

Digital Entertainment Is a Mainstay



A 2022 Tech Study report on the digital entertainment habits of the 50+

When smartphones first hit the market, many users looked past some of the fundamental functions of these new phones and became obsessed with the more entertaining aspect of them, like taking photos, creating fun videos, and listening to music. Almost 20 years later, not much has changed. While consumers may have moved past their love affair with “selfies,” they are continuing to find new and bolder ways to be entertained in this digital space.

With the 50-plus showing a significant interest in leveraging digital entertainment for their enjoyment, their engagement might be a gateway to expanding their digital adoption and digital literacy skills down the road.

The 50+ use a variety of devices to engage with entertaining content

While the smartphone is the most commonly owned tech device, it is not the only one used to access digital entertainment. The 50-plus report engaging in various types of digital entertainment on their computers, laptops, tablets, Smart TVs, and home assistants. Though, most engage with digital entertainment from either a smartphone or tablet.



Smartphones



Computers



Laptops



Tablets



Smart TVs

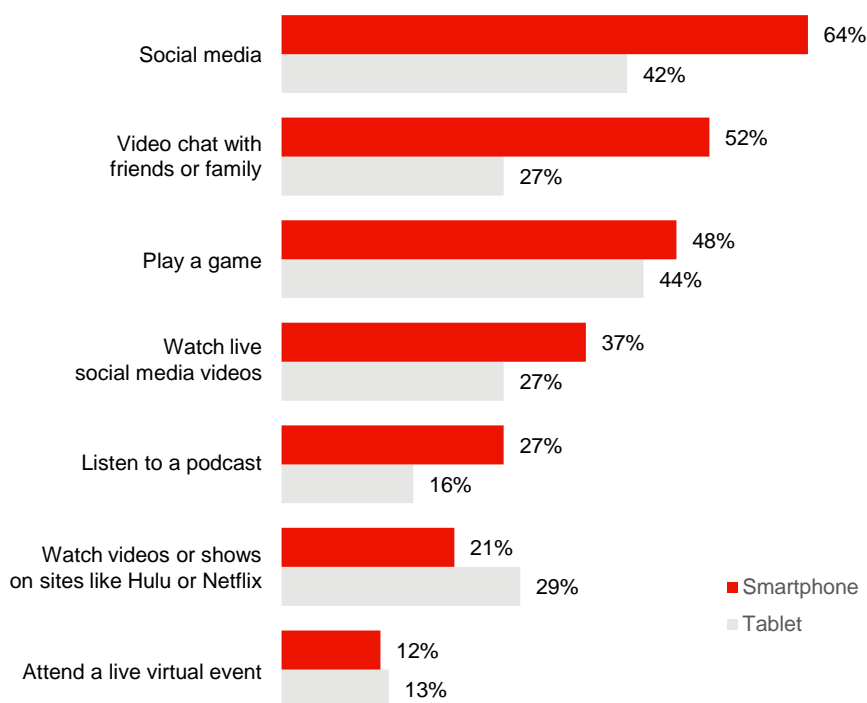


Home assistants

60% of the 50+ stream entertainment on a regular basis

Forms of Digital Entertainment Used in the Past 3 Months by Device

Among 50-plus



Examples of digital entertainment include, but are not limited to



Social media



Playing games



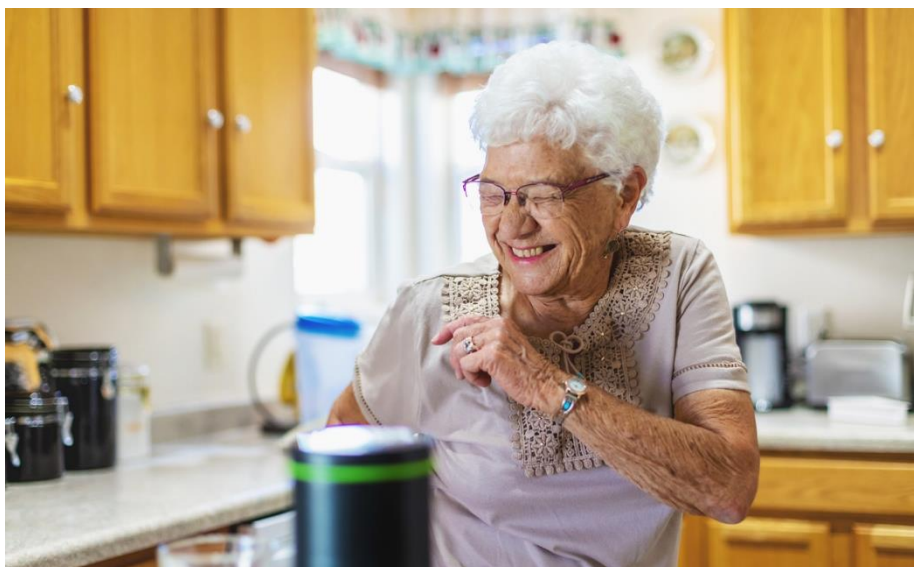
Listening to a podcast



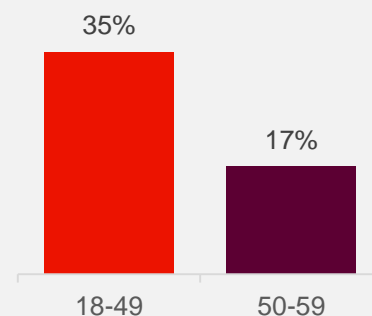
Streaming shows, movies, and videos

When 50-plus adults were asked to select the type of apps they used weekly, the most popular activities conducted on one's smartphone and tablet were entertainment-focused. More specifically, six (6) of the top sixteen (16) most used apps, or 38%, are entertainment-focused. For example, three in five (63%) use a social media app at least weekly.

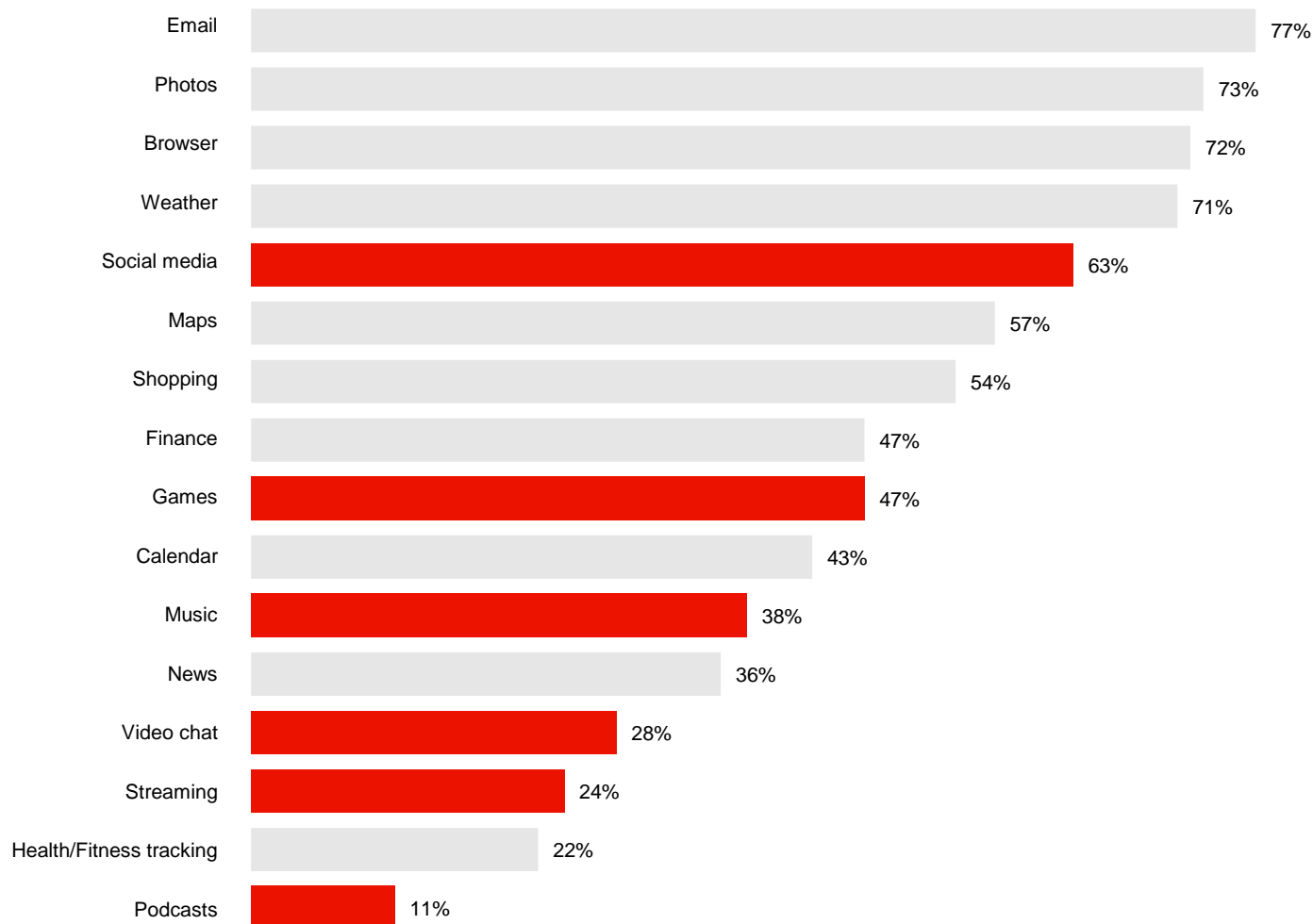
Evidence of how digital entertainment has intertwined itself in the daily lives of the 50-plus doesn't stop there—the most common use of the smart speaker/home assistant (a voice-based “virtual assistant” that allows people to control their homes through automation) is to play music, as cited by 84% of the 50-plus who own one.



