98 US adults on the $5 rise, release cadence, passwords and ads

We asked 98 US adults what a $5 monthly rise would do to the streaming service they value most, how they prefer new seasons released, what the password crackdowns changed, and how they trade price against ads.

Q1 Think about the streaming service you personally use and value most. If it raised its monthly price by $5 starting next month, what would you most likely do? Begin your answer with EXACTLY one word on the first line: Cancel, Downgrade, or Keep. Then briefly explain your choice.

Q2 When a new season of a show you love is released, which do you actually prefer: all episodes at once, or one episode per week? Begin your answer with EXACTLY one word on the first line: Binge or Weekly. Then explain why, and whether weekly release would change how long you stay subscribed.

Q3 Streaming services have been cracking down on password sharing over the past few years. Has this changed anything about how you use or feel about these services? Begin your answer with EXACTLY one word on the first line: PaidMore, StoppedWatching, or Unchanged. Then explain.

Q4 Would you rather pay full price for streaming with no ads, pay less with some ads, or watch free with more ads? Begin your answer with EXACTLY one word on the first line: FullPrice, Cheaper, or Free. Then explain how you think about that trade.

98	392	23 Jul 2026	US adults 18 to 80, census weighted on labour status and age
panellists	responses · 34,479 words	fielded	

THE SPLIT

The $5 rise, answered three ways

61	20	17

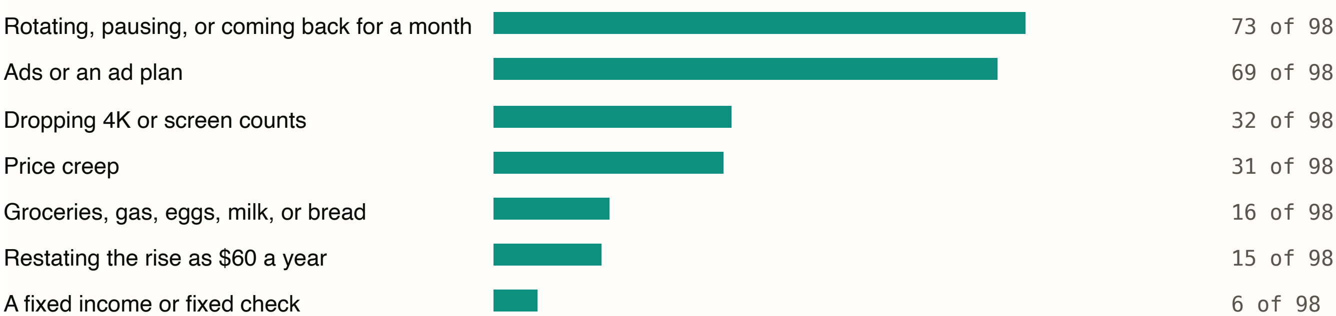
- **61 answered downgrade to the $5 rise** · the ad plan, dropped 4K and extra screens, rotating off between seasons. These panelists say they would move to a cheaper tier rather than pay $5 more, and most name the ad plan as the destination. In Q2 all 61 chose Binge except Sylvia Felty, and their explanations repeat a pattern of finishing a season inside one paid month. In Q3, 52 answered Unchanged, 6 StoppedWatching, and 3 PaidMore.
- **20 answered cancel and describe returning for single paid months** · single paid months when a show lands; YouTube, antenna TV, library DVDs, free ad apps. These panelists say the $5 rise ends the subscription and name what replaces it. Seven of the 13 StoppedWatching answers on Q3 sit in this group, tied to being locked out of a sister's, cousin's, or aunt's login. Ages run from 19 to 80 and their answers cite groceries, gas, milk, prescriptions, and fixed incomes as the competing spend.
- **17 answered keep at the higher price** · kids' shows, live sports and locals, offline downloads for rural signal, YouTube at meals. These panelists absorb the rise on the one service they use most and move the cost onto side apps. Seven of the ten PaidMore answers on Q3 come from this group, including an extra member fee for a kid at school, a two-household custody setup, and replacing a sibling's login with a paid account. Two of the three Weekly answers on Q2 also sit here.

