DIGITAL NEWS REPORT 2024

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A series of 'platform resets' create new uncertainties for publishers as audiences worry about AI and misinformation

News subscriptions stall, with many people saying they would pay nothing and a significant proportion of subscribers paying less than full price

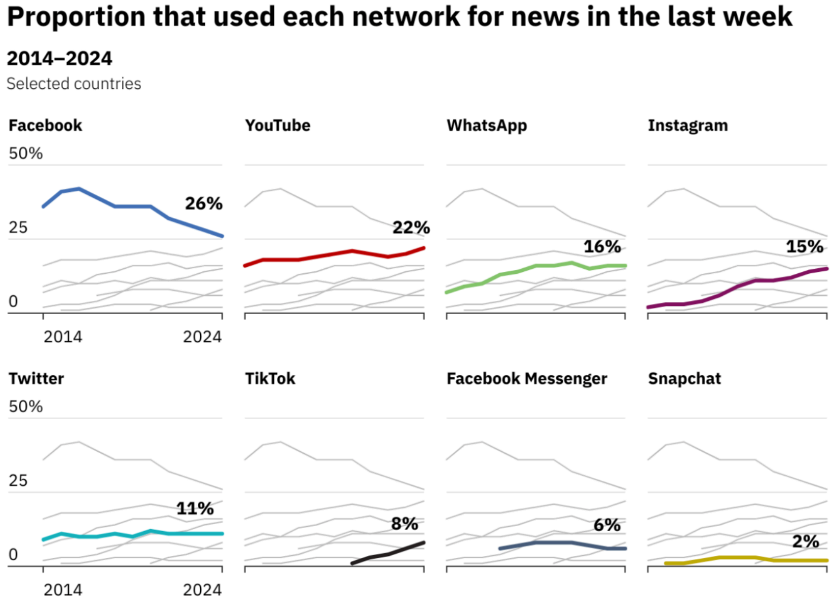
This year's Reuters Institute Digital News Report documents the scale and scope of ongoing 'platform resets' which are putting more pressure on publisher business models – even before advances in generative artificial intelligence further change the information ecosystem.

Legacy social media such as Facebook and X have been actively reducing the prominence and role of news on their platforms and investing more in creator content, while video formats and networks are becoming more popular. In a year that sees a record number of elections around the globe, concern about misinformation has risen further with worries about AI-generated content a contributory factor. As publishers adopt AI to make their businesses more efficient and relevant, our research suggests they need to proceed with caution, as the public mostly wants humans to stay firmly in charge, especially when it comes to hard news topics such as politics. Meanwhile, trust in the news remains low and selective news avoidance has risen again, against a backdrop of continuing conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine.

These are some of the conclusions of the 13th edition of the Digital News Report, which is based on an online survey of almost 100,000 people in 47 countries, representing the views of more than half the world's population. The report is embargoed until Monday 17 June 00.01 BST. You can download a PDF version in [this link](). It will be live at www.digitalnewsreport.org/2024

Social media shifts and the rise of video platforms

In many countries, we find a further decline in the use of Facebook for news, and a growing reliance on a range of alternatives including messaging apps and video networks. Facebook news consumption (37%) is down 4 percentage points across all countries in the last year; a decline that is higher in countries such as the Philippines (-11 points), Argentina (-11) and Colombia (-10). YouTube is used for news by almost 31% of our global sample each week and WhatsApp by around a fifth (21%). TikTok (13%) has overtaken X (10%) for the first time with much higher usage in parts of the Global South. The numbers in the chart below are slightly different as they reflect average data for 12 countries we have been following for ten years, but they show the same trends.



