

World Press Trends

2020-2021

OUTLOOK

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World Association
of News Publishers

Methodology, data partners and profile of the study

For key performance indicators (revenue, circulation and ad spend), WAN-IFRA relies on its historical WPT data, and works with [PriceWaterhouseCoopers \(PwC\)](#) and [Zenith](#).

This year we also conducted a **global survey of publishers** and experts to gauge financial performance, forecasts and insights, as well as national associations for their insights.

More than 90 news executives from 51 countries responded. The vast majority of respondents (61.1%) identified themselves as Top Managers and about a quarter (24.4%) are commercial managers, while 4.4% were editorial managers and 4.4% technology / data managers.

We also work with analytics specialists [Chartbeat](#) to share their data and insights around audience development. And this year we worked with [Mather](#), the consulting firm specialising in subscriptions, economic modelling, analytics and strategic consulting services.

Snapshot of ...

GLOBAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Circulation revenue
\$6.9 billion
YoY +23%

Advertising revenue
\$13.7 billion
YoY +9%

Digital circulation
(audience)
50.8 million
YoY +23%

Overall Revenues
\$112.4 billion
YoY -11%

2019 - 2020

Overall Audience
571.8 million
YoY -10.7%

Circulation revenue
\$54 billion
YoY -13%

Advertising revenue
\$38 billion
YoY -19.5%

Print circulation
(audience)
521 million
YoY -13%

Source: WPT analysis of Zenith's Advertising Expenditure Forecast 2020, WPT historical data and WPT Outlook. These totals include both daily AND weekly publications.

Revenue development



Source: WPT analysis based on historical data, Zenith (ad expenditure) and the WPT Outlook survey. Figures for daily publications only.

Publisher survey

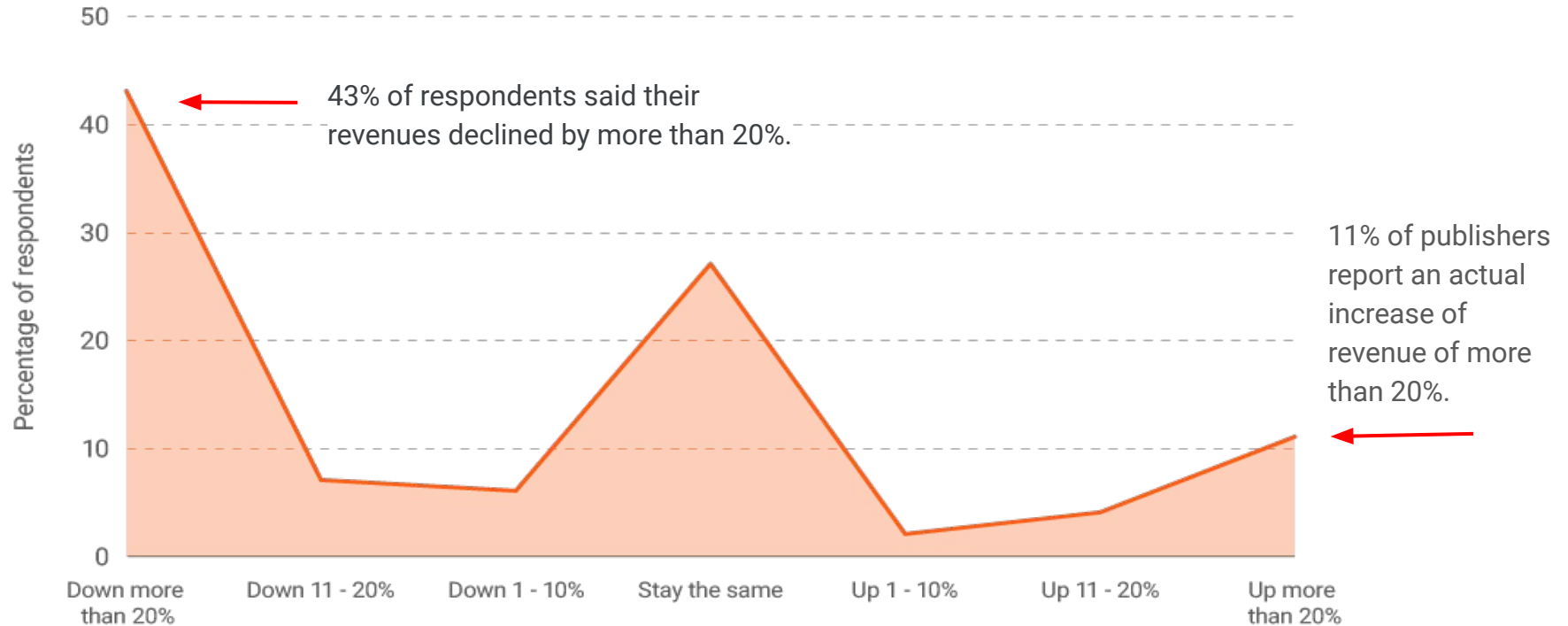
PERFORMANCE & PANDEMIC IMPACT

In our survey of more than 90 publishers, their clear priorities and challenges this year include:

- Reader revenue and transformation a clear priority
- Yet a decline in ad revenue is their biggest concern

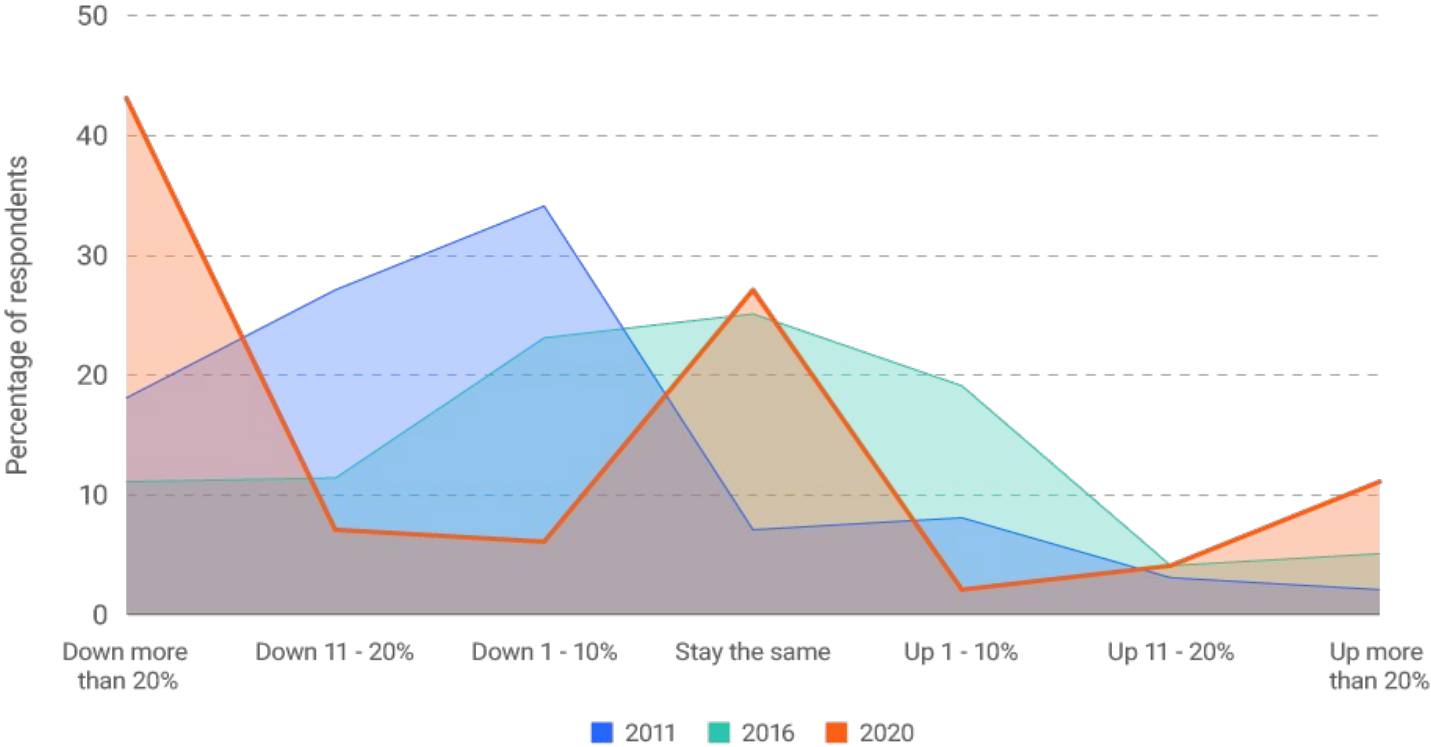
The peaks and valleys of the pandemic on the bottom line

