



# Mastering Media Strategy in 2025: Balancing Linear TV and Connected TV for Maximum Impact

*By Kevin Wilson, Director of Media Strategy at Tipping Point Communications*

In a fragmented and fast-evolving media landscape, one thing is clear: the TV set viewing experience is still a powerhouse. The question is not whether to advertise for the living room viewing experience—it's how to strategically balance traditional linear TV with Connected TV (CTV) to optimize reach, precision, and performance.

At Tipping Point, we believe the most effective campaigns aren't built around either/or decisions. They're rooted in a data-driven media strategies that play to the strengths of platforms. This whitepaper outlines how you can use linear and CTV in concert to solve common media challenges like wasted impressions, inconsistent results, and budget misalignment.

We'll show you how to:

- Define and differentiate Linear TV and Connected TV
- Allocate budget for maximum ROI
- Use targeting and measurement tools effectively
- Build a scalable, strategic video plan

Whether you're a seasoned CMO or an owner trying to modernize your marketing, this guide will give you the clarity and framework you need to make smarter media investments in 2025.

To discuss your media strategy, email Kevin Wilson, Director of Media Strategy, at [kwilson@tippingpointcomm.com](mailto:kwilson@tippingpointcomm.com).

# Understanding Linear TV & Connected TV

## What Is Linear TV?

Linear TV refers to traditional, scheduled television content delivered via broadcast, cable, or satellite. It's what most people over the age of 30 grew up with. Viewers tune in at a specific time to watch a specific program.

What makes linear valuable today:

- Live events like sports, award shows, and breaking news
- Local targeting through geographic spot buys
- Historical data that aids reliable forecasting

Linear is ideal when you want broad reach across demographics in a defined market. Its long history provides years of audience trend data, making planning less speculative than emerging channels.

## What Is Connected TV (CTV)?

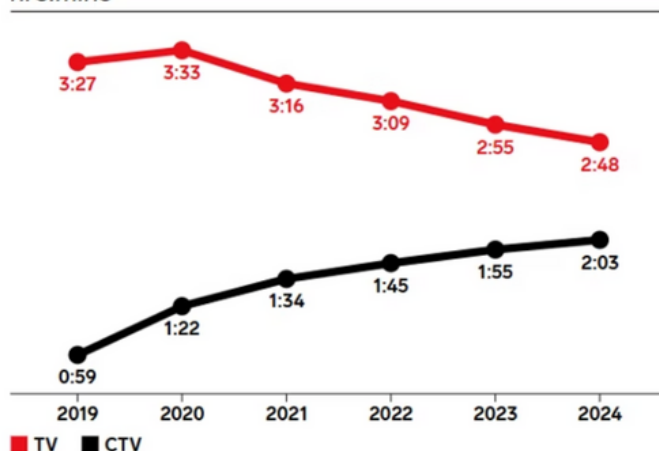
Connected TV is video content streamed through internet-connected devices—smart TVs, Roku, Fire Stick, or game consoles. CTV delivers ads through apps like Hulu, Disney+, Pluto TV, and Amazon Prime Video.

Why marketers love it:

- Hyper-targeting using first- and third-party data
- Real-time metrics and attribution
- Dynamic ad formats like interactive ads and dynamic content with product feeds

CTV excels when precision is key. You're not buying a time slot—you're buying an audience. CTV lets you serve ads to people based on their behaviors, purchases, location, and more.

**Average Time Spent per Day With TV vs. Connected TV (CTV) by US Adults, 2019-2024**  
hrs:mins



Note: ages 18+; TV includes live, DVR, and other prerecorded video (e.g., video downloaded from the internet but saved locally); includes all time spent watching TV; excludes digital; CTV includes all time spent using the internet through a CTV; includes CTV devices such as Apple TV, Xfinity Flex, connected Blu-ray devices, connected game consoles, Google Chromecast, Roku, and smart TVs  
Source: eMarketer, June 2023

