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# WINNING BIG

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with CTV Advertising on  
Live-Streamed Sports





# Sports and TV — a natural partnership

Almost since the beginning of television, live sports have been essential programming. The first sporting event to air on TV was the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, which starred American sprinter Jesse Owens.

The first color broadcast of a sporting event was a Major League Baseball game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and Boston Braves in 1951. One of the [first sporting events to be live-streamed](#) on television was the Ohio State spring football game in 2001.

Over the years, the motion, action, and drama of live sports have made it and television a natural partnership. Today, live sports telecasts dominate television. [In 2023, an astonishing 93 of the top 100 most-watched TV shows were NFL games and related programming.](#)

For advertisers in this increasingly fragmented TV universe, live sports telecasts deliver large audiences, including the hard-to-reach young male demographic. [Featuring natural conflict on the biggest screen in the house, live sports telecasts attract engaged viewers, who, enmeshed in the game's suspense, are less likely to skip ads.](#)

Some of the world's biggest brands — Bud Light, Gatorade, Verizon, and others — are long-term advertisers on live sports. Brands have long loved sponsoring live sports on linear television. Now, the next big shift in sports viewing is underway. In a world where Amazon Prime streams Thursday Night Football and Olympic events appear on Peacock, live sports streaming telecasts have come a long way since that Ohio State spring football game two decades ago.



Read on to see why some of the biggest advertisers are embracing live-streamed sports for its advantages over linear TV:

- To **reach their audience** beyond linear and across cord-cutters and cord-nevers.
- To **leverage advanced creative** for personalization, engagement, and commerce.
- To **gain measurement insight** that simply isn't available on linear TV.



# The era of live-streamed sports has arrived

Live sports telecasts aren't moving to streaming. They're already there. Media companies are paying for the streaming rights to live sports, because they understand there's a massive shift of viewership to streaming. **A report by PWC projected that the number of U.S. viewers who stream a sports event at least once monthly will increase to 90 million in 2025 — compared with 57 million in 2021.**

Here are a few highlights showcasing the rise of live-streamed sports across leagues and around the world:



**Paramount+** streamed the 2024 Super Bowl, which was the most streamed Super Bowl ever.



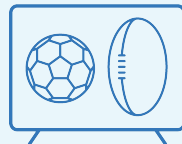
**~27.8**  
**Million viewers**  
**watching on**  
**streaming**

The NFL's opening game of the 2024 season, which aired on both linear and streaming, reached a peak audience of 55.6 million viewers — half of whom were watching via streaming platforms such as Peacock and YouTube TV.



**23.5**  
**Billion minutes**

**NBCUniversal** streamed 23.5 billion minutes of Olympics coverage during the 2024 Games, according to eMarketer. During the Olympics, Peacock notched eight of its 10 highest streaming days in its history.



**70%**  
**Streaming**  
**live sports**

7 in 10 United Kingdom CTV users stream live sports.



**\$1.8**  
**Billion dollars**

The **NBA** inked a new television deal that begins with the 2025-2026 season and includes Amazon Prime Video, paying an annual cost of \$1.8 billion for the rights to stream select NBA games.

# Streaming is grabbing more ad dollars

Advertisers will go wherever eyeballs are, and as consumers stream more of their television viewing — especially live sports — ad dollars are following suit. CTV advertising spending is anticipated to surpass **\$40 billion by 2027**, according to eMarketer, which would amount to **more than 100% growth since 2022**.

However, the growth in ad spending isn't keeping up with how quickly eyeballs are shifting to streaming. eMarketer has projected that **CTV has surpassed** linear TV in viewership this year. Despite this inexorable trend toward streaming viewership, **brands are spending about \$61 billion on linear TV and just \$30 billion on CTV advertising**.

As brands realize CTV's advantages, this spending gap will close. Because of CTV's digital nature, it offers far more than linear advertising. Advertising on live-streamed sports offers precise targeting; the capability to leverage advanced creative for personalization, engagement, and even commerce; and more granular measurement and actionable optimization. **The bottom line: Innovative advertisers have an opportunity to seize CTV's advantages before their competitors do.**

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“For brands, live sports are incredible. ... It is the most watched content. It's shifted (into streaming). YouTube now has all of the Sunday Ticket. Amazon's got Thursday Night Football. Netflix has a Christmas game this year. So when you think about live sports, it's not what we used to buy; it's much broader now. It's got targetability. It's in the moments that probably matter the most to consumers. The engagements are through the roof.”

