on premiere date**  
 Percentage of 31-day season finishers that binged in first five days





# Bingeable shows have edge on audience retention

When audiences can binge their shows as quickly as they want, they're more likely to finish the whole season. The average retention between season premiere and finale across bulk releases was 46% of households, compared with 40% of households across shows that released episodes weekly. With its bulk-release model, Netflix dominated from a retention standpoint, with Bridgerton spin-off Queen Charlotte retaining almost two-thirds of its viewers between premiere and finale. Meanwhile, weekly episode releases like Citadel (Amazon Prime Video) retained less than one-third of households between premiere and finale. The weekly episode releases with the highest retention each had previous iterations or seasons with established and committed fanbases. For advertisers, the takeaway is clear: bingeable shows with high audience retention is a captive way to reach consumers who will be home, heavily focused on TV for a few hours, and available to order delivery, shop online, and browse websites.

## Average household retention between season premiere and finale



### Bulk release shows with highest retention rate

Retention from premiere to finale



**NETFLIX**

Queen Charlotte:  
A Bridgerton Story S1

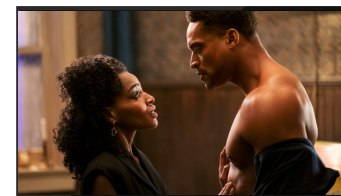
**63%**



**NETFLIX**

Vikings:  
Valhalla S2

**63%**



**NETFLIX**

Sex/Life S2

**60%**

### Weekly release shows with highest retention rate

Retention from premiere to finale



**Paramount+**

Star Trek: Picard S3

**57%**



**Apple+**

Ted Lasso S3

**54%**



**Disney+**

The Mandalorian S3

**50%**

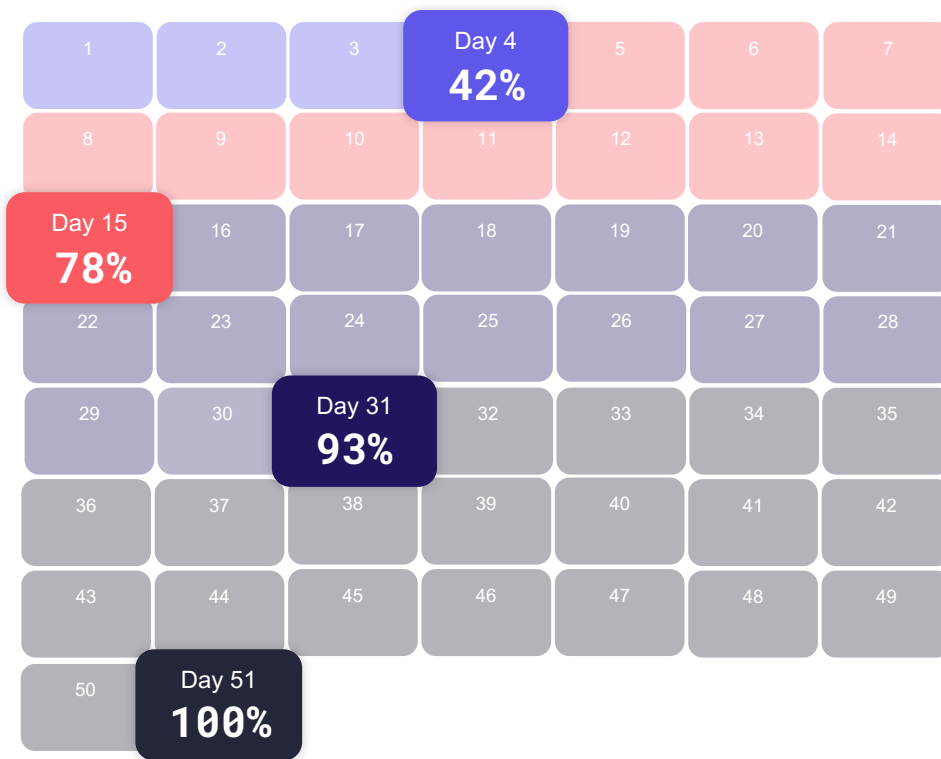
\*Averages include data from the top 50 streaming premieres of 2023 to date; includes shows with 5 or more episodes



