THE BELGIAN STREAMING MARKET AT A CROSSROAD



WPP Media

Executive summary

According to the 2026 Belgian Video Monitor coming from WPP Media, Belgium's streaming market is no longer in expansion mode. 63.5% of Belgians aged 18–59 declared to have at least one paid subscription, which is the 2nd consecutive decrease since 2024. Increased competition, both internal and external, cause the SVOD market to lose traction. Subscribers are reviewing what they want from their subscriptions, as value for money becomes key. Price is here the main pressure point.

With ad-supported tiers, the platforms are trying to reduce churn while giving new oxygen to the market. But adoption comes rather slow. 17% of subscribers have at least one AVOD plan (a 6-point increase vs. last year), and where AVOD options exist, average conversion reaches roughly one in three. For the platforms, adoption matters as advertising income replaces subscription revenues. For advertisers streaming now helps recover part of the audience that linear TV no longer reaches as efficiently.

This diversification of how the TV screen is being used is bringing new advertising possibilities to the Belgian market. But it does not replace the Belgian video ecosystem. BVOD platforms are working hard to keep their audiences and are constantly developing. This results in viewership increasing on all levels. The strong local anchorage of local TV, even if it is in a VOD environment, must certainly not be ignored. The real opportunity lies in combining global platforms with strong local video players.



1. The mechanics behind the shift: a push & pull dynamic

The push: the streaming business model reaches saturation

Belgium has entered a new phase of streaming, as the subscription model reaches saturation. With penetration falling by 6% over the last 2 years the market seems -for now- to have reached its full potential. Consequently, internal competition between the different platforms increases as the search for subscriber attention becomes harder. This is reflected in the top 3 where Streamz reclaimed its place at the expense of Disney+.

Early 2026, Disney+ launched an ad-supported plan hoping to recover lost subscribers and regaining traction. And the timing matters. Streaming penetration has declined for a second consecutive year, and above all, churn remains high. Results show that cancellation is increasingly driven by affordability and underuse, showing that value-for-money now matters as much as content.

Consumers are not abandoning streaming as such, but they are managing it more tightly. Ad-supported tiers could thus clearly provide a response to the current subscription rationalization. In Belgium 17% of all subscribers has at least one that includes advertising. Adoption varies between platforms:

- **Streamz** reaches 19.6% of the Flemish population in its market, with 7.0% already on AVOD. That means around 36% of Streamz subscribers are already on the ad-supported offer.

- **Disney+** reaches 18.9% of Belgians, with 5.2% already on its ad-supported tier. That represents an AVOD conversion rate of around 28%.

- **HBO Max** reaches 9.3% of Belgians. Its ad-supported tier already reaches 3.8%, meaning roughly 41% of HBO Max subscribers are on AVOD.

These adoption rates are still far below international standards, as a large part of the market has no access to an ad-supported plan. But this is about to change, as Netflix and Amazon Prime have announced their AVOD launch in Belgium.

- **Netflix** remains the market leader with 47.6%. Its ad-supported offer is not yet live in Belgium (Expected to arrive in 2027), but our results suggests the largest upside in the market. Potentially making Netflix the biggest future AVOD opportunity in scale terms.

- **Amazon Prime Video** is the second-largest subscription platform with 24.4%. As of June 2026, advertising will be included by default for Belgian Prime members, and thus its initial ad-supported reach could rapidly evolve.

The pull: what attracts advertisers?

The potential attraction is there, but one major hurdle remains: securing sufficient advertising inventory. This is necessary to ensure high quality and effective campaigns. If sufficient reach by the platforms is achieved, the doors are open. However, advertising on streaming services is not only about additional inventory. It is a combination of different other aspects:

- **Increasing video inventory:** these platforms add high-quality, brand-safe video advertising space in Belgium. Because the market is consolidating, this growth is likely to be progressive rather than explosive.

- **Smart targeting capabilities:** these platforms hold rich first-party data on viewing habits, demographics and interests, which makes them attractive for more efficient audience buying.

- **Connected services, especially Amazon:** Amazon links entertainment with commerce, which gives advertisers a fuller path from video exposure to purchase.

