

## Netherlands

**Population: 17m**

**Internet penetration: 96%**

**The Dutch media environment is characterised by strong public service media, relatively high quality commercial news organizations, and continued digital innovation.**

Dutch news organizations continue to focus on digital innovation with the two most recognizable digital-only initiatives growing and expanding. De Correspondent, a well regarded start-up, which bills itself as an antidote to the daily news grind has grown from 20,000 paying members at launch in September 2013 to 56,000 in March 2017. It also announced plans for a launch in the United States. Aggregated pay-per-article (micropayment) platform Blendle doubled its registered users and increased its number of paying accounts by 60% in 2016, according to its founder.<sup>1</sup> Blendle also launched a new Premium product, which offers a daily selection of twenty articles for 9.99 euro per month. This caused quality paper NRC to stop using Blendle's services, citing the latter's move from additional service to a distribution platform and therefore from a collaborator to a competitor. Follow The Money, which bills itself as a radical investigative journalism initiative, introduced a membership paywall. Surviving on investments (?) and donations, it aims to gain enough subscribers to guarantee financial independence in the long run. Youjournalism, a platform for crowd-funded investigative reporting launched in 2014, dissolved.

Legacy news organizations also continue to innovate. Most notably, publishing house De Persgroep launched Topics in the Netherlands, giving subscribers to any of their Dutch and Belgian titles unlimited access to the content of all of them.

Print circulations continue to decline. Popular broadsheets De Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad (AD) retain a bigger circulation than all quality newspapers combined, but face a steeper decline (-8% and -6%) than their quality counterparts Het Financieele Dagblad (-1%), Trouw (-2%) and De Volkskrant (-3%). Total digital circulation continues to grow. Quality newspapers De Volkskrant (90k) and NRC (66k) outnumber De Telegraaf (44k) and AD (34k) in terms of digital subscribers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.marketingfacts.nl/berichten/analyse-blendles-groei-in-nederland-stagneert>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.svdj.nl/de-stand-van-de-nieuwsmedia/oplage-2016-telegraaf-grote-verliezer-trouw-en-fd-bijna-stabiel/> and <https://www.svdj.nl/nieuws/digitale-dagbladverkoop-blijft-groeien/>

Public news organisation NOS continues to dominate the offline news market (70%), followed by commercial broadcaster RTL (34%). Online, NOS (30%) is second only to Nu.nl (38%). Remarkable surges in ratings were seen by daily talk show Jinek and weekly news satire Lubach op Zondag. The latter generated worldwide attention when a [clip](#) introducing The Netherlands to Donald Trump went viral.

A controversial Media Act was weakened after opposition parties worried the independence of public service media (PSM) would be jeopardized. The amended law assured politics would have no say in appointing the board of PSMs' governing body NPO, and the NPO board would have no say in presenters, guests, topics or specifics of form or content supplied by the various public broadcasters.

As a result of decreasing resources leading to smaller newsrooms and a bigger dependency on freelancers, two-thirds of Dutch editors-in-chief report they fear a higher risk of violation of editorial independence than five years ago. In particular, they expect an increasing pressure to conform their editorial choices to the preferences and wishes of the public.<sup>3</sup>

In the Netherlands, fake news is more media hype than real challenge, with little serious concern about its impact. Half of our Dutch online sample (51%) trust news overall (= 5<sup>th</sup>/36), while 62% trust the news they themselves are using (2<sup>nd</sup>/36). Furthermore, the Netherlands is in first place (1<sup>st</sup>/36) agreeing that news is free from undue political influence and in second place (2<sup>nd</sup>/36) agreeing about Dutch journalism being free from undue commercial influence. A comparison of users' trust between top news sites illustrates these figures. Users rate public broadcaster site NOS.nl high on accuracy (56%) and explanatory power (41%). Even 34% of the users of commercial news site NU.nl judge it as most accurate and 27% think it is best for understanding complex issues. Dutch news blog GeenStijl which describes itself as "tendentious, unfounded and needlessly offensive" is used more often than websites of quality newspapers NRC and Trouw, but 40% see it as entertainment rather than as an accurate news source (11%). De Dagelijkse Standaard [The Daily Standard] – referred to as the Dutch Breitbart – appears to be a negligible player.

