

Streamed Out: Cost of living crunch prompts one-in-three to cancel streaming subscriptions in last six months

Cable TV subscriptions continue steady decline; landline use plummets in last decade

October 27, 2022 —While House of the Dragon, Stranger Things or the latest Marvel offering may still represent must-see viewing for Canadians, households across the country are making hard choices about which shows – and the subscription they require – they enjoy most.

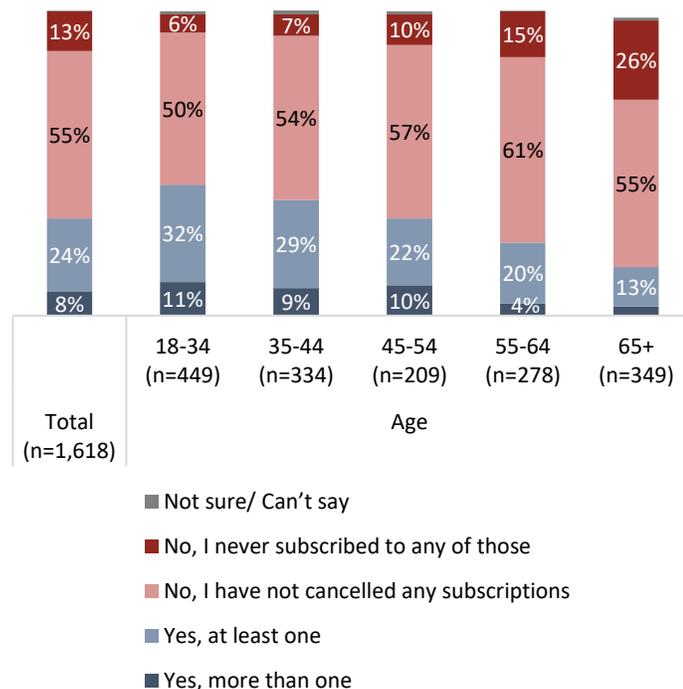
As subscription costs increase, streaming platforms threaten to crack down on password sharing and even introduce advertisements, new data from the Angus Reid Institute finds one-in-three Canadians have cancelled at least one service in the past six months. For at least half, these cancellations are in direct response to a persistent and ongoing cost of living crisis roiling households.

Others say they have made cuts to their subscription portfolio because they weren't using certain services as much (39%) or that the selection wasn't up to par (24%).

While these decisions may represent a current setback for streaming service providers, the overall trend in viewing is still working largely in their favour. More than four-in-five (85%) now say they have at least one streaming service subscription, up from approximately half in 2016.

Conversely, as Canadians continue to move toward the on-demand model, just three-in-five now say they subscribe to cable or satellite TV. This represents a five-point drop from 2018 and a 27-point drop over the past decade. For Canadians over the age of 54, this traditional viewership model remains a much bigger part of life – four-in-five (82%) say they still subscribe. Half as many 18- to 34-year-olds say the same (41%).

Have you cancelled any of your subscriptions to streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crave, etc. in the last six months?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Oct. 11-13, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 1,618 Canadian adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Nearly one-in-five Canadians (17%) say they have at least four streaming service subscriptions. Approaching one-quarter (23%) say they currently have three.
- Landline use has now halved over the course of the last decade. In 2013, 79 per cent of Canadians said they had a landline in their house, now just 36 per cent say this.
- Two-in-five (38%) landline users say they are probably or definitely going to do away with this service in the future. Those who maintain it, most likely to be older Canadians, say that it allows them to feel safer in an emergency (39%) and that they still receive calls from friends and family in this way (38%).

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Part One: Still streaming, but also saving

