

Media That Engages Older Adults: A Preference Study

2024 Survey



2024 Media Preferences of Older Adults

Understanding how older adults consume and use media is key to a successful acquisition and retention strategy for healthcare and lifestyle marketers.

Throughout their life journey, baby boomers have deeply impacted the US economy and culture. Now, as the youngest boomers are turning 65, they are swelling Medicare membership and will have an impact on healthcare and lifestyle needs of older adults for many years. Tapping into their behaviors and preferences for media is an essential component for more effective targeting by marketers of Medicare, healthcare, residences and other products and services. In this seventh consecutive survey on the media preferences of older adults, Media Logic surveyed 577 people between the ages of 63 and 75.

Executive Summary

Key Findings:

- 1. Dominance of TV and Internet:** Ninety-nine percent of older adults use the internet daily, and 98% watch TV, with 77% watching TV for more than two hours each day. TV remains the primary source for news and entertainment, although the internet is second for news.
- 2. Shift Towards Streaming:** Streaming services have become the most popular TV option among older adults, with about half being ad-free subscriptions. The top five types of content watched include news, drama, comedy, sports and documentaries.
- 3. Response to TV Ads:** Older adults prefer visiting company websites in response to TV ads over other methods such as phone calls or QR codes.
- 4. Internet Use and Preferences:**
 - **Primary Activities:** Email and weather updates are the top internet activities. However, online shopping has increased, edging ahead of news consumption.
 - **Device Usage:** Computers, laptops and smartphones are equally popular for internet access, followed by tablets and smart TVs.
- 5. Social Media Engagement:**
 - **Platform Preference:** Facebook and YouTube are the dominant social media platforms, with 47% of older adults spending more than an hour daily on these channels.
 - **Purpose of Use:** The primary reason for social media use is to connect with friends and family, followed by entertainment and news consumption.
- 6. Other Media Preferences:**
 - **Radio and Music Streaming:** AM/FM radio is the leading choice, with YouTube Music the favorite streaming service. Classic rock is the most popular radio genre.
 - **Smart Speakers and Video Calling:** Usage of smart speakers for music and information is slow to grow traction. FaceTime and Zoom are the most used video calling platforms.
- 7. Traditional vs. Digital Media:**
 - **Newspapers:** Digital newspapers lead in readership, though over 50% still read print or a combination of both.
 - **Radio:** Traditional AM/FM radio retains high listenership among older adults, with a minor segment using streaming services.

Executive Summary

Marketing Implications:

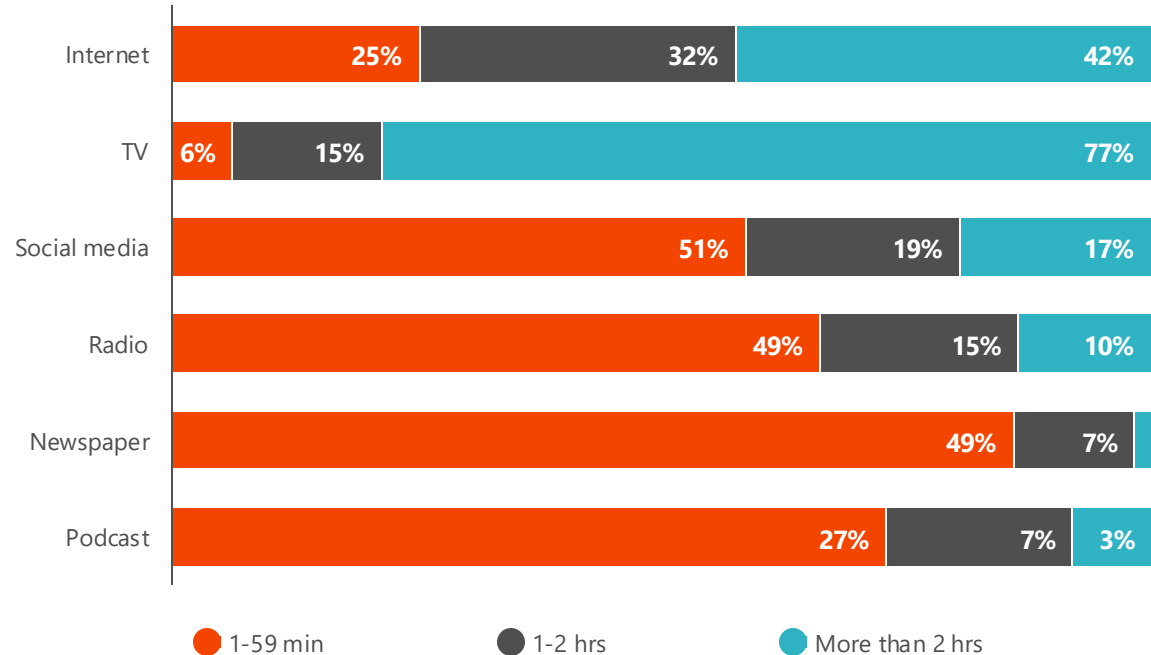
- 1. Leverage TV and Streaming Services:** Given the high engagement with TV and streaming services, placing ads and content on these platforms is crucial. Focus on news and entertainment segments to capture the largest audience.
- 2. Enhance Online Presence:** Ensure company websites are optimized for easy navigation and information retrieval since older adults prefer visiting websites after seeing TV ads.
- 3. Utilize Social Media Strategically:**
 - **Targeted Campaigns:** Focus on Facebook and YouTube for social media campaigns. Consider creating content that encourages interaction and shares, particularly content that connects family and friends or provides entertainment and news.
- 4. Adopt Multi-Channel Approaches:**
 - **Integrated Marketing:** Use a combination of TV, streaming, social media and internet advertising to ensure comprehensive coverage. Tailor messages to suit each platform's strengths and user behaviors.
- 5. Prioritize Trust and Credibility:** Older adults lean into marketing that's credible. Leverage content such as testimonials and reviews to build trust. Deliver marketing messages with clear and factual information.
- 6. Create Interactive and Engaging Content:** Connect with an audience that's eager to learn through "how-to" videos. Consider interacting with more tech-savvy older adults through video calls, smart-speaker engagements and QR codes.
- 7. Continue to Use Traditional Media:**
 - **Print and Radio:** When considering broader-reaching media plans, don't dismiss traditional media such as print newspapers and AM/FM, which still have loyal audiences.

The internet and TV programming dominate media engagement by older adults.