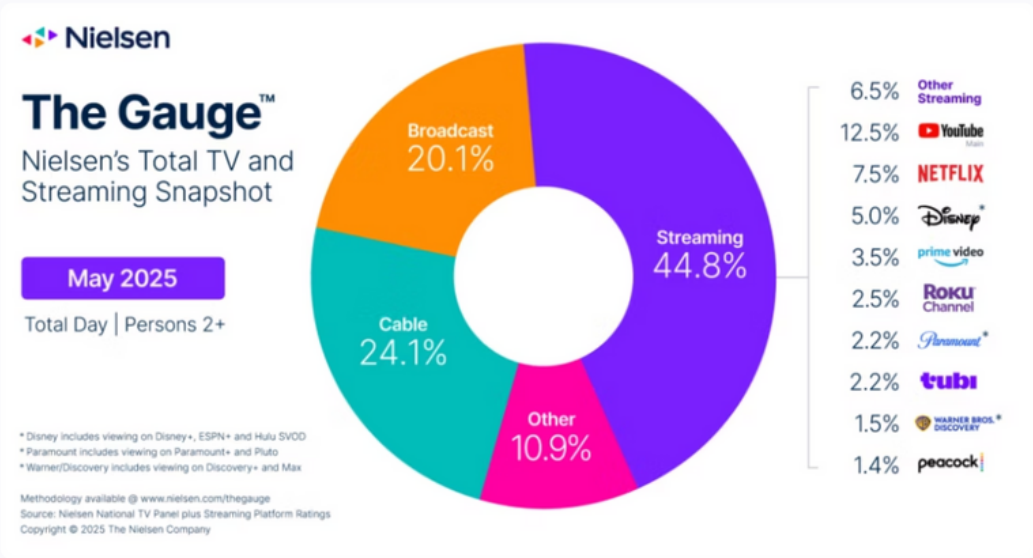
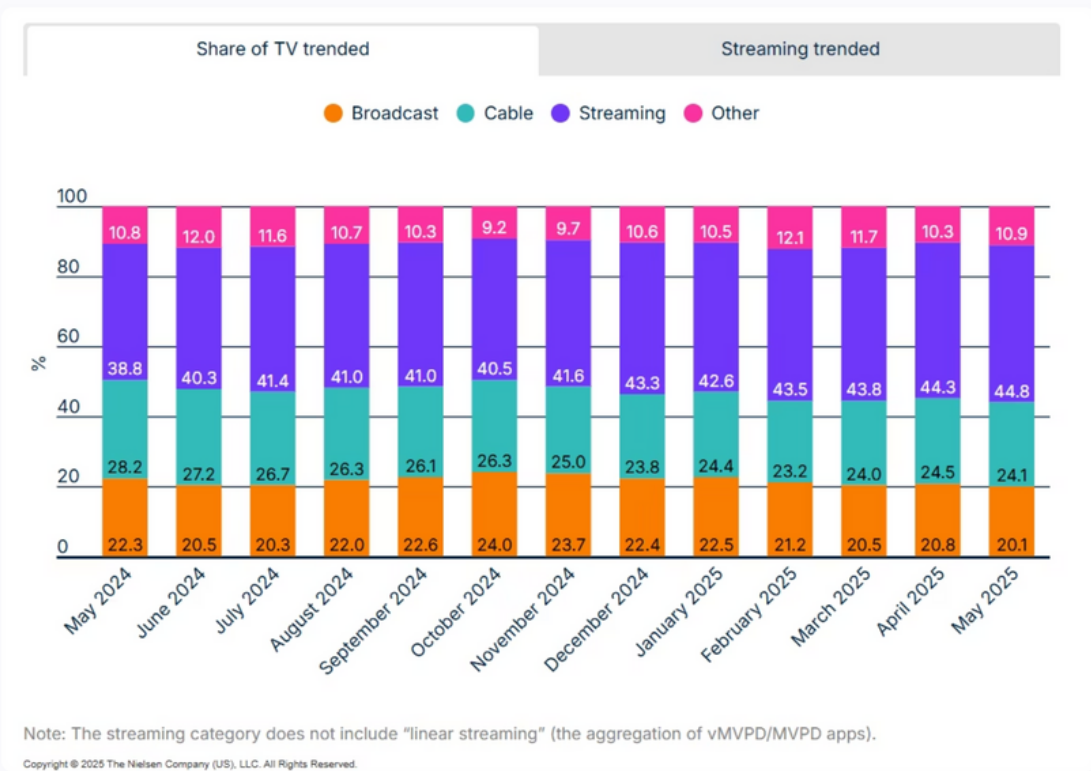
281523

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

*The amount of time spent with CTV continues to grow while the amount of time spent with traditional TV has been shrinking. That said, Linear TV is still one of the top places US adults spend their media time. Ignoring it in your ad strategy means missing out on big audiences.*

# What the Data says about trends

Streaming continues to grow as a share of time spent with TV. However, some of these streaming trends may be seasonal as people switch back to broadcast for tentpole events or NFL games.