How has your overall revenue developed over the last 12 months?



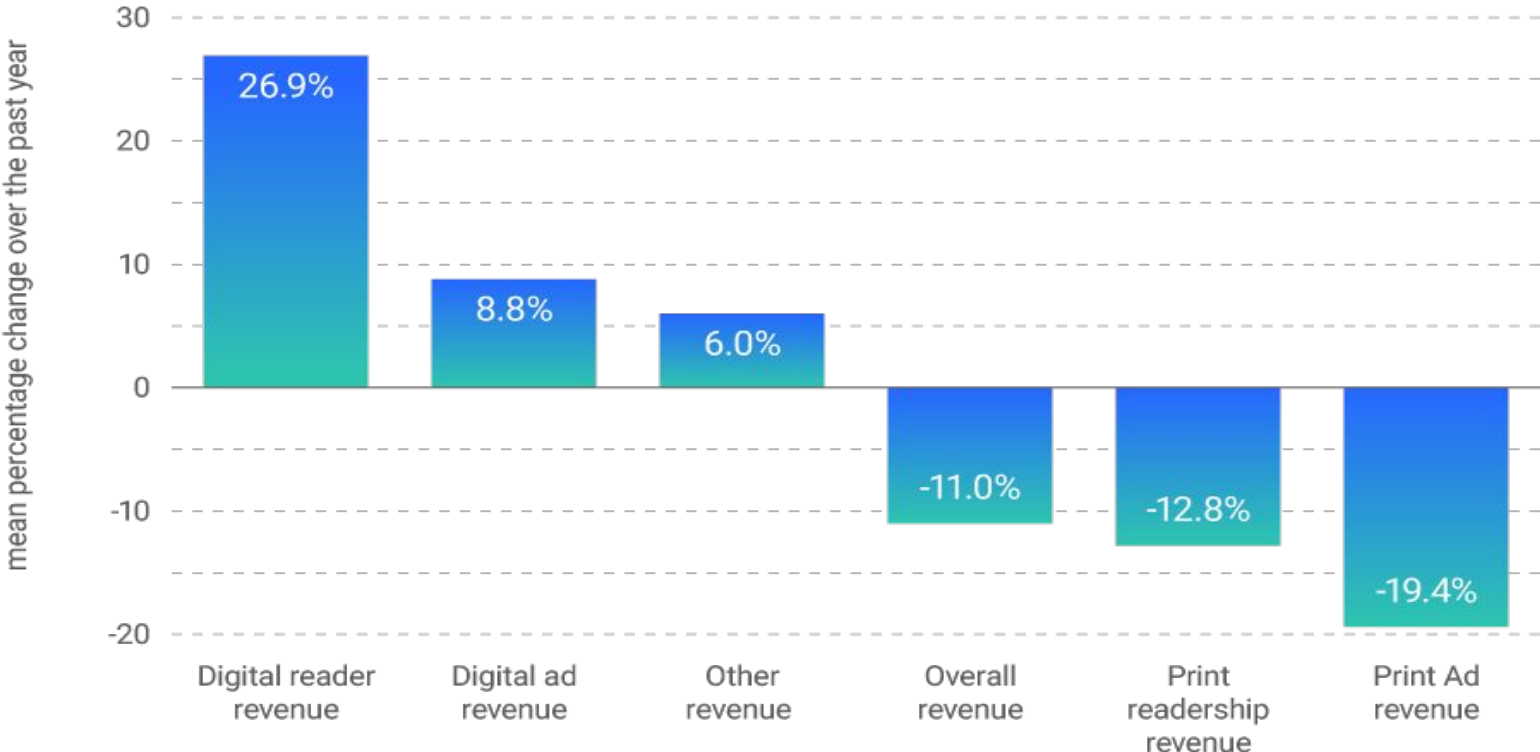
10-year snapshot: Pandemic vs. the Great Recession

Revenue development over last 12 months compared to previous years (2011-2016-2020)



Digital reader revenue: A path to growth...

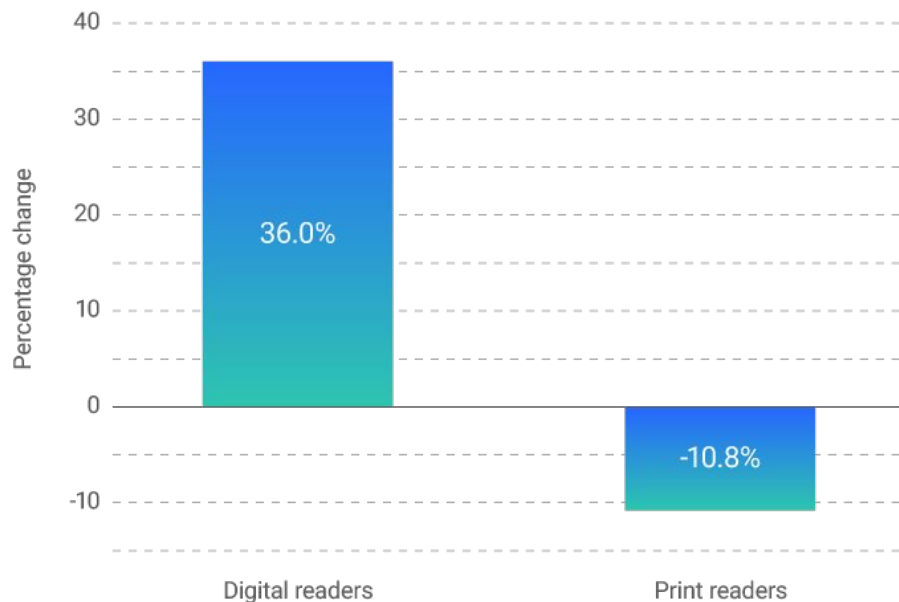
Question: How have your revenue streams changed over the last 12 months?



