

FREE FACTS



Free facts

**Rapid changes in SA media
landscape**

September 2024



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Rapid changes in SA media landscape

South Africa's media landscape is changing and it is changing rapidly.

The way that we receive our news has changed significantly – but is still too early to say what this means.

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at issues such as how many South Africans watch TV or listen to the radio, the circulation of newspapers, and also provides data on the country's most popular websites.

It also provides data on South Africa's levels of press and internet freedom, and like most metrics of this nature, the country performs well.

But the decline in the circulation of South African newspapers and magazines is absolutely astonishing. It is not an exaggeration to say circulation has collapsed for most newspapers and magazines and we still do not know what the long-term effects of this will be.

For example, in 2005 the newspaper with the biggest daily circulation in South Africa was the Daily Sun at over 260 000. By 2023 this had dropped to 12 600. Not all newspapers showed such a precipitous decline but all showed very big drops in the number of people who read them each day. In 2005 there were 15 newspapers with circulations of more than 20 000 a day, by 2023 there were only two.

There was a similar decline when it came to weekly magazines, for example.

Conversely there has been growth in the number of people visiting popular websites, with some sites having hundreds of thousands of visitors a day.

And while this decline in the print media is a concern we should be heartened by the fact that South Africa enjoys a free press and free internet. According to Reporters without Borders South Africa – out of 170 countries – had the 25th freest press in the world, above countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia.

With regard to internet freedom South Africa was the 15th most free out of 70 countries.

There are serious concerns about South Africa's print media but we should be grateful for the media freedom we do enjoy.

— Marius Roodt

JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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The Media

Adults with access to radio and television, 2005-21

| Year | Number of adults ^a | Radio access ^b | Television access ^b |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2005 | 30 655 696 | 81.4% | 60.3% |
| 2006 | 30 903 002 | 81.7% | 61.5% |
| 2007 | 31 109 074 | 79.4% | 61.3% |
| 2008 | 31 305 016 | 79.7% | 66.9% |
| 2009 | 32 498 063 | 79.9% | 67.0% |
| 2010 | 34 019 661 | 80.1% | 72.4% |
| 2011 | 34 933 809 | 91.4% | 88.5% |
| 2012 | 34 935 454 | 92.6% | 91.5% |
| 2013 | 37 214 317 | 83.0% | 91.7% |
| 2014 | 37 664 536 | 83.0% | 91.8% |
| 2015 | 38 258 907 | 82.9% | 92.2% |
| 2016 | 38 800 000 | 83.0% | 93.0% |
| 2017 | 39 500 000 | 88.0% | 95.0% |
| 2018 | 40 100 000 | 88.0% | 96.0% |
| 2019 | 40 700 000 | 88.0% | 95.0% |
| 2020 | 42 571 395 | 82.0% | 93.0% |
| 2021 | 43 099 703 | 82.0% | 93.0% |
| 2005-21 | 40.6% | 0.7% | 54.2% |

Source: Eighty20, All Media and Products Survey (AMPS): Overwhelming and under-mined reasons to love AMPS data, May 2012, p13; AMPS 2013B (January-December 2013), 8 April 2014; AMPS 2014 (July 2013-June 2014), accessed 6 March 2015; AMPS 2015 Individual (June 2014-June 2015), accessed 23 February 2016; Broadcast Research Council of South Africa (BRC), www.brcsa.org.za, RAM 2016 (January-September 2016), accessed 8 March 2017; Establishment Survey: Demographic and Media Consumption Trends, ES Wave 1 Launch Presentation (Jul-Dec 2016), March 2017, pp31, 38; April 2018, pp5 and 15; April 2019, pp5, 33; April 2020, accessed 3 July 2020; www.brcsa.org.za, Nielsen TAMS tv market overview, accessed February 2022; Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), Mid-year population estimates 2020-21 data

a People aged 15 and above.

b Respondents were asked if they had listened to radio or watched television in any seven-day period.

