



Consumers are Watching; Here's How They Want Their Video Ads.

On a digital medium that's overcrowded with content and choices, how can publishers and advertisers create an ideal and strategic viewer experience?

Consumers Will Watch Video Ads, But Have Some Requests

In the digital age, consumers have their choice of video content - from what they choose to watch to where they tune in. And where the audience goes, advertising is sure to follow.

When done properly, great advertising can expose consumers to new products, services and ideas, shift societal norms, and influence spending patterns. But a bad ad experience can do more harm than good.

As consumers spend more time online, and therefore see more video ads, are they still paying attention?

Are video ads always considered a necessary interruption? Or are today's savvy consumers willing to barter their time (and data) for affordable access to desired content?

Connatix polled over 1,000 U.S. consumers 18+ to understand what types of videos they want to see from publishers, how they want to watch video ads, and how contextual alignment can impact engagement.



Publishers Remain a Core Destination for Video

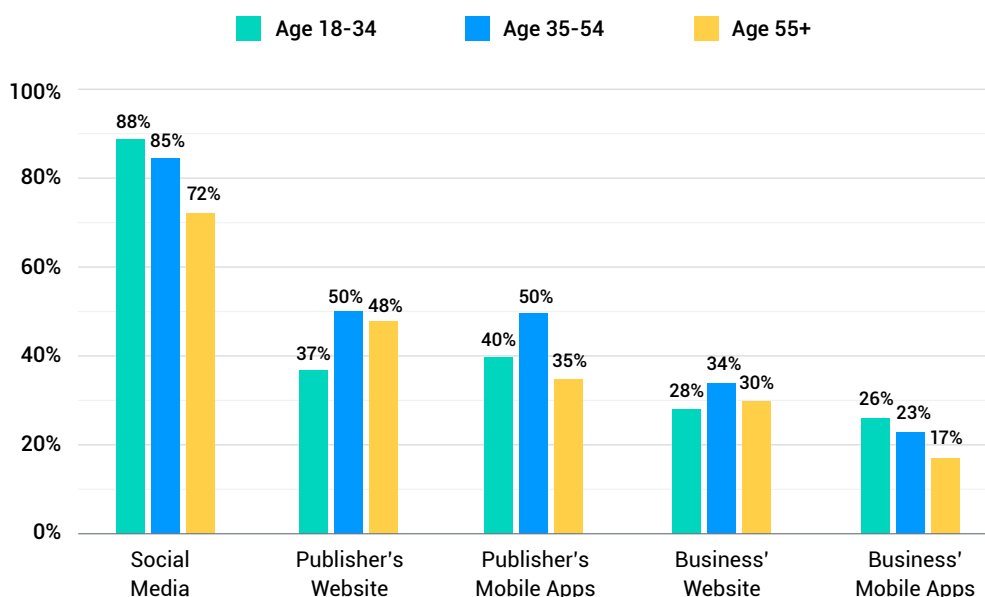
Across all demographics, social channels like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok remain a top destination for video consumption, capturing attention from 81% of those surveyed. However, **publishers' websites (45%) and mobile apps (41%) also attract strong audiences.**

Within specific demographics, the size of that audience increases. For example, 52% of respondents identifying as male report visiting publishers' websites to watch videos. More affluent viewers demonstrate a similar trend, with 60% of those making \$150k/year or more reporting publishers' websites as a destination. However, respondents making less than \$150k/year and those aged 18-34 have the opposite views of their more affluent counterparts, with 83% and 88% respectively preferring to watch on social channels compared to 43% and 37% visiting publishers for that content.

60%

of viewers making \$150k/year+ consume video content on publishers' websites

Where viewers watch desired content, by age



This could be because younger generations, including recent grads and entry level employees, are more social media savvy and inclined to watch video content on those platforms.

This data could benefit publishers who are looking to better tailor experiences to audiences and advertisers who are looking to increase reach.

While content on business websites is often assumed to be more sales-focused, it still attracts 31% of the audience surveyed – making a brand's website another video destination and useful touchpoint for consumer interaction.

31%
of consumers visit
business' websites for
video content



Viewers Want Entertainment & News

Most viewers under 55 years of age prefer to watch entertainment videos from publishers, but as ages and income levels rise, this interest shifts to news.

