



PROJECT OASIS

INDEPENDENT DIGITAL NATIVE MEDIA FROM MORE THAN 40 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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RESEARCH CENTER

Google News Initiative

A research project on the trends, impact
and sustainability of independent digital native media
in more than 40 countries in Europe.

18 April 2023

Acknowledgements:

This report was produced by a collaborative team of writers and editors that included: Kathryn Geels, Madalina Ciobanu, Janine Warner, Mijal Iastrebnier, Sanne Breimer, Lela Vujanic, Elena Ledda, Nicole Chang, James Breiner and David LaFontaine.

More than 60 researchers, managers, data analysts, programmers and other team members contributed to this year-long research project. Their names, photos and bios are included in the [Who We Are page](#).

Special thanks to the hundreds of media leaders who agreed to be interviewed for this research project. Profiles of all their organisations are included in the [Project Oasis Media Directory](#).

This Project Oasis research project was led by SembraMedia in partnership with the European Journalism Centre (EJC), International Media Support (IMS), Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC) and Google News Initiative (GNI). To learn more about our partners, visit [the Partners page](#).

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Executive Summary



Against the backdrop of what many have called a “media extinction event”, caused by the pandemic, economic instability, disinformation and war, a growing number of new kinds of independent news media have emerged.

While legacy news has continued to cut staff over the last decade, digital native media have blossomed throughout Europe, filling news deserts, attracting disillusioned audiences and pioneering new ways of sharing vital information.

Despite the political, economic and linguistic differences that characterise the 40+ countries where we conducted this research, the 540 digital native media organisations featured in our Project Oasis directory face many common challenges and opportunities.

Among our key findings:

- They use social media to target younger audiences, **send news updates via Telegram to evade censorship**, and train citizen journalists to reach underserved communities.
- More than 85% said **society and human rights issues are key** areas of their coverage, including topics related to migration, refugees, gender and feminism.
- More than 50% dedicate resources to investigative journalism, and many form alliances to **cover stories across borders**.
- More than **58% of the media founders featured in this report are women**. They are highly collaborative, and most have two or more co-founders.
- Media founded by **teams that include both men and women reported the highest revenues**, with an average of €509,740 per year.
- Those that invest in business development build more sustainable organisations. Media outlets that have at least one employee dedicated to revenue generation reported **average annual revenue six times higher** than those without people in these roles: €598,539 compared to €95,629.

- **More than half the media in this study are non-profit organisations**, and many of the for-profit ventures invest more in journalism than building profits.
- Among non-profit media, the **primary revenue sources** are grants, individual donations and membership (in that order). Among for-profits, the top sources are: advertising, website subscriptions and grants.
- **Revenue diversity is key**, but more sources do not correlate to greater success. Developing two to six sources of revenue appears to be optimal for sustainability and independence.
- Digital native media outlets range from small start-ups run by volunteers dedicated to their communities, to highly profitable multi-platform operations that attract millions of page views every month and **earn millions of euros a year**.
- Although a few of the media in this study are more than 20 years old, **more than half started publishing in the last decade**. The largest number were founded in 2016.

Sustainability is hard, and there is no simple recipe for success. However, many of the media leaders we interviewed are proving that it is possible to find the support they need to serve their communities.

"No oligarchs, no paywall. Just your donations and our work," is the slogan of the Czech digital native outlet Deník Referendum, which was established in 2009.

Editor-in-chief Jakub Patočka told us about his method: "Readers who wish to debate [in the comment section] under our articles pay a fee. This approach generates a modest income and also helps cultivate the discussion."

Media cooperatives financed through contributions from members are an interesting model among some of the publications in our directory. In the UK, The Bristol Cable's cooperative members are also "democratic shareholders", which means they can attend the organisation's annual general meetings, vote on editorial campaigns and stand in elections for the non-executive directors' board.

Most of the media ventures we mapped to create our directory were started by journalists, often with limited resources and business experience, but despite these (and many other) challenges, many said they expect to grow in the coming years.

Some will be well known to readers who work in the field of media, but we believe you'll find a few surprises among the many inspiring examples we've found in Europe. That said, we don't claim this first version of Project Oasis represents all of the media that should be included in our European directory.

Many of our findings in this study were consistent with our previous research projects, and to provide broader context and points of comparison, we delve deeper into all of the key findings above in the report that follows.

This research project was conducted using the methodology we developed at SembramMedia when we started looking for similar kinds of media outlets in Hispanic communities in Latin America, Spain and the United States in 2015. Since we began Project Oasis in 2022, more than 60 people have worked on this project, including 34 researchers with local experience, who mapped, analysed and conducted interviews in more than 30 languages.

We are inspired by the innovation, determination, courage and often award-winning journalism produced by the media leaders who generously made time in their busy workdays to talk to our researchers.

As we've learned from previous studies, highlighting the kinds of media outlets featured in the Project Oasis directory can help their leaders exchange knowledge, collaborate and gain greater visibility and recognition from organisations that can provide the vital support they need and deserve to continue their work.

Throughout this report, and in the [Project Oasis media directory](#) that accompanies it, the phrase “digital native media” represents an initiative that was started online and publishes its content exclusively or primarily on the internet. To provide variety for readers, we also use other terms interchangeably with “digital native media”, including “publication”, “outlet” and “organisation”. By comparison, “digital first” is more commonly used to refer to print or broadcast organisations that later switched to publishing most or all of their content online.

Introduction



Project Oasis: Purpose and objectives

Purpose: The Project Oasis report and searchable [media directory](#) are the result of a year-long research initiative designed to study the trends, impact and sustainability of independent digital native news organisations in more than 40 countries across Europe. (Note: We began the research for this project in April 2022 and published the report and directory on 18 April 2023.)

The mission for the project is to support independent media in Europe by bringing greater visibility to digital native media organisations, and to uncover new insights about the trends, opportunities and challenges in this growing market sector.

The goal is to empower innovative media organisations to grow, develop and publish information with greater independence and sustainability, so they can better inform their communities in ways that strengthen democracy.

Objectives:

1. Map the media ecosystem to identify and study independent digital native news organisations in more than 40 countries in Europe.
2. Bring greater visibility to the growing European independent digital native media market sector through a searchable, interactive media directory that consists of descriptive profiles and searchable data points, including the types of news and

information they cover; the journalism genres and techniques they employ; their team and management structure; business structure and revenue sources; and information about transparency.

- Enhance our understanding of digital native media by expanding on earlier research projects. These include SembraMedia's ongoing study of Hispanic media, which began in 2015 and is available in the [SembraMedia directory](#), and the [Project Oasis media directory for the US and Canada](#), which was done by LION Publishers.

PROJECT OASIS

Search: Media name Filter: Spain Revenue sources

25 results

OUR DIRECTORY

540 media organisations

44 countries

REVENUE SOURCES
In order of popularity

Revenue Source	Percentage
Grants	72.7%
Audience support / reader revenue	67.0%
Advertising	53.8%
Consultancy services	32.4%
Content services for others	29.4%

Who will benefit from reading this report

This report and [searchable media directory](#) were developed with the goal of providing insights and information for:

- Current and future media leaders, and their teams, with the aim of helping them learn from each other, identify potential partners, and surface business models, trends, best practices and techniques that can help them strengthen their own organisations.
- Funders, investors and media support organisations, to better understand benchmarks and trends across Europe, regions within Europe (including Central and Eastern Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Europe) and individual countries, with the goal of helping them to implement initiatives, tools and resources that better support the sustainability of independent digital native media.
- Academics, to increase their access to information about this relatively new media sector, as well as related issues such as media pluralism, media freedom, business

model disruption, European media markets, media consumption, women in media and media entrepreneurship.

- Policymakers and other key stakeholders, who will be able to call upon these insights to ensure that the needs of these relatively new forms of media are considered as they shape and influence policies at national and international levels.

Country summaries focus on local markets

To better represent the unique challenges and opportunities in each of the countries we studied, our researchers wrote [Country Summary reports](#), which feature insights and trends specific to each country.

Interviews for this research project were conducted in more than 30 languages, and we will be publishing translations of the executive summary and country summaries in all of these languages on this website in late May 2023, to provide greater access to this research.

It is important to note that because of the differences in size, economics and media freedom challenges, we were not able to include the same number of media from every country, although we did try to make sure that we had a representative sample from each, by ensuring our researchers included at least three and not more than 25 media from each country in this first version of our [Project Oasis media directory](#). Profiles of the 540 media included in this study can be found in the media directory.

Section 1: Digital native media teams

The media outlets included in this study range from small, volunteer-run news organisations that share content through newsletters, podcasts and messaging apps, to large multi-platform operations with more than 100 journalists, editors and other professional team members.

When we analysed all of the media in this study that reported having full-time staff members, we found the majority had 10 to 19 paid team members.

Team size of media organisations*

Percent of media	Number of full-time employees
22%	1 to 9
51.6%	10 to 19
21.4%	20 to 49
3.5%	50 to 99
1.5%	More than 100

* Based on responses from 341 media organisations that reported having full-time employees

Media with dedicated sales staff report higher revenue

Most of the media outlets in this study were founded by journalists or editors, and they often employ more reporters than business people, but the ones that have invested in expanding their teams to include staff members with skills beyond content production are building more sustainable organisations.

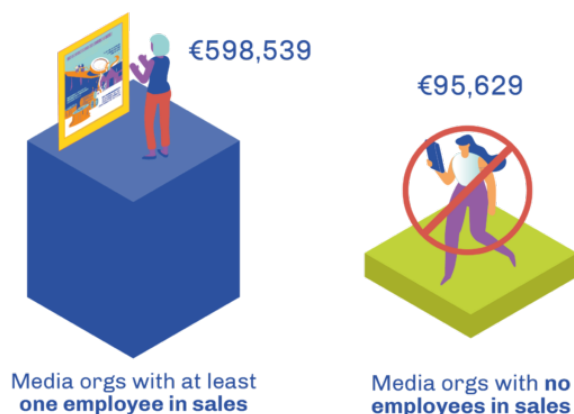
Our findings showed that organisations with at least one employee dedicated to sales or business development reported an average annual revenue six times higher than those that did not employ people in these roles.

Relationship between revenue and dedicated sales staff*

Media organisations that have at least 1 employee dedicated to sales or business development reported an average annual revenue **6 times higher** than media organisations with no dedicated employees in this area.

* BASED ON 302 MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

AVERAGE ANNUAL GROSS REVENUE:



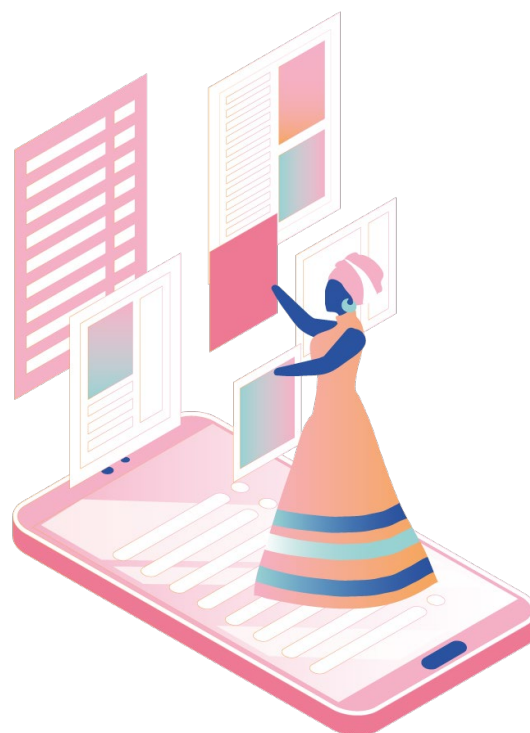
These insights about the value of having dedicated staff members focused on revenue generation are consistent with SembraMedia's findings from previous research projects, such as our 2021 [Inflection Point International](#) report, which included digital native media from Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia. In that report, media organisations that had a dedicated sales or business development staff member reported annual revenue six to nine times higher than those without dedicated employees working in these areas.

Women media founders breaking the glass ceiling

We found an unprecedented number of women founders among the independent digital native media organisations we studied in Europe.