- **Video consumption is shifting but not disappearing from the big screen:** 76% of BVOD users watch via connected TV, confirming that digital video is increasingly a living room behavior. The move is therefore not from TV screen to small screen, but from linear access to app-based viewing on the same screen.

The egg or the chicken: what comes first?

As the subscription market plateaus, one question naturally follows: is cord cutting driving the pressure on SVOD, or is the saturation of paid streaming accelerating the move away from traditional TV? What matters for Belgium is that the shift remains gradual rather than abrupt. The market is not witnessing a collapse of linear TV, but a slow rebalancing of how people access video, with connected TV and app-based viewing increasingly sitting between the old and the new.

- **Cord cutting remains limited in scale:** 74% of Belgians aged 18–59 keep direct access to linear TV. Only 24% have in some way cut, never had, or no longer use that access. The Belgian market therefore remains largely anchored in traditional TV, even if signs of change are clearly visible.

- **The revolution is slower than expected:** compared to last year, cord cutters increased only from 11% to 12%, confirming that the shift away from linear TV is progressing, but through small yearly steps rather than a sudden break.

- **Cost is a clear trigger:** among cord cutters, 70% cite high costs as the main reason for abandoning cable, far ahead of insufficient use (37%) and lack of interest (29%). Among cord nevers, the logic is slightly different: price still matters, but the absence of habit and the feeling that content is already available elsewhere play a stronger role.

- **The big screen stays central even when access changes:** 76% of BVOD users already watch via connected TV. This means the shift is not simply from TV to small-screen streaming. It is increasingly a move from linear access to app-based viewing on the same living room screen, which explains why cord cutting and streaming growth are intertwined rather than separate phenomena.

2. Consequences for the market

The main consequence is not simply about additional premium inventory. It is a tougher media-buying question: "Will AVOD create genuinely incremental reach, or does it mainly add touchpoints on profiles that are already heavily exposed through YouTube, BVOD and other digital video channels?" If AVOD will just be fighting for the same audience as others and the different aspects on which their strategy is based can be put into perspective.

YouTube still reaches 51.6% of people aged 18–59 in the last two weeks and remains by far the largest video platform in the country, while its cost remains materially lower than premium AVOD and BVOD environments. Non-skippable YouTube formats sit around €8–15 CPM, skippable around €5–10, versus €26–35 for most premium AVOD and BVOD environments in the current market view. On pure cost-per-reach logic, YouTube therefore remains extremely difficult to ignore.

BVOD platforms on the other hand are experiencing golden years. Overall viewership in the last 2 weeks of these local players increases by 2%-points to 47%. The question then is what additional value AVOD will bring in a market where BVOD and local anchorage are as strong as in Belgium. A focus on attention, brand safety, immersive experience, or high-quality content, for example, could be an option. Compared to YouTube, the advantages are obvious. But differentiation with BVOD platforms, that offer similar environments, is more difficult. AVOD could offer more in terms of targeting, once they increase their targeting capabilities, but local ecosystems are also making big moves in terms of data and targetability. The open question for the market is not whether AVOD has value, but whether that value comes primarily from incremental reach and attention, or a better balance between reach quality and media cost.

What about the quality of these different advertising environments?

The WPP Media point of view is therefore pragmatic: AVOD matters, but not automatically because it is new. Its value depends on the brief. If the objective is cheapest large-scale video reach, YouTube remains essential. If the objective is to access premium long-form viewing environments, reduce clutter, improve screen quality, or rebalance a plan towards more TV-like attention conditions, AVOD becomes strategically relevant. The market still lacks clear local proof on how much of that value comes from true incremental audience versus better quality of exposure on audiences already reachable elsewhere.

Should AVOD then be evaluated less as a universal reach solution and more as a premium optimization layer within the Belgian video mix? The open question for the market is not whether AVOD has value, but whether that value comes primarily from incremental reach, incremental attention, or a better balance between reach quality and media cost. For us, the story seems not to be local OR global, but local AND global, where AVOD provides an addition channel. A good mix between different platforms and thus different audiences and target groups might just be more essential. In this case, each service brings different audience profiles, trading models and data capabilities, so strategy cannot rely on generic assumptions about streaming.

