The battle of the TV mobile streaming apps over Xmas
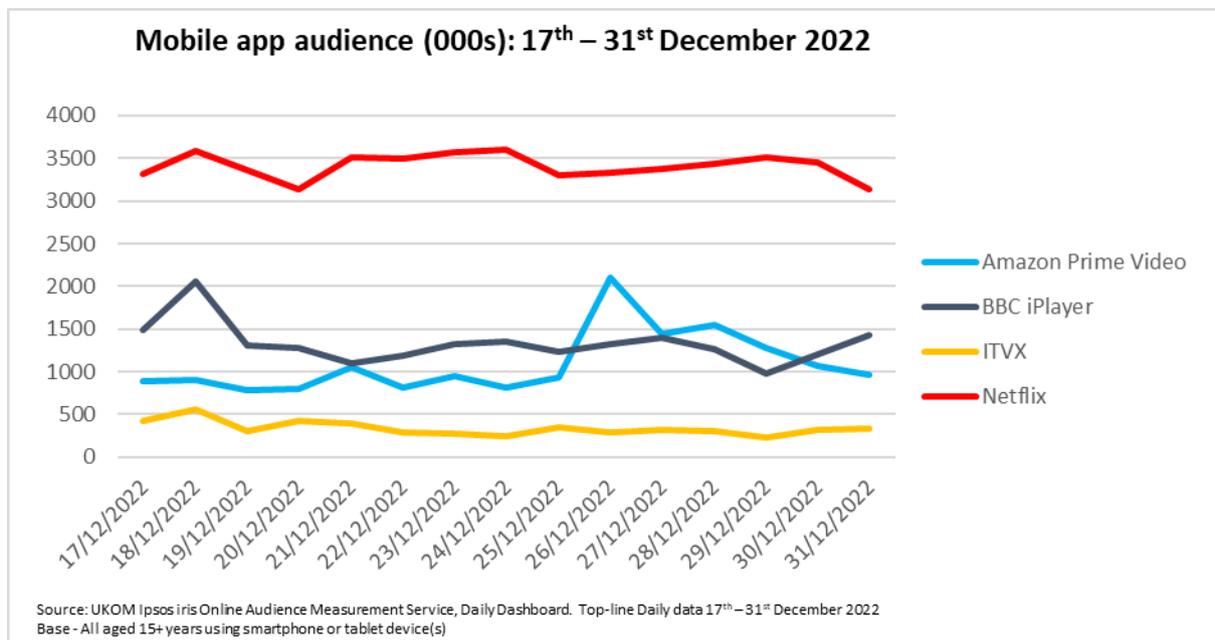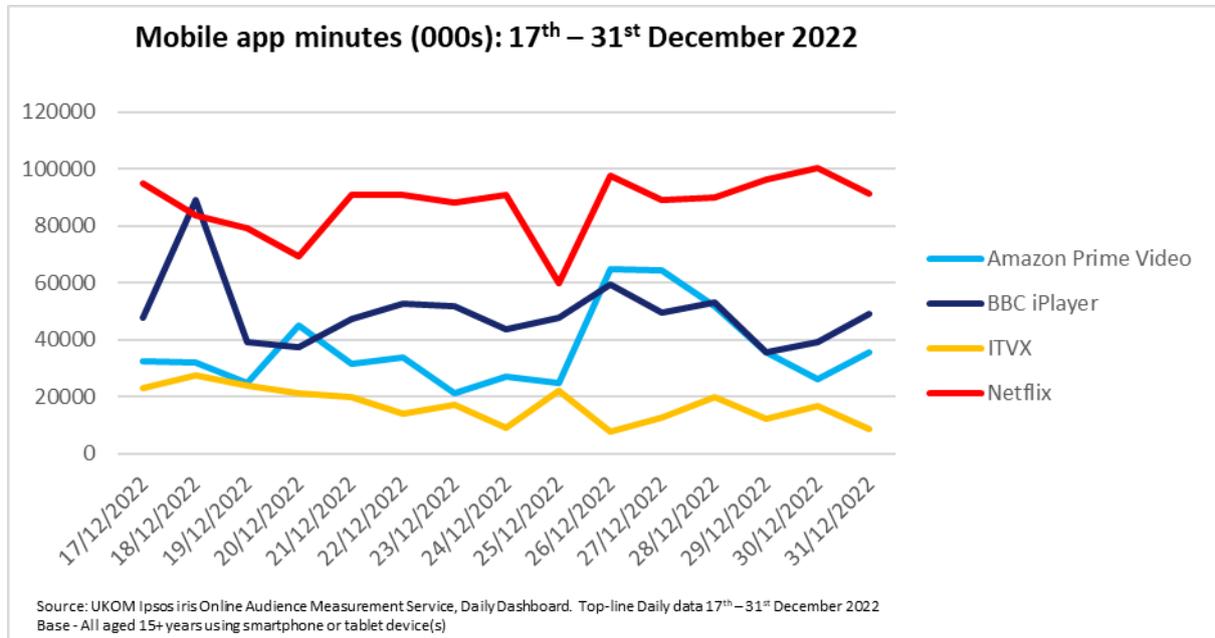
Following on from UKOM's pre-Christmas look at how the Harry and Meghan documentary drove usage of the Netflix app, this week we look at online TV streaming apps over the Christmas viewing period - specifically, how audience and time spent changed over time from the World Cup Final on 18th December to the Big Ben chimes on New Year's Eve for four key TV streaming mobile apps: Netflix, BBCiPlayer, Amazon Prime and ITVX.

