

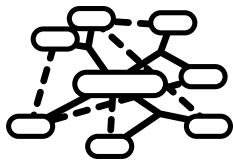
AlixPartners
Disruption
Insights

**CONTENT IS
KING . . . AGAIN**

Disruption in
the media industry

When it really matters.

In brief



DISRUPTION THEMES

- With the growth of the Internet and social media, content creation is becoming more and more disintermediated and democratized, thereby creating an explosion of content. While it has created choices for consumers, it has also resulted in decreasing trust in quality of content and increasing uncertainty among consumers.
- Self-centric consumers now demand personalized media experiences that are tailored to their own preferences, contexts, and schedules and facilitated by ubiquitous and high-speed connectivity and innovative devices.
- Traditional business models have been disrupted, thereby reducing revenues from physical sales, advertising, and third-party distribution.
- Competitive lines are blurring as players in different segments begin competing for consumers' attention—and dollars.



IMPLICATIONS

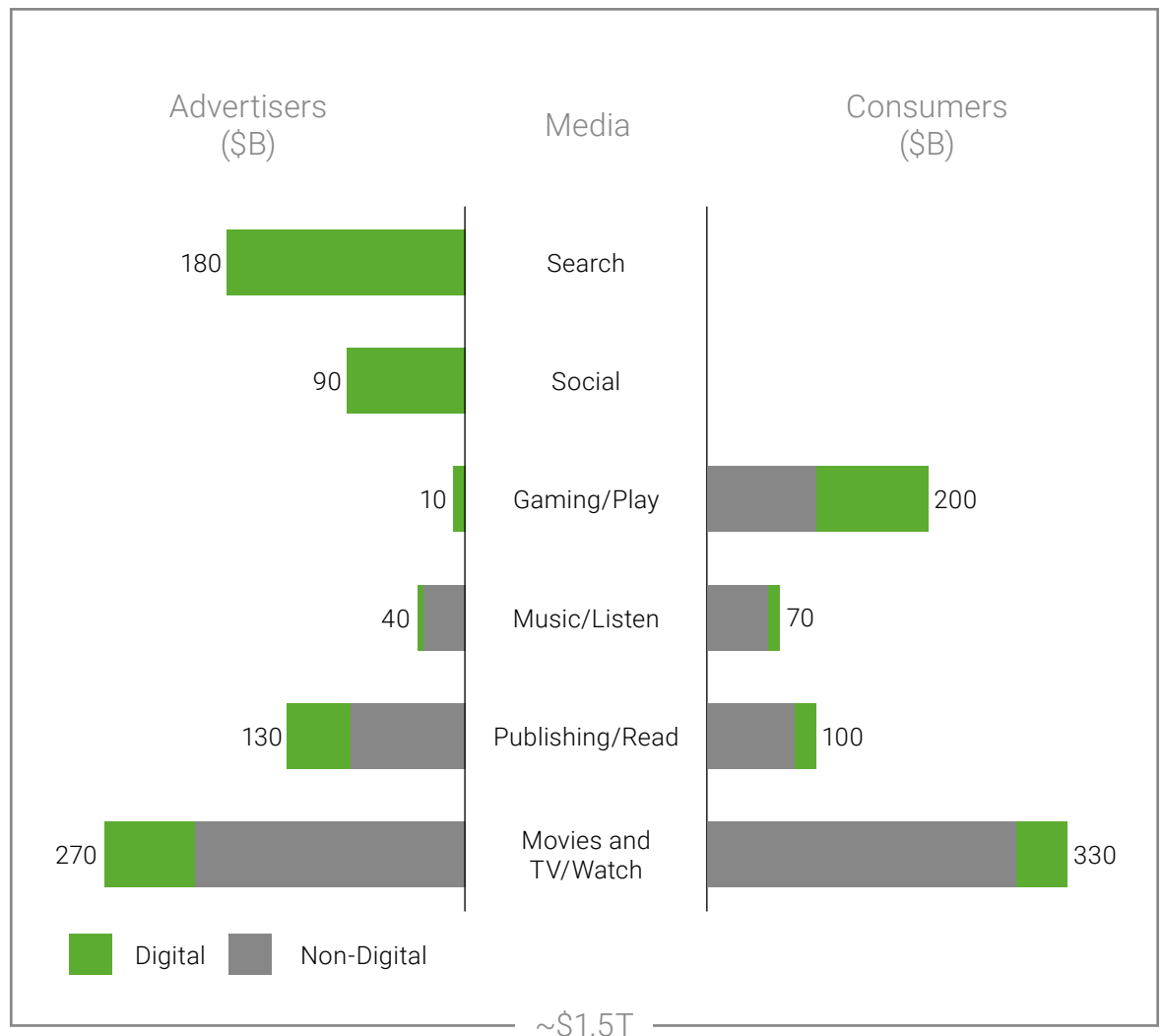
- Content creation must respond to consumers' demands for personalization with regard to how and when they experience media across all potential devices.
- Consumer analytics, in conjunction with artificial intelligence, will increasingly empower media companies to target those consumer demands and customize experiences around individuals.
- To supplement revenues lost from traditional channels, many media companies are increasing their reliance on digital subscriptions, but for some industries and companies, subscriptions might not replace all lost revenues as new entrants take market share and consumer behaviors change.
- Strong brands and quality products will differentiate companies in a more fragmented media environment.

