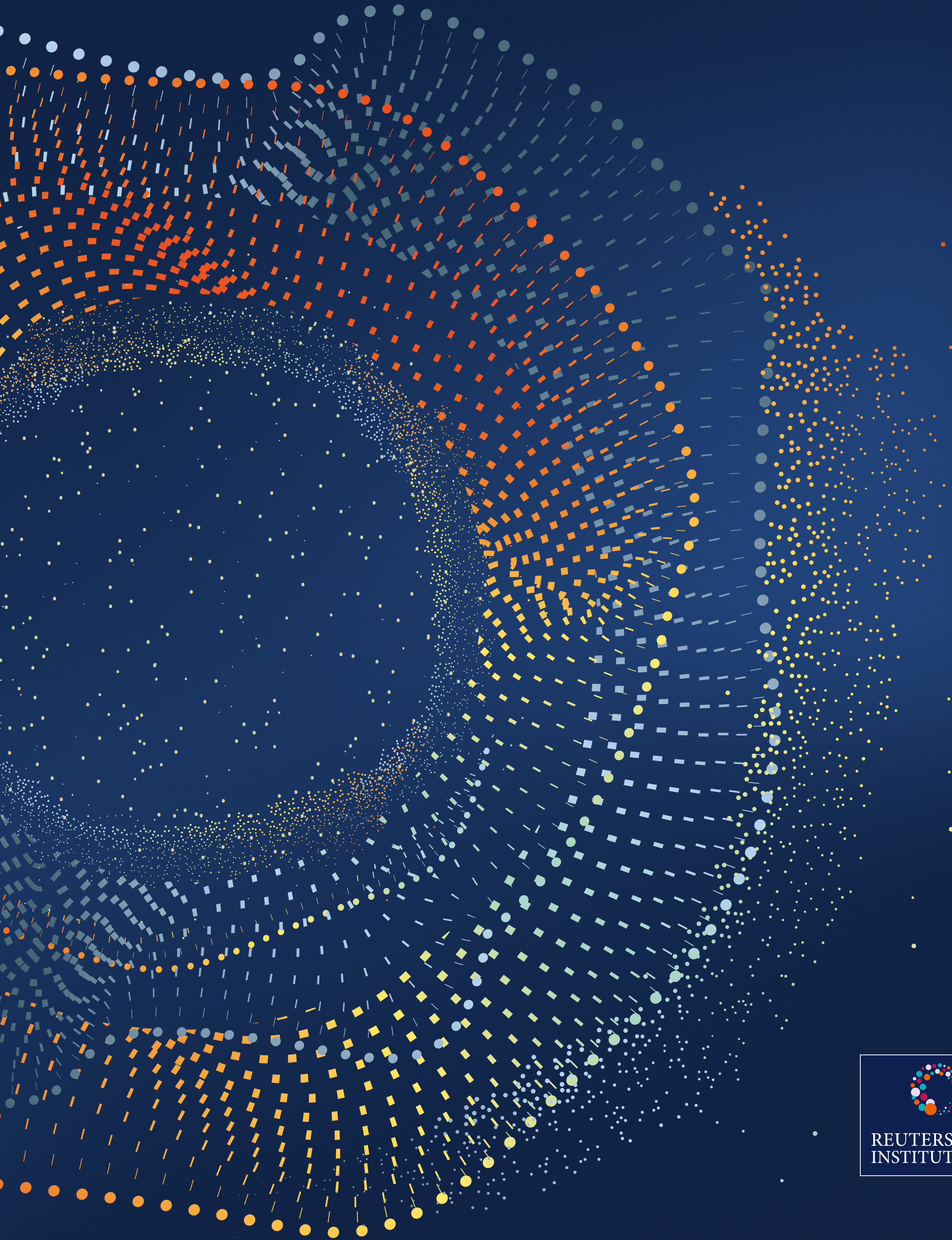
Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026



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Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026

Jim Egan, Craig T. Robertson, Amy Ross Arguedas, Nic Newman, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, Mitali Mukherjee, and Richard Fletcher

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Foreword

Mitali Mukherjee
Director, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ)

The fifteenth edition of the Reuters Institute *Digital News Report* comes at a moment of profound global precarity and the data in our 2026 report reflect that.

As news cycles go, last year's high-pitched election coverage across many countries was quickly replaced by a world grappling with significant political and economic volatility. Against this backdrop, we see audiences reacting with a mix of anxiety and disengagement, and searching for new ways to make sense of their daily lives.

Three key themes emerge in our report this year around structural access, formats for consuming the news, and trust levels amongst audiences.

The first central theme is the intensifying 'platformisation' of news consumption. Social media and video networks are now the most widely used sources of news globally, ahead of both TV news and news organisations' own online properties in terms of the proportion of people using them weekly.

The second theme is born of the first. News consumption on these platforms is marked by the growing importance of online video and the rise of creators and influencers as part of the news environment. For many audiences, these sources complement rather than replace traditional news, but they are redrawing the format, tone, and accessibility of journalism and the public. We are also witnessing the first meaningful steps towards the integration of artificial intelligence into news journeys.

These developments point to an information environment where pathways between journalism and the public are becoming less direct and more fragmented. News consumption is also less intentional.

The third key takeaway from our findings this year points to trust levels amongst audiences. Trust dropped significantly in 29 of the 48 markets we surveyed, and overall trust levels have fallen to their lowest since we started tracking this metric. From a period of relative stability, these drops are significant and perhaps reveal an institutional fragility shaped by wider political, social, and technological forces.

Given the richness of our research, this printed report can only convey a small part of the data collected. I encourage you to visit our website, which this year contains a completely redesigned interactive area allowing you to generate charts and download data for a range of core indicators back as far as 2013.

Our report this year is based on data from almost 100,000 individual survey respondents. Because we use online polling, our focus remains on countries with relatively high internet penetration, and the report provides more detail about differences in polling samples in pages outlining the methodology and the relevant country pages. We continue to work to improve data quality on both.

A report of this scale and scope is only possible due to collaboration with our partners and sponsors around the world. We partner with outstanding academics, experienced journalists, and media experts whose support is vital in developing our survey questions, writing many of the country pages, helping with interpretation, and in many cases publishing their own reports.

We are hugely grateful to our sponsors, in particular to our main sponsor, the Google News Initiative, which continues to support research on a truly international scale, as well as BBC News, Code for Africa, Ofcom, the Irish Coimisiún na Meán, the Dutch Media Authority (CvdM), the Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland, the Fritt Ord Foundation, the Korea Press Foundation, Edelman UK, NHK (Japan), YouTube, and the Reuters News Agency, as well as our academic sponsors at the Leibniz Institute for Media Research/Hans Bredow Institute, the University of Navarra, the University of Canberra, the Centre d'études sur les médias, and Roskilde University. Fundación Gabo continues to support the translation of the report into Spanish.

In an age of accelerating change, we hope this report remains a critical resource for journalists, news organisation leaders, emerging news producers, and policymakers.

Methodology

This study has been commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism to understand how news is being consumed in a range of countries. Research was conducted by YouGov using an online questionnaire from the middle of January to the end of February 2026.

- Samples were assembled using nationally representative quotas for age, gender, and region in every market. Education quotas were applied in all markets except Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Peru, and Thailand. We also applied political quotas based on vote choice in the most recent national election in 13 markets, including the United States, Australia, and much of Western Europe. The data in all markets were weighted to targets based on census/industry accepted data.
- Data from India, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa are representative of younger English-speakers and not the national population, because it is not possible to reach other groups in a representative way using an online survey. The survey was fielded mostly in English in these markets,[1] and restricted to ages 18 to 50 in Kenya and Nigeria. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative in these countries.
- More generally, online samples will tend to under-represent the news consumption habits of people who are older and less affluent, meaning online use is typically over-represented and traditional offline use under-represented. In this sense, it is better to think of results as representative of the *online* population. In markets in Northern and Western Europe, where internet penetration is typically over 95%, the differences between the online population and national population will be small, but in South Africa (78%) and India (70%), where internet penetration is lower, the differences between the online population and the national population will be large, meaning we need to be cautious when comparing between markets.
- The use of a non-probability sampling approach means that it is not possible to compute a conventional 'margin of error' for individual data points. However, differences of +/- 2 percentage points (pp) or less are very unlikely to be statistically significant and should be interpreted with a very high degree of caution. We typically do not regard differences of +/- 2pp as meaningful, and as a general rule we do not refer to them in the text. The same applies to small changes over time.
- Surveys capture people's self-reported behaviour, which does not always reflect people's actual behaviour due to biases and imperfect recall. They are useful for capturing people's opinions, but these are subjective and aggregates reflect public opinion rather than objective reality.[2] Even with relatively large sample sizes it is not possible to meaningfully analyse many minority groups. Some of our survey-based results will not match industry data, which are often based on different methodologies, such as web-tracking.
- The report refers to a segmentation of news consumers into three groups which are determined by interest in news and frequency of consumption. 'News lovers' consume news at least twice a day and are extremely interested in news, or they consume news at least six times daily and are extremely or very interested in news. 'Daily briefers' consume news between twice a week and once a day and are extremely interested in the news, or they consume news between twice a week and five times daily and are very interested in news, or they consume news at least daily and are somewhat interested in news. 'Casual/passive users' are people whose interest in and/or frequency of consuming news does not meet the criteria for the other two segments.
- Some verbatim quotes are included in this report, which are taken from a qualitative study of news definitions conducted as part of a separate research project (to be published later in 2026). This project set out to better understand what audiences consider to be 'news', to explore how people make these distinctions in practice, and to examine what people expect from news media across both legacy formats and newer digital spaces. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted in each of the UK, the United States, Argentina, and Norway in the final quarter of 2025.
- Questions about use of individual social media and video networks (e.g. Facebook, X, Instagram) both for any purpose and for news content were repolled in all markets in the second half of March after an issue was discovered in the way these brands were presented to respondents in the original fieldwork.
- In the United States we repolled some questions in the final week of March about online payment and also fielded a question about how Americans had been following news about the war in Iran.
- A merger between two well-known radio stations (Caracol Radio and W Radio) took place in Colombia while fieldwork was underway. We decided to repoll questions about news brand reach and trust in Colombia to take account of this merger. All repolling was conducted with 1,000 respondents, using the same quotas as the original fieldwork.
- A fuller description of the methodology, panel partners, and a discussion of non-probability sampling techniques can be found on our website along with the full questionnaire (reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk).

[1] Respondents in India could choose to complete the survey in Hindi and respondents in Kenya could chose Swahili, but in both cases the vast majority selected an English survey.
[2] From 2012 to 2020 we filtered out respondents who said that they had not consumed any news in the past month. From 2021 onwards we included this group, which generally has lower interest in news. In previous years this group averaged around 2–3% of the starting sample in each market, meaning that the decision to include it has not affected comparative results in any significant way. Some figures have been affected by one or two points in the UK, the USA, and Australia, and we have taken this into account when interpreting changes involving these years.

Market	Sample size	Population	Internet penetration
Europe			
UK	2,052	70m	95%
Austria	2,025	9.1m	95%
Belgium	2,039	11.8m	96%
Bulgaria	2,032	6.7m	82%
Croatia	2,023	3.9m	84%
Czech Republic	2,031	10.6m	88%
Denmark	2,055	6.0m	100%
Finland	2,043	5.6m	94%
France	2,011	67m	89%
Germany	2,001	84m	93%
Greece	2,015	9.9m	86%
Hungary	2,007	9.6m	94%
Ireland	2,053	5.3m	97%
Italy	2,040	59m	89%
Netherlands	2,022	18.4m	97%
Norway	2,038	5.6m	99%
Poland	2,011	38m	89%

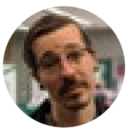
Market	Sample size	Population	Internet penetration
Portugal	2,024	10.4m	88%
Romania	2,030	18.9m	91%
Serbia	2,009	6.7m	88%
Slovakia	2,026	5.5m	90%
Spain	2,008	48m	96%
Sweden	2,052	10.7m	96%
Switzerland	2,051	9m	97%
Turkey	2,078	88m	90%
Americas			
USA	2,058	347m	95%
Argentina	2,036	46m	90%
Brazil	2,024	213m	84%
Canada	2,059	40m	94%
Chile	2,039	19.9m	96%
Colombia	2,021	53m	79%
Mexico	2,017	132m	83%
Peru	2,022	35m	82%

Market	Sample size	Population	Internet penetration
Asia-Pacific			
Australia	2,025	27m	96%
Hong Kong	2,024	7.4m	96%
India	2,044	1,464m	70%
Indonesia	2,053	286m	73%
Japan	2,046	123m	86%
Malaysia	2,076	36m	98%
Philippines	2,021	117m	67%
Singapore	2,041	5.9m	94%
South Korea	2,025	52m	98%
Taiwan	2,030	23m	93%
Thailand	2,043	72m	91%
Africa			
Kenya	2,006	58m	35%
Morocco	2,000	38m	91%
Nigeria	2,019	238m	41%
South Africa	2,015	65m	78%

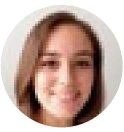
Source: United Nations population dashboard (https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS) for internet penetration, with the exception of Taiwan where all data come from the government of the Island territory.

Authorship and Research Acknowledgements

Jim Egan is Senior Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. He was Chief Executive Officer of BBC World News and bbc.com from 2012–2020 before becoming Chief Investment Officer of Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF). Prior to his position at RISJ he was part of the leadership team at FT Strategies, the media consulting arm of the *Financial Times* in London.



Dr Craig T. Robertson is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism whose interests include trends in news consumption, audience trust in and perceptions of news, and the impacts of technology on the news industry.



Dr Amy Ross Arguedas is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Digital News at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. She has worked extensively on issues around trust in media and previously worked as a journalist for the Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*.

Nic Newman is Senior Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and is also a consultant on digital media, working actively with news companies on product, audience, and business strategies for digital transition. He was the lead author of the first 14 editions of the *Digital News Report* and continues to write an annual report for the Institute on future media and technology trends.

Professor Rasmus Kleis Nielsen is Professor at the Department of Communication of the University of Copenhagen and a former Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. His work focuses on changes in the news media, political communication, and the role of digital technologies in both.

Mitali Mukherjee is Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. She is a political economy journalist with more than two decades of experience in TV, print, and digital journalism. Mitali was Consulting Business Editor at The Wire and Mint in India. Prior to that she was Markets Editor at CNBC TV 18 and Prime Time Anchor at TV Today and Doordarshan.

Dr Richard Fletcher is Deputy Director and Director of Research at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. He is primarily interested in global trends in digital news consumption, the use of social media by journalists and news organisations, and more broadly, the relationship between computer-based technologies and journalism.

Market-level commentary and additional insight around media developments have been provided by academic partners and by our network of Reuters Journalist Fellows around the world. RISJ Senior Research Associate Dr David Levy again did invaluable work editing and further developing many of the country profiles in this year's report. Additional expert analysis and interpretation of the survey data were provided by the team at YouGov, in particular, Charlotte Clifford, David Eastbury, Caryhs Innes, Mimi Smith-Jones, and Ben Seddon.

SECTION 1

SECTION 1

Executive Summary and Key Findings

Jim Egan
Senior Research Associate,
Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

Our 2026 report finds news audiences around the world reacting with growing unease to successive episodes of political, economic, and technological turbulence. Assumptions about the way the world works are being questioned as longstanding international alliances shift, the global trading system comes under strain, and the basic shape of the post-war order appears uncertain. At the same time, people are adapting to the rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence across many aspects of everyday life and, for many, the practical realities of climate change are increasingly being felt.

As the world changes at accelerating speed, news media report and update on these events around the clock, jostling for a share of the four to five hours each day that people devote to their smartphones. For some, this means new opportunities to stay close to news stories as they unfold; for others, it risks creating a sense of overload.

Our 2025 report was characterised by *relative* stability in many of the indicators we have tracked for over a decade. The data this year point to greater volatility, reflecting this heightened sense of uncertainty. We see a range of responses: anxiety, disengagement, and cynicism, but also openness to new sources and formats, and continued belief in what news at its best can offer.

Within the news ecosystem, an apparent paradox emerges between behaviour and attitudes. There is continued change in news consumption in favour of social media, video networks, and, more recently, AI. At the same time, concerns about trust in news, about misinformation, and about the wider impact of these platforms are all increasing.

A central theme this year is this growing 'platformisation' of news consumption. For the first time, social media and video networks are, on average across the markets covered, more popular than both TV and owned news websites and apps as sources of news. Growing numbers are also experimenting with AI chatbots as a new means of access. When online, people increasingly like to watch rather than read the news, often drawing on a wider range of sources and voices. Some of the new contributors are credible, innovative, and making a positive contribution to the range of news choices. This report explores in detail the rise of creators and other emerging news producers, the role they play in this changing environment, and what audiences value about their content.

Against the backdrop of disruptive political, economic, and social change, core news values nevertheless remain relevant. While opinions may be fragmenting in many countries, support for principles such as impartiality persists, even if audiences express dissatisfaction with aspects of their current news experience. People still care about what news and journalism – in new ways and in some traditional forms – aspire to.

Now in its fifteenth year, the 2026 edition of the *Digital News Report* seeks to capture these global trends while also reflecting the variation of news habits and attitudes across countries and also within them. Some of this year's report makes for unsettling reading, but it is an especially unsettled time both for the news media sector and for the world at large. Our findings may invite questions about how far news organisations are either to blame for or in control of the key trends. It is perhaps more constructive to acknowledge the anxieties and concerns expressed by audiences and to focus on what journalism can do to help people interpret what is happening and its relevance to their daily lives.

MAIN FINDINGS

Social media and video networks overtake news websites and apps

As audiences' use of traditional news sources continues to decline, the role of news consumption via social media and video networks becomes more prominent. Though it has been the case in some individual countries for several years, at the global level (averaging across 48 markets) social media and video networks are for the first time the single most widely used way of accessing online news (used by 54% of all respondents), ahead of news organisations' own websites and apps (51%). This shifting composition of news consumption is happening among all age groups.

AI chatbots as a new frontier in intermediated news consumption

The use of AI chatbots for news is growing quickly but not as quickly as AI use for other purposes: 10% of people use AI chatbots for news, up from 7% last year. Usage is predominantly by those most interested in news and is more concentrated among younger audiences (16% of under-35s report using AI chatbots for news).

South Korea, Greece, and Spain all saw use of AI chatbots for news double year-on-year, but growth was not universal. Several markets including the USA, the UK, France, and Germany reported no increase in AI chatbot use for news over the year. AI chatbot users seem to appreciate the extra depth or explanation which comes with using chatbots for news; the most popular feature (42% of respondents) is the ability to ask follow-up questions.

Online video marches on

For the first time, a majority of people now watch online news video in all 48 *Digital News Report* markets: 77% of people globally consume online news video each week. Additionally, in 45 markets more people now watch online news video than watch broadcast TV news – Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands are the only three countries where TV news leads or is on a par with watching news online.

The growth in online video consumption is all happening on third-party platforms. Mainstream news organisations have on average seen video consumption on their own sites and apps go backwards, down 5pp this year.

TV news is in decline, but for some there is a new role for news on the television set: a quarter (27%) of our respondents now watch on-demand news via apps like YouTube on their smart TVs.

Since the pandemic, growth in the use of third-party platforms has been concentrated among platforms which are video-led rather than text-based. The first wave of social media growth hit newspapers hardest. Now the second wave is affecting news organisations' TV and video interests. TikTok (growing fastest from a small base, used by 20% globally for news) and Instagram (more modest growth, but a more significant presence – 26% usage for news) are the fastest growing video-led networks and they are driving much of the change together with YouTube (34% for news). Facebook remains the biggest platform overall for news consumption (used by 43% this year), reversing recent declines.

Creators at the forefront of video growth

Around a quarter (27%) of respondents globally get some news from news-focused individual creators or influencers, and almost half (46%) get some news from creators of any type. Respondents say creators are more entertaining, easier to understand, and more relatable than traditional news outlets. On average, people think creators are less trustworthy and less impartial compared to other attributes such as authenticity and relatability.

Most people who get news from creators are using them alongside traditional media – not instead of it. In fact, those who access creators consume more traditional media than the average respondent. Averaged across all of our markets, 13% of respondents say that most or all of their news needs are met by creators who focus on news and only 3% of people are relying solely on creators for their news.

Interest in news falling

Since 2021, the proportion of people saying they are 'extremely' or 'very' interested in the news has fallen by an average of 13 percentage points (pp) across the markets we survey. A quarter (25%) of respondents are now casual or passive news users who typically only consume news once a week and say they have little to no interest in it, up from 16% in 2021. But although there are fewer highly engaged 'news lovers' in almost every country, these news enthusiasts are relatively undiminished in their usage, engagement, and propensity to pay – a smaller, but durable, target market.

Trust in news at a low

Trust in news has fallen in 29 of our 48 markets this year, resulting in a drop overall to the lowest level we have recorded since we started to measure trust in 2015 (37%). Trust fell by 5pp or more in 19 markets. In the United States, only a quarter (25%) of people now say they trust the news most of the time. Some of this worldwide drop in trust reflects wider anxieties beyond the news industry – trust in institutions and leaders is widely declining, and journalism is also often under direct attack from high-profile politicians. Despite these pressures, trust in the most widely used individual news brands is holding up better than trust in news overall.

Reductions in trust are also related to changes in the news consumption mix. Social media and video networks have long been trusted less than traditional news media, so trust overall is prone to go down as more people's consumption tends towards using social media and video networks (and AI chatbots) for news at the expense of legacy sources. We can probably expect trust in news overall to fall further in future, but trust for many established news providers appears to be defying this trend.

Concerns about fake news are also up, by 4pp to 62% on average, with jumps of more than 5pp in 11 markets. Only in one market (Brazil) did misinformation concerns decrease (-3 pp). As people's use of third-party platforms goes up so do worries about misinformation, but convenience appears to trump concern.

Paying for news also challenged by the drift away from direct consumption

The percentage of people paying for access to online news in the basket of 20 countries we track is unchanged at 17%. Growing reader revenue is likely to prove harder as the flow of people into the subscription funnel coming to news websites and apps reduces. But there is interesting variation in the types of organisations people support, and why, and this points to opportunities. Significant numbers of people are supporting non-traditional news outlets financially. People mainly pay for news for the direct benefits they get from the content they want to access (81% say this is at least part of the reason for paying). But almost half (46%) of respondents who pay for news also express values-based motivations for paying (such as supporting journalism because of its importance to society) and some news organisations are capitalising on this.

Enduring support for impartiality as an ideal ...

Against this turbulent backdrop people still support the idea of impartiality in news coverage. Although support for impartial news has fallen since 2020, those who say they prefer it still outnumber those who prefer news that shares their point of view by more than two to one. Almost half (45%) of respondents still prefer news which does not take sides, and a similar share (46%) also believe consuming news which does not take sides is best for others in society. At a time when commentators often assert that the idea of impartiality is now in the past, audiences (including younger ones) remain supporters of it in the main.

... But misgivings about the reality of news

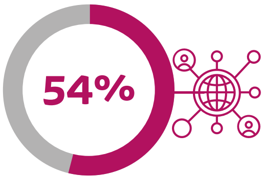
Support for the way news should be is not the same as satisfaction with the way news is. Our data reflect discontent with the way news media are covering many of the big, global stories. Immigration in particular seems an issue which is hard, perhaps even impossible, for the news media to get right. Significantly more people (11pp net difference globally) think that the news media is doing a bad job rather than a good job of covering immigration.

In 26 countries with public service media (PSM) news providers we find variations in agreement with the proposition that public service news has a positive social impact. Across these 26 PSM markets overall, people in the aggregate believe that public service news has a positive impact on life in their countries (37% positive against 22% negative), but this is not the case everywhere. Markets where sentiment is more mixed tend to be ones where trust in news generally is lower and polarising political dynamics are more evident. In the US, Germany, Spain, the UK, and elsewhere there are also very large differences in attitudes about the social impact of PSM news between those on the left and the right of the political spectrum.

THE CONTINUED DRIFT AWAY FROM DIRECT NEWS CONSUMPTION

For several years we have reported the trend of news consumption away from sources such as TV, radio, newspapers, and 'owned and operated' news websites and apps towards news consumed via platforms, by which we mean social media, video networks and – more recently – AI chatbots.

2026 represents a significant milestone: for the first time, social media and video network consumption is now ahead of other news sources as the most widely used source of news globally (54% of all audiences). The use of both TV news and news organisations' websites and apps has fallen by 13pp and 12pp respectively since 2020. The relative decline of television as a source of news is well recognised across the industry. What is perhaps less well acknowledged is that people's use of news websites and apps has declined at a similar rate in recent years.



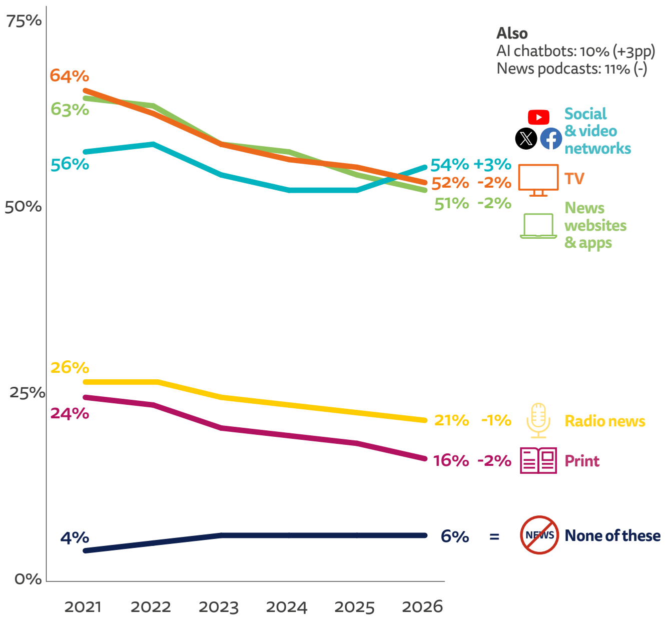
Share of people globally using social media and video networks for news (56% if AI chatbots are included)

Over the same period, social media and video networks have been largely stable in terms of global usage but, mainly as a result of ongoing falls for TV (to 52%) and news websites (to 51%), these third-party sources moved into the lead this year.[3] Adding in AI chatbots as the newest source of news gives a combined third-party total of 56%. It is better to think of this more as a drift rather than a shift, but it is nevertheless an important moment.

When people use social media and video networks they will often be doing so to consume news from established providers, but increasingly this is part of a more complicated news diet and one where news organisations are having to battle hard for their share.

Just about all news organisations have focused their strategic efforts on the transition to digital over the past ten years, and many of these digital transitions have been very successful. But even the most digitally advanced news organisations are increasingly having to contend with the reality that in most countries intermediated third-party consumption platforms are more popular than the branded digital properties publishers themselves have built. This has obvious implications in terms of prospects for audience reach, engagement, and for monetisation potential, at least 'on site' where the potential is greatest.

PROPORTION WHO USED EACH AS A SOURCE OF NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS



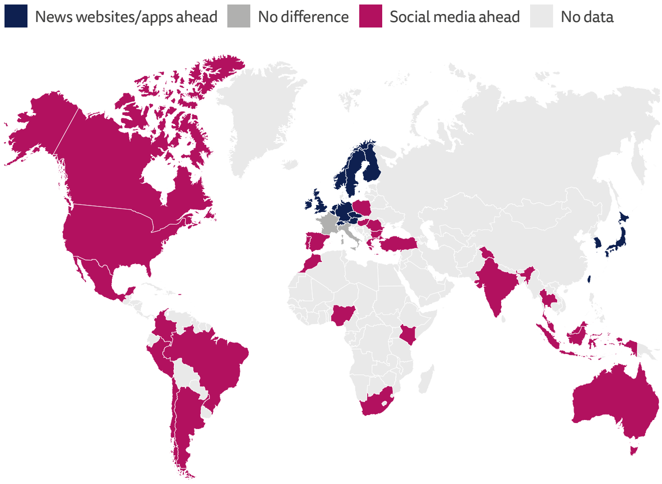
Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? *Base: Total sample in each market-year ≈ 2,000. Note: 2021–3 sample based on 46 markets, 2024 on 47 markets, 2025–6 on 48 markets.*

Social media and video networks as a source of news grew by 3pp this year on average. At the country level, their use for news increased in 22 of the 48 markets. Not all this growth will necessarily be demand-led. On the supply side, Meta publicly stated in 2025 that it would increase the volume of news content on Facebook and this is likely to have had an impact on reported usage levels.[4]

Social media and video networks are now more popular as a source of news than owned and operated online news websites and apps in 30 of our 48 markets. Of the markets where consumption of news websites and apps still leads social media and video networks, four are in Asia – Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan – the rest are all in Europe.

RELATIVE POPULARITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO NETWORKS VERSUS NEWS WEBSITES AND APPS – ALL MARKETS

News websites and apps more popular in Japan and South Korea because of the popularity of aggregators rather than social media



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520. Note: India, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa used a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

The proportion of people identifying social media and video networks as their *main* source of news also rose this year in 22 markets – including countries like Germany where use for news has been low historically (up 4pp to 18%) as well as in places such as Indonesia where they have long been in the lead (up 8pp to 48%).

Globally, 30% of people now say social media and video networks are their main source of news – up from 22% five years ago. The reasons for this shift will be mixed: for some, these third-party sources are just a better way of getting news; for others it is more likely to be a consequence of reduced usage of TV and news websites and apps. The proportion of people now *only* using social media and video networks for news has risen to 12% this year (doubling from 6% in 2020) – many of these individuals are in effect withdrawing from getting news in a variety of different ways and relying instead on seeing news occasionally when doing other things online.

[3] The gap between the use of social media and video networks (54%) and television (52%) is just 2pp and should be interpreted with caution. However, the trend line shows a clear move away from television as a source of news over time, with no such decline evident for social media and video networks.
[4] https://pressgazette.co.uk/media-audience-and-business-data/media_metrics/facebook-referral-traffic-news-social-2025/

AI is the other third-party source of news to see more recent growth.[5] Weekly use of AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google Gemini for news increased year-on-year from 7% to 10%. This is certainly a significant proportional rise but news consumption via AI platforms does not (yet) appear to be exploding – although usage has doubled, from small bases, in some countries including Greece (to 12%) and South Korea (to 14%).

For further analysis on why people are using AI chatbots and what they are using them for see later in this summary and in section 2.1 Emerging Uses of AI Chatbots for News and What it Means for Journalism

Looking back over the five years since the peak of the pandemic the trend is very clear. Whatever growth is left in online as a preferred way of getting news is almost all to third-party sources – social media and video networks and AI chatbots. The example of former Polish president Andrzej Duda's series launch on Kanał Zero last year neatly illustrates a few trends quickly becoming global: politicians going direct to audiences as news creators; online video channels rapidly building large followings; and established news media being side-stepped.

Former Polish president Andrzej Duda presenting his new show on popular YouTube news video start-up Kanał Zero (2.2m subscribers)

Usage of news podcasts is unchanged this year at 11% globally and in fact is unchanged in most markets (the only significant increases were a rise in podcast listening of 4pp in Australia and 3pp in Peru). Podcasts do well at attracting an enthusiast audience and can be a good way of reaching younger audiences. The format also continues to evolve, with many podcasts now being video-led, implying that at least some podcast consumption will show up in our online video data (more later).

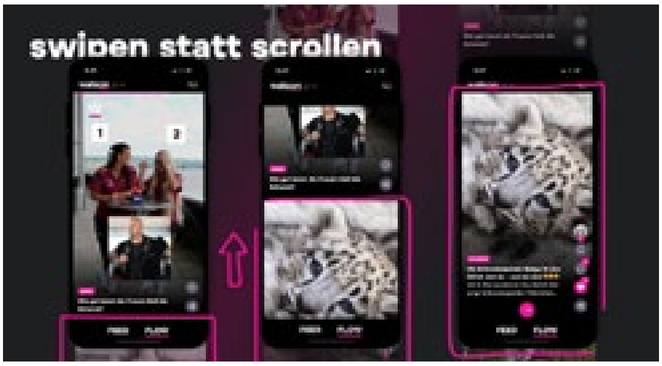
Globally, more than half (52%) of respondents aged 18–24 now say that social media, video networks, and AI chatbots are their main way of getting news. This is 32pp more than the next most popular main source. For audiences aged between 18 and 34 the decline in their use of news websites and apps has been faster than that of television news. These digital news sites and apps now show signs of starting to skew older and are no longer the main source of news for any single age group globally. As the chart shows, millennials and GenZ prefer to get their news from social media and video networks, while TV remains the main source of news for people aged 45 and above (note that the percentage point change figures in the chart compare 2026 and 2021 main source data, and also that we did not ask about AI chatbot usage in 2021).

PROPORTION WHO SAY EACH IS THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF NEWS (BY AGE GROUP) – ALL MARKETS

Q4. You say you've used these sources of news in the last week, which would you say is your MAIN source of news? *Base: All who have used a source of news in the last week across all markets aged 18–24 = 10,252, 25–34 = 15,771, 35–44 = 16,575, 45–54 = 15,729, 55+ = 33,394. Note: Showing change from 2021. The percentage point change figures in the chart compare 2026 and 2021 main source data; we did not ask about AI chatbot usage in 2021.*

[5] When talking about AI use for news in this report we generally mean the intentional use of standalone AI chatbots for news discovery and not AI Mode or AI Overview answers to search queries. In most cases, AI answers are not enabled by Google for news searches.

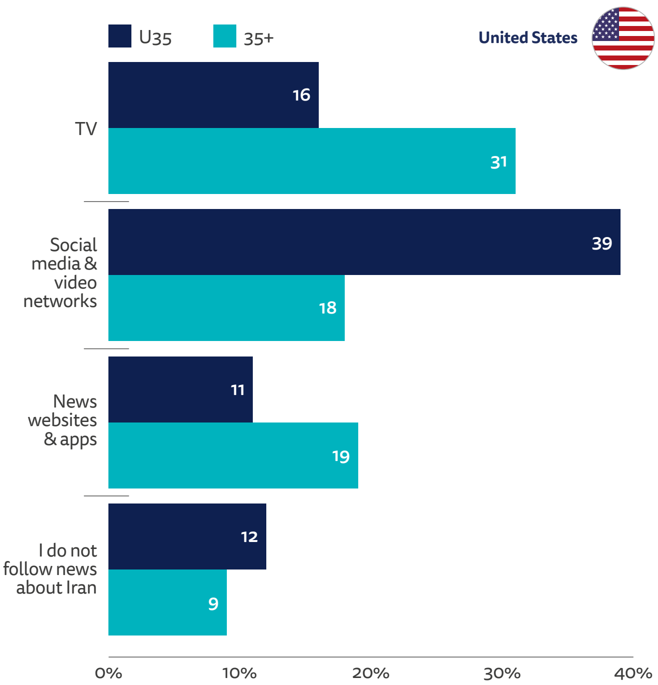
These generational contrasts in news consumption behaviour are increasingly pronounced, with big differences in most markets in terms of the main sources from which people in different age brackets get their news. Distinctive consumption patterns are not just seen in the youngest age groups either: people up to the age of 35 have a different relationship with news sources than their older compatriots.



Popular Swiss news portal Watson introduced a TikTok-like 'flow mode' to increase engagement with younger users

The next chart illustrates this contrast in terms of how audiences in the United States were keeping up with news about the war in Iran (these data are from supplementary polling conducted in late March 2026). Audiences under the age of 35 said using social media and video networks was the best way to follow the conflict and were more than twice as likely to say this than people aged 35 and over. It was the opposite story when it came to TV, with double the percentage of people over 35 choosing TV news as the best way relative to those aged 18–34.[6] As many younger Americans were not following news about the war at all as were principally using news websites and apps, while 19% of those aged over 35 were mainly relying on these sources.

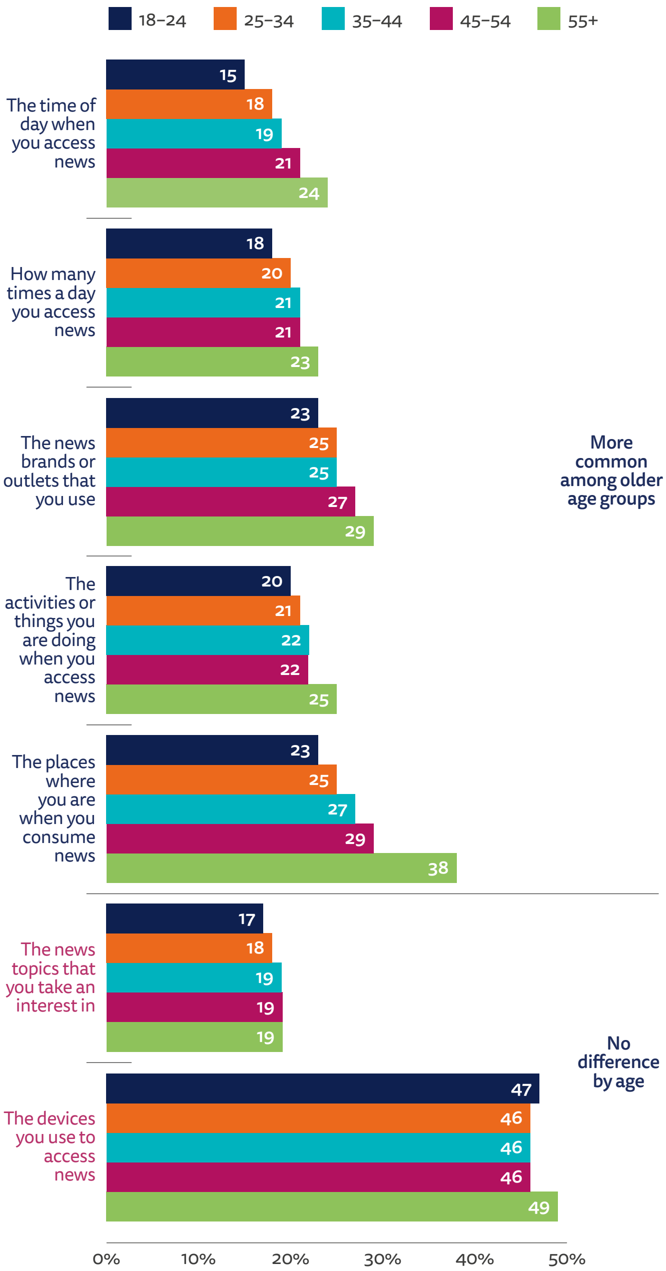
PROPORTION WHO SAY EACH IS THE BEST WAY OF FOLLOWING NEWS ABOUT THE WAR IN IRAN – USA



QIran_2026. Which, if any, of the following do you think is the best way to follow news about the current conflict in Iran? *Base: U35 = 240, 35+ = 806. Note: Data come from a separate poll conducted in the last week of March 2026.*

A perennial question is whether younger people with these distinctive news consumption patterns will eventually acquire the habits of their parents as they enter middle age and beyond. In fact, looking at the data globally (see the next chart), few people of any age group have fixed news habits. When we asked people if they have consistent daily routines for things like the locations they are in when they are consuming news, time of day, and daily frequency, a clear majority of people say these things often vary or are different each day. Younger people are even less likely to have fixed patterns of news use than people in other age groups. Two aspects of news behaviour appear not to vary much by age: the topics people are interested in and the devices they use. But again, most people do not have fixed habits for these either.

PROPORTION WHO HAVE CONSISTENT DAILY HABITS FOR EACH (BY AGE GROUP) – SELECTED MARKETS



Q1_habits_1-7. Thinking about your news habits, for each of the following, please indicate which option best applies to you. This is the same every day. *Base: All across 45 markets aged 18–24 = 8,384, 25–34 = 13,942, 35–44 = 15,173, 45–54 = 15,039, 55+ = 32,997. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

[6] Percentages for people using radio, newspapers, podcasts, and newsletters as their main source of Iran news range from 1–5% and are not shown in the chart.

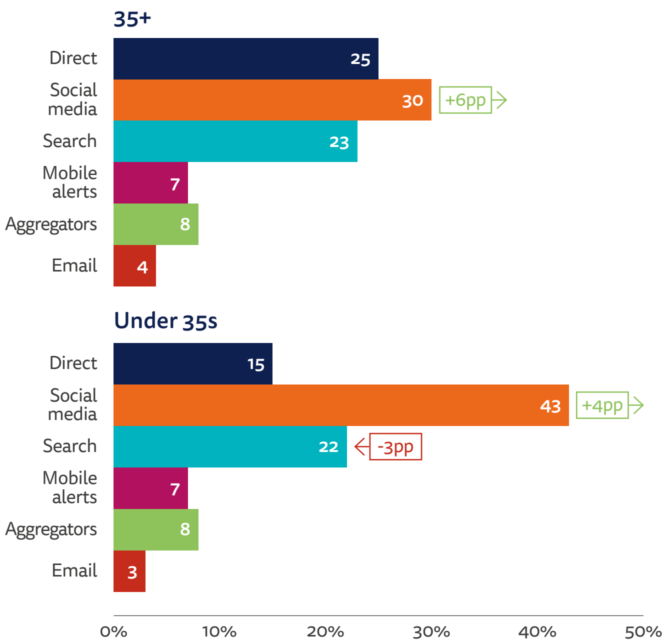
Proportion of young people globally who have never regularly read a newspaper

This year we also asked those who had not used certain news sources in the last week whether they have ever consumed them on a weekly basis, allowing us to differentiate between people who had lapsed from using particular news sources and those who had never regularly used them. There seems to be little reason to expect younger adults will gradually adopt the habits of older generations as they age. At the global level, 56% of people aged 18–24 who did not read a newspaper in the last week report they have never read one regularly. The equivalent figure for television news is 21%.

For further analysis on younger audiences' news consumption patterns and behaviour see section 2.4 The Different Reasons Why Television, Newspapers, and Radio are Losing Their News Audiences

A significant industry debate over the past year has been over what has been dubbed 'Google Zero' – the concern that changes in both search consumption patterns and in the way search engines work with the introduction of AI might result in precipitous falls in referral traffic to news sites. Looking just at what audiences say they are doing rather than at how search engines are answering queries, this year's data indicate that search as the main gateway to news is unchanged for older audiences, but is down (-3pp) among those aged under 35.

PROPORTION WHO SAY EACH IS THEIR MAIN GATEWAY TO ONLINE NEWS (BY AGE GROUP) – ALL MARKETS



Q10a_new2017_rc. Which of these was the **MAIN** way in which you came across news in the last week? *Base: All across all markets that used an online news gateway in the last week aged 35+ = 62,626, U35 = 25,185.*

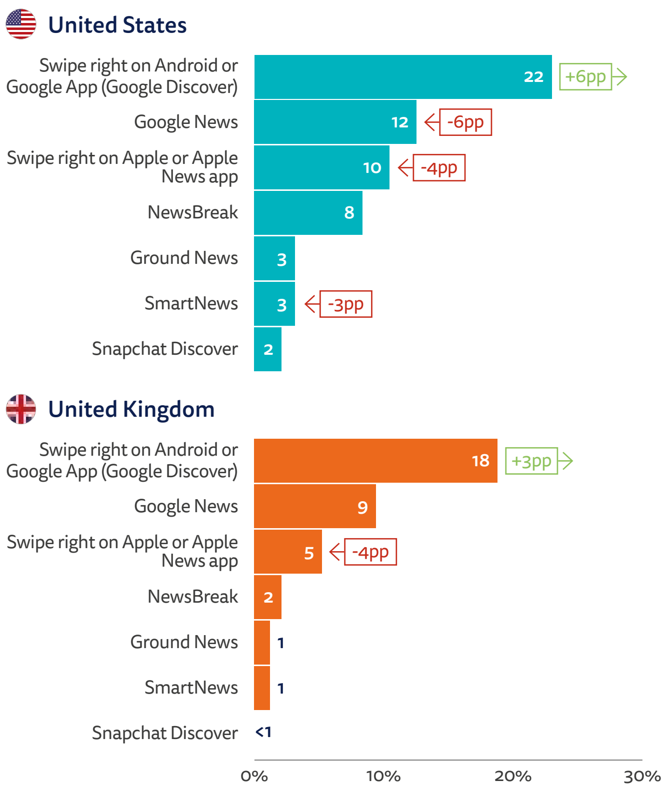
This does not of course mean correspondingly little change in the referral traffic which search engines and aggregators are sending to individual publishers. The ongoing rollout of both AI Mode and AI Overviews to Google's search experience is widely assumed to be affecting referral traffic, especially for some types of queries (although hard news search queries mostly remain excluded from AI Overviews).

Aggregate data, sourced from the analytics company Chartbeat for our 2026 *Trends and Predictions* report (Newman 2026) show that Google traffic from organic search to over 2,500 sites was down by a third (33%) globally between November 2024 and November 2025, and by 38% in the United States. Looking ahead, publishers expect traffic from search engines to almost halve (-43%) over the next three years.

Adjacent to search (literally for many online users) Google Discover now accounts for a large and growing proportion of aggregator usage in many markets, which underscores why many publishers are uneasy about their reliance on it. While Google News is Google's dedicated news aggregator, Google Discover (launched in 2018 as a replacement for Google Feed) is a highly personalised, mobile-first feed that suggests a mix of news, evergreen content, and videos based on a user's specific interests and search history. While our data show increased use overall, some publishers are reporting declines in their own traffic. In the UK's *Press Gazette* in March 2026, 'Chief executive Piers North told investors Google Discover traffic to Reach [a publicly listed UK news publisher] sites was down 46% in the second half of the year as the platform prioritises more user-generated content and video.'[7] The perceived fragility of search and Google Discover traffic helps explain why many news publishers have moved on from measuring audience reach as a key success metric, instead prioritising the depth of engagement with a smaller, more loyal audience.

Although total aggregator usage is significant in markets like the US and the UK, not all aggregators are the same and there is something importantly different about a user who has opted into and intentionally uses a dedicated news aggregator such as NewsBreak, compared to the more incidental nature of 'drive-by' traffic such as Google Discover, which is a passive experience that surfaces content automatically.

PROPORTION WHO USED EACH AGGREGATOR AS A GATEWAY TO NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – USA AND UK



Q10c_2025. When using the internet for news, which of the following, if any, have you used for news in the last week? *Base: USA = 2,058; UK = 2,052.*

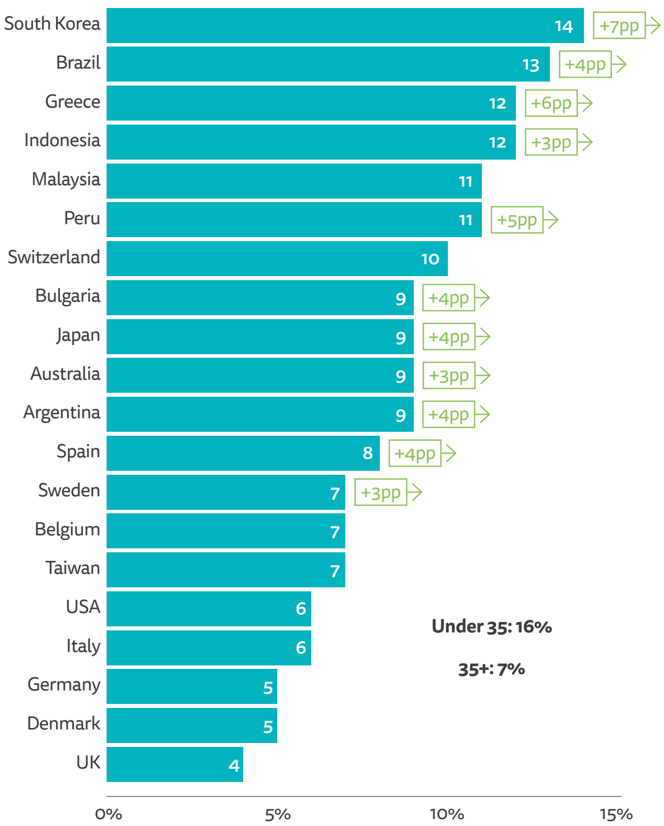
[7] https://pressgazette.co.uk/media_business/plunging-google-discover-traffic-hits-reach-digital-revenue/

AI CHATBOTS, A NEW FRONTIER IN INTERMEDIATED NEWS CONSUMPTION

And what of AI, perhaps the most consequential disruption to the news industry since the launch of the iPhone in 2007? Over the past year, news outlets have been adopting generative AI features in much of their newsgathering and production, with an increasing number of audience-facing innovations. Although the mantra of 'human in the loop' remains for now, publishers are actively exploring ways of introducing AI more deeply into workflows and products.

In this year's survey we looked specifically at a consumption aspect of the AI revolution, namely the usage of AI chatbots for news. Our data this year show fast rather than explosive growth in the use of AI chatbots for news. At the global level, weekly news usage has increased by 3pp from 7% to 10% of all audiences. (It is important to note again that these usage data relate specifically to the usage of dedicated, standalone AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google Gemini.)

PROPORTION WHO USED AN AI CHATBOT FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS



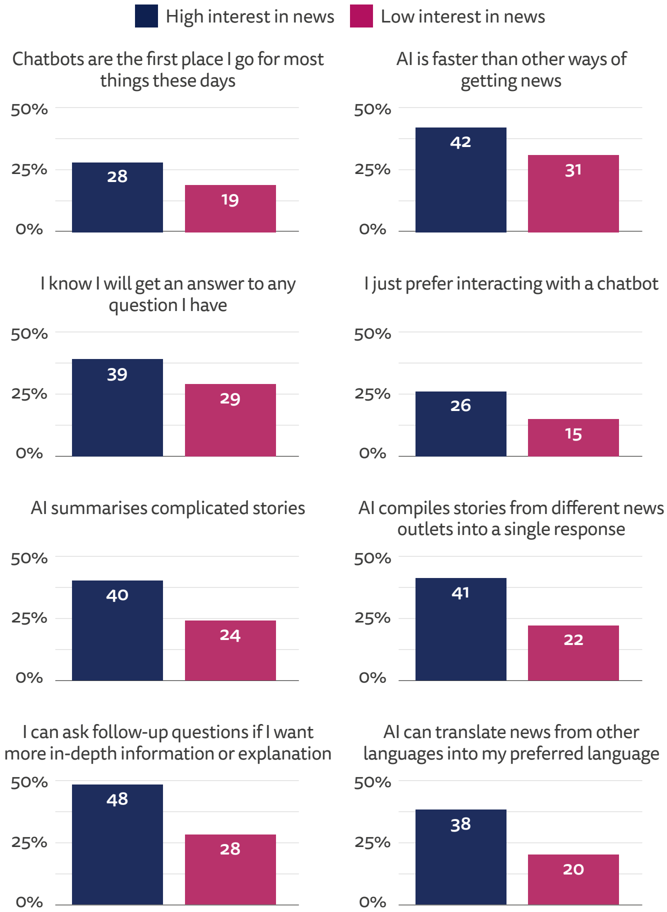
Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. *Note: Figures for U35/35+ based on average across all 48 markets.*

The chart shows considerable variation in weekly news usage rates. Some countries have seen usage double to levels of more than 10%, but accessing AI chatbots for news tends to be less popular in the USA and Europe, with usage in the UK the lowest of any market in our survey at 4%. In general, the adoption of AI chatbots for news is higher in countries where search, social, aggregator, and video platform adoption is relatively high, and lower in countries where direct access remains popular. In this sense, AI chatbot news use follows the pattern of platformisation that we have documented in past reports.

One factor likely to be affecting adoption of AI chatbots for news is perceived trustworthiness, itself probably influenced by the tone of media coverage about AI generally. Trust in answers from AI chatbots is 20% globally (relative to trust in news overall at 37%). In the UK the corresponding figure is 6%, also the lowest of any market.

People who are using AI chatbots for news are a highly engaged, digitally sophisticated segment of the news audience: 38% of people using AI chatbots fall into our 'news lover' segment, compared to 22% of respondents overall. They are characterised by the intensity and breadth of their news consumption, being far more likely to access multiple outlets, use a wide range of platforms and formats, and actively seek out information rather than encountering it passively. Their behaviour suggests strong familiarity with digital tools, reflected in higher use of search engines, messaging apps, and video platforms. They also appear more open to alternative sources of news, including individual journalists and news influencers, rather than relying solely on traditional institutional brands. AI chatbot users for news are best understood as 'power news consumers' generally – curious, experimental, with complex, multi-platform news diets. These characteristics can be seen when looking at people's motivations for using AI chatbots. Individuals with higher underlying interest in news particularly like the ability to compile stories from different news outlets into a single response, to ask follow-up questions for more in-depth information or explanation, and being able to translate news from other languages.

PROPORTION OF AI CHATBOT NEWS USERS WHO SAY EACH IS A MOTIVATION FOR USING THEM (BY INTEREST IN NEWS) – ALL MARKETS



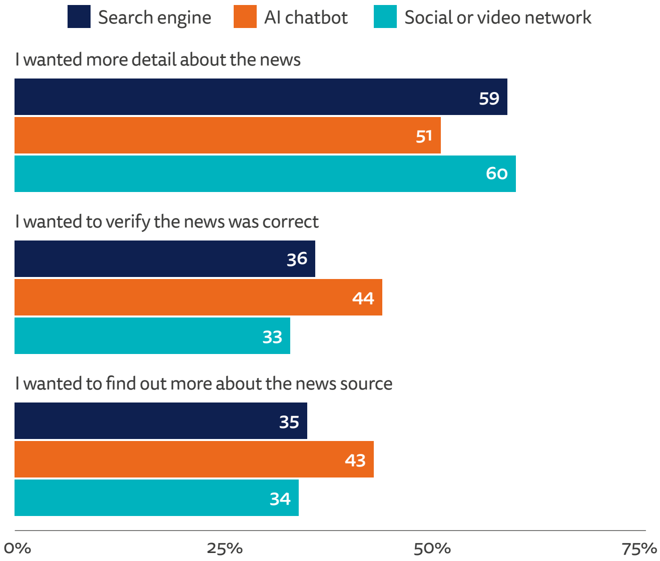
Q_AI_motivations. Why do you use AI chatbots to get news? **Q1c.** How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news? *Base: All who used a generative AI chatbot for news in the past week, with low interest = 827, high interest = 4,938.*

After more than a decade of seeing news consumption shift from on-platform traffic to third-party search and social platforms, established news providers are concerned about whether the use of AI chatbots for news will make it even harder to attract audiences to owned news properties (and hence engage and monetise them directly). This is another aspect of the 'Google Zero' issue described earlier; specifically, will audiences be satisfied with the answers they get to news questions on AI chatbots and therefore be less likely to embark on onward journeys to owned news sites? We sought to investigate this by asking respondents about their behaviour in terms of clicking through from search engines, social media platforms, and AI chatbots to original news sources. (It is worth remembering this may be an area where there are differences between what people say they do and their actual behaviour.)

Overall, 42% of AI chatbot users for news say they always or often click through from chatbot answers to original news sources but there are wide variations by market. Clicking through is most popular in South Korea (56%), more than twice the reported click-through behaviour in Denmark (26%). Propensity for clicking through from AI chatbots seems to sit between likelihood of clicking through from social media (36%) and search (44%), but these numbers should be compared with caution because they are proportions of quite different user bases.

We also asked *why* people click through from the search engines, social media platforms, and AI chatbots. For every platform the most commonly cited reason is that they wanted more detail about the underlying story, but AI chatbot users are relatively less likely to say this compared to search and social, perhaps because the AI response has already satisfied their needs. AI users are also relatively more likely to want to verify the story and find out more about the source, which probably indicates a degree of caution and scepticism about the technology. This can be contrasted with audiences wanting extra, which is more common with search and social click-throughs, though the differences between platforms, at 9pp or less, are quite small.

PROPORTION OF PLATFORM NEWS USERS WHO SAY EACH IS A MOTIVATION FOR CLICKING THROUGH TO AN ORIGINAL NEWS SOURCE – ALL MARKETS



Q_ClickMotive. Which of the following have you done in the last week when clicking a link to an original source when using <platform>? **Q3.** Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q10.** Thinking about how you got news online (via computer, mobile, or any device) in the last week, which were the ways in which you came across news stories? *Base: All who accessed news in the last week via a search engine = 22,508, AI chatbot = 4,452, social media or video network = 23,693. Note: Search engine news users identified using Q10, AI and social/video networks from Q3.*

For further analysis on the use of AI chatbots for news and click-through behaviour see section 2.1 Emerging Uses of AI Chatbots for News and What it Means for Journalism

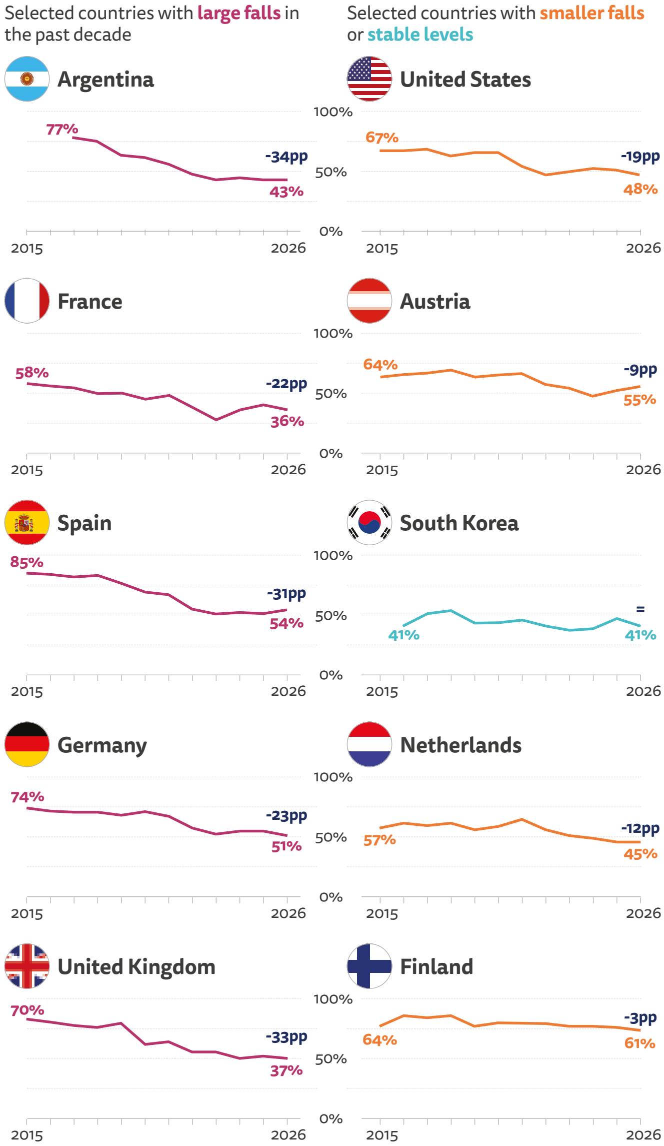
WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE NEWS?

What are respondents telling us this year about their attitudes towards the news in terms of indicators such as trust, interest in the news, and worries about misinformation? And how are changing attitudes related to changing patterns of consumption?

Interest in news and news avoidance

At least part of the drift away from TV news and owned news websites and apps towards third-party sources is likely to be down to falling interest in news overall. For 46 of our markets we can compare the percentage of people in each country who say they are either extremely or very interested in the news with data from 2021. These numbers show that, on average, interest in news has fallen by 13pp (from 59% to just under 46%) since the height of the pandemic.

PROPORTION EXTREMELY OR VERY INTERESTED IN THE NEWS – SELECTED MARKETS



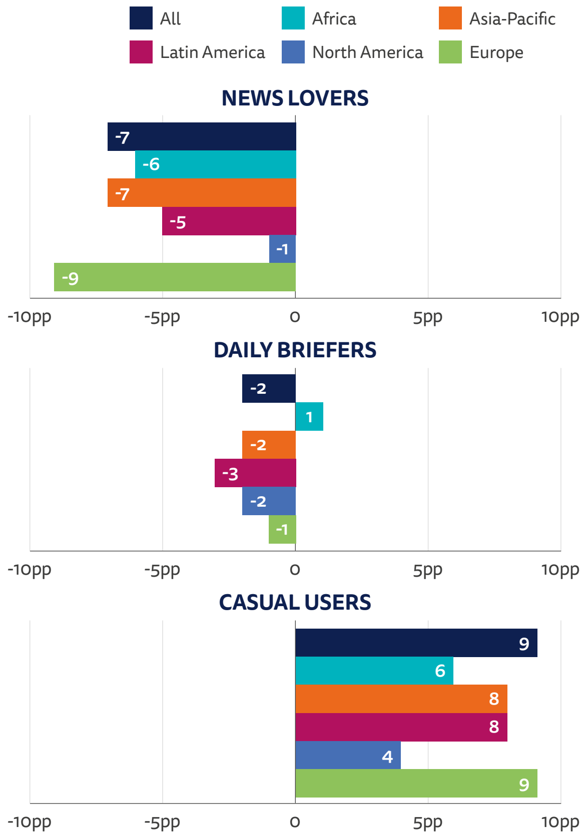
Q1c. How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news? *Base: Total sample in each country-year ≈ 2,000. Note: Sample size in Finland in 2015 = 1,509.*

The chart on the previous page shows very significant reductions in the proportion of people who say they are extremely or very interested in the news, including in some markets which have previously had more stable levels of interest. These reductions of popular interest in news have democratic as well as commercial implications, making it harder to engage citizens in the political process as well as increasing the challenge of successfully monetising attention to the news, whether through advertising or by way of reader revenue.

As we have seen, social media and video networks are now the most widely used source of news globally, but there are differences by platform in terms of the degree of intent people have in seeking out news on them. X and YouTube are the only two networks where more than half of users say they think of these platforms as useful ways of getting the news. On Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok most people say they generally only see news when they are online for other reasons. The incidental nature of news consumption when people are on social media and video networks is a significant factor.

We segment our respondents into three groups according to their self-reported frequency of consuming news and interest in it: 'news lovers', 'daily briefers', and 'casual users'. Since 2021 the proportion of news lovers has fallen from 29% to 22% of respondents overall, while casual users have increased from 16% to 25% of the survey. Asia is the region where the change in the mix of these segments has been the greatest. North America has seen the least change over the past five years. In some individual markets, including South Korea (24%), Japan (30%), Australia (22%), and Canada (23%), the share of news lovers is actually unchanged.

PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE IN SIZE OF EACH SEGMENT FROM 2021 TO 2026 (BY REGION)



Q1b_NEW. Typically, how often do you access news? **Q1c.** How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news? *Base: Total sample across all markets in 2021 = 92,372; Africa = 6,065, Asia-Pacific = 19,706, Latin America = 12,117, North America = 4,037, Europe = 48,413; 2026 = 97,520, Africa = 8,040, Asia-Pacific = 22,428, Latin America = 12,159, North America = 4,117, Europe = 50,776. Note: 2021 sample based on 46 markets.*

Even though in many markets the incidence of news lovers has fallen, indicators of engagement such as interest in politics, use of owned news websites and apps, and trust in news (see below) have held up better in this segment than for the population overall. For commercial news publishers pursuing differentiated strategies aimed at particular audience groups, this finding points to the continued existence of smaller, but still attractive, addressable segments.

A corollary of falling interest in news is avoiding the news at least some of the time. Overall, news avoidance has not changed in 2026 and is essentially flat at 42% year-on-year (for reference, the figure stood at 29% in 2017 when we began measuring it). In four countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, and Turkey – 60% or more of the population now say they avoid the news sometimes or often. And in some other countries there were marked changes. Two of the biggest year-on-year increases in news avoidance were in Denmark (up by 7pp) and Norway (up by 9pp). The crisis over the future of Greenland, which escalated quickly during fieldwork ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos at the end of January, likely played a contributing role in news avoidance here. Norwegian news media also very extensively covered two scandals involving Crown Princess Mette-Marit this year and this may have proved too much for some audiences.

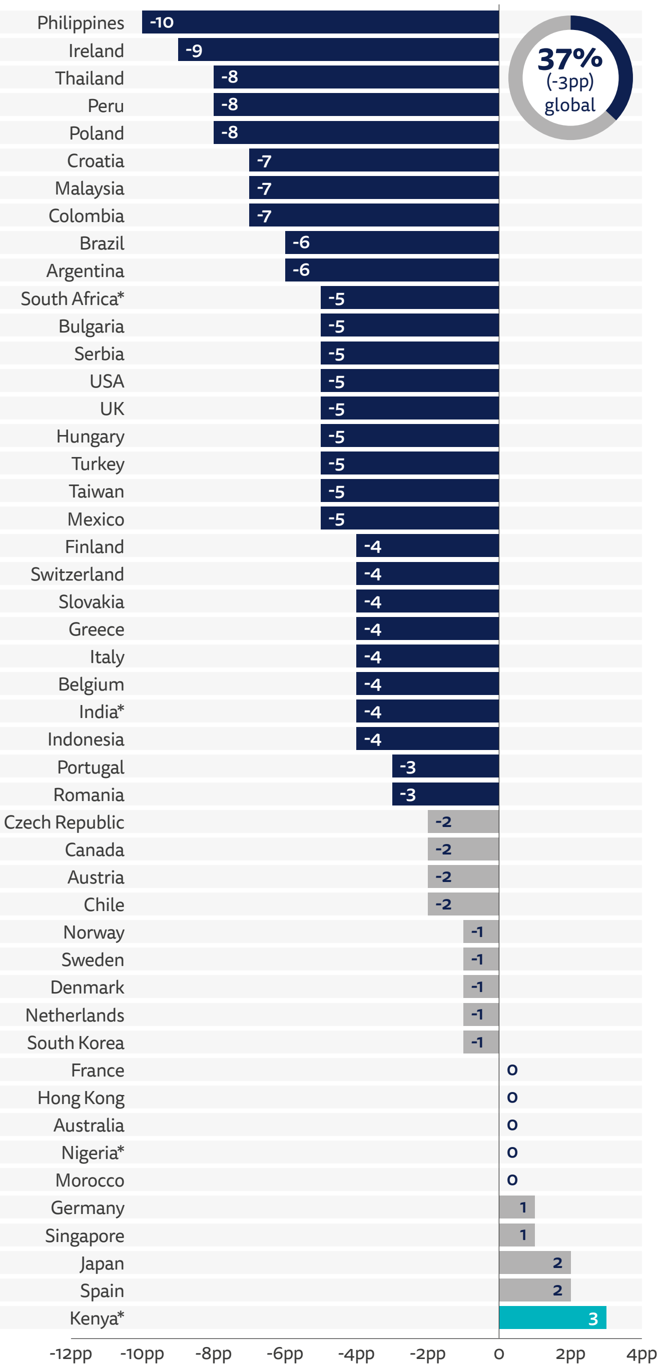
PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY SOMETIMES OR OFTEN AVOID THE NEWS – ALL MARKETS

Q1di_2017. Do you find yourself actively trying to avoid news these days? *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520. Note: Sample size in each individual market ≈ 2,000.*

TRUST IN NEWS

Perhaps the best illustration of the unease caused by turbulent world affairs are this year's data on trust in news. The proportion of respondents who say they trust news most of the time fell significantly this year (down by 3pp). Having held steady at 40% for three years, the percentage of people globally saying they trust news overall dropped to 37%, the lowest figure since we started measuring trust in 2015. Out of our 48 markets, 29 reported significant falls in trust in news this year. Several countries showed particularly marked drops: trust fell by 5pp or more in 19 markets.

PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE IN PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY TRUST MOST NEWS MOST OF THE TIME FROM 2025 TO 2026 – ALL MARKETS



Q6_2016_1. Thinking about news in general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – I think you can trust most news most of the time. *Base: Total sample in each market-year ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

How should we interpret such volatile sentiment about the trust in news? Are news organisations to blame, or is something else going on?

Some factors seem to be at play beyond journalism itself. It is difficult precisely to disentangle declining trust in news organisations from broader scepticism about political and social institutions, but there has been a long-term international trend of falling trust in representative institutions such as governments and political parties, with a notable decline in trust for parliaments following the 2008 financial crisis (Valgarðsson et al. 2025). Other external indicators such as the Edelman Trust Barometer (which reports a 16pp net fall in trust in national government leaders this year for example)[8] suggest that factors affecting institutional trust overall – including the actions of political leaders – may play an important role in shaping attitudes towards the news.

In countries with some of the biggest drops in trust such as the Philippines, Thailand, Peru, and Poland, recent events point to a likely sense of deterioration in the broader information environment. Political instability, divisive elections, and a noisier and more fragmented information environment seem to be shared characteristics of markets where trust in news has fallen most. Some of the reductions are almost certainly a consequence of direct attacks on news outlets and individual journalists, with a cumulative effect of undermining confidence in journalism overall. Reflecting its deepening political divides and sustained political pressure on the news domain, trust in news in the US is now the seventh lowest in our survey, falling another 5pp this year to 25% overall. Among politically right-leaning Americans, trust in news sits at just 15% – very nearly the lowest reported figure for any left/centre/right political demographic in any country covered by the *DNR* (only 14% of people in Greece on the political left trust news overall).

Guardian, 14 January 2026

None of this is to suggest that trust in news is unrelated to what news organisations themselves do. But increasing concerns about the information environment overall are more likely this year to explain the fall in trust. Looking at the five countries where trust in news fell the most this year, the reductions in overall trust are much larger than change in trust ratings for any individual news brand.

[8] https://www.edelman.com/trust/2026/trust-barometer

PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE IN PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY TRUST MOST NEWS MOST OF THE TIME COMPARED TO PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE IN BRAND TRUST FROM 2025 TO 2026 – SELECTED MARKETS

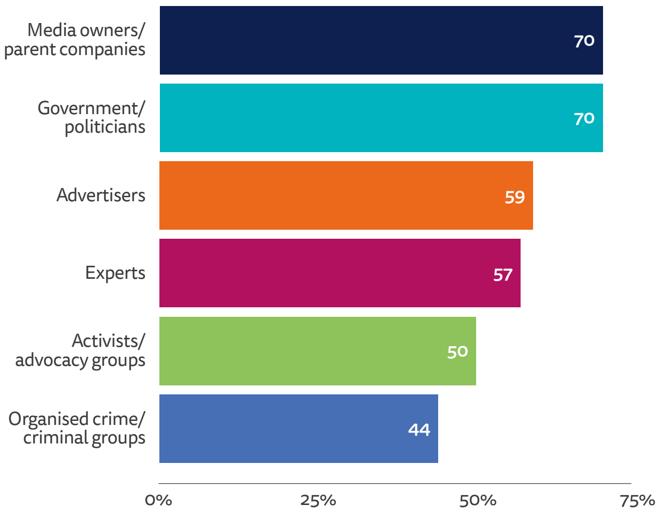
	Change in trust in news overall	Change in trust in news brands (range)
Philippines	-10pp	-4pp to +3pp
Ireland	-9pp	-3pp to no change
Poland	-8pp	-1pp to +2pp
Thailand	-8pp	-5pp to +1pp
Peru	-8pp	-2pp to +4pp

Q6_2016_1. Thinking about news in general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – I think you can trust most news most of the time. **Q6_2018_trust.** How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. *Base: Total sample in each country-year ≈ 2,000. Note: For brand trust responses 6–10 coded as 'Trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded.*

INFLUENCE ON THE NEWS

If audience concerns are indeed less about individual news brands and more about the trustworthiness of the news media sector generally, what are some of the relevant forces shaping these overall perceptions? In 26 markets we asked respondents how influential they perceive six different groups to be in terms of their impact on the news (these groups were politicians, experts, organised crime groups, advertisers, activists/advocacy groups, and media owners). Unsurprisingly, politicians and government officials are the group most thought to have influence on the news, but the owners of news media companies themselves are also considered to have a significant bearing on news output.

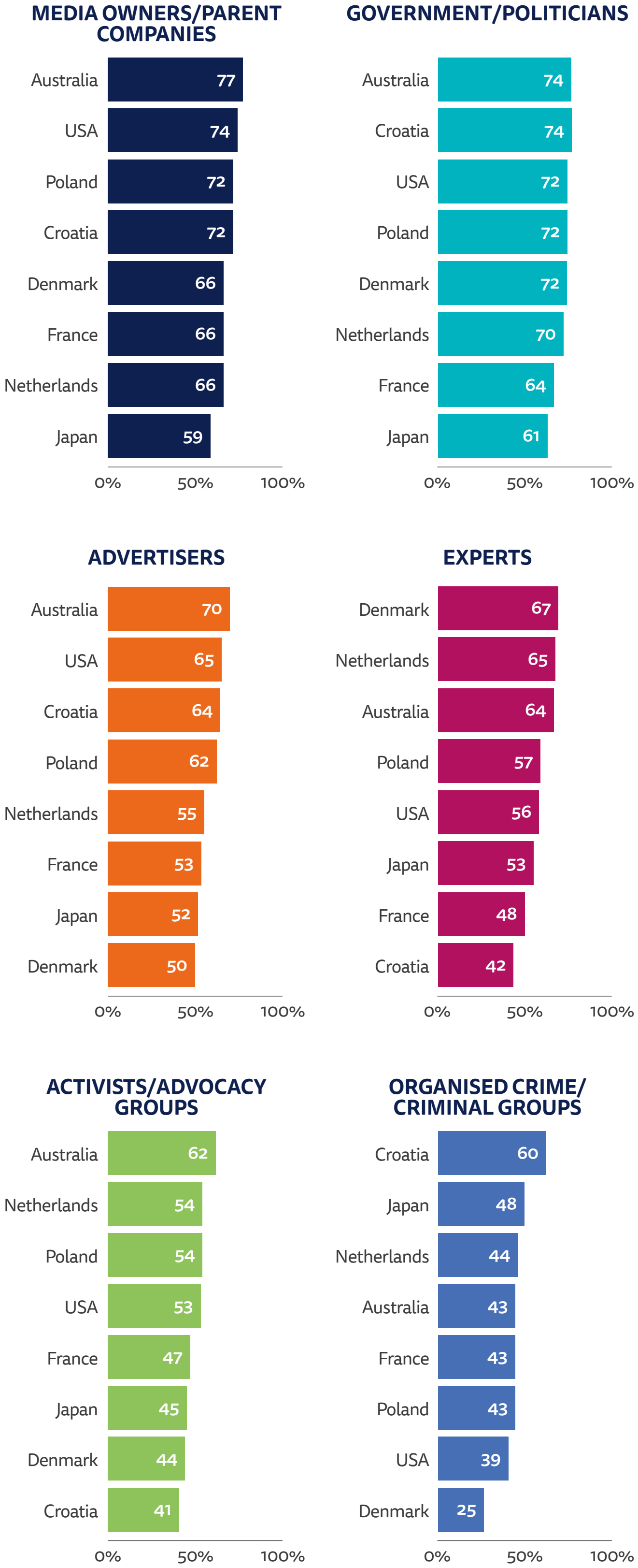
PROPORTION WHO THINK EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE INFLUENTIAL ON NEWS COVERAGE – 26 MARKETS



Q_undue. Thinking about the news media in your country ... how influential, or not, do you think each of the following is on news coverage? *Base: Total sample across 26 markets = 52,857.*

In the USA and Australia, for example, this influence on the part of media owners is felt to be more significant than the leverage enjoyed by any other group.

PROPORTION WHO THINK EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE INFLUENTIAL ON NEWS COVERAGE – SELECTED MARKETS



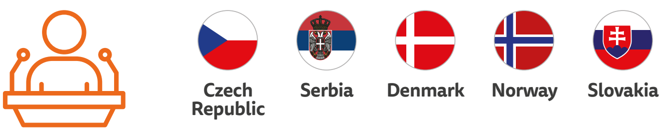
Q_undue. Thinking about the news media in your country ... how influential, or not, do you think each of the following is on news coverage? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

Of the six potentially influential groups we asked about, there were four where respondents widely perceived high degrees of influence: government officials and politicians, media owners, organised crime, and experts. (In the case of experts, we were interested in places where audiences identify a notable *lack* of influence by experts on the news.) In the next chart we have included the countries where net influence scores (the difference between people who considered each group to be influential and not influential) were highest. There are some countries where net perceptions of potentially problematic influence are high for each of these groups. In the case of Serbia and Slovakia,[9] respondents were among the most concerned anywhere about the influence of all four of these groups. In countries where people perceive high levels of influence on the news from groups such as politicians, media owners, and organised crime (and little impact from experts), it is reasonable to expect some association with trust in news overall.[10] Serbia and Slovakia both feature in the group of five markets where trust in news overall is lowest.

> ***Journalism should be impartial and objective, however this does not happen as media outlets are owned by politically motivated people or entities and used for a specific agenda. The narrative is distorted or manipulated to meet that subjective end.***
> *Female, 65, Australia (answer to open-ended question)*

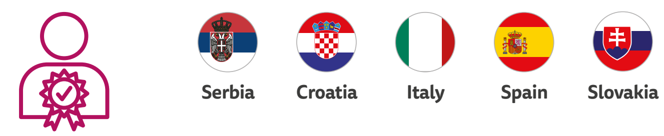
TOP FIVE MARKETS WHERE NET PERCEPTION OF INFLUENCE OF EACH ON NEWS MEDIA IS HIGHEST

POLITICIANS

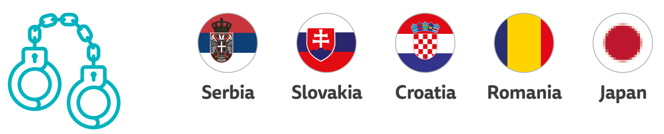


MEDIA OWNERS

EXPERTS (Least influential)

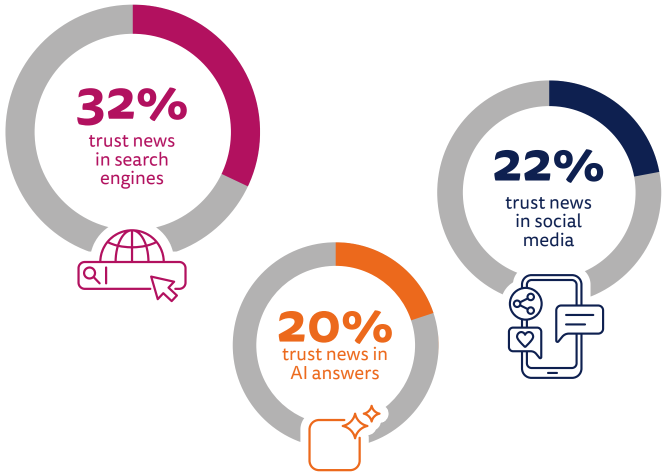


ORGANISED CRIME



Q_undue. Thinking about the news media in your country … how influential, or not, do you think each of the following is on news coverage? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: Based on percentage point difference between influential and not influential.*

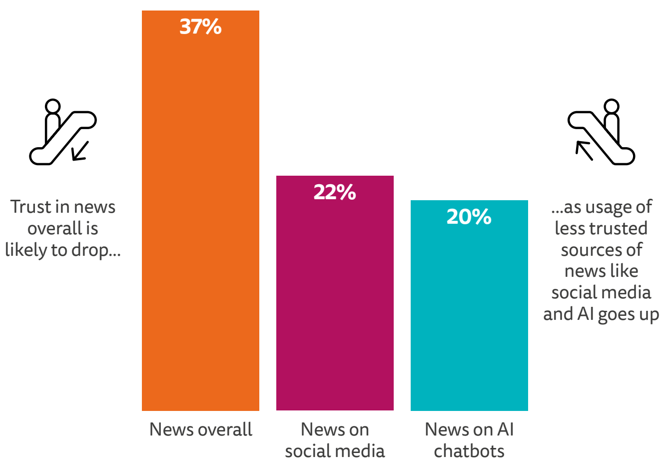
There is also a more direct link between trust in news and the falling prominence of traditional sources of news. A downward impact on trust in news overall as third-party platform consumption increases is to be expected because of the 'trust gap'. The trust gap exists because trust in news consumed via third-party platforms is substantially lower than trust in news overall.



On a global level, trust in news on social media and from AI chatbots stands at 22% and 20% respectively (trust in answers to news queries on search engines is significantly higher). As we have seen, trust in news overall has fallen to 37% while a significant change in the make-up of news usage has been unfolding, with audiences relying less on print, broadcast, and 'owned' online properties and more on news they consume on third-party platforms. If the composition of news consumption continues to move in favour of discovery on social media, video networks, and AI as it has done in 2026, a decline in overall trust is, at least in part, an expected outcome because news on these platforms is less trusted than the legacy forms of news people are drifting away from.

PROPORTION WHO THINK THEY CAN TRUST NEWS ON EACH PLATFORM MOST OF THE TIME – ALL MARKETS

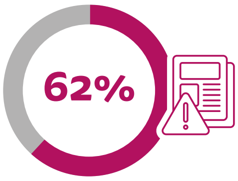
I THINK YOU CAN TRUST NEWS MOST OF THE TIME



Q6_2018_2/4. It is now possible to get online news in many different ways. With this in mind, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. – I think I can trust news in social media/in answers from AI chatbots most of the time. **Q6_2016_1.** Thinking about news in general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – I think you can trust most news most of the time. *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520.*

[9] Slovakia ranks sixth in terms of perceptions of influence of media owners.
[10] The interplay between political and media ownership influence is described by Schiffrin (2021).

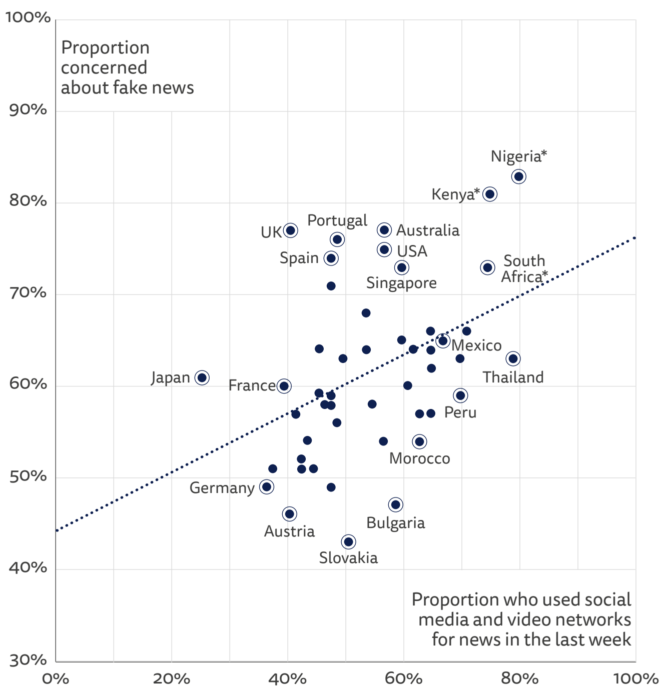
News is less trusted on social media in part because of worries about the prevalence of false or misleading information. The proportion concerned about fake news online more broadly has also risen this year to a figure of 62% of respondents globally (up 4pp).



worried about fake news online

Worries about fake news and misinformation remain highest in Nigeria and Kenya, followed by the UK, Australia, and Portugal. A distinct regional shift is evident with respect to worries about what is real and what is fake on the internet – in every single Western European market concern about fake news increased by at least 4pp this year, rising to a 7pp increase in Norway, 8pp in the Netherlands, and 9pp in Belgium as worries about deepfakes, AI slop, politically motivated misinformation, and the wider social implications of these networks escalated over the past year.

PROPORTION CONCERNED ABOUT FAKE NEWS ONLINE PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO NETWORKS AS A SOURCE OF NEWS – ALL MARKETS



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q_FAKE_NEWS_1.** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement. – Thinking about online news, I am concerned about what is real and what is fake on the internet. *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Putting the different elements together, a picture emerges of growing centrality of social media and video networks for news due to the declines in the use of more traditional online and offline sources, even as audiences consider the information they discover on these third-party networks to be less reliable. Political instability, increasing social division, and pressure towards polarisation are inclining audiences to take less interest in the news and to spend less time with traditional sources of it such as TV, radio, and news organisations' own websites and apps. For growing proportions, social media are emerging as the main source of information – but this may well not be because these platforms are a conscious preference and more because they are people's default exposure to news and current affairs.

Audiences have a keen sense of these environments being less trustworthy, while continuing to rely on them because they remain the most convenient places to encounter other types of information. It is also important to bear in mind that, outside of news, people generally have a positive view of third-party platforms. Data we reported from eight countries in 2024 showed a net positive view of video networks everywhere we asked. The picture is more mixed for social media (respondents in all markets except Germany said on balance social media were positive for them personally, but the net effect was only thought to be positive in three of the eight markets) (Ejaz et al. 2024). This picture of prioritising convenience over confidence helps to explain why trust holds up in leading news brands even though trust overall is falling.

> ***I knew already that I got some of my news from Instagram, but I didn't realise the extent, like, the full extent to which I rely on Instagram for news.***
> *Female, 28, UK, News Definitions project*

People's trust in these individual news outlets is, as we have seen, generally little affected, but their consumption of news from these sources is increasingly intermediated and diluted through the liked, but less trusted, third-party networks where they spend most of their time online.

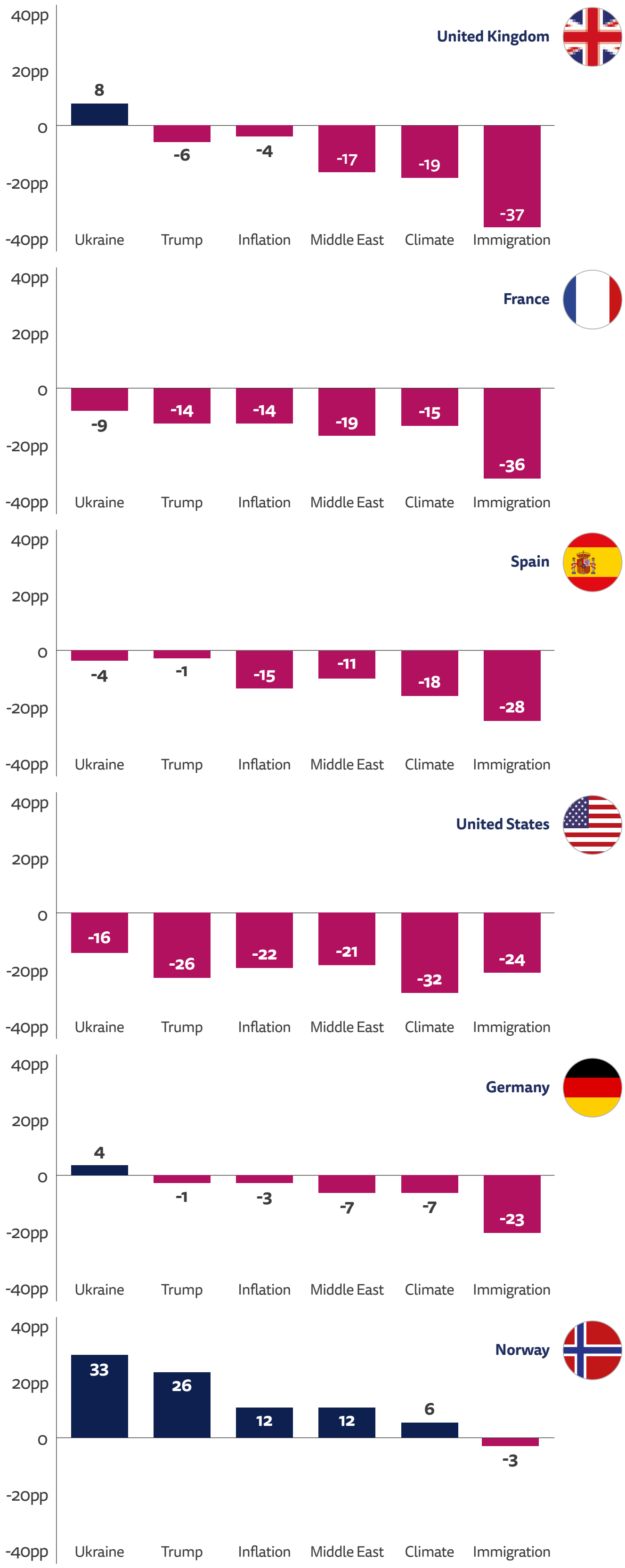
COVERAGE OF BIG STORIES

In addition to trust, we also asked respondents to judge how well the news media in their country had performed in its coverage of six long-running international stories: inflation and the cost of living, migration/immigration, Donald Trump's second presidency, climate change, and the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East (this question was asked before the Iran war began).

Audience attitudes to coverage of these stories varied by region and country, but there is no story where audiences (globally averaged) believe that news media are doing a good job. In the United States and in several European countries especially, net sentiment indicates that audiences do not believe news media are doing a good job on several of these stories. On the most divisive topics – particularly climate, immigration, and the conflict in Gaza – many audiences feel poorly served by existing coverage. Audiences in Norway tend to have a more positive view of the coverage of these big stories, although immigration stands out there as the issue where, relatively at least, audiences are least happy.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROPORTION WHO THINK NEWS MEDIA ARE DOING A GOOD JOB AND A BAD JOB OF COVERING EACH STORY – SELECTED MARKETS

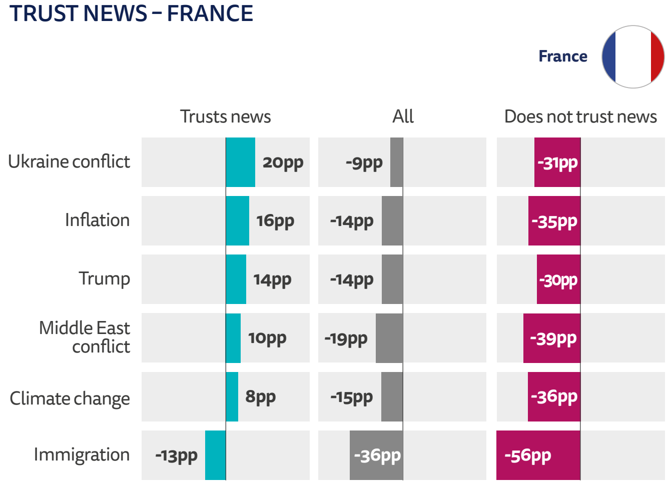
Calculated as difference between percentage saying 'good job' and 'bad job'



Q_BigStories. Thinking about the news media in your country, do you think they generally do a good job or a bad job of covering each of the following? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

Respondents' overall trust in news is closely associated with whether individuals consider the news media to be doing a good job on these big stories. Taking France as an example, people who say they do not trust news generally rate the news media as doing a bad job on each of the topics we asked about, with broadly the same relative ranking as the population overall. More than half of people who do not trust news in France (net -56pp) think news media are doing a bad job when it comes to covering immigration. Conversely, people who generally trust news tend to think news media are in fact covering each of these big stories well, with one notable exception – immigration.