Looking at all the organisations in our [directory](#), we found that nearly 46% had at least one woman on their founding team. Many outlets included more than one woman among their co-founders.

Delving more deeply, we decided to look at all the media founders in the directory, irrespective of which organisation they came from. We discovered that 58% of them were women — meaning that the majority of all founders in our directory across the board are women.



Finding a high percentage of women founders in these new kinds of media is consistent with our previous research on digital native media in other parts of the world; but in Europe, the numbers are even higher.

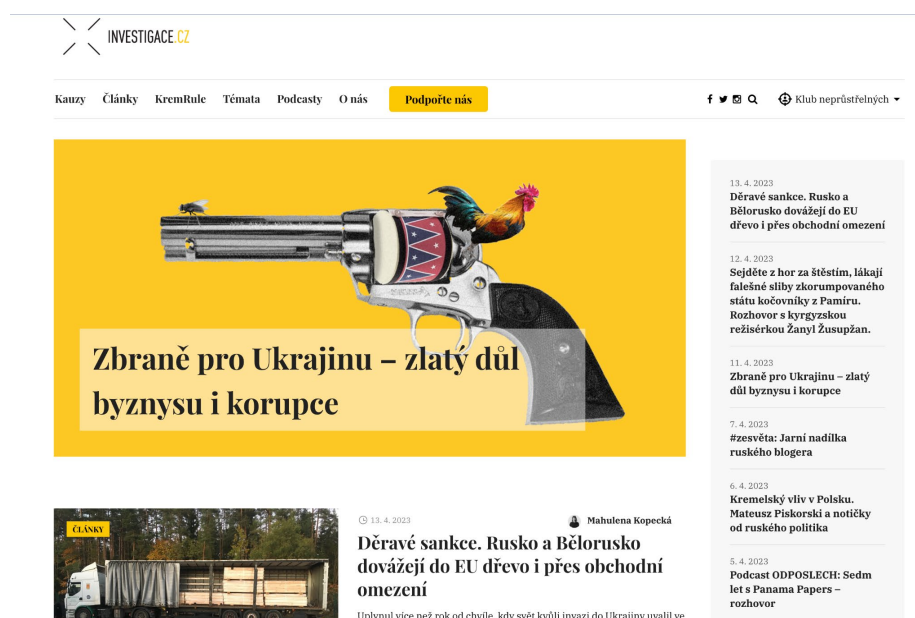
In our [SembraMedia directory](#) of Hispanic digital native media, 42% of the total number of founders are women.

Note: These figures are based on the number of media included in the Project Oasis and SembraMedia directories in April 2023. Because we continuously update our media directories, these numbers may change over time.

Women-led media tackle serious social issues

The women media founders featured in this study have created news organisations that cover a wide range of topics, from award-winning fact-checking sites, to investigative reporting collaboratives, to sites that focus on underserved communities.

The Czech media outlet Investigace.cz was started by investigative journalist Pavla Holcová because she wanted to do cross-border investigative reporting. When she launched the news site in 2013, it was clear that corruption and crime were happening across borders, but there were no cross-border teams of journalists covering these stories, she said.



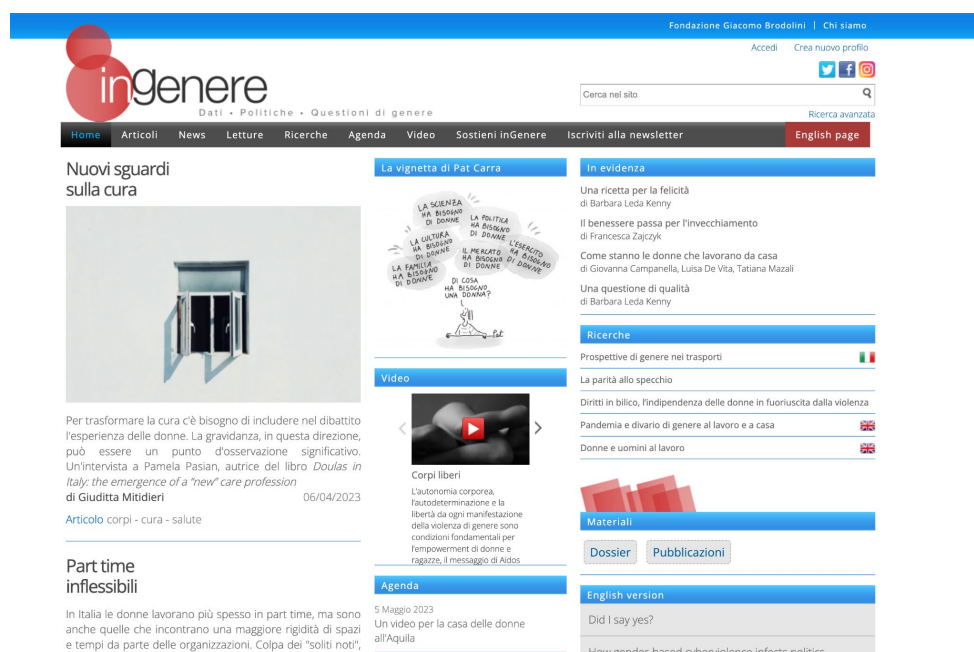
Holcová founded Investigace.cz as an Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) partner organisation in the Czech Republic, and by 2022 her newsroom had grown to include 10 members and contributors. The information on the website is partly original investigative stories produced by the outlet's own team, and partly reports from other

OCCRP partners. Investigace.cz also produces a podcast, which covers crime and corruption cases in greater depth.

The Andererseits.org news site, which was founded by three women, describes its mission this way: “Although around 15-20% of people living in Austria have a disability, there are only a handful of journalists with disabilities. We change that.”

Katharina Brunner, Katharina Kropshofer and Clara Porák founded the media outlet in 2020. All of the editors worked as volunteers, until a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2022 enabled them to grow, professionalise and start paying their first employees. The team aims to make all aspects of journalistic content production — from text to graphics, research to video production — as inclusive and accessible as possible.

In Italy, media founders that have a background in academia aim to spread their knowledge and expertise outside their field. The publication inGenere, a magazine that covers economics with a gender perspective, strives to give visibility to the opinions of high-profile female academics who are “ignored by mainstream media”, as the outlet’s editor-in-chief, Barbara Leda Kenny, explained.



Media with both male and female founders earn more revenue

Another key insight was that media with at least one female and one male founder reported the highest revenues, with an average of €509,740 annual revenue.

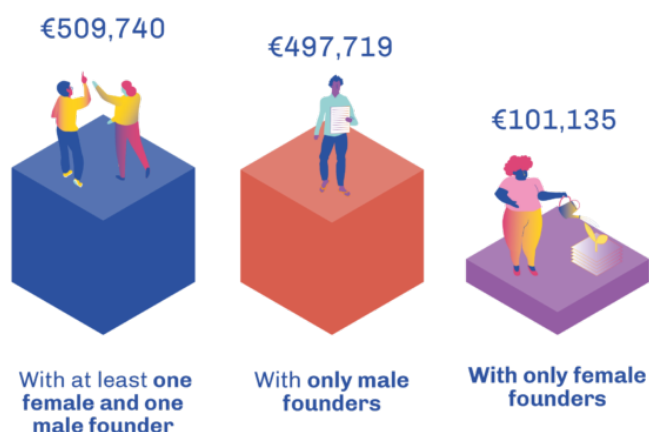
Media with only male founders reported the second highest average annual revenue of €497,719 — more than four times that of organisations with only female founders.

Relationship between gender of founders and annual revenue

Teams with male and female founders, earn more revenue.

Teams with only male founders earn more than 4 times the revenue of teams with only female founders.

AVERAGE ANNUAL GROSS REVENUE:



*These figures are based on the 57% (363 of the 540 media in our directory) that answered all of our questions about annual revenue and the gender of their founders. More than half of these (204) had at least one male and one female founder, 116 had only male founders and 43 had only female founders.

Although there are many reasons for this disparity, anecdotal conversations captured during our interviews suggest some of the causes are:

- A persistent lack of women in investment decision-making roles, which compounds the finance gap (i.e investors typically invest in teams that look like them)
- Evidence of higher risk aversion towards women-led companies
- The limited pool of women-led companies and female entrepreneurs in Europe in general
- The need for policy and funding bodies to provide more equitable support to women-led companies

The report [Why are women entrepreneurs missing out on funding](#) provides some insights on how to provide more equitable funding opportunities in Europe. It was written by Surya Fackelmann and Alessandro De Concini for the European Commission in 2019.

Outlets with women founders feature more transparency policies

In contrast with other parts of the world where we have done similar research, Europe seems to put a higher value on the use of transparency policies published on news sites. This is likely due, at least in part, to the implementation of the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) across EU member states in 2018.

To better understand how independent digital native media were following this trend, we asked nine questions in our interviews about transparency.

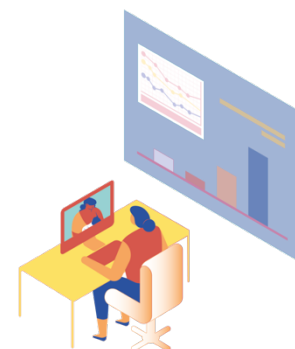
All interviewees were asked the same nine questions about transparency policies, including whether the media outlet publishes policies regarding data privacy, complaints and sexual harassment. We also asked whether they publish information about annual revenues and the names of donors, as well as the names of founders and team members.

The media organisations that reported having the most extensive and thorough transparency policies also had at least one woman founder. Delving deeper into the data, we found that 86% of the media that were founded only by women answered “yes” to all nine transparency questions. By comparison, only 62% of the media with only male founders answered “yes” to all of our transparency questions.

The relationship between transparency and annual revenue

The more transparent the media, the more they seem to be respected by donors. We found that organisations that commit to crafting the most extensive transparency policies, especially when those policies are published on that outlet’s website, are more likely to receive grants and individual donations.

***Media organisations with the most transparency policies published on their website also reported higher average revenue: €691,234**



Primary revenue source
GRANTS

Secondary revenue source
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

The media with the most transparency policies reported an average annual revenue of €691,234, which is higher than the general average. The primary revenue source for these organisations was grants, followed by individual donations.

*Based on the number of media orgs that answered YES to all of our transparency policy questions: 109 out of 343 orgs that reported publishing at least one type of transparency policy

Of the 343 media organisations that said they publish at least one transparency policy, 32% said they had implemented all nine of the policies we included in our questionnaire.

(You’ll find our questions related to transparency in the PDF included at the end of the About the Study section, where we published our entire questionnaire — as part of our own effort to be transparent.)

Section 2: Building business models

The digital native media in this study range from tiny start-ups with no revenue to large media organisations that bring in millions of euros each year. That diversity often makes it hard to generalise about what helps them build sustainable news organisations.

Thus, as we've done in similar research projects in other parts of the world, we found that the best way to compare them was to divide them into distinct tiers, or levels, of business maturity. We created these tiers by organising them based on annual revenue, team size (full-time employees) and how many years they have been publishing.

Business Maturity Tiers*

Tiers	Average annual revenue	Percent of media	Average age of media in years	Average team size (full-time employees)
1	€0	6%	6	6
2	€34,866	44%	9	8
3	€316,558	26%	10	11
4	€701,424	16%	9	16
5	€1,984,411	8%	10	16

* This conclusion is based on 69% (371 media organisations) that reported all of the data in this chart.

As we've expanded our research on digital native media from Latin America to Southeast Asia and Africa, and now to Europe, we have used the same five levels of business maturity to make it easier to compare datasets among our studies.

In this new study on European digital native media, we found that less than 10% of the media qualified for the highest tier (Tier 5), with average annual revenue of nearly €2 million per year. Note: to better reflect the average, we excluded a few outliers which surpassed €10 million in annual revenue.

Nearly half of the publications featured in this research project landed in the lowest tiers (Tier 1 and Tier 2) with annual revenues from 0 to €100,000.

The remainder fell into the mid-tiers (Tier 3 and Tier 4), earning between €100,000 and €1 million per year. As their annual revenues increased, their team sizes increased, as well. But as we've found in previous studies in other regions, age can be a misleading factor. Although in general, older media do tend to earn higher revenues, we found relatively young media in the top tiers, and media that were more than 10 years old sometimes still in the lower tiers.