The Media

Top ten radio stations by average listenership, 2023

| Radio station ^a | Main studio ^b | Number ^c | Proportion ^d |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Ukhozi FM (Zulu) | Durban, KwaZulu-Natal | 7 596 000 | 17.2% |
| Metro FM | Johannesburg, Gauteng | 4 698 000 | 10.6% |
| Umhlobo Wenene FM (Xhosa) | Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape | 4 194 000 | 9.5% |
| Lesedi FM (Sotho) | Bloemfontein, Free State | 3 536 000 | 8.0% |
| Motsweding FM (Tswana) | Mahikeng, North West | 3 106 000 | 7.0% |
| Thobela FM (Pedi) | Polokwane, Limpopo | 2 881 000 | 6.5% |
| Radio2000 | Johannesburg, Gauteng | 2 087 000 | 4.7% |
| Gagasi FM | Durban, KwaZulu-Natal | 1 524 000 | 3.4% |
| Munghana Lonene FM (Tsonga) | Polokwane, Limpopo | 1 457 000 | 3.3% |
| Jacaranda FM | Johannesburg, Gauteng | 1 342 000 | 3.0% |

Source: Source: BRC, www.brcsa.org.za, *BRC RAM Radio Listening (October 2022-September 2023)*, accessed 29 May 2024; Stats SA, *Country projections by population group, sex and age 2023-2027*, accessed 28 July 2024

a a Listed radio stations broadcast in English unless otherwise stated in brackets.

b Applies largely to stations with a wider reach (such as those of the SABC). Other stations, such as those within specific communities, usually have one studio.

c Refers to adults (people aged 15 and above). The listenership numbers are estimates and denote respondents who replied 'I listened to this station in the past seven days'.

d IRR calculations.