Source: World Press Trends Outlook survey

It's where readers are...

How have your audiences changed in the last 12 months?



Many publishers across the world have reported record traffic to their digital platforms during the pandemic, as people actively sought accurate and reliable information. This connects with a major trend that we've reported about during the past few years: publishers' future rests in building stronger engagement, and trust, with their audiences.

And that lays the foundation for paying audiences.

Covid-19: Staff reductions inevitable but not brutal

Yes, pressures on income have impacted staffing levels, but not as much as one might expect: On average, the organisations in our study report that **they reduced their staffing (editorial, commercial, IT, management & admin) across print and digital by 4.4% over the last year**, albeit the vast majority reported double-digit declines in revenues.

Job reductions were inevitable coming into this year with the pandemic's profound impact on revenues. With print readership, sales and ad revenues taking the biggest hits, investment in print production and distribution are forecasted to be down.

However, In our World Printers Forum Outlook Survey, **70.5% of production executives said they have reduced their workforce since the pandemic began and expect more cuts in 2021.**

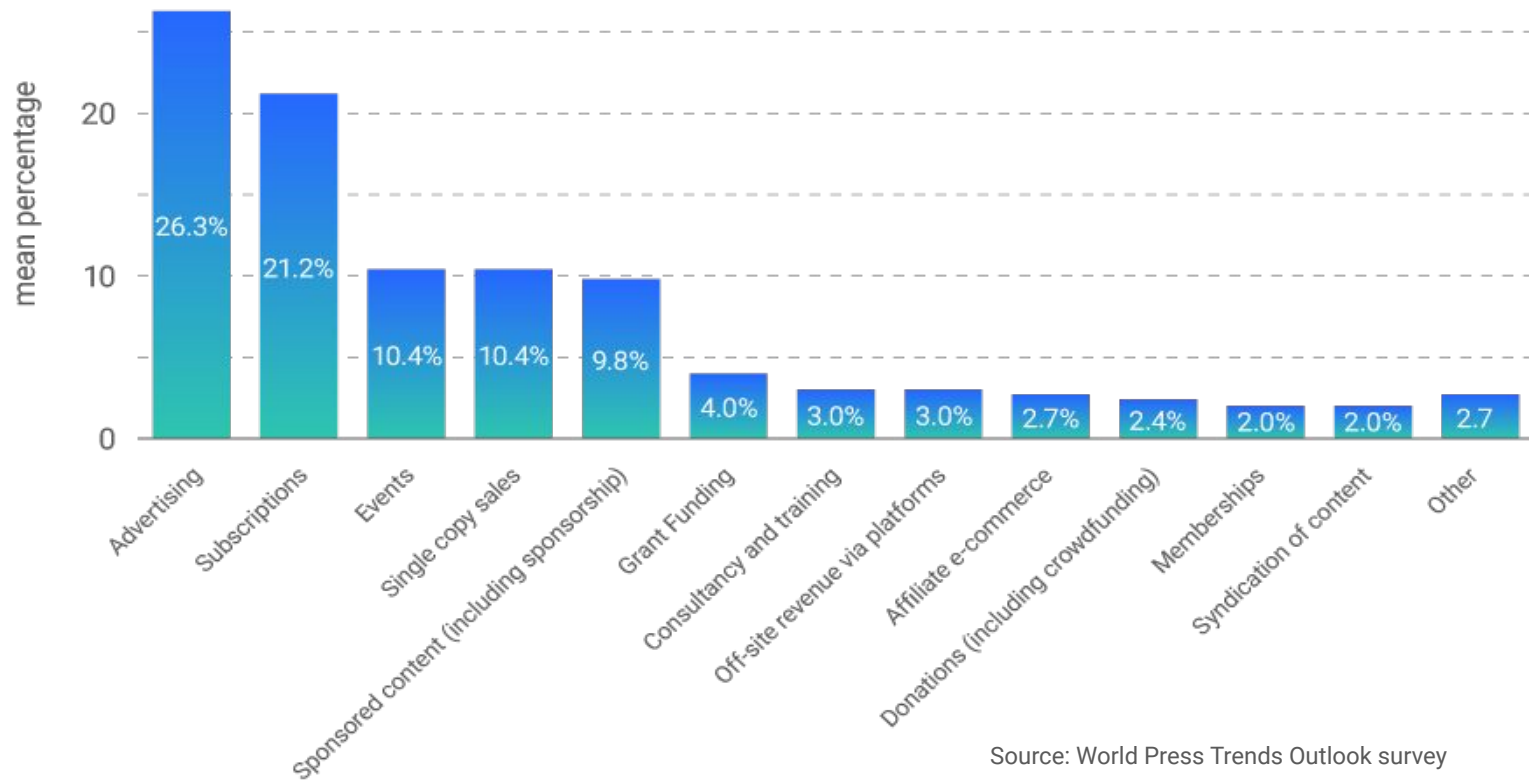
Yet as we will see later, those same executives expect to invest this year.

Publisher survey

OUTLOOK & INVESTMENT

Dependency on ad revenue: it's still a lifeline for publishers

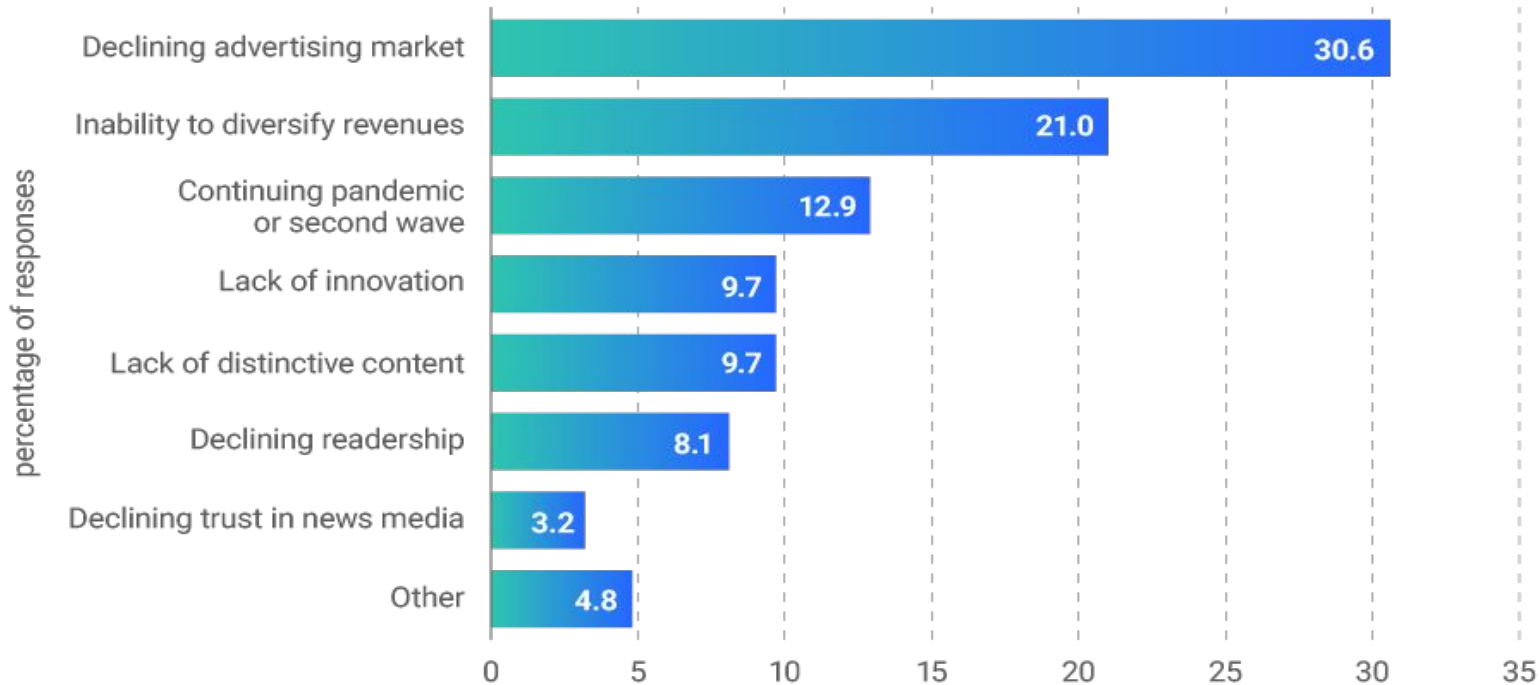
What are your organisation's main sources of income? (10% or more of income)