The fact that the age of these media organisations doesn't always correlate to annual revenue could be attributable to other factors covered in this report, including the amount of initial investment, investment in sales and business development staff, and the experience and focus of the media founders on building sustainable business models.

Note: To protect the privacy of these media organisations, we did not publish their annual revenues in the profiles in the [Project Oasis media directory](#), but many of them disclose detailed financial information on their own websites.

Media outlets that cover national and international news reported the highest annual revenue

The 100 media outlets with the highest annual revenues in this study primarily cover national news (52%) and international news (35%). Grants were the primary revenue source for media featuring both these types of coverage, especially among non-profit media organisations. For-profit media organisations in the highest revenue tiers cited advertising as their primary revenue source.

Media that focused on local coverage (7% of the highest earners) and regional coverage (6%) reported individual donations and advertising, respectively, as their primary revenue sources.

Type of coverage	% of 100 media with the highest revenues	Primary Revenue Source
National	52	Grants
International	35	Grants
Local	7	Individuals Donations
Regional	6	Advertising

Social media platforms drive revenue for top earners

As we dug deeper into the characteristics of the 100 media organisations with the highest annual revenues in this study, we explored the platforms they used to distribute information, and found that many went beyond news websites and used social media, newsletters and podcasts to engage audiences.

Of the top revenue producers, 46 attract more traffic to their content through social media platforms, followed by 34 publishing primarily on a website, 11 focused on producing podcasts and nine which cited newsletters as their main distribution channel.

It is important to note that these findings do not necessarily mean that these media earn the majority of their revenue through social media, but we did find that large social media audiences correlated to higher overall revenues. We also found it notable that media that primarily publish information through podcasts and newsletters were among the top revenue earners.

When we analysed the 200 media organisations with the highest annual revenues, social media platforms and websites remained in first and second place as the top news distribution methods, while newsletters overtook podcasts in third and fourth place.

In Germany, our researcher found five media outlets which primarily share content and information via newsletters. A particular standout is Buzzard, an initiative established in 2020 by Dario Nassal and Felix Friedrich, to provide “a daily dose of diverse perspectives”. During their studies in politics, the founders became increasingly aware of the rising polarisation in public debate, and how difficult it was to access an overview of different political perspectives.

The outlet was launched with an investment of nearly €20,000, as well as €165,000 from a crowdfunding campaign and multiple support schemes. Today, it uses over 2,000 verified sources, including established media outlets, think tanks and activist sites, and curates perspectives from across the political spectrum.

Its community can give feedback to the team about its indexed and curated content, although key or frequently appearing feedback is also passed on to the advisory board, which comprises six people.

Buzzard’s content is accessible via an app, a podcast and a weekly newsletter. Though it is largely member financed, its strict paywall has recently been lifted, giving guests access to the app and content insights via its website. Amid popular demand from teachers, Buzzard collaborates with philanthropic organisations to offer schools a new, easy way to strengthen discussion, culture and media literacy, and to integrate diverse perspectives on current debates into their curriculum.



Launched in February 2020, the Polish news initiative Raport o Stanie Świata (Report on the State of the World) produces the State of the World Report, a weekly dose of new stories, commentaries and columns about world events, as well as Report for Today, a weekly podcast that takes a deeper dive into one newsworthy event every Wednesday.

It also produces other podcasts on topics such as books, theatre and music productions, as well as the future (specifically, how the world is changing). The platform is financed by listeners through individual donations.

How digital native media earn revenue

As we selected the digital native media for this research project, we sought out media that serve the public interest, and paid special attention to publications that reach underserved communities or fill news deserts.

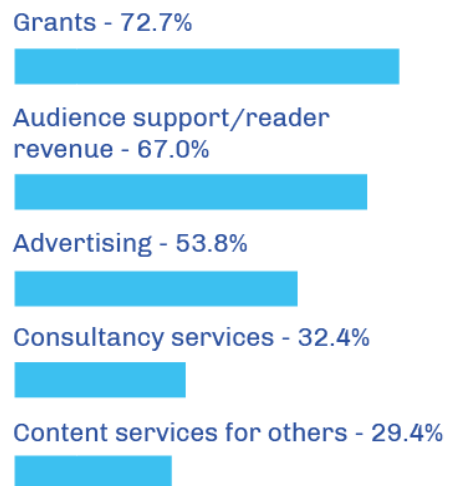
This focus may help to explain why more than half of the media in this study are non-profit organisations, and why grant funding emerged as the primary source of revenue reported by the media leaders we interviewed.

It's also important to note that for-profit and non-profit media outlets reported different revenue sources.

The primary revenue source reported by non-profit publishers was grants, followed by individual donations and memberships (in that order).

In comparison, the primary revenue source reported by for-profit publishers was advertising, followed by website subscriptions and grants (in that order).

Revenue sources in order of popularity



* This conclusion is based on 69% (371 media organizations) that reported all of the data in this chart.

Primary revenue sources

Average findings across all countries



FOR-PROFIT MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

Advertising
Website Subscriptions
Grants



NON-PROFIT MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

Grants
Individual Donations
Membership

These insights are based on an analysis of the 513 media that answered our questions regarding tax status and primary revenue source.

Out of these 513 media, 264 are non-profit, while 170 are for-profit. Meanwhile, 48 use a hybrid model (which incorporates for-profit and non-profit elements), and just 31 are initiatives that were not yet incorporated or registered when we completed our research.

In the [Project Oasis digital media directory](#), which accompanies this report, you can see the top revenue sources across all of the media in the directory.

Note that as we continue to add media to the directory with different revenue sources these numbers may change in the future.

The relationship between sources of revenue and publishing platforms

Diving deeper into the sustainability of the 100 media with the highest annual revenues, we examined how their primary revenue sources compare with the platforms they use to publish and distribute content.

As you can see in the table below, we found that grants were the primary source of revenue for media that rely on social media distribution, newsletters and podcasts, but membership revenue and advertising revenue stood out for outlets that distribute their information primarily on their own website.

100 media with highest annual revenue		Average across all of the media in the directory
Primary content distribution platform	Primary revenue source(s) (in order of significance)	Primary revenue source (s) (in order of significance)
Social media platforms	Grants and advertising	Grants and advertising
Website	Membership and advertising	Advertising and membership
Newsletter	Grants and individual donations	Grants and advertising
Podcast	Grants and individual donations	Grants and individual donations

* Based on 317 media outlets in our study that had provided answers to all of the related questions on distribution platforms and revenue sources.

The higher the page views, the higher the annual revenue

Consistent with our research in other markets, there is a direct relationship between the number of page views a news website attracts and its annual revenue.

This finding was especially notable among media that rely on advertising as their primary source of revenue.

How annual revenue correlates to the diversification of revenue sources

In SembraMedia's previous research projects examining independent digital native media, we have found that developing diverse sources of revenue fosters media independence and sustainability.

Consistently, the data has shown that having fewer than two revenue sources was likely to land media organisations in the bottom third of revenue earners in most markets, but having more than six revenue sources did not always increase revenue among similar-sized media organisations. The ideal number in most markets seems to be between two and six distinct revenue sources.

Although the diverse range of political and economic realities across the more than 40 countries included in this study made it more challenging to confirm this trend in Europe, we did find that the media in this study with the highest reported annual revenues rely on two to four active sources of revenue.

When we compared revenue sources among media in different countries, Italy stood out as the country with the greatest diversity, with digital media there reporting an average of 13 revenue sources. However, Italy came in seventh out of the countries with the highest annual revenue, reinforcing the finding that having too many revenue sources is not necessarily financially beneficial.

In Georgia and Croatia, some media outlets rely significantly on funding from private donors or from national and foreign governments. However, our researchers in both countries found organisations that have been established with the goal of breaking with this precedent and building sustainable, commercial media outlets.

Examples include On.ge and Project 64 in Georgia, and Srednja.hr in Croatia. Srednja.hr covers high school students, identifying them as an underrepresented group in national news coverage. It relies primarily on advertising to generate revenue.

How digital media build reader revenue

Many of the media outlets we studied turn to their audiences for financial support. For some, reader revenue is a means of operating within an environment where media capture

is widespread, while others seek audience support to build a sense of community and collectivism.

“Readers should donate because they feel they are part of a community, not because they are forced to do it,” said Alberto Puliafito, co-founder of the Italian multimedia publication Slow News.



Some media organisations have launched membership programmes, but only a few reported using a paywall to restrict audience access.

That said, only about 30% of the media in our directory reported receiving reader revenue. For the purposes of this research, we included financial contributions from memberships, donations, subscriptions (to a website or newsletter), crowdfunding and event ticket sales as reader revenue or audience support.

Membership models were slightly more popular with the publications we studied, compared to website subscriptions. It is worth noting that the terms [“membership”](#) and [“subscription”](#) are often subject to regional and language interpretations. In some countries, “subscription” is used for a model that often includes community participation in non-financial ways, as well as financial. Some 41% of the media we studied have membership models, but the majority reported having fewer than 10,000 paid members.

Website subscriptions are used by almost 25% of the media outlets that employ reader revenue. Most of these also reported fewer than 10,000 subscribers.

In some cases, readers pay to access or contribute to a specific section of a media's website. Czech outlet Deník Referendum, which was established in 2009, has the following slogan: "No oligarchs, no paywall. Just your donations and our work."

Editor-in-chief Jakub Patočka came up with a specific method: "Readers who wish to debate under our articles pay a fee. This approach generates a modest income and also helps cultivate the discussion in the comments section."

Deník Referendum DR Bez oligarchů. Bez paywallu. Jen vaše dary a naše práce Přihlásit | Odebírat zpravodaj

Bečva Domov Svět Názory Reportérky Klima Město Podcast Hledat

Zpráva • Petr Jedlička

Válka na Ukrajině z jara: ruská ofenzíva zpomalila, ukrajinská je na dohled

U Bachmutu, Kreminny či Avdiivky postoupili interventi přes zimu o jednotky kilometrů. Ukrajinci nyní přesouvají své síly na nástupní pozice. Hojně diskutovaný únik informací v USA by jarní ofenzívu ohrozit neměl.

Petr Jedlička Válka na Ukrajině na počátku druhého roku: celkový obraz

David Gardáš Peking a Moskva: proruská „neutralita“ bez hranic

Međuza Sociolog Grigorij Judin: Ruské imperiální ambice Ukrajinou zdaleka nekončí

Pavel Havlíček Moldavsko je pod tlakem, ale nikoli na pokraji zvratu

ŠPATNÉ ZPRÁVY? MÁME DOBŘE KAFE! REBEL REAN

Media cooperatives are also an interesting model among publications in our directory. As cooperatives, The Bristol Cable and The Meteor in the UK, Onderzoekscollectief Spit in the Netherlands, and RiffReporter in Germany are financed through contributions from members of the cooperative.

The Bristol Cable's cooperative members are also "democratic shareholders", which means they can attend the organisation's annual general meetings, vote on editorial campaigns and stand in elections for the non-executive directors' board. The board members help to guide, advise and steer the outlet forward.

Reader revenue, closely intertwined with community engagement, is also popular among digital native media outlets based in countries where media capture is widespread. Some of the examples you can find in our media directory include: OKO.press and Raport o Stanie Swiata in Poland, Telex and MÉRCE in Hungary, and Alternativata in Bulgaria.

The screenshot shows the MÉRCE website with a purple header. The navigation bar includes links for #SZTRÁJK, #VÁLÁS, and #KÜLFÖLD. On the right, there are buttons for 'Támogatom!', 'Hírlevél', and a '1%' badge. Below the header, there are three main article sections:

- SOKK:** An article titled 'Bíróságra megy igazáért a rendőrséggel szemben a lesokkolózott lakhatási aktivista'. The text mentions a journalist who was violently evicted from a shelter and is now suing the police. The author is KISS SOMA ÁBRAHÁM, dated 'ma 18:45'.
- SZTRÁJK:** An article titled 'A tanárok háromnapos sztrájkjához az egészségügyi dolgozók is csatlakoznak Lettországból'. The text asks if there are any teachers and mentions that teachers are also important with their strikes. The author is SZADAI LEVENTE, dated 'ma 7:30'.
- USA:** An article titled '„Működése értelmét veszítette” – a kormány búcsút int a Nemzetközi Beruházási Banknak'. The text mentions that the government is saying goodbye to the International Investment Bank. The author is KISS SOMA ÁBRAHÁM, dated 'ma 17:31'.