Overall, there were no significant shifts in media engagement. In a typical day, 99% of older adults use the internet and 98% watch TV. TV holds the highest level of engagement of all media, with 77% of respondents watching TV for more than two hours each day.



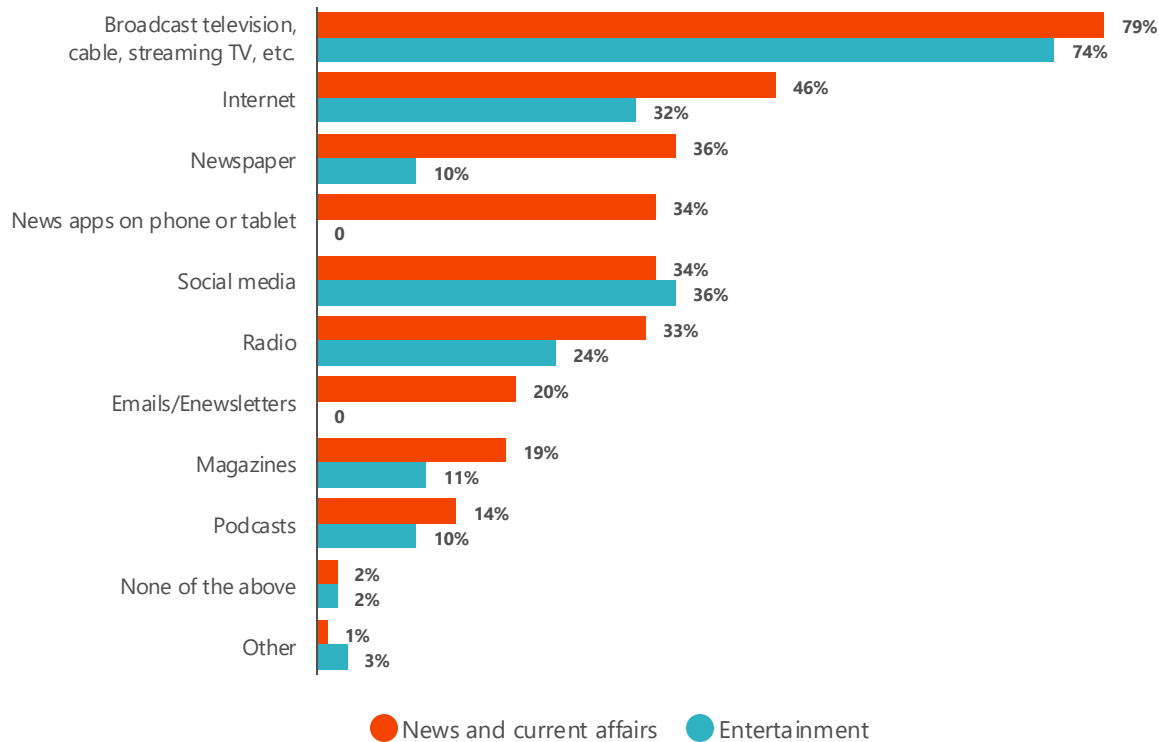
Q. In a typical day, how much time do you spend engaging with the following media?



TV programming is the go-to for news, current affairs and entertainment.

There is no beating TV programming for older adults' attention for news and current affairs or entertainment. Though, competition is warming for news. While the internet is a steady second source for news, newspapers, news apps, social media and radio are jockeying for subsequent positioning. Meanwhile, social media edged ahead of the internet for entertainment engagement this year.

Q. Which media channels do you frequently use to consume news and current affairs and which for entertainment?



Streaming is the leading TV service for older adults.

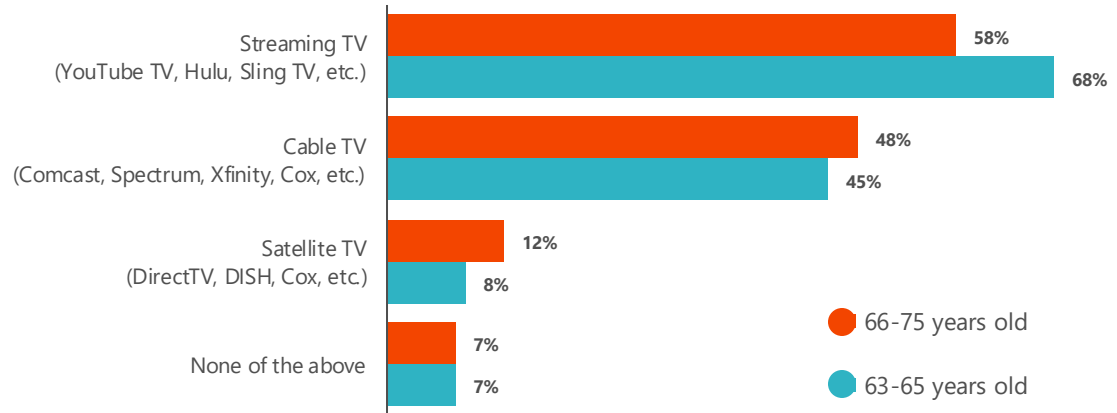
This year, streaming TV continues to grow as the most popular TV service among both the 63-65 and the 66-75 age groups. About half of those subscriptions are ad-free. Compared to last year, the 63-65 year old streamers increased by 11 percentage points.

Ad-Free
63-65 YO
50%

Ad-Free
66-75 YO
48%

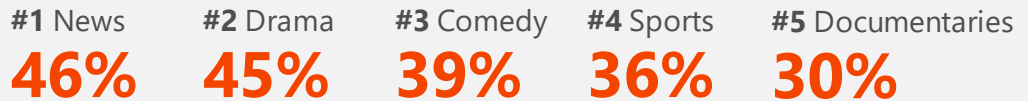


Q. What TV services do you subscribe to?



Q. What are the types of television programs you enjoy most?

The top five types of content watched by older adults:

