

knit

2025  
Consumer  
Report

What we're watching:

# The streaming services Americans love & cancel



# Executive Summary

Apps are everywhere—but which ones stick, and why? To find out, we surveyed 500 U.S. adults to understand how people are managing their digital ecosystems in 2025. The goal: uncover what drives adoption, retention, and cancellation decisions in an increasingly saturated app landscape.

A few clear patterns emerged. YouTube dominates daily life, with nearly 90% of respondents using it weekly—and its near-zero churn rate underscores its entrenched value. Facebook and Netflix follow, but for other apps and services, the story is less stable.

Consumers are hitting pause on subscriptions. 33.9% of respondents cited canceling subscriptions as their primary cost-cutting strategy, with Hulu and Netflix seeing the most changes. Financial pressure is the top driver, but it's not just about money. Many users are rethinking time spent online: 49 respondents flagged phone overuse as a source of wasted time, especially on social media and streaming platforms.

Despite these pressures, outright app deletion remains relatively rare. More than half of respondents haven't deleted any apps in the past six months—a signal of ecosystem stability, but also of inertia. When people do make changes, it's often driven by perceived lack of content relevance or value.

For brands, the message is clear: value is emotional, not just functional. Entertainment, connection, and curiosity remain the top reasons people keep coming back. Apps that fail to deliver on these emotional drivers risk becoming the next canceled subscription.

Key opportunities for app and service providers include:

- **Prioritize content density and versatility.** YouTube's success shows the power of multi-functional content experiences.
- **Help users feel in control.** Introduce tools that support time budgeting and subscription management without forcing disengagement.
- **Market to intent, not just novelty.** With 43% of users not adopting new apps recently, positioning new features as upgrades to existing experiences may outperform “new app” launches.
- **Lean into emotional ROI.** Highlight connection, escapism, and personal relevance in your messaging to retain users amid rising cancellation trends.

Apps aren't just tools anymore. They're micro-environments competing for attention, emotion, and wallet share. Brands that understand this—and design accordingly—will earn their place on the home screen.

## Key findings

Get the highlights:



### Subscription cancellations emerge as a leading cost-control strategy

- Cancelling app subscriptions or plans is a prevalent tactic among users, with 33.9% citing it as their primary method for managing digital expenses.
- Hulu and Netflix stand out as the most frequently adjusted streaming platforms, with 51 and 45 user-reported changes, respectively.



### Time and money pressures drive app reassessment and cancellations

- Concerns over excessive phone usage are widespread, with 49 respondents identifying it as a major source of wasted time - primarily spent on social media and streaming platforms.
- On the financial front, cost-related factors are a dominant reason behind subscription cancellations. Streaming platforms such as Peacock, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Paramount+, and Apple TV+ are especially impacted.

# People aren't downloading new apps

If you build apps for a living, it might be tempting to think the market is always hungry for something new. But the data tells a different story.

In our survey of 500 U.S. adults, 43.4% said they hadn't downloaded a new app or service in the past six months. That's nearly half of all users, sitting comfortably within their existing digital ecosystems.

Mobile games stand out as the one category still seeing steady new adoption. 16.5% of respondents reported downloading a new gaming app recently, driven largely by entertainment, curiosity, and recommendations from friends. Social apps like Instagram and TikTok also see some movement, but far less than gaming or streaming platforms.

