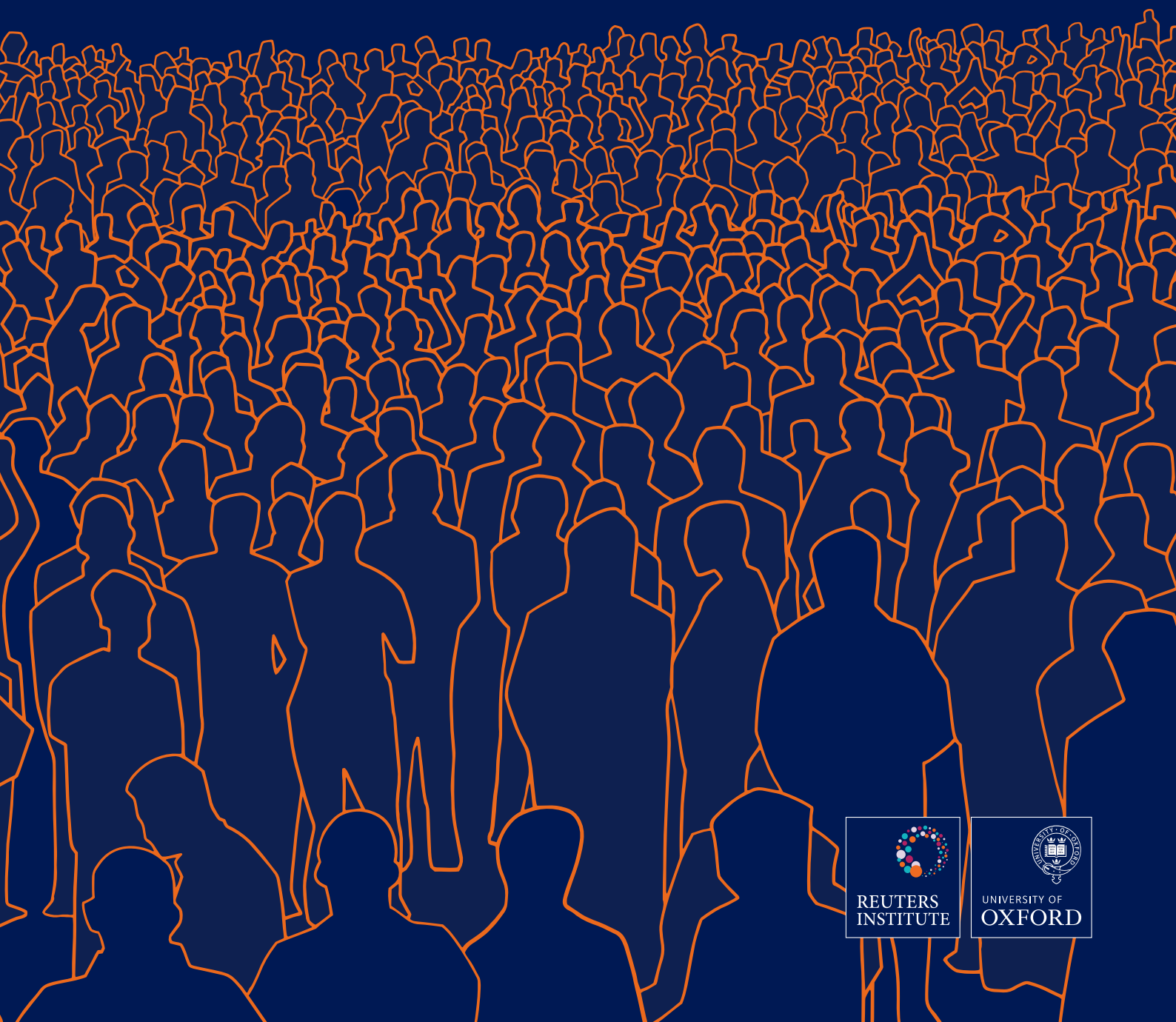


Mapping News Creators and Influencers in Social and Video Networks

Nic Newman, Amy Ross Arguedas, Mitali Mukherjee, and Richard Fletcher



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Introduction

News creators and influencers operating in social and video networks have become a significant source of news in recent years. Our own Reuters Institute *Digital News Report* indicates that personalities and news creators often eclipse traditional news brands in terms of attention when using certain social and video networks (Newman et al. 2023, 2024, 2025). Pew Research finds that around a fifth (21%) of adults in the United States (US) and more than a third of Under-30s (37%) now regularly get news from so-called creators or influencers, with the majority of these saying that the way these personalities present the news helps them better understand current events and civic issues (Stocking et al. 2024).

Creators are also having an increasingly important political impact, with Donald Trump courting popular YouTubers and podcasters such as Joe Rogan and the Nerk Boys in the run-up to his 2024 election victory. The recent murder of activist and podcaster Charlie Kirk, and the coverage of the aftermath, reminds us of the critical role these personalities are now playing in shaping both public opinion and political narratives. In other parts of the world, politicians such as Emmanuel Macron (France),¹ Anthony Albanese (Australia),² Claudia Sheinbaum (Mexico),³ and Keir Starmer (UK)⁴ have also been taking notice of these trends, incorporating social media

influencers into their media strategies, prioritising interviews with TikTokkers and YouTubers – as well as inviting them to government briefings. Elsewhere, in countries where press freedom is under threat or where debate in mainstream media is restricted, we have seen creators and influencers playing a different role – providing a much-needed source of critical or alternative views.

Online influencers may be attracting more attention but at least some of their content is considered unreliable by audiences (Newman et al. 2025), with well-documented cases of false or misleading information around subjects such as politics, health, and climate change raising important questions about what this might mean for our democracies.

In this report we aim to show how the trend towards online and social media news influencers is developing in 24 countries around the world. Using an audience-based approach we identify countries where influencers are having the biggest (and smallest) impact as well as some of the most important individuals. We also provide an emerging typology or categorisation of news creators, while recognising the inherent difficulties in this process given the diversity of styles, overlapping approaches, and broad range of content.

After explaining the methodology and typology, this report contains an opening section that summarises the overall findings. This is followed by 24 individual country sections where we highlight the news creators most mentioned by audiences in our Digital News Report surveys, the main networks used, and a few other characteristics of each market. The final section draws some conclusions and references other emerging work in this area.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Z6HnUJ3hcw>

² <https://theconversation.com/politicians-are-podcasting-their-way-onto-phone-screens-but-the-impact-may-be-fleeting-250793>

³ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/sheinbaum-promovera-que-haya-youtubers-afines-a-la-4t-la-comentocracia-se-carga-en-contra-del-gobierno-dice/>

⁴ <https://www.tiktok.com/@maxklymenko/video/752143511821282582>



SECTION 1

Methodology





Methodology

The data for this report come from the Reuters Institute Digital News Report surveys. In the 2024 and 2025 surveys we asked respondents who said they used social or video networks for news to tell us where they paid most attention when it comes to news (news brands and journalists, news creators, etc.). We then asked respondents to name some of the news brands and individual creators that they paid most attention to using open text fields.

In this report we analyse in detail these open responses from both the 2024 and 2025 surveys, counting mentions of both individuals and news brands across the dataset to identify the most frequently mentioned in each category. We supplement these lists with desk research and consultation with country experts.

In the 2025 survey, all respondents who said they used Facebook, X, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok for news in the last week were asked, for one randomly selected network they used, which sources they paid most attention to (traditional news media/journalists, digital-first news outlets not associated with traditional media, creators/personalities who mostly focus on the news, creators/personalities who occasionally focus on the news), and then, for each source type, to name up to three. In the 2024 survey, respondents were presented with a slightly different set of sources and, if they were selected, were asked to name up to three mainstream outlets or journalists, and up to three alternative news sources or online personalities or celebrities. See the *Digital News Report* website for the full questions.⁵

These questions were designed to provide enough breadth in terms of different social networks and different source types to be able to map the ecosystem and construct our typology. These data cannot be used to reliably estimate the proportion who pay attention to each individual or brand, though they can be used to highlight a selection of creators and influencers who are among the most widely encountered in each country. Moreover, surveys capture people's self-reported behaviour, which does not always reflect people's actual behaviour due to biases and imperfect recall.

We used open text response boxes to collect the data for several reasons. First, because in many countries the most popular news creators and influencers have not yet been identified by previous research. Second, because it would likely not be possible to fully capture the broad and fragmented nature of this ecosystem using a fixed listed of response options. And third, because we wanted to adopt an audience-centric approach whereby respondents could enter names that they considered news sources to them, even if they did not meet accepted standards or definitions within academia or the journalistic profession. This means that many of the names we list here would perhaps have been excluded under a more top-down approach.

Although open text responses enable an audience-centric approach, and research shows that they can be a more accurate way of measuring people's news exposure (Guess 2015), they are more challenging to analyse at scale. This is because misspellings, shorthand references, low-quality responses, and other errors all have to be cleaned and recoded, and groups of responses have to be merged into meaningful categories. We used two parallel processes to clean and process the data. We applied a range of commonly used text editing and clustering algorithms using OpenRefine, and supplemented this with manual editing and checking within the software by the authors. We also used ChatGPT5 to process and recode the original data, to identify the most mentioned individuals and news brands, and to provide pen-portraits for each in English. Previous research has shown that large language models can very reliably recode open survey responses (Mellon et al. 2024) and annotate short texts across multiple languages (Heseltine and Clemm von Hohenberg 2024). Both sets of responses were manually checked against the original data, with any discrepancies resolved by the authors. We also added follower/subscriber counts on social media for each individual as a rough proxy for the size of a particular individual's audience. We also asked country experts to review all information and provide a sense check. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this kind of analysis, even when undertaken by humans, can be subject to error and necessarily involves judgement calls. This means that, in addition to the usual error and uncertainty associated with surveys (see the *Digital News Report* methodology for a specific description) there is the potential for additional error in the order of the names in the lists, and on either side of the necessary cut-off point. Our lists are inclusive in terms of being faithful to the names mentioned by respondents. We removed just a handful of actors, sports stars, and celebrities if we were sure they did not post on any news-related issues.

We applied the same process in 24 countries, which were chosen to provide geographic diversity (Europe, Americas, Africa, and Asia-Pacific) as well as a good mix of different media systems. The countries chosen were United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, United Kingdom, Norway, Netherlands, Germany, France, Spain, Czech Republic, Poland, Australia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. In order to achieve the biggest sample of names, we used data from open fields in both our 2024 and 2025 surveys, in all countries except Nigeria, Kenya, Colombia, Mexico, Indonesia, and the Philippines where data were drawn only from our 2025 survey because the questions were not asked there in 2024.

Data from India, Kenya, and Nigeria are representative of younger English speakers and not the national population, because it is not possible to reach other groups in a representative way using an online survey. The survey was fielded mostly in English in these markets, and restricted to ages 18 to 50 in Kenya and Nigeria. Findings should not be taken to be nationally representative in these countries.

Reuters Institute Digital News Report methodology: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025/methodology>

⁵ Although slightly different questions were used in 2024 and 2025, we believe the data are broadly comparable and, given that the primary purpose is to map this space, that the added depth from two years' worth of data outweighs any comparability issues.

Definitions and typology

Social and video networks offer anyone the opportunity to build an audience off the back of free global distribution and increasingly powerful creator tools. In combination with new ways of monetising content, these attributes have encouraged a new breed of creators and an explosion of content across many genres, including news.

At the same time, traditional news organisations have been adapting their content for social and video networks, driven by increasing audience preference for consuming on these platforms. Much of this is delivered through brand-led accounts, but some publishers are also leaning into 'personality-led' social accounts as a way to engage younger audiences in particular.

In another recent development, some high-profile journalists have started to leave news organisations and set up on their own, either because they want more control or believe they can make more money – or both.

Politicians have also been investing time in building their own social media profiles as a way of increasing their influence and, in some cases, communicating with the public while dodging media scrutiny. And around them we find a huge number of political activists looking to amplify their talking points, as well as troll accounts (in some countries) designed to denigrate opponents.

For these reasons, and those outlined in the methodology, mapping different types of news content creators on social media is extremely challenging, but based on our analysis of around 40,000 unique named individuals we have attempted to do this in a common way across 24 countries.

The audience-derived lists that we publish later in the report contain names of a range of individuals including news creators, journalists, and politicians – because we want to understand where audiences are placing their attention on social media. However, we are particularly interested in *news creators* because this is the area that we believe is least understood. We also want to understand the gaps they fill that mainstream media and traditional journalists may not be serving.

By news creators we mean ...

Individuals (or sometimes small groups of individuals) who create and distribute content primarily through social and video networks and have some impact on public debates around news and current affairs. News creators are independent from wider news institutions for at least some of their news output. As such, they overlap with what are sometimes referred to as 'newsfluencers' (Hurcombe 2024) or 'peripheral actors' in the academic literature (Hanusch and Löhmann 2022).

Within this group, our typology of news creators is primarily based around the *content* they produce, and makes a distinction between those who are focused on ...

- 1. The News:** by which we mean politics, wars, and other parts of the traditional agenda.
- 2. News-adjacent content:** a broader definition of news often used by younger groups (Collao 2022) and includes both a wider range of subjects (entertainment, religion, gaming) as well as more diverse presentation formats including comedy, memes, and the like.

However, as we acknowledge in more detail below, in practice the dividing lines between these two categories (and their respective sub-categories) can be extremely fuzzy.

Audience-centric typology of news creators on social media

PART ONE: THE NEWS

In this section we identify four approaches taken by news creators and indicate the different level of challenge each poses for traditional journalism.

1. COMMENTARY

(Often partisan, mostly men)



Tucker Carlson **Russell Brand**
Also: Julian Reichelt (Germany),
Jordan Peterson (Canada)



More balanced commentary
& analysis formats are being
outgunned by more partisan or
entertaining formats

3. EXPLANATION

(Decoding and simplifying news)



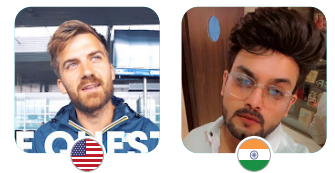
Hugo Travers **Kovy**
Also: V Spehar (USA), Dylan Page (UK)



News media is especially challenged
in this area as young people prefer
more authentic voices

2. NEWS/INVESTIGATION

(War, scandals, OSINT)



Johnny Harris **Raza Graphy**
Also: Michael West (Australia),
citizen journalists



Creators have brought new skills
but do not have resources for
largescale newsgathering

4. SPECIALISM

(Building niche businesses)



Fabrizio Romano **Taylor Lorenz**
(sport transfers) (internet culture)



A talent problem for specialist
publications – with more stars
setting up on their own

1. Commentary is the most frequently mentioned category represented in our data and generally describes online political chat show hosts (such as Tucker Carlson, Joe Rogan, and Russell Brand). Commentary tends to be cheap and does not require investment in newsgathering or infrastructure. It is also unconstrained by regulation or norms around impartiality that may exist for television and radio. The vast majority of creator-led commentary is produced by men. Many of the biggest names in political commentary such as Ravish Kumar (India), Julian Reichelt (Germany), and Piers Morgan (UK) used to work as journalists but are now highly critical of the mainstream media. They relish the freedom to express their true opinions with titles like *Unplugged*, *Uncensored*, or *Unchained*. In some countries (United States, Brazil, India) we find evidence that some of these shows are attracting as much attention as mainstream media talk shows – but elsewhere (Spain, Argentina, France, Norway) we tend to find that traditional publishers have more effectively harnessed social distribution, arguably strengthening the profile and bargaining power of broadcast stars. In the United States the vast majority of political commentary comes from creators who self-identify on the right and are supportive of Donald Trump. But in other countries such as India and Thailand, where debates in mainstream media tend to be more controlled, creators tend to be critical of the government.

2. News and investigation: Although less frequently mentioned, we find many examples of creators and citizen journalists who break news or conduct detailed investigations across countries. These are often on matters of great public interest that have been poorly or inconsistently covered by mainstream media. Palestinians reporting from Gaza were well represented in our lists, among them Motaz Azaiza, a former aid worker whose footage during the early stages of the conflict was widely shared. In Ukraine we have seen a consistent set of social media accounts providing detailed news about the latest fighting that has been largely absent in mainstream media. And in Kenya, citizen journalists have been documenting police brutality in recent street protests. But there are also many examples of independent long-form investigative journalism, such as Michael West in Australia (*The West Report*) and Johnny Harris in the United States, whose videos are rigorously researched and often take months to complete. Indian creator Raza Graphy has 3.5m followers for his YouTube channel that is dedicated to exposing fake news in India. In Japan, Brazil, Thailand, South Africa, and Kenya, among other countries, we find hugely popular creators who run accounts focused on the latest salacious crimes or break news about scandals (often about other online creators and influencers), frequently with legal consequences for the individuals concerned. Overall, this is probably the area where creators are making least impact compared with well-resourced traditional media, though networked investigators such as Bellingcat have pioneered open-source approaches to verification (OSINT/Open-Source Intelligence) that have been incorporated by mainstream media.⁶

3. Explanation: Across countries we find creators who explain the news in simple and accessible ways, often for younger consumers. HugoDécrypte (real name Hugo Travers) is the poster child for this type of content. Still in his twenties, he is the most mentioned French news creator or journalist in our survey and has over 7m followers on TikTok and 5m on Instagram – far more than even the biggest legacy news brands on these platforms. In addition to explaining complex news topics, he interviews politicians, including the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. But there are many other examples. Kovy is a young online personality from the Czech Republic known for explanatory videos about politics; Herr Anwalt is a German TikTokker with 7m followers who explains legal issues to Gen Z audiences; and husband-and-wife team Abhi and Niyu (3.5m subscribers on YouTube) produce videos that simplify and decode complex issues for young Indians. These examples reflect the popularity of new storytelling techniques designed for a generation that is faced with a huge amount of content competing for their attention and that often sees news as a chore. This category of creators is taking attention away from traditional media, which often struggle to connect with younger audiences, but arguably they are also providing societal value by helping to educate people about politics and current affairs. This group also has a more symbiotic relationship with the mainstream media – it is essentially remixing mainstream content – and is much less hostile towards such media than political commentators.

4. Specialism: Here we find individuals who work in a specific niche, often at greater depth than can be found in a traditional media organisation. Many specialists are former journalists who have left big media companies so they can devote more time to their chosen subject. Taylor Lorenz previously covered internet culture for the *Washington Post* but left to run her own Substack and podcast. She has been outspoken about the constraints of mainstream media and the benefits of a creator lifestyle. Fabrizio Romano is one of the best-connected sports journalists in media and regularly breaks news about football transfers. He has 25m followers on X and over 2m subscribers to his YouTube channel. In addition to former journalists, we find lawyers, academics, doctors, personal finance experts, and crypto fans building very powerful and specific communities. Specialists bring a passion to their work that is often shared by their audience, and this helps them monetise their work through subscription, membership, donation, or personal appearances.

⁶ <https://www.bellingcat.com>

PART TWO: NEWS-ADJACENT CREATORS

Here we find a broad range of creators and formats that are more fun or entertaining. Some of these rarely talk about news and politics (or do so in a humorous way), but the size of their audience, which is often larger than those in the first section, and the trust and authenticity that they have built up can still have a powerful impact on political debates.

1. SATIRE AND COMEDY

(Politics and culture)



Brozo

Also: John Oliver (US),
Led by Donkeys (UK)



Trevor Noah



Alex Cooper

Also: Leo Dias (Brazil),
MacG (South Africa)



Steven Bartlett



Some countries (UK, US) have a strong tradition of TV satire but online has given this more bite

2. INFOTAINMENT

(Interviews, celebrities)



Alex Cooper

Also: Leo Dias (Brazil),
MacG (South Africa)



Steven Bartlett



Infotainment podcasts are challenging many media companies but are also a recruiting ground for new talent

3. GAMING AND MUSIC

(Occasionally get sucked into news)



Ibai (esports)

Also: Squeezie (France),
Nek Boys (US)



Rezo



Largely these are topics avoided by traditional newsrooms



Virginia Fonseca

Also: Ivana Alawi (Philippines),
Linda Ikeji (Nigeria)



Ria Ricis



Some media companies are looking to develop verticals in these areas

1. Satire and comedy: In almost every country we find satirical or humorous news accounts that are popular, especially with younger audiences. Brozo is a satirical clown character (7m followers on X) known for his cynical commentary on Mexican politics. In Canada, Cody Johnston delivers comedic rants on politics to 1m followers of his Some More News show on YouTube, while The Deshbhakt, hosted by Akash Banerjee, offers satirical takes on Indian politics. In the United States, stars from late-night TV such as Stephen Colbert, John Oliver, and Trevor Noah are widely mentioned – a reminder that much of this is not new; rather, it is being packaged and distributed in fresh ways. Indeed, humour and comedy are a defining feature of much creator output including explainer videos (Dave Jorgenson) and political commentary. Joe Rogan is a comedian as well as a talk show host, for example.

2. Infotainment: Some of the biggest social accounts in terms of size belong to entertainment or celebrity podcasters. Steven Bartlett's Diary of a CEO podcast (12m subscribers on YouTube) is among the

most popular in the UK. He interviews entrepreneurs and other celebrities covering topics such as business, success, and well-being. The show has been criticised for amplifying health-based misinformation.⁷ Alex Cooper's Call Her Daddy (1.7m subscribers on YouTube) covers dating, sex, mental health, and personal empowerment. She welcomed presidential candidate Kamala Harris as a guest in the run-up to the November election, who was keen to access her younger female audience. MacG is co-host of South Africa's most popular YouTube podcast and mixes entertainment with often controversial discussion of cultural and social issues.

3. Gaming and music: In most countries we find younger people paying attention to gamers and e-sports streamers on platforms such as YouTube or Twitch. Ibai is a Spanish internet celebrity streamer (20m followers on Twitch and 13m on YouTube) known for bridging digital content with mainstream culture, interviewing high-profile athletes, entertainers, and global influencers. Rezo is a German musician and podcaster (1.6m subscribers on YouTube) who mostly talks about lighter subjects but made an influential viral video about how traditional politics is failing young people. He has also spoken out against the rise of the far right in Germany.

4. Lifestyle: This category indicates how broadly many people now interpret news. Effectively it means anything that is 'new' or interesting to them. These areas have some of the most followed creators on the internet, especially in Brazil. Virginia Fonseca (fashion blogger) has 53m followers on Instagram and 39m on TikTok. Ria Ricis is an Indonesian influencer known for hijab tutorials and lifestyle content. She has 44m followers on YouTube and 47m on TikTok.