# Majority of viewers watch new shows in the first two weeks

Across the U.K, the U.S., and Australia, the hottest new TV premieres soaked up the majority of viewership within their first two weeks. In fact, all of the top 50 streaming shows released in H1 2023 saw over half of their audience tune in during the first 15 days, and all but two shows saw more than two-thirds of audiences do so. The exceptions were Physical: 100, a South Korean reality show, and The Night Agent, the number two show of 2023 to date. This small window to capture audience attention highlights the importance of aligning targeted promotional and discovery campaigns early.

**Average household viewership achieved by day\***  
Percentage of 51-day viewership



**Shows with the longest discoverability windows**  
Based on percentage of 51-day viewing households that watched in the first 15 days

	Physical: 100 S1E1	57%	<b>NETFLIX</b>
	The Night Agent S1E1	63%	<b>NETFLIX</b>
	Star Trek: Picard S3E1	66%	<i>Paramount+</i>

**Shows with the shortest discoverability windows**  
Based on percentage of 51-day viewing households that watched in the first 15 days

	The Nurse S1E1	90%	<b>NETFLIX</b>
	Formula 1: Drive to Survive S5E1	89%	<b>NETFLIX</b>
	Selling Sunset S6E1	88%	<b>NETFLIX</b>

\*Averages include data from the top 50 streaming premieres of 2023 to date released prior to 5/11/23 to allow a full 51-day viewership window to transpire

## 03

## Biggest TV Moments

With streaming platforms putting huge spend behind original content, what's paying off for them? Data from the first half of 2023 shows that dramas and thrillers are leading the way, with *The Last of Us* driving the highest viewership. Meanwhile on linear, the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla was a strong draw for U.K. households.



# King Charles’s Coronation takes the crown for #1 linear event of the half

While sports typically dominate the linear space, their reign was overshadowed by the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. This was the only linear event to surpass 5M household tune-ins throughout H1, with the concert broadcast coming close to 6M alone. The FA Cup finals match between Manchester City and Manchester United drove the most viewership of any event unrelated to the Coronation.