The Media

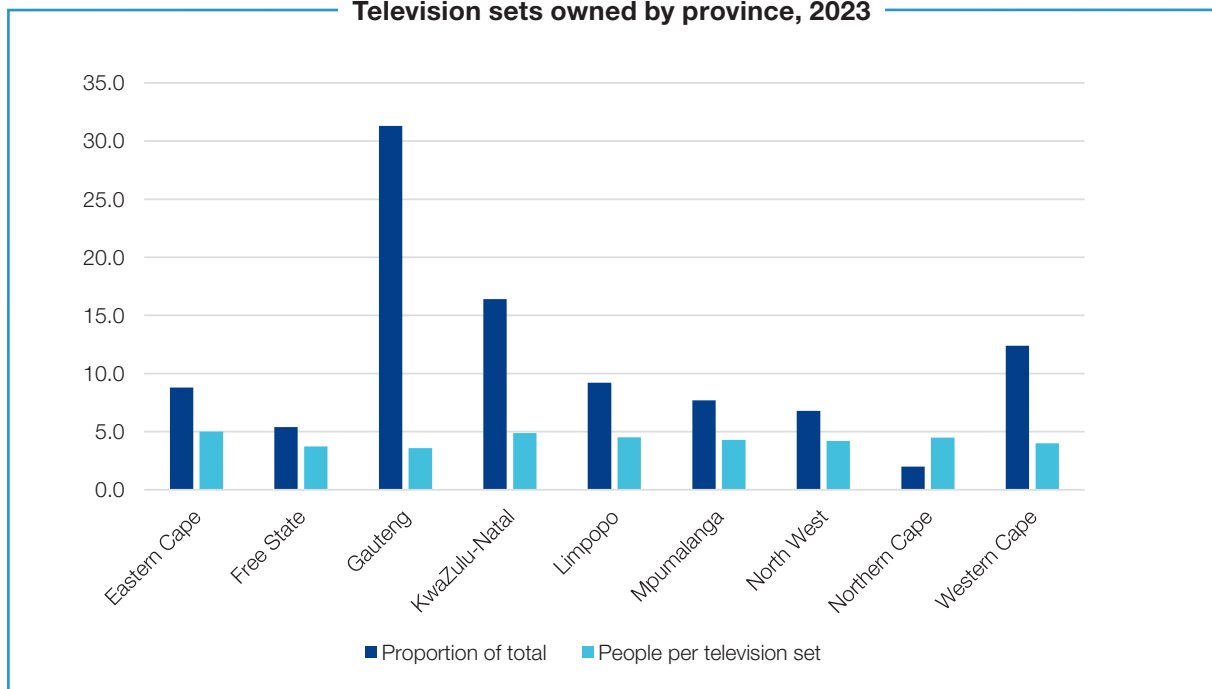
Television sets owned by province, 2023

| Province | Number | Proportion of total ^a | People per television set ^a |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Eastern Cape | 1 304 000 | 8.8% | 5.0 |
| Free State | 810 000 | 5.4% | 3.7 |
| Gauteng | 4 656 000 | 31.3% | 3.6 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 2 447 000 | 16.4% | 4.9 |
| Limpopo | 1 377 000 | 9.2% | 4.5 |
| Mpumalanga | 1 147 000 | 7.7% | 4.3 |
| North West | 1 015 000 | 6.8% | 4.2 |
| Northern Cape | 292 000 | 2.0% | 4.5 |
| Western Cape | 1 845 000 | 12.4% | 4.0 |
| South Africa | 14 894 000 | 100.0% | 4.2 |

Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2023 Addendum tables*, Statistical release P0318, 17 August 2023, Table 17.1, p1; Table 1.1, p1

a IRR calculations.

Television sets owned by province, 2023



The Media

Circulation of daily newspapers, 2005-23

| Newspaper ^a | Headquarters | 2005 | 2017 | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Change 2005-23 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Beeld (Afrikaans) | Johannesburg | 51 064 | 35 934 | 32 797 | 22 160 | 20 318 | 19 014 | -62.8% |
| Business Day | Johannesburg | 29 559 | 20 313 | 18 053 | 15 297 | 14 410 | 13 605 | -54.0% |
| Cape Argus | Cape Town | 30 393 | 27 662 | 27 245 | 11 115 | 10 459 | 8 571 | -71.8% |
| Cape Times | Cape Town | 32 371 | 29 673 | 29 523 | 11 855 | 11 305 | 9 194 | -71.6% |
| Daily Dispatch | East London | 26 147 | 17 958 | 15 468 | 10 566 | 10 889 | 10 091 | -61.4% |
| Daily News | Durban | 26 973 | 23 508 | 22 393 | 9 687 | 8 918 | 7 166 | -73.4% |
| Daily Sun | Johannesburg | 265 993 | 143 981 | 117 220 | 40 164 | 28 006 | 12 616 | -95.3% |
| Diamond Fields Advertiser | Kimberley | 9 161 | 7 599 | 7 113 | N/A | N/A | N/A | — |
| Die Burger (Afrikaans) | Cape Town | 56 145 | 47 400 | 39 625 | N/A | 26 951 | 26 110 | -53.5% |
| Isolezwe (Zulu) | Durban | 110 155 | 79 476 | 72 495 | 32 680 | 27 009 | 19 022 | -82.7% |
| Pretoria News | Pretoria | 8 511 | 12 532 | 12 478 | 2 383 | N/A | N/A | — |
| Son (Afrikaans) | Cape Town | 82 579 | 66 045 | 55 126 | 20 588 | 16 016 | N/A | — |
| Sowetan | Johannesburg | 92 244 | 71 797 | 70 737 | 29 252 | 24 869 | 17 873 | -80.6% |
| The Citizen | Johannesburg | 57 097 | 43 694 | 40 481 | 27 492 | 24 455 | 22 914 | -59.9% |
| The Herald | Port Elizabeth | 20 919 | 17 067 | 14 793 | 10 958 | 10 380 | 10 021 | -52.1% |
| The Mercury | Durban | 27 499 | 25 432 | 24 402 | 11 633 | 10 990 | 9 069 | -67.0% |
| The Star | Johannesburg | 91 735 | 74 520 | 72 010 | 27 417 | 27 257 | 17 834 | -80.6% |
| The Witness | Pietermaritzburg | 16 544 | 11 641 | 10 779 | 7 366 | 6 405 | 6 313 | -61.8% |
| Volksblad (Afrikaans) | Bloemfontein | 18 652 | 13 906 | 13 341 | N/A | N/A | N/A | — |
| Total | — | 1 053 741 | 770 138 | 696 079 | 290 613 | 278 637 | 209 413 | -80.1% |