68% of viewers 55+ visit publishers' websites directly for news content (compared to 55% of all consumers), and the level of interest in entertainment content from publishers is 71% for those making less than \$50k/year (compared to 55% for those making \$150k+).

Aside from entertainment and news, only 24% of respondents aged 55+ report a preference for lifestyle and shopping content from publishers as compared to 53% of respondents aged 18-34. When looking at the gender breakdown, only 25% of male-identifying respondents report the same preference as compared to 56% of non-binary respondents and 50% of those who identify as female.

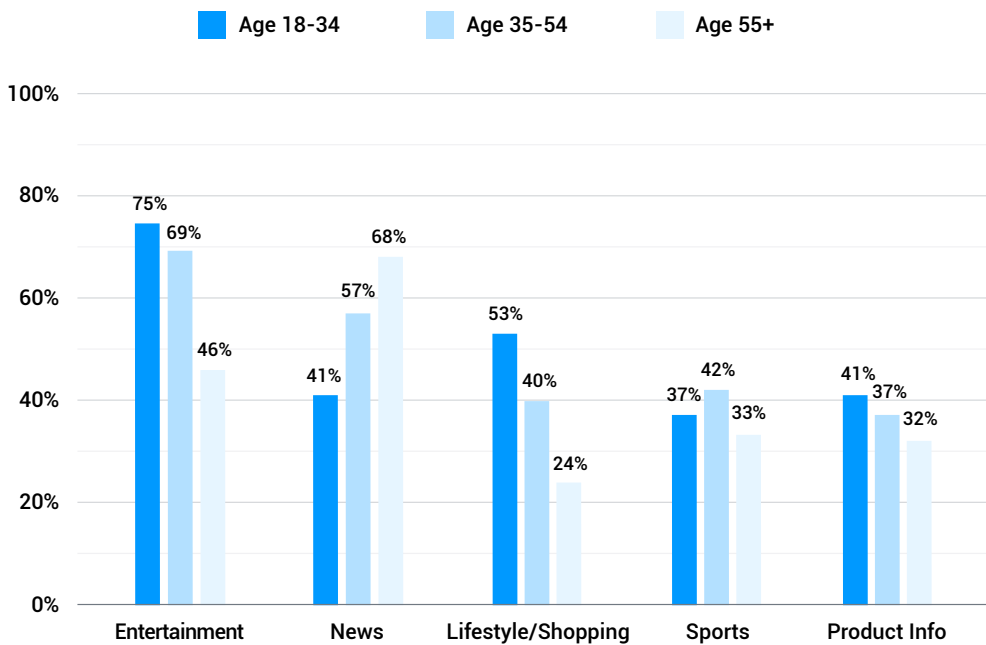
68%

of respondents 55+ visit publishers' websites directly to consume news content

71%

of consumers making less than \$50k/year prefer entertainment content from publishers

Preferred type of content from publishers, by age





Access to trustworthy news is essential for the healthy functioning of democracy and society, but unfortunately news publishers are also often the first to experience spending cuts from advertisers due to brand safety concerns. Using broad keyword blocklists instead of evaluating news sources based on their editorial standards actually represents a big loss for advertisers, who miss out on highly engaged audiences, greater viewability, higher click-through rates, and other campaign efficiencies.

Platforms like Connatix that leverage NewsGuard's ratings can help advertisers to approach news as a category safely, diversify their ad spend to reach a broad audience, and invest in quality journalism.

VEENA McCOOLE

Head of Comms and Marketing at NewsGuard



Viewers Are Selective About Where They Watch

With the majority of respondents (68%) visiting three or fewer channels, viewers indicate that **they do not want to jump between multiple destinations to consume content**. Instead, they prefer to stay within a handful of publisher properties. Publishers looking to increase viewer engagement could consider this preference when developing content strategies, aiming to attract both a larger share of desired audiences and increase time spent on their pages with captivating on-site experiences.