Below these articles is a large banner with the text: 'adj 1%-ot, hogy hangot adhassunk a 99%-nak!'. To the right of the banner is a section titled 'STÁTUSZ' with a photo of a person on a street.

At the bottom of the page, there is a purple bar with the text 'A MÉRCE-nél vannak sütik. Info.' and a button labeled 'RENDBEN'.

Despite the relatively small numbers of membership and subscription programmes we found among media throughout Europe, when we asked the media leaders we interviewed for this study if they were planning to add any new revenue sources in the upcoming year, more than half said “yes”. This number was even higher among those that had only one revenue source, or none. Many of them indicated reader revenue would be a focus, particularly membership and website subscriptions.

Media outlets that publish in English tend to have higher revenue

Europe is a linguistically diverse region, with the European Union alone boasting 24 official languages. During the course of this research, our team conducted interviews in more than 30 languages.

As we analysed the implications of this linguistic diversity, we looked at the most commonly used languages among independent digital native media in Europe, and how publishing in different languages related to annual revenue rates.

The most common languages used to share information, among the 100 media outlets in our directory that reported the highest annual revenues, were, in descending order: English, German, Spanish, French, Polish, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Czech and Finnish. These publications reported an average annual revenue of €691,234.

Note: this finding refers to media that publish in these languages, regardless of whether or

not they are based in, or cover, a country where the language is the primary (or native) language. In other words, media outlets that publish content in English have higher revenue, but these organisations are not necessarily based in countries that have English as a first language.

Digital native media often publish information in more than one language

Some independent digital native media outlets told our researchers that they publish information in other languages to reach underserved communities.

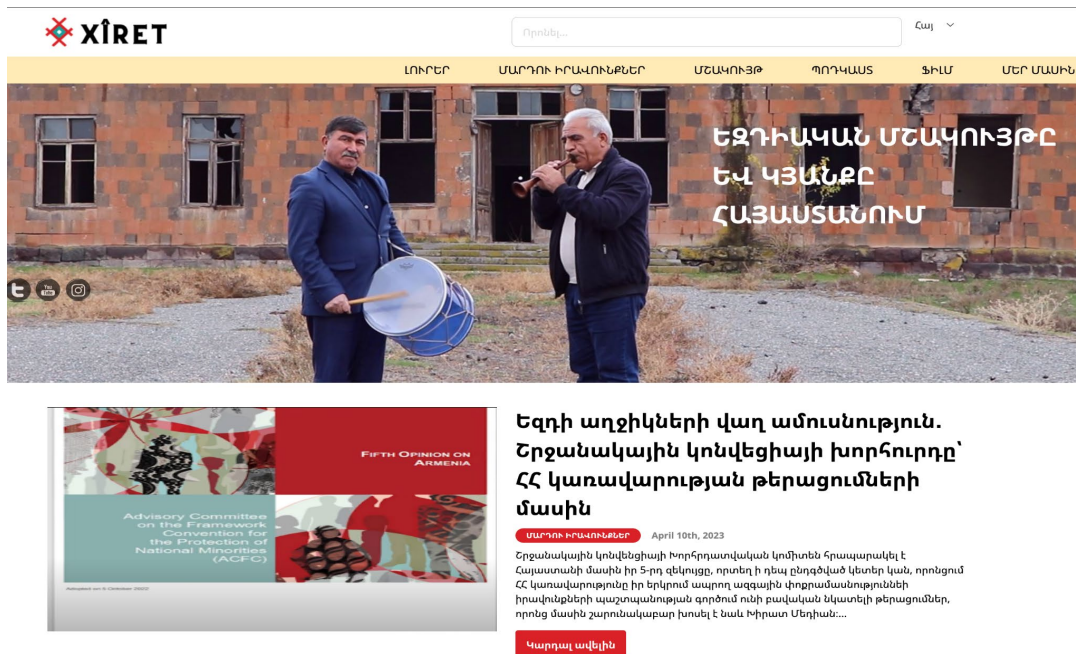
More than 250 of the media in our directory, across 38 countries, publish content in languages other than English. Nearly 28% of these are in Germany, Bulgaria, Portugal, Italy and the Czech Republic.

For nearly 15% of the media that publish in languages other than English, the primary revenue source is grants, with grants from local and national government, and other connected governmental institutions, being the biggest contributor. This is followed by advertising at 13%, and website subscriptions at just over 5%.

Our team of researchers conducted many of their interviews in the primary language(s) of each country, and then translated the information into English before adding the data to our directory and country summaries. To find out more about our methodology and how data was collected and analysed, visit the About The Study section.

In Georgia, some outlets have identified a need to create original content for ethnic minority groups in their first languages, in order to decrease their dependency on information sources from outside the country. In order to create and distribute multi-language content, partnerships were formed among various media outlets to adapt, translate and publish each other's content.

In Armenia, Xirat is the only digital platform in the country that covers the life of national minorities in the Yazidi language, covering the unique culture, traditions, religion, art and history of the Yazidi communities that reside there.



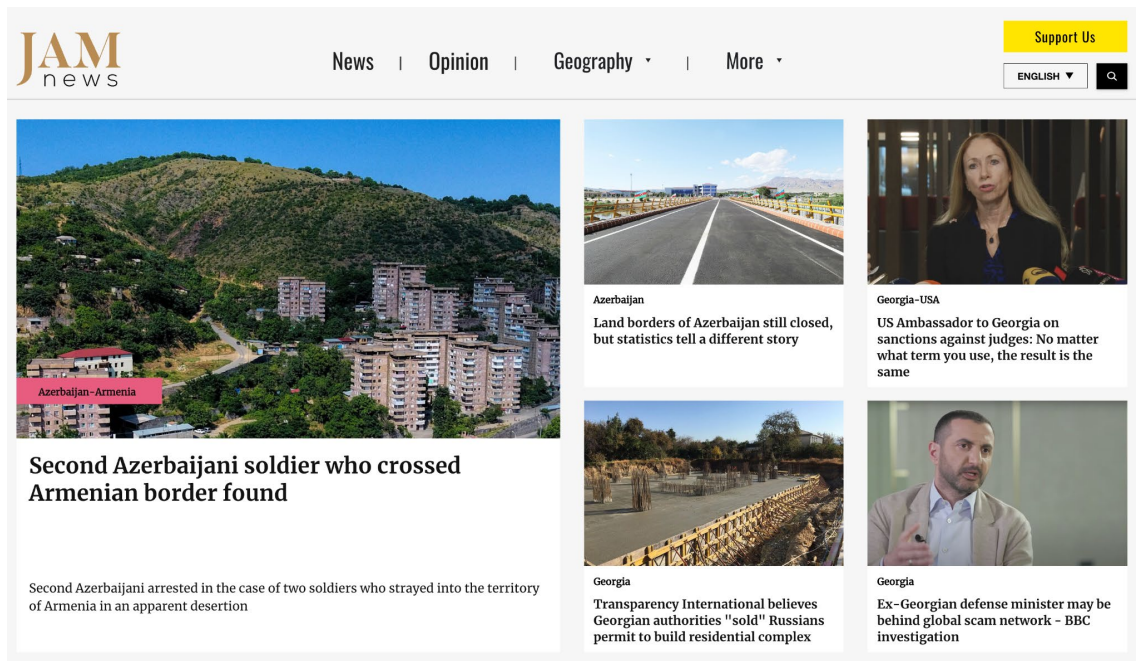
In Latvia, many Russian-language outlets, including the bilingual news platform Meduza, serve the Russian minority population in the Baltics, as well as Russian-speaking audiences globally.

Translating content into English to reach a global audience

Many of the media organisations we interviewed said they translate their content into English to extend their reach, often sharing their translations with other publications.

For example in Georgia, multimedia and investigative outlet OC Media partners with six other outlets to translate and re-publish its English-language content in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian.

JAMnews, which brings together professional journalists, authors and experts from around the Caucasus, is part of the Russian Language News Exchange initiative. The outlet exchanges content with independent newsrooms from Eastern Europe and Central Asia for its pentalingual website.



Some 183 media across 36 countries publish content in one or more languages, in addition to English:

- We found more than 50 examples of media that translate content into English in Armenia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy, which likely reflects their need to reach an international audience. By comparison, of the media we include from the United Kingdom, only 2% publish in a language other than English.
- More than 36% of media that translate their content report grants as their primary revenue source, with funding from private donor organisations cited as the biggest contributors. This is followed by memberships at 6%, and advertising at 5.5%.
- Almost 65% of media that publish in multiple languages are non-profit. Nearly 18% are for-profit, and almost 11% have a hybrid for-profit and non-profit model.

(Note: The percentages do not always add up to 100% because we are not listing all of the categories in these sections.)

Section 3: Why journalists start digital media organisations



Creating media outlets based on their own values, ideas and identity

Media leaders we spoke with during this research cited many reasons for starting their own news organisations. In this section, we explore some of their most frequently cited motivations.

Reasons for striking out on their own included:

- Not “finding their place” in traditional organisations
- A desire to be more entrepreneurial than they were permitted to be in legacy news organisations
- Wanting more freedom to cover the topics they chose, with their own vision

In our interviews with media leaders in France, Georgia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Turkey, we learned that many of them were inspired to set up their own news organisations in collaboration with other journalists after leaving more traditional media outlets.

The local digital news site Indip was co-founded by a group of freelance journalists in Sardinia, Italy in 2021 because they wanted more control over choosing what topics they covered, and how.

"Too many times, the editors-in-chief of national and local newspapers prevented us from developing a story in order not to annoy politicians or entrepreneurs, " said Raffaele Angius, one of the site's founders. "On Indip, by contrast, we are able to publish unheard stories, such as the presence of mafia organisations in Sardinia, or the corruption that affects our public administration."



In Slovakia, Denník N was founded by a group of about 50 journalists who left a daily newspaper, after it was partially acquired by a group of new investors who had a history of being involved in corruption scandals with local politicians.

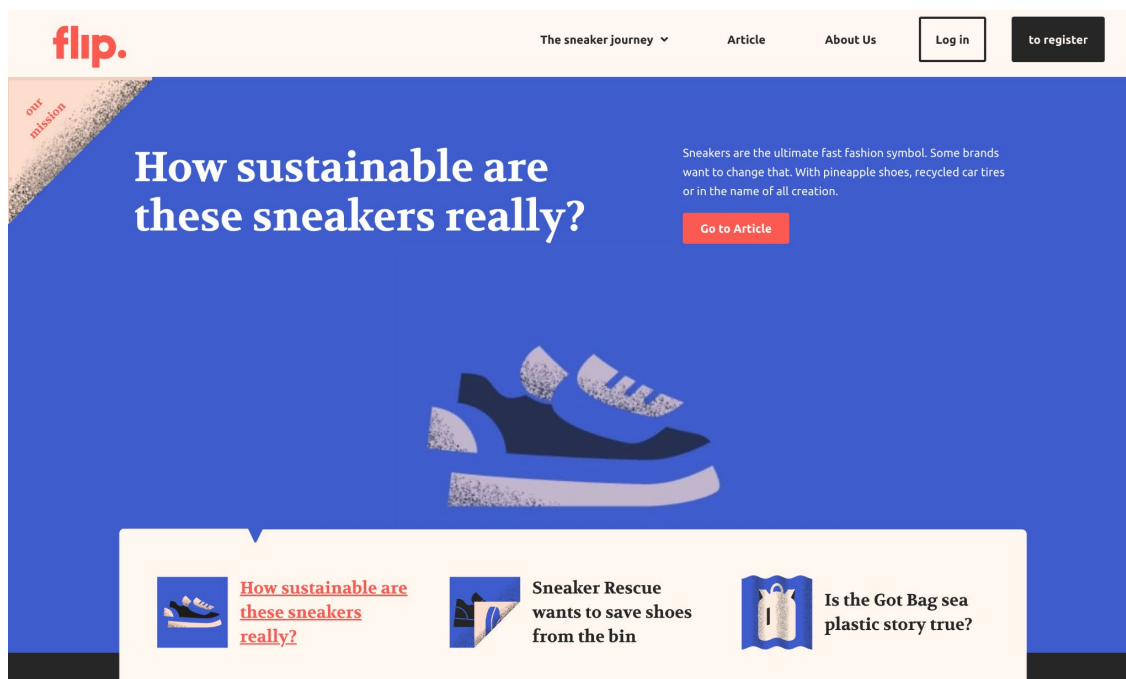
After starting its own website, the team went on to publish a new daily newspaper. The venture was named Denník N, because "N" stands for a Slovak word for "independent", and they wanted to stress their independence from oligarchs and politicians.

