

FAST 101

Why FAST matters and
how to get started

Updated Q1 2025



Agenda

01

Fast is rapidly growing in audience and revenue while traditional media is declining.

02

FAST represents a new source of revenue and an opportunity to reach new audiences through targeted advertising.

03

If you're not already planning for FAST, you should be.

04

Start by developing your content and ad strategy then plot how you will take it to market.

FAST
101

Growing FAST

FAST
defined

Free

Ad-Supported

Streaming

Television

At-a-glance

It's free!

There are

ads. It's linear.

Viewers cannot fast forward, rewind, or restart a show.

Viewers cannot skip ads.

There are hundreds of channels.

Elevator pitch

FAST is television programming that's streamed over the Internet to a smart TV or third-party device like Roku. A quick and easy set-up provides access to hundreds of free linear ad-supported channels.

How FAST fits into the alphabet

- **OTT = Over The Top**

Streamed content that's delivered through the Internet rather than cable or satellite. Many cable providers, like Xfinity, offer content OTT as do streaming devices like Roku.

- **CTV = Connected TV**

TV services streamed over the Internet. This usually requires a device like a Smart TV or Roku. FAST is a CTV service along with SVOD and AVOD.

- **SVOD = Subscription Video On Demand**

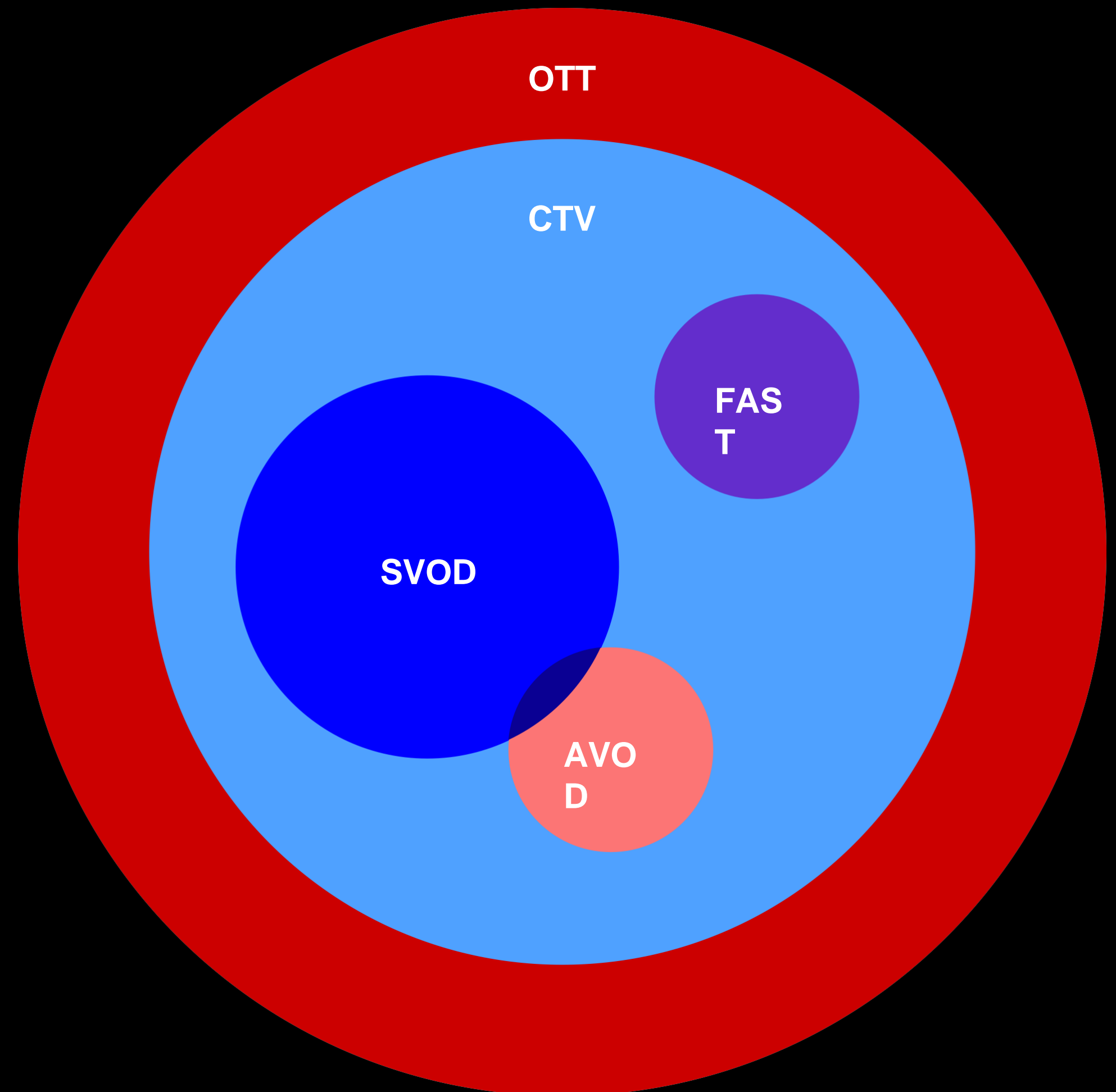
A subscription service where viewers pay a monthly fee to access on-demand programming without ads, e.g., Netflix, Max, Apple TV+.

- **AVOD = Advertising Video On Demand**

A subscription service where viewers pay a reduced or zero monthly fee to access on-demand programming in exchange for watching ads. Examples include SlingTV, Crackle, YouTube, and ad tiers from SVOD streamers like Hulu, Disney+, and Peacock.

- **FAST = Free Ad-supported Streaming TV**

A CTV service that offers linear TV channels for free in exchange for watching ads. Some services also offer a limited amount of video on-demand.



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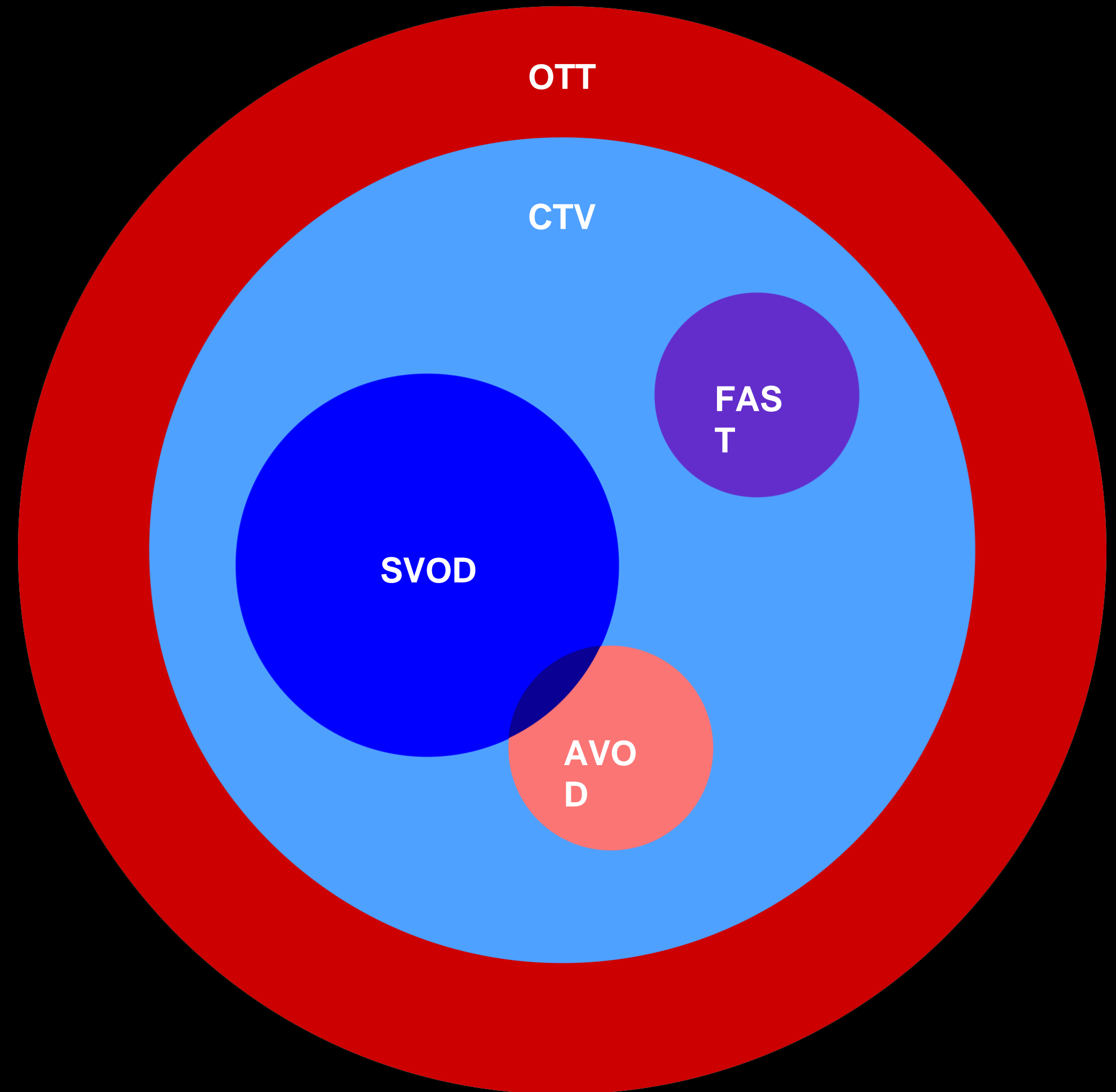
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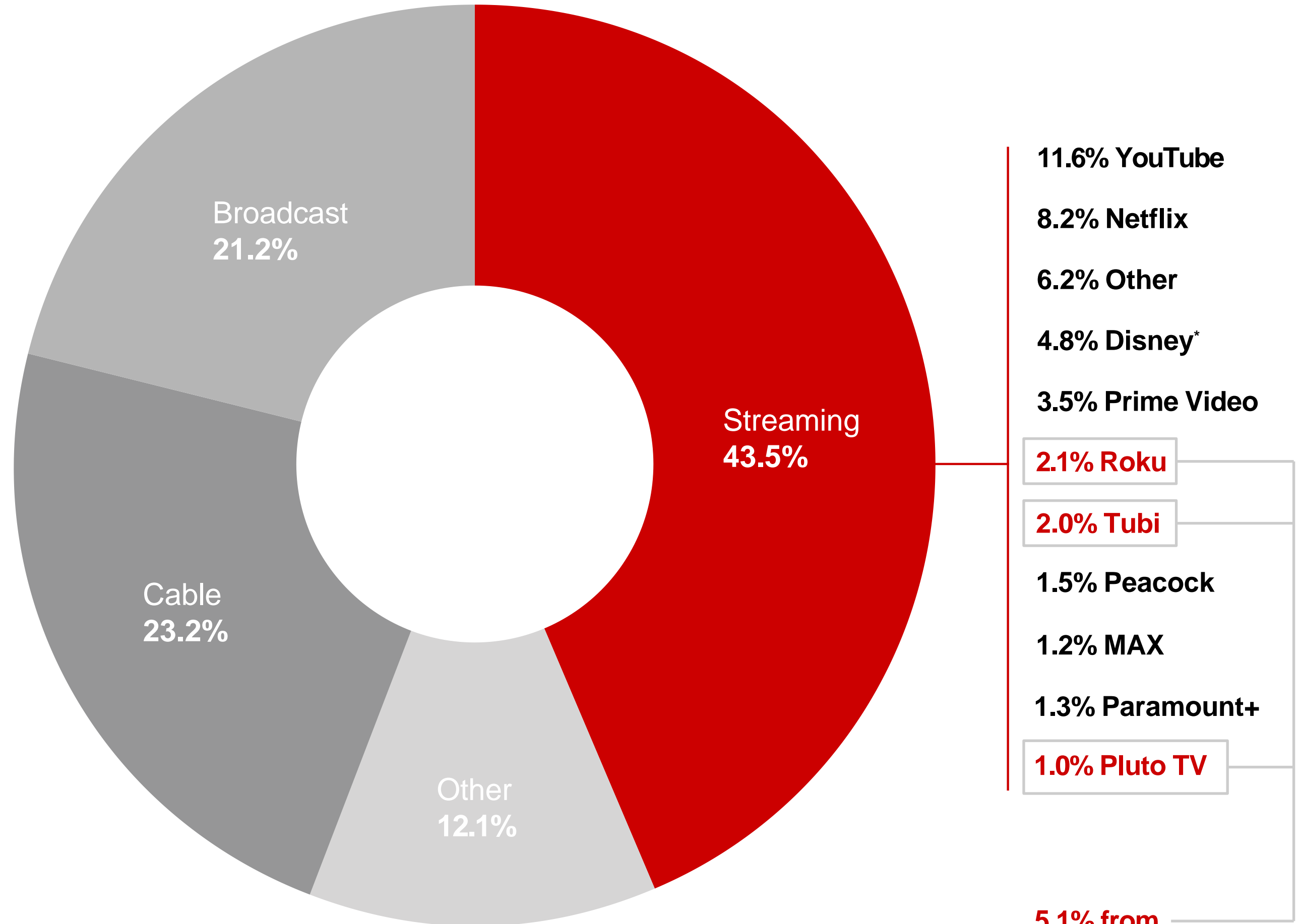


