Cable TV customer satisfaction falls even further behind streaming video



reader comments

53 with 44 posters participating

Share this story

Netflix and other online video services have expanded their customer-satisfaction lead over cable and satellite TV, the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) found in its annual telecommunications report released today.

Streaming-video services averaged a score of 76 on the ACSI’s

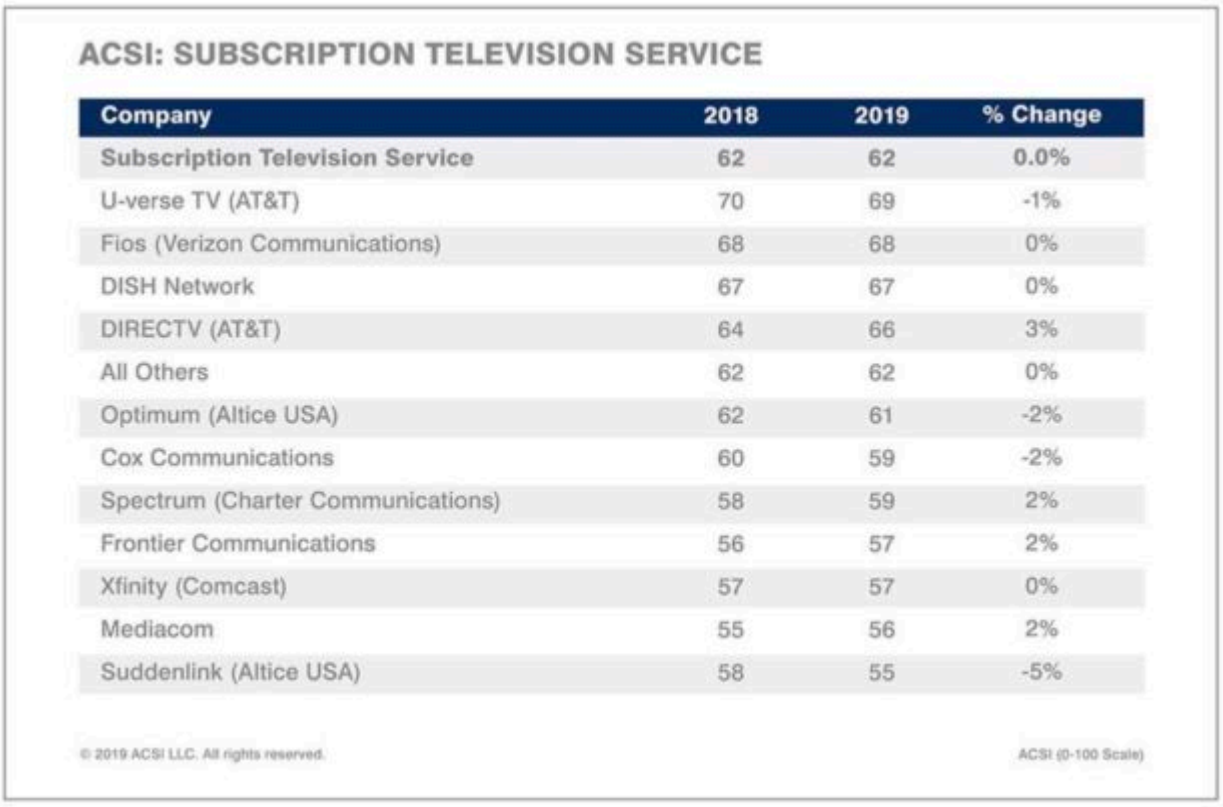
100-point scale, up from 75 last year. Meanwhile, the traditional subscription-TV industry's score remained unchanged at 62.

"For the past six years, customer satisfaction with subscription TV has languished in the mid-to-low 60s, not recovering enough to effectively compete with streaming services," the ACSI report said. "In 2018, subscription sales declined 3 percent to $103.4 billion. Customer service remains poor, and cord cutting is accelerating. As video-streaming services gain traction, a growing number of households may never subscribe to pay TV in the first place."

