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FEATURED

Techsurvey 2019: Smart Speaker Adoption Continues To Ramp Up.

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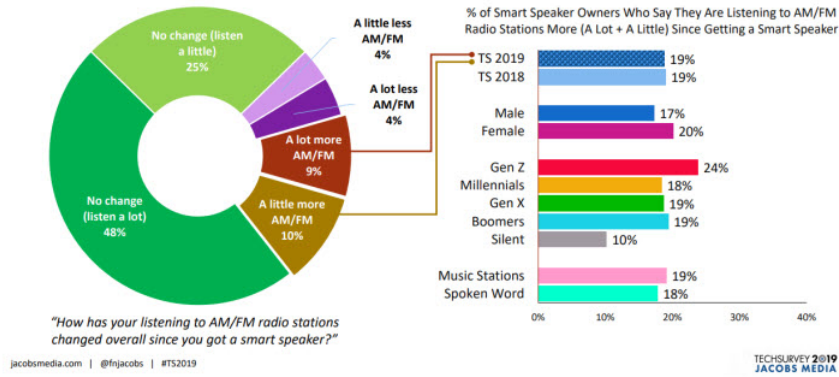


Among ad circles the new mantra is "voice is the new click," referring to how some marketers are adopting an "audio first" strategy in a world that is increasingly voice-activated. In hand, the latest Techsurvey data from Jacobs Media shows smart speaker adoption continuing to ramp up. The online survey of more than 50,000 radio listeners fielded in early 2019 shows more than one in four (27%) now own a voice-activated speaker, up from 21% in 2018 and just 11% in 2017.

Millennials and Gen X-ers are out front of this trend with three in ten of each generation owning one of the devices. And suggesting that smart speakers represent an all-format opportunity, the study found ownership clocks in at 27% for both music station partisans and spoken word radio loyalists. Listeners to hot AC, sports and CHR stations over-index for smart speaker ownership. But voice activation isn't just confined to cylindrical objects sitting on kitchen counters and in family rooms. Two thirds of the core radio listeners surveyed use the built-in voice command features on any device and half use voice commands on a smartphone. "We have a big growth trajectory in smart speaker ownership," Jacobs Media president Fred Jacobs said during a webinar Monday. Millennials and Gen X-ers are clearly leading the way but one fourth of Boomers also own one. And nearly half of smart speaker owners (49%) have two or more of the devices, up from 42% in 2018. "People are doubling and tripling up on the number of smart speakers," Jacobs added.

Across all demos, 19% of these core radio listeners say they're listening to broadcast radio either a lot or a little more due to owning a smart speaker, compared to just 8% who say they are listening less. "That is a net positive of about 10 points and that's why there's so much excitement now in radio about smart speakers," Jacobs told the webinar crowd. "This is a very promising finding for radio and it's encouraging a lot of broadcasters to focus on smart speakers and voice." While Gen Z is most likely to listen to more AM/FM radio since getting a smart speaker, all demos showed solid gains.

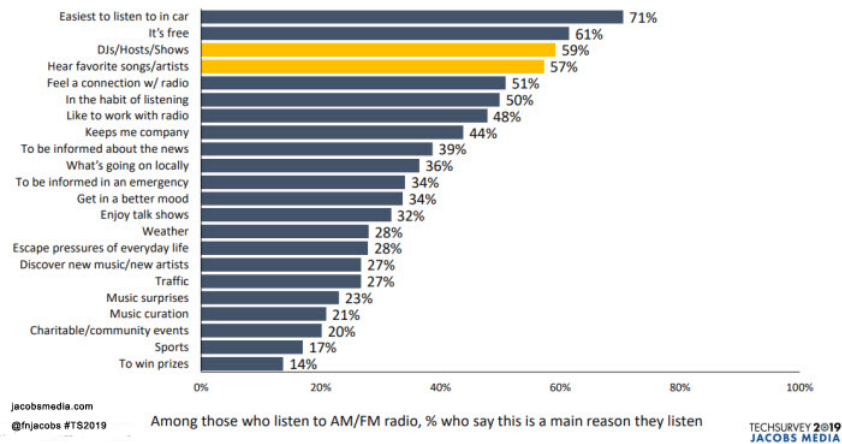
Gen Z Most Apt to Listen to More AM/FM Radio Since Getting a Smart Speaker, But All Demos Show Solid Gains