ANSWERS ALL OF THEM GAVE

- **95 of 98 chose Binge.** Panelists across ages 18 to 80 describe watching a season at their own pace and finishing inside a single billing month.
- **89 of 98 describe subscribing for one month and then canceling** somewhere in their four answers, applying the pattern to either their main service or their side services.
- **85 of 98 chose Cheaper or Free on the ad question.** Their answers pair ads with an activity: folding laundry, muting, refilling tea, switching laundry, grabbing a snack.
- **81 of 98 answered Cancel or Downgrade to the $5 rise.** The dollar figure gets restated in their own units: eggs, gas, a gallon of milk, diapers, $60 a year.

Q1

Named moves in the $5-rise responses



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

> "Uh, five dollars more each month is not small on a fixed check, and I do not like bills creeping up. I'd drop to the cheapest plan with ads or cut any add-ons so the bill stays steady. I mostly watch a few old shows in the evenings, so ads don't bother me."
>
> Margaret Trathen · 79 · Not in Labor Force · Houston TX · Q1

> "Money is tight, so I'm not paying just to dodge ads. I mute them, check the weather, switch the laundry, grab a drink, smoke, stretch my back. If a show I really want drops, I'll do one month, binge it, then cancel. Day to day, free with ads is fine background. My time is cheaper than my dollars right now."
>
> Miguel Houser · 33 · Landscaping Worker · High Point NC · Q4

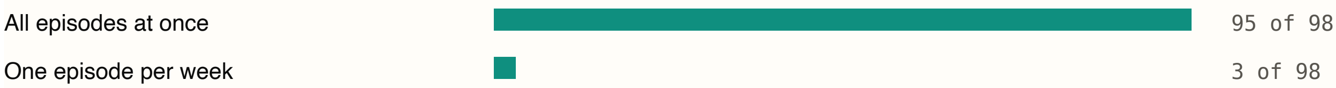
> "Ads are a tax on my time. My window at night is tight, and ads bloat a 40-minute watch into 50 and wreck the pace. On a phone, they chew data, battery, and patience when Wi-Fi is spotty. Paying to kill ads buys back quiet, control, and predictability, which is the point."
>
> Ronald Brooks · 59 · General And Operations Manager · Buffalo NY · Q4

> "I used to hop on my sister's now and then. Then they did that home Wi-Fi thing and it kept kicking me out, and I am not paying extra for some "household" mess. Money first. So I just quit that one and went back to YouTube and the antenna."
>
> Lona Wills · 58 · Childcare Worker · Rural NC · Q3

> "$5 more every month is a lot for us. That's gas for a midweek trip or bread and milk. I'd cut it, use free apps and library DVDs, and only do a paid month here and there when there's a show we really want."
>
> Bianca Lafferty · 35 · Retail Sales Worker · Rural PA · Q1

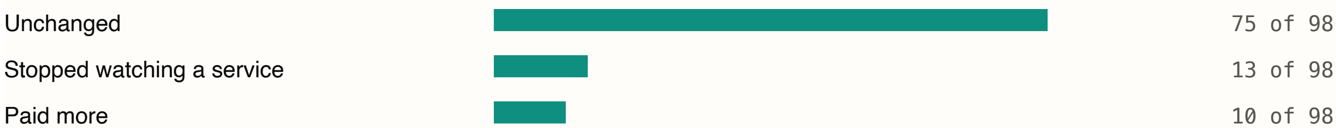
Q2

Season release preference



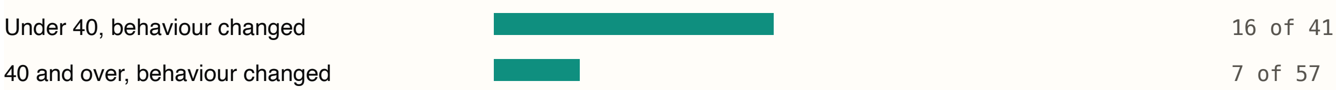
Q3

Password crackdown, what changed



Q3

Crackdown behaviour change by age



Q4

The price and ads trade

Q4

Ad-break behaviours panelists describe