Streaming audiences are finding their content in several areas. YouTube has been making strides in TV consumption time, but many people will use multiple services. Many premium services like Netflix and Amazon are also pushing users towards ad supported streaming subscriptions.

# Key Differences and Why You Need Both

| Factor       | Linear TV                 | Connected TV (CTV)             |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Audience     | Broad demographics        | Specific audience segments     |
| Targeting    | Geo + demo targeting      | 1st & 3rd party data targeting |
| Measurement  | Ratings, GRPs             | Impressions, conversions       |
| Buying Model | Spots (programs/dayparts) | Impressions                    |
| Best For     | Live events, local news   | Retargeting, performance media |

## Why You Need Both

CTV and linear aren't rivals—they're teammates. Used together, they help you:



**Extend reach**  
Combining platforms allows you to reach viewers across different viewing habits and preferences.

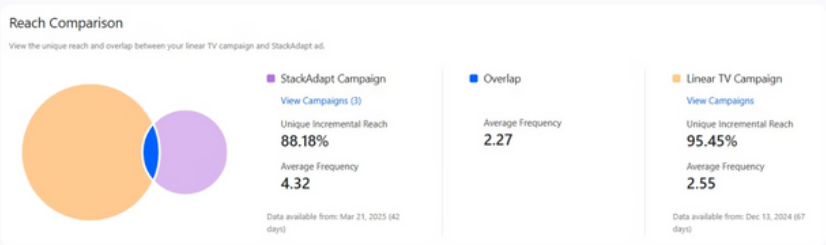


**Increase frequency among priority audiences**  
Target your most valuable segments across multiple touchpoints for better message retention.



**Reduce wasted impressions**  
Optimize your spend by avoiding over-delivery to the same viewers repeatedly.

This "linear reach extension" approach ensures you're not just hitting the same people repeatedly, but finding new viewers across platforms. To support this strategy, we partner with vendors who analyze CTV impressions alongside TV ratings data. This helps us understand the unique reach and frequency of each audience, where overlap occurs, and where efficiencies can be found. These insights directly inform future media strategies and allow us to optimize spend based on specific campaign goals.



A Linear Reach Extension analysis may look like the chart to the left, showing audience overlap and unique reach across both tactics.

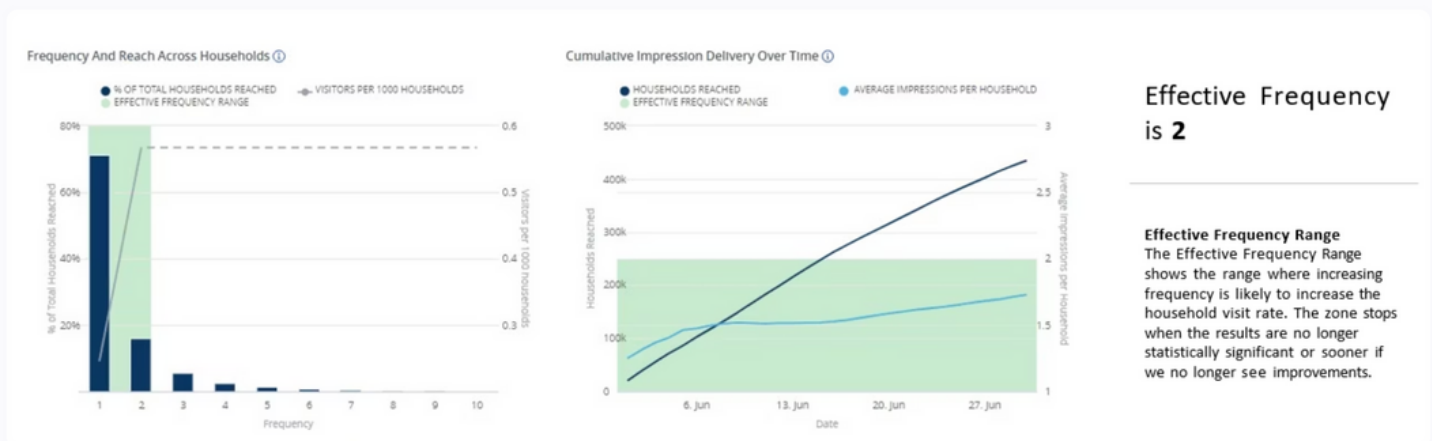
# Budget Allocation and Targeting Tactics

