

Georgia - Media Landscape

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Overview

With a population of 4.3 million people, Georgia is one of the three states composing the South Caucasus. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave a major boost to the independent media in Georgia. Some 600 newspapers were registered in

the country between 1990 and 2000. An audience hungry for uncensored news and editorial freedom found it in Georgia's first regularly published independent newspapers, *7 Days* and *Resonansi*, and in *Rustavi 2* television, established in 1994. Media soon became one of the most trusted institutions in Georgia, faring consistently high in polls after the Georgian Orthodox Church and the army, as shown in opinion polls by International Republican Institute (IRI).

The Georgian people put high value on the freedom of expression and press. Post-Soviet governments chose to allow independent media. But as media grew more and more critical in their coverage of public affairs, government pressure strengthened.

The 1990s saw most attacks against the independent press and journalists: There were two attempts to shut down *Rustavi 2 TV*, the killing of a prominent TV anchor, Giorgi Sanaia, and numerous other physical and verbal attacks against journalists. The first real victory won by the budding independent press has been the free and thorough coverage of the rigged parliamentary elections of 2003, leading to the Rose Revolution. Mass protests, steered by *Rustavi 2's* coverage of the electoral fraud, deposed of the "neo-patrimonial government" (Laventy, 2008) of President Shevardnadze and brought to power the government of Michael Saakashvili.

The post Rose-Revolution era brought the liberalisation of media legislation, business incentives following strong economic growth but also new challenges. The government took charge of the news agenda. Two TV stations and several newspapers closed down. National TV channels were taken over by businesses close to the government. The violent closure amidst political protests of the oppositional TV station Imedi in November 2007 damaged Georgia's standing as a country with a fledgling free press. The war with Russia in 2008 further complicated the environment for independent media.

The freedom of the press became one of the pressing issues ahead of the 2012 Parliamentary Elections. The government's control of the biggest TV stations created uneven and unfair competition among those running for elected office. Under pressure from the opposition parties, media rights activists and international organisations, the government of Saakashvili introduced legislative amendments in the broadcast and election laws to require mandatory distribution of all broadcast signals by cable operators in the pre-election period to ensure access to both government and opposition-leaning outlets. The Parliamentary Elections of 2012 were held in a competitive environment, and according to the US Department of State resulted in the first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since the country's independence in 1992.

The new government by the Georgian Dream party made steps towards greater freedom in the media by completing the digital switchover in the broadcast sector and removing the licensing requirement for terrestrial broadcasters. However, in the lead-up to the Parliamentary Elections of 2016, the government strengthened its grip over the media. TV stations loyal to the government closed down highly-rated political talk shows for no apparent reason. An ownership dispute case was brought against critical *Rustavi 2 TV* by one of its former owners in 2015, followed by the freeze of the station's assets, the protracted litigation, and the Supreme Court ruling to transfer the ownership to the plaintiff in 2017. The case is now at the European Court on Human Rights, which has suspended the Georgian court's ruling until a final verdict is reached.

TV stations leaning towards the government, namely *Maestro*, *GDS* and *Imedi*, merged their resources in 2017 and are competing for the market share with *Rustavi 2*. *Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB)*, which by law is required to offer balanced views, discontinued major talk shows open to opposition voices in 2016. *GPB* received much criticism for non-transparent hiring and procurement practices, and the initiation of amendments to the Law on Broadcasting to sell advertising and sponsorship, which was previously banned. Commercial TV stations argue that the *GPB*, which is funded by the taxpayers' money and therefore has a huge financial advantage over other stations, should not enter the market of commercial advertising.

Pending research on Georgia's place in the taxonomy of media systems, the country clearly belongs to the system described

as “television-centric.” In Georgia, newspaper readership is meager, while TV captures 72 percent of the population, according to the latest poll by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Most nationally broadcasting TV stations are owned by businesses with strong political ties, resulting in a high degree of political parallelism. Consequently, the media system is highly polarised, reflecting the major political divisions in society. Print press, with its limited circulation, targets the political elites and activists. Print press is independent, as are smaller TV and radio stations. The Internet is free.

While there are no state-sponsored media in Georgia, the government maintains strong formal and informal leverages to control media, primarily economical ones.

The journalistic professionalism is on the rise, supported by the expansion of quality journalism education and stronger self-regulatory practice. Still, journalism values are not widely shared. It is a common practice for journalists to enter politics or, vice versa, for politicians to enter journalism. Editorial policies favoring infotainment and sensationalism are also a major problem, as is the journalists’ lack of familiarity with web technologies and tools.

Regional media have practiced greater independence and ethical standards. But they have been struggling on the business side. Regional media do not reach large audiences, and their share in advertising incomes is meager. Some 15 percent of Georgia’s non-ethnic Georgian population is unable to read Georgian-language press and lacks minority-language media of its own.