A few caveats on the typology and definitions

While these categories look neat, it is important to note that in practice the dividing lines are extremely fuzzy. Many creators defy categorisation. Others may start with one approach in mind (say explainer videos) but expand into other areas (investigation or commentary). This is a very fluid space, especially given how responsive creators must be to ever-shifting audience preferences and behaviours.

It is also difficult to distinguish between 'news' or 'news-adjacent' creators and a wider set of influencers that includes musicians, comedians, and sports personalities among others. In terms of our typology and country-based lists, we have included them only if they post or talk about current events but have excluded them if we can find no record of this.

A third challenge is the emergence of creator collectives or creator-led news brands that operate primarily on social media. In line with our audience-centric approach, where audiences have identified them as individuals, we have tended to categorise these as creators rather than news brands.

Finally, politicians and business people are also frequently mentioned by survey respondents in the context of news sources on social media and have significant followings (e.g. on X, Donald Trump has 109m, Narendra Modi 109m, and Elon Musk 225m). Many politicians are also content creators and commentators who shape public debates. Some content creators have become politicians, and vice versa.

For this reason, they are not part of our news creator typology, but we have included them in our lists of most mentioned individuals along with journalists who belong to mainstream media, because we think it is useful to see how each group ranks in terms of public attention.

⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gpz163vg20>

Five key findings

1. There are big differences across countries in terms of creator attention and impact

In the *Digital News Report 2025*, we asked social media users about the attention paid to news organisations and their journalists – as well as to different types of creators (namely, ‘those who mainly focus on news’ and ‘those that occasionally [do this]’). If we map the proportion who paid attention to each across markets, we find substantial differences between countries.

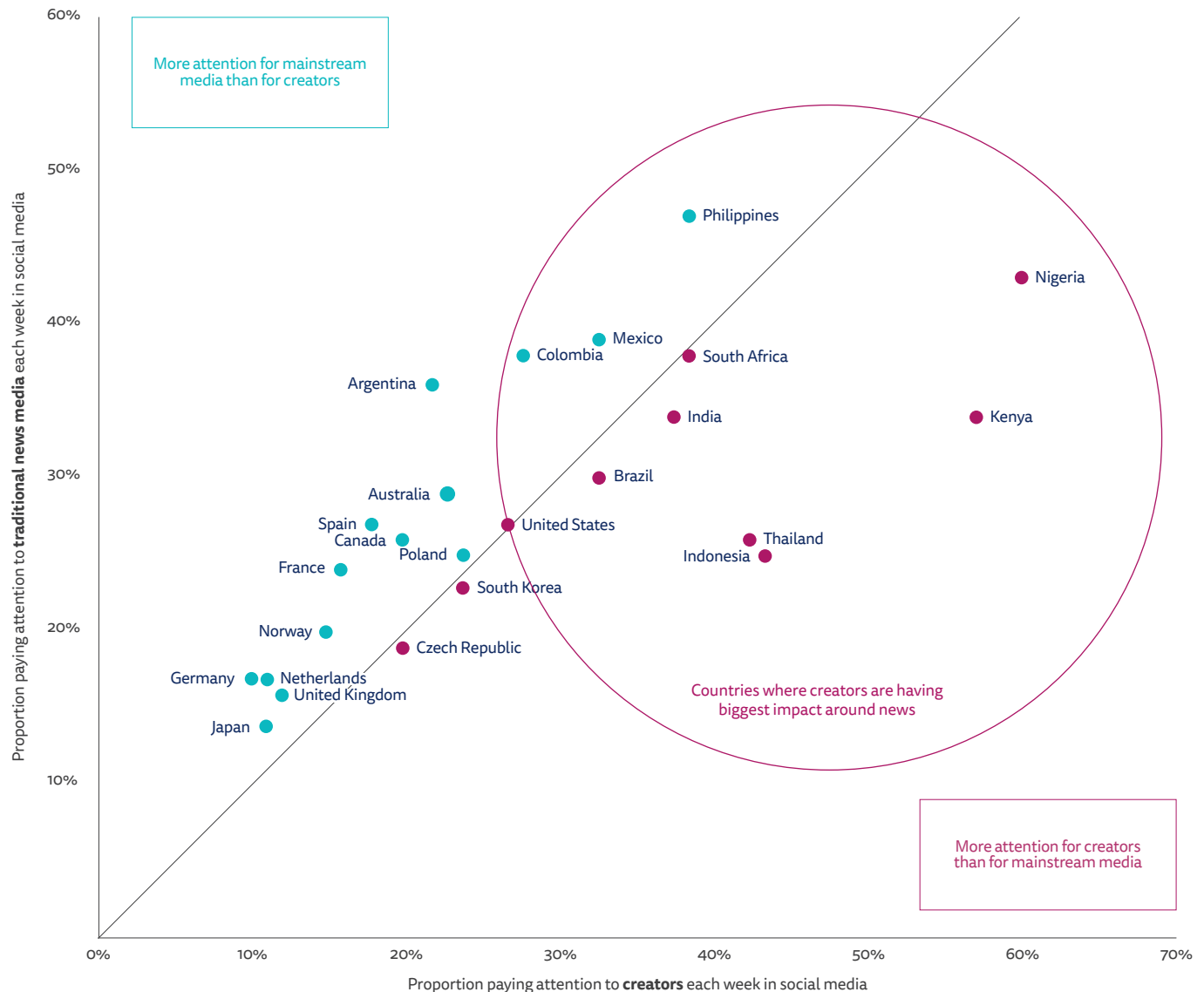
The chart below shows that there is a set of markets including Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States (as well as Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa) where news creators are having a very significant impact. In most of

these markets (shaded in magenta) people also say they pay more attention to creators and influencers than to mainstream news brands (or their journalists) when using social media, as indicated by the position below the line of equality.

By contrast, in much of Northern Europe and also Japan the impact of news creators tends to be much more limited. In most of these markets traditional news brands tend to get more attention than individuals (shaded in turquoise).

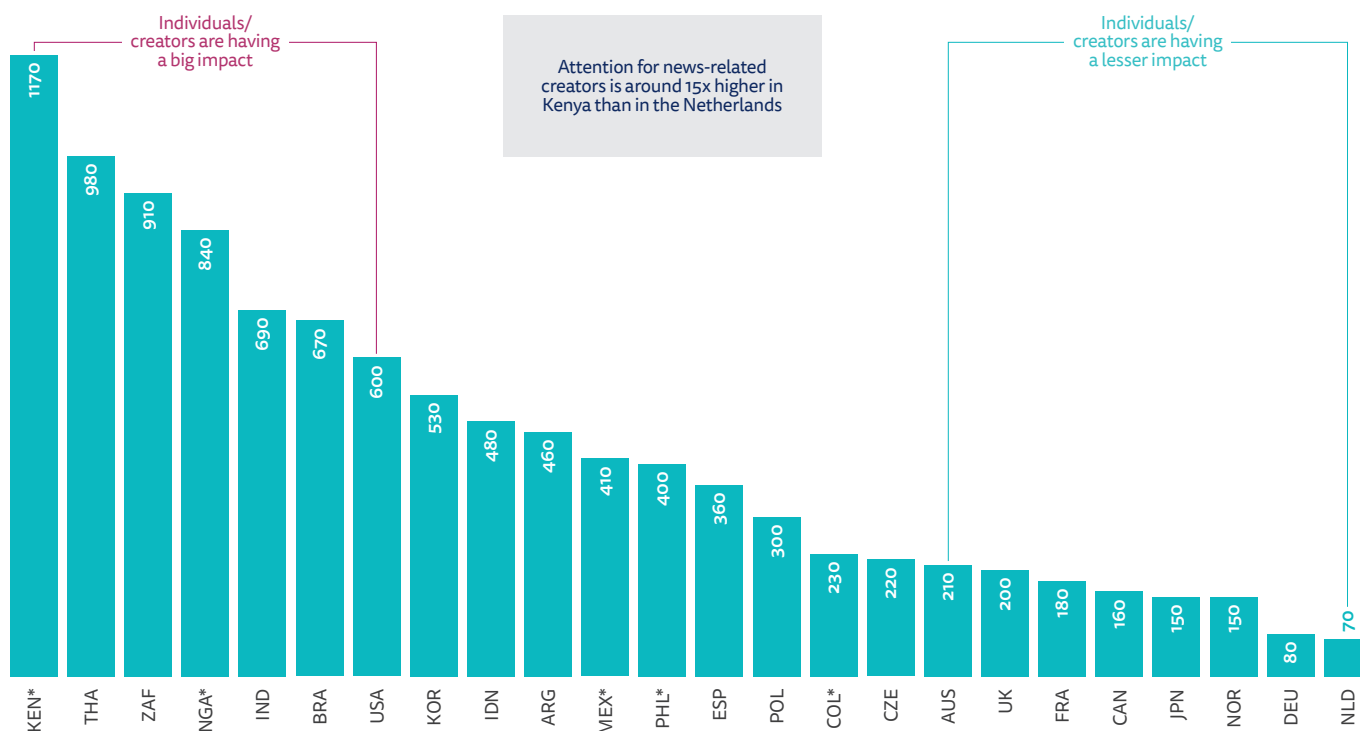
These differences can partly be explained by varying levels of use of social media for news, but there are likely to be other factors including cultural differences, the size of the market, and the strength or weakness of legacy media.

PROPORTION WHO PAY ATTENTION TO NEWS CREATORS AND MAINSTREAM NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO NETWORKS



Q12_Social_sources. You said that you use one of these networks for news ... When it comes to news on these networks, which of these sources do you generally pay most attention to? Base: Total sample in each country = 2000. Note: Showing 'traditional news' category and 'news creators'/other creators'. Respondents could select more than one option.

NUMBER OF MENTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN EACH COUNTRY



Q12. Social sources open. You said that you pay attention to creators/personalities that mostly focus on the news/occasionally focus on news/mainstream or other news brands and their journalists in [platform]. Can you name any of the accounts you follow or pay attention to? Please name up to three. Base: Total sample in each country = 2000. Note: Counts based on references to individuals that were mentioned three or more times across the 2024 and 2025 surveys. In 2025, for each actor they paid attention to on social media, respondents were asked about their attention on a random platform they used in order to aid recall. In countries marked with * the mention count is only from one year (2025) as the question was not asked in 2024. Mentions rounded to the nearest ten.

This interpretation is supported by analyses of the citations for individuals (news creators, other creators, and journalists) drawn from the follow-up survey question where people were asked to provide up to three names using open text responses. The chart above shows the number of mentions for individuals in different countries (based on references to individuals who were mentioned three or more times). This is another useful way to illustrate the extent to which individuals and news creators might be having a significant impact in a particular country. The data show the biggest number of mentions in Kenya, Thailand, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, India, the United States, and a much smaller number in Northern Europe, Australia, Canada, and Japan.

2. A few news creators stand head and shoulders above the rest

While most individuals get a handful of mentions at most, in a few countries we find personalities and news creators who are much more frequently mentioned by survey respondents. Looking at the publicly available follower counts of some of the most popular names is another indication of their wider impact.

Some of the most popular news creators reach millions of followers across platforms. These include those who provide 'commentary' such as Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson in the United States, Dhruv Rathee and Ravish Kumar in India, 'infotainers' such as Leo Dias in Brazil, and 'explainers' such as Dylan Page in the UK.

But these numbers are very much the exception. The majority of news creators lie in the long tail providing regular value to a particular audience, perhaps burning brightly for a while before losing traction. In smaller countries even the top news creators struggle to reach a million subscribers on individual platforms, with average plays for videos typically in the tens of thousands.

	Joe Rogan Comedian turned podcaster. Has younger right-leaning audience.	 20m followers on YouTube
	Leo Dias Journalist and media personality, focus on infotainment.	 19m followers on Instagram
	Deddy Corbuzier TV presenter, YouTuber, and host of Close the Door podcast.	 24m followers on YouTube
	Dylan Page Known for snappy and engaging content about topical issues.	 17.5m followers on TikTok

3. Creator consumption is primarily national in nature, but there are exceptions

In most countries attention is focused on domestic creators, but many English-speaking countries show a different pattern. In particular, right-leaning political commentators from the United States, such as Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, and Ben Shapiro, have found fertile ground for their pro-free speech and anti-mainstream media narratives in a number of countries in this study. Two-thirds of the most mentioned list in Canada are creators/personalities based in the United States or the UK, with an even higher number seen in Australia. In some European countries where English is widely spoken (and the domestic creator space is nascent), we also find US commentators appearing regularly in the top ten lists, highlighting how politics in these countries is being impacted, to some degree at least, by the US radical right.

Elon Musk's name is mentioned in all 24 countries, perhaps not surprising given his control of the X platform and its algorithm (225m followers). Donald Trump's name is also widely cited across markets. We also find mentions of self-declared misogynist Andrew Tate in around half of our 24 countries, though often with very small numbers. His aspirational messages aimed at young men have proved effective in connecting with a small minority across borders.

Football transfer specialist Fabrizio Romano is mentioned by respondents in almost every country in our survey including South Africa, Kenya, Norway, and the United States. Creators are increasingly able to draw on passionate fans wherever they live.

4. News creators and personalities tend to be men

In analysing the most mentioned individuals in social and video networks across 24 countries we find that the vast majority (85%) of the top 15 in each country are men. In Canada the entire top 15 list is made up of men. The Philippines has the lowest proportion of men (46%) in the top list and the highest proportion of female news creators and journalists (54%).



of the top individuals mentioned are **men**.
This is especially true for political commentary.
Lifestyle and infotainment are more balanced

Especially with **political commentary**

More mixed in lifestyle and infotainment areas

Canada



All of them are men
(15/15)

Philippines



Roughly equal gender balance
(7/15)

Political commentary is particularly prone to male-dominated presentation, with hosts often talking with other men into very large microphones. Not surprisingly audiences for this content also tend to be male (but not exclusively so).⁸ By contrast, a significant proportion of top lifestyle creators (e.g. Virginia Fonseca in Brazil) are women with predominantly female audiences.

In analysing the audiences that pay attention to both news creators and mainstream news brands we find that the key difference is around age. Under-35s who use social media are more likely to consume news from creators (48%) than from mainstream media (41%). Those 35 and over pay more attention to mainstream media (44%) than creators (35%).

MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED COMMENTATORS IN INDIA TEND TO BE MEN



Ravish Kumar



Dhruv Rathee



Nitish Rajput



Akash Banerjee



Sham Sharma



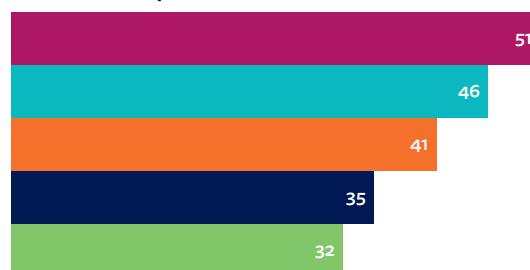
BeerBiceps

These age differences also help to explain why in aggregate there are no significant audience differences when it comes to politics. Audiences for right-leaning creators (e.g. Tucker Carlson) who tend to be older are likely being balanced out by younger audiences who use social media more heavily and tend to identify on the left.

PROPORTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS PAYING MOST ATTENTION TO NEWS MEDIA AND NEWS CREATORS – BY AGE

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55+

News creators/personalities



Traditional media/journalists



0% 20% 40% 60%

Q12_Social_sources. You said that you use one of these networks for news ... When it comes to news on these networks, which of these sources do you generally pay most attention to? Base: Social media news users across 48 markets aged 18-24 = 7837, 25-34 = 12,161, 35-44 = 11,850, 45-54 = 10,618, 55+ = 19,827. Note: Showing 'mainstream news' category and 'news creators'/other creators'. Respondents could select more than one option.

⁸ Audiences for Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson are twice as likely to be male (Digital News Report 2025).

5. YouTube is the most important platform for news creators

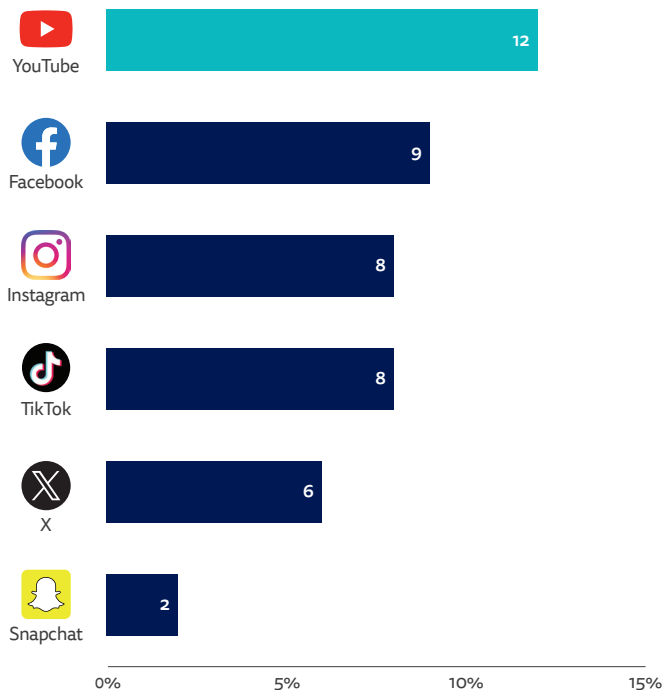
While Facebook remains an important platform in general, it is video platforms such as YouTube (see chart below) as well as networks with a high proportion of younger audiences that tend to be the most important spaces for creators. The chart (right) from the UK shows how traditional media still tend to take a good share of attention on Facebook and X, but news creators do better elsewhere. News organisations particularly struggle to attract attention on TikTok and Instagram, networks that place a premium on short-form and visual storytelling.

We find important and surprising country differences.

Facebook is still used more as a news platform in parts of Asia (Thailand, Philippines) and Africa (Kenya) and as a result many individuals have profiles there. Overall, we find that X and YouTube are the most important platforms for political commentators. YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are often favoured by creators who explain or simplify the news, though this is largely a function of the younger audience for this type of content.

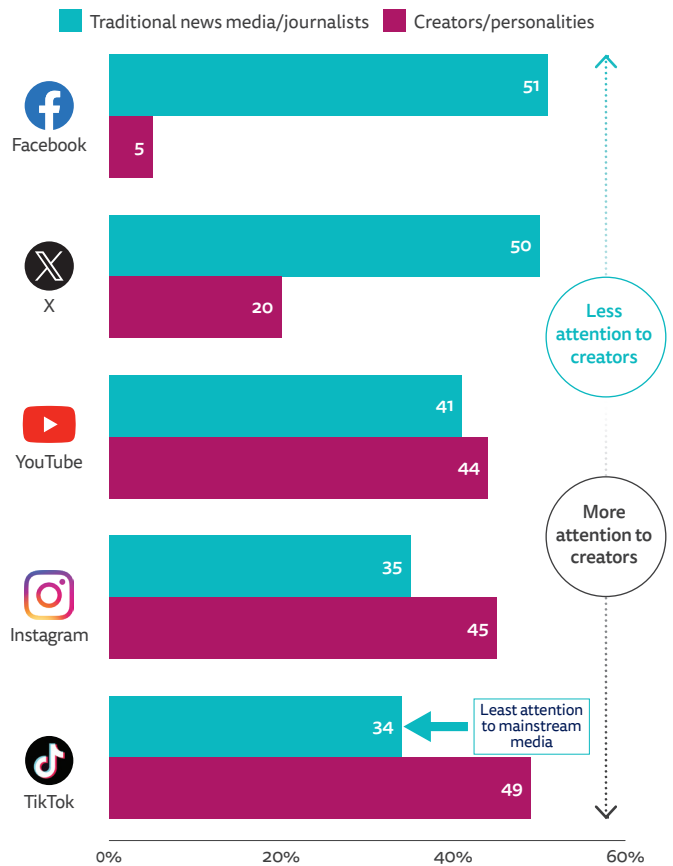
X is particularly important in the United States, South Africa, Nigeria, and Japan and is still the main platform for following politicians. Instagram is widely used for political content in Brazil and Indonesia and is also very popular in India. It is often the network of choice for lifestyle and infotainment content along with YouTube.

PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL ONLINE POPULATION WHO PAY ATTENTION TO NEWS CREATORS/PERSONALITIES ON EACH SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORK



Q12_Social_sources. You said that you use [platform] for news ... When it comes to news on [platform], which of these sources do you generally pay most attention to? Please select all that apply. Base: Total sample across 48 markets in the 2025 DNR = 97,055.

PROPORTION USING EACH NETWORK FOR NEWS WHO PAY MOST ATTENTION TO NEWS MEDIA AND CREATORS/PERSONALITIES – UNITED KINGDOM



Q12_Social_sources You said that you use <social platform> for news ... When it comes to news on [platform], which of these sources do you generally pay most attention to? Base: All who get news on Facebook = 189, X = 160, YouTube = 167, Instagram = 133, TikTok = 99.



SECTION 2

Country-based Analysis



In this section we explore the country data in more detail. We list the names of some of the top individuals that people say they pay attention to, supplementary information about what they are known for, and how many followers they have in specific networks. We also include information about the top news brands people say they pay attention to on social media and the use of different social and video networks for news from our *Digital News Report 2025*. In the discussion elements, we highlight news creators who are particularly popular or noteworthy.

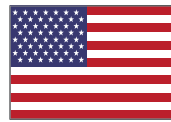




North America



UNITED STATES



Population	342m
Internet penetration	93%
Social media for news (weekly)	54%

The United States is home to some high-profile news creators, many of whom have achieved significant reach, fuelled by an entrepreneurial culture, a large population, and a high use of social media for news. The list of most mentioned individuals (on the next page) is dominated by political commentators, most of whom are men. The most cited voices are from the right, with many promoting themselves as alternatives to the 'fake' mainstream media. X and YouTube are the dominant distribution channels for this kind of content in the United States, as is clear when looking at follow accounts for each individual. Creators with controversial or extreme views (Alex Jones, Andrew Tate) are also well represented in our data despite being banned by some networks. Only Anderson Cooper (CNN) from the top list is currently working with mainstream media, though many others (Tucker Carlson and Megyn Kelly) started their careers there.

Around a quarter of the US population say they pay attention to news creators or influencers on a regular basis, according to our data, with a similar proportion saying they pay attention to traditional brands. Perhaps surprisingly this puts the United States in the middle range of countries studied in this report. Having said that, some US creators do have outsized influence on the political

process, because of their role as cheerleaders for Donald Trump – with many being close to the administration itself. Many of these individuals also have significant international audiences, adding to their impact.

The branded accounts of CNN, Fox News, and the BBC are also widely followed on social media providing important platforms for their top journalists. Creator collectives such as the Meidas Touch, The Bulwark, Young Turks, Damage Report, Majority Report, The Ring of Fire (all progressive), and the Daily Wire (right-leaning) are also well represented and an important feature of the US market. We treat these as brands rather than individuals in our coding.