**Vinny Rinaldi**

VP-Media & Marketing Technology  
*The Hershey Company*

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# Streaming transforms games — and ads — into lean-forward experiences

Watching live sports via streaming will become even more compelling for viewers with opportunities for interactivity during the events — **live chat, polls, quizzes, multi-angle views, and virtual and augmented reality — eventually becoming an integral part of the telecast.** On its streaming telecasts, the Spanish soccer league, La Liga, is already experimenting with offering multiple camera angles and enabling viewers to access overlays of real-time statistics.

The end result begins to transform watching sports from a lean-back activity to a lean-forward event. Streaming also provides brands with the opportunity to upgrade their advertising into a lean-forward experience with dynamic creative optimization (DCO) and interactive ads.

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**“Brands are moving more and more ad dollars to CTV, because they can do better ad targeting to find the audience segments that either hit their specific targets or viewers who match their first-party data. They also want the opportunity to take advantage of interactivity and retail media opportunities that are unique to CTV ad delivery. Finally, and probably most importantly, they want to reach cord-cutters and cord-nevers who are only available on streaming and CTV platforms.”**

**Richard Glosser**

Managing Director

*Oaklins | DeSilva+Phillips*

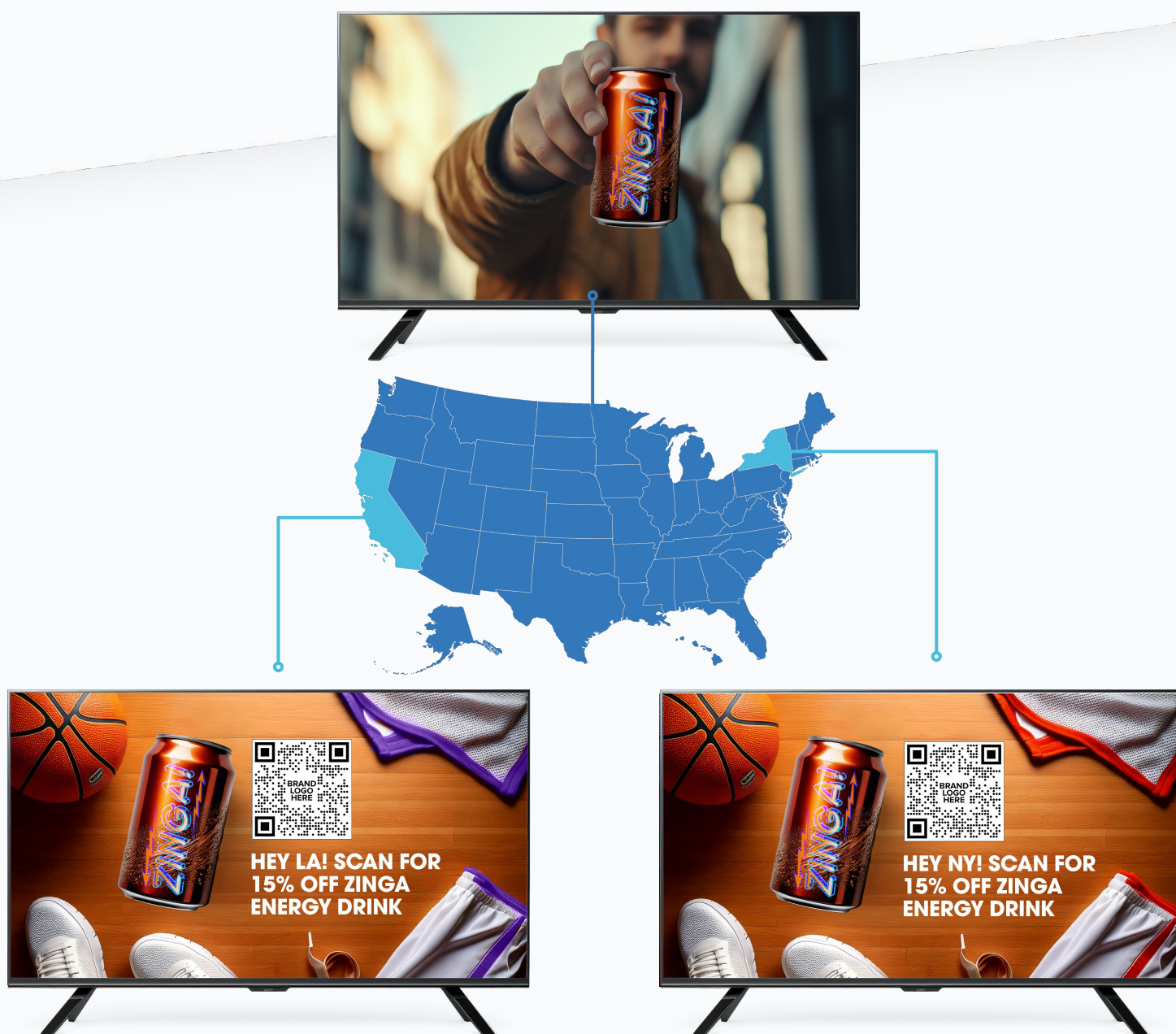
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# Personalize advertising messages with DCO