## Budget Allocation: Stop Wasting Impressions

One of the biggest traps marketers fall into is chasing impressions inefficiently. Without frequency control, linear ads can over-deliver to the same viewers. With CTV alone, you risk missing older viewers, less digital-savvy consumers, or live event opportunities not available on streaming services yet.

Our approach helps you allocate budget based on real audience viewing behavior, not assumptions.

Once we've established frequency patterns against real outcomes (site visits, leads or other KPIs) we can start to adjust campaign target frequency across linear and CTV to maximize campaign efficiency.



## Targeting Tactics

### Linear TV Targeting

Great for reaching large groups at once. We target by geography and demographic data.

- Geographic spot buys
- Demographic targeting
- Program/daypart selection

### CTV Targeting

Great for reaching individuals. We use:

- CRM/email lists (1st party)
- Purchase behavior data
- Lifestyle segments (parents, interests, etc.)
- Product/service intent (3rd party)

Combining both gives you the benefits of efficient brand reach and precision performance.

# Measuring Success Across Platforms

When evaluating media performance, it's essential to understand not just the metrics—but the role each platform plays in your funnel. Video advertising is often upper to mid-funnel, meaning conversions may take several exposures over time.

## Linear TV Measurement:

- Gross Rating Points (GRPs)
- Estimated impressions
- Correlation to organic/direct web traffic

Linear TV offers more limited attribution, relying on correlation models—such as observing spikes in traffic or branded search when your ads run.

## CTV Measurement:

- Impressions, reach, frequency
- Site visits and conversion attribution
- Retargeting audience behavior

CTV enables more direct attribution through impression tracking, device matching, and pixel integrations. These tools allow us to connect ad views to specific site visits or conversions, and even build retargeting audiences from completed views.

We set performance benchmarks early in the planning phase and evaluate results across the full journey, using a combination of platform data, Google Analytics, and client CRM insights to understand impact.

This dual approach provides both brand health and performance feedback in real time.



*In the case of the campaign above, we saw a very clear increase in direct and organic traffic for this client's product page when the traditional campaigns for this promotion were live, including a lag for a few weeks after the campaign finished. This is one tool among many for understanding media spend impact.*

# Creative Considerations and Interactive Tools

## Creative Considerations for Linear vs. CTV

Before diving into creative best practices, it's worth asking: can the same ad work equally well across both linear and connected TV? While reusing assets is possible—and often practical—the answer isn't always yes. Viewers bring different expectations to each platform, particularly around ad load, personalization, and interactivity. These subtle but important differences should shape your approach to messaging and format.

- Linear ads should use strong voiceover to hold attention during breaks
- CTV ads should be more personalized and CTA-driven
- In either format, QR codes should stay on-screen long enough for scanning

## Interactive Ad Tools for CTV

One of the biggest creative advantages of Connected TV is its support for interactive ad formats that go beyond traditional 15- or 30-second spots. With the right placements, advertisers can meet viewers in the decision-making moment, using tools that invite exploration or direct response. These features make CTV a powerful performance channel—not just a branding one.



### L-Bars

A branded message bar that appears along the bottom or side of the screen during programming, keeping your brand visible without interrupting the viewer experience. These can be included in linear creative too.



### Menu screen ads

Ads shown in the platform's content navigation screen, reaching viewers before they choose what to watch.



### Pause ads

Static or semi-static ads that appear when a viewer pauses content, offering a non-intrusive opportunity to message a captive audience.



### Binge ads

A value-exchange format where viewers agree to watch one longer ad upfront in exchange for fewer or no interruptions during binge sessions.



### Trivia

Interactive formats that allow viewers to engage directly with your brand through quizzes or games, increasing engagement and memorability.