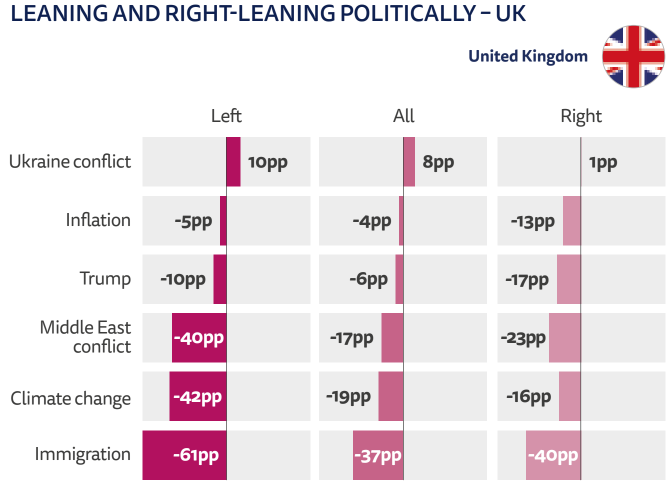
NET DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROPORTION WHO THINK THE NEWS MEDIA DO A GOOD JOB VERSUS A BAD JOB COVERING EACH STORY AMONG THOSE WHO DO AND DO NOT TRUST NEWS – FRANCE



Q_BigStories. Thinking about the news media in your country, do you think they generally do a good job or a bad job of covering each of the following? *Base: Total France sample = 2,011, trust = 576, do not trust = 799.*

Some interesting differences emerge when looking at the data by political leaning. In the UK, although most of the political momentum for policy change has come from the right, it is audiences on the left who are actually most unhappy about coverage of immigration. However, people on the right are also dissatisfied with the coverage, and more so than for any other topic, highlighting how fraught it is for the news media to cover.

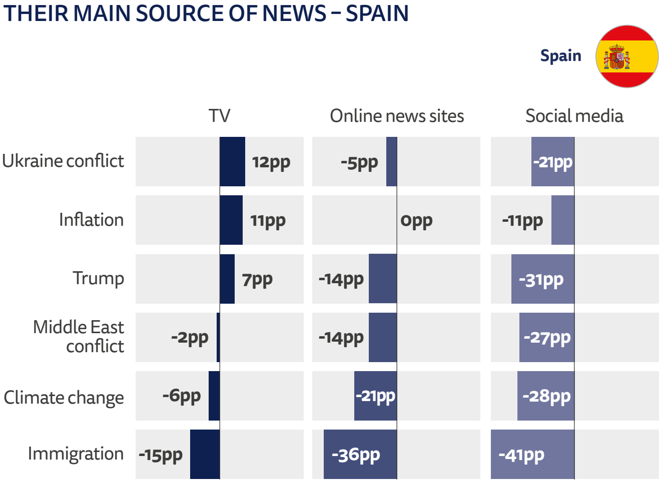
NET DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROPORTION WHO THINK THE NEWS MEDIA DO A GOOD JOB VERSUS A BAD JOB COVERING EACH STORY AMONG THOSE WHO ARE LEFT-LEANING AND RIGHT-LEANING POLITICALLY – UK



Q_BigStories. Thinking about the news media in your country, do you think they generally do a good job or a bad job of covering each of the following? *Base: Total UK sample = 2,052, left = 362; right = 280.*

These questions about big stories allow another illustration of the trust gap. Dissatisfaction about coverage is especially pronounced when people encounter news about these issues on social media. Looking at the Spanish data, among audiences for whom social media and video networks are their main source of news, attitudes are net negative for all of the big stories. Relatively speaking at least, audiences express improved levels of satisfaction if their main source of news is established online news sites and apps and are net positive about three of the six stories if their main source is TV news. These differences play out at the global level also, where people who use social media and video networks as their main source of news are more negative about coverage on each of the six stories.

NET DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROPORTION WHO THINK THE NEWS MEDIA DO A GOOD JOB VERSUS A BAD JOB COVERING EACH STORY AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM EACH IS THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF NEWS – SPAIN



Q_BigStories. Thinking about the news media in your country, do you think they generally do a good job or a bad job of covering each of the following? *Base: Total Spain sample = 2,008, TV main source of news = 752, online news sources main source of news = 400, social media main source of news = 432.*

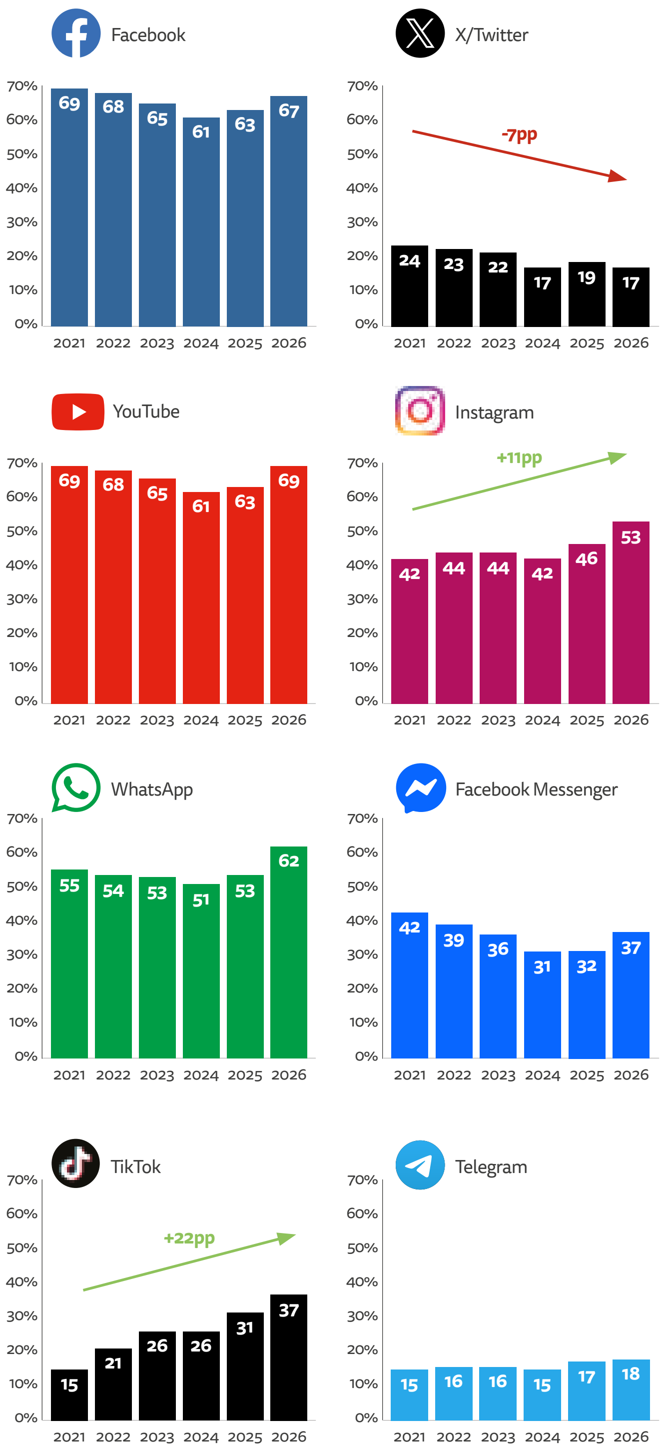
THE CONTINUED RISE OF VIDEO NETWORKS

We have already seen how social media and video networks are playing a bigger role in news consumption overall. To be more specific, the story is largely about the growing significance of video networks – Instagram and TikTok – alongside the more established role of YouTube.

In the five years since the pandemic, the percentage of global respondents saying they use TikTok for any purpose has grown from 15% to 37%. Although Instagram's growth has been slower than that of TikTok, Instagram is substantially bigger overall, with 53% of respondents globally saying they use Instagram for any purpose. This growth for TikTok and Instagram should not, however, obscure the fact that YouTube remains comfortably the biggest video-led network, with usage rates above 60% of all respondents globally throughout this decade. YouTube (69% this year) and Facebook (67%) have been neck and neck for the past five years.

These data reflecting the rise of these video-led networks echoes other analysis which has pointed to social media networks becoming less social. In October last year, John Burn-Murdoch at the *Financial Times* wrote, 'We have now witnessed the transformation of social media into anti-social media with the progressive disappearance of most people from active participation on the platforms and the steady displacement of real-world interactions by scrolling.'[11] As a result of people participating less actively on social media, less content is user-generated by people within networks. (See also Ofcom's 2026 media use and attitudes research for the UK.[12])

PROPORTION WHO USED EACH SOCIAL MEDIA OR VIDEO NETWORK FOR ANY PURPOSE – ALL MARKETS



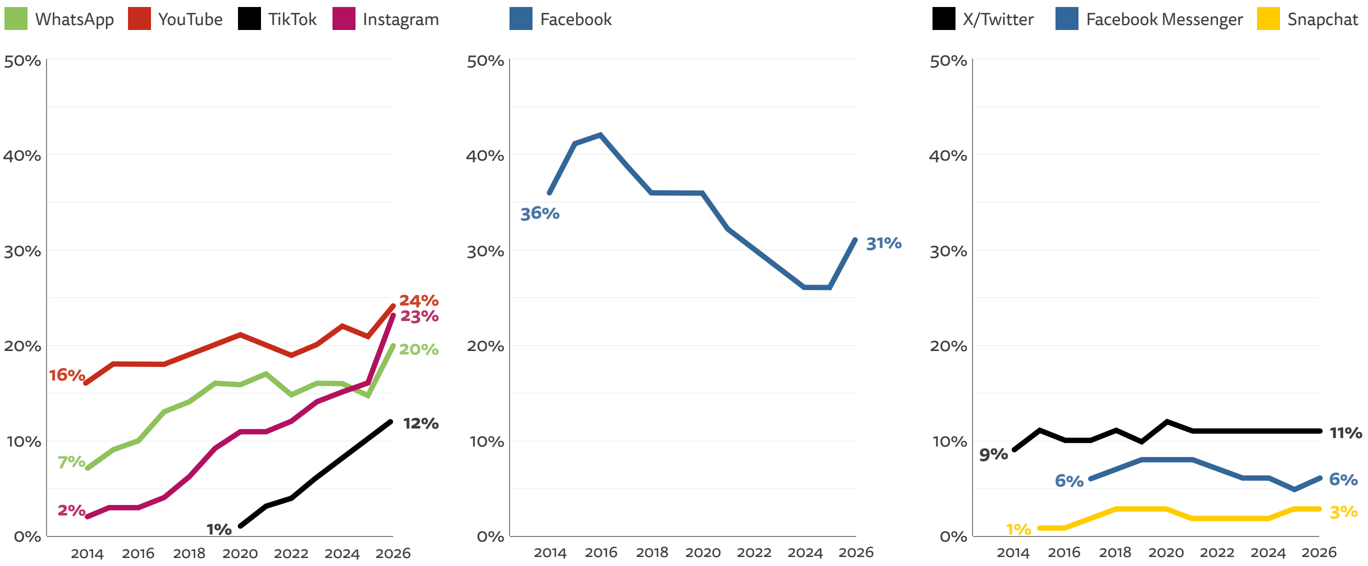
Q12A. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week for any purpose? *Base: Total sample in each market-year ≈ 2,000. Note: 2021–3 sample based on 46 markets, 2024 on 47 markets, 2025–6 on 48 markets. 2026 data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with 1,000 respondents per market.*

Similar growth patterns are evident at the global level when looking at the use of social media and video networks *for news*.

[11] https://www.ft.com/content/a0724dd9-0346-4df3-80f5-d6572c93a863
[12] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/media-habits-adults/passive-social-media-use-ai-companionship-and-online-side-hustles-uk-adults-media-and-online-lives-revealed

PROPORTION WHO USED EACH SOCIAL MEDIA OR VIDEO NETWORK FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS

Use for news growing | **Facebook also back to growth?** | **Use for news stagnant**



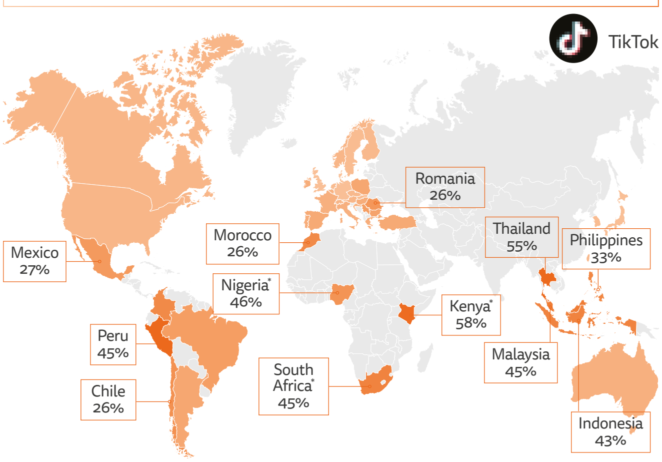
Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: Total sample in each country-year in UK, USA, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Brazil, Japan (2014–25). Australia and Ireland (2015–25) ≈ 2,000. Note: 2026 data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with 1,000 respondents per country.*

Zooming out to look back to when we started tracking data for these platforms, we can identify three different groups (note that data in the chart above are for a basket of 12 markets for which data is available over the period): WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have enjoyed sustained growth since 2014. Facebook, long the market leader, had been declining slowly but seems to have enjoyed a resurgence this year – again this may be due to Meta's decision to increase the volume of news content on the platform. Increases in news consumption for Facebook this year are especially pronounced among respondents aged 45 and above, with no statistically significant growth among those aged 18–24. Three platforms, X, Snapchat, and Facebook Messenger have not seen their usage for news change much since 2014.

PROPORTION WHO USED TIKTOK FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS

6% (Denmark) 58% (Kenya)

Darker colours represent higher levels of audience usage of TikTok for news.
Grey indicates markets not covered.



Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 1,000. Note: Data from a repoll conducted in March 2026. TikTok has been banned in India and does not operate in Hong Kong.*
** indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

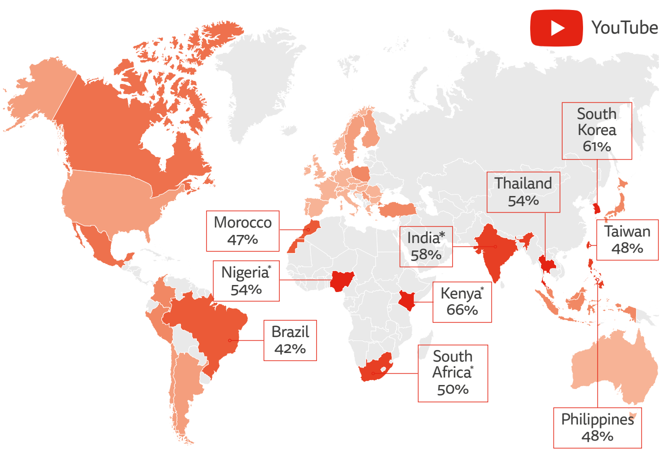
Although TikTok's role as a platform for news is more limited in markets like the US (10%) and the UK (7%), its impact elsewhere is much bigger. More than half of respondents in Thailand and Kenya use TikTok for news, with usage rates also above 40% in Peru, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Even higher usage for news is reported in countries such as India and Kenya for YouTube,[13] a more mature platform which has grown less since 2021, but remains by some distance the biggest video network for news around the world.

PROPORTION WHO USED YOUTUBE FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS

10% (Denmark) 66% (Kenya)

Darker colours represent higher levels of audience usage of YouTube for news.
Grey indicates markets not covered.

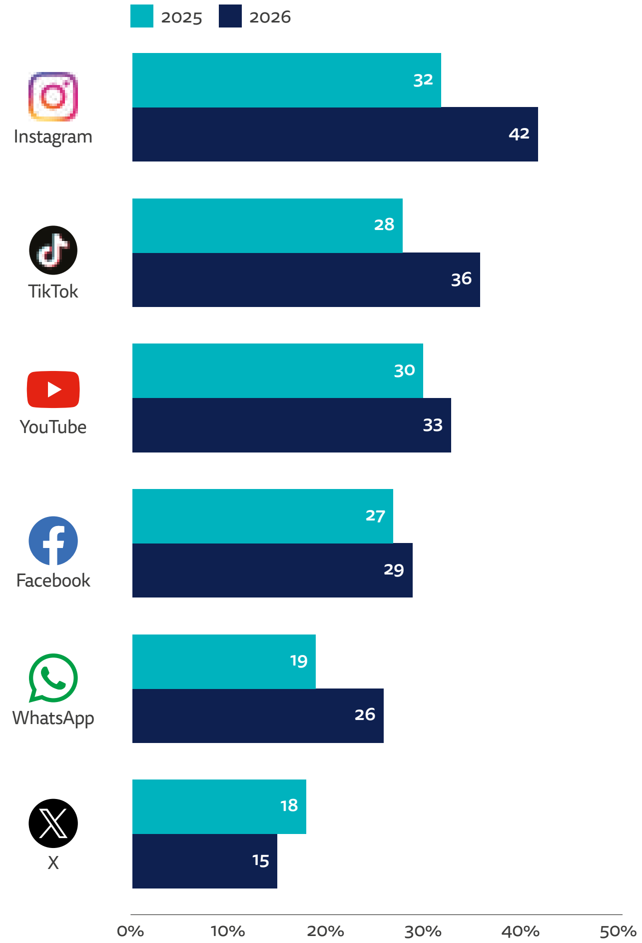


Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 1,000. Note: Data from a repoll conducted in March 2026. * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

[13] Note that TikTok is banned in India.

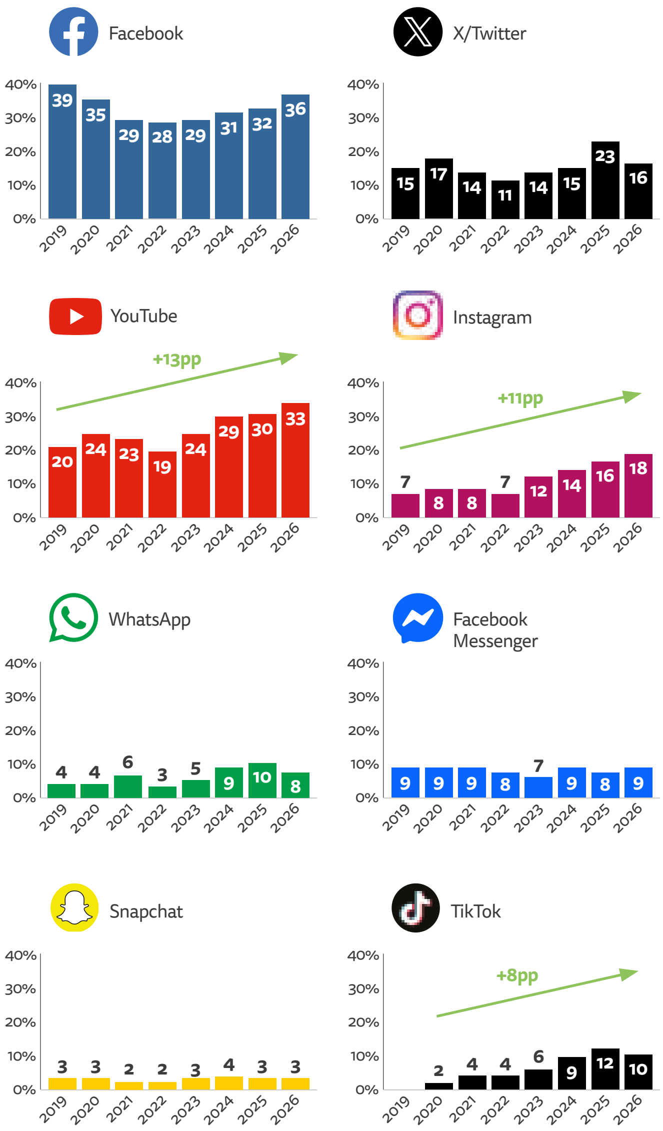
Among younger audiences, the more recent momentum has been with Instagram, which is now the biggest social platform for news among those aged 18–24, reaching 42% of this age group. The usage of X for news fell this year among 18–24s to 15%.

PROPORTION OF 18–24S WHO USED EACH FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS



Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: Total sample across all markets in 2025 = 97,055, 2026 = 49,285. Note: 2026 data from a repoll conducted in March 2026. TikTok has been banned in India and does not operate in Hong Kong.*

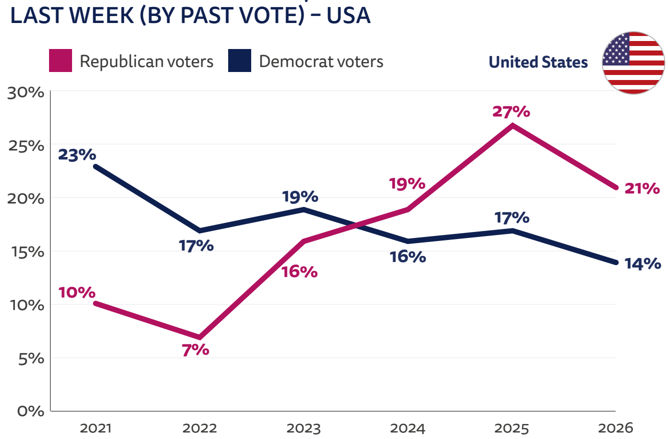
PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY USED EACH SOCIAL MEDIA OR VIDEO NETWORK FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – USA



Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: Total sample in each year ≈ 2,000. Note: 2026 data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with 1,068 respondents.*

For social media and video networks in the USA, the biggest change this year is a drop by 7pp in the use of X for news, although it is worth remembering that 2025's data will reflect a hectic news period in the USA, including Donald Trump's inauguration and Elon Musk's time leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) as it was called. The 2026 figure is roughly the same as for past years other than 2025. Leaving 2025 aside, the broader post-pandemic trend is that news audiences for X have grown on the political right and fallen among those on the left, although there is no question that X remains highly influential overall, particularly in the realms of politics, media, and public affairs. Looking ahead, how TikTok's fortunes in the USA are affected by its sale to a US-led consortium will be something to watch in 2027 – the platform appears to have lost some of its popularity among American users in the run-up to the sale.

PROPORTION WHO USED X/TWITTER FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK (BY PAST VOTE) – USA

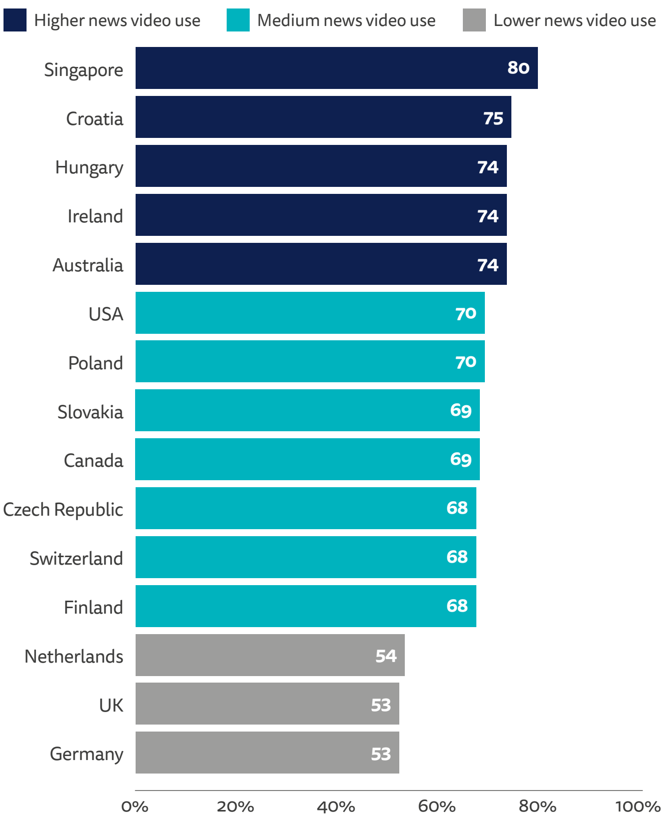


Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing, or discussing news in the last week? *Base: All in each year who most recently voted Republican ≈ 650, Democrat ≈ 650. Note: 2026 data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with 332 Democrat voters and 313 Republican voters.*

As the usage of video-led networks such as TikTok and Instagram grows, alongside the existing scale and reach of YouTube, so we should expect the consumption of news video online to grow accordingly. We reported last year on the shifting format preferences in many markets towards video and this shows no signs of stopping in 2026, although there are variations by platform in terms of where this growth is happening.

Globally, 77% of respondents now say they consume online news video. There were large year-on-year increases in markets such as Denmark (up 9pp), Australia (up 7pp), and Portugal (up 6pp). As a result of growth in Germany and the UK,[14] another significant milestone was reached this year. For the first time, a majority of respondents now say they watch news online in every single market we cover, whether on news websites and apps or on social media and video networks.

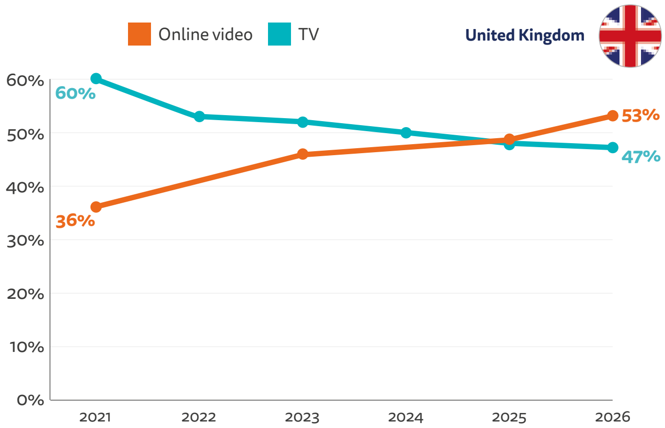
PROPORTION WHO WATCHED AN ONLINE NEWS-RELATED VIDEO IN THE PAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS



Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

As the popularity of online news video grows and the reach of broadcast television news wanes, watching news online has now overtaken watching TV news almost everywhere. This line was crossed in the United Kingdom in 2026, meaning the UK joins 44 other markets where this shift has already occurred. Broadcast TV news is still watched by more people than online news video in only three markets – the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany. It should be remembered that this is a measure of the proportion of people who say they watch news online and on TV each week – actual minutes watched may well still be higher for television news. We should also keep in mind that our online survey data slightly over-represents online use, and under-represents offline use, and more so in markets with relatively low levels of internet penetration.

PROPORTION WHO WATCHED AN ONLINE NEWS-RELATED VIDEO COMPARED WITH PROPORTION WHO USE TV AS A SOURCE OF NEWS – UK

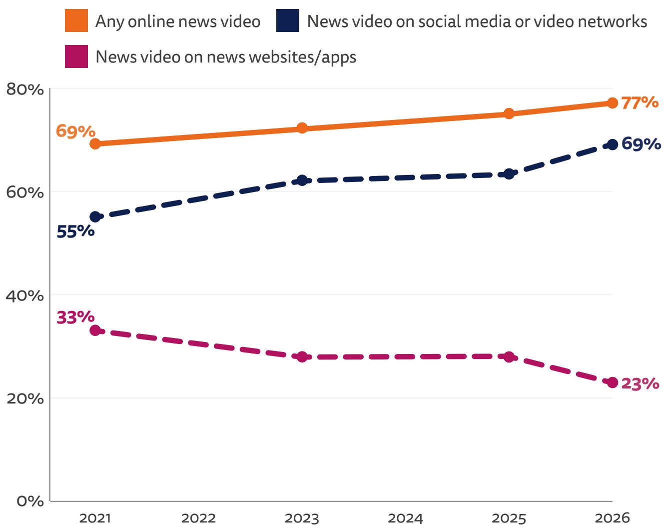


Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? **Q3.** Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? *Base: Total sample in each year ≈ 2,000.*

fall in on-site news publisher video consumption since 2021

Crucially, growth in online video is overwhelmingly taking place on third-party platforms. Despite strong audience appetite for digital video, established news organisations have struggled to capture a commensurate share of this viewing on their own properties. At a global level, watching video on owned and operated news websites and apps in fact fell last year by 5pp to 23%. Despite the prominent role that the enthusiasm for online video has played in driving the growth of video networks, it is striking that video consumption on news websites and apps is falling in absolute terms. (It is important to acknowledge that we cannot capture the share of third-party video consumption which is accounted for by content from established news media in our research – for some publishers this will have been growing significantly.)

PROPORTION WHO WATCHED A NEWS-RELATED ONLINE VIDEO IN THE PAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS



Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? *Base: Total sample in each market-year ≈ 2,000. Note: 2021–3 sample based on 46 markets, 2024 on 47 markets, 2025–6 on 48 markets.*

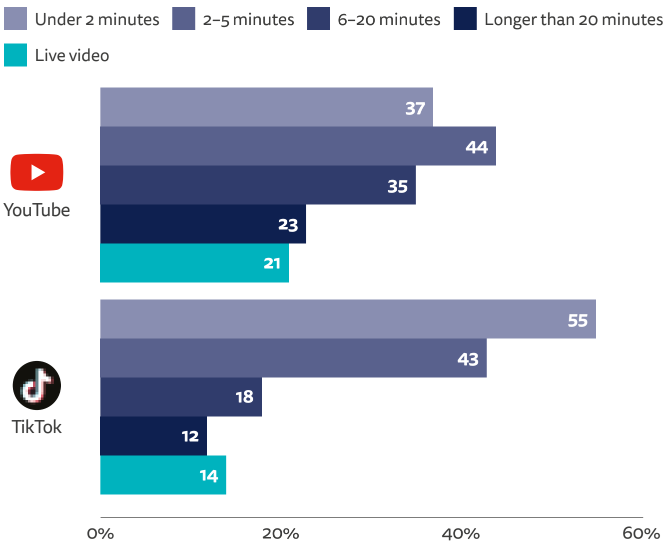
[14] Prior to 2026 consumption of online video was last measured in Germany in 2023 when the figure was 45%.

Given the popularity of platforms like TikTok and Instagram, there has been lots of focus recently on short-form videos in particular, and many publisher video strategies have been focused on 'shorts'.

Online video is not just short-form. Luzu TV, one of Argentina's most popular YouTube TV news channels with over 3m subscribers

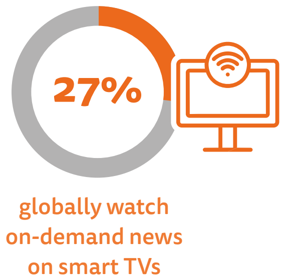
Our data show that the duration of news videos watched differs markedly by platform, with TikTok evidently skewing towards videos of less than two minutes. YouTube supports a wider range of video durations, from short clips to full-length programmes. At the global level, 21% of respondents who say they access news on YouTube watch live news.

PROPORTION WHO WATCHED EACH TYPE OF NEWS-RELATED ONLINE VIDEO IN THE PAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS



Q11_VIDEO_2026. You say you access news videos on <platform> … Which of the following have you accessed in the last week? *Base: All across all markets who accessed news video on YouTube = 26,052, TikTok = 17,290. Note: TikTok has been banned in India and does not operate in Hong Kong.*

Importantly, the growth of online video is not purely a mobile phenomenon. As well as watching videos on smartphones, some people are also choosing to watch news video on their internet-connected smart TVs. In the United States, YouTube is now in direct competition for TV audience attention with both legacy cable TV groups like Warner Bros. Discovery as well as streaming giants such as Netflix. But this is not solely an American trend and several other apps offer both live and on-demand news in addition to YouTube (such as Haystack, Tubi, and Plex).



Our data show that half of all respondents globally say they use a smart TV to watch news, whether broadcast or on-demand. Of news audiences across 27 markets, 27% say they are using third-party apps like YouTube and others to watch news on TV. This is of course a highly competitive, intermediated distribution channel, but is now a significant one for traditional TV news broadcasters to consider.

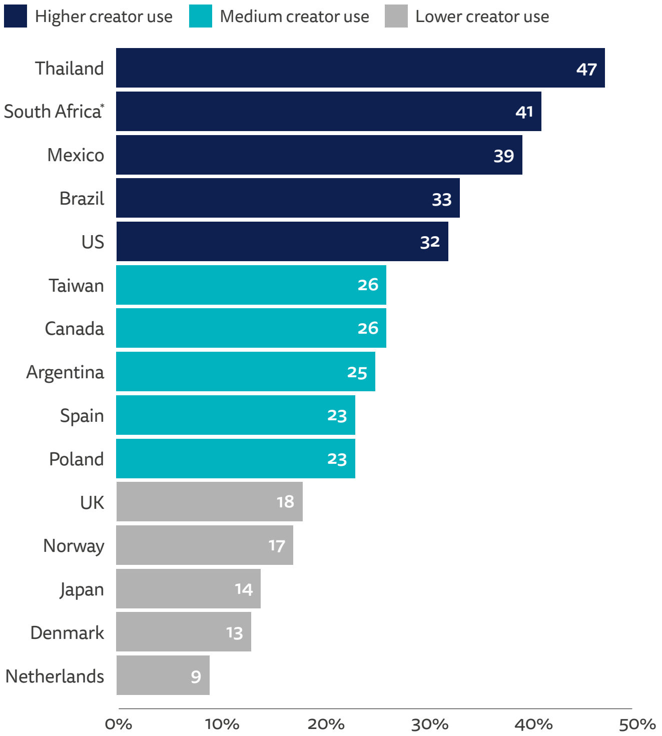
For further analysis on the role and implications of online video see section 2.2 From Broadcast News to Streaming and Platforms: The Changing Landscape of News Video

CREATORS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE GROWTH IN ONLINE VIDEO

The shift from on-platform towards off-platform consumption of online news and towards the consumption of video on these third-party sites is accompanied, and partly fuelled by, the emergence of independent news creators or influencers (we use these terms interchangeably: Newman et al. 2025).

News influencers now play a visible role in the news landscape: 27% of respondents say they encountered news content from news influencers or creators in the past week. This figure reflects content from creators dedicated to producing news content (e.g. HugoDécrypte in France or Philip DeFranco in the USA). If we also include consumption of content from creators who are more broadly focused on entertainment but sometimes talk about current affairs (e.g. Penguinz0, a long-established YouTuber originally best known for gaming, now a more general internet commentator) the figure increases to 46%.

PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS FROM CREATORS OR INFLUENCERS FOCUSED ON NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS



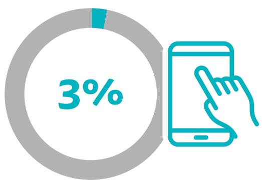
Q_Creators1_2026. In the last week, have you consumed news from any of the following? This could be on social and video networks (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), web portal (e.g. Substack), or podcast, etc. – Individual creators or influencers who mainly focus on news. *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Creators seem to be most popular in global-majority countries, with markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America generally making up the top ten. Impact so far is lowest in Europe and Japan, reflecting the fact that creator use is associated with use of social media and video networks for news (and this is lower in Europe and Japan). However, it is worth noting creator usage in line with the global average in European markets with significant press freedom challenges such as Hungary and Serbia, a reminder of the role creators can play as independent voices in countries where mainstream journalism operates under constraints.

Is this growth of creator news consumption coming at the expense of traditional news providers? Our data this year appear to suggest this is generally not the case. Most people who are getting news from creators are doing so in a way that is complementary to their existing news habits.

Creators having an impact even in countries where their usage is relatively low. Dutch creator, Bender (centre), at the Netherlands' Golden Televizier Ring Gala 2025

To inject some new data into the industry, academic, and policy debate about the rise of news influencers,[15] we asked questions this year to establish the scale of creator consumption for news, as measured in terms of the extent to which creator content meets audiences' news needs. At the global level, of the 27% of respondents who say they consume news from creators who *mainly* focus on news, 47% of these people say that most or all of their news needs are met by these news creators. This equates to 13% of people globally who, at least in theory, feel mainly satisfied with news from creators alone (though in practice they may still be consuming news from other sources to go beyond their needs). The chart on the next page shows wide variation. Assuming that people who do not use creators are having none of their needs met by them, in the Netherlands only 2% of people have most or all their news needs met by creators who mainly focus on news, rising to 19% in Mexico and as much as 34% among English-speaking online audiences in Nigeria. The other way of thinking about this 13% global average is that 87% of people around the world have none or only some of their news needs met by news-focused creators and mainly rely on other sources. Moreover, to reinforce the point about complementarity, reach for the online news brands we ask about in each market is higher among people who get some of their news from creators than it is for the population overall – this is true for markets where creator use is highest (Nigeria and Kenya) and also lowest (Denmark and the Netherlands).[16]

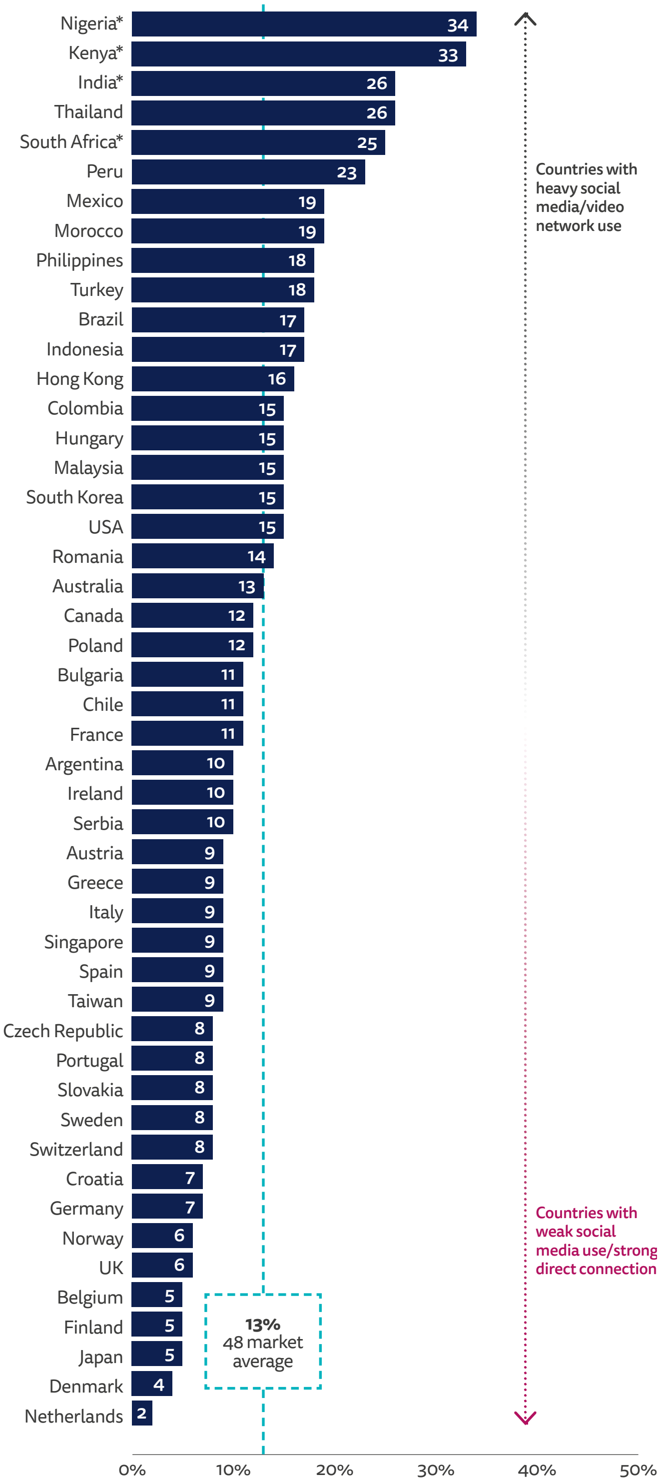


Share of people who only get news from creators

The share of people globally who say they have all their news needs met by news-focused creators is currently only 3% and in practice these individuals might still be consuming other news sources.

[15] E.g. in Spain an updated law on 'rectification' (the right of an individual to have false or inaccurate information about them corrected by the person or organisation that publishes it), which includes online influencers with large followings, is currently going through the legislative process. https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/paginas/2026/20260113-council-press-conference.aspx
[16] With the exception of Ekstra Bladet online in Denmark.

PROPORTION WHO SAY MOST OR ALL OF THEIR NEWS NEEDS ARE MET BY CREATORS WHO FOCUS ON NEWS – ALL MARKETS



Q_Creators3_2026. You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs are met by these creators or influencers? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: Those that do not use creators are coded as having none of their needs met by them. * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

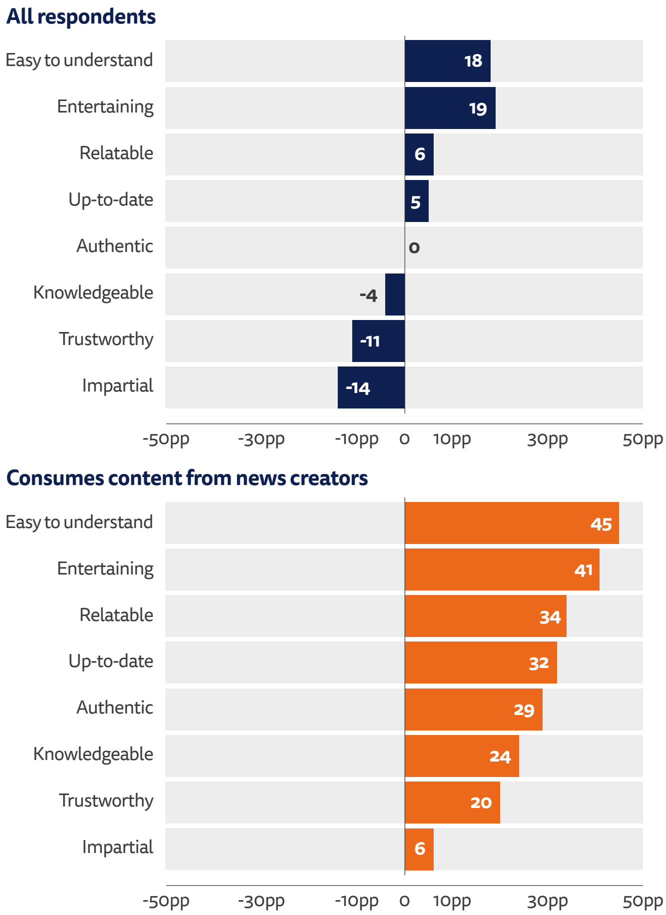
News publishers are at pains to understand in detail what it is about creators which explains their recent popularity and what can be learned from them to increase the appeal of mainstream news to audiences, especially younger ones. We asked respondents this year how they think news from creators compares to traditional news providers.

> ***If it's just one YouTuber who shared something, I'm not as engaged. But if it's someone who's clearly done research and is talking about a specific topic, then I actually get more out of it. They often go deeper into one thing than traditional media does, because the news has to cover so many things at once.***
> *Male, 28, Norway, News Definitions project*

In headline terms, audiences tend to see creators as more entertaining and engaging, but less trustworthy and less impartial than established outlets – but there are important differences between respondent groups. When measured on the basis of all audiences, traditional outlets are considered stronger than creators in 'core' news values areas such as impartiality and trustworthiness. People who use creators for at least some of their news consumption have the same relative ranking for attributes but in fact prefer creators on each characteristic we asked about.

> ***They share news, but they share it in a way that's concise and easy to follow. I feel confident the information is correct, and it doesn't feel like someone talking down to you. It's more relatable than watching someone in a suit behind a desk.***
> *Female, 48, US, News Definitions project*

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS CREATORS ARE MORE OR LESS OF EACH COMPARED WITH TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA – ALL MARKETS



Q_Creators4_2026_1. Comparing content from news creators or news influencers with traditional news brands and outlets, would you say that news creators or news influencers are more or less of the following. *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520, those who used a news-focused creator for news in the last week = 26,780.*

The creator landscape continues to evolve rapidly. There are considerable variations between markets, between types of creators, and people who consume them. The 3% of people who have all their needs met by creators are likely to be less interested in news overall and to rely on more partisan influencer voices. For the vast majority, however, creator consumption for now at least is a complementary rather than a substitutive practice and evidently there are lessons for legacy media in the formats, storytelling techniques, and modes of audience engagement that creators have refined.

This is a fast-moving part of the news media sector. High rates of entry into and exit from the creator space are likely, reflecting the difficulty some individuals experience of sustaining high levels of content production, in adapting to platform changes, and building a viable business. At the same time the nature of the creator sector is changing; the most successful creators are professionalising, evolving from sole operators into small – and sometimes substantial – media businesses. This blurs the boundary between alternative and established media, as illustrated by the sale of Bari Weiss's The Free Press to CBS for an estimated US$150m. And as big media brands such as Schibsted in the Nordics, the *Daily Mail* and the *Independent* in the UK, and the *Washington Post* and many others in the US set up their own 'creator labs', the dividing line between conventional and alternative news media will only become more blurred. In the words of Tyler Denk, CEO of popular email newsletter platform Beehiiv used by many news creators, 'The creator use case and the enterprise use case are going to merge quicker than most people expect.'[17]

'Aburna's Boat' is a new creator-style interview format from regional Danish public broadcaster TV2 Kosmopol

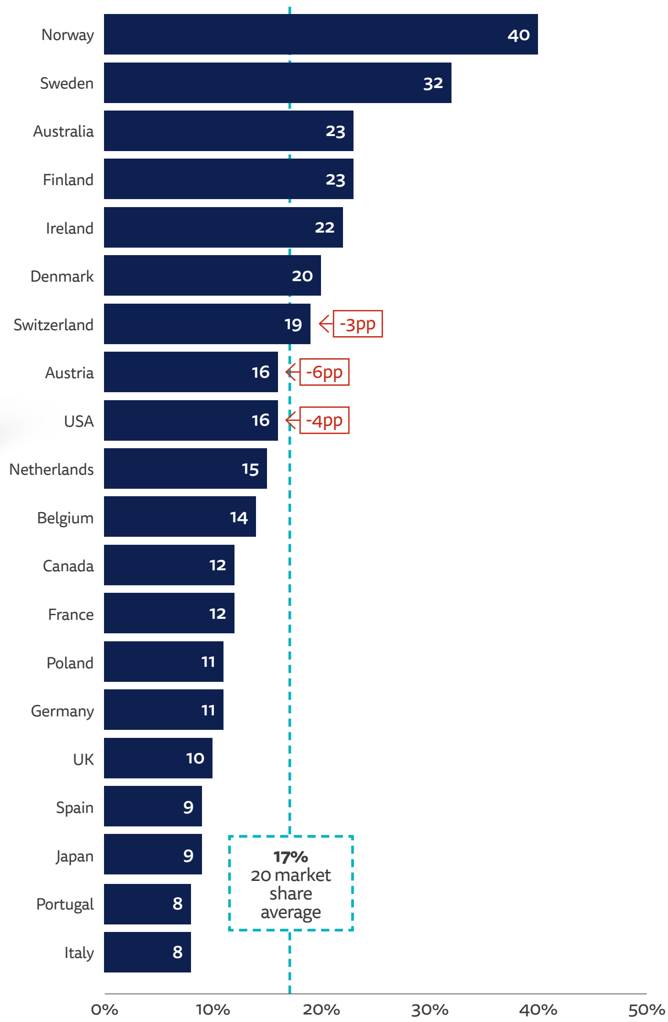
For further analysis on who is using creators for news and who these creators are see section 2.3 How News Creators are Impacting Politics and Media Around the World

PAYING FOR NEWS

What does the shift in the balance of news consumption towards third-party platforms mean for the commercial prospects of news businesses that make reader revenue a strategic priority? Once again this year there is little change in the overall proportion of respondents who say they are paying for news, with 10–20% appearing to represent a ceiling in most markets – Norway (40%) and Sweden (32%) remain the outliers. Across the 'pay basket' of 20 countries we track (where paywalls are relatively common and the concept of paying for online news is understood), the percentage of people paying for news stayed roughly the same on 17% (compared to 18% in 2025). A large drop was recorded in Austria (-6pp), although this was largely a reversal of an unexpected increase in 2025, and there was a 4pp fall in the United States,[18] and a 3pp reduction in Switzerland.

This stagnation of reader revenue growth in part will reflect the long-term decline in the use of owned news sites and apps, which have lost 12pp of reach since 2021, shrinking the top of the subscription funnel. With fewer new visitors coming to sites, publishers are increasingly focused on retaining existing subscribers and ARPU (average revenue per user) optimisation in addition to exploring innovative ways – such as bundling – of attracting new subscribers. The Q4 2025 results of the *New York Times* indicate that the share of its subscribers just paying for access to news fell from 17% to 12% last year.[19] The majority pay for a bundle which includes other content, like puzzles and cooking.

PROPORTION WHO HAVE PAID FOR ANY ONLINE NEWS IN THE LAST YEAR – SELECTED COUNTRIES



Q7a. Have you paid for ONLINE news content, or accessed a paid for ONLINE news service in the last year? (This could be digital subscription, combined digital/print subscription, or one-off payment for an article or app or e-edition). *Base: Total sample in each country ≈ 2,000. Note: US data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with ≈ 1,000 respondents.*

Ireland and Australia are the only two countries outside the Nordics where more than 20% of people now pay for news. They are also the two countries where paying for news has grown the most since 2020, up by 10pp and 9pp respectively. This progress in Ireland is at least partly explained by a 'market move' of all four of the major quality Irish newspapers over the past decade to introduce paid models. The achievement of Nordic levels of paying for news in Ireland is notable given that free content from not just one but two public service media entities (RTÉ and the BBC) features in the top five online news sources in Ireland.

17 https://www.therebooting.com/p/email-as-infrastructure
18 These changes should be interpreted with caution as they may be the result of the uncertainty and error associated with survey sampling.
19 https://nytco-assets.nytimes.com/2026/03/The-New-York-Times-Company-2025-Annual-Report.pdf

24-hour news channel SIC Noticias (Portugal) launched a bundled subscription with the *New York Times* which also features adaptive switching between vertical and horizontal live video

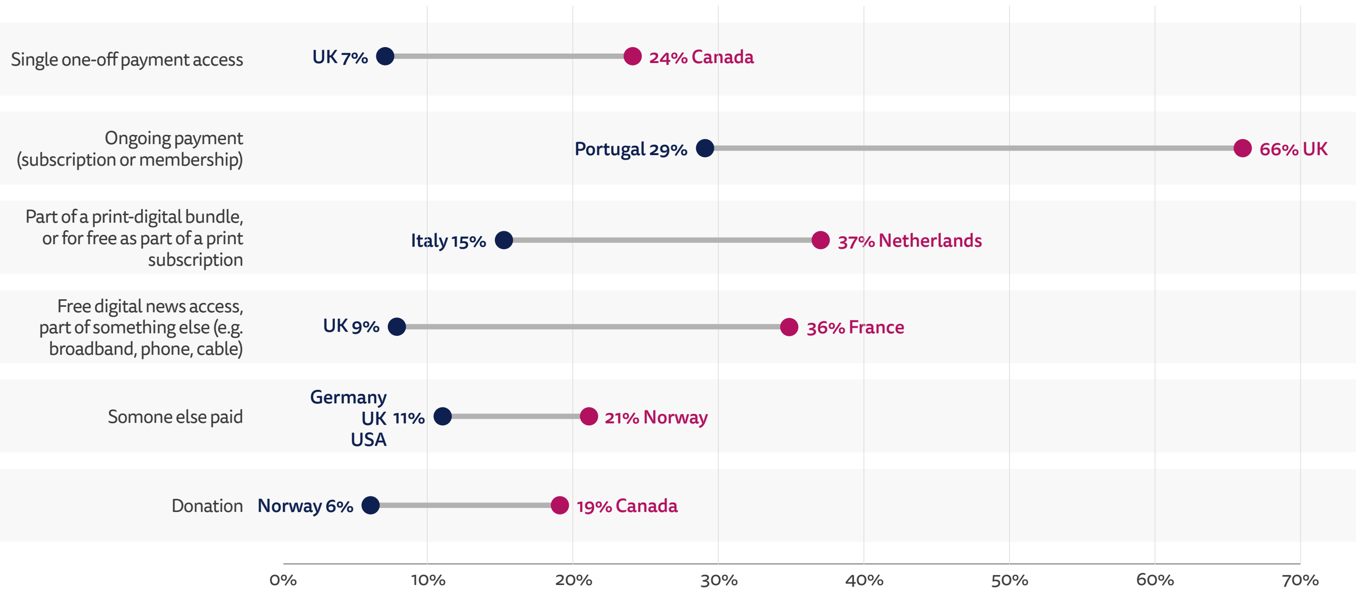
When we ask people if they pay for access to online news we also ask those who say 'yes' to tell us about the forms of payment for access, including whether individuals get access for free – either as part of a bundle with something else, or because in fact somebody else paid. It is important to remember that people could select more than one option. The data show a wide range of answers. For example, in the UK – a market where 10% of people say they pay for news – we find the highest percentage (66%) of people on our survey who say they pay by way of ongoing subscription or membership and the lowest percentage (7%) of people who say that they have made a one-off payment to access news. The Netherlands is where the highest share of people say they get online access as part of a print subscription, while France is where the largest percentage of people say they get free access as part of something else such as a broadband subscription. Norway is the market where the highest share of people say that someone else paid for their access and it is in Canada where the highest proportion say they have made a one-off payment for news and it is also the highest in terms of making donations to support a digital news service – this final data point is likely to be related to people's motivations to pay for news (see below).

Although paying for news is not growing in most places at the headline level, we wanted to understand more about the diversity of reader revenue by asking respondents about the types of organisations they have a paying relationship with. Among those who pay for online news, 56% across the 20 markets in our pay basket pay money to a traditional news organisation, but there are notable variations – in the UK, 80% of all reader revenue goes to this type of news business. Although the total level of paying for news is relatively low in the UK, it seems that established news brands have been relatively successful in capturing a high share of people willing to pay for news and, as mentioned above, getting people to pay ongoing subscriptions or memberships.

Asiastudio, a subscription-based digital video start-up recently launched in Finland featuring high-profile Finnish news commentators

In neighbouring France the corresponding figure for the share of reader revenue going to traditional media is only 39%. France (34%) is one of a number of countries (Australia is another at 35%) where financial support for digital-born online news outlets is significantly higher than the average – Mediapart is probably the best-known example, with almost 250,000 subscribers.[20] In line with the popularity of aggregators generally in east Asia, paying relationships with aggregators are relatively high in Japan (34%), and in South Korea and Hong Kong around half of respondents who pay for news pay aggregators.

RANGE OF PROPORTION OF PEOPLE PAYING FOR NEWS MAKING EACH FORM OF PAYMENT – SELECTED MARKETS

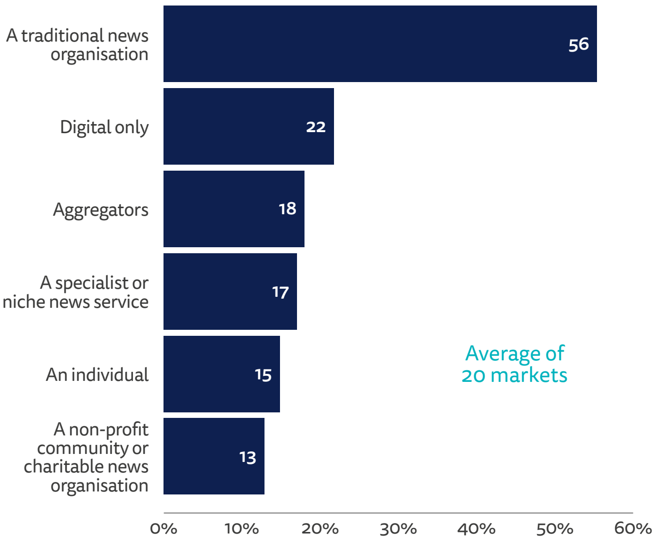


Q7ai. You said you have accessed paid for ONLINE news content in the last year … Which, if any, of the following ways have you used to pay for ONLINE news content in the last year? Please select all that apply. *Base: All who pay for news in each of 20 selected markets, ranging from 860 in Norway to 176 in Italy. Note: US data from a repoll conducted in March 2026 with ≈ 1,000 respondents (Base = 152).*

[20] https://www.20minutes.fr/arts-stars/medias/4142978-20250311-mediapart-site-investigation-annee-2024-celle-tous-records

When it comes to individuals generating at least some of their revenue from audience members, this is an area of the news creator domain where text plays a bigger role than video (YouTube and TikTok creators tend to rely on a mix of advertising revenue shares, direct sponsorships, and paid promotions). For news creators and commentators, platforms such as Substack and Beehiiv offer a route to reader revenue income, and in markets like Canada (29%) and the United States (21%) above-average percentages of people pay individuals. Some of the most successful in this category include Heather Cox Richardson, with more than 2.5 million Substack subscribers,[21] and Aaron Parnas, who has successfully leveraged a large footprint on TikTok to a paid relationship with over 615,000 subscribers on Substack.[22]

PROPORTION OF ONLINE NEWS PAYERS WHO HAVE PAID MONEY TO EACH TYPE OF ORGANISATION IN THE PAST YEAR – SELECTED MARKETS



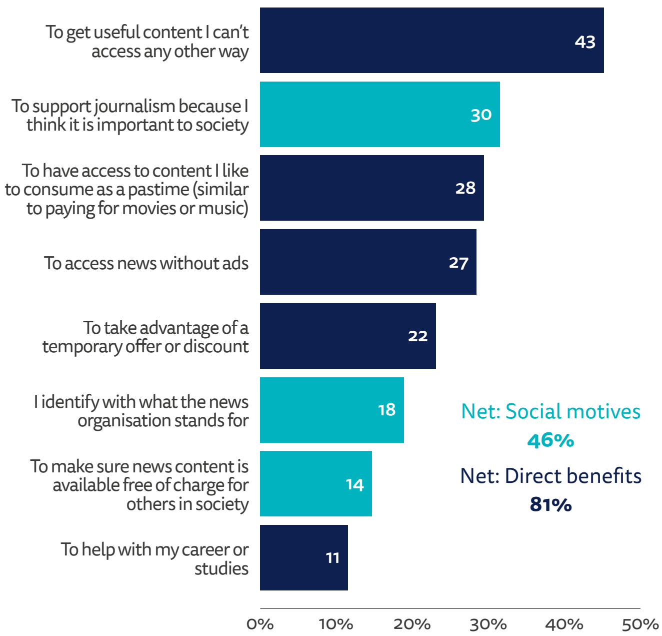
Q7_2026_type. You said that you have paid for access to online news in the last year … Which of the following types of news organisations or individuals have you paid money to? *Base: Those that have paid for online news in selected markets = 5,709.*

We tried to understand more about motivations this year by asking respondents why they pay for news. The most popular response on average was perhaps the most obvious one ('to get useful content I can't access any other way'), underscoring the imperative of genuinely distinctive, unique content for publishers' revenue strategies. Other common personal or transactional motivations for paying included having 'access to content I like to consume as a pastime'. But social or values-based rationales also play a role – the second most popular motivation was 'to support journalism because I think it is important to society'. Of people paying for news, 46% said these social or values-based motivations were part of their motivation for paying. Intriguingly, the Nordic markets, which are in the leading group of countries where people pay for news, all feature among the markets where 'supporting journalism because I think it is important to society' ranks lowest as a motivation. These Nordic markets are much more likely to cite direct benefits as their rationale for paying for news.

It is interesting to draw a contrast between the two countries which sit at opposite ends of the motivational spectrum – Finland and Canada. In Finland, paying for news is overwhelmingly driven by direct personal benefits. Of people paying for news, 86% cite at least one direct benefit and a majority (52%) specifically say they pay to get access to content they cannot find elsewhere. By contrast, social or values-based motivations are relatively weak. In Finland, paying for news is understood primarily as a functional transaction – a way to secure access to valuable or exclusive content.

Canada presents a different picture, one with a much stronger role of social and values-based motivations. Of Canadians paying for news, 63% cite at least one social motive, nearly double Finland's level. This divergence suggests a structural difference: in Finland, payment is necessary and habitual, people describe it in terms of utility. In Canada, where paying is about half the level of Finland's overall, payment may be a more conscious, value-laden choice, leading people to articulate it in civic and moral terms rather than purely practical ones.

PROPORTION OF ONLINE NEWS PAYERS WHO SAY EACH IS A MOTIVATION FOR PAYING – SELECTED MARKETS

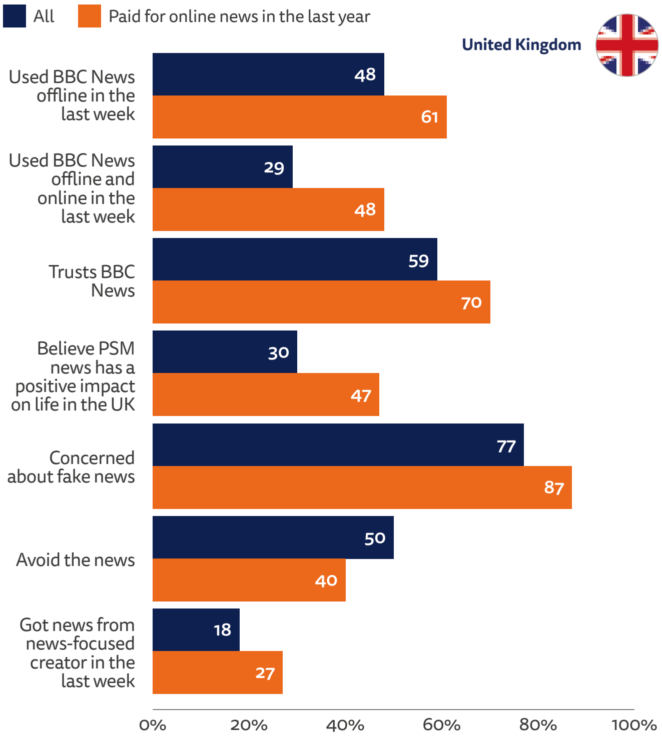


Q7_2026_motivation1. You said that you have paid for access to online news in the last year … Which of the following, if any, describes why you pay for online news? *Base: Those that have paid for online news themselves in the last year in selected markets = 5,729.*

Finally, it is useful to remember how more-engaged paying audiences differ from society on average. Although paying for news probably does not cause these differences, in the UK as an example, people who pay for news are more concerned about fake news, less likely to avoid the news, and more likely to consume at least some news from creators. People who pay for news in the UK have a more positive attitude than average to the BBC, trust the BBC more, and use the BBC more both online and broadcast than the typical Briton.

[21] https://time.com/collections/time100-creators-2025/7299128/heather-cox-richardson/
[22] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron_Parnas

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE WHO PAY FOR ONLINE NEWS COMPARED TO ALL RESPONDENTS – UK



Q5a. Which of the following brands have you used to access news offline in the last week (via TV, radio, print, and other traditional media)? **Q6_2018_trust_rb_1.** How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. – BBC News. **Q_PSM_Attitude.** Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. BBC) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? **Q_FAKE_NEWS_1.** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement. 'Thinking about online news, I am concerned about what is real and what is fake on the internet.' **Q1di_2017.** Do you find yourself actively trying to avoid news these days? **Q_Creators1_2026.** In the last week, have you consumed news from any of the following? This could be on social and video networks (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), web portal (e.g. Substack), or podcast, etc. *Base: Total sample = 2,052, those that have paid for online news themselves in the last year = 200.*

This year's findings point to a reader revenue market that is no longer expanding in aggregate, but continues to evolve dynamically. For many publishers, subscriber volumes are no longer growing significantly, with revenue gains increasingly driven by pricing and product mix rather than new subscriber acquisition. The USA Today Co. provides a concrete example of this focus on increasing average revenue per user – they reported a drop of total subscribers of 30% during 2025, while seeing ARPU increase by 27% over the same period as a result of churn reduction measures such as an end to heavy discounting.[23]
In short, the ceiling on paying for news may not be rising, but the ways in which value is created within that ceiling are becoming more varied. And although usage of owned and operated news properties may be declining, it is likely that those traffic reductions are concentrated among infrequent users least likely to convert to paying audience members.

Beneath the low growth headline the picture is certainly more nuanced. Some major news companies such as News Corp Australia, the Globe & Mail (Canada), and Le Monde (France) continue to enjoy sustained reader revenue momentum.[24]
Several smaller and mid-sized publishers are also reporting growth in paying audiences. In Central and Eastern Europe, highly focused pay strategies have been successfully executed by companies like Dennik N (Slovakia) and Telegram (Croatia), while The Mill Media in the UK has built a network of local titles supported primarily by reader revenue, reaching around 13,000 paying subscribers for local news across six cities.

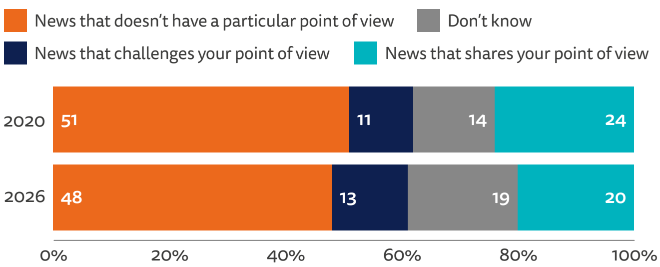
What emerges from this year's data is a market characterised less by uniform growth than by increasing differentiation. A few publishers are succeeding by focusing on scale, others through depth of engagement, and others still through a strong sense of mission or identity. The challenge remains how to sustain and deepen relationships with audiences in an environment where overall willingness to pay is no longer growing. In that context, this year's numbers are perhaps best understood not as a single narrative about success or failure, but as a set of signals about the different ways in which reader revenue can take shape across markets, products, and audiences.

DO PEOPLE STILL BELIEVE IN IMPARTIAL NEWS?

Despite unease with both the state of the world and the way it is reported, audiences continue to endorse core journalistic values. This year we revisited attitudes towards impartiality and asked people whether they prefer news which doesn't have a particular point of view, news that shares their point of view, or news that challenges their point of view.

> ***News should be without points of view and without any bias so that each person can form their own judgement.***
> *Female, 56, Mexico (answer to open-ended question)*

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW IN 2020 AND 2026 – SELECTED MARKETS



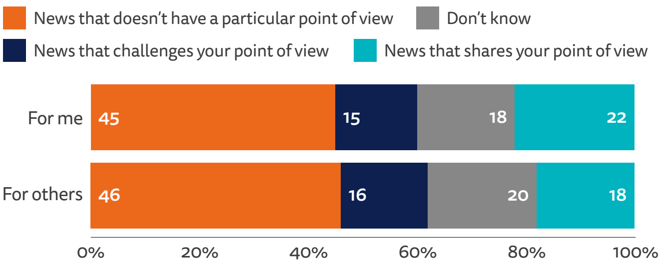
Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer …? Base: Total sample across selected markets in 2020 = 80,155, 2026 = 81,309. Note: *Data for 2026 comes from the 40 countries included in the 2020 survey.*

Opinions about this aspect of impartiality are little changed from when we last asked this question six years ago (there is a 3pp drop from 51% to 48% among people who think it is preferable to consume news that does not have a particular point of view), suggesting enduring support for this ideal even as consumption habits evolve and polarising pressures continue to have an effect. Interestingly, the proportion of people saying they prefer news that shares their point of view fell by 4pp to 20% – in part because more people now respond with 'don't know'.

In addition to asking about personal preferences, we also asked people this year whether they believe others in society should consume news from sources that do not take sides. A clear plurality believes that a news diet drawn from non-partisan sources is desirable, both for the individuals themselves and for others.

[23] https://pressgazette.co.uk/paywalls/biggest-subscription-news-websites-2026/
[24] https://pressgazette.co.uk/paywalls/biggest-subscription-news-websites-2026/; https://flashesandflames.com/2025/07/10/le-monde-booms-by-adding-journos/

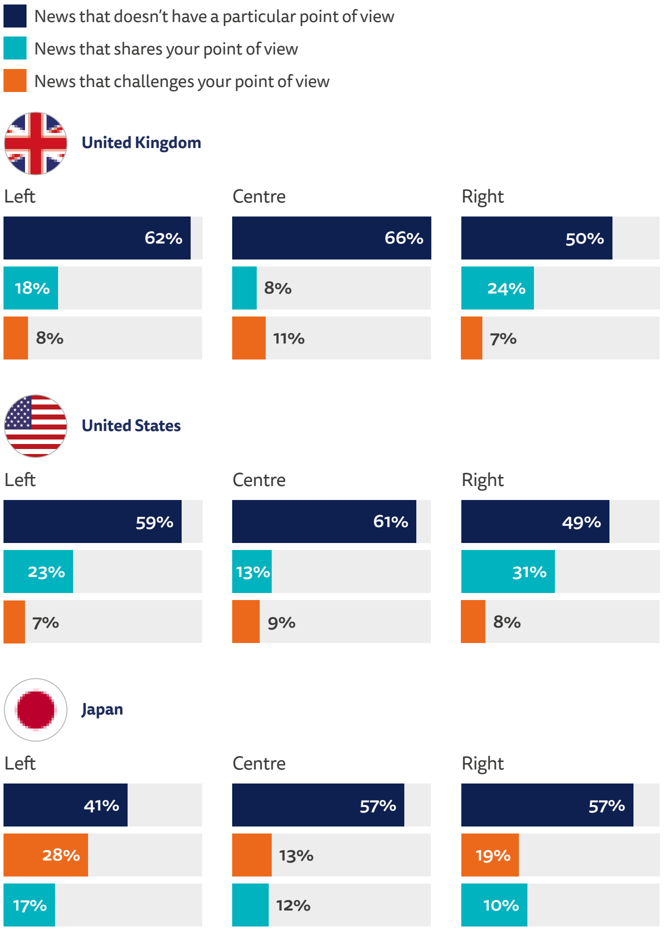
PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR OTHERS IN SOCIETY – ALL MARKETS[25]



Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer …? **Q5c_2013_2026.** Thinking about the different kinds of news available, do you think other people in society should mainly …? *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520.*

Nevertheless, some variations emerge if we look at the data by political leaning. Under this analysis, respondents on both the left and right of the political spectrum in both the US and the UK show a somewhat greater preference for news from sources which share their point of view, with people on the right in these two countries showing relatively lower support for news which does not have a particular point of view. But these variations are not universal. In Japan, people on the left show relatively lower support for news which does not take sides.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW (BY POLITICAL LEANING) – UK, USA, AND JAPAN



Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer …? **Q1F.** Some people talk about 'left', 'right', and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale? *Base: Left/centre/right in UK = 362/1,023/280, US = 452/873/478, Japan = 86/1225/288.*

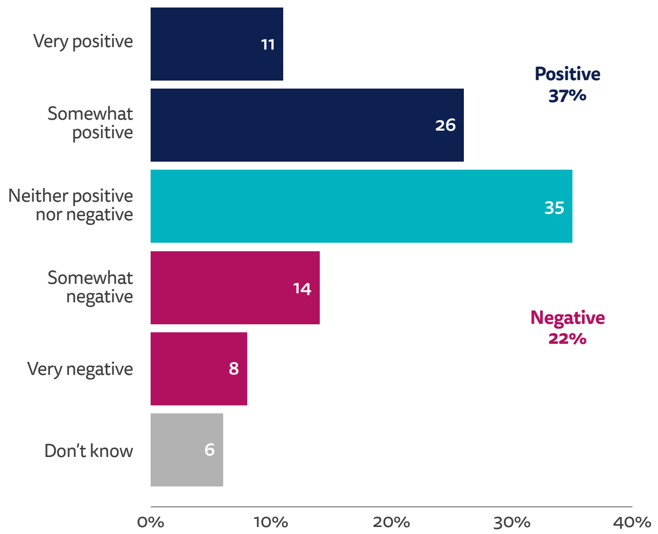
> ***I prefer news sources that align with my point of view because they save time, reduce confusion, and help me focus on information that fits my values and goals. I believe others should do the same, as it keeps people engaged and allows them to make clearer, more confident decisions, while still being open to other perspectives when necessary.***
> *Male, 31, UK (answer to open-ended question)*

For further analysis on impartiality, see section 2.5 Can Public Demand for Impartial News Survive Platforms and Polarisation?

ATTITUDES TOWARDS NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA AND ITS SOCIAL IMPACT

We asked respondents in 26 countries with established public service media (PSM) whether public service news has a positive or negative effect on life in their country. Overall, across the 26 countries the net attitude is favourable. A combined 37% of respondents think PSM news has a positive effect, 22% in aggregate think the effect is negative. It is important to note that 35% of people consider PSM news to have neither a positive nor negative effect, reflecting the fact that many people are ambivalent, consider the effect to be negligible compared to other forces in society, or perhaps do not think very much about the issue.

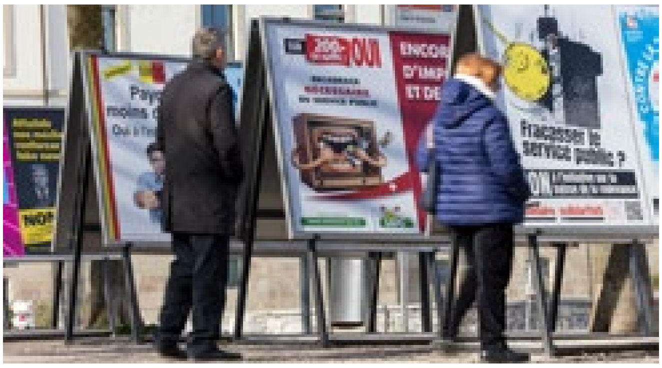
PROPORTION WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? *Base: Total sample across 26 markets with prominent public service media = 52,857.*

Across the 26 countries there was a wide variation in national sentiment, however. When looking at the percentage point difference between people who are positive and negative, net positive views about the effect of PSM news on society is strongest in four Nordic markets, plus Portugal (42% net positive, with 53% positive and 11% negative) where television news remains notably popular as a source of news, and overall trust in news is high. At 28pp, net positivity is also high in Switzerland (42% positive, 14% negative) where a referendum to dramatically cut funding to the Swiss public service broadcaster, SRG SSR, was recently rejected.

[25] Note that the 45% figure in this chart for people who prefer news that doesn't have a particular point of view differs from the 48% in the preceding chart due to a difference in the number of markets used for the calculation.

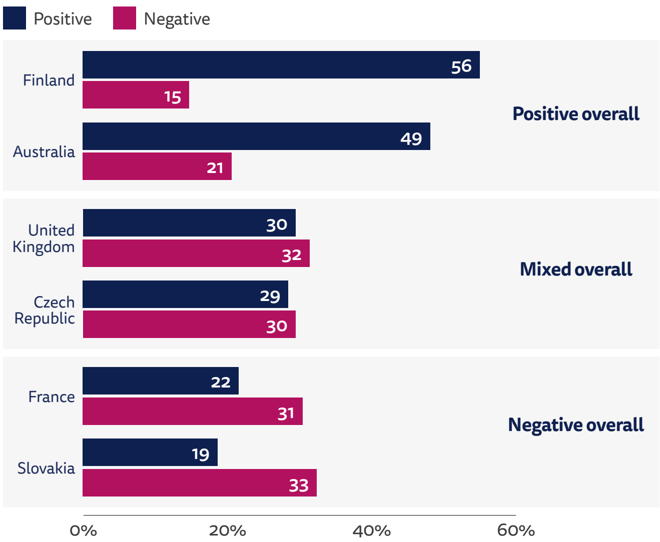


People stand next to posters about funding cuts to SRG SSR ahead of the upcoming Swiss national referendum on March 8, in Geneva, Switzerland, February 15, 2026. REUTERS/Pierre Albouy

Three groups of markets emerged from the analysis, as shown below. One group includes countries like Finland and Australia which show significant overall net positivity for the social impact of public service news. In another group, including the UK and the Czech Republic, views on the effect of PSM news on society are mixed overall, even though most respondents in those two countries see news from PSM brands as trustworthy (see section 3 Analysis by Country and Market). And in a third group where trust in news ranges from 19 to 32%, more respondents believe that public service news has a negative impact on national life than say it has a positive impact. This group includes France and Slovakia.

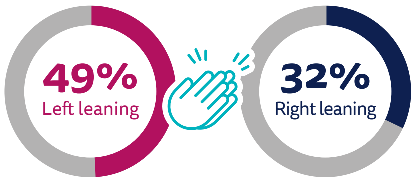
Trust in news overall seems to be closely associated with attitudes towards the social impact of public service news. Another important factor is engagement in news. In places where interest in news and politics is higher, where people consume news frequently and from a wide range of sources, respondents are more likely to have a positive view of the social effect of public service news. Recent events within the public service media organisations themselves play a role too. In the five markets where there is a net negative attitude towards the effect of PSM news on society there have been significant episodes of, to varying degrees, organisational upheaval, funding reductions, and external pressure from politicians or other influential actors.

PROPORTION WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? *Base: Total sample in each country ≈ 2,000.*

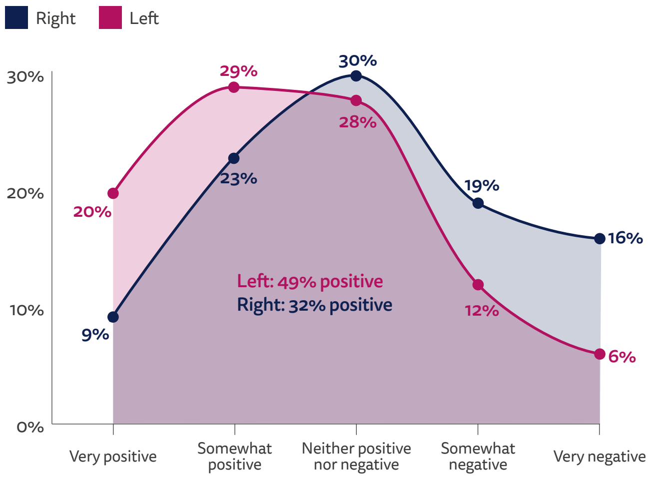
There is one dividing line which stands out as a differentiating factor: political leaning. Responses in several markets illustrate the contested position of public service journalism in a more fragmented and politicised media environment.



Share of people who are positive about social impact of PSM news

In several countries, including ones where attitudes overall are positive as well as ones where attitudes are net negative, there are marked differences in net positivity depending on where people place themselves on the political spectrum. In general, right-leaning respondents are the group most likely to take a negative view of the effect of news from public service media, but this is not always the case. In Italy, for example, negative views are more pronounced among those on the political left.

PROPORTION WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY (BY POLITICAL LEANING) – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? **Q1F.** Some people talk about 'left', 'right', and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale? *Base: Left/right across 26 markets with prominent public service media = 8,501/8,909.*

Large differences in attitude between those on the left and right of the political spectrum, including countries such as Germany and the UK with large and highly trusted PSM news providers, underscore the challenge faced by organisations such as ARD/ZDF and the BBC/ITN to convince audiences that commitments to inclusion and representation of a range of viewpoints are being upheld. This is a point acknowledged by individuals like Deborah Turness, former CEO of BBC News, who said in February of this year, 'Do I think that the BBC newsrooms would, in percentage terms, vote the same way as the nation right now in the UK in terms of the Reform party, which is quite an extreme conservative movement, very anti-immigration, [and is] really gathering steam? No, I don't. What that means is you have to work even harder to maintain that impartiality.'[26]

For further analysis of attitudes to news from public service broadcasters and what both advocates and opponents of public service news most like and dislike about it see section 2.6 Do People Think Public Service News is Good for Their Country?

[26] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/us/news/2026/02/26/deborah-turness-dismisses-bbc-trump-scandal-bad-edit/

CONCLUSIONS

Previous editions of the *Digital News Report* have described a news media sector in a state of flux, but in 2026 the data suggest a heightened sense of volatility, reflecting a widespread mood of unease among large parts of the public. There is no single explanation for this. Some of the drivers lie beyond journalism itself: geopolitical tensions, shifting norms of political leadership, and the erosion of long-held assumptions all play a part. At the same time, patterns of media use continue to change rapidly, reshaping how attention is distributed and who is able to capture it.

Sandwiched between this political and social turbulence, journalists and news media organisations endeavour to report on dizzying events and to engage audiences despite a growing sense of dissatisfaction, and sometimes hostility, in many countries both from politicians and from some sections of the public (see photo).

Roadside placard, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, Ireland, March 2026

The continued drift away from traditional sources of news can lead news organisations to battle for a share of attention in the places where audience intent and loyalty are lowest, and the prospects for monetisation are most challenging. Many publishers are starting to reflect on what their social media strategy is actually yielding, while at the same time focusing on how to maximise the engagement and value of the smaller but more loyal audience which continues to read, watch, and listen to news organisations' own outlets.

How to respond to the rapid development and diffusion of generative AI is the biggest 360-degree challenge for today's news leaders and policymakers. As our data show, the use of AI chatbots is growing fast, but use for news is not growing as quickly as use of AI tools more widely. This perhaps creates a small window of opportunity to work through some of the thorny distribution dilemmas about whether to allow AI platforms access to publisher content and, if so, how to be compensated for the value this brings to the AI chatbot experience. Initiatives to achieve leverage by working collaboratively to engage with the AI companies are likely to become more popular. What specifically to license to AI chatbots is another emerging question – although some people are using chatbots like alternative search engines, the consumer use cases are becoming more varied, meaning that trying to drive click-throughs to article URLs may well not be the only thing to focus on and develop.

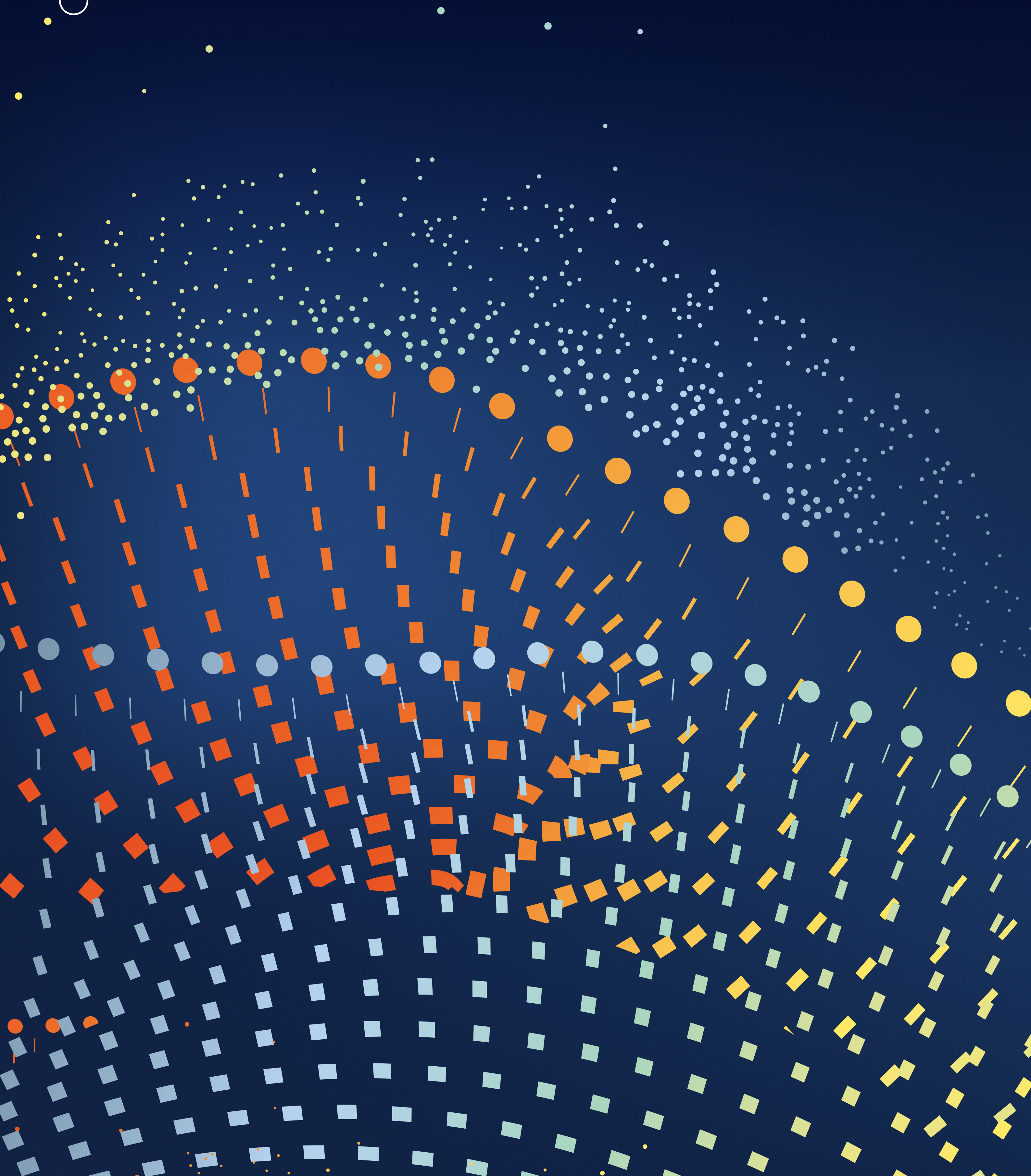
At a time when audience growth can seem so elusive, news creators have found a way of achieving it. Capitalising on growing audience enthusiasm for online video content in a way which seems to have passed publishers by, a quarter of audiences are now getting at least some content from creators who focus on news. It may be tempting for institutional news media to regard these creators as a new threat, but for most audiences these creators are complementary voices, adding freshness and colour to people's existing news experience. Established news organisations can utilise the opportunity to learn from what audiences value about the best news creators. For their part, the most successful creators are learning that – for better or worse – they are now running news businesses themselves, with all the challenges that come with the territory. We might expect more collaboration between legacy news media and these emerging news producers as they explore ways of working together for mutual benefit.

To think positively about the anxious sentiments evident in this year's data, people continue to care about the news and news values. Although there is plenty of noise from partisan commentators about the death of impartiality, we find a quieter mainstream of opinion still in favour of news which does not take sides. This opinion is an expression of both personal preference as well as an expression of what is good for society overall.

Politicians and policymakers have important parts to play. As we have seen, people are highly sensitive about perceptions of government officials and politicians influencing the news. For those grappling with legislative and regulatory questions, the challenge is likely to be one of striking the right balance between a darkening public mood about the impact of social media while people at the same time become more reliant on it for their news and information.

Trust and interest in news are falling, concerns about misinformation are rising, but at the same time a number of individual news brands are highly and broadly trusted, standing out against an abundance of content, and connecting with their target audiences. Their success, as well as appreciation of the contributions of a growing number of news creators, are a reminder that people still care about what news and journalism – in new shapes and some traditional forms – has to offer, and that the opportunity for news organisations is to ask how they can play a positive role in the lives of their audiences. As we have said before, the answer is unlikely to lie in producing more content or in peppering people's lockscreens with yet more notifications. In a more questioning age, simply telling people what to believe probably belongs to a more hierarchical past. But news organisations can play a vital role helping people make sense of seismic change in the world at large and in brokering and facilitating trust in societies and neighbourhoods where people may feel there is sometimes more which divides them than they have in common.

SECTION 2



SECTION 1

Further Analysis and International Comparison

2.1 Emerging Uses of AI Chatbots for News and What it Means for Journalism

Amy Ross Arguedas

The rapid rise of generative AI has become a growing focus for journalism, as publishers and platforms grapple with what it means for how people access and engage with news. Much of the attention has so far centred on how newsrooms can use AI to produce or distribute content more efficiently. But at the same time, a small but growing share of the public is beginning to use these tools directly to get news, as chatbots become more embedded in everyday digital life.

Recent evidence points to a sharp increase in AI use overall. The *Generative AI and News Report 2025* found that weekly use of generative AI tools across six markets grew from 18% to 34% between 2024 and 2025 (Simon et al. 2025). In this chapter, we examine the emergence of standalone AI chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini as a source of news, looking at who is using them, what they are used for, and how these behaviours may shape engagement with, and traffic to, original sources.

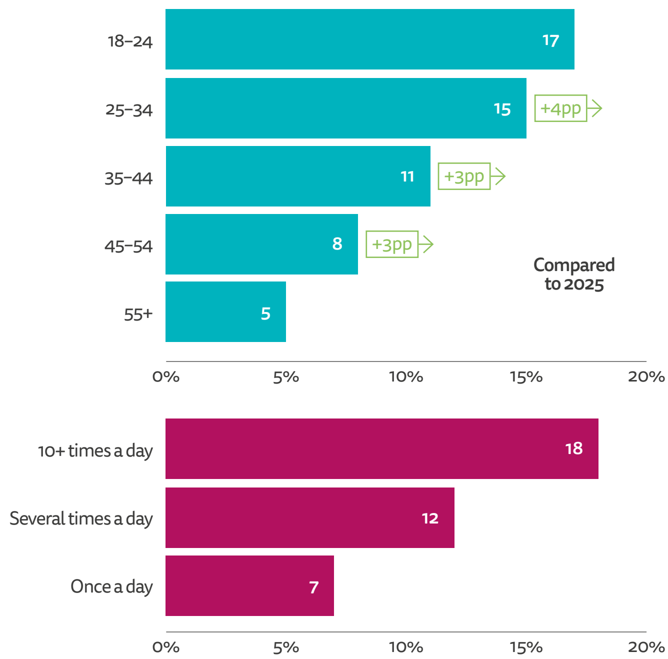
WHO IS USING AI CHATBOTS FOR NEWS?