Streaming dominates and is growing!

FAST currently has only a small portion of CTV ad dollars giving it a lot of headway to capture the shifting ad dollars.¹

56%

Increase in streaming hours during H2 2024, compared to 8% for linear TV²



Source: 1. Nielsen The Gauge, February 2025 2. Samba TV, The State of Viewership

* Disney includes viewing on Disney+, ESPN+ and Hulu SVOD

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New opportunities

Opportunities for publishers and advertisers

Publishers who aren't streaming will miss out on

\$5.7 Billion

Advertisers who only buy traditional media will miss out on

80.8 Million

Source: [Statista](#), November 2024

Users projected by 2029

Global rise from Q4 2023 to Q4 2024:

65%

Growth in ad impressions

95%

Growth in hours of viewing

Source: [Amagi](#), January 2025

Political campaigns turn to streaming:

24%

of programmatic ad share of impressions in 2024 (up from 11% in 2022)

50%

share of spend (up from 30% in 2022)

Source: [Basis Technologies](#), March 2025

Not just old TV shows

Of the record-setting 127 million people who watched this year's Super Bowl, more than 25 million were inside of FAST environments.

“When we look at the top-five FAST apps, or five of the top eight or nine, and we look at January 2024 versus January 2025, we’re seeing roughly a 30% increase in total ad impressions available.”

— Don Norton, GM of data solutions, ADImpact

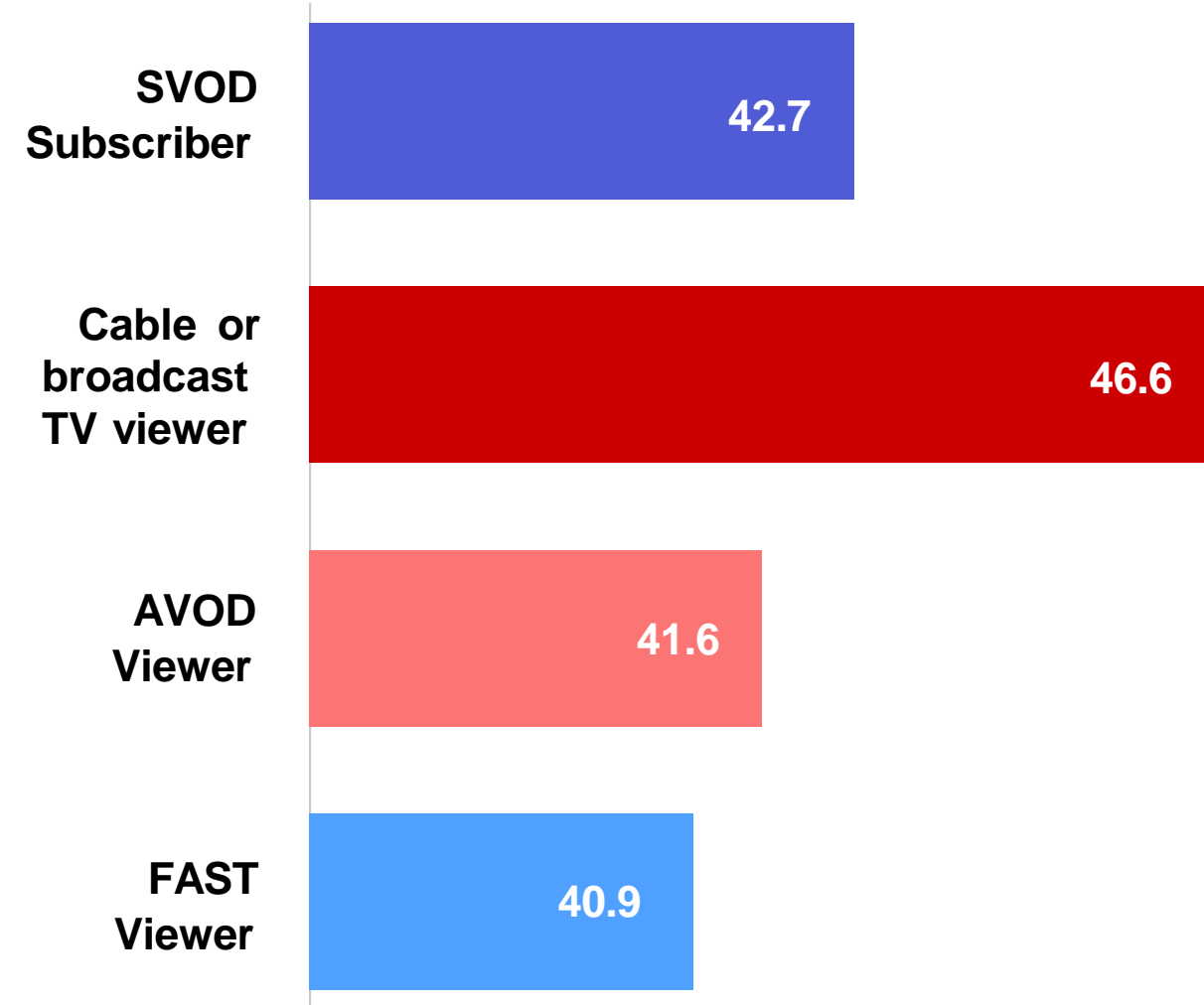
“I think the proliferation of FAST has been fascinating to watch, and to see the growth shows that audiences will really go and find content if you put it somewhere.

Effectively, if you build it, they will come.”

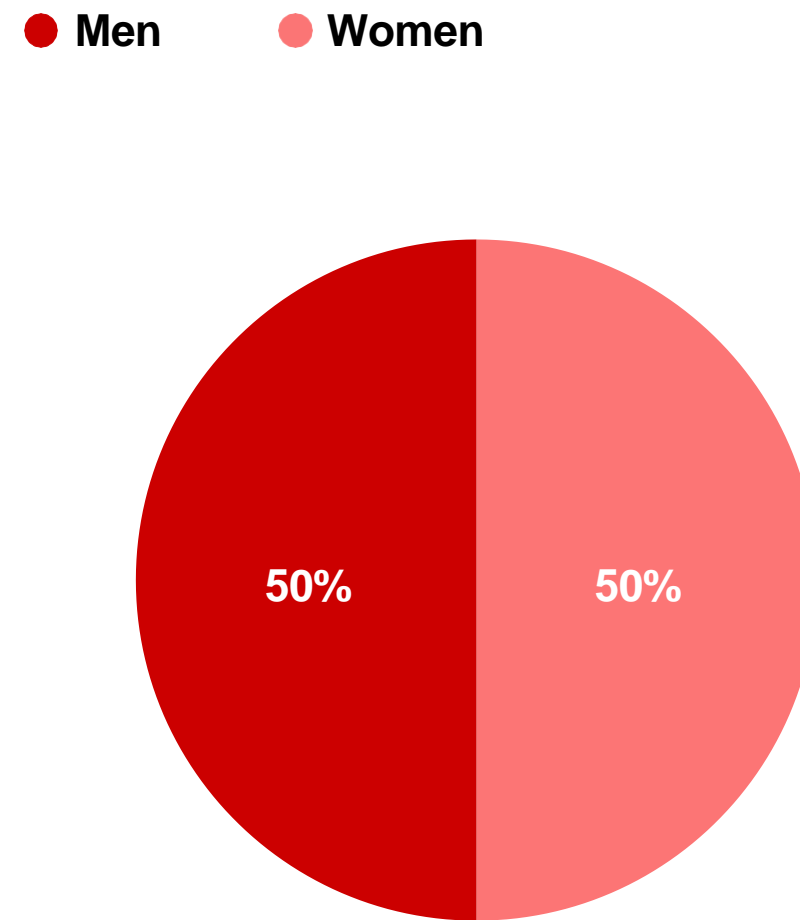
— David Graber, EVP of content sales at Warner Bros. Discovery