Disruption in the media and entertainment industry

In many ways, the media and entertainment industry is experiencing a golden age. New technologies have enabled creators of content to connect to a broader array of consumers in more-direct and more-impactful ways than ever before. As barriers to entry have fallen, an explosion in the amount and types of content has occurred, which has served to democratize the creation process. Consumers have been spoiled by an abundance of choices, and revenues for the industry continue to rise steadily. We estimate that global revenues will reach \$1.5 trillion in 2022, with digital accounting for 40% of the market.

THE RISE OF DIGITAL HAS RESULTED IN AN ABUNDANCE OF CONSUMER CHOICES AND WILL ACCOUNT FOR 40% OF THE INDUSTRY BY 2022

2022 Global Media Ecosystem Estimate



Note: Ecosystem revenue includes all advertising and consumer-paid media content.

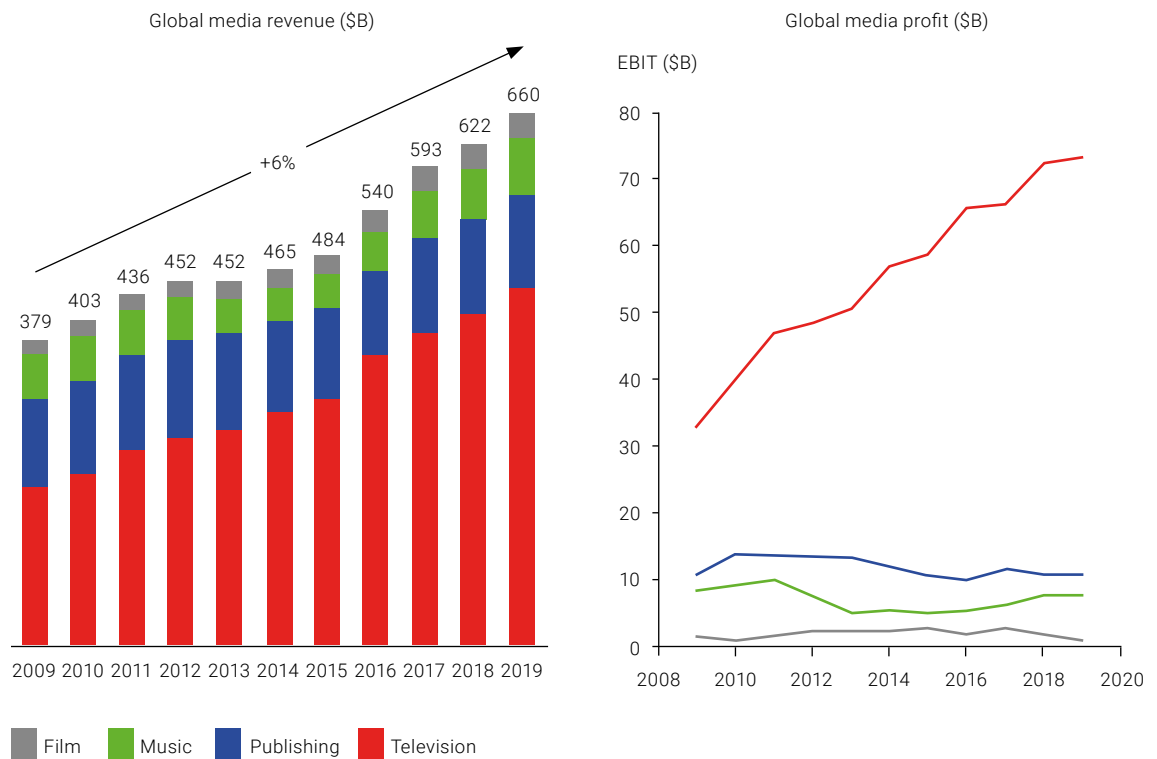
Source: AlixPartners

But beneath that top-line number lies a fundamental disruption in business models, which has necessitated new ways of operating and which is demanding a transformation in the types and quantities of content produced. Distribution has become disintermediated because consumers are increasingly relying on digital and mobile technologies to directly access and curate content. The platforms are more and more converging on the same devices, and competitive lines are blurring as consumers start choosing not between the alternatives in one form of entertainment—like television shows—but between all the various forms of digital entertainment now available to them, including television, films, news, gaming, and social media.

Indeed, with mobile devices connecting us continuously everywhere, media and entertainment companies compete for every minute of our time and all of our attention. As Netflix CEO Reed Hastings said, “We actually compete against sleep, and we’re winning!”

The graphic on page 3 shows these various entertainment alternatives and our estimates for the revenues these segments will generate by 2022. The first three categories—search, social, and gaming—are new entrants and disruptors in this industry. The latter three—music, publishing, and movies and television—are the incumbents who are facing fundamental disruption to their business models. The following graphs show revenues and profits in these segments. We will go into a deep-dive analysis on each of these to see the forces at play and how companies are responding.

BOOMING TELEVISION REVENUES ON THE BACK OF STREAMING COMPENSATE FOR ANEMIC PERFORMANCE IN OTHER SEGMENTS



Sources: CapIQ, AlixPartners analysis

Connectivity and digital media are growth drivers

As seen in other industries, ubiquitous and high-speed connectivity has facilitated a metamorphosis in consumer behaviors, but the very designs of mobile phones, tablets, and computers—which optimize individuals' consumption of media and entertainment—has accelerated the pace of change in this industry. And that is what the smartphone was built for.