2024 (change from 2023)
Selected countries

Facebook	Change (points)
Philippines	61% (-11)
Colombia	48% (-10)
Argentina	37% (-11)
Malaysia	43% (-8)
Turkey	27% (-6)
X (formerly Twitter)	**Change (points)**
Indonesia	12% (-9)
South Africa	19% (-6)
Philippines	9% (-7)
Malaysia	12% (-6)
Colombia	12% (-6)
TikTok	**Change (points)**
Thailand	39% (+9)
Kenya	36% (+7)
Nigeria	23% (+6)
Indonesia	29% (+7)
South Africa	28% (+6)

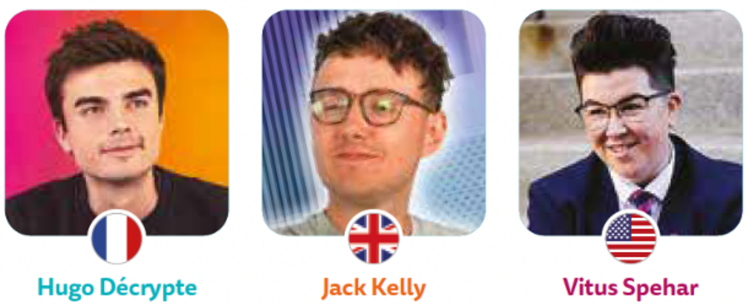
Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for news in the last week? Base: Total sample in each country-year in the UK, USA, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Australia (2014-24), Brazil, and Ireland (2015-24) ≈ 2000. Figures in parentheses indicate change from previous year.

Reuters Institute Director and editor **Rasmus Nielsen** outlines the implications for traditional media:

> *"The public is increasingly relying on competing platforms to access all sorts of content and information. Many of these platforms are in turn increasingly moving away from news and publishers, and instead focusing more on other kinds of content and other creators. This more complicated platform ecosystem, the end of mass referrals from legacy social media, and growing competition for attention means journalists and publishers will have to work much, much harder to earn the public's attention, let alone convince them to pay for news."*

Linked to these platform shifts, video is becoming a more important source of online news, especially with younger groups. Short news videos are accessed by 66% of our global sample each week, with longer formats attracting around half (51%). But the main focus of news video consumption is online platforms (72%) rather than publisher websites (22%), increasing the challenges around monetisation.

YOUTH-BASED NEWS INFLUENCERS AROUND THE WORLD



Our research also finds that users of TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat tend to pay more attention to social media influencers and celebrities than they do to journalists or media companies when it comes to news topics. This is in contrast to legacy social networks such as Facebook and Twitter/X, where news organisations still attract most attention and lead conversations. The report documents the rise of a new generation of news creators such as France's Hugo Décrypte, who produces explainer videos on TikTok and YouTube and was cited by survey respondents more often than legacy publishers *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*. Jack Kelly's TLDR brand in the UK and Vitus Spehar's 'Under the Desk' TikTok account in the US are also popular with younger consumers.

Other well-cited creators include outspoken politics hosts such as Tucker Carlson in the United States and Piers Morgan in the UK, who have both embraced online streaming after leaving traditional TV outlets. Lead author **Nic Newman** says:

> *"Consumers are adopting video because it is easy to use, and provides a wide range of relevant and engaging content. But many traditional newsrooms are still rooted in a text-based culture and are struggling to adapt their storytelling while the business side is also reluctant because the sums don't add up."*

Concerns about the extent of unreliable content are widespread

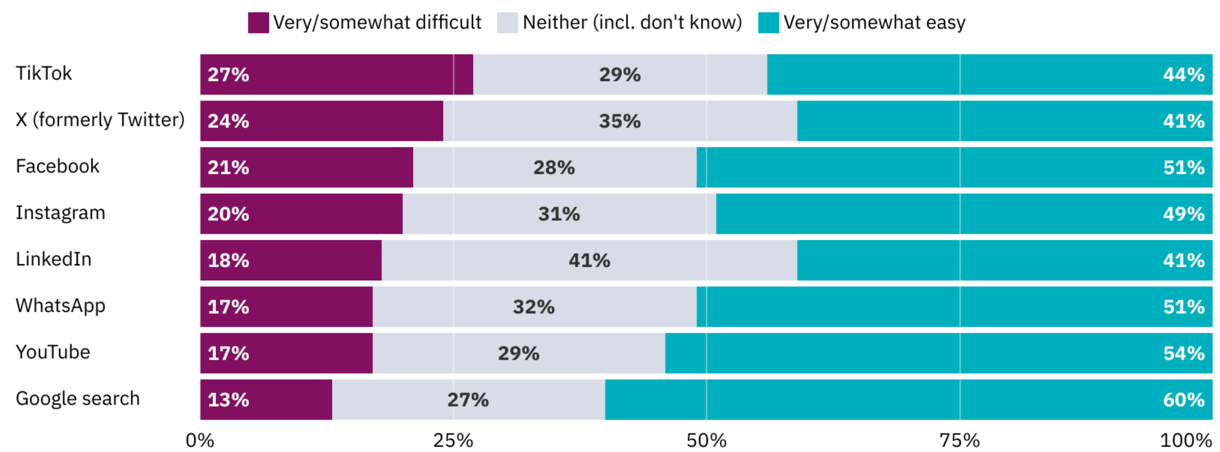
Concern about what is real and what is fake on the internet when it comes to online news has risen by 3 percentage points in the last year with around six in ten (59%) saying they are concerned. The figure is considerably higher in South Africa (81%) and the United States (72%), both countries that have been holding elections this year.

