



**Can do better!
say the French of their TV**
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Can do

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The French magazine *Télérama* publishes an exclusive survey each year on what the French think of their television.

Demanding

In comparison with 2004, the number of people satisfied with what's on television was down (46% in 2005, 51% in 2004). However, at the same time the number of people who think that television is better than before has increased.

The audience is more demanding of television content than before: the current level is considered better but still not good enough to make the audience happy.

The different categories of viewers confirm this:

Programmes

“Frustrated” (who are not only dissatisfied with current TV content

but think that it is getting worse) – still in the majority (38%).

“Philosophical” (who acknowledge that the level is getting worse but continue to appreciate what is offered) – down by 6 points. They are resigned to accepting what is offered.

Similarly, “nostalgic” (who see the level getting worse without changes being noticeable over the past year) – almost 33% of those surveyed. They talk about the old days. They not only think that television is not as good as it used to be but also that things are not likely to get any better as they haven't noticed any changes since last year.

The number of “never satisfied” (who accept that the level is improving but it is still not enough to satisfy them)

has increased by 4 points, whereas 25% of the audience are described as “disappointed” because they have noticed changes since last year but only in the sense that the content is becoming worse.

The rise in the proportion of “never satisfied” combined with a drop in “frustrated” proves that viewers are becoming more demanding of TV content.

The remainder of the audience are “delighted” (changes seen since last year meet their expectations) or “happy” (who haven't noticed any change since last year but are not bothered because they think that in any case things are improving).

Targets

Satisfaction and demands vary with the targets.

The youngest members of the survey group, the 18–24s, are slightly more satisfied than the whole group (51% vs. 46% overall) although by and large they consider that the level is less good than before (70% vs. 58% overall). They are therefore quite undemanding.

The same can be said for the over-65s, of whom 53% are satisfied (vs.

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46% overall): they are slightly more likely than the group as a whole to feel that the level is less good than before (59% vs. 58% overall).

This can be explained to a large extent by the fact that these target groups have a functional or routine relationship with television.

The older viewers watch far more TV than the group as a whole to combat loneliness (85% vs. 72%) and then talk about it (50% vs. 41%).

These two target audiences declare slightly more than the group as a whole that they watch TV more out of habit than by choice (61% for the 18–24s

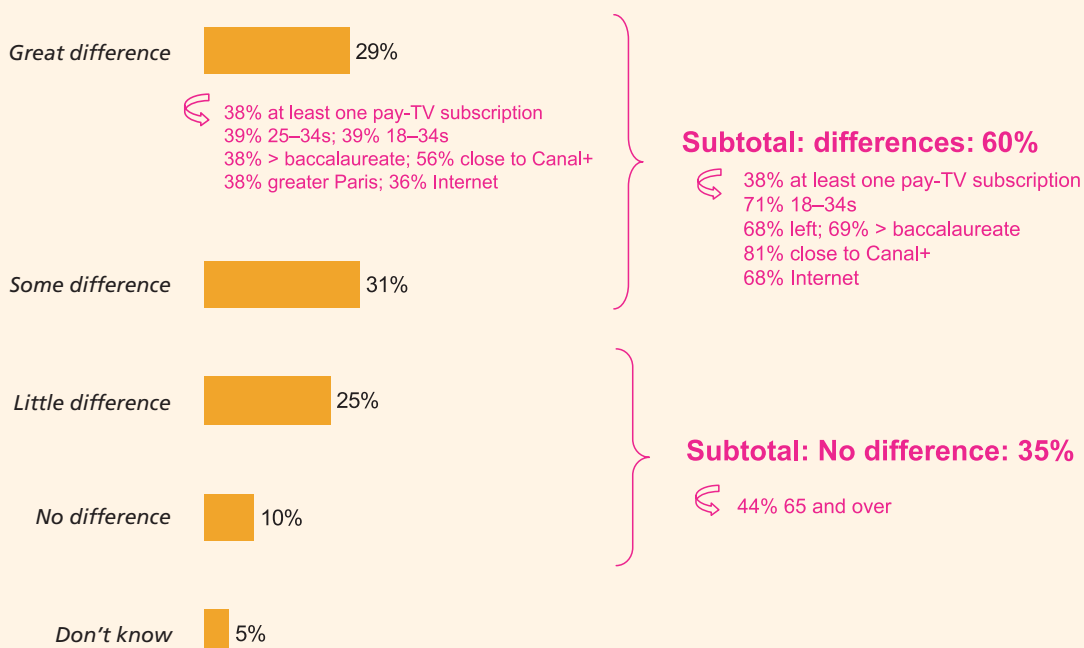
and 59% for the over-65s vs. 58%). The quality offered by the small screen is therefore less important than its ability to provide background noise.

The harshest judges

The higher professional classes are the most dissatisfied (60% vs. 53%) and

Perceived differences between public and private channels

"In your opinion is there a great difference, some difference, little difference or no difference between public service channels and private channels?"



the most disappointed in changes in TV content (63% find it less good than before vs. 58% overall).

The 25–34s are the most critical age group (60% vs. 53% overall), the majority of whom consider that the level of TV content is not what it used to be (70% vs. 58% overall).

Those living in greater Paris are also dissatisfied with the current level of television (62% vs. 53% overall) and somewhat dissatisfied with how it has changed (64% vs. 58% overall).

Of those with Internet access 58% are dissatisfied with television as it is nowadays and 61% consider that it is going downhill.

Internet would therefore appear to fulfil a certain number of expectations that television does not manage to meet, whether it be terrestrial, cable or digital channels, since access to this type of offer does not improve the

level of satisfaction or the perception of positive change with regard to the small screen.

Similarly, when access to the Internet is available, people tend to spend less time watching TV (56%), which corroborates the fact that if those surveyed were to only keep one media type they would choose the mobile phone first (33%), then Internet (28%), far in front of television (17%).

Expectations

The demands and expectations placed on television are on its content. Those surveyed would like television to act as a window on the world and meet their wish to understand.

They expect openness, culture, and ethics:

90% said that television should enable them to discover the unknown.

75% felt that television enabled them to have a better understanding of the world around them.

This is even more obvious among older people, rural populations, the less well educated, and those without the Internet.

So this year it is perceptible that there is a willingness to see television become once more a medium of culture and not just a means of entertainment.

Furthermore, of the channels corresponding most to personal expectations, not only does Arte achieve top position, moving into the lead ahead of TF1, contrary to what we saw in 2004, but in addition Arte gains four points in the poll whereas M6 loses five points.

Even if TF1 moves up one point in popularity, this double movement appears to reveal distance placed – or

Differences between public and private channels

“In your opinion, where are these differences mainly?”



at least expressed – in relation to the content on offer (in particular reality TV) on the two main private channels. Broadly speaking the public service channels meet with greater approval in 2005 (55%) than in 2004 (47%). They are seen as different (60%), by people for whom these differences are primarily based on the programming and only very much to a second degree on the type of funding and volume of advertising (35%).

It is therefore very much in terms of content and programme quality that the French place their demands on television nowadays. And the fact that the level of satisfaction with TV content is even lower among those who subscribe to pay-TV (down 8 points from 2004 to 2005 vs. -3 points for those who only receive terrestrial channels) proves that they demand quality rather than just quantity.

Under these circumstances it comes as no surprise that the interest for digital TV is relatively modest (53%). Only added value in terms of content could give rise to greater enthusiasm for these channels.

Source: survey conducted TNS Sofres Media Department for Télérama using a representative sample of the French population aged 18 and over.

The telephone survey, in which 1,006 people were questioned at home, was conducted in the evening, from 7 July to 11 July 2005.