Source: World Press Trends Outlook survey

Another reality: Publishers say ad declines pose biggest risk

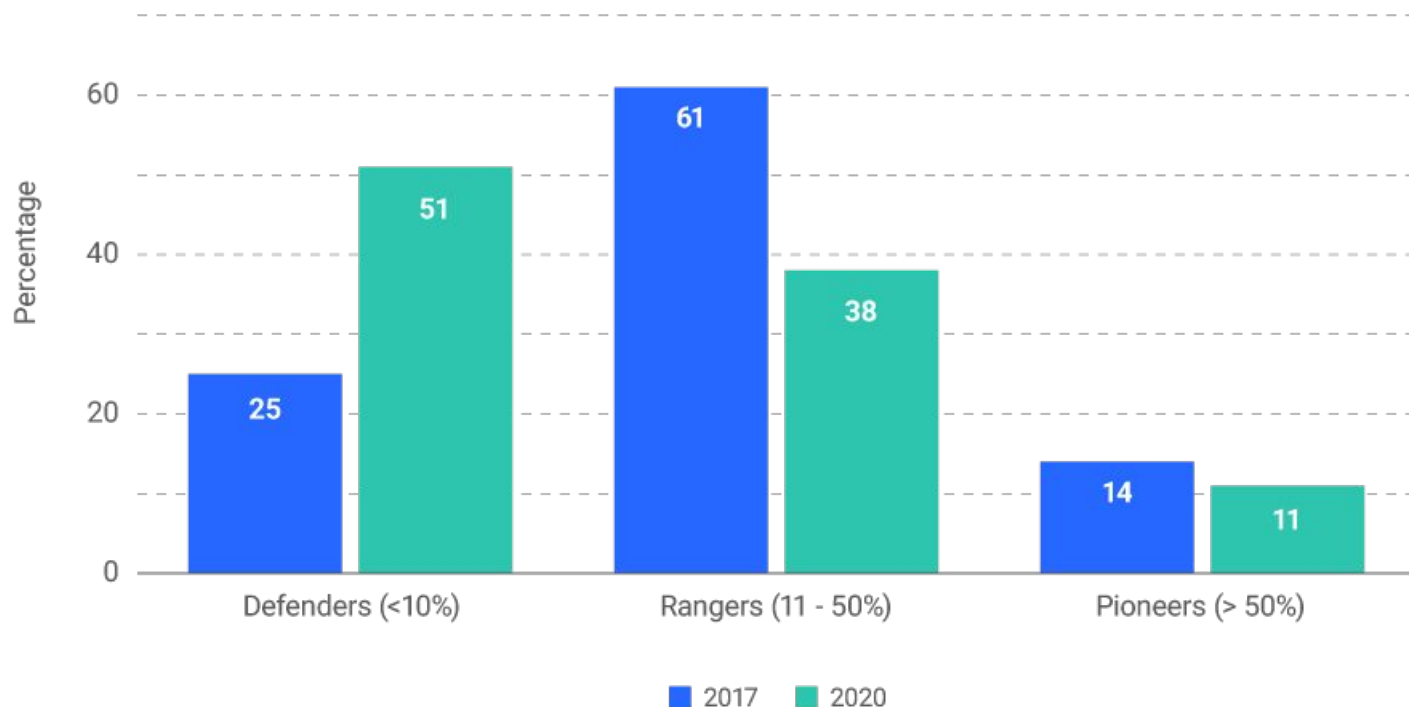
What is the single most important risk to your news organisation's future success?



Source: World Press Trends Outlook survey

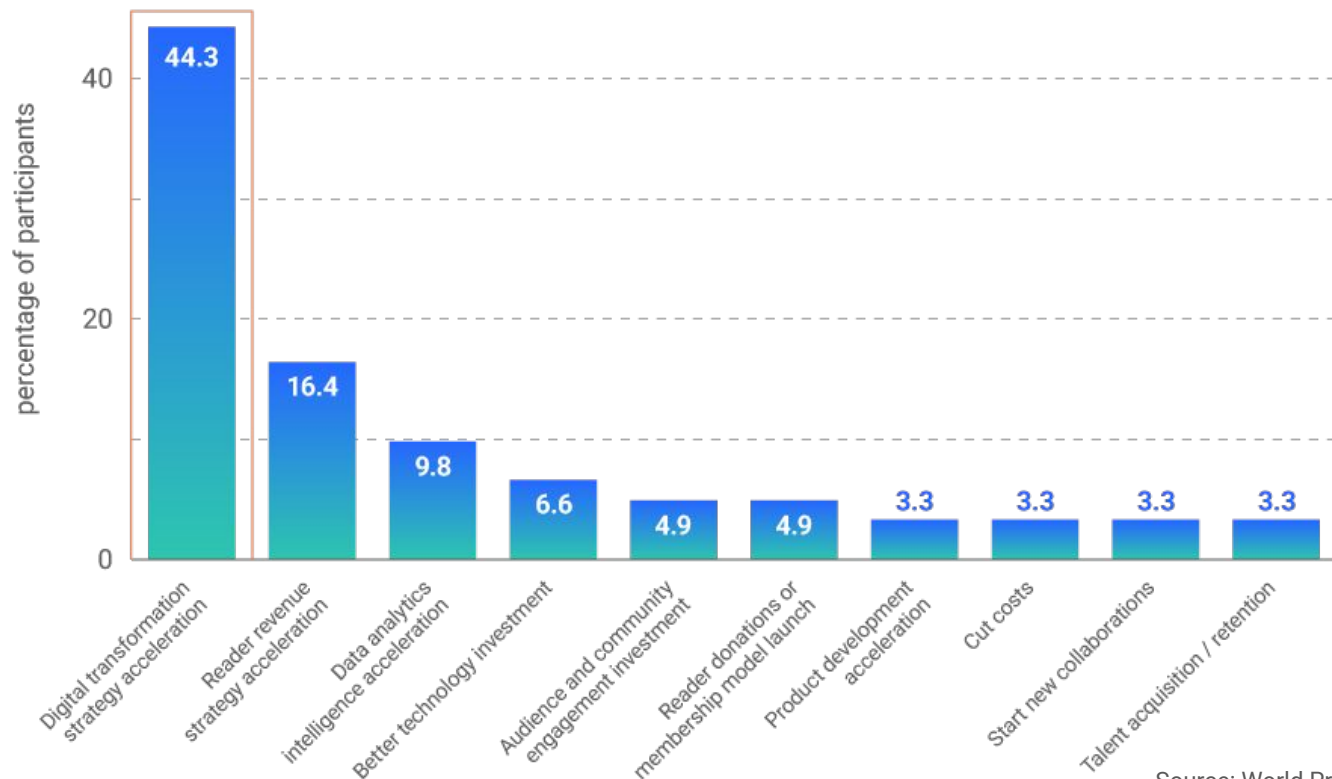
Publishers banking on core revenue streams in the short term

Over the next 12 months, what percentage of your overall revenue needs to come from sources OTHER than advertising and reader revenue to achieve your company's objectives?