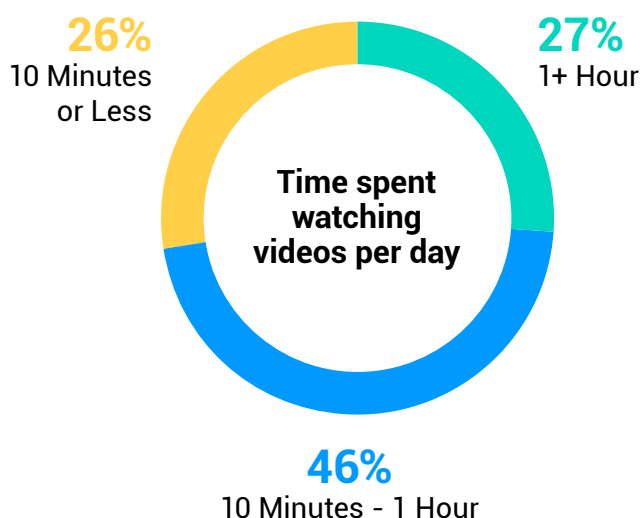
Armed with their favorite video destinations, viewers are happy to dedicate time to watching videos. **46% of survey respondents report that they spend more than 10 minutes and up to an hour a day consuming video**, with 27% reporting that they spend more than an hour watching. Only 10% of respondents say they spend less than 5 minutes a day watching video content.

46%

spend up to an hour watching video content each day

3.6

The number of sites the average viewer visits to consume desired video content



Long Form Content is Welcome, But Longer Ads Are Not

In recent years, the optimal length of online video content has significantly shifted. When video initially burst onto digital platforms, shorter was better. However, with the rise of streaming providing a more comfortable viewing experience on all screens, long-form video has seen increased engagement.

When asked about desired non-ad video content length in this survey, respondents indicate a variety of preferences, with strong generational differences. Respondents between the ages of 18-34 report a preference for longer form video, at 5-10 minutes or more (25%), while those aged 35-54 prefer shorter spots of 3-5 minutes. Respondents aged 55+ are least likely to want longer videos of 3 minutes or more.

While viewers have varying opinions on ideal video content lengths, they are more in agreement about the ideal length of a video ad. **More than half (64%) of respondents say that a video ad should be a minute or less – with 46% of that group preferring even shorter ads, 30 seconds or less.** This evidence reinforces how important it is for advertisers to create ads that are short and attention-grabbing, and for publishers to consider the ratio of organic content to ads.

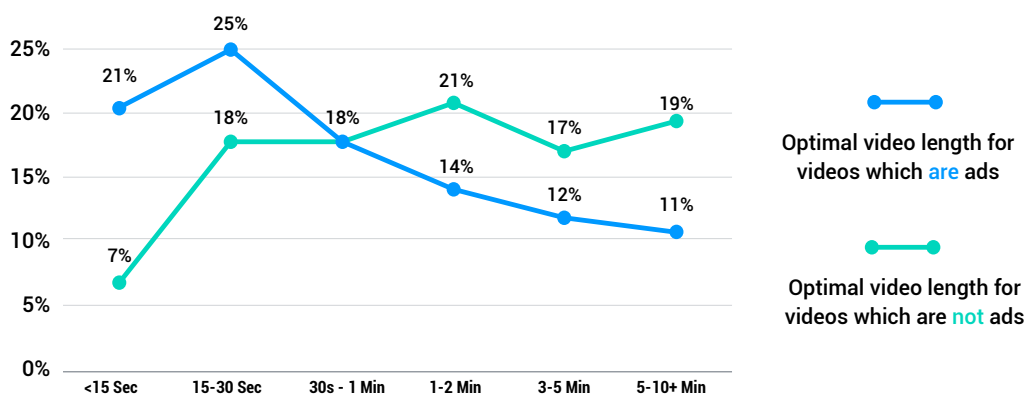
64%

of respondents say that a video ad should be a minute or less in length

44%

of respondents aged 55+ prefer non-ad videos to last at least 30 seconds but no longer than 2 minutes

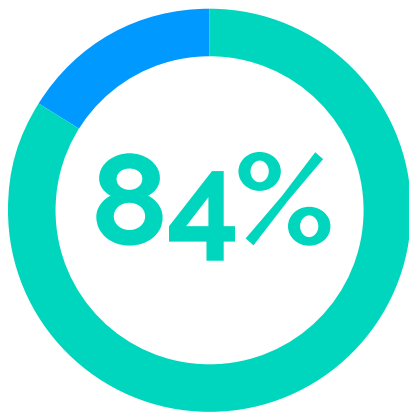
Consumers' Desired Video Length



Viewers Will Trade Their Time (and Data) for Access to Desired Content

Today's consumers have a better understanding of the importance of advertising, specifically how ads can help drive access to desired content. In general, viewers report that they will watch an ad 37% of the time, with 6% saying they always watch ads. When asked to watch an ad in order to access desired content, this rate skyrockets.