FAST reaches a young and diverse audience

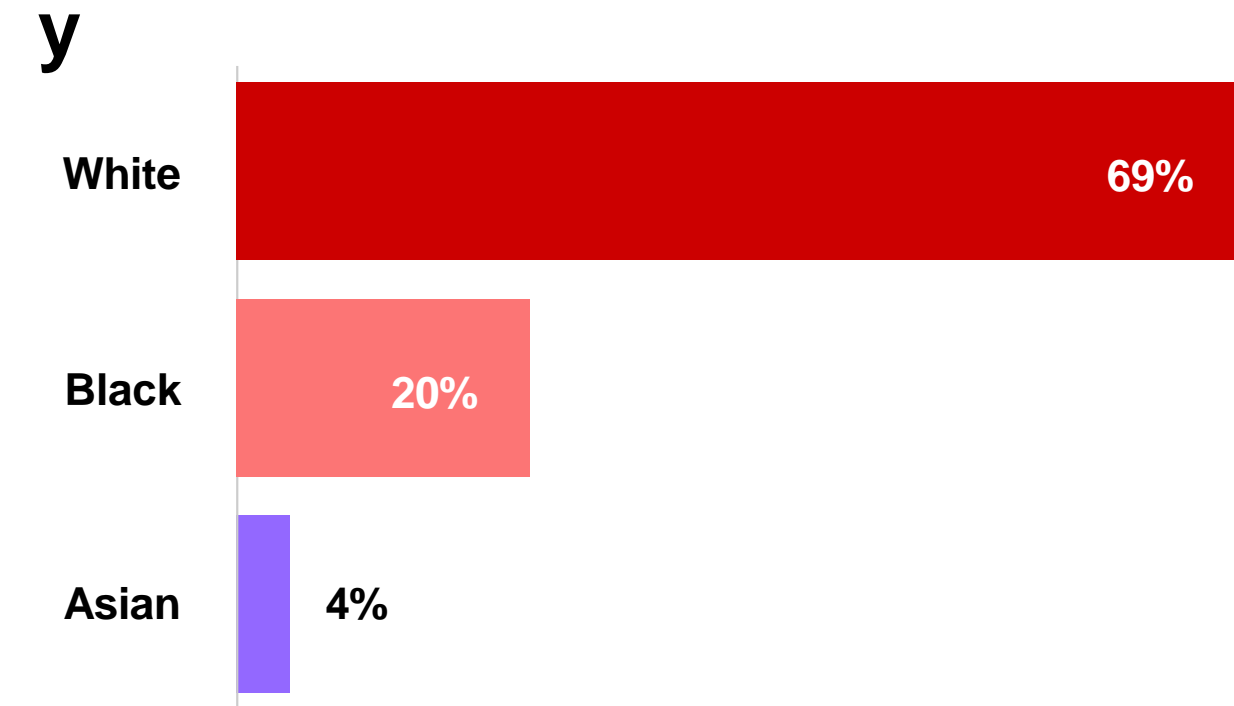
Average Age of



Gender



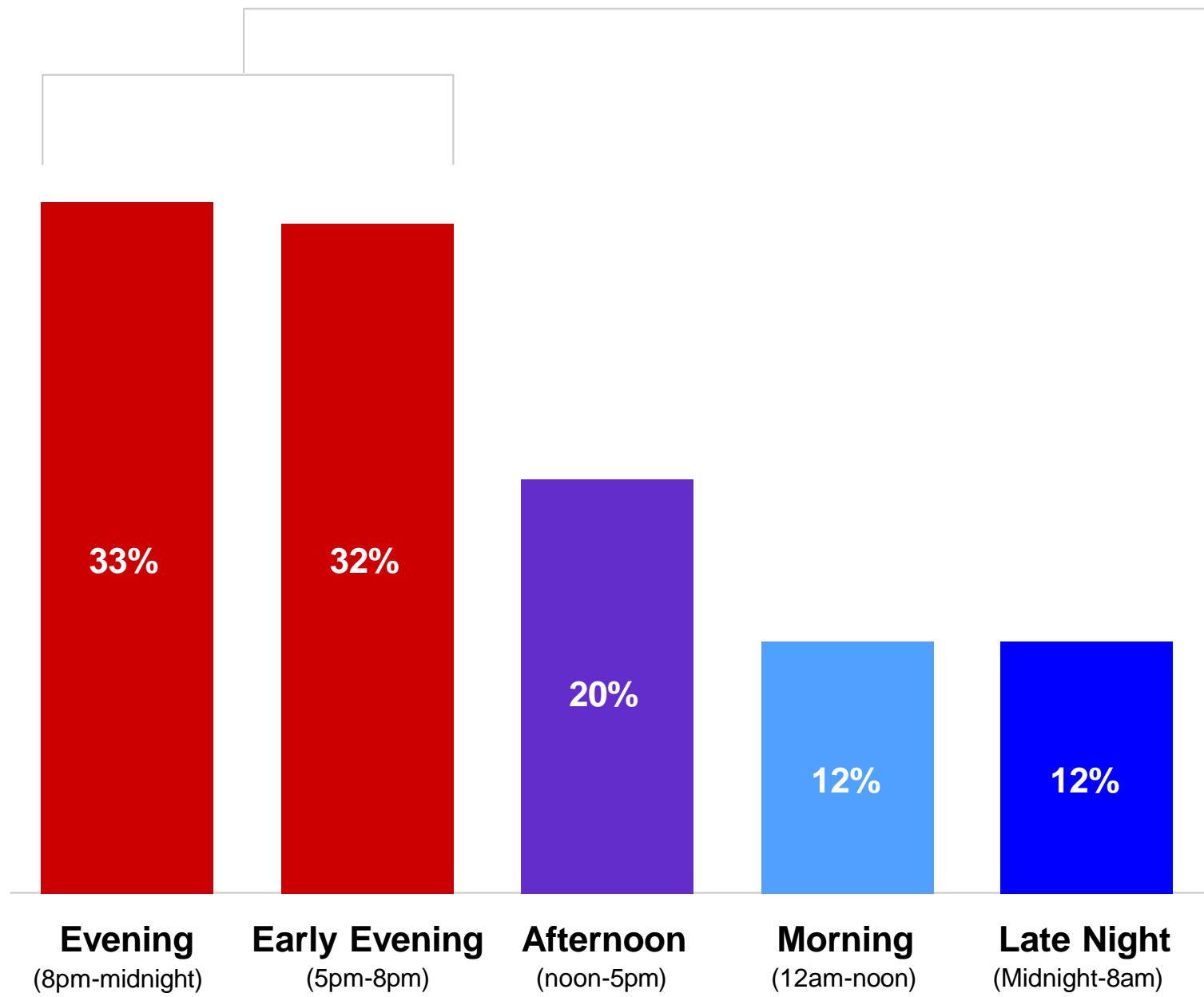
Ethnicity



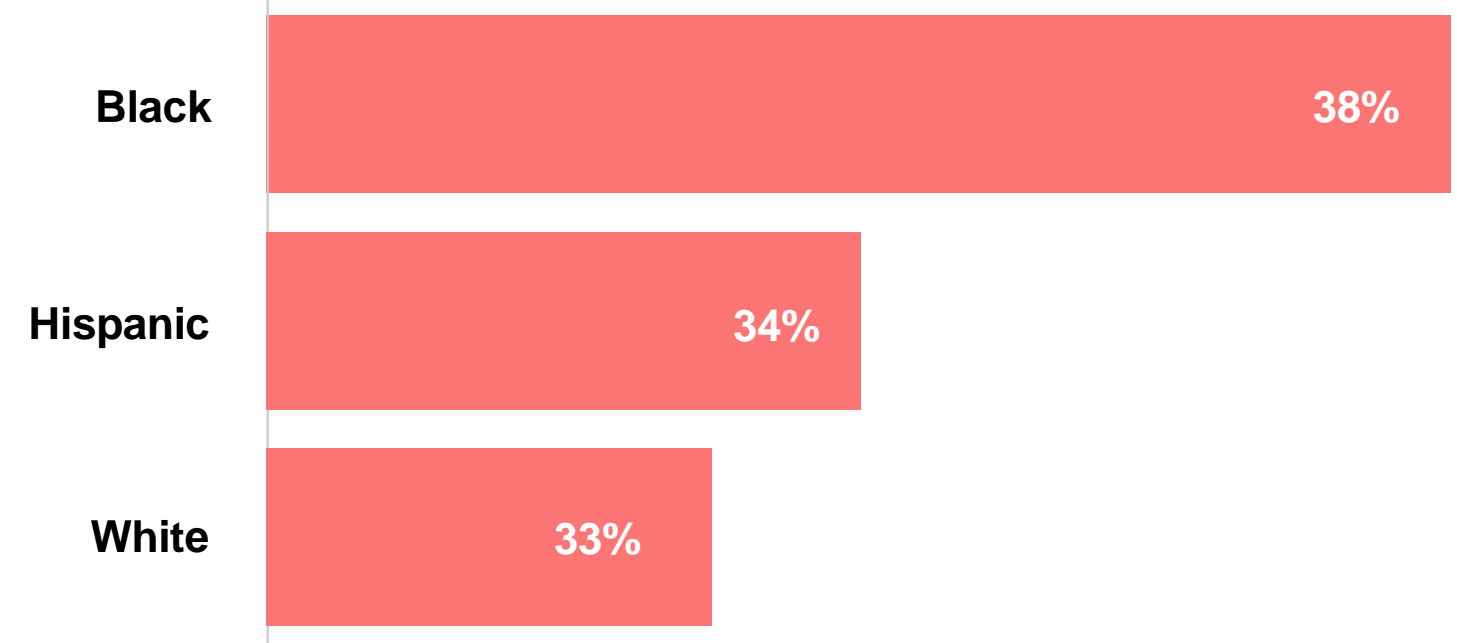
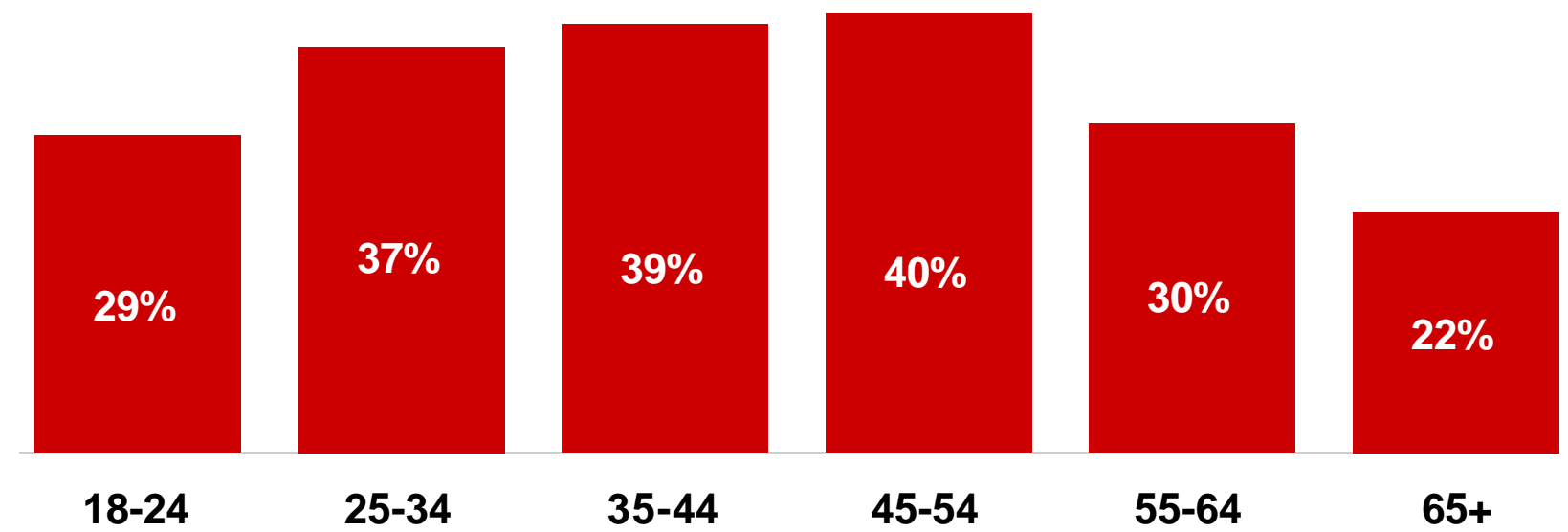
23%

of regular FAST viewers identify as having Hispanic or Latino origins.