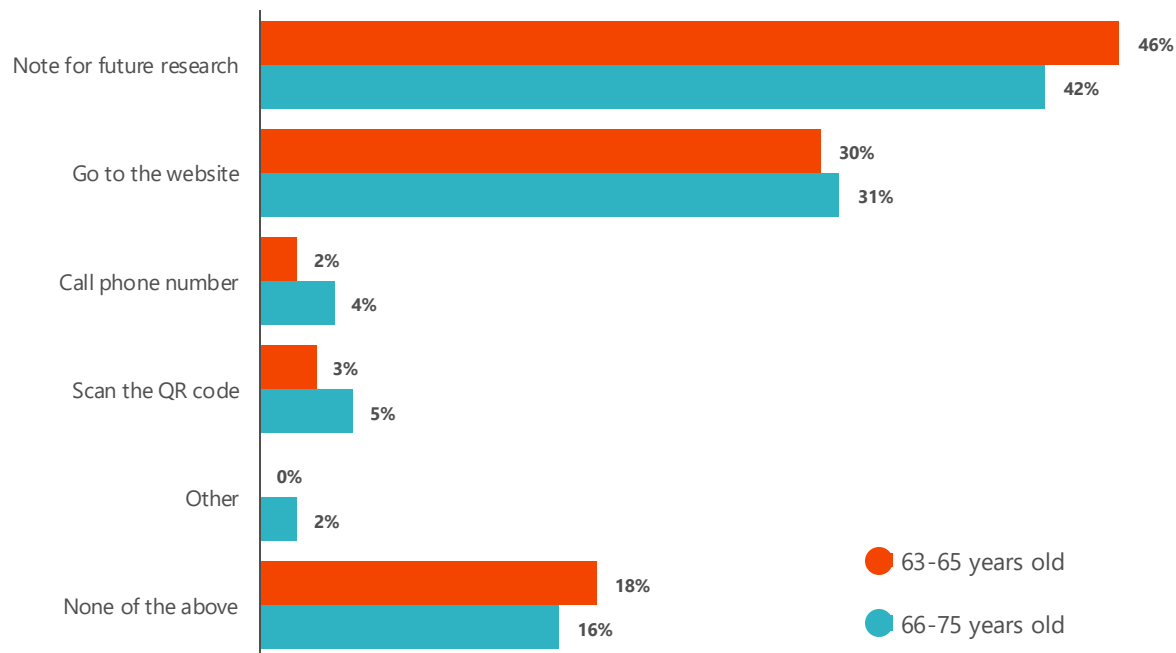


URLs see more response than other calls to action in TV ads.

While the most popular response to an ad of interest is to make a note to self for future research, visiting the company's website is a strong secondary action compared to other ways to connect for more information. Though becoming somewhat commonly featured, QR codes show limited traction with just slightly more use than last year. It is interesting to note, though, that the increase in users came from the older segment of respondents.



Q. How would you respond to a television commercial for a product or service that interests you?



Internet use fills many needs of daily life.



Q. What activities do you do on the internet?

As found in past surveys, older adults continue to use the internet mainly for email and checking the weather. Compared to last year, shopping and social media swapped positions in the top five internet activities, and shopping just edged out checking the news for fifth place. It is also worth noting that 41% of older adults on the Web use it to learn “how to.”

Top 5 reasons older adults use the internet:

#1
Email

84%

#2
Weather

70%

#3
Access personal accounts (e.g., pay bills, file/check statements)

64%

#4
Social media

63%

#5
Shopping

62%

Q. Which devices do you use to access the internet?

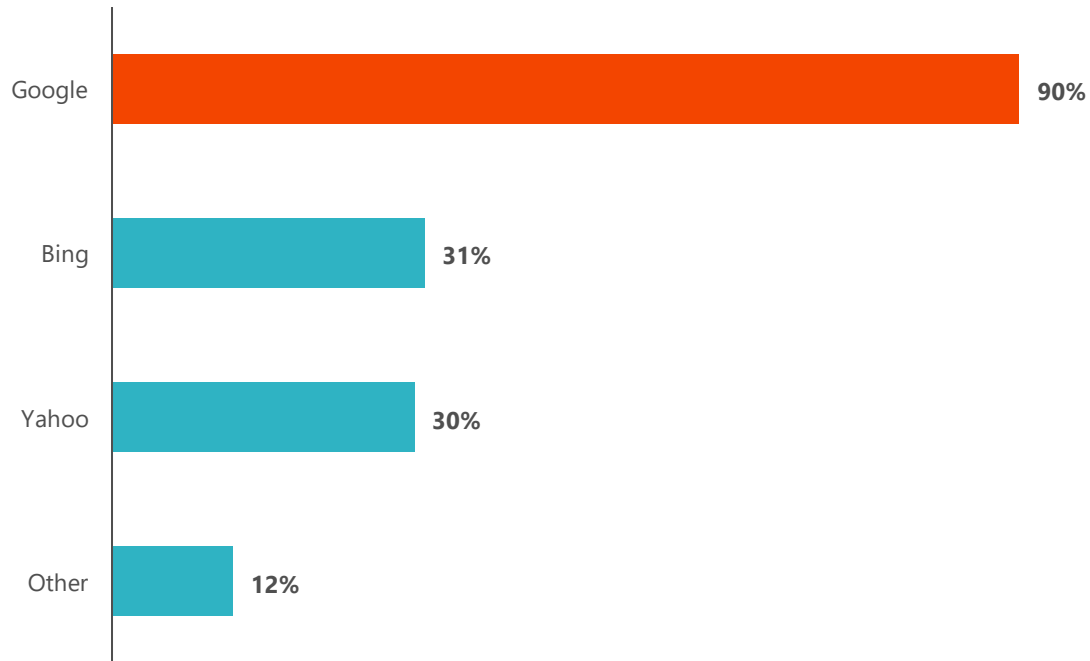
Computers/laptops (75%) and smartphones (75%) were most popular for online activity, followed by tablets (38%), smart TVs (25%) and e-readers (6%).



Internet search starts most often with Google.

Older adults' typical go-to for internet search is Google, with Bing and Yahoo nearly tied for a distant second.