In our data this year, we find evidence of rising weekly use of AI chatbots for news, up from 7% to 10% globally since last year, driven largely by growth in parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as Southern and Eastern Europe – markets where platformisation of news is stronger. While this is still a fairly small minority of the population, the figure represents a substantial relative increase and indicates that AI is beginning to play a more meaningful role in news consumption alongside established pathways. However, only 1% say AI is their main source of news, suggesting it currently plays a complementary role for most users.

Uptake of AI chatbots, both in general and for news, continues to be driven by younger people, typically at the forefront of tech adoption, including AI. The proportion of respondents in the youngest age group using chatbots for news (17%) is three times higher than that in the oldest age group (5%), although the most significant growth relative to 2025 was recorded among those 25–34 (up 4pp).

Much of this uptake is concentrated among people already engaged with news. Usage is considerably higher among news lovers (18% among these most intensive news consumers compared to 7% among those who get news just once a day) and is also higher among those with high interest in news (19% among those who are extremely interested relative to 7% among those not very interested). This helps explain why we also see higher use among those on the political extremes, who also tend to skew more interested in news: 16% and 15% among those very left and right wing, respectively.

PROPORTION WHO USED AI CHATBOTS FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK (BY AGE GROUP AND FREQUENCY OF NEWS USE) – ALL MARKETS

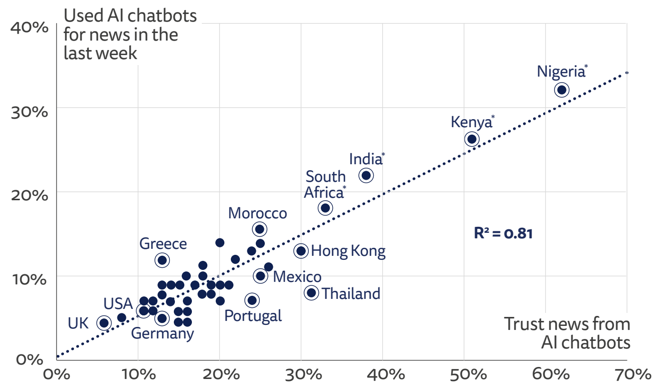


Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q1b_NEW.** Typically, how often do you access news? *Base: Total sample across all markets aged 18–24 = 11,041, 25–34 = 16,944, 35–44 = 17,822, 45–54 = 16,764, 55+ = 34,949 and who consume news 10+ times a day = 11,171, several times a day = 55,823, once a day = 21,648.*

Another factor shaping the uptake of AI chatbots for news is how much people trust the quality of their outputs. In a context of already low trust in news (37% of people trust most news most of the time), this year's data show that trust in news from AI chatbots among the general population is lower still at just 20% globally. However, a different picture emerges when looking at those who use these tools: 44% of AI chatbot users express trust in news from AI chatbots, compared with just 17% of non-users, which highlights both the extent to which low trust is driven by people who aren't using the technology and the extent to which users think it performs reasonably well.

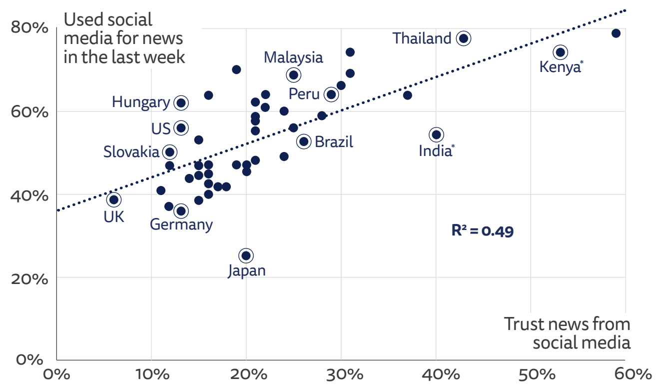
When we plot AI chatbot usage against trust at the market level, we see a strong relationship: markets with higher trust in AI chatbots for news also tend to report higher levels of use. What's more, as we can see in the next charts, the relationship between trust and use is considerably stronger for AI than for social media, as reflected in the higher R^2. The dots sit much closer to the trendline in the first chart, meaning that levels of trust are more consistently proportional to levels of AI chatbot use than for social media. A similar pattern is evident at the individual level. People who trust AI chatbots are several times more likely to use them for news, whereas the relationship is weaker for social media.

PROPORTION WHO USED AI CHATBOTS FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO TRUST NEWS FROM AI CHATBOTS – ALL MARKETS



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q6_2018_4.** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. – I think I can trust news in answers from AI chatbots most of the time. *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

PROPORTION WHO USED SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO TRUST NEWS IN SOCIAL MEDIA – ALL MARKETS



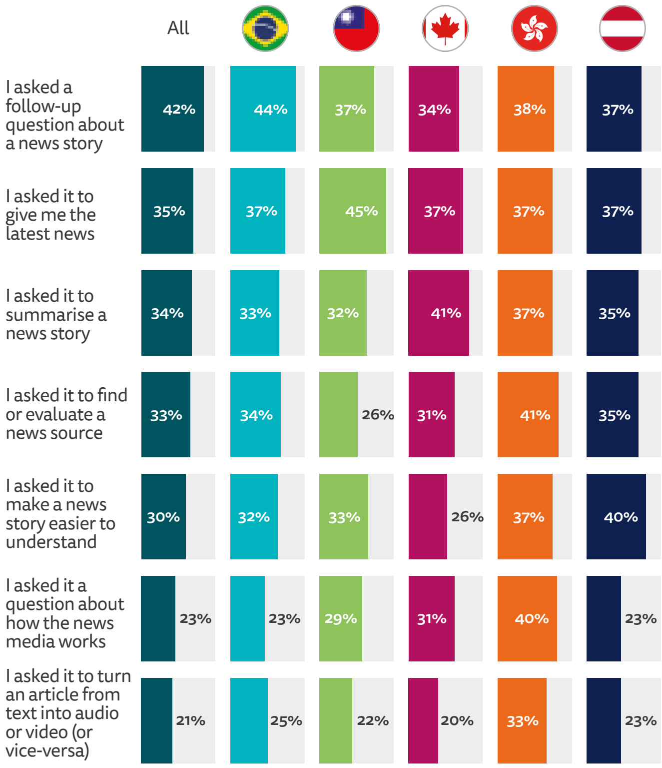
Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q6_2018_2.** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. - I think I can trust news in social media most of the time. *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

This likely reflects differences in how these platforms are used. Using AI chatbots for news is still an emerging and more deliberate behaviour, meaning trust plays an important role in whether people choose to use them at all. By contrast, social media is used for a wide range of purposes, and news is often encountered incidentally, so people may continue to use it for news even if they have lower levels of trust.

AI CHATBOT USES AND MOTIVATIONS

So, what exactly are people turning to AI chatbots for when it comes to news? Across 45 markets, asking chatbots a follow-up question is the clear front-runner, reported by 42% of users. A second tier of uses is reported by roughly a third of respondents, spanning several distinct types of uses. Around a third use AI to get the latest news (35%). Similar proportions use it to help simplify news consumption, with 34% using chatbots for summarisation and 30% to make news easier to understand. At the same time, around a third (33%) report a more evaluative use, asking chatbots to assess the reliability of a news source. This highlights the variety of different ways AI can be used for news, beyond what is possible on other platforms.

PROPORTION OF AI CHATBOT NEWS USERS WHO SAY THEY USED IT FOR EACH IN THE LAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS



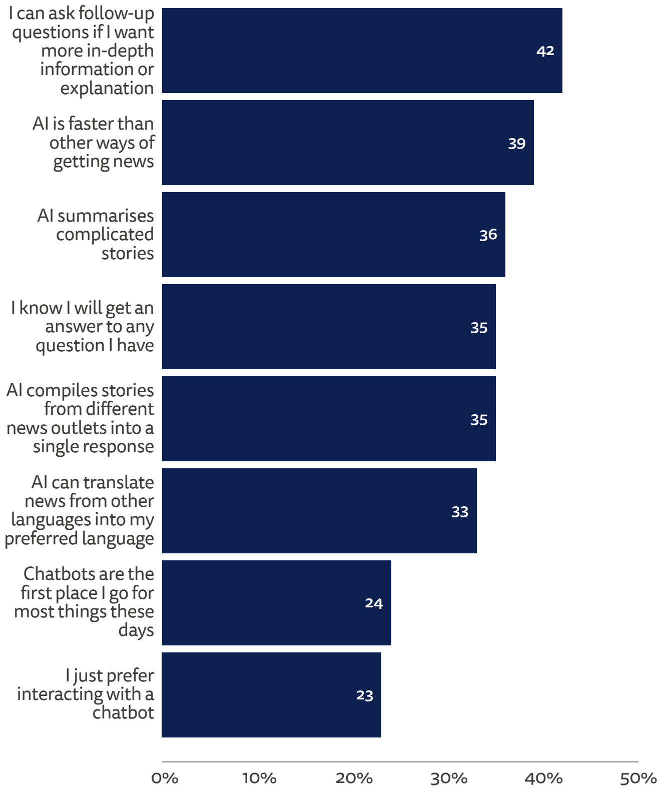
Q_AI_newstype. You said you have used a generative AI chatbot (e.g. ChatGPT) for getting news in the last week ... Which, if any, of the following did you do? *Base: Those who used an AI chatbot for news in the last week across 45 markets = 8,322, Brazil = 259, Taiwan = 164, Canada = 166, Hong Kong = 260, Austria = 114. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

We can identify some similarities and differences across markets by looking at the rank order of these uses. Across most countries, the dominant use of AI chatbots for news is interrogation, with asking follow-up questions ranking first in 33 of the 45 markets where this question was asked, including Brazil (see chart above). However, other uses are relatively more prominent in different contexts. In Asian markets such as Taiwan and South Korea, where many people are accustomed to getting news from aggregators, simply getting the news is the most frequently cited use. In Canada and the UK, summarisation ranks highest, whereas in Austria the most frequently reported use is making news easier to understand, an application that also ranks highly in Germany and Japan.

Meanwhile, using AI to evaluate news sources ranks highly in markets like Hong Kong and Turkey, which score low in terms of press freedom, as well as markets with lower levels of trust in news, including Hungary and Romania. Finally, some uses remain relatively marginal across countries: asking questions about how the news media work, and converting content between formats, do not rank among the top three uses in any market surveyed.

Another way to understand the uptake of AI chatbots for news is by foregrounding not how people use them but why. Globally, the most commonly cited motivation for using AI chatbots is wanting more depth or explanation (42%), highlighting the interactive nature of these tools. This is followed by an efficiency-driven motivation, with 39% saying AI is faster than other ways of getting news. Several motivations, each mentioned by around a third of respondents, point to AI's role in helping users process and navigate information: 36% use it to summarise complicated stories, 35% value the sense that they can get an answer to any question, another 35% use it to compile stories from different outlets, and 33% to translate news into their preferred language. In contrast, platform-oriented motivations are less widespread, with 24% saying chatbots are the first place they go for most things and 23% saying they simply prefer interacting with a chatbot.

PROPORTION OF AI CHATBOT NEWS USERS WHO SAY EACH IS A MOTIVATION FOR USING AI – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_AI_newstype. Why do you use AI chatbots to get news? *Base: Those who used an AI chatbot for news in the last week across 45 markets = 8,322. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

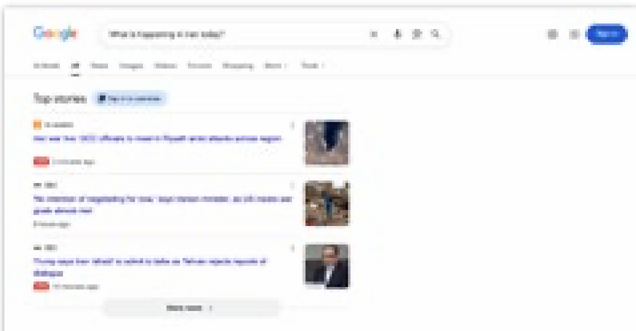
CLICKING-THROUGH FROM AI CHATBOTS TO ORIGINAL SOURCES

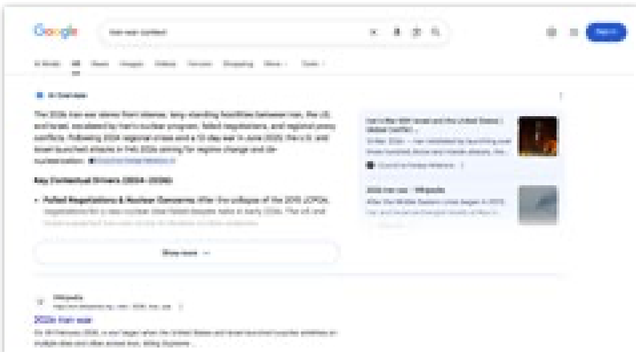
One of the key concerns among publishers is that growing use of AI chatbots for news will increasingly eat into referral traffic as users get more detailed, personalised answers to their questions within the chatbot environment. In this year's survey, we tried to get a better handle on this issue by asking those who use standalone AI chatbots for news how often they click through to original news sources. We asked the same of people who use search engines, and also social media, for news to provide points of comparison.

Before turning to the findings, it is important to acknowledge that the data reflect self-reported behaviour, which may under- or overestimate what people do in practice, due to limitations in recall and the tendency to give socially desirable responses. However, the figures give us a starting point to understand differences in click-through intent. It is also worth noting that the rollout of AI-generated summaries in search engines like Google, Bing, and Naver may already be shaping the experiences – and responses – of those using search for news.

This issue underpins industry anxieties about 'answer engines', which publishers fear will increasingly satisfy users' information needs directly within platforms, potentially reducing click-throughs to original sources. Implementation varies across markets, and Google's AI Overviews,[27] for example, are disabled for certain types of news queries, particularly breaking or developing news, with the Top Stories carousel instead featuring original reporting (see images below).[28] However, to the extent that search queries go beyond breaking news, it is possible that the integration of AI features may already be shaping click-throughs for search.

SCREENSHOTS COMPARING DIFFERENT GOOGLE QUERIES ABOUT THE IRAN WAR



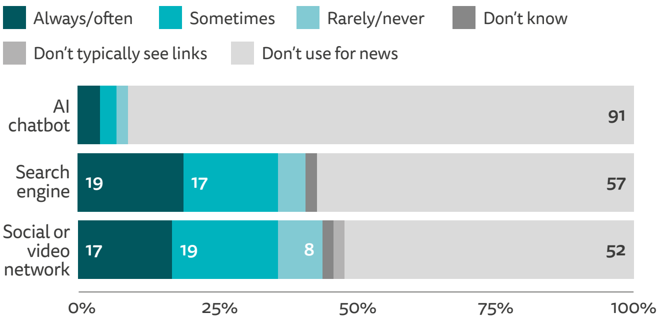


While AI overviews in Google (UK) are currently restricted for queries focused squarely on the latest news, they are available for more contextual searches related to the news

[27] Per Google's documentation in March 2026, AI Overviews had been rolled out in all the markets covered by our survey, except France: https://support.google.com/websearch answer/14901683#zippy=%2Chow-to-control-your-data%2Ccountries-and-territories
[28] https://www.google.com/intl/en_us/search/howsearchworks/how-news-works/

The data in the two following charts are for the full sample, meaning they include non-users (in light grey), to allow more meaningful comparisons across platforms with very different user bases. We see that, across 27 markets where the question was asked, just 4% of respondents overall say they always or often click through to underlying news sources from AI, compared with 19% from search, and 17% from social media. The large gap between AI and the other platforms reflects the much smaller proportion of people who use AI chatbots for news in the first place (9% across 27 markets), which as we've seen, continues to be a niche behaviour among a small, albeit highly engaged, group of users.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY ALWAYS/OFTEN CLICK THROUGH TO ORIGINAL NEWS SOURCES ON EACH – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_ClickAI/Search/Social. You said earlier in the survey you have used an AI chatbot/search engine/social media for news in the last week … How often, if at all, do you click through to the original sources that are sometimes linked to in the responses/in the results/on your feed? *Base: Total sample across 27 markets ≈ 54,000.*

Comparing across markets, differences are fairly small when it comes to AI chatbots, with the proportion of people saying they always or often click through to the original source in the lower single digits in nearly all the 27 markets where we asked the question (e.g. just 1% in the UK compared with 3% in Spain and 4% in Argentina). South Korea, where AI use is above-average and skewed towards an especially engaged subset of people, stands out with a relatively higher figure (8% say they always or often click through), though still low in absolute terms.

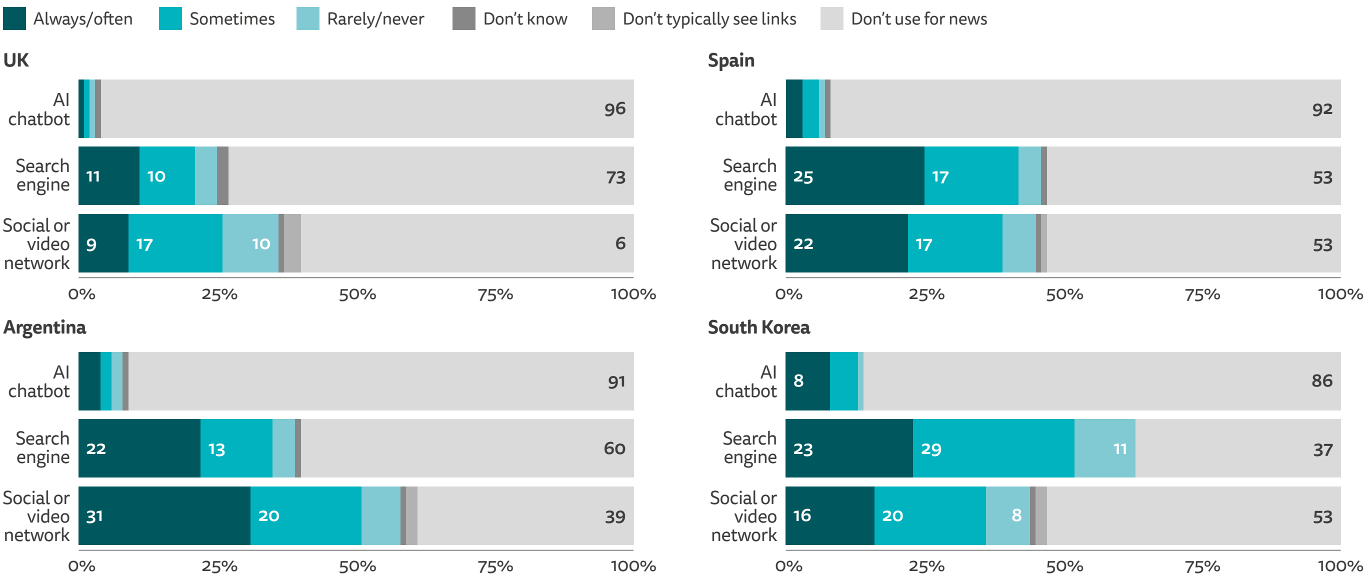
We see more pronounced differences when looking at social media and search, which tend to have larger user bases for news. In parts of Latin America and Southern Europe, higher proportions say they always or often click through from social media (e.g. 31% in Argentina and 22% in Spain), compared with much lower levels in Northern and Western Europe, including the UK (9%), where social media use for news is lower more generally. Asian markets sit closer to the middle on this measure, with 16% in South Korea saying they always or often click through from social media. Search follows a similar regional pattern, though the differences between countries are somewhat narrower than for social media. This likely reflects the more intentional way people use search to access news, where users are typically seeking out information and therefore more likely to click through in a more consistent way across markets.

These findings are consistent with a broader pattern where platforms tend to play a more limited role in how people access news in Northern and Western Europe, but are more central to news access in Southern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia. Differences may also reflect variation in platform environments. In South Korea, for example, search portals such as Naver combine search with news aggregation and other content within a single environment and play a much larger role as gateways to news than search engines in most other markets.

We also asked users of AI chatbots, search, and social media what motivates them to click through to original news sources and stories. Do users simply want to know more? Or are they looking to verify the information? Or learn more about the source?

Our data across 27 markets show that while wanting more detail is the primary motivation for clicking through among users of all three types of platforms, AI chatbot users are less likely to say they click through because they want more detail (51% of those who say they click through), compared to users of search (59%) and social media (60%). This suggests users may be slightly more satisfied with the amount of information provided within chatbot environments than users of search and social media are in the context of those platforms.

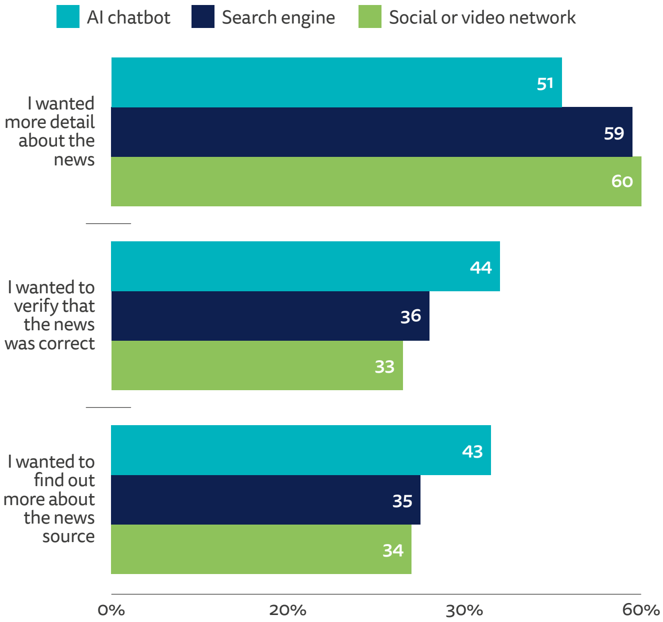
PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY ALWAYS/OFTEN CLICK THROUGH TO ORIGINAL NEWS SOURCES ON EACH – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_ClickAI/Search/Social. You said earlier in the survey you have used an AI chatbot/search engine/social media for news in the last week … How often, if at all, do you click through to the original sources that are sometimes linked to in the responses/in the results/on your feed? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

However, AI chatbot users are more likely than search or social media users to say they click through because they want to verify the news or find out more about the source, suggesting click-throughs from AI chatbots may be driven more by doubt or curiosity about the accuracy or provenance of the information. The differences between motivations are, thus, much smaller for AI chatbot users than they are for social and search users, where wanting more detail is a much more prominent reason to click through.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY HAVE CLICKED THROUGH TO THE ORIGINAL NEWS SOURCE FOR EACH REASON IN THE LAST WEEK (BY PLATFORM) – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_ClickMotive/SE/SM. Which of the following have you done in the last week when clicking a link to an original source when using an AI chatbot/search engine/social media? *Base: Those across 27 markets that clicked through to a news story in the last week when using an AI chatbot = 4,452, search engine = 22,508, social media = 23,693.*

CONCLUSION

While only a small minority of people currently use AI chatbots for news, rapid growth suggests these tools could become a more significant part of news use over time. As with other emerging technologies, early adoption is concentrated among more engaged audiences, meaning initial effects are likely to be felt most among those already closely connected to news, as well as among younger people.

AI is not simply another route to headlines. While some use it to access the latest news, many are using it to interrogate, summarise, and evaluate information, pointing to a more expansive role that combines access with interpretation. Some of these uses align with areas where news organisations can respond directly. The demand for simpler, more digestible news reinforces the value of clearer writing and summarised formats for time-poor audiences, while the appetite for follow-up questions points to opportunities to better anticipate audience needs through formats such as explainers or newsletters.

But other uses are less easily addressed. Part of the appeal of chatbots lies in their ability to provide highly personalised, low-effort responses at scale, something individual publishers are unlikely to match. This raises important strategic questions about where publishers should invest. Efforts to replicate generic AI functionality risk being outpaced by platform companies, suggesting publishers may be better served focusing on ways of enhancing their journalism that are distinctive and genuinely valuable to audiences. Uses focused on evaluating sources or explaining how news works also sit uneasily with journalism's role, where such assessments may be viewed with scepticism given publishers' vested interests.

In terms of click-throughs and referrals, our self-reported data suggest AI chatbot users appear somewhat less driven by a need for detail and more by a desire to verify information or understand its source. Though the picture is still emerging, this indicates that AI chatbots may reduce some forms of referral traffic while reinforcing the importance of verification and information provenance, at least among its highly interested user base. The impact of AI is likely to be uneven, varying across markets and user groups, especially as these tools become more embedded in search and other environments. For publishers already struggling with weakening links to audiences, this suggests a need to focus not only on visibility, but on what makes their journalism distinct, including their role as trusted sources in a noisy information environment and deeper reporting that goes beyond what AI can easily replicate.

2.2 From Broadcast News to Streaming and Platforms: The Changing Landscape of News Video

Craig T. Robertson

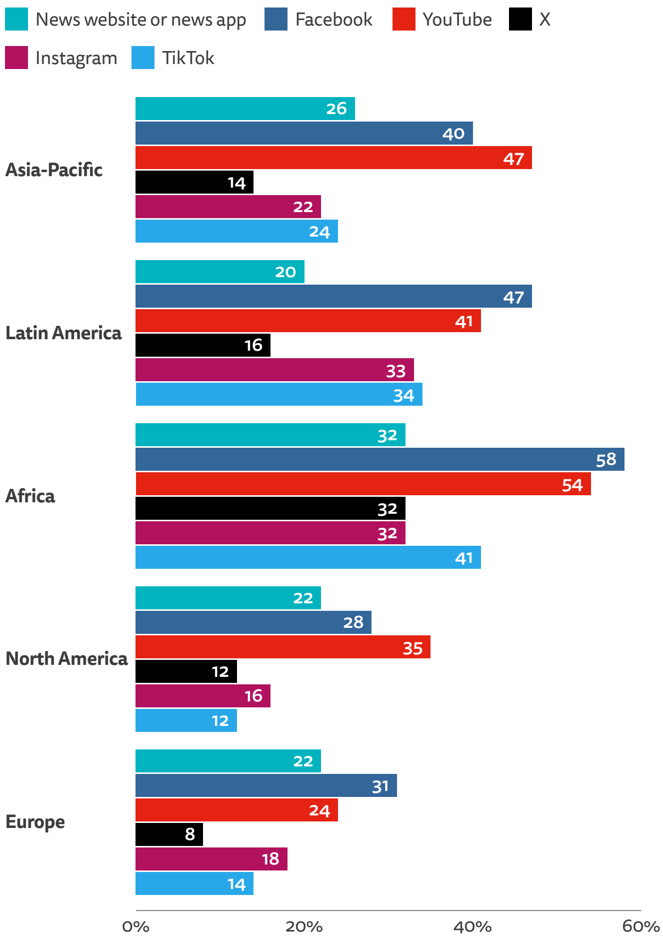
Broadcast television has long been a popular format for audiences wanting to know about – and see – the biggest news stories of the day. But changes in technology and audience habits have been happening for some time now, altering the video news landscape. This year, we take a deeper dive into online news video, looking at where consumption is (and isn't) happening. The picture may not be of much solace to traditional broadcasters, who are seeing viewership drift away. But there are signs of life, particularly on the social media and video networks which have most shaped this space: YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Audiences on these platforms do seem to have an appetite for consuming news, but in different ways.

THE LANDSCAPE OF ONLINE NEWS VIDEO CONSUMPTION

Looking at the overall landscape of online news video, there are two important observations to make. The first point is that the largest amount of online news video consumption is happening primarily outside of Europe, though the clear majority of Europeans (60%) are still also consuming online news on social media or video networks weekly. The second point is that this consumption is happening on third-party platforms, rather than news organisations' own websites or apps.

The chart opposite shows the proportion of people in each region in our survey who say they consume news videos weekly on each platform. The heaviest news video consumption is happening in Africa, Latin America, and South-East Asia, but even in Europe and North America there is widespread adoption. The regional differences are interesting, with half of people surveyed in Africa (54%) and Asia (47%) consuming news videos on YouTube, compared to just a quarter (24%) in Europe. These differences are replicated across other social media platforms and video networks, with perhaps the main exception being news organisations' own websites and apps. Here, a similar proportion of people (around a fifth) in Latin America, North America, and Europe say they consume news videos on publisher sites weekly, with this rising to a quarter (26%) in Asia and a third (32%) in Africa.

PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS VIDEO ON EACH IN THE LAST WEEK (BY REGION)



Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? *Base: Total sample in Asia-Pacific = 22,428, Latin America = 12,159, Africa = 8,040, North America = 4,117, Europe = 50,776.*

Countries with the highest levels of online news video consumption include Thailand, Indonesia, Peru, and South Africa, where weekly use is widespread (>80%). Countries with the lowest rates of use include Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands, where weekly use of online news video on any platform sits around 50%. Yet, even in these markets, there has been growth in usage, with the UK, for instance, seeing an increase from 40% in 2021.

The high rate of online news video consumption in countries like Thailand is, in part, explained by these markets having younger populations, high mobile phone usage, heavy platform use, and cheap data. Platform design also feeds into the picture, with auto-play video features likely to boost usage in these very social-first markets.

Indeed, the countries with the highest rates of online news video usage are very much social-first news markets, while those with the lowest rates tend to be markets with lower social media use for news and historically strong upmarket newspaper brands and public service media (PSM). The UK is perhaps the best example of this, where social media use for news is comparatively lower than in other markets (40% weekly, compared to, for example, 69% in Peru) and where the BBC has very high reach.

The second main observation about the online news video landscape is that growth in consumption is happening on social media and video networks, rather than on publisher websites or apps. It should be acknowledged that news video consumption on social media platforms and video networks *will* include content from mainstream news publishers, including public service broadcasters, newspapers, and digital-first outlets. But we cannot estimate with our data how much traffic is going to these outlets compared to other kinds of sources. Still, if news videos from mainstream news organisations are being watched, that consumption is likely happening *somewhere other* than that publisher's own website or app.

The chart below shows the proportion of people across all our markets who said they consumed online news video on each platform in the last week in 2023 and in 2026. What we can see is that, even over this short period, growth in online news video consumption can be seen on TikTok (+7pp) and Instagram (+5pp), but use on publisher websites is in decline (-5pp). This decline in online video consumption on news publisher websites sits alongside the decline in broadcast TV news usage across all age groups over the last decade.

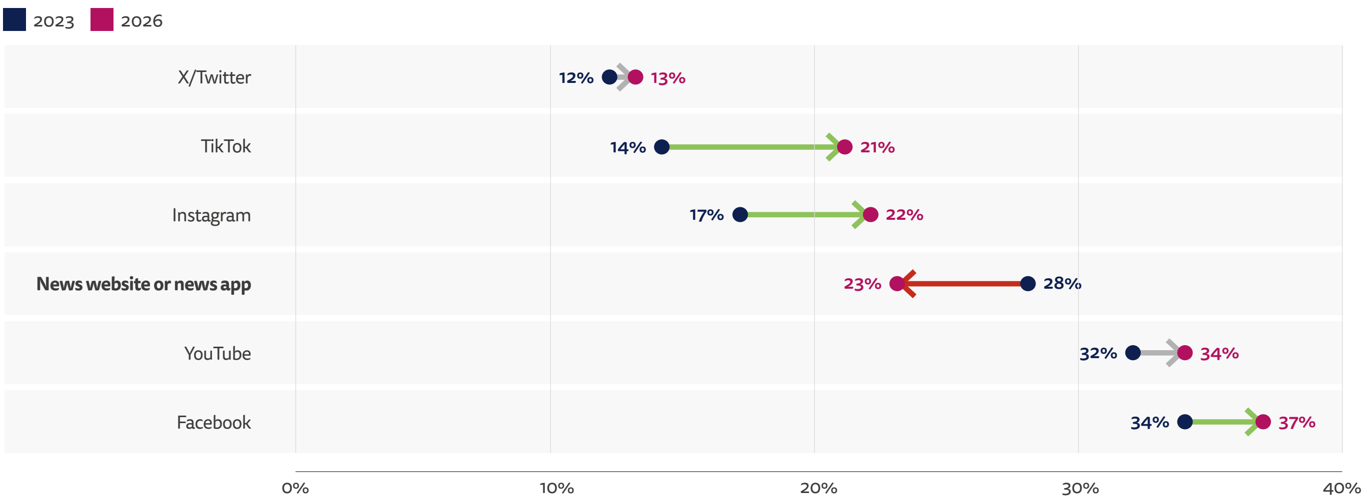
In terms of platforms, the data suggest that Facebook (+3pp) and YouTube (+2pp) have also seen small growth in reach. Video is now one of the main competitive drivers between the platforms, evidenced, in part, by the fact that Facebook has this year started courting influencers in an attempt to better challenge the popularity of TikTok.[29]

A TALE OF THREE PLATFORMS: YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM, AND TIKTOK

Consumption of online news video does not look the same across platforms. Most – if not all – social media platforms now offer video content in some form. But a video-first approach has not always been the core ethos of platforms: Facebook began as a way for people to connect with friends, sharing pictures and status updates; Twitter was the text-based social network; and Instagram was a way for people to share photos. Two platforms, however, explicitly focused on video as their core feature: YouTube (est. 2005) and TikTok (est. 2017). We focus on these two for that reason, as well as the clear contrast they provide. Instagram (est. 2010) is also included as an illustrative example of platform differences, pointing to similarities with TikTok rather than YouTube. Instagram has seen a strong pivot to video, where there is growth (as we can see in our data).

The differences in how these platforms are used for news video consumption are striking. The chart on the next page shows the proportion of people in different age groups across all our markets who use each platform for news video consumption weekly. Almost the same proportion of people in all age groups (around a third) say they use YouTube weekly for online news videos. The contrast with TikTok and Instagram is immense: almost four in ten people aged 18–24 say they use TikTok weekly for news videos (it is 36% for Instagram), compared to just 12% of over 55s (15% for Instagram). The comparison with people 25–54 is further striking, with large gaps in usage on TikTok and Instagram for news even among this demographic when compared to those under 25.

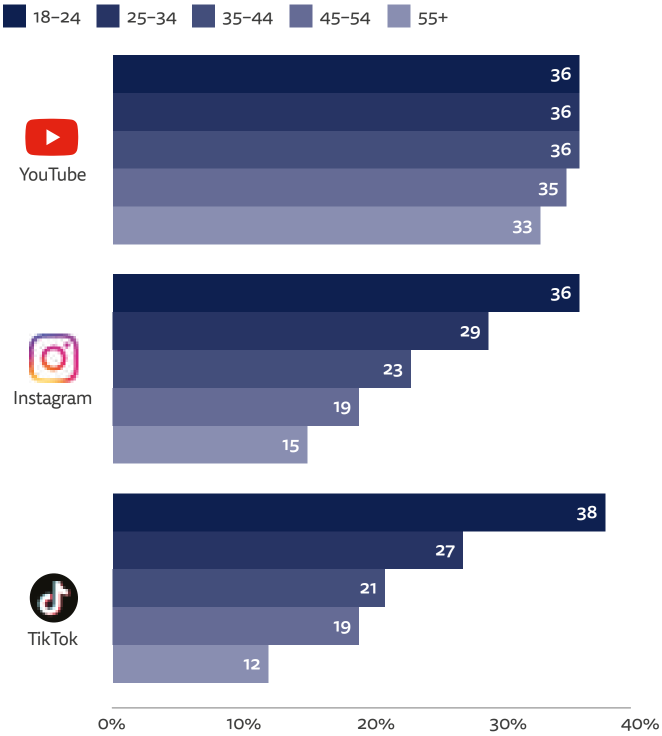
PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS VIDEO ON EACH IN THE LAST WEEK IN 2023 AND 2026 – ALL MARKETS



Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? *Base: Total sample in 2023 = 93,511, 2026 = 97,250. Note: 2023 sample based on 46 markets, 2026 on 48 markets.*

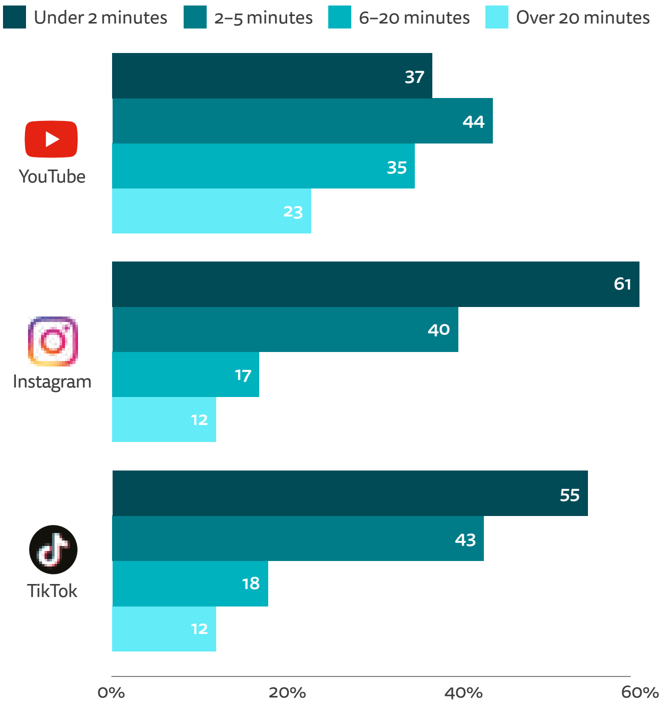
[29] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c895wwp3kqlo

PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS VIDEO ON EACH IN THE LAST WEEK (BY AGE) – ALL MARKETS



Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? *Base: Total sample across all markets aged 18–24 = 11,041, 25–34 = 16,944, 35–44 = 17,822, 45–54 = 16,764, 55+ = 34,949.*

PROPORTION OF ONLINE NEWS VIDEO USERS ON EACH NETWORK WHO CONSUMED A NEWS VIDEO OF EACH LENGTH IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS



Q11_video_2026_YouTube/Instagram/TikTok. You say you access news videos on <platform>... Which of the following have you accessed in the last week? *Base: Those across all markets that consumed an online news video in the last week on YouTube = 26,052, Instagram = 19,128, TikTok = 17,290.*

This contrast perhaps says something about the maturity of YouTube as a platform, with many people treating it as a video streamer akin to the likes of Netflix. In fact, this is to some extent how Netflix and YouTube as companies see the situation, with YouTube being seen more as a competitor to Netflix than to Facebook or X.[30]

TikTok, on the other hand, is a younger platform with a younger user profile. Over half (53%) of 18–24s in our survey use TikTok for any purpose, compared to under a quarter (23%) of over 55s. TikTok stands out as a platform among the youngest demographics. Instagram similarly skews younger, with two-thirds (67%) of 18–24s using it weekly for any purpose, compared to 39% of people aged 55+. It is then, perhaps, no surprise that consumers of news videos on these platforms skew young. That skew is also driven by very high smartphone usage among the youngest demographic in our survey.

The rise of TikTok since 2017 is perhaps the main social media story of the last decade. It is also the story of a video format that has shaped how people think of online content. Short-form videos as a popular format are not new – many might remember the short-lived popularity of Vine (2013–17). But the short-form vertical video was arguably perfected on TikTok, to the point where other platforms created their own features to compete (Instagram with Reels and YouTube with Shorts).

Short-form videos are no doubt popular, but with the exponential rise of short-form video has come a perception that what most (young) people are consuming is only short-form video. Do people – especially younger people – even have an appetite for longer videos? The answer is yes, they do. But it depends on the platform. The following chart shows the length of news videos that users of each platform say they watch – across all age groups. Again, the differences between YouTube and TikTok/Instagram are clear.

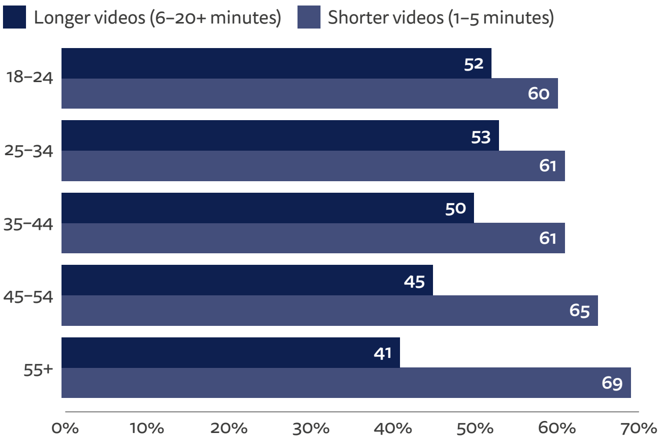
It might come as no surprise that the majority of news video watchers on TikTok (55%) say they are watching short videos under 2 minutes. The platform was originally designed entirely around short-form videos, though the maximum length of videos allowed has gradually increased. Even so, the appetite for watching longer news videos on TikTok is not yet apparent, with the gap between videos of 2–5 minutes (43%) and 6–20 minutes (18%) being stark. The same goes for Instagram.

However, on YouTube, the appetite for longer content is there. Almost a quarter (23%) of YouTube news video watchers say they are watching videos longer than 20 minutes weekly. More than a third (35%) are watching videos of 6–20 minutes in length. This contrast with TikTok and Instagram reflects the history of YouTube as a platform, where longer videos have been more of the company's focus (Shorts weren't rolled out worldwide until 2021).

Interestingly, longer news videos are relatively more popular among younger people than older people. Just over half (52%) of 18–24s watching news videos on YouTube say they watch longer news videos (over 5 minutes) weekly, compared to 41% of over 55s. Older people on YouTube are actually more likely than younger people to be watching short news videos (69% of over-55 YouTube users, compared to 60% of 18–24s, watching news videos under 6 minutes). This may be driven, in part, by younger people's greater preference for watching news videos (compared to reading or listening to news), as we highlighted in previous *Digital News Reports*.[31]

[30] https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/12/business/media/youtube-netflix-streaming.html
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/videos/c8eg1wx7j81o
[31] https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025/dnr-executive-summary

PROPORTION OF ONLINE NEWS VIDEO USERS ON YOUTUBE WHO CONSUMED A NEWS VIDEO OF EACH LENGTH IN THE LAST WEEK (BY AGE GROUP) – ALL MARKETS

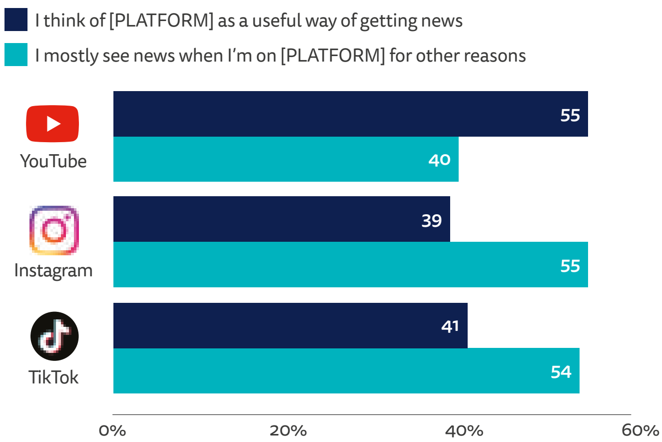


Q11_video_2026_YouTube. You say you access news videos on YouTube … Which of the following have you accessed in the last week? *Base: Those across all markets that consumed an online news video on YouTube aged 18–24 = 2,720, 25–34 = 4,382, 35–44 = 5,030, 45–54 = 4,668, 55+ = 9,252.*

YouTube is also seen more as a place to intentionally consume news videos, compared to the other two platforms. For many people consuming news on social media, the act is often unintentional – you might consume news on TikTok or Instagram, for instance, because it just happens to come up in the feed. We call this incidental news consumption because it happens when people are on social media platforms for entirely different reasons than to see news. When we ask a simple question about this type of behaviour, we again see a contrast across platforms.

Across all our markets, the majority (54%) of news users on TikTok say they are mostly consuming news on the platform when they are there for other reasons. A similar proportion say this about Instagram (55%). Compare this to YouTube, where the figures are essentially flipped: the majority (55%) of YouTube news consumers say they are intentionally getting news there, compared to 40% who say they are passively getting news on the platform. That intentional use of YouTube for news is also slightly higher among those aged 18–24 (58% see it as a useful way to get news), compared to those aged 55+ (49%).

PROPORTION OF NEWS USERS ON EACH WHO MOSTLY SEE NEWS WHEN THEY ARE ON THE PLATFORM FOR OTHER REASONS – ALL MARKETS



Q12cii_YouTube/Instagram/TikTok. You say you use <platform> for news. Which of the following statements applies best to you? *Base: Those across all markets that, in the last week, consumed news on YouTube = 14,642, Instagram = 11,483, TikTok = 5,681.*

Overall, our data indicate that people interact with news videos on YouTube differently to the way they interact with news videos on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. UK regulator Ofcom says people in the UK spend, on average, around 51 minutes a day on YouTube.[32] This compares to 28 minutes per day spent on TikTok and 20 minutes on Instagram. Given that the UK is at the tail end of social media video use in our data, time spent on each platform in markets in Asia and Africa is likely to be much longer, illustrating just how popular these platforms are.

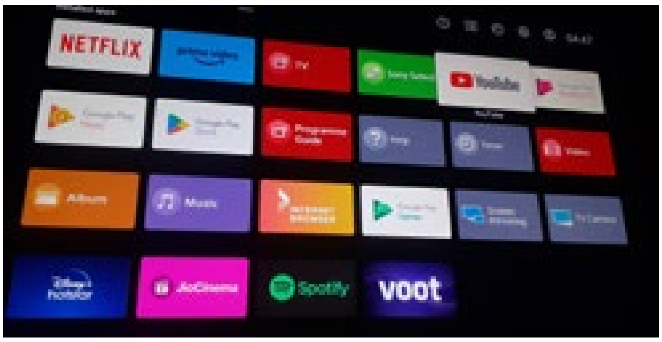
SMART TVS AND THE SHIFT IN HOW PEOPLE INTERACT WITH A MEDIUM

The popularity of YouTube as a platform across countries and age groups to intentionally get news – and the appetite people have for watching longer news videos on the platform – helps to underscore a shift that has been happening for many years, but which has now crystallised into a defined change in behaviour: how people interact with their TVs as a device. Internet-connected smart TVs, the rise of on-demand streaming platforms like Netflix, and the habits of younger people have fundamentally altered this landscape.

In this year's survey, we wanted to understand how people interact with their smart TVs by asking a simple question: when watching news on your smart TV, do you do that via video apps like YouTube?

A similar proportion of people across younger age groups say they do this, with around 70% of smart TV news users in the 18–24 (70%), 25–34 (71%), and 35–44 (67%) demographics watching via video apps. The proportion of respondents using smart TVs for news in this way drops down to 58% for people aged 45–54 and 44% for people aged 55+.

These figures suggest a generational divide: older audiences are less likely to use video apps for news on smart TVs, despite having similar access to the technology. For context, 70% of 18–24s say they use a smart TV for any purpose, compared with 66% of those aged 55+, suggesting that the difference in usage is driven less by access and more by viewing preferences. Many older people continue to favour linear broadcast TV news over streaming.



Apps are now a major way people interact with their smart TVs, watching on-demand streaming content

[32] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/online-habits/from-apps-to-ai-search-how-the-uk-goes-online-in-2025

These differences are likely explained, in part, by generational socialisation: older people who grew up watching linear broadcast television have kept the habit, compared to younger people who have grown up in a world of the internet, smartphones, and smart TVs. For the youngest respondents in our survey, this is the only world they have ever known, so their habits have been shaped by this environment. In many ways, younger people interact with TVs in a similar way to how they interact with smartphones: the devices are internet-connected, with media consumption happening via apps.

CONCLUSION: WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY FOR THE NEWS INDUSTRY?

Overall, in our research more broadly, we find that fewer people each year are watching broadcast television. Social media and video networks are the main way people interact with news videos. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram are growing fast, while YouTube remains widely popular for video news, as does Facebook. The use of publishers' own websites or apps for online news video is in decline.

The story is one we have been tracking for many years now: the ever-increasing platformisation of news, with more and more audience time and attention going to the likes of TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. News publishers have not always been able to keep up in this online world filled with videos from content creators, influencers, podcasters, and alternative media start-ups. These actors are well-placed to capitalise on social media trends, keeping up to date with the demands of the algorithm. What will happen to publishers in this context?

Our research shows how immensely popular social media and video networks are with younger people – and especially younger people in the Global South. Short-form video has been pushed for years by the likes of TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, seemingly to great effect. But our findings also indicate there are opportunities on platforms like YouTube, which people see as a destination for news and where people do have an appetite to watch longer content. It is also perhaps worth underlining again that this appetite for longer content on YouTube is more apparent among the youngest demographics in our survey.

Another point of interest is the fact that people are not abandoning the TV as a device – they are just interacting with it differently now. More people continue to drift away from linear broadcast television in favour of on-demand video provided via smart TV apps. This is a highly competitive space, and the leaders have, so far, largely been commercial entertainment companies like Netflix and Disney+. How news publisher apps (on smart TVs) fit into this ecosystem is an interesting question well worth grappling with.

Online video is still an evolving format. Podcasts are increasingly video-first, and the appearance of podcasts on Netflix signals something about the developing nature of this format,[33] not to mention Netflix's concerns about YouTube as a competitor. Vertical short-form videos are very popular, but they are not the *only* type of video people consume. For news publishers, our findings indicate there are both immense challenges, but also opportunities if ways can be found to cut through the noise.

[33] https://www.netflix.com/gb/browse/genre/82696818

2.3 How News Creators are Impacting Politics and Media Around the World

Nic Newman

This year's *Digital News Report* shows the extent to which news creators are recognised and valued by audiences. More than a quarter of our global sample (27%) now get information each week from news creators, whom we define as 'individuals or groups of individuals that create and distribute content primarily via social and video networks and have some impact on public debates'. In the Executive Summary we also found that these news creators are widely seen as more entertaining and easier to understand than traditional news media. At the same time, they are often viewed as being less trustworthy and less impartial by the general population.

In previous research (Newman et al. 2025) we categorised news creators into four camps: commentary, investigation, explanation, and specialism – and also identified a layer of 'news-adjacent' comedians, musicians, actors, and gamers who also, from time to time, take a position on political and civic debates. But this is messy and complicated work with increasingly blurred lines between journalism and political activism.

This year's survey is our most comprehensive yet in terms of the range and depth of data we have collected. It includes information about usage and attitudes – as well as the *names* that audiences consider to be news creators in all 48 markets in the *Digital News Report*. In this chapter we try to make sense of these datapoints through the lens of four different creator *ecosystems*.

First, we identify politically polarised systems where the most widely mentioned creators tend to be partisan commentators who often lead or shape public debates. Second, in countries where press freedom is under pressure, we find news creators as a source of opposition and scrutiny. Third, in a number of countries we find young news creators making their mark. Fourth, we identify a number of relatively stable democracies with fewer native news creators, where hybrid 'journalist creator' models are emerging.

Creator Ecosystem	Characteristics	Examples
1 Politically polarised	Many opinion-based creators from both sides of the political divide. Countries tend to have high use of social media	United States, Brazil
2 Critical voices	Where media is partly controlled by or close to ruling elites, creators offer different and critical perspectives	Turkey, Hungary, Peru
3 Youthful changemakers	Young creators building trust based on utility and authenticity, filling gaps left by mainstream media	France, Czech Republic, South Africa
4 Limited/hybrid ecosystems	Hybrid 'journalist personalities' emerging in absence of home-grown creators. Some 'imported' from other countries	Norway, Sweden, Netherlands

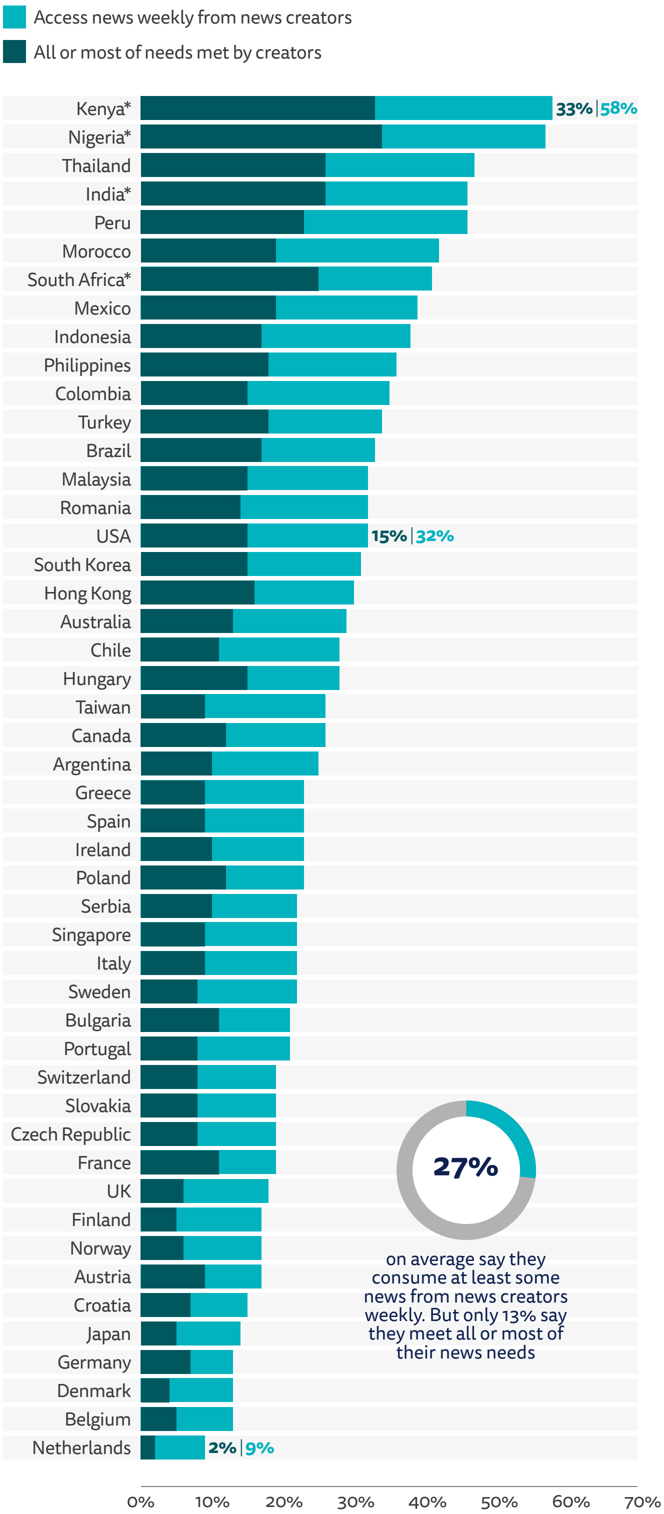
It is important to note that these creator ecosystems are not mutually exclusive; they still contain different types of creators, and not all countries in our survey map neatly onto them. Across markets we find many different types of news creators with a mix of approaches. Despite these important caveats, differences in the most-mentioned creators across markets remind us that some media systems are likely to be more or less receptive to news creators than others.

USAGE AND IMPACT OF NEWS CREATORS ACROSS COUNTRIES

In the Executive Summary, we showed significant differences between countries such as Kenya and Nigeria – where the vast majority use creators for news each week – and more traditional media environments such as the Netherlands and Japan, where only a minority do. When comparing these data, we should remember that our online survey sample in all African countries as well as India will tend to overrepresent younger, urban, English-speakers – fully representative numbers are likely to be lower.

But even amongst those that use creators, only a small proportion say 'most or all of their news needs' are met by these creators (see dark green bars in chart over). This supports previous research which shows that creators mostly play an additive or supplementary role, commenting on news, adding opinions and perspectives, or explaining the news – rather than breaking or investigating stories.[34]

PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS FROM CREATORS OR INFLUENCERS FOCUSED ON NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – ALL MARKETS

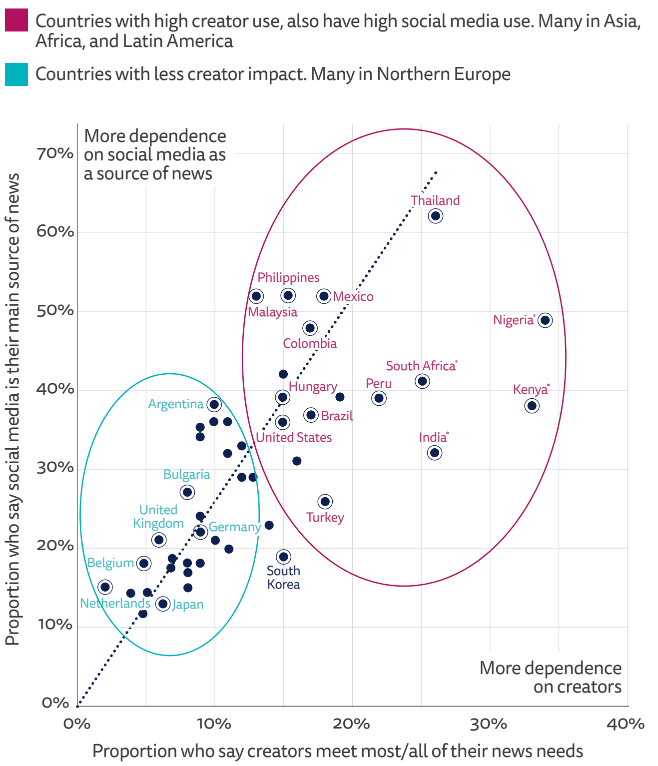


Q_Creators1_2026. In the last week, have you consumed news from any of the following? This could be on social and video networks (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), web portal (e.g. Substack), or podcast, etc. – Individual creators or influencers who mainly focus on news. *Q_Creators3_2026.* You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs is met by these creators or influencers? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Proportionately, a small number of countries seem particularly dependent on creators. In Kenya, a third of our sample (33%) say that all or most of their news needs are met by creators. That figure is around a quarter in Thailand (26%) and Peru (23%) and around one in seven (15%) in the United States and Hungary. However, the proportion that only use creators for news is much smaller – around 7% in Kenya, and 3% in the United States.

More widely, one of the driving factors seems to be the extent to which people use social media to access news. To understand the link with social media we plotted the proportion that say they get most or all of their needs met by news creators and the proportion that say social and video networks are their main source of news. Not surprisingly we see a clear correlation between the two.

PROPORTION WHO SAY CREATORS OR INFLUENCERS FOCUSED ON NEWS MEET ALL OR MOST OF THEIR NEWS NEEDS PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO SAY THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF NEWS IS SOCIAL MEDIA – ALL MARKETS



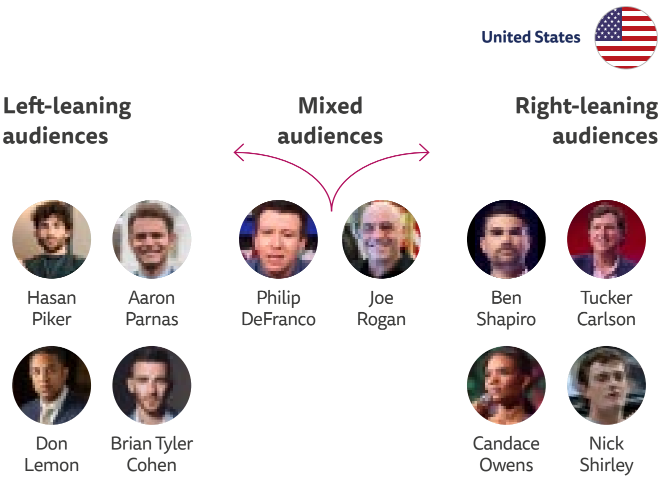
Q_Creators3_2026. You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs is met by these creators or influencers? *Q4.* You say you've used these sources of news in the last week, which would you say is your MAIN source of news? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Part of these differences relate to age. As we saw in the Executive Summary, younger people are much more likely to use social media for news, and the share of young people in Kenya – where around three-quarters of the population is under 35 – is much larger than in Japan, where the equivalent figure is around a quarter. But other factors are at play, including polarised politics, the size of the market, and the extent to which traditional media are seen to represent – or not represent – different audience interests. These are some of the factors driving our four creator ecosystems.

[34] https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news-creators-influencers/2025

1. Politically polarised (and influential)

In countries such as the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Poland, and Serbia, the most-mentioned news creators in our survey tend to be strident commentators from one side of the political divide or the other. These are countries that tend to have low trust, weak public service media, and high dependence on social media. The creator ecosystem in these countries tends to mirror the media in general which also show high degrees of polarisation, but if anything, creators seem to be amplifying these differences. In the United States (see the next figure) many of the top creators mentioned are former TV anchors, such as Tucker Carlson and Don Lemon, who moved to unregulated online platforms, partly to allow them to explore a wider range of views.

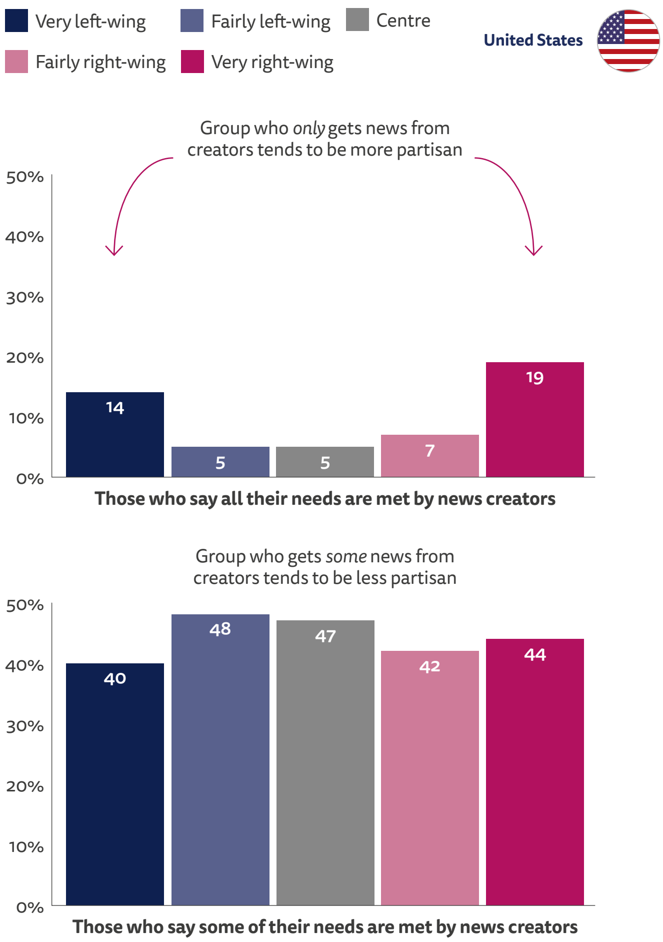


Note: These positions are drawn from the self-declared political alignment of survey respondents and how this matches the aggregate audience make-up for each.

Carlson, for example, recently platformed Nick Fuentes, someone often described as an antisemitic white nationalist, on his podcast (7.2m views on YouTube alone)[35] – something he would have found hard to do as a mainstream anchor on Fox. Others, like Aaron Parnas, 26, a progressive TikTokker and former securities litigator with over 5m followers on the platform, and Nick Shirley, 24, a right-wing YouTuber with almost 2m followers, come from a generation of digital natives. In December 2025 Shirley made a viral video (100m+ views), alleging fraud at Somali-run childcare centres in Minnesota that was amplified by Vice President J. D. Vance and led to federal investigations, despite limited evidence.[36]

Lack of trust in the 'mainstream media' is a key driver of reliance on creator-led news in the United States. If we combine the group that *only gets news from creators* with those that mostly do (12% total) we find they are three times as likely to say that news from creators is more trustworthy than mainstream media, when compared to the general population. And if we look at the smaller group that say they *only get news from creators* (3%) we also find an even greater tendency to partisanship. This group is more likely to self-identify as being very left- or very right-wing – suggesting that a creator-only diet could be reinforcing and amplifying extreme and sometimes unreliable views.

PROPORTION WHO CONSUMED NEWS FROM CREATORS OR INFLUENCERS FOCUSED ON NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK (BY POLITICAL LEANING) – USA



Q_Creators1_2026. In the last week, have you consumed news from any of the following? This could be on social and video networks (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), web portal (e.g. Substack), or podcast, etc. **Q_Creators3_2026.** You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs is met by these creators or influencers? **Q1F.** Some people talk about 'left', 'right', and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale? *Base: Those that consumed news from creators or influencers focused on news in the last week who self-identify as very left-wing = 110, fairly left-wing = 111, centre = 244, fairly right-wing = 72, very right-wing = 75.*

We see a similar story in Brazil, where again the top news creators tend to be anchored on either the left or the right and are disproportionately accessed by partisans. As in the United States, most political commentators are men and many have courted controversy. The most widely mentioned is Nikolas Ferreira, a right-wing commentator and politician who has built a huge following online (8m followers across YouTube, X, and Instagram) through exploiting culture-war issues. On the progressive left, creators such as Felipe Neto (80m followers across social platforms) have huge influence with younger generations, while Galãs Feios ('Ugly Heartthrobs' in Portuguese) is a creator-led channel that mixes satire with progressive political critique.

Nikolas Ferreira, part creator, part politician

[35] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/31/conservative-reaction-tucker-carlson-nick-fuentes-interview
[36] https://edition.cnn.com/2026/01/02/us/fraud-minnesota-programs-scandal-trump

2. Creators as critical voices

A second case that emerges from our research is where creators operating online act as a locus of opposition – or even overt protest – against an unpopular government (or one that largely controls the mainstream media).

In Turkey, Reporters Without Borders suggests that around 90% of the national media are now under government control. Against this background, much of the public has turned to the few remaining independent media outlets and to news creators to learn about the impact of the economic and political crisis. Many of those that the public consider to be news creators in Turkey are former journalists who are no longer able to operate freely within mainstream media. Others are digital natives trying to build a new independent future for journalism. The most mentioned five names are all critics of the current government.

MOST-MENTIONED NEWS CREATORS IN TURKEY

	News creator	Characteristics	Main platforms	Followers (across platforms)
1	Nevşin Mengü	Former CNN Türk anchor known for her critical, often fearless, reporting – despite judicial harassment and government pressure	YouTube, X	Around 5m
2	Cüneyt Özdemir	Prominent journalist who moved from CNN Türk into independent daily digital broadcasting on YouTube due to political pressure	YouTube, X	Around 8m
3	Fatih Altaylı	Veteran columnist and TV host transitioned to digital channels and known for often critical commentary on politics and power structures	YouTube, X	Around 5m
4	Özlem Gürses	Journalist who left traditional media and now operates via independent digital channels. Her commentary is generally critical of government policies	YouTube, X, Instagram	Around 4m
5	Fatih Portakal	Former Fox TV news anchor who stepped away from mainstream broadcasting and built a large independent following. He is regarded as critical of the government	YouTube, X, Instagram	Around 12m

It is a similar story in Hungary, where Facebook, YouTube, and X became key channels for opponents of the government of then Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, which at the time of our survey had a stranglehold over mainstream media. Péter Magyar, the opposition leader who defeated Orbán in recent elections, did so partly on the strength of his strong social media presence amplified by online outlets such as Partizán.

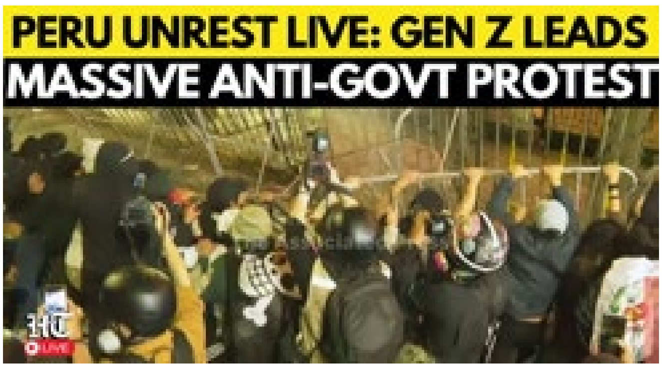
His creator-like style and tone, which was personal, urgent, and unscripted when alleging corruption in the ruling party, helped build his nationwide profile. Péter Juhász has been another strong voice campaigning against oligarchic influence and media capture under Viktor Orbán's government. Jólvanezígy and Fókuszcsoport are creator-led brands which mix political analysis with humour and play a significant role in shaping political opinions with younger groups.

MOST-MENTIONED NEWS CREATORS IN HUNGARY

	News creator	Characteristics	Main platforms	Followers (across platforms)
1	Partizán (brand)	Left-leaning online media outlet founded by journalist and activist Márton Gulyás	YouTube, Facebook	Around 1m
2	Péter Juhász (Juhi)	Former politician turned activist and commentator, known for anti-corruption campaigns	YouTube, Facebook	Around 0.75m
3	Jólvanezígy (brand)	Creator-led satirical commentary, politics and internet culture popular with urban youth	YouTube, TikTok	Around 0.75m
4	Edina Pottyondy	Political satirist and commentator. Critical of former government	YouTube, Facebook	Around 1m
5	Áron Molnár	Actor and activist who became a prominent anti-government voice through social media	Facebook, YouTube	Around 1m
6	Róbert Puzsér	Public intellectual and commentator; resists clear alignment but is often critical of political elites	X, Instagram	Around 0.5m

In India, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi exercised considerable control over leading media outlets – especially television – the two most-mentioned creators are Dhruv Rathee and Ravish Kumar, who are both known for being critical of the government on their YouTube channels.

Meanwhile, we find a slightly different picture in Peru, where digital journalists, streamers, and small media brands have played a significant role in the country's ongoing political crisis.

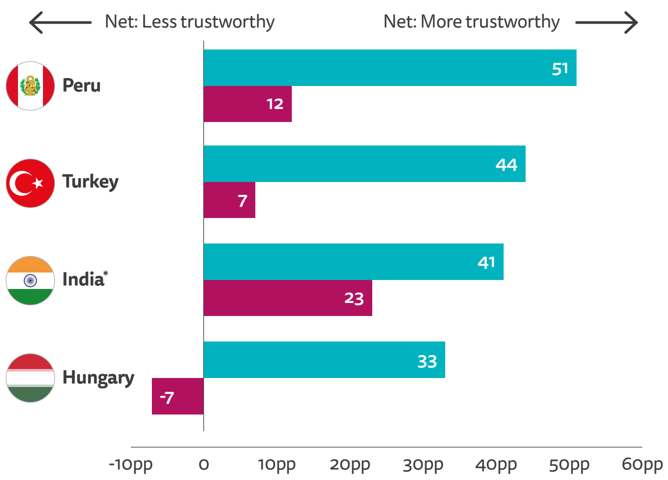


Here the issue has been less related to government control of the media and more about wider frustrations with elites. Deep distrust of traditional media has created a vacuum for creators to fill, with live streams and short video output on Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube proving especially popular with young people. Creators have helped to amplify voices of protesters, especially rural and indigenous communities, and challenge perceived bias in the mainstream media.

In all these countries we find that those that depend on creators for all or most of their news are *much more* likely to say that they find their content trustworthy when compared with mainstream media.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS CREATORS ARE MORE OR LESS TRUSTWORTHY THAN TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA – SELECTED MARKETS

All users | Those who have all or most of their needs met by news creators



Q_Creators4_2026_2. Comparing content from news creators or news influencers with traditional news brands and outlets, would you say that news creators or news influencers are more or less of the following? – Trustworthy. **Q_Creators3_2026.** You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs is met by these creators or influencers? *Base: Total sample/those that use creators for all or most of news needs in Peru = 2,022/454, Turkey = 2,078/382, Hungary = 2,007/303, India = 2,044/539. Note: * indicates an English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

3. Youthful changemakers

In a number of countries, we find significant elements of news consumption shaped by young, platform-native creators bringing a new approach to storytelling and politics.

In France, HugoDécrypte – real name Hugo Travers – has become the single most important news source for younger audiences. He reaches more than a quarter (28%) of all those under 35 – twice as many people as historic news brands such as TF1 and *Le Figaro*. His YouTube and TikTok channels distil complex political and global issues into short, accessible formats, combining clarity with a neutral, explanatory tone. Around him sits a layer of creator-led brands such as Brut and Konbini, which produce social-first video journalism designed for platforms. YouTuber Guillaume Pley has also created a breakout hit with Legend, a popular long-form interview, while young journalists focused on the environment, such as Hugo Clément, also strike a chord. News-adjacent influencers such as Squeezie, a popular gamer, complete the list.

Young creators and creator-led brands are particularly popular in countries where traditional media have struggled to connect with GenZ audiences.

MOST-MENTIONED NEWS CREATORS IN FRANCE

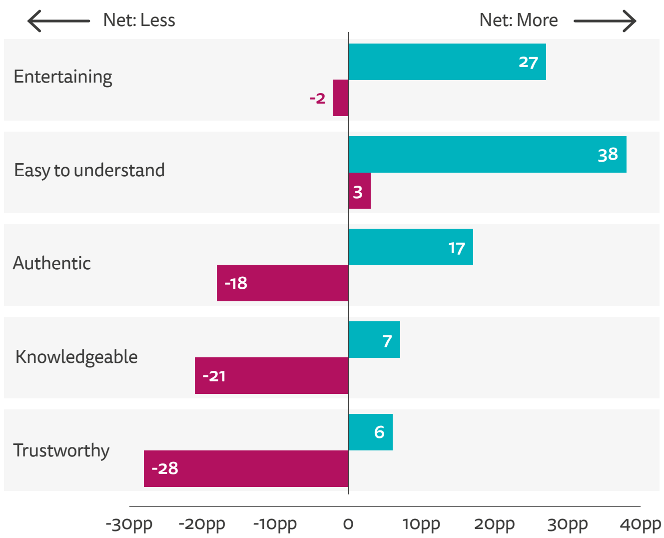
	News creator	Characteristics	Main platforms	Followers (across platforms)
1	HugoDécrypte	France's most influential news creator, producing short-form explainers	YouTube, TikTok	Around 15m
2	Brut (brand)	Leading digital-native media brand focused on short-form video news	YouTube, TikTok	Around 11m
3	Hugo Clément	Journalist and documentary maker focused on environmental and social issues	YouTube, X	Around 2m
4	Legend (brand)	Interview format focused on long-form conversations with public figures	YouTube	Around 1m
5=	Squeezie	France's biggest YouTuber and gamer, occasionally discusses news issues	YouTube	Around 35m
5=	Léna Situations	Influential French-Algerian YouTuber, author, and entrepreneur	YouTube, Instagram	Around 8m

In France, our data show how 18–24s see news creators as not just more entertaining than mainstream media, but also easier to understand, more authentic, more knowledgeable, and more trustworthy. The contrast with the wider population could not be starker.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS CREATORS ARE MORE OR LESS OF EACH COMPARED WITH TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA (BY AGE) – FRANCE

France

All respondents | 18–24s



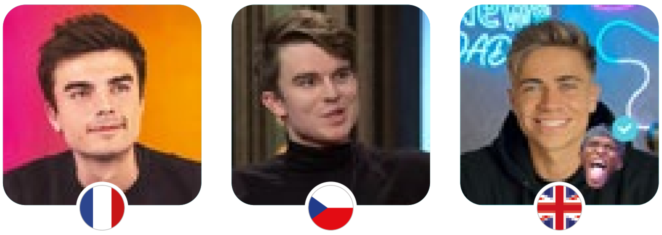
Q_Creators4_2026_2. Comparing content from news creators or news influencers with traditional news brands and outlets, would you say that news creators or news influencers are more or less of the following ...? *Base: Total market sample = 2,011, 18–24s = 186.*

Against this background it is not surprising to find networks such as TF1 partnering with popular YouTuber Gaspard G to create a new format for the 2027 election that mixes long-form political interviews with archive footage.[37]

We find similar youth focus in the Czech Republic, where Karel 'Kovy' Kovář is a leading explainer, translating complex issues into engaging, youth-oriented content. He has an average audience age of 26, according to our data.

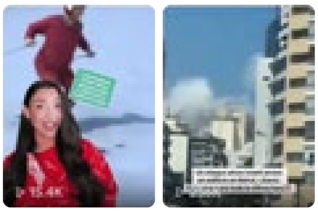
YOUTH-FOCUSED CREATORS MAKING NEWS ENTERTAINING AND EASIER TO UNDERSTAND

Most-mentioned by survey respondents in their market



HugoDécrypte | Kovy | Dylan Page

In the UK, Dylan Page heads the list and has 19m followers on TikTok alone. We also found high name recognition for TLDR, a collective effort to make news and politics easier to understand. In Italy, Geopop is a hugely successful science-based explainer brand founded by Andrea Moccia, and in Spain the team behind Ac2ality uses creator-led approaches (7m followers on TikTok) to engage young people with serious topics such as the Iran War.



Ac2ality: *Accessible news in short bites*

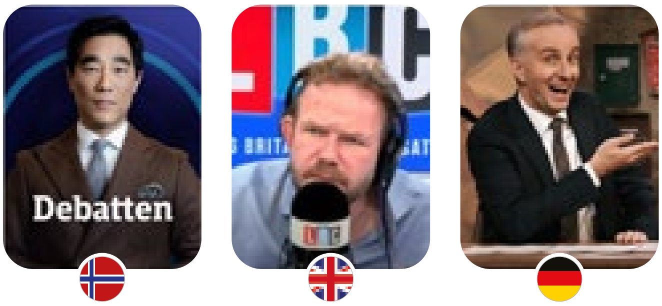
Geopop: *Science explained (with fun)*

4. More limited creator ecosystem with hybrid and imported elements

Our final category takes in many smaller countries in Northern and Eastern Europe as well as Japan. Lower use of social media, older populations, and the continued strength and relative trust in established news brands have limited the emergence of independent news creators, so far at least.

In countries such as Denmark, Norway, Germany, and Sweden, the relatively small number of individuals identified by respondents as creators are often not independent digital-native figures, but journalists or presenters from traditional media organisations who have extended their presence onto social platforms. These figures adopt some of the stylistic elements of creators – such as direct address, personal tone, vertical video, and humour – but remain rooted in institutional media. One example is Jan Böhmermann, a journalist and satirist who presents a weekly show with ZDF and is co-host of one of Germany's top podcasts, Fest & Flauschig, along with active social accounts.

HYBRID JOURNALIST CREATORS/PODCASTERS ARE EMERGING IN MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



NRK host Fredrik Solvang | LBC host James O'Brien | ZDF late night host Jan Böhmermann

Alongside these 'hybrid journalist creators', respondents frequently name entertainment or lifestyle-focused influencers, whose engagement with news tends to be occasional. Examples include Oskar Westerlin in Norway, Enzo Knol in the Netherlands, and Rezo in Germany. There are some nuances in Sweden and Norway, however, with a small home-grown right-wing creator ecosystem that aims to fill gaps left by mainstream media on issues like immigration.

A different pattern emerges in markets such as Ireland, Canada, and Switzerland, where domestic creator ecosystems are nascent and audiences instead rely on 'imported' creators. In these cases, respondents frequently mention international figures such as Joe Rogan, political podcasters like Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart from The Rest Is Politics, or Fabrizio Romano, the Italian influencer and expert on football transfers. This reflects a form of cross-border media consumption, where global or neighbouring markets fill the gap left by weaker domestic creator presence.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored four ecosystems that help explain how news creators are shaping public debate across countries: politically polarised, creators as a form of political opposition, youth-focused creator systems, and markets where creator influence remains limited or imported. However, these should not be seen as fixed or mutually exclusive. In practice, many countries display elements of several models at once, and creator ecosystems continue to evolve rapidly.

Across these different contexts, one consistent finding is that creators are rarely replacing traditional news media outright. Instead, they tend to play a more supplementary role, helping audiences to interpret, explain, critique, or react to the news rather than break stories themselves. Even in countries such as Kenya, Peru, or the United States, where reliance on creators is high, only a minority say that most or all of their news needs are met in this way.

At the same time, the structure and impact of creator ecosystems varies considerably. In some countries, particularly those with polarised politics or weak trust in mainstream media, creators have become powerful voices shaping competing narratives. In others, especially where governments exert control over traditional media, creators and independent digital journalists have emerged as an alternative source of scrutiny.

[37] https://www.formatbiz.it/dettNews.aspx?id=14794

Elsewhere, we are seeing the emergence of 'hybrid journalist creator' models where existing radio and TV stars (and others) lean into creator approaches while remaining part of the traditional media ecosystem, offering a different potential future for the industry.

Across countries we find that news creators are disproportionately reaching younger audiences, by providing more accessible and engaging formats than traditional media. A few high-profile individuals (HugoDécrypte/Dylan Page/Kovy) are effectively building youth-based news brands, joining existing social-first media such as TLDR, Ac2ality, GeoPop, and Brut. Taken together, young people say these are more entertaining, easier to understand, and more trustworthy than traditional news media – a major challenge for the industry.

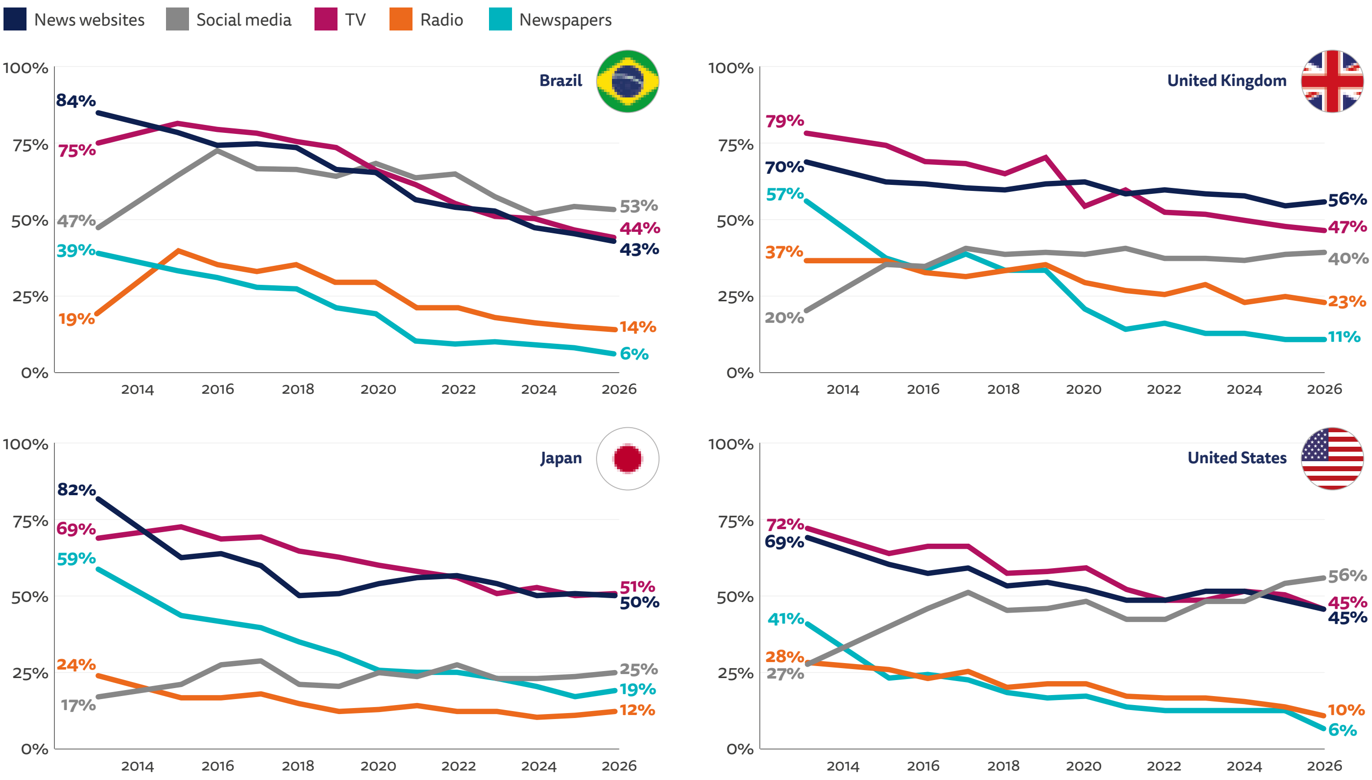
Creators now represent an important and growing layer within the news ecosystem. Understanding how they operate in different contexts – and how they interact with both big tech platforms and traditional media – will be critical in assessing their long-term impact on news consumption and public debates.

2.4 The Different Reasons Why Television, Newspapers, and Radio are Losing Their News Audiences

Richard Fletcher

Almost all markets we cover in the Digital News Report survey have seen a decline in the use of offline news sources in the last decade. Printed newspapers, radio, and television have all experienced double-digit falls since 2013 in the proportion who say they use them for news on a weekly basis. As can be seen in Section 3 of this report (Analysis by Country and Market) the picture is broadly consistent across countries with markedly different media systems. Taking just four examples – Brazil, Japan, the UK, and the USA – we can see that newspapers, television, and radio have all seen large declines. And as we document in the Executive Summary, even online news websites and apps have seen modest declines, leaving social media and video networks to emerge as the most widely used source, even in markets where they have not experienced growth in recent years.

PROPORTION WHO USED EACH AS A SOURCE OF NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK – SELECTED MARKETS



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? *Base: Total sample in each market-year ≈ 2,000. Note: No data for 2014.*

These trendlines provide an essential guide to changes in news audience behaviour. However, on their own, they have little explanatory power. In short, they tell us how the size of an audience has changed, but they say little about the processes that undermine or sustain that audience.

Why are traditional sources in decline? Why are some traditional sources – like newspapers – declining at a faster rate than, say, television news? Is it because certain sources struggle to attract users in the first place? Or is it perhaps that they are more vulnerable to existing users turning away from them?

These are essential questions for media companies across the world that are still in the process of navigating the digital transition, as offline income still accounts for a substantial part of overall revenues. And they beg further questions for publishers. For example, might it be better for some companies to prioritise retaining existing audiences rather than fruitlessly trying to attract newer, younger ones if new audience recruitment is fundamentally very difficult to do?

This year, to address the question of why traditional sources are in decline, and why some are declining faster than others, we asked respondents basic questions about how they used to get news in the past.

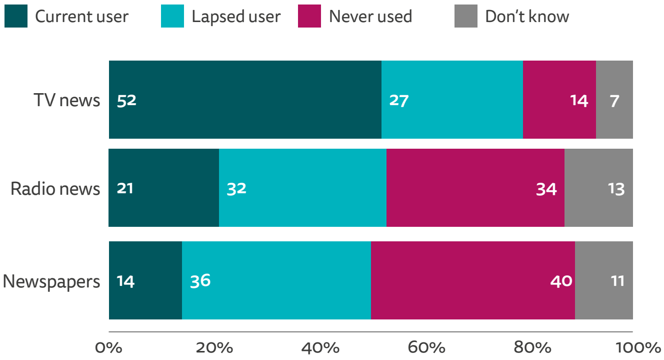
Specifically, we asked respondents who said they had not used a specific source in the last week: (a) whether they *used to* use it as a source of news on a weekly basis but stopped, or alternatively (b) if they had never used it on a weekly basis. As will be explained in this chapter, these questions help shed light on rates of 'adoption' (how many people have ever used a given news source) and rates of 'retention' (how many people carry on using a source once they start). And in turn, these may shed some light on what news use might look like in the future, given it seems unlikely that people who have *never* been socialised into the regular use of sources like print, radio, and television will suddenly start using them for the first time when they get older.

For any given source, respondents can be placed into one of three groups:

1. **Current users**: those that used a source of news in the last week
2. **Lapsed users:** those that used to use a source of news on a weekly basis, but have now stopped
3. **Never used:** those that have never used a source of news on a weekly basis at any point in their lives

Across 45 markets where we asked these follow-up questions, 52% said they currently use TV news on a weekly basis, 27% used to use TV news on a weekly basis, while 14% said they have never used it regularly (7% answered 'don't know' to the follow-up question). As we've already seen, fewer people currently use radio news and newspapers on a weekly basis, meaning that larger numbers either never used them in the first place or have lapsed.

PROPORTION OF CURRENT, LAPSED, AND NEVER USERS OF EACH SOURCE – ALL MARKETS



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q3_Ever.** You said that you did not access news from the below source(s) in the last week… Which of the following statements best describes your past usage of this source(s) of news? *Base: Total sample across 45 markets = 91,456. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

We can use these data to compute two further measures: (i) the rate of adoption for a given news source, and (ii) the rate of retention. The rate of adoption refers to the proportion of people who have ever used a source of news on a weekly basis, and is simply the proportion of current users added to the proportion of lapsed users:

Adoption rate = Current users + Lapsed users

The rate of retention is a measure of how many of those who adopted a news source are still using it, and is the proportion of current users divided by the rate of adoption:

Retention rate = Current users / Adoption rate

When we compute these measures for different sources we see that television news as a source has a high rate of 'adoption' – because 79% across 45 markets either currently use it on a weekly basis or used to in the past (52% current users + 27% lapsed users). What's more, television news has also been able to retain many of the people in this group, giving it a relatively high level of 'retention' – 66% of the 79% that adopted it are still using it.

In contrast, the adoption rate has been lower for newspapers (49%) and radio news (53%), with only around half the current population ever using them on a weekly basis. And they have both been less sticky, with most adopters having lapsed, meaning that retention levels are at 39% for radio news and 27% for newspapers. Put differently, they have lost most of their living userbase.