INCREASINGLY CONNECTED TO THE MOBILE/SMARTPHONE

5 HOURS

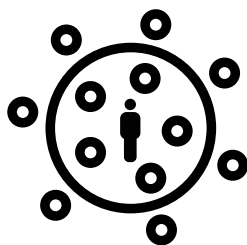
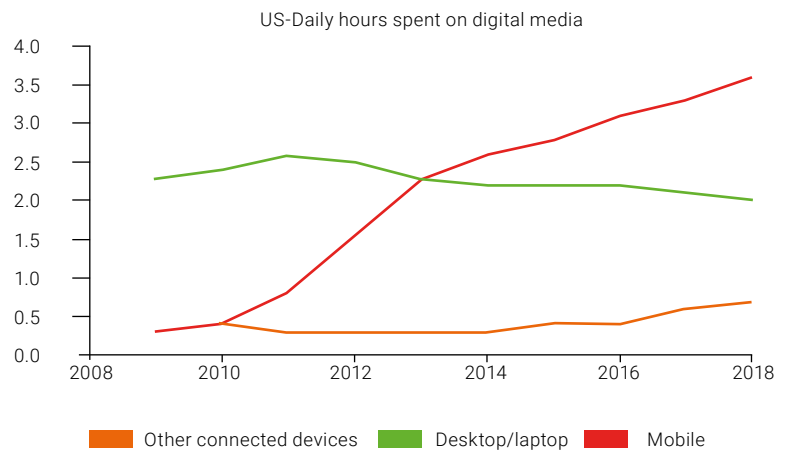
Average time per day on our mobile device

~2,600

Times we touch our phone per day

~79%

Internet usage originates from mobile device



Self-centric consumer

As demand has increased, so has the amount of content. In one month, YouTube users post the same amount of video as the three main US broadcasters have created in the past 60 years. Upwards of 350 million photos are uploaded to Facebook every day. And in 2018, Netflix alone created 1,500 hours of original programming. In such an environment, it becomes difficult to win, and hold, consumers' attention.

As a result of all those developments, people increasingly expect to enjoy their media experience how and when they want it. They tailor their selections across a range of services and devices to fit those demands, thereby curating a unique ecosystem that meets their personal preferences. An otherwise great product that is not delivered how and when and where consumers want it is likely to be ignored.

That personalization is something consumers are looking for in actual content as well. They want content optimized and available on the device of their choosing, and they're relying more and more on artificial-intelligence (AI)-driven recommendations to facilitate discovery. Netflix even designed a choose-your-own-adventure episode of its show Black Mirror, allowing a range of viewer-driven endings.

Different business models for publishers and content creators across consumers and advertisers

The industry has several different business models—primarily advertising, subscription, transactions, licensing, merchandising, and content marketing. Two segments—search and social—that have emerged during the past decade, rely primarily on advertising revenue, while the other segments are increasingly adopting the subscription model to “own” the consumer.

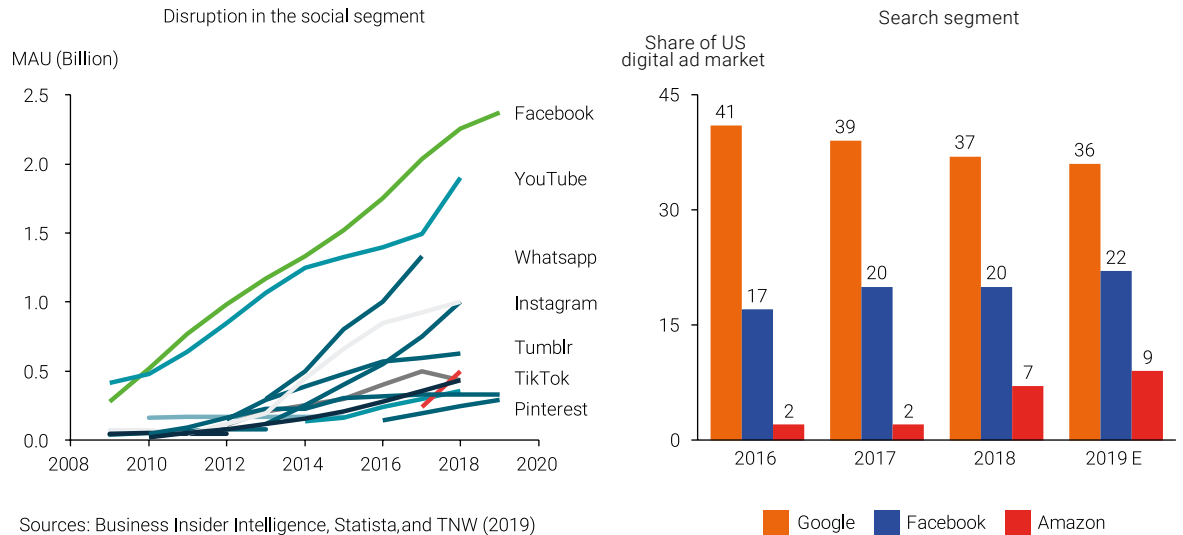
MONETIZATION BASED ON MULTIPLE BUSINESS MODELS ACROSS ADVERTISERS AND CONSUMERS

Advertiser		Consumer				
Call to Action	Branding		Subscription/ Tiered Membership	Transaction	Licensing	Merchandising
✓		Search		Free		
✓		Social		Free		
✓	✓	Publishing/Read	✓	✓		
	✓	Movies and TV/Watch	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	Music/Listen	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	Gaming/Play	✓	✓	✓	✓

Search, social, e-shopping, and e-gaming

Purely digital advertising revenue streams have emerged from search engines, social media, e-commerce platforms, and gaming. While Facebook dominates the social media segment, generational preferences for platforms (TikTok being the “youngest”) with different features continue to rise and thrive. Today, Google’s dominance of the search segment is being threatened by Amazon, which in addition to subscriptions is adopting advertising across its ecosystem. Armed with consumer data from its e-commerce platform, Amazon is positioned to target consumers across a wide range of platforms, including e-commerce, video, and music.