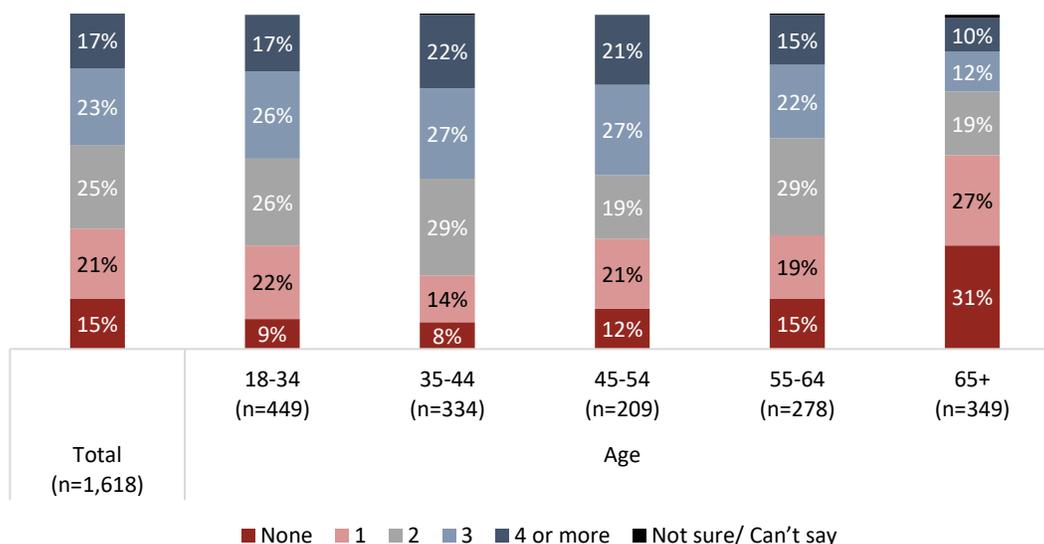
Netflix debuted as a streaming service in Canada in 2010, ushering in the streaming era. More than a decade later, Canadians have a buffet of streaming options to choose from: Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Crave, Apple TV, DAZN, Disney Plus, and more.

Two-in-five have three or more streaming services

Today, more than four-in-five Canadians (85%) say they subscribe to at least one streaming service. A majority (65%) of Canadians subscribe to more than one, including two-in-five (40%) who subscribe to three or more. In many cases, individuals may say they subscribe to a service, but may share that account with another person in their household, thus, the actual total of subscribers reported may be higher than the number of individual subscriptions.

Canadians over the age of 64 are the only age group of whom a majority do not subscribe to more than one streaming service, but still two-in-five (41%) of this age have access to at least two. Meanwhile, half of Canadians aged 35 to 54 (48%) subscribe to three or more:

How many, if any, subscription streaming services – such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crave, etc. - do you subscribe to?



One-third have cancelled at least one service in last six months

As inflation has taken hold, many Canadians say they have been tightening their household budget. In September, nine-in-ten said they had trimmed spending.

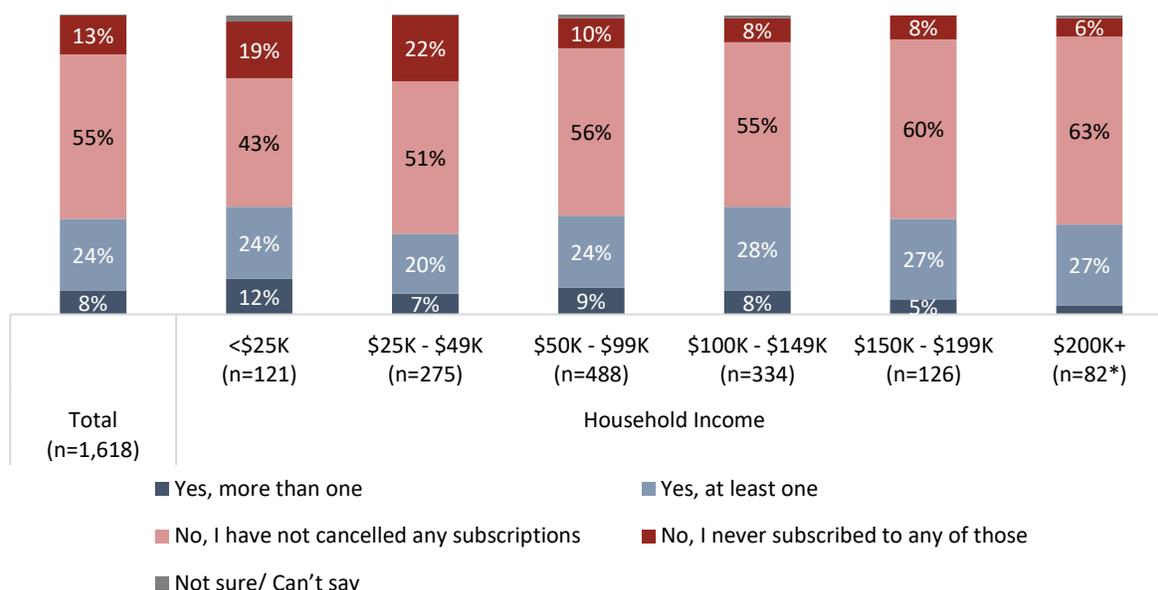
Related: [Cutting back: Nine-in-ten Canadians now tightening household budgets as inflation, high prices persist](#)

One-third (32%) of Canadians tell the Angus Reid Institute they have cancelled at least one streaming service in the last six months. This includes eight per cent who have cancelled more than one. Those in lower income households are more likely to be dropping the number of streaming services they pay for:

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Have you cancelled any of your subscriptions to streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crave, etc. in the last six months?