Pay-TV and broadband—two services that are generally offered in bundles by the same companies—each posted an industry average of 62, which is again in "last place among all [46] industries tracked by the ACSI," the report said. Pay-TV's satisfaction score peaked at 68 in 2013 and has dropped steadily since.

Streaming services rated significantly higher than cable and satellite in many categories, including the ease of understanding bills, mobile app quality and reliability, and call-center satisfaction.

Comcast remained near the bottom of pay-TV rankings with a score of 57, while AT&T's U-verse led the ranking despite dropping from 70 to 69:



ACSI: SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE

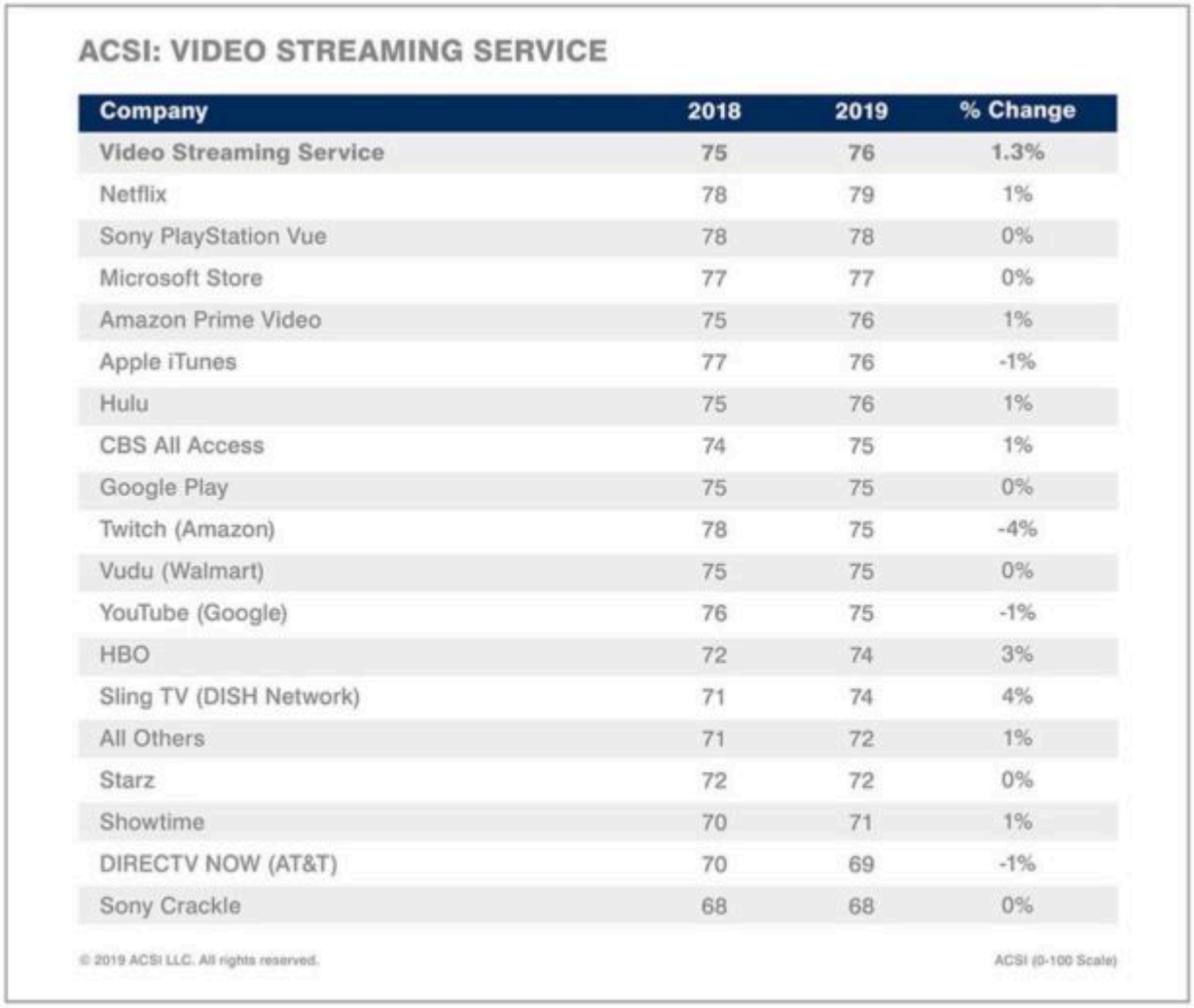
Company	2018	2019	% Change
Subscription Television Service	62	62	0.0%
U-verse TV (AT&T)	70	69	-1%
Fios (Verizon Communications)	68	68	0%
DISH Network	67	67	0%
DIRECTV (AT&T)	64	66	3%
All Others	62	62	0%
Optimum (Altice USA)	62	61	-2%
Cox Communications	60	59	-2%
Spectrum (Charter Communications)	58	59	2%
Frontier Communications	56	57	2%
Xfinity (Comcast)	57	57	0%
Mediacom	55	56	2%
Suddenlink (Altice USA)	58	55	-5%