Among left-leaning respondents, progressive political commentators dominate alongside satirists like John Oliver. Elon Musk also appears in the left's top ten.

Traditional news figures (Dan Rather, Rachel Maddow) and popular left-leaning commentators (TizzyEnt and Kyle Kulinski) round out the left's list. Among right-leaning respondents, the top names are all conservative media personalities. People on the right are more likely to cite political news creators than those on the left overall.

While political commentary is largely consumed by older viewers, many younger users access creators via Instagram and TikTok, which have become home for a broader range of views and a more informal style. V Spehar, who operates at @underthedesknews, has millions of followers on TikTok for quick takes on the news with a liberal focus. Matt Bernstein posts on social justice and gender issues. Quentin Quarantino is a meme account run by young creator Tommy Marcus that became popular during the pandemic. It has recently shifted focus to Gaza and the plight of Palestinians.

BIG ON TIKTOK



V Spehar (3.6m followers)

Is an American journalist and podcast host best known for their TikTok account, **UnderTheDeskNews**



Tizzy Ent (7.6m followers)

Is best known for his vlogs and commentary on pop culture, social justice

BIG ON INSTAGRAM



Matt Bernstein

'Friendly jew with long nails' posts on social justice, gender



Quentin Quarantino

Meme account created and run by 30-year-old Tommy Marcus critiques pandemic denialism and misinformation

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	32%	(+1)	64%
	2 YouTube	30%	(+1)	63%
	3 X	23%	(+8)	31%
	4 Instagram	16%	(+2)	41%
	5 TikTok	12%	(+3)	26%
	6 WhatsApp	10%	(+1)	26%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	CNN
2	Fox News
3	BBC News
4	New York Times
5	ABC News
6	NBC News
7	MSNBC
8	CBS News

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY UNITED STATES SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	X 225m	
2	Joe Rogan	US comedian and podcast host, UFC commentator, health supplement entrepreneur	X/YT	X 15.5m	Y 20.2m
3	Tucker Carlson	Conservative commentator, podcaster, Trump supporter	X/YT	X 16.5m	Y 4.1m
4	Ben Shapiro	Conservative commentator, host of daily podcast/radio show	X/YT	X 7.9m	Y 7.2m
5	David Pakman	Left-leaning commentator, podcaster, radio host	X/YT	X 0.4m	Y 3.3m
6	Candace Owens	Conservative commentator, podcaster, Trump supporter	X/YT	X 6.9m	Y 4.6m
7	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	X 109m	T 11m
8	Megyn Kelly	Conservative commentator, podcaster, ex-Fox News anchor	X/YT	X 3.7m	Y 3.8m
9	Bryan Tyler Cohen	Left-leaning commentator, podcaster, radio host	X/YT	X 0.6m	Y 4.7m
10	Tim Pool	Right-leaning commentator, podcaster, host of TimcastIRL	X/YT	X 2.4m	Y 1.4m
11	V Spehar	Journalist known for their TikTok account UnderTheDeskNews	TikTok/IG	T 3.6m	I 1m
12	Anderson Cooper	Host of the Anderson Cooper Show on CNN	X/CNN channels	X 9.1m	Y 19m (CNN)
13	Fabrizio Romano	Italian journalist known for scoops on football transfer news	X/YT	X 26.9m	Y 2.9m
14	Alex Jones	Sandy Hook conspiracy theorist, reinstated by Musk on X	X	X 4.4m	
15	Charlie Kirk	Conservative political activist and author (killed Sept 2025)	X/YT	X 5.6m	Y 3.3m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Tucker Carlson



Now runs a digital-first operation (ex-Fox news)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

27% (11th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

27% (11th/24)

Gender balance
12 of top 15 individuals are men

Creator breakdown by political leaning

Rank	Left-leaning respondents	Right-leaning respondents
1	David Pakman	Elon Musk
2	Brian Tyler Cohen	Joe Rogan
3	V Spehar	Tucker Carlson
4	Elon Musk	Ben Shapiro
5	Dan Rather	Candace Owens
6	Mehdi Hasan	Megyn Kelly
7	Philip DeFranco	Donald Trump
8	John Oliver	Tim Pool
9	Joy-Ann Reid	Charlie Kirk
10	Rachel Maddow	Dan Bongino

Apart from Elon Musk there is very little crossover between those on the left and right. People are watching largely different movies.

CANADA



Population	39m
Internet penetration	94%
Social media for news (weekly)	44%

US commentators dominate the Canadian lists alongside a small number of home-grown personalities such as Jordan Peterson, mostly from the political right. The top 15 list is made up exclusively of men. The main networks used for accessing creators are similar to the United States, namely YouTube and X. Facebook and Instagram (owned by Meta) have restricted access to news content on their platforms in response to the Online News Act and this is likely to have affected the popularity of some creator content on these networks in addition to news brands.

The most mentioned Canadian online personality in our data is psychologist and author Jordan Peterson. Originally a University of Toronto professor, Peterson rose to international prominence through viral lectures and his book *12 Rules for Life*. He is known for his critiques of political correctness and for providing a conservative intellectual perspective on social and cultural debates. With around 9m followers on YouTube and 6m on X, Peterson's influence is also felt, across multiple countries, with a number of mentions in Australia, the UK, South Africa, and Norway.

News anchors from the main networks CBC, CTV, Global News, and Radio Canada are widely cited in our survey along with the branded accounts for these networks. Rebel News, a network that has been associated with the alt-right, also gains significant attention on social media (1.1m followers on YouTube) as does one of its co-founders Brian Lilley, who now works for the *Toronto Sun*. Rebel News was accused of spreading misinformation around the Covid-19 pandemic⁹ among other issues. Another colourful character who has been given a voice by social media is The Pleb, a former truck driver who takes a populist, anti-establishment viewpoint. The Pleb engages directly with attendees at conservative rallies, livestreaming political events for an audience that now numbers around 250,000 YouTube subscribers.



The Pleb's grassroots approach has won him a big audience on the right

Meanwhile left-leaning Canadians, according to our survey, tend to pay attention to public service broadcasters CBC and Radio Canada, as well as US talk show hosts such as John Oliver and Stephen Colbert. Home-grown satirist Cody Johnston has also built a following of over 1m for his YouTube show *Some More News*, with segments that critique lazy media narratives. J.J. McCulloch is one of Canada's most successful YouTubers with over 1m subscribers. Based in Vancouver his videos cover everything from the history of Canadian politics to international and cultural issues. He has also worked as a cartoonist and commentator for local and international publications. YouTuber Hugo Travers/HugoDécrypte also picks up a significant audience with young French-speaking Canadians for his explanatory videos.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 YouTube	28%	(-1)	59%
	2 Facebook	25%	(-)	62%
	3 Instagram	13%	(-)	37%
	4 X	11%	(-)	18%
	5 Facebook Messenger	10%	(-1)	40%
	6 WhatsApp	10%	(+2)	29%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	CBC News
2	CNN
3	CTV News
4	BBC News
5	Rebel News
6	Global News
7	Radio-Canada/ICI RDI
8	TVA Nouvelles/LCN

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/09/justin-trudeau-rebel-media-canada-vaccine-misinformation>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY CANADA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	X 225m	
2	Joe Rogan	US comedian and podcast host	X/YT	X 15.5m	Y 20.2m
3	Tucker Carlson	US conservative commentator, podcaster, Trump supporter	X/YT	X 16.5m	Y 4.1m
4	Bryan Tyler Cohen	Left-leaning commentator, podcaster, radio host	X/YT	X 0.6m	Y 4.9m
5	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	X 109m	T 11m
6	David Pakman	Left-leaning commentator, podcaster, radio host	X/YT	X 1.1m	Y 6.6m
7	Philip DeFranco	American pioneer of YouTube news commentary	X/YT	X 0.4m	Y 3.3m
8	Jordan Peterson	Canadian psychologist, author, and social commentator	X/YT	X 6.1m	Y 8.8m
9	Anderson Cooper	Host of the Anderson Cooper Show on CNN	X/CNN channels	X 9.1m	Y 19m
10	Brian Lilley	Political columnist for Toronto Sun, co-founder Rebel News	X/Toronto Sun	X 0.25m	Y 0.3m (Toronto Sun)
11	HugoDécrypte	Explanatory journalism for U35s, interviews with politicians	TikTok/YT	T 7.4m	Y 3.5m
12	Stephen Colbert	Late night US TV host uses satire to comment on politics	X/YT	X 6.7m	Y 4.6m
13	Justin Trudeau	Prime minister (2015-25), Liberal Party	X/IG	X 6.7m	I 4.7m
14	J.J. McCullough	Young(ish) Canadian YouTuber, journalist, and author	YT/Substack	Y 1m	
15	The Pleb Reporter	Former truck driver, now right-wing political commentator	X/YT	X 0.2m	Y 0.3m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Jordan Peterson



Canadian academic with a global audience

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

20% (16th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

26% (13th/24)

Gender balance

15 of top 15
individuals are men



Latin America



ARGENTINA



Population	46m
Internet penetration	89%
Social media for news (weekly)	59%

Traditional news brands still play a strong role in Argentina, with many of the most mentioned individuals in our survey working for legacy outlets such as *TN* (Jonatan Viale), *América 24* (Antonio Laje and Eduardo Feinmann), and *La Nación+* (Esteban Trebucq and Luis Majul). These journalists dominate both broadcast and online discussions, illustrating how established media still provide the platform for some of the country's most visible commentators, even as their influence is amplified through social media.

The late Jorge Lanata, one of Argentina's most influential investigative journalists until his death in December 2024 (just days before our survey entered the field), reflected this combination of legacy clout and digital reach. Though he did not run personal social media accounts, content from programmes like *Lanata sin filtro* – shared via Radio Mitre's YouTube channel – as well as the YouTube channel for his show *Periodismo Para Todos* (PPT) resonated enough to place him among the top five in our ranking.

Alongside these established journalists, a parallel set of politically engaged digital creators has emerged. President Javier Milei himself is the most mentioned figure,

with millions of followers across Instagram and X, using social media as a direct communication channel. Since his election in December 2023, Milei has taken a hostile approach to traditional media by cutting government advertising and through regular attacks on his own widely accessed social media accounts (6m followers on Instagram and 4m on X). Around him we see an orbit of libertarian commentators such as Alejandro Fantino (founder of Neura Media), as well as creators like Mate con Mote and Tipito Enojado. Their sharp, often combative style resonates with Milei's base and underscores the ideological skew of Argentina's online political sphere towards conservative and libertarian voices. Inside government, Manuel Adorni, an economist turned presidential spokesperson, has also become a highly visible figure on Instagram and X.

Instagram is a key distribution channel for Argentinian creators and influencers including those who talk about politics – as in many other Latin American countries. Legacy journalists tend to be more salient on Facebook, the most widely used platform for news in Argentina, as well as X, which although is less widely used

overall retains outsized influence among journalists, politicians, and opinion leaders. Meanwhile, YouTube and TikTok are rising in prominence, particularly among younger audiences, and have become the main stage for libertarian commentators like *Mate con Mote*.

Argentina's media personalities online are overwhelmingly men: 14 of 15 of the most mentioned figures are male. The only exception is Yanina Latorre, who focuses on entertainment and celebrity news rather than politics, pointing both to the deep gender imbalance and the narrow thematic focus of Argentina's leading digital commentators.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	38%	(+1)	62%
	2 Instagram	35%	(+2)	61%
	3 YouTube	28%	(-3)	65%
	4 WhatsApp	27%	(-6)	75%
	5 TikTok	17%	(+2)	35%
	6 X	12%	(+1)	18%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	TN (Todo Noticias)
2	La Nación
3	Infobae
4	C5N
5	Telefe
6	Crónica
7	Clarín
8	América 24

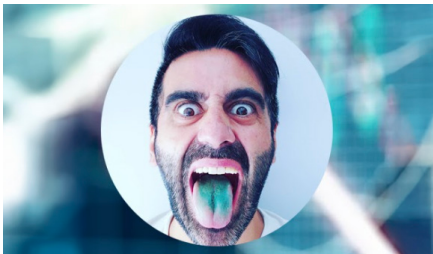
MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY ARGENTINA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Javier Milei	Argentina's president, known for anti-establishment rhetoric	IG/X	 6m	 3.9m
2	Eduardo Feinmann	Journalist and anchor known for conservative commentary	X/IG	 1.1m	 0.6m
3	Jonatan Viale	Political scientist and TV host – currently with ¿La Ves? on TN	YT/X	 1.2m	 0.6m
4	Jorge Lanata	Influential journalist known for high-impact investigative reporting and founding news outlets; died December 30, 2024	FB/X (PPT)	 1m (PPT)	 0.7m (PPT)
5	Alejandro Fantino	Multimedia host and founder of Neura Media, seen by many as a friendly platform to Milei	X/IG	 2.8m	 0.6m
6	Mate con Mote	Political news influencer and analyst known for libertarian views	TikTok/YT	 1.6m	 1.5m
7	El Presto	Provocative libertarian political influencer and journalist	FB/YT	 0.8m	 0.5m
8	Manuel Adorni	Politician and current presidential spokesperson for Milei	IG/X	 1.2m	 0.9m
9	Tipito Enojado	Libertarian YouTuber and podcaster	YT/X	 0.5m	 0.2m
10	Mauro Szeta	Journalist specialising in crime/police reporting	IG/FB	 0.9m	 0.6m
11	Antonio Laje	News anchor, current host of A24's Otra Mañana	IG	 0.9m	
12	Emmanuel Danann	Conservative content creator and musician who comments on politics and culture	YT/FB	 2.2m	 1m
13	Esteban Trebucq	Journalist and TV host known for outspoken opinions and opposition to political correctness; current LN+ host	IG/X	 0.4m	 0.3m
14	Yanina Latorre	Media personality and radio host focusing on entertainment and celebrity news	IG/X	 3.2m	 1.2m
15	Luis Majul	Political journalist and commentator, hosts la Cornisa on LN+	X/IG	 0.9m	 0.3m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Mate con Mote



A libertarian political commentator

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

22% (15th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

36% (6th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men

BRAZIL



Population	218m
Internet penetration	84%
Social media for news (weekly)	54%

News creators and influencers play a much bigger role in Brazil overall than most other countries in this study, even as large brands like Globo are also widely accessed via social platforms. Politicians have huge followings, as do political commentators, who frequently combine social media with TV and podcasting. Celebrity, fashion, and gaming influencers are widely followed across networks. Instagram is much more important than in other countries for news and is where we find the largest number of followers for both political and entertainment content.

Legacy television remains highly salient on social media. William Bonner (long-time face of *Jornal Nacional*) and César Tralli (*Jornal Hoje*), both from Globo, pull substantial audiences on Instagram in parallel with their broadcasts. Anchors hosting crime shows such as José Luiz Datena and Luiz Bacci also figure among the group of legacy presenters who have adopted a strong TV social media presence, illustrating the heightened public attention for issues around public security. Others such as Luís Ernesto Lacombe and Alexandre Garcia were once important figures in legacy media but now focus on digital-first, partisan content.

Both the current (Lula da Silva) and former presidents (Jair Bolsonaro) have large personal followings on social platforms, which they use to regularly fire up their political base. They are surrounded by a large number of (mostly men) activist creators with controversial views, such as Nikolas Ferreira, a young MP, who describes himself as a 'right-wing Christian, gun-savvy, defender of the family'.¹⁰ He opposes abortion, drug legalisation, and what he terms 'gender ideology'. Other right-leaning figures such as Augusto Nunes, Bárbara (Te Atualizei) Destefani, and Gustavo Gayer rely on Instagram for reach and YouTube for monologues, interviews, and live streams; some also have radio/TV or podcast tie-ins.

While collecting relatively fewer mentions, anti-Bolsonarista creators are also an important part of this ecosystem. Luiz Galeazzo (OiLuiz) packages daily politics into short, high-tempo explainers for YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok with a generally anti-far-right line. Galãs, the satirical duo made up of Helder Maldonado and Marco Bezzi, delivers daily live streams and clips dissecting the news with humour and a centre-left/anti-Bolsonaro bent.

The size of the Brazilian sample allows us to examine partisan splits, and as with the United States we find that social media audiences are largely divided along ideological lines. *Left-leaning* respondents tend to follow anchors from Globo news channels such as William Bonner and César Tralli as well as commentators with CNN. We find a similar skew with Erika Hilton, a Brazilian politician, activist, and prominent advocate for Black and LGBT rights, and for Jones Manoel, who is a Marxist-Leninist political activist. Among *right-leaning* respondents, the top names are predominantly conservative and libertarian personalities. Right-leaning audiences are more likely to cite a news influencer than those on the left.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 YouTube	37%	(-1)	64%
	2 Instagram	37%	(+1)	61%
	3 WhatsApp	36%	(-2)	71%
	4 Facebook	28%	(-1)	52%
	5 TikTok	18%	(+4)	33%
	6 X	9%	(-)	16%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Globo/G1
2	Record/R7
3	CNN Brasil
4	UOL
5	SBT
6	Band
7	Jovem Pan
8	Metrópoles

¹⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230330020320/https://istoe.com.br/a-estrela-do-conservadorismo>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY BRAZIL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Nikolas Ferreira	Right-wing influencer (and MP) who campaigns on a conservative/Christian platform	IG/X	 19m	 5.3m
2	Alexandre Garcia	Veteran ex-Globo journalist now a conservative YouTube commentator	YT/X	 3.1m	 4.6m
3	Virginia Fonseca	Beauty and lifestyle influencer and entrepreneur	IG/TikTok	 53m	 40.5m
4	Leo Dias	Celebrity reporter; runs his own entertainment site	IG/FB	 19m	 2.9m
5	Jair Bolsonaro	Former president of Brazil; uses social platforms to circumvent traditional media	IG/X	 27m	 14.1m
6	William Bonner	Editor and main presenter of TV Globo's Jornal Nacional (will step down November 2025)	X/IG	 9.4m	 2.4m
7	Carlinhos Maia	Influencer and comedian; famous for humorous content	IG/FB	 36.4m	 9.2m
8	Augusto Nunes	Veteran journalist, writer, and conservative commentator	IG/X	 1.9m	 2.8m
9	Bárbara Destefani	Right-wing commentator and YouTube known for news reaction videos branded 'Te atualizei'	X/YT	 2.6m	 2.2m
10	Luiz Bacci	Journalist and TV host of SBT (until January 2025 hosted a popular crime show for Record)	IG/FB	 24m	 8.8m
11	Lula da Silva	Brazil's current president (known as Lula), left-wing politician	IG/X	 14m	 9.6m
12	Hugo Gloss	Blogger and influencer (real name Bruno Rocha da Fonseca) with website and socials covering celebrity news	IG/X	 22m	 5.8m
13	Luís Ernesto Lacombe	Ex-Band/Rede TV! anchor who has moved to digital channels	IG/YT	 3m	 1.5m
14	César Tralli	Journalist and presenter known for his career at Globo	IG/X	 4.5m	 1.2m
15	José Luiz Datena	Hosted a crime TV programme (Band TV), now at RedeTV!	IG	 1.1m	

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.



Nikolas Ferreira, right-wing influencer and MP (cc credit)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

33% (8th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

30% (9th/24)

Gender balance

13 of top 15 individuals are men

Creator breakdown by political leaning

Rank	Left-leaning respondents	Right-leaning respondents
1	William Bonner	Nikolas Ferreira
2	Portal do José	Alexandre Garcia
3	Galãs Feios	Jair Bolsonaro
4	Leo Dias	Virginia Fonseca
5	Lula da Silva	Augusto Nunes
6	Reinaldo Azevedo	Bárbara Destefani
7	Andréia Sadi	Luís Ernesto Lacombe
8	César Tralli	Gustavo Gayer
9	Erika Hilton	Leo Dias
10	Thiago dos Reis	Luiz Bacci

Apart from Leo Dias there is very little crossover between those on the left and right.

COLOMBIA



Population	52m
Internet penetration	77%
Social media for news (weekly)	58%

Social media news consumption in Colombia combines legacy journalists and digital-first creators. Outlets such as Caracol, RCN, Semana, and El Tiempo remain central, and several of the most mentioned individuals (e.g. Luis Carlos Vélez, Daniel Coronell) are currently or were previously tied to television and radio. At the same time, satirists and creators aimed at young audiences feature prominently.

Walter 'Wally' Rodríguez stands out among the digital-first voices and has been outspoken in his support of President Gustavo Petro. A lawyer-turned-commentator, his Late Show-inspired YouTube channel Wally Opina blends satire and legal analysis, winning him the Simón Bolívar award for opinion and analysis on television in 2019. Alejo Vergel is part of the same wave: a pro-Petro commentator whose live streams, explainers, and interviews have attracted a sizeable YouTube following. Levy Rincón (Notiparaco) brings a sharp satirical edge with monologues, interviews, and live shows that also lean left.

As government-friendly creators have acquired influence, they have also received growing scrutiny, wary of the role they will play in the upcoming 2026

elections. Rincón and Wally have both expanded their reach through collaborations and slots with public media, raising questions about partisanship in publicly funded spaces. News organisations have also published critical reports documenting government payments to influencers hired for contracting or communications work.¹¹

Among the individuals with traditional journalistic backgrounds, Daniel Coronell stands out as one of Colombia's most recognised investigative journalists and newsroom leaders, with experience at the head of RCN, *Noticias Uno*, and *Cambio* magazine. Daniel Samper Ospina, a journalist-satirist and former editor, has also successfully built a large YouTube audience. Luis Carlos Vélez and Juan Diego Alvira, as well as other names with slightly fewer mentions (Beto Coral, Julio Sánchez Cristo, María Jimena Duzán) also illustrate how legacy anchors often work across radio, television, and social media, keeping a foothold even as consumption shifts online.

While the Colombian creator space tends to lean left, when it comes to politicians the most mentioned individuals lean to the right. While current Colombian

President Gustavo Petro (the first left-wing president in modern Colombian history) attracts significant attention, he is in the company of more right-leaning voices like former president Álvaro Uribe, Senator María Fernanda Cabal, and journalist-turned-presidential candidate Vicky Dávila. Global figures such as Donald Trump and Elon Musk also make it into the list, underscoring how conversations from abroad, often from the United States, filter into the global digital landscape. The blurring between media and politics is also evident in Colombia: Vicky Dávila has shifted from journalism into a presidential campaign, while Wally is pursuing a seat in Congress after building a large YouTube audience.

