

ARGENTINA

STATISTICS

Population	45m
Internet penetration	93%

The combination of an economic crisis and political polarisation has affected the media industry in Argentina. There have been significant job losses in newsrooms throughout the country, and hopes for a law which could have regulated media concentration were dashed when the legislation stalled in Congress.

News consumption in Argentina has decreased across all platforms, from print to social media, but print has suffered the largest losses, with circulations of the ten top-selling dailies down by 8% in 2018 compared to 2017. *La Nación*, the second-largest daily, closed its print plant early in 2019, which led to around 100 jobs being lost. Editorial Atlántida cancelled the weekly print editions of 97-year-old women's magazine *Para Ti* and 99-year-old children's publication *Billiken*. In all, more than 500 jobs were lost in the news media industry during 2018.⁹³

Paywalls have been one of newspapers' ways of responding to falling circulation numbers in the digital space. However, so far only three newspapers, top-selling *Clarín* and *La Nación* from the city of Buenos Aires, and *La Voz del Interior* from Córdoba have implemented them. *Clarín* reached 150,000 digital subscribers in December 2018.⁹⁴ However, only 8% of our survey respondents said they had paid for online news in the past year.

Due to competition with streaming services such as Netflix and YouTube, broadcast television ratings reached their lowest level since 2004 and advertising decreased significantly in 2018. Pay television had the highest market share ever, and in November 2018 Kantar Ibope media, in charge of measuring TV ratings, announced it would start measuring Time Shifted Viewing.

Political polarisation has influenced both telecommunication regulation and news coverage. In June 2018, the government formally approved the merger between Grupo Clarín, the largest media organisation in Argentina, and Telecom, a



telecommunications company. The newly merged corporation accounts for 42% of fixed telephone lines, 34% of the mobile telephony market, 56% of fixed internet connections, and 40% of cable television connections, in addition to owning the top-selling newspaper, the 24-hour news channel with the largest audience, the leading AM radio stations, and several FM radio stations.

Grupo Clarín's dominant position is evident in the ranking of the top brands examined for this report. The corporation owns three of the top ten brands in the offline ranking (TN, Canal 13, and *Clarín*), and three of the top ten brands in the online ranking (TN, *Clarín*, and sports newspaper *Olé*). However, for the second year in a row news website Infobae, which is not part of Grupo Clarín, was the top-ranked online brand. This year it also became the top-ranked brand overall.

The government drafted legislation which would have allowed other corporations to offer 'quadruple play' services (landlines, mobile phones, pay television, and broadband internet). The bill was approved in the Senate, but stalled in the Chamber of Deputies due to lack of consensus between the government and the opposition. The bill is not likely to pass during 2019, which is a presidential election year. The lack of a law means that media regulation is mostly conducted by executive order. Polarisation has also influenced news coverage of corruption scandals, with most media devoting space and attention according to their political alignments. Public media have remained relatively neutral, something which did not happen under the previous administration.

Political interference in media regulation and polarisation could be related to low levels of trust in news in general (39%) in 2019. There were also changes in news consumption on social media platforms, which increased on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger and decreased on Twitter and YouTube. Argentines spend, on average, more than three hours a day on social media, which could explain, at least partly, the growing reliance on these platforms for information. The role of social media will probably be a hot issue during the electoral campaigns this year, and several local and global organisations, such as Chequeado and First Draft News, respectively, are gearing up to combat false information on these platforms.

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⁹³ Fopea (Foto de Periodismo Argentino). INFORME 2017–2018 Observatorio y alerta laboral de periodistas (2019), <https://www.fopea.org/informe-observatorio-y-alerta-laboral-de-periodistas-de-fopea-2017-2018/>

⁹⁴ Grupo Clarín, Memoria y Estados Financieros Consolidados, 2018, grupoclarin.com/IR/files/ESTADOS-CONTABLES/2018/GCSA%20-%20EEFF%20-%202012-2018.PDF