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Half say they've cancelled to save money, one-in-five because they had too many

For those who have trimmed streaming subscriptions, half (53%) did so to save money. A further one-in-five (19%) say they cut one or more because they had too many.

What is and isn't on the streaming service was another matter for many who cancelled subscriptions. There are significant numbers who say they weren't watching the service they axed (39%), there wasn't anything on to watch (24%), or a show they watched was removed from the catalogue (15%). Almost one-in-ten (8%) cut a streaming service because they feel like there isn't any difference between them.

Younger Canadians are more likely to cite cost as a reason they cut a streaming service than older ones:

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And for what reason would you say you cancelled your subscriptions to those services? (Among those who cancelled at least one streaming subscription in last six months)						
	Total (n=508)	Gender		Age		
		Male (n=239)	Female (n=269)	18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=191)	55+ (n=124)
To save money/ couldn't afford them all	53%	52%	54%	61%	53%	41%
I wasn't watching it	39%	34%	44%	35%	42%	40%
Because there wasn't anything to watch on it	24%	24%	24%	29%	22%	18%
Had too many	19%	21%	18%	20%	24%	8%
They removed a show or shows I liked	15%	19%	11%	17%	14%	12%
They're all the same	8%	9%	7%	8%	9%	8%
Other	10%	11%	9%	11%	10%	8%

Part Two: The continuing decline of cable

Cord-cutting continues; three-in-five say they continue to subscribe

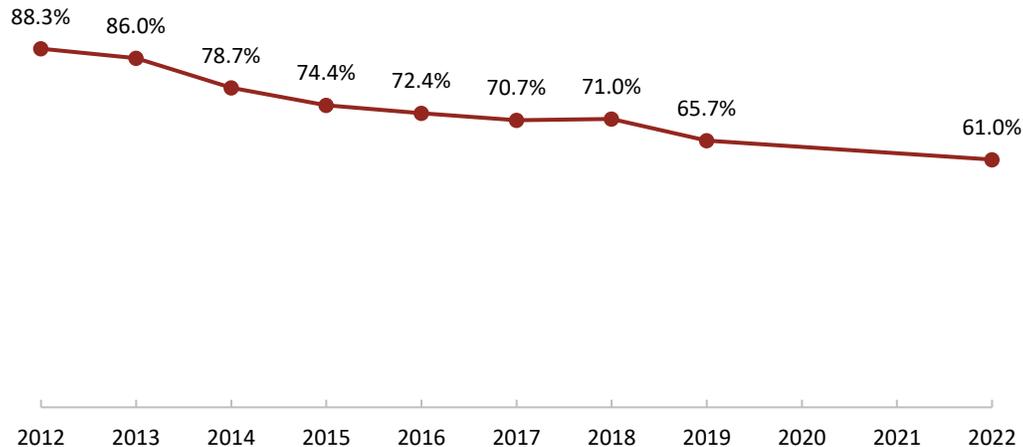
The streaming revolution has created upheaval in the world of video entertainment. As services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, Disney Plus, and Crave have risen, the stability of traditional cable companies has tumbled. For the first time ever [in 2010](#), pay television saw declining subscribers. That trend has continued in the decade since as streaming entertainment has become more common and the options more varied.

In 2012, approaching nine-in-ten Canadian households subscribed to cable or satellite. Now, three-in-five (61%) Canadians say the same, a figure that has been declining steadily:

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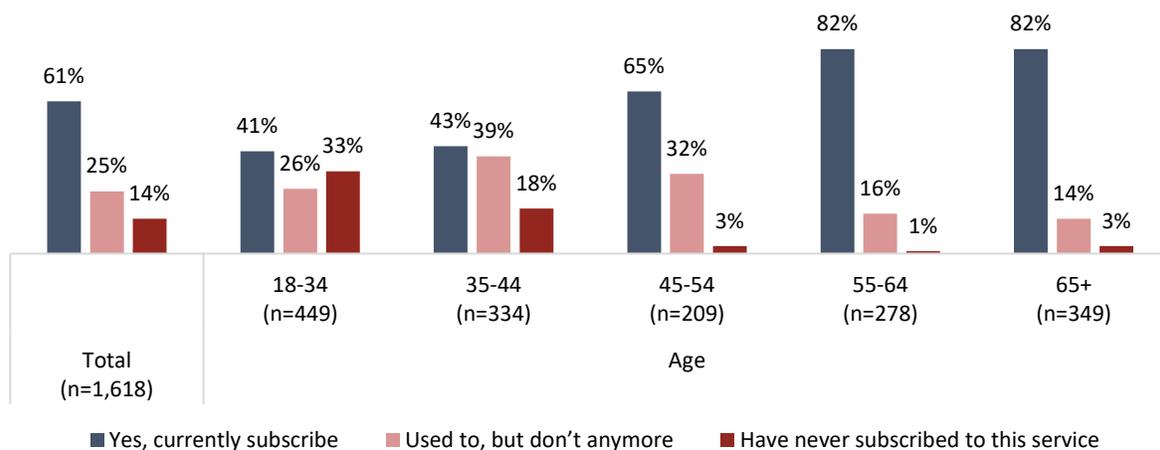
**Percentage of Canadian households with cable or satellite television service
(2012-2017, and 2019 data from Statistics Canada; 2018 and 2022 numbers from ARI)**



There is a marked difference by age on this matter. Canadians under the age of 35 are much more likely to never have subscribed to television than their elders. One-third (33%) say so.

Canadians aged 35 to 44 are similar to those younger in low rates of current cable subscription, but also much more likely than other age groups to say they had a subscription that they cancelled (39%). Meanwhile, four-in-five Canadians over the age of 54 say they continue to subscribe to cable, a rate nearly double that of Canadians under the age of 45:

**Does your household currently subscribe to:
Television (cable or satellite)**



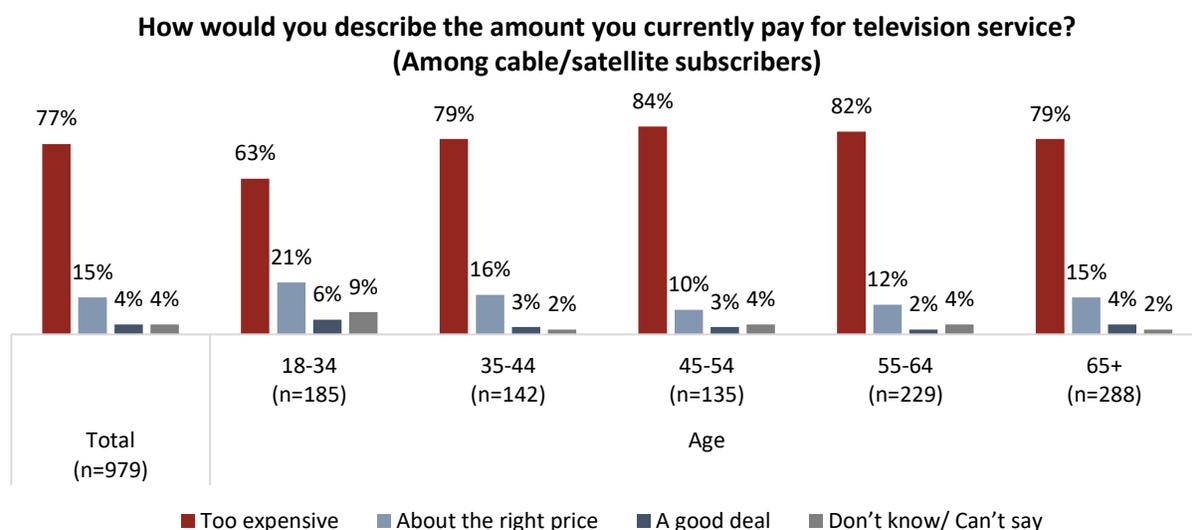
Cost, value big issue with TV service

For those who cut the cord, value and cost were significant factors. Half (47%) say they didn't feel like they were getting good value for their subscription, while one-in-five (20%) say they couldn't afford it. Content appears to be secondary to value: one-third (35%) say the movies and shows they watch were already offered online by streaming services, while one-quarter (26%) say there wasn't anything on TV that they wanted to watch. Again, income represents an important part of the affordability narrative:

What were your main reasons for cancelling your TV service? (Among those who used to have cable or satellite and cancelled)				
	Total (n=409)	Household Income		
		<\$50K (n=98*)	\$50K - <\$100K (n=124)	\$100K+ (n=153)
Wasn't getting good value for the money	47%	36%	44%	58%
Already getting most of my shows/movies online	35%	34%	35%	36%
Wasn't using it much/nothing on I wanted to watch	26%	30%	23%	27%
Just couldn't afford it anymore	20%	26%	24%	12%
Other	6%	9%	4%	5%

**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Meanwhile, for those that continue to subscribe, there is widespread belief that the amount they pay for their TV subscription is too high. Three-quarters (77%) describe their cable bill as too expensive:



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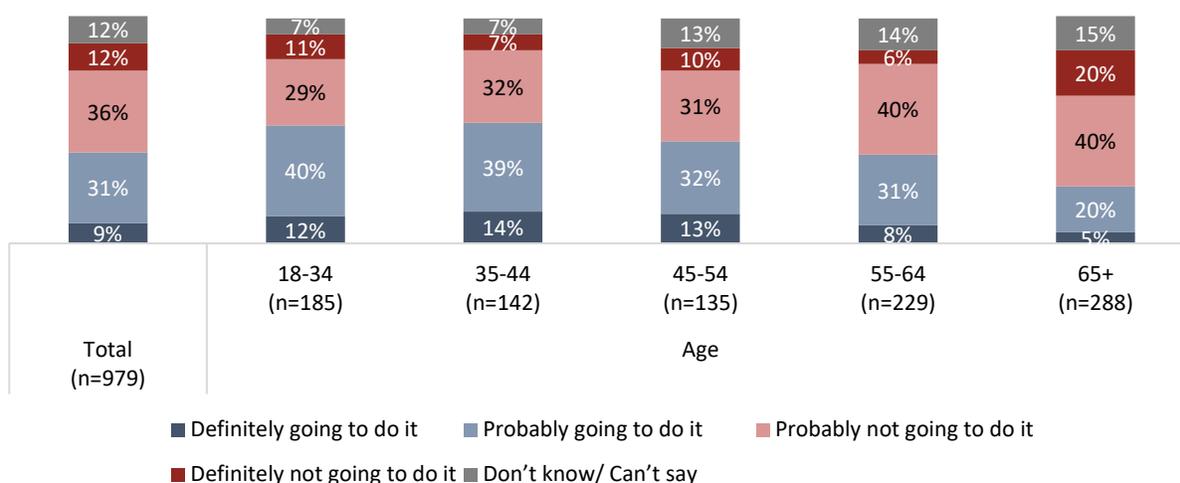
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Two-in-five say they're likely to cancel TV subscription

This cost concern portends more challenges for cable and satellite providers. While on balance, Canadians are more likely to be leaning towards keeping (48%) their current package, two-in-five are considering cutting (40%). Of current TV subscribers, only one-in-eight (12%) say they definitely won't cancel their subscription.

Half of subscribers under the age of 35 are leaning towards cutting the cord. Older Canadians, and especially those over the age of 64, are much more likely to hold on:

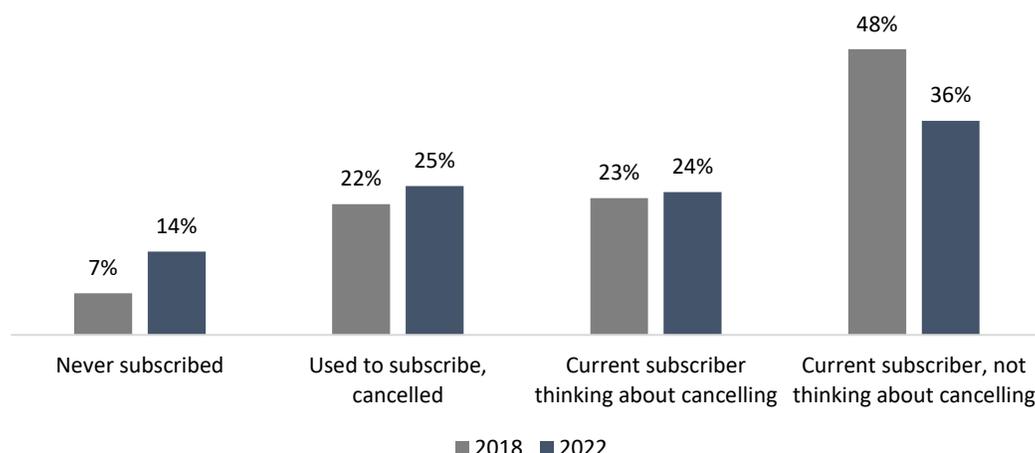
**How likely are you to cancel your television service altogether and move to using online streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crave, etc. for your home entertainment needs?
(Among cable/satellite subscribers)**