Q. In the past 12 months, which internet search engines have you used?

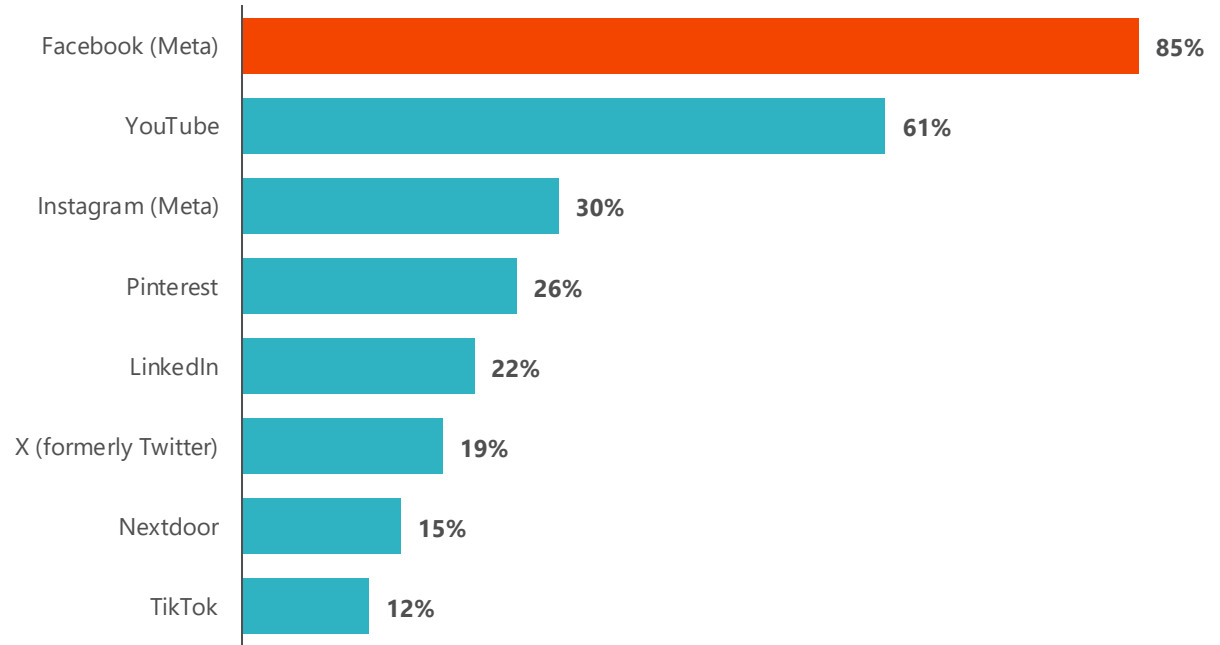




Older adults using social media are most active on Facebook and YouTube.

Facebook and YouTube continue their dominance as the preferred social channels for older adults.

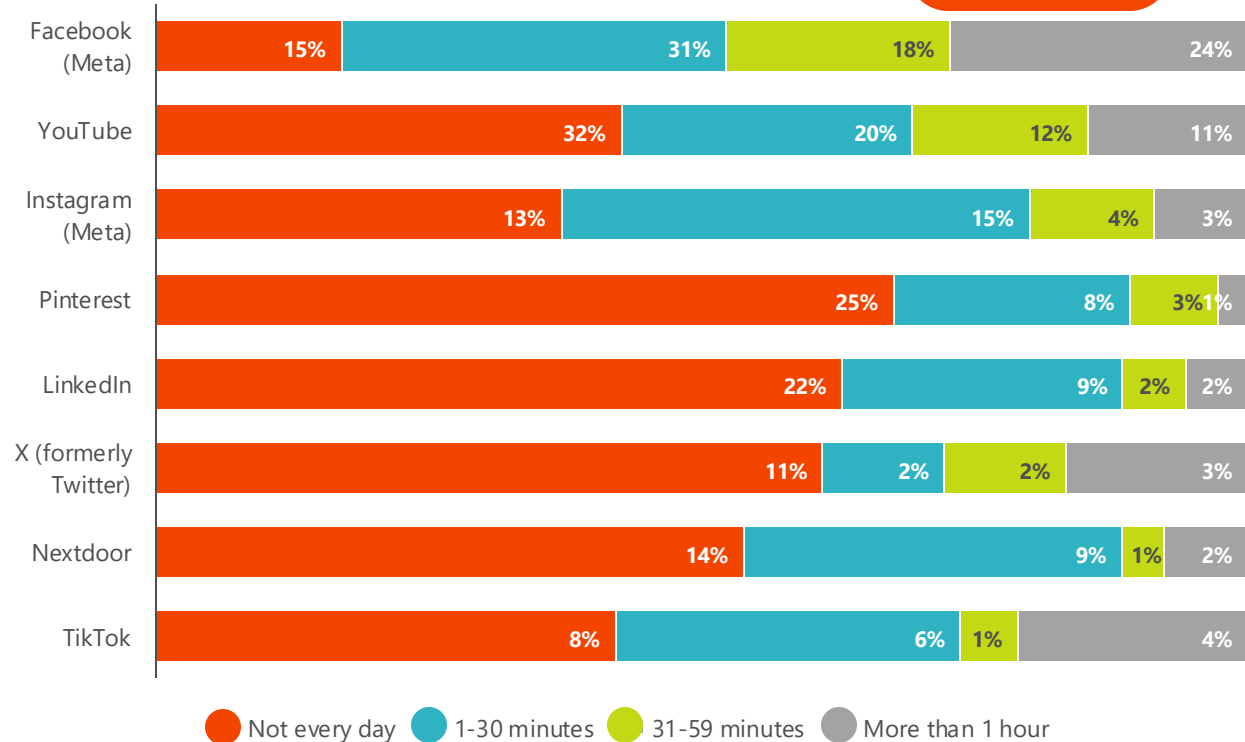
Q. Which social media platforms do you use?



About 47% of older adults on social media spend over an hour on social channels daily.

Compared to last year, Facebook and YouTube remain favorites, and Facebook is the social platform that older adults spend the most time on each day. The next tier of social media engagement shows a close call between Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

Q. In a typical day, how much time do you spend on these social media channels?



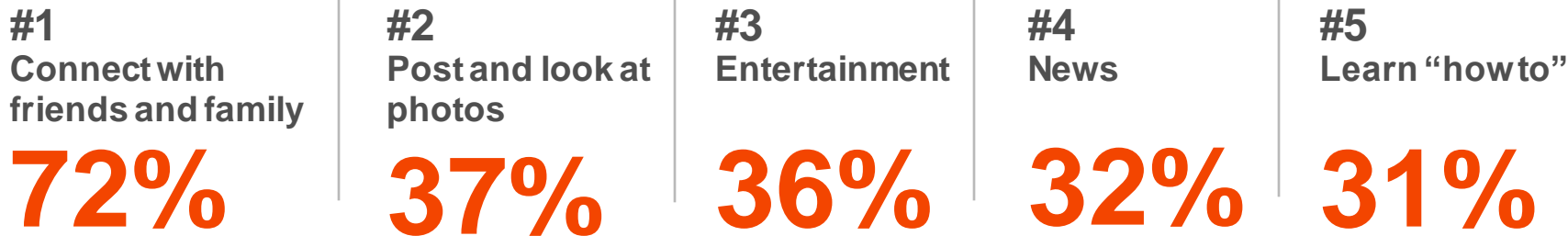
Older adults look to social media primarily to connect with friends and family.



