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Amagi Global FAST Report | Edition #11

Grabbing the remote control: What's on FAST?

Tracking the content landscape and viewing habits



Introduction by
Gavin Bridge
The FASTMaster

Delve into comprehensive data and insights powered by Amagi's homegrown data analytics platform – Amagi ANALYTICS and the Amagi Consumer Survey 2024.

Analysis period – Q1 2024 (Jan-Mar) vs. Q1 2023 (Jan-Mar)

In the 11th edition of the Amagi Global FAST Report, we focus on the global market and bring data and insights from 50+ FAST services and 5,000+ channels distributed that use Amagi THUNDERSTORM, our SSAI (Server-Side Ad Insertion) platform. This is not a universal data set of all FAST channels and FAST services. But we hope this report provides directional guidance to content providers, FAST services and advertisers.

The report also provides insights into audience preferences and viewing habits based on the 2024 Amagi Consumer Survey of ~500 U.S. households comprising diverse income groups.

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Introduction: Expanding the picture of FAST viewership

Gavin Bridge
The FASTMaster

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The upfront season will see many media companies unveil their new channels and plans for FAST for the coming year. This is hot on the heels of Q1 earnings season where media companies share the latest key performance indicators with investors.

A commonality in both will be a lack of actionable FAST metrics. This is a core issue within FAST. To address the theme of the prior Amagi Global FAST Report, which looked at the imbalance between FAST audiences and advertising revenues and how that is expected to change, the most powerful change agent will be providing marketers with information on what content is being watched on FAST and how it has been trending.

This is where this edition of the Global FAST Report steps in. Amagi has crunched the numbers across their worldwide operations to provide us with a detailed look into what content types are most popular in key regions and how these differ between now and one year ago.

Before highlighting some essential takeaways, an important caveat. This data reflects only the channels carried by Amagi, so for instance, if Amagi carries a high proportion of news channels in the US, this may be reflected in the dataset. In other words, as Amagi states in the body of this report, the dataset should be considered reflective but not representative of the entire universe of FAST.

Yet, in the absence of reliable content performance insights, it provides a fascinating view of the current status of FAST and how it differs by region. News is undeniably a popular format in the U.S., a feat made possible by population size, the rise of cord-cutting, and an increasingly growing demand for centrist news content to counter cable news and opinion channels. No other developed nation has all three of these key ingredients to support a thriving FAST news market of the size that is possible in the United States.

(It would be duplicitous to not point out that the APAC region has seen news grow tremendously driven by India, due to a combination of local elections, and also the embrace of traditional broadcasters in regions like Australia to incorporate FAST into Broadcaster Video On Demand BVOD service, quite unlike the approach seen in the U.S., which generally eschewed BVOD for the masses.)

Yet while news remains the most popular format in the U.S. and Canada among Amagi-powered channels, it has seen its share fall as the overall pie of FAST viewership grows and more non-news channels get launched. This is a key point as analysts last year suggested that FAST success in the U.S. was intrinsically linked to news. Instead, it can be seen as one of the key drivers for viewership, but not the only one.

In other regions — EMEA and LATAM — entertainment rules supreme in FAST. This is because of the ease that FAST allows viewers to access content, but also plays into a common theme seen in the U.S., where being able to easily find content not available on TV is a key driver for the success of FAST.

Why is this data important? It should encourage talent agencies and owners of entertainment content that FAST is a viable arena to embrace and be a part of. It should also help media buyers to better understand what is available on FAST and draw logical conclusions. Taking the U.S. as an example, if news is a strong driver for watching FAST, then it is not hard to assume that viewers are watching for long enough to see commercials. That then opens up possibilities for using the news audience to promote other FAST channels too, further growing the time spent watching this format.

This report contains a rich treasure trove of data that invariably you will see reformatted and shared in the coming weeks by analysts and media bodies. If you are interested in what to expect as FAST grows across the globe, be sure to read on. Hopefully, a full picture of FAST viewership can emerge that will not only help guide better content decisions but also provide better data to advertisers, boosting the value of FAST and strengthening the industry.

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FAST: Tracking the current landscape



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With its established position in the streaming industry, Free Ad-supported Streaming TV (FAST) remains a highly sought-after streaming model. As Subscription Video On Demand (SVOD) subscription costs rise and Pay TV cord-cutting increases, FAST has become a popular streaming option for viewers. According to eMarketer, almost one-third of the U.S. population is projected to watch FAST channels by 2027.

