

FROM BROADCAST TO BROADBAND: OTT PLATFORMS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HOME ENTERTAINMENT ECOSYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of home entertainment from broadcast-based television to broadband-enabled streaming platforms constitutes a fundamental transformation in contemporary media ecosystems. Traditional broadcasting operated within a linear, schedule-driven framework characterized by centralized content distribution and limited audience agency. In contrast, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms—such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+—deliver content via internet infrastructures, enabling on-demand access, personalized viewing, and multi-device consumption. This transition reflects broader processes of digital convergence, wherein distinctions between media formats, distribution channels, and user roles are increasingly blurred.

KEYWORDS: *Distribution, Contemporary, Consumption, Convergence, Personalized.*

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of home entertainment from broadcast-based television to broadband-enabled streaming platforms constitutes a fundamental transformation in contemporary media ecosystems. Traditional broadcasting operated within a linear, schedule-driven framework characterized by centralized content distribution and limited audience agency. In contrast, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms—such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+—deliver content via internet infrastructures, enabling on-demand access, personalized viewing, and multi-device consumption. This transition reflects broader processes of digital convergence, wherein distinctions between media formats, distribution channels, and user roles are increasingly blurred.

Scholarly discourse situates this shift within the framework of convergence culture, where media consumption becomes participatory, interactive, and dispersed across platforms. According to **Henry Jenkins (2006)**, convergence is not merely technological but also cultural, involving the

active migration of audiences across multiple media environments. OTT platforms exemplify this paradigm by integrating content libraries, recommendation systems, and user interfaces into cohesive digital ecosystems that prioritize user engagement over passive reception. Consequently, audiences are no longer confined to predetermined schedules but exercise temporal autonomy through practices such as binge-watching and selective viewing (Jenner, 2018).

From an economic perspective, the rise of OTT platforms aligns with the logic of platform capitalism, wherein digital intermediaries leverage data analytics and algorithmic infrastructures to mediate content distribution and consumption. **Nick Srnicek (2017)** argues that platforms function as data-driven entities that extract, analyze, and monetize user behavior, thereby reshaping traditional media value chains. In this context, OTT services utilize algorithmic recommendation systems to curate personalized content feeds, influencing audience preferences while simultaneously reinforcing platform dependency. This dual dynamic of empowerment and control underscores the complexity of contemporary media consumption.

Moreover, the transition from broadcast to broadband has significant implications for domestic viewing practices. Historically, television functioned as a collective medium, fostering shared family experiences within the household. However, the proliferation of personal devices and individualized accounts has led to the fragmentation of viewing patterns, with users engaging in solitary and asynchronous consumption (**Lotz, 2017**). This transformation not only alters social interactions within the home but also redefines the cultural significance of television as a communal activity.

Despite extensive research on digital media and streaming technologies, there remains a need for qualitative investigations that capture the lived experiences of users navigating this evolving ecosystem, particularly in emerging markets such as India. The rapid expansion of internet penetration and mobile streaming has accelerated OTT adoption, creating hybrid consumption environments where traditional broadcast media coexist with digital platforms. Understanding how individuals negotiate these overlapping systems is essential for developing a nuanced account of media transformation.

This study, therefore, examines how OTT platforms reconfigure home entertainment ecosystems by analyzing changes in viewing practices, audience agency, and platform-mediated content consumption. It advances the argument that the shift from broadcast to broadband is not a linear replacement but a complex reorganization of media infrastructures, shaped by technological innovation, economic imperatives, and evolving cultural practices.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The rapid expansion of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ has significantly disrupted traditional broadcast-based home entertainment systems; however, the nature and implications of this transformation remain insufficiently understood at the level of lived experience. Existing scholarship has largely emphasized technological advancement and market growth, with limited qualitative attention to how individuals and households interpret and negotiate the coexistence of broadcast and broadband media within everyday contexts. Moreover, while OTT platforms promote user autonomy through on-demand access, their reliance on algorithmic recommendation systems introduces new forms of structured consumption that may constrain choice and shape cultural exposure. This tension

between perceived freedom and platform-mediated control, coupled with the shift from collective television viewing to individualized, multi-device engagement, generates complex changes in domestic media practices that are not adequately captured in current research, particularly within emerging markets such as India. Consequently, there is a critical need for in-depth qualitative inquiry to examine how OTT platforms reconfigure home entertainment ecosystems across technological, cultural, and social dimensions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined the transformation of media consumption through OTT platforms using diverse methodological and theoretical approaches. Amanda D. **Lotz (2021)** investigated the evolution of internet-distributed television and argued that OTT platforms fundamentally restructure audience engagement by prioritizing subscriber retention over mass viewership metrics. Using qualitative industry analysis and audience behavior data, the study demonstrated that platform-driven content strategies emphasize niche targeting and long-term engagement, thereby altering traditional programming logics and reinforcing the shift toward individualized consumption patterns.