The majority of viewers (84%) across all demographics report that they would watch an ad on their favorite website to access desired video content. While this number dips to 60% for content on other, less familiar sites, the point still stands: **viewers accept the value exchange and are happy to watch advertisements in order to access the content they want.**



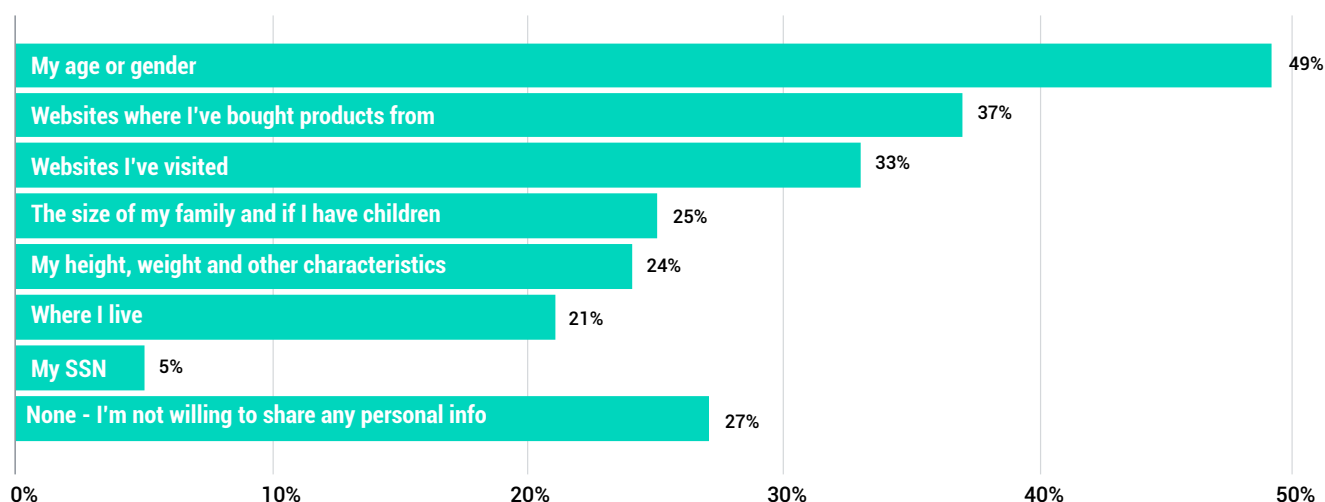
Will watch a video ad
if it's the only way to
see desired content
on their favorite website

The power of desired video content is increasingly evident when viewers are asked for more than just their time. Nearly half of respondents (49%) note that they are willing to share information regarding their age and gender identity to access desired video content. Respondents are also willing to provide information like websites where they made previous purchases (37%) or simply visited (33%). As the information requested becomes more personal, such as size of family, height, weight, and address, respondents' willingness decreases, but doesn't disappear entirely, with 21% to 25% of respondents still willing to disclose depending on the ask.

49%

of respondents are willing to share information about their age and gender identity to access desired video content

Personal information consumers will share in exchange for access to video content





“

Consumers are smart. They understand that access to content is never truly free, and that without a paywall they will likely need to engage with some form of advertising to access the content they want to see. But at the same time, we can't take advantage of their willingness to consume ads. It's important for publishers to have a balanced ad strategy that protects, rather than disrupts, the reader experience.

CHRIS KANE

Founder of Jounce Media



Contextual Alignment Matters

As the importance of data privacy increases and cookie-based solutions wanes, advertisers are starting to leverage contextual targeting to meet consumers where they are with a more engaging brand experience. But how are these efforts perceived by video viewers?