Our previous edition of the Amagi Global FAST Report, showed a notable uptick in channel growth (25%), ad impressions (28%), and Hours Of Viewing (HOV) (26%). Our latest analysis shows FAST maintains its trajectory of advancement across these metrics.

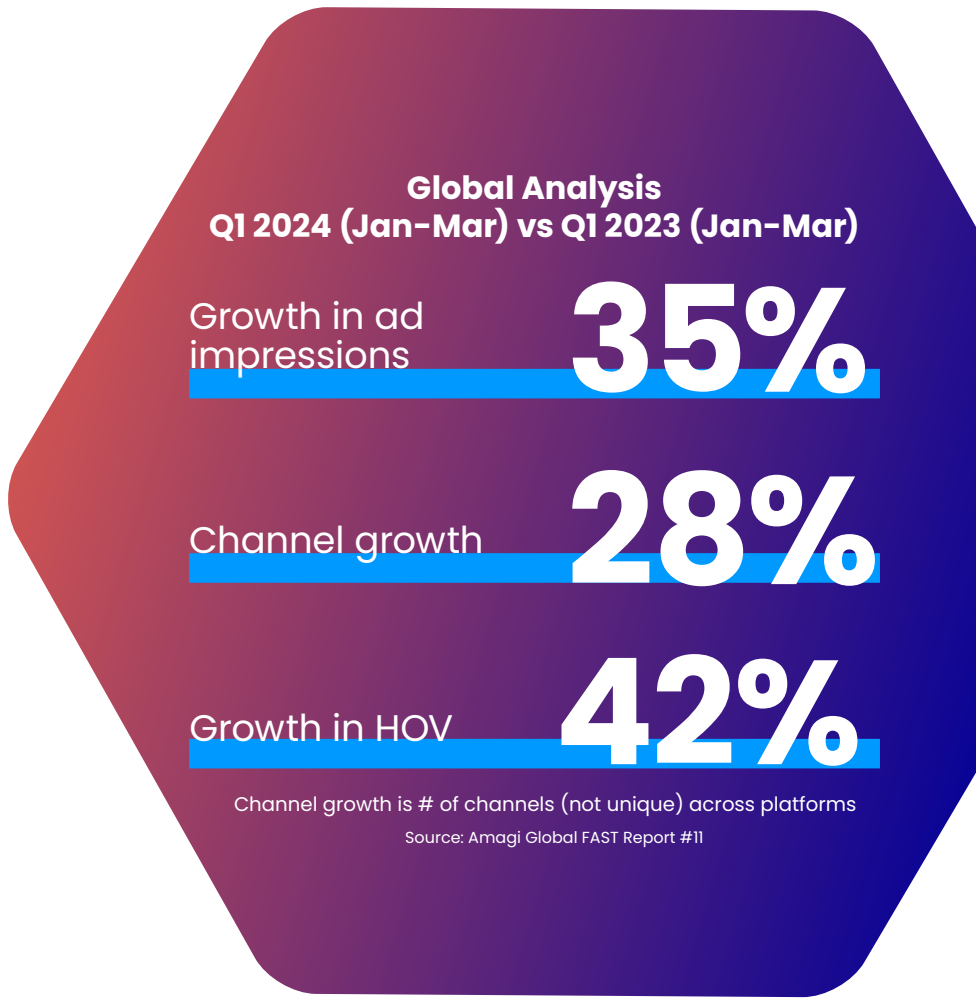
Linear, lean back and library: A viewer's point of view on FAST

Why do viewers actively choose FAST services over other streaming options?

- **Linear:** FAST upgrades the familiar Pay TV experience with streaming-like navigation by allowing viewers to enjoy premium, high-quality content in their favorite, tried and tested TV-like format.
- **Lean back:** FAST solves one of the biggest problems for today's viewers – the paradox of choice. Instead of spending valuable time looking for what to watch next, FAST services let viewers indulge in a worry-free experience.
- **Library:** FAST has a vast content library, offering viewers diverse entertainment options. From blockbuster movies to niche documentaries, viewers can enjoy a wide variety of nostalgic and recent content from leading studios and creators – ensuring there's always something new to discover.

FAST also offers highly targeted and customized ads. The Amagi Consumer Survey 2024 told us 33% of viewers prefer more personalized ads, while 29% are interested in shoppable ads.

What is driving the popularity of FAST among viewers? What content genres are resonating with viewers? Do the genres differ by geography? We answer all these questions and viewership insights in this report.



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