

## **Key Findings from 2014 TV Ratings Research among Parents**

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*From May 7 to 15, 2014, Hart Research Associates conducted a nationwide online survey among 1,017 parents of children ages two to 17 on behalf of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board. This survey is part of a continuing effort to understand the views of parents, and this survey tracks key findings from a similar online survey conducted among parents in November 2011.*

### **Awareness of the TV ratings system remains very high among parents, and three in four parents view the system favorably.**

- Fully 94% of parents are aware that broadcast and cable networks provide parental ratings for TV programs, which is on par with the proportion who were aware in 2011 (93%). Similarly, parents are aware that the ratings appear on screen at the start of shows (90% in 2014; 88% in 2011).
- Most parents feel that they understand the TV ratings well (93% in 2014; 90% in 2011). The proportion of parents who feel they understand the ratings very well has increased from 41% in 2011 to 52% today.
- More than three in four parents say they have a favorable opinion of the TV ratings today, while only 6% have an unfavorable opinion of them, and 18% do not have an opinion either way. Parents' impressions today are slightly more positive than they were in November 2011, when 69% viewed TV ratings favorably and 9% viewed them unfavorably.
  - Parents who are favorable toward the TV ratings system volunteer that they appreciate that the ratings help them make decisions about the suitability of TV shows for their children.
- Nearly two in three (65%) parents are comfortable with the ratings they have seen for television shows recently, while 35% remember seeing a show that they felt should have been rated differently. While this reflects a slight increase in the proportion of parents who feel that a rating was inaccurate (up from 29% in 2011), just 15% of parents say they frequently saw an inaccurate rating for a show in the past few months, which is comparable to the proportion of parents (14%) who said this in November 2011. Furthermore, the large majority of parents who recall seeing an inaccurate rating view the TV ratings system favorably (72%). Even among those who recall seeing inaccurate ratings frequently, 63% view the TV ratings system favorably.

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**Echoing the 2011 findings, the large majority of parents report using the TV ratings system, and most parents find the ratings helpful. There have been small but notable increases in the frequency of parents' use of the ratings and the degree to which they find them helpful.**

- Currently, 72% of parents say they use TV ratings often (38%) or sometimes (34%). Overall, this is only slightly higher than the level of use reported by parents in 2011, when 68% said they used them often (26%) or sometimes (38%). However, it is notable that the proportion of parents who say they use them *often* has increased by 12 points.
- Nearly three in four (74%) parents say they have established rules about TV watching for their children. One in three parents overall say that, among such rules, their children are only allowed to watch shows based on their parental rating.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of parents say the ratings are helpful, including 41% who think they are very helpful. This reflects a slight increase from the 80% who found them helpful in 2011, including 33% who found them very helpful.
- Fully 98% of parents who use the TV ratings often say they are helpful.

**Awareness of and favorability toward the TV ratings system vary little among parents regardless of their children's age, even though use of TV ratings drops off slightly among parents with teens.**

- Parents with children age 12 and under use the TV ratings more often than do parents of teens. Nonetheless, nearly two in three parents with 16- and 17-year-olds say they use TV ratings at least sometimes.
- The proportion of parents who say they have rules for TV viewing for their children is lower among parents with teens, especially older teens, and they are less likely to say that their children can only watch shows based on their TV ratings.

	<u>Have Child Age 2-5</u> %	<u>Have Child Age 6-10</u> %	<u>Have Child Age 11-12</u> %	<u>Have Child Age 13-15</u> %	<u>Have Child Age 16-17</u> %
<b>Aware of TV ratings</b>	94	94	91	94	96
<b>Understand TV ratings very/somewhat well</b>	92	93	94	93	94
<b>Favorable opinion of TV ratings</b>	76	75	75	72	78
<b>Find TV ratings very/somewhat helpful</b>	85	88	86	80	81
<b>Use TV ratings fairly often/sometimes</b>	75	78	80	66	64
<b>Have rules for TV viewing</b>	78	83	79	73	63
<b>Rules include: only allow to watch TV shows based on parental TV rating</b>	37	43	38	31	26

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- African-American and Hispanic parents use the ratings more often and find them more helpful than do white parents, and the most educated parents use them less often and find them less helpful than do less-educated parents.

### **Three in four parents are aware that parental-control devices are available to them—either through the V-chip or cable parental controls, and their use of parental controls has held steady since 2011. Parents who do not use them say they manage their children’s television viewing in other ways.**

- Nearly two in three (65%) parents are aware that their cable or satellite company provides parental controls, while a lesser 38% of parents are aware their television has a V-Chip. This translates into 75% of parents who are aware that least one of these types of parental controls is available to them—the same proportion found in November 2011.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of parents report using either the V-Chip or cable parental controls, which is comparable to the 36% who reported they had used them two and a half years ago.
- Parents who do not use parental control devices say it is mainly because an adult is nearby when their child is watching TV. A secondary reason is that they have household rules about what their children can and cannot watch on television.

### **More parents say their children are viewing television content using alternative devices.**

- Today, 69% of parents report that their children have watched television content on one of six non-television devices in the past few weeks, including 35% who say their child has watched TV content on three or more of them. This is up from 50% of parents who said their children had watched online television content on one of those devices in November 2011, including 18% who said their children had watched on three or more.
  - Parents are most likely to say their children have watched TV shows on a tablet (38%), smartphone (37%), video game console (36%) or laptop (36%).
- Additionally, nearly half of parents say their children have watched TV programs that are streamed from the Internet to a television.
- Parents age 18 to 34 and those with children age two to five are among those most likely to say their children use alternative means to view television shows.

### **Parents would find it helpful if TV ratings were available across viewing platforms.**

- When asked which platform they would choose for their child to watch television, 62% of parents say they would choose the website that includes parental ratings for TV programs. Just 6% would choose the website that does not include parental ratings, and 32% say it would make no difference to them.
- Nearly nine in 10 parents would find it very (51%) or fairly (38%) helpful if the TV ratings were available across all platforms and devices.