Dynamic Creative Optimization is one key advantage offered on live-streamed telecasts. With DCO, advertisers can take advantage of new strategies for personalization that are not available on linear TV. Just as it does online, DCO enables brands to use data-driven signals to personalize their messaging at scale, making it more relevant to specific audiences. With DCO, brands create versions of ads based on a single template, where elements — such as images, text, headlines, and background colors — are automatically swapped out based on data signals like geolocation, weather, and daypart. For instance, a DCO ad for a sporting goods store can feature the local team's gear based on geolocation.

Innovid data from the first half of 2024 shows interactive **DCO advertising performs — delivering an average of 20.18 seconds of additional engagement** compared with standard video ads.






# Capitalize on fan engagement with interactive advertising

Designed to drive engagement on big-screen TVs, laptops, and iPads, interactive CTV ads can feature QR codes, overlays, trivia, and surveys to encourage viewers to deepen the experience with the brand — and increase the likelihood that consumers take an action aligned with an advertiser’s KPI.

Interactive ads provide clear insights into how a user engages with the ad, which can inform how brands can optimize their campaigns. The knowledge that a consumer engaged with a QR code, looked at a specific product in a gallery, or scanned a coupon can lead to optimization — such as segmenting that prospect for retargeting or other sequential ads that continue to move them down the funnel.

Innovid data from the first half of 2024 shows that interactive advertising on CTV drives engagement. **Interactive CTV ads generate an average of up to 76 additional seconds of engagement compared with standard pre-roll video. And they achieve an engagement rate 4.5x that of standard video on mobile and 3.8x that of standard video on desktop.**

**Powerfully Engaging: Interactive Engagement Rates and Time Earned by Device and Video Ad Format**

Ad Format	Device	Engagement Rate	Time Earned*
Interactive	 Mobile	0.68%	40.22 seconds
	 PC	0.16%	
Interactive (Non-Choice-Based)	 CTV	0.61%	67.95 seconds
Interactive (Choice-Based)		20.96%	76.40 seconds
Interactive (Total)		3.18%	73.14 seconds

\*Time earned is the amount of time beyond the length of the pre-roll video that a consumer spends engaging with the interactive portion of an ad.

# Paramount+ wins with add-to-watchlist ads during the Super Bowl

During the 2024 Super Bowl, Paramount+ used the unprecedented streaming audience of the Super Bowl to run interactive ads in partnership with Innovid on Roku, Fire TV, Android TV, and Apple TV devices, promoting content such as “Halo,” “The Chi,” and “Fire Country.” The objective was to make subscribers more “sticky” on the Paramount+ platform past the Super Bowl.