PROPORTION WHO ADOPTED EACH SOURCE AND THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO WERE RETAINED AS USERS – ALL MARKETS

Adoption is the proportion of respondents who have used each medium on a weekly basis
Retention is the proportion of those adopted who are still weekly users

Source	Adoption rate	Retention rate
TV news	79%	66%
Radio news	53%	39%
Newspapers	49%	27%

Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q3_Ever.** You said that you did not access news from the below source(s) in the last week… Which of the following statements best describes your past usage of this source(s) of news? *Base: Total sample across 45 markets = 91,456. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

These new measures start to tell us more about what's driving the trendlines from the beginning of the chapter – and point to different reasons for the audience declines we have seen in recent years. The decline in newspaper use is driven by a combination of weak adoption and weak retention. The same is true for radio news – it has a similarly weak adoption rate to newspapers but is a little better at retaining users. Therefore, declines in radio news use are primarily down to weak adoption rates, but made worse by poor retention. In contrast, the declines in television news are primarily driven by the failure to retain audiences. Television has a very high adoption rate and, although it has a better retention rate than other sources, it still means that the main reason people do not currently use TV news is because they gave up on it, not because they never started.

If we split this table by age, we can start to see how this pattern changes for younger people – which in turn suggests how the overall picture might change over time. When we compare the 18–34s to the 35 and overs, we see that the newspaper adoption rate is even lower among younger people (37%), while retention rates are similarly low for both young and old. Both adoption rates and retention rates are lower for radio news among the 18–34s, which means for younger people it has a similar profile to newspapers – and faces the prospect of low adoption compounded by low retention.

However, the most significant age gap is for TV news retention. While TV news has been relatively good at retaining users who are currently aged 35 or over (71%), it has only retained about half of those aged 18–34 (51%). Adoption rates are also lower for television news among the 18–34s (72%), but the gap between them and the older group is smaller than for retention. Taken together, this means that declines in television news use are being driven more by its failure to hold on to younger users than its ability to attract them in the first place.

PROPORTION WHO ADOPTED EACH SOURCE AND THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO WERE RETAINED AS USERS (BY AGE GROUP) – ALL MARKETS

Adoption is the proportion of respondents who have used each medium on a weekly basis
Retention is the proportion of those adopted who are still weekly users

	Adoption rate		Retention rate	
Source	18–34	35+	18–34	35+
TV news	72%	81%	51%	71%
Radio news	45%	56%	32%	41%
Newspapers	37%	54%	30%	27%

Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? **Q3_Ever.** You said that you did not access news from the below source(s) in the last week… Which of the following statements best describes your past usage of this source(s) of news? *Base: Those across 45 markets aged 18–34 = 24,804, 35+ = 66,652. Note: Question not asked in Chile, Kenya, and Nigeria.*

Up to now we have only considered offline sources, but online news websites and apps are also in decline in many countries across the world. Overall, news websites and apps have a similar adoption/retention profile to television news, with high levels of adoption (71%) and declines primarily driven by a failure to retain audiences. When we split data by age, we see identical rates of adoption for the 18–34s and the 35 and overs, but retention rates are 10pp lower among younger people. Therefore, as with television news, declines in the use of news websites and apps are being driven by the loss of younger former users.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have explained the dynamics behind the declines in audiences for traditional news media. Although the reach of newspapers, television news, and radio news have all declined since 2013, the underlying dynamics of these declines are fundamentally different. This matters for publishers because, as many devote time and energy to developing their 'young audiences strategy', they may encounter a tension between focus on retention and a focus on adoption.

While newspapers are experiencing a deep structural decline driven by a combination of low adoption rates and low retention rates, for radio news, low adoption is the more salient factor. In contrast, for television news, the problem is one of retention. Although most people have been weekly consumers of television news at some point in their lives, many have lapsed, with declines driven by the failure to retain younger audiences in particular. In this sense, television news has faded out of use for many people, whereas newspapers and radio news may never have been part of the picture in the first place.

Today's younger adults will eventually grow older, but the data suggest that they are unlikely to grow into the media habits of their parents' generation. Older people do not consume more traditional media simply because of their age but because their generation was socialised into specific consumption patterns and preferences. The data show that – in the case of newspapers and radio – relatively few young people have been socialised into these consumption habits in the first place. The social reproduction of newspaper and radio news audiences may have broken down altogether. And although many young people have acquired the television news consumption habit, there are clear signs that this habit is proving less durable than it was for older groups.

What alternatives will people turn to after their usage of a source has lapsed? Unfortunately, this is not a question we can answer with our cross-sectional data. However, it is worth noting that it presumes that people always substitute one source for another. This isn't necessarily the case. While social media and video networks are emerging as the most widely used news source in many parts of the world, this is driven less by growth and more by the decline in the use of other sources. People may be content to simply carry on with a smaller news repertoire and, for a smaller minority, stepping away from a source may mean that they opt out of news altogether. Among the group that say they used to use TV news on a weekly basis but stopped, 9% say they no longer use any of the sources we asked about – which includes print, radio, podcasts, social media, AI chatbots, and the websites or apps of a variety of different types of news publisher.

This is part of a trend we have documented in previous reports, whereby a small but significant minority in every country say they do not use any news sources at all. It points to the structural decline of news use in general, and not just the rise and fall of specific sources. The idea that a source like television news could be adopted by 80% of the public is, in a sense, quite remarkable – and at its peak, the number was likely even higher. Will another news source ever be so widely adopted again?

2.5 Can Public Demand for Impartial News Survive Platforms and Polarisation?

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

Impartiality is a core commitment for parts of the news media, including both public service media such as the BBC and some private publishers such as Reuters News. But many other news media, legacy or new, operate with a much more explicit, opinionated, and sometimes openly partisan editorial line. This has long been the norm in, for example, many European newspapers and much of US cable television and talk radio.

In a context of often intense disagreement, where it sometimes feels like we have less and less in common, where social media are rife with polemics, and where some highly partisan news media and opinionated influencers and news creators have built significant audiences, it can look like the public is rejecting the aspiration towards impartiality and instead prefers news from sources that have a clearer point of view – perhaps especially a view that confirms people's own opinions.

Is that true? One way to find out is to ask members of the public, and that is exactly what we have done in this year's survey.

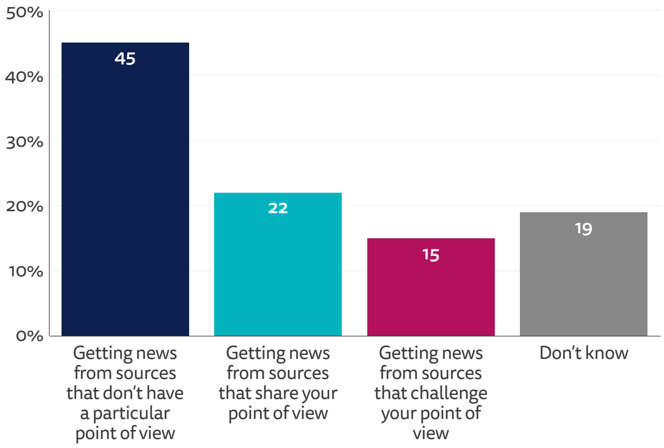
DO PEOPLE WANT IMPARTIAL NEWS?

A defining aspect of impartiality is the attempt to abstain from being partial, in the context of news by aspiring to offer news without adopting a particular point of view – in contrast to outlets who have a clear editorial line. Without suggesting that this exhausts a concept that can be both practically and philosophically elusive and subject to principled challenges, reporting the news while striving to keep from adopting a point of view is an important aspect both of how many journalists and editors think of the aspiration towards impartiality, and of more philosophical discussions of impartiality as a moral principle (Kieran 1998). Impartiality in this sense is not the absence of a clear moral position. It is instead a specific moral ideal. Previous research shows it is not only an abstract ideal, but also embedded in how much of the public in many countries think about impartiality when it comes to news (Mont'Alverne et al. 2023).

The latter suggests it is clear and comprehensible enough to use in a survey. This is why we use it here as a gauge of how people think about impartiality in news.

Asked about the different kinds of news available, 45% of respondents across all markets say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view. That is twice as many as the 22% who say they prefer news from sources that share their point of view, whereas 15% say they prefer news from sources that challenge their point of view, two different ways in which people might think about the appeal of more explicitly partial news sources.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW – ALL MARKETS

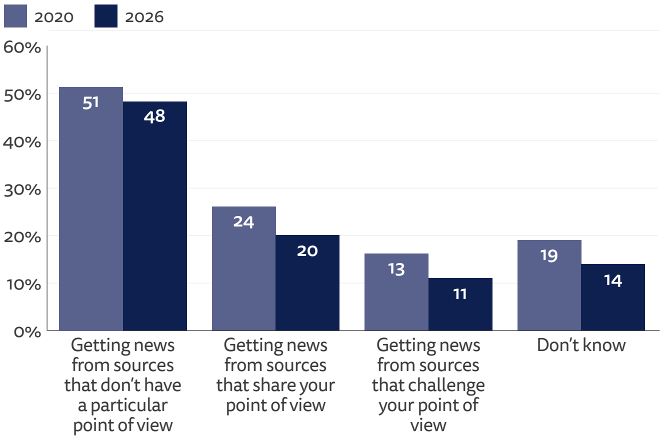


Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer … *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520.*

These responses are expressions of opinion, not observed behaviour, so of course some of the people who say they prefer news from sources that don't have a particular point of view are in fact relying at least in part on clearly opinionated outlets, outlets that may or may not present themselves as such. (The *Guardian* is explicit, its stated ambition is to be 'the world's leading liberal voice', the strident Fox News less so, it used to market itself as 'fair and balanced'.) But, in addition to being important in documenting widespread public appreciation for at least the idea of impartial news, these data are also aligned with a tendency in many countries we cover in this report for outlets that abstain from taking a clear and explicit editorial position on issues of the day and position themselves as relatively neutral – commercial broadcasters, online portals, public service media where these exist – to be among those with the highest reach both offline and online.

Because we have asked the same question before, we can track how much public opinion on this question has evolved over time. Looking exclusively at the 40 markets where we asked the question in both 2020 and 2026, there has been little change overall – most significantly perhaps there has been a slight decline in how many say they want news from sources that share their point of view (down by 4pp), and an increase in the number of respondents who say they don't know (up by 5pp), both bigger shifts than the slight decline in the number of people who say they prefer to get news from sources that don't have a particular point of view.[38] In a context where many other aspects of media use, and people's perception of news and its role in our societies, are changing rapidly, the numbers here are strikingly stable.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW IN 2020 AND 2026 – SELECTED MARKETS



Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer … *Base: Total sample across selected markets in 2020 = 80,155, 2026 = 81,309. Note: Data for 2026 comes from the 40 markets included in the 2020 survey.*

A RELATIVELY SILENT PLURALITY AND A MUCH MORE VOCAL MINORITY

The finding that a large plurality of the public in most countries still say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view may be a surprise. It runs counter to expectations based on the experience many have of partisan polemics in the news and perhaps especially moralising grand-standing and rage-baiting on social media. But the outsize role played by the minority who seek partisanship is easier to understand when we take into account that those who say they prefer news from sources that share their point of view are, in our survey data, also more likely to

- Share and comment on news online and on social media
- Be very or extremely interested in news and in politics
- Place themselves on the left or the right of the political spectrum
- Access news many times daily and pay for online news

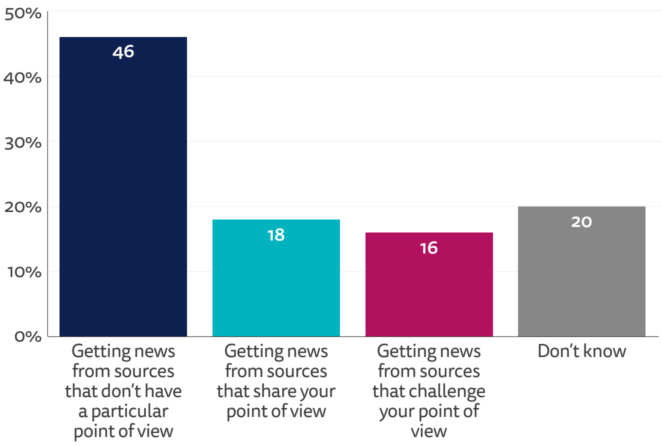
The people who prefer news that aligns with their own views are a minority. But they tend to be more vocal, more highly engaged, more partisan, and more commercially important for many news publishers than the public at large.

Looking across social differences, young people and people with low levels of formal education are both groups that are less likely to say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view. A slightly larger share of 18–24-year-old respondents say they prefer news from sources that share their point of view, or from sources that challenge their point of view. A significantly larger share of those with low levels of formal education answer 'don't know'. In both groups, however, a clear plurality still expresses a preference for impartiality.

IMPARTIALITY FOR ME, IMPARTIALITY FOR THEE?

Importantly, when people express a personal preference for getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view, it is generally not simply a matter of individual taste – it is also a social norm that people subscribe to. Immediately after respondents were asked about their personal preference ('Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer…'), we asked them about their more general views for the public at large ('Thinking about the different kinds of news available, do you think other people in society should mainly…'). The aggregate public views here are strikingly aligned. Far from a case of 'rules for thee, but not for me', there is almost perfect correlation between how many say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view and how many say other people in society should mainly do the same.[39] (This is quite different from other issues, like perceived susceptibility to advertising or misinformation, where people often see themselves differently from the way they see the rest of the public.)

PROPORTION WHO SAY OTHERS IN SOCIETY SHOULD GET NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW – ALL MARKETS



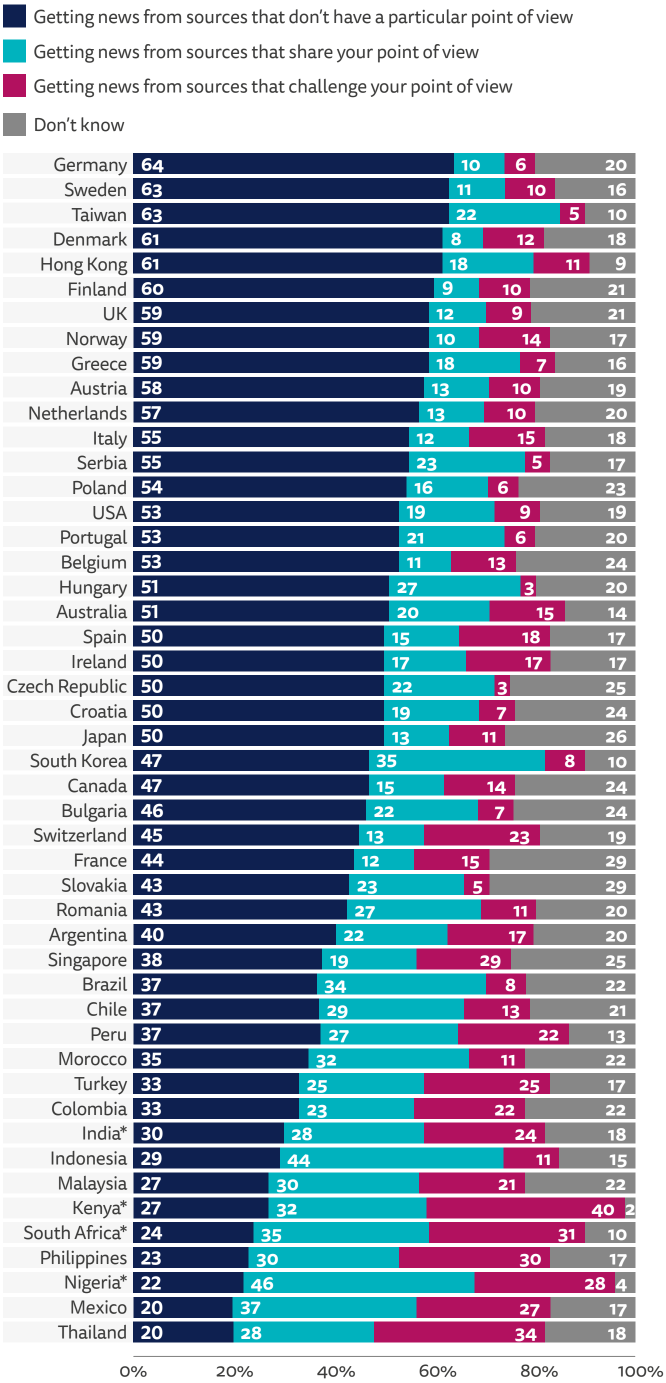
Q5c_2013_2026. Thinking about the different kinds of news available, do you think other people in society should mainly … *Base: Total sample across all markets = 97,520.*

[38] We asked the same question in a small number of countries in 2013, but with different response options, so the data from then is not comparable to the 2020 and 2026 data.
[39] There may be an element of consistency bias here, where respondents align answers across different questions so as to not come across as hypocritical or inconsistent, but the overall pattern is very clear.

GLOBAL VARIATION IN PREFERENCES FOR IMPARTIAL NEWS, SOCIAL MEDIA USE, AND POLARISATION

While pronounced, the preference for impartial news is not uniform across the world. In 24 of the markets we cover, half or more of the public say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view, and in 16 markets, a plurality say so. But in seven of the remaining eight markets, including many important, populous countries in the Global South, a plurality say they prefer news from sources that share their point of view.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW – ALL MARKETS

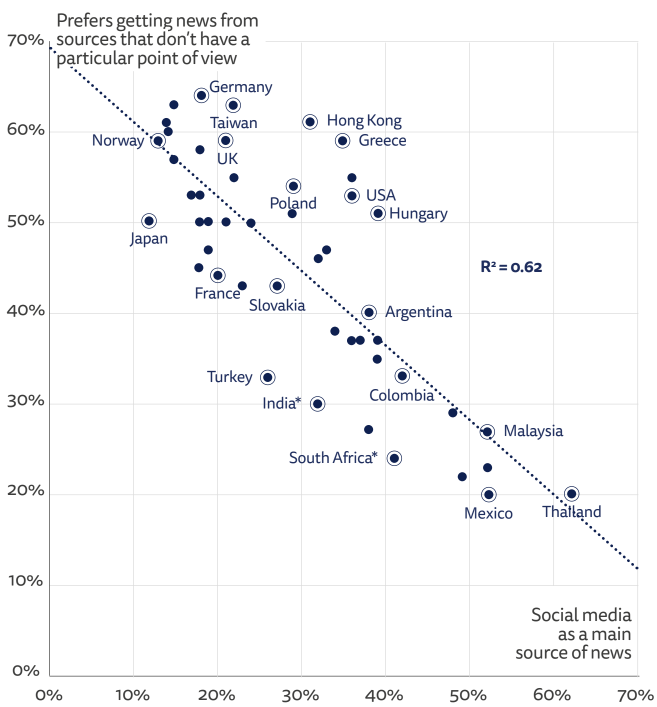


Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer … *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Survey data alone are far from enough to account for this variation, and the situation in individual countries and for specific communities will always also be shaped by cultural, historical, political, and other specific circumstances that go far beyond what we can cover here. But we can use our data to capture some potentially important country-to-country variations by mapping public preferences for getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view against two factors that previous research has documented are among those that sometimes significantly influence how people think about news – the platforms they access news via (Fletcher et al. 2025) and the political context that the news covers (Hanitzsch et al. 2018).

Platforms first: social media, which often amplifies polemics and offers highly personalised feeds, is potentially at odds with the aspiration of impartiality. And indeed, if we plot the percentage of respondents in each country who say that social media is their main source of news against the percentage who say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view, we see a clear negative correlation at the country level. This does not prove a causal relationship (nor is the correlation as pronounced at the individual level), and in any case, disentangling whether behaviour or preferences comes first is a complicated task. But it is important to recognise that, all else being equal, in countries where more people say they rely on social media as their main source of news, there is a clear tendency for fewer people to say that they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view.

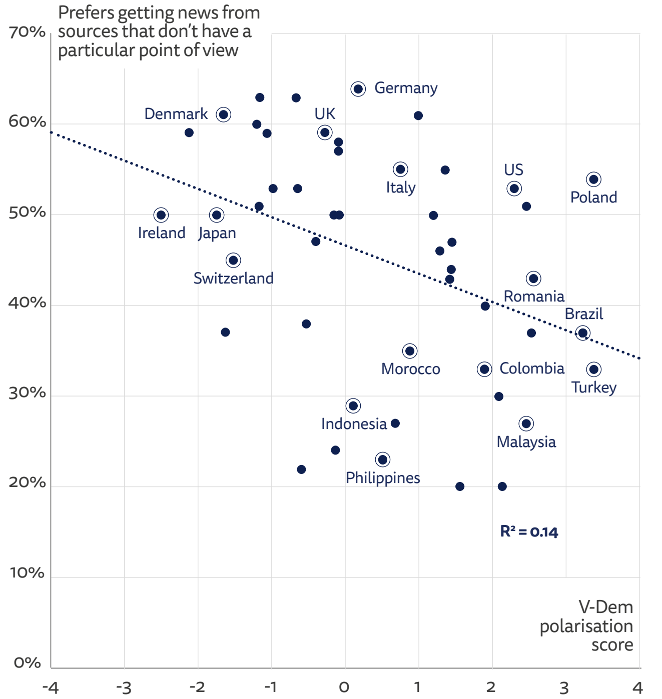
PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO SAY THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF NEWS IS SOCIAL MEDIA – ALL MARKETS



Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer … **Q4.** You say you've used these sources of news in the last week, which would you say is your MAIN source of news? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: * indicates a predominantly English-speaking rather than a nationally representative sample.*

Polarisation next: profound disagreement or intractable conflict between different camps may potentially create a situation where the concept of impartiality begins to seem more ideological than idealistic. When core democratic institutions or the fundamental rights of whole swaths of the public are under concerted political attack, what does it mean to report the news in a way that doesn't have a particular point of view? Our survey does not provide data on how politically polarised different societies are, but to consider this factor, we can draw on other research that does. Specifically, the V-Dem project (Nord et al. 2026) includes an expert estimate of the extent to which a society is divided into hostile political camps, and political differences undermine social relationships and discourage interaction across ideological lines. Using this as an indicator, we can plot countries by how polarised they are and how many people say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view. What we see is some correlation, but it is important to underline that it is much weaker and there is greater variation. Again, this finding does not demonstrate a causal relationship. But, all else being equal, in more polarised societies, there seems to be slightly less of a preference for getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY PREFER NEWS THAT DOESN'T HAVE A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW PLOTTED AGAINST LEVEL OF POLITICAL POLARISATION



Q5c_2013. Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer … *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000. Note: Measure of political polarisation from V-DEM (data not available for Hong Kong).*

CAN IMPARTIAL NEWS SURVIVE?

Overall, our data suggest that the plurality of the public, and in many countries a clear majority, say they prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view, and also believe other people in society should mainly get news from such sources.

This underlines that, despite the proliferation of partisanship in both politics and media, online and offline, there is still real public demand for impartial news, and broad public support for the aspiration to provide it. It is something many want both for themselves and for others. Even in a world where algorithms sometimes reward polemics and societies are often deeply divided, there is clearly still public demand for news from sources that do not take a particular point of view.

That said, our analysis also underlines that impartial news faces real challenges. Because the minority who prefer getting news from sources that share their point of view are more engaged and commercially valuable than the public at large, news publishers – whether individual creators or media brands – in an incredibly competitive marketplace for attention, have an incentive to cater to them. Having a clearly articulated editorial line and partisan position can, in addition to the possible intrinsic appeal it may have for some creators or journalists, serve as a form of product differentiation. It is not the only way to try to stand out (clearly defined target audience, niche focus, format, etc. are others). But it is clearly one way to distinguish one's offering from an abundance of alternatives. Especially in countries where many established news media have historically tried to position themselves as proponents of impartial news, new entrants are particularly likely to see partisanship as a powerful differentiator – as we have seen in the United States from cable news and talk radio onwards.

In terms of the media and political context news publishers need to navigate, the public preference for getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view tends to be less pronounced in countries where more people rely on social media as their main source of news and slightly less clear in countries that are more politically polarised. How pronounced either of these two factors is – the move to distributed discovery with a high reliance on social media and other digital platforms for news, and the move to a more polarised politics – differs in important ways from country to country. The growing importance of digital platforms in general is nearly universal, but the importance of social media and the like for news specifically varies greatly by country (Nielsen and Fletcher 2023). There is even more variation when it comes to political polarisation – while clearly and spectacularly on the rise in many countries, others have seen no significant change or even a slight decline in polarisation (Boxell et al. 2024). Looking at the 40 countries we covered in 2020 and again in 2026, the percentage of respondents who identify social media as their main source of news has grown significantly in 33 and declined in one over that period. Looking at the V-Dem data on polarisation, divisions have deepened in 29 countries, but declined in eight (Nord et al. 2026).

Many publishers, including both legacy titles and some new entrants, continue to have a strong connection with those in the public who prefer getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view. So far, public demand for impartial news has remained strong even as platforms become ever more important and polarisation has increased in many societies. But for those who are struggling, or struggling to break in, a more strident, partisan editorial line is one potential way to seek to stand out in the din (while perhaps adding to it). And in the countries where people increasingly rely on social media for news, and where politics is growing more polarised, these incentives are likely to be reinforced, rewarding the production of partisan news that an important and highly engaged minority may want, but that many others believe isn't right for them personally, or for society at large.

2.6 Do People Think Public Service News is Good for Their Country?

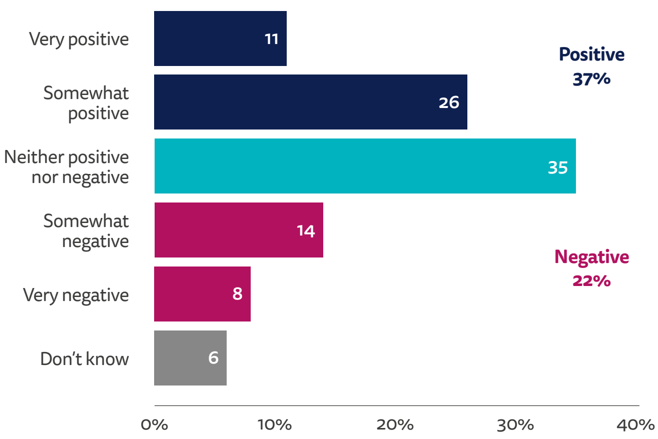
Jim Egan

In a period of rapid change in news consumption patterns and ongoing debate about the role of public service media (PSM) we wanted to find out what impact people think PSM news – whether on TV, on radio, or online – has on national life. This is just one dimension of how people think about news from public service media organisations, and just one aspect of their remits, but it is important given the prominence that PSM news has in many media systems across the world. The survey question we asked was, 'Overall do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters has a positive or negative effect on life in your country?'[40]

We asked this question in 26 markets where PSM play a significant role.[41] 21 of the markets surveyed are in Europe. We also asked about attitudes in three Asia-Pacific markets (Japan, South Korea, and Australia) as well as in the USA and Canada. In some countries there is a single recognised provider of public service news, while in others there is more of a public service ecosystem. The German data, for example, are likely to reflect a mix of views about ARD, ZDF, and the regional network of German public service entities, and in Australia some people may mainly have been thinking about the ABC while others may have reflected their attitudes about news from SBS.

Across the 26 countries where the question was asked, views are positive overall. On average, 37% of respondents say that public service news has either a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive effect on life in their country, compared with 22% who think it has a negative effect – a net positive score of 15 percentage points (pp). A further 35% take a mixed view, indicating that a substantial minority either see little impact or do not hold strong opinions on the broader role of public service news.[42]

PROPORTION WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY – SELECTED MARKETS



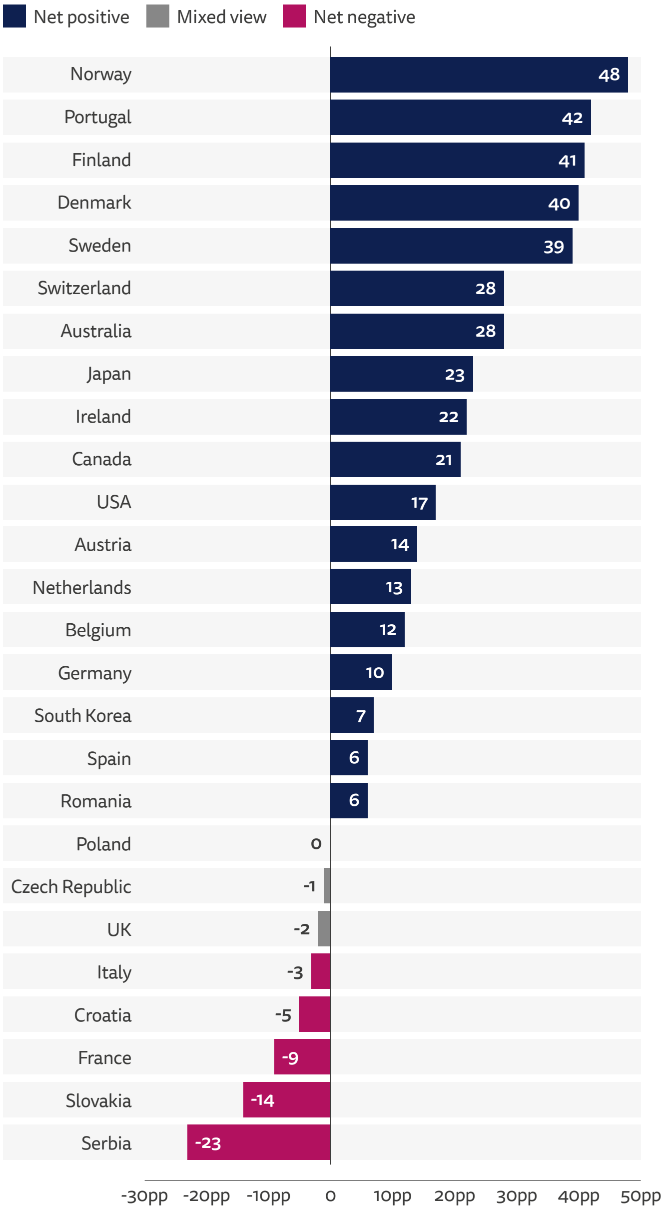
Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? *Base: Total sample across 26 markets with prominent public service media = 52,857.*

HOW DO ATTITUDES VARY BETWEEN COUNTRIES?

To help with comparisons of attitudes across different markets we calculated 'net positivity' scores for each country. This is simply derived by deducting the total percentage of respondents who say public service news has a negative social effect from the total percentage of those who think the effect is positive. On this basis we can see a wide range of views across countries, from a net positive score of +48 in Norway (58% positive vs. 10% negative) to -23 in Serbia (22% positive vs. 45% negative).

[40] We did not ask about specific organisations but framed the question broadly in terms of 'public service broadcasters'. In each market we provided an example in the question of one public service entity in case respondents were unsure about the term.
[41] The question was asked in: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.
[42] We did not ask respondents for their opinions overall about public service media organisations. It is possible that respondents' broader attitudes about PSM organisations and their content affected the way they answered the question as worded.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT AND A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY – SELECTED MARKETS



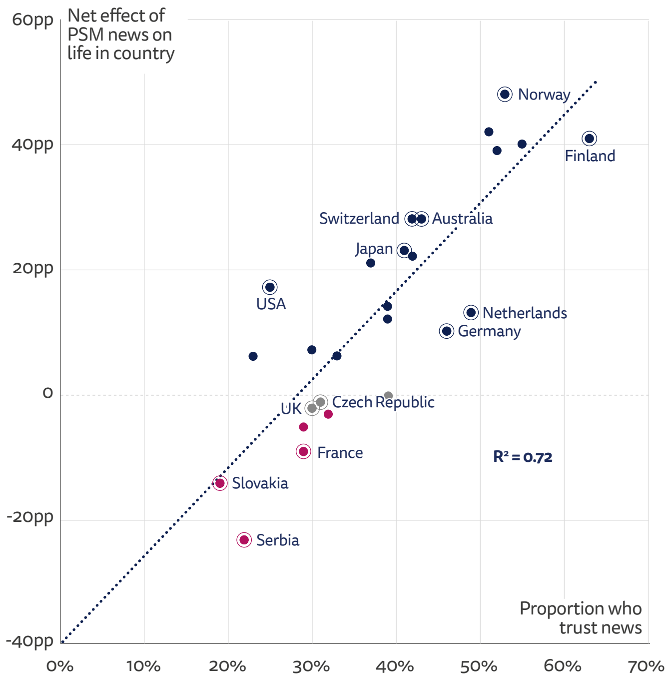
Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

We can identify three groups of markets. In 18 of the 26 countries people express a statistically significant positive attitude towards the impact of public service news on national life (a net positive score of 3pp or more). This group includes all the North American and Asian markets as well as most of the European respondents we polled. Within this group there is also considerable variation, with noticeably high levels of net positivity in Nordic markets and Portugal, while the net positivity was more marginal in South Korea, Spain, and Romania.

There is then a group of three markets where the net national view is mixed (less than 3pp difference): the Czech Republic, Poland, and the UK. And in five markets people overall believe that public service news has a negative effect on national life (a negative score of 3pp or more): Italy, Croatia, France, Slovakia, and Serbia.

How should we think about these marked national variations? One important factor associated with these differences is the level of trust in news in each country. The next chart shows a strong association ($R^2 = 0.72$) between overall trust in news and opinions about the effect of public service news on society. In the group of five countries where people are negative overall about the social impact of PSM, overall trust in news is between 19% and 32%. In the mixed group, trust ranges from 30% to 39%, while in the 18 positive markets it varies more widely, from 23% in Romania to 63% in Finland.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT AND A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY PLOTTED AGAINST PROPORTION WHO TRUST MOST NEWS MOST OF THE TIME – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? **Q6_2016_1.** Thinking about news in general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – I think you can trust most news most of the time. *Base: Total sample in each market ≈ 2,000.*

This relationship with trust is not surprising. Positive views of the impact of public service news can be expected to go together with higher levels of trust in news overall, particularly in countries where public service media are widely used. The relationship may also run in the other direction: people who are generally trusting of news are more likely to view public service news positively.

At the individual level, these attitudes are also aligned with trust in news: 57% of people who say they trust news most of the time are positive about the social impact of PSM news while only 10% are negative. Conversely, among those who do not trust news overall, 44% are negative about the impact of PSM news on life in their country while 21% are positive.

WHAT ELSE EXPLAINS DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES?

But trust is not the only explanatory factor. Attitudes towards the role of PSM news are not isolated opinions, but part of people's broader relationship with news – indicators such as higher interest in news overall and also engagement with it are associated with people's views about the social impact of PSM news. Those who use PSM news are also more positive about its impact on national life. For example, BBC news audiences are more positive than people who do not consume any BBC news about the impact of public service news upon life in the UK: 39% of BBC users are positive, compared to only 14% of people who don't consume any BBC news (a net difference of +25pp). The same difference in positivity between users and non-users is evident for NHK in Japan (52% vs. 22%) and for NRK in Norway (66% vs. 36%).

Another factor associated with these attitudes is paying for news. Respondents with a positive attitude towards the social impact of public service news are twice as likely as those who are negative to pay for online news (this is perhaps relevant to perennial debate about whether public service news 'crowds out' commercial players).[43]

These attitudinal differences provide useful context for understanding variations across countries. Recent developments within public service media systems may also be relevant in interpreting these patterns. The United States has experienced one of the most dramatic recent upheavals in public broadcasting: the elimination of roughly $1.1bn in federal funding under the new Trump administration in 2025 led to the closure of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in early 2026, triggering widespread layoffs, output cutbacks, and financial instability across PBS, NPR, and, especially, local public radio and TV stations.[44] As we will see shortly, there is a clear dividing line in the USA between those who continue to be positive about the social role of PSM news and those who dislike it.

In Italy, the recent story is more about politicisation. Rai has undergone leadership changes and editorial interventions widely seen as tightening political control, together with broader pressure on journalists and investigative programming. Concerns about independence and governance have intensified.[45]

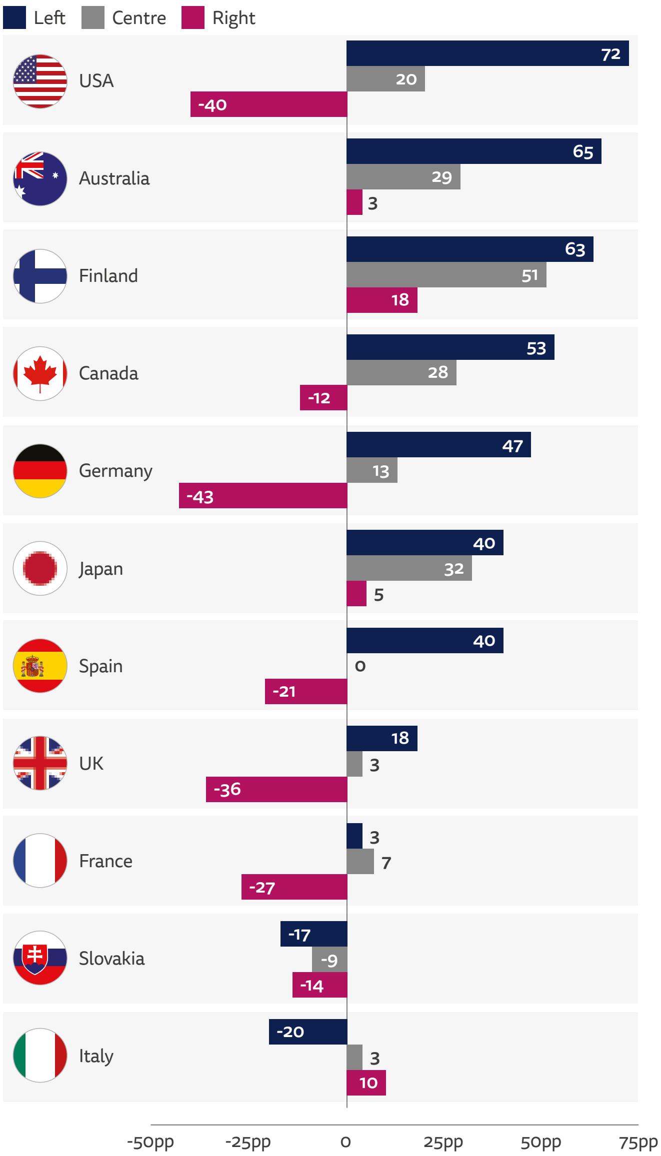
In Slovakia, recent changes have been especially controversial. The government abolished the existing public broadcaster (RTVS) and replaced it with a new entity (STVR) under a governance model that critics argue increases political control. This institutional redesign prompted protests domestically as well as international concern.[46] While in Serbia, public broadcasting has been caught up in and shaped by ongoing political crisis and public protest. Demonstrations in 2025 directly targeted RTS, accusing it of pro-government bias and inadequate coverage.[47] The organisation has become a focal point for wider tensions over press freedom, with declining trust, internal pressures, and ongoing disputes over editorial independence.

These examples of organisational upheaval bring us to one of the most significant factors in understanding differences in attitudes about the social value of public service news: politics and polarisation.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL IDENTITY

The history of public service media has its roots in a political decision: intervening in the media market to establish and fund an entity based on an understood shortfall in the provision of certain types of content which are deemed to have wider social benefits. As such, public service media organisations rely on a degree of national consensus about the merits both of their existence and also their day-to-day content. As signs of political polarisation have increased in several of the markets we survey, many public service media outlets find themselves in the crosshairs of increasingly confrontational political debate. Our data illustrate this polarisation of views about the contribution to national life of news from public service media. In all countries, there are differences of opinion in accordance with political leaning, and in several places these differences are very striking.

PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO THINK NEWS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT AND A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY (BY POLITICAL LEANING) – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. <country example>) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? **Q1F.** Some people talk about 'left', 'right', and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale? *Base: Left ranges from 87 in Japan to 438 in USA, centre ranges from 432 in France to 1,451 in Germany, right ranges from 167 in Germany to 665 in France.*

[43] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0267323120903688
[44] https://theconversation.com/clawback-of-1-1b-for-pbs-and-npr-puts-rural-stations-at-risk-and-threatens-a-vital-source-of-journalism-255826
[45] https://www.euractiv.com/news/italian-government-criticised-for-intimidation-of-critical-journalists/
[46] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-68887663
[47] https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-students-collapse-canopy-vucic-vulin/33385418.html

The easiest way of thinking about this polarisation is to look at the differences in each market in terms of net attitudes towards public service news between people on the left, in the centre, and on the right of the political spectrum (the chart on the previous page is sorted according to the strength of positive sentiment among left-leaning audiences). Even in a market like Finland where there is a high degree of positivity at the national level about the role of public service news, there is a substantial difference between people on the left (63% net positive) and the right (18% net positive). The difference is at its greatest in the market where, as mentioned above, the disruption to public media has been most significant over the past year: the United States. Germany and Spain are two continental European countries where we can also see large differences. In the UK too there is a very significant difference between those on the left who are 18% net positive about the effect of public service news on life in the UK and people on the right who are net 36% negative.

Typically, it is people on the political left who are most positive about the social impact of public service news, followed by those on the centre. The French example is interestingly different. France is the only country where people in the centre of the political spectrum are more positive about the social impact of news from public service media than people on the left, although views on both the left and the centre are only marginally net positive. The net negative view of right-leaning French respondents is relatively straightforward to understand in the context of recent criticism by right-wing French politicians and other groups about the public media system.

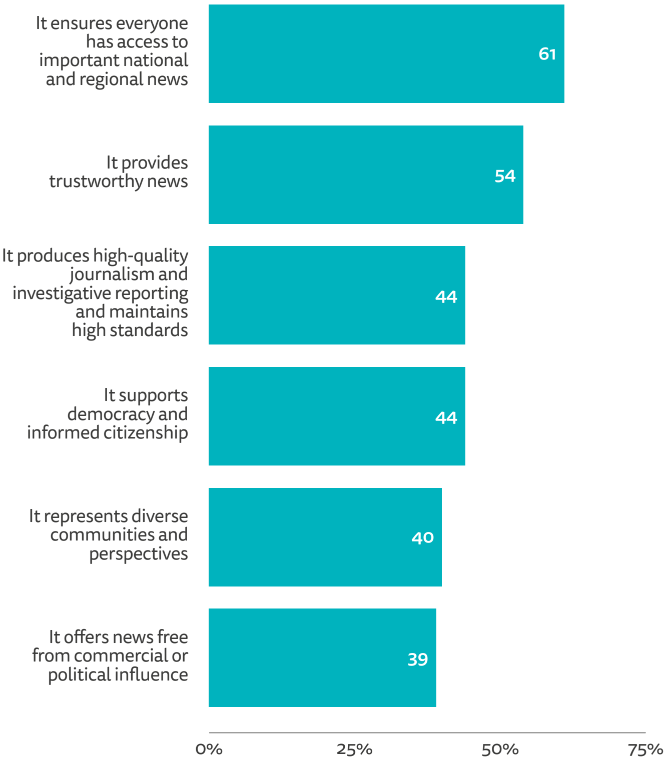
Also relatively straightforward to understand given the political dynamics in Italy, respondents there stand out for being the only country where it is people on the left who are much more negative (-20 net) about the effect of public service news on life in Italy than on the right. And in Slovakia the data illustrate very clearly the widespread negativity about recent developments there in the public media landscape. Right across the left-right political spectrum people have a net negative attitude.

WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE MOST AND LEAST?

To better understand what drives these positive and negative perceptions about social impact, we asked a follow-up question depending on people's answer to the main question. If people said they have a positive view of the impact of PSM news on society we then asked them about various positive aspects of PSM news, to shine more light on what they think these positive features are. Conversely, if a respondent said they believe public service news has a negative impact on national life we gave them a range of negative aspects to consider. (There was no follow-up question for people who thought that the impact of public service news was neither positive nor negative.)

In the context of these wide differences of opinion, it is useful to look at the things which people who are positive about the impact of PSM news value the most, as well as the things which those with a negative view find most troublesome.

PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO ARE POSITIVE ABOUT SOCIAL IMPACT OF PSM NEWS WHO AGREE WITH EACH – SELECTED MARKETS

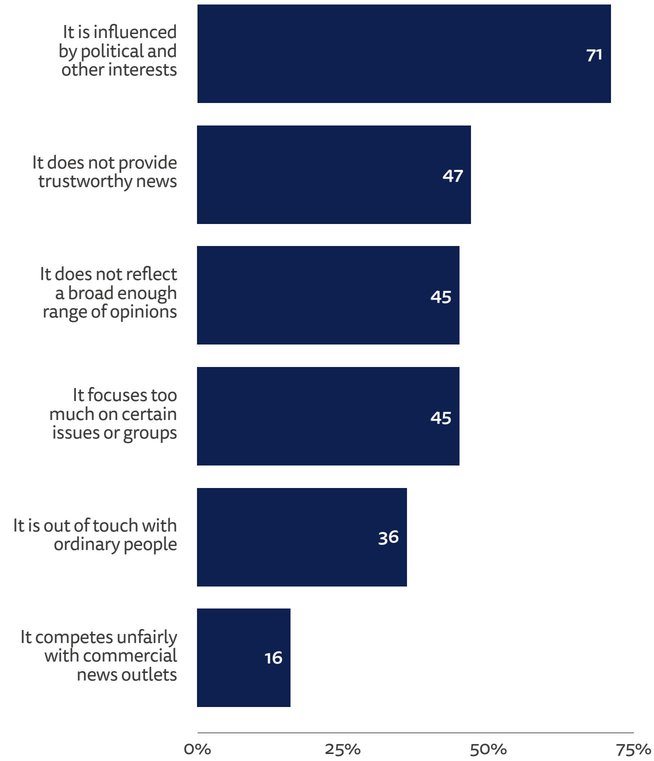


Q_PSM_PositiveAspects. Which of the following, if any, do you think are the positive aspects of news provided by public service or publicly funded media in your country? *Base: 19,273.*

Of those who are positive about the social impact of PSM, 61% across the 26 markets agreed with the statement that their public service media ensure everyone has access to important national and regional news. A majority (54%) also consider the provision of trustworthy news to be a positive aspect. This positive sentiment about two of the key ingredients of PSM news – trustworthiness and universality – points to ongoing support for these central pillars. About 40% of these positively minded people on average also agreed that PSM news is high quality, supports democracy, represents diverse communities, and is free from commercial or political influence (we will return to this point about influence shortly).

In terms of country variations there are respondents in two groups of countries where those who are positive about the social impact of PSM news appear to be *most* positive relatively speaking. One group is the four Nordic countries, plus Germany. The second is made up of the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada. (Interestingly, respondents in the United States were in the top five most enthusiastic countries about each of the six aspects we asked about in the chart above.)

PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO ARE NEGATIVE ABOUT SOCIAL IMPACT OF PSM NEWS WHO AGREE WITH EACH – SELECTED MARKETS



Q_PSM_NegativeAspects. Which of the following, if any, do you think are the negative aspects of news provided by public service or publicly funded media in your country? *Base: 11,973.*

And how about the things which people who are negative dislike about public service news? There is one issue which stands out, namely perceptions of influence by political and other interests, which 71% of those who are negative about the social impact of public service news consider to be a negative aspect. This aligns with the data we report in the Executive Summary about perceptions of influence on the news media, especially on the part of actors in the political sphere. To reinforce the sensitivity people have about influence, among those with a positive view of PSM, a majority of respondents agreed that PSM offers news free of commercial or political influence in only three of the 26 markets – Sweden, Australia, and the USA.

Between 36% and 45% of people believe that public service news is out of touch with ordinary people, focuses too much on certain issues, and does not reflect a sufficiently wide range of opinions. This group of attitudes speaks principally to concerns about inclusiveness. Nearly half (47%) of those with a negative view also believe that their PSM fail to provide trustworthy news.

Among people negative about the social impact of public service news, there is relatively little concern about the competitive impact of PSM news on the commercial sector. This remains an issue of intense industry debate in some markets but seems to be something which does not really trouble even the opponents of PSM news.

Finally, it is worth noting five countries where negative respondents are among the most negative *and* where people who are positive are the most positive: Germany, Sweden, the UK, the US, and Australia. This strength of feeling both in favour of and against the social impact of public service news reflects some of the polarising forces in those countries and speaks again to the challenge threatening the national consensus in support of public service media and the role they play in national life.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to emphasise that analysis in this chapter is focused solely on respondents' answers to a question about the impact on national life of public service news. A number of other important dimensions of the PSM debate are not addressed here. Asking people for their views on the social impact of PSM news is different from factors such as trust in public service news, or usage of PSM news output – data on these aspects can be found both in the Executive Summary and in the individual country profiles elsewhere in this report. In many cases, reach of and trust in PSM news is significantly higher than the findings here about attitudes towards its social impact.

These findings about the social impact of PSM news highlight the challenge public service media organisations can face in connecting with audiences who feel distant from news and are sceptical about its social impact. Negative attitudes about the effect of PSM news on national life are often associated not with highly engaged critics, but with people who are less engaged, less trusting, and less accustomed to consuming news regularly. This raises questions about how news can feel easier and more rewarding to engage with, helping audiences quickly understand what matters to them and why. Making relevance more explicit by connecting reporting to people's everyday lives, local contexts, and practical concerns may help reinforce the sense that news is useful, plays a worthwhile national role, and is not just important in the abstract. For some people who strongly dislike PSM news though, do not consume it, and are negative about its social impact, there may be little which public service news providers can do to engage them.

In a more polarised and fragmented media environment, the findings point to a potential role for public service media not only as providers of trusted information, but as facilitators of trust across different – often divided – groups. This could involve developing formats that help audiences understand why perspectives differ, highlighting areas of shared concern, and creating space for informed dialogue without forcing consensus.

Away from the output itself, reinforcing the structure of public service media to minimise the scope for, and defuse speculation about, political influence on news could reassure those who are already supportive, while directly addressing the principal concern of people who are negative about the social impact of PSM news.

Taken together, these considerations suggest that strengthening the position of public service media is less about any single intervention and more about a combination of approaches: demonstrating independence clearly, lowering the barriers to engagement, embedding news in everyday consumption patterns, and helping audiences navigate difference in a way that supports shared understanding.

SECTION 3

SECTION 3

Analysis by Country and Market

In this section we publish a *market-based* view of the findings, which includes an overview of the most important data points in terms of news.

These include an overview of consumption in each market, including details of the most popular news brands – traditional and online. The pages also contain statistics about the different sources of news over time, the role of different social networks, and levels of payment for online news. Information is drawn from the 2026 Digital News Report survey using the methodology outlined on pps. 2–3, with the exception of population data from the United Nations,[48] internet penetration data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU),[49] and press freedom scores from Reporters Without Borders.[50]

Data from India, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa are representative of younger English-speakers rather than the national population. The survey was fielded in English in these markets (respondents had the option of selecting Hindi in India and Swahili in Kenya, but the majority selected English), and restricted to ages 18 to 50 in Kenya and Nigeria. In markets where internet penetration is lower, our data often represent younger and more affluent groups – even if they meet other nationally representative quotas. For all these reasons, one should be cautious in comparing some data points across markets where we know these limitations apply. In a few markets we do not ask certain questions (such as on paying for news and podcasts) because sample differences could lead to misunderstandings or misleading comparisons. We have also signalled important details about samples in a short note on the country page, where relevant. We have ordered the countries and markets by geography (Europe, Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Africa) and within each region countries are then ordered alphabetically – with the exception of UK at the start of the Europe section and the United States at the start of the Americas.

Questions about use of individual social media and video networks (e.g. Facebook, X, Instagram) both for any purpose and for news content were repolled in all markets in the second half of March after an issue was discovered in the way these brands were presented to respondents in the original fieldwork. In the United States we repolled some questions in the final week of March about online payment. A merger between two well-known radio stations (Caracol Radio and W Radio) took place in Colombia while fieldwork was underway. We decided to repoll questions about news brand reach and trust in Colombia to take account of this merger. All repolling was conducted with 1,000 respondents, using the same quotas as the original fieldwork.

[48] https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard
[49] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS
[50] https://rsf.org/

SECTION 3

SECTION 3

Analysis by Country and Market
Europe

UNITED KINGDOM

News consumption in the UK continues to be dominated by traditional print and broadcast brands, and although direct traffic remains comparatively strong, almost all news organisations worry about threats to direct audience access. Review of the BBC's Charter and potential consolidation among commercial players point to significant change in 2026.

Population	**70m**
Internet penetration	**95%**

Despite its large majority in the UK parliament the Labour government led by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer appeared to many commentators to lose its way over the past year, and his opinion poll ratings collapsed. Amid growing tensions on the right of British politics the insurgent populist party, Reform, made much of the political weather in the UK. It had a profound impact on the most prominent issue dominating domestic politics, the immigration debate.

News organisations, especially public service ones, wrestled with the challenges of reporting on the immigration story and have also battled to accommodate stark differences of opinion within the British public on big international stories, not least the conflict in the Middle East.

Within the news industry, the biggest story was the latest crisis at the BBC. This centred around a BBC *Panorama* documentary from October 2024 which featured an edit of President Trump's speech on 6 January 2021 that created what the BBC acknowledged to be a misleading impression. BBC News executives became aware of this in February 2025 but took no action, largely because the BBC had received no complaints. However, an internal BBC memo written by an external editorial standards adviser was leaked to the *Daily Telegraph* in late November and quickly became a major scandal. As the BBC Board wrestled with how to respond, the White House became involved and, by the end of the week, both the CEO of BBC News, Deborah Turness, and the BBC's Director General, Tim Davie, had resigned. President Trump subsequently issued a defamation lawsuit for damages of $10bn, which the BBC is contesting. Meanwhile, the BBC's ten-year Charter is being reviewed by the government. This major strategic exercise is due to conclude by December 2026 and is now led on the BBC side by new Director General, Matt Brittin, formerly President of the EMEA region at Google until early 2025.

The other biggest policy and regulatory issue is the ongoing question of social media and its role in the UK. Concerns about social media are among the highest anywhere, with 73% of Britons saying they distrust news on social media and 77% expressing concerns about fake news and misinformation. A government consultation about the potential banning of social media for under-16s was launched in March 2026.

The BBC is now using artificial intelligence (AI) in ways directly visible to audiences. Domestically it has piloted AI-assisted news summaries such as short 'at a glance' formats, designed to help users quickly understand complex stories while retaining human editorial oversight. Internationally, the BBC World Service has introduced digital, AI-assisted language services, including BBC News Polska, combining original journalism by Polish-speaking journalists with AI-assisted translation of other articles.

The *Guardian* has continued to invest heavily in its digital products, with a redesigned app and homepage that place greater emphasis on personalisation, audio, and interactive formats as the organisation continues to pursue its membership-led business model.

Sky News is midway through a significant strategic reset that places greater emphasis on digital, video-first products alongside its traditional broadcast offer. Sky News increasingly focuses on online, where it is one of only three brands reaching more than 10% of the news audience weekly. Plans to introduce a subscription offer have been announced for later in 2026.

The *Daily Mail* embraced the creator economy in pursuit of younger, digitally native audiences, including two dedicated social initiatives staffed with Gen Z talent producing original, personality-led video content. 18% of UK respondents say they consume content from a news-focused creator/influencer each week.

At the corporate level, the *Daily Mail* was quick to table a £500m bid for the *Daily Telegraph* following the collapse of the *Daily Telegraph*'s acquisition by RedBird IMI in November 2025. However, a rival £575m bid by Axel Springer in early March 2026 was accepted and given fast-tracked regulatory approval. A major broadcast merger is proposed between Comcast-owned Sky and the broadcast interests of ITV, Britain's leading commercial broadcaster. Given increasing pressure from international competition, deeper collaboration between the UK's public service media organisations is also being discussed. Taken together, the processes underway in 2026 affecting the UK's largest public service and commercial broadcast and print providers could amount to the biggest reshaping of the news landscape in the UK for a generation.

Jim Egan
Senior Research Associate,
Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

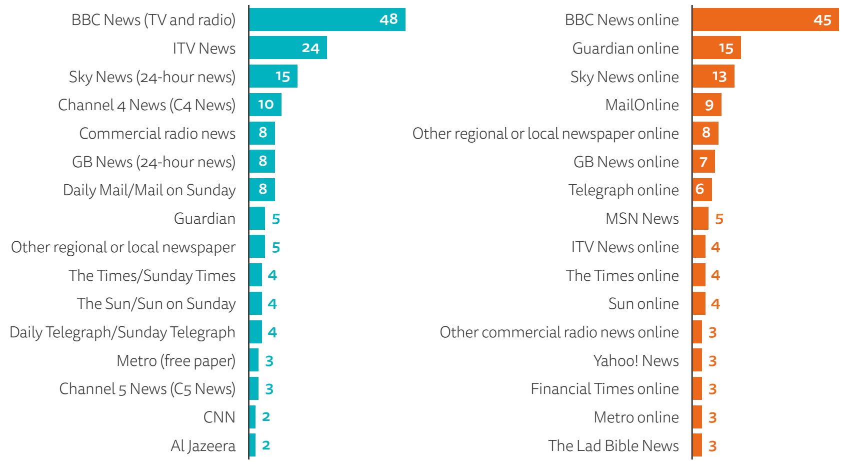
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

10% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

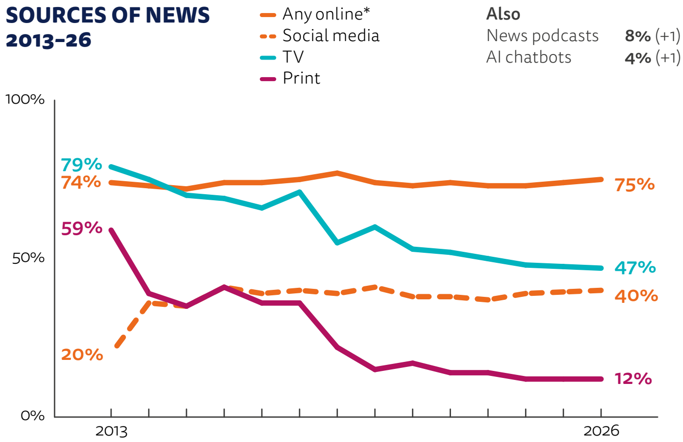
TV, RADIO, AND PRINT ### ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

A further 12pp fall in TV since 2021 appears the biggest change but the overall picture conceals a growing preference among younger adults for news from social media and video networks.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

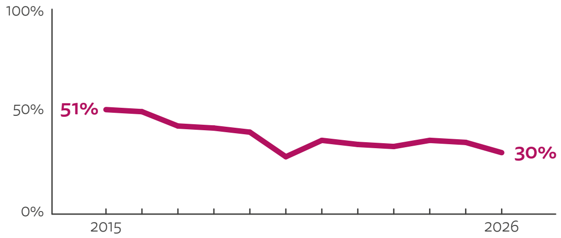
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	21%	(+4)	63%
2	YouTube	16%	(+3)	61%
3	WhatsApp	12%	(+2)	82%
4	Instagram	12%	(+3)	49%
5	X	10%	(-2)	17%
6	TikTok	7%	(+1)	21%

50% (+4) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

After some years of stability, trust in news is down 5pp compared to 2025. Trust in individual news brands is little changed, however, suggesting other factors may be behind the year-on-year drop in trust overall. Once again public broadcasters such as the BBC, ITV News, and Channel 4 remain the most trusted brands along with the *Financial Times*.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 30% (-5)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
BBC News	59%	17%	24%
Channel 4	57%	28%	15%
Daily Mail	23%	27%	50%
Daily Mirror	21%	33%	46%
Daily Telegraph	43%	33%	24%
Financial Times	56%	31%	12%
GB News	27%	26%	46%
Guardian	51%	29%	20%
Independent	47%	35%	18%
ITV News	57%	27%	15%
MSN News	21%	49%	30%
Other regional or local newspaper	52%	33%	15%
Sky News	50%	28%	21%
Sun	15%	23%	63%
The Times	48%	32%	20%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **79.45** | **18**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

AUSTRIA

Major ownership shifts and important cost-cutting measures reshaped Austria's media landscape in the last year, while the public media company ORF, still by far the most-used and most-trusted news brand, underwent governance reform and appointed new leadership.

Population	**9.1m**
Internet penetration	**95%**

Three major deals transformed Austria's media ownership. *Kronen Zeitung* changed hands at the shareholder level when Germany's FUNKE Mediengruppe (formerly WAZ) sold its 50% stake to the Dichand family, returning the newspaper to full ownership by the family. In digital commerce, Willhaben, Austria's dominant online classifieds platform, became a joint venture between investor Sprints and Styria, owner of *Die Presse* and *Kleine Zeitung*. Media For Europe (MFE), controlled by the Berlusconi family, raised its stake in German-based ProSiebenSat.1 to over 75%, gaining majority control of a group that owns Austria's largest private free-to-air TV channels, including ATV, Puls 4, and Puls 24. Our survey suggests the public is keenly aware of such concentration: media owners and parent companies are seen as the most influential force on news coverage, rated influential by 75% of respondents and very influential by 46%.

These shifts came amid severe financial strain within the sector. Federal government advertising spending – an important revenue source for the press – collapsed from €18.6m in the first half of 2024 to just €3.2m in the same period of 2025, leading to attacks on Media Minister Babler from tabloid media, even as the EU criticised limited progress in ensuring fair distribution of state advertising. Between August and October 2025, a cost-cutting wave swept through newsrooms, affecting roughly 180 to 200 jobs. *Kleine Zeitung*'s savings package affected 34 positions, *Der Standard* cut up to 25 employees, and *Kurier* announced around 50 job closures. *Die Presse*, Regionalmedien Austria, ProSiebenSat.1, Puls 4/Puls 24, and Antenne Steiermark also made cuts. The wave continued into 2026. In February ProSiebenSat.1 Puls 4 announced cuts of up to 45 further positions.[51]

Against this difficult backdrop, some publishers invested in digital innovation. In June 2025, *Die Presse* expanded its offering by including full access to the *New York Times* for its digital subscribers at no additional cost. Russmedia, publisher of VOL.AT, launched V+ Premium, a higher-tier dual-account subscription that provides access to three regional papers, allows article gifting, and bundles access across its portals with the aim of increasing revenue per user by encouraging sharing within households. Russmedia also created Story Premium, a native-advertising format with click-through rates up to 14 times higher than traditional formats. Both innovations won first prizes for regional media at the 2025 WAN-IFRA Digital Media Awards Europe. Our data suggest these publishers are building on receptive audiences: among Russmedia's print readers, about half also pay for online news, compared to 31% for *Die Presse*, 27% for *Der Standard*, and just 12% for *Kronen Zeitung*, against a national average of 16%. In podcasting, *Der Standard*'s daily Thema des Tages was named top podcast in Austria by both Spotify and Apple in 2025. The podcast is free and ad-supported, with an optional ad-free premium tier; 64% of podcast news users in last year's survey agreed that podcasts help them understand issues more deeply than other media. Also, just over a quarter of respondents (28%) say they have consumed news from an individual creator or influencer in the past week – 17% from creators who mainly focus on news, and 16% from creators who primarily post about other topics but occasionally cover the news.

The public broadcaster ORF retains a combined weekly reach of 70%. In 2025, parliament rebalanced ORF governance: changes included a reduction in the federal government's seats from nine to six in the 35-member Foundation Council (Stiftungsrat), which appoints the Director General and sets the strategic direction, while the Public Council (Publikumsrat), representing viewers and listeners interests, increased its seats from six to nine, responding to the Constitutional Court's concerns about excessive political influence.[52] Under the reformed structure, the Stiftungsrat appointed Radio Director Ingrid Thurnher as Director General in March 2026, after incumbent Roland Weißmann resigned unexpectedly. New DNR survey questions reveal a nuanced view of the broadcaster. Asked whether ORF news has a positive or negative effect on life in Austria, 38% say positive and 24% negative, with 35% neutral. Those who value ORF most appreciate its role in ensuring access to important news (62%) and supporting democracy (53%). The broader perception of political influence on news media persists: 73% see government officials and politicians as influential on news coverage, with 38% seeing them as very influential.

Sergio Sparviero and **Josef Trappel**, with additional research by **Stefan Gadringer** and **Mariia Aleksevych**
University of Salzburg

[51] https://www.diemedien.at/news/massive-sparmassnahmen-in-osterreichs-medienbranche
[52] https://www.parlament.gv.at/aktuelles/pk/jahr_2025/pk0188

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

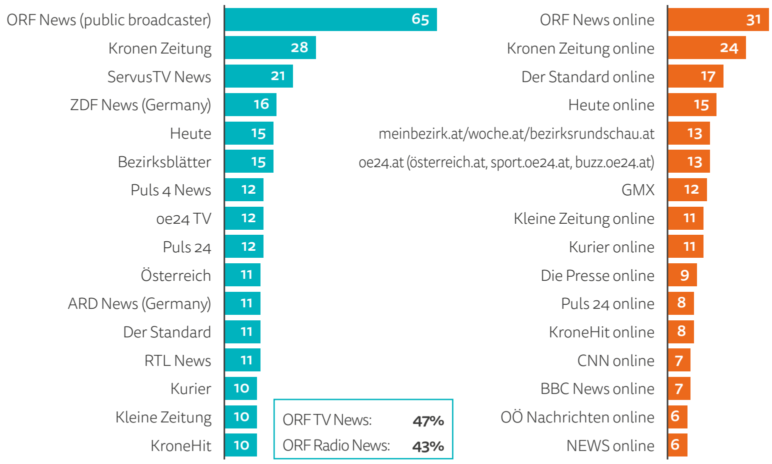
TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands



16% (-6) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

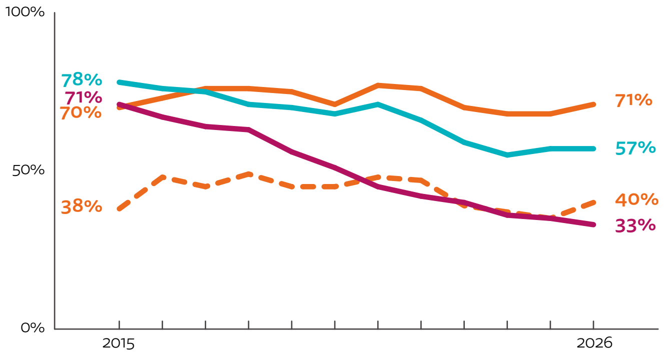
CHANGING MEDIA

Over the past decade, audiences have shifted from traditional to online news sources, with social media and video networks jumping 5pp this year, in line with global trends.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 10% (-1)
AI chatbots 6% (+1)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

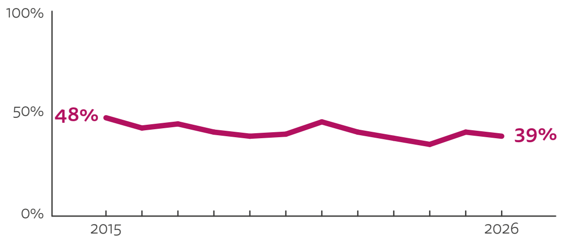
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	35%	(+16)	80%
2	Facebook	30%	(+8)	54%
3	YouTube	26%	(+6)	62%
4	Instagram	26%	(+10)	45%
5	TikTok	9%	(+1)	19%
6	Facebook Messenger	7%	(+2)	22%

41% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news remains essentially stable at 39%, broadly in line with last year's 41% and consistent with the post-COVID plateau observed since 2022. ORF News remains among the most trusted brands, with its trust score rising slightly to 66% (from 63%), followed by *Der Standard* at 62% (from 60%) and *Die Presse* at 62% (from 59%).

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

39% (-2)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ATV News	42%	31%	26%
Der Standard	63%	19%	18%
Die Presse	62%	23%	16%
Heute	36%	26%	38%
Kleine Zeitung	53%	28%	19%
Kronen Zeitung	46%	22%	32%
Kurier	55%	25%	20%
NEWS	46%	31%	22%
oe24	41%	26%	34%
OÖ News	54%	30%	16%
ORF News	66%	14%	20%
Other regional or local newspaper	61%	26%	13%
Puls 4 News	51%	27%	22%
Salzburger Nachrichten	59%	27%	14%
Servus TV News	58%	22%	20%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **79.43** | **19** / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

BELGIUM

Population	**11.8m**
Internet penetration	**96%**

Belgium's media landscape is characterised by its division between the Dutch-speaking Flemish region and the French-speaking Wallonia. Against a backdrop of declining print revenues and the decreased state distribution subsidies, the past year has been one of further consolidation, cuts – and some striking attempts to bridge the language divide.

This year the decline of television (49%) and print (18%) as sources of news seemed to stabilise, while remaining well below the use of online sources (75%), which continue to be the most common source of news. Interestingly, news via social media sees an uptick (+4pp to 41%). Illustrative is the breakthrough of young (French-speaking) news creator Askip offering a critical and culturally diverse take on the news to his c.50,000 followers on TikTok. The growth in digital is also reflected in the data from CIM showing that total brand reach for news media is fastest-growing amongst the 25–54 age group.[53]

However, the growth in digital reach cannot compensate for print's problems. In the Walloon region, *Le Soir* let go of five long-serving staff, and news channel LN24 pivoted away from pure news towards general programming, shedding journalists in the process. BX1 and RTL have also cut freelancers. Publishers point to two compounding causes: a federal government decision to end subsidised newspaper distribution, and the continued loss of advertising revenue to Meta and Google.

Media organisations in Belgium are again turning to consolidation as an answer to these challenges, illustrated most recently by the planned merger between Rossel (*Le Soir, Sudinfo*) and IPM (*La Libre, L'Avenir, La DH*). If approved by the Belgian Competition Authority during 2026, almost all French-language daily newspapers would sit under a single group. The rationale provided by the companies centres on the need for shared investment in AI and digital infrastructure. The media regulators in both regions continue to raise serious concerns about press pluralism, particularly when the apparent range of titles masks considerable editorial integration behind the scenes. The deal has prompted Walloon Media Minister Jacqueline Galant to attack the PSB RTBF, arguing its free online news undermines the struggling print sector, echoing the argument of many Belgian private media companies against a text-based public news offering.

In this context, Minister Galant has proposed reducing the number of non-profit local media outlets receiving subsidies from twelve to eight by 2031 and freezing subsidy indexation. In Flanders too, public and local media are being hit by new government cuts. BRUZZ, the bilingual Brussels media house, saw its funding fall by 6.4%, forcing it to lose four journalists and reduce coverage. Global affairs magazine *MO** lost its entire subsidy of €216,000 p.a., triggering a crowdfunding appeal. Meanwhile, Flemish public broadcaster VRT, Fonds Pascal Decroos for investigative journalism, the Flemish Association for Journalists, and news site DeWereldMorgen, all saw their subsidies reduced.

Unfortunately, it seems there may be a political as well as an economic rationale for cuts: Galant was caught on video hoping that new RTBF leadership would steer the broadcaster away from 'the other side of the political spectrum' – leading the European Federation of Journalists to file a complaint with the Council of Europe, noting the statements violated the media decree guaranteeing editorial independence of French-language public media.[54] On top of this, MR party president Georges-Louis Bouchez compared RTBF journalists to Nazi-era police in a retweet, called for a parliamentary inquiry into public broadcasting, and labelled Brussels subsidised non-profit broadcaster BX1 'the socialist party's social network'.

In a striking move, Dutch-language *De Standaard* launched a French-language digital edition in December 2025,[55] produced by a small team of editors who use AI to translate 15–25 articles per day for French-speaking readers. 'We believe it is relevant, from a journalistic and democratic point of view, to be accessible to all Belgians', wrote Editor-in-Chief Karel Verhoeven, although tapping into a new market at a low cost forms a likely motivation too. Similarly, 21News, a French-language outlet launched in 2024, has launched a Dutch edition after raising over €1m in capital, targeting liberal and centre-right readers in Flanders.

All this happened against a background of rapid adoption of AI. Data from Digimeter show that 43% (+15pp) of Flemish media users now turn to generative AI at least monthly; 75% of those aged 18 to 24 and 81% amongst students now use generative AI. Importantly, the most common use of AI is to find information quickly,[56] highlighting how AI chatbots are forming a challenge for news media in Belgium, as in many other parts of the world.

Ike Picone
Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

[53] https://www.lesoir.be/704991/article/2025-10-15/le-soir-confirme-sa-position-de-premier-quotidien-belge-de-reference
[54] https://fom.coe.int/en/alerte/detail/107643752;globalSearch=false
[55] https://www.dhnet.be/dernieres-depeches/2025/12/04/de-standaard-lance-une-version-francophone-NC7FXMN2IZBMPL2DLN5WOQ46MA/
[56] https://www.imec.be/nl/vlaamse-innovatiemotor/kennisuitwisseling/techmeters/digimeter

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

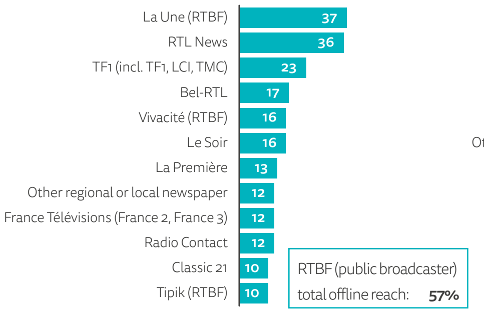
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

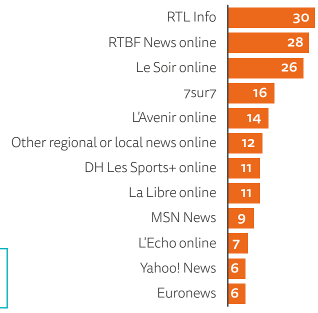
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

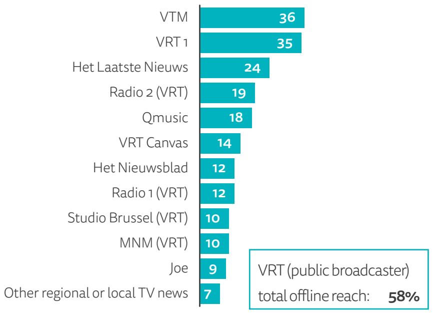
TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



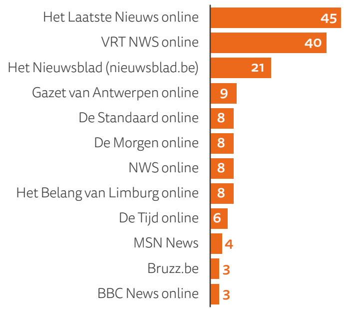
ONLINE (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (FLEMISH-SPEAKING)



ONLINE (FLEMISH-SPEAKING)



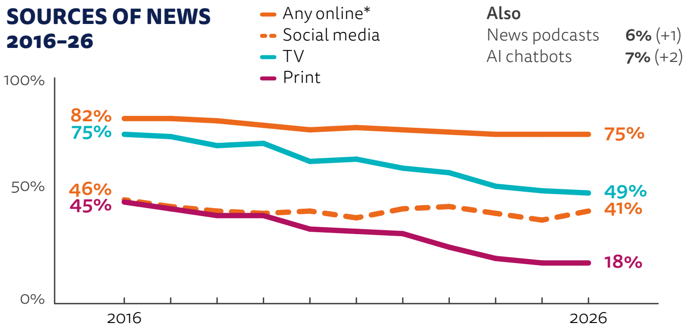
14% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

French 14% | Flemish 13%

40% (+5) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

French 42% | Flemish 38%

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26

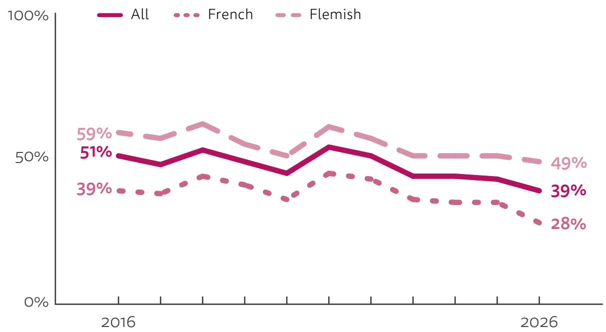


* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	40%	(+9)	71%
2	WhatsApp	27%	(+16)	73%
3	Instagram	22%	(+8)	48%
4	YouTube	21%	(+5)	55%
5	Facebook Messenger	13%	(+5)	47%

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



OVERALL TRUST 39% (-4) **GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%**

The trust gap between Flemish-speaking Flanders (49%) and French-speaking Wallonia (28%) continues to widen. Brand trust scores are also significantly higher in Flanders than Wallonia. In both markets, the respective public broadcasters VRT and RTBF remain the most trusted news sources, even though some commercial organisations follow closely.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 Score: 81.17 **16**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

FRENCH

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
7sur7	42%	40%	18%
Bel-RTL	53%	31%	17%
France 2	57%	31%	12%
L'Echo	51%	38%	11%
La Dernière Heure	45%	36%	18%
La Libre	54%	34%	11%
La Première	57%	31%	12%
L'Avenir	48%	36%	15%
Le Soir	62%	27%	11%
Other regional or local newspaper	55%	33%	13%
Radio Contact	46%	38%	17%
RTBF News	66%	24%	10%
RTL Info	58%	26%	16%
TF1	55%	28%	17%
Vivacité	55%	33%	12%

FLEMISH

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
De Morgen	68%	21%	11%
De Standaard	71%	20%	9%
De Tijd	73%	19%	7%
Gazet van Antwerpen	66%	25%	10%
Het Belang van Limburg	65%	24%	11%
Het Laatste Nieuws	68%	19%	13%
Het Nieuwsblad	69%	20%	11%
Joe	63%	27%	10%
NWS (@nws.nws.nws)	62%	26%	12%
Other regional or local newspaper	70%	21%	9%
Qmusic	65%	24%	11%
Radio 1	76%	17%	7%
Radio 2	75%	17%	9%
VRT Nieuws	79%	13%	8%
VTM Nieuws	75%	15%	10%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

BULGARIA

The Bulgarian media landscape is characterised by entrenched issues like political interference and very low public trust, set against a backdrop of deep political instability. The government's 2025 resignation paved the way for yet another snap election in 2026, defined by the emergence of Progressive Bulgaria, a centre-left coalition headed by former President Rumen Radev.

Population	**6.7m**
Internet penetration	**82%**

On 1 January 2026, Bulgaria became the 21st member of the eurozone, completing a final symbolic milestone of integration with the EU. However, the process has been marred by public scepticism and disinformation about the impact of the euro. Political turmoil and instability continued, with mass anti-corruption protests, dubbed the 'Gen Z protests', leading to the collapse of the government in December 2025. The protests, which quickly spread across the country, were joined by thousands of young Bulgarians demanding action against endemic corruption. Bulgaria's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index has declined for the second consecutive year, falling three places to 84th out of 182 countries, making it one of the EU's lowest-scoring countries.[57]

The political landscape in Bulgaria experienced a significant shift in January with the decision of President Rumen Radev to give up his mainly ceremonial role and enter party politics. The largely popular, pro-Russian former air force commander created a new three-party coalition, Progressive Bulgaria, which won a parliamentary majority in the April 2026 elections. As a Eurosceptic favouring a closer relationship with Russia and opposing military support to Ukraine, Radev's victory could change Bulgaria's foreign policy over time. Radev campaigned with promises to combat corruption and end years of political instability.

Bulgaria has made little progress in fulfilling its EU obligation to implement the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which came into full force in 2025.[58] Issues such as political pressure on journalists and public service media, limited pluralism, and non-transparent ownership still plague the Bulgarian media landscape and legislative reforms have been delayed. Bulgarian media are operating in a climate of hostility from politicians and the public. Journalists from Nova TV were assaulted while reporting on a protest in the town of Sopot, organised by the nationalist Eurosceptic party Vazrazhdane during a visit by the EC President Ursula von der Leyen. Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) cases are regularly used by politicians and officials to silence journalists. A prime example is the case of the investigative journalist Boris Mitov and the independent news outlet Mediapool who were convicted by the Supreme Court of Cassation and fined over €20,000 for defamation of a senior judge. Mitov's long-running legal battle relates to his 2018 factually accurate reporting on a magistrate's professional background and personal wealth.[59]

The removal in December of a journalist from bTV, Maria Tsantsarova, host of the popular morning talk show, along with her co-host Zlatimir Yochev, sparked protests in support of the journalists outside bTV's offices. Tsantsarova, a prominent, sometimes outspoken, journalist, was fired from bTV for allegedly violating editorial standards, an act she described as one of political censorship.[60]

The use of major news brands in Bulgaria remains largely unchanged across both traditional and online platforms. The leading broadcasters – Nova TV News, owned by Nova Broadcasting Group, and bTV news, owned by bTV group – retain their dominant market positions and continue to account for over 90% of total advertising budgets. *24 Chasa* remains leader in the relatively stable print market. Despite introducing paid digital subscriptions, Dnevnik and Capital (Economedia AD) have recorded growth in online use. Capital is one of the very few traditional outlets creating content tailored for younger readers. Bulgaria no longer leads in news avoidance (60%), while more citizens turn towards AI chatbots for daily news.

Journalists and veteran creators, such as Martin Karbowski, Stanislav Tsanov, Yavor Dachkov, Mirolyuba Benatova, and Genka Shikerova, continue to be popular in the digital space, commanding large YouTube followings for their takes on current affairs, but new Gen Z influencers and content creators have seen a significant rise in popularity among younger audiences. Flora Stratieva (over 267,000 TikTok followers and 122,000 YouTube subscribers), Andrea Banda Banda (97,000 Instagram followers), and Mimi Shishkova (50,000 followers) are among other established vloggers and artists who helped mobilise support for the protests among young people in late 2025. 'You pissed off the wrong generation' and 'Give us a reason to stay' became two of the defining slogans that trended as hashtags across TikTok and Instagram. Drone footage on social media was widely used to show the scale of the young crowds to counter official government numbers.

Lada T. Price
University of Sheffield, UK

[57] https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/bulgaria
[58] https://ipi.media/bulgaria-media-capture-monitoring-report-2025/
[59] https://rsf.org/en/bulgaria-rsf-condemns-conviction-journalist-boris-mitov-slapp-case
[60] https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2025/12/22/bulgaria-top-tv-anchor-taken-off-air-amid-political-interference/#:~:text=

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

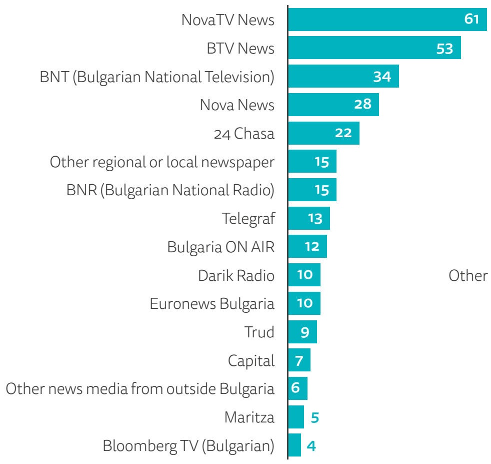
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

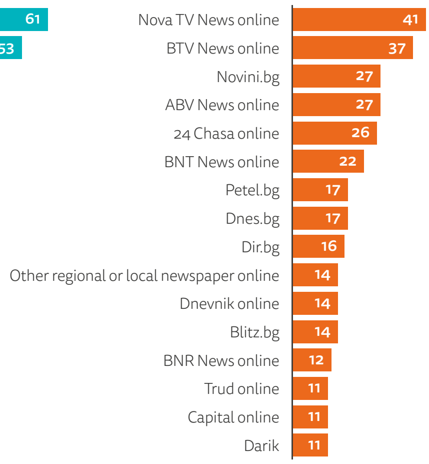
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



9% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

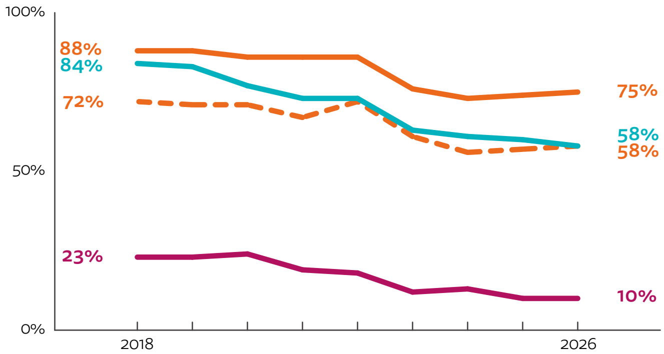
METHODOLOGY NOTE

We introduced education quotas in 2023 to make data more representative of national populations. Part of the declines in reach in the source chart between 2022 and 2023 will be because there are more people with lower levels of education in our sample, who typically have lower interest in news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2018–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 15% (-)
AI chatbots 9% (+4)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

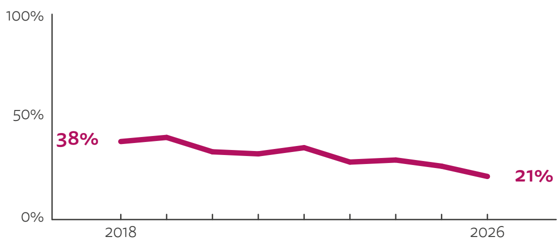
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	66%	(+9)	80%
2	YouTube	35%	(+5)	69%
3	TikTok	20%	(+5)	39%
4	Instagram	19%	(+10)	43%
5	Viber	17%	(+3)	69%
6	Facebook Messenger	13%	(+2)	59%

60% (-3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in Bulgarian news hit a low of 21% in 2026. Traditional broadcast media faced heavy criticism for their coverage of the protests, political bias, firing of prominent journalists, and neglecting younger audiences. PSBs BNT and BNR remain most trusted, ahead of the more widely used private channels bTV News and Nova News.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2018–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
21% (-5)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 60.28	71/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
24 Chasa	42%	31%	27%
ABV News	34%	37%	29%
Bivol	41%	29%	31%
BTV News	46%	22%	32%
Bulgarian National Radio (BNR)	56%	25%	19%
Bulgarian National Television (BNT)	55%	22%	23%
Capital	42%	31%	27%
Darik	50%	29%	22%
Dir	38%	36%	27%
Dnevnik	40%	34%	27%
Euronews Bulgaria	47%	30%	22%
Nova TV News	51%	23%	26%
Novini	44%	32%	24%
Other regional or local newspaper	43%	33%	24%
Trud	37%	34%	28%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

CROATIA

Croatia's small media market showed strong growth, especially in the digital segment, in the last year. The structure of the news industry remains largely unchanged – with offline use dominated by two foreign-owned TV news channels (Nova and RTL) together with the public broadcaster (HRT). While the EU Directive on media freedom is being implemented, in practice press freedom is still threatened.

Population	**3.9m**
Internet penetration	**84%**

Advertising revenues are the lifeblood of most Croatian media and 2025 was a pretty good year. Industry estimates suggest that legacy media ad revenues (TV, radio, print, and outdoor advertising) increased by 9% from €215m in 2024 to €234m in 2025. But this overall picture conceals big variations, with TV and outdoor revenues up by 6%, radio by 5%, and print static. Meanwhile, digital advertising is estimated to have grown by 11% in 2025 to a total of €191m. Online revenues now account for 45% of the market, suggesting a relatively highly developed digital market.[61]

Croatia has been plagued for years by the problem of hidden media ownership – where the listed proprietor (often in local media) conceals the identity of the real owner. Our survey evidence this year shows that Croatians believe that ownership really does matter: 72% of Croatian respondents said that they thought media owners had influence over news coverage, only just behind the 74% who said that governments and politicians had such influence. One step forward towards greater transparency of media ownership was the creation in 2025 by the Ministry of Culture and the Media and the Agency for Electronic Media (AEM) of a searchable online database for the revenues and declared owners of all audiovisual and online services.[62]

The major commercial TV companies have been foreign-owned for over two decades, and are prominent among our most widely used news sources. Nova TV (United Group since 2017), RTL 2 and Doma TV (both owned by Czech-based Central European Media Enterprises CME since 2022) all had their broadcasting licences renewed in 2025 for 20 years.

Tabloid *24 sata*, owned by the Austrian Styria group, is still the best-selling newspaper and attracts large numbers online, while the domestically owned Hanza media group retains market leadership in print media overall. Among the significant problems remains the lack of distribution of print media, after the main company stopped print distribution in its network of kiosks in 2025. Print newspaper circulation declined from 80m to 24m copies p.a. in the last ten years and even though the Croatian Post Office (HP) received a €90m government subsidy over five years for print distribution, newspapers are still not available in many rural areas.

The PSB HRT remains in financial difficulties. Their director Robert Šveb cites rising costs overall (especially the costs of sports rights), resulting in reduced in-house production and very low salaries. Faced with competition from commercial streaming services, HRT has launched its own free streaming service, HRTi, with 257,000 monthly users. Croatia's implementation of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) gives the regulator, the Agency for Electronic Media (AEM), oversight of the election of HRT's governing bodies. Opinions are divided between those who criticise inadequate protection for media pluralism and against political and economic pressure, while others fear the enlarged mandate of the regulator AEM.

Press freedom is under threat in Croatia with increasing numbers of attacks on journalists in recent years and 35 recorded in 2025.[63] In their 2025 report, Reporters Without Borders found that press freedom was at its lowest level since 2014, though the 2026 report shows some improvement. Many observers are concerned about the often precarious position of journalists who face both economic uncertainty and abuse from many in the political sphere. In spite of these difficulties, investigative journalism continues to expose abuses of political power and public authority, contributing to a vigorous critical public sphere.

Podcasts remain popular. Some legacy media such as national print dailies *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* have started their own podcasts. One of the most popular (with over 420,000 followers on YouTube) is the Podcast Inkubator, created in 2017 by a group of independent journalists covering topics from politics to sport and everything in between. Projekt Velebit is a prominent right-wing podcast covering domestic and international politics, while a growing recent news podcast, Prvi glas (First News), is produced daily by the left-leaning website Telegram. Despite the generally low level of people paying for online news in Croatia (8%), Telegram launched a major subscription drive in 2025 and reported that subscriber numbers increased by more than 50% in the year.