When do they watch?



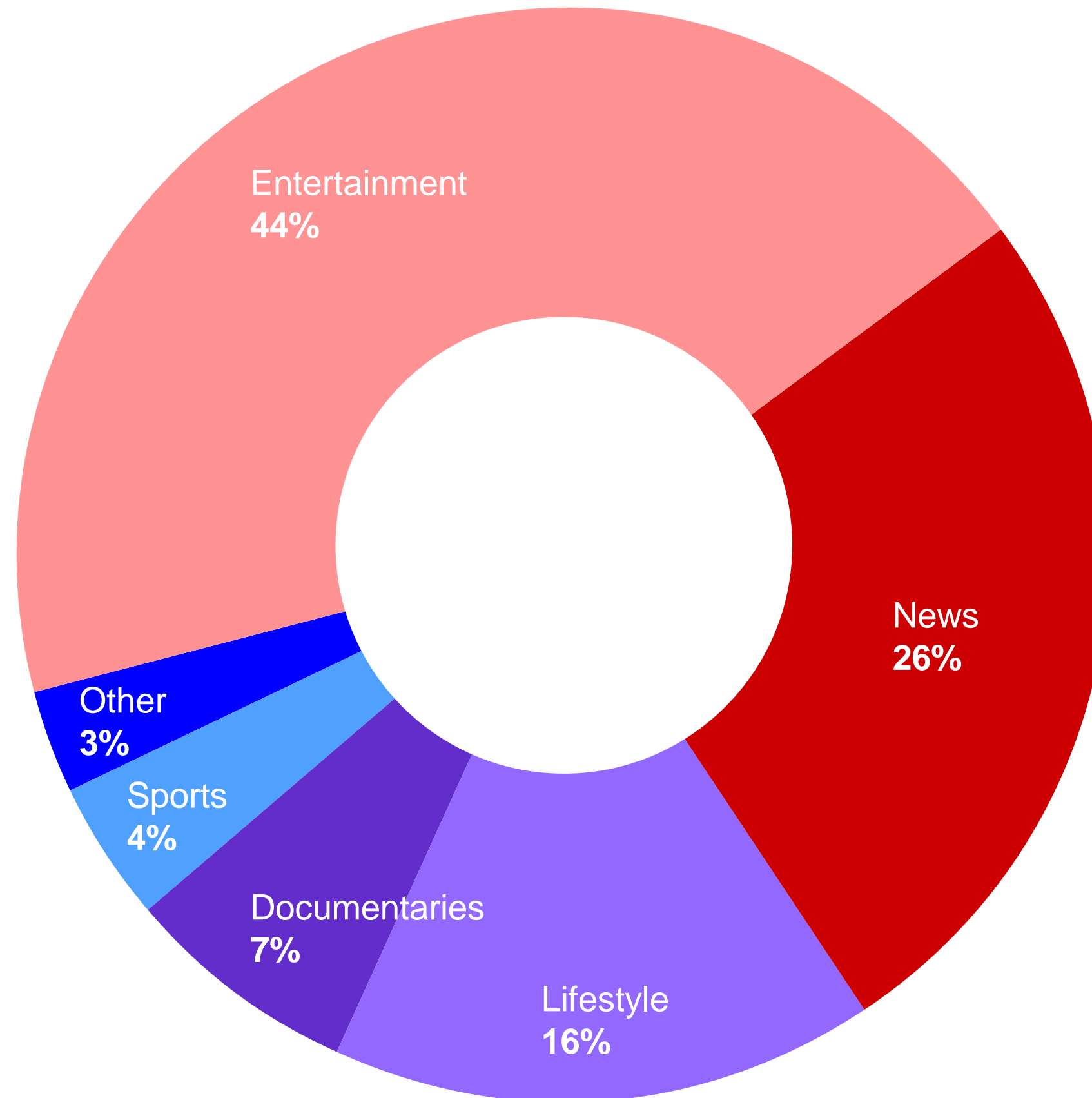
Who's watching in the evening?



What do they watch?

News continues to be a popular form of programming.

Top 5 FAST genres in Q4 2024 in the U.S. & Canada by viewership



16% of News hours of viewing came from local news channels.

Why do they watch?

69%

“I can always find something to watch on free streaming channels.”¹

67%

“Free streaming channels keep me entertained.”¹

55%

“Free streaming channels are one of my favorite entertainment sources.”¹

53%

“Free streaming channels offer high quality content.”¹

73%

of FAST users agree that TV is more enjoyable when they can watch whatever is on²

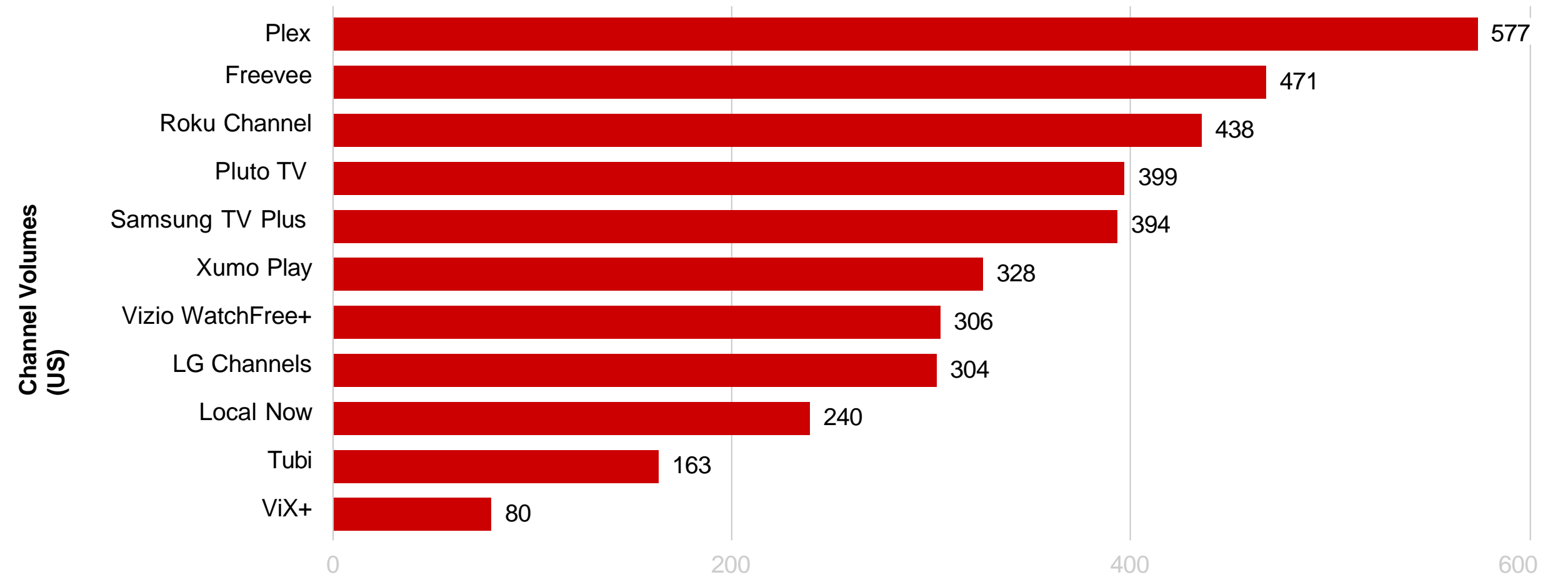
58%

of cord-cutters say FAST is like having cable TV again²

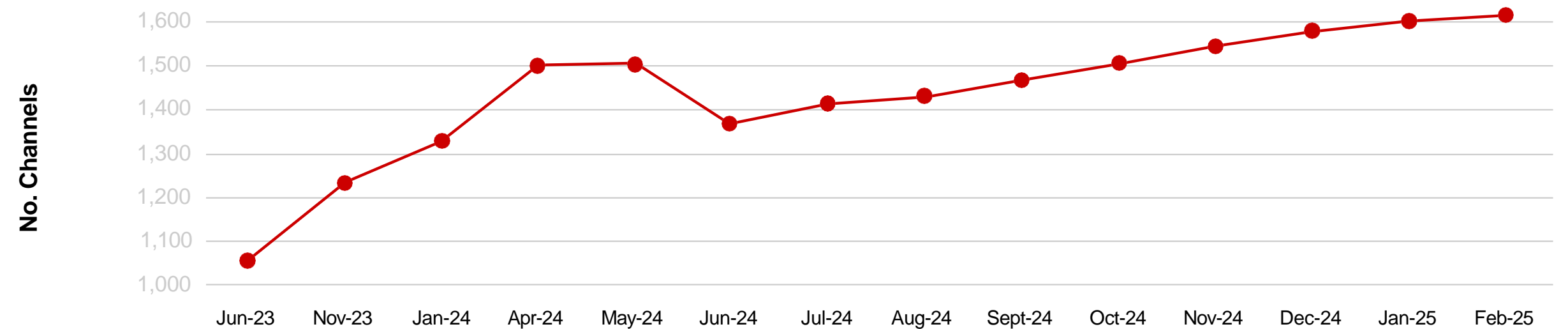
Which platform has the most channels?

The number of unique FAST channels has grown 42% in the last two years globally. As of February 2025, there were 1,189 channels in the U.S. alone, many on multiple platforms.¹

Total number of channels on selected U.S. FAST platforms²



Tracking the growth of FAST channels¹



Source: 1. [Nielsen Gracenote](#), March 2025 2. [3Vision FAST Tracker](#), August 2024

Note: The data excludes FAST channels that are either static (unmaintained) or do not have current programming schedules.