Top Reasons For Listening

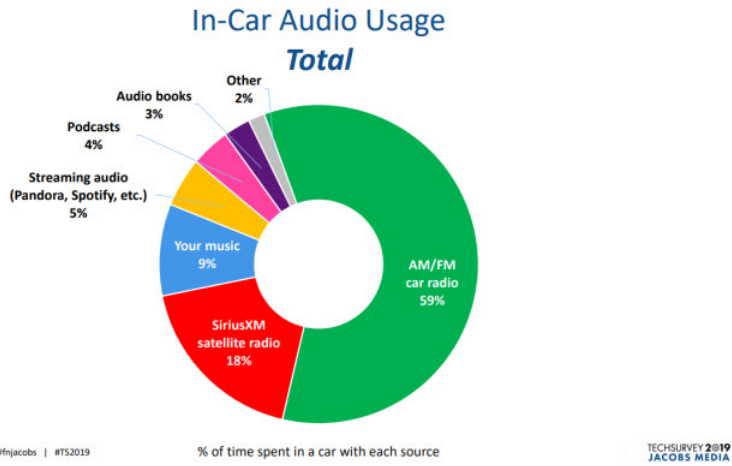
Drilling down into the top reasons why respondents tune in to AM/FM radio, seven in ten (71%) say the fact it is easiest to listen to in the car is a main reason they enjoy listening to the radio (the most mentioned response among the choices presented), while more than six in ten (62%) say a prime motivator for listening to broadcast radio is that it's a free service. Another advantage radio possesses over other audio sources: it's local. Nearly nine in ten (86%) of respondents agree that "one of radio's primary advantages is its local feel," up from 77% three years ago.

Main Reasons For Listening to AM/FM Radio



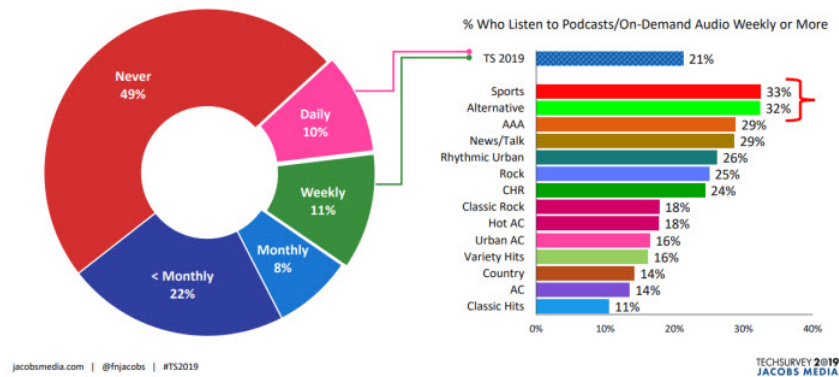
"In a world where subscription fees are plentiful, the fact that radio is a free service is a benefit that we often don't talk enough about," Jacobs offered. "Free is an important differentiating element between broadcast radio and our satellite and streaming competitors."

Looking at how core radio listeners divide their audio time on the road, AM/FM has a 59% share of in-car media use on an average weekday. But in a somewhat surprising finding, satellite radio came in second place with 18%. "Part of the reason why satellite radio does so well is it is as easy to listen to in the car as broadcast radio," Jacobs surmised. After that it was owned music (9%), streaming audio such as Pandora and Spotify (5%) and podcasts (4%).



In other Techsurvey 2019 findings, more than one in five listen to podcasts weekly or more, led by men, younger generations and college graduates. In fact more than one third of Millennials (35%) say they listen weekly to podcasts/on-demand audio. Among formats, sports radio (33%) and alternative fans (32%) lead the way for weekly podcast listening, followed by adult alternative and news talk (29% each), then rhythmic/urban (26%) and rock (25%).

Sports Radio and Alternative Fans Lead the Way for Weekly Podcast Listening



But about half of the total sample has never listened to a podcast, which has Jacobs questioning whether podcasting has become a mainstream platform. However it's worth noting that Techsurvey primarily canvasses commercial radio listeners, where weekly podcast listening (done by 21% of the sample) is lower than for a separate survey of public radio listeners (with 35% listening weekly). Among these mostly commercial radio listeners, 40% of those who do listen weekly are spending more time with podcasting, compared to 32% in 2018. "Once people get hooked on podcasting, their time spent podcasting goes up," Jacobs noted.

Facebook, Pandora Trending Down

Facebook has come under fire in the past year over privacy concerns and how its data is used. While it remains far and away the top social platform among radio listeners, the latest Techsurvey results show more than one fourth (26%) are seriously considering deleting their Facebook accounts, mostly because of privacy concerns. The figure runs higher among men (28%) than women (24%). Overall, Facebook declined from 79% of the sample having a profile in 2018 to 76% in 2019.

But Facebook's decline pales in comparison to that of Pandora. Among those who listen to streaming audio at least monthly, the amount who listen weekly to Pandora fell to 30% from 36% in 2018, 39% in 2017 and 43% in 2016. Spotify, meanwhile, remained largely stable at 19%. "Pandora is clearly going backwards in weekly listening," Jacobs observed, adding that teens prefer Spotify to Pandora by a two to one margin while Pandora skews older.

Techsurvey2019 was fielded from January 3 - February 3 with 50,652 participants mostly fielded from the databases of 519 radio stations in the U.S. and Canada. Respondents are largely commercial radio users. Responses were collected online and weighted using Nielsen market population data. Because the survey was conducted entirely online, it is not representative of all radio listening or even each participating radios station's audience. In addition, it is not stratified to the U.S./Canadian populations.