Q. What do you use social media for?

The older adults on social media overwhelmingly use it to connect with friends and family more than any other reason. It's worth noting that using social channels to learn "how to" is a top five reason.

Top 5 reasons older adults use social media:

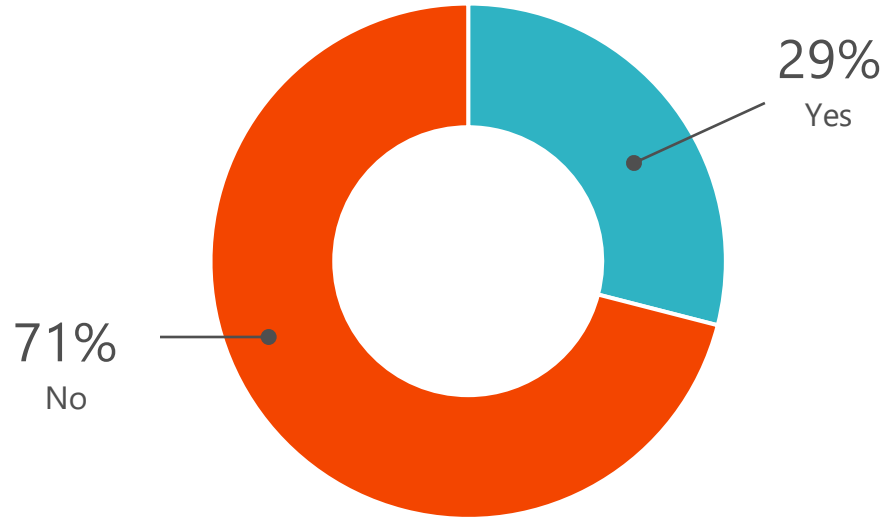




Nearly one third of older adults were influenced to make a purchase based on an ad seen on social media.

Over one quarter of older adults on social media made a purchase decision based on an ad they saw on a social channel.

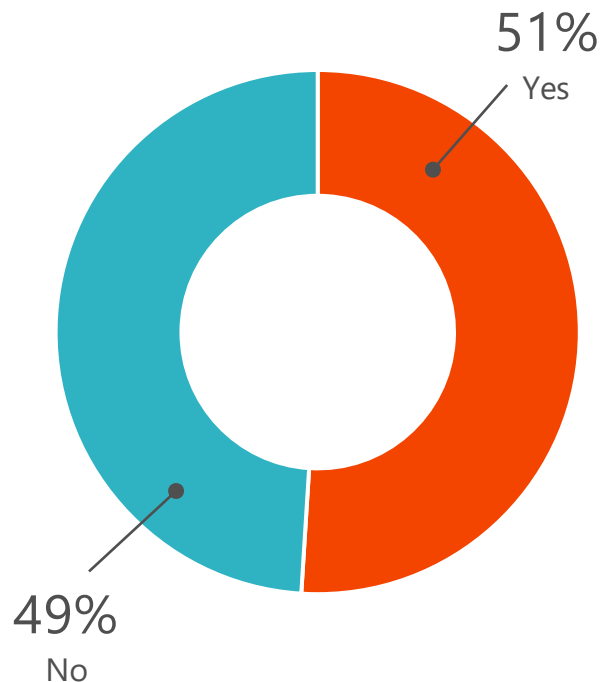
Q. In the last 6 months, have you made a purchase decision based on an ad you saw on social media?





More than half of respondents play games online. Since last year, older adults' engagement with online games has remained steady at 51%. Their favorite type is now split between "memory and word games" and "puzzle and party games," compared to heavier preference for the former last year.

Q. Do you play games online?



Q. Which video games or virtual activities interest you?

Older adults play a wide range of games.

Memory and word games

47%

Action and adventure

14%

Sports simulation

12%

Puzzle and party games

44%

Exercise and dance

13%

Virtual reality

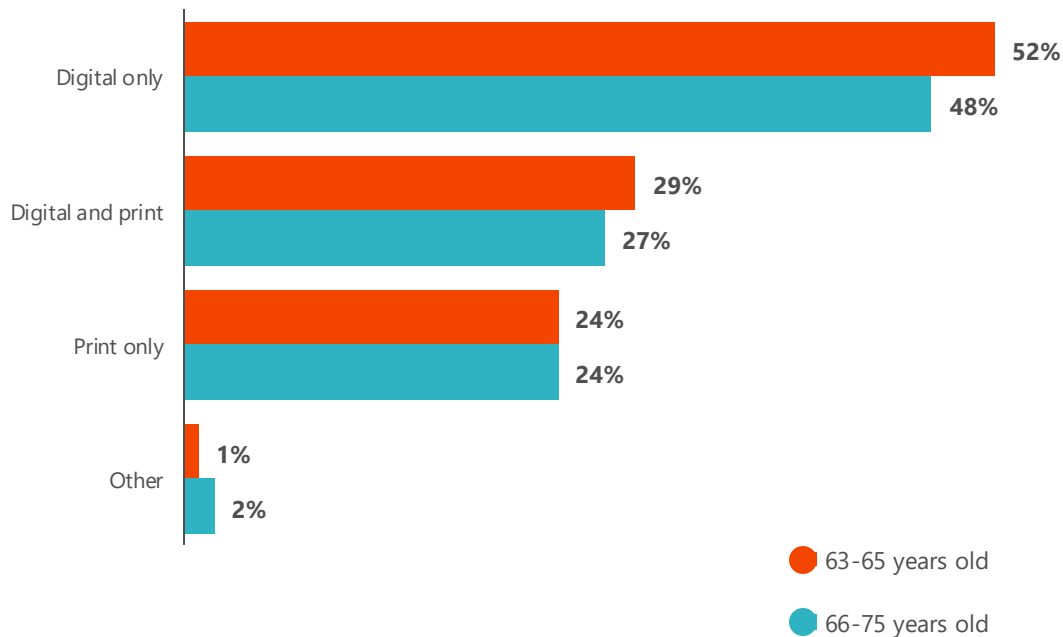
7%



Digital newspapers lead print in readership.