Worries about how to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy content in online platforms is highest for TikTok and X when compared with other networks. Both platforms have hosted misinformation or conspiracies around stories such as the war in Gaza, and the Princess of Wales's health. Qualitative research in the UK, US, and Mexico suggests growing concern about AI generated 'photo-realistic' pictures and so-called deepfake videos.

> *"I have seen many examples before, and they can sometimes be very good. Thankfully, they are still pretty easy to detect but within five years they will be indistinguishable."*
> ***Qualitative research participant Male, 20, UK***

Proportion that find it difficult to identify trustworthy news on each platform

All markets



Q6_platform_trust. Still thinking about trust, how easy or difficult is it for YOU to tell apart trustworthy versus untrustworthy news and information on each of the following platforms? Base: All that say they use each platform, ranging from Google Search = 92,185 to LinkedIn = 61,224. Note: Respondents in India and Hong Kong were not asked about TikTok.

AI and the news industry

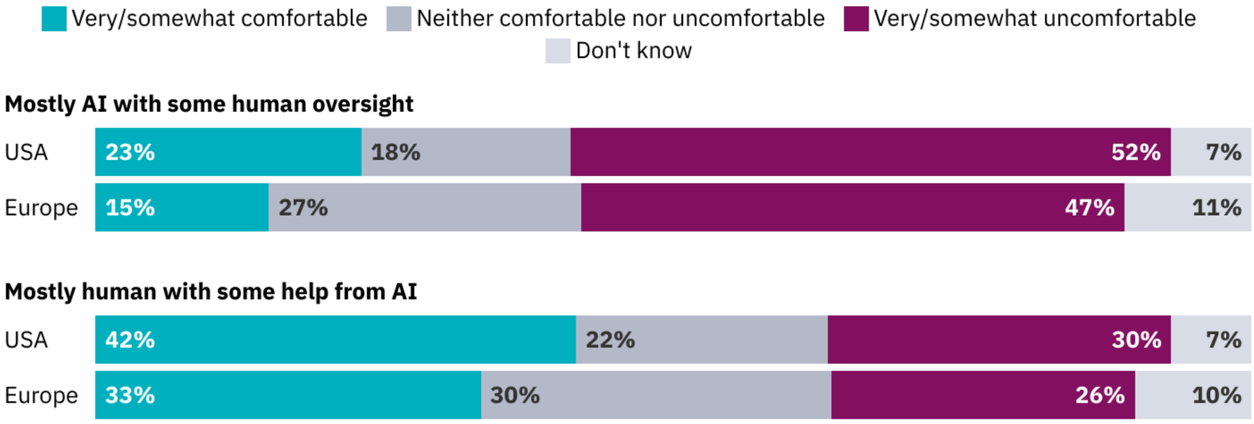
As publishers embrace the use of AI, we find widespread public suspicion about how it might be used, especially for 'hard' news stories such as politics or war. There is more comfort with the use of AI in behind-the-scenes tasks such as transcription and translation; in supporting rather than replacing journalists.