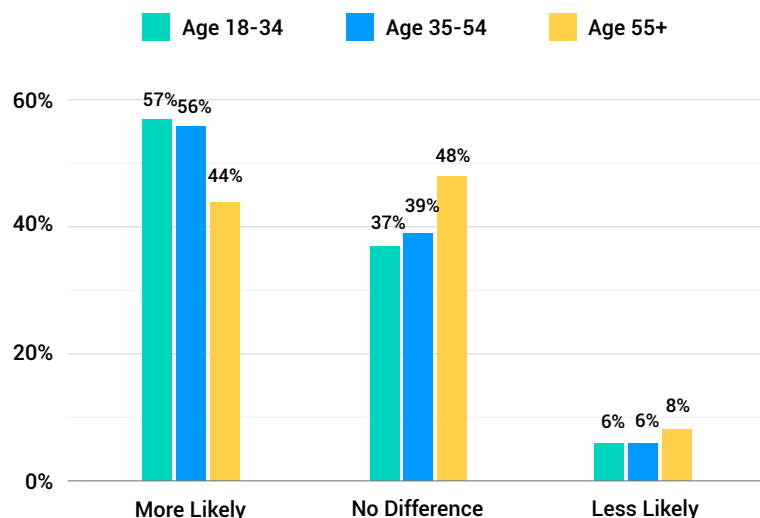
Consumers care about contextual alignment, with 83% of respondents reporting they prefer to see ads online that are related to their personal interests, and 82% saying they notice when an ad is related to the content of the video they were watching.

When asked if they are more likely to watch a video ad if it is related to the content they are consuming, 47% of respondents say they are – but another 47% say it doesn't make a difference. When asked for more detail, a key takeaway emerges. Of the respondents who say contextual targeting is preferred, 39% report that it makes them more likely to take action.

57%

of respondents aged 18-34 are more likely to watch a video ad if its content is aligned with previously consumed non-advertising content

Likelihood of watching a video ad if it's the same topic as an article, by age



So, while consumers may say that it makes no difference whether ad content is related to video content, they notice and prefer the contextual connection.

Similar takeaways emerge when looking at contextual alignment for recommended content – 46% of respondents report clicking on recommended articles or videos at least half the time, but 57% say they are more likely to watch a recommended video if it's about the same topic they just consumed.

82%

of consumers notice when an ad is related to the content of the video they were watching



What Makes an Ad Successful?

As mentioned, viewers prefer ads that are related to their personal interests, so it comes as no surprise that 69% of respondents report that an existing interest in a product or service catches their attention and prevents them from skipping an ad. Likewise, 47% note that an ad highlighting a store or business in which they already have interest would have a similar result.

If an existing interest in the product, service, or business is not considered, respondents mention that visual interest and humor are important elements in both preventing ad skipping (53% and 47% respectively) and in making an ad stand out (70% and 57%). Music is also a relevant factor. While only 39% of respondents mention an ad's music as potentially attention grabbing, 50% report that it makes an ad stand out.

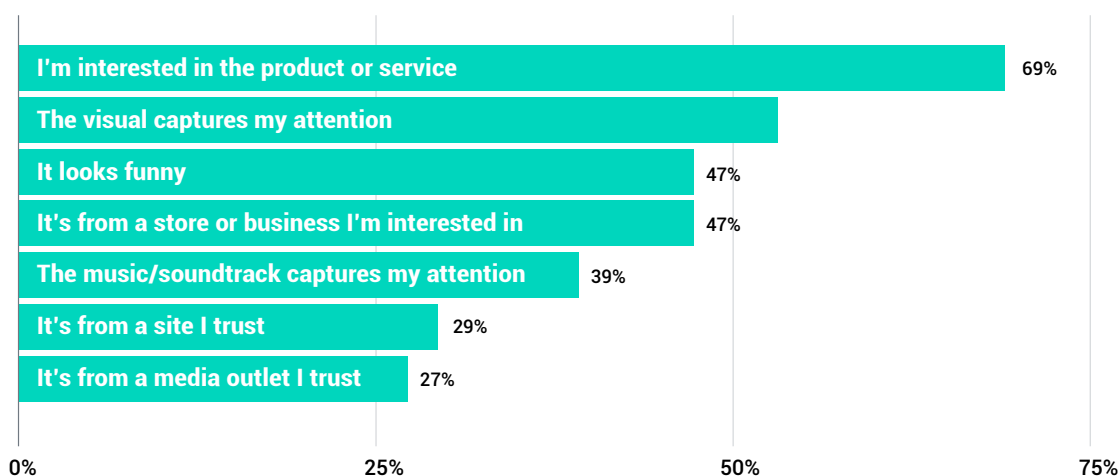
As for the contextual connection, the more interested a viewer is in a video's content, the more memorable the ads that play before, during or after will be – 32% of respondents say ad placement and contextual alignment drive memorable advertising.

