

OTT PLATFORMS AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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Abstract The rapid expansion of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has fundamentally transformed the structure, consumption patterns, and economic models of electronic media. Traditional broadcasting systems—television, radio, and cable networks—are increasingly challenged by digital streaming services that offer on-demand, personalized, and multi-device access to content. This paper examines how OTT platforms have reshaped electronic media by altering content production practices, audience engagement mechanisms, advertising strategies, and regulatory frameworks. It highlights the technological drivers behind OTT growth, including broadband penetration, smartphone diffusion, artificial intelligence-driven recommendation systems, and cloud-based distribution models. The study further explores socio-cultural implications such as binge-watching behavior, content localization, and changing audience attention spans. Through a critical review of contemporary literature published in 2023, the paper identifies emerging challenges for traditional broadcasters and outlines strategic adaptations necessary for survival in a convergent media ecosystem. The findings indicate that OTT platforms are not merely an extension of electronic media but represent a paradigm shift toward user-centric, data-driven, and globally networked media environments.

Keywords: OTT platforms, electronic media, digital streaming, media convergence, audience behavior, content economy

1. Introduction

Electronic media has historically played a central role in shaping public opinion, entertainment preferences, and information dissemination through television, radio, and cable broadcasting. However, the last decade has witnessed a dramatic shift due to the emergence of OTT platforms that deliver audio-visual content directly to users via the internet, bypassing traditional

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distribution intermediaries. This transformation has accelerated since the COVID-19 period and continues to redefine media consumption habits globally. Scholars note that OTT platforms represent a disruption rather than an incremental change, as they challenge linear scheduling, mass-audience models, and advertiser-driven revenue structures (Kumar & Mehta, 2023).

Unlike conventional electronic media, OTT services provide users with control over what, when, and how content is consumed. This shift from broadcaster-centric to consumer-centric media has profound implications for production, regulation, and cultural representation. The increasing preference for mobile-first viewing and personalized content feeds has further weakened appointment-based television viewing, compelling traditional media organizations to rethink their strategies (Singh, 2023). This paper situates OTT platforms within the broader evolution of electronic media and examines their role in reshaping the media ecosystem.

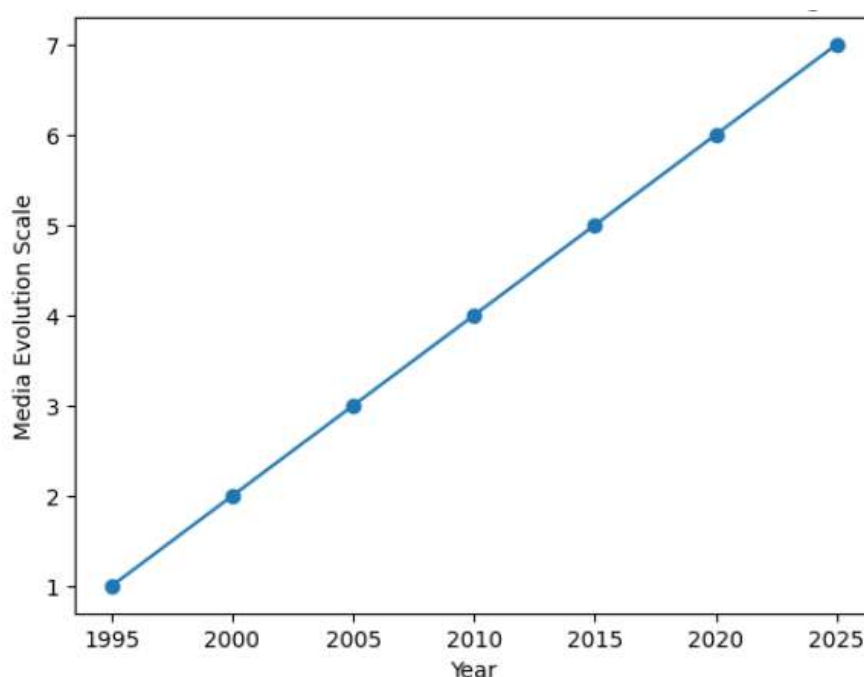


Figure 1 Evolution of Electronic Media from Traditional Broadcasting to OTT Platforms