## Top H1 2023 linear programs Live + same day household viewership

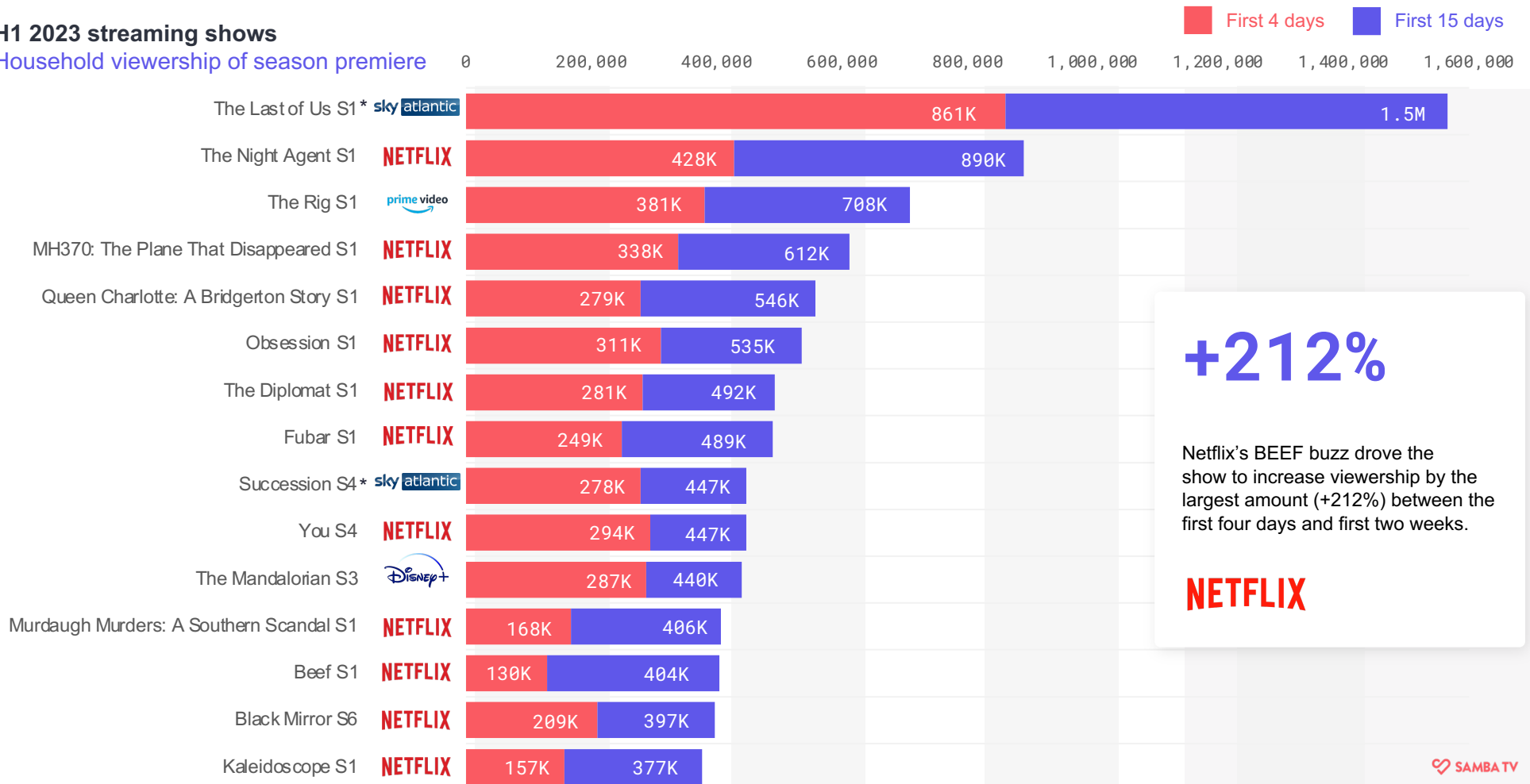
	Network	Household Reach
The Coronation   The Concert	BBC	5.8M
The Coronation   The Celebration	BBC	5.1M
BBC Weekend News May 7 (Day After Coronation)	BBC	4.9M
FA Cup Final: Manchester City v Manchester United	BBC	4.9M
BBC Weekend News April 23	BBC	4.8M
Our Changing Planet	BBC	4.8M
FA Cup Semi-Final: Brighton & Hove Albion v Manchester United	BBC	4.6M
Live: UEFA European Championship Qualifiers	4 CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION	4.6M
Glastonbury 2023: Elton John	BBC	4.4M
Live: ITV Racing Live   The Grand National: Day 3	itv	4.3M
UEFA European Championship Qualifier Football   Italy v England	4 CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION	4.2M
Six Nations Rugby   England v Scotland	itv	4.2M
The Coronation   The Preparation	BBC	4.2M
Six Nations Rugby   Wales v England	BBC	4.2M
Six Nations Rugby   Ireland v England	itv	4.0M

# Originals pay off for streaming platforms

Original streaming series are winning audiences. The Last Of Us was the number one performer for viewership of its premiere and the only series to crack 1M views within the first 15 days. Meanwhile, Netflix's BEEF benefited from global post-debut buzz with a 212% increase in viewership over its first two weeks, indicating that positive word-of-mouth helped it grow (a trend that was also seen in the U.S. for the show). Other Netflix shows drove notable buzz throughout the half including The Night Agent, which claimed the number two spot and benefited from a 108% increase in viewership over the first two weeks. Overall, Netflix dominated the pack: 11 out of the top 15 streaming series were original content. With new ad tiers, this makes the platform an ideal addition to advertisers' OTT buys.