70%

say visual interest is key to making a video ad memorable



Reasons viewers stay to watch a video ad



32%

say placement and contextual alignment make video ads stand out



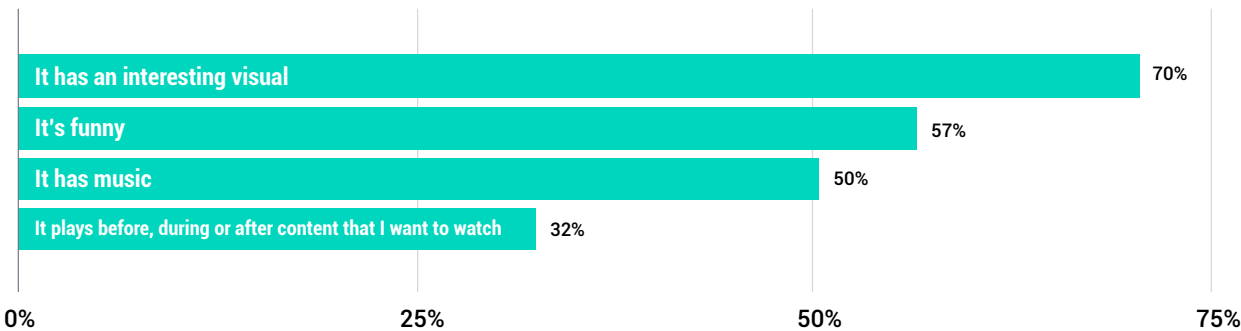
However, when specifically asked which factors would result in immediately skipping a video ad, unwelcome interruption is the biggest faux pas for 55% of respondents. Additionally, 51% would immediately skip an ad if it pops up unprompted.

This response shows how important it is for publishers to balance content and ads so that the experience doesn't feel too disruptive. For advertisers, understanding what the consumer wants to see and prioritizing alignment between ads and content delivers a high-quality and memorable experience.

50%

reported that music works to make the ad stand out

Features that make a video ad stand out



Sound On & Click-To-Play Put Viewers In Control

The majority (58%) of viewers prefer to control the videos they consume through click-to-play functionality. For publishers, implementing a video player that viewers click to start may be an opportunity to improve the reader experience.

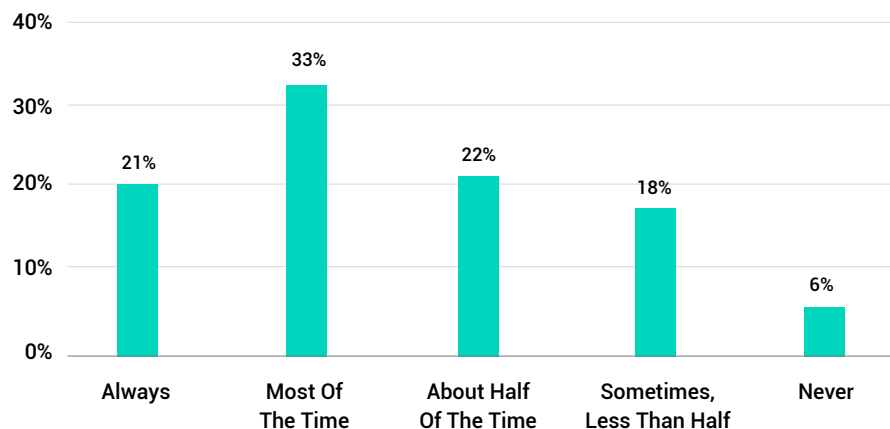
When it comes to videos with sound, 54% of respondents report watching with the sound on either always or most of the time as compared to only 6% who never watch with sound. This directly contradicts previous data, including a survey conducted three years ago by [Verizon Media and Publicis Media Relations](#) that reported 69% of viewers watched with sound off in public. Increased prevalence of video content and the significance of sound to a video's value may contribute to this behavioral shift.

54%

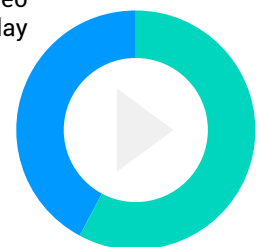
of respondents watch videos with sound on either always or most of the time



When consumers watch videos with sound



42%
prefer a video to auto-play



58%
prefer to click on a video



User intent to watch video content is becoming an increasingly important metric for publishers to consider, especially in the wake of the IAB Tech Lab's new guidelines on instream content. Consumers prefer to take control of their viewing experience, selecting and clicking to play the content that they want to see. This makes today's instream content even more valuable to advertisers than the previous definition, as they are able to place ads next to content that consumers not only requested but are excited to watch.

