

US TV ownership down for first time in 20 years

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Flat screen televisions hang in an electronics store in New York City. The number of US homes owning television sets is falling for the first time in two decades, the Nielsen Co. said on Tuesday.

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Nielsen estimated that 114.7 million US [households](#), or 96.7 percent of US homes, will own [television](#) sets next year, down from the current 115.9 million, or 98.9 percent.

Nielsen said the last drop in TV ownership was in 1992.

It said there were several reasons for the decline, including the 2009 transition from analog to digital broadcasting, when some TV owners did not purchase new digital sets or converter boxes.

Economic belt-tightening was also a factor, Nielsen said, with TV penetration declining among lower-income, rural homes.

Nielsen said a "small subset of younger, urban consumers" was going without paid television subscriptions, watching video on the Web.

"Long-term effects of this are unclear," Nielsen said.

"It's undetermined if this is also an economic issue, with these individuals entering the TV marketplace once they have the means, or the beginning of a larger shift to viewing online and on [mobile devices](#)," it said.

"Nielsen data demonstrates that consumers are viewing more [video content](#) across all platforms -- rather than replacing one medium with another," it added.

Nielsen's Pat McDonough said "the media marketplace continues to evolve and become more complex.

"Some consumers are clearly being driven by the economy to make choices on the media devices they purchase," McDonough said.

"Others are expanding their equipment to add more audio/video devices to their home," she said. "Still others may be deferring a TV purchase or replacing their TV with a computer."

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