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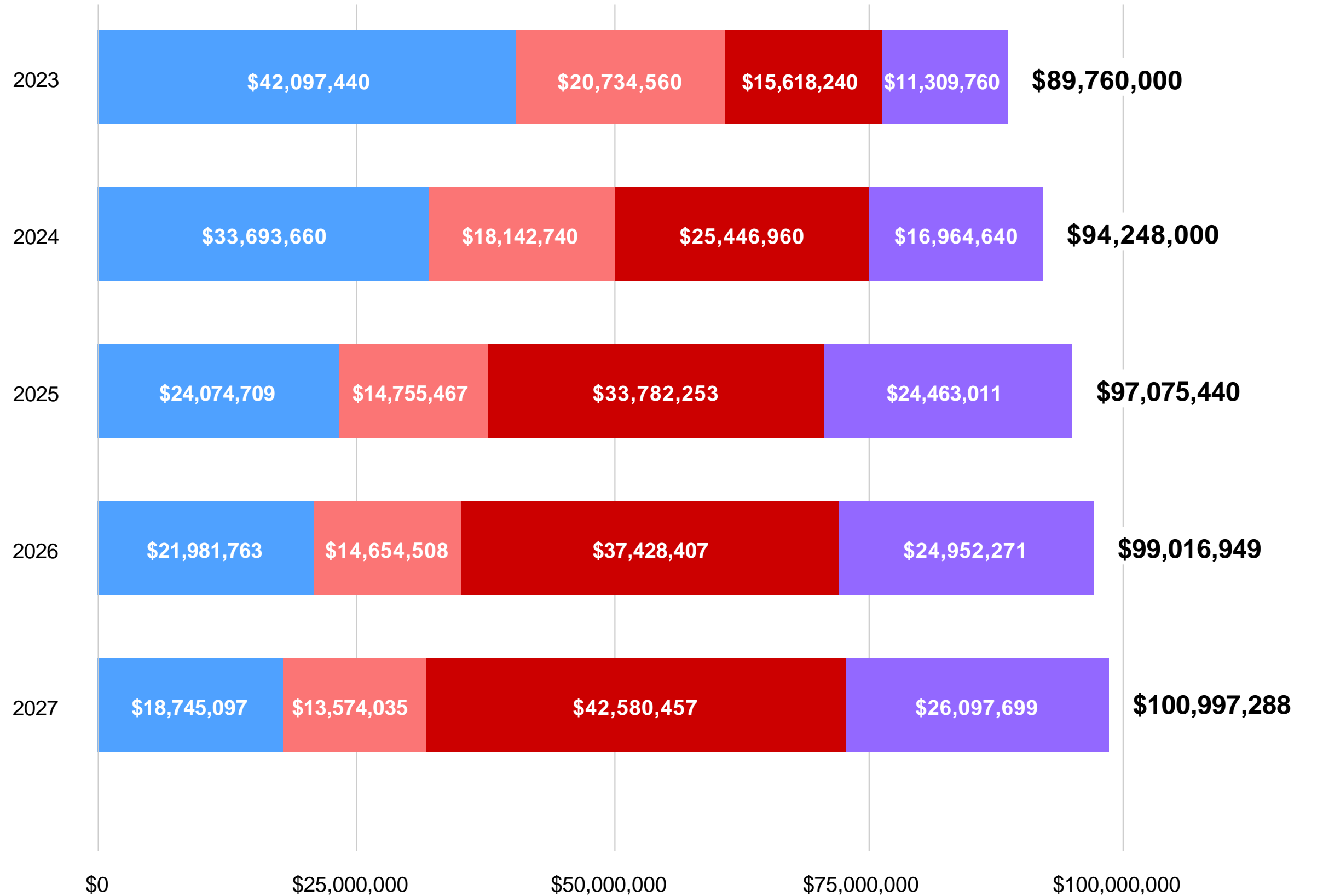
Why it matters

FAST is pulling ahead

Ad spending on FAST is projected to surpass that of cable, broadcast, or SVOD services by 2025 and account for 68% by 2027.

Aggregate ad spend: broadcast, cable, SVOD, FAST 2023-27

● Cable ● Broadcast ● FAST ● SVOD



FAST is powerful

As Google and Meta dominate digital advertising revenue, media companies are turning to FAST to compete using new models.

Three core advantages for media companies

- 01 Local targeting**
National ad buys may under- or over-deliver impressions in certain markets, but FAST can be more targeted to deliver exactly the number of impressions an advertiser seeks within a given market.
- 02 Minimal overlap**
The overlap between broadcast and streaming is minimal, opening doors for media companies to tap into new viewers, new demographics, and new advertising opportunities.
- 03 Cross-platform packaging**
Packaging ad buys across broadcast, streaming, and other digital platforms that each have different audiences can increase ad buys.

“The overlap between NBC prime and streaming is only 16% and the overlap between a Bravo viewer on linear and a Bravo viewer on streaming is only 6%. Doing these holistic buys has caused 90% of our local OTT buys to have advanced targeting, while our national network side hasn’t yet crossed 50%. I think it shows that local has actually led in data targeting.”

— **Shawn Makhijani**, SVP of business development and strategy, NBCUniversal Television and Streaming and SVP, NBC Spot On

Major broadcasters commit to FAST

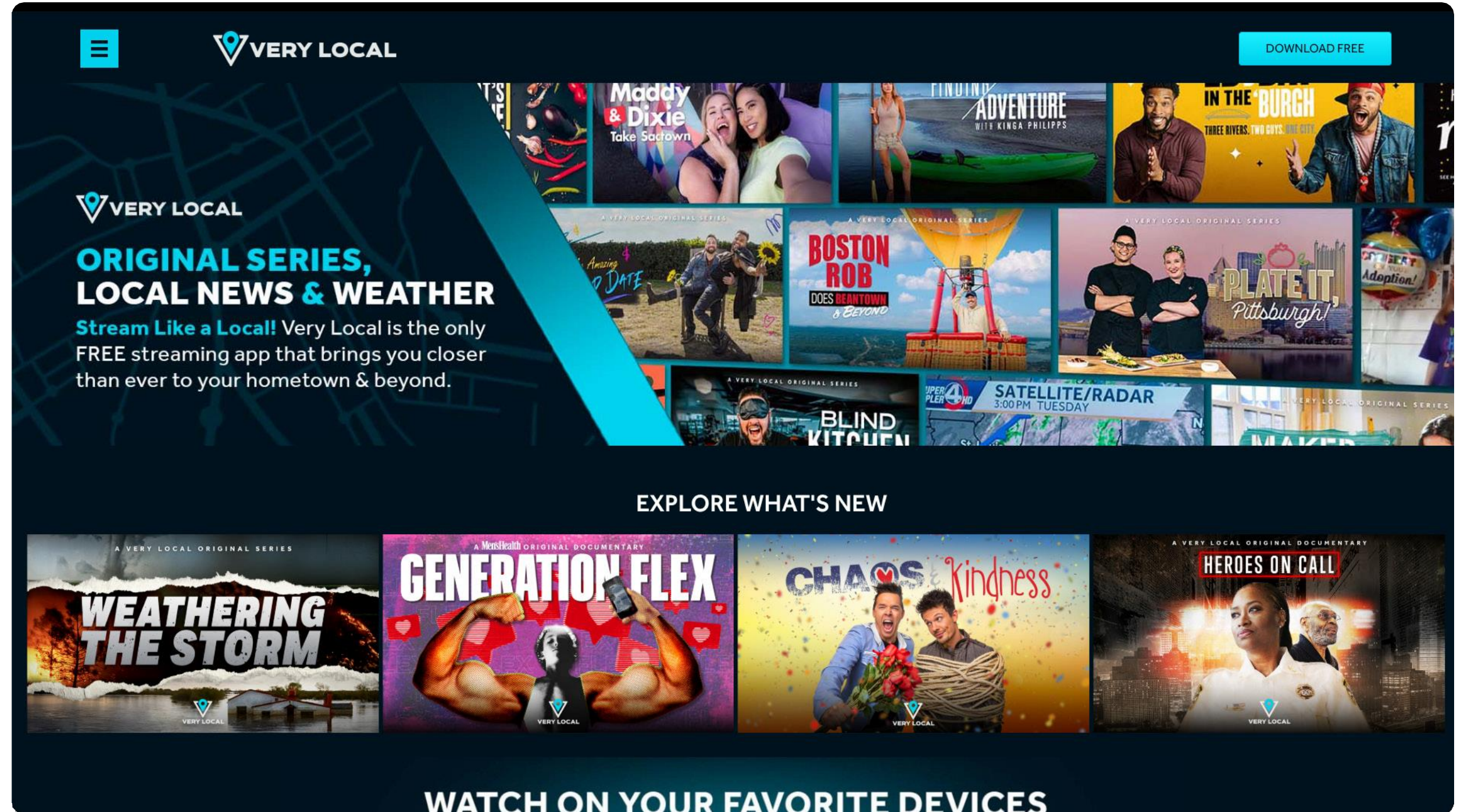
CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, CNN, and E.W. Scripps all have news-oriented FAST channels, some with dozens. BBC News joined the movement in 2024.



“This is a significant milestone for the BBC as this launch will more than double the current reach and availability of the BBC News channel in the U.S. at a time when access to independent news and information is more important than ever.”

Local groups build platforms

Two local broadcast groups have created their own FAST platforms. Hearst has Very Local while Sinclair built NewsOn.



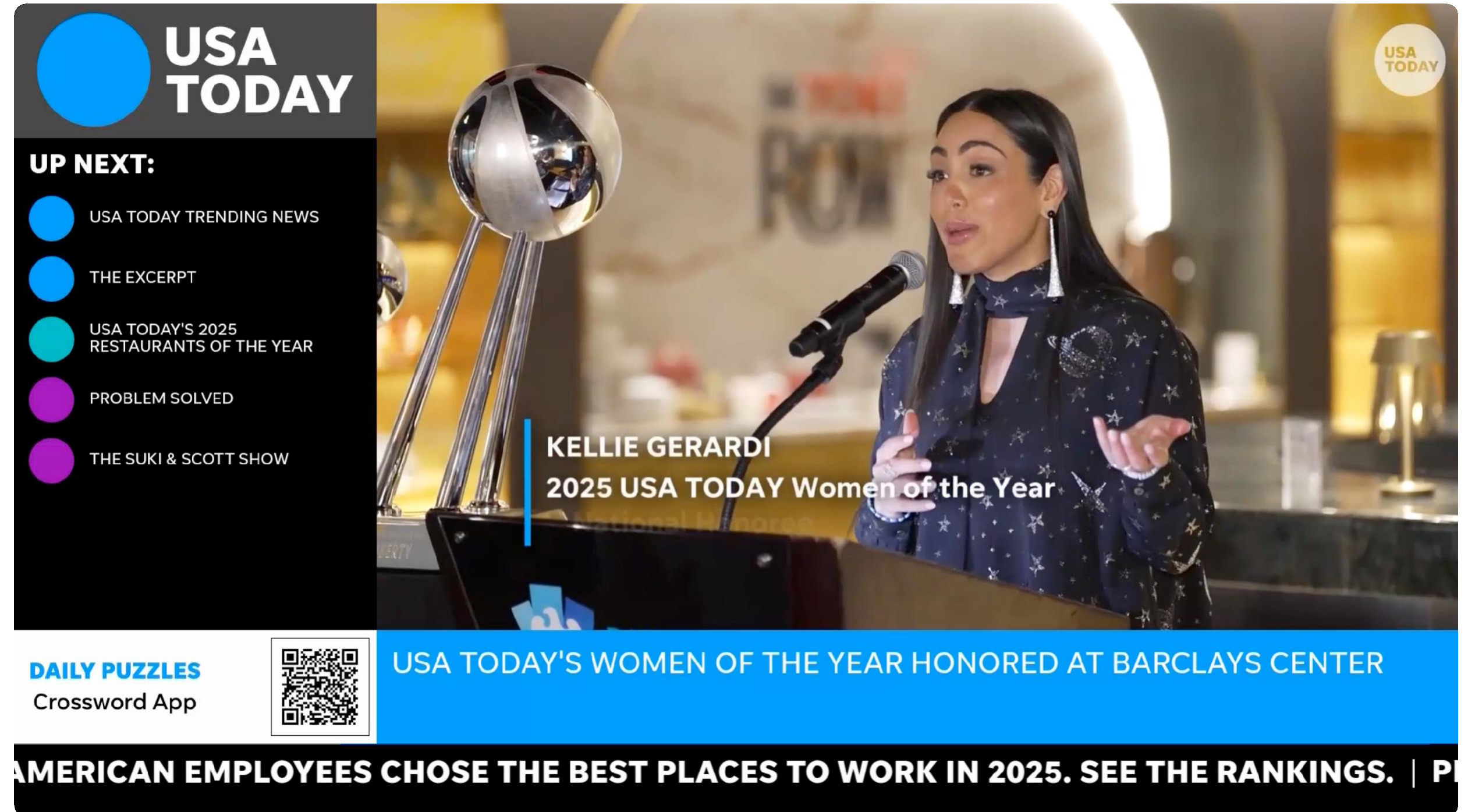
“Local newscasts from trusted stations form the core of the Very Local offering, but this is augmented by other locally produced news programming and high-utility lifestyle content celebrating the communities within the Hearst Television footprint.”