POTENTIAL DISRUPTION OF THE DIGITAL DUOPOLY

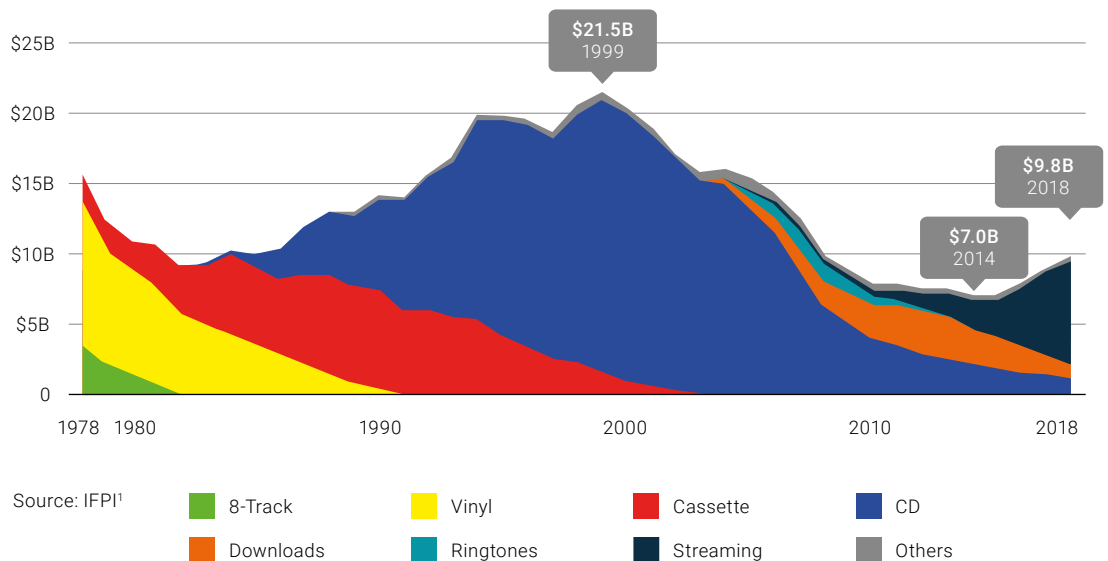


Although small, the gaming segment is growing rapidly. Monetization in this segment is primarily from in-game purchases, with many games adopting a free-to-play model, but subscription services are also becoming an increasingly important strategy.

Deep dive: music

The music industry was the effective canary in the coal mine in the media and entertainment industry, because the disruptive impact of new digital technologies and consumer behaviors was felt there first.

DIGITAL STREAMING REVENUE IS ON THE RISE



The music industry has evolved from sale of physical assets (records and CDs) to the widespread adoption of subscription services like Spotify, Pandora, and Apple Music. And the industry is beginning to see growing revenues again.

Since 2015, global revenues have been increasing at a rate of 8.74% a year, with about half of the revenue now coming from subscription-based streaming.² Millennials and Gen Z are now spending more on music than their older generational cohorts. Spotify grew its subscriber base from 3 million in 2011 to 124 million in 2019 and is approaching profitability.

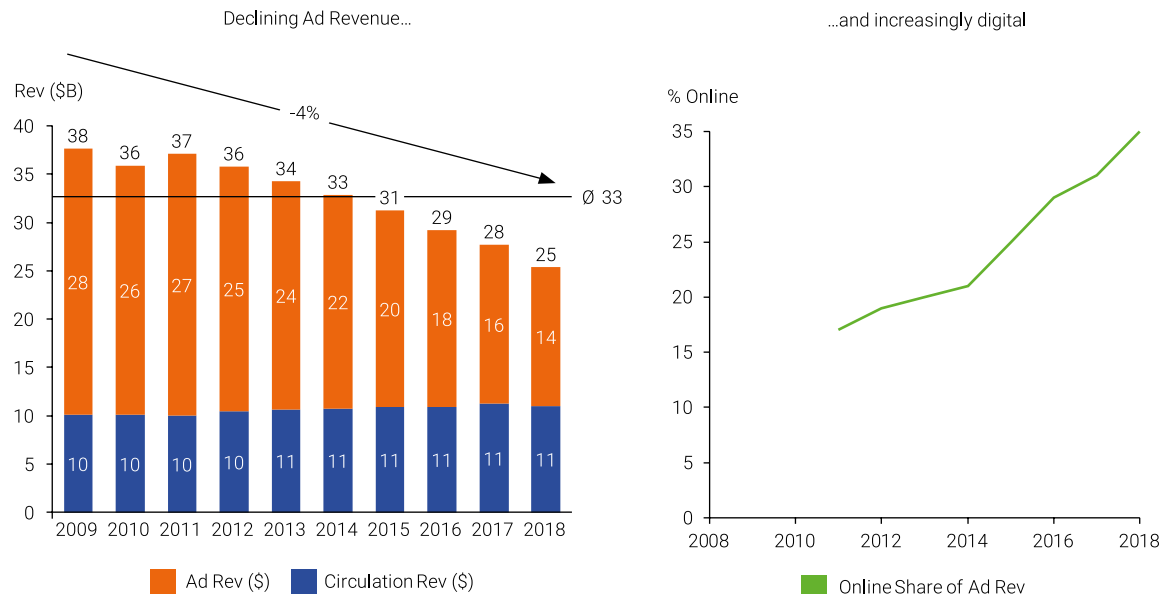
The industry has not recovered to pre-2000 levels of revenue, but the trendline is strongly positive.