### Product carousels

Interactive formats that allow viewers to explore a rotating set of featured products directly from their TV screen.

# Audience Retargeting Advantage

Another performance advantage of CTV is the ability to capture household-level audience data after your ad has been viewed. Once a user completes a CTV impression, we can retarget that household with display ads across their devices—laptops, phones, and tablets. This second layer of engagement helps drive users to your website, reinforces brand messaging, and improves the likelihood of conversion.

## Case Studies and Campaign Planning

Before we dive into the real-world examples, it's worth emphasizing how powerful a data-informed hybrid approach can be. The following case studies illustrate how combining Linear TV and CTV not only expands audience reach but also creates new opportunities to optimize campaigns mid-flight. By tracking performance across both platforms and adjusting spend, timing, or creative accordingly, we unlock greater efficiency and drive better results.

### 1. Accessibility Campaign

**Objective:** Reach the visually impaired, caregivers, and employers.

**Tactics:**

- CTV with audio descriptions
- Oversized QR codes for accessibility
- Retargeting with digital display ads

**Results:**

- 3M+ impressions
- 108 QR scans
- 17% awareness lift in post-campaign survey

### 2. Economic Development Initiative

**Objective:** Drive website traffic from a neighboring city.

**Tactics:**

- Shifted linear TV budget to high-viewership news slots
- Used OTT for retargeting younger audiences

**Results:**

- 15% web traffic increase
- Clear performance spike after optimizing time slots

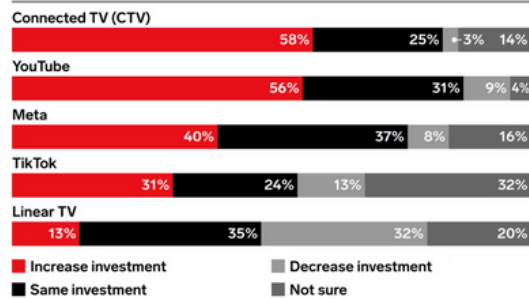
## Understanding Timelines and Buying Cycles

Planning your media campaign requires different timelines depending on the platform. For linear TV, buying cycles often happen well in advance—especially during high-demand seasons or around major live events. We recommend planning 6–8 weeks ahead to secure ideal placements and inventory. CTV, on the other hand, allows for shorter lead times—although we need a few weeks for planning, we can make changes within a few days—this gives you more flexibility for last-minute creative updates or budget shifts.

# Media Buying Trends Vs Consumer Trends

## Current Investment Strategies for Select Platforms According to US Media Agency Professionals, Nov 2024

% of respondents



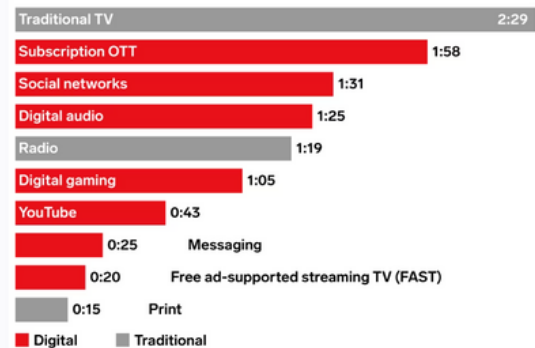
Note: n=124; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
Source: Pixability, "US YouTube & Connected TV Media Agency Survey 2025," Jan 21, 2025  
289298

EM | EMARKETER

Advertisers are decreasing investment in Linear, but it still dominates media consumption time.

## Most Major Media-Consuming Activities Are Digital, but Traditional TV Still Tops the List

average hrs:mins spent per day with select media by US adults, digital vs. traditional, 2025