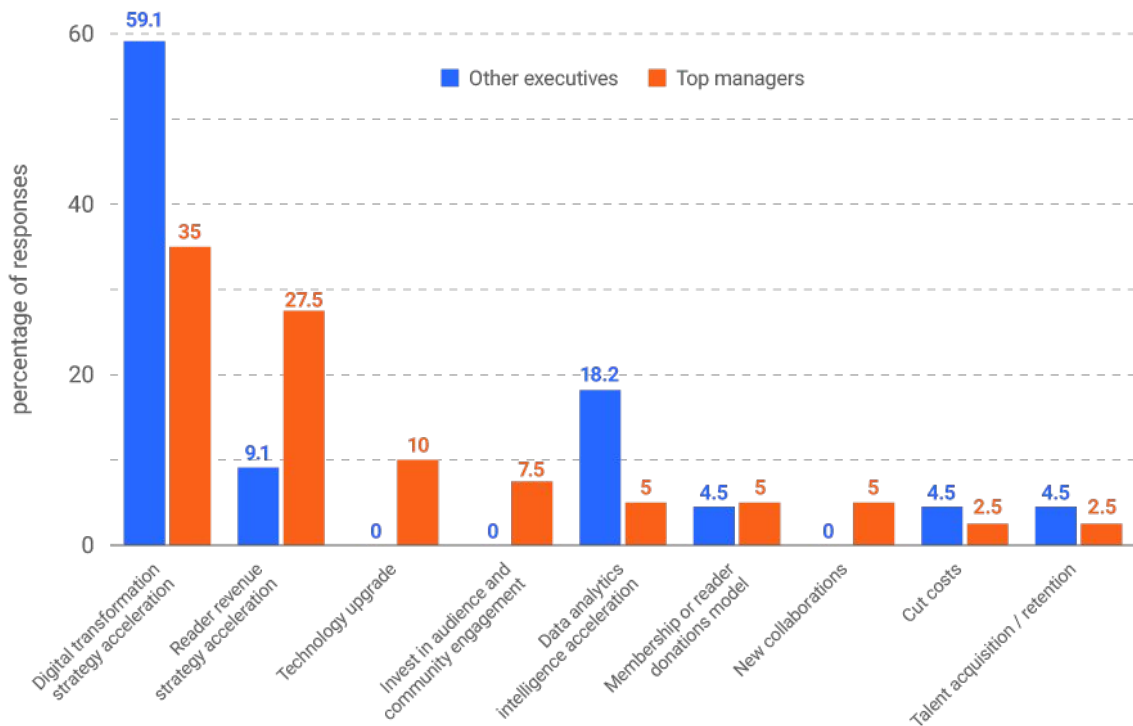
Accelerating digital transformation the top priority in 2021

What is the single most important change that has to be implemented in your organisation over the next year?



A different perspective from the C-Suite

How different executives in the survey view the most important changes in the next 12 months



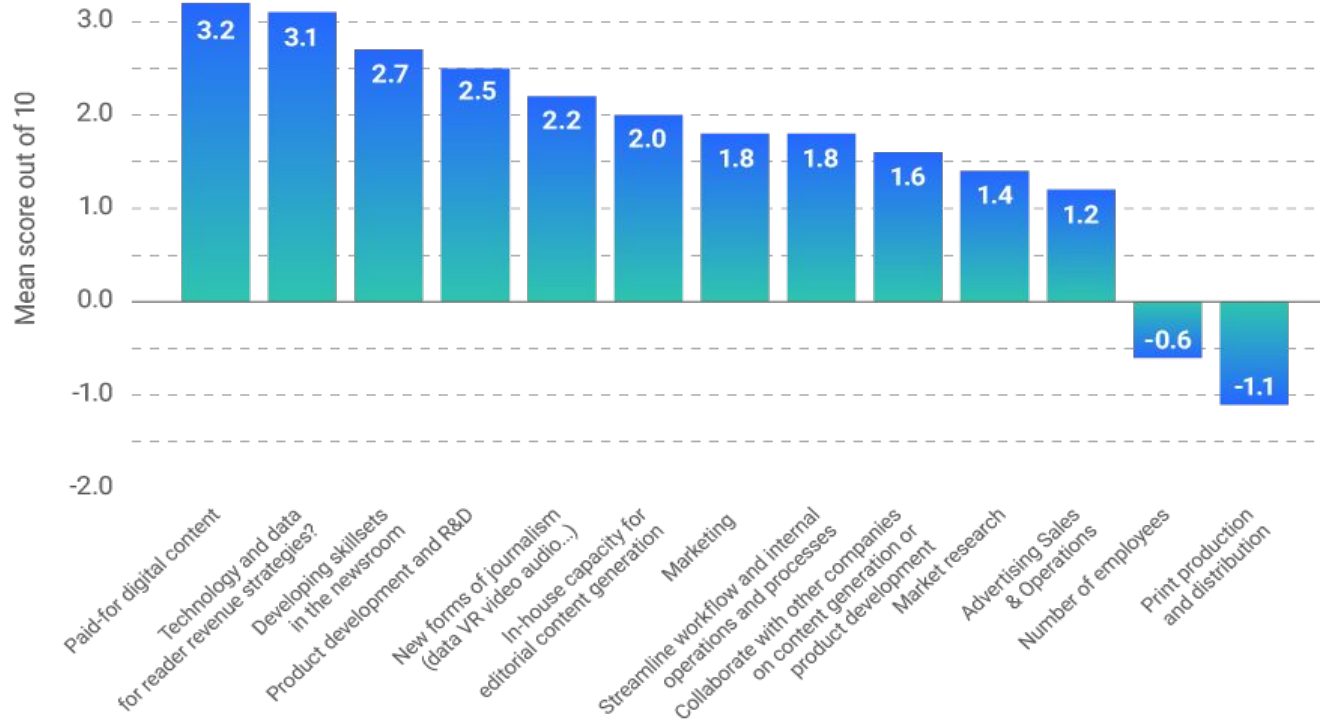
Source: World Press Trends Outlook survey

While there's wide consensus amongst decision-makers about what changes they need to make, **three times as many Top Managers said they needed to accelerate reader revenues in 2021 than executives in other areas of the business.**

Those in the C-Suite were also prioritising **investment in better technology, audience engagement capabilities and new collaborations.**

Investment: Reader revenue at the top of budgets

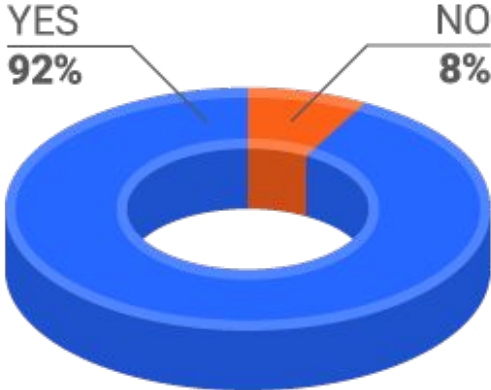
To what extent is it important for your organisation to invest / divest in the following areas over the next 12 months?