Deep dive: newspaper publishing

Disruption in the news business has been equally dramatic. Newspaper publishing long relied on a combination of subscription and advertising revenues to fund its business, with advertising representing more than 35% of the total.

The advent of the Internet, smartphones, and social media combined to drive a democratization of content creation and disintermediation of traditional news sources. When barriers to entry fell, anyone and everyone became an arbiter of the truth; and the news profession, which consumers traditionally relied on to provide that lens of trust, was increasingly characterized as slow and biased.

NEWSPAPER REVENUES HAVE FALLEN IN THE LAST DECADE AND AD REVENUE IS INCREASINGLY TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE ADS



The publishing industry faced challenges on several fronts. Free services like Craigslist decimated the classified advertising departments of newspapers, while Google and Facebook dominated the online digital advertising space.

However, emerging success stories in news publishing show the promise of new operating models. Companies like Dow Jones, the Financial Times, and the New York Times are demonstrating the importance of developing premium content for which readers are willing to pay—and they're growing their subscriber bases.

Google and Facebook still dominate the online ad game, but demonstrations of engaged subscriber bases and the control and understanding of customer data can help drive digital advertising revenues, which are rising for the industry as a whole.³ The United Kingdom's Guardian newspaper recorded a profit in 2019 for the first time in many years—on the back of growing digital advertising revenues and increased contributions from its engaged readers.

Advertising-only models can also work for publications with sufficient viewership. The Daily Mail in the United Kingdom grew digital revenues by 15% in 2019 not through subscriptions but through digital advertising on the backs of stories about celebrities, scandals, and breaking news. And today, it's one of the world's most-read websites.

A FOCUS ON CONSUMERS AND QUALITY CONTENT

Along with the rest of the newspaper industry, the New York Times has struggled with declining advertising revenues and falling physical newspaper sales. The advent of the Internet, followed closely by the growth of Google and Facebook as primary means of news discovery, fundamentally undercut the company's traditional business model, as consumers began expecting to access content for free.

Even though overall advertising revenue continues to fall, the company has responded to its challenges by maintaining its journalistic quality, by engaging with audiences in expanded types of content—including audio,

video, and data visualizations—and by demanding that consumers pay to access it.

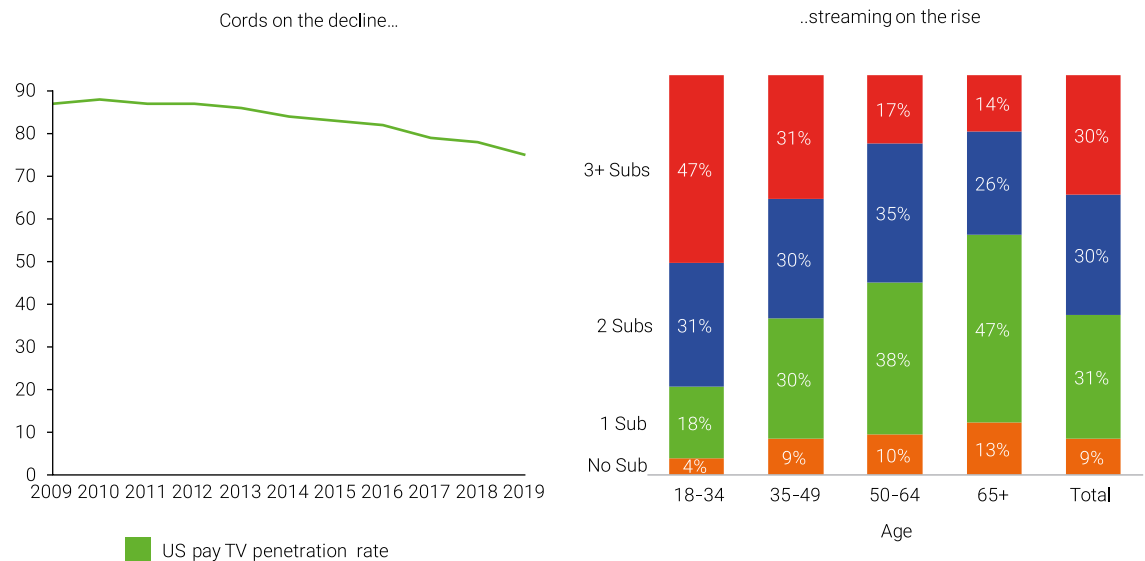
Maintaining value alignment with readers has helped drive subscriptions higher. In what has been termed the Trump bump, the New York Times has added about 200,000 paid subscribers per quarter since Donald Trump's election in 2016. The New York Times now has 4.7 million paid digital subscribers and hopes to have 10 million by 2025. Its unique cooking and crossword content also requires additional subscriptions, thereby adding incremental revenues along with services like Wirecutter, which provides product review and recommendations.