— Andrew Fitzgerald, Senior Vice President of Streaming Video Services for Hearst Television and General Manager of Very Local

Newspapers get into the game

As audience continues to grow and ad revenue follows, newspapers are recognizing an opportunity to expand their footprint as well.

- USA Today's FAST channel features live reporting from around the country as well as documentaries and franchise series.
- It's available on multiple streaming platforms including Roku, Local Now, Amazon, Plex and more.




USA TODAY

UP NEXT:

- USA TODAY TRENDING NEWS
- THE EXCERPT
- USA TODAY'S 2025 RESTAURANTS OF THE YEAR
- PROBLEM SOLVED
- THE SUKI & SCOTT SHOW

KELLIE GERARDI
2025 USA TODAY Women of the Year

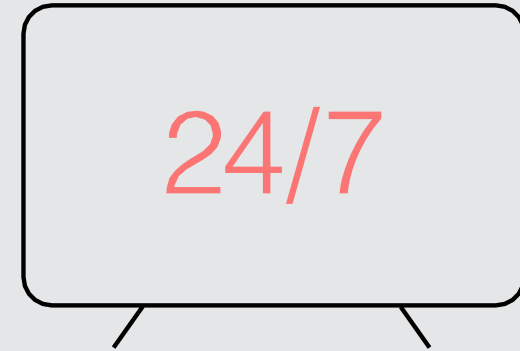
DAILY PUZZLES
Crossword App



USA TODAY'S WOMEN OF THE YEAR HONORED AT BARCLAYS CENTER

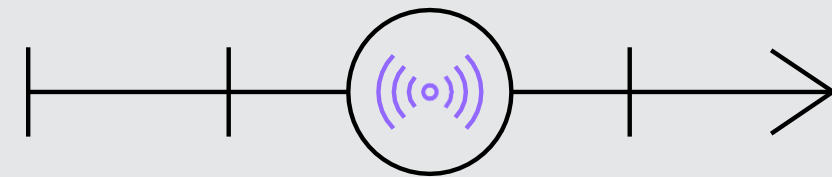
AMERICAN EMPLOYEES CHOSE THE BEST PLACES TO WORK IN 2025. SEE THE RANKINGS. | P

Pros for news organizations



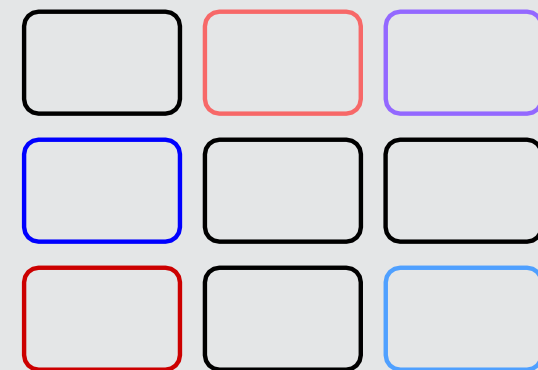
An owned space

A FAST channel is a local news organization's own 24/7 space unlike linear TV where programming blocks are shared with other shows. This additional time gives local stations the ability to experiment and to tell deeper, more complex stories.



Extended live coverage

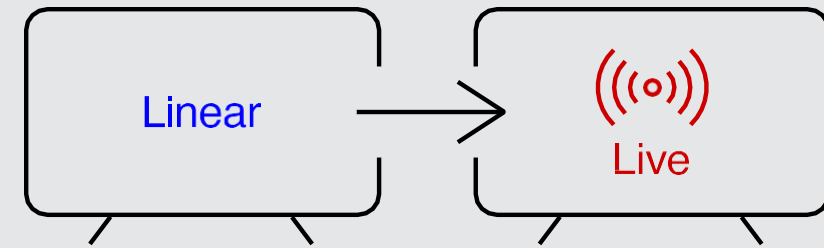
Live programming has proven to be very successful. Stations can be more liberal with live break-ins since other programming is not being interrupted.



Existing content works

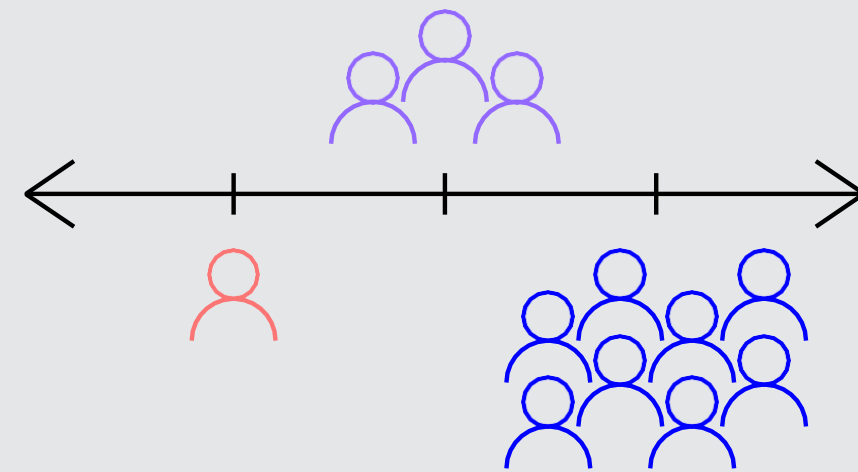
The deep library of content that was created for linear TV can easily port over to a FAST channel.

Pros for news organizations



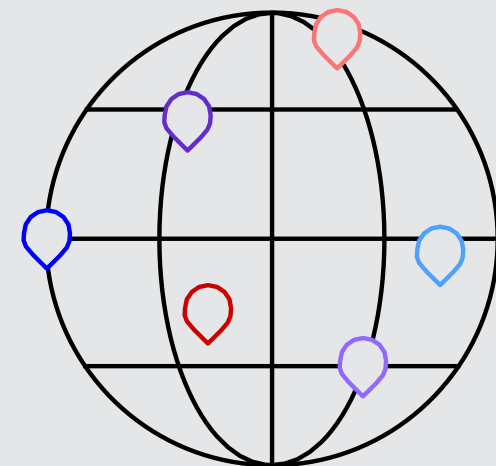
Driving from linear to FAST

Local news stations can promote programming on their FAST channel when other shows are about to take over the linear channel. For example, an anchor might say, “We’re about to resume normal programming, but we will continue live coverage on our Roku live streaming channel.”



More audience for longer

Stations are finding that viewers turn to streaming news during big events—either breaking or planned. The number of viewers tuning in increases over the length of the event.



An expanded footprint

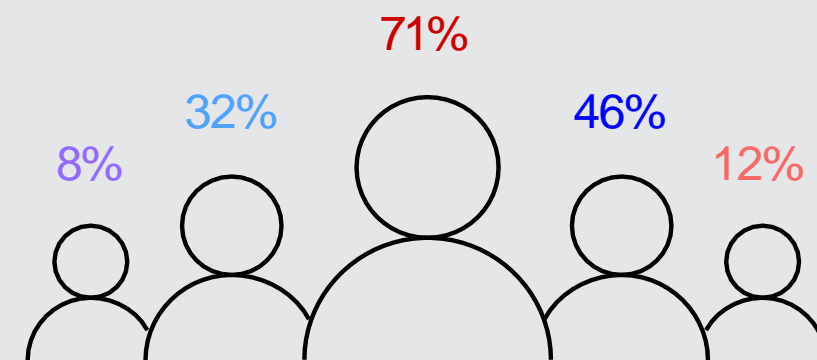
Because viewers have access to local stations around the country, they sometimes watch news from other markets—often in places they used to live or wish to live.

Pros for news organizations



New audiences

FAST viewership trends younger and more diverse than traditional linear television thereby exposing local news content to new, highly sought-after audiences.



More audience data

There is a lot of viewership data available from FAST platforms that enables stations to evaluate what's working and what's not. Stations are able to experiment to determine what kind of programming resonates best with viewers.



Additional ad revenue

As advertisers learn to take advantage of more accurate user data and more customizable ad experiences, CPMs will increase on FAST platforms.