The Angus Reid Institute surveyed Canadians on this subject [in 2018](#), when the streaming market was [dominated by Netflix](#). This was in the early days of Amazon Prime Video, and prior to the launch of Apple TV or Disney Plus. [In 2018](#), 56 per cent of streaming viewers in Canada were watching Netflix. Netflix's market share is now [25 per cent](#), after losing ground to Prime Video, Disney Plus and Crave.

With a plethora of streaming options, there are now twice as many Canadians who say they have never subscribed to cable or satellite TV than there were in 2018. As well, the number of current subscribers who are say they plan to keep subscribing has decreased:

The Canadian cable/satellite TV landscape 2018 vs. 2022



What’s on TV, habit keeps people subscribing

While programming options proliferate on streaming services, more than two-in-five (44%) Canadians who still subscribe to cable say there is programming they prefer that is only available through a traditional TV subscription. Habit (34%) is another reason people keep subscribing to cable, as well as comfort with the technology (31%). For those over the age of 64, the latter is a more common reason to keep subscribing to cable (44%):

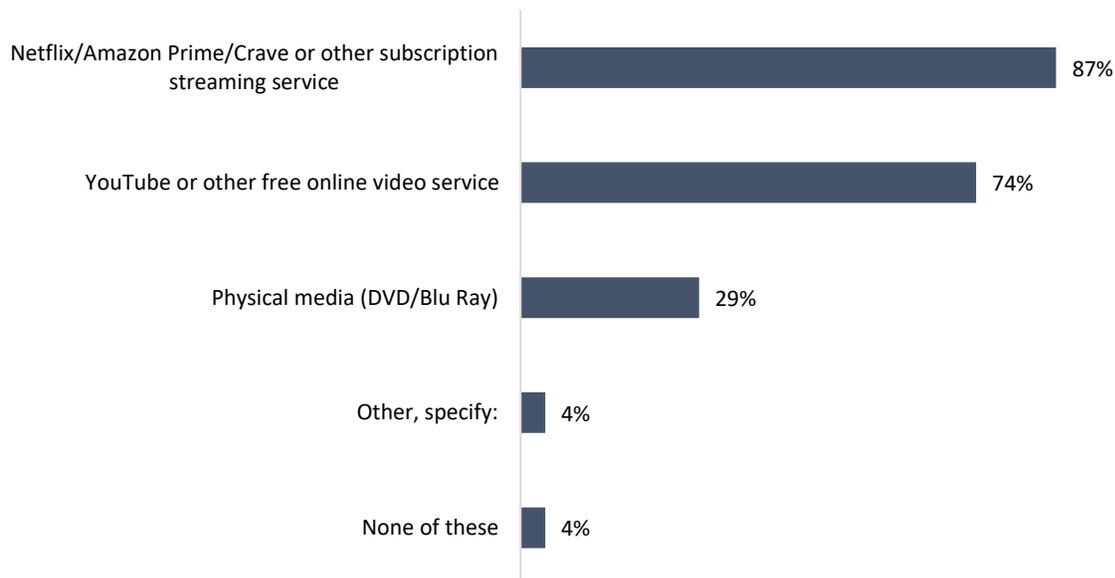
What are some the reasons you continue to subscribe to cable or satellite television? (Among cable/satellite subscribers)						
	Total (n=979)	Age				
		18-34 (n=185)	35-44 (n=142)	45-54 (n=135)	55-64 (n=229)	65+ (n=288)
There’s programming I get on cable/satellite that I can’t get online	44%	47%	47%	49%	44%	37%
It’s a habit at this point	34%	38%	29%	41%	34%	31%
I’m more comfortable with cable/satellite TV than online streaming	31%	20%	23%	24%	31%	44%
Other	11%	14%	19%	11%	8%	8%

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Nearly all (87%) of those who say they've never subscribed to cable say subscription streaming is what they use for video-based entertainment at home. Three-quarters (74%) say they use YouTube, while there are a significant minority (29%) who use physical media such as Blu-rays or DVDs:

**Which of the following, if any, do you use for video-based entertainment in your home?
(Among those who have never subscribed to cable/satellite television, n=230)**