The advertising market is small in size, and dominated by television. Print and digital media are affected by the lack of advertising income and the reliance on direct and copy sales. While audience measurement mechanisms exist for big televisions, small regional TV stations, radios, newspapers and magazines cannot accurately measure viewers, listeners and readers. Newspaper and magazines largely rely on copy sales. Web-based advertising is limited but growing. With the exception of a handful of rich TV stations, news organisations are poor and cannot invest in development, such as online distribution. Foreign investors, present in the Eastern Europe, are not interested in Georgia’s media business.

The media are one of the most influential institutions in Georgia, despite its uneven distribution and the audience’s awareness of its political alliances, editorial control and bias (NDI, 2017). Its influence on the political process is presumed to be substantial, and takes many forms. However, the trust in media is dwindling, while ambivalence and skepticism are building up, as shown by time – data from a series of analysis of the Caucasus Barometer for 2011-17. The lack of trust in media does not necessarily translate in more critical use of media sources and verification of facts. NDI polls show that nearly one third of Georgians relies only on one source for public affairs information.

Media

Print

Newspapers and news magazines enjoy freedom in Georgia, but their readership is low. Only 1 percent of Georgians said in the polls (NDI, 2017) that newspapers and news magazines were their primary source of political and public affairs content, and only 6 percent used the print press as the secondary source. However, the print press plays a role in agenda setting through targeting the elite readership and feeding stories to the national and local broadcasters.

While 317 newspapers are registered with the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2016), more than one third of these

newspapers is either published irregularly (56) or one (34) or four to six times a year (39). These are industry publications, political and commercial marketing tools. Another third of newspapers appears once a month (78) or two to three times month (39). As for regular newspapers, most are weeklies (51), followed by twice or thrice-weekly editions (19) and dailies (14).

Tbilisi-based daily *Resonance* and weekly *Kviris Palitra* offer diverse public affairs content. These newspapers have loyal readership, and are generally oriented towards the centre of the political spectrum. Tabloid press *Alia*, *Versia*, *PrimeTime*, *Chronika +*, *Kviris Kronika*, *Akhali Taoba* have readership but less stringent professional standards. *Asaval-Dasavali*, *Sakartvelo da Msoplio*, and *Sakartvelos Respublica* have carried hate speech and xenophobic content traceable to Russian propagandist sources, according to the Media Development Foundation (MDF). Most Tbilisi dailies are distributed in the regions.

Georgia has a vibrant scene of small independent regional publications. These newspapers have a high degree of independence, and contribute strongly to the national news gathering and investigative practice. The leaders are *Samkhretis Karibche*, *Kakhetis Khma*, *Spektri*, *Guria News*, *Chemi Imereti*, *Batumelebi*. Most of these newspapers operate online but some also produce print copies, if irregularly. Unlike these newspapers, which originated in the domain of print press, *Qartli.ge*, *Mtisambebi.ge*, *Livepress.ge* and *Netgazeti.ge* are regional publications, which started online (see Digital Media).

There are 34 newspapers, mostly regional monthly publications, which are funded by central and municipal budgets to carry public information, including in the languages of ethnic minorities. Central newspaper *Vrastan* (in Armenian) and *Gurjistan* (in Azerbaijani) are both funded by the state budget. Armenian-language content in local newspapers *Nor Akunk* and *Arshaluis* and Azerbaijani-language content in newspapers *Bolnisi*, *Tiraletis Expressi* and *Didgorelebi* are subsidized by municipal authorities. Independent *Samkhretis Karibche* prints an Armenian-language edition irregularly with international donor funds. Russian-language newspapers circulating in Tbilisi are *Vecherni Tbilisi*, *Tbilisskaya Nedelya*, *Tbilisskaya Nedelya*, *Argumenti i Facti*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Gruzii*. *The Messenger Online*, *Georgia Today*, *the Georgian Times* (available in English and Georgian), *Georgian Journal* are English-language newspapers catering to the international community. *The Messenger Online* is now only available on the net.

Most-read niche editions are devoted to sports and business. *Bankebi da Pinansebi*, *Financial*, *Georgia Today Business*, and *Sitkva da Sakme* belong to the latter type. Sports newspapers *Lelo*, *Sarbieli*, *Msoplio Sporti*, *Sport Info* have loyal readership and regular circulation. Newspapers devoted to literature, like *Literaturuli Gazeti* and *Literaturuli Sakartvelo* are also popular with audiences.

Magazine publishing is on the rise. *Sarke*, *Tbiliselebi*, *Gza* offer a mix of gossip about entertainment and politics on low-quality paper and at a small price. Licensed brand editions, such as *OK Georgia*, *Forbes Georgia*, *Hello Georgia*, *National Geographic Georgia*, *Auto Build Georgia*, are also popular among audiences and do well business-wise. *City*, *Amarta*, *Beaumonde*, *Shin*, are popular homegrown glossies. Among serious magazines, *Indigo* and *Liberali* meet the demand for analytical content. After years of appearing in print, *Liberali* stopped printing and appears only as an online edition.

