

EXCLUSIVE: Amazon Doubles Prime Video Ads to 6 Minutes Per Hour

More ads could mean lower CPMs, but performance could slip.

20 hours ago



Prime Video has quietly doubled its load, making good on a promise the streamer made last year to ramp up the number of commercials per hour.

ADWEEK; Amazon, Getty Images

By Mark Stenberg

When Amazon introduced ads on Prime Video in January 2024, it said it aimed to have meaningfully fewer ads than rivals—reportedly, just two to three-and-a-half minutes per hour. Less than 18 months later, that number has quietly doubled.

According to six ad buyers and documents reviewed by ADWEEK, the current ad load on Prime Video now ranges from four to six minutes per hour. And while that could bring down CPMs, buyers will be watching whether this impacts user experience.

"Prime Video ad load has gradually increased to four to six minutes per hour," an Amazon representative wrote to an ad buyer in an email obtained by ADWEEK. The exchange occurred earlier this month.

The increase, which Amazon had telegraphed to investors but has not publicly acknowledged to consumers, gives the company significantly more inventory to sell across its rapidly expanding streaming business.

"They told us the ad load would be increasing," said Kendra Tang, programmatic supervisor at Rain the Growth Agency. "That's been confirmed recently when we noticed more avails in the system."

The uptick in commercials is the latest sign of maturation from the streaming service, which in recent months has debuted a slew of new products designed to make it more appealing to marketers. Its show-level data, private auction deals, and forthcoming contextual offerings have all sought to separate Prime Video from its competitive set.

Amazon did not respond to specific questions about increasing its ad load, but in a statement referred to its broader ad strategy.

"Our commitment is to improving ad experiences rather than simply increasing the number of ads shown," said an Amazon Ads spokesperson. "While demand continues to grow, our commitment is to improving ad experiences rather than simply increasing the number of ads shown."

Why ad load increased

When Prime Video launched its ad tier, Amazon made commercials the default for all Prime subscribers, prompting backlash from some consumers but giving the company an immediate footprint of over 150 million monthly ad-supported viewers.

Still, to ease that transition, Amazon kept its ad load light. "They had to make the ad load palatable," said Doug Paladino of PMG.

But by late 2024, Amazon had already told investors it would "ramp up" the volume in 2025. According to buyers, the shift reflects a broader effort to right-size Prime Video's inventory relative to the rest of the market.

"This is a lot of them coming back to equilibrium," Paladino said. "They have more subscribers than any other ad-supported streamer, but many weren't watching enough for that to matter. More ad load helps bring that back into balance."

How Amazon compares to other streamers

At its new level, Prime Video's ad load begins to mirror broader industry standards.

Netflix still offers the lightest ad experience, while services like Hulu, Tubi, and Paramount+ carry heavier loads. "Prime Video is now firmly in that middle tier," Paladino said, noting its ad volume now matches other premium platforms.

Critically, streamers' ad load generally still pales in comparison to what viewers experience on linear television, which typically ranges from 13 to 16 minutes per hour.

By increasing its ad load, Amazon has created more inventory to sell. More inventory typically leads to lower CPMs, and while buyers haven't yet seen major drops, they expect them to come soon. Currently, buyers said that Amazon Prime Video CPMs fall somewhere in the middle compared with other streamers.

"That's the upside here," said David Nyurenberg, senior vice president of digital at InterMedia Advertising. "A biddable environment, plus greater supply, should allow buyers to find impressions at more efficient rates. It's a good thing if they can scale without degrading user experience."

"If Prime Video drops 10% to 20% in price, it could move spend their way," Paladino said. "We're in a tariff-heavy retail environment where clients need to do more with less. A cheaper premium platform helps."

The increased inventory should also make it easier for ad buyers to target niche categories at scale, according to Nyurenberg. That would help advertisers take further advantage of the granular data capabilities it offers through its demand-side platform.

However, not everyone is convinced that more inventory solves Prime Video's challenges.

Vicky Chang, vice president of media at Tatari, said that for many advertisers, the barrier is less about price and more about measurement.

"It's still hard to measure Prime Video's performance against other platforms," Chang said. "Amazon does measurement, but only within its own ecosystem. That makes it hard to justify the high CPMs, especially when results can't be benchmarked elsewhere."

Buyers are also monitoring for performance degradation as ad load increases.

"For us, lower CPMs are appealing, but it comes with a viewer tolerance tradeoff, which might lead to tune-out or effectiveness declines," said Markacy president and chief operating officer Ryan Mason. "It might take a while to fully observe that in the market—if it does happen—but tracking ad revenue per advertiser is something Prime will be managing tightly as a harbinger of how effective Prime Video ads truly are."

What comes next

The increase in ad load puts Prime Video's ad load closer to industry norms, and buyers say Amazon is still within acceptable bounds.

But the move underscores Amazon's broader ambition to scale its advertising business, both on Prime Video and across its broader media ecosystem.

"There's a clear strategy here," said Sam Bloom, head of partnerships at PMG. "They've been investing in tools like Amazon Marketing Cloud, Publisher Cloud, and private auctions to make this a full-fledged ad platform. Increasing ad load is part of creating enough scale to support that."

Still, as Amazon grows its inventory, it will have to balance monetization with viewer tolerance and advertiser expectations.

"As long as the ad load stays manageable and performance holds up, we'll keep investing," Paladino said. "But if it slips, spend follows the results."