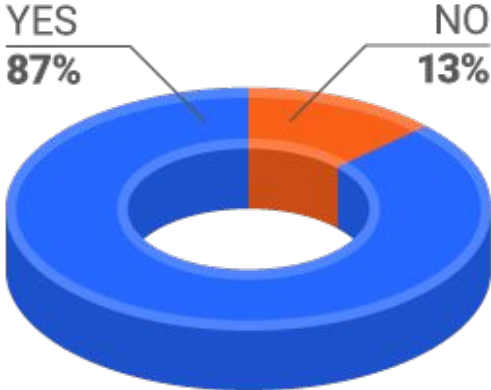
A closer look at...

THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON ORGANISATION

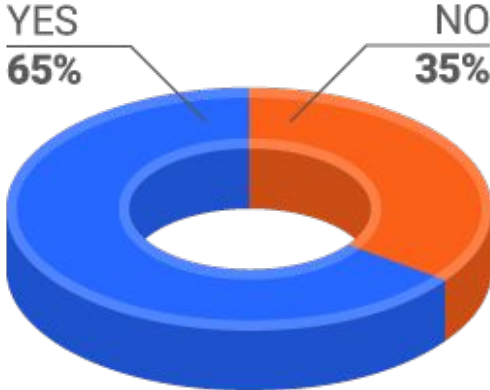
Covid-19: Response, impact and eventual recovery



My organisation's top management have responded appropriately to the Covid-19 crisis



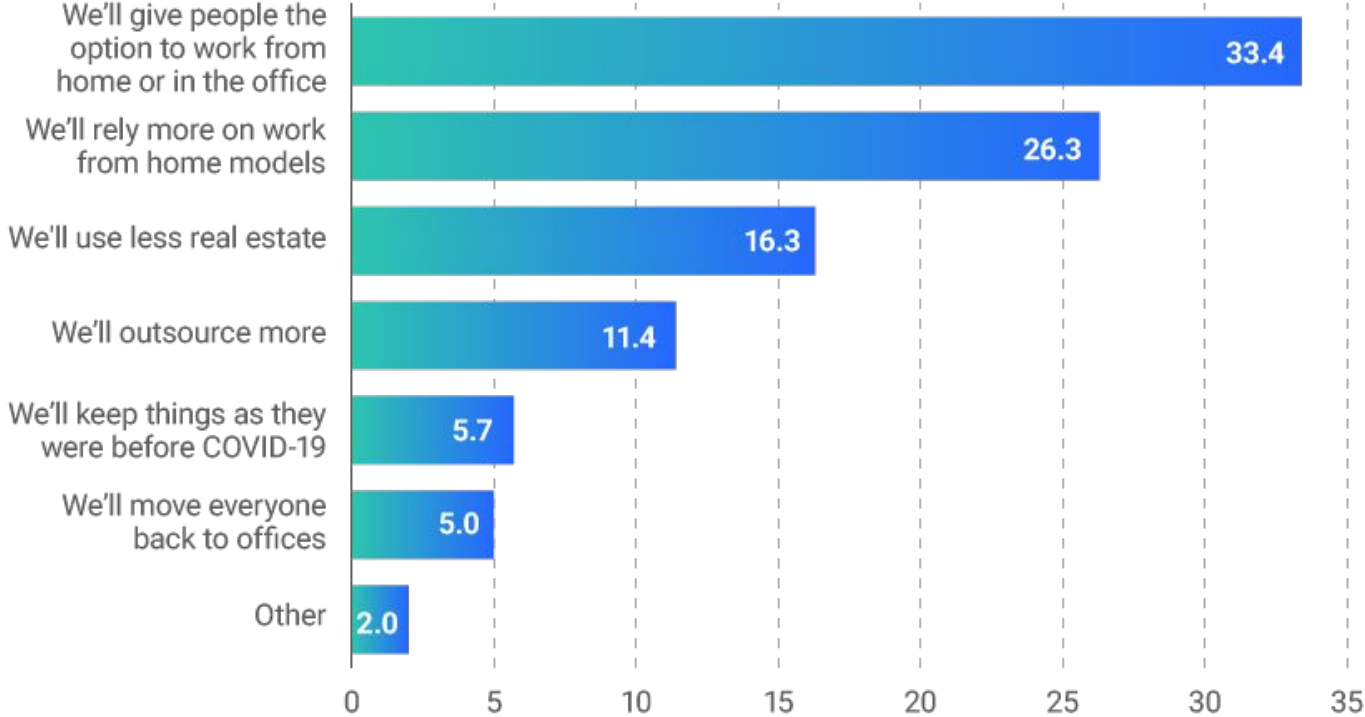
The Covid-19 crisis has changed how my organisation will work also after the pandemic in terms of workflows and processes



My organisation will fully recover from the impact of the Covid-19 crisis

Covid-19: Decentralised operations now a long-term reality?

As you look ahead to work options, which do you expect...



percentage of responses

Banking on digital subs growth

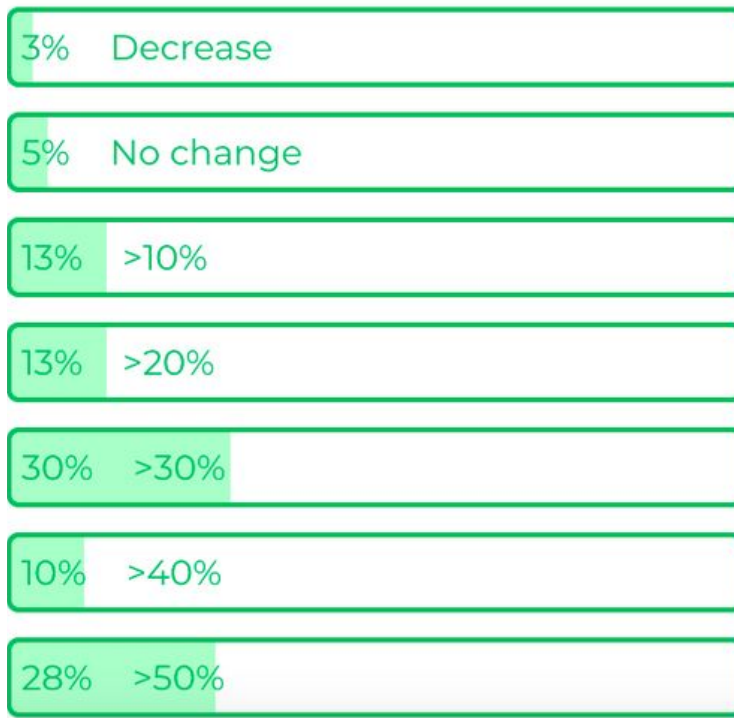
In November, WAN-IFRA held its annual Digital Media Europe conference. Naturally, it was a virtual event. In this poll featuring a very global audience of media executives, 68% said they expect digital subscription growth of at least 30%. Even 28% said they expect more than 50% growth.