TikTok, a platform for short-form videos aimed completely at entertaining the viewer with exciting, spontaneous, and genuine content, **has grown in popularity in the past few years and broadened its reach with of those 18-49 and of those 50-59 now engaging with the platform.**



Top Apps Used Weekly Among 50+



Use of the Smart TV continues to grow as streaming content becomes commonplace

Smartphones and home assistants aside, perhaps the device most associated with entertainment is the Smart TV. The majority (67%) of the 50-plus now own a Smart TV, up from 63% in 2020, with the most significant growth in ownership coming from those 70-plus.

Year Over Year Growth in Smart TV Ownership by Age

50-59		60-69		70+	
2021 (n=777)	2020 (n=808)	2021 (n=680)	2020 (n=798)	2021 (n=606)	2020 (n=650)
70%	72%	72%*	67%	57%*	51%

* indicates a significant difference by year at a 95% confidence level

Two-thirds of the
50+ audience
own a Smart TV

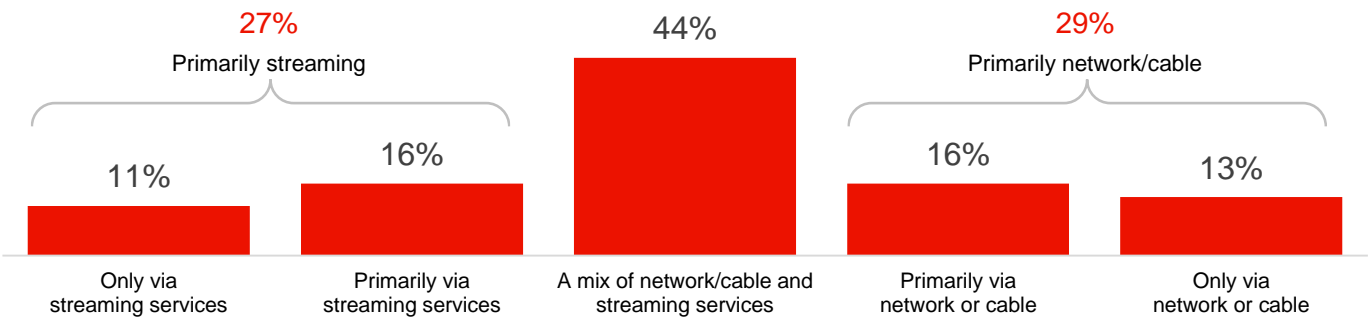


And it's not just those who are more tech-savvy or comfortable with new technology engaging in Smart TV streaming. While 82% of early adopters own a Smart TV, that only drops to 72% among those who wait until a technology becomes mainstream, and to 49% who say they are among the last to buy. It is safe to say, streaming entertainment is a mainstay among the 50-plus because once they own a Smart TV, they use it.

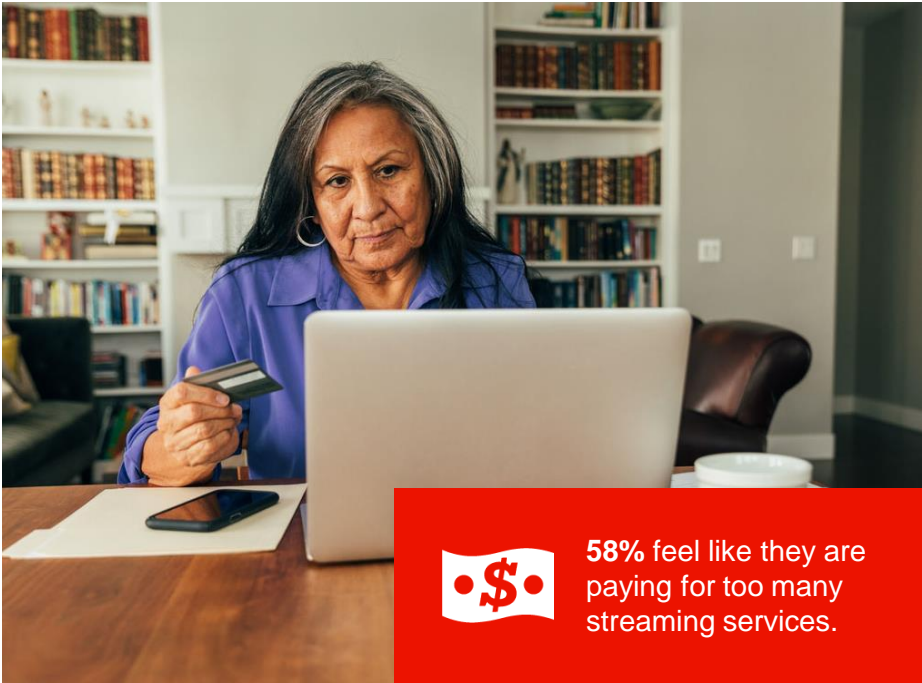
More specifically, among those who own a Smart TV, 71% stream their entertainment, with the majority saying they stream shows/movies/videos at least once a week.