PAUL BANNISTER

Chief Strategy Officer at Raptive and co-author of the IAB Tech Lab's new instream content guidelines

Raptive

Video Ads Drive Purchases, Especially on iOS

Platforms are continuously changing how they gather and leverage user data for advertising. In light of Apple's App Tracking Transparency policy and Google's upcoming deprecation of third-party cookies, advertisers are concerned about reaching audiences with traditional targeting methods.

However, for advertisers who are able to overcome targeting challenges, video ads are still effective at influencing consumers to take action with **75% of respondents reportedly making at least 1 purchase as a result of watching a video ad within the last year.**

Survey results also indicate that viewers with the highest purchase intent are using iOS devices, with 56% of purchases made by respondents aged 18-34 on iPhones (37% across all ages). Advertisers who are concerned about effectively reaching this coveted audience in the face of ongoing privacy changes should consider testing cookieless solutions like contextual targeting.

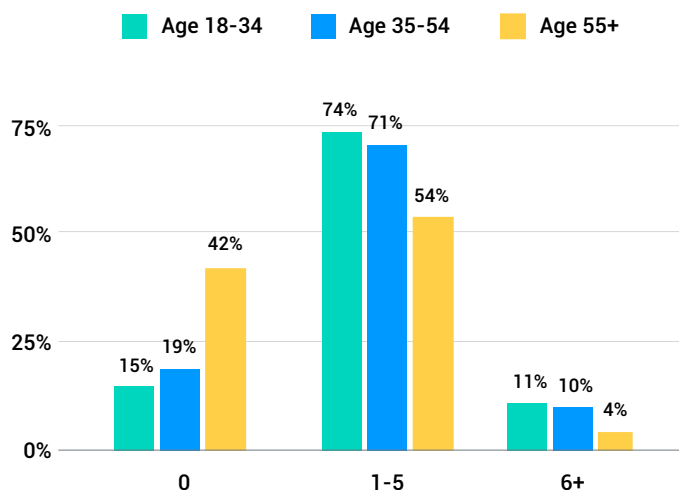
56%

of respondents ages 18-34 made a purchase from an iPhone as a result of a video ad

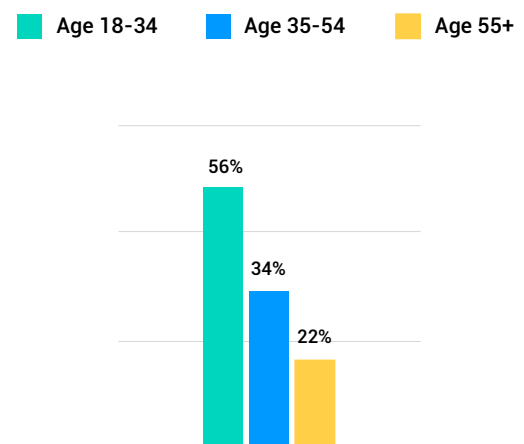
75%

of respondents have made at least 1 purchase as a result of watching video ads

Number of purchases resulting from video ads, by age



Purchases made from iPhones after watching video ads





Apple's App-Tracking Transparency privacy framework, which turns tracking off by default unless a user approves it, is fundamentally changing the way inventory is filled on iOS. Traditional audience targeting is no longer effective at reaching valuable iOS users because there is now significantly less audience data to use. Savvy advertisers should turn to tools like contextual targeting, which focuses on the content/ad alignment rather than behavioral identifiers to still reach this engaged audience.

STEFANOS METAXAS

EVP, Streaming+ at Tinuiti



Are Consumers Advertising-Savvy?

In general, consumers feel they have a good understanding of how advertisers target users online. Consumers aged 35-54 felt the most confident about their understanding (63%), compared to 55% of those aged 18-34 and 40% of those aged 55+.

A similar trend is seen when asked about their knowledge regarding how advertisers use third party cookies, with 51% of 35-54 year olds saying they have a good understanding, compared to 43% of those 18-34 and 31% of those aged 55+.