Nick Tjaardstra
@tjaardvark

...

28% of news publishers (and we have 110 attendees online right now) expecting > 50% digital subscription growth in 2020 #DME20

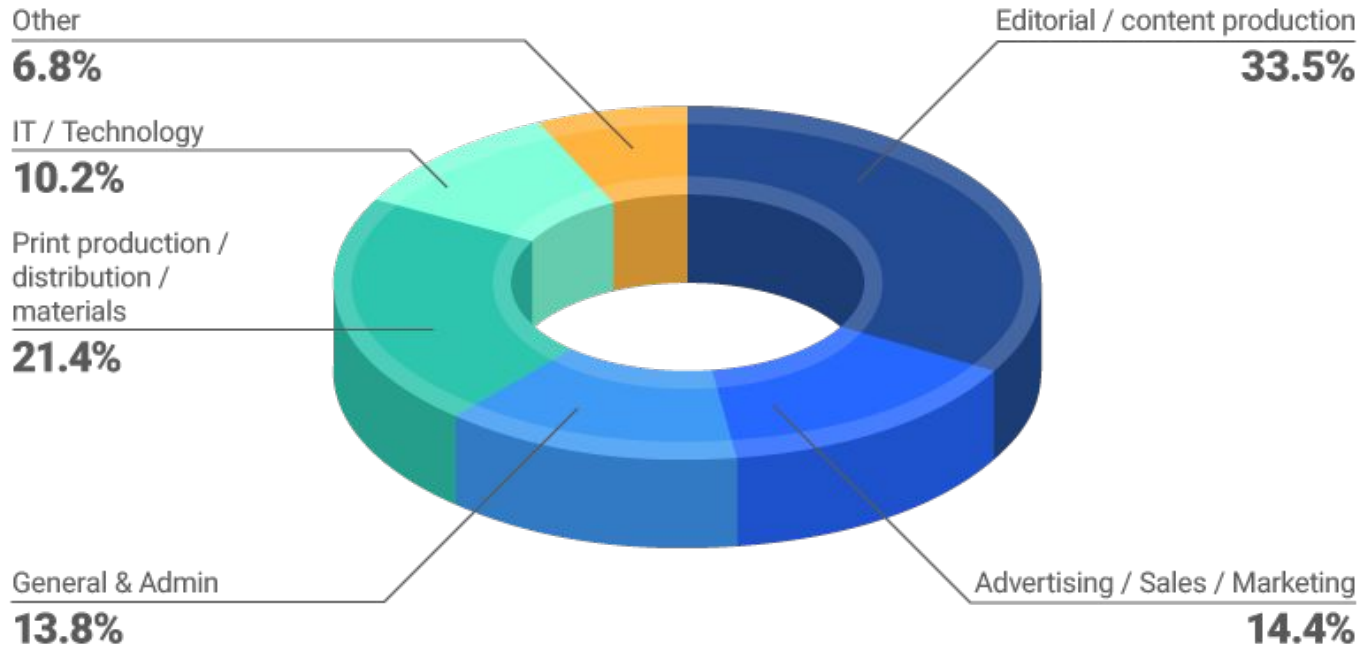


A closer look at...

THE COSTS OF DOING BUSINESS

How the costs of the news business have shifted

What are your costs across the current functions?



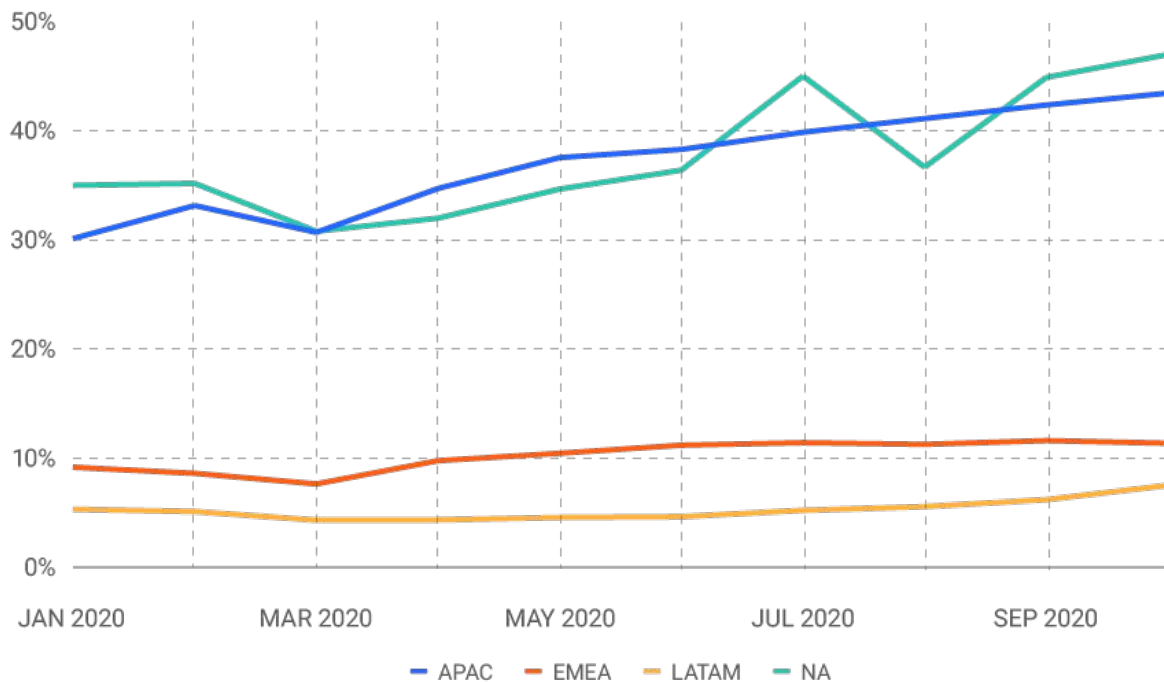
Source: World Press Trends Outlook Survey

A closer look at...

