

SPAIN

STATISTICS

Population	46m
Internet penetration	92%



Governments and the media tried to unite the country in

the battle against COVID-19, while journalists struggled to provide clarity among often contradictory messages about the pandemic. Meanwhile, as demand for news increased but traditional revenues fell, many news organisations pushed forward with pay strategies.

Spanish publishers have embraced digital paywalls in the last year, in the face of increased demand for reliable news but declining revenue from print and advertising. According to industry figures the left of centre national newspaper *El País* reached 100,000 digital subscribers just ten months after introducing its paywall in May 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. *El Mundo*, which started its pay model in October 2019, reported having 60,000 digital subscribers, also by March 2021. Meanwhile, the digital-born *ElDiario.es* reached 63,000 paying users as it made membership compulsory for full access, with free or discounted fees for those unable to afford it. Joining the freemium trend in 2020 were *El Confidencial*, *La Vanguardia*, and *ABC*. Our *Digital News Report* data also show some people paying for digital versions of local and regional papers. Some Vocento regionals had operated paywalls since 2015 and *La Voz de Galicia* since 2019. In total, the Spanish media market now records about 400,000 subscribers to online news services provided by nearly 30 news brands.

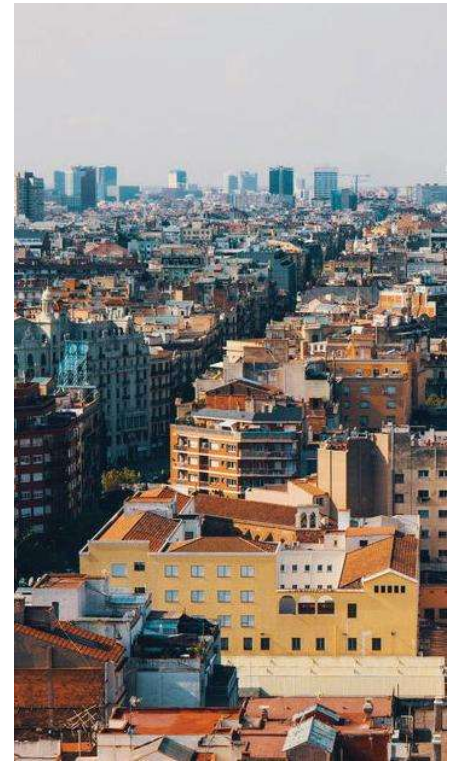
Despite soaring digital subscriptions, the main traditional media groups (PRISA, Unidad Editorial, and Vocento) lost millions from COVID-19's impact on advertising and print's declining sales. Publishers' associations requested more government

support, arguing that loans and a reduction in VAT rates for digital subscriptions from 21% to 4% were insufficient.

Plans for a so-called 'Google tax' were approved in February 2020 and came into force in January 2021. The tax, of 3%, on digital services and online advertising is predicted to produce around €1bn in 2021. There has been discussion about how the revenues should be used to support different sectors in difficulty, including tourism and journalism. Back in 2014 Spain had pioneered the idea of a 'link tax' or 'snippet tax' charging platforms for aggregating news stories. This included the payment of copyright fees to news organisations, but led to the closure of Google News Spain in December 2014, and the approach was not at that stage adopted elsewhere.

Developments in the industry and policy arenas were reflected in changes in the editorial leadership of some of the major Spanish newspapers: four men were appointed editors-in-chief of major newspapers: Jordi Juan at *La Vanguardia*, Albert Sáez at *El Periódico*, Javier Moreno back at the helm of *El País*, and Julián Quirós at *ABC*. At the ownership level, Javier Monzón was dismissed as chairman of PRISA. His replacement, Joseph Oughourlian, was approved by the new major shareholders, Amber Capital, Telefónica, and Vivendi.

Public broadcaster RTVE has new leadership. The incoming chairman, José Manuel Pérez Tornero, sworn in in March 2021, is a well-respected and experienced Professor of Journalism but politicians faced accusations of appointing some political party loyalists to the board. TVE had already made significant changes in 2020 to its main broadcast channel, boosting political coverage in its midday schedule and modernising the presentation of its news bulletin of record, *Telediario*, and its 24-hour news channel registered its highest-ever annual audience share. However, RTVE online remains one of the less well used brands and on TV its reach still lags behind commercial rivals Antena 3 and Telecinco, whose faster-paced news, with high-profile presenters providing more commentary and sometimes hard-hitting political



interviews, also inherit audiences from their popular entertainment programming. Regional public broadcasters' reach increased as audiences sought the regional angle on the pandemic as in Spain many key policies are made at the regional level.

Several firms modernised their products in spite of COVID-19 related difficulties. *El Periódico* and *La Razón* did their most radical print and online redesigns in decades. Catalan-language newspaper *Ara* overhauled its website and apps for its tenth anniversary. *ElDiario.es* refreshed its site and its quarterly print magazine, strengthened its newsletter offer, and started collaborating on exclusives and video with the smaller digital native *infoLibre*, of which it bought a 10% share.

PRISA started *SER Podcast*, complementing digital-native *Podium Podcast*. *Podium* arrived in Spain in June 2020 and *Audible* in October; both signed up well-known Spanish hosts. Barcelona-based podcast platform *iVoox*, founded in 2008 and with a 20% monthly reach in Spain, launched a subscription service in September 2020. Public radio broadcaster RNE now provides more podcast-exclusive content and reached a distribution agreement with Spotify.