The team at Denník N also produces a series of podcasts and video interviews, hosts political debates and related events, and publishes books. Since its launch in 2014, the outlet has

become a significant contributor to Slovak political journalism and public discourse. Denník N has a reputation for being a liberal, pro-democratic, pro-European and progressive news outlet. After its success in the Slovak market, the same team of founders started a similar project in 2018 in the Czech Republic, with the name Deník N (both outlets are based on a subscription model).

Countering misleading marketing messages

The news site Flip was founded in Hamburg, Germany, in 2020. Its mission is to help people to better distinguish between sustainable consumption alternatives and products they describe as “subject to greenwashing”.



In its bi-weekly newsletter, Flip provides in-depth, investigative reports on products and services that make sustainability claims. It then invites community members to rank the validity of these claims on a scale of 1 to 10. It aims to promote promising, impactful ideas and call out those who are not doing what they claim, with the goal of generating long-term impact on the environment, and informing the audience about misleading marketing messages.

One of its most in-depth investigations was on the recycling of sneakers, a project Flip undertook with two established media partners (the private Zeit and the public-sector broadcaster NDR). As part of their research, journalists tracked 11 cases, exploring whether

sneakers were recycled. Their investigation found that many sneakers ended up in large dumps on the streets of Kenya.

After publishing the story, the team ran a crowdfunding campaign and raised €78,489 from 530 contributors to produce its own more environmentally sustainable sneakers. The co-production of genuinely sustainable alternatives to the products they review is one way the founders hope to continue financing their investigative work. To date, the media outlet has relied on crowdfunding, grants and start-up funds from angel investors.

Media leaders motivated by media capture

Qualitative data collected by our researchers in the country summaries suggests that more than 65% of the media included in this study exist in markets where media is controlled by a relatively small group of owners. These markets are typically dominated by large media players, and often heavily influenced by business and political leaders. Half of these countries also have government restrictions on media, and low press freedom rankings.

Our researchers found that in media markets where press freedom scores were low, digital native media often chose publishing platforms that made it easier to evade digital attacks and surveillance.

Research by Reporters Without Borders found that the Hungarian media market is [dominated](#) by the pro-government Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány (KESMA - Central European Press and Media Foundation), which owns approximately 500 national and local media organisations.

Yet despite the political, economic and regulatory pressures, we found independent digital native media in Hungary have had a significant impact — especially those who use social media to distribute content.

444.hu, established in 2013 by journalists who left the independent digital site Index.hu, quickly became popular with its distinctive “gonzo-style” journalism and mobile-friendly design.

When we completed our research at the end of 2022, 444.hu had more than 424,000 followers on Facebook, and more than 230,000 followers on YouTube.

In Turkey, which is often cited as a challenging media market due to political polarisation and government restrictions, many media leaders said they have opted for a social-first approach, avoiding publishing on a website altogether.

In almost all countries we studied that are known for having a high concentration of media ownership, fewer than 8.5% of the digital native media we interviewed reported advertising as their primary source of revenue.

In more than half of the 29 countries in markets with concentrated media ownership, we also found a high rate of digital native media practising investigative journalism, solutions journalism, explanatory journalism and fact-checking, often with a focus on covering human rights and environmental issues.

Establishing media in exile to counteract restrictions and provide crucial information

In countries such as Belarus and Azerbaijan, which are classified by Reporters Without Borders as having [very serious limitations on press freedom](#), our researchers learned that independent digital native media founders often had to start their media organisations in exile. As a result of digital attacks and threats, they have often had to re-establish their news organisations, or find more discreet ways of publishing information.

In Belarus, many media outlets were [labelled as “extremist”](#) and some of their leaders were [jailed](#) during the 2020 protests there.



In the aftermath, many journalists fled the country to start new digital native media outlets, such as Pozirk and Zerkalo, which they have operated in exile ever since.

Pozirk publishes exclusively on Telegram to reach audiences without publishing information that can be easily searched for online. Established by the team originally behind news website Naviny.by, Pozirk continues the website's tradition of objective, accurate and fast news reporting. The newsroom was based on the example of Belapan, Belarus's first and only private news agency.

Naviny.by and Belapan were obliterated by President Aleksander Lukashenko's regime in the aftermath of the 2020 protests. These outlets were branded "extremist", and their key editors and founders are currently in prison. Members of those teams who managed to avoid arrest and flee Belarus created Pozirk as a news outlet in exile, and they said they chose Telegram as the sole distribution channel to get around the government's attempts to block independent websites.

In our interviews, many of the leaders of independent media in countries with low press freedom scores reported that their work is often disrupted when their Facebook and YouTube pages are taken down because political leaders and others file false reports of plagiarism or other platform policy violations.

This practice has become so common around the world that the Electronic Frontier Foundation created a [guide to appealing social media takedowns](#). But even if they are successful in getting their profiles and pages restored, digital native publishers face a difficult dilemma: each time they encounter these types of disruptions, they risk losing audience, brand awareness and the chance to build a reputation — especially when they have to set up entirely new organisations to counteract restrictions.

In SembraMedia's 2021 Inflection Point Report on media in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, digital attacks were reported as an increasingly common form of censorship and retaliation. More than half of the media leaders interviewed for that report said they had suffered cyber-attacks, ranging from hacked email and social media accounts to [Distributed Denial of Service \(DDoS\)](#) attacks.

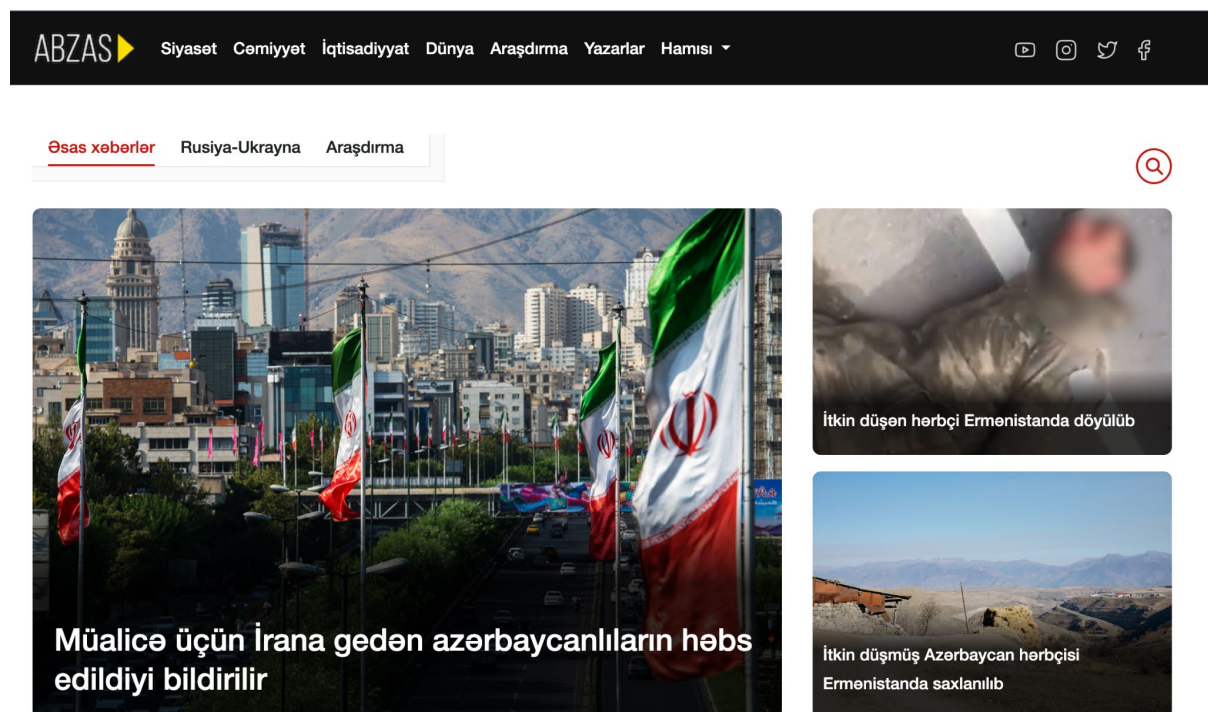
Nearly 20% of the media leaders who reported these kinds of threats in Europe said they had been victims of online attacks or targeting.

Serhat News is an outlet founded by the non-profit organisation Dijital Medya Derneği (in English: Van Digital Media Association), covering Turkey's eastern region in Turkish, Kurdish and English. The outlet is based in Van, a crucial passage point for refugees, primarily from

Afghanistan and Iran, and covers migration, refugees and political issues related to the Kurdish minority.

Leaders of the Serhat News website said they face cyber-attacks on a regular basis, and that their journalists have been subject to physical violence on the ground. The newsroom has also received numerous lawsuits and police investigations. Despite these challenges, the founders said they are determined to continue publishing "to show everyone that journalism can be done despite the politics of intimidation".

In Azerbaijan, Ulvi Hasanli, the co-founder of AbzasMedia, said that one of the main motivations for establishing the outlet was that in 2014, there were attacks on independent media in the country, as a result of which many media outlets were shut down. In light of these disruptions, in 2016 a group of journalists decided to create a new media outlet to fill the void and provide alternative news. They intended to highlight human rights violations, corruption cases and social problems.



However, as soon as the media outlet became popular, it faced severe difficulties. Its website domain name was blocked, and Hasanli [was sent](#) for compulsory military service. After he returned to civilian life in 2018, Hasanli discovered that "the media outlet operated only through proxy links, and its audience had decreased by 10 times". AbzasMedia's main web domain is unavailable in Azerbaijan, and the staff use another web domain to avoid restrictions.

Political polarisation is boosting demand for independent journalism

In Poland's relatively diverse and independent media market, many of the digital native media leaders we interviewed said they were motivated to create their own media organisations to counter the increased politicisation of private media ownership, as well as buyouts of regional media by government-controlled companies.

Digital native publishers in Poland told our researcher that social media channels had proven the most effective way to generate website traffic. Polityka Insight and Kultura Liberalna have also developed podcasts to complement the reports on their websites. OKO.press has used a variety of multimedia formats to attract more than 136,000 followers on Instagram. In addition, most of the digital native media we included in Poland publish one or more email newsletters.



Motivated by concentrated media ownership

Our research shows that many media founders in this study were motivated by increasingly concentrated media ownership in their countries.

The founders of VierNull, founded in Düsseldorf, Germany in 2021, said they started their news site out of a motivation to counteract the increasing concentration of local news organisation ownership, and what they saw as a resulting reduction in coverage and quality. VierNull, which means FourZero in English, refers to the first two postcode digits of the publication's target area.



Initially funded through a crowdfunding campaign, it now earns revenue primarily through subscriptions. As the founders started into their second year, they said they were exploring new ways to diversify revenue, including offering city tours to local residents and tourists.

VierNull's founders added that their goal is to publish information that empowers Düsseldorf's citizens to form their opinions and become more actively engaged with local political and community issues. In addition to publishing news on the website, the team sends subscribers a weekday newsletter at 5:30am, focusing on the main article of the day.

Digital native media filling information gaps and news deserts

In Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Switzerland, the UK, Italy and Ukraine, many of the media leaders we interviewed said they were motivated to fill news gaps, cover underserved communities and combat mistrust and disengagement.