While men dominate the list of most-cited figures, a handful of women also receive mentions in the realm of politics and news. Alongside politicians Dávila and Cabal, Gabriela Alonso (Política para Apolíticos) has carved out space on TikTok and Instagram with accessible explainers about 'politics for the apolitical' aimed at younger audiences, showing there is also an appetite for less partisan and more explanatory content in the polarised creator sphere.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	47%	(-1)	68%
	2 WhatsApp	35%	(-6)	73%
	3 YouTube	34%	(-)	67%
	4 Instagram	28%	(-1)	54%
	5 TikTok	27%	(+5)	49%
	6 X	13%	(+1)	20%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	TV/Caracol Radio*
2	RCN
3	Semana
4	El Tiempo
5	CNN
6	Blu Radio
7	CityTV
8	El Espectador

*These brands have different owners but respondents did not always make clear which they were referring to so we have aggregated all mentions here.

¹¹ <https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/los-influencers-seran-una-pieza-clave-de-la-campana-por-la-presidencia>
<https://www.elespectador.com/politica/petro-influenciadores-x-asi-se-mueven-lo-creadores-de-contenido-petristas-con-contratos-dps-sic-rtvc-gustavo-bolivar-noticias-hoy>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY COLOMBIA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Vicky Dávila	Prominent journalist and news anchor known for commentary; has launched a presidential bid as a right-wing independent	X/IG	X 4.1m	IG 1.4m
2	Walter 'Wally' Rodríguez	Lawyer and YouTuber known for political commentary; outspoken supporter of President Petro	YT/X	YT 0.5m	X 0.6m
3	Gustavo Petro	Current president of Colombia with a strong digital presence	X/IG	X 8.3m	IG 2m
4	Alejo Vergel	Political commentator and social media personality	FB/YT	FB 1.2m	YT 0.5m
5	Álvaro Uribe	Former president of Colombia and influential figure in contemporary politics	X/FB	X 5.4m	FB 2m
6	Daniel Coronell	Respected investigative journalist with a long trajectory in media leadership	X/YT	X 1.9m	YT 0.6m
7	Levy Rincón (Notiparaco)	Content creator and satirist known for left-leaning commentary	X/IG	X 0.7m	IG 0.7m
8	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	X 109m	TS 11m
9	Luis Carlos Vélez	Journalist and news anchor; now hosts his own YouTube newscast and hosts a programme on Univisión's 24/7 channel	X/IG	X 1m	IG 0.3m
10	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	X 225m	
11	María Fernanda Cabal	Colombian politician and current member of the senate known for active social media presence and strong rhetoric	X/IG	X 0.7m	IG 0.4m
12	Daniel Samper Ospina	Journalist and satirist known for blending humour and news	FB/YT	FB 1m	YT 0.9m
13	Pirry (Guillermo Prieto)	Journalist, documentarian, and creator known for adventure videos; often highlights environmental and social issues	FB/IG	FB 5.4m	IG 2.4m
14	Juan Diego Alvira	Journalist and presenter known for his engaging explainers	IG/FB	IG 1.4m	FB 0.9m
15	Política para apolíticos (Gabriela Alonso)	Content creator focused on explainer videos about politics and public policy in an accessible and non-partisan way	TikTok/IG	TikTok 0.3m	IG 0.03m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Walter Rodríguez



Lawyer and YouTuber known for political commentary

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

28% (10th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

38% (4th/24)

Gender balance

12 of top 15
individuals are men

MEXICO



Population	129m
Internet penetration	81%
Social media for news (weekly)	63%

Traditional news brands remain highly influential in Mexico, which ranks fifth in attention to legacy media and journalists on social media platforms. However, strong brands like N+ (Televisa) and TV Azteca co-exist alongside a thriving, personality-led ecosystem in a country where almost two-thirds get news from social media weekly and more than 40% say it is their main source of news. The list of most mentioned individuals reflects a hybrid creator ecosystem that combines a number of well-known legacy anchors and investigative journalists who have defined Mexican television for decades, alongside pro-government YouTubers with loyal audiences and satirists who blur the line between politics and performance.

At the top of the list, Carmen Aristegui and Carlos Loret de Mola are both veteran journalists with an ongoing presence on traditional media who have also launched successful digital news companies. Aristegui's investigative work on abuse of power has made her one of the country's most recognised watchdogs. In addition to fronting a show on CNN en Español, she is also the face of Aristegui Noticias, an online news website she founded in 2012. Her morning news show Aristegui en Vivo is broadcast daily on her website and YouTube, as well as the website of La Octava (Grupo Radio Centro). Loret de

Mola, a former Televisa anchor, hosts the radio programme *Así las cosas* on W Radio and is also a co-founder of the Mexico-focused, US-based digital news outlet Latinus, which was critical of the government of former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO).

Mexico's news creator landscape is also marked by the important role of politically aligned YouTubers. Especially notable is a group of creators who rose to prominence during the AMLO presidency, closely aligned with his Fourth Transformation (4T) movement. Their styles vary, from the rapid-fire takes of El Chapucero to El Charro Político's more accessible, chat-style videos, but together they were an important part of AMLO's digital ecosystem, defending policies, countering critics, and shaping the tone of online debate during a government that had a combative relationship with traditional media.

Mexico's current president and AMLO's successor, Claudia Sheinbaum, has generally taken a less hostile approach to the media than her predecessor but continues to give access to pro-4T YouTubers at press events such as the Mañaneras, a daily morning briefing, broadcast and streamed, which is often criticised for attempting to bypass the

scrutiny of legacy media. These 4T-aligned influencers have not been without controversy: fact-checkers have documented cases where these channels spread misleading or false information, particularly during the pandemic.¹²

Satire and entertainment also claim an important piece of the Mexican news creator landscape. Brozo, the clown persona of Víctor Trujillo, remains one of Mexico's most recognisable political commentators, complete with a green wig, make-up, and a deliberately grotesque style that parodies the spectacle of politics itself. Meanwhile, infotainer Adela Micha, who caters to an audience interested in entertainment and celebrity news, and travel and lifestyle vlogger Luisito Comunica, both underscore how non-political influencers also occupy an important space in the region's news creator scene.

Although far from parity, women have a stronger presence in the news creator landscape than in other Latin American countries analysed and are not constrained to the realm of entertainment as is often the case: three out of the four women on the list actively discuss or are directly involved in politics, including Sheinbaum, who is the country's first woman president.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
 1	Facebook	52% (+2)	76%
 2	YouTube	35% (+1)	72%
 3	WhatsApp	28% (-)	75%
 4	TikTok	24% (+6)	50%
 5	Instagram	15% (+2)	44%
 6	X	15% (+1)	23%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	TV Azteca
2	N+ (Televisa)
3	Latinus
4	Milenio
5	CNN
6	El Universal
7	UnoTV
8	Imagen Noticias

¹² <https://verificado.com.mx/como-un-grupo-de-youtubers-pro-4t-desinformo-sobre-la-pandemia/>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY MEXICO SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Carlos Loret de Mola	Journalist and former Televisa anchor; founder of Latinus and known for reporting on corruption and organised crime	X/FB	X 9.8m	f 3.1m
2	Carmen Aristegui	Longtime investigative journalist known for challenging political power; founded Aristegui Noticias and CNN en Español host	X/FB	X 9.5m (Aristegui Noticias)	f 7.2m (Aristegui Noticias)
3	Joaquín López-Dóriga	Spanish-born journalist and anchor, nicknamed 'The Teacher' and symbol of old-guard television news	X/IG	X 8.4m	ig 1.1m
4	Campechaneando (Edwin Granados)	Creator of the Campechaneando YouTube channel, known for staunch support of former Mexican president AMLO	YT/FB	yt 3.3m	f 2.2m
5	El Charro Político (Juncal Solano)	Prominent political YouTuber known for her enthusiastic support of Mexico's ruling party; current city councilor	YT/FB	yt 1.7m	f 1.1m
6	Adela Micha (La Saga)	Veteran journalist and TV presenter known for interviewing newsmakers and celebrities	FB/YT	f 4.3m	yt 2.8m
7	Claudia Sheinbaum	Current president of Mexico	X/YT	X 4.4m	yt 1.4m
8	Ciro Gómez Leyva	Mexican journalist and news anchor respected for his sober and analytical style	X/IG	X 2.2m	ig 0.4m
9	Nacho Rodriguez (El Chapucero)	YouTuber and political analyst known for his support of AMLO	YT/X	yt 1.7m	X 0.4m
10	Brozo (Victor Trujillo)	Satirical clown character used to criticise politics through a blend of comedy and journalism; part of Latinus	X/YT	X 7m	yt 0.8m
11	Vicente Serrano	Journalist and YouTube host of Sin Censura; positions himself as an independent, anti-establishment voice	YT/X	yt 1.4m	X 0.8m
12	Chumel Torres	Comedian and creator known for his political satire	X/YT	X 4m	yt 2.7m
13	Luisito Comunica	YouTuber and vlogger who rose to fame for his travel videos; among the most popular Latin American influencers	YT/IG	yt 45m	ig 34m
14	Javier Alatorre	Veteran news anchor and host of Azteca's Hecho programme	X/FB	X 3.9m	f 0.6m
15	Atypical (Carlos Alazraki)	Businessman, publicist, and producer; currently hosts Atypical YouTube channel; has been critical of the current government	YT/FB	yt 1.2m	f 0.8m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Carlos Loret de Mola



Journalist and anchor, founder of Latinus

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

33% (8th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

39% (3rd/24)

Gender balance

11 of top 15
individuals are men



Northern and Western Europe



UNITED KINGDOM



Population	68m
Internet penetration	96%
Social media for news (weekly)	39%

Traditional brands play a significant role with many of the most named individuals on social media working directly or indirectly for one of the UK's national news organisations. These include the political editors from ITV (Robert Peston) and Sky News (Beth Rigby). The social media accounts of BBC News, *The Guardian* and Sky News significantly outnumber any named individual, while GB News and some of its more controversial anchors (Neil Oliver and Nigel Farage, who is the leader of Reform UK) are also widely cited. At the same time, US commentators and podcasters such as Joe Rogan pick up a younger, right-leaning crowd in the UK. Piers Morgan, a former newspaper editor and mainstream broadcaster, has now set up his own digital operation aimed at UK, US, and Australian audiences.

Comedian Russell Brand was once one of the BBC's top entertainment stars but has shifted his focus to social media where he promotes a mix of wellness topics and fringe theories. On his daily Stay Free with Russell Brand show he talks about distrust in the government and mainstream media and regularly platforms figures from the US alt-right.¹³ Brand continues to lean into spirituality and recently underwent a public Christian baptism. Other right-leaning YouTubers include Mayhar Tousi (Tousi TV) and Konstantin Kisin, co-host of the popular

TRIGGERnometry podcast, and another former comedian. Both are highly critical of the mainstream media and so-called political correctness.

Elon Musk has made a number of recent interventions in British politics, including criticising Keir Starmer's government over its response to grooming gangs and has also argued that the recent UK Online Safety Act (2023) is a threat to free speech in the UK. Most recently he called for a change of government when speaking at a rally in London organised by far-right leader Tommy Robinson.

Meanwhile, left-leaning UK audiences are drawn to Owen Jones, a commentator and *Guardian* columnist, known for his outspoken views on politics and also on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza. James O'Brien is a radio talk show host whose monologues on issues such as the negative impact of Brexit – and which frequently criticise those on the political right – regularly go viral on YouTube and TikTok. Less (or non-) partisan creators include News Daddy (Dylan Page), who has 17m TikTok followers, one of the largest news accounts on the platform. Page, who is in his twenties and not a trained journalist, has attracted Gen Z audiences all over the world for his concise and entertaining news summaries, presented in a short-form video format.

Specialist content creators include the Blackbelt Barrister, real name Daniel ShenSmith, who is a practising lawyer and mediator whose YouTube channel explains the law and legal principles. Recent videos have covered the implications for free speech of the UK's controversial Online Safety Act and have attracted considerable attention. He is also a martial artist, holding a Black Belt in Taekwondo. Martin Lewis is a hugely popular personal finance expert who works across traditional media (ITV, BBC) and his own social media channels.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF GURUS OFFERING ADVICE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Blackbelt Barrister
Explaining the law



Russell Brand
Spirituality and politics



Martin Lewis
Money saving expert

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 Facebook	17%	(-) 63%
	2 YouTube	13%	(-) 54%
	3 X	12%	(-2) 24%
	4 WhatsApp	10%	(-) 70%
	5 Instagram	9%	(+1) 42%
	6 TikTok	6%	(+2) 18%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	BBC News
2	Sky News
3	The Guardian
4	ITV News
5	CNN
6	PoliticsJOE
7	Channel 4 News
8	GB News

¹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/arts/russell-brand-youtube.html>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY UK SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Joe Rogan	US comedian and podcast host	YT/X	20.2m	15.5m
2	Piers Morgan	Eponymous online show, former newspaper editor and TV host	X/YT	8.9m	4.1m
3	Owen Jones	British left-leaning commentator and author	X/YT	1m	0.8m
4	Mayhar Tousi (TousiTV)	Political activist known for conservative and free market views	YT/X	1.2m	0.4m
5	Konstantin Kisin	Russian-British co-host of the 'TRIGGERnometry' podcast	YT/X	1.5m	0.2m
6	Robert Peston	ITV political editor, podcaster, active on social media	X	1.3m	
7	Elon Musk	Owner of X, has made 'free speech' interventions in UK politics	X	225m	
8	James O'Brien	Outspoken talk show host/podcaster (left-leaning) for LBC	X/YT	1.1m	1.2m
9	Black Belt Barrister	Legal and finance advice on YouTube (also expert in Martial Arts)	YT/X	0.8m	0.1m
10	Nigel Farage	Leader of Reform UK and current GB News host. Big on TikTok	YT/TikTok	2.3m	1.3m
11	Russell Brand	Libertarian, comedian, daily online 'Stay Free' show	X/YT	11.2m	6.8m
12	Andrew Neil	Former BBC, former Editor of the Sunday Times, and Spectator	X	1.2m	
13	Beth Rigby	Sky political editor and podcast host (Electoral Dysfunction)	X	0.5m	
14	Martin Lewis	Personal finance advice, freelance, also works for BBC/ITV	X/IG	3.2m	1.4m
15	Dylan Page	Aka News Daddy on TikTok with hot takes on news, gaming etc.	TikTok/IG	17.5m	2.4m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Piers Morgan



Now runs a digital-first operation:
Piers Morgan's Uncensored

Proportion that regularly pay
attention to creators/influencers
in social and video networks

12% (21st/24)

Proportion that regularly pay
attention to news brands/journalists
in social and video networks

16% (23rd/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men

FRANCE



Population	65m
Internet penetration	87%
Social media for news (weekly)	37%

News creators and influencers play a smaller role in France than many other countries, with more attention for news brands. Young creator Hugo Travers (HugoDécrypte) is the main exception, getting significant volumes of attention for his explanatory news videos and more mentions than any mainstream media account. Many commentators combine social media with radio or TV appearances. Right-wing and populist politicians are also active in social networks and well represented in our lists.

Hugo Travers receives one of the highest number of mentions for any individual in this study. Most others on the list get far fewer. What began as a YouTube channel when he was a university student has become a 'go-to' source of news for young people in France with over 15 million followers across different social media accounts. Décrypte's daily news update is one of the most downloaded podcasts in the country. His reach with young people has enabled him to secure interviews with key politicians and get access to press conferences at the Élysée Palace. He was recently chosen to ask a question to President Trump.

Youth-focused brands such as Brut that have pioneered creator-type approaches to news, including accessible short-form

videos on social platforms, also feature strongly and are mentioned more than traditional brands such as *Le Monde*. Other popular young French creators include Salomé Saqué, who writes about the dangers of climate change and right-wing populism. Hugo Clément and Gaetan Gabriele are two other young environmentalists with a strong social media following. Gabriele creates videos with a humorous tone, which he uses to critique government decisions and corporate greenwashing related to the climate crisis.



Salomé Saqué reports on the dangers of climate change and right-wing populism

Newer networks have also become important communication platforms for the political right. Jordan Bardella, the 30-year-old former RN candidate for prime minister, has 2.2m followers on TikTok, with Marine Le Pen not far behind. At the same time, the creator Squeezie (20m followers on YouTube), who has become a central figure in French youth culture,

weighed in on the other side of the argument. In a social media post to his followers, entitled Letter to the Young People Who Follow Me, he warned about the dangers of what he termed a 'drastic' rise of the far right.

Another notable figure is Clément Viktorovitch, a French political scientist, author, and online streamer known for his expertise in rhetoric. He provides analysis of political discourse and communications strategies through various social platforms including a morning show on Twitch called Café Rhétorique.

Camille Aumont Carnel is a French feminist activist and author, best known for her work in sex-positivity and for founding the popular Instagram accounts @jemenbatsleclito and @adosexo. She has become an opinion leader on issues of sexuality, relationships, and equality.

Fashion and lifestyle influencers such as Jessica Thivenin, Caroline Receveur, Chloe Gervais, and Lena Situations (real name Lena Mahfouf) are especially popular in France with younger female audiences. The Lena Situations podcast is one of the most streamed on Spotify and includes lifestyle tips and interviews with inspiring figures.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	Facebook	33% (+1)	61%
2	YouTube	24% (+3)	53%
3	Instagram	21% (+5)	42%
4	WhatsApp	17% (+1)	51%
5	TikTok	12% (+4)	22%
6	Facebook Messenger	11% (+1)	35%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Brut
2	Le Monde
3	Mediapart
4	BFMTV
5	CNews
6	Le Parisien
7	France Info
8	TF1

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY FRANCE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)
1	HugoDécrypte	Explanatory journalism for U35s, interviews with politicians	IG/YT/TikTok	 5m  3.5m  7m
2	Hugo Clément	Journalist, environmentalist, broadcaster, and filmmaker	IG/TikTok	 1.6m  1.2m
3	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	 220m
4	Pascal Praud	Right-leaning commentator, broadcaster	X & Europe 1 channels	 0.37m
5	Salomé Saqué	Writes on climate change, gender, and the rise of the far right	IG	 0.5m
6	Marine Le Pen	Far-right leader (RN) banned from running for public office	X/TikTok	 3.1m  1.2m
7	Jordan Bardella	President of National Rally since 2022. Big on TikTok	TikTok/IG	 2.2m  1m
8	Squeezie	YouTuber and digital creator, central figure in youth culture	YT/IG	 19.5m  9m
9	Gaetan Gabriele	Environmental content creator and climate activist	IG	 0.3m
10	Camille Aumont Cernel	Feminist who runs Instagram account 'jemenbatsleclito', addressing societal taboos around sexuality	IG	 0.65m
11	Clément Viktorovitch	Streamer who uses social platforms to popularise political science and help decipher political language	YT/IG	 0.4m  0.6m
12	Jessica Thivenin	Influencer and businesswoman, runs her own beauty and clothing brands	IG/TikTok	 6m  1.6m
13	Caroline Receveur	One of France's best known fashion bloggers	IG/TikTok	 5.5m  0.5m
14	Christine Kelly	TV Host of flagship Face à l'info news show for C News	IG	 0.2m
15	Emmanuel Macron	Current president of France (centrist) since 2017	X/TikTok	 2.8m  6.5m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Hugo Travers (HugoDécrypte)



Interviewing President Zelensky April 2024

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

16% (19th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

24% (17th/24)

Gender balance

9 of top 15 individuals are men

GERMANY



Population	83m
Internet penetration	94%
Social media for news (weekly)	33%

News influencers have limited impact in Germany with just a few hundred individuals named by respondents, many of whom work for mainstream media brands. News brands continue to resonate strongly with many ordinary Germans, even when using social networks, especially public service brands such as ARD (Tagesschau) and ZDF (heute). Partisan political commentators are also widely represented in our lists along with explanatory podcasts and a range of specialist creators covering finance, bitcoin, and real estate.

One characteristic of the German market is the strong showing for populist politicians and right-wing commentators, who have found an outlet on social media for views that would previously rarely be heard on the mainstream media. Leaders of the AfD (Alternative for Germany) party, such as Alice Weidel, have tapped into social networks including X, YouTube, and TikTok with posts often critiquing government policies on migration as well as the role of the mainstream media. Some of these views are amplified by right-leaning commentators such as Boris Reitschuster and Tim Kellner, a former police officer and soldier, and Neverforgetniki, the pseudonym of Niklas Lotz, a young German YouTuber who

regularly criticises the news media and discusses mass migration and climate change from a sceptical point of view.

Alternative brands with a strong social media presence include NiUS, a collective of right-wing YouTube commentators, similar to the Daily Wire in the United States. It's run by Julian Reichelt, a former editor of *Bild*. *Tichys Einblick*, a conservative magazine, is also widely cited by right-leaning respondents, along with *Junge Freiheit*, a newspaper that has been described as the 'ideological supply ship of right-wing populism'.¹⁴

Rezo is a YouTuber and an important figure in youth culture. While his channel is mostly focused on music and comedy, he also frequently talks about politics. In 2019 he posted a viral video (20m views) critiquing CDU (Christian Democratic Union) policies on the environment, sparking a wider media debate. He has also warned about the dangers of right-wing populism. Other creators popular with the young include Herr Anwalt, who explains legal issues in simple language, and Mr Wissen2Go, real name Mirko Drotschmann, who produces YouTube explainers on politics and history on his own YouTube channel and has previously worked with a range of public broadcasters.

Vermietertagebuch (Alexander Raue) is a real-estate creator who increasingly comments on politics/economics from a finance/investor lens, and Aktien im Kopf (Kolja Barghoorn) is another well-cited specialist creator offering stock market and economic commentary. Alicia Joe is a YouTuber discussing digital culture, influencers, and media.