53%

of all respondents feel they have a good understanding about how advertisers can target a user online with personal ads

51%

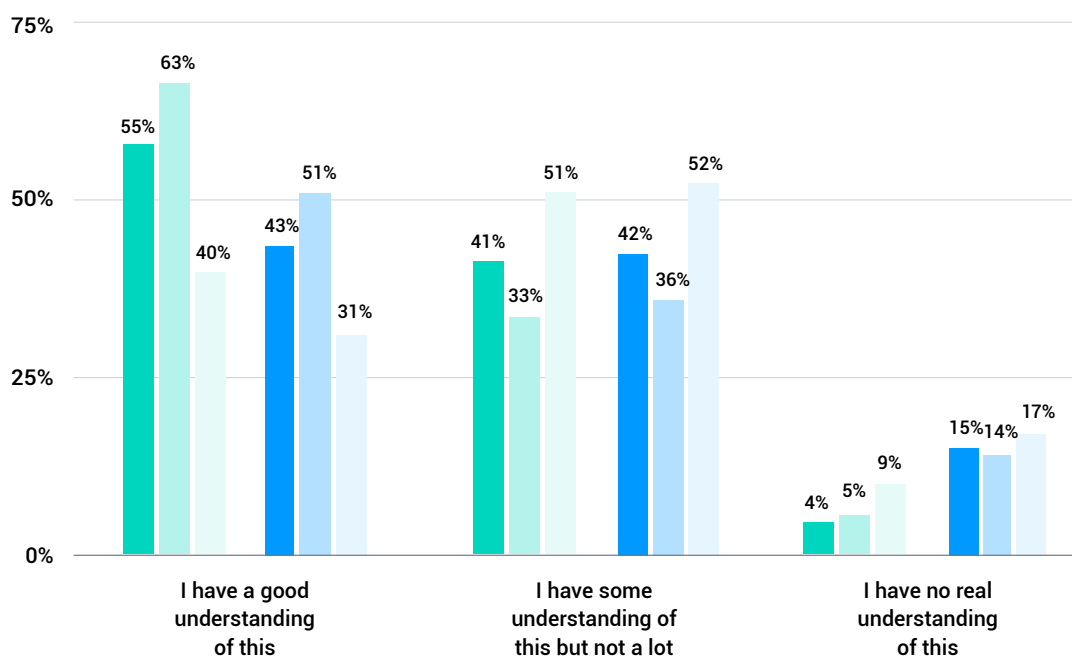
of respondents aged 35-54 feel they have a good understanding about how advertisers use third-party cookies

Consumers' understanding of how advertisers target

Age 18-34 Age 35-54 Age 55+

Consumers' understanding of how advertisers use third party cookies

Age 18-34 Age 35-54 Age 55+



Key Takeaway: Readers are Watching, Meet Them Where They Are

For Publishers

Readers are visiting publishers' websites for video content, and while the need for a compelling viewing experience is nothing new, there are additional considerations for publisher teams to keep in mind. As more consumers watch with sound, consider using audio to enhance a story by adding catchy music or a valuable voice over. Additionally, readers don't want to jump around to multiple publishers for information, and are looking for contextual alignment both between content and ads and between content and recommended articles. Publishers with access to contextual data could benefit from sharing those insights with advertisers to make smarter targeting decisions, and also use it to suggest additional articles and videos that will keep readers engaged and on site longer.



For Advertisers

Consumers are not against watching video ads – in fact, they are happy to consume brand messages that are related to their interests and aligned with the other content they want to consume. They are even willing to share some personal data as part of the value exchange. However, it's important to consider keeping ads short and sweet and delivering them in a nonintrusive way. Tactics like contextual targeting can also help reach audiences in an era of cookieless, privacy-first advertising while making brand messages more memorable and effective.





About Connatix

Connatix is a video technology company that powers the world's stories with effortless, empowering, and inspiring solutions. Through a proprietary full-stack platform, Connatix helps publishers deliver, monetize, analyze and create video, while providing advertisers with premium video inventory and precise Deep Contextual™ targeting. Sitting at the forefront of innovation, Connatix leverages the power of AI to optimize revenue and ensure relevancy, efficiency and scale across campaigns.

Connatix currently works with 350+ publisher groups across thousands of sites and leading brands and agencies. The private equity-backed business has been named an AdExchanger Programmatic Power Player for two consecutive years and included on the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing companies for three consecutive years. Founded in 2014, Connatix is headquartered in New York City and continues to expand its global footprint with offices in London, Cluj-Napoca, and Tel Aviv.