Method of Watching Shows, Series, and Videos

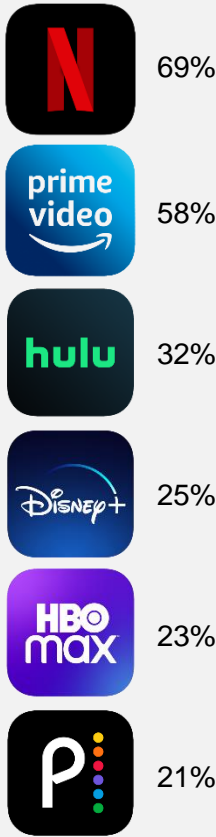
Among the 50-plus who own a Smart TV



Speaking of streaming, there are now a variety of streaming services available, and though Netflix remains the most popular, HBO Max and Peacock have come onto the scene quickly and boldly. On average, the 50-plus household subscribes to 3 different streaming services. Which makes sense as 50% claim to need multiple services to have enough content to choose from. That said, having so many services can also cause issues as 37% claim too many services can be confusing, and they have trouble finding what to watch and where. Perhaps it will become a survival of the fittest over time, as many 50-plus consumers are beginning to feel like they are paying for too many services and/or were a bit coerced into subscribing in the first place.



Streaming Services Used Among 50+



Digital entertainment may be a gateway to broader technology adoption and improving digital literacy

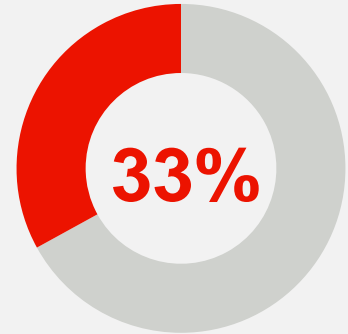
Over the past several years, concepts such as gamification (defined as the process of adding games or game-like elements to something such as a task, to encourage participation) and edutainment (defined as an experience combining education and entertainment in an enjoyable experience to inform, teach, or encourage an action) have been used successfully to engage consumers. Therefore, wouldn't it stand to reason that as older adults engage more frequently with various types of digital entertainment the more comfortable and competent they might become in their digital literacy skills and/or with technology in general? While this might sound like a stretch, it is an interesting perspective.

One of the key complaints among the 50-plus related to technology is that it is not designed with all ages in mind (as cited by 41%), and more specifically, it is too complicated and tends to lack the training or instructions needed for full adoption. The opportunity then becomes how to embed some type of fun or gamification into the communication of the benefits and use cases of new products and services to make them easy to use and easy to learn. Given the 50-plus exhibit an appetite for being entertained it certainly seems like it might be an opportunity to springboard them into broader adoption through entertainment.

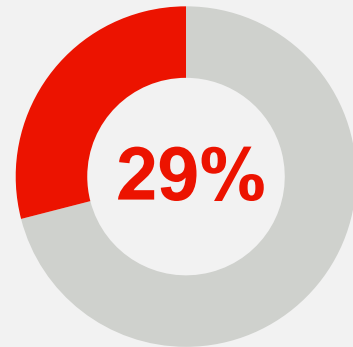


Not all subscriptions to streaming services are proactive

Baited to subscribe
50-plus



Charged post free trial
50-plus



Implications

The 50-plus appear to have fully embraced digital entertainment. Practically all of their devices are used at one time or another for entertainment purposes such as social media, gaming, and listening to music. Digital entertainment is clearly part of our evolving culture with lots of room for growth.

Streaming services have been a primary delivery platform of digital entertainment and were a welcomed distraction during the pandemic. And though there does not appear to be a slow-down in the use of streaming services, there could come a time in the near future when older adults do not feel the content is worth the cost.

But possibly most interesting is the potential for digital entertainment to be an avenue to greater tech adoption and digital literacy growth among older adults. If leveraged correctly, time spent with entertainment-focused content could actually be doubling as training for other technology applications and in turn improving confidence, literacy, and ultimately adoption of technology.



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