Respondents in the United States are significantly more comfortable about different uses of AI than those living in Europe, perhaps reflecting different attitudes to regulation of mainly US-based tech companies. Lead researcher **Richard Fletcher** said:

> *"People are generally quite wary of generative AI being used for news, but they are a little more comfortable with it being used for coverage of topics like sports and entertainment, and to help with more routine behind-the-scenes tasks."*

Proportion that say they are very or somewhat comfortable with news being produced in the following ways

USA, Europe



Q2_AIComfortlevel_2024_1. In general, how comfortable or uncomfortable are you with using news produced in each of the following ways? Base: Total sample in Europe = 34,351, USA = 2023. Note: Question not asked in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey.

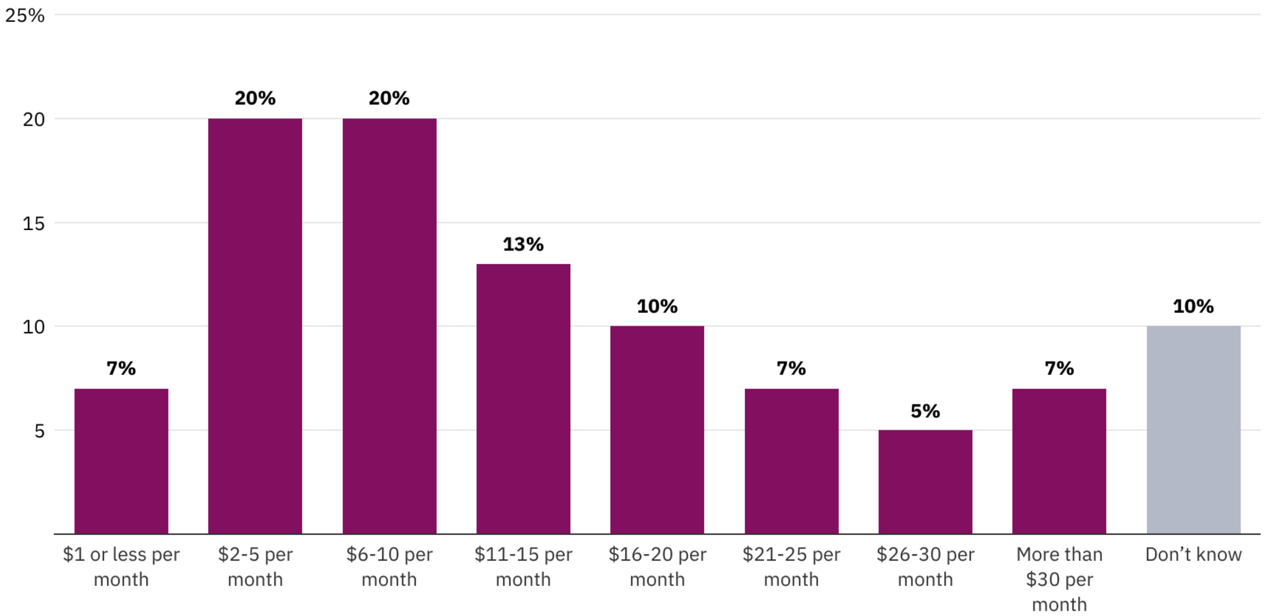
Business pressures mount as subscription growth stalls

Our data show little growth in news subscriptions, with just 17% saying they paid for any online news in the last year, across a basket of 20 richer countries. Northern European countries such as Norway (40%) and Sweden (31%) have the highest proportion of those paying, with Japan (9%) and the United Kingdom (8%) amongst the lowest. In some countries we find evidence of heavy discounting, with around four in ten (41%) saying they currently pay less than the full price. The US is amongst those countries where a significant proportion appear to be paying a very small amount (often just a few dollars), with many likely to be on low-price trials. By contrast in Nordic countries we find fewer people paying a discounted rate.

Proportion of ongoing digital news subscribers that pay each amount for their main subscription, compared with the median full price cost

USA. Cost per month

Median full-price monthly subscription cost across all US brands is **$16**



Q1a_Pay_2024. You said that you pay for an online news subscription. How much does your MAIN online news subscription cost you per month? Base: Ongoing digital subscribers in USA = 480.