## H1 2023 streaming shows

### Household viewership of season premiere

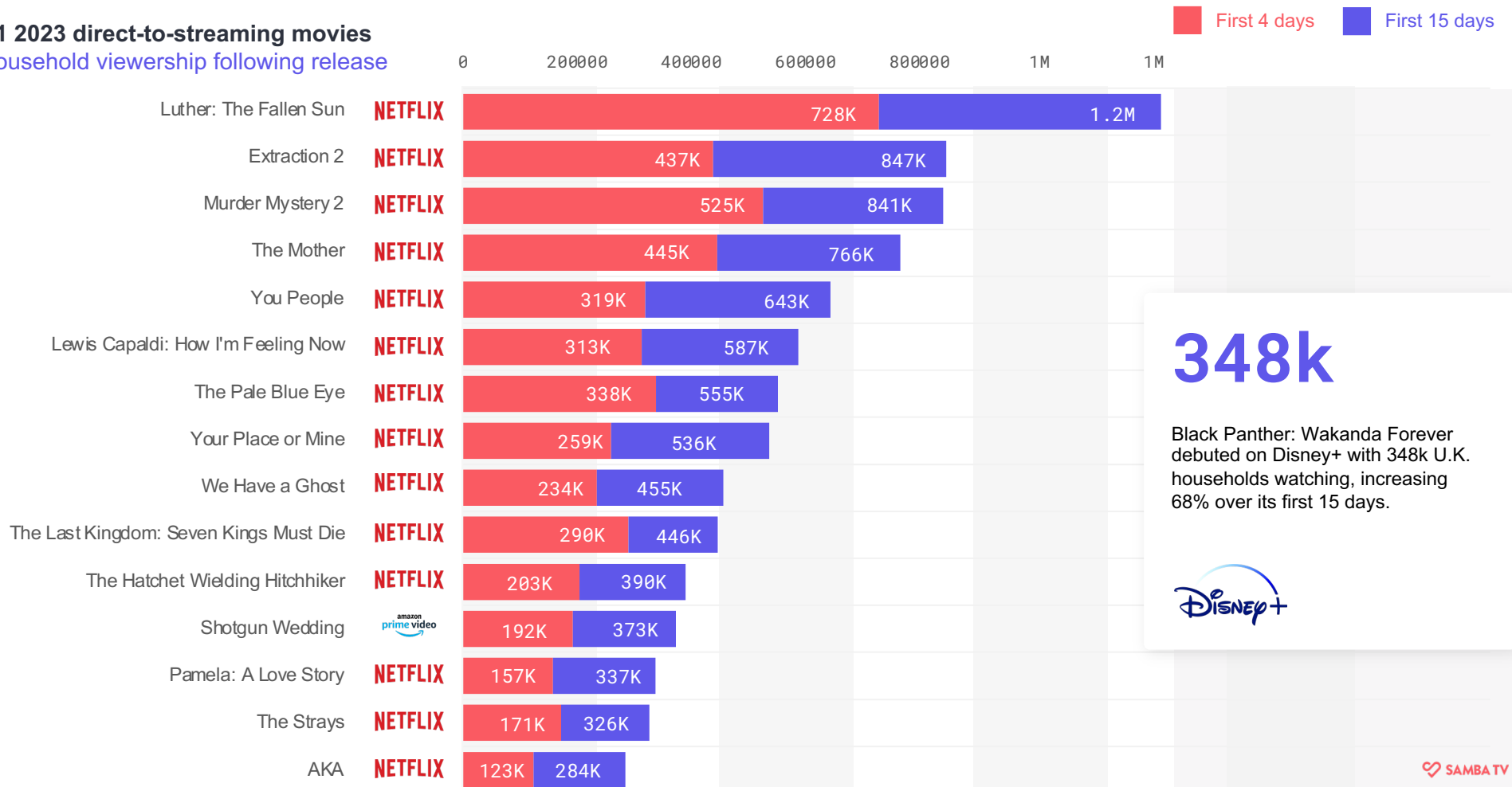


\*Includes viewership on linear channel

# Netflix dominates top streaming movies, post-theatrical licensing a smart investment for others

Fourteen of the top 15 streaming movies of the first half were Netflix originals, including several sequels. Netflix’s consistent spend of \$17B has been smartly allocated to investing in romcoms and action-adventure flicks. Luther: The Fallen Sun, starring Idris Elba, was the top