Ramon Lobato (2022) explored the globalization of streaming services with a focus on regional content flows and platform localization strategies. Through comparative case analysis, the study highlighted how OTT platforms adapt to local cultural contexts while maintaining global distribution infrastructures. The findings indicated that algorithmic recommendation systems play a crucial role in mediating cultural visibility, often privileging platform-generated content hierarchies, thereby reshaping audience exposure and reinforcing asymmetrical power structures within global media ecosystems.

In a qualitative audience study, **Mareike Jenner (2023)** examined binge-watching practices and temporal autonomy in OTT consumption. Drawing on in-depth interviews, the research identified that users perceive binge-watching as both a form of leisure control and an outcome of platform design. The study concluded that while OTT platforms enhance viewer autonomy, they simultaneously encourage prolonged engagement through interface design and narrative structuring, thereby embedding users within continuous consumption cycles.

David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell (2024) analyzed platformization within the cultural industries, emphasizing the role of datafication and algorithmic governance in shaping media production and distribution. Using a political economy framework, the study demonstrated that OTT platforms exert significant control over content visibility, monetization, and audience access. Their findings underscored that platform infrastructures transform creative labor and institutional practices, leading to increased dependency on proprietary algorithms and performance metrics.

Focusing on emerging markets, **Usha M. Rodrigues (2025)** conducted a qualitative investigation into OTT adoption in India, utilizing semi-structured interviews across urban households. The study revealed hybrid consumption patterns in which traditional television and OTT platforms coexist, with users strategically navigating between them based on cost, convenience, and content preferences. It further highlighted the role of mobile-first streaming and regional language content in accelerating OTT penetration, while also identifying persistent digital divides affecting accessibility and user experience.

These studies indicate that OTT platforms not only transform technological infrastructures but also reconfigure cultural practices, audience agency, and media economies. However, a critical gap remains in deeply contextualized qualitative analyses that integrate household-level experiences with broader theoretical frameworks, particularly within rapidly evolving media environments.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the expanding body of scholarship on OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, existing research remains predominantly oriented toward quantitative assessments of market growth, subscription patterns, and technological innovation, with comparatively limited emphasis on qualitative, experience-centered analyses of media consumption. Current studies insufficiently address how users negotiate hybrid entertainment environments in which traditional broadcast television coexists with algorithm-driven streaming systems. Furthermore, the experiential dimensions of algorithmic recommendation—particularly the tension between perceived user autonomy and platform-mediated control—remain underexplored within household contexts. There is also a notable lack of region-specific qualitative research focusing on emerging markets such as India, where rapid digital adoption intersects with socio-cultural diversity, linguistic plurality, and uneven access to technology. Additionally, limited attention has been given to the transformation of domestic viewing practices, including the shift from collective to individualized consumption and its implications for social interaction within households. Consequently, a critical gap exists in developing a contextually grounded, theoretically integrated qualitative understanding of how OTT platforms reconfigure home entertainment ecosystems across technological, cultural, and social dimensions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the transformation of household viewing practices from traditional broadcast television to on-demand OTT consumption through platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.
2. To examine the role of algorithmic recommendation systems in shaping audience choice, perceived autonomy, and content consumption patterns within OTT environments.
3. To investigate the shift from collective to individualized viewing practices and its implications for domestic media interactions and home entertainment ecosystems.

PROPOSITIONS OF THE STUDY

Although qualitative research is typically exploratory, the study formulates the following analytically grounded propositions to guide inquiry into OTT-mediated transformations:

H1: The adoption of OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video is associated with a significant shift from scheduled, collective television viewing to individualized, on-demand consumption practices within households.

H2: Algorithmic recommendation systems embedded within OTT platforms significantly influence user content choices, thereby shaping viewing behavior despite the perception of increased audience autonomy.