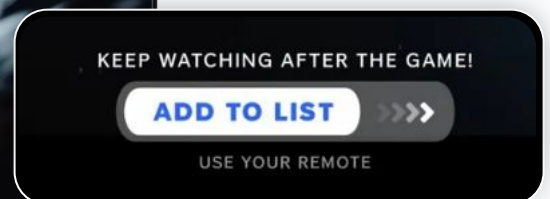
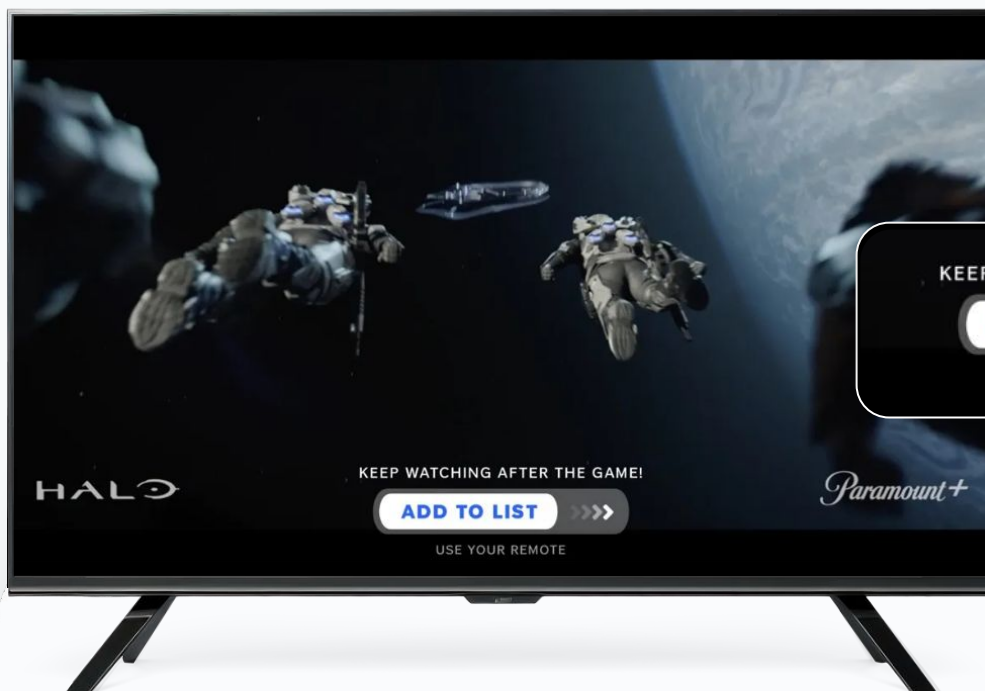
Using their remotes, viewers could engage with interactive overlays on the screen to add the advertised shows to their personalized watchlists. The “add-to-watchlist” interactive ads delivered strong performance with an engagement rate 6% higher than Innovid benchmarks.

# Paramount+



# 6%

**Higher engagement  
than Innovid benchmarks**





# Create loyal fans of your brand with shoppable ads

Shoppable advertising — a subset of interactive advertising — enables advertisers to compress the funnel with elements like QR codes, store locators, and add-to-cart buttons to drive engagement and sales. Viewers can shop directly from ads appearing on the biggest screen in the house using their television remote or mobile phones.

Innovid data indicates that QR codes are gaining popularity among advertisers — and consumers. **In the first half of 2024, impressions for interactive CTV ads with QR codes have already surpassed the total for all of 2023 by 11% (and counting).** Even more impressive, the engagement rate for this class of advertising has more than doubled to **0.89% from 0.37%** in the same timeframe.

That surging engagement rate indicates that viewers have become more accustomed to interacting with QR codes in TV ads — making it a highly effective way to drive action. Data from a [recent joint report](#) from Innovid and Target Roundel underscores viewers' rising comfort with shoppable ads. Here are some of the report's key findings:



## 60%

Of Target guests look up products after seeing a video ad they're interested in.



## 33%

Will scan a QR code on their TV if they know it will take them to a familiar site.



## 3x

Roundel's new shoppable CTV ad formats drive a 3x increase in average sales.

# Proving ROI is a slam dunk with powerful measurement and optimization

Brands will spend more than **\$60 billion** in 2024 on advertising during global sports telecasts, according to WARC. Because of the massive investment in live sporting events, brands understandably want to be sure their campaigns are generating positive outcomes—and they want to prove ROI.