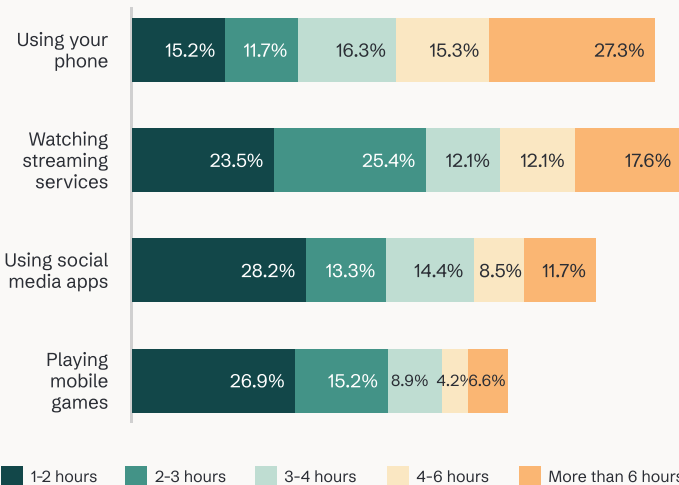
Why does this matter? Because it reframes how brands should think about growth. Acquisition isn't just about standing out in a crowded market — it's about proving relevance to users who aren't actively looking for something new.

The reasons people do adopt new apps are revealing. Entertainment is the top driver, especially for gaming, streaming, and TikTok. For Discord, peer influence plays an outsized role: 63.2% of users said they joined because friends were using it. Netflix, on the other hand, attracts new signups with content quality and freshness. Over half of new users (56.6%) said they were drawn in by new or interesting shows.

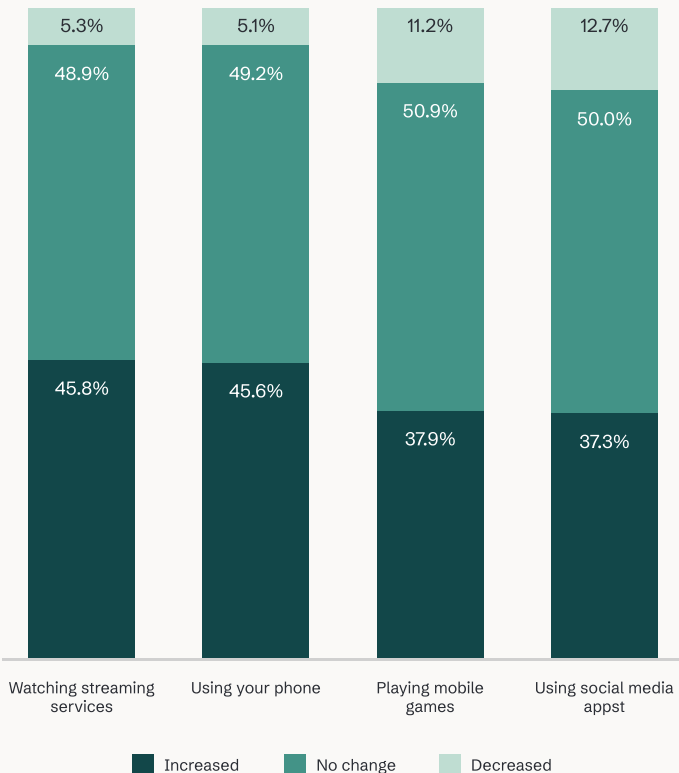
But alongside these adoption triggers, another signal emerges: time is becoming a scarcer, more consciously managed resource. Over a quarter of respondents (27.3%) use their phones for more than six hours a day. That's not just an idle statistic; it's a reflection of digital saturation.

More than a quarter of respondents (27.3%) use their phones for over six hours daily. Mobile gaming has the highest share of respondents reporting no time spent (16.3%).