H3: The integration of OTT platforms into domestic media environments contributes to the fragmentation of shared viewing experiences, altering traditional patterns of family-based media engagement.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design to examine how OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video reconfigure home entertainment ecosystems. A qualitative approach is appropriate as the research seeks to capture subjective experiences, interpretive meanings, and socially embedded media practices that cannot be adequately understood through quantitative measures.

Data were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to articulate their viewing behaviors, preferences, and perceptions of platform-mediated consumption in a flexible yet guided manner. The study employed purposive sampling to select 15–25 participants from urban households, ensuring diversity in age, gender, occupation, and media usage patterns. This sampling strategy facilitated the inclusion of information-rich cases capable of providing nuanced insights into evolving entertainment practices. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, ensuring analytical adequacy rather than numerical representation.

All interviews were conducted either in person or via digital communication platforms, recorded with informed consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke, involving systematic stages of familiarization, open coding, category development, and theme generation. An inductive coding approach was adopted to allow patterns to emerge organically from participant narratives, while also aligning with the study's theoretical framework on platformization and media convergence.

To ensure methodological rigor, the study incorporated strategies such as triangulation through comparison of participant responses, member checking to validate interpretations, and reflexivity to minimize researcher bias. Ethical considerations were strictly maintained, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymization of personal data. This methodological approach enables a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of how OTT platforms transform home entertainment ecosystems at the level of everyday experience.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Objective 1: Transformation of Household Viewing Practices

Proposition 1: The adoption of OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video is associated with a significant shift from scheduled, collective television viewing to individualized, on-demand consumption practices within households.

Figure 1 :Conceptual Representation of the Shift from Linear Broadcast Viewing to On-Demand OTT Consumption

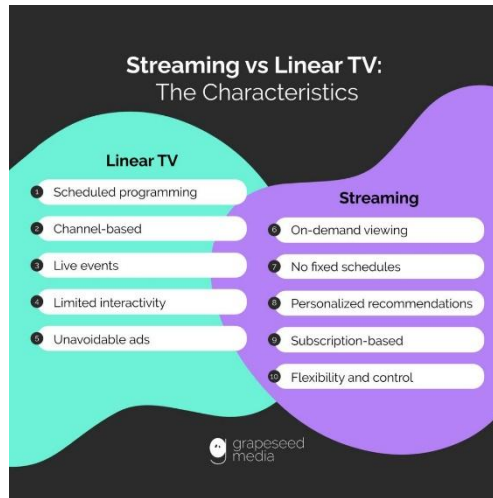


Table 1 :Thematic Analysis of Changing Household Viewing Practices in the OTT Era

Theme	Key Findings	Interpretation
Shift to On-Demand Viewing	Majority preferred flexible, anytime viewing over fixed schedules	Indicates decline of linear broadcast dominance
Binge-Watching Behavior	Frequent consumption of multiple episodes in one sitting	Reflects temporal autonomy and immersive engagement
Hybrid Consumption	Continued use of TV for news/sports alongside OTT	Demonstrates coexistence rather than complete replacement

Table 1 presents a thematic synthesis of the transformation in household viewing practices associated with the adoption of OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The findings indicate a marked transition from rigid, schedule-bound television consumption to flexible, on-demand viewing, reflecting a broader decline in the dominance of linear broadcast models. Participants consistently emphasized the value of temporal autonomy, enabling them to access content according to individual convenience rather than institutional programming schedules. Furthermore, the prevalence of binge-watching behavior underscores a shift toward immersive and continuous engagement, facilitated by platform design and content structuring. Despite these changes, the persistence of traditional television for specific genres such as news and live sports reveals a hybrid consumption pattern, wherein broadcast and broadband media coexist within the domestic environment. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that the transformation of viewing practices is not characterized by outright replacement but by a negotiated integration of new and traditional media forms.

The findings for the objective 1 explains that the proposition is supported. The findings clearly demonstrate a shift from scheduled, collective viewing to individualized, on-demand consumption, confirming the transformation of viewing practices.

Objective 2: Influence of Algorithmic Recommendation Systems

Proposition 2 :Algorithmic recommendation systems embedded within OTT platforms significantly influence user content choices, thereby shaping viewing behavior despite the perception of increased audience autonomy.