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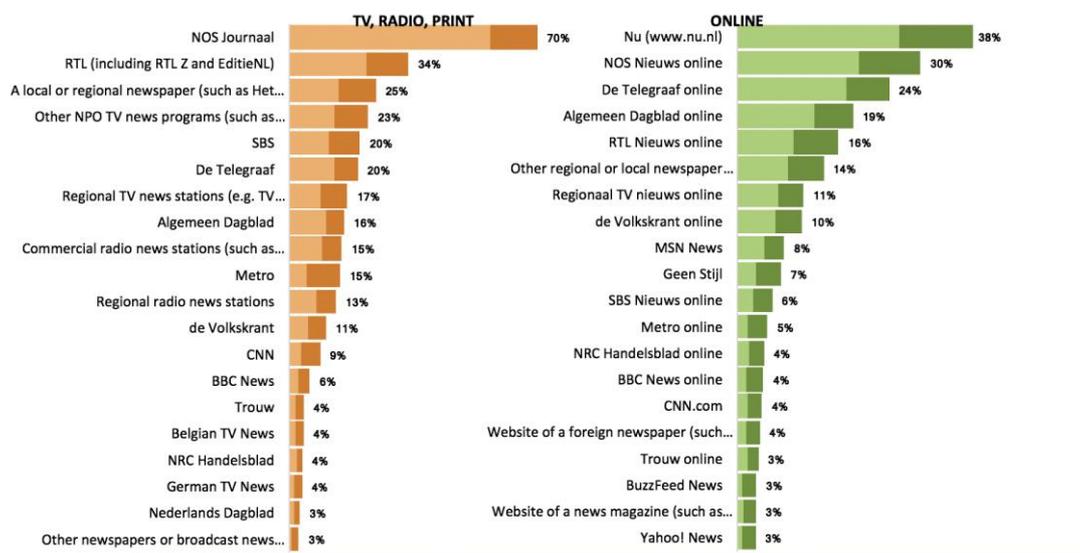
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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mediamonitor.nl/analyse-verdieping/onafhankelijkheid-van-nieuwsredacties-2015/>

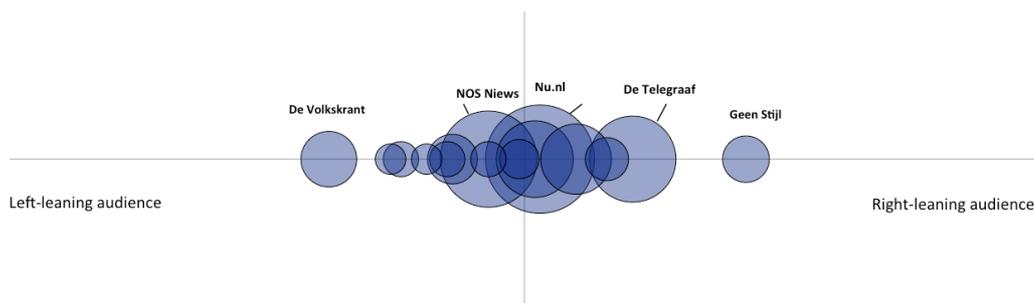
## TRUST

Trust in news remains comparatively high in the Netherlands, which might be due to a low presence of tabloid news media and a pluralistic system of public service media and relatively high quality commercial news brands. The country ranks (among) highest in perceived freedom from undue political influence and commercial influence.