Rezo has attacked mainstream politics as failing the young



Alicia Joe makes difficult topics accessible to a broad audience



Mirko Drotschmann produces explainers on complex topics

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 YouTube	18% (-3)	51%
	2 WhatsApp	15% (-)	73%
	3 Facebook	15% (-1)	42%
	4 Instagram	12% (+1)	37%
	5 TikTok	5% (-)	15%
	6 X	5% (-)	10%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	ARD/Tagesschau
2	ZDF/Heute
3	Welt
4	Der Spiegel
5	n-tv
6	Bild
7	NiUS
8	Focus

¹⁴ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article163314751/Junge-Freiheit-Ein-Besuch-im-ideologischen-Mutterschiff-des-Rechtspopulismus.html>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY GERMANY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Boris Reitschuster	Journalist known for his critical reporting on Russia and politics from a right-leaning point of view	YT/X	0.4m	0.4m
2	MrWissen2go	Creates engaging explanations of historical and political topics	YT	2.3m	
3	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	225m	
4	Kolja Barghoorn	Host at 'Aktien mit Kopf', a personal finance advice channel	YT	0.7m	
5	Tim Kellner	Influencer, former soldier, talks about migration and identity	YT/IG	0.6m	0.2m
6	Rezo	YouTuber, went viral for attack on CDU over green policies	YT/TikTok	1.6m	1.8m
7	Alice Weidel	Co-leader of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party	X/TikTok	1.2m	0.9m
8	Hoss and Hopf	Provocative podcast commentary on gender, politics, and more	YT/IG	0.4m	0.3m
9	Herr Anwalt	Real name Tim Hendrik Walter, explains legal issues for Gen Z	TikTok/YT	7.2m	1m
10	Tilo Jung (Jung & Naiv)	Podcaster known for informal interviews with politicians	YT/IG	0.6m	0.1m
11	Vermietertagebuch	Online persona of property investor/adviser Alexander Raue	YT	0.5m	
12	Sahra Wagenknecht	Founder of the populist BSW party ('left conservatism')	YT/X	0.7m	0.8m
13	Montana Black	Popular creator, focusing on gaming in YouTube and Twitch	YT/Twitch	3m	5.6m
14	Lanz & Precht	Popular podcast from a TV presenter and a philosopher	YT	1.7m	
15	Oliver Pocher	Comedian/TV host known for his wit and provocative style	X	0.7m	

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Herr Anwalt



Tim Hendrik Walter is a TikTok star with 7.2m followers

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

10% (24th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

17% (21st/24)

Gender balance

15 of top 17
individuals are men

NETHERLANDS



Population	18m
Internet penetration	97%
Social media for news (weekly)	35%

The list of individuals and creators associated with news in the Netherlands is extremely sparse and mostly populated by journalists or authors who are associated with traditional media brands such as *De Telegraaf* and *De Volkskrant* or with the public broadcaster NOS.

A few US and British YouTubers and TikTokkers also get a mention as English is widely spoken in the Netherlands. The low number of mentions for Dutch creators is consistent with a slower adoption of video networks such as YouTube and TikTok for news compared with many other countries.



Cestmopro mixes hard news and humorous videos (1.2m followers on Instagram)

One of the most widely mentioned social media accounts in the Netherlands is Cestmopro, an anonymous news meme account aimed at younger users. It is the most popular news account on Instagram (1.2m followers) and has taken a strong pro-Palestinian stance over the Gaza conflict. We find a range of other Palestinian supporting creators mentioned by younger Dutch respondents including Motaz Azaiza,

a Palestinian citizen journalist and aid worker from Gaza whose footage during the early stages of the conflict regularly went viral. The Palestinian Eye Instagram account was also widely mentioned.

RapNieuwsTV is another influential Instagram account (634,000 subscribers) which posts on a variety of topics, including music and general news. A study by the Dutch media regulator (Commissariaat voor de Media) found that its news was trusted by less than a fifth of the young people that use or follow it.

Columnists associated with traditional media brands include Wierd Duk, who is a journalist and historian who hosts a weekly podcast and appears regularly as a commentator on Dutch radio and television. Maarten Keulemans is a science journalist who won awards for his coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic. He is known for engaging with the public's questions on social media, embodying a new style of transparent science journalism. Arjen Lubach is a Dutch satirist, comedian, and late-night talk show host. His show has become a popular source of news for younger people, according to research studies, because it provides important information and context on topical stories in an engaging way. Lubach became widely known for his 2017 viral spoof video (America First, Netherlands Second) aimed at the Trump administration, which gained over 30m views.

Also appealing to that younger audience is a teenage news creator who goes by the name Bender (real name Benjamin Buit). He has almost half a million followers on TikTok and also produces content for YouTube and Instagram. He calls himself a 'humorous journalist with a critical edge' and is frequently found at demonstrations and other public events. He asks for financial support from his followers.



Jan Roos is a journalist and YouTube personality known for his role as co-host of *Roddelpraat*, an online show focused on Dutch celebrity gossip (300,000 subscribers on YouTube). His blunt style has also led to controversy and legal challenges.¹⁵

Enzo Knol is probably the best-known Dutch creator, having posted a video to YouTube every day since 2013. He has 3m followers on YouTube and almost 2m on TikTok, but his focus is travel, challenges, and other content that is unrelated to news.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	Facebook	19% (-3)	52%
2	WhatsApp	16% (-3)	74%
3	YouTube	13% (-3)	48%
4	Instagram	12% (-1)	40%
5	TikTok	7% (+1)	18%
6	X	6% (-1)	12%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	NOS (public broadcaster)
2	Nu.nl
3	RTL Nieuws
4	AD (Algemeen Dagblad)
5	Cestmopro
6	Telegraaf
7	BBC News
8	CNN

¹⁵ <https://www.nu.nl/media/6358322/roddelpraat-presentator-jan-roos-wordt-vervolgd-voor-teksten-rond-sunneklaas.html>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY THE NETHERLANDS SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)
1	Saskia Belleman	Court reporter known for live-tweeting trials (De Telegraaf)	X	X 0.27m
2	Wierd Duk	Dutch journalist/ historian/podcaster (De Telegraaf)	YT/X	YT 0.62m X 0.22m
3	Maarten van Rossem	Dutch historian and media personality	X	X 0.03m
4	Chris Klomp	Klomp uses social media and blogs to explain legal proceedings	X	X 0.08m
5	Geert Wilders	Leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), known for populist and anti-immigration stance	X	X 1.6m
6	Motaz Azaiza	Palestinian photojournalist covering Gaza conflict	IG	IG 16.5m
7	Maarten Keulemans	Science and health journalist (science editor at De Volkskrant)	X	X 0.05m
8	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of Space X and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	X 225m
9	Jan Roos	Co-host of 'RoddellPraat', a controversial YouTube show on celebrity gossip	YT/IG	YT 0.3m IG 0.1m
10	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	X 109m T 11m
11	Joe Rogan	US comedian and podcast host	X/YT	X 15.5m YT 20.2m
12	Mentour Pilot	Swedish airline pilot, provides insights into airline industry	YT	YT 2.3m
13	Arjen Lubach	Dutch satirist, comedian, and late-night talk show host	YT/IG	YT 0.84m IG 0.4m
14	Denys Davydov	Ukrainian citizen journalist widely followed in social channels	YT/Telegram	YT 0.9m Telegram 0.3m
15	Bender	Teenager reporter, provides news for young people	TikTok/YT	TikTok 0.5m YT 0.2m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Wierd Duk



Podcaster, historian, and columnist

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

11% (22nd/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

17% (21st/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men

NORWAY



Population	5.5m
Internet penetration	99%
Social media for news (weekly)	41%

Our data suggest that there are relatively few Norwegian creators or influencers focusing on news specifically. English is widely understood by Norwegians, and partly as a result, US podcasters such as Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson head the list of most mentioned individuals on social media – along with the owner of X Elon Musk.¹⁶ Much of the attention for these US figures comes from Norwegians that identify as right-wing or very right-wing.

For most Norwegians, however, attention tends to go to the social media accounts of the big news brands such as VG, TV2, and the public broadcaster NRK, as well as the personal accounts of some of their key anchors. Strong trust in Norwegian news brands has made it harder for influencers to find an audience, except in lifestyle or other specialist areas that have been less well-covered by the news media.

Fredrik Græsvik is one of Norway's best-known journalists following a long career as a foreign and war correspondent for broadcaster TV2, including a long stint in the United States. Græsvik is a prolific podcaster, both on his own and in collaboration with others. He co-hosts one show with comedian Zahid Ali, for example, which covers current events with a blend of serious commentary and humour.

Wolfgang Wee Uncut is another popular, if controversial, podcast, hosted by a former NRK radio host and DJ. The show is notable for unedited, long-form conversations, a format that has drawn comparisons to The Joe Rogan Experience, but also led to controversy. Wee has received criticism for recent statements made on his podcast, including allegedly spreading Russian propaganda and questioning chemotherapy treatments for cancer.¹⁷

Norwegian brands (VG, TV2, and NRK) worry about attracting younger readers, which is why their focus has been on making content more accessible and developing short-form video content such as reels, shorts, and TikToks. They face competition from lifestyle influencers such as Sophie Elise and Oskar Westerlin, who have loyal followings on Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat – the last being a uniquely popular network in Norway. In smaller markets young influencers also tend to operate in partnership with publishers. Victor Sotberg, for example, is a YouTuber who gained fame on NRK's youth web show FlippKlipp. Sebastian Solberg is a podcaster and family blogger who discusses lifestyle and parenting issues. Known as Sebb TV on social media, he has been a vocal participant in debates about children's privacy in influencer content.

LIFESTYLE INFLUENCERS ARE A KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE NORWEGIAN MARKET



Victor Sotberg has a big fan base on YouTube; parenting content from Sebb TV.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 Facebook	24% (-1)	71%
	2 YouTube	13% (-)	49%
	3 Snapchat	12% (+1)	58%
	4 Instagram	10% (-)	50%
	5 TikTok	10% (+3)	23%
	6 Facebook Messenger	7% (-1)	53%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	VG
2	NRK
3	TV2 Nyheter
4	Dagbladet
5	CNN
6	BBC News
7	Aftenposten
8	Nettavisen

¹⁶ Overall, 39% of the top 100 individual names are creators from outside of Norway (mainly from the United States).

¹⁷ <https://www.dagbladet.no/meninger/vi-gar-rett-i-fella/83171960>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY NORWAY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	X 225m	
2	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and business man	X/Truth Social	X 109m	T 11m
3	Tucker Carlson	US conservative commentator, podcaster, Trump supporter	X/YT	X 16.3m	Y 4.1m
4	Joe Rogan	Comedian and host of The Joe Rogan Experience podcast	X/YT	X 15.5m	Y 19.8m
5	Fredrik Græsвик	Freelance journalist, podcaster, and former foreign correspondent (TV2)	X/IG	X 0.07m	I 0.03m
6	Oskar Westerlin	Young influencer, weighs in from time to time on online and media controversies	TikTok/IG	T 1m	I 0.4m
7	Ben Shapiro	US right-leaning commentator and media host, Daily Wire	X/YT	X 7.9m	Y 7.2m
8	Fabrizio Romano	Italian sports journalist famous for football transfer news	X	X 25m	
9	Isabel Raad	Lifestyle content, commentary on media and influencers	IG/TikTok	I 0.4m	T 0.4m
10	Kristin Gjelsvik	Blogger and influencer, known for outspoken views on body positivity, feminism, and mental health	IG/Snapchat	I 0.2m	S 0.1m
11	Fredrik Solvang	Journalist with NRK, hosts weekly debate show	IG/NRK channels	I 0.3m	
12	Sophie Elise	Lifestyle and beauty influencer, sometimes engages in political discussions	IG/Snapchat	I 0.6m	S 0.4m
13	Wolfgang Wee	Former NRK, host of a controversial but popular podcast	X	X 0.1m	
14	Kadafi Zaman	Award-winning journalist and presenter at TV2	X and TV2 channels	X 0.04m	
15	Dylan Page	UK-based TikTokker covering news for young generation	TikTok/IG	T 17.5m	I 2.4m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Oskar Westerlin



Norwegian video creator and influencer appearing on the Wolfgang Wee Uncut podcast

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

15% (20th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

20% (19th/24)

Gender balance

12 of top 15
individuals are men

SPAIN



Population	48m
Internet penetration	95%
Social media for news (weekly)	46%

The list of frequently named individuals is split between established TV and radio hosts using social media to expand their presence, politicians, and political commentators, and younger creators connecting with their peers around a broader range of content from gaming to e-sports. Broadcast networks and legacy newspaper brands such as *El País* and *El Mundo* have enthusiastically embraced social media, leaving less room for independent news creators and influencers. All of the individual names in our list are Spanish and the vast majority are men. There is limited attention for US commentators when compared with many other European countries.

Straddling politics and journalism are Alvis Pérez from the right (currently an MEP and who started with an influential Telegram channel) and Pablo Iglesias on the left, who was deputy prime minister (2020–2021) and the founder of far-left party Podemos. These personalities are agents of polarisation for both the left and the right, and sometimes influential in public debates.

Another polarising figure is Un Tío Blanco Hetero (UTBH), the pseudonym of YouTuber Sergio Candanedo. UTBH is known for his criticism of concepts like modern feminism and political

correctness. His videos feature a white mask and hoodie, and he presents himself satirically as ‘a straight white guy’ while delivering strident critiques of current social issues. Not surprisingly most of his followers come from the political right.

From the progressive left, Alan Barroso is a young political scientist and author who posts regularly across multiple platforms. He runs two separate channels on YouTube, a daily podcast on Spotify, and has over half a million followers on TikTok.

Jordi Wild is a popular YouTuber and psychologist known for his podcast *The Wild Project*, which is sometimes compared to Joe Rogan’s due to its similar format of long-form interviews and a blunt, provocative style. Wild has a significant following in Spain (more than 6m subscribers on YouTube), and like Rogan he often interviews controversial figures and tackles divisive topics.

Angel Martín is a Spanish comedian, actor, and TV presenter who in recent years has become known for his satirical videos on social media. These videos, entitled ‘Informativo matinal para ahorrar tiempo’ (Morning news to save time), summarise the main headlines of the day in a humorous way and became a viral success.

One notable and much cited Instagram account is *Es.descirdiario* (1m followers) founded by author and journalist Sheila Hernandez Torres. It focuses on telling human interest stories for younger audiences in engaging and visual ways.

Instagram plays a significant role in supporting numerous lifestyle creators in Spain along with YouTube and X. TikTok and Twitch are mostly popular with younger groups. Telegram and Facebook also feature in terms of building followers with different groups.

NOTABLE SPANISH CREATORS



Un Tío Blanco Hetero” (UTBH)
challenging ‘political correctness’



Alan Barroso has a presence on multiple channels including TikTok

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	WhatsApp	24% (-3)	77%
2	Facebook	24% (-2)	55%
3	YouTube	19% (-3)	59%
4	Instagram	18% (-3)	55%
5	X	15% (-1)	24%
6	TikTok	11% (-)	31%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	El País
2	Antena 3
3	El Mundo
4	RTVE
5	ABC
6	La Vanguardia
7	Telecinco
8	20 Minutos

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY SPAIN SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Carlos Herrera	Veteran Spanish radio host for Cadena COPE (morning show)	YT/IG	1m (COPE)	0.4m
2	Alvise Pérez	Social media activist and controversial far-right political figure; elected as MEP in 2024	X/Telegram	1.1m	0.7m
3	Sheila Hernández	Runs popular Instagram account Es.decidiario focusing on unusual (and positive) news stories from around the world	IG	1m	
4	Ibai Llanos ('Ibai')	Spanish internet celebrity, e-sports streamer who has become one of the world's most followed Twitch personalities	YT/Twitch/IG	13m	20m 12m
5	Un Tío Blanco Hetero	UTBH aka Sergio Candanedo, YouTuber and commentator	YT	0.55m	
6	Alan Barroso	Young Spanish political communicator and commentator	TikTok/IG	0.54m	0.22m
7	Juan Ramón Rallo	Economist and libertarian commentator	YT/X	0.9m	0.48m
8	Jordi Wild	Podcaster and YouTuber often called 'the Spanish Joe Rogan'	YT/IG	6.8m	3m
9	Marc Vidal	Economic analyst, technology communicator, and speaker	YT	1m	
10	Iker Jiménez	TV journalist and presenter famous for hosting paranormal and investigative programmes	YT/TikTok	1.1m	0.5m
11	Aitor Guisasola Paredes	Lawyer whose YouTube channel 'Un Abogado contra la Demagogia' critiques politics and media manipulation	YT	0.5m	
12	Angel Martin	Comedian, actor, known for satirical 'morning news' video	X/IG	1m	0.9m
13	Vito Quiles	Controversial right-wing commentator and activist	IG/X	0.9m	0.5m
14	Pedro Sánchez	Prime Minister of Spain since 2018 (centre-left)	X/IG	2m	0.6m
15	Jordi Évole	Investigative journalist and TV host known for satirical edge	X/IG	3.5m	0.42m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Ibai Llanos



E-sports streamer has 17m followers on Twitch

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

18% (18th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

27% (11th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men



Central and Eastern Europe



CZECH REPUBLIC



Population	10.5m
Internet penetration	86%
Social media for news (weekly)	44%

Traditional news brands play a strong role and amass many more mentions than individual creators in the Czech Republic. We see a highly fragmented creator economy where only a handful of personalities register with the public at scale, and where comedy, infotainment, and accessible explainer videos aimed at younger audiences draw much of the attention alongside traditional journalists and politicians. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the main distribution channels.

Karel 'Kovy' Kovář, one of the country's most recognisable YouTubers, sits comfortably at the top of the list. He began his creator career with light vlogs and gaming videos but evolved into engaging and often funny explainers on politics, society, and media literacy. He acquired international recognition in 2017 when he interviewed Jean-Claude Juncker (then president of the European Commission) on behalf of young Europeans and has been active in media literacy efforts and youth outreach, serving as a bridge between public institutions and Gen Z viewers and millennials.

Pavel 'Herdyn' Mikeš, a former pro-gamer turned Twitch star and YouTuber, has also built a considerable under-35s following through long Just Chatting streams and

highlight cuts that blend internet culture, creator drama, and gaming-industry commentary with occasional forays into current affairs, including an interview in 2023 with then-presidential candidate Petr Pavel on his WoLe Show. Others have made similar gamer-to-politics transitions building on large Twitch followings. For example, while he only receives a small number of mentions in our data, Petr Žalud (CzechCloud) has also shifted from gaming to recently hosting long interviews with President Petr Pavel and Prime Minister Petr Fiala on his channels.

A number of legacy-born figures have also carved out audiences on social media. Čestmír Strakatý, who hosted Reflex's Prostor X until 2023, is now primarily an independent YouTuber and podcaster, offering both free and paid versions of his popular long-form interviews. Lucie Borhyová, the long-time face of TV Nova's evening news, also makes the list, which may be more a reflection of her presence on Televizní Noviny's social channels than her lifestyle-focused Instagram account.

On the more overtly political side, Jindřich Šídlo turns the week's politics into satirical video essays (Šťastné pondělí), while Události Lud'ka Staňka offers a faster-paced, punchline news parody. Jana

Bobošíková's Aby bylo jasno (ABJ) serves a right-leaning commentary audience, Kecy a politika (Bohumil Pečinka and Petros Michopoulos) delivers blunt weekly analysis in podcast-plus-YouTube form, and Luboš 'Xaver' Veselý straddles broadcasting and YouTube, closely associated with XTV, the internet channel he co-founded, which also receives a number of mentions.

As in most countries, politicians also play an important role. President Petr Pavel, a retired general and former chair of NATO's Military Committee elected in 2023, maintains a steady cross-platform presence. Prime Minister Petr Fiala, a political scientist and leader of ODS, uses his X account for messaging focused largely on policy and process. Tomio Okamura, leader of the Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) party, is highly active on Facebook and YouTube, where he promotes his far-right politics. The list also includes Elon Musk, whose ownership of X means platform-level decisions and high-visibility posts often reverberate in Czech online debates even when the topics are not domestic.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	32%	(-4)	66%
	2 YouTube	19%	(-2)	60%
	3 WhatsApp	14%	(-3)	58%
	4 Instagram	14%	(+2)	38%
	5 Facebook Messenger	8%	(-2)	43%
	6 X	7%	(+1)	12%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Česká televize (CT1, CT24)
2	CNN (Prima News)
3	Seznam Zpravy (incl Seznam.cz)
4	TV Nova (Televizni Noviny)
5	iDnes.cz
6	Novinky.cz
7	Aktuálně.cz
8	DVTV

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY CZECH REPUBLIC SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Karel 'Kovy' Kovář	Online personality known for infotainment videos about politics and society, aimed at young audiences	YT/IG	1m	0.8m
2	Andrej Babiš	Businessman and former prime minister of the Czech Republic	X/FB	0.5m	0.5m
3	Pavel Mikeš (Herdyn)	Gaming streamer turned commentator, discusses internet culture and current affairs with a focus on young audiences	Twitch/YT	0.08m	0.5m
4	Petr Pavel	Currently president of the Czech Republic 2021-2025	IG/FB	0.8m	0.3m
5	ABJ (Jana Bobošíková)	Right-leaning YouTube channel Aby bylo jasno (To Make It Clear), co-hosted by former TV news anchor and MEP	YT	0.1m	
6	Jindřich Šídlo	Veteran political journalist, currently creator of satirical news show on Seznam Zprávy	X/IG	0.3m	0.04m
7	Čestmír Strakatý	Journalist with roots in legacy media, known for popular long-form interviews on YouTube and podcasts	IG/YT	0.1m	0.1m
8	Kecy a politika	High-impact political podcast by commentator Bohumil Pečinka and strategist Petros Michopoulos	YT/IG	0.05m	0.04m
9	Lucie Borhyová	News presenter and face of TV Nova's main evening news	IG	0.2m	
10	Události (Lud'ka Staňka)	Stand up comedian and host of a satirical 'news you didn't know you needed' show	YT/FB	0.1m	0.04m
11	Luboš Xaver Veselý (Xaver)	Controversial talk-show host and vlogger known for alternative commentary on politics and news, co-founder of XTV	YT/FB	0.1m	0.05m
12	Tomio Okamura	Far-right politician and entrepreneur	FB/X	0.5m	0.06m
13	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	225m	
14	Petr Fiala	Prime minister of the Czech Republic 2021-2025	X/FB	0.4m	0.1m
15	Agáta Hanychová	Model and broadcast media figure turned influencer	IG/FB	0.4m	0.07m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Kovy



YouTuber and infotainment vlogger

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

20% (16th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

19% (20th/24)

Gender balance

13 of top 15
individuals are men

POLAND



Population	40m
Internet penetration	86%
Social media for news (weekly)	54%

Traditional news brands play a weaker role in Poland’s social media ecosystem, where some individual personalities accrue as many mentions as large news organisations, and where legacy anchors are notoriously absent among the most mentioned individuals. The most influential accounts are a distinctly varied mix of news, investigation, commentary, satire, specialism, and lifestyle. Many of the individuals mentioned are not overtly political or politically aligned, but when it comes to politics (political commentators and politicians) the most mentioned names skew conservative.

At the top of the list, Łukasz Bok is a breaking-news curator who built one of Poland’s biggest social news-related presences. He created Katastrofy i Konflikty Światowe (KiKŚ) as a teenager in 2013 to track conflicts, disasters, and major events. KiKŚ now exists across several platforms, breaking 1m followers on Instagram, Facebook, and X, with feeds consisting of rapid, source-linked updates.