direct-to-streaming movie in H1 of 2023, and the only one to surpass 1M household views within the first 15 days. Interestingly, the investment in post-theatrical rights also pays off for streamers. Looking at VODs and post-theater debuts not analysed in this list, for example, Disney+ saw strong U.K. numbers for the debut of Black Panther: Wakanda Forever even after months in theatres.

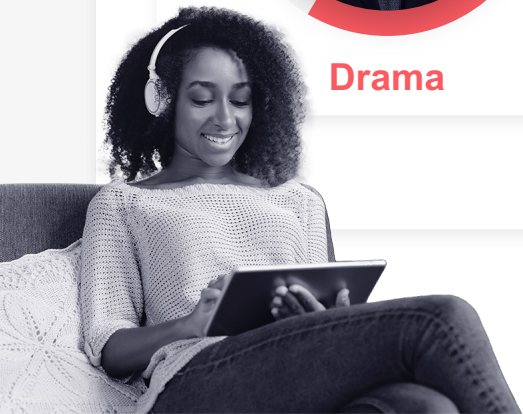
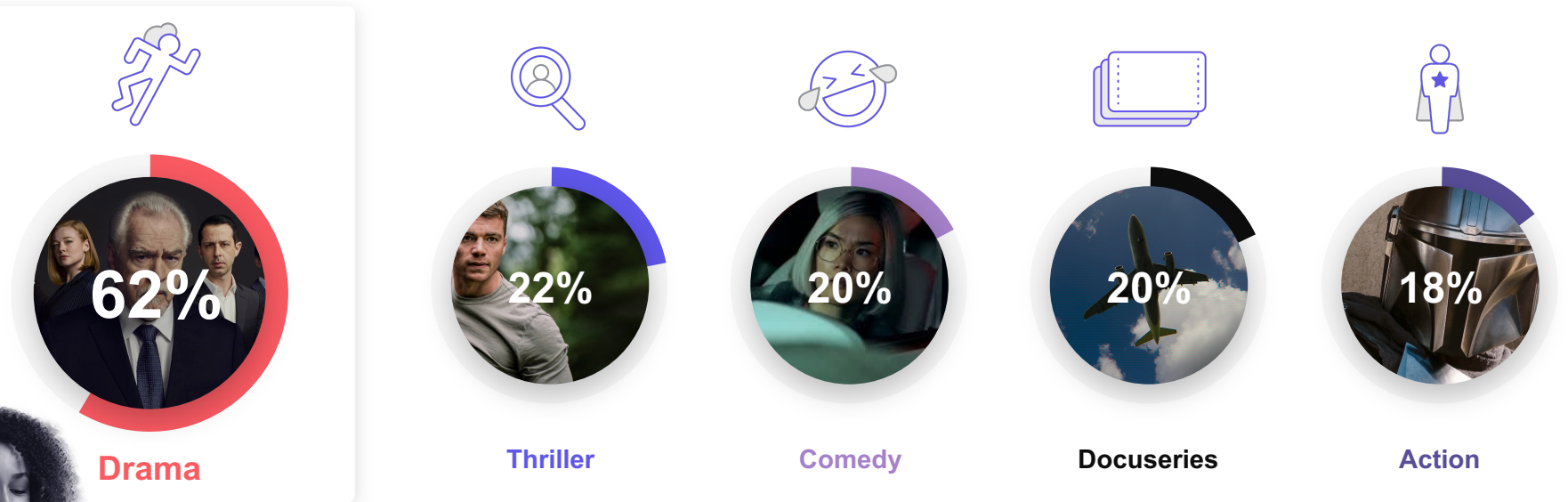
## H1 2023 direct-to-streaming movies Household viewership following release