Daily Usage - By Activity



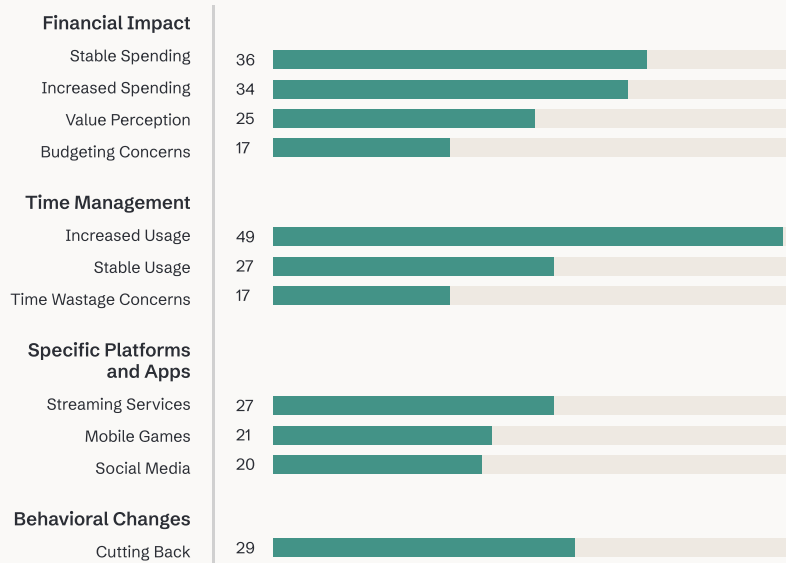
Changes in Time Spent





### Rising phone usage is a prominent concern, with 49 respondents citing it as a key factor contributing to wasted time.

While 36 respondents report stable spending habits, nearly as many (34) have observed an increase in their app-related expenses.



VQ11. Think about how much time and money you currently spend on apps, games, and subscriptions - across things like social media, streaming platforms, and mobile games. How do you feel about it overall? N = 109

People know it, too. 49 respondents cited rising phone usage as a source of wasted time, especially on social media and streaming platforms. While 36 respondents said their app-related spending has stayed stable, nearly as many (34) reported spending more than they used to.

Despite these pressures, there's a sense of control. 35.6% strongly agree they feel in control of their phone usage, and one-third say they regularly review their subscriptions. Yet a smaller segment—about a quarter—are actively looking for something new. 25.4% reported enjoying discovering and trying new apps, highlighting a niche but meaningful group for early adoption strategies.

What does this mean for app developers and marketers?

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# 54.7%

haven't deleted any apps or services in the past six months

## Why people cancel apps: Relevance over cost

When people delete an app or cancel a subscription, it's rarely impulsive. More often, it's a calculated choice driven by one question: is this still worth it?

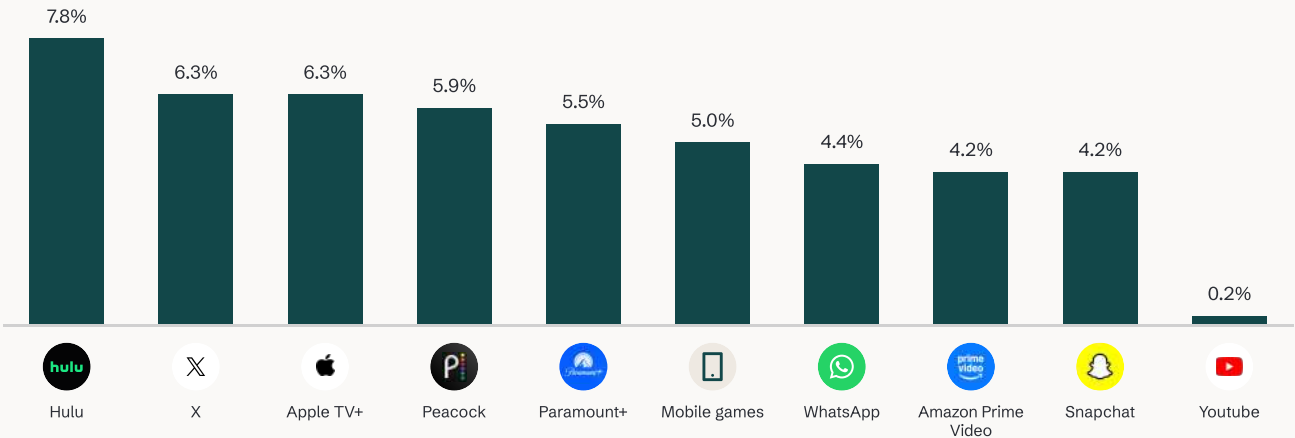
In our report, a clear narrative emerges. For most apps, the answer is still yes: 54.7% of respondents hadn't deleted any apps or services in the past six months. That stability signals broad satisfaction with current digital ecosystems. But where churn does happen, understanding the why is crucial for brands hoping to avoid it.