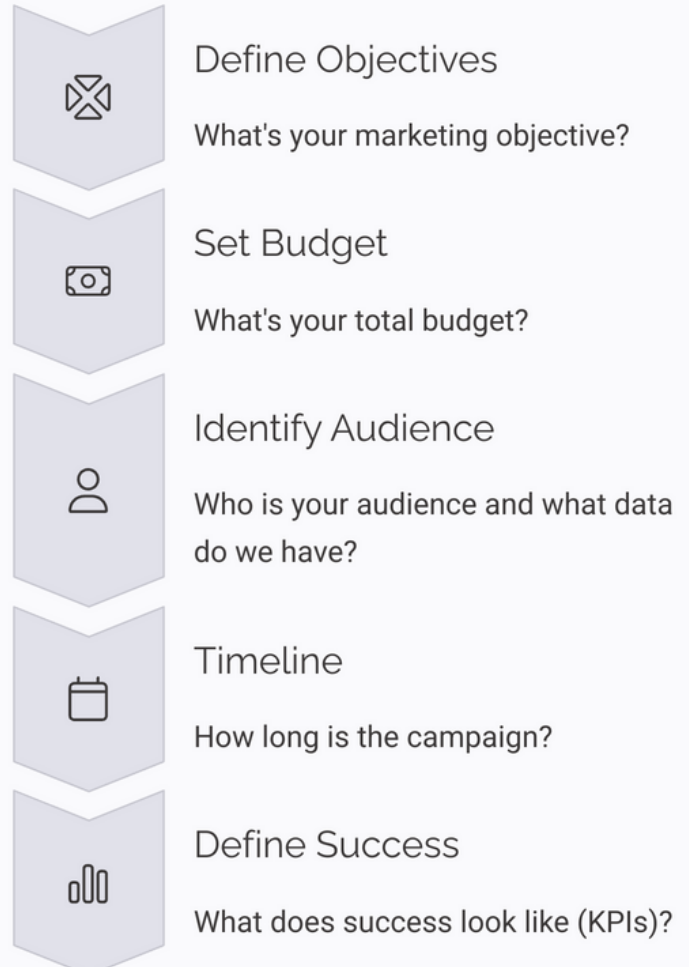
Note: ages 18+; digital includes all time spent with the referenced medium via any device; traditional TV includes live, DVR, and other prerecorded video, and excludes digital; digital audio includes audio content delivered within a website or app and podcasts (streamed or downloaded); radio excludes digital radio; messaging excludes social networking apps that offer private messaging capabilities as a secondary feature; FAST platforms exclude all subscription OTT services, Twitch, and YouTube  
Source: EMARKETER Forecast, May 2025  
290815

EM | EMARKETER

## The Process

Working with Tipping Point means gaining a partner that's invested in the long-term success of your campaign. We don't just buy media—we build strategy. Our team collaborates with you to clarify goals, align creative with platform expectations, and refine targeting throughout the campaign lifecycle. We stay close to the data, translating insights into action and continuously optimizing your mix of linear and connected TV for performance. Whether your objective is awareness, lead generation, or conversion, we tailor a media plan that gets results.

This framework ensures we're investing where it matters most.



# Final Takeaways and Glossary

## Final Takeaways + Call to Action

Linear TV is still a powerful channel. CTV offers flexibility and performance. Together, they form the backbone of a smart, scalable media strategy.

If you're looking to improve media performance, stretch your budget further, and gain deeper insights into what's working—let's talk.

Schedule your media strategy session: Email Kevin Wilson, Director of Media Strategy, at [kwilson@tippingpointcomm.com](mailto:kwilson@tippingpointcomm.com) or call 585.340.1119.

Let's build your plan.

## Overview and Definitions

### • Linear or Traditional TV

- Includes
  - Over the air
  - Cable
  - Satellite
- Broad Reach
- Spot buying
  - Programs, dayparts, etc
- Really excels at live events
- Measured in ratings against target demo
  - Attribution is still challenging, but will improve over time

### • Connected or Streaming TV

- Includes
  - Streaming services watched on a TV
    - Prime Video, Hulu, Disney+, Max, Pluto, Tubi
- Often on demand, but some live events
- Often buying impressions with an audience
  - May be a 1<sup>st</sup> party audience (customer list) or 3<sup>rd</sup> party audience – curated in-market audiences
- Greater attribution
  - Web visit and lead data

### • Over the Top (OTT)

- Includes everything in streaming, but also includes impressions served on desktops, tablets, and mobile devices.