Deep dive: movies and television

The story for movies and television is certainly rosier than for either news publishing or music. Global box office revenues have grown 4% year over year for the past 10 years.⁴ In 2017, a record 487 original television shows were produced, reaching a global audience of over 1 billion and generating \$265 billion in revenues.⁵ But the ways that consumers are engaging with all this content is changing fundamentally, as are the types of content they're demanding.

Cord cutting is now a well-documented phenomenon that has only accelerated in recent years and has impacted cable and satellite providers as well as television studios.

CORD CUTTING IS ACCELERATING AS YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR MULTIPLE SUBSCRIPTIONS



Sources: Leichtman Research Group, Axios

As consumers have shifted to individualized suites of entertainment choices, viewership has become more fragmented, and streaming services have dramatically increased the amount of content available. Reliant on growth in subscription revenues, program creation for services like Netflix and Hulu has focused on engaging with otherwise untapped audiences. And success is dependent on how many subscriptions a show helps generate or maintain—not on the size of the audience. That's meant more niche and idiosyncratic programs.

Individualized entertainment choices are also increasingly driving the creation of content that is more easily watchable on mobile devices. As the CEO of AT&T, which owns WarnerMedia and HBO, said of the company's marquis show: "Think about things like Game of Thrones. In a mobile environment, a 60-minute episode might not be the best experience. Maybe you want a 20-minute episode."

With the exception of sporting events like the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup, gone are the days when one television event or series brings a large viewing audience together. HBO set a record for streaming services by garnering 19.6 million viewers for its Game of Thrones finale in 2019. Compare that to the 105.9 million people (primarily in the United States) who watched the last episode of M*A*S*H in 1983. Game of Thrones doesn't even make it into the top 100 programs in historical terms—despite the global reach that digital media provide.

As a result of audience fragmentation and the growth in viewership of advertising-free services like Netflix and HBO, advertisers are increasingly investing in digital media and away from traditional broadcasters as ratings decline. Television advertising, although not disappearing, is therefore an area of flat to slowly diminishing revenues for entertainment companies. Furthermore, as advertising moves to programmatic (automated), TV remains a laggard, with programmatic accounting for only 3% of the US linear advertising market compared to over 80% of digital display and video advertising.

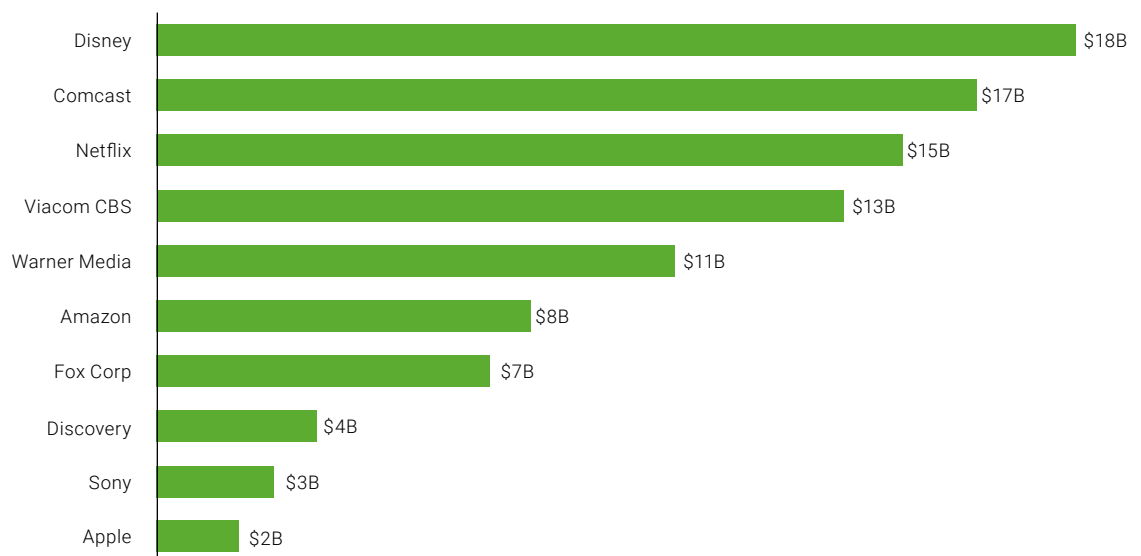
For movie studios, box office revenues continue to climb but largely on the backs of international distribution and inflation in ticket prices. Major motion picture releases are designed to minimize risk through a reliance on franchises or sequels and to maximize international viewership. In 2018, 7 of the top 10 grossing films globally were either franchise films, sequels, or remakes.

Much of the market for smaller, independent films has shifted to streaming services, which blur the lines between television and movies. In 2018, Netflix spent an estimated \$12 billion on the creation of 700 original shows, which grew to \$15 billion for original shows in 2019.⁶ In the process, it expanded its subscriber base to 167 million worldwide by the end of last year.

To compete in this new world, media companies have accelerated the pace of consolidation in the industry. That consolidation, in part, has happened by means of vertical models that combine distribution channels with production. Others have focused on collections of brands and production capabilities.