YouTube stands out with near-zero churn (0.2%), cementing its role as an essential platform. Free access, endless content variety, and integration into daily routines make it nearly untouchable. Facebook, TikTok, and Netflix also remain deeply embedded, ranking just below YouTube as users’ favorite apps. Netflix, for example, is prized for its original content, with respondents highlighting its cinema-level quality and exclusive programming.

**Rising phone usage is a prominent concern, with 49 respondents citing it as a key factor contributing to wasted time.**

Mobile gaming stands out as the top area of recent app adoption, drawing new engagement from 16.5% of users.

Apps / Services Adoption In The Last 6 Months



Q14.NewApp. Which of the following apps or services have you started using or signed up for in the past 6 months? Select all that apply. N = 528

But not all apps inspire this loyalty. When users do cancel or delete, cost is the most frequently cited driver. Financial considerations particularly impact streaming platforms like Peacock, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Paramount+, and Apple TV+. Yet a closer look reveals that cost is rarely the sole motivator.

Infrequent use is a close second. Users often described canceling services they “just weren’t watching anymore” or games they had stopped opening. Lack of interest in content was another major factor, with some respondents explaining bluntly that an app “isn’t relevant at this point in time.”

Interestingly, while financial concerns dominated cancellations for some services, mental wellbeing and productivity played a larger role for others. Apps perceived as distractions from work or daily responsibilities were especially vulnerable to deletion. This signals a shift away from viewing apps purely as utilities or entertainment sources, toward evaluating them as contributors to overall life quality.

Peer influence—so powerful in adoption decisions—fades in cancellation behaviors. Decisions to cut services were highly personal, rooted in individual goals, budget constraints, or shifting habits, rather than social trends.

Ultimately, retention is about relevance and emotional ROI, not just pricing strategy.

If your app is seen as essential—whether because it entertains, informs, or enables connection—it survives price hikes and digital fatigue. But if it becomes optional, the decision to cancel is quick and confident.

For brands, the implication is direct:

- Prioritize content freshness and relevance. Avoid stagnation.
- Embed into daily routines. Habit drives stickiness.
- Support mindful use. Enable users to manage time spent without disengaging entirely.

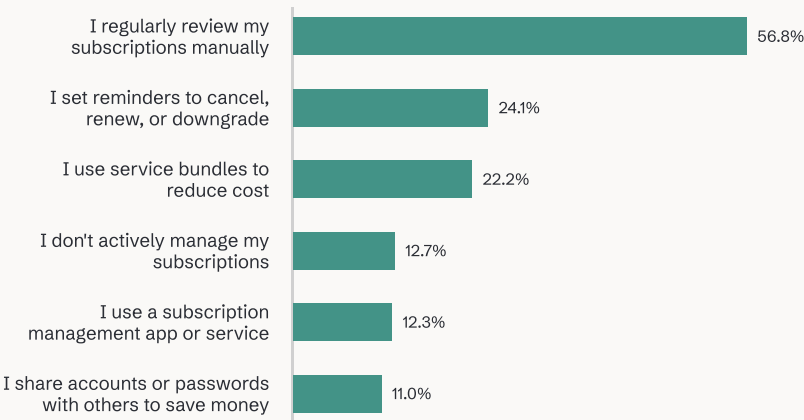
Because in today’s saturated digital landscape, being good isn’t enough. You have to be worth it—every single day.

