

CHILDREN'S MEDIA USE 2020 SUMMARY FOR BROADCASTERS

Overview

In 2020 BSA and NZ On Air jointly commissioned research into media use by children (aged 6-14) in New Zealand across programmes, music and games. The research was last undertaken in 2014 and the results provide insights into how children's media use has changed in the rapidly evolving media landscape which offers greater choice in what and how kids can access content.

The research explored where children go to find content, what they are watching and their attitudes and awareness of local NZ content. It also explored how kids manage challenging content, what upsets them, how they react, and what they, and their parents and caregivers, do to protect them from content that might harm them.

What are tamariki in New Zealand watching and listening to?

Children are increasingly consuming stories, songs and games on international media platforms online, but missing out on local content. Some key findings include:

- » YouTube (51%) and Netflix (47%) have the highest daily reach and children spend the longest time watching content here. Of local options, TVNZ 1 at 16% daily reach and TVNZ 2 at 15% have highest reach.
- » Cartoons are the most popular genre
- » A third of children use social media – TikTok which did not exist in 2014 is now the most popular social media platform at 22% daily reach.
- » Spotify and YouTube are the most popular platforms to access audio content at 42% reach.
- » 9 out of 10 children play video games. Adventure and multiplayer games are most popular
- » Three-quarters of parents agree it's important for their children to watch local content that reflects them and their world.
- » Children say a good TV programme should make them laugh, help them to learn new things, and 44% say "made in NZ".
- » More than 50% of children feel good when they watch stories about NZ and see children that look and speak like them
- » Most children (65%) don't have a favourite NZ-made show.
- » 49% of children aged 6-14 are aware of HEIHEI and 17% have used it
- » Children in low income households have significantly less access to a range of media devices.

How are children managing challenging content?

The research confirms that most kids have seen or heard content on television, the internet or radio that has upset them and for many it manifests in inappropriate behaviour. Most know what to do when confronted with challenging content: turn it off, change channels and talk to an adult. It also confirmed that protections such as classifications and warnings remain important for keeping kids safe, but these are not used as much as house rules, such as limited screen time, parental supervision and oversight.

Key findings include:

- » Most children aged 10-14 have seen content on television (87%) or the internet (72%) or radio (54%) that upsets them.
- » This includes sex and nudity (across all media), violence and animal harm. On the radio, people talking about sex and bad language were most often reported as upsetting. Violent or abusive behaviour and sexist and racist comments were also top concerns for parents.
- » One reason children need protection from certain types of content is because they sometimes cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is not. This is particularly so for 6 – 8 year-olds - parents/caregivers report that only 10% fully understand the difference. This rises to 36% for children aged 12-14 years.
- » Parents report that children’s behaviour can be negatively impacted by what they see, with 32% kids learning inappropriate words, 20% having nightmares or sleeping difficulties, 19% copying aggressive behaviour or 15% engaging in behaviour inappropriate for their age.
- » Most kids know to change channels or click out of the website (48%), to watch something else (46%) and to tell an adult if they see something that upsets them (39%).
- » The vast majority of children (89-92%) who talk to an adult if they see or hear something distressing feel better afterwards.
- » Classifications, warnings and the 8.30pm watershed continue to be important for keeping kids safe from content that may harm them and are used by the majority of parents and caregivers, and also kids.
 - o Kids use classification labels (51%) or warnings on TV (47%) to know that content is not for them. This has risen substantially since 2014, showing that these protections are important safeguards.
 - o 72% of parents use classifications and warnings at least some of the time to decide whether children should watch a programme, only a slight decrease since 2014 (78%).
 - o Parents’ awareness of the 8.30pm watershed has dropped since 2014 with only 26% aware it is 8.30pm (2014: 43%). However, 60% of children are aware there is a time of night when programmes are not ok for children, but only 15% know its 8.30pm.
- » Use of parental controls and filters is low with only 23% using parental locks on TV, 35% controlling streaming services and 48% using filtering software on online content. Use of household rules for radio is much lower (75%) but has increased since 2014.
- » Parents and caregivers are more proactive in using home rules than in 2014 with 96% (television) and 93% (internet) having rules for managing content. 86% restrict time spent on TV or the internet (78%) (cf 42% & 45% in 2014); 77% supervise TV and 80% supervise internet use (cf 17% & 26% in 2014). 49% do not let kids watch AO content, (cf 24% in 2014).
- » Importantly, most children who talk to an adult if they see or hear something distressing on TV (92%), the internet (91%) or radio (89%) feel better afterwards.

For Broadcasters

- » Classifications and warnings, and use of parental locks are important safeguards for children, irrespective of platform. These are important tools for parents and caregivers who manage content in the homes. To help audiences, broadcasters should promote these tools – information about them is available www.bsa.govt.nz and www.safeviewing.co.nz
- » Children find sexual content, animal torture, violence, sexism/racism and bad language distressing. This should be taken into account when making programming decisions during children’s normal viewing and listening times, and when classifying content. Warnings are important and help tamariki and their parents and caregivers decide if the content is suitable.

For audiences

- » Take note of the type of content that upsets your children.
- » Use classifications and warnings to help make decisions about what your children watch and listen to. Use parental locks, they are particularly useful for those times you are not available to supervise children in your care.
- » If your children see something that upsets them, talk to them about what they have seen and help them make sense of it.