© 2019 ACSI LLC. All rights reserved.

ACSI (0-100 Scale)

Enlarge / The ACSI’s subscription-television service ranking for 2019.

Coincidentally, AT&T’s streaming service—DirecTV Now—also fell from 70 to 69. But while the AT&T U-verse TV score of 69 was good enough to lead all cable and satellite TV providers, the DirecTV Now score of 69 was in second-to-last place among streaming providers:



ACSI: VIDEO STREAMING SERVICE

Company	2018	2019	% Change
Video Streaming Service	75	76	1.3%
Netflix	78	79	1%
Sony PlayStation Vue	78	78	0%
Microsoft Store	77	77	0%
Amazon Prime Video	75	76	1%
Apple iTunes	77	76	-1%
Hulu	75	76	1%
CBS All Access	74	75	1%
Google Play	75	75	0%
Twitch (Amazon)	78	75	-4%
Vudu (Walmart)	75	75	0%
YouTube (Google)	76	75	-1%
HBO	72	74	3%
Sling TV (DISH Network)	71	74	4%
All Others	71	72	1%
Starz	72	72	0%
Showtime	70	71	1%
DIRECTV NOW (AT&T)	70	69	-1%
Sony Crackle	68	68	0%

© 2019 ACSI LLC. All rights reserved.

ACSI (0-100 Scale)