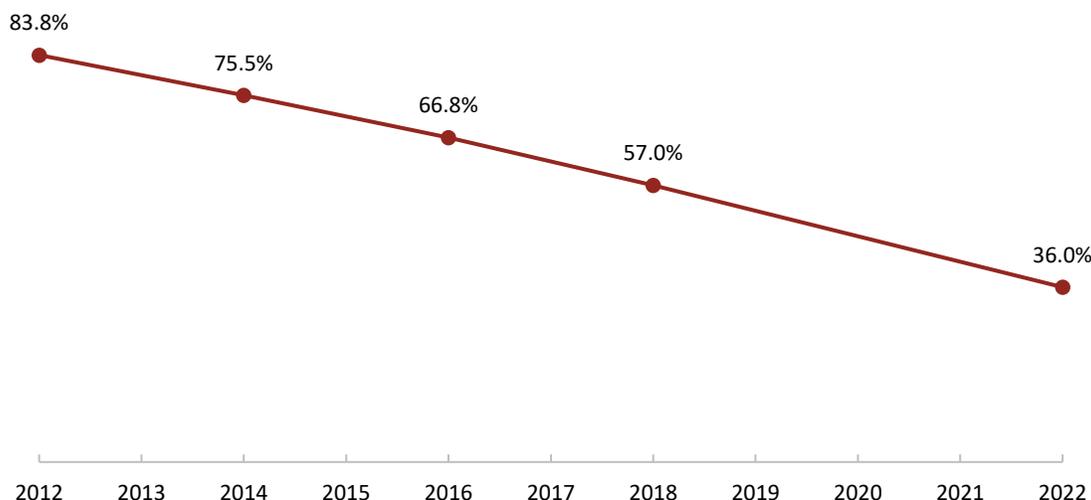


Part Three: The phones at home

Landline use more than halved in a decade

Once a staple of communication, landlines are becoming a thing of the past. As recently as 2012, Statistics Canada reported that more than four-in-five (83.8%) Canadian households had a landline. A decade later, one-in-three (36%) Canadians say they have a home phone:

**Percentage of Canadian households with landline telephone service
(2012-2016 data from Statistics Canada; 2018 and 2022 from ARI)**



In an age when nearly every Canadian household has access to a mobile phone (91.3% in 2019, the latest data available from [Statistics Canada](#)), there is evidently much less use for landlines. Indeed, four-in-five (81%) who unplugged their home phone say it was because they were using their cell phone for everything.

Cost appears to be a secondary consideration for Canadians who cut the phone cord. Though those in lower income households are much more likely to say they couldn't afford to use a landline (15%) than those in households earning more than six figures:

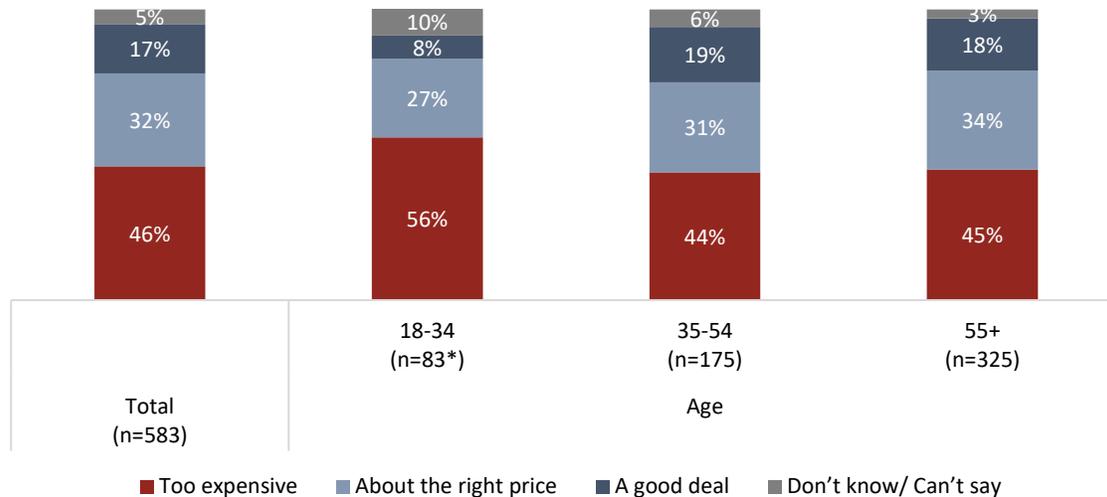
What were your main reasons for cancelling your home phone service? (Among those who used to have a landline)				
	Total (n=670)	Household Income		
		<\$50K (n=167)	\$50K - <\$100K (n=191)	\$100K+ (n=240)
Wasn't using it – use my cell phone for everything	81%	73%	82%	87%
I was getting too many unsolicited calls (telemarketers, etc.)	16%	15%	14%	16%
Wasn't getting good value for the money	13%	14%	11%	14%
Just couldn't afford it anymore	8%	15%	6%	4%
Other	3%	4%	3%	2%