# Audiences come for the drama across streaming

Despite drama making up just 8% of programming spend for global streaming platforms, the genre made up almost two-thirds of the top streaming shows of the first half of the year, with shows like Succession and The Rig capturing audience attention. Rounding out the top three were thrillers and comedies, typically accounting for the first and third largest portions of original content spend respectively. Action and docuseries programming, however, came in fourth and fifth, meaning that while these mainstays for original content are still yielding strong viewership, investing in dramas may yield larger audiences.

## Most represented genres across the top 50 streaming shows H1 2023



## 04

## Linear & OTT Advertising

With many viewers multitasking on other devices while they watch TV, advertisers have new opportunities to drive instant outcomes. So, which brands are leaning in? Data shows that top travel brands are serving more impressions year-over-year, while finance brands have cooled spend as the cost-of-living crisis and inflation dominate headlines. Meanwhile, McDonald's and lottery brands remain top spenders overall.





# 92% of linear ads reached only half of U.K. households

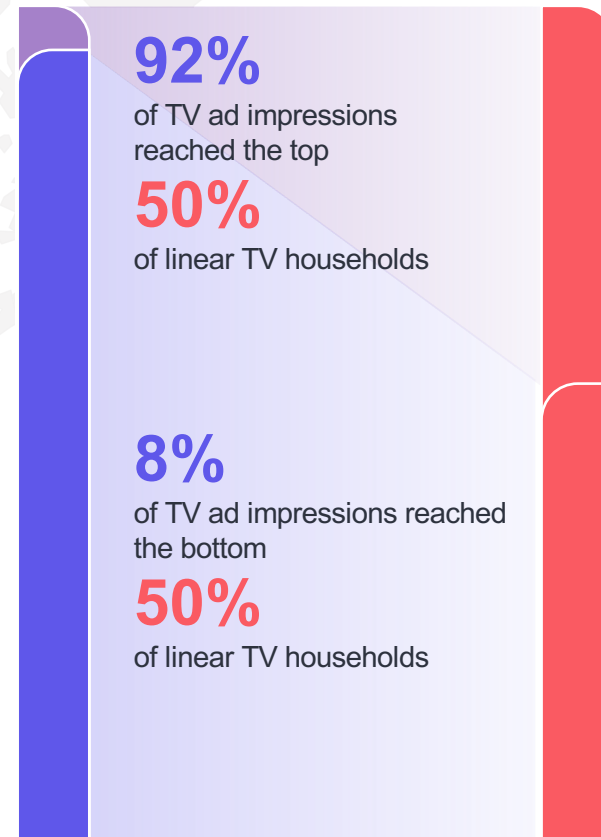
As consumer habits shift across linear and OTT, who are ads really reaching? Samba TV data shows that half of TV viewers (those who consume the most linear TV) are seeing the vast majority of ads (92%), while the other half of TV viewers (those who consume the least linear TV) are seeing just 8% of ad impressions. While that bottom 50% of U.K. households were underreached or not reached at all, those heavy linear viewers who make up the upper half were bombarded by over 70 TV ads daily, driving costly ad fatigue.

**71**

Average number of TV ads seen per day by the **top 50%** of linear viewers

**7**

Average number of TV ads seen per day by the **bottom 50%** of linear viewers



# Brands celebrating anniversaries drive big ad impressions

Throughout the first half of 2023, McDonald’s remained the top advertiser based on linear impressions served. Following closely behind, the number two brand was the U.K.’s National Lottery. Its latest campaign highlights the lottery operator’s nearly 30-year history and celebrates love with a heartwarming spot of two men who meet on the night of the first-ever draw. Coming in at number 10, retail brand Argos also celebrated a milestone anniversary of 50 years in business. Despite changing consumer habits shifting to online retailers, the retailer still served up huge impressions throughout the first half of the year.



