

BRAZIL

Brazil's politics remains deeply polarised following close-run elections in 2022 and subsequent attempts to overturn the result, which included riots and the storming of the National Congress. Media ownership remains concentrated, with a number of large, privately owned conglomerates running outlets across broadcast, print, and online. But these businesses are coming under pressure as audience habits change.

A year after the national poll that saw leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva narrowly overcome former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, Brazilians remain more divided than ever. An opinion survey by the research institute Quaest showed that in February, 83% of Brazilians believed that the country was more divided than united, up from 64% just six months earlier.¹⁰⁶ In June 2023, a panel of judges of Brazil's highest electoral court concluded that Bolsonaro had abused his power during his failed re-election bid and had cast baseless doubts on the national electronic voting system. Bolsonaro, 69, was barred from running for office again until 2030.

The former president and many of his allies, including former ministers and high-ranking military officers, are being investigated by the federal police for allegedly plotting a military coup. Since early 2023, the arrests and the ongoing legal inquiry have dominated the political headlines. Combined with conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine, the heavyweight news agenda might have been the cause of a sharp increase in news avoidance.

The proportion of respondents who avoid news often or sometimes reached 47%, up from 41% last year. Weekly reach of all the main news sources has declined in the past few years, including social media, where all the main networks have been on a downward path, except for TikTok, where Lula and Bolsonaro still post regularly. Despite their efforts to grow an audience on TikTok, the news media are no match for the most well-known personalities there. The largest broadcaster in the country, TV Globo, has around 6 million TikTok followers while comedian Whindersson Nunes has 22.4 million.

Brazil has struggled with misinformation being spread on social networks. In our survey, TikTok and X are considered the least trustworthy of the top networks for news – 24% of users of both platforms say it's difficult to tell trustworthy and untrustworthy news content apart.

There was an unsuccessful attempt to pass a bill regulating digital platforms and misinformation last year. The tech firms fiercely opposed the 'fake news bill', which would make digital platforms responsible for preventing the spread of falsehoods and hate speech. There was even a short-lived stand-off with the government when Google put a link on its homepage opposing the law, enraging the justice minister, who threatened an hourly fine. Google backed down after a few minutes. After four years of discussions in Congress, the bill was abandoned. In April, the president of the House of Representatives, Arthur Lira, announced the creation of a group to discuss a new regulation proposal.

There are concerns about the use of generative artificial intelligence to create fake campaign images targeting candidates or parties in this October's municipal elections. In late February, the Supreme Electoral Court issued a ruling banning deepfakes from official election campaign material. The court also ruled that any synthetic multimedia content should have a label stating it was created using AI. The fast-paced development of AI also prompted Editora Globo, one of the largest magazine and book publishers, to bar AI companies from crawling its content to train their generative models. However, some are finding new opportunities: the daily *O Estado de S. Paulo* launched a chatbot which uses its previously published content to answer questions posed by readers.



The downward trend in circulation for the newspaper industry was reversed last year, but mainly as a result of a change in the criteria used to calculate the number of online subscribers. The average daily paid circulation for the ten best-selling newspapers rose by almost 14% over 2022 to 1.7 million, according to Instituto Verificador de Comunicação. A change in methodology had meant that even readers who paid extremely low promotional prices were now considered subscribers.

This boost was not reflected in jobs. A study commissioned by the National Federation of Journalists showed that while 9,500 professionals were hired last year, 10,400 jobs were lost.¹⁰⁷ There was promising news regarding safety, however – the federation found that the number of attacks against journalists fell by 52% to 181. The figures include physical aggression, threats, legal decisions restricting the freedom of press, and journalist arrests, among other types of violence.

Rodrigo Carro

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¹⁰⁶ <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2024/03/10/pesquisa-quaest-polarizacao-brasil.htm>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.portaldosjornalistas.com.br/mercado-do-jornalismo-demitiu-mais-do-que-contratou-em-2023-diz-pesquisa/>

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE

TOP BRANDS

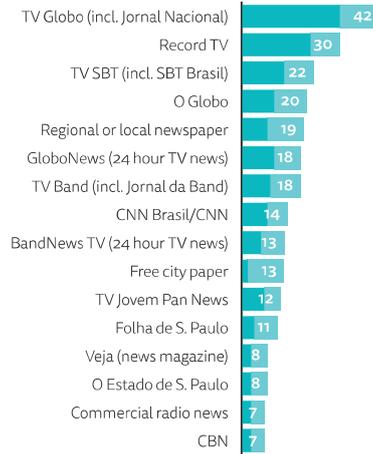
% Weekly usage

- Weekly use TV, radio & print
- More than 3 days per week TV, radio & print
- Weekly use online brands
- More than 3 days per week online brands

