

ADVANCED TELEVISION

Analysis: Disney+ mobile data traffic soars

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From just over a month since its European debut, mobile video traffic for streaming service Disney+ has reached 7 Exabytes per month according to data from Enea. This week, [Disney revealed](#) that it had secured 54 million subscribers – providing relief to families stuck at home, and creating headaches for mobile operators who have to juggle the exponential demand for data during nationwide lockdowns.

The analysis of the traffic from Enea is based on live data gathered from over 40 networks globally. In North America and Europe, Disney+ currently represents 1.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent of all mobile video traffic. Netflix – which was launched in Europe in 2012 and a few years earlier in the US – accounts for 7 per cent to 15 per cent. As a new entrant to the mobile video ecosystem, Disney+ has achieved an impressive presence in just a matter of a few weeks. In terms of specific network protocols such as HTTP, Disney+ now features within the top-10 mobile video applications according to data volume across the territories in which the service has launched. As such, the future potential of Disney's streaming service is a matter of great interest to all mobile operators.

The intensifying streaming wars and the rise of Disney+ mirrors the findings of a separate global study that was conducted by research firm Censuwide for Enea. The researchers interviewed 5,000 mobile subscribers across the US, UK, Japan and the UAE. They found that 1 in 3 people (29 per cent) were planning on subscribing to Disney's streaming service.

For wireless operators, there is even more mobile video traffic to come as consumers continue to cut the cord and shun traditional broadcast technology in favour of OTT services. The survey revealed that 41 per cent of respondents would consider getting rid of their multichannel cable or satellite TV service and only use the likes of YouTube, Netflix and Disney+.

As a customer acquisition strategy, OTT players have already explored mobile-only pricing in emerging markets, and Netflix has launched mobile-specific plans in India, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. These could prove hugely popular as the survey revealed that 39 per cent of subscribers who currently watch mobile video would opt for a mobile-only subscription to services such as Netflix, Disney+ and Apple TV+.

John Giere, President at Enea Openwave, said: "Some operators in Europe's hardest hit regions have already experienced twice the usual amount of peak throughput during the lockdowns. While most of the OTT traffic from the likes of Netflix and Disney+ is currently running over Wi-Fi, this additional video traffic will very likely shift to wireless as lockdowns are eased."

"There was already more OTT video traffic on mobile networks than ever before, even before Disney+ came along. Operators have to perform a delicate balancing act with available resources and not allow congestion to ruin the video experience for many. That requires the ability to detect and manage network congestion dynamically, rather than resorting to brute-force video optimisation. The operators that have applied this methodology have seen significant reductions in RAN congestion and improved the video experience for subscribers," Giere added.