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Centre for Media and Communication Research, University of Zagreb

[61] https://hura.hr/intelligence-hub/hura-media-adex-medijska-potrosnja/
[62] https://emediji.aem.hr/Aem/Nias/Home/IndexPublic?page=pmu-registar
[63] https://safejournalists.net/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

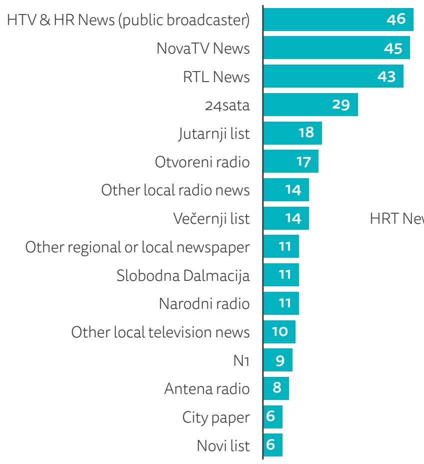
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

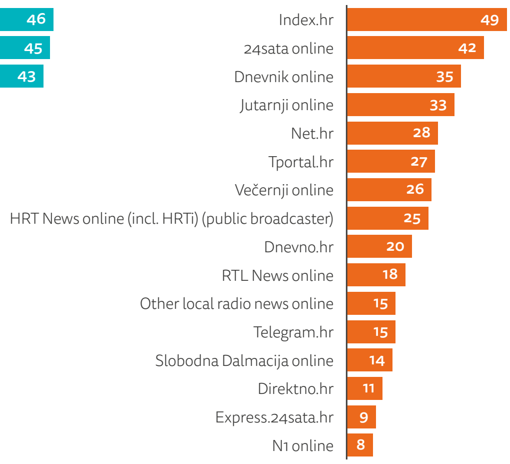
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



8% (+2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

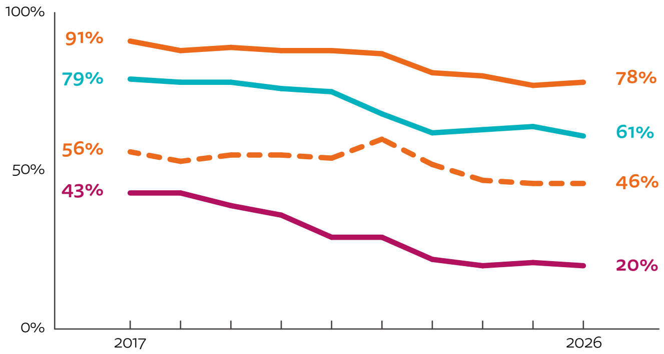
CHANGING MEDIA

There are no dramatic changes and existing trends continue. Online as the source of news has increased modestly, while social media remains stable. Both television and print are in decline.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **7%** (+1)
AI chatbots **5%** (+2)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

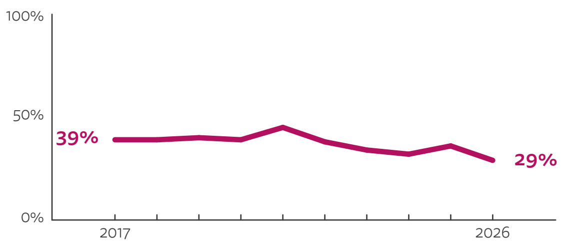
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	50%	(+2)	70%
2	YouTube	29%	(+5)	71%
3	WhatsApp	21%	(+7)	77%
4	Instagram	20%	(+6)	50%
5	TikTok	10%	(+2)	32%
6	Viber	10%	(+2)	47%

63% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust has fallen to its lowest level (29%) after a 7pp decline fuelled by leading politicians' hostility to independent reporting. The most-trusted brands are commercial NovaTV and RTL news and the PSB HTV, followed by Otvoreni radio and various local/regional radio stations. Dailies *Večernji list* and *Jutarnji list* follow. T-portal and Index.hr are the most-trusted online sources.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
29% (-7)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
24sata	45%	28%	26%
Dnevno.hr	43%	33%	24%
HTV & HR News (public broadcaster)	54%	23%	23%
index.hr	45%	26%	29%
Jutarnji list	50%	29%	21%
N1	47%	31%	22%
Net.hr	43%	32%	25%
NovaTV	62%	22%	15%
Other regional or local newspaper	51%	30%	19%
Otvoreni radio	54%	30%	16%
RTL News	59%	23%	18%
Slobodna Dalmacija	45%	34%	21%
Telegram.hr	41%	32%	27%
Tportal.hr	45%	33%	22%
Večernji	51%	28%	21%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026

Score: **66.31**

53/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

CZECH REPUBLIC

Population	10.6m
Internet penetration	88%

In the last year, the Czech media landscape reflected both economic recovery and mounting technological pressures. While some sectors experienced growth and further ownership consolidation, both legacy and digital publishers struggled with the disruptive impact of AI on online traffic. Meanwhile, the change in government renewed uncertainty about the future of public service media.

The Czech economy grew by 2.6% in 2025, slightly outpacing inflation (2.5%) and making it one of the faster-growing economies in the EU. While this benefited major broadcasters and streaming platforms, newspaper publishers continued to face structural challenges, including declining circulation (-9.6% year-on-year) and subscriptions (-8.3%). Publishers' ability to monetise online content has been further undermined by the rapid development of AI, particularly in online search. An analysis by the Association for Internet Development (SPIR) has shown that the rise of AI is significantly reducing traffic to Czech websites by providing users with answers directly in search results rather than directing them to original sources.[64] This trend accelerated following the introduction of Google's AI Overviews in the Czech market in May 2025. According to SPIR, news has not yet been affected, with the greatest impact seen in areas such as lifestyle, hobby, or advice sites, where traffic declines year-on-year approach 65%.

At the same time, Czech publishers have been seeking to strengthen their position vis-à-vis global digital platforms. These efforts gained new momentum in March 2025, when the Ministry of Culture authorised the Publishers' Licensing Rights Administrator (SLPV), representing the main market players, to negotiate licensing agreements with platforms such as Google and Meta. Negotiations were reportedly conducted with Microsoft and the major domestic online player Seznam in 2025; however, neither Google nor Meta had entered formal negotiations by the end of the year.[65]

The Czech streaming market underwent further consolidation with the launch of Oneplay, a new platform created through the merger of the pay-TV service O2 TV and the video-on-demand platform Voyo, both owned by the Czech financial and telecommunications group PPF. With around 1.5m subscribers, the service immediately became the market leader.

A very significant ownership change occurred in 2025 when a 50% stake in Mafra was acquired by Czech industrialist Pavel Tykač. Mafra, one of the biggest Czech media companies (publishing news brands including *MF Dnes* and *Lidove noviny*), had been owned by Prime Minister Andrej Babiš for a decade from 2013. The transaction highlights the continued concentration of Czech media ownership in the hands of powerful economic elites, whose rationales for investing often extend beyond purely commercial considerations. This view seems to be shared by the public, with this year's *DNR* data reporting that 77% of Czech respondents believe that media owners influence news coverage. Tykač's own public remarks – describing the acquisition as a 'purely defence mechanism' and an attempt to prevent the publisher from 'turning into a leftist medium' – have done little to reassure observers about the future editorial independence of Mafra.[66]

While the adoption of legislation implementing key European media frameworks – particularly the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) – has been further delayed, several new self-regulatory initiatives have emerged. A coalition of leading Czech news organisations and journalistic associations has adopted a ten-point self-regulatory code aimed at strengthening transparency, editorial autonomy, and adherence to shared ethical standards. This initiative responds to EMFA's requirements for the development of effective co- or self-regulatory mechanisms governing editorial standards and safeguarding editorial independence of media service providers.

Beyond mainstream media, the community of digital content creators – YouTubers, podcasters, and other online influencers – has also become increasingly active. In 2025, they established not one but two professional associations, highlighting both the growing importance of this segment and the rising recognition of the need for clearer standards and forms of self-regulation.

The outcome of the October 2025 parliamentary elections is impacting the prospects for public service media (PSM). Although the licence fee was increased as recently as May 2025 – after two decades of stagnation – the new government coalition, composed of populist and far-right parties, has proposed a bill which aims to replace it with direct state funding from 2027. While the new model ties the funding to inflation, the initial allocation for both PSM institutions has been reduced significantly, threatening their financial sustainability and raising concerns about increased dependence on the government. Combined with sustained verbal attacks by government representatives on individual journalists, particularly those at Czech Television, this has created unprecedented uncertainty about the future independence of public service media.

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[64] https://www.spir.cz/ai-poskozuje-vydavatele-spir-hlasi-propady-navstevnosti-u-kategorii-servisniho-a-zajmoveho-obsahu/
[65] https://www.lupa.cz/aktuality/cesti-vydavatele-maji-dalsi-firmu-ktera-bude-platit-za-jejich-obsah-online/
[66] https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-zivot-v-cesku-je-to-ciste-obranny-mechanismus-tykac-poprve-vysvetlil-proc-koupil-mafru-292578

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

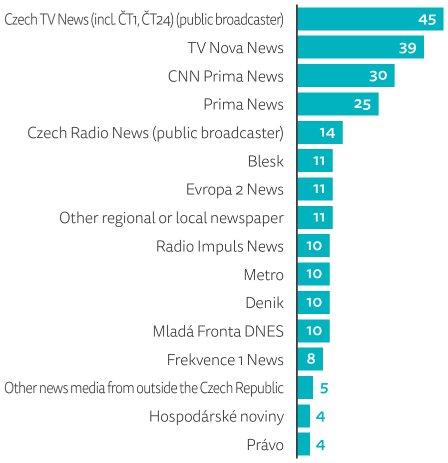
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

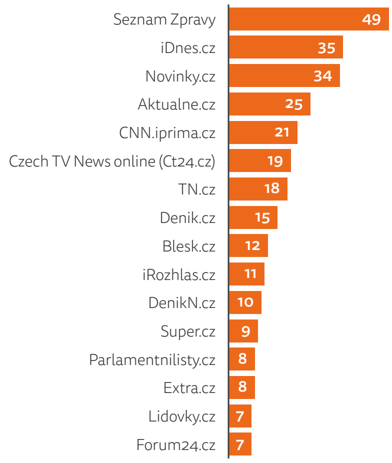
Weekly use online brands

13% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



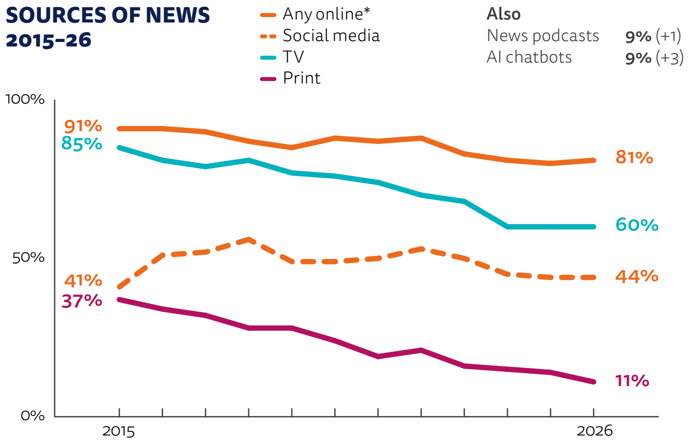
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

The use of TV and social media as sources of news has stabilised, while print continues to fall. Online remains dominant, though still below its peak in the previous decade, indicating an overall decline in weekly news use.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

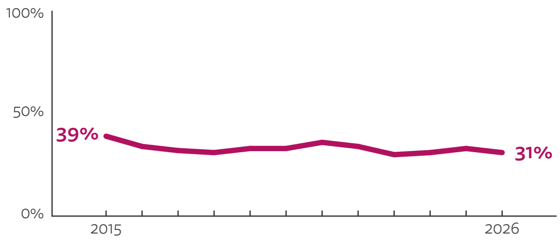
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	44%	(+12)	70%
2	YouTube	25%	(+6)	67%
3	WhatsApp	25%	(+11)	70%
4	Instagram	22%	(+8)	44%
5	Facebook Messenger	17%	(+9)	53%
6	TikTok	9%	(+3)	19%

41% (+4) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Since 2023 trust in news has remained relatively low at around 30–33%. There were no significant changes in trust in individual news brands this year. Public service broadcasters remain the most trusted brands, despite increasing attempts by various political actors to undermine their credibility.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 31% (-2)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Aktualne.cz	53%	29%	18%
Blesk	19%	25%	56%
CNN Prima News	57%	25%	18%
Czech Radio News (public broadcaster)	58%	24%	18%
Czech TV News (public broadcaster)	59%	18%	23%
Deník	47%	35%	18%
echo24.cz	38%	36%	26%
Frekvence 1	51%	34%	16%
Hospodářské noviny	55%	29%	16%
iDnes.cz	54%	28%	17%
Mlada Fronta DNES	49%	32%	20%
Novinky.cz	52%	28%	21%
Radio Impuls	49%	34%	16%
Seznam Zpravy	55%	24%	21%
TV Nova	48%	28%	24%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS — **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** — Score: **83.01** — **11**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

DENMARK

Population	6m
Internet penetration	100%

The Danish media market has two strong public broadcasters (DR and TV2) and several successful commercial news brands, which also receive public subsidies. Commercial news organisations are facing falls in print subscriptions and advertising revenue following loss of online traffic from social media and increasingly AI-driven search engines. Responses include cost-cutting, redundancies, bundling initiatives, and subscription price increases.

Following Norwegian conglomerate Amedia's acquisition of the Berlingske news organisation in 2025 and their partial acquisition of the regional news organisation JFM, these partners are hoping to increase payment levels by duplicating Amedia's Norwegian bundling schemes, launching new subscription packages 'before the summer'. With reduced editorial staff, Berlingske's tabloid *BT* appears to have recovered from the economic setbacks which led to the closure of its print edition in 2023.

Jutland-based national newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* has introduced a multi-layered subscription package which matches different user needs for flexible news products with differentiated payment models across online, print, and audio.

In 2025, new inter-Nordic collaborations saw the light of day, as Swedish media conglomerate Bonnier acquired a majority-share of the successful digital challenger Zetland, which itself had already established spin-off publications, *Demo* in Norway and *Uusi Juttu* in Finland.

The Danish Competition Authority has approved JP/Politiken's acquisition of Alrow Media, which runs Altinget, a key online provider of political news. The first AI-related casualty of the news industry in Denmark was the sacking of all staff at the digital news provider Avisen.dk (4% reach), who attributed a 70% drop in referral traffic to the combined impact of an Apple update in the spring – which slowed loading of their site – and the subsequent launch of Google AI Overviews.[67] It appears that the impact was greatest on their popular 'evergreen' content.

On a more positive note, DR used AI during the 2025 local elections to translate live radio reports from its regional districts into text on its regional websites, with content tailored to specific election constituencies.

The news creator scene in Denmark appears to be picking up speed after a slow start. Launching Frede's Frontpage with ultra-short videos on Instagram and TikTok in 2022, journalist Frede Dyrnesli targets a young demographic by putting a face to the news, with a mission to 'not lose them to AI and brainrot'.

In response, some established publishers are now trying to build stronger personality-based connections with younger audiences. For instance, regional TV2-station Kosmopol has launched 'Aburna's Boat' on Instagram and TikTok, where a journalist invites politicians, celebrities, and opinion-leaders for chatty interviews on her rowing boat on the lakes of Central Copenhagen.

The governing coalition agreed to set up a media ombudsman, with the main task of monitoring alternative media actors such as influencers, bloggers, and podcasters, who are currently operating outside the media accountability system based on the Press Council. Details of how this will be done are unclear, but the ombudsman has powers to act in response to complaints about libel and slander in alternative media content.

National dailies *Berlingske* and *Politiken* are investing heavily in vertical video, not just as a supplement to text-based news, but as journalistic content in its own right, for distribution on their own sites without paywalls and on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts, in an attempt to win young audiences.

DR's new Director-General Bjarne Corydon (former Social Democratic Finance Minister) is implementing wide-ranging strategic initiatives, including a structure where the news division no longer has its own CEO; plans to boost DR's presence on social platforms to appeal to hard-to-reach audiences; and the launch of a BBC-inspired initiative 'DR Verify' to boost fact-checking and combat misinformation. These were seen as defensive measures prior to a planned overhaul of media policy which was postponed once a general election was called for 24 April. The package is likely to revise the framework of national and regional PSBs and reform subsidy schemes for private news media.

State subsidies, currently totalling €51m p.a., are awarded to 'publicistic media', that is, commercial companies meeting a 50% threshold of news covering politics, society, and culture. Smaller funds aim to support innovation initiatives (€5m p.a.), going mostly to digital news startups (like Zetland) and struggling free local weeklies (€7m p.a.).

Unlike some other countries, where news organisations are seeking individual deals with tech and AI platforms, Danish publishers are continuing to work together to combat big tech's use of news organisations' copyrighted content and data archives for AI training purposes. After deadlocked talks with Meta, Google, and OpenAI, the publishers took OpenAI to court in February 2026.

Kim Christian Schrøder, **Mark Blach-Ørsten**, and **Mads Kæmsgaard Eberholst**
Roskilde University, Denmark

[67] https://journalisten.dk/pludselig-forsvandt-trafikken-til-avisen-dk-nu-er-hele-redaktionen-opsagt/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

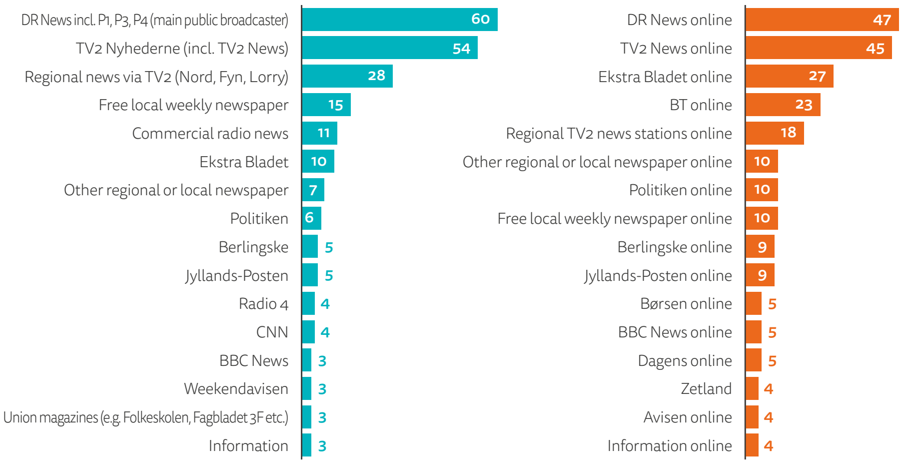
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

20% (+1) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

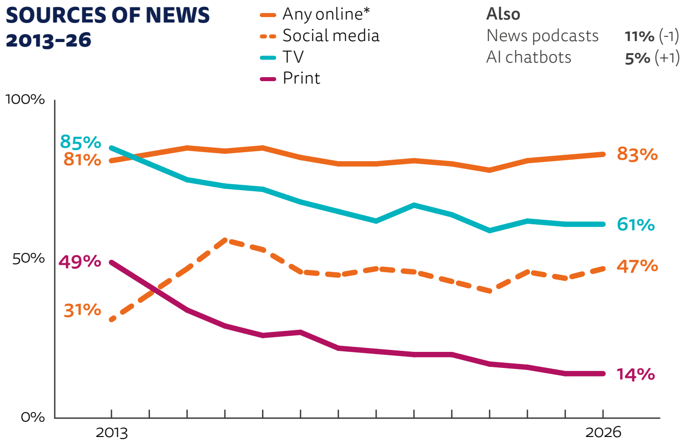
TV, RADIO, AND PRINT / ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Usage levels for different sources of news are mostly stable year-on-year. Online sources are used by more than 80%, with television used by 61%, and print sources unchanged at 14%.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

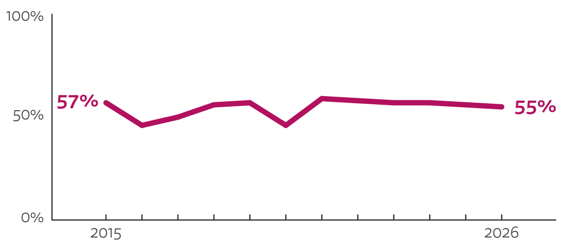
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	38%	(+11)	77%
2	Instagram	12%	(+3)	51%
3	YouTube	10%	(+3)	53%
4	Facebook Messenger	8%	(+2)	66%
5	TikTok	6%	(+1)	16%
6	LinkedIn	5%	(+1)	22%

34% (+7) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Since 2021, when trust in Danish news media peaked at 59%, there has been a small decline, leaving trust at a still high 55%. Most trusted are the national and regional public service news media as well as national and local legacy news media. Least trusted are the two national Danish tabloids.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

55% (-1)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Altinget.dk	60%	30%	10%
Berlingske	70%	22%	8%
Børsen	75%	19%	6%
BT	47%	24%	29%
DR News	83%	10%	6%
Ekstra Bladet	41%	23%	36%
Information	68%	23%	9%
Jyllands-Posten	71%	21%	8%
Kristeligt Dagblad	60%	29%	11%
Other regional or local newspaper	74%	20%	6%
Politiken	70%	20%	9%
Regional TV2 News	82%	13%	6%
TV2 Nyhederne	82%	12%	6%
Weekendavisen	62%	28%	9%
Zetland.dk	58%	30%	12%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **88.47** | **4**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

FINLAND

The Finnish news market is characterised by strong public service media, a widespread tradition of regional and local newspaper subscription, and a small, widely read group of national newspapers. Only one commercial television channel broadcasts news, with commercial radio news produced by affiliated newspapers, the national news agency, or commercial TV.

Population	**5.6m**
Internet penetration	**94%**

The past year can be characterised as a year of nascent stabilisation. The public service media company, Yle, began applying the expenditure cuts imposed on it in 2024 and has so far closed 309 posts (10% of the workforce). More cuts are expected in the future. The Finnish national news agency, STT, faced an existential crisis when the country's largest publisher, the Sanoma group (owner of titles such as *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Ilta-Sanomat*, and *Aamulehti*), ended their subscription. STT has survived for now by reducing the editorial workforce by over 25%, while its owners wait for a promised government emergency rescue package. Three major news media companies, Sanoma Media Finland, Alma Media, and Keskisuomalainen (which account for the bulk of Finnish newspapers' turnover, circulation, and titles), all reported increased profits for 2025. Schibsted of Norway acquired Finland's largest commercial television company, MTV, from Telia, a Nordic mobile operator, and many are expecting further Nordic cross-border consolidation or partnerships soon. Two complaints regarding state aid to Yle – originally filed in 2021 and 2024 – are still awaiting resolution by the European Commission and the European Union's General Court. Meanwhile, Yle has reached out to commercial media by offering more collaboration, for example in technology sharing.

The digital journalism outlet, Uusi Juttu, was launched with much fanfare in January 2025. Its selling point is in-depth journalism with a focus on audio, and it is entirely supported by subscriptions. Majority-owned by Danish Zetland (itself later acquired by the Swedish Bonnier News), Uusi Juttu signed up an impressive 12,000 paying subscribers before launch, reaching 25,000 and reportedly becoming profitable by the end of its first year.

Another digital-only startup, Asiastudio, focusing on video podcast content, was launched in July 2025, with a business model based on a mix of subscriptions and advertising. Such grassroots news media development is rare in Finland and establishing new outlets is therefore noteworthy. News creators are yet to enter the mainstream, while some creators cover news but often without much of a journalistic ethos. For example, one of Finland's leading podcasts, Sijoituskästi, has around 200,000 listeners per episode and aims to become the country's 'largest business media', but insists its content is not journalism.

The move to a largely digital business model is progressing slowly. The most recent data, from 2024, show that the proportion of newspapers' digital revenues is increasing, nearing one-third, and the relative weight of the ten best-performing media in total digital revenue is decreasing. In other words, smaller media companies are catching up on digital transition. Newspaper companies are generally compensating for declining print and advertising revenue by cutting costs and selling more digital subscriptions. Our survey data show 23% of Finnish respondents had paid for online news in the last year.

The Finnish parliament voted in 2025 to end the state monopoly over gambling and lift restrictions on related advertising from 2027. The new companies are expected to spend €150–300m p.a. on advertising, with much of it likely to go to the media sector. Since the total value of the Finnish media advertising market is €1.3bn, the likely increase is significant. Media companies are preparing for an initial advertising bonanza, especially around sports. They have begun preparing for 2027 by investing more in sports coverage and, at least in one case, launching an entirely new sports-focused online news product (Vuohi).

The use of generative AI has proliferated rapidly in Finnish newsrooms, with major media companies already using it for behind-the-scenes applications. Its use is also expanding into audience-facing applications like AI-voiced newscasts and news-brand-specific chatbots. One commercial radio station, JR Puhe, has aired fully AI-generated talk radio programmes since 2023. In 2025, Yle developed an investigative AI tool to scan municipal documents for news. A Finnish startup called Freepress also launched its product in September 2025, offering AI-generated news summaries based on aggregating content from other news websites. Freepress claims to be negotiating licensing deals with legacy media companies, but industry representatives have criticised it for what they argue is illegal use of copyrighted content.[68]

Ville Manninen and **Mikko Villi**
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

[68] https://suomenlehdisto.fi/suomalainen-freepress-ai-pyrkii-maailmalle-tekoalyuutisilla-jotka-pohjautuvat-uutismedioiden-tyohon/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

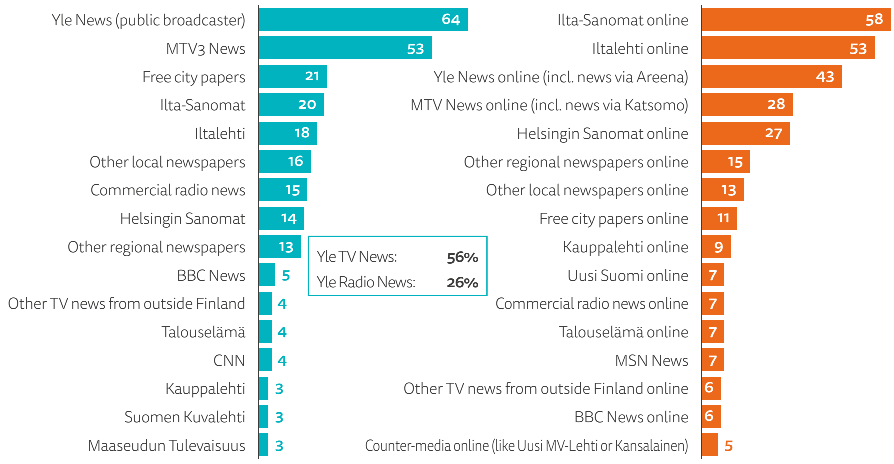
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

23% (+2) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

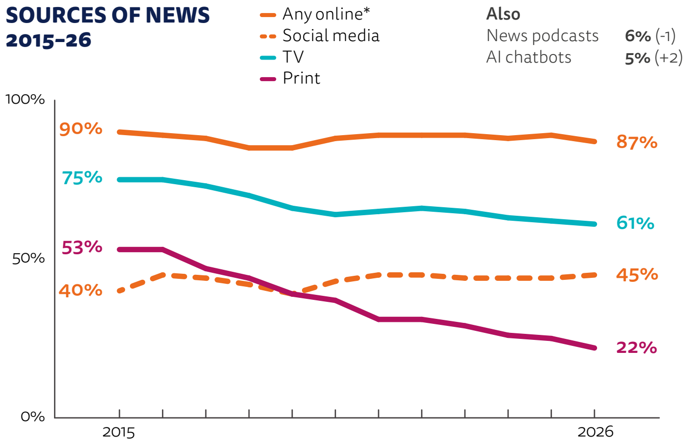
TV, RADIO, AND PRINT / ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Print continues to decline – by 20pp since 2018 – but use of TV for news has only declined by 9pp in the same period and is still used by a majority on a weekly basis.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

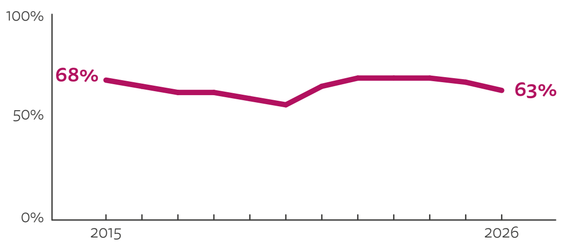
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	26%	(-1)	66%
2	YouTube	14%	(-1)	66%
3	WhatsApp	14%	(+2)	83%
4	Instagram	13%	(+1)	52%
5	X	8%	(+1)	12%
6	TikTok	7%	(-)	24%

31% (+4) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Finns' trust in news has continued to decline since the 2021–4 boost. This marks a return to a global, downward trend. However, Finns' trust in news remains among the highest recorded in any of the surveyed countries. At the brand level, broadcasters Yle, MTV, local newspapers, and the business newspaper *Kauppalehti* are among the most trusted.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 63% (-4)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 Score: **86.22** **6**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Free city papers	60%	25%	15%
Helsingin Sanomat	77%	12%	11%
Hufvudstadsbladet	67%	22%	11%
Iltalehti	66%	15%	20%
Ilta-Sanomat	66%	15%	19%
Kauppalehti	78%	14%	8%
Maaseudun Tulevaisuus	72%	19%	9%
MTV News	81%	10%	9%
Other commercial radio news	69%	18%	13%
Other local newspaper	80%	14%	7%
Other regional newspaper	75%	17%	7%
Suomen Kuvalehti	75%	17%	8%
Talouselämä	77%	15%	8%
Uusi Suomi	61%	26%	12%
Yle News (public broadcaster)	83%	7%	10%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

Population	**67m**
Internet penetration	**89%**

FRANCE

France is experiencing significant political and media turmoil. No fewer than five prime ministers have served during Macron's second term and distrust in politics is increasing as trust in the media remains low. But as the contest for the 2027 presidential race hots up, some conservative media are becoming more overtly partisan than in the past.

Turnout in the March 2026 local elections was 57% in a highly polarised landscape where the far right and far left were successful in winning over the youngest voters. The election was hit by a disinformation campaign based on websites designed to look like local media sites. While, in general, interest in news is low at 36%, interest in the local elections meant that genuine news sites saw significantly increased traffic for reporting and results during the two rounds.

However, traffic alone can't generate the revenues needed to support original journalism. The digital-born and subscriber-funded Mediapart is both profitable and growing, with nearly 260,000 subscribers, and plans to create ten new jobs in 2026. Meanwhile *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*, the two main daily national newspapers, are both seeing some growth in digital subscriptions, to 315,000 and over 600,000 respectively.

But most media companies are facing tough times. TV viewer numbers are holding up better than elsewhere but the market leaders, TF1 and M6, are cutting costs faced with falling advertising revenues. The Bertelsmann-owned M6 group plans to save €80m by 2030 through reducing production costs and a freeze on recruiting new journalists on long-term contracts. Amongst publishers, *Ouest France*, the best-selling French daily newspaper, with 800 journalists, plans to save €13m p.a. partly to invest in their new TV channel Novo19 based in Rennes. Following the end of its fact-checking contract with Facebook and the pressures on its major media clients, AFP, the French news agency, plans to save €10–12m p.a. by reducing the number of Paris-based journalists sent abroad.

Publishers are currently bringing a case against Microsoft and LinkedIn to receive payment when their content is reused. But some newspapers are moving towards greater cooperation with tech companies over AI. *Le Monde* struck a deal with OpenAI in 2024, with a significant undeclared cash payment in return for access to their content, and then in 2025 signed an AI deal with Perplexity; *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* are also both now partnering with Meta AI.[69]

Ahead of what is expected to be a fiercely fought presidential race in 2027, in which President Macron can't stand again, the PSB France TV is under intense scrutiny. Reduced public funding will lead to an €80m cut for France TV from their 2026 budget of €2.37bn. France TV responded with a major transparency operation on francetelevisions.fr, providing detailed data about its spending on programmes, independent producers, salaries, and travel.

A parliamentary commission has examined PSB spending and independence, with over 230 people called to give evidence. Some observers see the commission as being driven by the far-right, with the aim of weakening the PSB before the presidential election. The commission's criticisms are often amplified by the Bolloré-owned media (C News, *JDD – Journal du Dimanche* – and Europe 1 radio). During his evidence, Vincent Bolloré attacked PSBs for spending that he described as being out of control.

The French *DNR* data show that people have a net negative view of the effect of PSB news on society: 31% are negative versus 22% positive, with the most negative attitudes from those who self-identify on the right; 65% of respondents with negative views of the social impact of PSB news cited the influence of politicians. Looking across news media as a whole, 66% of the sample think media owners influence news coverage, as against 64% for politicians and governments.

Of French respondents, 29% say they get some news from creators, but only a tiny minority (3%) say creators meet all of their news needs. Following the success of HugoDécrypte, who now ranks seventh in our online brand list (just behind the PSB online service France Info), some prominent broadcasters – such as former anchor Claire Chazal – have launched their own YouTube channels, in her case helped by the very successful 28-year-old YouTuber Gaspard G, who has over 1.5m subscribers and significant sponsorship.[70] In an interesting twist, Gaspard G has been commissioned by the leading broadcaster TF1 to produce a series of political programmes ahead of the 2027 presidential elections for their YouTube channel, TF1 info.[71] Of our sample, 61% currently consume news video each week, and plenty of others are now hoping for new business opportunities there.

Alice Antheaume
Executive Dean, Sciences Po Journalism School

69 https://www.lemonde.fr/en/about-us/article/2025/12/05/ai-meta-signs-partnership-agreement-with-several-international-media-outlets-including-le-monde_6748182_115.html
70 https://intello.co/talent/claire-chazal/
71 https://www.instagram.com/p/DW4lQkEDEtX/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

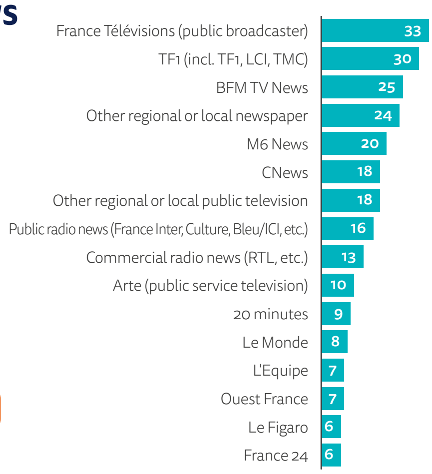
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE

12% (+1) PAY
pay for
ONLINE NEWS

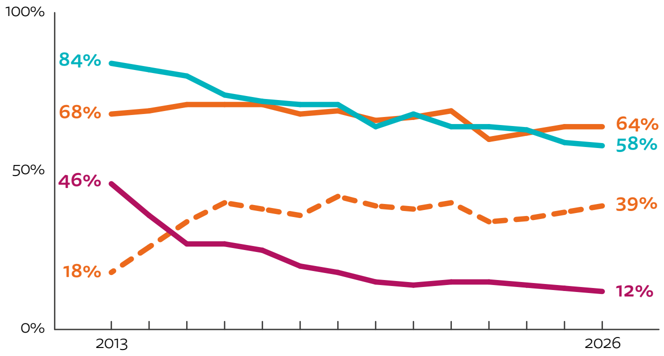
CHANGING MEDIA

Use of TV news has not changed from last year and social media is steadily increasing, while print, now at 12%, is less than half the level it was ten years ago.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **9%** (-)
AI chatbots **5%** (+1)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

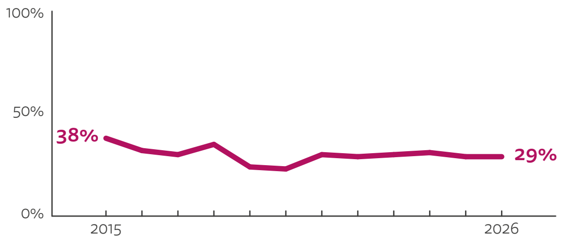
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	49%	(+16)	66%
2	WhatsApp	31%	(+14)	64%
3	Instagram	31%	(+10)	49%
4	YouTube	29%	(+5)	59%
5	Facebook Messenger	19%	(+8)	41%
6	TikTok	17%	(+5)	26%

37% (+1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust remains unchanged at the low level of 29%, but France's relative position has risen because of declines elsewhere. Local newspapers and PSBs are broadly trusted, whereas the commercial 24-hour news channels BFMTV and C News have much lower levels of public trust.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
29% (-)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

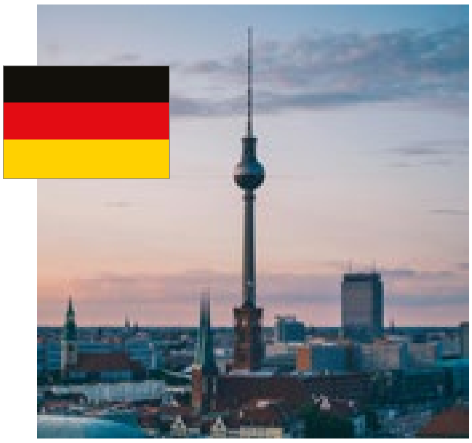
Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
20 minutes	43%	40%	18%
BFM TV news	41%	25%	35%
CNews	41%	26%	33%
France Bleu/ICI	49%	36%	14%
France Info	55%	27%	17%
France Inter	50%	31%	19%
France Télévisions News	58%	25%	17%
Le Figaro	46%	36%	18%
Le HuffPost	38%	43%	20%
Le Monde	53%	31%	16%
Le Parisien/Aujourd hui en France	44%	39%	18%
M6 News	47%	35%	18%
Médiapart	44%	33%	23%
Other regional or local newspaper	64%	26%	10%
TF1 News	50%	31%	19%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **76.68** **25**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org



GERMANY

The German news landscape is characterised by two strong public broadcasters and numerous private national and regional news offerings on TV, radio, print, and online. A reformed PSB-treaty requires public broadcasters to make significant financial savings and the decline in circulation of daily newspapers continues. While the printed editions continue to lose readers, digital subscriptions are growing.

Population	**84m**
Internet penetration	**93%**

The reformed state treaty, which came into force in December 2025, entails comprehensive changes to public broadcasting following complaints from commercial operators. A key requirement is the reduction in the number of broadcast radio services and linear television channels provided by the two PSBs, ARD and ZDF, and greater cooperation between the two companies. One casualty of these changes is that the well-known 24-hour news channel Tagesschau24 will close at the end of 2026. The politics and documentary channel Phoenix, on the other hand, will continue but with a tighter remit focusing on live coverage of political and social events, with Tagesschau24 eventually integrated into it. Meanwhile, there will be far-reaching consequences for PSB online services, which will be required to have a stronger focus on audiovisual content and accept limits on text-based offerings while expanding cooperation with private media providers by integrating hyperlinks in their online services.

The commercial company RTL Germany is going through a major restructuring process around greater use of AI, digitisation, and is looking for more synergies across the company. Six hundred jobs will be lost, of which 230 are at RTL News, as the company focuses more on the streaming market. In spring 2026, RTL and ntv, which are both part of the RTL group, started broadcasting joint news on weekdays between 6 and 9 a.m. *RTL Direkt*, a news magazine programme on RTL, was discontinued last year.

The decline in the circulation of German daily newspapers has continued. Including Sunday editions, an average of 10.11m copies were sold per day in the fourth quarter of 2025, 5.7% down on the previous year. Meanwhile, digital subscriptions increased overall by 8.5% to a total of 2.77m copies.[72] However, the picture is mixed. While *Bild* saw its digital subscriptions increase to 253,000, other titles such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* saw slight declines in their digital subscriptions to 139,000 and 105,000 respectively.[73]

Parallel to this development is a wave of increasing concentration, often with job cuts following mergers. At the end of 2025 the publishers of the daily city newspaper *taz* cited increased printing and distribution costs and changed reading habits as the reason for moving their weekday edition to online only (e-paper and app), while continuing to produce the weekend edition (*wochentaz*) both in print and digitally.

In contrast to these cutbacks a new newspaper for East Germany was launched in February 2026: the *Ostdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. It is published in Dresden by the newly founded Ostdeutscher Verlag, and aims to fill a journalistic gap by reporting from the East for the East, whereas most East German regional papers are run from West Germany. The paper is digital-only in the week and in print at weekends. The owner, Holger Friedrich, is an East German who made his fortune in IT and together with his wife bought the *Berliner Zeitung* in 2019.

Across the media industry, cross-media strategies and the use of artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly common. One example is ARD and ZDF's use of AI in their Olympics coverage, among other things, to create summaries and highlights of individual competitions. AI supported, for example, the technical analysis as well as the structuring of the extensive raw material. However, final control over the content remained with the editorial teams.

Other media companies are also experimenting with new AI-supported formats. For example, the non-profit investigative news title Correctiv also publishes its daily newsletter Correctiv Spotlight in audio on the main podcast platforms, using AI to generate the voice audio.

At the same time, several media companies are developing new digital and audiovisual offerings. After discontinuing its weekday print edition, *taz*, for example, is working on new digital formats and increasingly focusing on podcasts. Meanwhile, the new department of another Berlin newspaper *Tagesspiegel*, called 'Voice and Vision', will combine and develop its audio, video, and social media content.

Sascha Hölig, **Julia Behre**, and **Judith Möller**
Leibniz Institute for Media Research, Hans Bredow Institute, Hamburg

[72] Our *DNR* figures show a decline of 2pp to 11% in German respondents who paid for news online in the past year, but this survey question also includes payments to individuals and aggregators.
[73] www.medien.epd.de/article/4188

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

11% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

Brand	%
ARD News (Tagesschau, Tagesthemen, etc.)	38
ZDF News (Heute, Heute-journal, etc.)	31
RTL News	23
Public regional radio news	23
Other regional or local newspaper	22
Public regional TV news	20
Commercial radio news	18
n-tv	18
WELT	11
Free local newspaper	9
Commercial regional TV news	8
Bild/Bild am Sonntag	6
ProSieben Newstime	6
Der Spiegel	6
Focus	5
CNN	5

ONLINE

Brand	%
ARD News online (tagesschau.de, etc.)	20
t-online	17
n-tv.de	14
Bild.de	14
Spiegel online	13
Web.de	12
Welt.de	11
Focus online	10
Other regional or local newspaper online	10
ZDF News online (Heute.de, etc)	10
ZEIT online	9
Public regional TV news websites	9
GMX	7
Sueddeutsche.de	7
Rtl.de (incl. rtlaktuell.de)	6
FAZ.NET	6

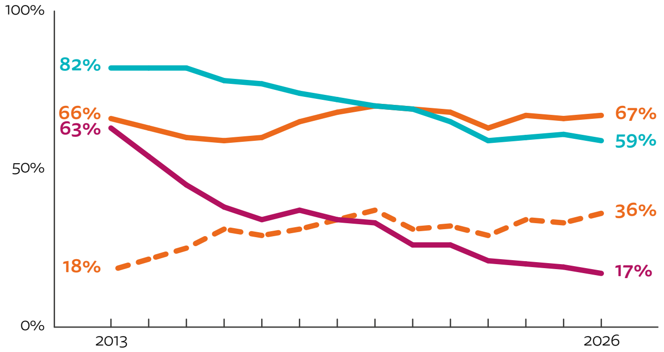
CHANGING MEDIA

The reach of news on TV and online has remained stable in recent years, while print news continues to decline, and news on social media shows a slight upward trend.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 8% (-1)
AI chatbots 5% (+1)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

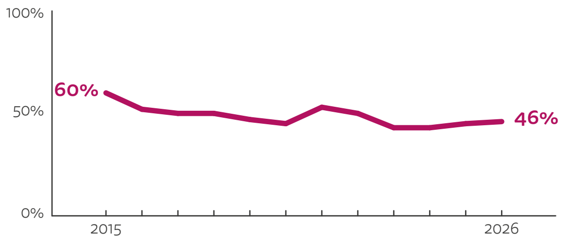
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	23%	(+8)	83%
2	YouTube	22%	(+4)	60%
3	Facebook	21%	(+6)	44%
4	Instagram	17%	(+5)	46%
5	TikTok	7%	(+2)	19%
6	X	5%	(-)	8%

40% (+3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

After reaching high levels during the pandemic and subsequently declining, overall trust in news in Germany has shown a slight upward trend since 2023 and currently stands at 46%. As in previous years, public service news and regional and local daily newspapers are the most trusted sources among those surveyed.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
46% (+1)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ARD Tagesschau	65%	15%	19%
Bild	24%	23%	53%
Der Spiegel	57%	25%	19%
Die ZEIT	60%	26%	14%
FAZ	57%	27%	16%
Focus	52%	30%	18%
n-tv	62%	24%	14%
Other regional or local newspaper	64%	23%	13%
RTL aktuell	49%	27%	23%
Stern	51%	28%	21%
Süddeutsche Zeitung	59%	26%	16%
t-online	47%	33%	20%
web.de	38%	40%	22%
WELT	57%	25%	18%
ZDF heute	65%	16%	19%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **82.17** | **14**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

GREECE

The Greek media market is characterised by digital brand fragmentation, high use of social media for news, and one of the lowest levels of trust in news among the 48 markets surveyed.

Population	**9.9m**
Internet penetration	**86%**

Last year further consolidation took place in Greek news media. The conglomerate of Evangelos Marinakis, who owns some of the largest legacy print and TV news organisations in Greece (e.g. Mega TV News, *Ta Nea*, *To Vima*), bought the NewsIt group, which comprises several digital-born outlets, including the successful news website Newsit.gr (19% weekly reach this year). In addition, Dimitris Melissanidis, a shipping and oil businessman who owns the business newspaper *Naftemporiki* and Naftemporiki TV, bought the left-wing newspaper *Efimerida ton Sintakton* (*EfSyn*). *EfSyn* was formed in 2012 as a co-operative by former workers of the *Eleftherotypia* newspaper but had recently faced financial difficulties. Finally, the three businessmen Dimitrios Mpakos, Ioannis Kaymenakis, and Alexandros Exarchos acquired the digital-born outlet iefimerida (16% reach), adding it to their expanding news media portfolio, which also includes the Athens-based regional broadcaster Action24.[74] Greek audiences consistently report high concerns about undue influence on news from powerful businesspeople and politicians (Kalogeropoulos et al. 2021).

In TV, the financial results of major broadcasters reveal continuing economic pressures. Only two of the seven national broadcasters reported profits in their 2024 results (Mega TV and Antenna).[75] Mega TV further expanded in 2025, with a 24-hour news channel available online and through pay-TV packages, strengthening its position in the competitive television news market. The Antenna Group expanded into Italy this year by acquiring the Italian Gedi Group, which owns *La Repubblica*. Other broadcasters continue to face financial challenges. Star and Alpha reported smaller losses compared to 2023, while Skai recorded losses of around €7m, prompting changes in the company's management board and raising questions about its long-term strategy. Finally, the owners of Mega TV, the Antenna Group, and the broadcasters Star and Alpha announced a new joint streaming platform to counter the competition from foreign and domestic streaming services, which have been affecting the ratings of Greek broadcasters. Generally, recurrent losses in the media sector suggest that many news outlets are owned more for their political or business influence than their profitability.

On the AI front, a new code of ethics from the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers (ESIEA) emphasises transparency about when AI is used, rigorous verification of AI-generated material, safeguarding sources and personal data, and respecting intellectual property rights. Despite these principles, disclosure of AI involvement in Greek journalism remains the exception, and there have already been instances where unverified or erroneous AI-generated content has made its way into published stories.

At the same time, *Proto Thema*, a large newspaper and third by weekly use in our online brand list, receives around 250,000 website comments each month and uses an AI system to moderate 80–90% of user comments.[76] On the users' side, the use of AI chatbots for news consumption among Greeks has risen to 12%, double the level recorded the previous year.

Several incidents during the year also raised concerns about the safety of journalists and the broader climate for press freedom. A bomb was placed outside the home of Giannis Pretenteris, the Mega TV commentator and publisher of the newspaper *To Vima*. The local news publisher and journalist Dimitris Kareklidis of magnesianews.gr was beaten up by hooded attackers in the city of Volos. In another incident, MEP Nikos Pappas assaulted journalist Nikos Giannopoulos in Strasbourg, leading to his expulsion from Syriza. Investigative journalists Thanassis Koukakis and Eliza Triantafyllou, who were working on a report about bank takeovers, were targeted by anonymous online publications attempting to damage their reputation before the stories were published. In addition, the government spokesperson publicly warned journalist Christos Avramidis during a press briefing that his questions about a deadly migrant shipwreck could be punishable by law, a statement that drew widespread criticism.

There were further developments in the Predator spyware scandal. A Greek court found four people guilty for using the surveillance software Predator to target 87 individuals, including politicians, military officials, and journalists. The scandal was first uncovered in April 2022 by investigative journalists Eliza Triantafyllou and Tassos Telloglou at the outlet Inside Story. Their reporting revealed how the spyware had been used to monitor a wide range of public figures. The case illustrates the resilience and continuing importance of investigative reporting in uncovering major political scandals despite the structural challenges confronting the Greek media system.

Antonis Kalogeropoulos
Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

[74] See the investigative project Whoownsthemedia.gr by Solomon for a guide to the business interests of media owners.
[75] https://typologies.gr/zimiogonoi-oi-5-apo-toys-7-stathmoys-ethnikis-emveleias-to-2024-piezei-asfyktika-ta-kanalia-o-athemitos-antagonismos-ton-streaming-ypiresion/
[76] https://mediacopilot.ai/proto-thema-utopia-analytics-ai-comment-moderation/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

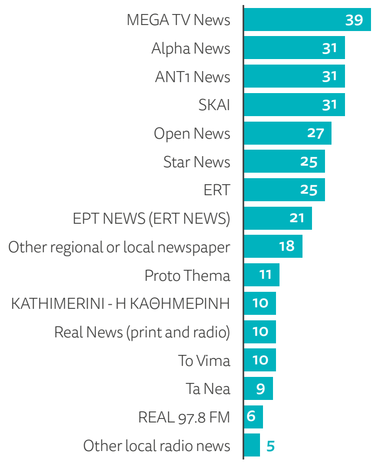
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

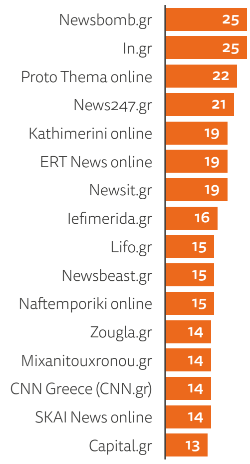
8% (+1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



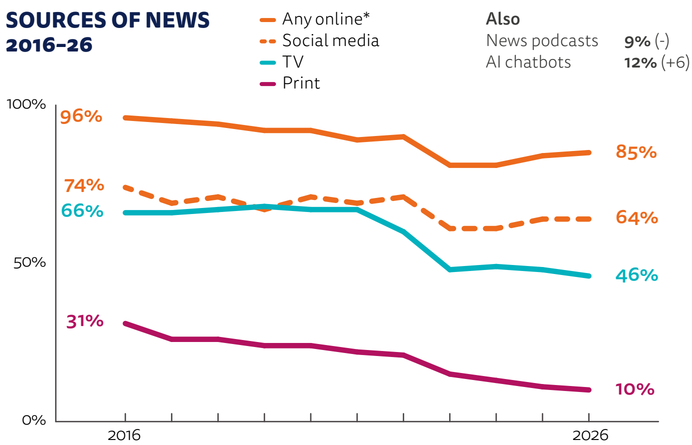
ONLINE



METHODOLOGY NOTE

We introduced education quotas in 2023 to make data more representative of national populations. Part of the declines in reach in the source chart between 2022 and 2023 will be because there are more people with lower levels of education in our sample, who typically have lower interest in news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

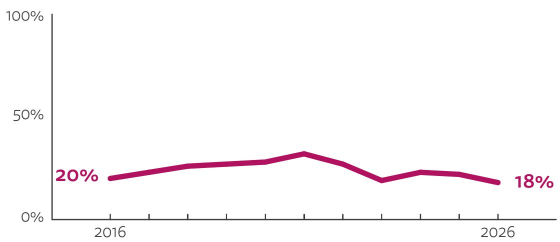
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	52%	(+8)	75%
2	Instagram	33%	(+12)	63%
3	YouTube	32%	(+2)	70%
4	TikTok	24%	(+7)	44%
5	Viber	23%	(+6)	67%
6	Facebook Messenger	21%	(+6)	59%

60% (-) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news in Greece fell by a further 4pp this year, reaching an 11-year low of 18%. Trust in political institutions and the media is closely linked, and both are currently at very low levels. Greeks overwhelmingly believe that the country's media are subject to undue political and business influence. Local and regional news are most trusted.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

18% (-4)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Alpha News	42%	32%	26%
Ant1 News	41%	31%	28%
Efimerida ton Syntakton	42%	31%	27%
ERT News	46%	25%	29%
in.gr	42%	33%	24%
Kathimerini	46%	30%	24%
MEGA	45%	29%	26%
news247.gr	41%	38%	22%
Newsbomb.gr	39%	34%	26%
OPEN	48%	31%	21%
Other regional or local newspaper	54%	31%	16%
Proto Thema	41%	30%	29%
SKAI News	32%	23%	45%
Star TV	39%	33%	28%
TA NEA	42%	32%	26%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **55.05** **86**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

HUNGARY

Population	**9.6m**
Internet penetration	**94%**

In April 2026, Hungary held a historic election. Voters ousted Fidesz, the governing party, after sixteen years in power and elected Péter Magyar in a landslide victory. This happened in the most advanced system of media capture in the EU, with the Orbán government controlling over 80% of the media, and followed an AI-fuelled campaign from the ruling party and a social media-based campaign from the challenger Tisza party.

Over the past year, the Hungarian media sphere was largely shaped by the campaign for the 2026 general elections, when Viktor Orbán faced significant opposition for the first time in 16 years. As the ruling party's popularity declined, it deployed a range of tools – escalating rhetoric, legislative measures to suppress critical voices, social media and billboard campaigns, manoeuvres in the media market, and AI-generated deepfakes – alongside economic transfers and the use of state resources. The main Fidesz narrative was anti-Ukrainian, claiming that Hungary was facing an imminent threat of war. The challenger Tisza party and its leader Péter Magyar campaigned mostly on domestic issues, such as corruption and economic problems, with heavy reliance on organic social media content and face-to-face encounters with voters. Within hours of his victory Magyar promised that, after taking office, he would suspend the news service of the PSB until impartial reporting can be ensured.

Fidesz's attempts in 2025 to suffocate independent voices by introducing a bill to fine and ban organisations receiving any foreign funding were in the end suspended, but also backfired. The attacks fuelled record donation levels for independent media under a scheme that allows taxpayers to donate 1% of their personal income tax to an NGO of their choice, with independent news portal Telex and YouTube channel Partizán receiving more donations than any other civic group in Hungary.

Readers' donations are an important source of revenue for independent media, which also often rely on a combination of advertising revenue, subscriptions (444, 24.hu, HVG), memberships, donations (Partizán, Telex, Direkt36, Átlátszó, Magyar Hang, Válasz Online), and foreign grants.

In contrast, pro-Fidesz-government media outlets, such as most legacy media (commercial television channel TV2, news channel HírTV, the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, Retro Rádió and Rádio 1, many local newspapers) and online media such as index.hu, origo.hu, and mandiner.hu, often relied on state advertising which functioned as covert state support.

The 2025 acquisition from the Swiss Ringier company of the most popular Hungarian newspaper, the tabloid *Blikk*, and its online version, by a pro-Fidesz-government media group, Indamedia (owner of Index), meant that *Blikk* became yet another outlet amplifying Fidesz's messaging. By April 2026 only 17 foreign media companies remained in Hungary, down from 57 in 2010, the most prominent being RTL, further centralising the market. Meanwhile, Radio Free Europe Hungary, an important news source, ceased operations in November 2025 after its funding was cut by the US administration.

In addition to using traditional media outlets, the Orbán government and its proxies relied on Facebook and YouTube to reach the electorate. They were among the largest spenders on political advertising in Europe. From late 2024 to September 2025, €10,585,970 was spent on political advertising on Meta and Google in Hungary, 87% from Fidesz-government-aligned actors.[77] When both platforms banned political advertising in Europe in October 2025, Fidesz tried adapting by mobilising supporters to boost the visibility of its posts on Facebook, but it could not compete with the opposition's organic reach.

Orbán's challenger Magyar relied heavily on social media, given his lack of access to Fidesz-controlled media. An analysis of the prime-time PSB news bulletin from February to December 2025 found that opposition politicians got less than 5% of the airtime, with Magyar appearing mostly in a negative context.[78] Magyar has harshly criticised independent media on a number of occasions, yet in his first post-election press conference, in a marked departure from the Orbán government's practice, independent media were called on first.

In the intense election campaign, Hungary experienced a rapid surge in AI-generated political content. A new company run by a Fidesz ally, and funded from undisclosed sources, became the largest spender on political advertising on YouTube in the EU during the summer of 2025. Its AI-generated videos smearing Magyar were shown an estimated 650m times across YouTube and Facebook.[79] Some deepfakes were shared by Orbán himself and by mainstream media, including the PSB, M1. Deepfake images of Magyar also appeared on billboards nationwide. Meanwhile, independent media contributed to our understanding of the nature of the Orbán regime through the publication of a wide range of high-quality content.

Judit Szakács
CEU Democracy Institute

[77] https://politicalcapital.hu/news.php?article_read=1&article_id=3615
[78] https://en.republikon.hu/media/175624/eves_koezmedia_monitoring_ford.pdf
[79] https://telex.hu/techtud/2025/10/02/tobb-mint-650-millioszor-futottak-le-harom-honap-alatt-facebookon-es-youtube-on-a-nemzeti-ellenallas-mozgalom-reklamjai

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

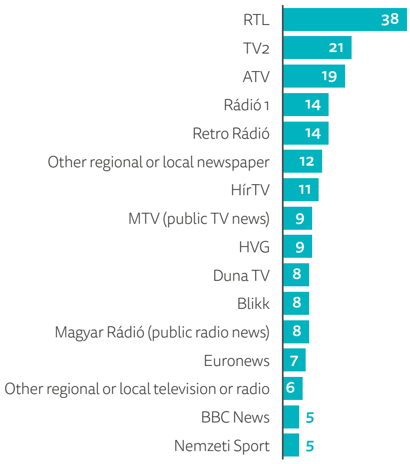
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

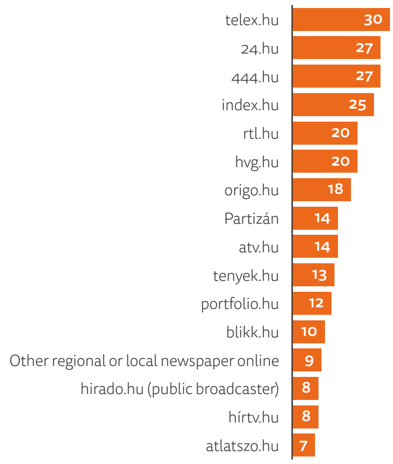
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



6% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

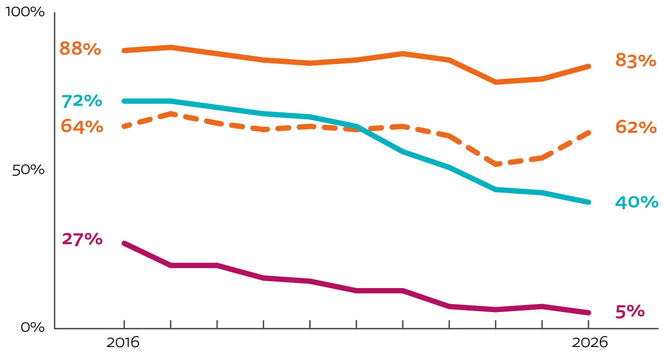
METHODOLOGY NOTE

We introduced education quotas in 2023 to make data more representative of national populations. Part of the declines in reach in the source chart between 2022 and 2023 will be because there are more people with lower levels of education in our sample, who typically have lower interest in news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 9% (-)
AI chatbots 5% (+1)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

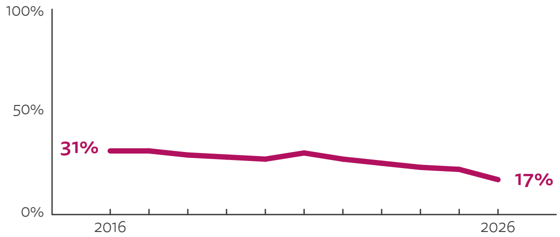
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	57%	(+14)	81%
2	YouTube	27%	(-)	73%
3	TikTok	16%	(+5)	43%
4	Facebook Messenger	11%	(+2)	72%
5	Instagram	9%	(+3)	39%
6	X	4%	(+1)	9%

45% (+4) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news declined by 5pp to 17%, the lowest figure recorded for Hungary since 2016, and the lowest of all 48 markets this year. The brands enjoying the most trust are independent while those with the lowest trust are Fidesz-government-aligned, including the public service broadcaster, MTV.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 17% (-5)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
24.hu	38%	32%	30%
444.hu	38%	31%	32%
ATV	36%	31%	34%
Blikk	15%	26%	59%
HírTV	23%	24%	53%
HVG	44%	28%	27%
Index.hu	26%	30%	44%
Magyar Nemzet	22%	29%	49%
MTV (public television)	21%	23%	56%
Népszava	26%	33%	41%
Origo.hu	21%	27%	52%
Other regional or local newspaper	28%	32%	40%
RTL	49%	26%	25%
telex.hu	41%	30%	29%
TV2	21%	22%	57%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026

Score: **59.85**

74/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

IRELAND

A shift towards reader revenue, digital products, and direct state support for public-interest reporting shaped Irish journalism in the last year. But the year also exposed the vulnerability of the wider information environment, as trust fell and AI-related anxieties grew.

Population	**5.3m**
Internet penetration	**97%**

Ireland remains a relatively strong market for paid news by international standards, with *DNR* 2026 data showing 22% paying for news online, but print and TV have continued to decline over the last five years. At the same time, news avoidance stands at 47%, a significant increase from 41% in 2025 and among the highest increases over the past year globally. Meanwhile 7% of Irish participants use AI chatbots for news, substantially more than in the UK (4%).

Overall trust in news fell sharply to 42%, down 9pp year-on-year, and among the biggest drops globally. This drop follows a slight rebound in 2025 (51%) but is still substantially below the 46% found in 2024. However, trust in Irish journalistic media brands remains stable in the 2026 report. Trust being down may be a result of reduced trust in the information system generally, given that individual brand trust overall is holding up.

At the national public service broadcaster RTÉ, 2025 was the year in which it looked to operationalise change following years of scandal. Ireland's public service media provider is dual-funded, with revenue from commercial activities and TV licence/public funding. In 2025 an agreement on RTÉ's funding was reached with the government. Its public funding is rising from €225m in 2025 to €240m in 2026 and to €260m in 2027. Even so, the broadcaster moved into the first year of its 2025–9 'New Direction' strategy very much in restructuring mode, with plans for a stronger focus on digital, streaming, and on-demand services, substantially more commissioning from the independent sector, and internal transformation, with a focus on reducing staff and moving more programming outside of Dublin. However, two unions representing RTÉ employees, including the National Union of Journalists, have opposed the new strategy and are campaigning for change. Some academics have also expressed concern about a dilution of the public service remit. Regarding news output specifically, RTÉ introduced new offerings with the Behind the Story podcast and its digital and social media focused fact-checking service, Clarity, which seeks to tackle disinformation.

The *Irish Times* in 2025 was the flagship Irish example of reader revenue driving newsroom redesign. Editor Ruadhán MacCormaic describes a shift from being 'digital first' to being 'audience' or 'subscriber first', with four digital commissioning desks, a separate print production unit, and more investment in newsletters, video, podcasts, and investigations. Subscriber revenue now fully funds its journalism, with around 150,000 print and digital subscribers across The Irish Times Group.

Mediahuis Ireland appointed a new CEO to manage its national and regional news brands. Focus remains on investment in local journalism in individual counties, and it continues to convert readers into paying subscribers, who now number over 100,000, to its *Belfast Telegraph* and *Irish Independent* titles as it moves toward its target of 200,000. The company has also invested heavily in podcasting and now boasts four in-house studios and a wide range of shows.

The *Business Post*, meanwhile, has completed a digital-first transformation, with a new CEO starting in June. Its North Star project oversaw a re-engineering of the Sunday print title into a premium digital-first publisher built around newsletters, data, audience metrics, seven-day workflows, and a clearer business-information proposition.

Overall, there's a vibrant podcasting culture and 23% of Irish respondents say they now consume some content from creators who focus on news. Established brands largely host the most popular news-focused podcasts.

Policy and regulation also moved higher up the agenda. In 2025, the government approved the General Scheme of the Media Regulation Bill and the General Scheme of the Broadcasting (Amendment) Bill. These will implement the European Media Freedom Act, introducing, for example, rules for media-mergers, transparency in state advertising spend, and the independence of public service media. At the same time, publishers intensified warnings about the economic effects of generative AI and pressed for faster legal reform, especially on copyright and defamation. And the media regulator, Coimisiún na Meán, renewed its direct state support for journalism, announcing in January 2026 more than €15m in funding for several schemes, including Local Democracy and Courts Reporting, News and Current Affairs Commercial Television, News Reporting, and Digital Transformation.

Jane Suiter
Professor, Dublin City University

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

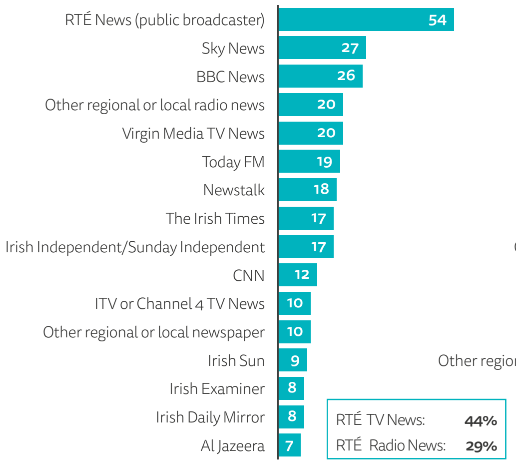
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

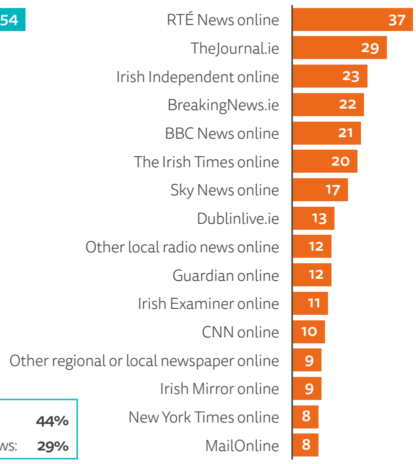
22% (+2) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



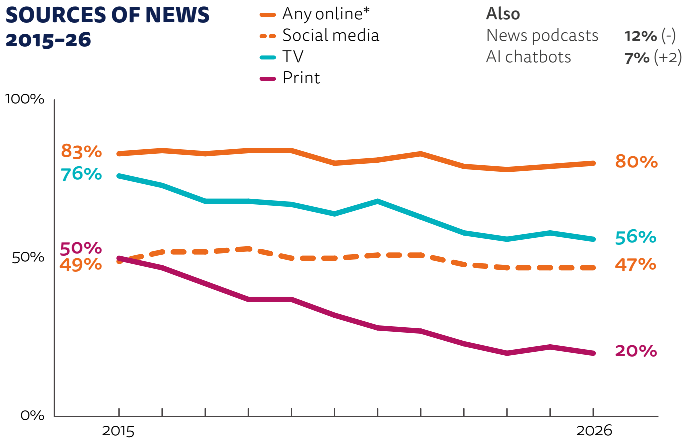
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

TV and print continued their long decline as news sources while online remained broadly steady. Social media was flat, and podcasts remained a niche news source.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

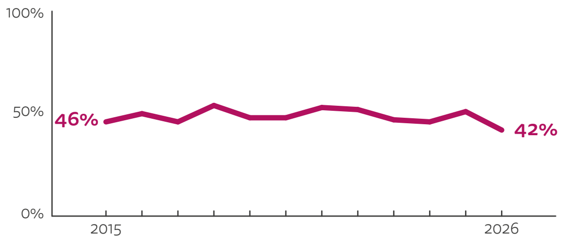
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	33%	(+4)	61%
2	WhatsApp	27%	(+4)	81%
3	YouTube	26%	(+8)	65%
4	Instagram	23%	(+7)	53%
5	TikTok	15%	(+3)	29%
6	X	11%	(-3)	19%

47% (+6) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news fell precipitously and is down some 9pp to just 42%. Yet trust in major brands online and offline, such as RTÉ, the *Irish Times*, *Irish Independent*, and *The Journal* remain unchanged. In contrast, trust in BBC News has dropped 3pp.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

42% (-9)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
BBC News	67%	17%	16%
Breakingnews	56%	28%	17%
Irish Daily Mail	45%	25%	30%
Irish Daily Mirror	44%	24%	32%
Irish Examiner	65%	22%	14%
Irish Independent	68%	20%	13%
Newstalk	65%	22%	13%
Other regional or local newspaper	69%	21%	11%
Other regional or local radio	71%	19%	11%
RTÉ News	71%	14%	15%
Sky News	66%	19%	15%
The Irish Times	69%	18%	13%
The Journal.ie	59%	26%	16%
Today FM	64%	23%	13%
Virgin Media News	64%	22%	14%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **85.93** | **7** / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

ITALY

Historically characterised by television dominance, concentrated ownership, and a relatively slow digital transition, Italy's media landscape is now being reshaped by disputes over platform power, major ownership changes, and the rise of new online actors. The result is a more competitive but also more fragmented market, where legacy brands, digital-born outlets, and creators increasingly coexist and compete.

Population	59m
Internet penetration	89%

Italy's legacy media sector is still dominated by TV, which generates 73% of traditional media revenues. The sector has historically been highly concentrated around the PSB Rai and the Berlusconi family's Mediaset. Rai remains the leading operator, ahead of Sky and Mediaset, and these three broadcasters together account for 69% of total TV revenues. Meanwhile, streaming platforms such as Netflix, DAZN, Amazon, and Disney continue to expand, now capturing more than 21% of TV revenues.

Growth in digital advertising has not benefited the wider media sector evenly, as revenue has become ever more concentrated among a few large platforms. The latest figures, for 2024, show that platforms took over 85% of gross digital advertising revenues, further marginalising publishers and traditional advertising sales houses.[80]

Weekly offline reach figures are dominated by the news and current affairs programmes of Italy's leading broadcasters. Among print outlets, only *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* are used weekly by 10% of respondents. These are the flagship titles of Italy's two main publishing groups, Cairo/RCS and GEDI. Cairo/RCS also owns the commercial broadcaster La7, while GEDI has historically owned several newspapers, radio stations, and digital-native brands.

GEDI has undergone rapid and far-reaching change in recent years and, most recently, in March 2026, it was 100% acquired by the Greek media group Antenna, controlled by the Kyriakou family. The transaction includes *La Repubblica*, Radio Deejay, Radio Capital, HuffPost Italia, National Geographic Italia, Limes, and the advertising sales house Manzoni, but not the daily *La Stampa*, already sold separately to regional publisher SAE. The deal is the latest step in a broader reshaping of GEDI, after earlier disposals of many local titles and of the weekly *L'Espresso* in 2022.

Online news use is less dominated by broadcasters than the offline market. Although Mediaset, Sky, and Rai are important digital brands, they face much stronger competition online from newspaper websites such as *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, alongside the news agency ANSA. The online environment has also created more room for digital-born players. Fanpage continues to lead the online rankings, while Il Post, HuffPost Italia, and CityNews (owner of local outlets such as RomaToday and MilanoToday) have also built meaningful audiences. This shift is even more visible among younger users, where the social-first brand Will Media and the digital native Il Post reach 11% and 15% of under-35s respectively.

Italy became an important testing ground for how publishers, regulators, and policymakers are seeking to redefine the relationship between journalism and tech platforms. In 2025 the media and telecoms regulator AGCOM issued high-profile decisions determining the 'fair remuneration' due from Meta and LinkedIn for the use of GEDI's journalistic publications. AGCOM did not publish the figures but €9–10m for Meta appeared in some press reports.[81] In October 2025, the newspaper publishers' federation FIEG filed a complaint with AGCOM against Google's AI Overviews, arguing that AI-generated summaries were reducing traffic to news websites and weakening advertising revenues.[82] Both issues will have European repercussions. Meta challenged key parts of AGCOM's fair remuneration decision, with the Italian court referring the case to the Court of Justice of the EU.[83] In February 2026 the AGCOM President said he was preparing to report Google AI Mode to the European Commission because of its impact on the press and on freedom of information. These disputes unfolded alongside Italy's new AI law, approved in late 2025, which introduced a national framework covering AI harms, copyright, data, and training uses.

Influencers and content creators are becoming more relevant in Italy, and regulators have started to respond. In July 2025, AGCOM adopted a new code of conduct for 'significant' influencers, later opening a registration portal for larger creators and introducing basic rules on transparency, commercial disclosure, and content responsibility. In the final days of the March 2026 constitutional referendum campaign, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni appeared on Pulp Podcast, a video podcast hosted by a popular Italian rapper and YouTuber. At the same time, Substack has gained ground among established journalists and commentators, including Stefano Feltri and Selvaggia Lucarelli, whose newsletters quickly attracted large paying audiences.

Alessio Cornia
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[80] https://www.agcom.it/pubblicazioni/relazioni-annuali
[81] https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/agcom-meta-dovra-versare-nove-milioni-euro-gedi-AHqxj3fB
[82] https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/oct/16/google-ai-overviews-italian-news-publishers-demand-investigation
[83] https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/meta-giornali-l-avvocato-ue-da-ragione-editori-AHhBZceB

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

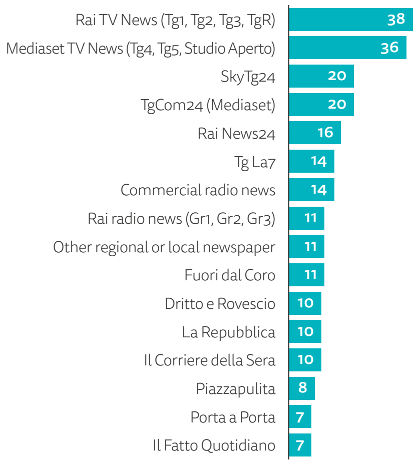
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

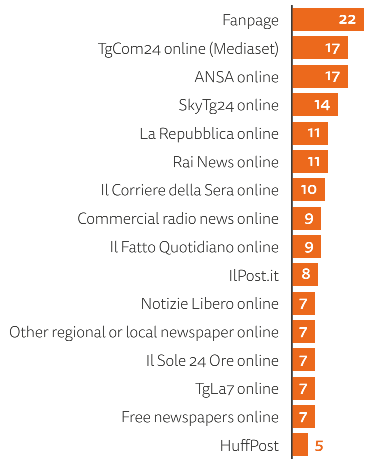
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



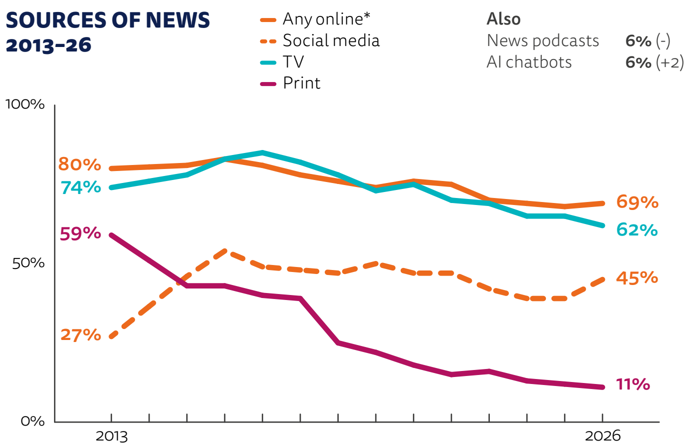
8% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

CHANGING MEDIA

Weekly reach for TV news is down slightly but remains comparatively high, while print is at just 11%. After an 11pp fall since 2020, social media use for news is up 6pp.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

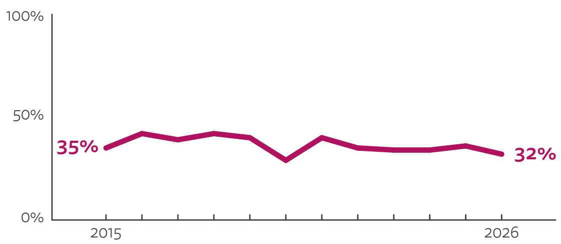
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	44%	(+8)	69%
2	Instagram	31%	(+9)	60%
3	WhatsApp	29%	(+8)	89%
4	YouTube	21%	(+1)	65%
5	TikTok	11%	(+1)	30%
6	Telegram	7%	(+1)	27%

36% (+3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news has fallen further and remains comparatively low, at 32%. In Italy's highly polarised media environment, brands seen as more neutral tend to attract higher levels of trust, while outlets with a clearer partisan profile generally score lower and are trusted mainly by those who share similar political views.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 32% (-4)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ANSA	74%	18%	8%
Fanpage	41%	31%	29%
Il Corriere della Sera	59%	26%	15%
Il Fatto Quotidiano	54%	29%	17%
Il Giornale	46%	31%	23%
Il Sole 24 Ore	64%	24%	11%
IlPost.it	44%	38%	18%
La Repubblica	55%	27%	18%
La Stampa	54%	30%	16%
Libero Quotidiano	41%	32%	27%
Mediaset News	54%	23%	23%
Other regional or local newspaper	60%	27%	12%
Rai	56%	23%	22%
SkyTG24	64%	24%	12%
Tg La7	58%	26%	15%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **65.16** **56**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

Population	**18.4m**
Internet penetration	**97%**

NETHERLANDS

The Dutch media landscape continues to be characterised by strong legacy brands and public broadcasting provision. Media is highly concentrated with the commercial market consolidating further. Several news media launched initiatives to reach younger audiences, from free subscriptions to native video content.

Already marked by high media concentration, the Dutch media landscape has further consolidated. The acquisition by the country's largest media company, DPG Media, of TV and entertainment company RTL Nederland was approved by the Netherlands Competition Authority (ACM). They previously postponed their decision due to concerns about the amount, quality, and plurality of news available to consumers. Conditions for the approval included the continuation of NU.nl – already owned by DPG Media – and RTL Nieuws as separate, freely accessible news sites, and the creation of independent foundations for both brands to safeguard their mission and identity. DPG Media also had to reinforce the editorial independence of its other news titles, which include the *De Volkskrant* newspaper and website. The acquisition further included the streaming service Videoland (1.7m subscribers[84]).

Major Dutch media brands wrote a joint letter to the Dutch informateur (the official with responsibility for exploring government coalition formation) addressing concerns about society losing grip on 'a fact-finding oriented and pluralistic provision of information due to the dominant role of global tech companies'.[85] In particular, they called for an integrated approach to media and technology policy, especially regarding AI, and for quicker and stronger implementation of EU legislation against Big Tech's power.

Over 30 news brands made their news archives available for training the Dutch AI initiative GPT-NL. This project aims to develop a reliable, trustworthy, reciprocal, and sovereign Dutch large language model (LLM), focusing on specific tasks such as summarisation, simplification, and information extraction. It presents itself as a responsible alternative to existing LLMs, focused on protection of copyright and giving fair compensation to news media for the use of their data.

Publisher Mediahuis is trialling a project with AI agents to fully produce breaking news or 'first-line news' service, with humans only reviewing the final output. There was controversy after a former NRC editor-in-chief was suspended by Mediahuis for publishing AI-fabricated quotes in his newsletter. Various DPG Media titles are also experimenting with generative AI. Regional newspaper *Tubantia* aims to fight news avoidance through suggestions to journalists for simpler, less negative language and making stories more relevant to readers. *De Volkskrant* is experimenting with an AI chatbot enabling readers to explore articles in-depth using pre-programmed questions, with answers based on the newspaper's own content.

News organisations intensified their efforts to reach younger audiences. After providing 5,000 free regional news subscriptions annually to people who could not otherwise afford them, DPG Media offered free digital news subscriptions to 16–25-year-old students. Mediahuis launched SPILNEWS, presented as a 'news-startup' independent from the publisher's established titles, such as *NRC* and *Telegraaf*. They present news in an influencer-like style, prominently featuring their young journalists, across digital platforms. NU.nl announced a similar 'video-first' social media strategy. SPILNEWS voiced concern over TikTok's opaque moderation and shadow-banning practices (platform limitations on the visibility of content or accounts without notifying the user), citing a lack of warnings, transparency, and opportunities to respond, which runs counter to the European Media Freedom Act.

PSB NOS's youth brand NOS Stories continues to do well across social media, especially TikTok (1.3m followers) and Instagram (1.2m). The platform Cestmocro – which is run anonymously and repurposes news from traditional news media and other sources – remains very popular on Instagram (1.2m), but its TikTok presence is far smaller, around 110,000 at the start of 2026. Popular young newsfluencer Benderbij – a play on his name Benjamin and the Dutch translation of 'I'm there' – blends street reporting with interviews, describing his style as 'humorous journalism with a critical edge'. As of early 2026, he had 600,000 followers on TikTok and over 300,000 on both YouTube and Instagram.

The rising role of newsfluencers raised questions about who counts as a journalist. Popular platform Left Laser, which describes itself as 'an independent media platform with a communist worldview', was initially denied press access to the Dutch House of Representatives, even after hiring an editor and creating an editorial statute. The journalists' union NVJ argued that Left Laser met the criteria for accreditation. Following media attention and questions from two MPs, the platform was eventually granted access.

The past year saw multiple incidents of (populist) politicians attacking news outlets, raising concerns about the erosion of media trust and the normalisation of violence against journalists. Reports of intimidation, threats, and violence against journalists have increased for the third consecutive year.[86]

Tim Groot Kormelink
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

[84] https://www.rtl.nl/nieuws/economie/artikel/5512483/dpg-media-neemt-na-lang-wachten-rtl-nederland-over
[85] https://sdm.nl/en/brief-aan-de-informateur-namens-de-nederlandse-mediasector/
[86] https://nvj.nl/_assets/f/291561/x/03788d3456/brief-minister-letschert-en-van-weel-inzake-veiligheid-van-journalisten.pdf

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

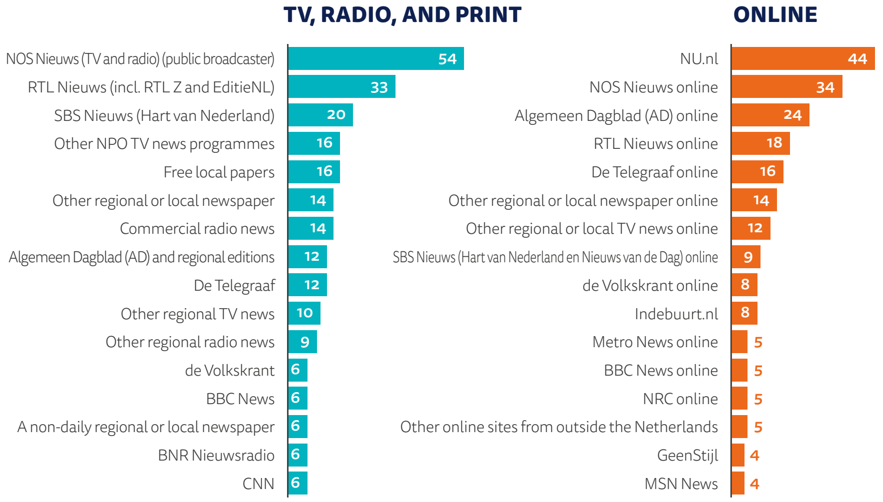
TOP BRANDS
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

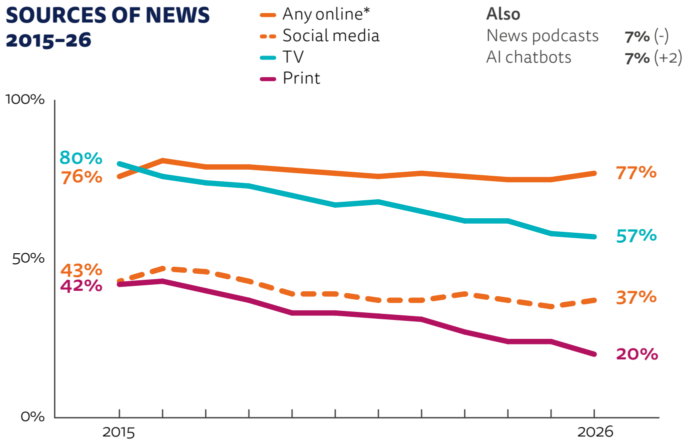
15% (-2) PAY
pay for
ONLINE NEWS



CHANGING MEDIA

TV and print continue their decline as news sources over the past decade. Online and social media slightly declined post-COVID-19, but appear to be stabilising now.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

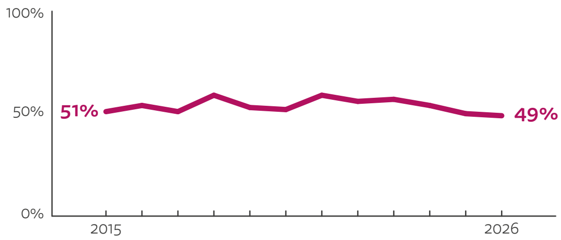
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	27%	(+8)	60%
2	WhatsApp	24%	(+8)	83%
3	Instagram	20%	(+8)	48%
4	YouTube	20%	(+7)	57%
5	TikTok	9%	(+2)	24%
6	LinkedIn	7%	(+2)	22%

34% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in Dutch news has slowly declined from the COVID-19 peak but remains comparatively high. Trust in individual news brands also remains high, with PSB NOS the most widely trusted, closely followed by regional and local news and leading commercial brands RTL and NU.nl.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
49% (-1)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Algemeen Dagblad (AD)	69%	20%	11%
ANP	70%	19%	10%
BNR Nieuwsradio	61%	26%	12%
De Telegraaf	54%	24%	22%
De Volkskrant	67%	21%	12%
GeenStijl	31%	32%	37%
Hart van Nederland (SBS News)	60%	23%	17%
Het Financieele Dagblad	66%	24%	10%
Metro	53%	31%	16%
NOS News	78%	13%	9%
NRC	65%	23%	12%
NU (Nu.nl)	72%	19%	10%
Other regional or local newspaper	74%	19%	7%
RTL News	72%	17%	11%
Trouw	64%	24%	12%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **88.92** | **2**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

NORWAY

The Norwegian media landscape combines strong national legacy brands with public service media, which have managed the digital transition well. During a year of global turmoil, the news business showed resilience and strength.

Population	**5.6m**
Internet penetration	**99%**

After major cuts and redundancies in the previous years, this year seems to suggest a move to greater stability in the Norwegian news market. However, the adoption of AI tools in newsrooms, new actors in the ecosystem in form of content creators, and the consequences this brings for news consumption, particularly amongst young users, pose new challenges to journalism and news media.

In 2025, Schibsted Media bought a Swedish (TV4) and a Finnish (MTV) TV channel from telecoms company Telia, further solidifying its presence across the Nordic region. Schibsted also acquired the remaining minority interest in Podme, the podcast platform in which it had first invested in 2019 and which by March 2026 reported 200,000 paying subscribers. In the domestic market, a major new initiative came from Danish digital-born membership news service Zetland, which aims to launch a Norwegian crowdfunded spin-off in 2026 called Demo.[87]

Norway remains the market with highest willingness to pay for news, although there was no growth this year. A solid news-reading tradition, an innovative media industry, but also a longstanding press subsidy scheme and the absence of freesheets are central reasons for this high number. Meanwhile, local news conglomerate Amedia made access to their 120 local news titles free to 15–20 year olds, reportedly reaching 20% of the target group by the end of 2025.[88] Other national newspapers followed with similar initiatives to attract younger readers, especially in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections.

The 2025 Norwegian parliamentary election presented new challenges for the news media. Social media influencers took on a new importance in Norwegian politics. Political parties spent around 5.4m NOK (€491k) in total on social media advertising and prioritised appearances in podcasts and other social media formats. Prime Minister Støre's appearance on a popular YouTube channel run by a group of male influencers gained nearly 480,000 views and was shared on TikTok with millions of users. These formats have laid the ground for a new wave of political content creators in Norway.

Norwegian news media have been eager to experiment with AI in journalistic work and news presentation, including personalised front pages and summaries, as well as using AI for investigative work. Schibsted is a pioneer in AI use and has also built in-house tools, e.g. for automation of video production, and made such tools and their source code openly available. Amedia even received an award for their personalised newspaper content at the Digital Media Awards Europe. However, this year also brought some scandals due to misuse of AI, including when the Norwegian News Agency (NTB) published a report on a telecom security threat based on an AI-generated summary full of mistakes. Concerns about AI's impact on young people's news consumption peaked during the parliamentary election campaign and all the major political parties signed an agreement not to spread deepfakes and misinformation on social media.

In early 2026, the geopolitical turmoil got closer to home. The Ukraine war continued and US threats against Greenland peaked. But as the latter story faded, a major political and royal scandal developed following investigative journalism into the Epstein files, with a former prime minister and high-ranking diplomats charged with corruption. Meanwhile, close links were revealed between Epstein and the Norwegian Crown Princess – who simultaneously saw her oldest son on trial for alleged rape, domestic abuse, and drug-related crimes.