For this, premium video planning should become more integrated. Different players should be planned as one connected ecosystem rather than as isolated silos. The buying question in that case no longer is "should AVOD be added?" but "what does AVOD add that existing video channels do not already deliver?" To find the right answers to that question, the market should also provide cross-platform measurement structures. Although CIM One could provide answer here in the future

Player	💰 CPM	Ad Format/Skippability	🎯 Targeting Capabilities
prime video	26€ (Programmatic)	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	Geo & Language at the start. Amazon 1st-party data later + contextual
Disney+	35€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	Geo & Language for now. 1st party data from Disney+, contextual & sponsoring soon
HBO max	34€ (Via Streaming Ads&Data)	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
streamz	30€ - 34€ (Via Streaming DPG & Ads&Data)	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual
vtmGO	30€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
PLAY	34€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
rtbf auvio	26€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
RTL play	30€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
vrt max	44€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	1st-party data, Geo, Socio-Demo, Contextual, Language
YouTube Non-Skip	8€ - 15€	In-Stream/Non-Skippable	Google data, intent, search, audience segments
YouTube Skippable	5€ - 10€	In-Stream/Skippable	Google data: intent, search, audience segments
Tv	17€	Linear Ad Break/Non-Skippable	Broad (Demographics, Program Genre, Time Slot)

3. Engagement becomes the currency of the market

In this new reality, engagement will become the focal point for the streaming platforms. For the ad-supported models to succeed and help reduce churn, streaming platforms need to evolve from a subscription-based mindset to a viewing-volume mindset. The key objective is to generate sufficient advertising inventory through audience engagement. They must build the right balance between reach and frequency to be able to offer advertisers high-quality campaigns.

But engagement is not only critical for advertising revenue. It is also directly linked to churn itself. Subscribers who regularly spend significant amounts of time on a platform are obviously less likely to cancel their subscription. High engagement is a strong indicator of customer satisfaction and triggers the monopolization of user attention.

Streaming platforms are increasingly innovating to engage their audience. Think about the addition of live events, the bundling of platforms or the addition of the highly popular videocasts and verticals in the platforms themselves. Results indicate however that when signing up for new subscriptions, people primarily consider price, followed by a wide range of offerings. Finally, we also see that a unique and regularly updated selection is gaining importance. So, price and content reign supreme and seem only to be gaining importance in the future. At first glance, these two factors seem incompatible. But the introduction of AI into the world may have a different take on that. Today, widespread use of AI applications on streaming platforms is still some time away, but the path to true integration already seems to be paved. Amazon Prime Video, for example, has already indicated that it intends to use AI to speed up both the production and rollout of shows. This seems to have set the ball rolling, and who knows where it will end. On the one hand, it will allow content to be produced faster, cheaper, and in greater quantities than ever before, just like people want. On the other hand, the fear of a substantial decline in content diversity becomes a real concern. The crucial question then becomes how the platforms will be able to distinguish themselves from one another again. Especially as competition will increase due to the current market saturation. In this case uniqueness and "what makes me special" will make the difference. Furthermore, one might wonder whether the appetite for high-quality and unique content will once again prevail.

4. How WPP Media will help its clients navigate this landscape

In this environment, planning decisions need to be grounded in local behaviour rather than global assumptions about streaming growth.

Strategic integration and holistic planning: Seeing the big picture

WPP Media's role is to connect international streaming platforms, local BVOD, linear TV and other online video into one coherent planning framework, based on how Belgian audiences consume video today.

Pieter Berger, Director Video, on strategic approach:



«Year on year we have seen the TV reach decline while CTV reach has increased. Within this online video (CTV) reach, we knew that a big part of it was 'lost' to advertisers as it belonged to online video services like Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Streamz, and HBO Max, with no advertising opportunities. Now that there are more streaming platforms with an ad tier, a part of this reach is suddenly accessible to advertisers. These platforms will offer us a TV-like experience combined with digital capabilities such as precise targeting and performance-driven actions. This means we will need to change the way we use video. Where we used to see it mainly as a tool for generating broad awareness (top of the marketing funnel), we must now use it as a powerful instrument throughout the entire customer journey. For example, traditional TV can effectively generate initial awareness, strong local online video platforms (BVOD) can work on building consideration, and Amazon Prime Video could drive the final purchase to the consumer to buy the product in Amazon's marketplace via a shoppable ad on Amazon Prime Video, once that format becomes available. In that way, we truly use video as a channel that can achieve multiple marketing objectives.»

