

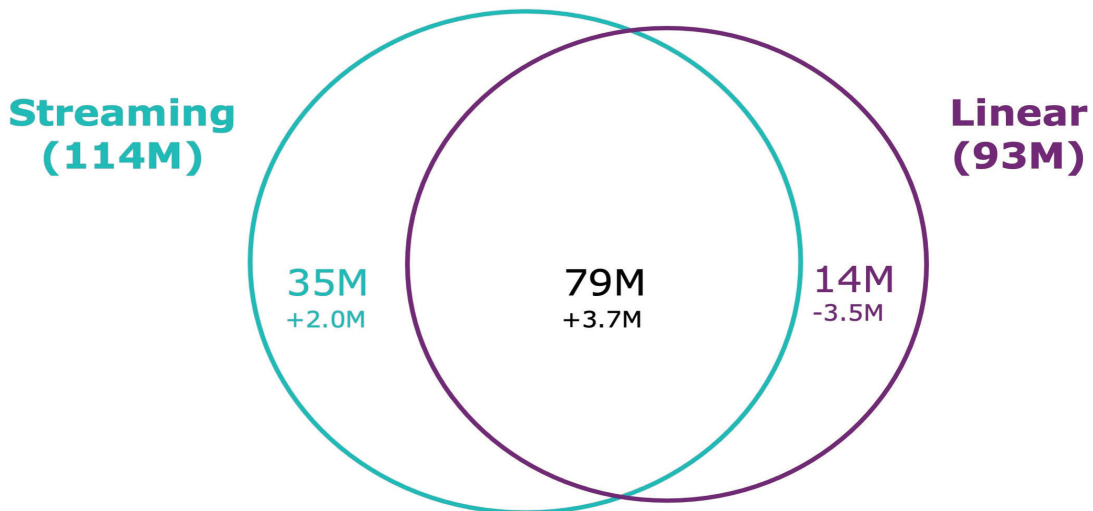
# TV DECONSTRUCTED: UNDERSTANDING THE AD-REACHABLE UNIVERSE

February 2026

The rapid evolution of television since the pandemic has broadened the ways households can access ad-supported content, while making the size and shape of the reachable TV audience harder to see. Linear and streaming are often discussed as competing ecosystems, but in practice they overlap extensively. The ARF’s DASH TV Universe Study provides a lens to define, size and understand the full ad-reachable universe across today’s TV landscape.

The latest DASH data show that ad-based streaming now reaches approximately 114 million U.S. households. Of these, about 35 million are streaming-only and therefore uniquely reachable through streaming advertising. Linear television continues to play a distinct role, reaching roughly 14 million households that do not participate in streaming at all. Taken together, linear and ad-based streaming account for nearly 95 percent of U.S. households, reinforcing that TV remains a near-universal advertising medium.

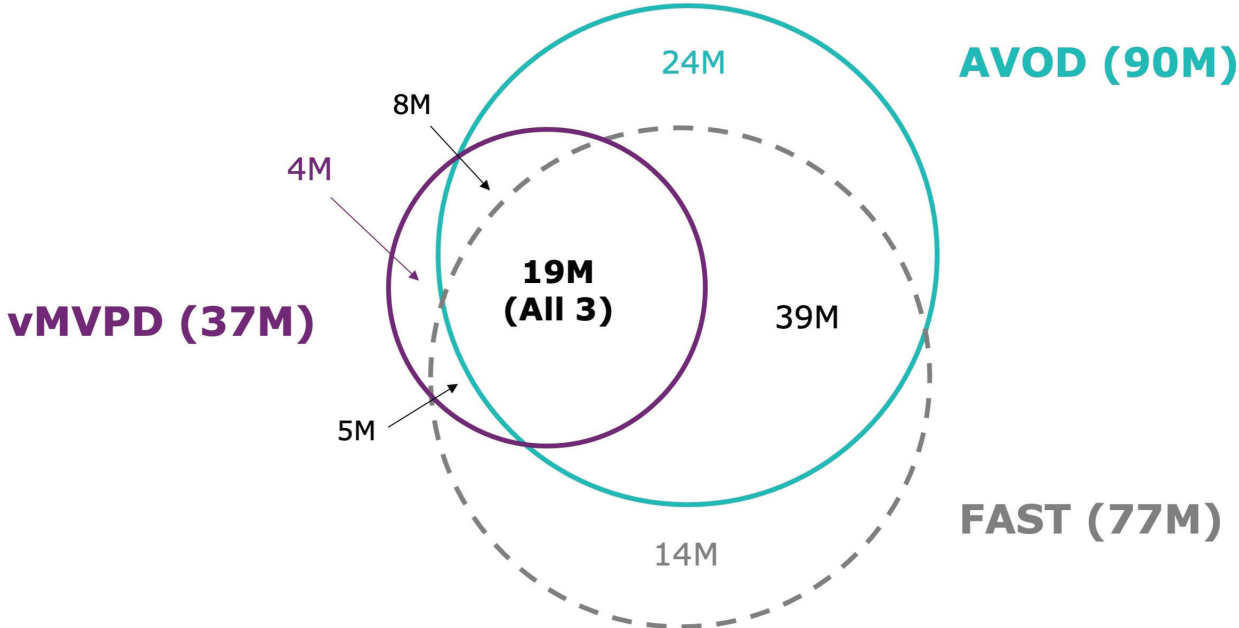
## Ad-Reachable Audiences 2025 (vs. 2024)



Overlap between linear and streaming is not static. Year-over-year analysis indicates that penetration of linear-only households declined by nearly three percentage points, while the share of households maintaining both linear and streaming increased. This pattern suggests that, for most households, streaming adoption is additive rather than substitutive. Linear services are being complemented, not immediately replaced, as viewing behavior evolves.

Within the streaming world, DASH further deconstructs the ad-supported universe into FAST, vMVPD and ad-supported paid streaming. This view highlights where incremental reach is truly coming from and where audiences are duplicated across services. By linking these universes to detailed demographic profiles, media usage patterns and shopping behavior, DASH allows planners and sellers to move beyond reach totals to understand audience composition and value.

### Streaming Ad-Reachable Audiences 2025



By quantifying overlap and isolating unduplicated audiences, DASH makes the full ad-reachable universe visible. The result is a clearer understanding of how linear and streaming work together, where incremental reach can be found and how advertising strategies can be calibrated to reflect the many ways households consume TV today.