The measurement and optimization capabilities enabled by streaming may be the most compelling reasons to advertise on live-streamed sports. Because CTV is digital, brands and agencies have deeper insight into ad performance and ad frequency. No longer are advertisers guessing how many people saw their 30-second spot based on GRP currency and no longer are they just hoping their campaign drives action from the consumer.

Streaming measurement gives brands and agencies remarkable, data-driven insight. This insight enables them to optimize campaigns on the fly and to manage frequency, serving an ad the right number of times to a viewer and avoiding overexposure.

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**“Live sports moving to streaming presents an incredible opportunity for advertisers to make use of digital capabilities never before possible in traditional linear broadcasting. From creative personalization and interactivity to real time optimization, the potential to create more meaningful and more measurable ads for this audience is right now.”**

**Dan Mouradian**

SVP-Global Client Solutions

*Innovid*

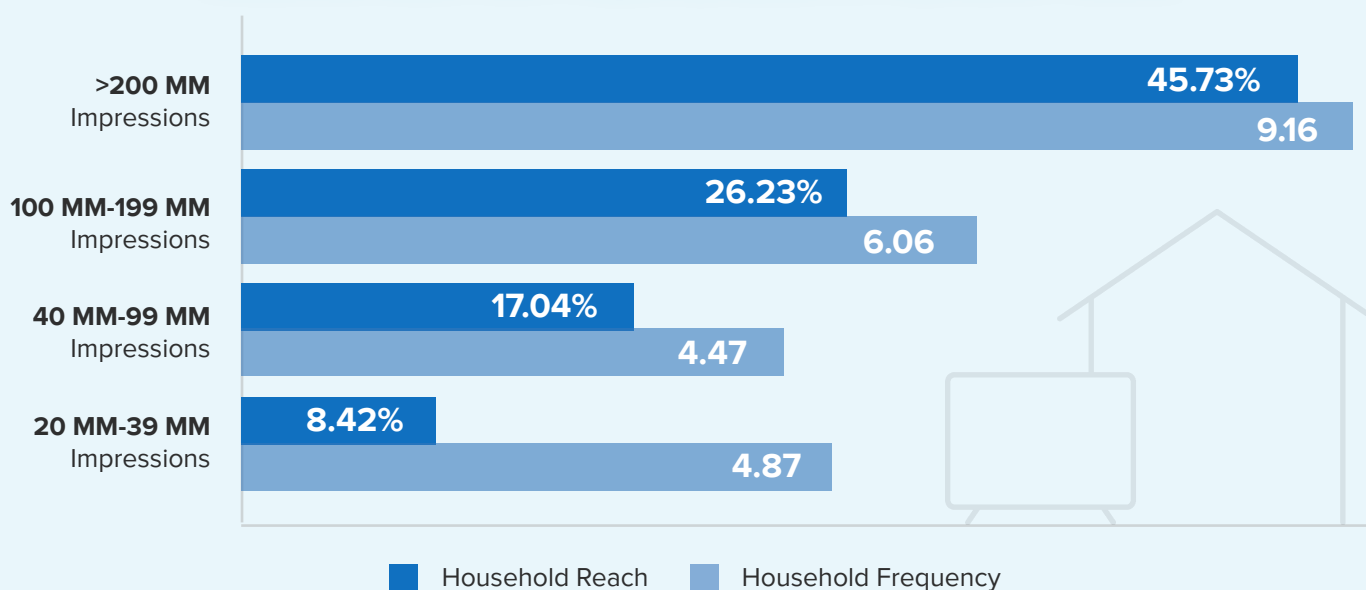
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# Get unparalleled insight into reach and frequency

The digitization of TV has enabled unprecedented measurement of reach and frequency for advertisers — which allows marketers to manage their campaigns for improved performance and ROI. The following insights, based on almost 200 billion video ad impressions Innovid served in the first half of 2024, provide a snapshot of what data is available for brands and agencies to measure their advertising campaigns on live-streamed sports telecasts.

**Household Reach and Frequency Based on Impression Volume**



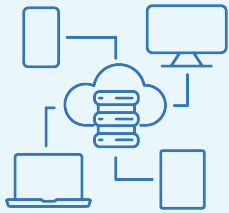
**Understand your campaigns' reach more precisely than ever before.** The chart above shows the average CTV campaign reach is 21.99% of Innovid's 95 million CTV households, which has more than doubled since 2021. The reach of CTV campaigns is expected to increase, fueled by the surge live-streamed sports viewership.