# Subscription Management: The Battle for Digital Budget

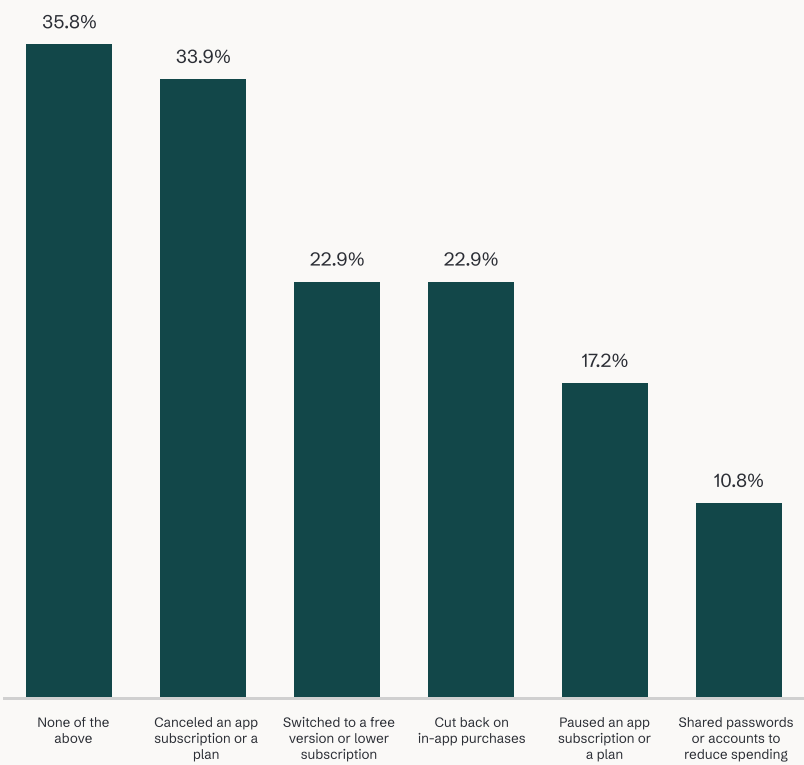
**Manual subscription reviews are a common practice, with 56.8% of users taking an active role in managing recurring digital costs.**

Cancelling app subscriptions or plans is a common behavior, with 33.9% of respondents choosing this as a primary method for managing digital costs.

Subscription Management Across Different Platforms



Subscription Cleanup Behaviour



Q20.SubscriptionMana. How do you manage the subscriptions you have across different platforms and apps? Select all that apply. N = 528

Q21.SubscriptionClea. In the past 6 months, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply. N = 528

People may love their apps, but that doesn't mean they're not trimming costs wherever they can. In an era of rising prices and digital overload, subscription management has become a critical user behavior—and brands that ignore it risk finding themselves on the chopping block.

Our data shows that 56.8% of respondents actively review their subscriptions manually, making this the most common strategy for managing digital spend. Users are paying attention. They're scanning monthly statements, tallying up in-app purchases, and deciding what's worth keeping. Another quarter (24.1%) set reminders to cancel, renew, or downgrade services, showing that cost-conscious behavior isn't passive; it's planned.

When it comes to action, cancelling subscriptions or plans is the most common tactic, cited by 33.9% of respondents. This is followed by switching to free or lower-tier versions (22.9%) and cutting back on in-app purchases (22.9%). Pausing subscriptions is also common (17.2%), as is password sharing (10.8%)—a reminder that users are getting creative in managing their budgets.

Streaming services bear the brunt of these adjustments. Hulu and Netflix emerged as the most frequently modified platforms, with 51 and 45 reported changes, respectively. These shifts aren't always cancellations. Downgrades to ad-supported plans were also frequent, signaling that consumers are willing to tolerate ads if it means saving money.

Why do people keep paying for some apps while axing others? The answer lies in perceived value. Entertainment remains the top motivator for continued payment, followed by regular usage. People will pay if an app is part of their daily routine or offers content they genuinely want. Cost-effectiveness, convenience, and exclusive content round out the top factors.

But when an app fails to deliver on these fronts—when price increases aren't justified by better content or user experience—cancellation becomes a quick decision. Financial constraints are cited frequently as a reason to cut services, but lack of use and content stagnation are nearly as influential.