2. Evolution of OTT Platforms within Electronic Media

The development of OTT platforms is closely linked to advancements in internet infrastructure, compression technologies, and cloud computing. Initially perceived as supplementary services, OTT platforms have now emerged as primary content distributors, competing directly with broadcast television and cable networks. According to Sharma (2023), the transition from

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analog to digital broadcasting laid the foundation for this shift by familiarizing audiences with digital interfaces and multi-channel environments.

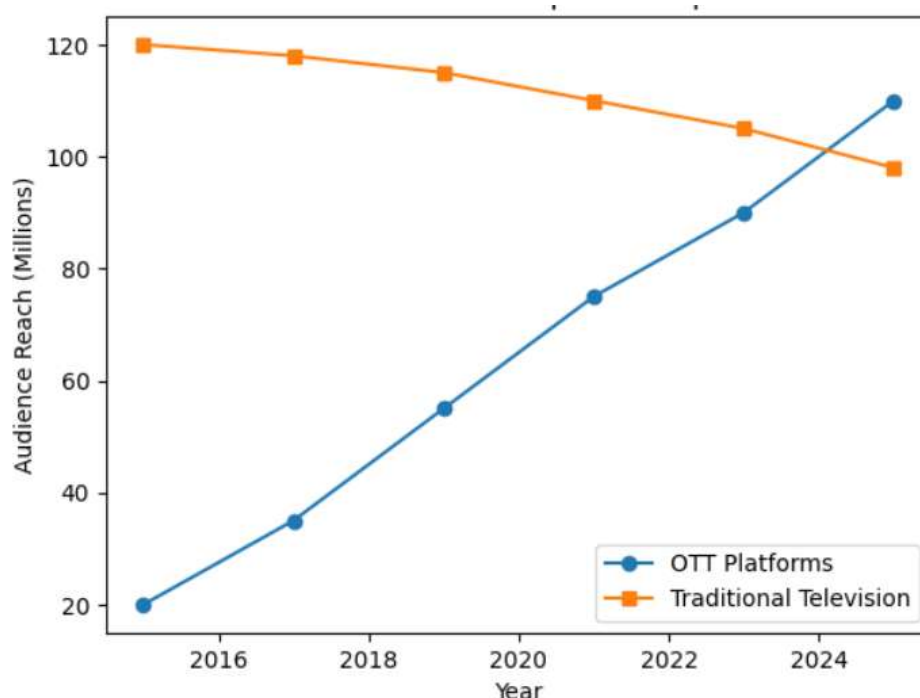


Figure 2 Growth Trend of OTT Platform Adoption Compared to Traditional Television

OTT platforms differ from traditional electronic media in their operational logic. They rely on subscription-based, ad-supported, or hybrid revenue models rather than exclusive dependence on advertising. Additionally, their global reach allows content to transcend national boundaries, leading to unprecedented levels of media globalization (Rao & Nair, 2023). The rise of original digital-only content further distinguishes OTT platforms, as production decisions are increasingly informed by data analytics and audience metrics rather than broadcaster intuition. **Table 1** presents a comparative overview of traditional electronic media and OTT platforms, highlighting structural differences that explain the ongoing transition.

Table 1: Comparison between Traditional Electronic Media and OTT Platforms

Dimension	Traditional Electronic Media	OTT Platforms
Content Access	Scheduled and linear	On-demand and non-linear
Distribution	Terrestrial, cable, satellite	Internet-based
Revenue Model	Advertising-centric	Subscription / Hybrid
Audience Reach	National or regional	Global
Content Control	Broadcaster-driven	User-driven

3. Changing Audience Behavior and Media Consumption Patterns

One of the most significant impacts of OTT platforms on electronic media is the transformation of audience behavior. Viewers have shifted from passive consumption to active selection, resulting in fragmented yet highly engaged audiences. Binge-watching, time-shifted viewing, and multi-screen usage have become defining characteristics of contemporary media consumption (Verma, 2023). These behaviors challenge traditional ratings systems and require new metrics for audience measurement.