That consolidation represents a new wave of competition, a so-called second wave of disruption, that is about to commence in the form of a battle over streaming video on demand.

MORE COMPANIES ARE INVESTING INTO ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT TO ENSURE THEY REMAIN COMPETITIVE



Note: Includes spending on sports. Estimates rounded to the nearest \$ billion.

Source: FT (<https://www.ft.com/content/03b86b7a-014e-11ea-be59-e49b2a136b8d>)

This second wave of disruption promises a more-fragmented reality for consumers, for whom an already-complicated entertainment environment is becoming even more complex and burdensome. In a multiplatform world, consumers may end up paying for bundles of shows and movies they will never watch. And questions about the optimal number of streaming services that can reasonably compete in such an environment remain to be answered.

INVESTING IN BRANDS AND DISTRIBUTION

In 2016, just days into his job as CEO of Viacom, Bob Bakish began holding meetings with senior executives to develop a strategic plan for turning around the media giant. The company was struggling with the disruptive effects caused by shifting consumer behavior and the disintermediation of its primary distribution channel: traditional cable television. Revenues were flat across its core businesses. And combined with financial concerns about the amount of leverage the company was carrying, the challenges were significant.

Prior to its merger with CBS in 2019, Viacom had implemented a successful transformation

program and seemed positioned for renewed growth. The company was investing in its core brands and made substantial changes to both its management and its financial and creative strategies. It also diversified outside its core businesses by expanding its content for digital platforms and experiential businesses. And its US advertising revenues grew for the first time in five years.

The newly recombined ViacomCBS will be first in every US audience demographic—a powerful value proposition to both distributors and advertisers—as they separately build their direct-to-consumer streaming capabilities.

Response from industry: implications

EMBRACE THE SELF-CENTRIC CONSUMER

Content creation and delivery must respond to consumers' demands for personalization when it comes to how and when consumers experience media across all potential devices. The pursuit and monetization of consumers' attention is the critical task of all media and entertainment companies. As John Stankey, head of WarnerMedia said: "It's not hours a week, and it's not hours a month. We need hours a day."

Consumers are spoiled over choice, and the convergence of different types of content (music, video, news, social media, gaming, etc.) onto the same, interconnected devices means that the competition for their attention is intense. Even great product that does not get delivered how, when, and where consumers want it will not cut through the noise.

The evolution of streaming services in both the music industry and film and television is an acknowledgment of the necessity of responding to consumer demands. In 2020, every major film and television studio in the United States will offer a streaming service.

Similarly, those studios are adjusting the types of movies they market widely in theaters, in order to ensure that the movies meet a mass appeal—usually with an established fan base—and are designed to maximize international ticket sales, particularly in Asia. Studios will continue to make more niche films for the big screen, but the audience for much of that type of content is going online. In 2019, Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman*, financed by Netflix, had a limited run in theaters before it began streaming.

The Economist has implemented a reader-first circulation strategy that has expanded its offering of products and channels in order to give customers more choice. Both video and audio play large parts in the strategy, with the newspaper's 1 million YouTube followers beginning to drive growth by way of subscriptions. By placing the consumer at the center, The Economist has grown subscription revenues by 50% while doubling its gross margin in the past five years.⁷

Artificial intelligence will increasingly empower media companies to target demand and customize experiences around individuals. Recommendation algorithms can help maintain viewers' attention and keep them within companies' ecosystems, and data science will increasingly help inform programming choices. Netflix estimates that 80% of what its customers watch comes from AI-driven personalized recommendations.⁸ And about a third of articles published by Bloomberg News use some form of automated technology.⁹

An understanding of consumer demands is critical, but not all trends are digital. Experiences represent an increasingly important demand from many consumers—because experiences are something they cannot get online. For instance, in 2017, 66 million music tour tickets were sold worldwide, marking the highest total in recent years. In the United States, revenues in the live-music industry are forecast to rise from around \$9 billion in 2015 to almost \$12 billion in 2021.¹⁰

Theme and amusement parks are experiencing similar growths in consumer demand. Global revenues in that sector outpaced worldwide GDP growth by 1.5 percentage points over the past five years. Disney has invested more in its theme parks than it did in the acquisitions of Pixar, Marvel, and LucasFilm combined. In 2018, its Walt Disney Parks and Resorts division reported operating profits of \$4.5 billion—an increase of more than 100% from five years earlier.¹¹

EMPHASIZE STRONG BRANDS, QUALITY CONTENT, AND SERVICE

In today's more fragmented media environment, strong brands and quality products will become even more important because they will generate trust in a sea of uncertainty. Owners of superb content that have the ability to distribute it widely will be the winners over the long haul.

Despite an unwillingness on the parts of many consumers to pay for news content, premium news organizations like Dow Jones, the Financial Times, and the New York Times are all growing their online subscriptions—partially replacing lost advertising revenue—on the strength of their product quality and their value alignment with readers. With news outlets ranking among the most politically polarizing brands,¹² value alignment will likely be a significant driver of subscriber growth going forward.

In late 2019, Disney entered into direct competition with Netflix by exerting the unparalleled strength of its brands and library of content to launch its streaming service, Disney+. Barclays Bank estimates the market value of the new business at \$100 billion.¹³

A key point in the turnaround of Viacom was the company's newly realized commitment to managing its portfolio of assets less as cable television channels and more as a collection of valuable brands, including Nickelodeon, MTV, and Comedy Central.