In media policy, the state budget granted a 3.6% increase in funding for public broadcaster NRK to accommodate price and wage growth. Yet NRK continues to experience cuts in response to digital developments. In early 2026, it announced plans to reduce staffing by cutting 150 full-time posts. Commercial public service broadcaster TV2, which saw a bump in its use and trust level this year, continued lobbying to abolish VAT on video news (other news outlets are exempt from VAT), which was introduced in 2023. In a related development, Vend Marketplaces, the company that now owns Schibsted's classified ad companies, which until 2024 also owned its news media, got hit by the tax authorities with a VAT claim, potentially as high as €50m, for subscriptions to leading online news site *VG*. Meanwhile, the major press subsidy scheme has been increased slightly to approximately 440.6m NOK (€39.3m) distributed among 163 newspapers. Well-known fact-checker Faktisk.no also received state support through an initiative to promote digital literacy.

Hallvard Moe and **Carolin Schefner**
University of Bergen

[87] https://www.demodemo.no
[88] https://www.amedia.no/aktuelt/nyheter/over-70-000-unge-med-gratis-digital-tilgang

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

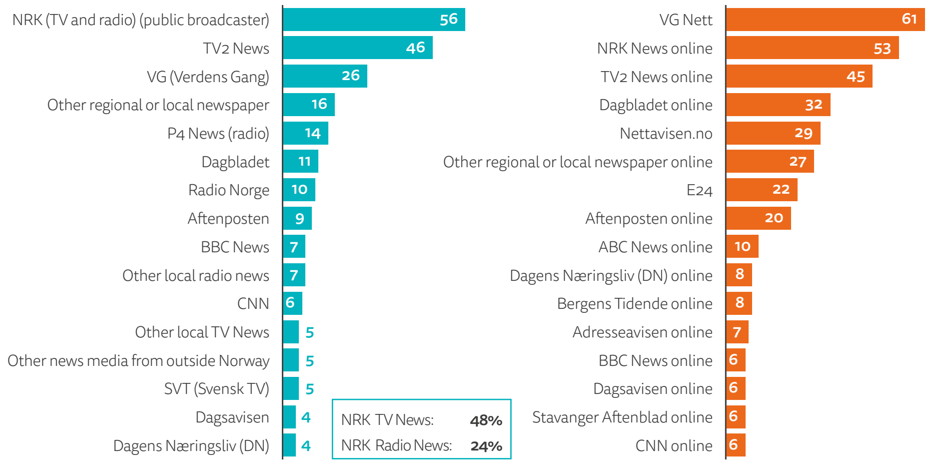
Weekly use online brands

40% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

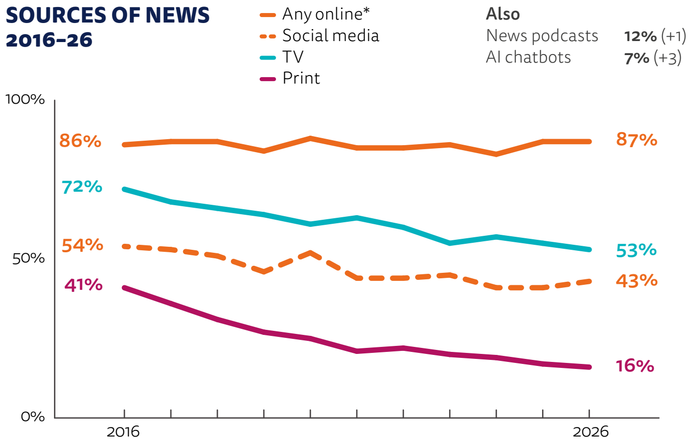
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

TV and print continue a slow but seemingly steady decline as sources for news, while social media remains steady.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

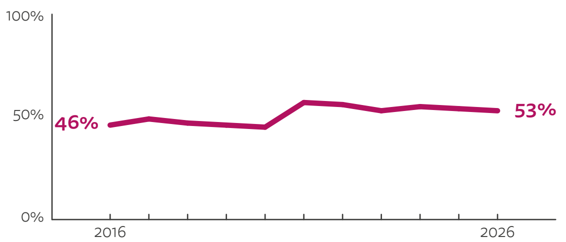
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	32%	(+8)	75%
2	Instagram	16%	(+6)	58%
3	Snapchat	15%	(+3)	64%
4	YouTube	13%	(-)	60%
5	TikTok	13%	(+3)	30%
6	Facebook Messenger	11%	(+4)	60%

39% (+9) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust has stabilised at a higher level post-COVID. In contrast, brand trust levels have risen substantially in recent years, especially for partisan newspaper *Klassekampen*, tabloid providers *VG* and *Dagbladet*, and P4, while NRK remains the most trusted brand.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

53% (-1)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ABC News	47%	31%	22%
Aftenposten	74%	16%	11%
BBC News	62%	24%	14%
Bergens Tidende	65%	24%	11%
Dagbladet	56%	20%	25%
Dagens Næringsliv	71%	20%	9%
E24	64%	24%	12%
Klassekampen	54%	29%	17%
Nettavisen	59%	24%	17%
NRK News	82%	9%	9%
Other regional or local newspaper	78%	14%	9%
P4	63%	25%	12%
Radio Norge	59%	29%	11%
TV2 News	78%	13%	9%
VG	71%	16%	13%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF Reporters Without Borders	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 92.72	1/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

POLAND

The growing influence of ideological, creator-led media ventures became one of the defining features of Poland's media market this year. As audiences shifted towards smaller right-wing outlets, the traditional hierarchy of broadcasters and news organisations continued to fragment.

Population	**38m**
Internet penetration	**89%**

The June 2025 presidential election campaign was the most widely followed political event of the year. It was unusually intense, featuring five televised debates between candidates, and saw a narrow victory for the conservative Karol Nawrocki, which was a blow to the government of centre-right Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The campaign boosted media consumption but also deepened polarisation, reinforcing the position of politically aligned outlets while public service broadcaster TVP remained weakened by political and legal conflict.

Television audiences remained fragmented, with TVN continuing to lead among news providers, while other channels competed for more politically defined audiences. TV Republika, the conservative news broadcaster once considered marginal, entered the group of the four largest television channels in Poland in 2025 for the first time.

Nearly two years after the controversial changes to its board, TVP's audience figures are relatively unchanged, with weekly reach for all TVP's offline news in the *Digital News Report* at 25%. Amidst disputes over governance and financing, the PSB expects to close 2025 with a net loss between €443 and €454m (compared to €5m in 2024), which will increase its dependence on government subsidies, with inevitable political consequences.

According to Reporters Without Borders, political pressure on public service media in Poland is not only intense but, in some cases, extreme.[89] The resulting legal and political uncertainty has further weakened the position of the public broadcaster in an already competitive market.

Alongside the rise of ideological television outlets, digital challengers continued to expand, aided by the interest in the presidential election. The most visible example remains Kanał Zero, the online news and commentary project. After rapidly building an audience on YouTube, the platform broadened its ambitions in 2025. The National Broadcasting Council granted Kanał Zero a satellite television licence in October, and the channel officially launched on 20 May 2026. It also started the news website Zero.pl in March 2026. The launch of a programme hosted by former president Andrzej Duda further increased its visibility, highlighting growing links between political figures and emerging creator-led media.

This shift towards personality-driven journalism was reflected across the wider ecosystem of politically aligned digital media. Internal tensions within the conservative media group Fratria – publisher of the portal wPolityce.pl and the television channel wPolsce24 – led several prominent commentators to leave the organisation and launch a new online initiative, Kanał TAK! on YouTube.

While new entrants reshaped parts of the media landscape, mergers continued between established players. In December 2025 the media and events group PTWP acquired a majority stake (56.82%) in Gremi Media, publisher of the daily *Rzeczpospolita*, in a share-swap transaction valuing the stake at about €10.7m, one of the biggest recent deals in the press market. PTWP's acquisition reflected a broader trend where publishers increasingly combine journalism with conferences and specialised information services.

Poland's media system also remained closely tied to global developments in the entertainment industry. Throughout 2025 the future ownership of the commercial broadcaster TVN – the most widely used source of news in Poland – remained uncertain, as its parent company Warner Bros. Discovery repeatedly explored its sale before suspending the process. The situation shifted again after Paramount Skydance announced its takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery, placing TVN within another global restructuring whose implications for the Polish market remain unclear.

Technological changes introduced by global platforms created further pressure for publishers. Google introduced AI Overviews and AI Mode in Poland in 2025, reducing referral traffic and putting additional strain on publishers' digital business models. Data from the SEO analytics firm Senuto, covering the period up to June 2025, based on Google Search Console data from more than 1,400 Polish websites, suggests that the introduction of AI Overviews was associated with a decline in click-through rates of around 19% year-on-year, indicating reduced referral traffic from search.[90]

Several media groups introduced layoffs and editorial consolidation to reduce costs. Agora, publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the portal Gazeta.pl, announced job cuts affecting more than 100 employees, while other companies rationalised their editorial teams. In May 2026 Ringier Axel Springer Polska, owner of Onet, also announced layoffs affecting around 120 employees.

Relations between publishers and technology platforms also became increasingly confrontational. An analysis commissioned by the Digital Publishers Employers Association (ZPWC) estimated that Google should pay Polish media organisations roughly €120m p.a. for the use of journalistic content.[91] Publishers subsequently submitted a request for mediation to the Office of Electronic Communications, highlighting growing tensions over the distribution of value between platforms and news organisations.

Vadim Makarenko
Insights and Research Products Director, Ringier Axel Springer Polska; former Reuters Institute Journalist Fellow

[89] https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/medias/file/2025/07/RAPPORT%20MEDIAS%20PUBLICS%20-%20EN.pdf
[90] https://insight.senuto.com/aio-report/
[91] https://zpwc.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-04-04-Final_Report_Fehr_Advice_Poland.pdf

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

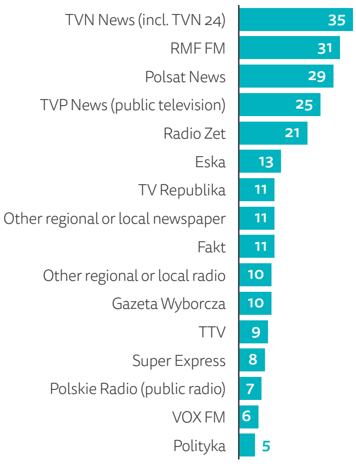
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

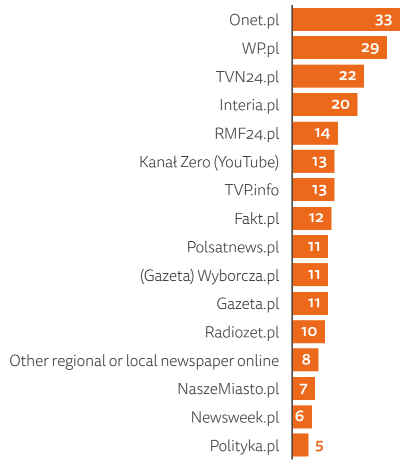
11% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



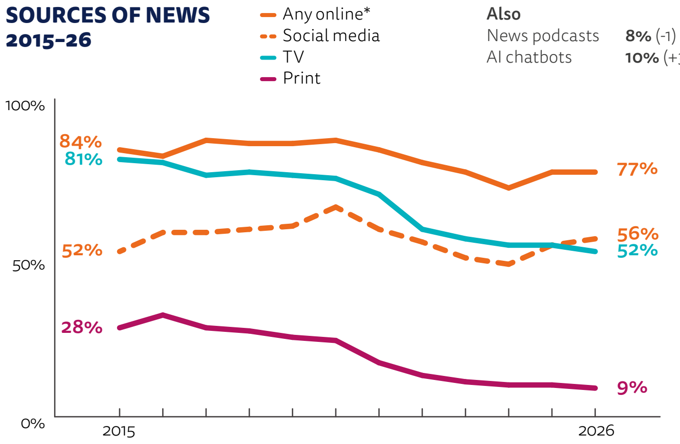
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Online news use remains stable, while traditional sources continue their gradual decline. New formats such as AI chatbots are beginning to emerge but overall consumption patterns have not shifted significantly in the last year.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

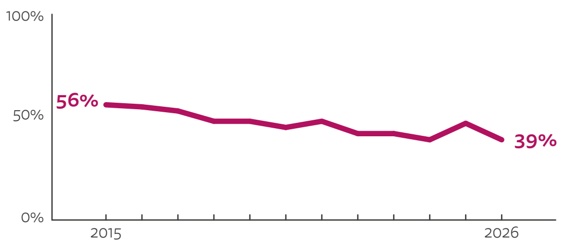
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	56%	(+16)	77%
2	YouTube	37%	(+5)	71%
3	Facebook Messenger	25%	(+12)	60%
4	WhatsApp	21%	(+11)	51%
5	Instagram	20%	(+8)	43%
6	TikTok	19%	(+8)	34%

46% (+3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news in Poland fell sharply to 39% in 2026, one of the largest year-on-year declines across markets, despite stable ratings for individual brands. This gap reflects heightened political polarisation during the presidential election, rising news avoidance, and exposure to misinformation, suggesting dissatisfaction with the media environment rather than with the outlets people use.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
39% (-8)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Fakt	30%	32%	38%
Gazeta Polska	31%	36%	33%
Gazeta Wyborcza	36%	31%	33%
Interia	41%	36%	23%
Newsweek Polska	38%	35%	26%
OKO.press	29%	41%	30%
Onet.pl	41%	30%	29%
Other regional or local newspaper	48%	34%	18%
Polsat News	48%	32%	20%
Radio Zet	48%	35%	18%
RMF FM	52%	32%	16%
Super Express	29%	35%	36%
TVN News	41%	31%	29%
TVP News (public broadcaster)	35%	34%	31%
WP.pl	42%	35%	23%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **75.52** **27** / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PORTUGAL

Population	10.4m
Internet penetration	88%

The Portuguese media landscape is undergoing significant structural change, evident in the restructuring of a major private media group, proposals to reform the PSB RTP and mounting challenges facing journalists. The market is dominated by four main commercial media groups – Impresa, Medialivre (formerly Cofina), Media Capital, and Global Media – alongside RTP, creating a difficult environment for new entrants.

As Portuguese commercial media companies seek to adapt to a more competitive digital environment, many see increased media concentration and recourse to foreign investors as key to that adaptation. One recent example of this trend came in March 2026 when the Italian MediaForEurope (MFE) group bought about one-third of the Impresa group (which owns SIC and Expresso) in an investment focused on commercial and digital synergies. This entry consolidates MFE's presence in six European markets and reinforces the sense of the Iberian Peninsula as an integrated market for advertisers, putting pressure on domestic competitors such as Media Capital and Medialivre to accelerate their own digital and revenue diversification strategies.

One factor that attracts both domestic and foreign investors is the strength of the TV sector. In 2024 Medialivre launched its own 24-hour news channel to challenge the three existing ones. While competition is fierce, the TV sector remains strong in terms of innovation and investment, fostered by historically high audiences, keen for both entertainment and news – seven out of ten people in Portugal accessed news on TV in the previous week, the highest rate across all 48 markets surveyed.

The collapse of magazine publisher Trust in News marked a significant development in Portugal's media sector in 2025, resulting in the closure of historical titles like *Visão*, *Exame*, and *Jornal de Letras*. As the country's largest magazine publisher, with an estimated readership of 1.7m, its disappearance marked a major contraction in the print magazine market. The case intensified debate over the sustainability of magazine journalism in Portugal and exposed structural economic challenges within the legacy media sector. *Visão* nevertheless continues in print and online, sustained by a group of journalists through crowdfunding initiatives. The troubles faced by *Visão* are emblematic of the print sector's business struggles, an issue that is even more prevalent in the regional and local news scene.

The government is implementing its new media policy for 2025–9. This is underpinned by Media Action and National Media Literacy plans looking to promote media literacy, combat disinformation, and encourage the responsible consumption of news and media content. The action plan also covers a wide-ranging review of the key media laws and seeks to tackle the rise of news deserts. Importantly, the new policy framework also aims to safeguard the distribution of printed newspapers to remote and sparsely populated areas, with a €3.5m press distribution scheme. Over three years, the funding will support both general distribution and newsagents in these areas.

Last year also saw renewed tensions between journalists' trade unions and the government on proposed changes at LUSA, the Portuguese national news agency. The debate gained prominence after the government retook full ownership of the agency. The priorities include a modernisation plan, and the strengthening of synergies between LUSA and the public service broadcaster RTP. The RTP board's decision to unify its various brands under a single visual identity has sparked a major internal dispute, with journalists warning that such a move could undermine the independence and distinct character of public service news.

The ongoing changes within RTP highlight a broader dilemma between the rationalisation of resources and the preservation of institutional autonomy and diversity in public service media in Europe. For journalists and newsrooms, the challenge lies in responding to the demands of technological innovation and fighting misinformation without exacerbating precariousness and abandoning the professional standards that sustain trust in the public service media provider.

Several media organisations are innovating with new formats. Outlets such as Expresso are investing in vertical video content, and news channels such as the *Conta Lá* are experimenting with AI-based news anchors to cover election results. AI keeps making its way into newsrooms, but adoption remains uneven and largely unstructured. The recently published *White Book on AI Applied to Journalism in Portugal* finds that most journalists lack training and that newsrooms have been slow to establish internal policies for the use of AI tools. It also highlights that insufficient governance and skills could undermine editorial standards and trust.[92]

Ana Pinto-Martinho, **Miguel Paisana**, and **Gustavo Cardoso**
Observatorio da Comunicacao and ISCTE, University Institute of Lisbon

[92] https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/white-paper-on-artificial-intelligence-in-journalism-in-portugal/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

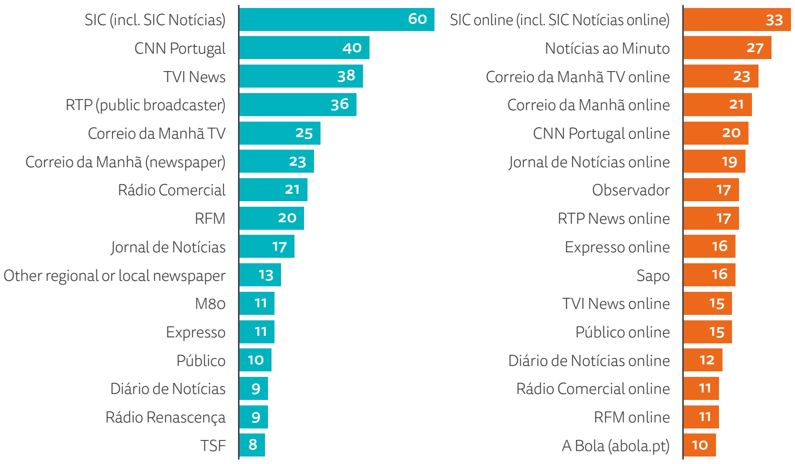
Weekly use online brands

8% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

ONLINE



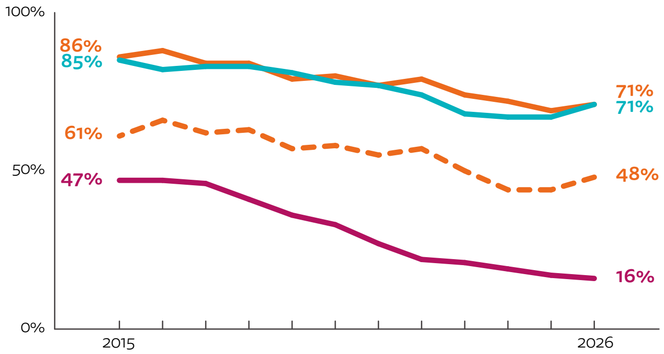
CHANGING MEDIA

With solid reliance on both television and social media for news, concerns focus on the radio and print sectors where diminishing audiences and ad revenue are not offset by a rise in payment for digital news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **7%** (+1)
AI chatbots **7%** (+3)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

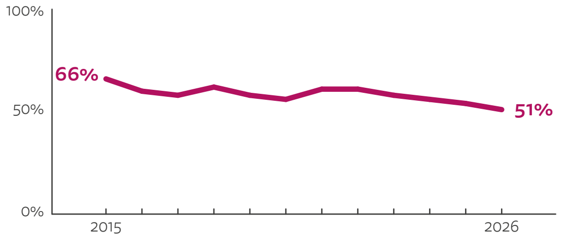
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	42%	(+8)	71%
2	WhatsApp	30%	(+9)	79%
3	Instagram	25%	(+4)	61%
4	YouTube	23%	(+6)	64%
5	TikTok	11%	(+2)	30%
6	Facebook Messenger	10%	(+3)	40%

37% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news is at the highest level in Europe outside the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, some worry that the slow but steady decline of trust in the news may be linked to growing political polarisation. By contrast, trust in most brands has increased, with RTP among the most trusted.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
51% (-3)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Agência Lusa	73%	18%	9%
Correio da Manhã	60%	20%	20%
Expresso	75%	17%	8%
Jornal de Notícias	78%	16%	6%
Notícias ao Minuto	70%	21%	9%
Observador	71%	21%	9%
Other regional or local newspaper	68%	23%	9%
Público	74%	18%	8%
Rádio Comercial	75%	18%	7%
Rádio Renascença	76%	17%	7%
RDP Antena 1	74%	18%	8%
RTP News	79%	14%	7%
SIC News	77%	15%	9%
TSF	73%	19%	8%
TVI News	72%	16%	12%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **83.71** | **10**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

ROMANIA

Compelling coverage from some mainstream newsrooms and investigative journalism teams mobilised Romanians to vote in presidential and by-elections and also to mount protests against femicide and 'a captured justice system'. Meanwhile, some other outlets and social media accounts spread disinformation, conspiracy theories, and hate speech, in attempts to influence the election results and pressure the new coalition government.

Population	**18.9m**
Internet penetration	**91%**

The possibility that a far-right candidate would win the May 2025 presidential elections increased social anxiety and left some audiences more engaged with news. Media coverage stimulated interest and participation in the election, while separate campaigns against issues such as gender-based violence contributed to the adoption of a law against femicide. Journalists meanwhile faced death threats, legal intimidation, smear campaigns, online trolling, and other punitive measures from politicians and members of the judiciary.

Websites such as PressOne, Snoop, Captura, and Recorder published hard-hitting and well-sourced investigations during the year, including one into the far-right, on Romanian mercenaries in Africa, on violence against women, on illegal public works, and on the manipulation of the justice system by the powerful. The two-hour-long documentary *Captured Justice*, from Recorder (eighth place in our online brand list and largely funded by donations, along with some grants and advertising), reached over 2m views on YouTube in one day. It was subsequently broadcast by the PSB TVR and by B1, a 24-hour TV news channel. Other outlets followed suit, reporting on the often aggressive reactions from the judiciary and politicians to days of public protests demanding change. The 24-hour news channels România TV and Realitatea Plus presented the documentary as a concerted attack on justice by hostile forces, and were subsequently sanctioned by the National Audiovisual Council. Through 2025 both channels received dozens of sanctions from the Council. Following a change in European legislation, the Council also issued hundreds of sanctions for audiovisual content online, in cases ranging from spreading conspiracy theories to hate speech. Our *DNR* data show that 32% of respondents get content from creators who focus on the news.

Increased usage of online and offline media gave a boost to advertising spending, which reached a record figure of €847m in 2025, excluding political advertising and online-only campaigns.[93] In 2025 political parties spent €22.7m from state funding allocated for 'media and propaganda', in proportion to their representation. The two major political parties directed a significant part of their subsidies to some news organisations, buying goodwill for their own candidates, with confidentiality clauses to obstruct transparency. However, one encouraging development is that an estimated €4.5m of donations was given by private individuals and companies to support independent news media.

The top online and offline media brands are largely unchanged, but with generally greater weekly usage. Pro TV remains dominant, with a combined news reach online and offline of 60% of DNR survey respondents. It is part of CME, a Czech-owned media company with leading brands in five of its six Central and Eastern European markets. Other foreign owners of top media brands include the Swiss company Ringier (owners of *Libertatea* – print and online), the Turkish Dogan Media International (Kanal D – generalist TV), and the Czech company Europe Developpement International (Europa FM – radio). Other media brands, such as generalist television Antena 1 (38% combined weekly reach) and Antena 3 CNN, România TV, and Realitatea Plus, Știri pe surse, Adevărul, and HotNews have private Romanian owners. TV news channel Digi24 (38% combined weekly reach) is the only media brand owned by a Romanian publicly traded company.

In 2025, the new parliament named new boards and presidents of the public radio and the public television, following the end of their terms. The Romanian PSBs are two of the five most trusted media brands but are much smaller in terms of reach. Each depends on the state for over 90% of their funding, about €84m p.a. The PSB TVR considers the amount inadequate for all its TV activities.[94] TVR has two international channels, five regional studios, and seven national broadcast channels, one of which was closed in March 2026. One controversial change in commercial ownership in 2025 was the acquisition of the digital native G4Media (which started as an investigative and hard news site), by Radu Budeanu, a media owner and former journalist with a past criminal conviction. Budeanu already owns the online news brands Mediafax and Gândul, alongside other mass-market titles and following this latest acquisition now controls the 'largest digital press conglomerate' in the Romanian market.[95]

Raluca-Nicoleta Radu
University of Bucharest

[93] https://mediafactbook.ro/
[94] https://www.paginademedia.ro/stiri-media/tvr-comunicat-cresteri-fonduri-22373546
[95] https://www.g4media.ro/grupul-g4media-ro-este-achizitionat-de-titluri-quality-se-formeaza-cel-mai-mare-conglomerat-de-presa-digitala-din-romania.html

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

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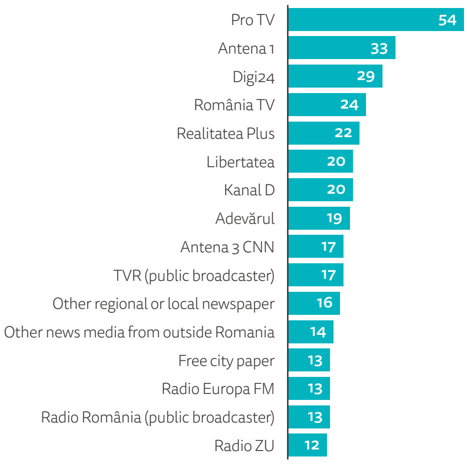
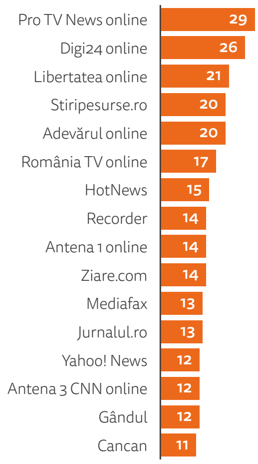
Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



15% (+3) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

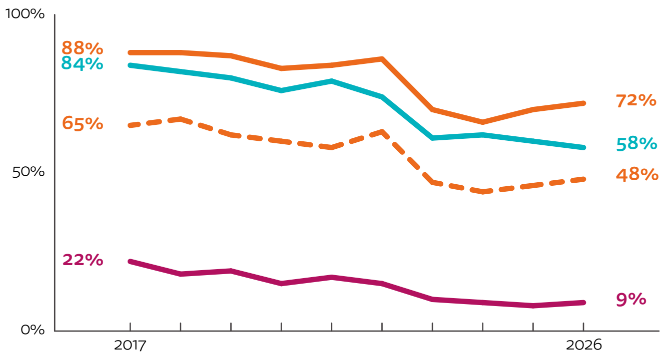
METHODOLOGY NOTE

We introduced education quotas in 2023 to make data more representative of national populations. Part of the declines in reach in the source chart between 2022 and 2023 will be because there are more people with lower levels of education in our sample, who typically have lower interest in news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **15%** (+2)
AI chatbots **8%** (+3)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

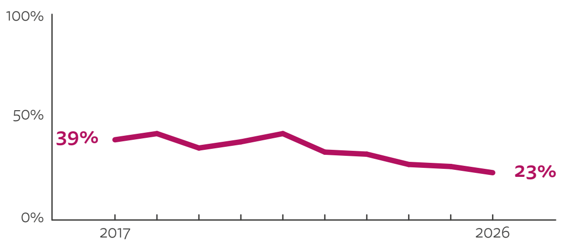
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	56%	(+6)	75%
2	YouTube	34%	(+3)	67%
3	WhatsApp	28%	(+6)	75%
4	TikTok	26%	(+1)	48%
5	Instagram	18%	(+5)	41%
6	Facebook Messenger	12%	(+2)	45%

47% (-1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news overall reached a new low point, for the fifth year in a row. Nevertheless, both weekly usage and trust in many brands increased. Pro TV has been the most trusted and most used news brand over the last ten years.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 23% (-3)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Adevărul	47%	31%	22%
Antena 1	50%	24%	27%
Antena 3 CNN	42%	23%	35%
Digi24	55%	21%	24%
HotNews	48%	29%	22%
Kanal D	49%	28%	23%
Libertatea	45%	30%	24%
Other local or regional newspaper	49%	32%	19%
Pro TV	61%	21%	19%
Radio Europa FM	56%	27%	18%
Radio România (public broadcaster)	55%	26%	18%
Realitatea Plus	45%	22%	32%
România TV	40%	24%	36%
Știri pe surse	47%	30%	23%
TVR (public broadcaster)	52%	26%	22%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **67.71** **49**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SERBIA

The media landscape in Serbia has deteriorated significantly during the ongoing political crisis this year. State ownership of the media increased, along with greater financial and political influence over the market, which together with constant hostility towards independent outlets, have led to a decline in media freedom and journalistic safety.

Population	**6.7m**
Internet penetration	**88%**

The crisis in the country erupted following the deadly collapse of the railway station roof in Novi Sad, Serbia's second-largest city, on 1 November 2024, killing 16 people. The tragedy was attributed to corruption and sparked widespread protests led by students, who blockaded major universities and mobilised citizens in a prolonged anti-government movement. Unrest escalated after use of an unidentified sonic weapon against peaceful demonstrators in Belgrade on 15 March 2025. After no success in bringing those responsible to account, protesters demanded early general elections, which the authoritarian regime of President Aleksandar Vucic continues to resist.

Instead, the government intensified repression against 'rebellious society', tightening control over the judiciary, media, and universities. Police violence increased, with over 1,636 arrests reported between June and September 2025.[96] Repression peaked during efforts to suppress student activism and reopen universities. Protests continued until the March 2026 local elections, which were characterised by serious irregularities and, according to the European Federation of Journalists, an unprecedented level of violence against journalists, making Serbia one of the most dangerous places for them outside of active war zones.[97]

In the highly but asymmetrically polarised media landscape, television remains very important with a large audience and political influence. There are two PSBs, national Radio Televizija Srbija (RTS) and regional Radio Televizija Vojvodina (RTV), four national commercial channels – RTV PINK, RTV Happy, TV Prva, and TV B92 – and over 200 local and cable channels.

All national commercial channels are owned by Serbian companies tied to the political elites, which effectively closes the mainstream media to reporting critical of the government. Meanwhile, state-owned Telekom Srbija, the major telecom operator, has acquired over 30 TV channels in the past year, thereby becoming an important media company, the major delivery platform, and one of the top advertisers in the country.

According to the 2025 Ipsos Media Landscape, total advertising spend has grown by 8% in the past year, reaching €296m, but that is still insufficient to sustain the number of media outlets. Television attracts 45% (+1.5%) of advertising spend, while print has just 4% (-13.9%) compared to the rapid growth in online (+ 23.4%), which now accounts for 32% of total advertising revenue.

Two critical cable television channels, N1 and TV Nova, are among the top sources of news offline in this year's survey. Both are owned by international telecom and media company United Group and have been regularly targeted by Aleksandar Vucic as anti-Serbian or even terrorist media. In early 2025 the United Group sold its telecoms business SBB but retained N1 and TV Nova in a new company, Adria News Network, while promising to defend their independence. However, in a leaked conversation revealed in August 2025, the new CEO of United Group, Stan Miller, was heard agreeing to dismiss the head of its media division at Mr Vucic's request. Then on 6 April 2026 N1 announced that its director of news Igor Bozic had been replaced. Journalists' unions and media watchers fear that this might lead to the neutering or shutting down of N1 and taming of the remaining critical media.[98]

The newspaper market is dominated by the tabloid press. Pro-government tabloids in Serbia have often been used to discredit dissenting voices, run smear campaigns, and amplify nationalist and anti-EU narratives. *Informer* was among three tabloids which the Press Council named for infringing the Code of Ethics in the second half of 2025, in their case with 1,456 violations.[99] In November 2024 it launched its cable news channel and now has 14% weekly reach offline and 12% online, but the lowest level of public trust (19%) among all the brands surveyed.

There are signs that audiences are rewarding investigative and community media for scrutinising corruption and covering protests. New digital multi-media outlets such as Masina and Zoomer are attracting audiences with their engaging live reporting, while investigative journalism portals such as KRIK and BIRN specialise in exposing crime and corruption. The fact that our Serbian respondents see 'organised crime' as the third largest influence on media at 47%, behind media owners and government/politicians cited by 64% and 63% respectively, suggests the extent of public concern about corruption and possible criminal links in parts of the media.

Snjezana Milivojevic
Retired Professor of Public Opinion and Media Studies, University of Belgrade

[96] https://www.bgcentar.org.rs/izvestaj-o-stanju-ljudskih-prava-u-srbiji-u-2025-godini/
[97] https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2026/03/30/serbia-brutal-assaults-on-journalists-reporting-on-the-local-election-require-urgent-response-from-authorities/
[98] https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2026/04/07/en-serbie-la-derniere-television-independante-fait-face-aux-pressions-du-pouvoir_6677943_3210.html
[99] https://savetzastampu.rs/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Izvestaj-FINAL-2025.-1.pdf

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

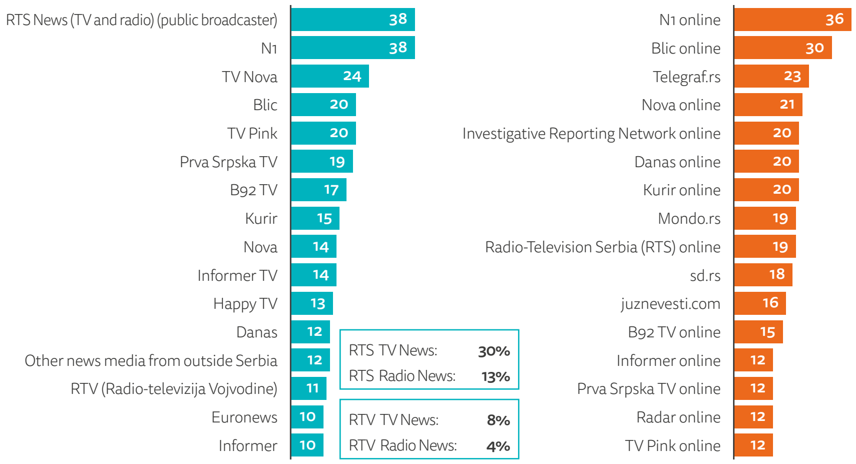
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT | ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

TV remains an important news source particularly for older Serbs but social media and online are in the lead with news websites/apps growing in the last year.

SOURCES OF NEWS

TV
51% (-3)

Any online*
85% (-)

Radio
19% (-2)

Social media
64% (-3)

Print
16% (+1)

News websites/apps
57% (+4)

* Incl. news websites/apps, social media and video networks, news podcasts (11%), and AI chatbots (9%)

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	50%	(+5)	75%
2	YouTube	41%	(+8)	80%
3	Instagram	40%	(+7)	69%
4	TikTok	24%	(+3)	46%
5	Viber	22%	(+4)	77%
6	X	14%	(-)	21%

53% (+7) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust has fallen – by 5pp – in the past year to just 22%, likely influenced by the severe political crisis and highly polarised media. The more critical media – N1, Nova, Danas and Vreme – have the highest levels of trust, ahead of widely used pro-government brands such as *Informer* and PINK.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS

22% (-5)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

MISINFORMATION CONCERN

62% (-)

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Blic	29%	25%	46%
Danas	41%	27%	32%
Informer	19%	16%	64%
Kurir	23%	20%	57%
NIN	37%	29%	34%
NovaS	47%	24%	29%
Politika	30%	26%	43%
Radio-televizija Srbije (RTS)	33%	23%	43%
TV B92	31%	23%	46%
TV Happy	21%	22%	57%
TV N1	52%	21%	27%
TV Pink	21%	16%	63%
TV Prva	33%	24%	43%
Vecernje Novosti	28%	25%	46%
Vreme	43%	28%	29%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

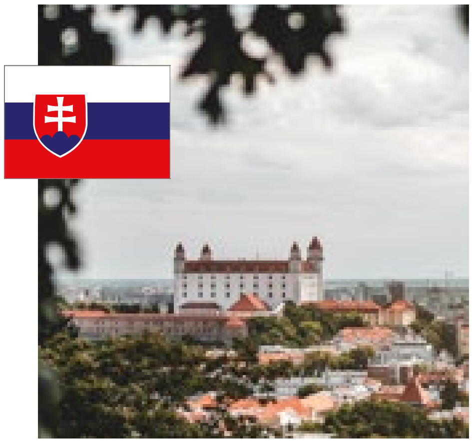
RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026

Score: **50.79**

104/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org



SLOVAKIA

Slovakia has a weak public service broadcaster, which successive governments have coveted as an instrument for state broadcasting. De facto, its mandate for democratic public service has, in the past, been assumed by the main commercial channel, Markíza. The country has a polarised press and online news sector with some innovative business models. However, low trust provides fertile ground for parajournalistic challengers.

Population	5.5m
Internet penetration	90%

The 2024 adoption of a controversial law on Slovakia's rebranded PSB, STVR, switched the appointment of the Director-General (DG) from parliament to a nine-member Council. Dominated by figures loyal to the current government, the Council elected Martina Flašíková as DG in May 2025. Formerly a TV producer and advertising executive, whose father ran ad campaigns for politicians including Robert Fico's ruling SMER party, Flašíková cancelled several long-running TV and radio shows featuring political discussion, fact-checking, and satire. Political satire is now largely confined to the internet in Slovakia.

Constant format, scheduling, and personnel changes in its political debate shows have characterised STVR and its predecessors since the country's independence in 1993, preventing the emergence of a strong brand identity that viewers can identify with. To an extent, the same instability afflicts commercial channels. Some TV presenters have tried to establish their own brands online, but only the online TV station 360°, of ex-Markíza presenter Michal Kovačič, has had much impact, with 9% weekly news usage.

In September 2025, the Council of Europe's (CoE) Platform for the Protection of Journalists raised concerns about governance and funding arrangements at STVR, regretting that the meeting to elect the DG was held behind closed doors, contrary to legal provisions.[100] Responding to this 'systemic alert', the government claimed the new governance structures at STVR, far from undermining editorial independence as the CoE alleged, 'ensure objectivity and guarantee a plurality of opinions', language that reveals how the government views the social role of the news media.

Equating objectivity to 'pluralistic information' echoes claims from leading politicians that news is more objective if unorthodox views (e.g. on vaccines or climate change) are included in public debate, and that giving politicians space to present their views without exposure to critical questioning therefore contributes to objectivity. Conversely, when other news media vow to defend liberal democratic values, as Roman Krpelan, the new editor-in-chief at Slovakia's second-largest daily newspaper *SME*, has done,[101] they become 'activists' in the mouths of government politicians, who no longer accept some liberal democratic values (e.g. protection of minorities) as fundamental.

Our survey results show that the largest share of Slovaks say they prefer to get news from a source with no particular point of view rather than one which either shares or challenges their point of view. In practice, following changes at STVR, Slovaks are more critical of the social impact of news from their PSB than any other nation in the *DNR* except Serbia. The number one complaint is that coverage is influenced by political or other interests, suggesting that the public rejects the government claim that its reforms will restore objectivity. Since the eve of the reform in 2024, STVR's weekly usage has fallen by 7pp and trust by 10pp.

The 2025 restructuring of Slovakia's Media Regulator has caused concern. Several new members have connections to the ruling parties SMER and SNS, or to the owner of a commercial TV station.[102] One, Rebeka Riabová (who is linked to SNS), criticises excessive 'censorship' by social media platforms and once commented that 'the real disinformers' are widely used news sites SME, Denník N, and Aktuality.[103] The regulator is required to work with the major social media platforms, to create effective mechanisms to enable the removal of illegal or prohibited content. This comes as an international report, *Sponsored Hate*, found that politicians and political parties in Slovakia (notably SMER) placed more than 500 ads on Meta attacking or discrediting journalists or NGOs between mid-2024 and mid-2025.[104]

In February 2026 Denník N bought Brussels-based website EUobserver.com, which covers European Union news. The acquisition gives its subscribers access to Slovak translations of EUobserver stories, as well as enabling EUobserver to benefit from Denník N's technological expertise and use its online subscription system. Elena Sánchez Nicolás, EUobserver's editor-in-chief, hailed the merger as a way of joining forces to protect 'independent' journalism, the founding motto of Denník N.

Commercial TV channel JOJ has begun experimenting with the use of AI avatars to present sport and show-business news, in a bid to attract younger viewers. The newspaper *SME*, however, has said it will never let AI write its articles.

Andrea Chlebcová Hečková
Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra
Simon Smith
Charles University, Prague

[100] https://fom.coe.int/en/alerte/detail/107642814;globalSearch=false
[101] https://www.sme.sk/komentare/c/sme-sa-nemeni-doveru-si-chcem-ziskat-pracou
[102] https://journalismresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Slovakia-2025-V2.pdf
[103] https://dennikn.sk/4926972/koalicia-zvolila-do-medialnej-rady-youtuberku-riabovu-kandidovala-za-sns-obhajuje-dannyho-kollara-a-utocila-na-kuciakov-pamatnik/
[104] https://vsquare.org/sponsored-hate-how-politicians-paid-for-meta-ads-to-attack-journalists-slovakia-hungary-czechia-poland-visegrad/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

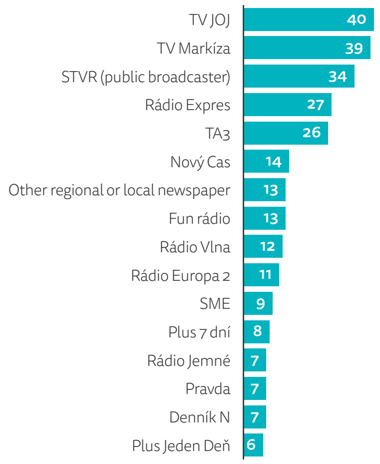
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

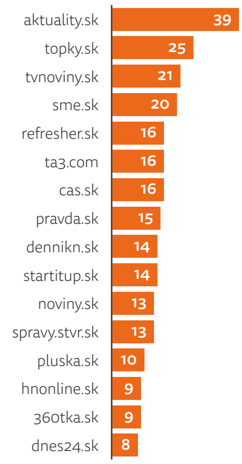
Weekly use online brands

11% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



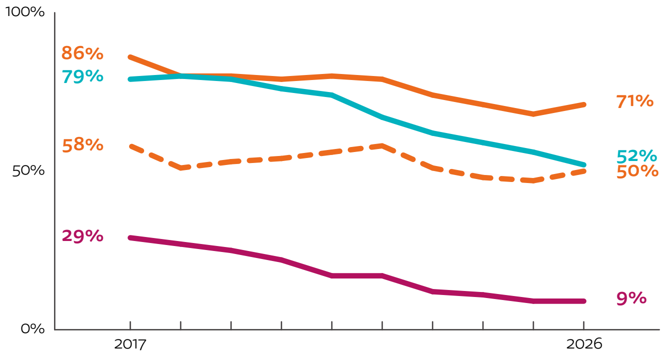
ONLINE



METHODOLOGY NOTE

We introduced education quotas in 2023 to make data more representative of national populations. Part of the declines in reach in the source chart between 2022 and 2023 will be because there are more people with lower levels of education in our sample, who typically have lower interest in news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

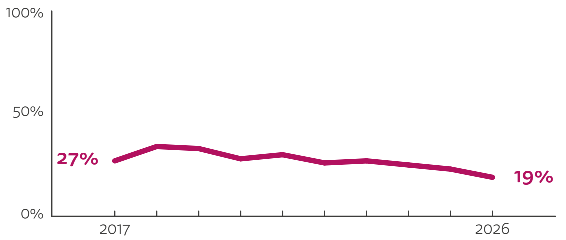
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	51%	(+8)	74%
2	YouTube	27%	(+6)	64%
3	Facebook Messenger	24%	(+12)	60%
4	Instagram	21%	(+7)	43%
5	WhatsApp	18%	(+9)	54%
6	TikTok	8%	(+1)	18%

47% (+5) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

The decline in general trust in the news media continued and even accelerated in 2026. For the second year in a row, rolling news channel TA3 was the only one of our 15 surveyed brands seen as trustworthy by more than half of respondents.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 19% (-4)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Aktuality	45%	25%	29%
Denník N	37%	25%	39%
Hospodárske noviny	46%	32%	22%
Nový Cas	25%	31%	45%
Other regional or local newspaper	48%	35%	17%
Plus	29%	32%	39%
Pravda	38%	35%	27%
Rádio Expres	49%	31%	20%
Refresher	30%	39%	31%
SME	40%	28%	32%
STVR (public broadcaster)	46%	27%	26%
TA3	54%	26%	20%
Topky	26%	33%	41%
TV JOJ	47%	27%	26%
TV Markiza	38%	26%	36%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **72.71** **37**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SPAIN

Spain's political and media landscape has been marked by heated debates over digital platforms and disinformation. The Socialist government, led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, has pushed for stricter online regulation to curb false information, in step with EU-wide initiatives. Opposition parties view these moves as threats to free speech.

Population	**48m**
Internet penetration	**96%**

As part of these efforts, in March 2026 the government announced the launch of HODIO – an AI-driven tool designed to track the spread of online hate speech and polarisation across major digital platforms, aiming to enhance oversight of tech companies. The opposition warn it could become a tool for ideological control or to label dissenting opinions as 'polarisation', while raising concerns about who defines what qualifies as hate speech within the algorithm.

The initiative takes place against a challenging backdrop for Sánchez's minority government, which relies on fragile parliamentary alliances while facing investigations into alleged government corruption.[105] Leaks and probes have intensified 2026's political clashes. Left-leaning media portray scrutiny as a right-wing 'lawfare' conspiracy, while independent outlets defend their watchdog role. In this polarised climate, tensions show little sign of easing.

Between 2025 and 2026, the Spanish government has promoted several significant media policy initiatives. The most significant is the Bill on Public Sector Advertising, requiring media outlets to disclose their ownership and cap public funding at 35% of total income to strengthen transparency. The government's declared aim is to prevent regional or local authorities from financing 'pseudo-media' lacking commercial viability or significant audience reach, in line with the spirit of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). The opposition Partido Popular (PP) and Vox oppose the initiative, describing it as a potential tool for discriminatory treatment or what they term 'soft censorship', and its future is uncertain.

Other changes include a new Law on the Right of Reply. It would cover influencers with more than 100,000 followers, as well as others with more than 200,000 users across multiple social networks, adapting right of reply and correction procedures to the digital environment. Together, these proposals are presented as part of Spain's effort to align its legal framework with the EMFA.

Amid this tense climate, the public broadcaster RTVE has experienced a turbulent year. In January 2026, RTVE's News Council published a 144-page report,[106] produced after over 100 staff complaints, alleging that certain news programmes had 'habitually and repeatedly' violated the corporation's journalistic standards. The main accusations pointed to political bias favouring the government and the Socialist Party's (PSOE) arguments; deficiencies in journalistic rigour; failure of presenters to act as impartial moderators; dissemination of false information; and loss of editorial oversight due to the outsourcing of programmes to external production companies. RTVE's management refuted these allegations, questioned the report's methodology, and demanded a public retraction. The Board of Governors subsequently backed management's position, approving a counter-report and referring the matter to a future board meeting.

According to InfoAdex,[107] Spain's advertising market closed 2025 at €12.7bn, a 2.6% decline ending five years of growth. Television remains the leading medium, with investment of €1.8bn, 28.5% of the audited market (-4.4% on 2024). Atresmedia (with channels such as Antena 3, La Sexta, and Onda Cero) leads with advertising revenue of €621.8m (-9.5%), with Mediaset España just behind with €615.8m (-9.7%). Mediaset is cutting costs after audience figures fell sharply and its leading channel Telecinco started 2026 with one of its lowest figures to date.[108] The plan includes merging the news operations of its two national channels, Telecinco and Cuatro, into a single newsroom while retaining distinct on-air brands, alongside significant cuts to its regional newsgathering network.

Newspaper advertising remained flat at €750m, 12% of media spend, with online news overtaking print, with €412.5m, compared to €337m. On the subscription front, media companies' figures show Spain now has slightly over one million digital news subscribers. *El País* leads with 451,000 digital subscribers, followed by *El Mundo* (181,000), and *La Vanguardia* (167,000). Meanwhile, Prisa, Spain's leading news publisher, appointed Jan Martínez Ahrens as a new editor of its flagship newspaper, *El País*, as part of a strategy to drive growth in the Americas.

Technological innovation in newsrooms has benefited from government-backed digital strategies and subsidies. Leading outlets have increasingly adopted AI tools for personalised news recommendations, fact-checking – such as *El País*'s collaboration with Maldita.es and other fact-checkers – and generating chatbots for subscriber support, alongside exploratory uses in content workflows.

Roncesvalles Labiano, **Aurken Sierra**, **María Fernanda Novoa-Jaso**, and **Alfonso Vara Miguel**
University of Navarra

[105] https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2026/04/29/spains-pm-was-at-level-one-in-scheme-to-rig-public-contracts-defendant-in-graft-case-says
[106] An RTVE internal organisation, elected every two years by its own journalists to safeguard editorial independence and impartiality.
[107] InfoAdex Study of Advertising Investment in Spain 2026.
[108] https://elpais.com/television/2026-03-08/historia-de-una-crisis-televisada-telecinco-trata-de-recuperar-su-identidad-y-la-audiencia-fugada-siete-anos-despues-de-perder-pasapalabra.html

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

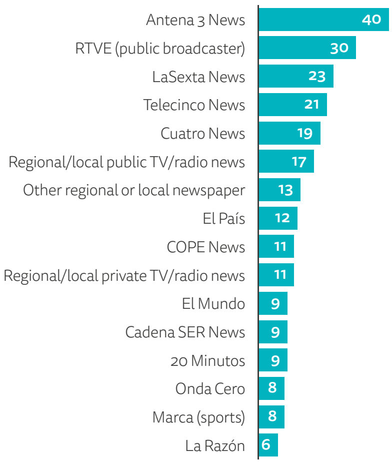
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

9% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

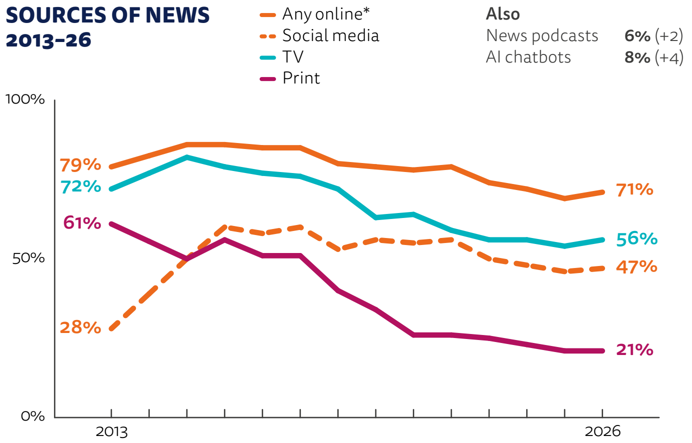


ONLINE

CHANGING MEDIA

This year the figures for news use across all four major sources – television, social media, online, and print – remained stable.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

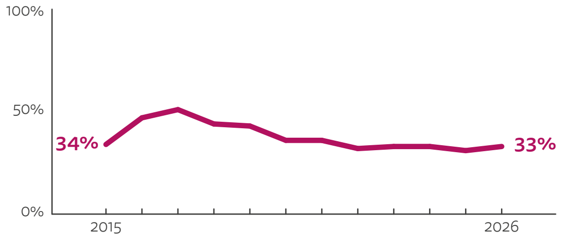
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Instagram	32%	(+14)	67%
2	Facebook	31%	(+7)	58%
3	WhatsApp	29%	(+5)	89%
4	YouTube	19%	(-)	65%
5	TikTok	16%	(+5)	43%
6	X	16%	(+1)	22%

37% (-) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news, at 33% (+2pp), puts Spain in the middle of the 48 markets surveyed. Most brands saw trust increase, but trust gaps between left- and right-leaning respondents still exist for most media brands, reflecting polarisation.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST **33% (+2)**

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 | Score: 75.42 | 29/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
20 Minutos	41%	37%	22%
ABC	45%	29%	26%
Antena 3	52%	25%	24%
Cadena SER	51%	27%	22%
COPE	45%	26%	28%
El Mundo	47%	28%	25%
El País	49%	27%	24%
El Confidencial	39%	38%	24%
elDiario.es	42%	35%	23%
LaSexta	46%	25%	29%
OKDiario	35%	30%	35%
Onda Cero	49%	32%	19%
Other regional or local newspaper	54%	32%	14%
RTVE	52%	21%	27%
Telecinco	36%	28%	37%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

SWEDEN

Sweden is marked by its combination of public service media (PSM) and commercial news publishers, both sectors being active in digital publishing. High levels of connectivity and subscription uptake support a resilient market, even as advertising revenues decline and publishers' experiment with AI, audio, and other formats to reach and engage their audiences.

Population	**10.7m**
Internet penetration	**96%**

Sweden's media system remains comparatively stable but it is shaped by long-term structural pressures and a rapid pace of digital innovation. Public service media (PSM) – Swedish Television (SVT), Swedish Radio (SR), and Utbildningsradion (UR)[109] – continue to enjoy high reach and play a central role for national and local news online. Both SVT and SR prioritise distribution through their own digital platforms, while SVT especially has been taking a more selective approach to third-party platforms in order to retain editorial control and limit platform dependence.

Alongside PSM, Sweden has a well-established commercial news sector dominated by a small number of large conglomerates, combined with a dense network of local and regional titles. Media ownership is relatively concentrated, dominated by the Bonnier Group, which owns national titles such as *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen* as well as 40 local newspapers, and by Schibsted Media, which owns *Aftonbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Omni*, and *E24* in Sweden (and multiple titles in Norway). While concentration of ownership has been taking place, this is partially offset by a longstanding system of state press subsidies designed to support plurality, particularly outside major metropolitan areas. These subsidies remain politically supported, although their design and effectiveness continue to be debated.

News consumption in Sweden is overwhelmingly digital. In 2026, 87% of respondents used online sources for news in the past week, compared with 61% for television and just 20% for print. Over the past decade, print's role has roughly halved, while online news use has remained consistently high. Social media is used by 47% for news on a weekly basis, and 7% are now using AI chatbots for news, up from 3% last year.

Advertising revenues for Swedish news publishers have been in decline for many years, reflecting both the structural shift away from print and strong competition from global technology companies. The morning press's combined advertising revenues from websites, apps, and printed newspapers fell by 1% to SEK 2,337.4m (€213m) in 2025, compared with SEK 2,364.2m (€216m) in 2024. This suggests that 2025 is the year that advertising revenue declines finally levelled off, thanks to growth in online advertising.[110] Moreover, Swedish news publishers have continued to focus on reader revenue. In 2026, 32% of respondents in Sweden reported paying for online news, placing the country among the highest-paying markets internationally. Industry figures indicate that reader revenues increased by 2% on a year-on-year basis.[111] News publishers, particularly those within the Bonnier Group and Schibsted Media, continue to refine bundled subscription models that combine national and local news, lifestyle journalism, and premium features. Bonnier News achieved record reader revenue in 2025, driven by its +Allt bundle reaching more than one million subscribers. They have integrated national dailies like *Dagens Nyheter* with 40+ local titles and Readly's magazines.

Audio and video formats remain strategic growth areas, with news podcasts reaching 11% of the population weekly. Short-form and explanatory formats are increasingly used to attract younger audiences. Artificial intelligence plays a growing role in newsroom workflows.

In 2025, several Swedish news publishers moved towards deep newsroom integration of generative AI, embedding tools for summarisation, transcription, analysis, and audience interaction into everyday editorial work, while emphasising human editorial oversight. They are adopting a similar approach in their stances towards AI companies, combining selective partnerships (e.g. content deals) with a firm defence of copyright, editorial control, and independence. In 2025, Swedish Radio and *Aftonbladet* both launched their own AI-driven news chatbots, signalling a shift towards conversational, question-based news access while keeping content tightly anchored in each publisher's own journalism. AI-enabled large-scale automation of production is being adopted by some companies, notably at Bonnier News, which uses automated print layout and workflow systems.

Oscar Westlund
Oslo Metropolitan University

109 UR is the public service educational broadcaster providing programming to SVT and SR and with their own streaming service UR play.
110 https://tu.se/pressmeddelanden/morgonpressens-digitala-annonsaffar-okade-kraftigt-2025/
111 https://tu.se/mediefakta/annonsbarometern/lasarintakterna-okade-med-2-procent-under-2025/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

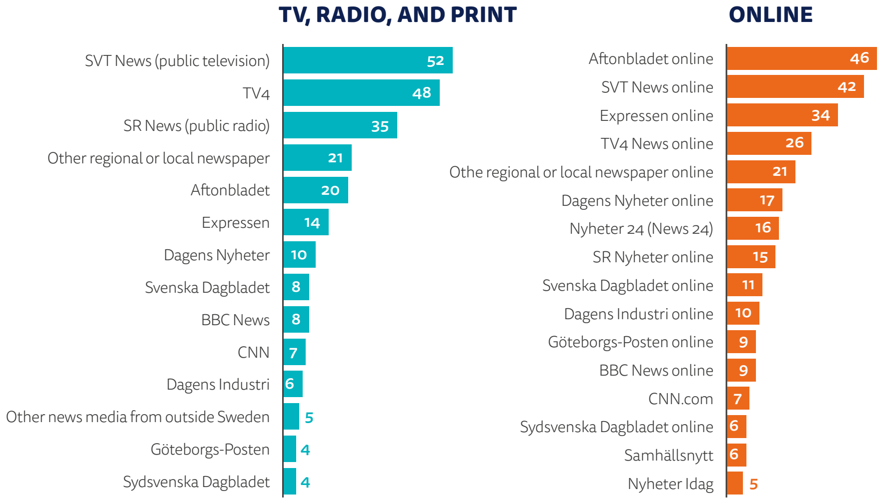
TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

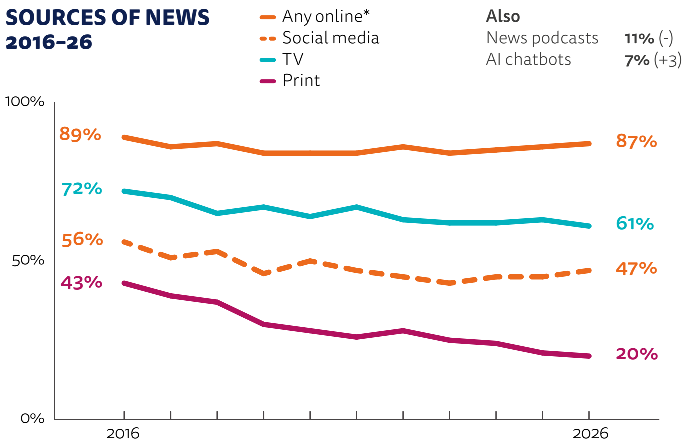


32% (+1) PAY pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

CHANGING MEDIA

News use in Sweden is dominated by online news access, while print continues a long-term decline. Television remains a resilient news source, driven mainly by the continued popularity of public service media.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

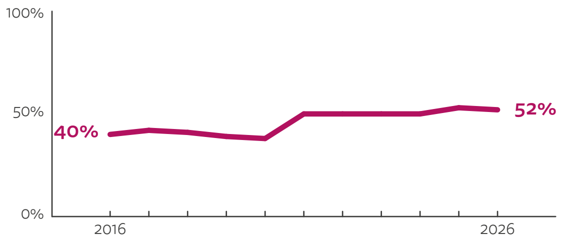
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	29%	(+5)	71%
2	Instagram	21%	(+5)	63%
3	YouTube	19%	(+4)	65%
4	TikTok	12%	(+4)	23%
5	Facebook Messenger	9%	(-)	55%
6	X	8%	(-1)	15%

30% (+4) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news remains comparatively high in Sweden. In 2026, overall news trust stood at 52%, ranking Sweden sixth among 48 markets surveyed. Public service media and local newspapers continue to attract the highest trust, while alternative news media and partisan outlets are trusted by significantly fewer people.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST **52% (-1)**

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Aftonbladet	57%	18%	25%
Dagens Industri	70%	20%	10%
Dagens Nyheter	70%	16%	14%
Expressen	56%	20%	24%
Fria Tider	28%	22%	50%
Göteborgs-Posten	65%	22%	14%
Nya Tider	30%	23%	47%
Nyheter 24	43%	29%	29%
Nyheter Idag	43%	29%	28%
Other regional or local newspaper	73%	16%	10%
Samhällsnytt	39%	27%	33%
Svenska Dagbladet	68%	19%	13%
Sveriges Radio (SR) News	78%	10%	12%
Sveriges Television (SVT) News	78%	9%	13%
TV4 News	67%	17%	16%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **87.61** | **5**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SWITZERLAND

In a small country with four separate language regions, only the public broadcaster SRG SSR operates in all four media markets. SRG SSR remains under pressure after an intense referendum campaign, even though 62% voted against a proposal that would have halved its budget.

Population	**9m**
Internet penetration	**97%**

Initiated by right-wing politicians, the rejected proposal demanded a reduction of the licence fee for each household from 335 to 200 CHF (€368 to €220) p.a., as well as the abolition of the fee which larger companies are required to pay. During the campaign, proponents claimed that SRG SSR's reporting had a left-wing bias, was no longer relevant for young people, and crowded out private media in sports, entertainment, and the online news sector. Opponents, trying to refute these claims, argued for a strong Swiss public broadcaster in the face of a global environment dominated by big tech and powerful media billionaires and politicians. Overall, citizens seemed to be concerned that with a cut of 50%, SRG SSR would be unable to play its current role as a widely used and trusted media organisation.

Still, SRG SSR remains in a difficult position. Before the referendum, the federal government had already decided on a (less drastic) reduction of the licence fee for households and companies by 2029. For SRG SSR, this will mean a budget cut of up to 20% and a loss of roughly 1,000 jobs. There may also be pressure to restrict the breadth of SRG SSR's activity when its licence is renewed by 2029, which may lead to further restrictions on text-based news reports online.

The relationship between public and private media remains multi-faceted. Most private media – Zurich-based TX Group being a notable exception – officially took a stance against the 'SRG initiative', largely due to a deal the Swiss publishers' association had struck with SRG SSR in 2025. While not all details of this deal are public, it consists mainly of a range of restrictions for SRG SSR, such as limitations on bidding for sports rights, reducing content on platforms such as YouTube, and not increasing its range of newsletters.

Many private media are in a situation where the business of news is barely profitable, if at all. In a survey of national and local online news brands, most indicated they could just cover their costs (Udris et al. 2025). Startups beyond niches are very rare, and even though *DNR* 2026 data shows 19% of the Swiss consume news from news creators, very few (if any) Swiss news creators appear to reach sizeable audiences. Cost-cutting strategies and layoffs remain common. In late 2025 TX Group ended the publication of Switzerland's most popular free newspaper, the print edition of *20 Minuten* (including its French- and Italian-language equivalents), and further centralised news production at the now digital-only brand. This decision can be read both as a sign of journalism's financial trouble and of a more decisive shift towards digital channels.

In its latest report, the NZZ group announced a 22% higher revenue per digital subscriber in Germany (8% in its home territory Switzerland), perhaps helped in part by its digital premium offer 'NZZ Pro', currently with over 20,000 subscribers. Ringier, publisher of *Blick*, says its growth comes mainly from digital marketplaces but sees potential in its new freemium paywall and in more use of AI in news production.

In March 2025, parliament approved an increase in the annual indirect press subsidy from CHF 50m to CHF 85m (€54m to €93m) for postage fees and early-morning delivery. Many publishers also hope that if a revised copyright law is passed it will require remuneration for use not only of snippets on search engines but also for content used by AI chatbots.

AI remains high on the agenda in the media industry. Most brands are still proceeding cautiously with GenAI, using it mainly for headline suggestions, editing, and rewriting of press releases. While companies have established AI guidelines, many journalists – according to survey data – do not know these guidelines, do not find them particularly helpful, or would prefer to see industry-wide standards (Fürst et al. 2025).

While Switzerland offers an overall protective climate for journalists, two events illustrated that press freedom can be challenged. First, in summer 2025, prosecutors searched the offices of a small online pure player, checking for breaches of the 'bank secrecy law' (a court later invalidated this search). This law makes it difficult for Swiss media to publish leaked information about Swiss banks. Second, Republik, a small online subscription-based pure player, exposed a lobbying campaign by Palantir in Switzerland, and may itself face legal action.

Linards Udris and **Mark Eisenegger**
Research Center for the Public Sphere & Society (fög), Department of Communication and Media Research (IKMZ), University of Zurich

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

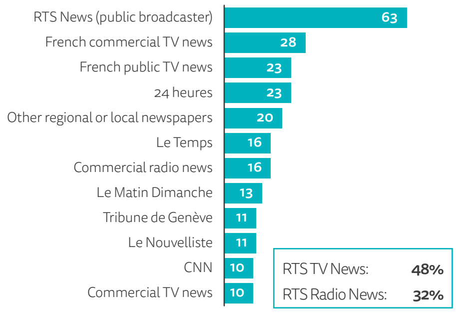
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

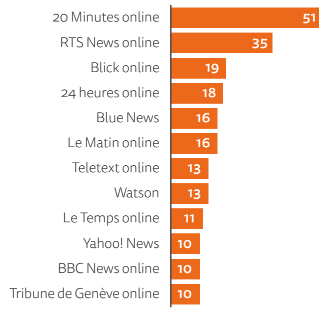
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

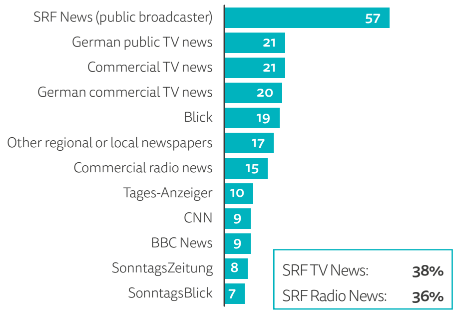
TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



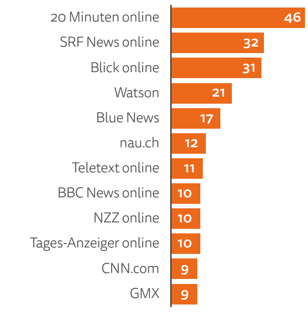
ONLINE (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (GERMAN-SPEAKING)



ONLINE (GERMAN-SPEAKING)



19% (-3) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

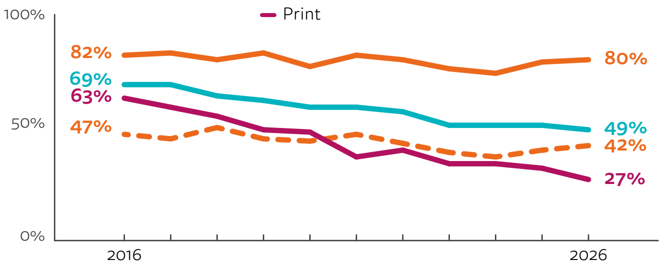
French 21% | German 19%

39% (-)

AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

French 40% | German 39%

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26



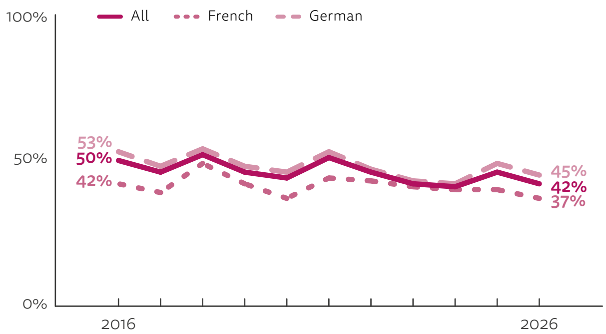
Also
News podcasts **9%** (-1)
AI chatbots **10%** (+2)

* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	42%	(+16)	80%
2	YouTube	30%	(+4)	62%
3	Facebook	29%	(+7)	51%
4	Instagram	29%	(+9)	50%
5	TikTok	16%	(+2)	26%

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



OVERALL TRUST 42% (-4) GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

Overall trust levels tend to fluctuate and are slightly lower than in 2025. However, many individual brands have seen trust increases in 2026. PSB brands remain the most trusted, followed by subscription-based newspaper brands. Less trust is placed in tabloids, digital-born brands, and news from email providers and portals (Blue News, MSN, Yahoo!, gmx).

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 Score: **84.83** **8**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

FRENCH

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
20 Minutes	57%	24%	20%
24 heures	66%	23%	11%
Arcinfo	52%	35%	13%
Blick	48%	33%	20%
Blue News	47%	35%	18%
Commercial radio news	57%	31%	13%
Commercial TV news	60%	29%	12%
Le Matin	59%	25%	16%
Le Nouvelliste	56%	31%	13%
Le Temps	65%	25%	10%
MSN	32%	37%	31%
Other regional or local newspaper	61%	28%	11%
RTS News	72%	17%	10%
Tribune de Genève	60%	28%	12%
Yahoo! News	31%	36%	34%

GERMAN

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
20 Minuten	60%	23%	18%
Aargauer Zeitung	64%	25%	11%
Blick	49%	23%	28%
Blue News	54%	28%	18%
GMX	42%	34%	24%
MSN News	44%	31%	26%
nau.ch	50%	28%	23%
NZZ	71%	17%	12%
Other regional or local newspaper	72%	17%	11%
Private radio news	67%	21%	13%
Private television news	68%	21%	12%
SonntagsZeitung	65%	22%	13%
SRF News	76%	13%	11%
Tages Anzeiger	69%	18%	12%
Watson	54%	27%	20%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

TURKEY

Turkey's media landscape is shaped by a highly concentrated ownership structure in which major television and print outlets are largely controlled by conglomerates known for their close ties to the government, while independent media, both legacy and digital, operate with limited financial and regulatory support, narrowing the space for dissenting voices.

Population	**88m**
Internet penetration	**90%**

In an increasingly constrained environment, economic pressures and changes to platform algorithms have deepened structural imbalances in the Turkish media sector. Advertising revenues in Turkey are concentrated among global technology companies and pro-government outlets, which limits the financial sustainability of independent journalism. Demirören Media is the largest media organisation in Turkey, with TV brands such as Kanal D, CNN Turk, and the *Hurriyet* newspaper and website. Turkuvaz's portolio includes TV channels ATV and A Haber.

Meanwhile, the state continues to expand its influence over media ownership by placing seized assets under trusteeship, such as when Turkish authorities took control of Can Holding (owners of Habertürk TV, Bloomberg HT, and Show TV) and transferred its business to the state-run Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF). TMSF, which is officially responsible for recovering debts from failed financial institutions, has been aiding media restructuring by seizing outlets via indebted parent companies and then facilitating their transfer to owners who are politically aligned with the government. A small number of opposition-leaning and independent outlets continue to operate, such as Sözcü TV and Halk TV, albeit under increasing pressure both from the authorities and market conditions.

In parallel, a series of algorithm updates, particularly Google's, between August 2024 and March 2025 were associated with traffic reductions of up to 80% for independent online outlets.[112] While some digital outlets are experimenting with reader-funded models, these remain limited in scale and insufficient to overcome structural vulnerabilities. Opposition-leaning *Gazete Duvar* closed in 2025, citing falling readership and financial difficulties.

Against this backdrop of economic and structural challenges, regulatory enforcement continues to intensify. This year, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has expanded its reach by requiring independent YouTube channels with large followings, such as those of well-known independent journalists, to obtain licences in order to avoid access bans. Since March 2025, coverage of the arrest that month of Istanbul's elected mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, who is widely regarded as Erdoğan's most prominent rival, has become a central focus of RTÜK's measures across both legacy and digital media. The contested aftermath of İmamoğlu's arrest, including mass protests and boycotts, has been accompanied by detention and travel bans for opposition-leaning journalists and commentators becoming increasingly routine. At the same time, broadly defined legal provisions relating to 'insulting' the president and 'threatening' national security or public order have enabled a steady expansion of what counts as punishable speech in the Turkish media landscape, which has further blurred the line between reporting, opinion, and offence.

Declared the 'Year of the Family' by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 2025 also saw increased media restrictions presented as a defence against the promotion of deviance by 'barons of global culture'.[113] Turkish authorities' emphasis on morality coincided with intervention across diverse forms of content and distribution channels. While at the policy level, the Ministry of Family instructed officials to avoid terms such as 'gender' and 'sexual orientation', public campaigns that framed the visibility of LGBTQ+ as a societal threat were on the rise. Along similar lines, fines and removal orders targeted streaming platforms (e.g. HBO Max, Netflix, Prime Video) over content depicting same-sex relationships.

Complementing these efforts to control the media landscape, social media companies' compliance with government takedown requests has reached high levels, with TikTok at 91.8%, X at 85.7%, and Instagram at 79.2%,[114] while authorities have introduced measures that further restrict online participation, including national ID verification requirements that would severely obstruct online anonymity. Periodic internet throttling during politically sensitive moments, alongside continued restrictions on platforms such as the popular livestreaming platform Discord and the blocking of VPN services, point to the state's capacity to curb internet freedoms.

Meanwhile, on the supply side, Turkey introduced its first large language model, T3AI, which was developed through collaboration between the defence firm Baykar, state broadcaster TRT, and pro-government Anadolu Agency. Presented as an example of 'ethical' artificial intelligence, T3AI remains in a nascent stage relative to leading US-based competitors, while reflecting how state-led technological efforts can be integrated into broader regulatory ambitions to shape content production and its governance.[115]

Jim Egan
Senior Research Associate, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

[112] https://turkiye.ipi.media/letter-to-google-letter-to-google-urging-action-on-algorithmic-impact-on-independent-media/
[113] https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/we-placed-the-principle-of-strong-women-strong-family-strong-turkiye-at-the-center-of-our-vision-for-the-century-of-turkiye
[114] https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/08/joint-open-letter-social-media-companies-censorship-turkiye
[115] https://www.dailysabah.com/business/tech/beta-version-of-1st-turkish-large-language-model-t3ai-launched

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

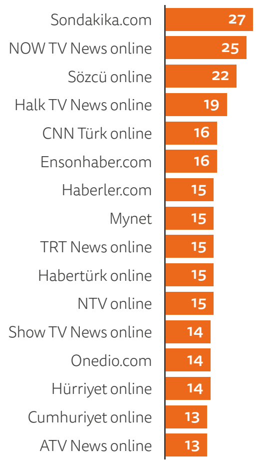
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

ONLINE



38% (+2)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

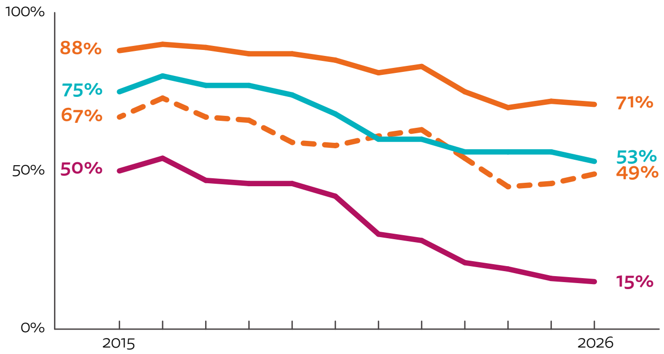
CHANGING MEDIA

TV and print continue to decline over the long term while social media has not recovered from its 2022 peak. Online remains dominant over offline, and AI chatbot use has risen to 14%, up 6pp.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26

- Any online*
- Social media
- TV
- Print

Also
News podcasts **5%** (-1)
AI chatbots **14%** (+6)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

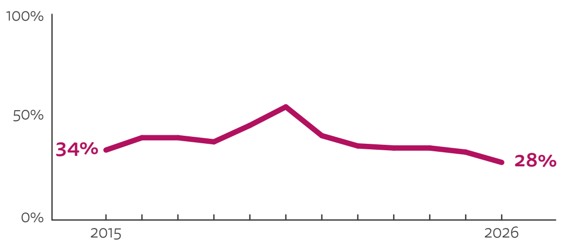
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Instagram	48%	(+8)	71%
2	YouTube	38%	(+3)	67%
3	Facebook	31%	(+9)	52%
4	WhatsApp	29%	(+6)	75%
5	TikTok	17%	(+6)	32%
6	X	16%	(-7)	24%

60% (-1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in Turkish news brands has generally declined over the past year. Opposition-leaning broadcasters, such as Sözcü TV and Halk TV, still score relatively higher, while some pro-government outlets (such as ATV, Sabah and A Haber) have lower trust. The gap reflects deep political polarisation and growing perceptions of increased state influence over the information and media landscape.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
28% (-5)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
A Haber	34%	18%	48%
ATV	35%	20%	45%
CNN Türk	44%	24%	32%
Cumhuriyet	49%	26%	24%
FOX TV News	57%	20%	24%
Habertürk	43%	26%	30%
Halk TV	52%	22%	26%
Hürriyet	39%	27%	34%
Kanal D News	39%	26%	35%
Milliyet	38%	28%	34%
NTV News	47%	25%	28%
Sabah	35%	25%	41%
Show TV News	38%	27%	35%
Sözcü TV	52%	22%	26%
TRT News	42%	19%	38%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

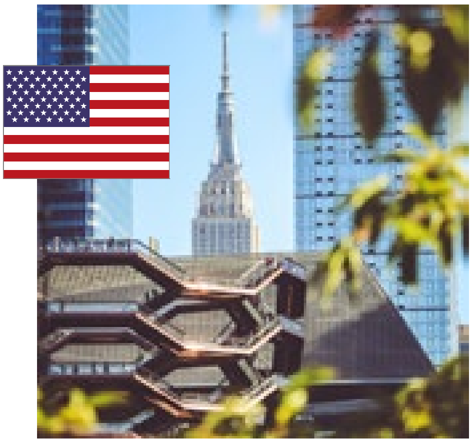
RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **27.94** **163**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SECTION 3

SECTION 3

Analysis by Country and Market
Americas



UNITED STATES

Threats to press freedom in the United States have sharpened in 2026 amid civil strife at home and a new US-led war in the Middle East, with President Donald Trump threatening to prosecute reporters for treason. Meanwhile, corporate shuffles endorsed by the White House may augur a lasting rightward shift in the US media landscape.

Population	**347m**
Internet penetration	**95%**

In mid-2025 CBS announced the cancellation of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. The comedian had mocked as a 'big fat bribe' a $16m payout by CBS owner Paramount – then seeking FCC approval for a sale to Skydance Media, headed by the son of billionaire and vocal Trump ally Larry Ellison – to settle what was widely seen as a baseless lawsuit by Trump over coverage of the 2024 presidential race. In September, another late-night host, Jimmy Kimmel, was suspended at Brendan Carr's prompting after the FCC chair threatened regulatory action against ABC and parent Disney, but Kimmel was reinstated in the wake of public outcry.

The new Paramount Skydance moved quickly to fulfil editorial pledges made to win approval for the merger, installing the former head of a conservative think tank as ombudsman at CBS News and naming anti-woke polemicist Bari Weiss as editor-in-chief, after purchasing her conservative opinion site The Free Press for a reported $150m. In February, Paramount Skydance struck a deal to purchase Warner Bros. Discovery, which owns cable news giant CNN.

In January, the long-running saga over the fate of TikTok's US operations, which a 2024 law requires Chinese owner ByteDance to sell off, closed: a joint venture led by software giant Oracle, owned by Larry Ellison, will run the US spinoff. Meanwhile, Google is preparing to appeal an April 2025 antitrust ruling that its adtech business constitutes an illegal monopoly. And in a landmark March 2026 ruling, a California court found Meta and YouTube liable for designing addictive services that potentially harm young users; the firms are appealing the verdict.

Trump's disdain for the news media has been evident in a slate of lawsuits. In February 2026, Trump filed a multi-billion-dollar lawsuit against the BBC for editing a speech Trump gave before the 6 January Capitol riots that appeared in the October 2024 *Panorama* documentary 'Trump: A Second Chance?'; the BBC's director-general and head of news subsequently resigned. In September 2025, Trump accused the *New York Times* of defamation over coverage that he said sought to 'undermine his candidacy and disparage his reputation as a successful businessman', according to the *Times*. Trump also threatened criminal prosecution for news organisations that reported information about a US fighter jet shot down in Iran in April before official government communication.

The Trump administration has implemented additional access barriers for journalists, including Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's efforts to deny an NBC News reporter Pentagon access, removal of several journalists from their on-site workstations, and creation of new restrictions for credentialled military reporters. A federal judge ruled twice in favour of the *New York Times* that the policies violated the First Amendment. Further, independent journalist Georgia Fort and former CNN host Don Lemon were arrested in Minneapolis while covering an 18 January demonstration against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) crackdowns.

Washington Post owner – and Amazon chief – Jeff Bezos announced that a third of the newsroom would be laid off, including the sports desk, significant cuts to the international desk (including in Ukraine), the Middle East desk, and the technology reporter covering Amazon. The Metro desk was reduced from more than 40 reporters to 12. Other major newsrooms also experienced layoffs.

Meanwhile, public media in the US face an uncertain future. In May 2025, Trump made an executive order calling on federal agencies to discontinue funding NPR and PBS over what he called 'left-wing propaganda' and biased coverage. In March 2026, a federal judge ruled that the executive order violated the First Amendment. The decision, however, would likely have little impact on the loss of $500m in annual federal funding that Congress approved. The Trump administration also continued its dismantling of Voice of America, a federally funded international broadcaster serving countries with limited press freedom.

Collaborative local journalism continues to thrive in a challenging US media landscape. Among other projects, a joint effort by six Chicago newsrooms documented federal immigration agents using tear gas on nonviolent protesters in defiance of a court order. Several were members of the Institute for Nonprofit News, a hub for independent newsrooms which has risen from 150 outlets a decade ago to more than 500 today.

Lucas Graves
University Carlos III, Madrid
Joy Jenkins
University of Missouri

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

Fox News	24
Other local television news	23
CNN	19
ABC News	19
NBC News	16
CBS News	16
Other regional or local newspaper	12
Other local radio news	10
BBC News	9
NPR News (including local NPR stations)	8
PBS News	8
New York Times	7
MS NOW	7
USA Today	6
CNBC	6
Newsmax TV	5

ONLINE

Fox News online	17
Yahoo! News	16
CNN online	14
Other local television news online	14
New York Times online	13
BBC News online	9
Politico	9
ABC News online	9
NBC News online	8
Other regional or local newspaper online	8
MSN News	8
National news magazine online	8
NPR News online	8
Washington Post online	8
CBS News online	8
USA Today online	7

16% (-4) PAY
pay for
ONLINE NEWS

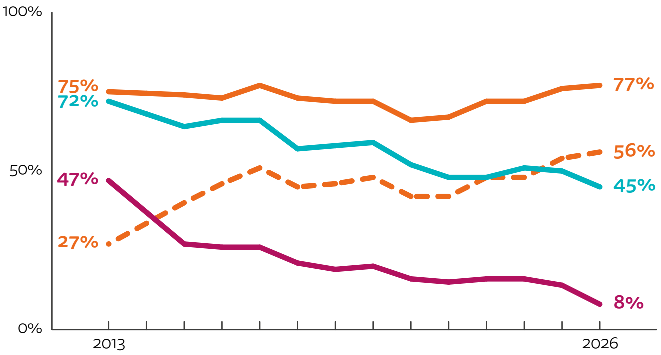
CHANGING MEDIA

In the US, TV news consumption has continued its three-year decline, while online and social media consumption are seeing slight year-on-year increases. Print media have been declining steadily for over a decade.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 14% (-1)
AI chatbots 6% (-1)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

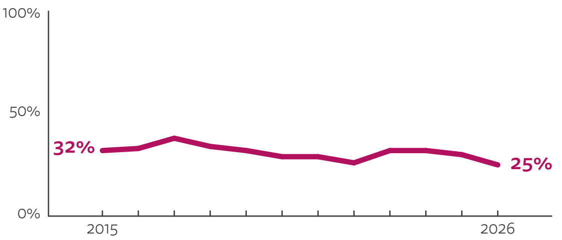
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	36%	(+4)	67%
2	YouTube	33%	(+3)	73%
3	Instagram	18%	(+2)	44%
4	X	16%	(-7)	24%
5	TikTok	10%	(-2)	25%
6	Facebook Messenger	9%	(+1)	45%

45% (+3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall news trust fell 5pp in 2026, reaching a new low for the United States since we started tracking trust in 2015. Trust scores for Fox News and CBS News both fell significantly, by 10pp. The most trusted news brands continue to be local television outlets and regional or local newspapers.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
25% (-5)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ABC News	44%	24%	32%
BBC News	47%	26%	26%
CBS News	38%	23%	39%
CNN	40%	21%	38%
Fox News	33%	19%	48%
Other local television news	56%	23%	20%
MS NOW	35%	29%	36%
NBC News	44%	24%	32%
New York Times	43%	26%	32%
NPR News	44%	25%	31%
Other regional or local newspaper	53%	28%	19%
USA Today	39%	33%	29%
Wall Street Journal	43%	30%	27%
Washington Post	37%	29%	33%
Yahoo! News	31%	37%	32%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **62.61** **64**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

ARGENTINA

The Argentine media system is in a period of transition. Traditional media struggle to retain audiences and advertising income, as interest in news remains low and trust in media declines. Meanwhile, emerging formats like livestreaming video are gaining prominence in how people, particularly younger users, access news and information.

Population	**46m**
Internet penetration	**90%**

Television remained a weekly source of news for about half of the respondents, and print reach was largely unchanged. However, *Clarín*, Argentina's highest-circulation print newspaper, reported a reduction in their daily print run to 34,000 copies at the end of 2025, from 38,000 the previous year, while its digital subscription base remained stable at 647,000 paying readers. Its main competitor, *La Nación*, recorded 386,000 digital subscribers over the same period.

FOPEA (the Argentine Journalism Forum) documented a net loss of 196 journalism organisations between 2021 and 2025, with more than 40% of the Argentine territory now consisting of 'news deserts' lacking local news outlets and facing extremely difficult conditions for practising journalism.[116] In a context of ongoing antagonism from President Milei towards journalists, FOPEA also reported that 2025 was the most critical year for press freedom in Argentina since it began tracking cases in 2008, with 278 recorded attacks – a 55% increase from 2024 – including physical assaults, judicial harassment, and online intimidation. These developments are reflected in the World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders, where Argentina fell several positions in the ranking in 2026.

Following a recession in 2024, total advertising spending grew by 30% in 2025, but the number of ads and total seconds of advertising declined by 8% and 6%, respectively, indicating higher advertising prices. Digital advertising (including social media and search) accounted for 47% of total investment, 3pp more than in 2024, while television, radio, and print continued to lose share.[117] Journalists' salaries remain low, with seven in ten reporters earning below the poverty line for a family of four. In February 2026, Congress repealed the Journalist's Statute, which provided special protections for reporters in cases of layoffs and had been in force since 1947.

Changes in the market structure underscore the declining relevance of legacy media. Paramount Global, which owned Telefe, the highest-rated television network in Argentina, sold its stake to a domestic business conglomerate in August 2025. No major transnational media companies currently hold significant ownership in the Argentine media sector. The Milei administration had pledged to privatise publicly owned radio and television outlets, long criticised for favouring the governing party under successive administrations, but has since set that plan aside. Instead, the government announced that several matches of the upcoming men's football World Cup will be broadcast on the public television network, which is expected to boost advertising spending and viewership in 2026.

In what continues to be a highly polarised media environment, interest in news remains low: only 43% of respondents say they are extremely or very interested in news, while trust in news reached record lows, as only 26% of respondents trust the news. Despite this, weekly news use on the internet, social media, television, and print has remained stable. Moreover, almost one in ten respondents now report getting news from AI chatbots, a rise of 4pp from 2025. The share of people paying for news remains low at 10%, reflecting the combination of relatively low interest and very low trust in the media, as well as widespread budgetary constraints across households.

In this context, a vibrant creator scene has emerged in Argentina, with influencers and online personalities offering free content. Many professional journalists have also launched newsletters, which they distribute at no cost while requesting voluntary contributions. Online live video has also grown in prominence as interest in traditional news declines. The format, which emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, consists mainly of talk-based programmes streamed on YouTube that combine commentary, interviews, and occasional news with lighter elements such as music or live performances. It has become an increasingly important source of information, particularly among younger audiences.

Luzu TV is cited as a news source by 13% of respondents, up from 8% the previous year (19% among those under 35). Both Luzu and its main competitor, Olga, have more than 2m YouTube subscribers. Most hosts are not professional journalists and do not present themselves as such. Although they invite columnists for more serious coverage of breaking news, their role resembles that of talk-show hosts. These formats encourage audience participation by reading messages posted on YouTube, inviting contributions, and maintaining a light-hearted atmosphere.