**Insight to deliver the right frequency for advertiser campaigns.** The chart above shows how the average frequency for a campaign (which is 6.25 across all campaigns) shifts upward based on the number of impressions. In this dawning era of live-streamed sports, Innovid's technology enables advertisers to precisely scale frequency.



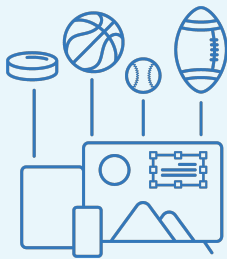
# Publishers, increase the value of your platform with live-streamed sports advertising

The brave new world of streaming can be challenging for publishers. Here's how Innovid's technology — built for the complex environment of CTV — can help publishers handle the demands of live-streamed sports and other live events:



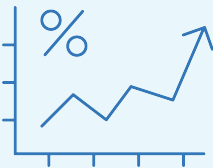
## Ad Server

For live events, **an ad server must be able to handle the weight of video and the real-time calling of ads in a live environment.** That's why a buy-side ad server like Innovid's — which has been purpose-built for the challenging CTV ecosystem — makes life easier for publishers.



## Creative

With Innovid's proprietary creative SDK installed on a publisher's platform, **advertisers can quickly and easily generate interactive creative campaigns.** This kind of creative, built for the CTV and live-streamed sports environment, helps a publisher's clients engage fans with immersive experiences aligned to the game.



## Measurement

Publishers can use Innovid's measurement to **prove the value of their inventory** with the aggregated advertising performance during live sports that demonstrates reach and engagement.

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**“Live sports is a major priority for Roku. We continue to see the value in our lean-back, live sports experiences with streaming audiences. From our Sports Zones to our Roku Sports Channel, we will continue to make premium sports content more accessible than ever for viewers and advertisers.”**

**Miles Fisher**

Strategic Advertising Partnerships  
*Roku*

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**Colleen Durkin**

SVP-Integrated Investment

***Assembly***

Colleen Durkin, SVP of Integrated Investment at Assembly, has spent the past two decades in the media buying sector at firms like Mediavest, Zenith Media, and Carat. We tapped Colleen's wisdom in the interview below on how live-streamed sports will transform advertising for brands by providing unique reach, access to advanced creative, and measurement unavailable via linear TV.

## **How transformative is the shift of live sports to streaming? Is it evolutionary, revolutionary, or somewhere in between?**

I believe it's somewhere in between. It's an evolution of how we are seeing more people consuming sports not in such a linear fashion, but through CTV channels. Where we're seeing more of that revolutionary shift is in how consumers are leaning in, bringing consumers closer to point of purchase with interactive ad formats on CTV. Streaming has completely changed the living room experience. It's no longer just about watching—it's about engaging. People interact with content in new ways, and advertisers are finding creative ways to connect with them. The technology behind streaming opens up so many possibilities, making it easier to create more interactive and personalized experiences. It's changing how we watch, how we connect, and how brands reach their audiences.

## **There are many ways to take advantage of what streaming telecasts offer — multiple cameras, trivia, and in-game betting. Are streamers taking advantage of these opportunities yet?**

We're seeing some engagement in the retail space, where you can pull consumers further down the funnel to action — especially when you're seeing those streamers like Amazon enable interaction, like with a QR code on the screen. Both streamers and advertisers are actively testing what works, what doesn't, and whether the engagement justifies the effort to create the interaction. The focus is on understanding what viewers find valuable and whether they see these interactions as a benefit and a deeper connection, rather than an overload.

There is so much more opportunity to build that living room experience beyond just the game and commercial breaks. When you go to a game in person, during the breaks, you engage in the stadium with various activities on the Jumbotron. When I take my kids to a hockey game, they're seeing all the different experiences you can have when there's no action on the ice. I think it's possible to transfer those kinds of experiences into the living room. We'll probably see that change more and more as the technology gets better and as we are actually engaging more as consumers.