This means the battle for retention isn't purely about pricing strategy. It's about:

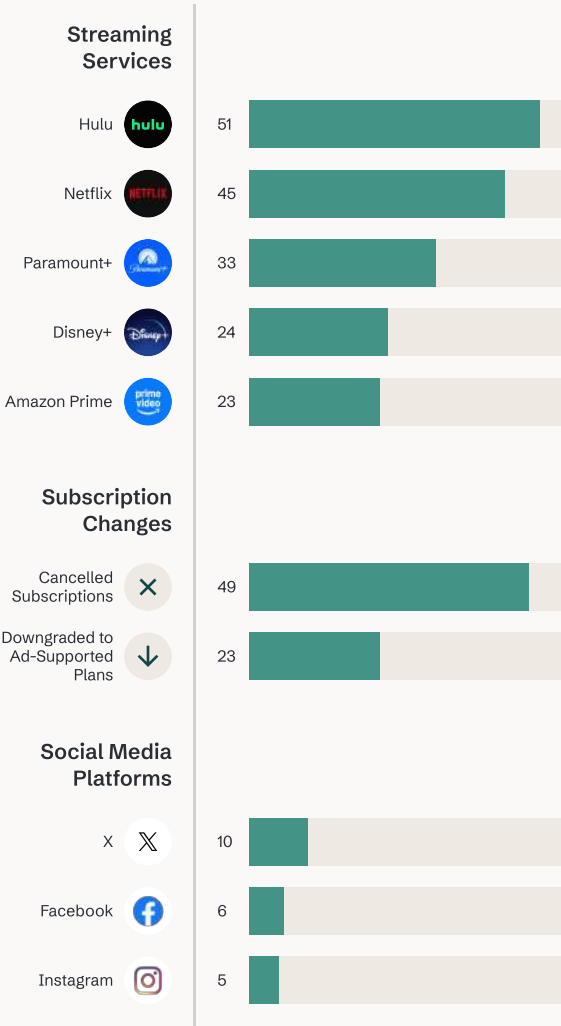
- **Relevance.** Does your app continue to deliver fresh, engaging, or useful content?
- **Habit integration.** Is it woven into users' daily lives, or is it an occasional indulgence they can live without?
- **Perceived fairness.** Do users feel they're getting value equal to or greater than the cost?

The data also points to an underleveraged opportunity: bundles. While only 22.2% of respondents currently use service bundles to reduce costs, those who do cite them as valuable tools for spend management. This suggests that clear communication around bundle savings and family or group plans could drive uptake and reduce cancellations.

For brands, these behaviors underscore an urgent reality. Subscription fatigue is real, and management tools are empowering consumers to take swift action. Retention strategies can't rest on loyalty alone. They must be rooted in delivering continuous value, supporting time- and budget-conscious choices, and making it easy for users to see why your app is worth keeping.

Because in today's digital economy, retention isn't a passive outcome—it's an active decision users make every billing cycle.

Hulu and Netflix emerged as the most frequently modified streaming services, with 51 and 45 user-reported changes, respectively.



Q22.SubscriptionCleanupApps. Which apps did you make changes to — cancelled, paused, or switched to a free or lower-tier plan? N = 278

# 22.2%

use service bundles to reduce costs

## What people are saying

On why they're deleting or cancelling apps

*"I cancelled Hulu because I wasn't watching any shows on it."*

- Millennial  
white woman



*"I've deleted a lot of casino gambling apps. I was getting too stuck on them and gambling a lot of money that I shouldn't have."*

- Gen X  
Hispanic woman



*"Stars was one that we just got rid of. I just wasn't really watching it."*

- Gen X  
white woman



*"I deleted Max. It just wasn't valuable programming."*

- Gen X  
Hispanic man



On why they pay for certain apps

*"If I'm paying for an app, it's because I find the value more important than the price. Period."*