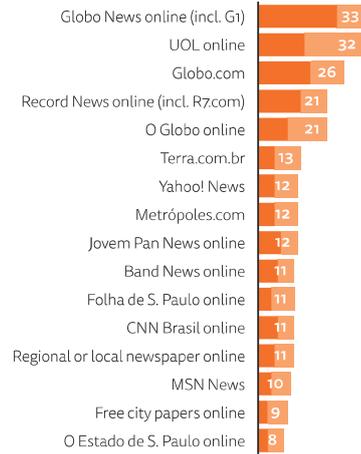
19% pay for **ONLINE NEWS**



TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



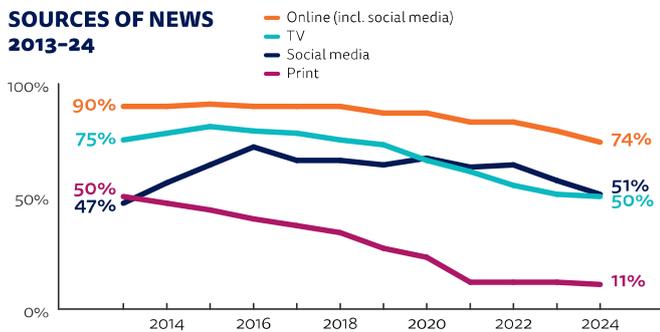
ONLINE



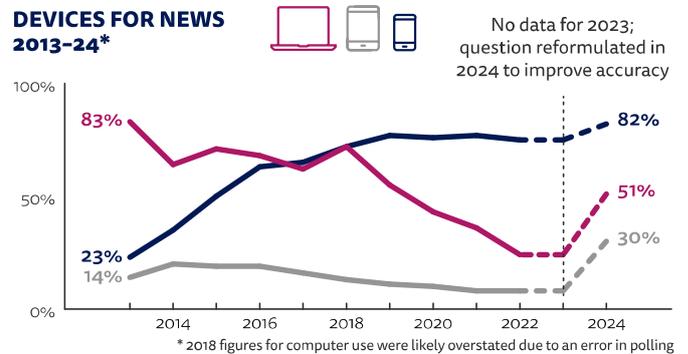
CHANGING MEDIA

Although TV still gets most of the advertising money, its use as a news source has declined sharply since 2015. Print experienced a steeper fall but has stabilised in the last few years.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2013-24



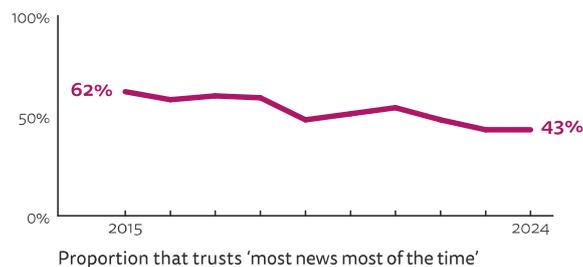
DEVICES FOR NEWS 2013-24*



TRUST

Overall trust in news is unchanged from last year at 43%, after significant decreases in the last two years. Even so, Brazil ranks in first place, in terms of trust, among the six Latin American countries surveyed. Among those we include, big news brands along with their evening TV shows remain most trusted overall, along with the regional and local press.

OVERALL TRUST SCORE 2015-24



43%
OVERALL TRUST
=15/47 markets

PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
Band News (incl. Jornal da Band)	59%	20%	20%
Folha de S. Paulo	54%	19%	27%
Globo (incl. TV Globo, GloboNews, G1)	55%	16%	29%
Metrópoles.com	48%	27%	24%
O Estado de S. Paulo	54%	21%	25%
O Globo (newspaper)	54%	17%	29%
Record News (incl. Jornal da Record, R7)	60%	20%	19%
Rede TV	52%	25%	24%
Regional or local newspaper	61%	23%	17%
SBT News (incl. SBT Brasil)	62%	22%	17%
Terra.com.br	50%	27%	23%
UOL	56%	21%	24%
Valor Econômico	51%	27%	22%
Veja	50%	23%	28%
Yahoo! News	46%	29%	24%

Q6 brand trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6-10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0-4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2024

Score: **58.59**

82 / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

41% **SHARE NEWS** via social, messaging or email

Rank	Brand	For News	For All	Rank	Brand	For News	For All
1	WhatsApp	38% (-5)	68%	4	Facebook	29% (-6)	51%
2	YouTube	38% (-3)	64%	5	TikTok	14% (-1)	28%
3	Instagram	36% (-3)	58%	6	X (formerly Twitter)	9% (-5)	16%