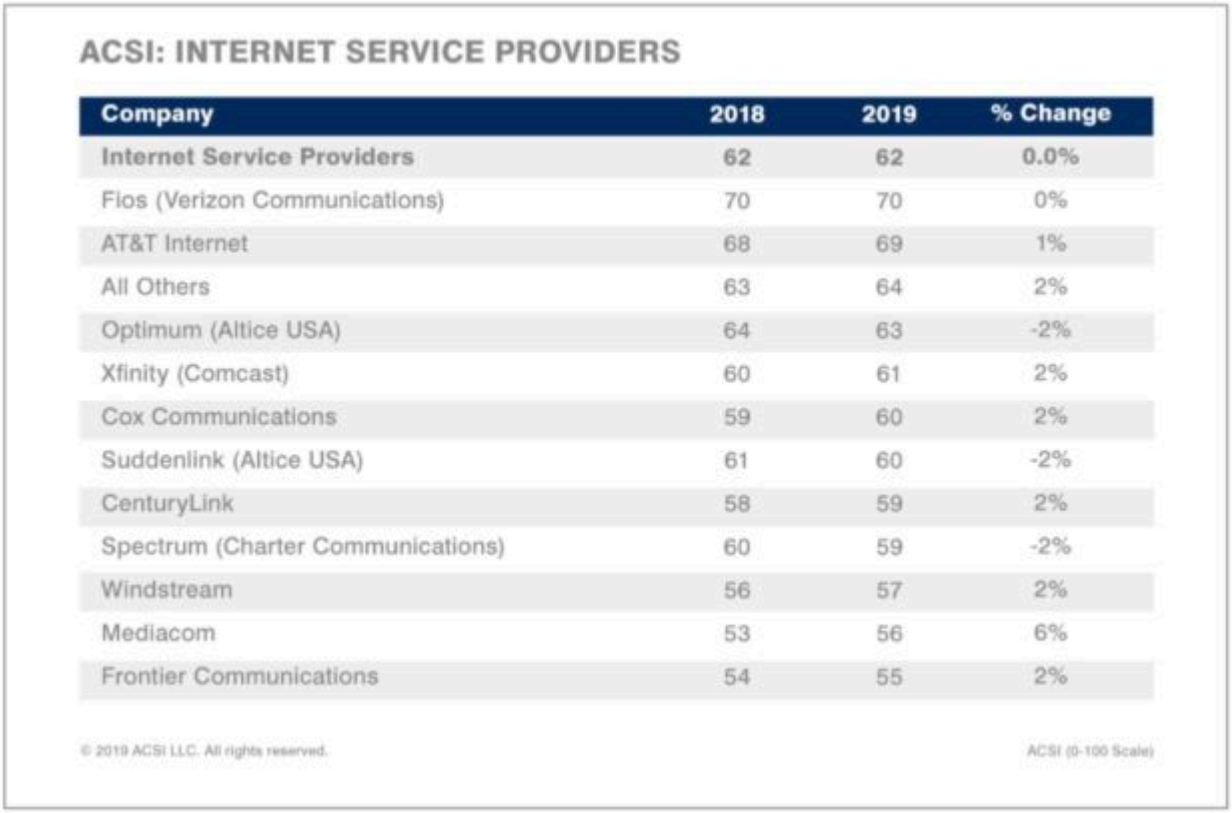
Enlarge / The ACSI's video-streaming service ranking for 2019. As you can see above, Netflix took the top spot in streaming satisfaction by raising its score from 78 to 79.

"Netflix shared the lead with Sony PlayStation Vue and Amazon's Twitch a year ago, but a 1 percent gain puts Netflix alone in first place—and number one across all five telecom categories [streaming, pay-TV, broadband, landline phones, and on-demand video]," the ACSI report said. "The company has been rolling out original content at an unprecedented rate, which remains among its greatest strengths. According to ACSI data, Netflix ranks at the top for original content among all streaming services. In addition, its membership growth continues at a record pace."

Despite streaming's big lead over cable and satellite TV, the ACSI said that lower-ranked streaming services have problems,

too. “Some of these services aren’t enough of a departure from original cable and satellite offerings in that commercial interruptions abound, prices are high, and customer service is poor,” the ACSI said.

There wasn’t much change in the broadband rankings, with Verizon FiOS and AT&T leading the way while Mediacom and Frontier finished at the bottom:



ACSI: INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

Company	2018	2019	% Change
Internet Service Providers	62	62	0.0%
Fios (Verizon Communications)	70	70	0%
AT&T Internet	68	69	1%
All Others	63	64	2%
Optimum (Altice USA)	64	63	-2%
Xfinity (Comcast)	60	61	2%
Cox Communications	59	60	2%
Suddenlink (Altice USA)	61	60	-2%
CenturyLink	58	59	2%
Spectrum (Charter Communications)	60	59	-2%
Windstream	56	57	2%
Mediacom	53	56	6%
Frontier Communications	54	55	2%

© 2019 ACSI LLC. All rights reserved.

ACSI (0-100 Scale)

Enlarge / The ACSI’s Internet service provider ranking for 2019.

The ACSI telecommunications report was based on interviews with 38,681 customers chosen at random. In all, the ACSI interviews 300,000 customers a year to track more than 400 companies in 46 industries.

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1509141