When looking at audience, Netflix consistently had the largest daily mobile audience of the major TV streaming apps over the two-week Christmas period. Between 3 and 3.5 million people aged 15+ visited the mobile app each day which is about 6-7% of all UK online adults. After reaching a peak of over 2 million visitors on the day of the World cup final (18.12.2022), the BBC iplayer's daily app audience dropped to under 1.4 million the following week before rising again on New Year's Eve – most likely as people tuned in to watch New Year fireworks. Although the iPlayer mobile app usually takes second spot in terms of daily audience behind Netflix, on Boxing Day it was overtaken by Amazon Prime video due to the latter streaming Premier League football matches. Amazon Prime video continued to do well for the next couple of days whilst showing the games. The newly launched ITVX had the smallest daily mobile audience of the four - its app audience reached a peak of over ½ million on World Cup Final day before dropping back.

Mobile app audience (000s): 17th – 31st December 2022

Source: UKOM Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, Daily Dashboard. Top-line Daily data 17th – 31st December 2022
Base - All aged 15+ years using smartphone or tablet device(s)

When looking at time spent on the apps, there are some interesting insights into behaviour. Although ITVX had the lowest audience, those who do use the platform spend longer on it and the app did particularly well on Christmas Day. On Christmas Day, ITVX mobile users spent on average 62 minutes on the app which was highest of the four and much higher than the 18 mins average among Netflix app users. It may be from a smaller base, but the ITVX audience was also up by 42% on Christmas day compared to Christmas Eve and as a result of this and the high average time per person, total minutes were up by 142%. Netflix showed the opposite trend as people spent much less time using the mobile app on Christmas Day. Compared to Christmas Eve, time spent on the

Netflix mobile app was down by 34% from 91 million minutes to 60 million. Whilst the audience was down by 8%, the time spent was impacted by the drop in average time per person on Christmas Day which was the lowest for Netflix across the two-week festive period (18 mins compared to 25-30 on other days). The trend for BBC iPlayer and Amazon Prime reflected those seen for audience – time spent was typically higher for the BBC iPlayer, apart from those days that Amazon streamed the football.

Mobile app minutes (000s): 17ᵗʰ – 31ˢᵗ December 2022

Source: UKOM Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, Daily Dashboard. Top-line Daily data 17ᵗʰ – 31ˢᵗ December 2022
Base - All aged 15+ years using smartphone or tablet device(s)

There could be lots of reasons for the Netflix drop on Christmas day. It may well be that people are less likely to watch TV on mobile devices on a day that is typically reserved for friends and families and shared experiences on the big screen but that doesn't explain the ITVX and BBC iPlayer mobile uplift. Perhaps, the big Christmas day soap episodes from the traditional broadcasters are un-missable to regular viewers and need to be watched on the day at all costs on any device. The back to back two hours of Emmerdale and Coronation street on ITV on Christmas Day evening may not have appealed to the whole family so avid viewers may have needed or wanted to watch on their own on tablets or smartphones.

Whilst UKOM can only speculate on the reasons why behaviour for the streaming app services shows different trends, UKOM endorsed Ipsos iris data in the UK can provide valuable insight for media owners and advertisers into WHAT consumers are doing online, WHEN they are doing it, WHAT device they are using and HOW behaviour differs to competitors on key dates across the year.

Notes on data:

Source: UKOM Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, Daily Data, December 2022.

Base = all aged 15+ years using PC/laptop, smartphone or tablet device(s).