In Spain, the investigative news outlet Datadista "analyses in-depth issues that are under the radar of the traditional media", said founder Ana Tudela. The team prides itself on bringing to the news agenda issues that go unnoticed, such as environmental pollution from the expansion of chicken and pig farms.

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Jueves, 12 de abril de 2023

Temas

Hipería

Tienda

Equipo

Inicia sesión

Suscríbete

DATADISTA

Investigación, datos y narrativas para salir del ruido

INICIO

COVID-19

PLAYA BURBUJA

MAR MENOR

MEDIO AMBIENTE

EMPLEO

TRANSPARENCIA

📍 CRISIS DE MEMORIA



España daña gravemente sus reservas subterráneas de agua

El 44% de las masas de agua subterránea está ya en mal estado, ya sea por sobreexplotación, contaminación o ambas. El abuso sobre los acuíferos ha dañado ecosistemas teóricamente muy protegidos como las Tablas de Daimiel, el Mar Menor o Doñana pero el problema llega ya al agua del grifo y tiene a las confederaciones buscando alternativas de suministro y al Estado invirtiendo en infraestructuras allí donde la gravedad es mayor.

👉 La contaminación de la agricultura y ganadería llega al agua del grifo



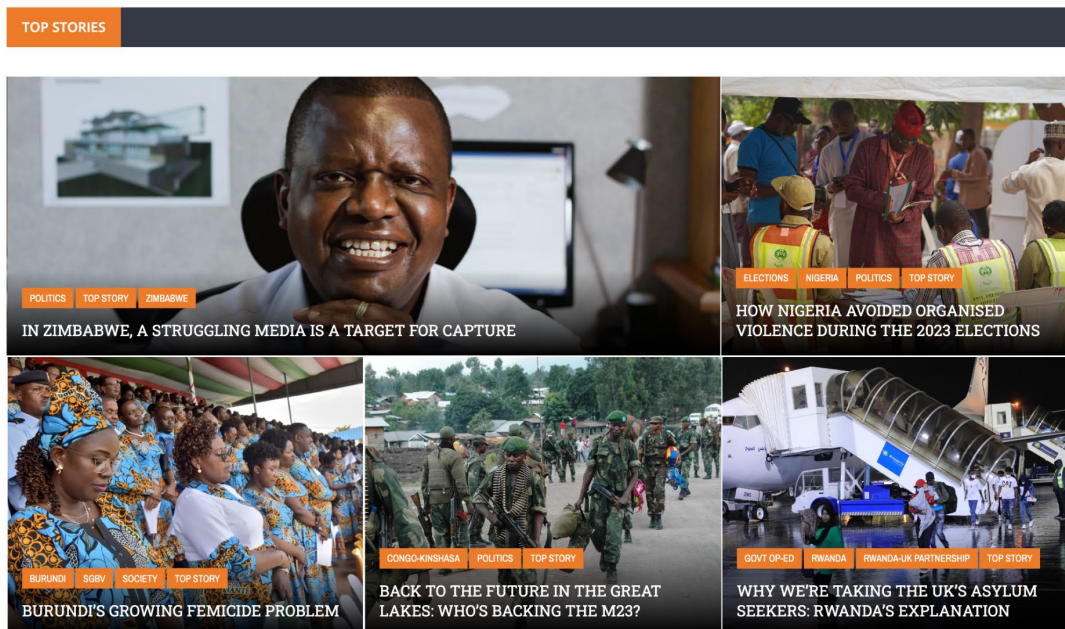


El 80% de los municipios con menos de 5.000 habitantes que tienen macrogranjas de porcino ha perdido población en una década

In response to the Russian occupation of Donbas, Ukrainian outlet Svoi.City offers information for internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees and those who remain in occupied territory. Hayane Avakyan, journalist and coordinator of the organisation, said: “We helped our audience to navigate the ever-changing 'rules and regulations' of everyday life and possibilities to leave the area. As our team had to move to safer places, our mission became to help the audience to move as well.”

Leaders of the UK-based platform African Arguments said they were motivated to offer a counter-narrative to mainstream international coverage of Africa. Rather than focusing on the bad news often covered by foreign reporters, the newsroom produces and investigates stories that matter for Africans, amplifying a diversity of voices. Its goal is to raise awareness of the continent's issues, with deep analyses, thought-provoking essays, open and informed debate and engaging original stories.

38



Challenges and opportunities in times of crisis

The Global Financial Crisis of 2008-2009, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic and the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement, have presented both challenges and opportunities for independent digital native media in Europe.

Anecdotal data collected by our research team, as well as quantitative data captured from our questionnaire, suggests that in several countries (including the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) independent digital native publishers emerged — and even thrived — in the aftermath of these critical events.

Many of the media founders in this study said they were motivated to start their own news outlets to help make up for the loss of journalism coverage caused by budget cuts in more traditional media.

Nearly 17% of the media in our directory were established during the Covid-19 pandemic, most notably in Portugal, followed by Germany, Italy and Turkey.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, digital native outlets found new opportunities to engage audiences with relevant content.

A [report by the European Journalism Centre](#), published in April 2021, details the impact of funding provided to European newsrooms and freelancers at the start of the pandemic, and shows that many of these grant recipients were not only able to keep their organisations from shutting down, they increased audience engagement and participation.

Some 87% of these grant recipients said they were able to increase engagement with their communities through new initiatives or product offerings that extended their reach, often through non-digital channels. These included:

- Special print editions for elderly people
- Community response networks established to enable third-sector charities and other organisations to share information, resources and support with citizens
- Service desks and one-to-one advisory services to answer audience questions about Covid-19, and help them identify what subsidies and government support they qualified for
- Radio programmes addressing mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic

Mensagem de Lisboa is a local, community-based outlet covering the Portuguese capital city. Since its launch in 2021, it has worked hard to "create room to hear the voices of the people living in Lisbon", said director Catarina Carvalho.

Mensagem is the only digital native media organisation in this study that publishes information in English in Portugal. It also translates articles into the Creole language to reach audiences of African descent living in Lisbon and its outlying areas. The news site organises newsroom meetings and tours around the city with readers, and publishes chronicles written by residents whom it has identified as underrepresented in other media (such as homeless people). Carvalho told our researcher they were also planning to start training young journalists from low-income neighbourhoods to help cover these communities.



CIDADE

Um semáforo mais que duplicou de tempo por força de cidadãos. Como os lisboetas estão a lutar pelas passeiras da cidade

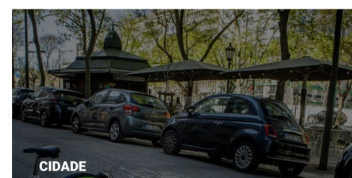


MENSAGEM RÁDIO

“O pior erro é achar que o bom cigano é aquele igual a nós”. À boleia do economista social Roque Amaro para ouvir os ciganos dos nossos bairros



por Catarina Reis



In 2010, two years after the economic crisis, four journalists from the Basque region in Spain founded Pikara Magazine, a non-profit outlet that covers political, economic, social and cultural issues from a feminist perspective.

Pikara Magazine primarily publishes information on its website. It also publishes a yearbook as well as four printed and three digital monographs annually, each of these focusing on a specific topic or trend. Its primary source of revenue comes from its 2,351 members. Nearly 40% of the Pikara audience visits the website from outside of Spain, primarily from Mexico and Argentina. In addition, the organisation receives revenue from the distribution and sale of printed publications, products such as tote bags, advertising and advisory services.

Pikara’s coordinator, Andrea Momoitio, said one of the most valuable lessons the team learned in its first 10 years was the importance of investing in the organisation's management, planning and processes, besides content production. "You are always tempted to hire more journalists, but adding management team members has been fundamental for us," she said. The team has also learned that it's vital to take breaks from publishing to focus on the organisation, she added. Every three years, the entire team stops publishing, and dedicates a month to strategic planning and reflection.



El infinito de Yayoi Kusama

LAURA CORCUERA

La obra de la artista japonesa tiene que ver con la necesidad vital de dibujar universos posibles y quebrar las normosis. Sus prácticas son una puerta para las artes de la performance del siglo XXI.

FICCIONES PORTADA



PIKARA FILMIN

nuevo número
YA A LA VENTA



In some Southern European countries, the economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic were among the driving forces behind the launching of new independent digital native media. Across Central and Eastern Europe, disruptive political events were cited as one of the main reasons for the emergence of new digital native media in the last decade.

The [Euromaidan uprisings](#) in 2013, which created opportunities for greater media independence from government and oligarchs, led to an explosion of independent digital native outlets in Ukraine. The current war in Ukraine has forced most outlets to make changes to the topics they cover, as well as their frequency of publication and platforms used for their reporting. For example, increasing coverage of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), rolling or breaking news coverage, and the use of the Telegram messaging platform to send out direct alerts to readers.

A series of [media captures](#) in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary in the last decade (2010-2020) left many journalists without a job. In those countries, our researchers found that some of these journalists went on to start their own independent media outlets, often making the leap from print publications to publishing online. Examples in our directory include Denník N, FORUM 24 and Telex.

Digital native media leaders in Slovakia told our researcher that journalists in the country were motivated to start their own publications after many of the more traditional media outlets changed from for-profit to “for-influence”.

In the Czech Republic, media leaders reported that news coverage changed dramatically after a wave of media capture in 2013. In reaction, some journalists created their own independent projects, and many moved from print to digital.

“It was a big change for me, I was always in print,” said Pavel Šafr, the founder of FORUM 24 and a former editor-in-chief of leading media organisations in the Czech Republic, including Mladá fronta DNES, Lidové Noviny and Reflex magazine.

Section 4: Innovative news coverage



Society and human rights issues stand out as the most-covered topics

The majority of independent digital native media featured in this report said they cover society and human rights issues. Many media leaders told us they started their news organisations to provide coverage for underrepresented communities and audiences, including refugees and the LGBTIQ+ community.

The Serbian media outlet Mašina publishes information about society, labour rights and movements, women's rights, the environment, politics and culture. Mašina sees itself as a "space for the production of social criticism", aiming to foster a critical approach to information and research beyond the daily news.



Discussing Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, an ELMO Panel and Series

Mašina February 6, 2023

ELMO's series of writings and panel discussion on migration provides insight into relevant and often overlooked aspects of movement of people across national borders.



Proposed policing bill introduces biometric surveillance, searches without warrants and use of force without justification

Iskra Krstić December 19, 2022

A new draft bill on internal affairs is due to be presented to the Serbian public by the end of the year. Members of the opposition and representatives of civil society have warned that it is even more alarming than legislation proposed in September 2021, which was withdrawn following an intervention by the Serbian head of state.



Climate Change Loss and Damage to Be Paid by Historical Polluters – But Not All of the Biggest Polluters

Iskra Krstić November 29, 2022

A historic agreement was reached at the United Nations Climate Change Summit, COP27, with developed countries pledging to establish a funding facility that will help developing countries deal with the impact of global warming. During the negotiations, developing countries relied on the influence of China, which will not, for the time being at least, fund the facility.