Making money is easier than you think

Hypothetical Earnings

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \sim 730 & \times & \sim 24 & = & 17,520 & \times & 200 & = & 3.5M \\
 \text{Monthly streaming} & & \text{Ad opportunities} & & \text{Ad slots per viewer} & & \text{Concurrent} & & \text{Ad opportunities} \\
 \text{hours in a 24/7} & & \text{per hour} & & \text{per month} & & \text{viewers*} & & \\
 \text{FAST channel} & & & & & & & &
 \end{array}$$

Sell 25% of inventory at \$40 CPM

+

Sell 30% of remaining inventory programmatically at \$10 CPM

=

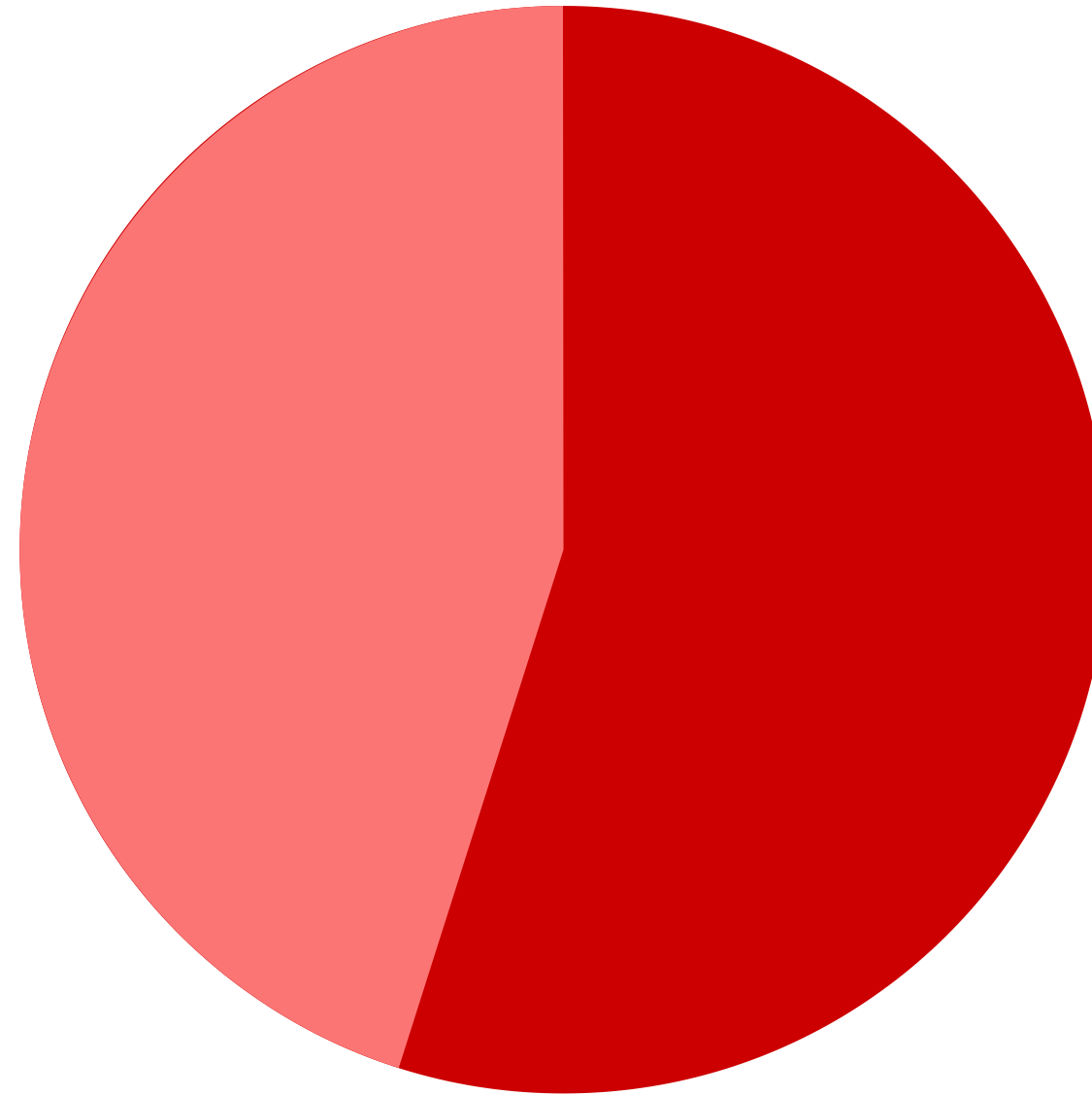
\$43,000 or **\$516,000**
per month per year

* To achieve 200 concurrent viewers, you'd need about 9,733 unique monthly viewers (assuming an average viewing of one hour daily, 15 days monthly).

How revenue is split

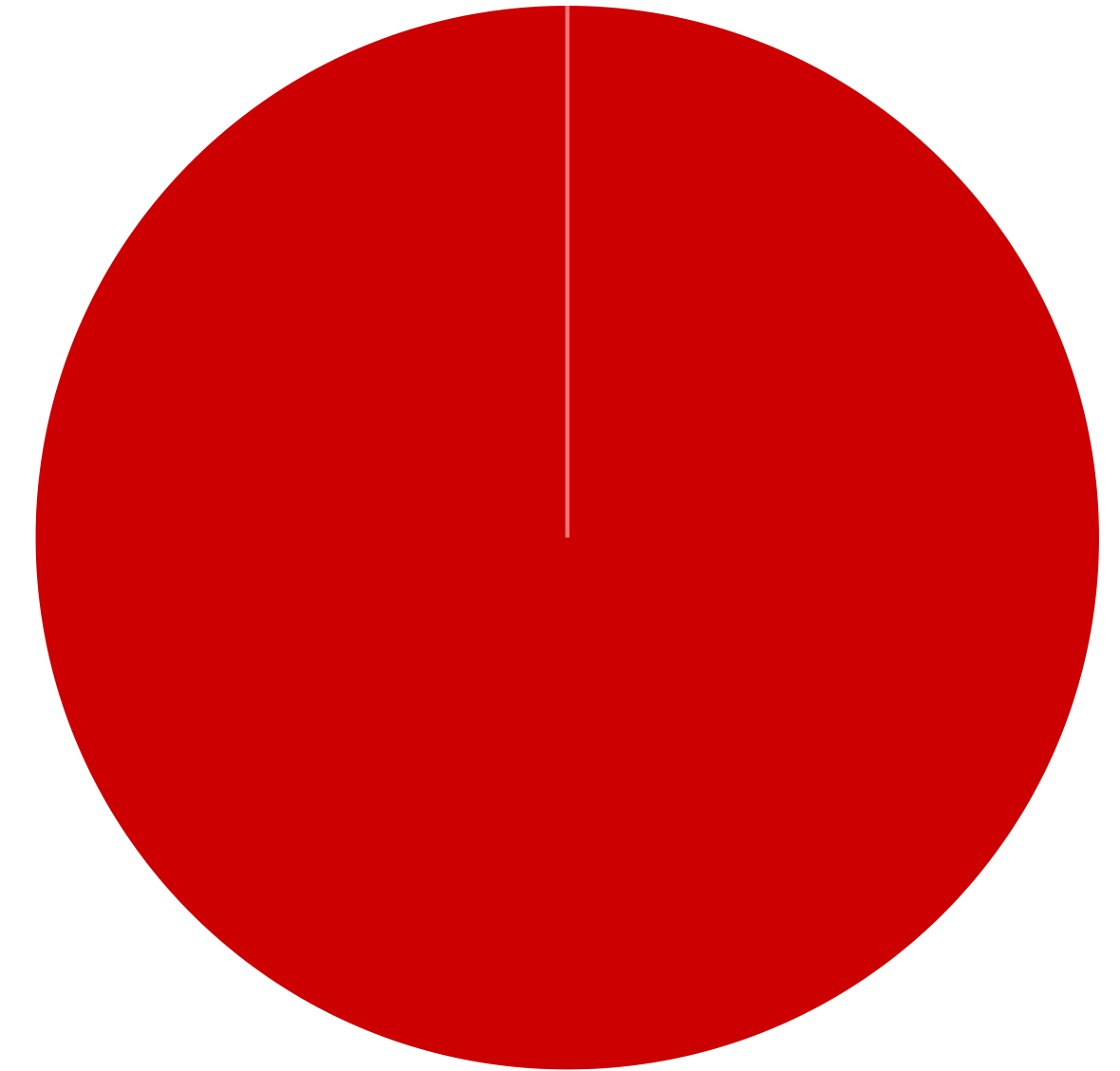
There are two revenue models for FAST.

Inventory Share



- **50–60% sold by content provider**
- **40–50% sold by FAST service**

Revenue Share



- **100% sold by FAST service**
Content provider still receives 50–60% of revenue

“In the early days of streaming, services were focused on building subscriber bases through low fees, ad-free programming, and high-quality original content.

Now, to fully monetize these efforts, they need to deliver a consistent, high-quality viewing experience that goes across all platforms.”

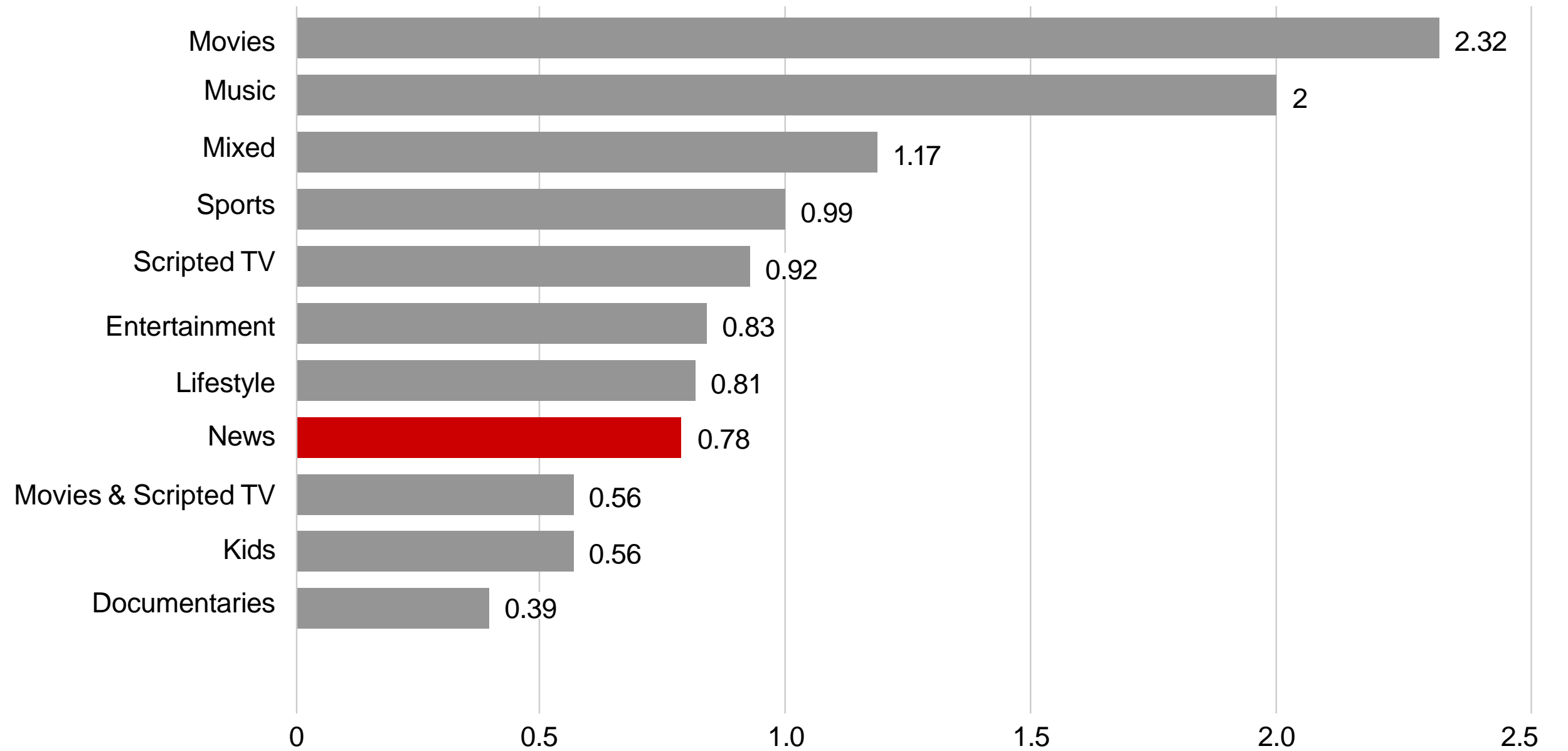
— **Sarah Lee**, Research analyst, Parks Associates

Platforms value news

The high volume of available channels is forcing providers to prioritize quality programming that can deliver ad dollars over sheer quantity.