Krzysztof Stanowski exemplifies the rise of platform-centred, personality-driven news: after making his name as a sports journalist with traditional media, he launched Kanał Zero in 2024, which despite being a new entrant to the market also appears at the top of the most mentioned brands on social media.

Though Stanowski is one of its primary hosts, Kanał Zero now operates as a multi-host, YouTube-native newsroom with daily long-form interviews, investigations, and live discussion. Stanowski himself has become one of Poland’s most visible media figures, even staging a self-described satirical presidential bid in 2025 to ‘show what elections look like from the inside’. He has also been criticised for his combative tone on X, including the use of direct insults.

At the younger end of the spectrum, Mikołaj ‘Konopsky’ Tylko has grown a large audience by scrutinising influencer behaviour and online scandals, positioning himself as a watchdog within the creator economy. Meanwhile, Piotr Zychowicz’s Historia Realna stands out as a specialist explainer/interview channel, turning military history, geopolitics, and security into long-form conversations that perform strongly on YouTube. A former deputy editor-in-chief of the conservative-liberal weekly *Do Rzeczy*, Zychowicz is often quoted by media sympathising with the Polish right-of-centre.

Meme- and humour-led brands have a wide appeal among Polish audiences too. Make Life Harder packages news and pop culture as shareable, ironic posts that travel fast on Instagram, while visual satirists like Michał Marszał draw

attention around big news moments with image-led riffs that often go viral. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this content sometimes bleeds into the political, as in ORB, a YouTube-native channel fronted by Bartek Urbaniak with punchy videos about current politics.

On the overtly political side, conservative columnist Rafał Ziemkiewicz and right-leaning commentator Witold Gadowski use their YouTube channels for weekly monologues and interviews, while Prime Minister Donald Tusk uses his social media presence for official communication and crisis management. Sławomir Mentzen, from the right-wing alliance Konfederacja, has mastered short-form videos on TikTok and YouTube to reach younger voters. Meanwhile, Wojciech Cejrowski bridges legacy and social media, building on his long-running travel brand (which remains on television), while much of his online output is now current affairs and political talk.

As in most countries, we find a stark gender imbalance in Poland. The majority of the most mentioned individuals are men, and the sole woman on the list is Anna Lewandowska, a lifestyle and fitness entrepreneur, highlighting the absence of women from the political sphere.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	40%	(-2)	74%
	2 YouTube	32%	(+1)	68%
	3 Facebook Messenger	13%	(-2)	55%
	4 X	13%	(+6)	19%
	5 Instagram	12%	(-)	37%
	6 TikTok	11%	(+1)	29%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	TV Republika
2	Kanał Zero
3	TVN
4	Onet.pl
5	OKO.press
6	Gazeta Wyborcza
7	BBC News
8	Wirtualna Polska (WP)

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY POLAND SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Łukasz Bok (KiKŚ)	Breaking news curator with a long-standing account providing updates on wars, disasters, and geopolitical events	IG/FB	 1.3m	 1.1m
2	Piotr Zychowicz	Historian and journalist specialising in WWII history, host of Historia Realna YouTube channel	YT/X	 0.7m	 0.2m
3	Krzysztof Stanowski	Internet personality and media entrepreneur behind the Kanal Zero YouTube news channel	X/IG	 1.4m	 0.6m
4	Rafał Ziemkiewicz	Conservative commentator and author	X/YT	 0.3m	 0.2m
5	Make Life Harder	Satirical, meme-driven news and culture account currently maintained by Jakobe Mansztajn	IG/FB	 1.7m	 0.2m
6	ORB	Political comedy YouTube channel fronted by Bartek Urbaniak, riffing on current events	YT	 0.3m	
7	Konopskyy (Mikołaj Tylko)	Young YouTuber known for investigative videos and commentary on internet scandals	YT/X	 2.1m	 1m
8	Donald Tusk	Current prime minister of Poland	X/FB	 2.1m	 0.8m
9	Anna Lewandowska	Karateka turned fitness entrepreneur and lifestyle influencer	IG/FB	 5.7m	 1.9m
10	Michał Marszał	Meme creator/journalist known for viral, image-led political satire on Instagram	IG	 0.5m	
11	(Witold) Gadowski	Right-leaning commentator and reporter who built a large audience through weekly monologues on YouTube	YT/X	 0.5m	 0.2m
12	Budda	Car-vlogger famous for giveaways and stunts, with recent legal scrutiny boosting his notoriety	IG/YT	 2.5m	 2.5m
13	Wojciech Cejrowski	Travel host with long-running TV show. Online he combines his travel persona with conservative opinion segments	YT/FB	 0.8m	 0.8m
14	Śławomir Mentzen	Far-right party leader who uses TikTok and YouTube to reach young voters	TikTok/YT	 1.7m	 1.1m
15	Dział Zagraniczny	Listener-funded foreign-news podcast and site by Maciej Okraszewski	IG/YT	 0.1m	 0.1m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Krzysztof Stanowski



Launched a satirical election campaign in 2025

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

24% (13th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

25% (15th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men



Asia-Pacific



AUSTRALIA



Population	27m
Internet penetration	97%
Social media for news (weekly)	47%

Domestic Australian news brands (ABC, 7, and 9 News) are widely accessed on social media networks with more than twice as many mentions overall when compared with individual creators or journalists. Australian creators are also in short supply with foreign personalities (mostly US and UK) making up 87% of the top 15 most mentioned names and 72% of the names in the top 100. Many of those foreign creators, commentators, and politicians are associated with the political right (Donald Trump, Elon Musk, Ben Shapiro, Joe Rogan) helping to spread a range of libertarian and anti-immigration views to some sections of Australian society. Jordan Shanks and Michael West are the most prominent home-grown independent creators to make the top list, along with right-leaning TV anchor Andrew Bolt (Sky Australia) and the global affairs editor for the public broadcaster (ABC), Laura Tingle.

Michael West is an Australian investigative journalist and founder of Michael West Media, an independent news website specialising in investigative journalism. A former columnist for major Australian papers (Fairfax), he is known for reporting on corporate tax avoidance and government accountability. His work is supported largely by donations.

Jordan Shanks-Markova, known online as Friendly Jordies, is an Australian YouTuber and political satirist. He often interviews politicians and uses comedy to engage younger audiences. Shanks' videos have led to high-profile legal disputes, most notably a defamation lawsuit by former New South Wales Deputy Premier John Barilaro, whom Shanks accused of corruption and portrayed satirically. The case was settled when Shanks apologised and agreed to edit two videos to remove content that Barilaro claimed were 'offensive'.¹⁸ Shanks combines his YouTube channel with live comedy shows and is popular with many younger Australians.

Punters Politics, hosted by former teacher Konrad Benjamin, is another initiative looking to make the news more accessible to 'everyday Australians'. Satirical content posted to YouTube and short-form video platforms aims to explain complex political topics, such as corporate tax loopholes and lobbying laws.

Despite the relatively low impact overall for Australian-born news influencers, leading politicians have been attempting to court popular news-adjacent and lifestyle podcasters during recent elections – in shades of Donald Trump's playbook.



The Australian prime minister's appearance on the Grade Cricketer podcast

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, for example, spent time with online personalities such as Ozzy Man Reviews, a comedian with 6.1m YouTube followers, reality TV star Abbie Chatfield, and The Grade Cricketer, the persona of two super-fans who have a popular podcast offering a comedic take on cricket culture in Australia. The Grade Cricketer reaches nearly 1m followers across X, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok and its creators also make money from live shows.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	38%	(+6)	71%
	2 YouTube	29%	(+3)	59%
	3 Instagram	19%	(+3)	46%
	4 X	16%	(+6)	21%
	5 TikTok	14%	(+5)	27%
	6 WhatsApp	13%	(+4)	36%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	ABC News
2	7 News
3	9 News
4	BBC News
5	Sky News
6	CNN
7	The Guardian
8	SBS News

¹⁸ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-05/john-barilaro-settles-friendlyjordies-defamation-action/100596638>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY AUSTRALIA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Joe Rogan	US comedian and podcast host	YT/X	20.2m	15.5m
2	Michael West	Investigative journalist, founder of the West Report	Website/YT/X	0.1m	0.1m
3	FriendlyJordies	Australian YouTuber and political satirist (Jordan Shanks)	YT/IG	1.4m	0.2m
4	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	109m	11m
5	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	225m	
6	Philip DeFranco	Prominent US YouTube personality and news commentator	YT/X	6.6m	1m
7	Megyn Kelly	Ex-Fox anchor now podcaster and US-based talk show host	YT/X	3.8m	3.6m
8	Ben Shapiro	US conservative commentator, co-founder of The Daily Wire	YT/X	7.2m	7.9m
9	Tucker Carlson	US conservative commentator, podcaster, Trump supporter	YT/X/IG	4.1m	16.5m
10	Piers Morgan	Ex-UK broadcaster/editor now runs his own digital show	YT/X	4m	8.9m
11	Andrew Bolt	Sky News Australia host and conservative commentator	YT/X	5.7m (Sky)	0.03m
12	Laura Tingle	ABC's global affairs correspondent, former political editor	X/ABC channels	0.3m	
13	Tim Pool	Right-leaning commentator, podcaster, host of TimcastIRL	X/YT	2.4m	1.4m
14	Konrad Benjamin	Host of Punters Politics, accessible news for the young	IG/YT	0.5m	0.2m
15	Dylan Page	UK-based TikTokker who does daily news round-ups	TikTok/IG	17.5m	2.4m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom of the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Friendly Jordies (Jordan Shanks)



Comedian and YouTube investigations

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers
in social and video networks

23% (14th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists
in social and video networks

29% (10th/24)

Gender balance

13 of top 15
individuals are men

INDIA



Population	1442m
Internet penetration	56%
Social media for news (weekly)	46%
Survey sample primarily comprised of English speakers	

Cheap mobile data, rising smartphone and social media use, combined with the large potential audience help to explain the popularity of news creators, influencers, and big personality journalists in India. Our data, along with the very high follower counts, indicate that the names at the top of this list have significant reach and influence, at least with our more educated, English-speaking, urban Indian sample.

Dhruv Rathee is a young YouTuber, influencer, and activist who operates mainly in Hindi. Based in Germany, Rathee focuses on news, politics, and social justice and is also frequently critical of the Modi government. A 2024 video entitled 'Is India becoming a Dictatorship?' garnered 26m views.¹⁹ His videos aim to simplify complex topics and present them in an engaging way. Often coupled with his own opinion, he reaches a large audience of younger Indians.

In the 2025 World Press Freedom Index,²⁰ India ranked 151st out of 180 countries. A combination of highly concentrated media ownership, political influence on several mainstream news providers, and concerns for safety has seen many seasoned journalists moving their reporting and analysis to platforms like YouTube where they believe they can provide a more critical perspective. A case in point is Ravish Kumar (14m followers), a former editor with NDTV, who has consistently highlighted issues such as media bias, communalism, and suppression of dissent. He uses his platform to highlight what he calls the 'collapse' of independent journalism under Modi's

tenure. Abhisar Sharma (9m+ followers), another former mainstream TV anchor, presents his views on political issues on his YouTube channel with the tagline 'This is the platform where we hold the powerful accountable'.

Akash Banerjee, a political satirist, is best known for The Deshbhakt, a show that regularly lampoons both government and opposition politicians and critiques traditional media practice. In the news-adjacent category, Beer Biceps (real name Ranveer Allahbadia) is a content creator known for his focus on self-improvement, fitness, mental health, lifestyle, and personal development. The Ranveer Show (TRS) is one of India's most watched podcasts available in both Hindi and English.

News anchors and editors-in-chief from top TV networks have also extended their personal brands to multiple social networks. While mainstream news editors like Arnab Goswami, Rajat Sharma, and Anjana Om Kashyap garner a large amount of mentions, many do not have individual social handles on YouTube but excerpts from popular debate shows appear through the social channels of each news organisation.

The diversity of Indian influencers is hard to represent in a report like this where a significant amount of content is consumed in local languages, with many of the top influencers often switching between Hindi and English. RazaGraphy (5m+ followers), aka Muhammed Raza, is one of number of YouTube channels looking to check facts and

expose fake news. Nitish Rajput's short-form video channels (7m+ followers) are aimed at younger audiences and focus on presenting multiple perspectives to encourage critical thinking. Abhi and Niyu are a husband-and-wife team (6.5m followers) who also create videos that aim to simplify complex issues for millennials.

The influencer ecosystem is both politically influential and fraught. Ahead of India's recent national elections in 2024, Prime Minister Modi created and attended a National Creators Award where some of the country's top social media influencers were felicitated by him;²¹ a nod to their reach and influence with India's younger voters. But in an August 2025 directive,²² India's apex court urged the government to include penalties for misconduct by social media influencers in its social media guidelines. Content creators like Ranveer Allahbadia are now facing court proceedings for inappropriate comments.²³ Abhisar Sharma, Raju Parulekar, and other journalists are facing criminal defamation complaints by a large Indian business conglomerate.²⁴ India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has also indicated it will soon outline steps to curb platforms and influencers allegedly disseminating content that may incite violence.²⁵

India has the world's largest YouTube audience²⁶ with close to 491m users and it is the most important network for independent creators along with Instagram. TikTok is banned in India.

TOP SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 YouTube	55% (+1)	71%
	2 WhatsApp	46% (-2)	69%
	3 Instagram	37% (+4)	54%
	4 Facebook	36% (+1)	50%
	5 Telegram	22% (+2)	38%
	6 X	16% (+3)	23%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Aaj Tak
2	BBC News
3	NDTV
4	Times of India
5	Zee News
6	ABP News
7	Republic TV
8	India Today

¹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9253_M38Xk
²⁰ <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom>
²¹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/gadgets-news/pm-narendra-modi-announces-national-creators-award-2024-list-of-winners-across-23-categories/articleshow/108330024.cms>
²² <https://www.medianama.com/2025/08/223-sc-govt-social-media-conduct-rules-samay-raina-jokes>
²³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg4g8q51xdo>
²⁴ <https://scroll.in/latest/1086665/court-summons-journalists-abhisar-sharma-razu-parulekar-on-adani-groups-defamation-complaint>
²⁵ <https://www.storyboard18.com/digital/parliamentary-panel-seeks-details-of-action-against-social-media-influencers-acting-against-india-64597.htm>
²⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/280685/number-of-monthly-unique-youtube-users>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY INDIA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)		
1	Narendra Modi	Indian prime minister and leader of BJP	X/IG/YT	X 108m	IG 96m	YT 28m
2	Dhruv Rathee	Creator and influencer often critical of the Modi government	YT/IG/X	YT 29m	IG 14m	X 3m
3	Ravish Kumar	Journalist, author, and YouTuber, former editor at NDTV	YT/IG/X	YT 14m	IG 4m	X 4m
4	Arnab Goswami	News anchor known for right-wing views and combative style	YT/various	YT 7m (via Republic World)		
5	Rajat Sharma	Editor-in-chief of India TV, host of popular interview show	YT/IG	YT 72m (IndiaTV)	IG 1m	
6	Anjana Om Kashyap	Indian news anchor Aaj Tak, combative style	YT/IG	YT 72m (Aaj Tak)	IG 4.8m	
7	Abhisar Sharma	Journalist who discusses current affairs and social issues	YT/X	YT 8.4m	X 2m	
8	Sudhir Chaudhary	Editor-in-chief at DD and host of popular Decode show	YT/X	YT 6.5m (DD)	X 7.9m	
9	Nitish Rajput	Indian YouTuber, digital content creator, and social activist	YT/IG	YT 7m	IG 2.9m	
10	Rahul Gandhi	Opposition leader, former prime minister	X/IG/YT	X 28m	IG 11m	YT 9.8m
11	Rajdeep Sardesai	Lead news anchor, columnist at the India Today group	X/YT	X 8.8m	YT 0.2m	
12	Akash Banerjee	Host of The Deshbhakt, offers satirical takes on politics	YT/IG	YT 5.7m	IG 1.1m	
13	Abhi and Niyu	Husband and wife creators of inspirational, educational videos	YT/IG	YT 6.5m	IG 2.8m	
14	Sushant Sinha	Former TV anchor and host of Top Angle with Sushant Sinha podcast	YT/IG	YT 3.4m	IG 1.7m	
15	Ranveer Allahbadia (BeerBiceps)	Host of the Ranveer Show (TRS), 'India's Joe Rogan'	YT/IG	YT 11m	IG 4.4m	

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Narendra Modi



The Prime Minister has hundreds of millions of followers across social platforms

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

38% (7th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

34% (7th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 16
named individuals are men

INDONESIA



Population	280m
Internet penetration	69%
Social media for news (weekly)	57%

Indonesians have embraced social media to a significant extent across a range of content genres including news, lifestyle, entertainment, and religion. As a result, this populous market offers many opportunities for creators and journalists alike. News brands such as Kompas, Detik, and CNN Indonesia have invested heavily in social channels and these branded accounts attract considerable attention, but younger Indonesians are attracted to creators who look more like them, often mix politics with comedy, or who explain news in simple ways. Politicians have also recently embraced platforms such as TikTok and Instagram to improve their image with younger voters.

Najwa Shihab is a leading Indonesian journalist and founder of Narasi TV, a respected digital media brand known for independent, investigative news. The company aims to provide an alternative to mainstream media, which is often seen as being influenced by political or corporate interests. Najwa Shihab herself keeps an independent profile, not least as host of the political talk show Mata Najwa.

Deddy Corbuzier is a YouTuber (24m followers) and magician who hosts a popular podcast, Close the Door, which uses a similar format to Joe Rogan in the United States. He hosts wide-ranging discussions with politicians, religious

leaders, and celebrities, but the podcast has been criticised for not sufficiently challenging controversial statements. Corbuzier's role has come under further scrutiny after his recent appointment as a communications adviser to the Ministry of Defense – with the government looking to harness the popularity of key influencers. Other popular podcasts such as the one hosted by Helmy Yahya are also criticised for lacking sufficient journalistic scrutiny of public figures.²⁷ Political influencers and podcasters in Indonesia often take a strong pro- or anti-government stance, including outspoken criticism of their opponents, contributing to a polarised environment.

The key channels for video-based news creators are YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, the fastest-growing network across all demographics. During the 2024 election President Prabowo Subianto used AI-generated videos of himself as a gemoy, or cute and charming grandpa.²⁸ These played well with younger viewers on Instagram and TikTok where he cultivated a strong following. Former president Joko Widodo has 59m followers on Instagram where he defends his record against corruption and makes arguments about the need for further welfare reform.

News-adjacent and lifestyle influencers are hugely popular in Indonesia. Ria Ricis

is a YouTuber and entrepreneur, best known for her hijab tutorials. She has amassed tens of millions of followers on YouTube and Instagram. Ria is also the founder of the Ricis Style hijab line and is influential in the Muslim fashion community. Atta Halilintar (38m followers on Instagram and 24m on TikTok) produces lifestyle and entertainment content but is also influential in shaping wider youth discussions online. Willie Salim is an influencer who is known for his creative short videos, comedy skits, and high engagement on TikTok where he has over 70m followers. Salim's online persona is built around his unsolicited acts of kindness where he often buys large quantities of food and distributes it to people in need.

Indonesia also has a number of anonymous or meme accounts, especially on Instagram. The best known is Lambe Turah (12m followers on Instagram), which breaks celebrity news and gossip and covers viral events.

A NEW GENERATION OF INDONESIAN INFLUENCERS MIXING LIFESTYLE, MUSIC, COMEDY, AND POLITICS



Atta Halilintar



Ria Ricis



Willie Salim

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 WhatsApp	43% (-3)	76%
	2 YouTube	41% (-)	67%
	3 Facebook	39% (+4)	59%
	4 TikTok	34% (+5)	51%
	5 Instagram	31% (+2)	52%
	6 X	13% (+1)	20%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Kompas
2	Detik
3	CNN
4	Tempo
5	TVOne
6	Metro
7	Tribunnews
8	Liputan 6

²⁷ <https://fulcrum.sg/public-officials-in-celebrity-podcasts-dodging-the-bullet>

²⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-68028295>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY INDONESIA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)		
1	Najwa Shihab	Host of popular TV show Mata Najwa, founder of Narasi TV	YT/IG/X	10.4m	24m	9.7m
2	Deddy Corbuzier	TV presenter, YouTuber, and host of Close the Door podcast	YT/IG/TikTok	24m	12m	4m
3	Denny Sumargo	Former basketball player, content creator, and TV host	YT/TikTok/IG	8.4m	10m	6m
4	Rocky Gerung	Political commentator outspoken on democracy/human rights	YT/ X	2.4m	1.2m	
5	Dokter Tifa	Outspoken influencer, critical of former president Widodo	X/TikTok	0.2m	0.3m	
6	Willie Salim	Known for comedic short lifestyle videos aimed at young people	IG/YT/TikTok	76m	38m	15m
7	Raffi Ahmad	Media personality, actor, TV presenter, and entrepreneur	IG/TikTok/FB	77m	17m	16m
8	Joko Widodo (Jokowi)	Ex president 2014–2024 (healthcare reform/anti-corruption)	IG/X/YT	59m	22m	3.3m
9	Prabowo Subianto	President, former military general with controversial past	IG/YT/TikTok	15m	5m	0.8m
10	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	225m		
11	Atta Halilintar	YouTuber, content creator, especially popular with young people	IG/YT/TikTok	38m	31m	24m
12	Anies Baswedan	Academic and politician (stood for president in 2024)	IG/X/TikTok	7.9m	5.4m	1.3m
13	Helmy Yahya	YouTuber, podcaster, actor, and former leader at PSB TVRI	YT/TikTok	2.2m	0.33m	
14	Abraham Samad	Lawyer, activist, known for his anti-corruption work	YT/X	1.4m	0.3m	
15	Ria Ricis	Social influencer known for hijab tutorials/lifestyle content	YT/TikTok	49m	37m	

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Najwa Shihab



Founder of digital channel Narasi TV, aimed at young Indonesians

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

44% (3rd/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

25% (15th/24)

Gender balance

12 of top 15
individuals are men

JAPAN



Population	123m
Internet penetration	87%
Social media for news (weekly)	24%

Japan has a relatively low adoption of social media and partly as a result we find a low number of mentions for individuals such as creators and journalists (less than 250) and limited follower counts. The biggest news brands, such as the public broadcaster NHK, NTV, and Yahoo!, are well followed on social media, but they face competition from a diverse and eclectic range of voices. Our list of most mentioned individuals has a strong representation from populist and right-wing politicians as well as maverick tech titans. Japan also has a large number of influencer accounts that specialise in celebrity scoops and news about crime, often with little substance. X still plays an important role in Japan when it comes to news, with YouTube the other major distribution channel. In a recent poll of Japanese elementary schoolchildren, being a YouTuber was the top dream job followed by manga artist and entertainer.²⁹

Hiroyuki Nishimura, the current owner of 4chan, has amassed millions of followers on social media, where he regularly

expresses outspoken and contrarian views. He appeals in particular to young Japanese who feel oppressed by the country's often rigid rules, and he has become so famous that many people refer to him simply as Hiroyuki. In a national poll, high-school students said he was their top pick for prime minister.³⁰ Takafumi Horie (better known as Horiemon) is another tech entrepreneur, who founded the portal Livedoor. He continues to make an impact as a media personality after serving prison time for securities fraud, linked to how he grew the company.