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While nearly half (46%) describe their home phone bill as too expensive, this is a much lower proportion than those who say the same of their cable bill (77%). In fact, landline subscribers are more likely to say the amount they pay for their home phone is a fair price or a good deal (49%):

**How would you describe the amount you currently pay for your home phone service?
(Among landline subscribers)**



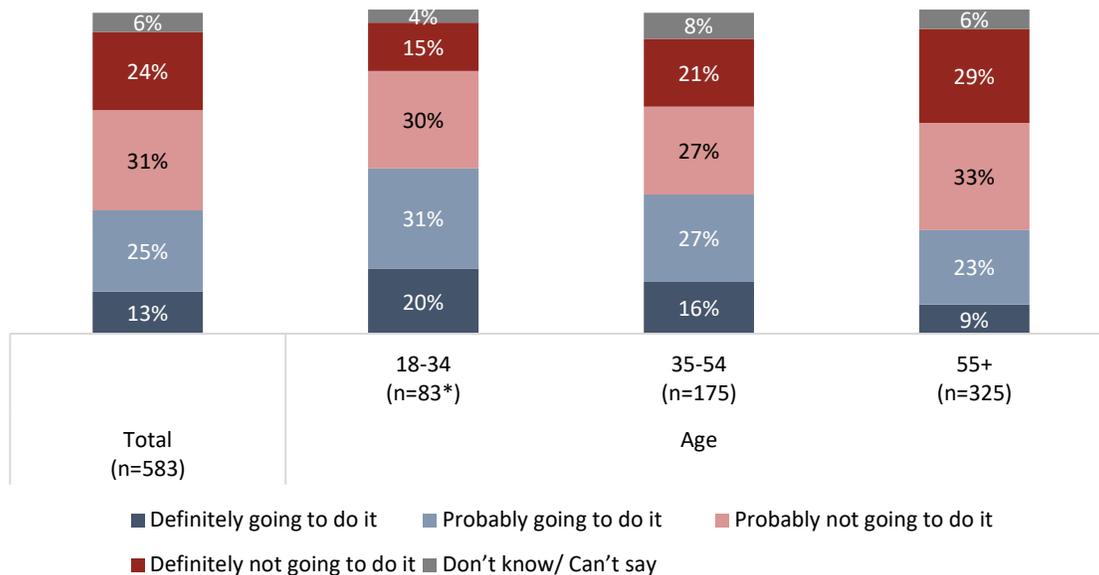
**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Remaining landline users more likely to keep than cancel

Those left with a landline are more likely to keep it than not. More than half (55%) say they are probably not or definitely not going to cancel their subscription. Two-in-five (38%) lean more towards cancelling.

Among those over the age of 54, three-in-five (62%) say they will likely be keeping their phone plugged in:

**How likely are you to cancel your home phone service altogether and instead use mobile phones for all your telephone needs?
(Among landline subscribers)**



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Landline users motivated to keep connection for older family, emergencies

Those holding the line cite emergency preparedness (39%) and keeping in touch with older friends and family (38%) as the top reasons for keeping their home phone. Landline subscribers also say habit (26%), holding onto their number (24%) and comfort level with the technology (23%) are reasons why they haven't shifted completely to mobile phones:

What are some the reasons you continue to have home phone service? (Among current landline subscribers)				
	Total (n=583)	Age		
		18-34 (n=83*)	35-54 (n=175)	55+ (n=325)
Emergency preparedness – in the event of cell network outage	39%	43%	41%	37%
Older people still call me on my home phone line	38%	39%	39%	33%
It's a habit at this point	26%	33%	24%	25%
I don't want to lose my home phone number	24%	24%	23%	24%
I'm more comfortable with a home phone than a mobile phone	23%	24%	20%	25%
Other	22%	18%	27%	20%

*Smaller sample size, interpret with caution

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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