- Gen X  
black woman



*"I keep apps where the content is relevant to my life,"*

- Millennial  
white man



*"In order for me to keep paying for an app, I have to feel like it has relevant material for me."*

- Millennial  
white man



*"I pay for Netflix and Paramount Plus because I like to be able to watch movies on the go. That's the value I see in them."*

- Boomer  
white man





## Conclusion: Apps Must Earn Their Place—Daily

Apps are no longer novelties. They're fixtures of daily life—tools, companions, and entertainment hubs competing for time, attention, and money. But in a saturated landscape, being downloaded isn't the win. Staying relevant is.

This research shows that while most users aren't actively deleting apps, they're still making conscious decisions about what earns their loyalty. Over half haven't deleted an app in six months, signaling broad satisfaction with their current ecosystem. But underneath that stability, a quieter shift is underway.

People are trimming subscriptions, driven by rising costs, digital fatigue, and shifting priorities. Streaming platforms, in particular, face the brunt of this scrutiny. Yet it isn't just about money. Lack of use and declining content relevance are equally powerful motivators to cancel or downgrade services.

The takeaway is clear: value isn't static. An app that once felt essential can become optional if it stops delivering fresh content, emotional payoff, or daily utility. YouTube's near-zero churn rate is a testament to the power of content density and versatility—it's woven into routines in a way few others can match.

For brands, this landscape creates both challenge and opportunity. Retention is no longer just about locking users in; it's about continuously earning your spot. That means:

- Investing in content and experience relevance, not just features for the sake of innovation.  
Supporting mindful usage, enabling users to feel in control rather than trapped in endless engagement loops.
- Positioning upgrades and new features as enhancements to existing experiences, not as disruptive replacements.

Apps that can integrate seamlessly into daily routines, deliver emotional and practical value, and adapt to users' shifting needs will remain indispensable.

Because at the end of the day, users are asking a simple question of every app on their phone: Does this still feel worth it?

The brands that can answer “yes”—today, tomorrow, and the day after—will be the ones that thrive.



# Methodology

This study was conducted in June 2025 to understand how U.S. adults manage their digital ecosystems, including app usage, subscription habits, and cancellation behaviors.

A total of 500 respondents participated in a structured, online quantitative survey, with an additional 100 respondents providing video-based qualitative insights. Participants were screened to ensure demographic diversity aligned with the most recent U.S. Census across age, gender, and ethnicity.

Key areas of focus included:

- Weekly usage frequency of apps and digital services
- Motivations for adopting new apps or subscriptions
- Reasons for app deletion and subscription cancellation
- Perceptions of time spent and digital fatigue
- Strategies for managing digital costs and subscriptions
- Emotional and practical factors driving retention

The sample included current users of major mobile apps, streaming services, social platforms, and gaming services to ensure relevance across categories.

Data collection occurred from June 11 to June 16, 2025. Responses were cleaned and analyzed using standard statistical techniques to surface behavioral patterns, emerging tensions, and strategic implications for app developers and subscription service providers.

By combining quantitative findings with open-ended, video-based narratives, this research aimed not only to measure what people do, but to uncover why—giving brands a clearer lens into the mindsets shaping modern digital engagement.

## Contributors



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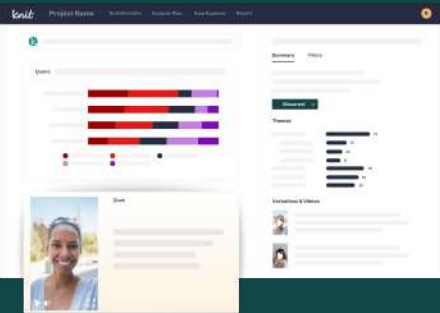
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# About Knit

Knit is the end-to-end consumer research platform top brands use to get deep quant and qual insights at scale in a single survey. The Knit AI-native platform automates key phases of the research process from scoping to storytelling, so you can do more research in less time and at a fraction of the cost.



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