Figure 2 :Conceptual Model of Algorithmic Recommendation Systems Influencing OTT Content Consumption



Table 2: Thematic Analysis of Algorithmic Recommendation Influence on OTT Content Consumption

Theme	Key Findings	Interpretation
Dependence on Recommendations	Users relied heavily on suggested content	Algorithms act as primary gatekeepers of content discovery
Perceived Convenience	Reduced search effort and quicker decision-making	Enhances user satisfaction and platform engagement
Content Narrowing	Repetitive and limited genre exposure	Suggests algorithmic bias and potential cultural limitation

Table 2 delineates the role of algorithmic recommendation systems in shaping user engagement within OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The findings reveal a substantial dependence on platform-generated suggestions, indicating that algorithms function as primary gatekeepers in the content discovery process. This reliance reduces the need for active search, thereby enhancing perceived convenience and expediting decision-making, which in turn contributes to sustained user engagement and platform retention. However, the data also highlight a critical limitation: the tendency of recommendation systems to reinforce repetitive viewing patterns, leading to narrowed genre exposure. This phenomenon suggests the presence of algorithmic bias, wherein user preferences are continually looped, potentially restricting cultural diversity and limiting exploratory consumption. Overall, the table illustrates the dual nature of algorithmic mediation, simultaneously facilitating ease of access while constraining the breadth of content engagement.

The results reveal that the above proposition is supported with nuances. While users perceive autonomy, the findings indicate strong reliance on algorithmic recommendations, suggesting that autonomy is structured rather than absolute.

Objective 3: Shift from Collective to Individualized Viewing

Proposition 3 :The integration of OTT platforms into domestic media environments contributes to the fragmentation of shared viewing experiences, altering traditional patterns of family-based media engagement.

Figure 3 :Illustration of the Transition from Collective Family Viewing to Individualized Multi-Device Consumption

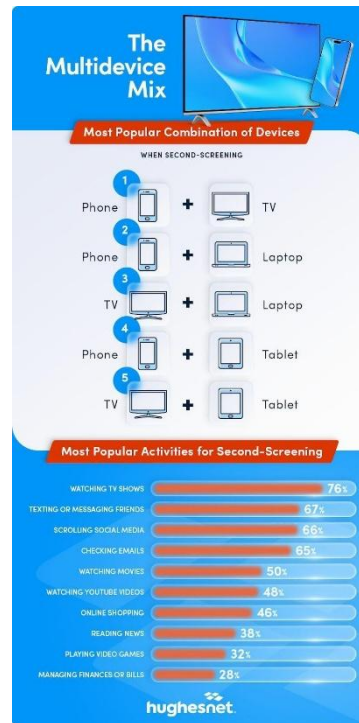


Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Individualized and Collective Viewing Dynamics in OTT Consumption

Theme	Key Findings	Interpretation
Individual Device Usage	Increased viewing on smartphones and personal devices	Indicates personalization and portability of media
Decline in Family Viewing	Reduced shared viewing time among family members	Weakening of collective cultural experiences
Selective Co-Viewing	Occasional shared viewing for major releases	Suggests partial retention of communal practices

Table 3 examines the transformation of domestic viewing patterns in the context of OTT platform adoption, particularly through services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The findings indicate a substantial increase in individual device usage, with participants predominantly accessing content through smartphones and personal screens, reflecting enhanced personalization and portability of media consumption. This shift has contributed to a noticeable decline in shared family viewing, thereby weakening traditional forms of collective cultural engagement within the household. However, the persistence of selective co-viewing—especially for highly anticipated or culturally significant content—suggests that communal viewing practices have not entirely disappeared but have been restructured into more occasional and intentional forms. The results demonstrate a transition toward individualized media engagement, accompanied by a partial yet meaningful retention of collective viewing experiences within evolving home entertainment ecosystems.

Based on the findings, it is informed that the proposition is partially supported. Although fragmentation of family viewing is evident, the persistence of selective co-viewing indicates that collective practices have not been eliminated.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The study reveals that the transition from broadcast television to OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video constitutes a structural reconfiguration of home entertainment rather than a simple technological substitution. First, viewing practices have shifted decisively toward on-demand, user-controlled consumption, with binge-watching emerging as a normalized mode of engagement. This reflects a broader reorientation from schedule-bound viewing to temporal autonomy, enabling audiences to curate their own media routines.

Second, algorithmic recommendation systems have become central to content discovery, significantly shaping user preferences and engagement patterns. While participants perceive these systems as enhancing convenience and efficiency, they also contribute to constrained exposure through repetitive suggestions, indicating a tension between perceived choice and algorithmic control.