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE

TOP BRANDS

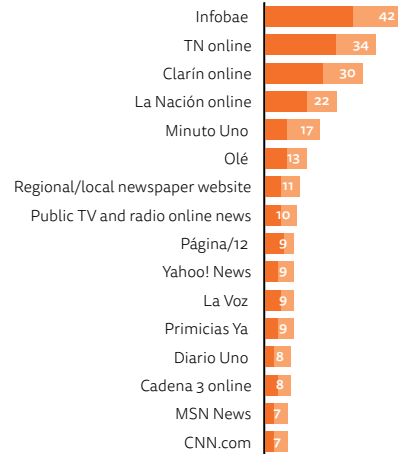
% Weekly usage



TV, RADIO AND PRINT



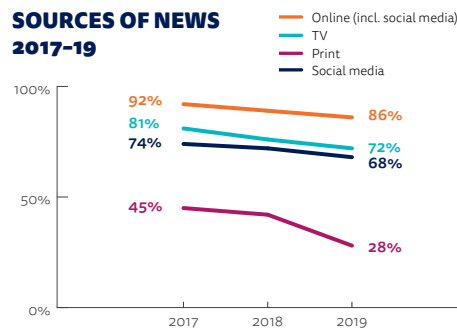
ONLINE



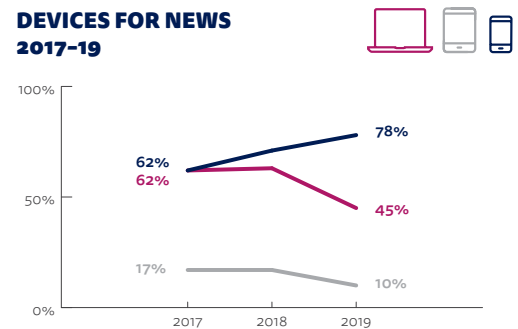
CHANGING MEDIA

Online and television remain the most popular sources of news in Argentina, while weekly print consumption has fallen from 45% to 28% over the last three years. Almost eight out of ten (78%) respondents say they now use the smartphone to access news.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2017-19



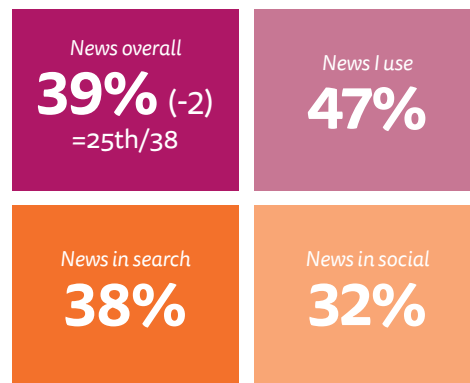
DEVICES FOR NEWS 2017-19



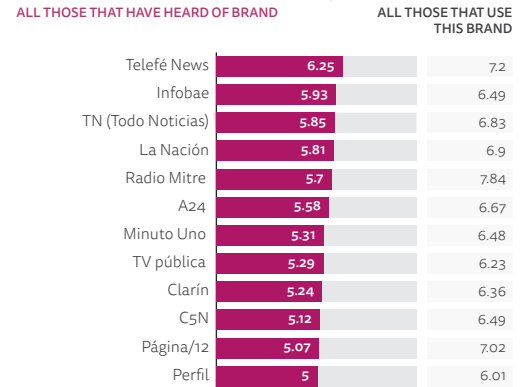
TRUST

Trust has declined from the previous year, from 41% to 39% for 'news overall' and from 51% to 47% in 'news I use'. However, trust in news in search remained stable and trust in news in social media went from 29% to 32%.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRUST



BRAND TRUST SCORES (0-10)



8%

pay for
ONLINE NEWS

31%

listen to
PODCASTS in
the last month

TOP SOCIAL MEDIA AND MESSAGING

Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	Facebook	63% (+3)	83%
2	WhatsApp	39% (+2)	82%
3	YouTube	25% (-2)	73%
4	Instagram	18% (+5)	49%
5	Twitter	15% (-3)	24%
6	Facebook Messenger	11% (+2)	39%

56%

SHARE NEWS

via social, messaging or email

31%

COMMENT ON NEWS

via social or website