CBS used the power of the Star Trek brand—and the brand’s loyal fan base—to launch its streaming service, CBS All Access, in 2017 with Star Trek: Discovery. In 2020, the now merged ViacomCBS added an additional show, Star Trek: Picard, and has plans for an animated Star Trek series to run on its Nickelodeon network.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AVENUE FOR REVENUES ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

To supplement revenues lost from traditional channels, many media companies are increasing their reliance on subscriptions. For instance, the music industry, which is seeing its revival, thanks to the growth of subscription-based streaming services. News publishers are increasingly relying on subscriptions to fill the hole left by absent advertising revenues, and tiered-subscription models for which consumers must pay for premium content may increasingly drive incremental revenue. Plus the battle over streaming video on demand will determine the fate of subscriptions in film and television.

By capturing consumers within a subscription ecosystem, a company can also mine personal data to increase its engagement with consumers, individualize consumers’ experiences, and, potentially, generate incremental advertising revenue. Capitalizing on those trusted consumer relationships can also open new revenue lines like live entertainment and product reviews and recommendations.

For some industries and many companies, though, subscriptions are unlikely to close the gap from lost advertising revenues, physical sales, or third-party distribution. Consumer behaviors have fundamentally shifted, and new entrants have captured market share that may be difficult to recapture.

For example, despite its success in growing its online subscriptions, the New York Times, along with its competitors, continues to see declines in advertising revenues. In 2018, advertising revenues were \$558 million, including both print and digital channels, which represents a fall of some 69% from ten years prior, when the company enjoyed advertising revenues of \$1.8 billion. Circulation revenues during the same period grew 55%, but not enough to replace lost ad sales.¹⁴

LEGACY REVENUE STREAMS WILL DECREASE BUT NOT DISAPPEAR FOR MANY YEARS

Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water. In other words, even though they may not pave the way for future growth, revenues from traditional distribution channels are not going away tomorrow. A diminishing but still substantial set of consumers will continue using satellite and cable television services. Likewise, television advertising will remain an important source of revenue for many companies. And sales of CDs still accounted for \$1.1 billion of revenue in 2018.¹⁵

The cash generated from those legacy businesses can help fund investments in new technologies and distribution models. For larger companies, those revenue streams may prove to be crucial tools for competing against new, technology-enabled entrants.

Comcast, the largest cable TV provider in the United States, continues losing bundled cable-video customers, but its cable business still generates about one-half of all revenues and continues to add high-speed broadband customers. The cash from that business helped Comcast acquire European pay-TV giant Sky in 2018 for \$39 billion and is helping finance the firm's investments into streaming via the company's new, Peacock service, which will launch in 2020.

COST MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES REMAIN PRIORITIES

Revenue growth, of course, remains essential, but many companies in the media and entertainment industry remain stuck in old operating models, tied to legacy cost structures and ways of working. New technologies offer major opportunities to rein in costs and align with realistic projections for future revenues.

The costs associated with the necessary digital transformation of the industry and competition with new entrants are escalating. To launch its streaming service, Disney invested \$2.6 billion to acquire new technologies and reshuffle management and operating lines in order to create a new direct-to-consumer division. The company ended its distribution deal with Netflix, forgoing \$150 million in annual income. Its \$71-billion acquisition of 21st Century Fox was also directly related to enhancing the firm's production capabilities and content library to prepare for streaming. All of that comes before spending on new content for this platform, which is estimated at \$1 billion for 2020.¹⁶

Non-content-related expenses are also growing at many firms. The New York Times has grown revenues, on average, 6.2% per year since 2016, but SG&A expenses have risen over the same period by 8% per year.

In an environment of increased competition and higher and higher expenses, media companies must be disciplined and must find ways to identify optimizations that will help drive their transformations. Many media companies have overly complex and duplicative systems and organizational models—many of them legacies of acquisitions or historical idiosyncrasies. The simplification of organizational structures can help companies take advantage of cross-functional synergies. And new technologies such as AI-enabled data analytics can help identify opportunities for organizational efficiency.

The media and entertainment industry has been fundamentally reshaped by how and where people consume content. Those trends are unavoidable, but the pace of change may have actually slowed, given the rate of adoption of new technologies to date. What remains true, as media companies expand subscription models across the industry, is that consumers are perhaps even more committed than ever to pay for quality content that aligns with their values and lifestyles.

Success will, therefore, build on:

- What to offer: Empowering the self-centric consumer and building top-quality service and content
- How to monetize: Charging the consumers for content through either subscription or transactions
- How to operate: Building operational excellence for both incumbents and new entrants

Notes

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About us

For nearly forty years, AlixPartners has helped businesses around the world respond quickly and decisively to their most critical challenges—circumstances as diverse as urgent performance improvement, accelerated transformation, complex restructuring, and risk mitigation.

These are the moments when everything is on the line: a sudden shift in the market, an unexpected performance decline, a time-sensitive deal, a fork-in-the-road decision. But it's not what we do that makes a difference; it's how we do it.

Tackling situations when time is of the essence is part of our DNA, so we take an action-oriented approach at all times. We work in small, highly qualified teams with specific industry and functional expertise, and we operate at pace, moving quickly from analysis to implementation. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our clients until the job is done and only measure our success in terms of the results we deliver.

Our approach enables us to help our clients confront and overcome truly future-defining challenges. We partner with you to make the right decisions and take the right actions. And we are right by your side. When it really matters.

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