### • Streaming Categories for Ads

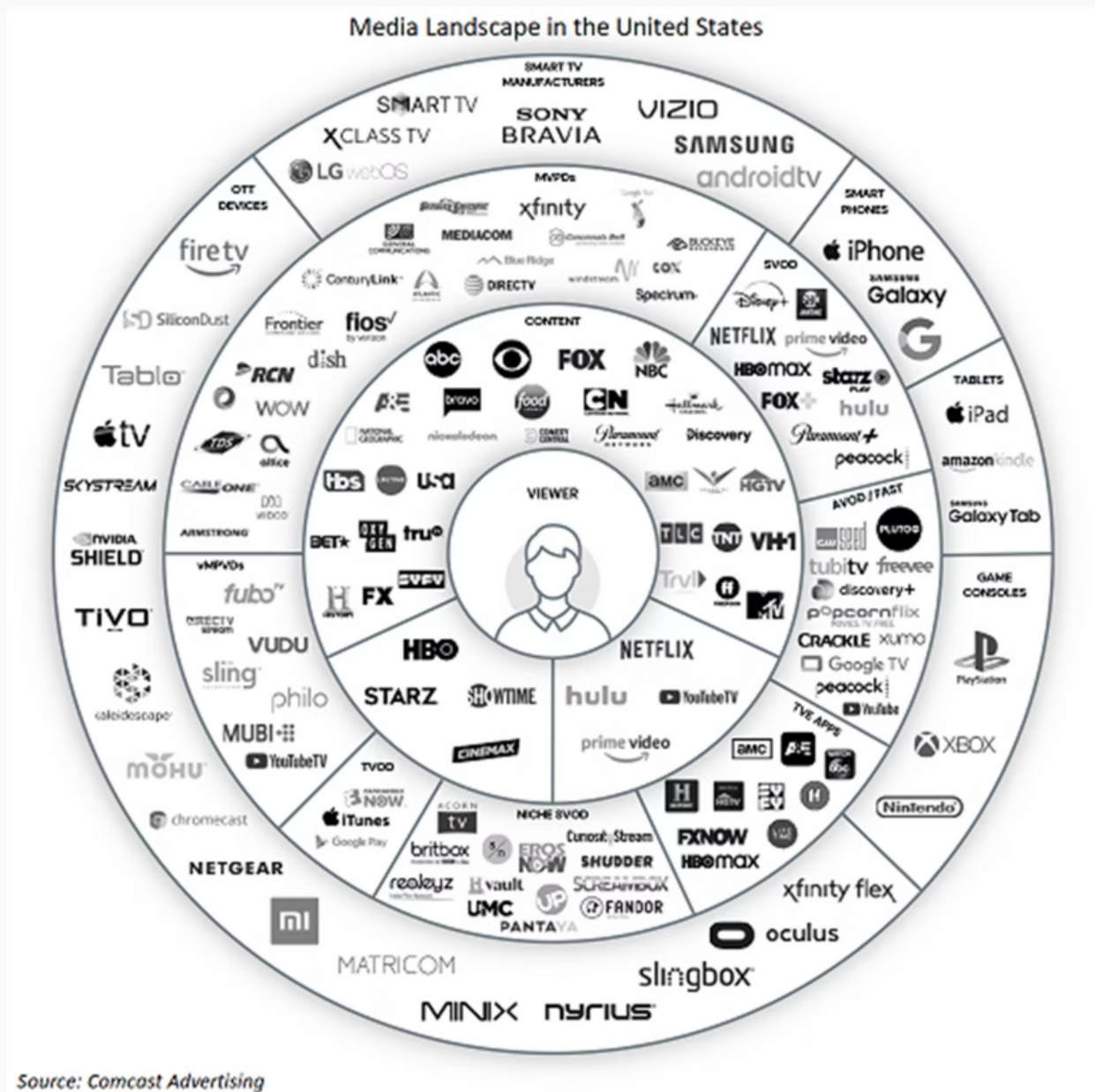
- Subscription – no ads
- Ad supported – subscription services with ad placements
- FAST – Free ad supported television.



## Quick Reference

### Glossary:

- **AVOD** — Advertising VOD
- **SVOD** — Subscription VOD
- **TVOD** — Transactional VOD
- **PVOD** — Premium VOD
- **vMVPD** — Multichannel Video Programming Distributor
- **FAST** — Free Ad-Supported Streaming — host, linear channel "live"



We weren't sure where else to put this chart, but thought it was a cool overview of the entire CTV/OTT landscape!