The use of social media by populist politicians has become a hot topic in Japan following a July 2024 election where an outspoken but little-known banker, Ishimaru Shinji, almost won the race to become the governor of Tokyo. Several right-wing politicians feature in our list including Takashi Tachibana, who is best known for founding an anti-NHK party, which targets the country's public broadcaster. His political speeches have been criticised for containing controversial and discriminatory comments.³¹

Elsewhere, Takizawa Gareso is a social media influencer who became popular on X (formerly Twitter) for aggregating and commenting on trending news stories. Known for his speed and humour he frames complex topics in a way that resonates with younger audiences. Z Li is another 'anonymous' account on X, which has a reputation for breaking news related to crime.

Another popular site with young people is a YouTube channel NKTofficial (5m subscribers) run by Japanese comedian Atsuhiko Nakata. Self-styled as an educational channel (Nakata University) it provides videos that summarise and explain complex topics in an accessible format about Japanese history, science, politics, and much more.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	YouTube	23% (-5)	56%
2	Line	19% (-)	51%
3	X	17% (-)	32%
4	Instagram	6% (+1)	27%
5	TikTok	6% (+1)	18%
6	Facebook	3% (-1)	11%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	NHK (public broadcaster)
2	Yahoo! News
3	Nippon TV (NTV)
4	BBC News
5	TBS
6	Asahi Shimbun
7	ANN
8	Nikkei

²⁹ <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20221202/p2a/oom/oet/012000c>

³⁰ <https://www.ytjp.jp/2022/05/27/koukouseiresearch-primeminister>

³¹ <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20250705/p2a/oom/ona/002000c>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY JAPAN SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)		
1	Hiroyuki Nishimura	Founder of the online forum 2channel, administrator of 4chan	X/YT	X 2.6m	Y 1.6m	
2	Takafumi Horie	Tech entrepreneur who founded the portal Livedoor	X/YT	X 3.6m	Y 2.2m	
3	Yoichi Takahashi	Economist and former economic advisor to Shinzo Abe	YT/X	Y 1.3m	X 0.8m	
4	Takizawa Gareso	Runs anonymous X account covering celebrity news and gossip	X	X 2.9m		
5	Akira Ikegami	Veteran journalist (ex NHK) known for explaining complex issues	YT	Y 0.2m		
6	Hikakin	Pioneering Japanese YouTuber, businessman, and beatboxer	YT/X/TikTok	Y 20m	X 7m	T 2m
7	Takashi Tachibana	Activist and populist politician, founder of a political party to oppose NHK bill payment	X/YT	X 0.5m	Y 0.05m	
8	Naoki Hyakuta	Author and former NHK governor now leader of emerging right-wing Conservative party		Party channels		
9	Kaori Arimoto	Conservative commentator linked to Hyakuta and his party	X/YT	X 0.6m	Y 0.23m	
10	Toru Hashimoto	Former governor of Osaka known as a fiery right-leaning populist voice on talk shows	X/YT	X 2.5m	Y 0.14m	
11	Taro Yamamoto	Actor-turned-politician, leader of anti-establishment Reiwa Shinsengumi	X/YT	X 0.6m	Y 0.4m	
12	Z李 (Z-Lee)	Controversial anonymous X account known for known for its 'exposé-style' content	X	X 0.9m		
13	Fusaho Izumi	Former mayor of Akashi, author, progressive political voice	X	X 0.6m		
14	Naomi Watanabe	Comedian and influencer, also known for body positivity activism	IG/YT	I 10m	Y 1.5m	
15	Yusuke Narita	Economist, public intellectual known for provocative ideas	X	X 0.7m		

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Hiroyuki Nishimura



The 4chan owner has had a huge impact on youth culture

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

11% (22nd/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

14% (24th/24)

Gender balance

13 of top 15
individuals are men

PHILIPPINES



Population	119m
Internet penetration	84%
Social media for news (weekly)	66%

Social media plays a major role in how Filipinos access news when compared with other countries but it is news broadcasters and their journalists that dominate the individual lists, rather than independent creators. TV anchors typically have their own Facebook or X accounts but their chat/debate shows tend to live within branded playlists, for example on YouTube. Branded accounts of the biggest news organisations GMA and ABS-CBN are widely accessed, each attracting almost 30m followers on Facebook and 20m on YouTube. Facebook remains a critical network for news in the Philippines, though many younger creators and audiences are increasingly drawn to TikTok.

The gender mix of top individuals is more balanced than in any other country in this study with 8 of the 15 names women and only 7 men. This reflects the strong tradition of female journalists in the Philippines across television, print, and online.

From the list above, only Christian Esguerra fits our definition of news creator in the political sphere. After a long career in mainstream media, he set up as an independent YouTuber and podcaster in 2022. His show, Facts First, aims to combat disinformation by providing facts and context on burning issues in Philippines politics.³²



Christian Esguerra hosts Facts First, which aims to combat disinformation within Philippine politics

The other most mentioned names are mostly longstanding anchors with the big TV and radio networks. Jessica Soho, a veteran news anchor for GMA, heads the list and is best known for her long-running programme Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho, which features in-depth interviews and human interest stories.

Female anchors associated with rival broadcaster ABS-CBN include Karen Davila and Bernadette Sembrano. Maria Ressa, co-founder and CEO of Rappler, also features on our lists along with her digital-first news organisation, which performs strongly on social media. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 and is recognised for her fight for press freedom in the Philippines and around the world.

Misinformation spread through social media has been a major concern in the Philippines over the last few years with vloggers and trolls spreading false information on social media, often for

money, but few of these have a stable enough footprint to show up in our data.

Maharlika is the online persona of Claire Eden Contreras. Once a strong supporter of the current president Bongbong Marcos, she is now one of his most vocal critics. Maharlika, who is based in the United States, represents the rise of partisan commentators who operate primarily on Facebook and YouTube rather than through traditional media.³³



Maharlika's Facebook page was originally pro-Marcos (now deactivated)

Politicians have also built large personal followings on social media, with the president's official accounts registering 7m followers on Facebook and almost 3m on X.

Independent Filipino influencers largely exist in the non-news or news-adjacent arena. Ivana Alawi has won an award as the top content creator on YouTube (20m subscribers) several times for her fashion and lifestyle content. She is equally popular on TikTok where she has 22m followers.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
	1 Facebook	65% (+4)	81%
	2 YouTube	50% (+5)	76%
	3 TikTok	29% (+6)	51%
	4 Facebook Messenger	27% (+1)	60%
	5 Instagram	14% (+2)	36%
	6 X	11% (+2)	21%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	GMA Network
2	ABS-CBN
3	Rappler
4	CNN
5	TV5
6	Daily Inquirer
7	SMNI
8	BBC News

³² <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/journalist-was-fired-largest-broadcaster-philippines-then-he-took-his-show-youtube>

³³ <https://opinion.inquirer.net/169803/maharlika-political-influencer-or-political-turncoat>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY PHILIPPINES SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)
1	Jessica Soho	A multi-awarded Filipino broadcast journalist with GMA Network	Via broadcaster socials	Many broadcasters have playlists within broadcaster channels for different shows, which make it hard to compare    Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok are the key channels due to video content Some shows have followings of up to 30m
2	Karen Davila	Veteran news anchor and talk show host with ABS-CBN	Via broadcaster socials	
3	Korina Sanchez	Host of a prime-time newscast, a news magazine show (Rated Korina), and a tabloid style talk show (TV5)	Via broadcaster socials	
4	Kara David	Hosts documentary and magazine shows with GMA Network	Via broadcaster socials	
5	Ted Failon	Long-time Filipino broadcast journalist and radio commentator	Via broadcaster socials	
6	Mel Tiangco	A veteran news presenter with GMA Network	Via broadcaster socials	
7	Raffy Tulfo	Filipino broadcaster-turned-senator, famous for his public service programme Raffy Tulfo in Action	Via broadcaster socials	
8	Noli de Castro	Veteran broadcaster and former Philippine vice president	Via broadcaster socials	
9	Atom Araullo	News anchor and documentary filmmaker popular with younger audiences	Via broadcaster socials	
10	Arnold Clavio	Host of weekly Tonight with Arnold Clavio	Via broadcaster socials	
11	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	 225m
12	Christian Esguerra	Former news anchor now hosts the online political/news analysis show 'Facts First'	YT	 0.6m
13	Ivana Alawi	Lifestyle creator, model, and entrepreneur	YT/TikTok	 20m  22m
14	Bernadette Sembrano	Broadcast journalist with ABS-CBN, co-anchor of TV Patrol	Via broadcaster socials	
15	Maria Ressa	Co-founder of Rappler and press freedom advocate	X/Rappler socials	 0.5m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Jessica Soho



Host of Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho (news magazine show)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

39% (5th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

47% (1st/24)

Gender balance

7 of top 15 individuals are men

SOUTH KOREA



Population	52m
Internet penetration	97%
Social media for news (weekly)	42%

Creator and journalist news content in South Korea is heavily focused on YouTube and includes both live streams and on-demand content. The most recent Digital News Report data (2025) shows that 50% of Koreans regularly watch news on YouTube, much higher than the global average of 30%. The growing impact of creators and influencers has raised concerns about the quality of news circulating online.³⁴ Debates on YouTube tend to be more outspoken than on conventional TV though partisanship has also long been a part of broadcast output.

Social media accounts of creators and politicians played a key role in shaping the outcome of South Korea's recent political crisis, which culminated in the declaration of martial law by President Yoon Suk Yeol in December 2024. Progressive political podcasters and YouTubers, who mostly head our list, had been highly critical of Yoon over autocratic tendencies, while right-wing influencers amplified his narratives, inflaming an already polarised media landscape. Opposition leader Lee Jae Myung also turned to YouTube, livestreaming himself (creator-style) climbing over the walls of the National Assembly, urging ordinary people to assemble in protest – attracting almost 3

million views. Lee, who became president in subsequent elections, has spent more than a decade building a loyal audience on YouTube (1.2m followers). According to the Korea Herald his videos 'lean heavily into humour, approachability and meme-ready charm'.³⁵

Kim Ou-joon is a popular and outspoken former radio host who has moved his programming to YouTube in recent years where he has several million followers. In our data, he has more mentions than any other individual and more than any of the top news channels. His Humility is Hard News Factory podcast has over 2m subscribers on YouTube and he was a leading critic of the former president. He also runs a second show Das Ist, hosted by the Ddanji Broadcasting YouTube channel, which has 1.5m subscribers. Both channels are partly funded by Superchat revenue, a YouTube feature that allows viewers to pay to have their comments highlighted during a live stream.

Another popular YouTube podcast is the Maebul Show hosted by comedian Choi Wook, who is known for his sharp wit and high energy. Originally a variety talk show, it has become an influential voice in political commentary and is considered to have a pro-Democratic party stance.



Choi Wook's podcast, the Maebul Show, has become an influential voice in political commentary

During the state of emergency in December 2024, the channel received a peak of 1m concurrent YouTube live streams according to the newspaper *Chosun Ilbo*. Another popular podcast is hosted by former politician Ryu Si-min, whose Alileo podcast includes both live streams and on-demand content.

Outside politics, YouTubers have developed content across a range of specialisms. Defense TV is a channel founded by Shin In-kyun, an analyst and military commentator. The channel covers conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war, tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and global arms development. Syuka (real name: Jeon Seok-jae) is a former securities fund manager who runs an economics-focused channel Syuka World with regular live broadcasts and over 3m subscribers.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 YouTube	50%	(-1)	69%
	2 Kakao / KakaoTalk	15%	(-4)	57%
	3 Instagram	11%	(-1)	35%
	4 TikTok	9%	(+4)	23%
	5 Facebook	6%	(-3)	20%
	6 X	6%	(+2)	12%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	MBC News
2	SBS News
3	YTN News
4	KBS News
5	JTBC
6	Yonhap News
7	BBC News
8	Naver News

³⁴ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1329878X221136931>

³⁵ <https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10491169>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY SOUTH KOREA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	Kim Ou-joon	Podcaster, YouTuber, outspoken critic of ex-President Yoon	YT	2.1m	
2	Choi Wook	Co-host of Maebul Show (popular YouTube podcast)	YT	2.5m	
3	Ryu Si-min	South Korean writer, former politician and podcaster	YT/X	1.7m	0.4m
4	Lee Jae Myung	Current president (2025-) and leader of the Democratic Party	YT/X	1.4m	0.8m
5	Jeon Seok-jae (Syuka)	YouTuber who runs a popular economics- channel Syuka World	YT	3.6m	
6	Kim Hyun-jung	Anchor with CBS radio known for incisive interviews	YT/IG	1.56m (CBS)	0.12m
7	Lee Dong-hyung	YouTuber with progressive views , runs Lee Dong-hyung TV	YT	0.8m	
8	Yoon Suk Yeol	Impeached (2024) former president of South Korea	YT/IG	0.78m	0.15m
9	Bae Seung-hee	Lawyer, YouTube commentator (runs Bae Seung-hee TV)	YT	1.6m	
10	Sohn Suk-hee	Broadcaster (ex JTBC) now associated with network MBC	YT (via MBC)	5.6m (MBC)	
11	Han Dong-Hoon	Politician, former leader of conservative People Power Party		Party channels	
12	Ko Sung-guk	Political YouTuber, professor, ex KBC presenter	YT/IG	1.2m	0.24m
13	Shin In-kyun	Defence analyst (hosts Shin In-kyun's Defense TV)	YT	1.5m	
14	Kim Jong-bae	Host of Kim Jong-bae's Focus, shared on YouTube	YT	1.7m (MBC radio)	
15	Joo Jin-woo	Investigative journalist who runs a news podcast on YouTube	YT	0.3m	

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Kim Ou-joon (김어준)



Host of podcasts and YouTube shows including Humility is Hard/News Factory

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

24% (12th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

23% (18th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men

THAILAND



Population	72m
Internet penetration	90%
Social media for news (weekly)	75%

Social media is widely used for news in Thailand and combined with low data costs this has encouraged heavy use of networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and LINE – including live streaming of both television and digital-born shows. This has encouraged a wide range of political and lifestyle creators, some of whom have built very large followings. Infotainment often overshadows public interest reporting in Thailand, and online streaming shows tend to lean into tabloid formats, often mixing politics with comedy. Political constraints still impact press freedom in Thailand where *lèse-majesté* laws impose harsh penalties for perceived royal disrespect, deterring investigative reporting and reinforcing state narratives. To some extent social media and the work of creators have extended the boundaries of debate, though new cyber laws are having an impact.³⁶

Kanchai Kamnerdploy (widely known as Num Kanchai), a former actor turned presenter, is the most frequently mentioned individual by respondents. His daily talk show *Hone Krasae* is characterised by tabloid-style interviews on controversial social issues, often featuring direct confrontations between opposing sides. While broadcast on television, the programme is regularly extended and amplified through Facebook and YouTube channels, where longer formats and looser restrictions allow for even more high-octane discussions.

Sorayuth Suthassanachinda remains one of Thailand's most prominent news anchors, best known for presenting *Morning News* on Channel 3. By contrast, more analytical journalists such as Suthichai Yoon, a veteran commentator and founder of Nation Multimedia Group, and Jomquan Laopetch, noted for her probing interview style, attract strong followings among Bangkok's educated audiences. Meanwhile, personalities such as Sondhi Limthongkul (a former media mogul, protest leader, and founder of the Manager Media Group) illustrate how journalism, activism, and politics frequently overlap in Thailand. The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has pressed for tighter regulation of online platforms, but distribution power largely lies with foreign-owned companies such as Meta and Google, limiting effective oversight.

Influential TikTokkers include Anuwat Noom (5m followers) and Phakkawat Rattanasiriampai (Pond on News), who has built an audience of more than 3m followers for his concise and accessible takes on the news. Use of TikTok for news is among the highest in the world according to our Digital News Report survey, with comedy, memes, and interactive explainers particularly popular with the young. Dr Lab Panda is a medical doctor who became widely known at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic for debunking health myths through his popular Facebook channel.



Kan Jompalang (real name Khan Thitipong) is a celebrity influencer and citizen journalist. After first going viral with a novelty 'giant-bowl noodle'

business he has reinvented himself as an online activist who champions people in distress. Kan regularly uses Facebook and TikTok to highlight social injustices and help individuals. He has campaigned over incidents ranging from child abuse and domestic drug use to assaults on university students and allegations of extortion within the LGBTQ community – and a range of other stories that he thinks have been overlooked by the mainstream media.³⁷

An example of Thailand's strong infotainment news culture can be found with 'Moddam' Kachapa Tancharoen, who co-hosts a popular news-talk show *Khao Sai Kai* (News with Egg). The programme is a mix of news, current events, entertainment commentary, and opinion, and Moddam is known for his outspoken, often humorous take on issues, which has brought him millions of followers on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	62%	(-2)	77%
	2 YouTube	55%	(-1)	79%
	3 TikTok	49%	(+10)	67%
	4 Line	41%	(-1)	67%
	5 Facebook Messenger	22%	(+2)	43%
	6 Instagram	18%	(+1)	35%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Thai Rath
2	Khaosod
3	Channel 3
4	Matichon
5	Ejan (crime)
6	ThaiPBS
7	Channel 8
8	The Standard

³⁶ <https://www.article19.org/resources/thailand-silencing-dissent-and-the-fight-for-free-expression>

³⁷ <https://thethaiger.com/hot-news/crime/boy-found-safe-in-khon-kaen-after-drug-use-with-father>

<https://thai.news/news/thailand/pathum-thani-lgbtq-rally-demanding-justice-in-unique-scalding-soup-incident-february-2025>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY THAILAND SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)		
1	Num Kanchai Kamnerdploy	TV presenter and news anchor, originally an actor, now famous for hosting the hard-hitting talk show 'Hone Krasae'	YT/FB/IG	9.6m	4.6m	2m
2	Sorayuth Suthasanachinda	Veteran journalist, host of Channel 3's morning show	YT/FB/IG	1.6m	5.1m	2m
3	Anuwat Fuangthongdang	Thai TV reporter widely followed across social media	TikTok/IG	5m	0.5m	
4	Suthichai Yoon	Veteran journalist, host of 'Suthichai Live' online, co-founder of the Nation newspaper	YT/FB/X	1.6m	3.1m	1m
5	Sondhi Limthongku	Media tycoon-turned-activist/politician, founder of the Manager Media Group	FB/YT	4.7m	2.3m	
6	Kan Jompalang	Social media influencer and online activist who champions people in distress	YT/FB/TikTok	1.6m	8.7m	1.9m
7	Pita Limjaroenrat	Former leader of the progressive Move Forward Party	FB/X/IG	2.2m	2.3m	2m
8	Moddum Kachapa	Co-hosts news-talk show Khao Sai Kai (News with Egg) where current events are discussed with humour and celebrity-style flair	TikTok/FB/IG	1.1m	0.5m	0.9m
9	Jomquan Laopetch	News anchor who puts opposing political figures 'in the ring'	X/YT	1.4m	0.9m	
10	Kanok Ratwongsakul	Conservative voice, host of prime-time news talk show on TV	FB/IG	1.4m	0.13m	
11	Karuna Buakamsri	Veteran foreign affairs journalist, environmentalist, and entrepreneur	YT/TikTok	1.4m	0.3m	
12	Dr Lab Panda	Doctor and influencer who debunks medical myths	FB/IG/YT	3.6m	0.08m	
13	Thaksin Shinawatra	Former prime minister, currently facing another jail term	FB	2.8m	0.9m	
14	Paul Pattarapol	Former actor and singer, now creates finance related content on social media	YT/FB/TikTok	2.1m	1.5m	1.7m
15	Phuttha 'Buddha' Apiwan	TV news host (Channel 8) noted for his tough interviewing style	FB	0.4m		

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Khao Kai (News with Egg)



Popular news-talk show Khao Kai (News with Egg)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

43% (4th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

26% (13th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15 individuals are men



Africa



KENYA



Population	56m
Internet penetration	35%
Social media for news (weekly)	75%

Survey sample primarily comprised of English speakers

Kenyans use a wide variety of social networks, with news and politics a key part of the diet along with lifestyle, comedy, religion, and other genres. Despite a lively creator and influencer scene, the most mentioned individuals in our news-related list are anchors from the top TV stations. These have followings in their own right but also through playlists in branded channels. Citizen TV, for example, has 6m subscribers to its YouTube channel and 6.8m on X and promotes both live streams and on-demand content. Independent creators, many critical of the government, regularly uncover stories of corruption or other wrongdoing, while citizen journalists and ordinary people use social channels to document police brutality, for example at recent anti-governments protests. The government itself has an active digital strategy, which often involves working with influencers to disseminate public information and talking points.

Entertainment and celebrity news is another key characteristic of the Kenyan market, with influencers and comedians competing with independent creators and digital-born brands. The Nairobi Gossip Club's Instagram account (3.3m followers) is a much mentioned source along with reality stars and so-called influencers. TikTok is an important channel in Kenya, especially for lifestyle content.

Larry Madowo is representative of a younger cohort of journalists and creators in a country where 75% of the population is

under 30. They have grown up with social media and are comfortable with more informal and personal styles of communication. Other examples include the comedian Eric Omondi, who though primarily an entertainer, uses his platform (5m followers on Instagram) to raise awareness about economic hardships, mental health issues, and the struggles faced by vulnerable groups in Kenya. This sometimes extends to raising money for and advocating for individuals.

Elsewhere we find a number of independent creators setting up YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok channels. Lynn Ngugi is a former video producer and host with Tuko News and her regular YouTube show (1.4m followers on YouTube) features powerful personal stories – from survivors of abuse to everyday heroes – that she says are largely uncovered by mainstream news. Oba Obinna, a businessman and comedian, runs Obinna TV, which is both a talent agency for creators and a production house. His popular talk show is known for candid interviews with celebrities, but he also discusses men's mental health and political transparency.