Developing deep platform knowledge

That requires detailed knowledge of each platform's commercial model, audience profile, targeting options and role in the broader video journey.

Mastering the programmatic shift

Simon Duquenois, Director Supply, on tech and programmatic opportunities:

"The arrival of Prime Video on the Belgian market comes at a time when the programmatic ecosystem is already marked by growing fragmentation, with a multitude of DSPs locked in fierce competition. Prime Video will only be accessible through programmatic buying — and exclusively via Amazon DSP. This is a significant lever for Amazon, which will inevitably gain ground on its two main competitors, The Trade Desk and DV360. Beyond the platform battle, it is also the buying model for premium video inventories that will be impacted: by making Prime Video accessible only programmatically, Amazon is accelerating a structural shift away from traditional insertion-order-based buying for BVOD inventories. A transformation that the Belgian market will simply not be able to ignore anymore."



Data-Informed decisions and complete measurement (understanding the challenges)

It also requires a pragmatic approach to measurement. The objective is not perfect comparability, but better strategic interpretation across platforms and a clearer view of each channel's contribution.

The Belgian Video Monitor is a key advantage in that process. It provides a longitudinal view of local viewing behaviour, subscription dynamics, churn, AVOD adoption and screen usage.

That local evidence helps improve allocation decisions across global platforms, local broadcasters and programmatic video, especially as premium inventory becomes more fragmented.

Trading excellence and value optimization

As more premium video supply enters the market, value optimisation becomes more important. More options do not automatically create more efficiency; they increase the need for sharper prioritisation.

Benoit Pissoort, Director Client Investment, on trading:



"The arrival of new streaming platforms has and will have a significant impact on the video ecosystem in Belgium. For several years, local platforms have been driving the success of OLV (Online Video), in combination, of course, with certain international platforms such as YouTube.

In the meantime, Disney+ has launched, Amazon Prime is arriving in June, and Netflix will also make its appearance in 2027. This is going to change our ecosystem, as these are three global players being added to the Belgian OLV landscape, hopefully bringing additional quality and reach.

In terms of trading, I do not expect any major disruptions: each player is adopting a pricing model suited to their own ambitions. Local players will continue to pursue the same pricing policy as they do today, while global players will play the card of premiumness of their offer.

The introduction of international platforms will have the merit of challenging the approach of current (local) players, without, however, causing an earthquake in our beloved local ecosystem."

Client education and strategic guidance

Client guidance therefore needs to stay practical: where is premium reach growing, where does local relevance remain strongest, which platforms add incremental value, and where does measurement remain too fragmented to overclaim precision?

Staying neutral and supporting its clients (While valuing local media)

That approach also requires neutrality across media owners. The Belgian market is not moving towards a single winner-takes-all model. It is moving towards a more competitive and more layered premium video ecosystem. While embracing the opportunities offered by global players, WPP Media is deeply committed to understanding and supporting the unique strengths and importance of local Belgian media, ensuring our strategies always consider its special value.

Conclusion

The Belgian streaming market is maturing, not exploding. Penetration is down, churn remains high, and consumers are increasingly selective about what they keep paying for. At the same time, AVOD is becoming a more credible way for platforms to retain users and for advertisers to access premium video audiences, including viewers that linear TV alone no longer captures as efficiently.

The Belgian Video Monitor shows that this shift is happening within a market that still values local content, still relies heavily on linear access, and is increasingly using connected TV as the bridge between traditional and digital viewing. 74% still keep direct access to linear TV, but 24% have already moved away from it in some form.

For brands, the opportunity is real, but it is not about shifting blindly towards whatever is new. It is about building video strategies that reflect how Belgian audiences actually behave: balancing global streaming with local broadcasters, premium context with efficient reach, and innovation with evidence-based planning.

WPP Media will help its clients to navigate this exciting yet complex situation. Its approach will be to offer balanced expert advice, making sure its clients understand where their advertising money can be most effectively spent, to help its advertisers' brands to grow.