Top linear + OTT advertisers by impressions: H1 2023

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

\*Excludes TV networks

# Travel is top-of-mind for consumers and advertisers alike

With forecasts for travel spend looking positive in 2023, advertisers are eager to reach consumers ready for the summer holidays. Eight out of the top 10 travel advertisers drove increases in ad impressions versus 2022, with online travel agencies like Booking.com, Airbnb, and Hotels.com driving some of the most substantial year-over-year growth. P&O Cruises remained the number one brand based on linear and OTT ad impressions served, driven in part by projections for 2023 to be a record cruise season. Looking at all travel brands, American tourism bureaus such as Orlando and New Jersey saw the highest increases from 2022, as American cities and states look to attract travellers from across the pond.

## Top travel advertisers by TV ad impressions H1 2023

	H1 2023 vs. H1 2022	Share of voice
1	+40%	4%
2	+26%	4%
3	-9%	4%
4	-4%	3%
5	+20%	3%
6	+7%	3%
7	+361%	3%
8	+57%	2%
9	+59%	2%
10	+23%	2%
Other		70%



## Largest increases in impressions among top travel advertisers: H1 2023 vs. H1 2022



# Inflation, cost-of-living crisis, and rising interest rates cause finance advertisers to curb spend

Over half of the top 10 finance advertisers tracked declines based on year-over-year ad impressions, as economic uncertainty continues to present challenges in the U.K. Advertisers remain cautious, with top share-of-voice brands like Halifax and Lloyds Bank pulling back ad spend. On the other hand, the number one finance brand, SunLife, took a different strategy and marketed into the downturn with a 23% increase in ad impressions year-over-year. Among the other finance brands driving growth were those with a technology focus, including global neobank and app Revolut, along with online banks and money transfer services like Remitly and WorldRemit.

## Top finance advertisers by TV ad impressions H1 2023

H1 2023 vs. H1 2022		Share of voice	
1	Sun Life	+23%	5%
2	HALIFAX	-17%	4%
3	LLOYDS BANK	-13%	4%
4	qb <small>intuit</small> quickbooks.	+12%	4%
5	ClearScore	-40%	3%
6	gohenry	-14%	3%
7	NatWest	-1%	3%
8	Santander	+12%	3%
9	SKIPTON BUILDING SOCIETY	+12%	2%
10	CHASE	-27%	2%
Other			68%



## Largest increases in impressions among top finance advertisers: H1 2023 vs. H1 2022

**Revolut**

ICICI Bank

WorldRemit

AIBell

Remitlu

# Key takeaways from the first half of 2023



## Better manage reach and frequency with OTT advertising

For years, linear has been oversaturating the same viewers with hundreds of ads. Comprehensive, omniscree measurement is essential to manage reach and frequency across the new opportunities that OTT presents.



## Use advanced data to target audiences with precision

With consumer habits shifting constantly, it's more important than ever to be precise when developing a targeting strategy. Use comprehensive, first-party datasets to identify and engage with elusive audiences.



## Embrace new opportunities with BVOD and AVOD

With Netflix ad tiers showing permanence among viewers and BVOD growth continuing, advertisers should engage with all the new strategies at their disposal to find audiences exactly where they are.



## Streaming platforms should use bulk-release model to retain viewers

With content more important than ever, the high retention rate of shows that audiences can binge present streaming platforms with a clear roadmap for how to maintain viewership throughout a full season.



## Bet on drama for high audience tune-in

Drama was the top genre of the first half of 2023 for streaming audiences, despite comprising only 8% of programming spend. Advertisers should prioritise these coveted ad-blocks.