## TOP BRANDS



## AUDIENCE MAP FOR THE TOP 15 ONLINE NEWS SOURCES NETHERLANDS



## BRAND ATTRIBUTES (ONLINE)

### Nu.nl

34% of Nu.nl online news users think it is best for accuracy

27% of Nu.nl online news users think best for understanding complex issues

24% best for strong opinions

32% best for amusing and entertaining

### **NOS online**

56% of NOS online news users think it is best for accuracy

41% of NOS online news users think best for understanding complex issues

30% best for strong opinions

14% best for amusing and entertaining

### **Geen Stijl**

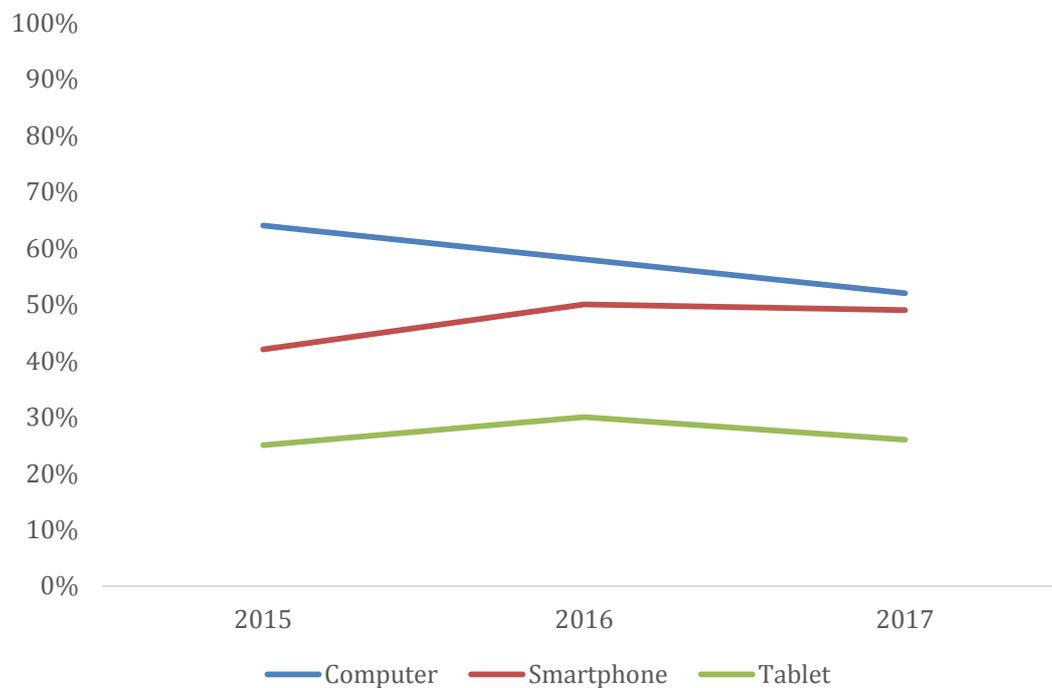
11% of Geen Stijl news users think it is best for accuracy

11% of Geen stijl news users think best for understanding complex issues

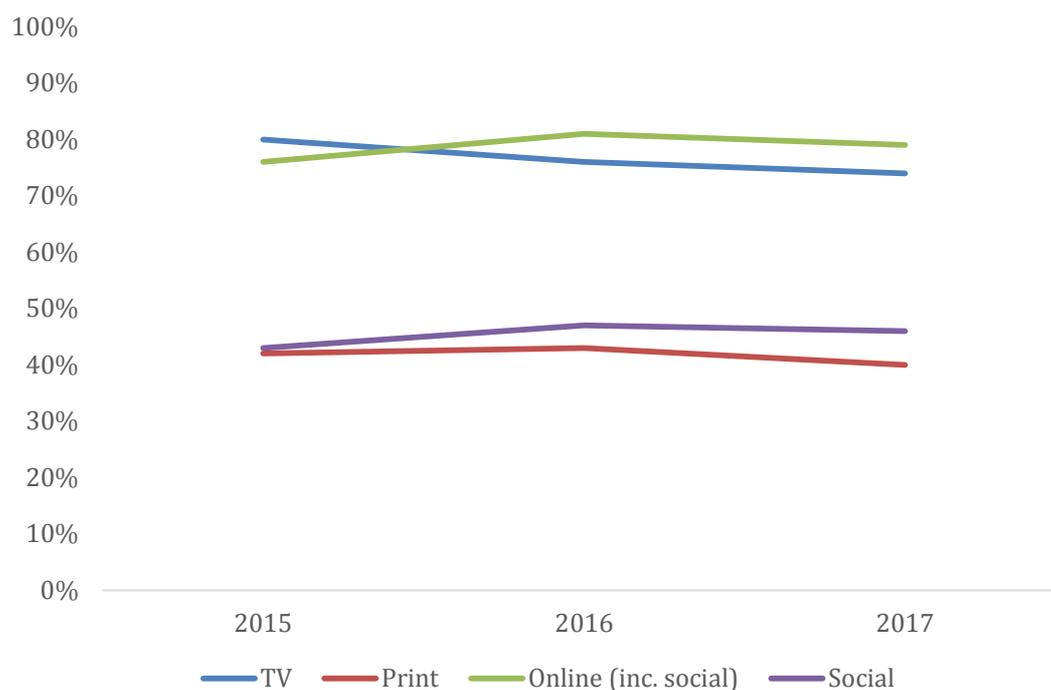
35% best for strong opinions

40% best for amusing and entertaining

### **Devices used for news**



### **Sources of news**



**Pay for online news:** 14% (=13th/36) –  
**Use an ad-blocker:** 22% (=27th/36)

**Trust in news overall:** 51% (=5th/36)  
**Trust in the news I use:** 62% (2nd/36)

**Free from undue political influence:** 51% (1st/36)  
**Free from undue commercial influence:** 37% (2nd/36)

**Top social media (and messenger) brands for news:**

Rank	Brand	All
1	Facebook	32% (-4)
2	WhatsApp	15% (+1)
3	YouTube	14% (+3)
4	Twitter	8% (-)
5	Instagram	4% (+1)