Third, domestic viewing dynamics have undergone notable transformation, with individualized consumption via personal devices increasingly replacing collective family viewing. This fragmentation of shared experiences suggests a redefinition of the social function of television within households, although selective co-viewing for specific content persists, indicating partial continuity of communal practices.

Finally, the findings highlight the emergence of a hybrid media ecosystem in which traditional broadcast television continues to coexist with OTT platforms, particularly for live and event-based content. Collectively, these results demonstrate that OTT adoption reshapes technological access, audience agency, and cultural practices simultaneously, producing a complex and negotiated media environment rather than a complete displacement of earlier systems.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study substantiate the argument that the transition from broadcast to broadband constitutes a systemic reconfiguration of home entertainment ecosystems rather than a linear process of technological replacement. The observed shift toward on-demand viewing aligns with theoretical perspectives on media convergence, wherein audiences exercise increased temporal flexibility and control over content selection. However, this autonomy is not absolute; rather, it is embedded within platform architectures governed by algorithmic recommendation systems. In this regard, the findings corroborate the notion of platformization, which posits that digital platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video simultaneously enable and structure user behavior through data-driven interfaces.

The prevalence of binge-watching further illustrates the reorganization of temporal engagement with media. While participants perceive binge-watching as a manifestation of personal choice and leisure optimization, it also reflects the strategic design of serialized content and auto-play functionalities that encourage prolonged consumption. This duality supports existing arguments within the political economy of media, particularly those advanced by Nick Srnicek, who emphasizes that platform economies are oriented toward maximizing user retention and engagement through continuous interaction. Thus, user agency operates within a framework that subtly directs attention and consumption patterns.

Moreover, the findings on algorithmic recommendation systems highlight a critical tension between convenience and constraint. Although participants acknowledge the efficiency of personalized content suggestions, the tendency toward repetitive recommendations suggests the formation of “filter bubbles,” limiting exposure to diverse genres and perspectives. This observation extends prior scholarship by demonstrating that algorithmic governance not only shapes individual preferences but also has broader cultural implications, including the potential homogenization of media consumption.

The transformation of domestic viewing practices provides further insight into the socio-cultural impact of OTT adoption. The shift from collective television viewing to individualized, multi-device consumption reflects broader processes of media privatization and personalization. This fragmentation of viewing experiences challenges traditional notions of television as a shared cultural medium, leading to reduced synchronous engagement within households. Nevertheless, the persistence of selective co-viewing indicates that communal practices are not entirely displaced but are instead reconstituted around specific content events, suggesting a hybridization of social viewing patterns.

Importantly, the continued relevance of traditional broadcast television for live content such as news and sports underscores the coexistence of legacy and digital media systems. This hybrid consumption model complicates deterministic narratives of digital disruption by demonstrating that older media forms retain functional and cultural significance within contemporary ecosystems. Such findings are particularly salient in emerging markets, where infrastructural variability and diverse audience preferences contribute to differentiated patterns of media adoption.

In analytical terms, the study advances the understanding of OTT platforms by integrating user-level experiences with broader theoretical frameworks of convergence, platformization, and media economics. To enhance scholarly rigor, future discussions could further incorporate comparative analysis across demographic segments and include longitudinal perspectives to capture evolving consumption trajectories. Overall, the discussion affirms that OTT platforms reshape not only how content is delivered but also how it is experienced, interpreted, and socially embedded within everyday life.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the transition from broadcast television to OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of home entertainment ecosystems, characterized by a shift toward on-demand, personalized, and multi-device consumption. While this transformation enhances temporal autonomy and user engagement, it simultaneously embeds viewers within algorithmically structured environments that shape content discovery and limit exposure. The findings further indicate a redefinition of domestic viewing practices, marked by the decline of collective television experiences and the rise of individualized consumption, alongside the continued coexistence of traditional broadcast media within a hybrid ecosystem. However, the study is constrained by its qualitative design and limited sample size, which restrict generalizability, as well as its urban-centric focus and reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the research limits the ability to capture evolving consumption patterns over time, and the absence of industry-level data restricts a more comprehensive analysis of platform dynamics. Despite these limitations, the study offers a contextually grounded and theoretically informed understanding of

the complex interplay between technology, audience behavior, and media systems in the digital era.

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