OTT platforms leverage artificial intelligence and algorithmic recommendation systems to personalize content delivery, thereby increasing user retention and viewing duration. This personalization contrasts sharply with the one-size-fits-all programming of traditional electronic media (Das & Iyer, 2023). Moreover, younger demographics increasingly perceive OTT platforms as their primary source of entertainment and information, reducing loyalty to conventional television channels.

Culturally, OTT platforms have expanded narrative diversity by supporting regional languages, niche genres, and experimental storytelling formats. Researchers argue that this diversification has democratized content creation while also intensifying competition for audience attention (Mukherjee, 2023). Consequently, electronic media institutions must adapt to an environment where audiences exercise greater autonomy and expect continuous innovation.

4. Impact on Content Production, Advertising, and Revenue Models

OTT platforms have significantly altered content production practices by emphasizing data-driven decision-making and shorter production cycles. Unlike traditional electronic media, where pilot episodes and audience trials determine program viability, OTT content strategies often rely on predictive analytics derived from user data (Bose & Chandra, 2023). This approach reduces financial risk while enabling targeted content investment.

Advertising within OTT ecosystems is also undergoing transformation. Programmatic advertising, branded content, and subscription-based ad-free models challenge the dominance of traditional television commercials. Advertisers increasingly favor OTT platforms due to their precise audience targeting and measurable engagement outcomes (Kapoor, 2023). As a result, traditional electronic media faces declining advertising revenues and intensified competition for marketing budgets.

Table 2 summarizes key differences in advertising and monetization approaches between traditional electronic media and OTT platforms.

Table 2: Advertising and Monetization Models in Electronic Media and OTT Platforms

Aspect	Traditional Electronic Media	OTT Platforms
Advertising Format	Fixed commercial slots	Programmatic & personalized ads
Audience Measurement	TRP-based	Data-driven analytics
Monetization	Advertiser-funded	Subscription + Advertising
Content Funding	Sponsor-dependent	Platform-funded originals

5. Regulatory, Ethical, and Technological Challenges

The rapid growth of OTT platforms has raised complex regulatory and ethical concerns. Unlike traditional electronic media, which operates under well-defined broadcast regulations, OTT platforms often exist in regulatory grey zones. Issues related to content moderation, censorship, data privacy, and intellectual property rights have intensified debates among policymakers (Malhotra, 2023). Governments worldwide are exploring regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability without stifling innovation.

Technologically, OTT platforms depend heavily on data collection and algorithmic governance, raising ethical questions about surveillance, user manipulation, and content polarization (Sen & Gupta, 2023). Additionally, unequal access to high-speed internet creates a digital divide that limits OTT adoption in rural and economically disadvantaged regions, particularly in developing countries.

Traditional electronic media organizations also face technological adaptation challenges as they integrate digital platforms, mobile applications, and streaming services into existing infrastructures. The success of such convergence strategies depends on organizational agility, investment capacity, and audience trust (Patel, 2023).

6. Conclusion and Future Outlook

OTT platforms have irreversibly altered the landscape of electronic media by redefining how content is produced, distributed, and consumed. The shift toward user-centric, on-demand media reflects broader changes in digital culture, technological capability, and economic

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organization. While traditional electronic media continues to hold relevance, its survival increasingly depends on strategic adaptation, digital integration, and audience engagement innovation.

Future trends indicate deeper convergence between OTT platforms and electronic media through hybrid broadcasting models, interactive content, and immersive technologies such as virtual reality. Researchers emphasize that the coexistence of traditional and OTT media will shape a pluralistic media environment rather than a complete replacement scenario (Reddy, 2023). Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of OTT platforms is essential for media professionals, policymakers, and scholars seeking to navigate the evolving electronic media ecosystem.

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