AUDIENCE AND TRAFFIC TRENDS

Subscribers represent an ever-larger share of total traffic

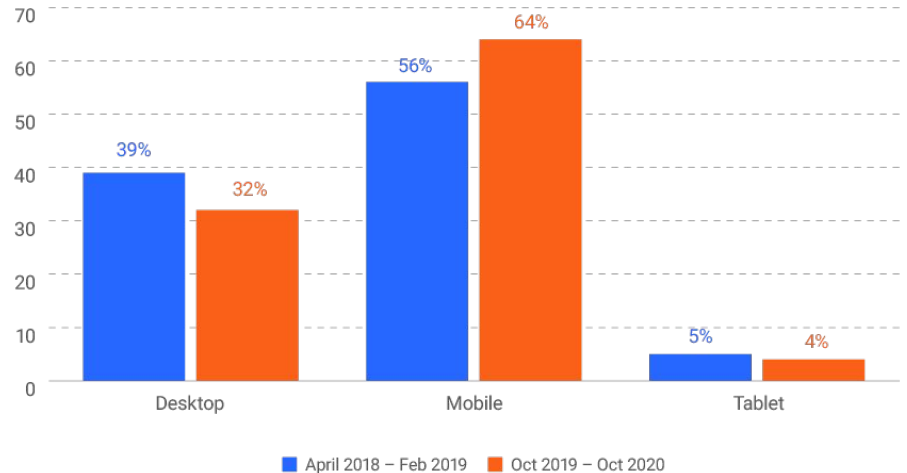
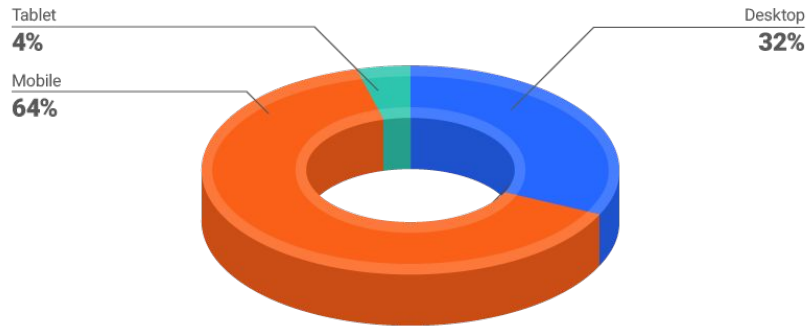
Page views from subscribers as percent of total



Source: Chartbeat

Digital traffic by device: mobile's momentum continues

If you thought that we'd reached peak-mobile – think again. According to Chartbeat's data, news content use on desktop continues to decline as audiences shift to mobile, and mobile increasingly is *the* primary news consumption device. As 5G deployment continues to roll out in different markets (see slides further down) this trend is set to accelerate. Not so long ago, publishers were striving to implement “digital-first” strategies, but today, that really should be: “mobile-first.”



A closer look at...

ADVERTISING LANDSCAPE

Shrinking ad spend globally for newspapers

Print Newspapers

3.8%

Mobile internet

36.3%

Desktop internet

15.9%

Digital Newspapers

1.9%

Print Magazines

2.2%

Digital Magazines

1.1%

Television

28.1%

Radio

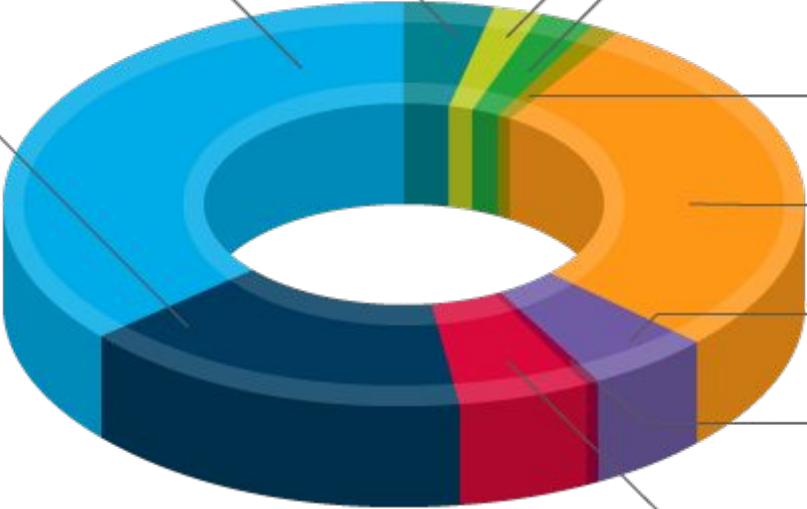
5.1%

Cinema

0.3%

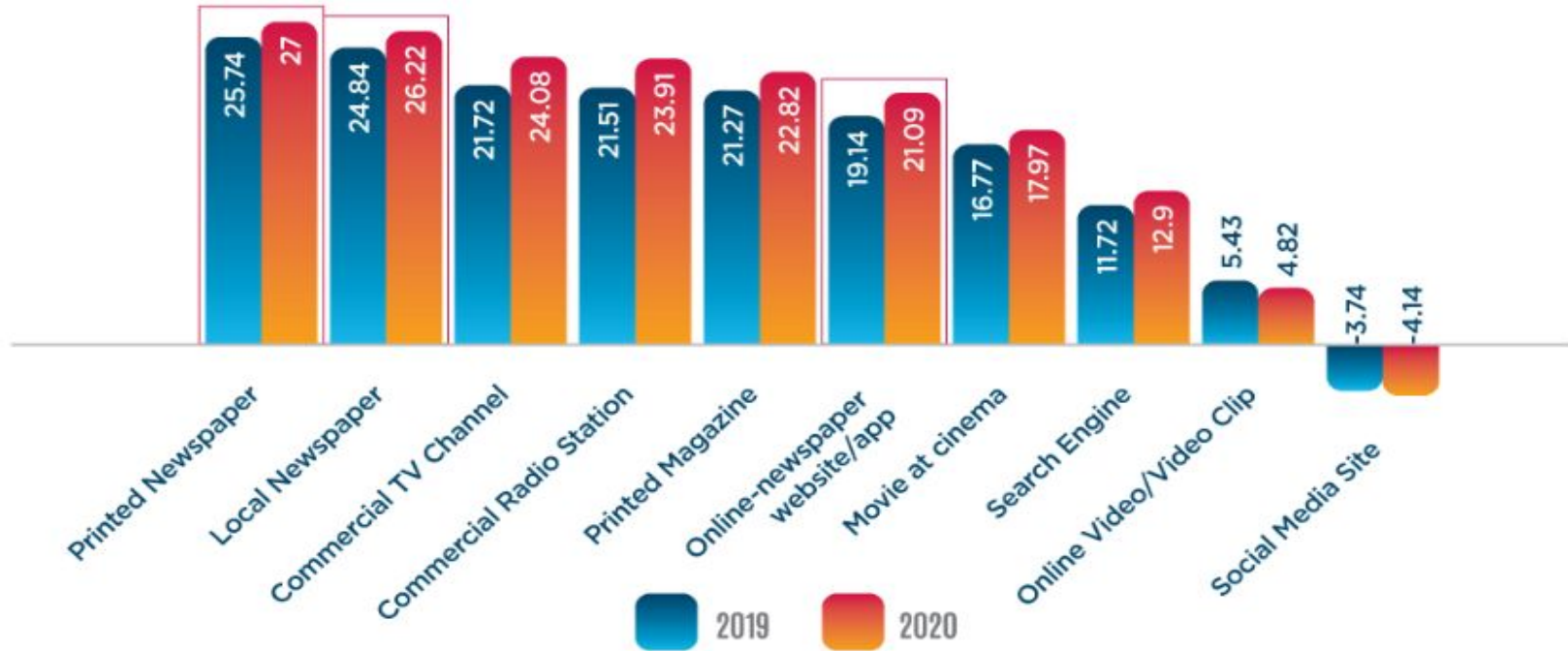
Outdoor

5.3%



Source: WPT analysis of Zenith 2020 data

Trust in advertising: A good argument for newspapers?





Thank you!

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