Though older adults clearly prefer digital to print format for reading newspapers, over 50% of newspaper readers still read print either exclusively or in combination with digital.

Q. What kind of newspapers do you read or subscribe to?

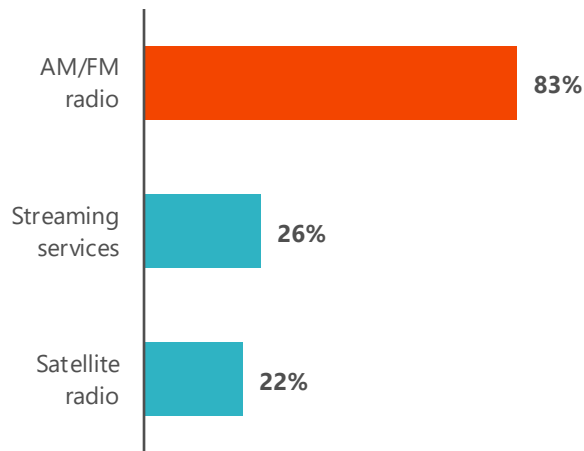




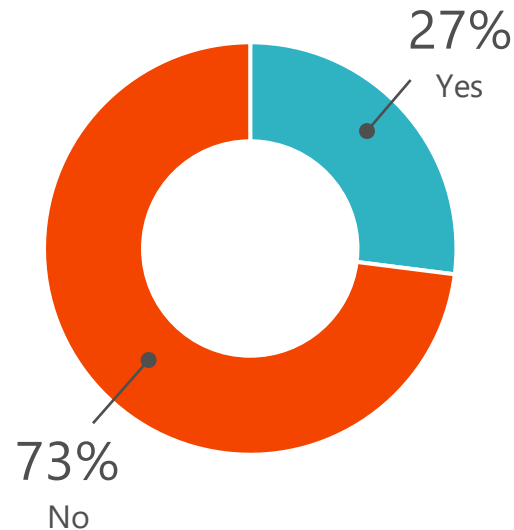
Broadcast radio retains older listeners.

Older adults remain very traditional in their radio listening habits. When they tune into the radio, 83% listen to AM/FM radio. Of the 26% of radio listeners who tune into audio streaming services, only 27% of those listeners pay for ad-free programming.

Q. What types of radio services do you listen to?



Q. Do you pay for any ad-free streaming service?

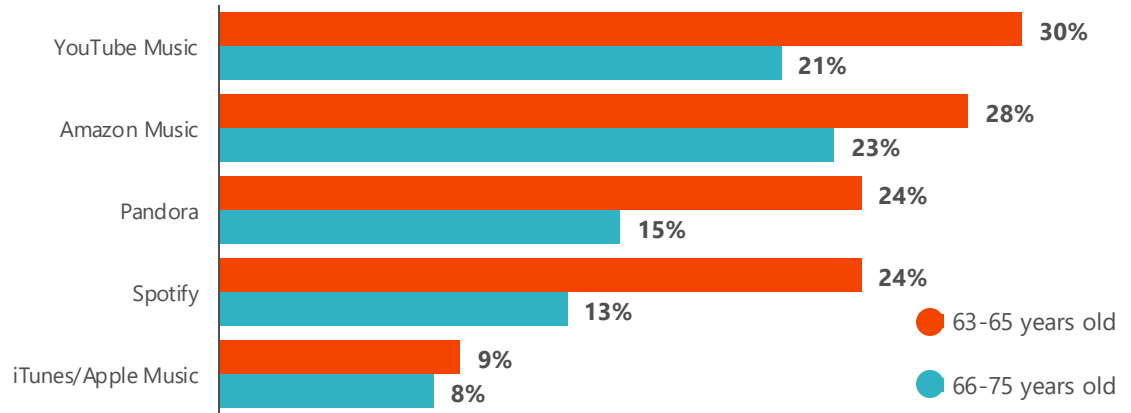


Older adults stream music from a variety of services.

YouTube Music took last year's lead from Pandora as the overall favorite streaming service for older adults.

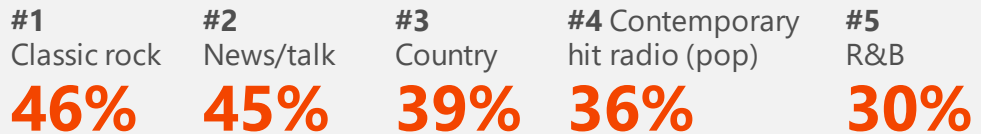


Q. Which online music services do you use either on a free or paid-for subscription?



Q. What radio genres do you enjoy most?

Older adult radio listeners love classic rock.

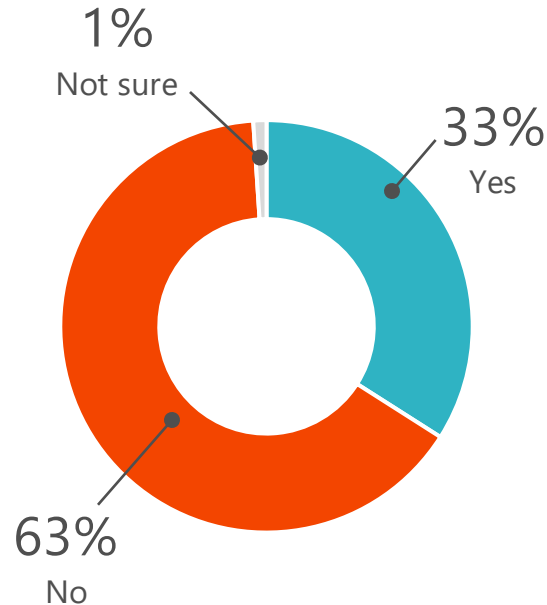




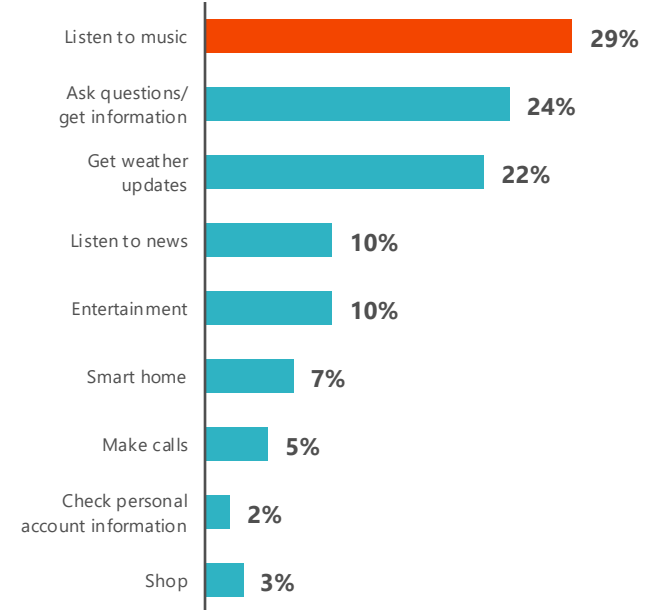
Smart speaker traction grows slowly.