Source: Eighty20, www.eighty20.co.za, *AMPS 2012B (January-December 2012) Individuals*, accessed 14 May 2013; Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa (ABC), www.abc.org.za, accessed January to May 2014; ABC, email correspondence, 29 March 2017; ABC, www.abc.org.za, *ABC analysis: Q4 2017*, accessed 17 April 2018; Bizcommunity.com, www.bizcommunity.com, accessed 11 April 2023; ABC, www.abc.org.za, *ABC analysis: Q4 2023*, accessed 16 May 2024

^a Published in English unless otherwise stated in brackets.

N/A — Not available.

The Media

| Circulation of weekly magazines, 2017-23 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Magazine ^{ab} | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| DRUM | 37 200 | 27 288 | 19 602 | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d |
| Move! | 65 960 | 53 524 | 32 811 | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d |
| YOU | 95 359 | 88 301 | 83 214 | 72 762 | 68 911 | 53 963 | 43 123 |
| HUISgenoot (Afrikaans) | 185 002 | 174 683 | 162 307 | 139 545 | 129 825 | 105 296 | 85 969 |
| People | 35 149 | 29 575 | 32 303 | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d |
| Vroue Keur (Afrikaans) | 48 829 | 43 554 | 38 623 | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d |
| Landbouweekblad (Afrikaans) | 27 292 | 22 723 | 20 692 | 17 741 | 12 559 | 11 162 | 14 443 |
| Financial Mail | 13 016 | 13 910 | 13 380 | 11 652 | 12 759 | 12 066 | 14 893 |
| Farmer's Weekly | 11 334 | 10 421 | 9 146 | 7 337 | 6 912 | 6 415 | 5 825 |
| Finweek | 18 209 | 15 423 | 14 954 | 11 572 | — ^d | — ^d | — ^d |
| Auto Trader | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| GRAZIA South Africa | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Kuier ^c | 94 851 | 91 964 | 85 949 | 78 358 | 69 226 | 54 735 | 48 634 |
| TIME | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Tvplus ^c | 15 490 | 11 164 | 7 100 | 5 177 | 3 439 | 2 323 | N/A |

Source: Bizcommunity, www.bizcommunity.com, *Magazines ABC Q4 2017-22*, accessed 11 April 2023; ABC, www.abc.org.za, *ABC analysis: Q4 2023*, accessed 16 May 2024

a Published in English unless otherwise stated in brackets.

b Q4 figures.

c Published fortnightly.

d Discontinued.

The Media

Selected online media sites by unique browsers and page views, 2024

| Sites | Monthly unique visitors | Monthly page views |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| —General news— | | |
| News24 | 5 480 000 | 58 100 000 |
| IOL | 3 792 000 | 28 950 000 |
| Citizen | 3 330 000 | 14 390 000 |
| Daily Maverick | 2 730 000 | 20 180 000 |
| SuperSport | 2 712 000 | 19 080 000 |
| TimesLIVE | 2 393 000 | 13 270 000 |
| The South African | 1 982 000 | 8 436 000 |
| SowetanLIVE | 1 156 000 | 5 320 000 |
| EWN | 992 576 | 5 354 000 |
| eNCA | 900 706 | 3 254 000 |
| Maroela Media | 832 944 | 20 030 000 |
| Netwerk24 | 825 174 | 10 420 000 |
| Mail & Guardian | 796 601 | 2 621 000 |
| Sunday World | 698 825 | 4 540 000 |
| SABC News | 589 124 | 1 429 000 |
| —Business— | | |
| Businesses | 2 823 000 | 14 000 000 |
| BusinessLIVE | 1 377 000 | 6 689 000 |
| Daily Investor | 1 210 000 | 6 278 000 |
| Moneyweb | 1 018 000 | 4 771 000 |
| Bisnow | 275 592 | 576 482 |
| —Technology— | | |
| MyBroadband | 1 884 000 | 12 070 000 |
| TechCentral | 348 155 | 880 339 |
| ITWeb | 311 023 | 851 651 |
| Stuff | 83 668 | 186 891 |
| HXTX | 59 112 | 121 585 |