The newsguy.ke is a popular figure on TikTok where he breaks stories and curates news using short, accessible videos. He often presents the news from ordinary locations such as his local barber shop – in contrast to the slick studio sets of traditional TV.

Edgar Obare is a Kenyan blogger notorious for spilling celebrity gossip and 'tea' (scandalous exposés) on social media. He operates primarily via Instagram, where he invites anonymous tips to uncover alleged infidelity, fraud, or other dramas involving Kenyan public figures.

Gen Z lifestyle creators are a growing feature of the Kenyan media scene. Temina Semo is a lawyer and fashion influencer on Instagram, but she also uses her platform to talk about issues such as femicide and women's rights. Shawn Dalmas is a creator and podcaster who is mostly known for skincare education but also describes himself as a human rights advocate and climate activist, issues that concern his generation.



The Lynn Ngugi Show



Edgar Obare



Thenewsguy.ke



Temina Semo



Shawn Dalmas

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 YouTube	54%	(-5)	78%
	2 Facebook	52%	(-8)	70%
	3 WhatsApp	46%	(-14)	74%
	4 X	42%	(+5)	54%
	5 TikTok	38%	(+2)	62%
	6 Instagram	26%	(-3)	53%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	Citizen TV
2	Tuko.co.ke
3	NTV
4	BBC News
5	Nairobi Gossip Club
6	KTN
7	CNN
8	Al Jazeera

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY KENYA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)		
1	Larry Madowo	Now CNN correspondent, formerly hosted The Trend on NTV	X/IG/FB	X 3m	IG 1.7m	FB 1.8m
2	Lulu Hassan	Co-anchor for Citizen TV's prime-time Swahili news bulletin	IG/FB	IG 1.7m	FB 1.6m	
3	Jeff Koinange	Veteran host of talk show Jeff Koinange Live on Citizen TV	X/FB/IG	X 2.5m	FB 1.1m	IG 1.2m
4	Cyprian Nyakundi	Controversial blogger known for his exposés on politics, governance, and corporate fraud; subject of legal run-ins	X/FB	X 1m	FB 0.46m	
5	Rashid Abdalla	Co-anchor for Citizen TV with his wife Lulu Hassan	IG	IG 0.8m		
6	Stephen Letoo	Young political affairs reporter at Citizen TV	TikTok/X	TikTok 0.6m	X 0.07m	
7	The News Guy	Digital creator who shares and curates news and comment	TikTok	TikTok 0.4m		
8	Oga Obinna	Hosts popular talk show Obinna Show live featuring candid interviews with celebrities, politicians, etc	IG/YT	IG 1m	YT 0.8m	
9	Eric Omondi	Comedian and activist who often comments on current events and social issues, supporting those in trouble	IG/TikTok	IG 5m	TikTok 0.9m	
10	Morara Kebaso	Anti-corruption campaigner popular with young, blunt style on social media has made him a polarising figure	FB/X	FB 0.55m	X 0.3m	
11	Fabrizio Romano	Italian sports journalists followed for football transfers	X/YT	X 25m	YT 2.8m	
12	Trevor Ombija	News anchor (Citizen TV) and talk show host	X/YT via Citizen	X 0.1m		
13	Maverick Aoko	Controversial Kenyan online commentator known for her 'loud, unfiltered and bold' opinions	X/TikTok	IG 0.5m	TikTok 0.1m	
14	Robert Alai	Politician, blogger and cyber-activist	X/IG	X 2.2m	IG 0.1m	
15	Lynn Ngugi	Former news anchor, now runs her own YouTube chat show	YT	YT 1.4m		

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

Larry Madowo

Former NTV, BBC, and now CNN

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

58% (2nd/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

34% (7th/24)

Gender balance

12 of top 15
individuals are men

NIGERIA



Population	229m
Internet penetration	39%
Social media for news (weekly)	79%
Survey sample primarily comprised of English speakers	

Nigerian news creators are a mix of independent creators and activists and prominent hosts from TV and radio. Public and private national broadcasters remain key sources of information for most Nigerians, but in some cases influencers and citizen journalists are now breaking stories ahead of mainstream media. Many news creators are young and focus on holding the government to account over issues such as corruption.

X (formerly Twitter) remains a particularly important channel for news in Nigeria along with Instagram and TikTok. YouTube plays a smaller role than many other markets in this report and TikTok one of the largest. Across networks, the number of followers for the top influencers is lower than you might expect for such a populous country. This partly reflects low internet penetration outside major cities and high data charges. The contents of our list may also be affected by our English-speaking and mostly urban survey sample.

At the top of the list and by far the most mentioned news creator in Nigeria is VeryDarkMan (VDM), the online persona of Martins Vincent Otse. VDM is an outspoken influencer and activist who is

on a mission to fight against injustice. His posts often show him leading protests, for example in seeking justice for the victims of a massacre, or supporting teachers demanding the minimum wage. His outspoken videos have led him to be arrested on several occasions.

Another prominent social activist is Aisha Yesufu, the co-founder of the #bringbackourgirls movement, which brought attention to the abduction of 200 young girls by the terrorist group Boko Haram. She also campaigns against police brutality and has millions of followers across X, Facebook, and YouTube.

Beyond politics, other creators are known for posting entertainment and celebrity news, mainly on Instagram. Linda Ikeji is one of Africa's best-known bloggers, who runs multiple accounts dealing with news, entertainment, and music. Instalog9ja, GossipMillTV, and Gistlover are other popular accounts. Afro-beat star Davido is one of Africa's most followed celebrities (30m followers on Instagram alone). He uses that influence for charitable purposes, such as raising money for orphanages in Nigeria. His posts frequently influence Nigerian fashion, language, and even politics.

Other notable creators include Dan Bello, who is best known for producing comic skits and political satire in the Hausa language, and Abis Fulani, who uses his TikTok account (3.9m followers) to educate audiences on topics such as mathematics and is actively involved in promoting Hausa traditions and youth empowerment.



Aproko Doctor (Egemba Chinonso Fideli) is a Nigerian medical doctor turned online educator. He has over 2m followers on both TikTok and Instagram and uses his feeds to provide health tips, debunk medical misinformation, and publicise health-related news.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	65%	(+3)	79%
	2 WhatsApp	53%	(-5)	80%
	3 YouTube	49%	(+5)	75%
	4 X	49%	(+9)	62%
	5 Instagram	41%	(+3)	68%
	6 Telegram	31%	(+1)	65%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	BBC News
2	Channels TV
3	CNN
4	Legit.ng
5	Pulse
6	Punch
7	Al Jazeera
8	NTA (State broadcaster)

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY NIGERIA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)
1	VeryDarkMan	Nigerian social activist known for outspoken advocacy against bad governance	TikTok/IG/FB	2.6m 2.6m 3.1m
2	Instablog9ja	Instagram-based news/gossip outlet with a big following	IG/X	6.4m 5.9m
3	Linda Ikeji	Controversial blogger focusing on celebrity news and gossip	IG/X	6.7m 1.7m
4	Tunde Ednut	Instagram page breaks viral stories and sparks public conversation	IG/TikTok	1.2m 0.1m
5	Rufai Oseni	TV broadcaster and news anchor on Arise News	X/IG	1.2m 0.55m
6	Seun Okinbaloye	Political correspondent for Channels TV and host of the flagship Politics Today show	X/FB	0.6m 0.3m
7	Elon Musk	Owner of X, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, former Trump ally	X	225m
8	Fabrizio Romano	Italian sports journalist famous for football transfer news	X/YT	25m 2.8m
9	Reno Omokri	Author and commentator, former presidential aide	X/IG	2.7m 0.8m
10	Reuben Abati	Veteran journalist and columnist, now a host on Arise News	X	1m
11	Aisha Yesufu	Activist, co-founder of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign and prominent End SARS protest figure	X/FB	2.1m 0.3m
12	David Hundeyin	Investigative journalist and author, founder of the West Africa Weekly newsletter	X	1.1m
13	Dylan Page	UK-based TikTokker covering news for young generation	TikTok/IG	17.5m 2.4m
14	David	Afro-beat star David Adeleke drives conversation and debate way beyond music	IG/X	31m 16.7m
15	Dan Bello	Nigerian activist who uses social media to speak on social issues	TikTok/FB	2.2m 1.1m

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

VeryDarkMan (VDM)

Social activist and influencer

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers
in social and video networks

61% (1st/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists
in social and video networks

43% (2nd/24)

Gender balance

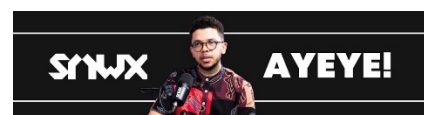
13 of top 15
individuals are men

SOUTH AFRICA



Population	61m
Internet penetration	76%
Social media for news (weekly)	71%

Survey sample primarily comprised of English speakers



Politically Awesh bills itself as South Africa's wittiest news show, a weekly YouTube show and podcast from comedian KG Mokgadi and the team. It's a non-profit that is looking to raise 'Awesh'ness and build civic participation with the young. But YouTube is also home to a range of serious thinkers. Penuel The Black Pen is a host of The Penuel Show, where he takes an in-depth approach to politics, social issues, fatherhood, and the history of South Africa.

Meanwhile in the news-adjacent space, lifestyle content is hugely popular. Mhlali Ndamase and Anele Mdoda are two well-known influencers and personalities who reach large numbers of people though Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X and are also mentioned by audiences in the context of news.

Despite the widespread use of social media for news, follower counts and mentions for home-grown news creators in South Africa are lower than in many other countries, with news organisations still playing a significant role. N24, eNCA, and public broadcaster SABC are among those who have adapted their content and style to meet audiences on social platforms. Among individuals, US-based South Africans Elon Musk and comedian Trevor Noah feature prominently along with TikTok star Dylan Page, who spent much of his childhood in the country. International YouTubers and podcasters such as Joe Rogan, Candace Owens, and Tucker Carlson are also popular with our largely English-speaking survey sample. Local politicians are also well represented among mentioned individuals, including the current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, and politicians and activists from the EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters), who are using social media platforms such as X to build support for their message of radical change. Younger podcasters and lifestyle creators focus more on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Here their video-led content combines politics, comedy, and entertainment in accessible ways.

Macgyver 'MacG' Mukwevho is the main host of South Africa's most popular

podcast, Podcast and Chill, which includes celebrity gossip, frank discussions about sex, and current affairs and politics, presented in a relatable and authentic tone. But the show has also attracted criticism from politicians and from the media for promoting harmful narratives and for allegedly misogynistic comments.³⁸

Another controversial figure is Chris Excel, an infamous online troll and self-proclaimed 'President of Black Twitter' (3.3m followers). He is known for mean-spirited comments targeting celebrities, politicians, and ordinary individuals. Man's Not Barry Roux is a notorious parody account on X that came to prominence during the Oscar Pistorius murder trial, poking fun at the language of defence lawyer Barry Roux. Beyond the trial, the account, which has been suspended and reborn under different names, became famous for investigative threads and often controversial political commentary.

A number of creators have been experimenting with approaches that mix news, politics, music, and comedy. Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh is an Oxford-educated author and podcaster who blends hip-hop with political analysis on The Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh Xperience.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
	1 Facebook	50%	(-1)	71%
	2 YouTube	42%	(-5)	71%
	3 WhatsApp	41%	(-5)	77%
	4 TikTok	33%	(+5)	55%
	5 X	16%	(-3)	25%
	6 Instagram	15%	(-2)	37%

MOST MENTIONED NEWS BRANDS IN SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand
1	News24
2	eNCA
3	SABC
4	BBC News
5	CNN
6	Al Jazeera
7	IOL
8	Daily Sun

³⁸ <https://womenforchange.co.za/podcast-and-chill-with-macg-is-not-entertainment-its-toxic-and-dangerous>

MOST MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FOR NEWS ON SOCIAL AND VIDEO NETWORKS BY SOUTH AFRICA SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Personality name	Known for	Main platform	Followers (global)	
1	MacG	Host of Podcast and Chill, candid celebrity interviews	YT/IG	1.6m	0.44m
2	Elon Musk	South Africa born entrepreneur and owner of X	X	225m	
3	Chris Excel	Parody X account comments on celebrity culture and politics	X	3.4m	
4	Trevor Noah	South African born comedian, former host of The Daily Show	IG/YT	9.3m	4.2m
5	Dylan Page	Creator (aka News Daddy) of TikTok news round-ups, grew up in South Africa	TikTok/IG	17.5m	2.4m
6	Somizi Mhlongo	Actor and socialite, talks on socials about living with HIV and LGBTQ+ rights	X/FB	5.3m	2.8m
7	Donald Trump	Current president of the United States and businessman	X/Truth Social	109m	11m
8	Fabrizio Romano	Italian sports journalist famed for football transfer news	X/YT	26m	2.9m
9	Piers Morgan	Outspoken UK podcast host, now with digital-first operation	X/YT	8.9m	4.1m
10	Joe Rogan	US podcaster and former comedian	YT/X	20.2m	15.5m
11	Musu Khawula	Controversial gossip and celebrity blogger now in jail	X/YT	0.25m	0.9m
12	Julius Malema	Leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), known for fiery speeches relayed on social accounts	X/IG	4.5m	0.7m
13	Cyril Ramaphosa	Current South African president	X/FB	3m	0.6m
14	Andrew Tate	US/British personality and former kickboxer, known for controversial views on masculinity and role of women	X (banned from FB and YT)	10.8m	
15	Bonang Matheba	TV and radio personality, entrepreneur (aka Queen B)	IG/X	5.3m	5.7m

Current politicians (or recently retired) are shaded grey.

Note: In some cases, especially near the bottom the list, differences in the number of mentions for individuals are very small. Given our survey methodology, and the associated margin of error, the precise rank order should be read as indicative rather than definitive. Many other individuals were mentioned by respondents in the context of news, even if they do not make the top 15 using our approach.

MacG (Macgyver Mukwevho)



Host of Podcast and Chill – interviews, comedy, fun.

Proportion that regularly pay attention to creators/influencers in social and video networks

39% (5th/24)

Proportion that regularly pay attention to news brands/journalists in social and video networks

38% (4th/24)

Gender balance

14 of top 15
individuals are men



SECTION 3

Conclusions





Conclusions

This audience-centric study, based on identifying who people are paying attention to news on social media across 24 countries, reveals how messy, fragmented, and loosely defined news sources have become for many people. Politicians and traditional media have taken their wares to an unruly information space where they compete with a rich variety of news creators focusing on commentary, investigation, explainers, and niche specialisms, as well as infotainment and lifestyle creators, who frequently get drawn into political and cultural debates, either because they want to or because their audience demands it. As all this is thrown into the algorithm(s), it makes for a bewildering cocktail, but one that is also richly creative, entertaining, and informative – even if much of that information cannot always be taken on trust.

News creators, and the forces that are driving them, continue to develop at a rapid pace, but this study of more than 40,000 individual names suggests that the impact today varies considerably across countries.

We find that there is set of populous countries, generally where traditional media are under pressure and social media use is high (e.g. Thailand, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Kenya, and the United States), where news creators are having a significant impact and where a few individuals are reaching a significant number of people. At the other end of the spectrum, we find countries with strong brands and lower use of social media (mostly in northern and western Europe) where successful news creators are the exception rather than the rule.

Another general observation is that even though the internet is global, most news creators operate in a national context, due to constraints around language but also cultural and subject relevance. This is the case in Eastern Europe, most of Asia and Latin America, and parts of Africa. The major exception is in English-speaking countries where political ideas from the United States, fronted by partisan and mostly right-leaning commentators, are striking a chord with audiences in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. While those US personalities still feature heavily in our top lists in those countries, the numbers are relatively small and we could expect to see local commentators filling that space over time.

Representation is another important issue in the creator space, with our data showing that male perspectives tend to dominate – especially in the field of political commentary. Putting together our top lists of individuals across countries we find that 85% are men. In most countries we also find that right-leaning commentators heavily outnumber left-leaning ones overall, but also that in politically polarised countries audiences are often exposed mainly to creators that align with their own views.

In terms of the platform mix, we find that political commentators tend to gravitate to X and YouTube while investigators, explanatory, and news-adjacent creators tend to focus more on Instagram and TikTok (as well as YouTube). This is partly due to the younger demographics that are interested in a broader set of content and more video-led storytelling. Again, our country pages show that there are many exceptions to this rule, with Instagram widely used for political commentary in India, Indonesia, and Latin America and Facebook still a key network in the Philippines and Thailand.

What are the implications for journalism and society?

The rapid growth of news (and news-adjacent) creators is providing an extra source of competition for pressured mainstream media companies, especially with Gen Z and millennial audiences that are already reluctant to go to news websites and apps.³⁹ In general, creators have been more adept than media companies in moulding their storytelling and their tone to the requirements of social platforms. They have also mostly proved better at attracting and keeping attention in fast-changing, algorithmically driven space. Finally, they have embraced a broader set of audience needs around entertainment, lifestyle, specialist, and passion-based content – needs that the mainstream media have largely ignored.

In considering our typology of commentary, investigation, explanation, and specialism, the level of challenge and potential opportunities can be thought of differently, as outlined in the table on the next page.

³⁹ Reuters Institute *Digital News Report 2018–2025*.

	Impact Rating	Current impact	Potential responses
NEWS			
Political Commentary	HIGH	Social- first commentators are attracting attention but often sensationalise and play to partisan feelings, pushing people apart.	Media companies could try to compete with creators or invite some of them to contribute to their publications. An alternative could be to emphasise 'responsible difference' e.g. considered analysis, balance of opinion, different perspectives.
News & Investigation	LOW	Creator impact is currently limited, due to the costs of original investigation and potential legal risks involved.	Media companies can learn new techniques (OSINT) and/or hire the best creators. More original investigations could be a useful point of difference with the public.
Explanation	MEDIUM	Young creators are attracting considerable attention by translating the news into simpler and more compelling formats.	There are opportunities for media companies to copy creator storytelling techniques to make content more accessible and fun. Investing in explanatory news teams is another option.
Specialism	HIGH	Creators are building small but sustainable businesses in a range of niches such as technology, football, and finance.	Media companies can build more niche content of their own with creator-led approaches such as newsletters and podcasts.
NEWS ADJACENT			
Infotainment, comedy, gaming, music, and lifestyle	MEDIUM	Considerable attention is going to these lifestyle podcasters/vodcasters some of whom also talk about politics.	Media companies can use the creator space as a way of identifying new talent or to act as brand ambassadors, though there are challenges over editorial control.

In terms of political commentary, our data suggest that algorithmically driven platforms are pushing both creators and audiences towards more sensational and partisan approaches. Many media companies (e.g. cable TV in the United States, upmarket newspapers all over the world) largely trade in political coverage, which is why the popularity of online commentators can be seen as such a threat. In response some media companies are looking to compete on partisanship, and others such as the *Washington Post* are looking to collaborate with creators by bringing content (labelled) into their platform. The main concern here is over the potential impact on trust. A recent FT Strategies report, which interviewed a number of different news creators, found that many did not accept traditional journalistic norms around objectivity and impartiality, which would make such collaborations challenging, especially around news or politics.⁴⁰

When it comes to investigation and original newsgathering, we find that the number of creators is relatively low. There are honourable exceptions such as open-source investigators and fact-checkers, but many of these are relatively closely aligned to existing journalistic standards such as fairness and accuracy. There is very little money to be made from committed newsgathering and longer investigations, which is why competition from creators is likely to be low.

Explanatory creators are proving popular with younger audiences and in this respect provide a useful function in

educating audiences that might otherwise miss out on regular news. Because they rely on and remix traditional sources, they are less interested in criticising or undermining the news media. Because of the difficulty of sustaining this output and making money over time, many creators have built mini-brands and multiple revenue streams.

Specialism is becoming a central strategy for many news organisations looking to create more distinctive content. Legacy print newspapers have invested heavily in newsletters and podcasts that provide detailed coverage of a particular area because they have the potential to attract paid subscriptions and drive revenue from events. But independent creators are now operating in the same space with a lower cost base, leading to a talent exodus for many news organisations. Columnist Paul Krugman recently left the *New York Times* and now operates on Substack. Taylor Lorenz, who writes on internet culture, left the *Washington Post* and writes a newsletter and hosts a weekly podcast. In this area ex-journalists join academics, lawyers, footballers, musicians, and many others for whom content creation is just one part of their portfolio.

Finally, in the news-adjacent informational lifestyle area, we find a similar battle for talent and attention emerging, with podcasts and live streaming taking attention away from entertainment-based broadcast shows news. The demise of late-night TV audiences from shows like *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* in the United States is part of this trend.

⁴⁰ <https://news-sustainability-project.com/decks/News%20Sustainability%20News%20Creators%20Project.pdf>

The future of news creators

This report provides a snapshot of activity by news creators and other personalities on social media at a particular moment in time. It's a world that is noisy, hard to define, and changing rapidly. It has big stars, a long tail, and much in between. But where is it heading?

One of the biggest challenges for individual news creators is burnout, driven by the pressure to keep audiences engaged and the algorithm on your side. Being a creator is a popular ambition for many young people, but few are making significant amounts of money. Starting things is often fun, but keeping them going can be a grind.

That's why a number of creators highlighted in this report are turning themselves into mini-businesses and brands. Hugo Travers is now editor-in-chief of the HugoDécrypte brand and employs over 20 staff to support his work. Johnny Harris is building a creator-driven media business by launching a network of independent YouTube channels through his company New Press. The Tucker Carlson Network (TCN) is effectively a mini media company with professional management at the back end. Dave Jorgenson, once the *Washington Post's* TikTok guy, is launching a company specialising in short-form video (LNI) together with former colleagues from the *Washington Post*.

Meanwhile, a number of news organisations (*Le Monde*, *Die Zeit*) have been hiring young creators to run their social video content. Others are setting up creator studios focused on talent-led projects. The *Independent* (UK) is partnering with digital creators including high-profile football content from Adam Clery (ACFC). Vox has signed deals to help monetise the work of high-profile creators Kara Swisher, Scott Galloway, and others. At the same time, long-established digital-born brands such as PoliticsJOE and Brut continue to develop new talent and formats.

The professional and creator worlds are converging, and that is likely to mean more discussion about the need for regulation, standards, training, and other approaches to build trust and maximise commercial opportunities. These are outside the scope of this report but are starting to be discussed elsewhere.⁴¹ We're still at the beginning of this shift to online creator-led media, and how it plays out will at least partly depend on the role platforms play in promoting valuable and useful content, the further development of business models to support these creators, and the continued interest of audiences around the world.

⁴¹ FT Strategies; News Creators Project August 2025 <https://news-sustainability-project.com/decks/News%20Sustainability%20News%20Creators%20Project.pdf>

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