Eugenia Mitchelstein and
Pablo Boczkowski
Center for the Study of Media and Society, Argentina (MESO)

[116] https://desiertosdenoticiaslocales.fundaciongabo.org/dashboard/
[117] *Argentine Chamber of Media Agencies 2025.* https://agenciasdemedios.com.ar/caam-informa-la-inversion-publicitaria-en-medios-de-argentina-en-2025/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

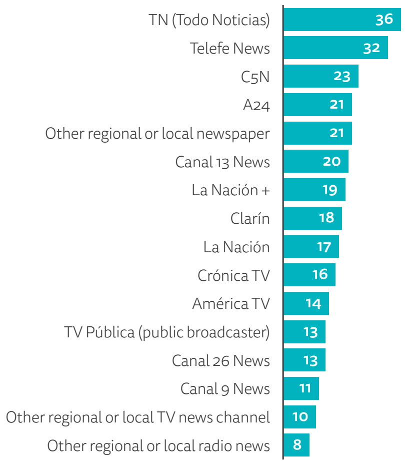
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

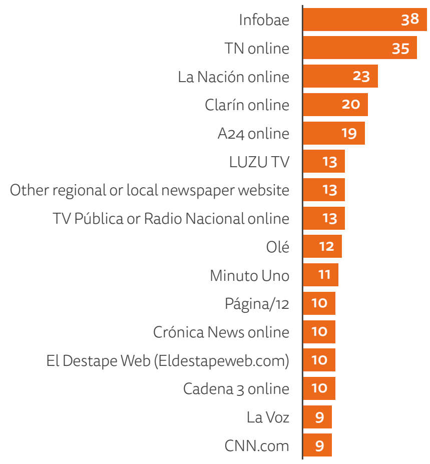
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



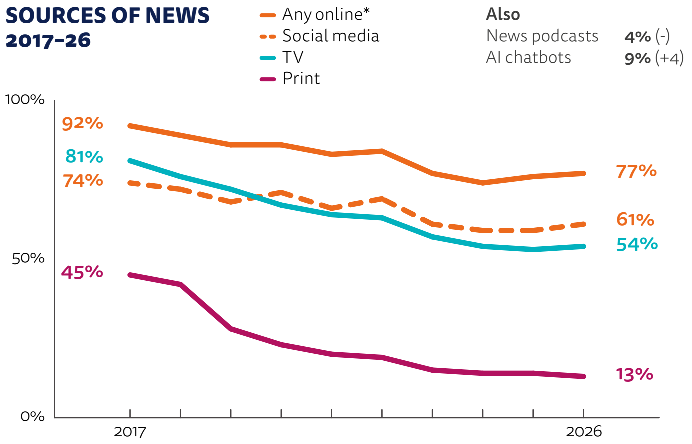
10% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

CHANGING MEDIA

Broadcast and print consumption have stabilised, with around half of the population watching TV news and one-eighth reading print news weekly. Meanwhile, nearly eight in ten get news online, including 9% who use AI chatbots.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

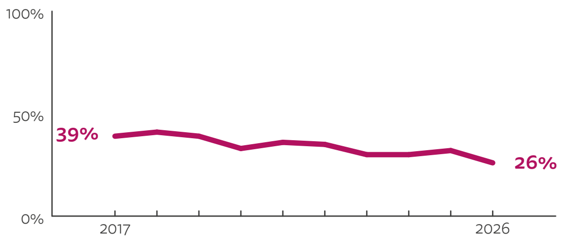
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	43%	(+5)	66%
2	Instagram	38%	(+3)	68%
3	WhatsApp	34%	(+7)	83%
4	YouTube	32%	(+4)	71%
5	TikTok	19%	(+2)	39%
6	X	10%	(-2)	16%

46% (-) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news fell 6pp to 26%, the lowest level in a decade. However, respondents assign higher levels of confidence to certain media brands. Outlets such as Telefe, TN, La Nación+, and Infobae are trusted by more than half of the public, indicating that brand-level credibility persists even as trust in the media sector as a whole erodes.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 26% (-6)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

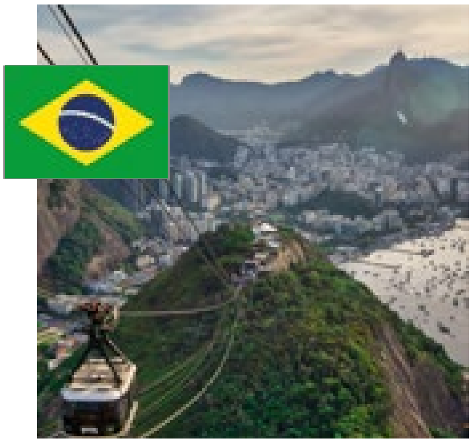
Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
A24	49%	29%	22%
C5N	40%	23%	37%
Cadena 3	39%	37%	24%
Canal 13 News	52%	27%	21%
Clarín	44%	27%	29%
Cronista	34%	32%	34%
Infobae	53%	27%	19%
La Nación (newspaper)	50%	28%	22%
La Nación + (television)	52%	26%	22%
Minuto Uno	40%	37%	23%
Other regional or local newspaper	49%	33%	18%
Página/12	39%	32%	29%
Telefe News	61%	25%	14%
TN (Todo Noticias)	55%	23%	22%
TV Pública News	43%	33%	24%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **52.44** **98**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org



BRAZIL

Traditional media continues to lose ground as a news source in Brazil, while AI chatbots grow in popularity and social media use for news remains high. Despite an adverse environment, marked by declining trust in news and a shrinking paying customer base, the number of online media outlets grew in 2025.

Population	**213m**
Internet penetration	**84%**

Historically strong in Brazil, television is broadening its distribution networks with the launch of multi-platform channels. Owned by a major TV broadcaster, 24-hour news outlet SBT News debuted in December 2025, under a free, ad-supported streaming television (FAST) business model. Its content is available through cable, streaming platforms, and smart TVs, following in the footsteps of two all-news channels launched in 2024: CNN Money and The Times Brasil (a CNBC licensee).

This investment is driven by a hike in pay-TV advertising. Over the past three years, expenditure nearly doubled in nominal terms, according to the non-profit organisation Cenp,[118] suggesting a move towards targeted audiences while broadcasters seek to diversify revenue. By comparison, ad spend on free-to-air television grew by a modest 4.6% over the same timeframe.

The shift towards segmentation comes as television's dominance of the advertising market is under siege. Digital media accounted for 40.6% of the advertising expenditure last year, almost equalling television's 41.3% share.[119]

Amid this challenging context, unions have reported layoffs at national networks such as RedeTV! and Record, highlighting ongoing efforts to reduce costs.[120] CNN Brasil also implemented staff and programming cuts in mid-2025 before expanding its coverage this year with new agribusiness and infrastructure beats.

Meanwhile, veteran TV news presenter William Bonner stepped down from the *Jornal Nacional* anchor desk in October 2025, ending a 29-year tenure and marking the end of an era for the influential news programme.

Newspapers' advertising share held steady at 1.4% year-on-year, mirroring the stable average daily paid circulation for the ten best-selling newspapers at slightly over one million copies, according to the Instituto Verificador de Comunicação (IVC). However, these figures exclude two leading Brazilian dailies, *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*, no longer audited by the IVC.

A broader analysis of the publishing sector from Atlas da Notícia shows that 122 print outlets have closed since 2023,[121] and many Brazilian municipalities lack a local news outlet. Meanwhile, the digital media landscape remains buoyant, with the number of online media outlets showing growth in 2025, even as the proportion paying for news online has declined 5pp since 2023 to 15%.

In a market where over half use social media for news weekly and influencers play an outsized role, a federal law enacted in January established the 'multimedia practitioner' as a regulated profession, formalising roles in digital content creation. The legislation drew mixed reactions. While the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (Abert) welcomed the move as a recognition of market realities, the National Federation of Journalists (Fenaj) and various unions worry it will lead to more precarious working conditions for journalists.

The vibrant influencer ecosystem spans politics, entertainment, and specialist areas. For example, financial influencers are gaining ground in a field once dominated by the business press, as more Brazilians seek their advice on investing. A study by the Brazilian Association of Financial and Capital Market Entities (Anbima) mapped 904 active financial influencer profiles in 2025.[122] Their combined audience reached 310m, reflecting a more than fourfold increase in five years. In response, legacy media outlets have expanded their digital portfolios, adding more video content, and mirroring social media formats and features.

The last year has also seen shifts in platform regulation. In June 2025, the country's top court (STF) ruled that digital platforms can be held civilly liable for illegal third-party content, even without a prior court order, if they fail to immediately remove materials involving serious crimes, such as anti-democratic acts, terrorism, and racism. In March 2026, new legislation aimed at protecting children and adolescents online came into effect, mandating strict age verification and content moderation.

The rapid advancement of AI tools has sparked debate over the use of copyrighted material by AI developers, as weekly use of AI chatbots for news reaches 13%. In a joint statement released in February 2026, 12 Brazilian creative industry organisations, including radio, TV, and newspaper associations, announced the sector is 'open to negotiating authorization and licensing models, as well as partnerships that ensure legal certainty and mutual benefits'. This follows a lawsuit *Folha de S. Paulo* filed last year, accusing OpenAI of unfair competition and copyright infringement.[123] In late May, the newspaper dropped the lawsuit after reaching a commercial agreement to licence its journalistic content to ChatGPT.

Rodrigo Carro
Financial journalist; former Reuters Institute Journalist Fellow

118 https://www.cenp.com.br/cenp-meios
119 https://www.cenp.com.br/cenp-meios
120 https://sjsp.org.br/redetv-inicia-processo-de-demissao-em-massa/
https://jornalistas.org.br/2026/04/01/recordtv-demite-10-reporteres-cinematograficos-e-aprofunda-precarizacao-das-relacoes-de-trabalho/
121 https://atlas.jor.br/atlas-v-7/reducao-dos-desertos-de-noticias-no-brasil-e-impulsionada-pelo-crescimento-do-segmento-online/
122 https://www.anbima.com.br/pt_br/noticias/audiencia-de-finfluencers-cresce-mais-de-300-e-ultrapassa-310-milhoes-nas-redes.htm
123 https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/brazil/2025/08/folha-files-lawsuit-against-openai-for-unfair-competition-and-copyright-infringement.shtml

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

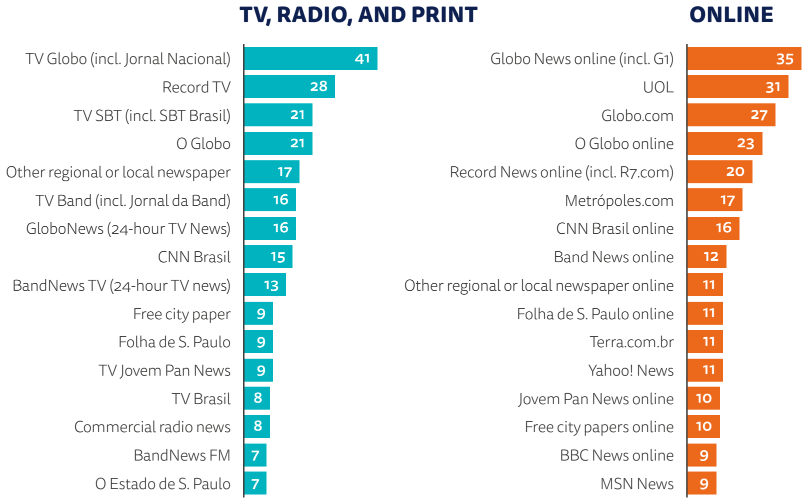
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

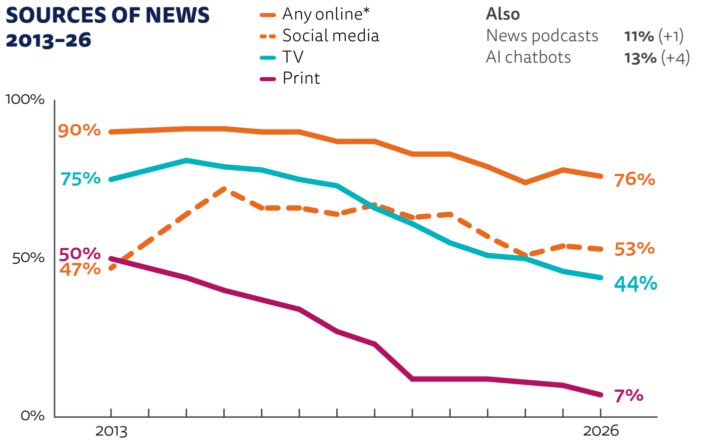
15% (-2) PAY pay for **ONLINE NEWS**



CHANGING MEDIA

Social media maintains a 9pp lead over television as a weekly source of news in Brazil, where 33% of the population gets content from creators or influencers who mainly focus on the news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

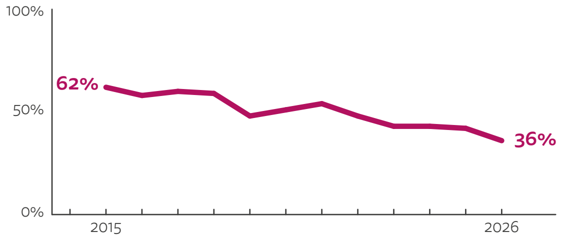
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Instagram	49%	(+12)	70%
2	WhatsApp	46%	(+10)	82%
3	YouTube	42%	(+5)	70%
4	Facebook	30%	(+2)	55%
5	TikTok	21%	(+3)	40%
6	Telegram	8%	(+1)	21%

47% (+1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

After three relatively stable years, trust in news dropped to a 12-year low in a context of persistent partisan polarisation, further fuelled by the 2026 presidential election and the arrest of former president Jair Bolsonaro last year. Political and financial scandals may have also contributed to declines. Nearly half (47%) of Brazilians say they avoid the news sometimes or often.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 36% (-6)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 66.37	52/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Band News	59%	23%	18%
CNN Brasil	62%	21%	17%
Folha de S. Paulo	53%	23%	24%
Globo	55%	18%	26%
Metrópoles.com	52%	27%	21%
O Estado de S Paulo	54%	24%	22%
O Globo (newspaper)	55%	20%	25%
Other regional or local newspaper	57%	26%	17%
Record News	61%	21%	18%
SBT News	61%	21%	18%
Terra.com.br	50%	28%	22%
UOL	54%	25%	21%
Valor Econômico	51%	29%	20%
Veja	52%	24%	24%
Yahoo! News	47%	31%	22%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

CANADA

The Canadian media landscape includes a well-established public broadcaster, strong private players, and a small but growing number of independent startups online. The future of Canadian journalism appears increasingly tied to the country's digital sovereignty, as the government pursues arduous trade negotiations with the USA and reconsiders its support of news organisations alongside regulatory changes for online use.

Population	**40m**
Internet penetration	**94%**

Canada axed its Digital Services Tax on foreign-owned services like Netflix and resumed talks with Meta about returning news links to Facebook and Instagram. Independent TV stations showed that clips of their content were still being shared on Facebook and Instagram and argue the company should compensate news organisations under the Online News Act. TikTok, meanwhile, was allowed to continue operations in Canada.

The past year saw hundreds of layoffs in the industry and closures once again outpaced launches, especially among community news outlets. But no sector (television, radio, print, or digital) was spared.

A few new initiatives have emerged in response to the closures including Freshet News, a worker co-op in Metro Vancouver launched on the back of three Glacier Media newspapers shutting down. Online news platform The Level (readthelevel.ca) presents stories from two different viewpoints. Local Ink is a new e-edition platform for community newspapers. National Observer created a search tool for journalists covering municipal public meetings across the country. Relaunches of some print newspapers point to a modest comeback for paper as a medium.

The Globe and Mail refreshed its Life and Style sections, adding more than ten new journalists. The addition reportedly saw its traffic almost double while audience growth rose by over 60%.[124] Taking a page from the *New York Times* playbook, it launched Globe Games, to boost user engagement beyond news. *The Globe* also adopted Mobian AI contextual intelligence to help advertisers better match placements with content whose tone and themes align with their values and messaging.

CBC is collaborating with Magellan AI to optimise growth in its podcast offerings. While the Canadian public broadcaster continues to dominate the domestic podcast market with seven of the ten top-ranked podcasts in the country, the most popular podcasts still originate from the United States, and Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre was a guest on The Joe Rogan Experience.

Métro Montreal was relaunched online using supervised and labelled AI-generated content. Several major news organisations (CBC/Radio-Canada, *The Globe and Mail*, *La Presse*) updated their AI guidelines. *La Presse* – which once again reported an operational profit – has taken legal action against OpenAI, following a lawsuit filed last year by a coalition of Canadian media organisations that includes CBC/Radio-Canada, *The Globe and Mail*, The Canadian Press, Postmedia, and Torstar. A research report concluded that major AI systems extensively ingest and reproduce Canadian journalism with little attribution or compensation (Owen and Bridgman 2026).

Content creators were an important source of election-related content in 2025, in some cases raising concerns about misinformation. HugoDécrypte, whose youth-oriented podcast and social media contents are widely popular in France, launched a bureau in Montreal, hiring local journalists. The Canadian Journalism Federation also launched a training programme for creator-journalists.

The increasing dependence of newsrooms on public funding (including Google's contribution under the Online News Act), as well as the processes to determine eligibility, continue to attract criticism.

A report submitted to a Canadian senator suggested a global policy approach for consistency, fairness, and transparency in government support to news media.

Several foundations consolidated their support for news initiatives into the new Journalism Future Fund, which awarded three-year grants totalling CAD 1.88m (USD 1.37m) to six small- to medium-sized organisations. *The Globe and Mail* launched a charitable foundation to provide education and training in journalism and to fund public interest journalism.

Sébastien Charlton and **Colette Brin**
Coordinator and Director, Centre d'études sur les médias

[124] http://mediaincanada.com/2025/09/26/cbc/ndtr/globe/life/style/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (ENGLISH-SPEAKING)

ONLINE (ENGLISH-SPEAKING)

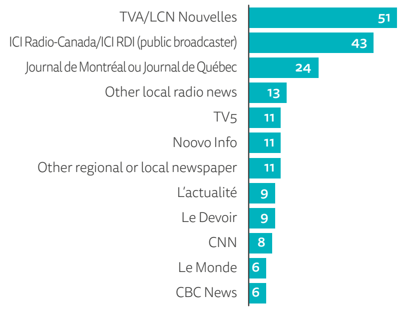
12% (-2) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

English 14% | French 12%

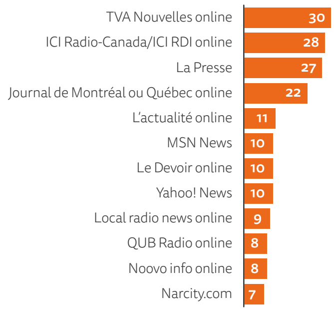
45% (+5) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

English 46% | French 38%

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



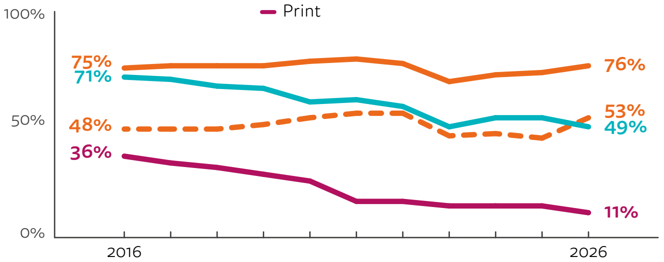
ONLINE (FRENCH-SPEAKING)



SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **10%** (+1)
AI chatbots **8%** (+2)

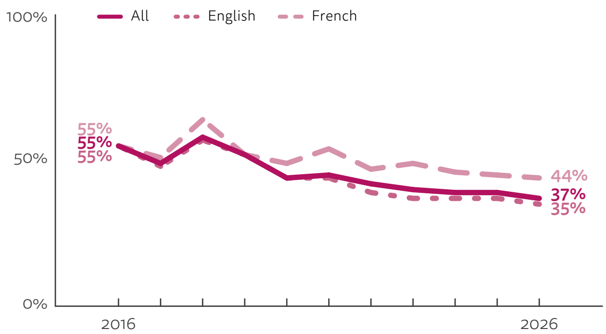


* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	35%	(+7)	67%
2	Facebook	33%	(+8)	70%
3	Instagram	17%	(+4)	45%
4	Facebook Messenger	14%	(+4)	46%
5	TikTok	11%	(+2)	25%

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



OVERALL TRUST 37% (-2) **GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%**

Overall news trust continues to decline slowly in Canada, reaching its lowest score for both French and English markets this year. Individual Canadian brands retain relatively high trust. Public broadcasters, despite frequent debates about their relevance and impartiality, are trusted by a majority of Canadians.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 Score: **78.76** **20**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

ENGLISH

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
BBC News	57%	26%	17%
CBC News	62%	20%	18%
CityNews	58%	28%	14%
CNN	51%	25%	24%
CP24	51%	33%	16%
CTV News	64%	22%	14%
Fox News	31%	23%	46%
Global News	62%	23%	14%
Globe and Mail	56%	27%	17%
MSN News	42%	36%	22%
National Post	50%	31%	19%
New York Times	54%	27%	19%
Other regional or local newspaper	64%	26%	10%
Toronto Star	52%	30%	18%
Yahoo! News	37%	39%	24%

FRENCH

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
CTV News	54%	34%	11%
Hebdomadaire local ou régional	61%	29%	10%
ICI Radio-Canada/ICI RDI	72%	19%	9%
Journal de Montréal ou Québec	64%	23%	14%
L'actualité	61%	28%	10%
La Presse	68%	23%	9%
La Presse Canadienne	66%	25%	9%
Le Devoir	65%	25%	9%
Les coops de l'information	57%	31%	12%
MSN Actualités/Microsoft Start	41%	37%	22%
Narcity.com	29%	39%	32%
Noovo Info	57%	30%	13%
Other regional or local radio	64%	27%	9%
TV5 Information	56%	34%	11%
TVA Nouvelles/LCN	69%	18%	12%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

CHILE

In a mostly private media system, traditional outlets face financial challenges due to declining advertising revenue, while the industry seeks new audiences through streaming and video podcasts. Radio confirms its role as the country's most reliable medium during times of crisis, in a year when press freedom and media financing in Chile were under pressure.

Population	19.9m
Internet penetration	96%

In a presidential election year, public debate around the media focused on the financing and role of public television. TVN, the country's only state-owned broadcaster, operates largely on a commercial basis, a model that has come under increasing strain as advertising investment has declined. TVN began 2025 in debt, and in May its board declared the company was not viable. Strike threats loomed as the company's unions agreed to stop broadcasts to demand better working conditions. Management reached an agreement with the unions, but the channel's financial crisis continues.

TVN's management and editorial independence also became part of the political debate during the campaign. Candidate José Antonio Kast, who went on to win the election, criticised the channel's management, culminating in the resignation of TVN's chairman, who said he stepped down to avoid harming TVN staff. While figures on the political right disputed this explanation, attributing the resignation to the channel's poor financial performance, those on the left lamented the decision.

Financial challenges are impacting commercial outlets too. CNN Chile entered court-supervised debt restructuring, Copesa (owner of *La Tercera*) faces lawsuits from suppliers and former employees, and Radio Cooperativa put its building and studios up for sale to cover debts.[125] Anatel, the National Television Association, announced it is considering legal action against Google over its alleged dominant position in the advertising business, arguing it harms national media. Meanwhile, Chilevisión changed hands for the second time within four years, with the international company Paramount selling the station to Vytal Group, an Argentinian and Chilean media company.

Amid a challenging economic landscape, news organisations are seeking to reach audiences through strategic changes and new products. Mega, the most-watched channel, moved its evening news an hour earlier to strengthen its prime-time lineup, securing the top ratings for both the newscast and the channel in Chile.

In digital media, two projects are exploring new formats. El Dínamo, known for its news coverage, launched a print magazine featuring columns, interviews, and long-form reports by veteran journalists, along with a subscription plan. Meanwhile, The Clinic, after transitioning from print to fully digital, expanded its content with newsletters and podcasts, blending information and magazine-style features.

News radio stations Bío Bío Chile and Cooperativa have consistently scored highly in public trust since we started measuring in 2017. In 2025, a power outage that affected over 90% of the population and left many without internet access underscored radio's role as a reliable information provider. AM and FM stations became a key source of updates during the recovery process, and battery-powered radios temporarily replaced mobile phones as the primary news device.[126] Canal 13 further illustrates radio's relevance: originally a TV channel, it now runs a radio conglomerate too. The company is enhancing a second news station, Radio 13C, with a new programming lineup, following the success of T13 Radio.

Journalist groups raised alarms about press freedom after the Public Prosecutor's Office requested permission to intercept the phones of 11 journalists to identify sources in investigative reports linked to a bribery and influence-peddling scandal known as the 'Audio Case'.[127] The judiciary rejected the request but journalists saw it as an act of intimidation and a violation of press freedom protections. A similar debate arose around a proposed law seeking to criminalise publishing information from confidential judicial cases. While the bill's sponsors say it aims to prevent leaks of restricted information, journalist associations fear it could become a tool to persecute reporters. This comes as publishing case-related conversations, particularly via WhatsApp, has become more common in investigative journalism.

YouTube has consolidated its role as a key platform for both traditional and independent outlets, some led by journalists recognised for their television work, such as Daniel Matamala and Mónica Rincón. Live streams and video podcasts share a style reminiscent of radio, with visible microphones and headphones, blending news delivery, analysis, and entertainment in panel formats with recurring contributors and guests. Meanwhile, emerging news influencers summarise and interpret daily events in vertical videos using the visual language of platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Some are journalists, while others are from outside the profession, yet deliver news to their communities.

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Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Enrique Núñez-Mussa
Michigan State University

[125] https://www.biobiochile.cl/especial/bbcl-investiga/noticias/articulos/2025/04/02/copesa-en-estado-critico-35-cobranzas-judiciales-solicitud-de-quiebra-y-cuentas-sin-fondos.shtml; https://www.lacuarta.com/chile/noticia/reconocida-radio-vende-su-historico-edificio-para-saldar-deudas
[126] https://www.archi.cl/la-radio-no-solo-resiste-se-fortalece-como-el-medio-mas-confiable/
[127] https://radio.uchile.cl/2025/11/06/amenaza-a-la-libertad-de-prensa-colegio-de-periodistas-condena-solicitud-de-fiscal-para-interceptar-telefonos-de-comunicadores/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

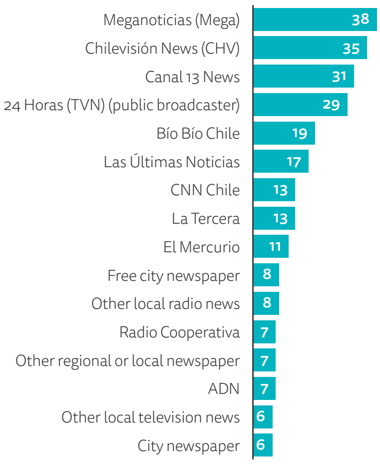
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

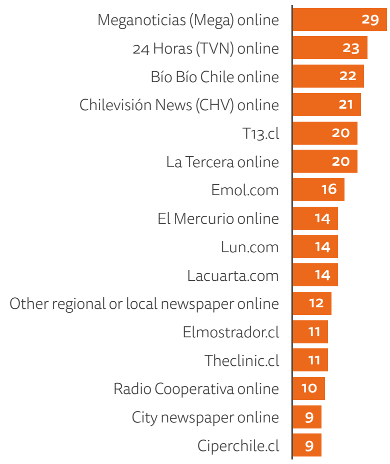
Weekly use online brands

10% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



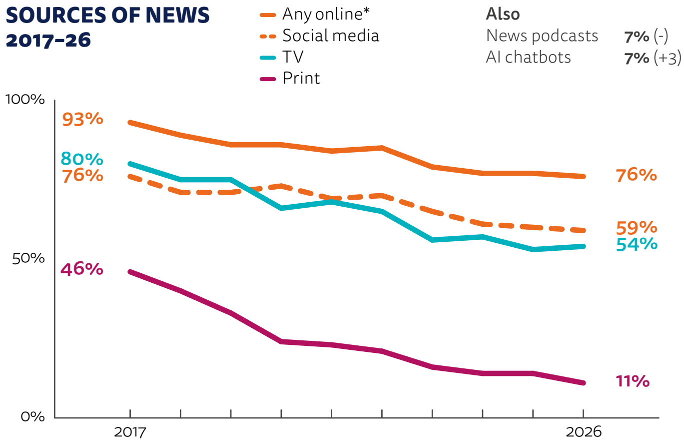
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Print newspapers reached their lowest level of consumption since 2017. Online and television news consumption remains stable, with social media retaining its prominence as a news source.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

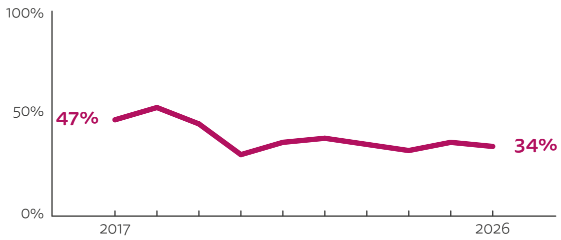
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	44%	(+4)	69%
2	Instagram	41%	(+9)	69%
3	WhatsApp	33%	(+7)	83%
4	YouTube	28%	(+2)	68%
5	TikTok	26%	(+3)	51%
6	X	8%	(-4)	16%

45% (-1) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Public trust in news has fluctuated within a relatively narrow range since 2020, hovering at around a third of the population. However, several brands increased their trust scores this year, most notably Meganoticias, the brand with the largest reach on and offline, which rose by 5 pp.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 34% (-2)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
24 Horas (TVN)	57%	23%	20%
Bío Bío Chile	65%	20%	15%
CHV Noticias (CHV)	58%	23%	20%
Ciperchile.cl	50%	30%	20%
CNN Chile	64%	21%	15%
Cooperativa	62%	24%	14%
El Mercurio	52%	23%	24%
Elmostrador.cl	50%	30%	21%
Emol.com	45%	30%	25%
Free city newspapers	47%	33%	20%
La Tercera	53%	25%	22%
LUN	44%	29%	27%
Meganoticias (Mega)	59%	21%	21%
Other regional or local newspaper	56%	29%	15%
Tele 13 (Canal 13)	58%	22%	21%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **60.84** **70**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

COLOMBIA

In a polarised election year, Colombia's media landscape continues to undergo structural shifts away from traditional media. This change coincides with declining trust in news, increasing news avoidance, and the ongoing impact of emerging technologies and networks on politics and the industry.

Population	**53m**
Internet penetration	**79%**

As the weekly reach of television and print for news continues to decline, the media environment in Colombia is increasingly shaped by a dependence on online platforms that is transforming how news is produced, distributed, and consumed beyond traditional channels. This shift is reflected in a range of industry developments, including the launch of OTT platforms, which integrate live TV, on-demand services, and digital content. It is also visible in the expansion of audio, streaming, podcasts, and video within traditional brands such as Caracol Radio, Caracol TV, RCN, and *El Tiempo*.

Social and video networks are central to how information circulates and to how the news agenda is shaped. During the 2026 electoral process, much of the online conversation took place on platforms such as TikTok, X, and Instagram, where attention often focused on viral content and campaign-driven messaging. Short-form video is particularly prominent, with both media organisations and political actors investing more heavily in this format.

In this context, 35% of respondents report getting news from news-focused creators or influencers weekly, with the highest use (40%) among the youngest age group (18–24s). These creators range from legacy journalists to independent commentators, some of them politically aligned, and are becoming increasingly important intermediaries in political communication. For example, President Gustavo Petro granted an interview at the presidential residence to a controversial streamer to discuss education, security, and the role of young people in politics. Colombia reflects a broader trend in Latin America, where consumption of news produced by creators is above average, posing a challenge for traditional news media in the region.

Artificial intelligence is also playing a more visible role in Colombian newsrooms, as organisations experiment with automation in content production, curation, and distribution. Regional outlet *Diario Occidente* developed 30 automated feeds to generate and distribute news on social media, producing roughly 800 news pieces in six months and significantly reducing costs. In July 2025, business newspaper *La República* published its first edition using AI to transform online articles for print. Meanwhile, digital-native outlet La Silla Vacía continues to experiment through its AI Lab, including launching a chatbot (SillaIA) designed to help users navigate political information.

Alongside these newsroom experiments, AI-powered tools are also beginning to shape how audiences access news. In Colombia, around one in ten (9%) now say they use an AI chatbot for news weekly. This reflects a broader regional trend identified by Comscore, which highlights the growing role of AI assistants and search tools that provide direct responses as gateways to news, raising questions about potential impact on referral traffic to news websites.[128]

At a time of digital disruption and erosion of traditional advertising models, radio is undergoing one of its most significant transformations in decades, with two historic radio news organisations restructuring their operations. RCN (owned by the Ardila Lülle Group) consolidated its radio news operations under its flagship brand La FM, integrating its digital platforms, while Caracol Radio (part of the Spanish conglomerate PRISA) integrated W Radio and its digital operations under the Caracol Radio brand. These changes have been accompanied by layoffs as part of the consolidation of programming. Meanwhile, in April 2026, public broadcaster RTVC re-adopted the historical name INRAVISIÓN, a move framed by the government as reaffirming its public service mandate, civic participation, and the role of state media. This follows a period of scrutiny, with some concerns about political influence and editorial independence.

Alongside these transformations, renewed public attention to allegations of sexual harassment has rattled the industry, sparking wider debates about workplace culture, power dynamics, and accountability. These discussions have unfolded alongside a deeply polarised election year, during which the Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP) has documented attacks against journalists that restrict or obstruct their coverage.[129]

News avoidance is also on the rise, with nearly five in ten Colombians (49%) saying they sometimes or often avoid the news, up 5pp from last year, which previous findings suggest is largely driven by negative effects on mood and feeling worn out by news. Likewise, six in ten (60%) are concerned about what is real and what is false on the internet, suggesting that rising news consumption across social media, video networks, and messaging apps does not necessarily translate into perceptions of greater information accuracy online.

Víctor García Perdomo
Dean of the Communication School and Director of the Research Center for Digital Technology & Society, Universidad de La Sabana

[128] https://www.comscore.com/lat/Prensa-y-Eventos/Presentaciones-y-libros-blancos/2026/Tendencias-Digitales-Definiendo-el-rumbo-del-2025-2026-Edicion-LATAM
[129] https://flip.org.co/pronunciamientos/la-flip-exige-respuestas-y-acciones-frente-a-las-denuncias-de-violencias-basadas-en-genero-en-los-medios

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

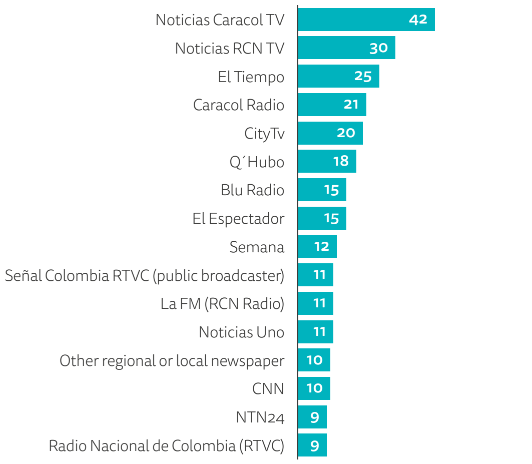
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

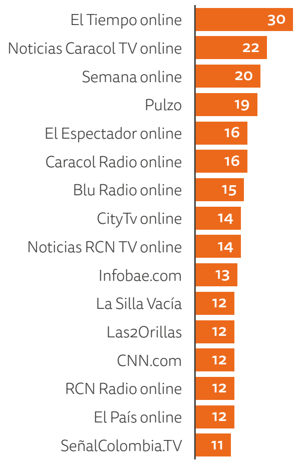
Weekly use online brands

15% (+1) PAY pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



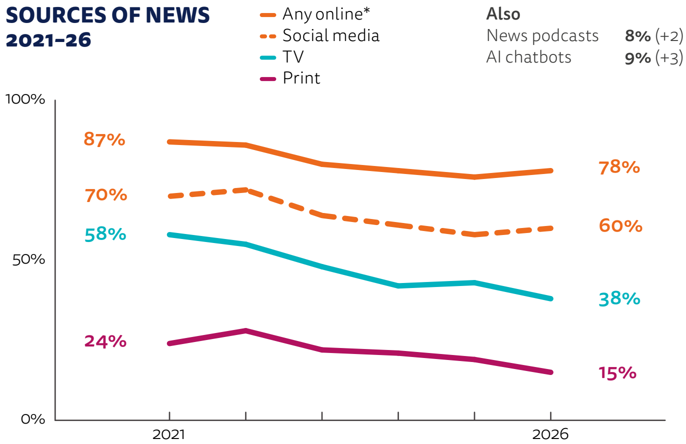
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

The gradual increase in the use of AI chatbots for news (+3pp), alongside the stability of social media for news, coincides with a continued decline in TV (-5pp) and print (-4pp), while online news use remains stable.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

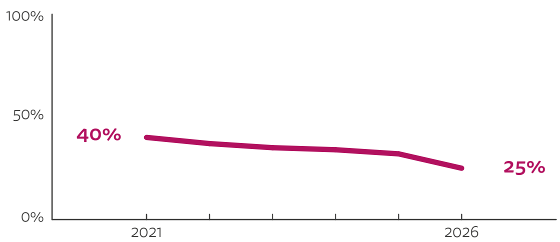
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	51%	(+4)	68%
2	WhatsApp	46%	(+11)	82%
3	YouTube	40%	(+6)	72%
4	Instagram	33%	(+5)	57%
5	TikTok	32%	(+5)	54%
6	X	12%	(-1)	20%

49% (+5) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news in Colombia has declined sharply to 25% (down 7pp), in the context of a challenging political climate and a continued reliance on social media and video networks for news. However, trust in individual news brands remains significantly higher, with regional TV news channels, Noticias Uno, and Señal Colombia all with around 60% trust.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

25% (-7)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Blu Radio	52%	18%	30%
Caracol Radio	50%	19%	31%
El Espectador	53%	20%	27%
El Tiempo	56%	18%	26%
La FM (RCN Radio)	50%	20%	31%
Las2Orillas	42%	28%	30%
Noticias Caracol TV	50%	18%	32%
Noticias RCN Televisión	51%	18%	31%
Noticias Uno	58%	23%	19%
Other regional newspapers	50%	26%	25%
Pulzo	42%	29%	29%
Q´Hubo	39%	27%	34%
Regional TV news	59%	23%	19%
Semana	47%	19%	34%
Señal Colombia (RTVC)	57%	21%	23%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **51.66** **102**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

Note: We conducted a repoll for the social, messaging, and video network numbers in March 2026 due to a scripting error in the original poll. In the Colombia repoll, we also collected new data on brand reach and brand trust to reflect a merger announced when the initial survey was in the field. All other numbers are from the January/February poll.

MEXICO

Mexico is an information ecosystem under pressure from ongoing violence against journalists, declining trust in news, and financial challenges facing traditional media. Social and video networks dominate news consumption, pushing outlets to adapt formats, distribution channels, and monetisation strategies while also experimenting with AI.

Population	**132m**
Internet penetration	**83%**

The Mexican political context in 2025 was shaped by international tensions and domestic security challenges, including an intensification of actions against organised crime by the government of Claudia Sheinbaum. A key episode in February 2026 involved the killing of a major cartel leader, ‘El Mencho’, which triggered a violent backlash. This widely covered episode highlighted some recurring challenges of a media environment where journalism is often dangerous to practise and professional reporting competes for attention on social media. Videos recorded by citizens went hand-in-hand with a wave of false and misleading content, making it difficult to establish an accurate picture of events as they unfolded.[130]

The ‘Mañanera del Pueblo’, a morning press conference format inherited from former President López Obrador, remains a central means of communication for the Sheinbaum government, though confrontation and attacks on the media have diminished compared to the previous administration. The environment for practising journalism nonetheless remains dangerous. Mexico recorded nine journalist killings in 2025, the second-highest total globally behind only Palestine, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF); a further 28 journalists remain missing. This level of violence has a chilling effect on watchdog journalism, making coverage of organised crime and corruption very dangerous.[131] Furthermore, the international human rights organisation Article 19 reported an increase in judicial harassment of journalists in 2025, highlighting the growing use of legal and administrative mechanisms as tools to pressure and censor the press.

Social media remains the most important source of news, with two-thirds of the population (66%) saying they use it weekly. Traditional and digital-native brands maintain a strong presence on networks like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, many of them adapting storytelling or repackaging content. Audiovisual formats are especially popular in Mexico, where the vast majority say they have watched an online news video in the last week. Spotify (and to a lesser degree Apple) is also an important distribution platform for long-form radio programmes, as well as shorter daily news podcasts like N+ Diario and Infobae's Las Noticias del Día (MX).

After several years of stability, trust in news dropped 5pp this year to just 31%. In a context of eroded trust in institutions, individual news creators and influencers play an important role, seen by some as more authentic and relatable than news brands. Established journalists like Carlos Loret de Mola (LatinUs), Carmen Aristegui, and Joaquín López Dóriga draw considerable attention on digital platforms, where creators operating outside of institutional media have also grown in popularity, some of them politically aligned.

In terms of structure, the market remains highly concentrated. Large traditional brands like N+ and *El Universal* coexist with digital-native media that have achieved prominence, such as Aristegui Noticias and LatinUs, along with platforms linked to telecommunications like UnoTV. Weekly television use for news has dropped to 34%, nearly half of what it was in 2017, reflected in the financial crisis confronting TV Azteca: mounting debts and fiscal pressures led shareholders to approve a voluntary bankruptcy process in early 2026 to restructure the company’s finances and liabilities,[132] alongside a merger of Azteca Noticias and ADN 40’s news operations. Meanwhile, public service media in Mexico continue to have low audience reach.

Free distribution remains dominant online, sustained by advertising, but a shift towards subscription models is underway. Newspapers like *El Universal*, *Milenio*, and *Reforma* have continued to bolster their paywalled content, including exclusive features, columns, and investigations, delivered with reduced or no advertising, with brands like *El País* (Spain) also offering access to exclusive events. Some news organisations, like digital outlet Animal Político, also continue to produce newsletters as a way to build direct relationships with audiences that are less vulnerable to platform algorithms.

Artificial intelligence is progressively becoming more embedded in newsroom operations. Organización Editorial Mexicana (OEM), for example, has created a designated unit to integrate AI into production and distribution of journalistic pieces. *El Economista* developed LANA, an AI assistant that draws on its archive to help journalists develop summaries, story ideas, and follow-up coverage. Elsewhere, it is used to automate, optimise, and, in rare cases, generate content. In one bold experiment, Azteca Noticias used AI to recreate the operation that resulted in the killing of ‘El Mencho’, based on information provided by Mexican authorities.[133]

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Universidad Panamericana

[130] https://english.elpais.com/international/2026-02-25/the-use-of-ai-and-bots-behind-the-wave-of-digital-disinformation-about-the-fall-of-el-mencho.html
[131] https://latamjournalismreview.org/articles/how-violence-hostile-rhetoric-and-economic-precarity-undercut-mexicos-watchdog-press/
[132] https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/mexicos-tv-azteca-announces-bankruptcy-proceedings-2026-02-26/
[133] https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ENcVBjkk89o

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

15% (+1) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

Brand	%
TV Azteca News	24
N+	24
El Universal	21
Imagen News	20
Milenio News	19
N+ Foro	17
Other regional or local newspaper	17
CNN en Español	14
Radio Fórmula News	11
Canal 11 News	11
Reforma	10
El Sol de México	10
El Heraldo de México	10
State public service television or radio	10
Excélsior	9
La Jornada	9

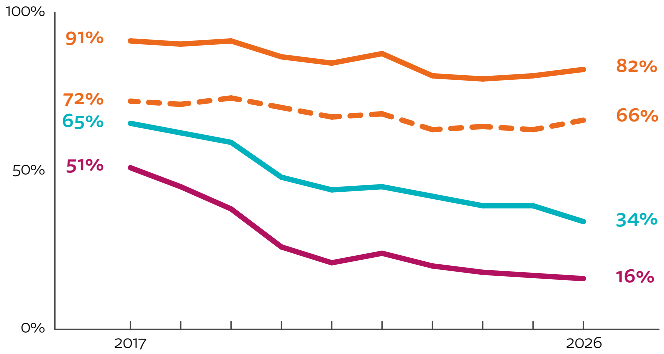
ONLINE

Brand	%
Milenio News online	20
El Universal online	20
UnoTV News online	18
N+ online	17
TV Azteca News online	16
Aristegui Noticias	15
Latinus	15
Imagen News online	15
CNN en Español online	14
El Heraldo de México online	11
Reforma online	11
Radio Fórmula News online	11
La Jornada online	11
Animal Político	10
Other local television news sites online	10
Other regional or local newspaper online	10

CHANGING MEDIA

Weekly use of social media for news has broadly remained stable over the past decade. However, television use continues to decline (down 5pp this year), widening the gap between the two.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

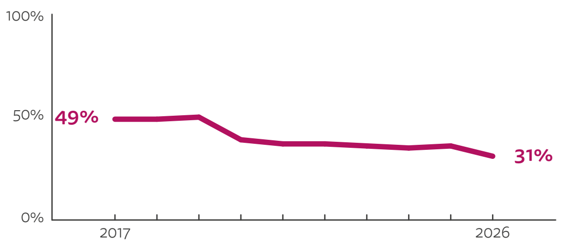
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	57%	(+5)	75%
2	WhatsApp	35%	(+7)	83%
3	YouTube	34%	(-1)	71%
4	TikTok	27%	(+3)	54%
5	Instagram	18%	(+3)	50%
6	X	13%	(-2)	21%

45% (+1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news has dipped to 31%, its lowest level since 2017, in a context of low trust in public institutions and political actors. However, trust in individual news brands fares better, with over 60% of respondents expressing trust in news brands like CNN en Español and *Milenio*, as well as local television, radio, or newspapers.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 31% (-5)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 45.23	122/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Aristegui Noticias	57%	24%	19%
Canal 22	57%	27%	16%
CNN en Español	64%	23%	13%
El Economista	56%	29%	15%
El Financiero	58%	25%	17%
El Universal	61%	23%	15%
Imagen News	61%	23%	15%
Latinus	48%	27%	25%
Milenio News	62%	23%	15%
N+	54%	23%	23%
Other local TV, radio, or newspapers	61%	25%	14%
Radio Fórmula News	59%	25%	17%
Reforma	57%	24%	19%
TV Azteca News	56%	22%	23%
UnoTV	58%	26%	17%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

PERU

Peru's media market entered the 2026 election year under intense strain, marked by the deadliest year for journalism in decades, political instability, a major television ownership change, and an election-driven infusion of public campaign money, alongside the expanding role of non-traditional digital campaigning and generative AI.

Population	**35m**
Internet penetration	**82%**

Press freedom groups described 2025 as the deadliest year for journalism in Peru in at least three decades.[134] Four journalists were killed, all of them outside Lima, confirming the dangerous working conditions outside of the capital. The National Association of Journalists of Peru (ANP) recorded an additional 454 attacks on journalists and media outlets, including threats and harassment. The rise in violence unfolded amid deep hostility towards the press from government officials and political figures. In one prominent example, presidential candidate Rafael López Aliaga publicly targeted investigative journalist Gustavo Gorriti,[135] reinforcing concerns that hostile rhetoric from elites may legitimise violence against the press.

The current crisis also has a historical dimension. The Constitutional Tribunal annulled the landmark 2023 conviction of former army general Daniel Urresti for the 1988 murder of journalist Hugo Bustíos,[136] leading to his release and raising concerns about human rights and free speech amid broader efforts to expand amnesties for abuses committed by members of the armed forces pre-2002. Meanwhile, former intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the 1991 letter-bomb killing of journalist Melissa Alfaro. These cases highlight a central tension in Peru's media environment: justice remains possible, but fragile.

These developments have taken place against a backdrop of acute institutional instability. Since October 2025, Peru has seen yet another succession of political crises, reinforcing public perceptions of a deteriorating democratic order. President Dina Boluarte was impeached and succeeded by Congress President José Jerí, who after four months was himself ousted after failing to disclose meetings with Chinese businessmen. His successor, José Balcázar, is expected to stay in office until the new president takes office in July.

A major ownership shift has added to those concerns. In late 2025, the Schütz family sold Panamericana Televisión, one of Peru's best-known broadcasters, to mining company Grupo Paltarumi and producer Susana Umbert, ending more than six decades of family ownership. The change has raised questions about editorial independence at a politically sensitive moment. Umbert said the new owners plan to move beyond traditional broadcasting towards a multi-platform, digital model.[137] Grupo Paltarumi also acquired a 50% stake in the radio and digital channel PBO.

Campaign communication is also changing. While publicly funded electoral spending continues to channel significant resources into traditional and digital media, candidates are increasingly investing in programmatic advertising, social media, and less regulated forms of online promotion. As in other countries, some politicians are bypassing journalistic scrutiny by relying on influencers, streamers, and softer interview formats. The role of influencers is particularly relevant given that social media is the main source of news for 49% of people under 35, at a time when 6.7m voters aged 18 to 29 were expected to participate in the election.[138] For example, Víctor Caballero 'Curwen', a prominent political news influencer, has drawn more than 3m streams on YouTube for his reaction videos across six presidential debates.

At the same time, Peru appears to be moving into a more AI-mediated information environment: 11% of Peruvians report weekly use of AI chatbots for news, up 5pp from last year. This growth suggests that AI tools are becoming part of everyday news discovery and sensemaking for a meaningful minority in a country where social media already plays an outsized role in news consumption. Innovation in newsrooms is slower but showing promise as projects such as Ojo Público's Funes, an AI-driven tool to detect patterns of corruption on government contracts, and *El Comercio*'s AI-supported workflow used to analyse 36 candidate résumés and agendas illustrate.

Meanwhile, business pressures on legacy media continue to build, as advertising has been shifting steadily towards digital platforms. In 2025, Grupo El Comercio S.A. quintupled its losses and closed the year with a negative result of more than US$19m, while revenues fell 9.2% relative to 2024. These figures underline the structural weakness of traditional media even among the country's most established brands.

Lourdes M. Cueva Chacón
San Diego State University

[134] https://rsf.org/en/authorities-must-act-after-fourth-journalist-killed-peru-2025
[135] https://www.sipiapa.org/la-sip-repudia-amenazas-del-alcalde-lima-contra-el-periodista-gustavo-gorriti-n1300759
[136] https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2026/044.asp&utm_content=country-per&utm_term=class-mon#:~:text=On%20February%206%2C%202026%2C%20the%20Constitutional%20Court,judiciary%20against%20former%20Minister%20Daniel%20Urresti%20for
[137] https://semanaeconomica.com/sectores-empresas/medios-de-comunicacion/panamericana-television-cambia-de-duenos-grupo-paltarumi-y-susana-umbert-concretan-la-compra-del-canal
[138] https://andina.pe/ingles/noticia-2026-elections-195-million-peruvians-will-vote-for-first-time-for-a-bicameral-congress-1057121.aspx

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

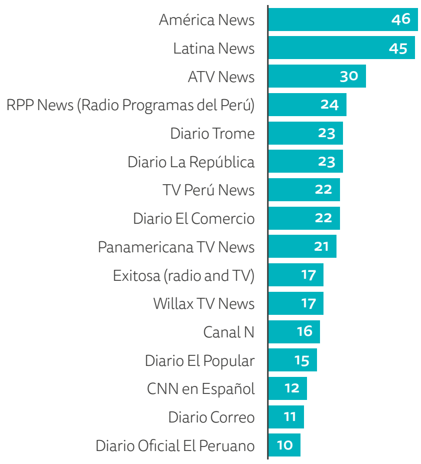
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

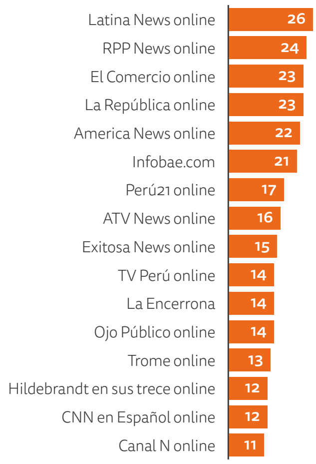
14% (-4) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



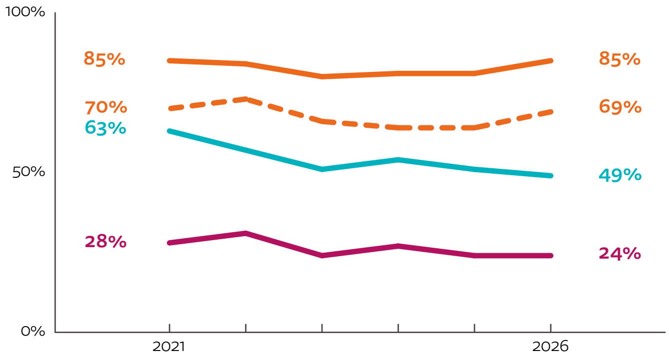
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

The gap between social media (up 5pp) and television as sources of news continues to grow for our online sample. Several newspapers and digital-native brands registered growth of 4–6pp in this election year.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

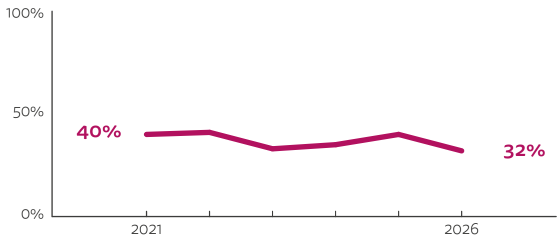
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	61%	(+9)	81%
2	TikTok	45%	(+12)	71%
3	WhatsApp	41%	(+12)	87%
4	YouTube	40%	(+6)	78%
5	Instagram	27%	(+6)	59%
6	Facebook Messenger	11%	(+4)	34%

38% (-1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news overall is down 8pp to its lowest level since 2021, at a time of deep political unrest and as the election campaign draws conflicting information onto digital platforms that are widely used for news. However, trust in individual news brands remains stable, and most are trusted by the majority of respondents.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

32% (-8)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026 Score: 37.86 **144**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
América TV Noticias	52%	23%	25%
Canal N	54%	24%	21%
El Comercio	56%	22%	22%
El Peruano	63%	23%	14%
Exitosa	53%	25%	23%
Gestión	54%	26%	21%
Infobae	45%	30%	26%
La República	55%	22%	23%
Latina Noticias	56%	22%	22%
Other local or regional newspaper, radio, or TV	49%	30%	21%
Panamericana Noticias	53%	25%	22%
RPP Noticias	64%	20%	16%
Trome	35%	27%	38%
TV Perú Noticias	55%	25%	20%
Willax TV	45%	24%	31%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

SECTION 3

SECTION 3

Analysis by Country and Market
Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA

The re-election of Anthony Albanese's Labor government with a greatly increased majority in May 2025 has had a major impact on media policy. Australia introduced the world's first ban on under-16s accessing social media, and increased pressure on the platforms by moving from voluntary content deals to a new model obliging digital platforms to pay for news.

Population	**27m**
Internet penetration	**96%**

The social media age-limit reform is intended to protect adolescents from grooming, mental-health harms, algorithmic pressure, and exposure to harmful content. This stems from the Labor government's commitment to the 'digital duty of care' since 2024, which places the onus on digital platforms to prevent online harms at a systemic level, instead of individuals having to enter at their own risk. After the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 was enacted in December 2025, platforms reported deactivating 4.7m accounts. Without algorithm transparency and safety-by-design reforms, the ban alone is unlikely to be effective in reducing harm. Media literacy education is also needed to prepare children for when they start to use social media.

Faced with Meta's resistance to renewing the voluntary content agreements reached under the 2021 News Media Bargaining Code, the government created the News Bargaining Incentive (NBI). The NBI proposal, currently under consultation, will charge large digital platforms (whether or not they carry news) a percentage of their Australian revenue, which can be offset if they enter commercial agreements with news publishers.[139]

Following multiple government inquiries since 2017 into the declining news industry and public interest journalism, in December 2024 the government announced the News Media Assistance Program (News MAP) worth AU$180.5m (US$127m). News MAP is the largest direct public investment in Australian public and commercial journalism in decades, driven by a concern to support public interest journalism and media diversity, seen as critical to a healthy democracy, social cohesion, and informed citizens. It includes a Journalism Assistance Fund of AU$67.6m, a further AU$31.5m for a second phase of direct grants, AU$33m over three years in continued support for Australian Associated Press, and a minimum of AU$3m per year in federal government advertising for regional newspapers in 2025–6. The funding has generally been welcomed, though some have seen it as too little now and too late for the over 350 news outlets that had either closed or contracted in the previous five years (PIJI 2025).

As part of News MAP, the Australian Communications and Media Authority released the *News Media in Australia 2025* report, providing an evidence base to guide future policies on news diversity and sustainability.

The Labor government continues its broad support for the public broadcasters, ABC and SBS. From 2023, a five-year funding cycle was implemented, and the budget cuts from the former Coalition government were reversed, sustaining the support for regional journalism.

Commercial pressures continued to drive consolidation across television, audio, digital, and advertising. In April 2025, the UK-based sports streamer DAZN acquired Foxtel. Seven West Media and Southern Cross Media, Australia's largest commercial radio operator, merged in early 2026.

The industry's financial stress led to further layoffs. In November 2025, Nine Entertainment undertook major restructuring, cutting costs by AU$100m (US$70m) and eliminating about 50 jobs across their news teams. Print closures continued, particularly in regional areas where it was reported that more than 20 regional and community newspapers ceased printing or closed across the 18 months spanning late 2024 into 2025.[140]

The 2025 federal election marked a shift in how the media shape voting decisions. News Corp-owned publishers – *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Mercury*, and *Herald Sun* – as well as Seven West Media's *The West Australian* and *The Nightly* explicitly endorsed the right-of-centre Coalition. However, in a hybrid news ecosystem, influencers and independent digital-first publishers set the agenda which led to the Coalition's defeat. Influencers such as Abbie Chatfield, Friendlyjordies, The Juice Media, Sam Fricker, and others became major political communicators during the campaign. Both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton deliberately engaged influencers to access younger audiences. Shortly before the election, at the federal budget lockup – an embargoed event traditionally reserved for journalists – a dozen influencers were invited, which illustrates how news boundaries have shifted. While influencers provide a diverse range of perspectives, particularly for younger audiences, the uneven quality and the absence of agreed journalistic standards raise concerns.

Sora Park
News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra

[139] https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/daniel-mulino-2025/media-releases/news-bargaining-incentive-consultation-paper-released#:~:text=It%20reinforces%20the%20News%20Media,raise%20revenue%20for%20the%20Government
[140] https://www.meaa.org/campaigns/our-stories/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

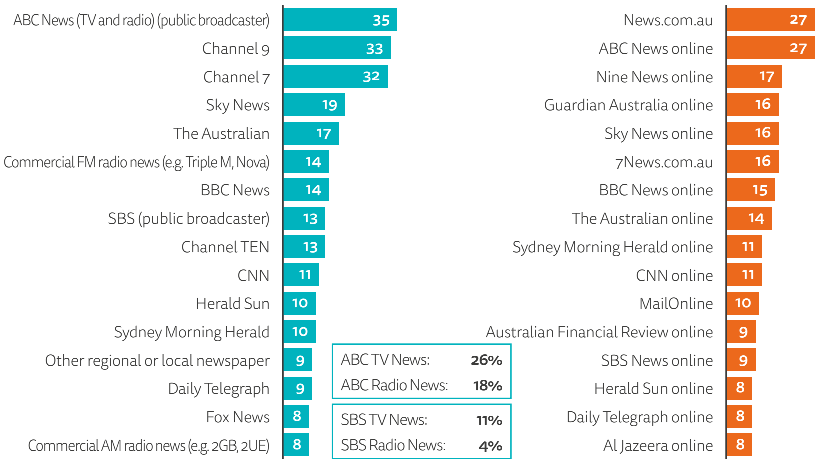
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT | ONLINE



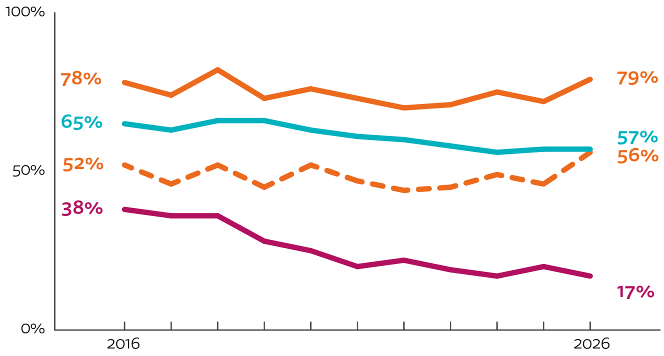
23% (+1) PAY pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

CHANGING MEDIA

Print and television news are in long-term decline, as the use of social media for news has increased. AI chatbot use for news rose by 3pp and podcast use by 4pp.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26

Also
News podcasts **13%** (+4)
AI chatbots **9%** (+3)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

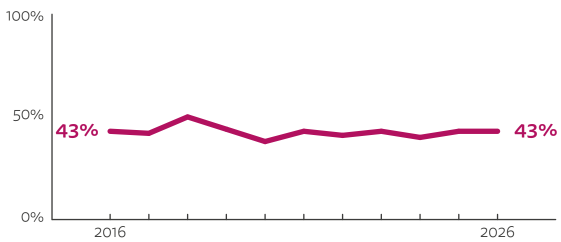
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	40%	(+2)	71%
2	YouTube	32%	(+3)	63%
3	Instagram	24%	(+5)	50%
4	WhatsApp	20%	(+7)	46%
5	TikTok	19%	(+5)	30%
6	X	17%	(+1)	22%

40% (-) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news remains in the low 40s and has changed little in recent years. Trust in major news brands has increased across the board. Public broadcasters – ABC and SBS – continue to be the most trusted news sources. Regional and local newspapers also rank highly, showing the lowest levels of distrust.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

43% (-)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
ABC News	66%	15%	19%
Australian Financial Review	62%	25%	13%
BBC News	64%	21%	15%
Channel 7 News	61%	21%	19%
Channel 9 News	61%	21%	18%
Daily Telegraph	48%	28%	24%
Guardian Australia	55%	27%	18%
Herald Sun	49%	27%	23%
News.com.au	53%	24%	23%
Other regional or local newspaper	63%	24%	12%
SBS News	66%	20%	14%
Sky News	52%	20%	28%
Sydney Morning Herald	55%	26%	19%
The Age	54%	28%	18%
The Australian	59%	24%	18%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **74.58** **33**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

HONG KONG

Five years after the National Security Law (NSL) took effect, Hong Kong's press freedom remains under strain, as reflected in high-profile prosecutions of media figures such as pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai. In addition to the law, local journalists face a widening range of intimidation, including tax investigations. Meanwhile, declining advertising revenue has deepened the financial crisis of local media.

Population	**7.4m**
Internet penetration	**96%**

Enacted in response to Hong Kong's 2019 protests, the NSL continues to reshape the city's media landscape, with journalists treading carefully to avoid crossing vaguely defined legal red lines and, as a result, practising more self-censorship. In the latest development, Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily* and one of the most high-profile figures arrested under the NSL, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, the longest sentence handed down under the law so far. Lai was convicted of conspiring with others to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security and of conspiracy to publish seditious articles. His co-defendants, including six former editors of *Apple Daily*, all pleaded guilty and received prison terms ranging from six years and three months to ten years.

Journalists confront an expanding range of legal pressures. According to the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), at least seven independent media and 20 individuals were targeted by tax audits, with the targeted media and individuals reportedly receiving tax bills totalling around HKD 1,700,000 (approx. US$217,500). In some cases, tax investigations have extended to the personal tax affairs of journalists' family members. The HKJA argued that many audits involved questionable demands, including inflated income calculations, tax assessments for periods predating the establishment of media outlets, and claims involving companies the journalists did not manage. The Inland Revenue Department, however, maintained that a taxpayer's industry or background had no bearing on tax reviews.[141] Amid these pressures, the HKJA stopped publicly listing the names of its executive committee members.

Pressures have extended to foreign media. In November 2025, a fire at the Wang Fuk Court apartment complex in Tai Po killed 168 people and drew extensive international media coverage. The reporting prompted Beijing's national security office in Hong Kong to summon representatives from foreign media and warn them not to cause trouble through their coverage of the fire.

The business environment for Hong Kong's media has become increasingly challenging. Mainstream outlets such as *Ming Pao* and *Hong Kong Economic Times* have recorded substantial losses,[142] reflecting both the broader decline in advertising revenue and higher cost bases that make legacy media vulnerable to shifting media conditions. Nonetheless, some media organisations have bucked the trend. TVB, Hong Kong's largest TV broadcaster, is expected to post an annual profit of more than HKD 50m (approx. US$6.5m), ending years of losses. This turnaround was partly driven by growth in its mainland China business. Although Hong Kong news content cannot be distributed in mainland China, TVB's dramas streamed on major mainland platforms such as Youku have performed strongly,[143] suggesting that expansion into the mainland may offer a path forward for local media organisations with business lines beyond news.

While most legacy outlets struggle to stay afloat, some independent digital-based outlets have rapidly expanded their influence by leveraging the internet's low-cost, high-reach potential with lean operational setups. These include The Witness, which focuses on court reporting; The Collective, which specialises in in-depth reporting; and Initium Media and The Impulse, which have relocated overseas in response to the NSL. Together, they provide local readers with a broader range of perspectives than those in mainstream media coverage and have filled part of the gap left by the closure of *Apple Daily*. Meanwhile, the pro-government camp has also actively strengthened its media presence. Outlets such as Speak Out HK, Dot Dot News, and Orange News have gained considerable online influence, aided by their comparatively stronger resources. Overall, these developments have made Hong Kong's media market more fragmented than before.

Hong Kong media are also learning to use AI. Mainstream outlets like HK01 and *am730* have reported using AI to produce short videos, voiceovers for AI presenters, and infographics. Some of these AI-generated voices have been criticised for sounding too similar to real news anchors, giving rise to disputes.

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Chinese University of Hong Kong

141 https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/21/world/asia/hong-kong-media-tax-harassment.html?unlocked_article_code
142 https://bit.ly/47znYL8; https://bit.ly/4tdjdPC
143 https://bit.ly/4tpK5fF

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

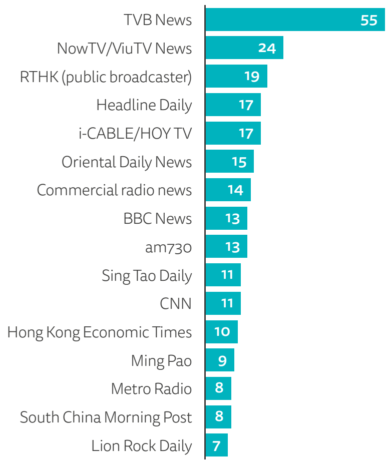
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

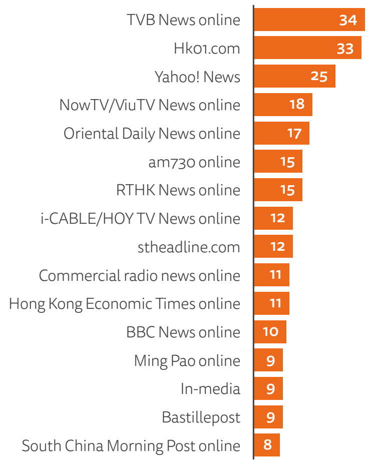
Weekly use online brands

18% (-4) PAY pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



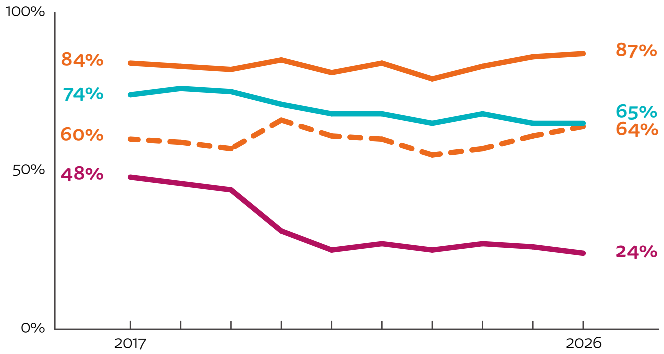
CHANGING MEDIA

News consumption habits in Hong Kong have remained stable for the past five years. Most respondents consume news online (87%), while 65% rely on television and 24% on print. The use of social media for news is increasing steadily.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 16% (+2)
AI chatbots 13% (+4)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

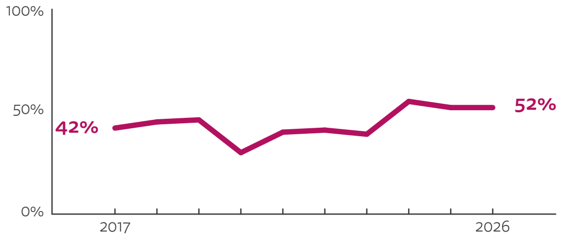
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	51%	(+5)	74%
2	YouTube	49%	(+5)	80%
3	WhatsApp	30%	(+5)	81%
4	Instagram	29%	(+9)	57%
5	Threads	15%	(+8)	30%
6	WeChat	14%	(-)	46%

28% (+2) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Although press freedom remains strained, most local outlets are trusted by over half of respondents. Well-known electronic media enjoy relatively higher trust, with NowTV News, i-Cable News, and RTHK among the most trusted. Less widely known digital-only outlets tend to score lower, though Yahoo! News, likely benefiting from the public recognition of its platform, scores highly in trust terms.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
52% (-)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **39.49** **140**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
am730	67%	24%	9%
Bastillepost	57%	27%	16%
Commercial radio	70%	22%	8%
Dot Dot News	54%	31%	15%
HK01	68%	21%	11%
i-CABLE News	72%	22%	6%
In-media	58%	31%	11%
Ming Pao	69%	23%	8%
NOW TV News	73%	22%	5%
Oriental Daily News	66%	23%	11%
RTHK	71%	19%	10%
Sing Tao Daily	68%	23%	9%
The Collective	56%	32%	12%
TVB News	69%	17%	14%
Yahoo! News	70%	23%	7%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

INDIA

India's news cycle was dominated by state elections, bilateral relations, and a contentious constitutional amendment. These developments were accompanied by regional language news and hyperlocal content from diverse media players, including mainstream news organisations and independent journalists. As video-led social media platforms continue to attract both traditional players and new content creators, media like TV now offer multiple avenues for news.

Population	**1,464m**
Internet penetration	**70%**

Survey sample primarily composed of English speakers

With a majority of respondents saying they find news online and over half of those saying they use social media platforms for news, legacy sources like TV (44%) have retained popularity for news by offering multiple avenues such as traditional subscription models or connected TV, blurring the lines between traditional broadcast and digital content formats.

Video-based social media platforms support diverse actors – news organisations, independent journalists, and news creators – making them a popular source of news. In India, around 58% of respondents rely on YouTube for news.

The Collective Newsroom in India is developing a playbook on how to build partnerships with content creators, including selection and training frameworks. The project will run as a pilot in Hindi and Marathi. Saurabh Dwivedi, former founding editor of The Lallantop, joined The Indian Express Group in January 2026. Dwivedi is expected to drive the group's Hindi digital content and social media reach. Individual news creators continue to garner large audiences in India. Raj Shamani, for example, is a young creator and entrepreneur with close to 17m subscribers on YouTube and his long-form podcast Figuring Out focuses on finance, news, and personal growth. In a move to tap into their popularity and reach, the Indian government announced collaborations with content creators for its broadcast arms – DD News and Akashvani (AIR). It also plans to train 15,000 creators and media professionals on AI through partnerships with Google and YouTube.[144]

News channels in regional languages, like Odisha TV and Aaj Tak, have been experimenting with AI anchors and AI clones of popular news anchors. Digital-born news outlet Scroll.in developed a tool that extracts and converts media from a text article into a short video for social channels. *The Hindu*, a legacy print brand, experimented with an AI character during the recent Assembly elections for poll-related video news. AI integration is, however, uneven across newsrooms due to a lack of resources, knowledge, or genuine concerns around the dilution of editorial safeguards and trust in news.

Early this year, the Indian government introduced a slew of amendments to the IT Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code. The amendments look at identifying and labelling synthetically generated information (SGI), and streamlining procedures to take down content by social media platforms when flagged by relevant authorities under the law.[145] Further, the amendments include provisions to oversee content put up by creators, who are not publishers but comment on news and current affairs on social media platforms.[146]

However, these amendments have been met with concerns they may dilute procedural safeguards around the removal of content and in the protection of free speech. Some of these include a reduced time limit for platforms to remove content, exercising restraint before publishing content that may violate the law, overlooking benign or creative purposes of AI by way of a broad definition for SGI, and overreach of executive powers to take down content. Intermediaries and platforms risk losing their safe-harbour provisions if they fail to comply with the takedown orders.[147]

In another worrying instance of attacks on press freedom, the office of one of India's oldest news agencies, United News of India (UNI), was sealed by the local police in Delhi in March, following an order from the Delhi High Court cancelling its land allotment. The move witnessed force to seal the premises on the day the order was passed. Several journalist bodies, including the Press Council of India and the Editors Guild of India, criticised the move as 'high handed' and a display of 'excessive force'.[148]

In the latest RSF Press Freedom Index, India ranks 157 out of 180 countries – a drop of six places since last year. While India has ranked lower in RSF's rankings in the past, its current position indicates the legal, political, and economic challenges the press continues to face in one of the most diverse media markets in the world.

Anjana Krishnan
Research Associate, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai

[144] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/india-to-train-15000-creators-in-ai-through-govtgoogleyoutube-partnership/articleshow/129758389.cms
[145] https://www.dw.com/en/india-tightens-ai-rules-for-social-media-platforms/a-75903631
[146] https://www.deccanherald.com/india/explained-centres-draft-it-rules-how-are-they-going-to-affect-social-media-creators-3950725
[147] https://internetfreedom.in/it-intermediary-amendment-rules-2026-contradict-their-purpose/
[148] https://www.deccanherald.com/india/journalists-bodies-condemn-manhandling-use-of-excessive-force-in-sealing-uni-premises-3939919#google_vignette

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

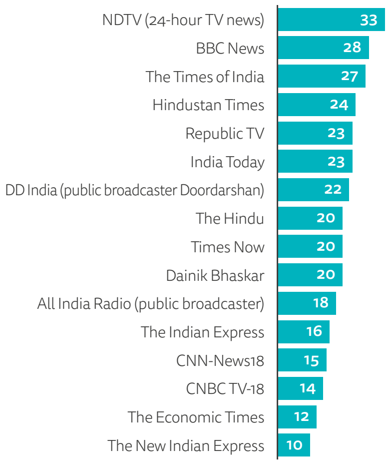
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

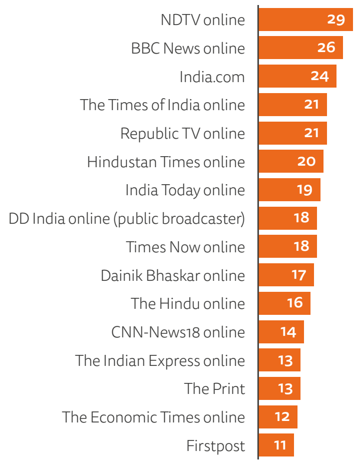
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



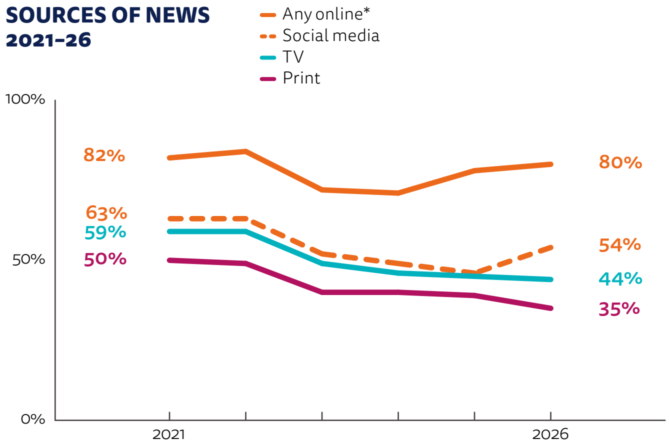
The Wire:	10%
Rediff News:	10%
NewsClick:	10%
The News Minute:	9%
Newslaundry:	9%

47% (+3)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

METHODOLOGY NOTE

These data are based on a survey of mainly English-speaking, online news users in India – a small subset of a larger, more diverse, media market. Findings in this online poll are not nationally representative and will tend to under-represent the continued importance of traditional media such as TV and print.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

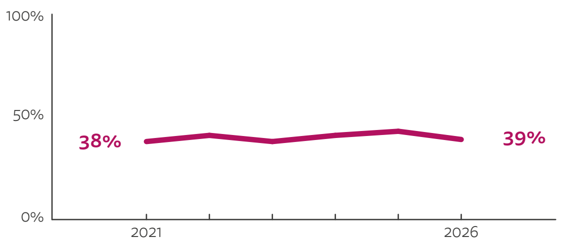
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	58%	(+3)	76%
2	WhatsApp	56%	(+10)	78%
3	Instagram	45%	(+8)	63%
4	Facebook	39%	(+3)	57%
5	Telegram	23%	(+1)	39%
6	Facebook Messenger	16%	(+4)	26%

52% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

India witnessed a 4pp decrease in trust levels. Overall trust in news for India is 39%, placing it eighteenth among 48 markets in the survey. At the brand level, trust in legacy print publishers and public broadcasters remains high.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
39% (-4)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
All India Radio	65%	19%	16%
BBC News	64%	19%	17%
CNN-News18	61%	22%	17%
DD India	63%	18%	19%
Economic Times	65%	19%	16%
Hindustan Times	67%	18%	15%
India Today TV	61%	20%	19%
NDTV	62%	18%	20%
Other regional or local newspaper	62%	19%	19%
Republic TV	57%	20%	23%
Scroll.in	48%	28%	25%
The Hindu	63%	18%	19%
The Indian Express	64%	19%	16%
The Times of India	69%	16%	15%
The Wire	51%	26%	23%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: 31.96 **157** / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

INDONESIA

Population	286m
Internet penetration	73%

Indonesia's news media operate in a complex political environment shaped by a long democratic transition and ongoing concerns about media independence. Journalists and news organisations continue to face pressures from political actors, business interests, and regulatory frameworks that constrain critical reporting. The growing influence of digital platforms and online creators is reshaping how audiences access and engage with news.

The implementation of President Prabowo Subianto's Free Nutritious Meals programme, or Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG), caused ripple effects across Indonesian news media. Some media advocacy groups reported incidents of self-censorship and pressure on critical reporting.[149] The massive programme, managed by groups close to the president and estimated to cost over Rp 300tr ($18.5bn) in 2026,[150] became a focal point of public dissatisfaction with the administration, as accounts of food poisoning, inadequate meals, and widespread graft circulated.

The diversion of state funds to the MBG programme had unintended consequences for the health of news organisations, as government advertising at both the national and provincial levels was significantly reduced. That, coupled with the shuttering of USAID, led to financial hardship for many smaller publications dependent on advertising from either the government or USAID-supported NGOs.

The year 2025 was especially difficult for television news organisations. Although hard numbers are difficult to obtain, there were reports of massive layoffs at major outlets such as Kompas TV, CNN Indonesia, and TVRI. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) reported that 549 journalists lost their jobs during 2025.[151]

For many years after the fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998, the key media issues in Indonesia were related to securing and institutionalising the freedoms enshrined in the 1999 Press Law. By 2025, however, the central focus had shifted to economic survival. The 2024 Publishers' Rights Decree (Perpres 23/2024) was widely hailed as a positive step forward, as it sought to address the perceived imbalance between media companies and platforms such as Google, Meta, and X. However, as a 'decree', Perpres 23/2024 has been criticised for lacking legal teeth.

Evidence of the disconnect between Perpres 23/2024 and actual practice can be found in Article 3.3 of Indonesia's Trade Agreement with the US, signed by Presidents Trump and Prabowo in February 2026. The agreement stipulates that Indonesia cannot require 'U.S. digital services providers (platform services) to support domestic news organisations through paid licenses, user data sharing, and profit-sharing'. Moreover, the agreement allows foreign investment without ownership restrictions in both publishing and broadcasting.[152] Not only does this agreement appear to conflict with both the Press Law and the Publishers' Rights Decree but some media observers noted it was also ironic in light of President Prabowo's statements in early 2025 attacking *Tempo* magazine as 'foreign-funded media'.

Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok are extremely popular in Indonesia, and 64% of Indonesians report getting their news from them. While use of most social media platforms increased, WhatsApp continued to dominate both for news and other purposes, jumping up 13pp to 56% for news.

One of the biggest challenges facing legacy media outlets is the proliferation of what are known locally as 'homeless' media, upstart sites on social media that use bots to crawl legitimate news sites and scrape content, at best republishing it in its entirety, at worst sensationalising it so that it is no longer accurate. The spread of these sites has likely contributed to declining trust in media, as some Indonesians are unsure about the difference between legitimate news outlets and the 'fake news' offered by homeless media.

Growing concerns about Indonesia's democratic backsliding have focused on the new Criminal Code, passed in 2022 and set to be implemented in 2026. The Indonesian Press Council has noted that 17 articles have the capacity to threaten press freedom, including bans on insulting the president, the vice-president, state institutions, the flag, and the state ideology of Pancasila.

Journalists' organisations such as the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and the Indonesian Association of Cyber Media (AMSI) have not been passive in the face of these legal and economic threats, proposing ideas that include creating a state-funded journalism 'trust fund', developing new means of blocking AI crawlers, and revising the Copyright Law to include journalistic content.

In keeping with the global average, 17% of Indonesians pay for online news. Yet, as *Tempo*'s digital CEO Wahyu Dhyatmika quipped, 'if only 17% of Indonesians are willing to pay for news, 17% of 280 million is a lot'.

Janet Steele
Professor of Media and Public Affairs and International Affairs, George Washington University

149 https://aji.or.id/system/files/2026-02/catahu-2025-english.pdf
150 https://jakartaglobe.id/news/indonesias-free-meal-program-may-cost-18b-a-year-by-2026
151 https://aji.or.id/system/files/2026-02/catahu-2025-english.pdf
152 https://aji.or.id/informasi/presiden-bunuh-media-lewat-amerika

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

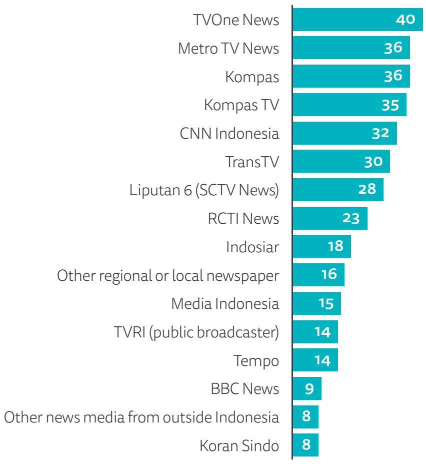
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

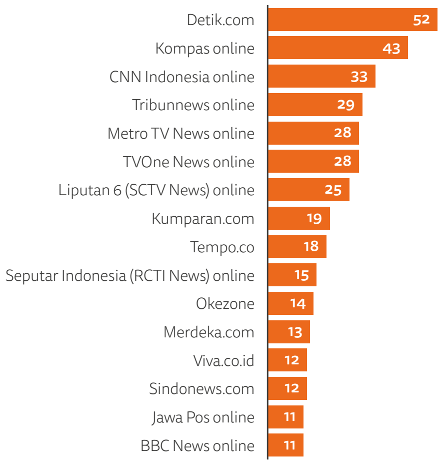
Weekly use online brands

17% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



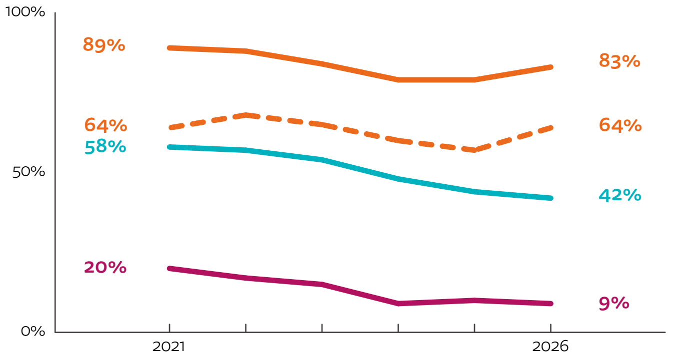
CHANGING MEDIA

Social media as a source of news is on the rise, along with the use of AI and video podcasts on all platforms.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts **17%** (+2)
AI chatbots **12%** (+3)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

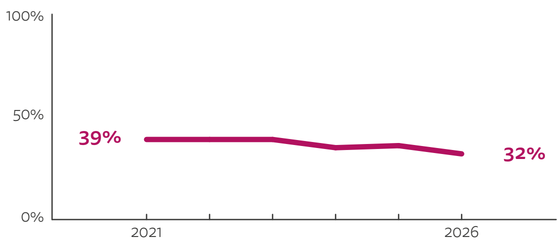
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	56%	(+13)	82%
2	YouTube	47%	(+6)	71%
3	Facebook	44%	(+5)	57%
4	TikTok	43%	(+9)	57%
5	Instagram	34%	(+3)	51%
6	X	10%	(-3)	15%

37% (-2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

While overall trust in media declined from 36% in 2025 to 32%, trust in most individual brands has not fallen, suggesting that audiences are more concerned about the broader news environment than they are with specific outlets.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
32% (-4)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
CNN Indonesia	61%	34%	5%
Detik.com	57%	37%	6%
Jawa Pos	47%	45%	8%
Kompas	61%	34%	5%
Kumparan.com	47%	46%	7%
Liputan 6 (SCTV News)	59%	36%	5%
Merdeka.com	49%	44%	7%
Other local television news	52%	42%	7%
RCTI News	56%	38%	6%
Sindonews.com	48%	44%	8%
Suara.com	46%	47%	7%
Tempo	53%	40%	8%
Tribunnews	50%	42%	8%
TVOne News	58%	34%	8%
TVRI News	58%	37%	5%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: **43.02** | **129**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

JAPAN

Japan's media landscape is characterised by significant print circulation for national and regional broadsheet newspapers and a dense network of television broadcasters, including public broadcaster NHK. However, that dominance is increasingly challenged by social networks and video platforms in terms of influence and profitability. Legacy outlets have struggled to maintain their position as the primary source of information for voters in recent major elections.

Population	**123m**
Internet penetration	**86%**

The circulation of Japan's daily newspapers continues to decrease steadily; in October 2025, total circulation fell to 24m copies, representing a 6.57% drop from the previous year. The readership is ageing and the industry's influence is waning.

At the same time, the success of legacy media's digital transformation has been limited. *Nikkei*, or the *Japan Economic Daily*, which owns the *Financial Times*, achieved 1.21m digital subscribers (including affiliated media, e.g. Nikkei Prime), nearly matching its print subscriber base of 1.25m. In contrast, the digital subscriber count for *Asahi Shimbun*, one of the earliest adopters of digital platforms, has remained around 300,000 in recent years, despite the paper losing millions of print readers over the last decade. Meanwhile, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, with a circulation of nearly 6m, continues with its bundle-only policy to maintain healthy print circulation figures. Smaller regional newspapers are further behind, with 74 out of 79 local and national newspapers generating less than 5% of their revenue from digital sales (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors 2026). In terms of digital-born brands, Yahoo! retains a strong weekly news reach, having been a portal giant in the early days of the internet in Japan, while LINE News leverages its position as Japan's dominant messaging app. Both offer aggregated news alongside original content.

As the challenges for newspapers continue, *Asahi Shimbun*'s CEO Katsu Tsunoda has clarified its stance of 'pivoting entirely toward AI integration'.[153] This involves, for example, science reporters using AI to summarise research papers and implementing systems where reporters are only alerted to high-priority late-night police press releases. However, he emphasises that obtaining primary information through reporting remains a task exclusively for humans. News app SmartNews has partnered with the YouTuber management firm UUUM to convert hobby-related videos into text for distribution using AI.[154] Outside of AI initiatives, the *Mainichi Shimbun*, Japan's oldest daily, has produced documentaries focusing on the national elections in 2025 and 2026.

The broadcast sector is also struggling to maintain its viewership, particularly among younger audiences. The time people spend watching live weekday TV has been declining since it was overtaken by online in 2021, according to the government's annual *Survey on Information and Communication Media Usage Time and Information*.The latest figures from 2024 show that only over-60s spend more time watching live television than using the internet.[155] Against this backdrop, Japan's five major commercial broadcasters are working to expand access to their content through TVer, a free streaming service they jointly operate. The platform offers ad-supported streaming of drama and entertainment programmes, and livestreamed terrestrial broadcasts. It currently hosts around 800 programmes and attracts 44m monthly users.

The 2025 revision of the Broadcasting Act redefined online services as a mandatory function for public broadcaster NHK. Regular users of the newly launched NHK ONE online and app are charged if they do not already pay the television licence fee. However, it remains unclear whether the new service will compensate for declining income from viewing fees.

Changes in media consumption are becoming evident in political discourse, as was the case in the 2026 snap election. The country's first female prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, secured a landslide victory as skilfully crafted social media content portrayed her as relatable and energetic. The ruling party's campaign video also featured her heavily and was viewed 130m times on YouTube.[156] However, a *Nikkei* investigation found that, among all election-related videos, videos from anonymous creators accounted for 55% of the total views,[157] highlighting the difficulty of detecting unverified information and foreign influence operations.

The surge of short-form video during the 2025 Upper House election and the 2026 general election presented new challenges for broadcasters operating under impartiality obligations.

Major stations explored alternatives to the stopwatch balance, and complemented their coverage with broader context, explanation, and fact-checking. NHK uploaded unedited footage and full transcripts of party leaders' campaign-launch speeches and analysed frequently used words. Some commercial broadcasters used 'pre-bunking' to limit the spread of misinformation.

