



Press release

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Pay models spreading across European newspapers

New research from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism shows that more than two-thirds of newspapers and news weeklies across a sample of 171 major news organisations in six European countries operate a pay model for news.

However, the researchers found, the majority of major news organisations still offer free access to their digital news content. This is the case for all broadcasters examined (both commercial and public service), 97 percent of digital-born news organisations, and 75 percent of mid-market and tabloid newspapers.

The Reuters Institute Factsheet *Pay Models in European News* analyses the spread of pay models across a sample of 171 major news organisations (broadcasters, digital-born, newspapers and news weeklies) from six European countries (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom). 46% of the organisations covered have a pay model in place, 54% make their digital news content freely accessible.

Across the countries covered, a monthly subscription costs €13.64 (£11.56) on average, with the highest national average in the UK (€22.26 (£18.87)) and the lowest in Poland (€7.21 (£6.11)).

The lead author, Dr Alessio Cornia, says: "We find that most newspapers and news magazines across Europe are moving away from digital news offered for free and supported primarily by advertising, and are cultivating a wider range of sources of revenue, including various pay models. However, it is clear that other types of media organisations, especially broadcasters and digital-born news outlets, still make their digital news content available for free."

Based on the 171 major news organisations analysed, the researchers find that:

- 66% percent of the newspapers operate a pay model.
- 71% of weekly newspapers and news magazines operate a pay model.
- All broadcasters offer free access to their digital news. This includes both private sector broadcasters and public service media.
- Almost all (97%) digital-born news media offer free access to their news.
- The average price for the cheapest available monthly subscription (across the organisations that operate a pay model) is €13.64 (£11.56). Prices range from €2.10 (£1.78) to €54.27 (£46) a month.

Developments differ from country to country:

- A much larger share of newspapers and news weeklies in Finland (87%), France (95%), and Poland (90%) have adopted pay models.

- By contrast, in both Italy and the United Kingdom, the majority of newspapers and weeklies in our sample continue to offer free access to their digital news. In Germany, almost half (48%) of newspapers and weeklies in our sample offer free access

Dr Annika Sehl, co-author of the study, says: “Pay models are particularly widespread in markets like Finland that are dominated by a limited number of very strong incumbents, and in those with very small digital display advertising markets, like Poland. In the most competitive markets with a larger advertising pies, like the United Kingdom, most digital news content is still freely available.”

Director of Research, Dr Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, says “As the digital display advertising market grows more and more challenging, it is encouraging to see that more and more news organisations are experimenting with new business models to support news. Convincing people to pay for digital news is difficult, and will be a slow process, but we are already seeing encouraging signs that people across all age groups, including younger media users, are willing to pay for quality content and services online that they find valuable and useful.”

[Download a copy of the report](#) (Dropbox link). Please note this is an embargoed preview copy. It may undergo minor changes before publication.

