

Weather vs. TV

Everybody knows the effect from own experience – when the weather is good people like to go outside. On the contrary, on a bitterly cold winter’s day, an evening on the sofa in front of the television is more appealing. The TV consumption should therefore be dependent on the weather. The Swiss usage data, measured with the GfK Telecontrol VIII devices, enables a differentiated analysis of this circumstance.

The summer of the century - 2003

A possible effect of the weather on the TV consumption should be easily detected during extreme incidents. For this analysis, the “summer of the century” in 2003, was therefore compared to an average summer (2009). The description “summer of the century” colloquially describes a season with extraordinary weather related occurrences like f.e. very long and hot periods of dry weather with above-average maximum temperature, daily insolation and number of summer days (maximum temperature above 25 °C) resp. tropical days (maximum daytime temperature above 30 °C, nighttime temperature not below 20 °C). Most “summers of the century” do statistically vary several degrees Celsius from the maximal temperatures of an average summer.

Graph 1 shows quite clearly the differentiation of the “summer of the century” in 2003 to the rather average summer of 2009: In May, the temperatures were relatively similar but the values of June and August vary quite significantly. In 2003, a drop in temperature in July is distinctive but its lowest point is still higher than the mean temperature of July 2009. This high average implies a significantly higher number of sunshine hours with only little rainfall; whereas in September both meet again on a common level.

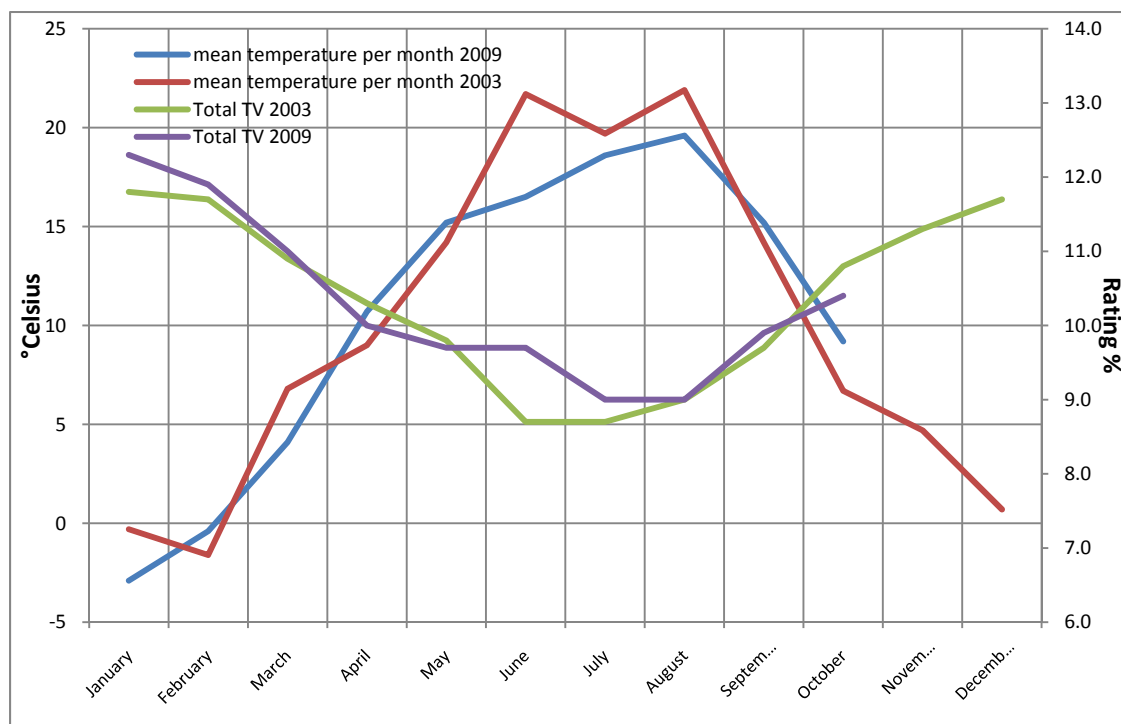


Fig. 1: Mean temperature per month in Berne, Switzerland vs. total TV consumption per month, 2003 / 2009. Source: Mediapulse AG / Meteoschweiz

TV consumption during the „summer of the century“ 2003

Now it is interesting to compare the total TV consumption in Switzerland over the same period of time. The data measured with GfK Telecontrol VIII devices deliver differentiated data, which make this analysis possible at all. Generally, the TV consumption is at its highest during the winter months, whereas in summertime it drops by approximately 3%. In autumn, it slowly climbs back up to the winter level. The low consumption can on one hand be ascribed to holiday absences in June, July and August and on the other hand to people taking part in outdoor activities more often and therefore spend less time in front of the television.

Distinct is the difference between the „summer of the century“ in 2003 and the rather average summer in 2009. In June and July 2003, TV usage was at its lowest and only slowly recovered in August. In 2009 on the other hand, the nice weather in August, which followed the changeable weather in June and July, kept TV consumption low, which meant that TV consumption only slowly increased in September to reach its normal level.

Influence of the weather on a small scale as well

The comparison of the “summer of the century” in 2003 with the average summer of 2009 concerning the weather and the TV consumption shows, that the weather does have an influence on the TV consumption. This extreme example makes clear that probably even less extreme weather can influence the TV consumption. For example, good weather weekends results in a drop in TV consumption, however, it is difficult to ascertain the numbers over such a short period. In fact, in media research several options have been thought of, how to align the TV programme to the weather.

The GfK Telecontrol AG

The GfK Telecontrol AG is a wholly-owned subsidiary of GfK SE in Nuremberg, Germany – the fourth-largest market research company in the world. Located in Switzerland, GfK Telecontrol AG is a good example of “Swiss Quality”: its products Telecontrol and Mediawatch – both of which are in-house GfK Telecontrol AG developments – have been in use in a total of 28 countries worldwide for 22 years. The Swiss Broadcasting Company, in particular, has been using Telecontrol since 1985 to survey TV viewing habits and the Mediawatch (formerly Radiocontrol) since 2001 to survey radio listening habits. However, Telecontrol and the Mediawatch are also used worldwide to survey TV and radio consumption in Germany, Austria, Cyprus, Greece, many Eastern European and Asian countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and India and other countries.

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