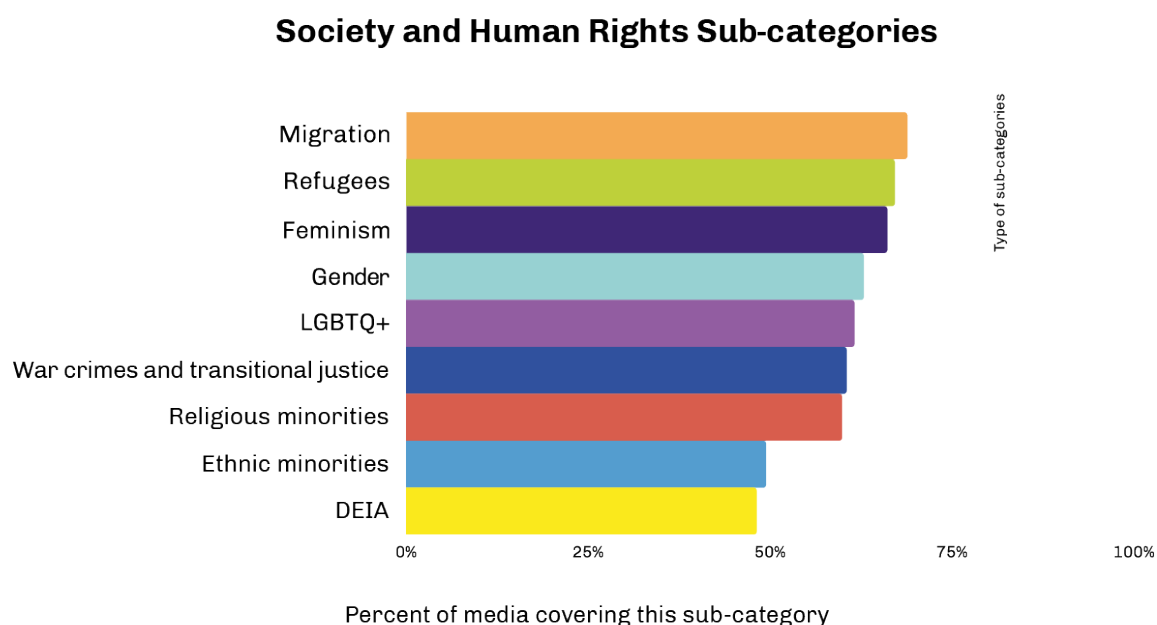
To better quantify the coverage areas of the media we studied, we identified 12 main topic areas, which you can use to filter media in the [Project Oasis directory](#). In our interviews with media leaders, we broke these down into more specific sub-categories to better understand key areas of coverage.

Although you can only search our Project Oasis media directory by the top 12 categories, in each of the individual media profiles you will find a complete list of the topics they cover, including the sub-categories.

The most popular categories of content cited by media in this study are:

- Society and human rights, with 87%
- Politics, with 84%
- Economy and business, with 73%
- Environment, with 71%
- Entertainment and culture, with 62%
- Education, with 60%

Because the majority of the media featured in our directory selected “society and human rights” as one of their primary coverage areas, we’ve included its sub-categories in the table that follows.



More than half of digital native media do investigative journalism

To better understand how these media organisations share their news and information, our questionnaire included a list of 10 journalism genres.

Nearly 89% of the independent digital native media in our directory said they publish content by conducting interviews to report on topics, 75% said they primarily publish opinion pieces and 64% do investigative journalism.

Many of the media in this study play a crucial role in holding power to account in the countries where they operate. “There would be almost no investigative work done in Slovakia without media like Aktuality.sk or Denník N,” concluded our Slovakian researcher, after creating nine directory media profiles for a country which has a population of about 5.5 million people.

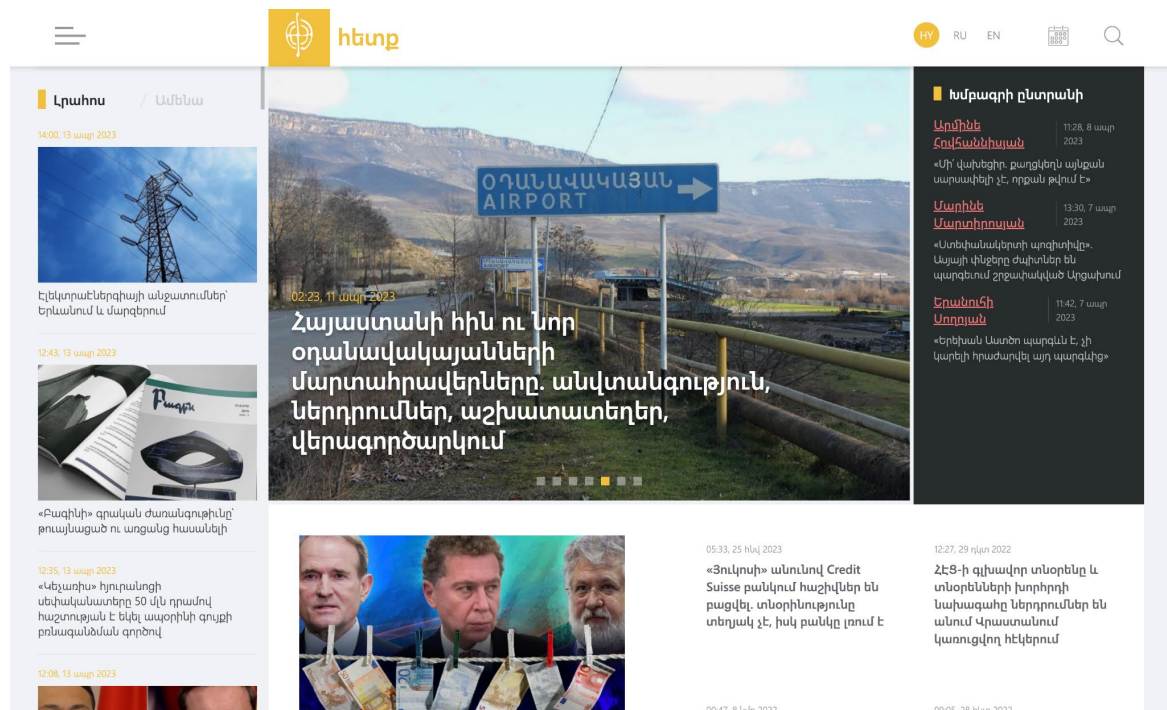
In Slovenia, Oštro publishes investigative and data journalism, because its team is determined to nurture the “right to know” as a fundamental human right. It publishes in-depth local, national, regional and international investigative journalism, with the goal of spreading knowledge and inspiring future generations of journalists.

But in Slovenia, as in so many other markets, media leaders also told us that investigative journalism is costly and requires long-term investment.

“We have to find new business opportunities for survival in the market. Journalism investigation [has become] not only a risky genre, but also a very expensive one. Modern

tools and technologies cost money; staff training takes a long time and needs investment in the profession,” said Kristine Barseghyan, the executive director of the Hetq investigative media outlet in Armenia.

The Hetq team, which has contributed to award-winning international investigations, including [The Panama Papers](#), was the first publication to adopt a [code of ethics](#) and to introduce the practice of working with investigative teams in Armenia. Hetq publishes articles in English and Armenian.



Declines in website page views drive digital media to social platforms

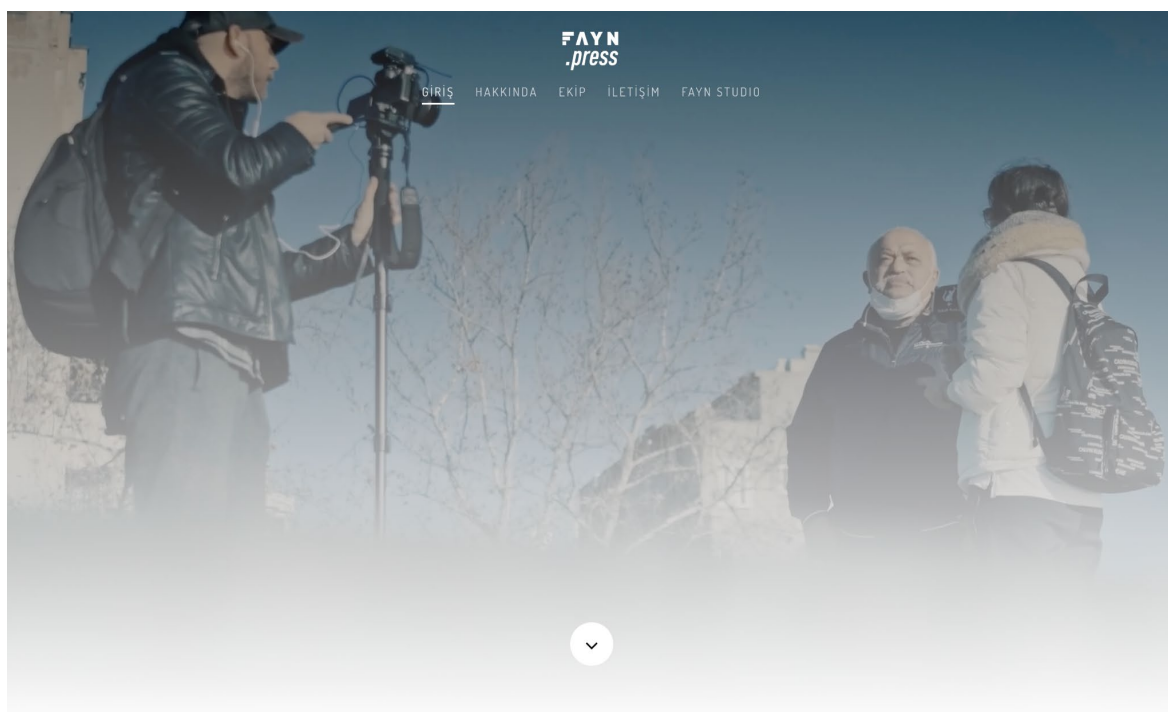
Several of our study participants in Turkey said that despite soaring social media engagement, they were concerned that website page views have steadily declined over the last few years. Media leaders there said general news fatigue was a likely factor.

The [2022 Digital News Report](#), published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, supports this theory, noting news fatigue in Turkey was “not just around Covid-19 but around politics and a range of other subjects — with the number of people actively avoiding news increasing markedly”.

Semih Sakallı co-founded Mesele Ekonomi in Istanbul in 2018. His team primarily features expert opinions focused on political economy, through a YouTube channel. Sakallı said he is working to build a sustainable business model through revenue from advertising and sponsorship on YouTube. He also highlighted the importance of LinkedIn, which has helped them to build connections with potential advertisers.

Kutsal Motor, also founded in 2018 in Istanbul, shares information primarily through a YouTube channel, with a focus on entertainment and culture, politics, and society and human rights.

In 2022, the founders of Fayn Studio, a Turkish business offering video content services for journalism organisations, local streaming services and visual brand consultancy for NGOs, launched Fayn Press to publish their own explanatory short videos and posts on social media.



Co-founder Şükrü Oktay Kılıç told our researcher that he foresees Instagram will be the primary place for growth for the outlet, with solid engagement metrics. By spring 2023, the outlet had more than 100,000 followers on Instagram (an almost tenfold increase compared to autumn 2022, when we interviewed the organisation).

Messaging platforms increasingly popular for sharing news

Many of the digital native media in this study also use messaging apps to share information directly with their audiences, with Telegram standing out as the most-cited app, followed by WhatsApp and Signal.

In Ukraine, our researcher found that Telegram is the most prevalent messaging platform used by digital media there. Ukrainian media outlets have been using Telegram since the Euromaidan uprisings in 2013 (which is also when the messaging app first launched), as well as more recently to share news and other vital information during the ongoing war.

The second most-used messaging platform is WhatsApp, which was most popular among media in Spain.

Media in Spain and Montenegro reported using Signal, and in Serbia and Switzerland, we found media using SMS-based text messaging to share content.

Innovative journalism techniques build audience engagement

Digital native media throughout Europe are producing news and other information using a variety of innovative journalism techniques and formats. From [solutions journalism](#) to [fact-checking](#), to [slow journalism](#) to [satirical news sites](#), digital media leaders told us they are attracting audiences that are disillusioned by the constant barrage of clickbait news, misinformation and polarising tactics practised by many of the other news outlets in their markets.

Among the examples we found, Armenian outlet Urbanista produces solutions-oriented journalism with a focus on architecture and local government initiatives in the country's urban areas and in other parts of Europe. It also conducts interdisciplinary research on urbanism and urban governance.

Urbanista has produced a variety of journalism projects, including Interactive City Budget, a project that investigates how the budgets of 12 Armenian towns are distributed; Women of Borderland, which shares the perspectives of women in urban developments; and Rethinking Post-industrial Cities, a web documentary on the past, present and future of four Armenian cities.

In Sweden, our researcher found the independent digital media landscape to be diverse and innovative, both in content and in form.

Newsworthy, to name one example, was founded in 2016 as a news service for local, data-driven journalism in Sweden. Its business model is based partly on subscriptions, but mostly on producing commissioned content for companies and organisations.

Newsworthy's automation technology and experience in data journalism enable the creation and distribution of local press releases with high efficiency, quality and impact.