Figures and Tables

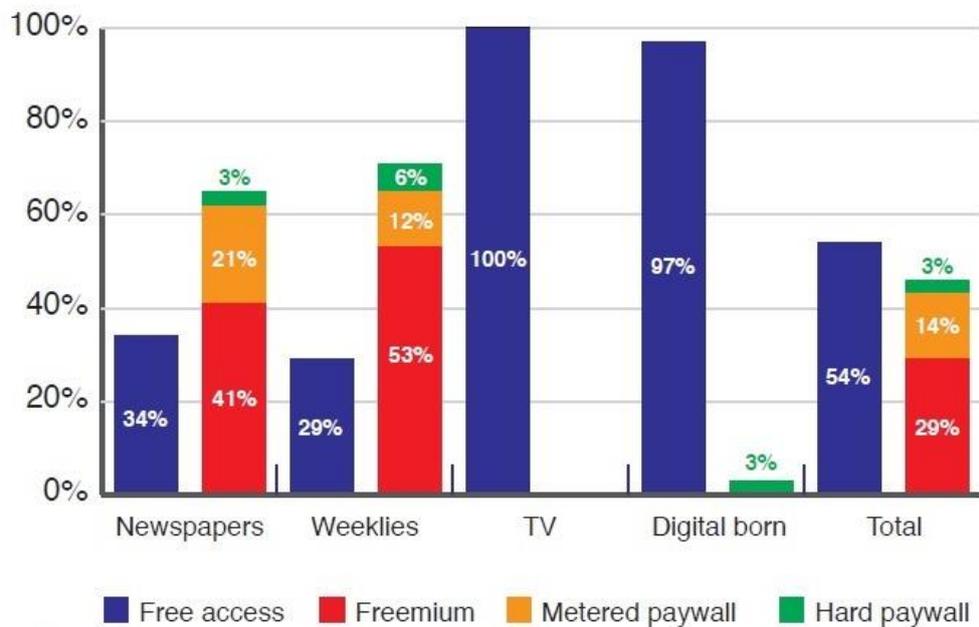


Figure 1. Free and pay models by media type

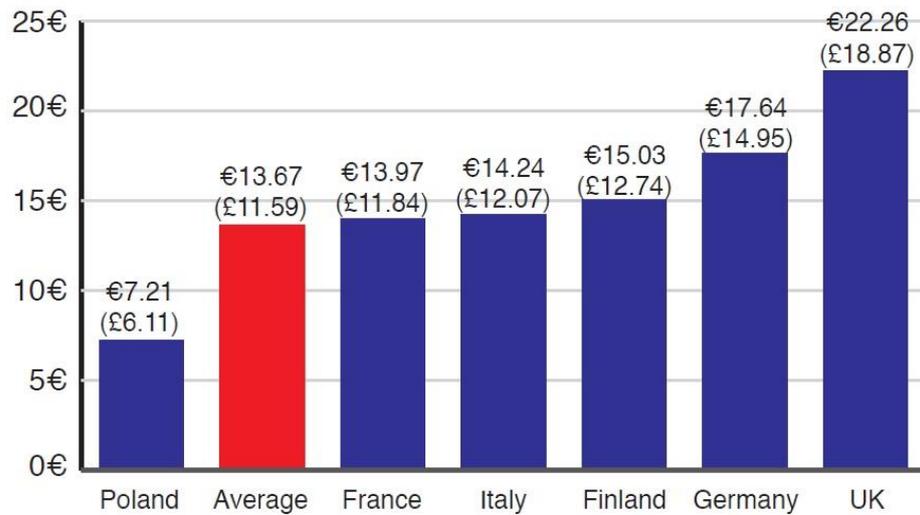


Figure 2. Average monthly price across countries (newspapers and weeklies with pay model only)

Table 1. Pay models across media types

	Free access	Freemium	Metered paywall	Hard paywall	N
Newspapers	34%	41%	21%	3%	99
Weeklies	29%	53%	12%	6%	17
TV	100%	0%	0%	0%	23
Digital Born	97%	0%	0%	3%	32
Total	54%	29%	14%	3%	171

Note: In the case of a combination of a metered model and premium content, we coded the offer as "metered paywall". Differences to 100% for the media types are due to rounding.

**Table 2. Pay models across countries
(newspapers and weeklies only)**

	Free access	Freemium	Metered paywall	Hard paywall	Average monthly price (pay models only)	N
Finland	13%	47%	40%	0%	€15.03 (£12.74)	15
France	5%	67%	29%	0%	€13.97 (£11.84)	21
Germany	48%	38%	14%	0%	€17.64 (£14.95)	21
Italy	60%	25%	15%	0%	€14.24 (£12.07)	20
Poland	10%	71%	10%	10%	€7.21 (£6.11)	21
UK	67%	6%	17%	11%	€22.26 (£18.87)	18
Total	35%	43%	19%	3%	€13.67 (£11.59)	116

Note: In the case of a combination of a metered model and premium content, we coded the offer as “metered paywall”. Total may differ from 100% due to rounding. Exchange rate at 15 April 2017.

Editors Notes

About the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the core funder of the Reuters Institute, based in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. The Institute was launched in November 2006 and developed from the Reuters Fellowship Programme, established at Oxford 34 years ago. The Institute, an international research centre in the comparative study of journalism, aims to be global in its perspective and provides a leading forum for scholars from a wide range of disciplines to engage with journalists from around the world. See: <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/>

About the Authors

Dr Alessio Cornia is a Research Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. His main area of research interest is the comparative research of journalism, with a focus on news industry developments, digital news, EU journalism, political communication, journalism and corruption, and risk communication. He is currently working on the Digital News Project, focusing on how private media are developing in several European countries.

Dr Annika Sehl is a Research Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. She is working on a project aimed at analysing media developments in a sample of more than thirty

countries, with a particular emphasis on digital media, news, and politics. Her primary focus here is how public service media are developing across six European countries (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom). Her research interests include journalism, comparative research, audience research and research methods.

Felix Simon is a journalist and MSc student at the University of Oxford's Internet Institute (OII). He works as a Research Assistant at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and writes for the German newspaper 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' as well as the online-edition of 'Die Welt'.

Dr Rasmus Kleis Nielsen is Director of Research at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and serves as Editor in Chief of the International Journal of Press/Politics. His work focuses on changes in the news media, on political communication, and the role of digital technologies in both. He has done extensive research on journalism, American politics, and various forms of activism, and a significant amount of comparative work in Western Europe and beyond.