Source: Intermetal, www.sainternetmap.co.za, accessed 13 May 2024

The Media

Press freedom^a, selected countries, 2023

| Country | Rank (out of 180) | Score ^b |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Australia | 27 | 78.24 |
| Botswana | 65 | 64.61 |
| Brazil | 92 | 58.67 |
| Chile | 83 | 60.09 |
| China | 179 | 22.97 |
| Denmark | 3 | 89.48 |
| Egypt | 24 | 78.72 |
| France | 24 | 78.72 |
| Germany | 21 | 81.91 |
| Ghana | 62 | 65.93 |
| Greece | 107 | 55.20 |
| Hong Kong | 140 | 44.86 |
| India | 161 | 36.62 |
| Indonesia | 108 | 54.83 |
| Ireland | 2 | 89.91 |
| Israel | 97 | 57.57 |
| Italy | 41 | 72.05 |
| Japan | 68 | 63.95 |
| Kazakhstan | 134 | 45.87 |
| Lithuania | 7 | 86.79 |
| Mexico | 128 | 47.98 |
| Mozambique | 102 | 56.13 |
| Nigeria | 123 | 49.56 |
| Pakistan | 150 | 39.95 |
| Philippines | 132 | 46.21 |
| Poland | 57 | 67.66 |
| Russia | 164 | 34.77 |
| Saudi Arabia | 170 | 32.43 |
| South Africa | 25 | 78.60 |
| Spain | 35 | 75.37 |
| Switzerland | 12 | 84.40 |
| Turkey | 165 | 33.37 |
| Uganda | 133 | 46.08 |
| United Kingdom | 26 | 78.51 |
| United States | 45 | 71.22 |
| Venezuela | 159 | 36.99 |

Source: Reporters Without Borders, *World Press Freedom Index 2023*, www.rsf.org, accessed 10 July 2023

a The Press Freedom Index is based partly on a questionnaire that looks at seven general criteria. These criteria take into account pluralism or the variety of opinions in the media; media independence; environment and self-censorship; the legislative framework; transparency; news and information infrastructure; levels of violence and harassment during the assessment period, and abuses. Every kind of violation affecting journalists (including murders, imprisonment, physical attacks, and threats) is also taken into account. The Index does not look at human rights violations in general, just press freedom violations.

b Scores range between 0 and 100. A lower score indicates a freer press, and vice versa.

The Media

Internet freedom^a, 2023 (selected countries)

| Country | Rank (out of 70) | Score ^b | Status |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Australia | 9 | 76 | Free |
| Brazil | 23 | 64 | Partly free |
| China | 70 | 9 | Not free |
| Egypt | 59 | 28 | Not free |
| France | 10 | 76 | Free |
| Germany | 7 | 77 | Free |
| Ghana | 22 | 64 | Partly free |
| India | 41 | 50 | Partly free |
| Indonesia | 43 | 47 | Partly free |
| Italy | 13 | 75 | Free |
| Japan | 8 | 76 | Free |
| Kazakhstan | 53 | 34 | Not free |
| Mexico | 25 | 61 | Partly free |
| Nigeria | 29 | 60 | Partly free |
| Pakistan | 61 | 26 | Not free |
| Philippines | 27 | 61 | Partly free |
| Russia | 66 | 21 | Not free |
| Saudi Arabia | 63 | 25 | Not free |
| <i>South Africa</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>72</i> | <i>Free</i> |
| Turkey | 55 | 30 | Not free |
| Uganda | 38 | 51 | Partly free |
| United Kingdom | 5 | 78 | Free |
| United States | 12 | 76 | Free |
| Venezuela | 57 | 28 | Not free |

Source: Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2023: The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence*, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/FOTN2023Final24.pdf>