

2 May 2018

Radio consumption rises in Australia as smart speakers enter the audio space

Global firm Edison Research has released the second annual comprehensive Australian study of the digital audio, social media, mobile, smart speaker and podcast habits of Australians.

The latest research into what audio technology Australians are using includes for the first time the newcomers to the sector, smart speakers.

Key findings show a rise in radio consumption across multiple platforms in the marketplace, with 88% of people having listened to an AM/FM/DAB+ either via free to air broadcast or online in the last week, three times as many people than the second highest audio platform.

The Australian Infinite Dial Study, commissioned by Commercial Radio Australia (CRA), Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) via their PodcastOne subsidiary, and Triton Digital, provides updated insights into what Australians are consuming online. The Infinite Dial research for Australia is patterned on the longest-running survey (1998) of digital media consumer behaviour in the USA and provides a unique profile of the 2018 Australian digital consumer.

“The Infinite Dial Australia study explores the usage of technology in the market, and as has been the case in the USA we believe The Infinite Dial Australia is set to become the authoritative source in the understanding of the online audio space” said Edison President Larry Rosin.

CRA chief executive officer, Joan Warner said: “It’s an exciting time for radio in Australia. Audio innovation and development across the world has provided radio with another way of reaching audiences, whether it is via a traditional AM/FM radio, on a DAB+ device, via a podcast or on a smart speaker. Australian radio listeners interact with their radio station across, social media, on the mobile and in the car. The Edison Study is an essential tool informing the industry on the technology habits of Australians.”

Key Australian Infinite Dial findings include:

- Radio is the leading audio platform consumed by Australians with 88% of people having listened to an AM/FM or DAB+ station in an average week (up from 85% AM/FM in 2017).
- After just 17 months, awareness of the Australian radio industry’s free mobile app with access to more than 250 stations, RadioApp is 15%, compared to the long established Tunein 20% and iHeartRadio 37%.
- Radio continues to dominate listening in the car with 89% of people (over 18 years) having listened to AM/FM radio in the car in the last month.
- 13% of Australians have listened to a podcast in the last week, with 16% of 25-54 year olds listening to a podcast weekly. An average of five podcasts are listened to each week by those who are weekly podcast listeners. 14% of weekly podcasts are by Australian radio stations or Australian radio personalities.
- Overall social media usage by Australians is up 2% to 82% in 2018, with 94% of 12-24 year olds using some form of social media. However, the social media used most often finds Facebook use down to 60% from 73% in 2017 and Instagram up to 14% from 8%.

- Smartphone ownership in Australia continues to outstrip the US with 90% of Australians owning a smartphone and the 25-54 year olds have the highest ownership with 96% owning a smartphone.
- Brand awareness of smart speakers in Australia shows Google Home leading with 61% awareness, compared to Amazon Alexa at 28%. Smart speaker ownership is 5% in Australia compared to the USA at 18% but the US ownership more than doubled from 7% in 2017.
- Netflix remains the most popular on-demand video service, with 41% of Australians subscribing. Foxtel Play, Go or Now is up in 2018 to 18%. In the last week in Australia 49% of people have used Netflix, Foxtel Play, Go or Now, Stan or Amazon Prime.

Edison President Larry Rosin is in Australia this week presenting the second Australian study to commercial radio stations and media agencies in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The Australian Infinite Dial study was conducted in the first quarter of 2018 and uses a nationally representative survey of 1009 people and is a random probability telephone sample, comprising both mobile phones and landlines, of all Australians aged 12 and older.

The full Infinite Dial study can be downloaded at www.radioalive.com.au on Friday, 4 May.

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