

TWEETS AND TRENDS

This Feed looks at the most recent data available on the condition of the news industry, drawing on reports from Pew, The Newspaper Association of America, Nielsen and others.

New opportunities for surviving and thriving in a changed media landscape are proliferating. As social networking sites like Twitter become increasingly popular, they also become powerful new tools for reaching your target audiences.

ONLINE [Twitter and Facebook are now staples of Internet news.](#)

- Two-thirds of all Internet users visit social networks and [blogging](#) websites. This sector is now more popular than personal email. It has the greatest reach in Brazil, where 80% of the online population visits these sites, compared to 67% in the U.S.¹
- The real-time messaging website [Twitter](#) not only allows people to keep up with family and friends, but also to fundraise, promote and market, and respond in times of emergency.
- While Western news media were restricted during the recent election protests in Iran, Twitter became one of the main sources of information about these events.² Users shared pictures, videos and news not available in other media.
- Visitors to Twitter have grown exponentially since it began in 2006 to more than 32 million.³ But only the top 10% of prolific Twitter users produce more than 90 percent of the content.⁴
- [Facebook](#) was also critical for people outside Iran to learn about friends and family when other communication tools were shut down.

- In February 2009, [Facebook](#) had 276 million unique visitors -- about one fifth of all Internet users -- while MySpace had 124 million.⁵ According to Facebook, 100 million people use the site daily, and the fastest growing demographic is 35 year-olds or older.
- As of June 2009, Facebook is most popular in Turkey and Croatia, Myspace and Twitter are most popular in the U.S., and LinkedIn is most popular in India.⁶
- The top news websites (by unique visitors) are MSNBC.com (39.9 million), CNN.com (38.7 million), Yahoo! News (37.9 million). By comparison, the top news blog Huffingtonpost.com draws an average of 4.5 million visitors.⁷
- Readers of news online tend to be more educated: 61% of college graduates get news online regularly, while only 19% of people with no more than a high school degree do.⁸
- More people are accessing the web with smart phones. In the first quarter of 2008, 7.3 million smart phones were sold, double than in 2007.⁹ Between Friday June 19 and Sunday June 21, Apple sold 3 million iPhone 3GS units.¹⁰

NEWSPAPERS [Traffic to newspaper websites continues to grow.](#)

- In 2008, visitors to newspaper websites increased by 15% to 65 million.¹¹ But only 34% of Americans say they read an online newspaper regularly, 40% fewer than in the early 1990s.¹²
- The top newspaper websites (by unique visitors) are The New York Times (20.2 million), USA Today (10 million) and the Washington Post (9.3 million).¹³
- The daily print circulation of these newspapers is much lower: The New York Times' is 1.07 million, USA Today's is 2.2 million and the Washington Post's is 670,000.¹⁴
- Roughly one in five newspaper journalists have lost their jobs since 2006.¹⁵ Seventy percent of those jobs were cut in 2008. The worst losses were in Washington DC, state capitals, and oversea bureaus. Half of all state newspapers now lack staff based in Washington, D.C.¹⁶
- The total number of daily newspapers in 2008 was 1,408.¹⁷ Since 2006, 29 dailies have closed, including major metros such as the Rocky Mountain News.
- Most newspaper readers are older: 64% of people ages 65+ read a newspaper regularly, while only 31% of people ages 18 to 24 do.¹⁸
- Alternative newsweeklies more than [doubled their circulation](#) from 1990 to 2007. But in 2008, circulation fell by 5% to 7.1 million.

TV Cable news had more viewers in 2008, but local TV still draws a much larger audience.

- Cable news (CNN, FOX and MSNBC) had 3.5 million viewers each night in 2008, nearly one million people more [than in 2007](#). The election played a role in these gains since cable is increasingly preferred for political news. After the election, audiences shrunk.¹⁹
- In 2008, newsrooms at the major cable channels were hiring. All three major channels were set to increase their news gathering investment by 7% on average and CNN announced a new wire service.²⁰
- Viewers of *The Daily Show* and *Colbert Report* are up by 8% and 9%, respectively.²¹ *The Daily Show* has an average of 1.8 million viewers,²² while *Colbert Report* has about 1.1 million. These “satirical news” shows are attracting an age group of 35- to 45-year olds: the median age for *The Daily Show* is 41.1 and for *Colbert Report* is 38.3, up 5 years from 2008.²³
- About half of [Americans watch local TV](#) news regularly (52%), down from nearly two-thirds (64%) a decade earlier.²⁴ Most local stations are now affiliated with major networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), and independent stations exist in only 25 of the 210 U.S. media markets.²⁵
- In 2008, the three network newscasts (NBC, CBS and ABC) had a combined audience of 22.8 million viewers each night, and 13.1 million each morning.²⁶

RADIO The number of stations that carry news/talk radio is up.