Prospects of attracting new subscribers remain limited by a continued reluctance to pay for news, linked to low interest and an abundance of free sources. Well over half (55%) of those that are not currently subscribing say that they would pay nothing for online news, with most of the rest prepared to offer the equivalent of just a few dollars per month, when pressed. Across markets, just 2% of non-payers say that they would pay the equivalent of an average full price subscription.

Five more headlines from this year's report

On trust. Trust in the news (40%) has remained stable over the last year, but is still four points lower overall than it was at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. Finland remains the country with the highest levels of overall trust (69%), while Greece (23%) and Hungary (23%) have the lowest levels, amid concerns about undue political and business influence over the media. The report finds that high standards, a transparent approach, lack of bias, and fairness in terms of media representation are the four primary factors that influence trust.

On interest in news. Elections have increased interest in the news in a few countries, including the United States (52%, +3 points from last year), but the overall trend remains downward. Interest in news in Argentina, for example, has fallen from 77% in 2017 to 45% today. In the United Kingdom (38%), interest in news has almost halved since 2015.

On news avoidance. We find a rise in selective news avoidance. Around four in ten (39%) now say they sometimes or often avoid the news – up 3 percentage points on last year's average – with more significant increases in Brazil, Spain, Germany, and Finland. Open comments suggest that the intractable conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East may have had some impact.

On what audiences need. In exploring user needs around news, our data suggest that publishers may be focusing too much on updating people on top news stories and not enough providing different perspectives on issues or reporting stories that can provide a basis for occasional optimism. In terms of topics, we find that audiences feel mostly well served by political and sports news but there are gaps around local news in some countries, as well as health and education news.

On podcasting. News podcasting remains a bright spot for publishers, attracting younger, well-educated audiences but is a minority activity overall. Across a basket of 20 countries, just over a third (35%) access a podcast monthly, with 13% accessing a show relating to news and current affairs. Many of the most popular podcasts are now filmed and distributed via video platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.

Methodology

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Survey conducted in 47 markets; United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. Total sample size was 94,943 adults, with around 2,000 per market.

Fieldwork was undertaken at the end of January/start of February 2024. The survey was carried out online. The data were weighted to targets set on age, gender and region (and education and political leaning where possible), to reflect the total population. The sample is broadly reflective of the population who have access to the internet in each country. 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, and restricted to ages 18 to 50 in Kenya and Nigeria. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative in these countries.

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 from individual countries are very unlikely to be statistically significant and should be interpreted with a very high degree of caution.

Contact

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More information on the Digital News Report 2024

The research and report can also be found on our website from 17 June including slide-packs, charts, and raw data tables, with a licence that encourages re-use. A fuller description of the methodology is available along with the complete questionnaire.

Supporters of this year's report include main sponsor the Google News Initiative as well as BBC News, Ofcom, the Irish Coimisiún na Meán, the Dutch Media Authority (CvdM), the Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland, the Fritt Ord Foundation in Norway, the Korea Press Foundation, Edelman UK, NHK (Japan), and the Reuters News Agency, YouTube, as well as our academic sponsors at the Leibniz Institute for Media Research/Hans Bredow Institute, the University of Navarra in Spain, the University of Canberra, the Centre d'études sur les médias, Quebec, Canada, and Roskilde University, Denmark. Code for Africa has increased their support for the report to enable us to include Morocco this year. The Fundación Gabo continues to support the translation of the report into Spanish.

About the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism is dedicated to exploring the future of journalism worldwide. The Institute receives core funding from the Thomson Reuters Foundation and is based in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. It was launched in November 2006 and developed from the Reuters Journalist Fellowship Programme, established at Oxford almost 40 years ago. See http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/

About the authors

Nic Newman. Lead Author, Senior Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford and a consultant on digital media.

Dr. Richard Fletcher. Author, Director of Research at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. He is a data and survey specialist primarily interested in global trends in digital news consumption.

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Prof. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. Editor, Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and Professor of Political Communication at the University of Oxford. His work focuses on changes in the news media, political communication, and the role of digital technologies in both.

About YouGov

YouGov is an international market research agency and pioneer of market research through online methods. YouGov has a panel of 6 million people worldwide, including 1.2 million in the UK representing all ages, socio-economic groups and other demographic types.