Yasuomi Sawa
Journalist and Professor of Journalism, Waseda University
Reiko Saisho
NHK, Broadcasting Culture Research Institute

[153] https://note.com/storyhub/n/nc3e870cf234f
[154] https://about.smartnews.com/ja/news/2524.html
[155] https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/001017160.pdf
[156] https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASV2623XSV26UTFK002M.html
[157] https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUC130W60T10C26A2000000/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

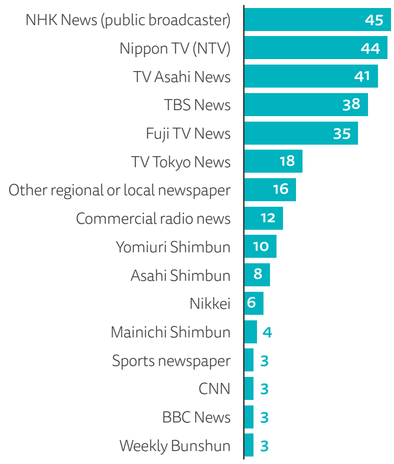
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

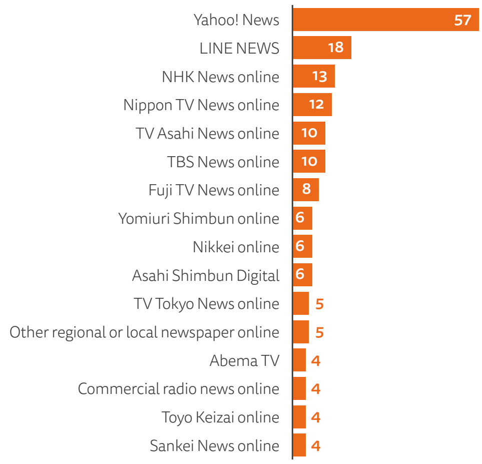
Weekly use online brands

9% (-1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



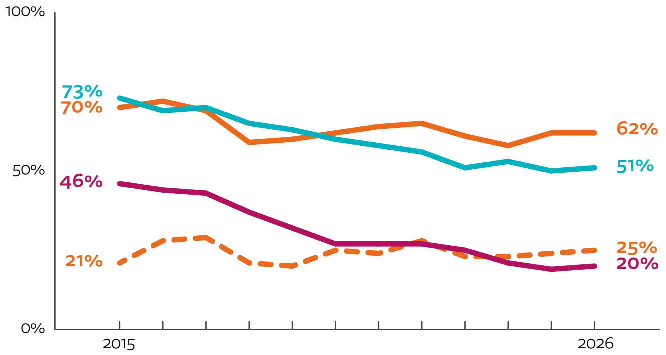
CHANGING MEDIA

Use of traditional and online media has remained largely stable, with the sole exception of AI chatbots, which have increased in adoption not only among younger cohorts but also among individuals aged 35 to 54.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2015–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 3% (-)
AI chatbots 9% (+4)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

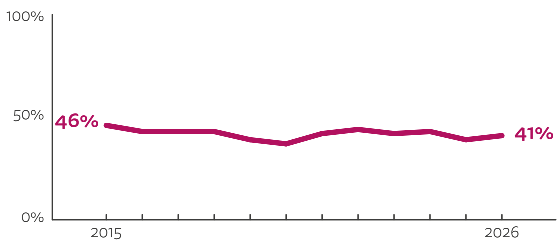
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	30%	(+7)	71%
2	Line	24%	(+5)	66%
3	X	20%	(+3)	41%
4	Instagram	9%	(+3)	36%
5	TikTok	7%	(+1)	25%
6	Facebook	5%	(+2)	18%

12% (+1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news, which fell sharply in the previous year in the context of a sex scandal involving a major television network, may be starting to bounce back. NHK remains the most trusted news source of those asked about in the survey.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2015–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

41% (+2)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Asahi Shimbun	45%	34%	21%
Fuji TV News	46%	34%	20%
Mainichi Shimbun	45%	37%	18%
NHK News (public broadcaster)	57%	28%	16%
Nikkei	51%	36%	14%
Nippon TV News	50%	34%	16%
Other local newspaper	51%	36%	13%
Sankei Shimbun	43%	38%	19%
TBS News	49%	33%	18%
TV Asahi News	49%	32%	18%
TV Tokyo News	49%	38%	13%
Weekly Bunshun	25%	40%	36%
Weekly Shincho	26%	44%	31%
Yahoo! News	46%	39%	14%
Yomiuri Shimbun	46%	37%	17%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS | **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** | Score: 62.9 | **62**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

MALAYSIA

Malaysia's contemporary media landscape is currently characterised by a sharp paradox. The long-awaited Malaysian Media Council finally became operational in 2025, offering the prospect of genuine self-regulation for the first time in decades, yet a succession of incidents – physical attacks on journalists and arrests linked to reporting – have tested those hopes.

Population	36m
Internet penetration	98%

The passing of the Malaysian Media Council Act saw the establishment of the Malaysian Media Council (MMC) in June 2025. Its elected Governing Board comprises representatives from media companies, journalists, broadcasters, civil society organisations (CSOs), academics, and government agencies. This marks a departure from decades of government-led media oversight.

The MMC has moved quickly to take public positions on press freedom incidents. In January, it called the arrest of journalist Rex Tan for asking a question deemed racially sensitive at a public lecture on Gaza 'unnecessary and punitive' and demanded his immediate release.[158]

Events such as a daytime attack on sports journalist Haresh Deol in November 2025 have caused further unease among journalists. Deol had been reporting on the Football Association of Malaysia's (FAM) heritage-player document scandal, in which FIFA sanctioned FAM and seven players for forgery and falsification linked to eligibility documents. Deol said two men attacked him while a third filmed the incident, prompting concern among media freedom groups such as Gerakan Media Merdeka about possible intimidation. Police subsequently arrested a suspect, who was charged with assault and criminal intimidation, pleaded guilty, and was later fined MYR 2,000 (about US$500).

The major recent policy development has been the implementation in January 2026 of the Online Safety Act (OSA) 2025, which extends regulatory oversight of platforms. It means major platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are now automatically subject to a wider set of Malaysian laws. The government has said that, with the rapid expansion of digital media, the OSA will enhance the protection of children, prevent online scams, and help in combating fraud. However, at least three media freedom CSOs, the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ), Article 19, and Sinar Project, issued a lengthy statement decrying this latest move by the government. For them, 'the risk of abuse and selective enforcement is high, with growing evidence of targeted suppression or arbitrary takedowns'.[159]

Malaysiakini, the country's oldest independent news portal, endured a troubled year. Having already laid off staff as part of a restructuring exercise announced in 2024, it was rocked in March 2026 by the discovery that MYR 3m (approximately US$750,000) had been diverted from its subsidiaries by former employees to entities suspected by the company of running unlicensed investment schemes. The funds represented a significant part of the company's reserves built up over more than a decade.

Around a third (32%) of Malaysians now access content from influencers and content creators who are focused on the news. The major influencers are popular, often young(ish) politicians and activists. Former UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) youth head, Khairy Jamaluddin, has his weekly Keluar Sekejap podcast, and retired politician and technocrat Idris Jala and his son, Leon, also have a weekly podcast, The Game of Impossible. Both use Spotify as their platform. Activist Roshinee Mookaiah provides a more critical stance on Instagram. Together with former minister Rafizi Ramli with his Yang Berhenti Menteri podcast on YouTube, these influencers, sometimes with invited guests, provide interpretations and commentary on current news, which many consider refreshing, independent, and entertaining.

Elsewhere in the industry other individuals are also in the limelight. Astro Awani lost its young, enterprising Editor-in-Chief, Ashwad Ismail, to the national broadcaster RTM as its Director-General of Broadcasting. Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Johari Abdul Ghani, who is a major shareholder (25%) of media giant Media Prima, saw his son, Amir Nashrin, join him on the shareholder list with his own acquisition of a 7.96% share in March.

Total advertising expenditure declined by 22% in 2025 and is expected to shrink a further 9.5% in 2026. Digital advertising expenditure plunged 39% in 2025, 'amid intensifying competition from social media, search engines and live commerce platforms'.[160]

Artificial intelligence has allegedly compounded these pressures, with Media Chinese International Limited (MCIL), parent company of the main Chinese-language media *Sin Chew Daily*, *China Press*, and *Nanyang Siang Pau*, retrenching 44% of its workforce in mid-2025 as it integrated AI across its operations.[161]

Zaharom Nain
Allianz Centre for Governance, University of Malaya
Aril Mikhail
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[158] Majlis Media Malaysia/Malaysian Media Council, Press Statements and Council Announcements, June 2025–March 2026. https://majlismedia.my/
[159] https://cijmalaysia.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Press-statement-on-eKYC.pdf
[160] https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/highlight/2026/01/28/media-industry-to-face-a-milder-contraction-in-2026
[161] https://www.campaignasia.com/article/media-chinese-to-layoff-44-employees-in-malaysia-and-replace-them-with-ai/43952l5x1a38knbzw5oilch4z0

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

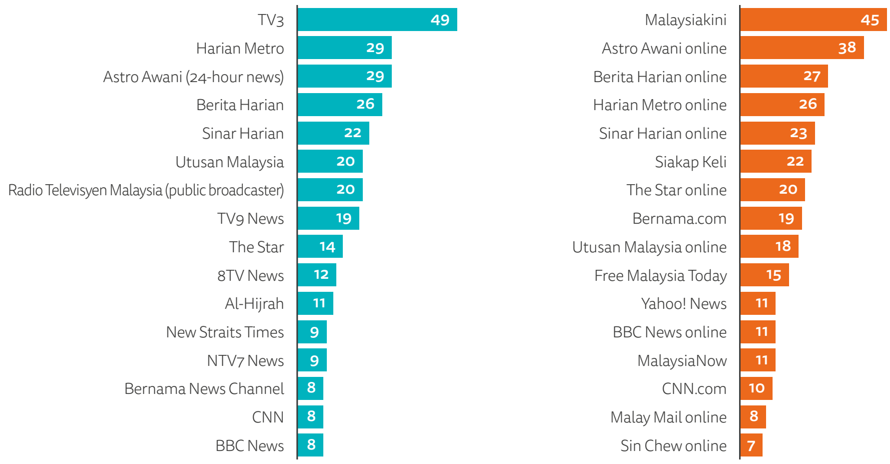
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT | **ONLINE**



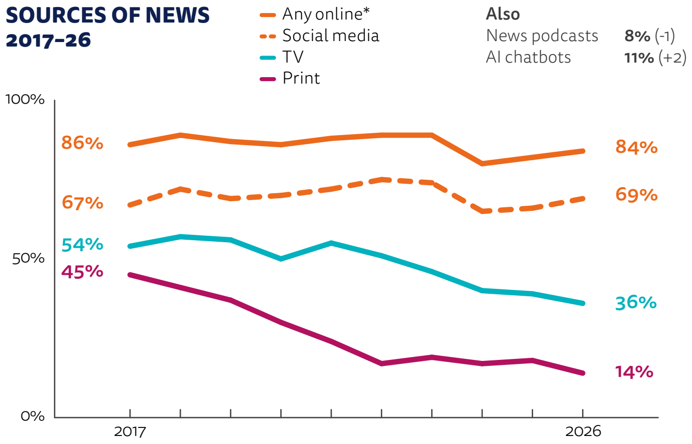
18% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

CHANGING MEDIA

Print has collapsed since 2017, from 45% to 14%. Television has also declined, from 54% to 36% over the past decade. Online news and social media for news have risen steadily since 2024.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

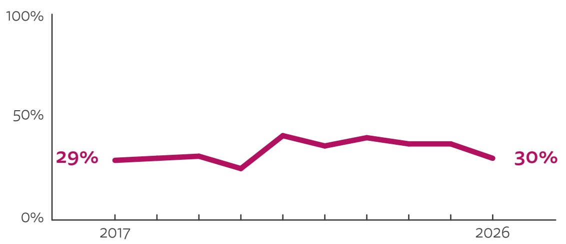
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	50%	(+8)	82%
2	Facebook	49%	(+2)	66%
3	TikTok	45%	(+5)	62%
4	YouTube	41%	(+3)	71%
5	Instagram	24%	(-)	46%
6	Telegram	16%	(-3)	38%

39% (-) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Peaking at 41% in 2021, trust in news stood at 40% in 2023, likely reflecting optimism around a new reformist government, stabilised at 37% for two consecutive years, but dropped significantly to 30% this year, as the optimism appears to have waned. Broadcast brands, led by Astro Awani, remain the most trusted.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 30% (-7)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Astro Awani	64%	27%	9%
Berita Harian	61%	29%	10%
Bernama.com	55%	34%	11%
Free Malaysia Today	48%	38%	13%
Harian Metro	60%	30%	10%
Malaysiakini	58%	31%	10%
Other regional or local newspaper	56%	34%	10%
Radio Televisyen Malaysia	61%	30%	10%
Sin Chew Daily	42%	39%	19%
Sinar Harian	58%	31%	11%
The Star	54%	35%	11%
TV3 News	62%	28%	10%
TV9 News	58%	31%	11%
Utusan Malaysia	58%	30%	12%
Yahoo! News	46%	40%	14%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **52.73** **95**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PHILIPPINES

Efforts to regulate online disinformation have intensified in the Philippines, with lawmakers proposing new penalties and authorities launching initiatives with major news organisations. These moves come as the news media industry is being reshaped by shifts in distribution, platform use, and audience behaviour, alongside persistent press freedom concerns.

Population	**117m**
Internet penetration	**67%**

Lawmakers in the 20th Congress are proposing criminal penalties, regulatory oversight, and takedown mechanisms for allegedly false or misleading online content. Although not yet implemented, this package of bills would allow authorities to order the removal of disinformation and impose fines or prison terms on publishers, platforms, or individuals who fail to comply.

Some proposals include safeguards for legitimate journalism. However, a number of proposals look set to treat journalists as aggravating offenders, triggering maximum penalties if they are found liable for spreading disinformation. Press freedom advocates warn that vague definitions and broad takedown powers could expand state authority over freedom of speech.

The government has also stepped up other anti-disinformation initiatives. In March, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) launched 'Oplan Kontra Fake News', bringing together major newspapers to counter false narratives, and later set up an Anti-Fake-News Desk and reporting platform where the public can flag suspicious content for assessment and possible referral to agencies. By May, the initiative had moved into enforcement, with the PCO saying it had referred several cases to the Justice department after the arrest of a former broadcaster over a cyberlibel case involving allegedly fabricated medical records of President Marcos.

ABS-CBN has continued running without a broadcast franchise since 2020 by shifting to a platform-distribution strategy and expanding partnerships with other networks and platforms. The company has also faced internal tensions tied to a family dispute among its owners, including a rejected proposal to shut down the network.

Over the past year ABS-CBN has revived well-known news brands across multiple channels. The network relaunched its streaming service iWant, which now carries news programming such as ANC and DZMM TeleRadyo, and revived the DZMM Radyo Patrol 630 brand and its iconic call sign through a joint venture with Prime Media, now operating across radio, television, and streaming platforms.

DZMM Radyo Patrol 630 has resumed 24-hour programming and brought back veteran broadcasters. Data from this year's *Digital News Report* suggest that the brand restoration and multi-platform strategy has helped rebuild its reach. Offline DZMM climbed back to reach 15% of Filipinos, though still below the 20% reach it enjoyed in 2020 before the franchise loss.

New entrant and digital-native Bilyonaryo has expanded into broadcast. Its Bilyonaryo News Channel reaches audiences through cable and smart-TV platforms such as Samsung TV Plus and TCLtv+, and it has also entered the North American market. Sister outlets, including Politiko, Abante, DWAR/Abante Radyo, and Mellow 94.7 BFM, reinforce its cross-platform reach. Included for the first time in this year's *Digital News Report*, Bilyonaryo recorded 15% online reach and 8% offline reach, partly reflecting the growing importance of connected-TV consumption, with 53% of Filipinos accessing news via smart TVs.

Content creators are also playing a growing role. About one-third of people (36%) report consuming content from creators or influencers mainly focused on the news. A larger proportion (46%) get some content from creators who mostly cover other topics but sometimes discuss current events. Many of the most popular journalist-creators are affiliated with established media organisations, though they often focus on softer or personality-driven content.

Industry groups have also experimented with collaborative models to support local journalism. The Philippine Press Institute's (PPI) News Commons initiative, launched during the pandemic to aggregate content from member newspapers, began distributing advertising revenues in mid-2025 to participating community publications. PPI and two community outlets also partnered with Rappler to create public chat rooms for shared storytelling and audience engagement.

Newsrooms are also experimenting with artificial intelligence tools. Fact-checking organisation VERA Files launched SEEK, an AI tool trained on its fact-checks archive, while smaller regional outlets are testing AI-assisted production. Palawan News now uses generative tools to produce daily video news with limited staff. Some organisations have begun publishing AI policies, though industry standards are still uneven.

Press freedom remains a prominent issue. Journalists have had some success using legal remedies to challenge harassment and intimidation. In November, a local court voided the National Telecommunications Commission's 2022 order to block alternative news site Bulatlat and 25 other websites. An anti-disinformation group has also secured identifying information from Meta linked to accounts involved in the red-tagging of a Mindanao journalist through arbitration facilitated by the National Privacy Commission.

But concerns nonetheless persist. Four radio broadcasters were killed after the May 2025 mid-term elections, bringing the number of journalists killed under the Marcos administration to ten. In January, community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio was convicted of financing terrorism after nearly six years in detention and has since become a global press freedom icon.

Yvonne T. Chua
University of the Philippines

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

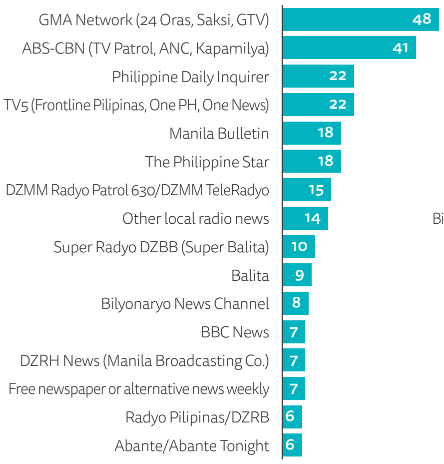
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

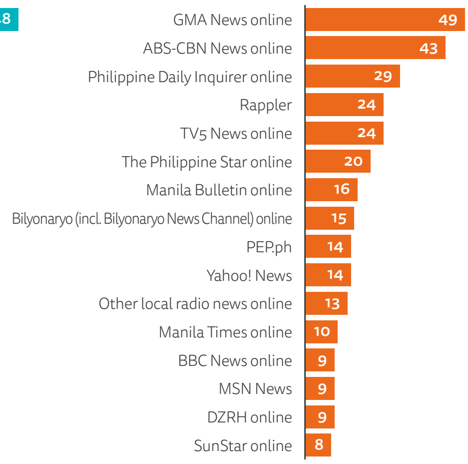
13% (-2) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



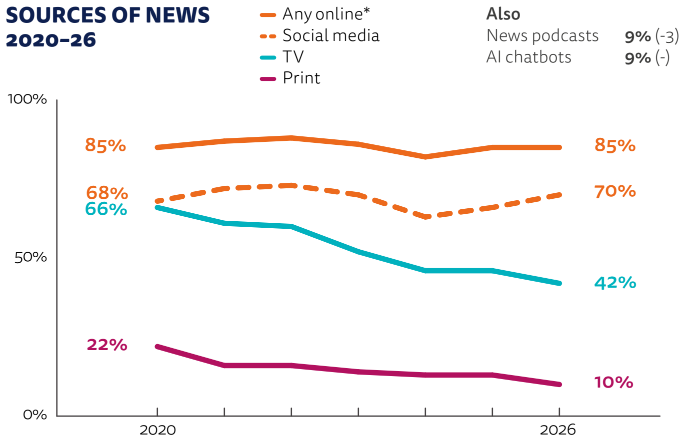
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Social media remain the dominant source of news in the Philippines, while television and print continue their long-term decline and online news use has plateaued.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2020–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

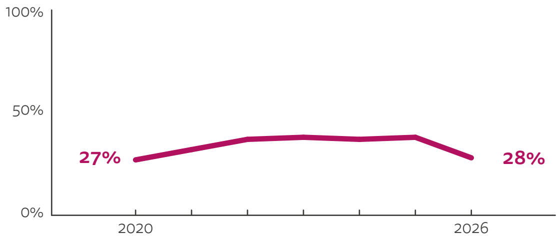
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	72%	(+7)	84%
2	YouTube	48%	(-2)	75%
3	Facebook Messenger	33%	(+6)	73%
4	TikTok	33%	(+4)	53%
5	Instagram	15%	(+1)	38%
6	X	9%	(-2)	17%

51% (+3) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news fell by 10pp this year, even as trust in major brands held steady. Fewer Filipinos now access news directly via TV, radio, or websites, while social media use remains stable, suggesting that more people encounter journalism through platform feeds shaped by polarisation, political messaging, and disinformation.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2020–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

28% (-10)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Abante/Abante Tonight	46%	39%	15%
ABS-CBN	60%	25%	15%
DZMM Radyo Patrol /DZMM TeleRadyo	60%	29%	10%
DZRH	56%	34%	10%
GMA Network	66%	23%	11%
Manila Bulletin	59%	30%	11%
Other regional or local newspaper	54%	36%	11%
Philippine Daily Inquirer	61%	28%	11%
PTV	51%	35%	15%
Radyo Pilipinas	51%	38%	11%
Rappler	46%	29%	25%
SunStar	48%	39%	13%
Super Radyo DZBB (Super Balita)	58%	31%	11%
The Philippine Star	59%	29%	11%
TV5/One PH	59%	31%	10%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **46.79** **114**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SINGAPORE

Legacy brands continue to dominate Singapore's news landscape in terms of audience use and trust, reflecting a small market long shaped by a de facto duopoly and tight state regulation. As audiences increasingly turn to digital platforms, social media, and AI-mediated news consumption, media organisations are facing layoffs, restructuring, and ownership changes.

Population	**5.9m**
Internet penetration	**94%**

Channel News Asia (CNA) (47%) remains the most-used online news source in Singapore. CNA is part of the state-owned Mediacorp, which operates most television and radio stations in the country. Its portfolio includes the 24-hour news network CNA (used weekly by 31%), English-language Channel 5 (22%), and Mandarin-language Channel 8 (21%). In September 2025, Mediacorp announced that it was laying off 93 employees.

State-supported non-profit SPH Media Trust (SMT) publishes the country's newspaper of record, the English-language *The Straits Times*, whose website (44%) is the third most-used online news source in our data, behind digital-native Mothership.sg (45%). In October 2025, SMT shuttered *The New Paper*, a tabloid founded in 1988, and merged it with its digital platform STOMP, which is known for user-generated content and coverage of viral social media posts.

As part of its 180th anniversary in 2025, SMT revamped its website and mobile app, introducing features such as an AI-powered newsfeed and short article summaries. CNA has also started an investigative unit using AI, data analysis, and OSINT tools to report on disinformation.

Independent media players have also seen changes to ownership dynamics, with digital media outlet Rice Media being sold to a social media agency alongside staff layoffs earlier this year. Global advertising giant Publicis acquired Hepmil Media Group, the team behind SGAG, a digital content producer focused on young audiences, and other Southeast Asian meme and creator brands, as part of their social media push.

In November 2025, Singapore passed the new Online Safety Bill to better protect victims of online harms. While the bill aims to focus on addressing online harms such as inauthentic material or deepfake abuse and reputationally harmful statements, critics note the government's growing power to direct platforms to take down harmful content.[162]

The government also continues to enforce the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA), which grants the government the authority to order the publication of corrections to online content that it considers erroneous. Refusal to comply may result in takedown orders, which can also be issued directly to technology platforms and internet service providers.

POFMA can also label news outlets as a Declared Online Location (DOL): such outlets have to carry warning notices for visitors and are prohibited from profiting from content deemed to spread falsehoods. Following the May 2025 elections, which saw the ruling party win 87 of 97 seats, the government issued multiple correction orders to individual users, platforms, and independent news outlets.[163] This includes TOC, an independent local news site known for its political commentary. The government also blocked access in Singapore to a Malaysia news portal, MalaysiaNow, that did not comply with earlier correction orders.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr., **Lydia Cheng**, *and* **Matthew Chew**
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

[162] https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/singapore-parliament-passes-online-harms-bill-after-more-than-eight-hours-of-debate
[163] https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/pofma-order-issued-to-toc-editor-publisher-over-article-alleging-govt-inaction-against-sporeans

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

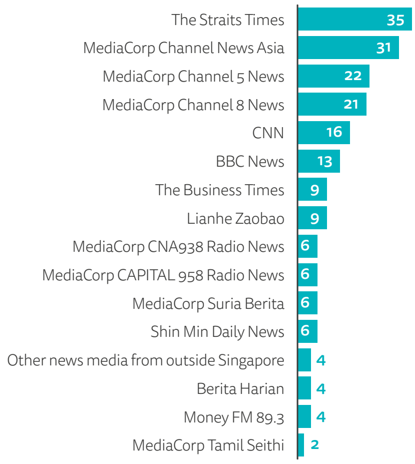
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

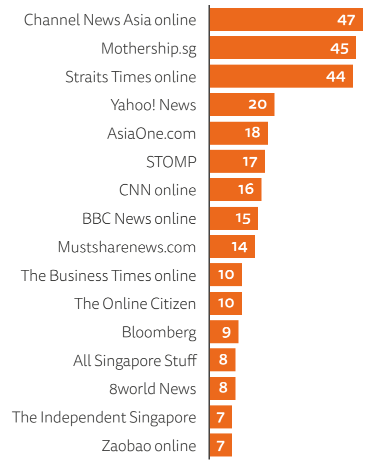
17% (+1) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

PAY

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Online (87%) and social media (59%) remain the most common ways to access news. Television (40%) and print (17%) have consistently declined in the past several years. Some also access news via AI chatbots (11%) and podcasts (6%). Most participants do not pay for news, with 17% saying they are willing to do so.

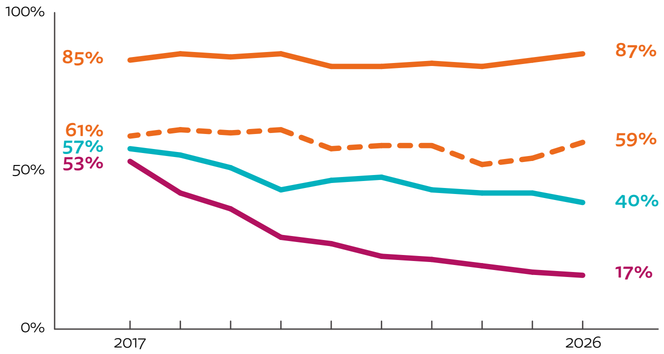
SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26

- Any online*
- Social media
- TV
- Print

Also

News podcasts **6%** (+1)

AI chatbots **11%** (+4)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

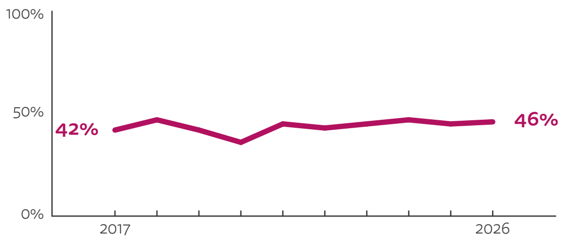
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	40%	(+7)	91%
2	Facebook	38%	(+7)	62%
3	YouTube	35%	(+3)	76%
4	Instagram	29%	(+5)	61%
5	TikTok	22%	(+4)	45%
6	Telegram	17%	(-)	45%

26% (-1) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news has been stable for the last three years. All major news brands recorded gains in brand trust, CNA (78%) and *The Straits Times* (77%) are the most trusted news brand in Singapore. The Online Citizen, which had been declared a DOL (Declared Online Location) since July 2023, also recorded a 3pp increase in its trust score (41%) from the previous year.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 46% (+1)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 44.57	123/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
AsiaOne	63%	29%	8%
BBC News	67%	24%	8%
CNN	67%	24%	9%
Lianhe Zaobao	66%	26%	8%
MediaCorp Channel 5 News	76%	19%	6%
MediaCorp Channel 8 News	73%	21%	6%
MediaCorp Channel News Asia	78%	17%	5%
MediaCorp Radio News	71%	23%	6%
Mothership.sg	58%	30%	12%
mustsharenews.com	43%	41%	17%
Shin Min Daily	60%	30%	10%
The New Paper	62%	29%	10%
The Online Citizen	41%	40%	18%
The Straits Times	77%	16%	7%
Yahoo! News	55%	34%	11%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

SOUTH KOREA

Across all age groups, news consumption via online portals is declining, but growing rapidly on video platforms, especially short-form content. As media outlets begin to integrate AI more fully into their operations, the AI Act coming into force and the relaunch of Naver's News Partnership Committee suggest that the South Korean news industry has entered a period of structural transformation.

Population	**52m**
Internet penetration	**98%**

The Framework Act on the Development of Artificial Intelligence and the Creation of a Foundation for Trust (the AI Act), which took effect in January 2026, marked a significant institutional shift in the South Korean media landscape. The law mandates labelling for generative AI outputs and establishes measures to ensure transparency and safety. As AI is increasingly used across the news production and distribution process, from summarisation and automated editing to image and video generation and recommendation systems, the law stipulates that users must be able to distinguish between journalist-authored and AI-generated content. Accountability and transparency are especially important for sensitive topics such as elections, natural disasters, criminal cases, and social conflict. However, concerns remain over certain issues such as labelling requirements, the scope of what the law describes as 'high-impact AI', and details of accountability for news and other content. Moreover, some worry that if implementation leans too heavily towards promotion of AI sector development, protections for copyright and user trust may prove insufficient, particularly in journalism.

At the same time, South Korea's media landscape is being shaped by both the political prominence of 'Sovereign AI' and the practical adoption of AI in newsrooms. In August 2025, the government launched a Sovereign AI policy, centred on a 'National AI foundation model' project, a strategic move to operate South Korea-specific data and infrastructure domestically. For the news industry, however, copyright protection and compensation mechanisms for news content used in AI training remain unsettled. Media companies are closely watching and contributing to sovereign AI policy development while continuing to deploy AI in practice.

In the broadcasting sector, two issues have come to the fore: universal viewing rights for major events and public support for local media. JTBC's exclusive rights to the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, and the subsequent breakdown of resale negotiations with the three terrestrial broadcasters, reignited controversy over whether events of national importance should be concentrated in the hands of a single distributor. Simultaneously, the survival of local broadcasters is under threat. The Regional Broadcasting Association protested against recent budget cuts, arguing that such funding is a necessary public investment to uphold residents' right to know and maintain the regional public sphere. Funding challenges are further intensifying as broadcast advertising revenue continues to decline. Taken together, the sector faces a structural shift as major events move to platforms and pay TV, while struggling to secure enough funding to fulfil its public mandate.

In early 2026, the governance framework for news distribution on internet portals was overhauled. Given Naver's very significant role in news consumption, whether a media outlet is admitted to a portal directly affects its traffic, influence, and advertising revenue. The review system that determines which media outlets can be carried by portals has long functioned as one of the key institutions in South Korea's news ecosystem. Naver's News Partnership Evaluation Committee, launched in 2015, suspended its activities in 2023 due to controversies over alleged political bias and fairness, creating an institutional vacuum in both new-entry evaluations and the oversight of problematic outlets. In February, Naver launched a newly restructured News Partnership Committee. By emphasising procedural legitimacy and fairness in both partnership reviews and operational evaluation, it seeks to strengthen the reliability and accountability of news distribution while managing low-quality content such as clickbait and advertorials.

Portal-based news consumption is gradually declining. The 2025 *Media Users in Korea Report* shows that portal use has fallen each year since 2021,[164] while news consumption on online video platforms, especially of short-form content, more than doubled year-on-year. These formats are not only slowing the long-term decline in overall news consumption but also increasing total news use. This reflects a rapid shift from reading to watching and points to significant change in the channels and formats through which users access news. News consumption of influencer content on YouTube is growing quickly, raising concerns for some about information reliability.

Hyun-Woo Lee, **Chang-Young Jeon**, and **Soeun Yang**
Senior Researchers, Korea Press Foundation

[164] https://www.kpf.or.kr/front/research/consumerDetail.do?miv_pageNo=&miv_pageSize=&total_cnt=&LISTOP=&mode=W&seq=600224&link_g_topmenu_id=676f2f0f377b4b19840685a46f69a233&link_g_submenu_id=f193a96c92284493b56f35b5f0eb15e3&link_g_homepage=F&reg_stadt=&reg_enddt=&searchkey=all1&searchtxt=

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

19% (-) pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT

Brand	%
MBC News (public broadcaster)	39
KBS News (public broadcaster)	38
YTN	35
JTBC News	33
SBS News	32
YonhapNews TV	30
TV Chosun News	18
MBN News	16
Channel A News	15
Chosun Ilbo	14
Joonang Ilbo	11
Dong-A Ilbo	10
Maeil Business Newspaper	10
Hankyoreh Shinmun	9
Korea Economic Daily	9
Kyunghyang Shinmun	8

ONLINE

Brand	%
Naver (news portal)	56
MBC News online	27
YTN online	24
KBS News online	23
JTBC News online	22
SBS News online	21
Daum (news portal)	20
YonhapNews TV online	20
Yonhap News online	15
Chosun Ilbo online	14
TV Chosun online	14
MBN (Maeil Broadcsast Network) online	12
Hankyoreh online	11
Korean Economic Daily online	11
Joongang Ilbo online	10
Channel A News online	10

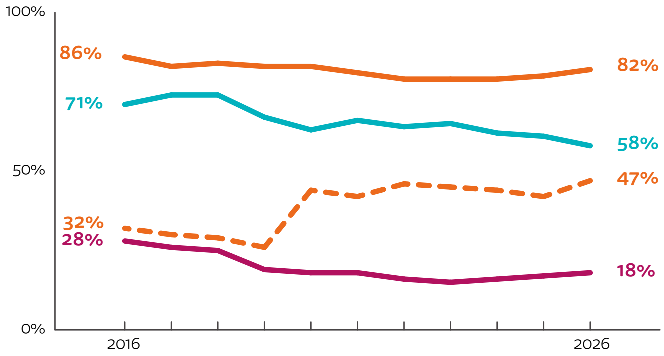
CHANGING MEDIA

Online portals such as Naver are the most widely used source of news, followed by television, social media, and print. Video and short-form usage is rising, and AI chatbot news consumption is notably high.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2016–26

Any online*
Social media
TV
Print

Also
News podcasts 13% (-4)
AI chatbots 14% (+7)



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

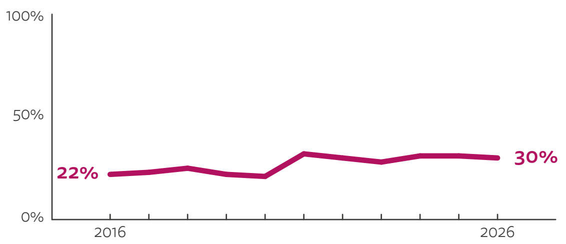
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	61%	(+11)	80%
2	Kakao/KakaoTalk	30%	(+15)	78%
3	Instagram	19%	(+8)	48%
4	TikTok	16%	(+7)	37%
5	Facebook	12%	(+6)	27%
6	X	9%	(+3)	17%

29% (-2) AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news remains largely stable at 30%. Trust in major media outlets increased this year; broadcasters (KBS, SBS, MBC, Channel A) and newspapers (*Hankyoreh*, *Kyunghyang*, *Joongang*, *Dong-A*) all saw gains. Broadcasters, led by MBC (60%), JTBC (59%), SBS (56%), YTN (54%), and KBS (53%), remain more trusted than newspapers.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2016–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST 30% (-1)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Channel A News	46%	28%	27%
Chosun Ilbo	40%	26%	34%
Dong-A Ilbo	42%	28%	29%
Hankyoreh	47%	29%	25%
Joongang Ilbo	42%	30%	28%
JTBC News	59%	23%	18%
KBS News	53%	25%	22%
Kyunghyang Shinmun	44%	32%	23%
MBC News	60%	19%	21%
MBN News	46%	31%	23%
Other regional or local newspaper	40%	36%	24%
SBS News	56%	25%	19%
TV Chosun News	42%	24%	34%
YonhapNews TV	52%	29%	19%
YTN	54%	27%	19%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026

Score: **69.12**

47 / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

TAIWAN

While Taiwan's commercial media have restructured to prioritise short-form video and social content in response to platform dominance, this digital shift has yet to reverse stagnant financial returns. Conversely, public and niche media are achieving sustainability by pivoting away from broad reach towards deep audience engagement, community building, and knowledge monetisation.

Population	23m
Internet penetration	93%

Over the past decade, Taiwan's media practitioners have struggled to keep pace with rapid technological shifts and, more recently, AI-driven SEO. In the same period, advertising revenue for the five major traditional media categories nearly halved (-47%) according to the Taipei Media Services Agency Association.[165] While digital advertising skyrocketed by over 200%, the vast majority of these gains were captured by US-based platforms. Traditional media's digital earnings – including ads and YouTube profit-sharing – remain insufficient to offset the massive losses in traditional advertising markets.

To mitigate losses, several news organisations have undergone significant restructuring. 42% of Taiwanese consumers now utilise social media for news, and news outlets have expanded digital teams to prioritise short-form text and video that's tailored to these platforms. With Taiwan generating 21% of global Threads traffic,[166] media are shifting towards 'personified engagement', adopting a more human and relatable voice to interact with readers. News organisations have simultaneously cut departments and personnel dedicated to in-depth, investigative reporting.

TVBS, a privately owned news network, pivoted to digital production and ranks at the top of this study for both traditional and digital news usage (41% and 31%, respectively). The network, however, continued to register limited digital revenue growth. This widening gap has led to a severe decline in profitability, with TVBS reportedly facing its first-ever loss this year. Consequently, the network has initiated austerity measures and let go of approximately 45 employees from traditional news roles, such as photojournalists and regional correspondents.

Major news media associations in Taiwan have been advocating for 'news funding legislation' since 2021, including proposing mechanisms such as mandatory bargaining between digital platforms and news media, alongside a platform tax to establish a 'news development fund'. In June 2025, a joint petition calling for legislative action was launched by Taiwanese communication scholars and industry practitioners under the 'Stop Platform Exploitation, Save Journalism' Action Group.

In 2025, Taiwan's public media group the Taiwan Broadcasting System (TBS), which includes both the Public Television Service (PTS) and the Chinese Television System (CTS), saw one-quarter of its budget frozen by the opposition for six months in the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's parliament. In response, TBS sought to demonstrate the value of public media to secure public support.

During the Mataian Creek dam failure in September 2025, the TBS team trekked directly to the collapse site to produce a 26-part series on resettlement and risk assessment. The series garnered over 2m views, representing nearly 10% of the total population. As a result of building and scaling its Southeast Asian language services, TBS claim the international reach of their services can be twice the size of its domestic audience during major events.

TBS also initiated the 'Public Media AI Chatbot Collaborative Project' to establish an AI ecosystem that connects national media outlets – including CNA, RTI, and TITV – to integrate news archives with authorised data from non-profit groups. The project features a 'traceable' AI chatbot that links responses back to original news sources.

Threads has gained significant traction in Taiwan, with 30% general usage and 14% specifically for news. During Typhoon Danas in July 2025, Threads was used as a decentralised, real-time disaster map, enabling users to share hyper-local updates on water levels and road conditions faster than institutional channels.

Niche outlets *CommonWealth Magazine* and *Business Weekly* have adopted knowledge monetisation strategies to diversify their revenue. As a non-profit organisation, *The Reporter* focuses on narrative journalism – such as the 'Children of the Ruins' series – to analyse systemic policy issues and to seek public donations on the back of its investigative reporting.

Lihyun Lin
National Taiwan University

165 https://maataipei.org/download/2024%E5%AA%92%E9%AB%94%E7%99%BD%E7%9A%AE%E6%9B%B8-2-2-2-2-2-2-2/
166 https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/6323133

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

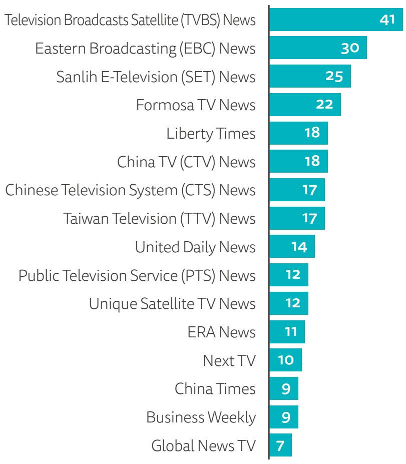
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

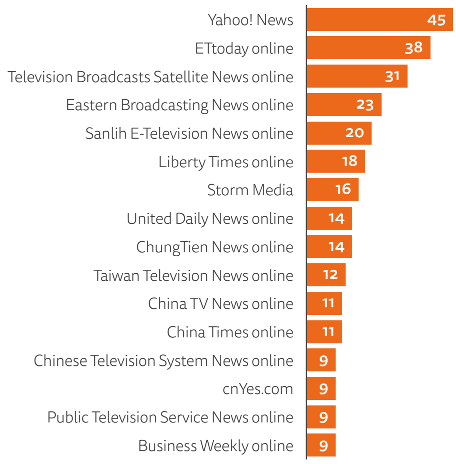
10% (-4) PAY

pay for **ONLINE NEWS**

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



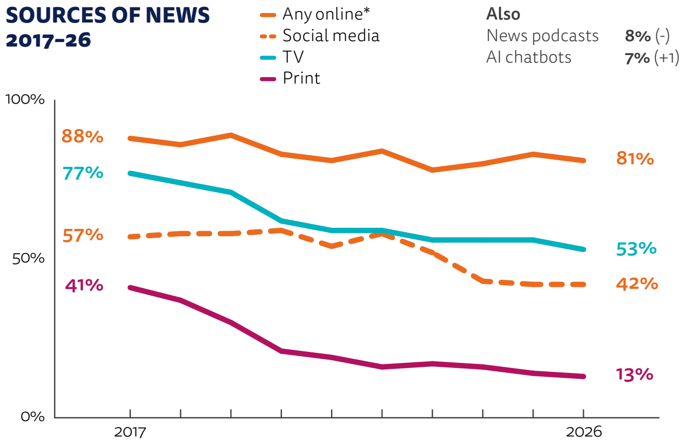
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Print media have become significantly less influential over time, while television and digital news have also experienced slight declines. Social media as a news source remains stable in 2026.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

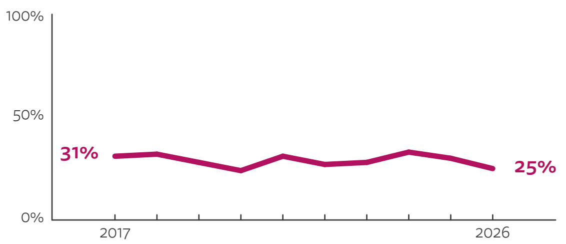
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Line	49%	(+7)	84%
2	YouTube	48%	(+2)	79%
3	Facebook	47%	(+10)	72%
4	Instagram	19%	(+5)	47%
5	Threads	14%	(+6)	30%
6	TikTok	11%	(+1)	25%

19% (-2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news in Taiwan remains low following a further 5pp decline this year, as more partisan outlets have trust scores at the lower end of the spectrum.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2017–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST

25% (-5)

GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Business Weekly	55%	36%	9%
China TV News	46%	38%	16%
Chinese Television System News	46%	39%	15%
CommonWealth Magazine	55%	34%	11%
Eastern Broadcasting Company News	48%	37%	15%
Economic Daily	54%	36%	9%
Ettoday.net	46%	39%	15%
Formosa TV News	40%	31%	29%
Liberty Times	40%	33%	27%
Public Television Service	54%	33%	13%
SET News	36%	31%	33%
Storm Media	36%	41%	24%
TTV News	48%	39%	13%
TVBS News	52%	34%	14%
United Daily	48%	38%	14%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **75.44** **28**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

THAILAND

Legal restrictions, commercial pressure and high social media use have kept the Thai news market vulnerable to persistent flux. In 2026, key events – including an ongoing border war with Cambodia that spread disinformation across every platform, court-ordered leadership changes, and a snap February election – deepened that vulnerability further, producing a fall in news trust and leaving many Thais uncertain how much of what they saw was true.

Population	**72m**
Internet penetration	**91%**

With internet penetration exceeding 90%, Thailand's news landscape is driven by a strong appetite for short-form video on TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Reels. Television is now used by 42% for news weekly, down from 50% in 2024; only 14 of the original 24 TV channels remain, with all licences set to expire in 2029. Tero Radio Eazy FM 102.5, Bangkok's dominant international station for 30 years, closed in 2025 despite migrating to streaming, evidence that going digital is not always sufficient in itself.

Younger Thais navigate these platforms in a distinctive way. Researchers have described how a news encounter begins with short-form video; if interest holds, longer YouTube content follows; further context comes through search.[167] TikTok now reaches 55% for news, putting Thailand among the top countries in our data. However, there is a notable gender asymmetry: its audience skews significantly female while YouTube's skews male.

Thailand is also among the world's leading countries for creator attention (Newman et al. 2025).[168] The February 2026 election and constitutional referendum saw creators such as Anuwat Noom and Pond on News, each with millions of followers, cover events in ways television journalism simply could not. While Facebook leads overall for news use at 69%, among under-25s TikTok has already overtaken it. Kan Jompalang, a citizen journalist, became a polarising nationalist figure during the border conflict – typifying a fast-moving, unregulated space.

Lèse-majesté prosecutions continued through 2025 – at least 1,986 individuals have been charged for political expression since 2014. During the February 2026 election, citizens livestreaming the ballot-box process in Chonburi flagged irregularities and this spread across social media before mainstream outlets could follow, an episode reflective of the growing role of citizen journalists in independent reporting.

Internet advertising overtook television spending for the first time in 2025, as TikTok surged 63% in ad revenue while the total market contracted.[169] Revenue that once sustained editorial operations now flows primarily to platform algorithms rather than newsrooms. Unable to charge readers, outlets have turned to product placement and banner advertising that now saturates every news screen – formats that sometimes erode the boundary between content and commerce and fragment the attention of audiences already habituated to scrolling past.

By 2025, all major Thai media organisations had integrated AI into their production workflows – one of the fastest adoptions in the region. Nation TV introduced AI anchor Natcha in April 2024 and Mono 29 followed with Marisa in May; Thai PBS launched its fact-checking platform 'Verify' in April 2025, processing scores of disinformation items during the border conflict.

While 43% sometimes or often avoid news altogether, online news participation of Thais is relatively high in the form of sharing, commenting, and discussing the news – 37% say they actively shared news content in the last week.

Professor Jantima Kheokao
Asian Network for Public Opinion Research
Dhanaraj Kheokao
Potsdam University, Germany

167 Layered consumption pattern first observed in Thai audience research (Kheokao 2022).
168 In Thailand 43% pay most attention to creators vs 26% for mainstream news brands (4th of 24 markets surveyed). 14 of the top 15 most-mentioned Thai individuals are men; the pattern is consistent globally (85% across all 24 countries).
169 Internet advertising overtook television for the first time in Thailand in 2025: 38.6% of total ad spend vs television's 36.3% (MI Group). TikTok ad revenue grew 63% to 6.776bn baht, overtaking YouTube (DAAT Day, Kantar/DAAT, August 2025). Total market contracted 1.63% (MAAT/AAT; Nation Thailand, November 2025). Internet projected at 45% of total budgets for 2026 (MI Group, February 2026).

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

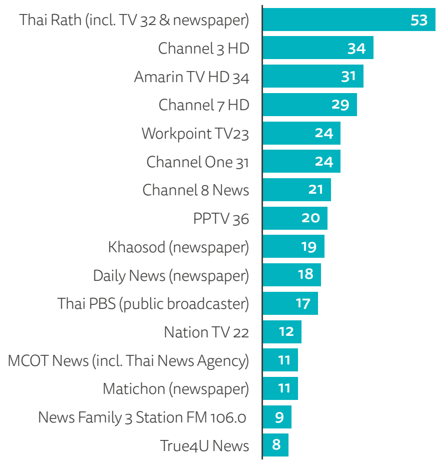
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

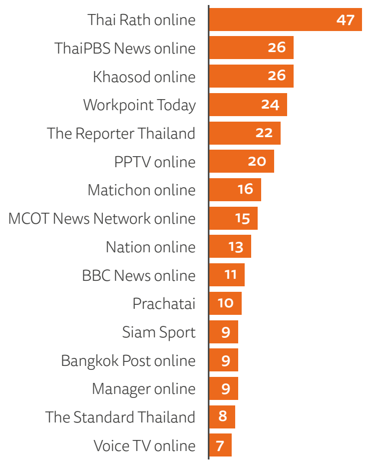
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE

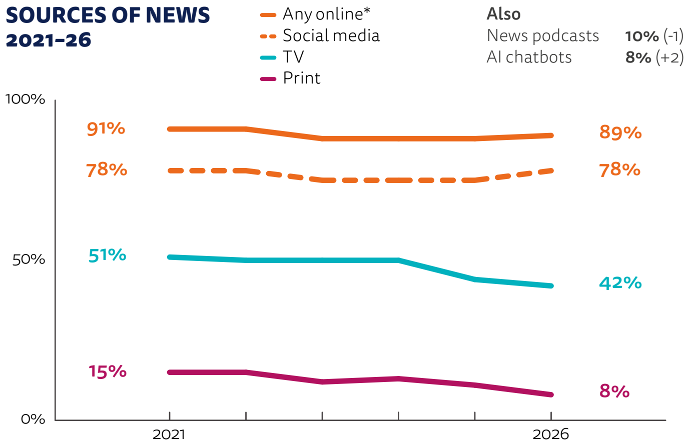


37% (-)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

CHANGING MEDIA

Television has fallen from 50% to 42% of weekly news sources over two years as TikTok matches YouTube; social media is used by 78% of Thais and is the primary discovery route for six in ten.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

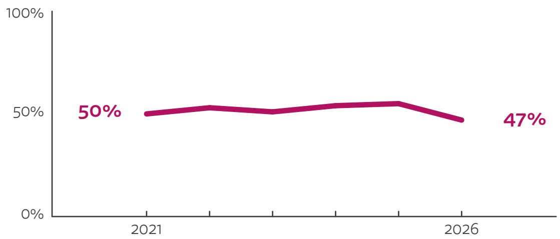
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	69%	(+7)	79%
2	TikTok	55%	(+6)	71%
3	YouTube	54%	(-1)	75%
4	Line	45%	(+4)	69%
5	Facebook Messenger	27%	(+5)	48%
6	Instagram	20%	(+2)	34%

43% (+2) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news held between 50% and 55% from 2021–2025, before dropping to 47% in 2026. A border conflict that generated pervasive disinformation, general elections, and a simultaneous constitutional referendum all likely contributed to the fall. Channel 7 retains the highest brand trust score.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
47% (-8)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 53.97	92/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

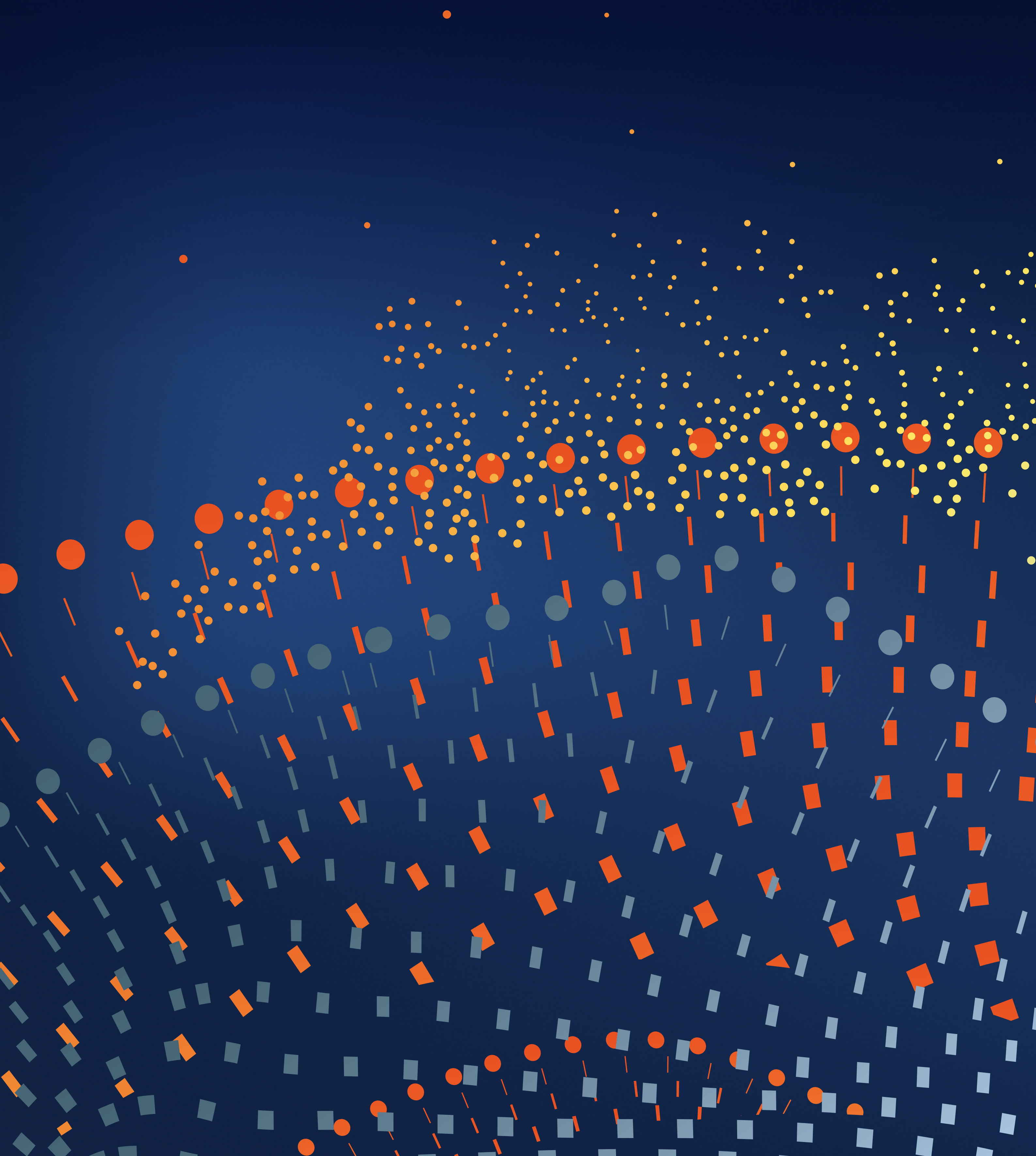
PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Amarin	71%	23%	6%
Bangkok Post	64%	30%	6%
Channel 7 HD	75%	21%	4%
Daily News	64%	30%	6%
Khaosod	64%	29%	7%
Krobkruakao 3	63%	29%	8%
Manager	56%	36%	8%
Matichon	64%	29%	7%
MCOT News Network	67%	28%	6%
Nation	60%	30%	9%
Other regional or local newspaper	57%	35%	7%
PPTV	68%	28%	5%
Thai PBS (public broadcaster)	70%	25%	5%
Thai Rath	69%	25%	6%
Workpoint TV	72%	22%	5%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

SECTION 3

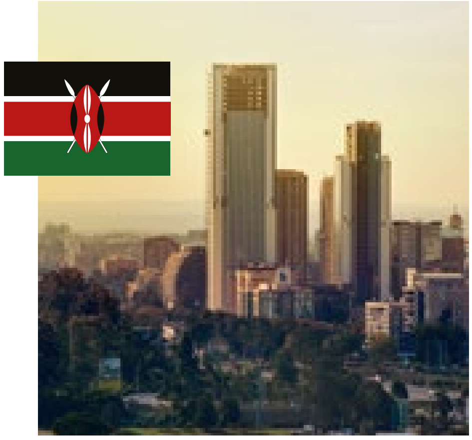


SECTION 3

Analysis by Country and Market

Africa

KENYA



Kenya's media landscape is undergoing profound change. Public interest in news remains high, but political tension, economic strain, and changes in media ownership are reshaping how journalism is produced and sustained, raising fresh questions about independence, sustainability, and who will hold power to account.

Population	**58m**
Internet penetration	**35%**

Survey sample primarily composed of English speakers

Trust in news remains relatively strong. However, it is often selective, anchored more in individual sources than in institutions. At the same time, many say they sometimes avoid the news, pointing to a more complex relationship with information, one that mixes engagement with fatigue.

Traditional media continue to play an important role, but their position is gradually weakening. Television still reaches a broad audience, though fewer people now rely on it as their main source of news. Print remains in long-term decline, and public-service broadcasters are also experiencing reduced reach.

Social media now sits at the centre of the ecosystem, with many encountering news through feeds, clips, and forwarded content rather than going directly to news brands. WhatsApp is particularly influential, acting as a key channel for circulating political information and rumours, and for mobilisation.

Platforms are no longer just places where news is shared; they are increasingly where it is discussed, interpreted, and shaped as events unfold. People are not simply consuming information but engaging with it: reacting, sharing, and debating in real time. Kenya stands out globally for the prominence of this creator layer, with many audiences turning to influencers, activists, and digital personalities for news and commentary. TikTok and YouTube are now central entry points to news and current affairs, particularly for younger audiences. Short explainers, satire, livestreams, and interviews, designed for speed and shareability, are becoming common and popular. Rather than replacing traditional journalism, these formats are reshaping how news is consumed and understood. On X the influence of creators is particularly visible in politics. Influencers, activists, and Spaces hosts operate in ways that resemble a form of parallel talk radio, convening audiences, shaping narratives, and amplifying interpretations in real time.

The financial strain on Kenya's media sector has become more visible over the past year. Advertising revenues continue to migrate to global digital platforms, leaving domestic news organisations competing for a shrinking share of income. At the same time, delayed government advertising payments, reportedly amounting to KSh 866m (about US$6.7m), and owed largely to major legacy groups, including Nation Media Group (NMG), Standard Group, and Mediamax, have intensified these pressures, constraining newsroom operations and contributing to cost-cutting and layoffs.

This has also taken on a political dimension, with some media and press-freedom observers suggesting that government advertising and payment delays may be used to exert pressure on outlets that publish critical coverage.[170] These dynamics are unfolding alongside a shift in state communication strategy, with plans to allocate public funds to social media influencers to promote government initiatives underscoring the growing importance of platform-based communication in shaping public narratives.

The ownership change at Nation Media Group takes on particular significance. NMG is East Africa's largest media house and a historically important institution tied to Kenya's independence-era mission of providing a voice for the majority population at a time when most Kenyans were excluded from political and media power.

For decades, its ownership under the Aga Khan's Development Network provided a degree of insulation from direct political and commercial pressures. While not immune to influence, this structure meant the controlling shareholder was not deeply embedded in the same political and business networks the newsroom was expected to scrutinise.

The acquisition of a controlling stake in NMG in 2026 by Tanzanian businessman Rostam Aziz represents a structural shift. Aziz is a politically connected regional figure with extensive business interests and ties to Tanzania's ruling party.[171] This does not automatically translate into editorial interference. In fact, Aziz has promised to safeguard the group's editorial independence while transforming the company for the future. Regardless, concerns abound that the new ownership may reshape the incentives and boundaries within which editorial decisions are made.

Technology is adding another layer of change. In 2026, Nation Media Group introduced a formal artificial intelligence policy framework to guide the use of AI across its editorial and business operations, including commitments to transparency where AI is used. Across the sector, newsrooms are experimenting with AI tools in areas such as content production, social media optimisation, and audience analytics. While these applications are largely focused on efficiency and distribution, adoption remains uneven, reflecting resource constraints and ongoing concerns about accuracy, ethics, and job security. Taken together, these technological shifts are unfolding alongside deeper structural changes in ownership, revenue, and distribution.

Catherine Gicheru
Director, Africa Women Journalism Project
George Nyabuga
Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Media and Journalism, Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications

[170] https://www.trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TRF_Weaponising-the-Law_Kenya_20Feb.pdf
[171] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy0d7k75l2g0#

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

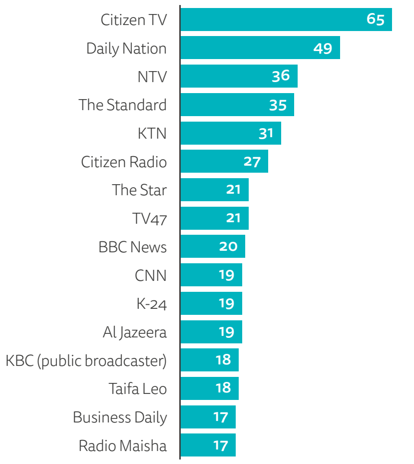
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

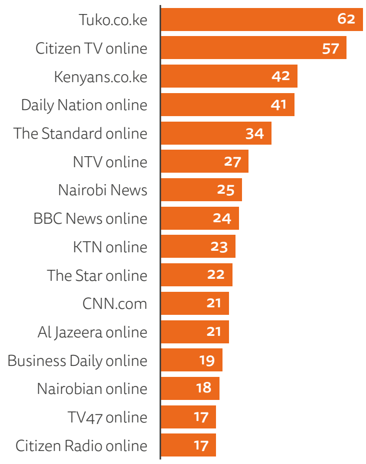
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE

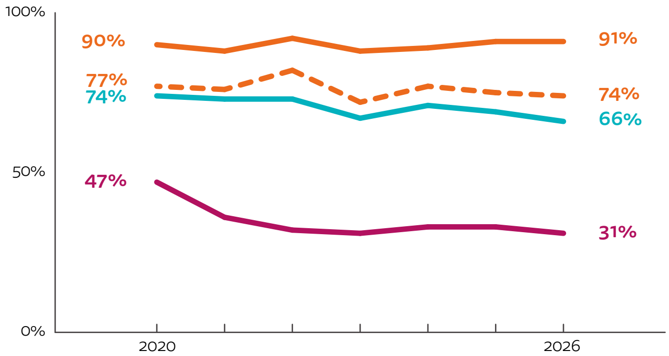


57% (+6)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

METHODOLOGY NOTE

These data are based on an online survey of mainly English-speaking, online news users in Kenya – a subset of a larger, more diverse, media market. Respondents were generally more affluent, younger (18–50 only), have higher levels of formal education, and are more likely to live in cities than the overall Kenyan population. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2020–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

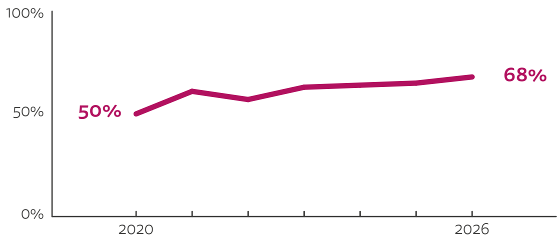
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	66%	(+12)	84%
2	Facebook	63%	(+11)	77%
3	WhatsApp	62%	(+16)	88%
4	TikTok	58%	(+20)	79%
5	Instagram	42%	(+16)	67%
6	X	38%	(-4)	52%

46% (-4) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news in Kenya is relatively high at 68%, indicating strong confidence in the media environment among the English-speaking sample. However, brand-level trust reveals a slightly more nuanced picture, with audiences differentiating between outlets and placing greater trust in familiar or frequently used brands.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2020–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
68% (+3)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
BBC News	91%	5%	5%
Citizen Radio	89%	5%	6%
Citizen TV	91%	4%	5%
Daily Nation	91%	5%	4%
K-24 TV	85%	8%	7%
KBC (public broadcaster)	84%	7%	8%
KTN	90%	5%	5%
NTV	91%	5%	4%
Radio Jambo	84%	9%	7%
Radio Maisha	86%	8%	6%
Taifa Leo	85%	8%	6%
The Business Daily	88%	7%	5%
The Standard	90%	5%	5%
The Star	82%	10%	8%
Tuko.co.ke	73%	14%	13%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026** Score: **50.51** **106**/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

MOROCCO

Morocco's news environment is increasingly shaped by platforms, online video, and digital creators, as trust in news remains low and the legal environment tightly bounded. Official attempts to reshape the debate sparked by widespread protests about spending on FIFA World Cup infrastructure ahead of other priorities have resulted in a public sphere that is somewhat more active and open, but still marked by caution and constraint.

Population	**38m**
Internet penetration	**91%**

For a few weeks in autumn 2025 Morocco's public sphere was pulled in several directions at once. Youth-led protests organised through Discord and social media about health, education, corruption, and spending priorities quickly spread. While the state was responding with arrests and prosecutions,[172] Morocco's national under-20 football team won the World Cup, and then a UN Security Council vote (Resolution 2797) on Western Sahara handed Rabat a major diplomatic success.

In response to the growing impact of the protests, Morocco's media belatedly began a strategic opening. Official outlets gave broader visibility to concerns first articulated on social media platforms which established media had struggled to frame. This tension now defines Morocco's information environment. Public debate is increasingly shaped less by a single media hierarchy than by a platform-first audience; Facebook and YouTube are especially important, with Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok also central to discovery and circulation. Official media still matter, especially for legitimacy and symbolic authority, but they no longer reliably control the pace and tone of politically sensitive conversations.

GenZ212 emerged as a decentralised youth movement that quickly turned into a national conversation with no easily identifiable leadership, relying heavily on online networks to organise and circulate its message. When ministers later addressed the protests on 2M (one of Morocco's leading television networks) it signalled an overdue attempt to incorporate social grievances into a more manageable national narrative. A few weeks afterwards, Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita used a special 2M appearance after the adoption of Resolution 2797 to highlight the Western Sahara vote as the fruit of King Mohammed VI's long-term diplomacy. Together, these moments suggested not a free opening of debate, but a slower process in which protest was first absorbed and then recentred within the more familiar language of sovereignty, stability, and national cohesion.

Digital-native brands such as market leader Hespress remain central to reach, while broadcast names such as Medi 1 TV, Al Aoula, SNRT News, and 2M enjoy high trust ratings. Online news use dominates, social platforms are central to discovery and circulation, and participation has picked up again (36% share news online). But trust in news overall remains low (28%), while concern about misinformation stays high (54%). Morocco's challenge is therefore not simply a digital transition. It is the emergence of a more active yet more sceptical public, one that consumes, shares, and comments on news while remaining unconvinced by much of the wider information system. This suggests a more fragmented trust structure than a simple collapse in confidence: people express low trust in news overall, but higher trust in selected brands and in the news they personally use.

This is also helping reshape who counts as a news intermediary. In recent years, YouTube commentators, independent digital voices, and a wider creator class have become increasingly important in explaining politics, amplifying grievances, and speaking in a more direct register than traditional media often can. This includes both former journalists who have shifted to digital formats – such as the return of Taoufik Bouachrine (a high-profile journalist who had been imprisoned since 2018) via YouTube commentary – and a wider creator ecosystem that is often closer to audiences in tone and format than traditional newsrooms (such as Mustapha Swinga's Aji Tfham YouTube channel, with more than 1m followers). These news creators are not necessarily seen as more reliable than mainstream outlets, but they are often experienced as faster, closer, and easier to understand.

At the same time, the legal environment remains tightly bounded. Reforms to the National Press Council and the professional status of journalists were presented as steps towards modernisation, but not necessarily interpreted as such.[173] These changes unfolded alongside continuing judicial pressure on protest-linked speech and a broader climate in which regulation, discipline, and caution remain central to how the media field is governed.

Morocco's media system is therefore neither opening cleanly nor closing completely. It is adapting. But adaptation is not the same as pluralism. As long as trust remains thin, institutions remain cautious, and politically sensitive debate is only selectively absorbed, Morocco's digital public sphere will stay energetic, fragmented, and contested.

Imru AL Qays Talha Jebril
Research fellow, Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis and Co-Managing Partner, A&K Advisors

[172] https://edition.cnn.com/2025/10/29/world/morocco-charged-over-2400-gen-z-protests-latam-intl
[173] https://www.article19.org/resources/morocco-new-national-press-council-law-a-serious-setback-for-press-freedom/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

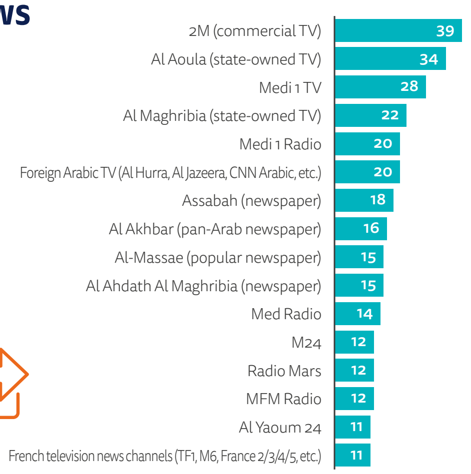
Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

Weekly use TV, radio & print

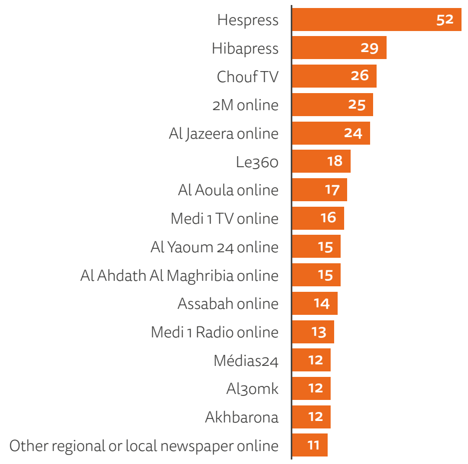
Weekly use online brands

36% (+7)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



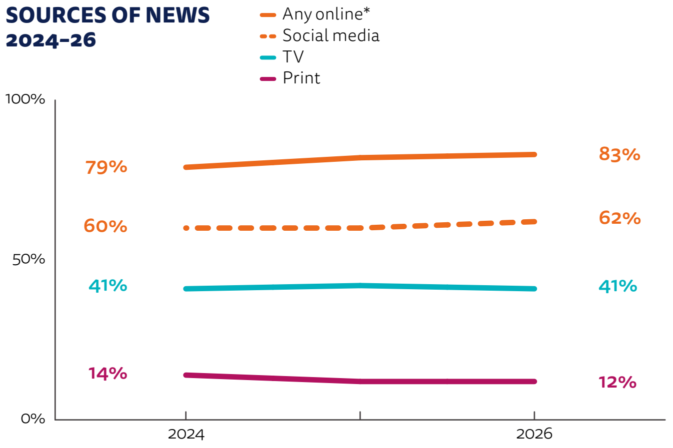
ONLINE



CHANGING MEDIA

Online and social media are popular sources of news in Morocco with our educated and more urban sample, but broadcast and print remain important with older generations and for those who are not online.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2024–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

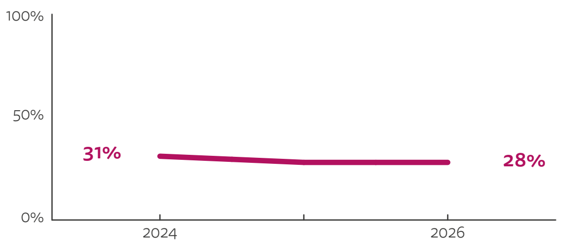
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	59%	(+12)	73%
2	YouTube	47%	(-2)	71%
3	Instagram	38%	(+6)	62%
4	WhatsApp	35%	(+5)	75%
5	TikTok	26%	(+2)	47%
6	X	11%	(+3)	15%

46% (-) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

Overall trust in news is unchanged at 28%. Many Moroccans do not see news media as truly independent, avoiding sensitive subjects and mostly reflecting government views and perspectives. A number of news brands do have relatively high levels of trust, including some of the most widely used commercial (Medi 1) and state-owned outlets on TV (Al Aoula) and online (Hespress).

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2024–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
28% (-)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: **50.55**	**105**/180

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
2M	69%	14%	18%
Al Aoula	70%	16%	14%
Al Jazeera	65%	17%	19%
Al Maghribia	67%	18%	15%
Al-Massae	60%	23%	17%
Assabah	60%	21%	19%
Hespress	67%	17%	15%
Hibapress	59%	22%	19%
L'Economiste	58%	23%	18%
Le Matin	58%	24%	18%
Le360	54%	25%	20%
Medi 1 Radio	69%	17%	14%
Medi 1 TV	72%	15%	14%
SNRTNews	69%	16%	15%
Télé Maroc	56%	26%	18%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

NIGERIA

Nigeria's media market is one of the largest and most vibrant in Africa, shaped by a highly digital audience and a fast-growing social media ecosystem. Over the past year, economic pressures, debates around press freedom, platform dominance, and growing experimentation with artificial intelligence (AI) have shaped the environment in which journalism operates.

Population	**238m**
Internet penetration	**41%**

Survey sample primarily composed of English speakers

Nigeria has a large and fragmented media market. Radio accounts for the highest number of outlets, followed by television, while newspapers are fewer but remain influential. The landscape reflects a hybrid environment where legacy media coexist with digital-born brands. International broadcasters such as BBC News maintain a strong reach with our English-speaking sample, alongside domestic television like Channels Television and established print titles including *The Punch* and *Vanguard Newspaper*. At the same time, digital-born brands such as Pulse Nigeria and Legit.ng continue to grow, particularly among younger audiences, reflecting broader shifts towards mobile and social news consumption.

Press freedom remains a key concern. The recent rankings by Reporters Without Borders indicate an improvement in Nigeria's global position from 122 to 112, but concerns remain about harassment of journalists and the use of cybercrime legislation in cases involving reporters. Several journalists were detained under cybercrime-related allegations despite ongoing reforms,[174] including the 2024 amendment to the Cybercrimes Act (Section 24). In one widely reported case, journalist Matthew Ojoduma was released after more than nine months in detention before being cleared of charges.[175] State-level actions have also raised alarm, including the closure of Badeggi Radio by the Niger State governor,[176] which drew condemnation from editors. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)have challenged the use of the Cybercrimes Act before the ECOWAS Court of Justice,[177] while the federal government has signalled its willingness to review the law in collaboration with the media and the National Assembly.

At the same time, economic pressures continue to shape the operating environment for media organisations. The Nigerian Guild of Editors has publicly warned of a potential media collapse, citing unsustainable costs, declining advertising revenue, and regulatory headwinds. In response, industry bodies have called for policy support, fiscal relief, and tariff relief on newsprint and broadcasting materials.[178] President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has tacitly endorsed measures to support the sector.

Alongside these challenges, Nigerian publishers are concerned about the influence of global technology platforms. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria has argued that Big Tech companies are disrupting traditional business models. Publishers say they are losing advertising revenue and web traffic to digital platforms, while news content is used to train AI models without compensation. These concerns have prompted calls for clearer regulatory frameworks governing the relationship between platforms and publishers.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria continues to see growth in digital-first publishing. A new online outlet, Pinnacle Daily, launched in October 2025, has added to the growing number of digital-native news platforms in the country. Similarly, Agujiegbe Media was formally unveiled in September 2025 in Lagos as a verified online news and creative media platform with ambitions to expand into TV and radio, supported by a network of over 1,000 members.

Another notable shift in the Nigerian information ecosystem is the growing influence of news creators and social media influencers. In a market where social and video networks like Facebook (81%) and YouTube (78%) are widely used, influencers often act as curators and amplifiers of stories, contributing to how public debates evolve online. This trend has also inspired infrastructure-style launches: LekeeLekee, a Nigerian social platform developed by the founders of Arise and THISDAY, explicitly positions itself as an African alternative, offering direct monetisation for creators and promoting 'digital sovereignty', a model particularly relevant for news and commentary creators.

Traditional news organisations, however, have generally maintained an adversarial approach, seeing creators as competitors occupying roles historically associated with professional journalists, such as agenda-setting and gatekeeping. Younger journalists appear more open to engaging with influencer-driven distribution models, although this often occurs outside traditional newsroom structures as freelance or independent creators, contributing to a more fragmented but also more diverse media ecosystem.

Artificial intelligence has become a growing area of experimentation within Nigeria's journalism. The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development recently inducted 33 organisations into its Nigeria AI Collective CSO/Media Advocacy Group to support responsible AI governance. The International Centre for Investigative Reporting has launched NativeAI, a tool designed to provide automated transcription and translation that recognises local accents and languages, while JournoTECH has introduced NewsAssist AI to support newsroom workflows.

Across the industry, AI-generated content and visuals are increasingly appearing in news production, but a formal guidelines framework is still emerging. Organisations such as the Nigeria Union of Journalists have yet to establish comprehensive policies, and many journalists continue to rely on free tools. Concerns are also growing about the spread of AI-generated propaganda in local languages.

Tolulope Owajoba Adeyemo
Code for Africa

[174] https://cpj.org/2025/11/3-nigerian-journalists-detained-on-cybercrime-allegations-despite-reform/
[175] https://cpj.org/2025/12/nigerian-travel-journalist-jailed-on-terror-charge-in-benin-since-january/
[176] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/811566-outrage-as-governor-shuts-down-independent-radio-station.html
[177] https://serap-nigeria.org/2025/01/12/serap-takes-tinubu-govt-governors-to-ecowas-court-over-misuse-of-cybercrimes-act/
[178] https://statehouse.gov.ng/president-tinubu-promises-to-look-into-tariffs-for-media-business-calls-for-greater-collaboration-for-national-development/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

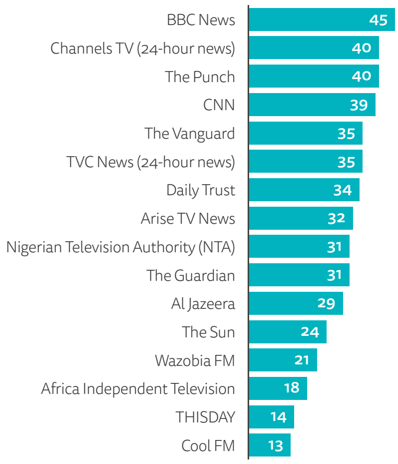
TOP BRANDS
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

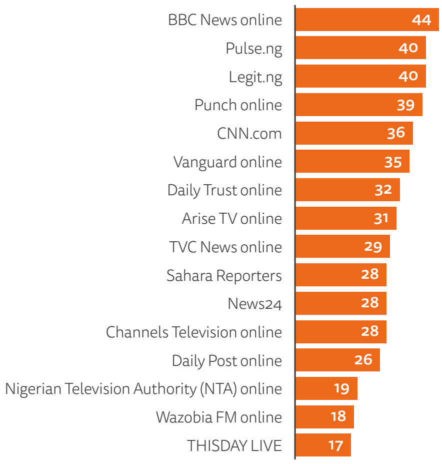
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE



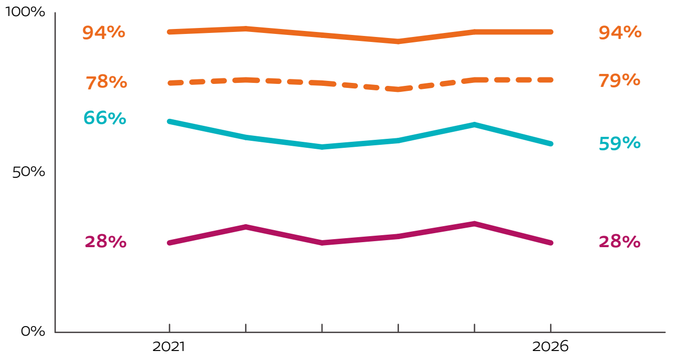
63% (+4)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

METHODOLOGY NOTE

These data are based on a survey of English-speaking, online news users in Nigeria – a subset of a larger, more diverse, media market. Respondents are generally more affluent, younger (18–50 only), have higher levels of formal education, and are more likely to live in cities than the wider Nigerian population. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021–26

- Any online*
- Social media
- TV
- Print



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

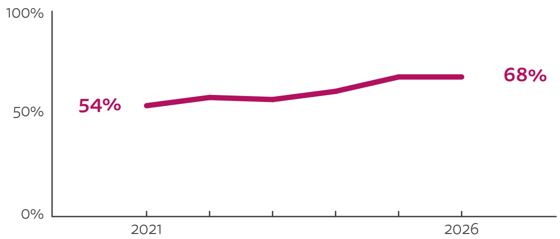
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	WhatsApp	68%	(+15)	89%
2	Facebook	68%	(+3)	81%
3	YouTube	54%	(+5)	78%
4	Instagram	50%	(+9)	73%
5	TikTok	46%	(+18)	68%
6	X	46%	(-3)	56%

32% (-3)
AVOID THE NEWS
sometimes/often

TRUST

Trust in news in Nigeria remains relatively high at 68%, placing it joint first among the 48 markets surveyed. The media operate within a context shaped by political pressure and commercial constraints, factors that may influence perceptions of independence even as some brands, such as Arise TV News, retain audience confidence, recording a (+3pp) gain in trust.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
68% (-)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 48.11	112/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Africa Independent Television	84%	10%	7%
Arise TV News	87%	6%	6%
BBC News	90%	5%	6%
Channels TV	89%	5%	6%
News Agency of Nigeria	79%	11%	10%
Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)	81%	9%	10%
Premium Times	83%	10%	8%
Pulse.ng	83%	10%	8%
The Guardian	86%	8%	6%
The Nation	82%	10%	8%
The Punch	87%	7%	6%
The Sun	83%	10%	8%
The Vanguard	86%	8%	6%
THISDAY	82%	10%	8%
TVC News	84%	8%	8%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

SOUTH AFRICA

The media environment has seen growth in the influence of news creators, a welcome injection of funding into community media, and increasing adoption of AI solutions into newsrooms. Some legacy media titles have closed, but the rise of digital news creators and their audiences indicates a more positive outlook for the business of news. Trust in news overall has been eroding, not least because of incursions into the media ecosystem by foreign states.

Population	**65m**
Internet penetration	**78%**

Survey sample primarily composed of English speakers

South African newsrooms keep shrinking. The sector is still dealing with the consequences of earlier print retrenchments and closures, especially the Media24 print shutdowns that began in 2024, and this year the *Mail & Guardian* said they were cutting 12 people from their already small newsroom of 25 permanent staff.

Tracking with global trends, digital news creators are growing increasingly influential, making the online news environment more crowded and competitive, and accelerating the shift of audiences away from legacy outlets and towards smaller digital, personality-driven platforms. Founded in 2025, the Debrief Network, for example, is anchored by ex-News24 editor Qaanitah Hunter, and its goal is to become 'a habit for people who currently live outside the news cycle'.[179] Other news creators are less invested in the craft of ethical journalism, with a rash of conservative commentators mimicking the techniques of the US's right-wing creator economy.

The final report of the Competition Commission's 2025 *Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry* report was released, confirming that Google will establish a R688m (US$40m) media support package, described by Google as 'tailored for the country's unique and multilingual news ecosystem'. The report also imposed new transparency and AdTech obligations on Google, and content-control tools across Meta, TikTok, Microsoft, YouTube, and AI firms, described as a shift in regulatory thinking that is not just about repairing the media industry's losses, but 'reshaping the digital ecosystem for fairer, more sustainable competition in the future'.[180] There has been an initial injection of R10.7m (US$640,000) into 23 digital news media projects, thanks to the Association of Independent Publishers/Google Digital News Transformation Fund, although it is too early to gauge the overall impact. It remains to be seen if this merely allows news organisations a brief respite from the attrition of declining revenue, or serves as a kickstart for new business models.

The broader industry has acknowledged that advertising alone will not sustain journalism, given the domination of global platforms, and publishers are experimenting with a variety of revenue models. Media24 launched enterprise subscriptions for News24, Netwerk24, and Landbou.com, aimed at enlisting institutions as customers.

This year has seen an increase in investigative analysis into foreign information manipulation and interference. Forbidden Stories reported on payments to an intermediary to broker payments to 'online newspapers' and influencers to publish pro-Russian content.[181] OpenAI reported on a ChatGPT user who generated at least 38 pro-Kremlin articles, the majority of which were published on South African news sites under the byline of a fictitious writer. The vulnerability of media ethics was highlighted when an SABC journalist was placed on precautionary suspension following allegations of accepting payment of R500 (just US$30) in exchange for a source's contact details.

Wits University's 2025 *State of the Newsroom* report suggests that South Africa is 'among the leaders in experimenting with AI in journalism in Africa' (McNally et al. 2025). This ranges from the largest site, News24, which has appointed a head of AI strategy and rolled out an AI newsroom assistant, to community newspapers like *The Pondoland Times*, which has implemented AI strategies to drive its digital ad revenue and editorial production. However, a Stellenbosch University report found that most journalists use AI cautiously, often checking the results manually, eroding AI's efficiency benefits (Allen et al. 2026).

There is cause for optimism. Many legacy media organisations are taking the opportunity to re-engineer news products for the next generation of news consumers, and news creators are proliferating. In both cases, the challenge is to build sustainable business models that match the scope of the products, while maintaining ethical standards.

Chris Roper
Deputy CEO, Code for Africa

[179] https://www.thedebriefnetwork.com/p/reintroducing-the-debrief-network
[180] https://michaelmarkovitz.substack.com/p/beyond-compensation-reshaping-the
[181] https://forbiddenstories.org/propaganda-machine-secret-documents-reveal-russias-foreign-influence-strategy-across-three-continents/

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

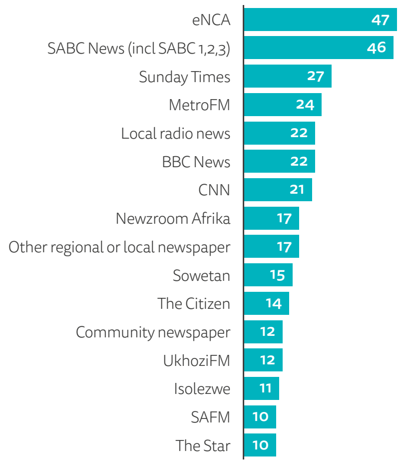
% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

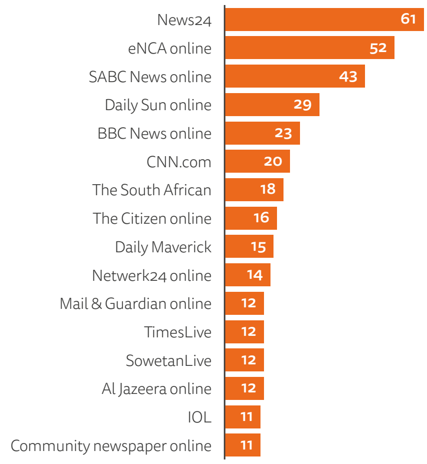
Weekly use TV, radio & print

Weekly use online brands

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE

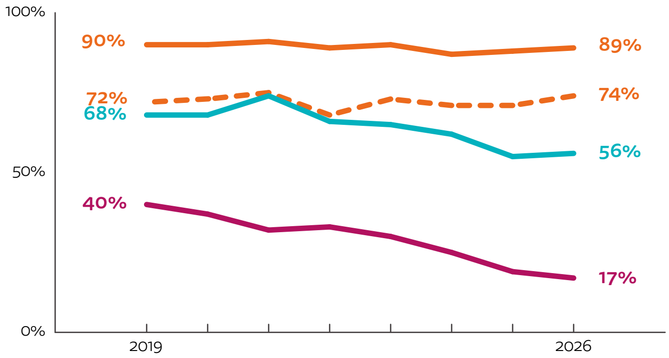


51% (+7)
SHARE NEWS
via social, messaging, or email

METHODOLOGY NOTE

These data are based on a survey of English-speaking, online news users in South Africa – an important part of a larger, more diverse, media market. Respondents are generally more affluent, younger, have higher levels of formal education, and are more likely to live in cities than the wider South African population. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2019–26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

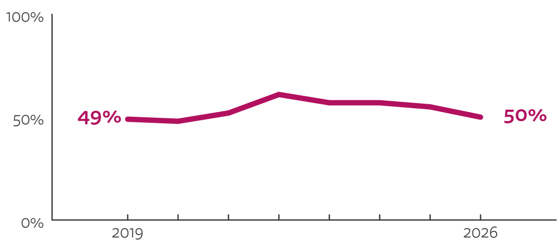
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	66%	(+16)	80%
2	WhatsApp	53%	(+12)	89%
3	YouTube	50%	(+8)	75%
4	TikTok	45%	(+12)	67%
5	Instagram	22%	(+7)	46%
6	Facebook Messenger	17%	(+7)	46%

42% (+1) **AVOID THE NEWS** sometimes/often

TRUST

From a 2022 high of 61%, trust in news has declined to 50%. South Africa now ranks ninth of the 48 markets: in 2022, it was second. Reversing this decline is going to require a collaborative effort by trusted legacy brands and new digital creators, to establish editorial guardrails and agreement on industry self-regulation.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2019–26



Proportion that trusts 'most news most of the time'

OVERALL TRUST
50% (-5)
GLOBAL AVERAGE 37%

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
BBC News	75%	15%	10%
City Press	64%	23%	12%
Daily Maverick	62%	24%	15%
Daily Sun	58%	22%	20%
eNCA	80%	12%	8%
EWN (Eyewitness News)	57%	28%	15%
IOL	56%	28%	16%
Mail & Guardian	66%	22%	12%
News24	80%	11%	9%
Other regional or local newspaper	69%	21%	10%
SABC News (public broadcaster)	77%	13%	11%
Sowetan	62%	24%	14%
Sunday Times	75%	15%	10%
The Citizen	68%	20%	11%
TimesLive	67%	20%	13%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6–10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0–4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026	Score: 77.95	21/180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

SECTION 4

SECTION 4

References

The authors welcome feedback on this report and suggestions on how to improve our work via reuters.institute@politics.ox.ac.uk as well as potential partnerships and support for our ongoing work.

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