Compared to last year, there was a small shift of only two more percentage points on older adults using smart speakers. Those who do use smart speakers request their music on demand more than anything else. Notably, 24% of users utilize their device to ask questions or get information.

Q. Do you own a smart speaker?



Q. What do you use a smart speaker to do?

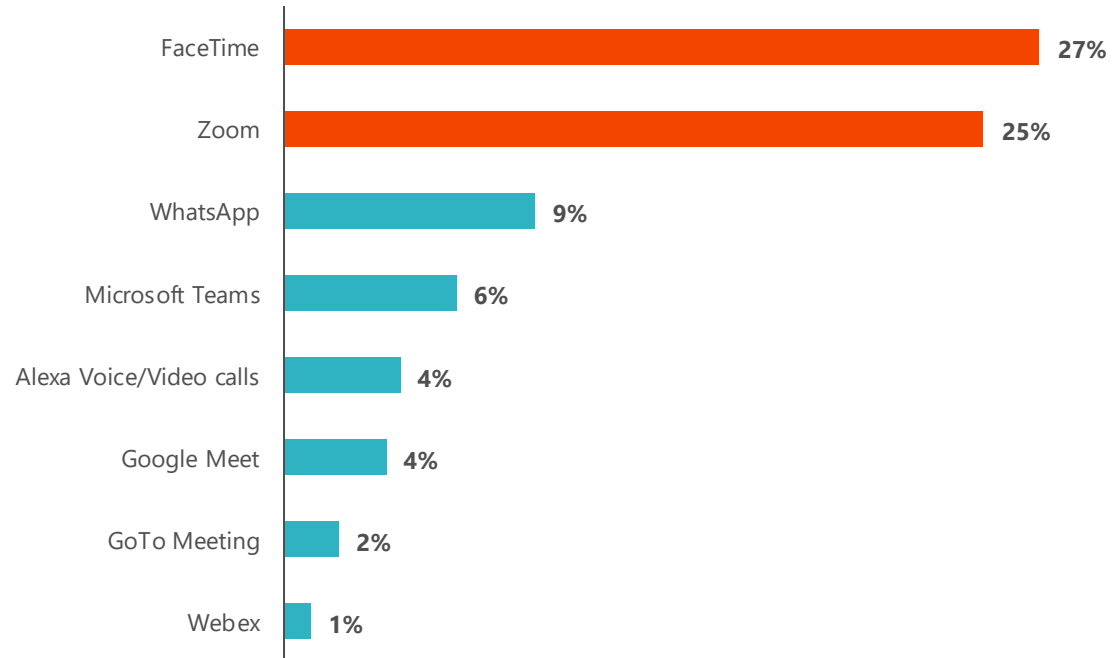




Zoom and FaceTime lead video calling platforms for older adults.

While Zoom and FaceTime continue to be the most frequently used video calling platforms for older adults, their use of FaceTime took the lead from Zoom this year. Meanwhile, the volume of use for these platforms increased slightly compared to last year (22% for FaceTime and 24% for Zoom).

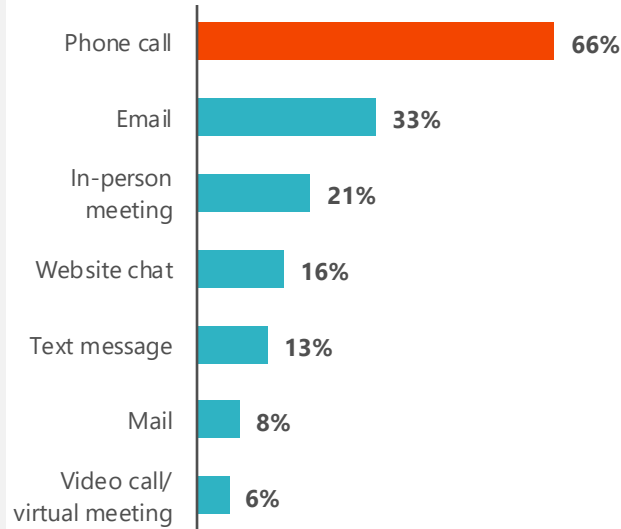
Q. In the past 12 months, which video calling platforms have you used?



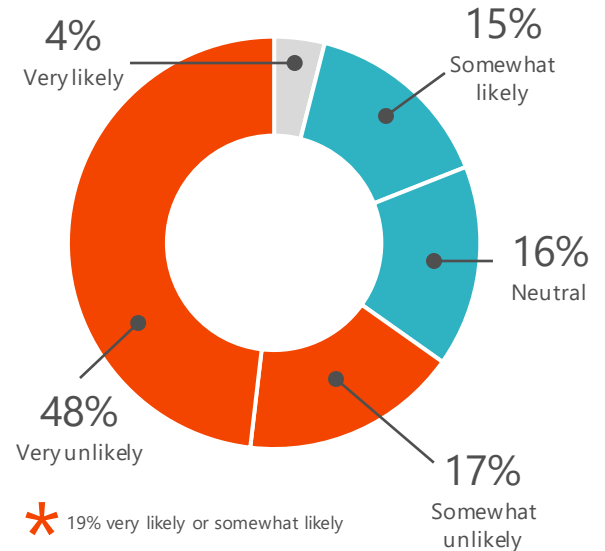
Older adults reach for the phone first to get answers to Medicare questions.

The phone tops the ways older adults would prefer to get their Medicare questions answered. It's worth noting that connecting by website chat rose in preference this year above texting as an alternate way to get information. Compared to last year, older adults are slightly more resistant to attending a virtual meeting or seminar to learn more about a Medicare plan.