The platform's subscribers include editorial offices, public administrations and civil servants in Swedish municipalities. With a stack of tools for process automation, including natural language generation, Newsworthy can produce over 300 local news feeds. In 2021, the media platform published more than 40,000 articles.

The potential of slow journalism

Several media outlets in our directory have built an audience with slow news journalism, focusing on publishing deeper dives with reporting that takes more time to produce — and read.

Edasi.org is an Estonian longform magazine “for people who are exhausted from the attention economy, and who appreciate thorough and objective slow journalism”. It publishes essays and analysis, and features topics ranging from lifestyle to society and politics, which are meant to give readers more time and space to think.

"Our goal is to be like The New Yorker of Estonia," said founder Janeck Uiho. He calls the magazine a "small miracle" because despite early challenges, the venture is now making a profit, and expects to continue growing in the future.



Newsworthy

Välj lokala nyheter ▾

Högsta antalet varslade sedan november 2020 i Dalarna

114 personer varslades i Dalarnas län i mars. Det är den högsta siffran sedan november 2020.

I dag klockan 05.10

Lägsta arbetslösheten på 14 år i Sverige



0 1 1 0

Consideration:

Among its innovative approaches to reporting, the Aikštėje team has examined the concepts of “home and homeliness”, by inviting the audience to approach the subject from many different points of view — from philosophy to building typology, which is the study and documentation of buildings according to their essential characteristics. They also produce a series of podcasts on architecture.



Digital media use community-driven journalism to build engaged audiences

To better understand the often innovative ways these media organisations cover the news, we included a question with 11 common journalism techniques, including: [explanatory journalism](#), which aims to provide more in-depth context to foster understanding of a topic; [collaborative journalism](#), where organisations work together and share resources on a project or story; and [engaged, community-driven or participatory journalism](#), which seeks to include the audience in selecting topics and reporting.

The techniques employed by digital native outlets in our media directory include:

- Explanatory journalism, with 77% (417 media)
- Collaborative journalism, with 60% (324 media)
- Engaged, community-driven or participatory journalism, with 57.5% (311 media)

- Data journalism, with 51% (277 media)
- Fact-checking, with 45% (243 media)
- Breaking news, with 44% (239 media)
- Cross-border journalism, with 42% (225 media)
- Chronicles and non-fiction, with 29% (157 media)
- Information services (including jobs boards, roadwork notices, construction notices, weather reports), with 22% (120 media)
- Satire, with 18% (96 media)
- Graphic novels and comics, with 14% (77 media)

West Leeds Dispatch in the UK is an example of an organisation practising engaged, community-driven journalism. Since its founding in 2015 as a non-profit social enterprise run by West Leeds Community Media, the local news outlet has put the community first, according to its founders.

Thanks to its “people-powered community newsroom” and a free community reporter course, it has grown to a team of more than 60 contributors, who have published more than 1,000 articles. A six-week reporting training programme led by John Baron, co-founder and editor of West Leeds Dispatch, equips new team members with the skills to report their own stories.

Community reporters write stories with support from more experienced writers and editors in the community newsroom. Local volunteers and businesses have also contributed to the creation of this collaborative news venture.

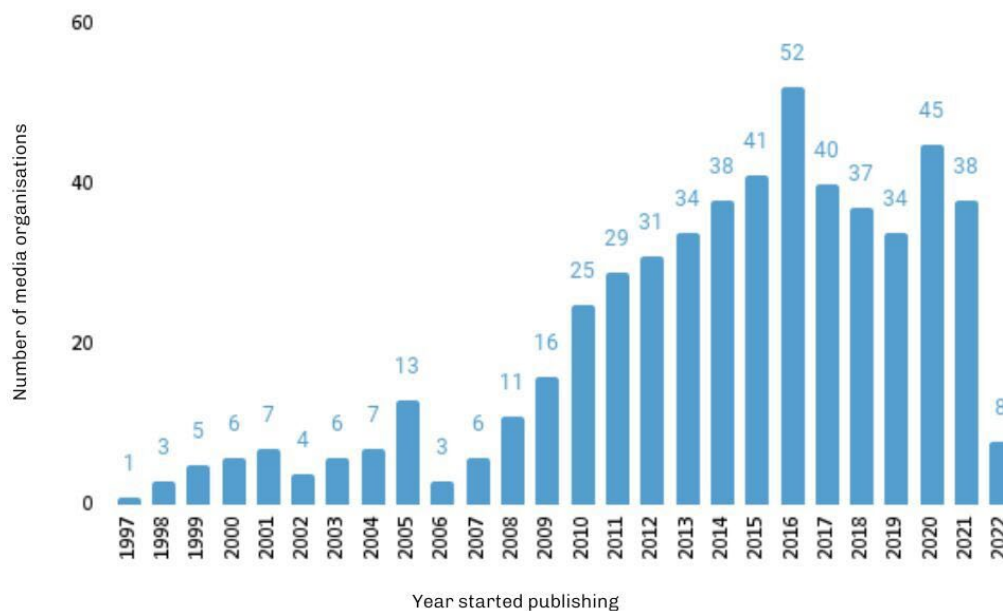
Section 5: Most digital native media were founded in the last decade

Most of the independent digital native media included in this report were launched in the last 10 years.

The average age of the media organisations in our directory is just under nine years. Our research shows that the majority of the media we studied — nearly 68% — started publishing content in the past 10 years, and 44% of these started in the past five years, between 2018 and 2022.

In the last decade, Ukraine, Germany and Portugal accounted for the greatest number of new digital native media outlets established, of the countries we studied.

Project Oasis

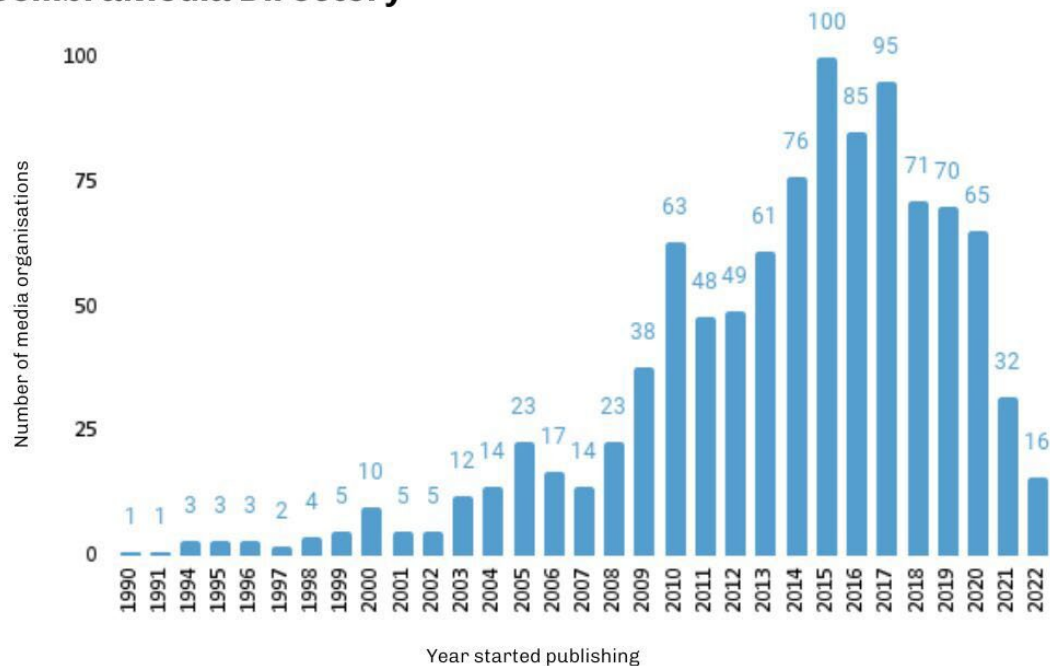


The last ten years were also the most active, according to the [Project Oasis](#) research report on local digital native media in the United States and Canada, first published in March 2021.

Authors of that report noted: “The past decade has seen the number of local [digital native news outlets] multiply six times over.” The report was conducted by UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media, LION Publishers, Douglas K. Smith and the Google News Initiative. This trend is consistent with SembraMedia’s research on Hispanic media. We also found that the majority of the digital native media featured in our SembraMedia directory were also

founded in the last decade. More than 600 of those publications were launched between 2013 and 2021.

SembraMedia Directory



When media were formed as non-profit vs for-profit organisations

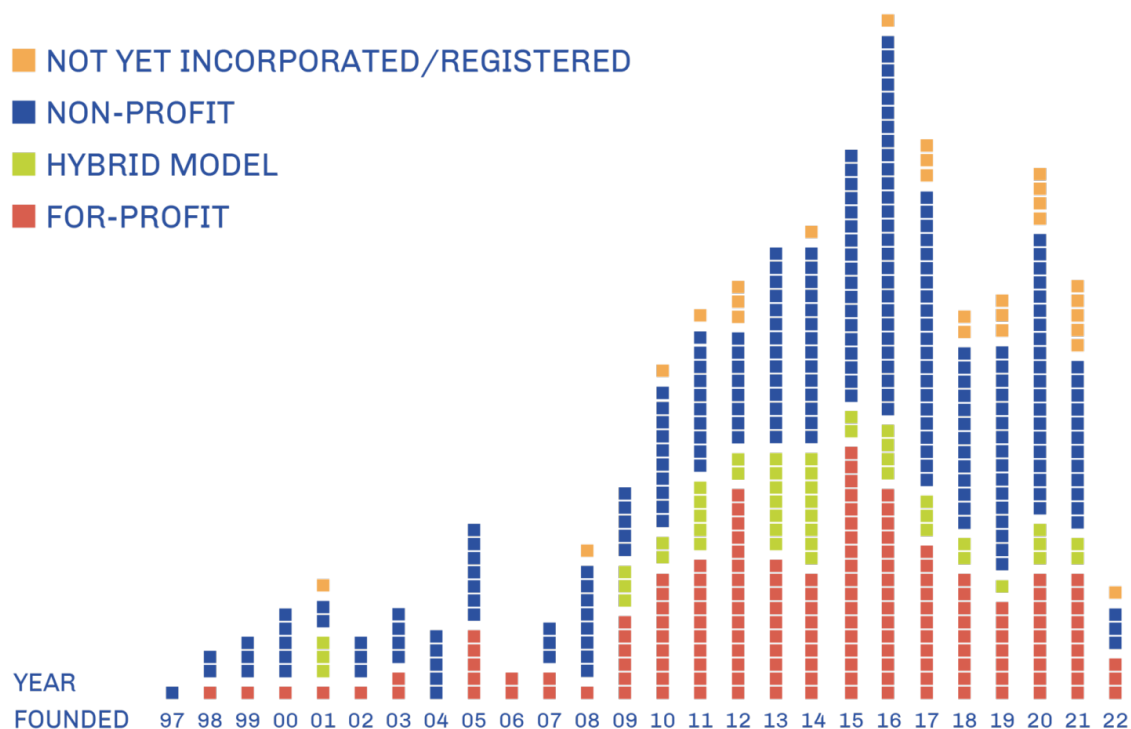
In our research on European media, 2016 stood out as the year in which the most new digital native media were launched — nearly 10% of the total included in this study. It is also notable for being the year in which the most non-profit media were established.

The majority of media founded in 2016 were in Georgia, Ukraine, Spain, Kosovo, France, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan (in that order).

By comparison, we found that the most for-profit media were started in 2015, while the most hybrid media organisations, which combine for-profit and non-profit models, were established in 2014.

We saw a slight decline in the number of media established after these peak years — although in 2020, during the height of the pandemic, we found another spike in the growth of digital native media organisations, including a number of media projects that had not yet incorporated or registered when we completed our research at the end of 2022.

Years media organizations were founded and registered as legal organizations



Digital native media appeared in Europe more than 25 years ago

Not all of the media featured in this study are “new”. More than 10% have been publishing for 15 to 26 years. The oldest media in this study were launched in 1997, just two years after commercial ventures were first permitted to publish on the World Wide Web. Most of the oldest media in this study were from Armenia, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Profiles of all the media outlets included in this report can be found in our [Project Oasis media directory](#), where you can search for them by name to learn more about their work. The directory can also be filtered by country, news coverage topics and more.