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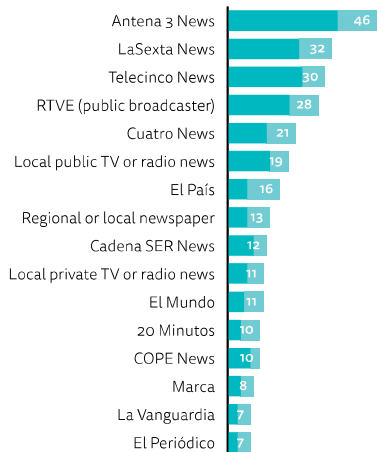
WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE

TOP BRANDS

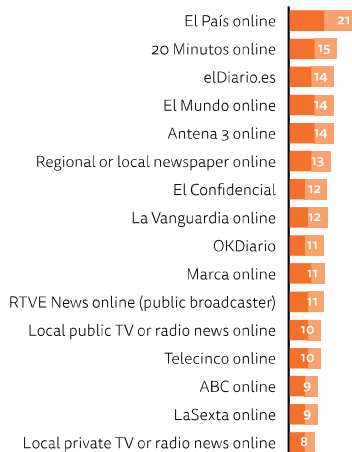
% Weekly usage

- Weekly use TV, radio & print
- More than 3 days per week TV, radio & print
- Weekly use online brands
- More than 3 days per week online brands

TV, RADIO AND PRINT



ONLINE

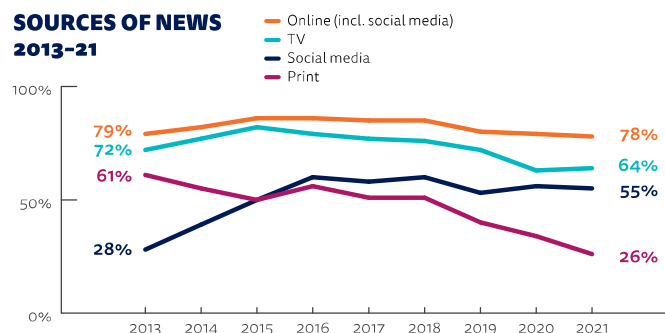


CHANGING MEDIA

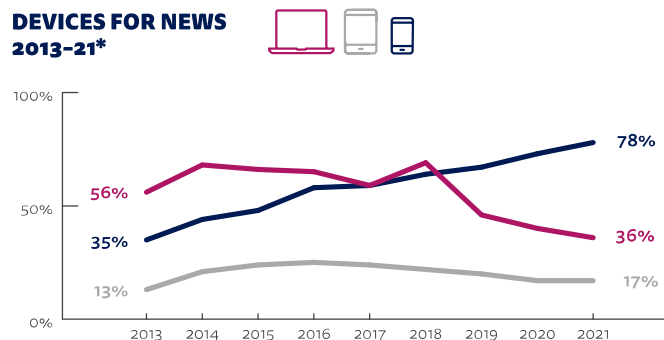
Smartphones overtook computers for digital news access four years ago, and are now twice their level. Changing habits during the COVID-19 pandemic may have flattened the slow decline of tablets. Print's fall as a news source continued.



SOURCES OF NEWS 2013-21



DEVICES FOR NEWS 2013-21*

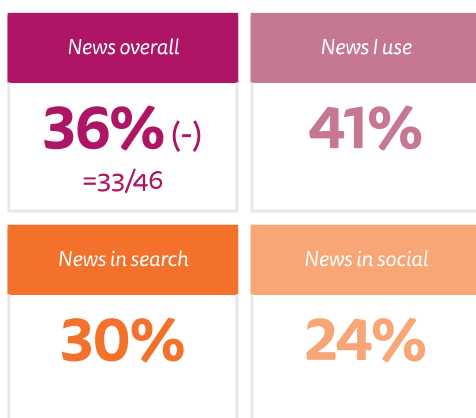


* 2018 figures for computer use were likely overstated due to an error in polling

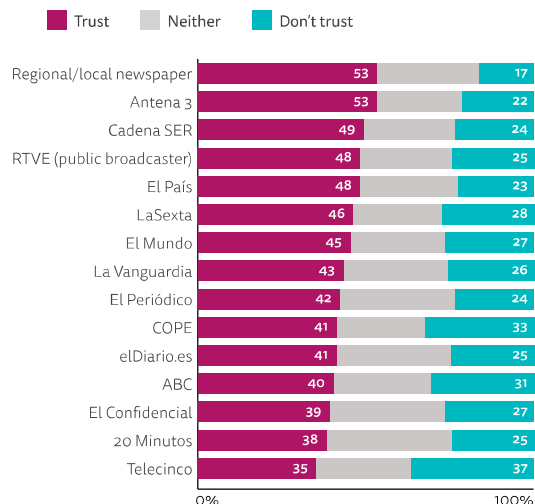
TRUST

Trust in the news remains at its lowest level since 2015 and the general figures show no change on 2020. When users are asked about specific media brands, trust shows a remarkable decrease in all cases and only regional/local newspapers and Antena 3 reach more than 50% of approval.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRUST



BRAND TRUST SCORES



Trust = % scored 6-10 on 10-point scale. Don't trust = 0-4. Neither = 5. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Only the above brands were included in the survey so should not be treated as a list of the most trusted brands.



TOP SOCIAL MEDIA AND MESSAGING

Rank	Brand	For News	For All	Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	Facebook	39% (-5)	66%	4	Twitter	19% (-1)	33%
2	WhatsApp	35% (+1)	83%	5	Instagram	17% (-)	55%
3	YouTube	21% (-4)	70%	6	Telegram	8% (+3)	23%