Providers are dropping underperforming channels but news has one of the lowest attrition rates.

Category Attrition Rates H1 2024 (US)



$$\text{Attrition Rate} = \frac{\text{No. Channels Dropped}}{\text{No. Channels Added}}$$

And measurement is a challenge

What's lagging behind is a universal measurement system that can track performance across multiple platforms.

“Nobody does a fabulous job of measuring cross platform and cross device and ultimately, we need to connect the audiences.

Then you can literally run a campaign across all of a broadcaster's audience, no matter where they are, and have interchangeability, so that if you under-deliver on linear, you can make good in CTV and vice versa.”

— **Tom Sly**, managing partner, Media Inno

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How to get started

First, understand the landscape

FAST services

Content owners/creators

Media companies and other TV/movie content distributors.

Paramount

Disney

NBC

Hardware OEMs

Connected TV manufacturers who have their own walled garden FAST experiences.

SAMSUNG

LG

VIZIO

Platform agnostic services

Free FAST services or devices that are not tied to a platform.

ROKU

**local
NOW**

NewsON

Media owned services

FAST services owned by large media companies which tend to feature their owned content.

tubi

xumo

pluto tv

Cloud master controllers

Companies that enable content owners to launch and manage FAST channels, including ad insertion.

amagi

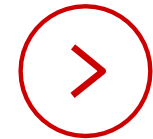
bitcentral

Then, develop your strategy

01

Gather your content

Will it all be yours? Is there anything you can use from wire services or other news orgs? Is there content from any third-party syndicators you could leverage?



02

Create your channel

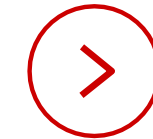
Decide on a programming strategy. How long will your content blocks be? How many ad breaks will you have per hour, etc. Do you need to use a third party to create your channel? (e.g., Amagi, Frequency, Bitcentral, Vestastream, Syncbak, etc.)



03

Plan your ad strategy

Work with your advertising team to determine who will sell ads. Will you sell it all direct? How much will be programmatic?



04

Determine distribution

Where will viewers find your channel? Website, O&O Apps, FAST platforms (Roku, Local Now, etc.)?

01 Content strategy

Will you start out with mostly live/simulcasted content because it's easier to fill the hours? Or can you run more frequent newscasts?

Do you have the resources to cover stories in more depth and build special coverage of more evergreen stories?

What role should sports, weather, and traffic play?

Here are five ways media companies typically fill the hours.

01

Digital video reuse

Video produced for websites, apps, and other digital products can be repackaged for FAST channel use.

02

Live streams

Live newscasts, coverage of local events, and breaking news can be an easy way to fill hours and can serve as unique programming for the audience.

03

Content localization

Nostalgic content has proven to perform well on some FAST channels. Comb through the video archive to see where programs focused on a single topic or event could be stitched together.

04

Public content

Free publicly available content can be added to your programming, such as traffic cams, tower cams, local government meetings, etc.

05

Licensing

Consider rounding out your offering by using video packages and live streams offered by third-parties such as CNN Newsource.

For more information, contact CNN Newsource at cnnnewssource@cnn.com

02 Channel strategy

Plan the mechanics of how you will program your channel as well as its brand positioning relative to traditional media.

01

Programming blocks

Determine how you will construct your programming blocks between ads. Will they follow a predictable pattern? How will lengths vary based on type of content or time of day?

02

Branding/graphics

Establish your brand strategy. Will you use the same brand and graphics used on broadcast or print? Or will you create variations specifically for FAST?

03

Special needs

Are there unique needs or special functionality you would like to include? Do you need to support multiple live shots? Do you need the ability to record?

04

Schedule changes

How often will you need to change your programming schedule? How far in advance will you know about those changes?

03 Ad strategy

How will you approach ad sales?

Will you run your own channel and support it with your own sales team or license your content to a platform and outsource the ad sales?

Do you have the support structure in place to enable the sales team to go after FAST opportunities?

Here are four steps to develop an ad strategy.

01

Targeting

Identify the targeting opportunities you could offer advertisers. What audiences can you deliver? What kinds of content might advertisers be most interested in?

02

Advertisers

Determine how to expand your current roster of advertisers by offering them additional impressions. Identify the new advertisers you want to go after.

03

Inventory & Packaging

Determine the volume of inventory you need to sell to make the channel economically viable. Plan how you will package opportunities across platforms to make your offering more attractive.

04

Activation

Identify the revenue benchmark you will use for launching your channel. Finalize the revenue split with the FAST service. Develop a plan for filling ad inventory over the coming months.

04 Distribution strategy

Launching and growing the audience for a FAST channel takes nurturing over time. Get your feet wet, learn what resonates with the audience, and expand what's successful.

01

Start simple

Launch the channel where you have control – your O&O website and apps (mobile and streaming).

You also control the business model and ad sales here and keep 100% of the revenue.

02

Move to Tier 2 & 3

Start with platforms where it's easier to gain distribution like LocalNow, who wants to be the biggest platform for local news FAST channels. NewsOn, Haystack, and Plex are also good places to start. Build an audience and a story to tell when pitching the Tier 1's.

03

Go after Tier 1

Try to get placement on the big players, e.g., Roku, Samsung, LG, Tubi, FreeVee, etc.

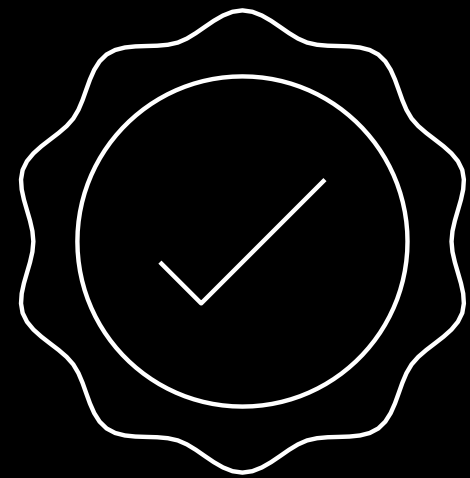
But even then, it's worth considering the ROI on the cost to get there versus the potential audience.

04

Co-mingle with broadcast

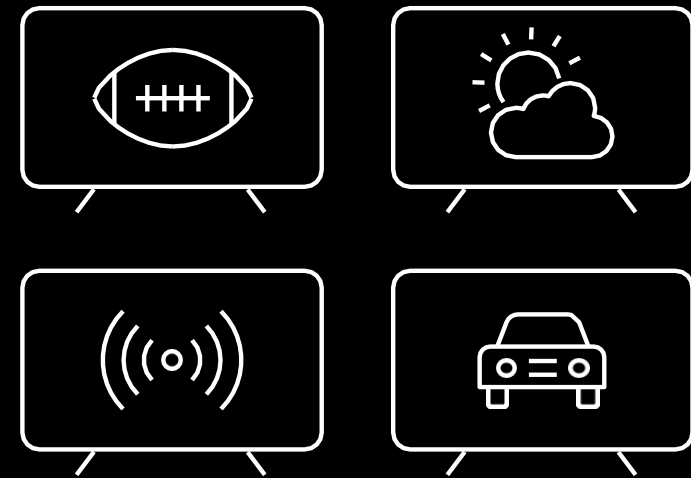
As your service matures, consider how you can use your FAST programming to supplement or replace hours of your over-the-air broadcast channel, or on related streaming services like DirecTV Stream.

Programming considerations



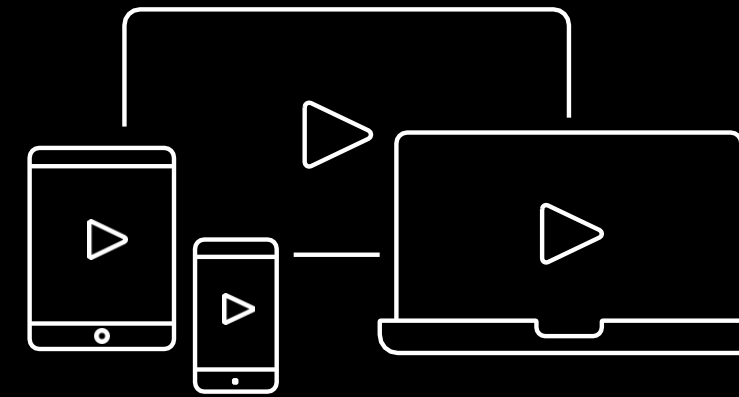
Quality

Maintain content and graphic quality. Don't fill it with junk, clip reels, or social media feeds. Editorial curation is key.



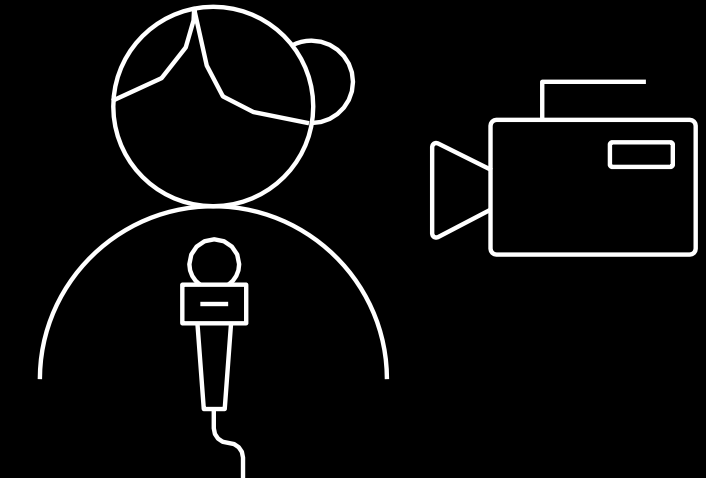
Oversaturation

Balance brand proliferation. It's easy to spin up different channels (weather, top news, sports), but cost, content requirements, and oversaturation of brand must be balanced.



Volume of content

Make sure the content is there. Can enough broadcasts, packaged content, and live streams be produced to operate a 24/7 channel?



Resources

Is there someone already on staff who can oversee FAST channel strategy and programming or does someone need to be hired? Do additional journalists or producers need to be hired to support additional content?

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Key takeaways

Four key takeaways

01

FAST is rapidly growing in audience and revenue while traditional media is declining.

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FAST represents a new source of revenue and an opportunity to reach new audiences through targeted advertising.

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To learn how CNN Newsource can help you in your FAST journey, contact us at:

cnnnewsourc@cn.com
<http://cnnnewsourc.com/>