- The number of [stations airing news/talk](#) programming jumped from 1,370 in 2007 to 2,046 in 2008.²⁷
- About a third of Americans (35%) say they listen to radio news regularly.
- NPR’s news programming had a record average of 20.9 million listeners in 2008, up 9% from 2007. However, NPR announced it would cut 7% of its staff of 889 in 2008 because of revenue shortfalls.²⁸
- The top broadcasting companies – Clear Channel, Cumulus and Citadel Communications - own most of the radio stations in the U.S. The largest company, Clear Channel, owned 833 stations in December 2008, almost 200 stations more than in 2007.
- Listeners of news/talk radio tend to be older and more affluent. Seventy-seven percent of listeners are over 45, and four in 10 have a household income of \$75,000 or more.²⁹
- The top talk radio hosts – the conservatives Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity – have more than 13 million weekly listeners each.³⁰

- Audiences for new audio technologies, including satellite, podcasts and Internet radio, are also growing, but not as fast as some predicted. A 2008 survey found that most respondents (84%) were not likely to subscribe to satellite radio.³¹

ETHNIC MEDIA Audiences grew by about 16% since 2005.

- Ethnic media now reaches 57 million readers, viewers and listeners in the U.S., 8 million more than in 2005. This figure represents about 82% of African American, Hispanic and Asian American adults.³²
- According to a recent national survey commissioned by New America Media³³:
 - [Spanish language TV](#) (lead by the giant networks Univision and Telemundo) reaches about 86% of the country's Hispanics, while TV targeting Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Filipinos reaches 57% of Asian Americans.
 - Ethnic radio reaches about 70% of Hispanics (16% more than in 2005) and 25% of Asian Americans (7% more than in 2005).
 - Hispanic and Asian American newspapers have increased readers by 8% since 2005, reaching 37% of Hispanics and 43% of Asian Americans.
- Most [Spanish language newspapers](#) are weeklies. The number of weeklies grew from 384 in 2006 to 417 in 2007, the latest year with data available, while dailies decreased from 38 in 2006 to 33 in 2007.³⁴
- Since 2000, the number of bilingual newspapers (in Spanish and English) has doubled to 202. The combined circulation of bilingual newspapers in the U.S. is 5.6 million.³⁵
- In 2007, the latest year with data available, Spanish news/talk radio had 1.7 million listeners per week. The largest share of listeners (31%) is 65 years old or older.³⁶
- About 56% of Hispanics use the Internet, compared to 76% of Asian Americans.³⁷
- The top five Hispanic news websites by ad dollars spent in the U.S. were Yahoo! Telemundo, Univision.com, StarMedia.com (Mexican), MSN Latino and AOL Latino.

A WORD ON HOW

LEGISLATORS GET NEWS

[Members of Congress are twittering.](#)

- [Tweetcongress.org](#) allows users to find their elected representatives by name and location. In February 2009, only 69 out of 536 members of Congress had Twitter accounts.³⁸ This number grew to 146 in June. By some accounts, Republicans outnumber Democrats 2-to-1.³⁹

- Increasingly, some members of Congress are twittering personal, minute-by-minute insights of what’s going on in Capitol Hill, not just links to press releases and “controlled” messages.⁴⁰
- As of June 2009, Representative John Culberson (R – TX), an avid twitterer and one of the first to embrace the technology, has 12,098 followers. John McCain is the most followed member of Congress, with more than 800,000 followers.⁴¹
- A phone survey of communications staff of state senators in California, Colorado and Washington in February 2009 revealed that:
 - Local newspaper and TV websites are regularly monitored online for articles that mention the legislator and issues they are working on. Some offices also use paid monitoring services to track radio and TV stories. Most offices don’t survey blogs or social networks for news of interest to legislators.
 - Even with changes in the media landscape, particular attention is still paid to the op-ed pages of local newspapers.

ENDNOTES

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