## Do you see younger consumers being more likely to lean in to this kind of interactivity and to watching sports with their mobile phone, their second screen, in their hands?

There is a younger skew, because they're more comfortable in that space. They've been in that space longer. Adoption rates can also depend on how avid of a fan you are or what the sport is. With the Olympics this year, Peacock did a ton on their space, which was quite engaging across different sports and across their different communities. And during my weekly Thursday Night Football game on Amazon Prime, I might be paying attention to my fantasy football team. There are many different aspects of how to engage.

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**“Streaming has completely changed the living room experience.  
It's no longer just about watching—it's about engaging.”**

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## Where are advertisers leveraging the possibilities of streaming most effectively? Extending their reach? Via advanced creative? Or with enhanced measurement?

It's all the above, depending on the advertiser's objectives. Fully tapping into both linear and streaming spaces ensures no audience is left out, whether they engage on one platform or the other. Engaging with the audience across the entire ecosystem is essential.

With so many creative capabilities available, standing out and pulling consumers further down the funnel becomes even more achievable, especially through streaming, which offers greater opportunities for creative differentiation than linear. Optimization and measurement play a crucial role in this process, leveraging engagement metrics to determine what resonates and what doesn't. Diving deep into performance across all media ensures campaigns are constantly refined for success.

At Assembly, this approach is at the core of what we do. Consistent testing, learning, and optimization ensure every media choice delivers value and drives results. This iterative process keeps campaigns effective and audience engagement high.

## How have you seen the streaming networks take advantage of what's available with interactivity?

I think there's a lot of testing when we talk about the overlays with QR codes. And there are even the virtual product integrations. I think the easy connection to make with consumers is if they're using your mobile device. We do know that the second screen is still such a popular way for people to consume content even in front of a television.



# Live-streamed sports aren't the future — they're now

The shift of live sports telecasts to streaming is more than a trend; it's a movement that's only sprinting faster. This is not the future. This is now. The streaming of sports is transforming these telecasts for viewers and for advertisers. Streaming is where the eyeballs are and will continue to be, where personalized ads drive engagement and revenue, and where measurement is more accurate and granular than on linear TV.

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**“There’s enormous opportunity to grow, especially on a global basis. What that will require is using new technology that’s largely coming through streaming services to find better ways to engage fans. That comes through personalization of those telecasts — things you can’t do certainly on broadcast television or on linear cable, but you can through streaming...”**

**Adam Silver**

Commissioner,

*NBA*

(as told to Sports Illustrated)

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## 5 takeaways

Here are five takeaways from this report that brands, agencies, and publishers with an eye on live-streamed sports should keep top of mind:



Live-streamed sports are gathering more viewers every day. PwC predicts that almost **100 million viewers** will stream a sports event at least once a month in 2025.



Advertisers are embracing CTV. Spending on CTV advertising will have doubled to more than **\$40 billion** between 2022 and 2027, according to eMarketer projections, and much of that investment will flow to live-streamed sports.



Live-streamed sports offer advertisers creative advantages. DCO strategies enable brands to **personalize their messaging** to consumers, and interactive ads can **boost engagement** throughout the funnel — all the way through to purchase.



When compared with linear TV, advertising on live-streamed sports offers a **significant increase in the ability to measure frequency, reach, and outcomes**. It also enables campaign optimization in real time to boost ROI.



For publishers, live-streamed sports represent a massive opportunity—but a challenging one. **Partnering with an ad server built for video, and able to handle the complexity of CTV, is a must.** It ensures you can help your clients create personalized and engaging campaigns and prove the value of their advertising investments.

## About Us



Innovid (NYSE:CTV) is an independent software platform for the creation, delivery, measurement, and optimization of advertising across connected TV (CTV), linear, and digital. Through a global infrastructure that enables cross-platform ad serving, data-driven creative, and measurement, Innovid offers its clients always-on intelligence to optimize advertising investment across channels, platforms, screens, and devices. Innovid is an independent platform that leads the market in converged TV innovation, through proprietary technology and exclusive partnerships designed to reimagine TV advertising. Headquartered in New York City, Innovid serves a global client base through offices across the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

To learn more, visit [Innovid.com](https://www.innovid.com) or follow us on:



Get in touch!