Q. What channels would you use to get a Medicare question answered?



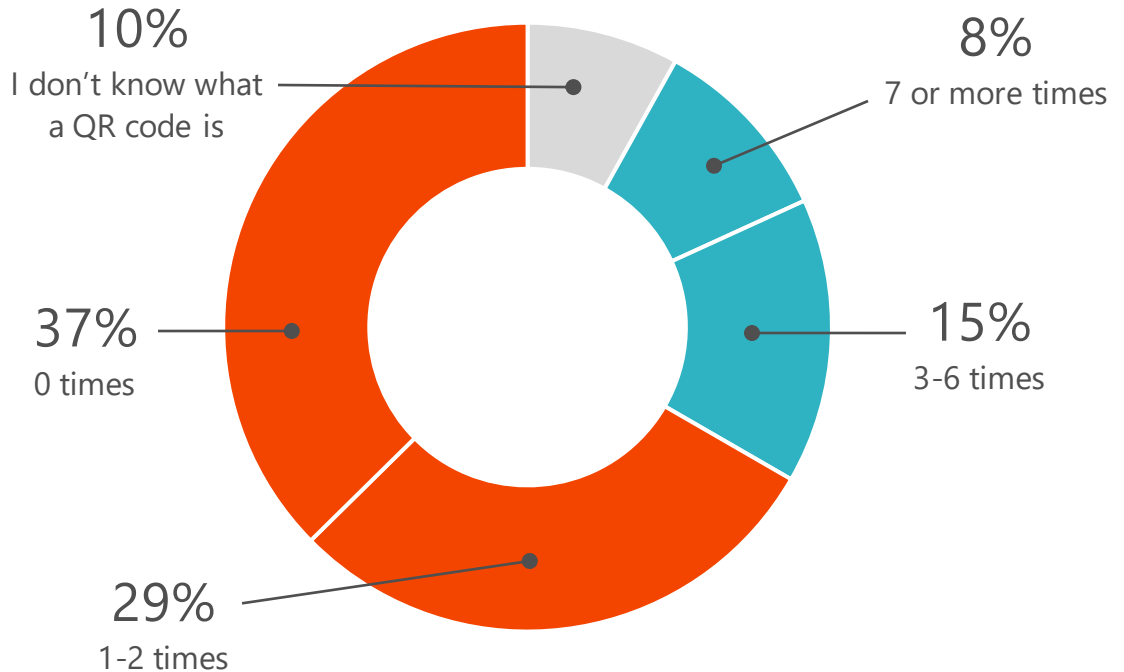
Q. How likely are you to attend a virtual meeting or seminar to learn more about a Medicare plan?





Older adults may still need to be convinced on QR codes. Though more than half of older adults say they have used a QR code during the last year, their usage overall decreased by 10 percentage points from last year. They may be encountering fewer QR codes on restaurant menus and the like post pandemic.

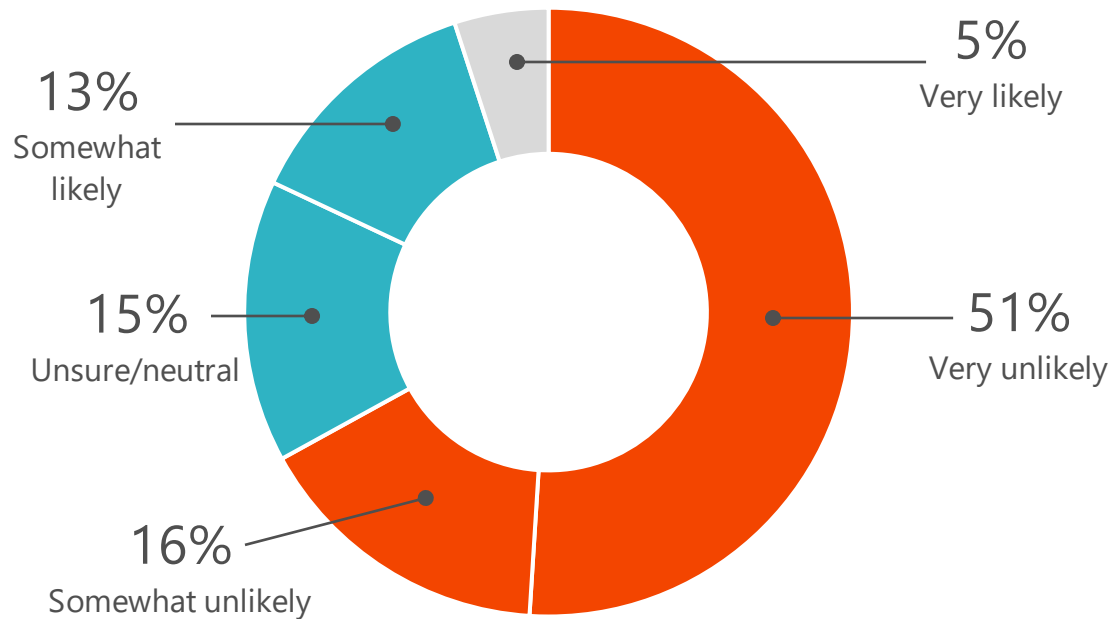
Q. In the past 12 months, how often have you used a QR code?





Less than a quarter of older adults are inclined to follow their health plan on social media. Only 18% of older adults are somewhat or very likely to follow their health plans on social channels.

Q. To get updates and other health and wellness information, how "unlikely" or "likely" are you to follow your health plan on social media?





Consumer In Sight (CIS) is an investigative research series conducted by Media Logic, with the aim of gaining new insights into consumer preferences and behaviors in the healthcare and financial services industries. Using an industry-leading software platform, we survey geo-targeted and national panels to track the changing marketing landscape and support clients in connecting with consumers through creative executions and multichannel media.

About Media Logic

Media Logic is a national leader in healthcare marketing – providing strategic, breakthrough solutions that drive business. Media Logic offers deep experience in branding and lead generation and is an expert in turning research and segmentation data into actionable plans. Leveraging more than two decades of health plan marketing knowledge, Media Logic understands the nuances of Medicare, group and individual exchange prospects. From traditional ad campaigns to retention efforts to content marketing, everything Media Logic does is focused on generating results for clients – giving them an edge in a competitive, constantly changing environment.

Learn more about Media Logic at medialogic.com and subscribe to our healthcare marketing newsletter at medialogic.com/newsletter



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