Precise and detailed data on newspaper circulation is not available as Georgia lacks data collection and circulation verification mechanisms. According to the latest data available from the Georgian Department of Statistics (GeoStat), a combined circulation of all registered (317) newspapers, including trade and political publications and commercial papers was 111,217 copies in 2016, while the total newspaper print was 60.4m copies. The total magazine print in 2016 was 27.4m copies. Compared to 2005, newspapers circulate fewer copies, with total circulation down by 72 percent (from 400,000 in 2005). However, the number of newspapers is up from 88 in 2005 to 317 in 2016, with the growth mostly in the categories of bi-annual, annual and irregular press. Total newspaper print volume has also grown by 237 percent (from 17.9m in 2005 to 60.4m in 2016). Said another way, there is greater variety of print editions, which circulate at lower levels.

The data shows that in line with global trends, the Georgian daily and weekly news press has shrunk in size, but printed information is still relevant in a country with partial Internet penetration and readers, mostly from older generations, lacking Internet skills. The increased transparency in business practices of Georgia is also a factor.

The total magazine print has also grown by 2.427 percent from 1.1m in 2005 to 27.4m in 2016, according to the GeoStat.

At the same time, newspapers and news magazines lost their relevance as sources of serious, public affairs content: From 2011 to 2017, the number of readers who said newspapers and news magazines were their first source of news about politics and public affairs fell by 50 percent and the number of readers who used newspapers and newsmagazines as their secondary sources dropped 75 percent from 24 percent in 2011 to 6 percent in 2017, according to NDI's 2017 study.

The share of the advertising market for the print industry remains relatively stable at a low 4 percent, according to Transparency International Georgia (2016). The business models adopted by newspapers and magazines vary. While the majority of newspapers relies on copy sales, some local newspapers that still print copies, distribute free of charge to maintain the audience. A handful of regional newspapers received continued financial support from international donors. Magazines rely on advertising and sponsorships. News magazines, such as *Indigo*, rely primarily on subscription and advertising incomes. Entertainment, sports and glossies also use the combination of copy sales and advertising income.

Radio

According to the latest data available from the Georgian National Communications Commission for 2016, there are 38 radio broadcasters. Most offer general programming, followed by niche (sports, business) and community-oriented content. Most radio stations broadcast from Tbilisi while 14 radio stations operate in the regions. Leading Tbilisi-based stations include: *Fortuna*, *Fortuna Plus*, *Ar Daidardo*, *Avtoradio* (all four are part of Fortuna Radio Holding, a market leader by income), *Imedi* (second by profits), *Maestro*, *Jako* (sports radio), *Shokoladi*, *Abkhazetis Khma*, *Palitra Radio*. While precise data on audience share is not available, these stations have stable audiences and offer a mix of news, talk, music and entertainment.

Most airtime is filled by music and entertainment, but radios licensed for general programming offer at least two information programs. This is in tune with the global trend of an increase in entertainment content over more traditional news stories. Radios are rarely used for serious, public affairs content; Georgians polled by NDI annually between 2011 and 2017 have not once mentioned radio as their first source of news and public affairs content, and the share of those using radio as a secondary source has fluctuated between 1 percent and 3 percent.

In recent years a positive development has been the strengthening of regional radios, such as *Dzveli Kalaki* and *Imeri* (Kutaisi), *Trialeti* (Gori) *Hereti* (Lagodekhi), *Samkhretis Karibche* (Akhaltikhe), *Harmonia* (Poti), *Atinati* and *Odishi* (Zugdidi), and the establishment of community radios. Community-based radios such as *Nor* (Armenian language, broadcasts from Akhaltikhe) and *Marneuli* (Azerbaijani language, broadcasts from Marneuli) were established in 2006, but the previous government refused to grant them radio licenses. For this reason, the community radios produced a website and broadcasted via loudspeaker. The licenses for FM broadcasting were granted in 2014. The Azerbaijani-language community in the village of Iormughalo can now tune to recently-launched *Radio Ivrisi*. Community radio *Radio Way* opened in the Pankisi Gorge for the Vainakh minority in 2015. The Armenian-language community can also tune to Vrastan FM. Local communities in the regions are also served by *Radio Mozaika* in Gori. Some radios, such as *Dzveli Kalaki*, *Radioway*, *Hereti*, *Nor*, *Marneuli* offer both on-air and original content on their websites.

Soviet-era state radio was transformed into public radio, and is now part of the *GPB*. *GPB* operates two radio channels: *Sakartvelos Radio – Pirveli Radio* and *Radio Ori – Kartuli Radio*. *Sakartvelos Radio* broadcasts nationwide with news and

various programmes.

The demand for niche programming is met by classic, jazz, rock and folk music stations as well as stations with sports and business news. Listeners can tune in to re-broadcasts of America's National Public Radio on *Radio GIPA*. Georgia does not have a 24-hour talk radio station except for *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)*, which fills the niche with locally produced news and analysis. GPB's Radio Pirveli Arkhi (channel 1) also devotes most airtime to news and opinion programs.

Advertising income in the radio sector is US\$12.2m, based on the 2016 Annual Report by the Georgian National Communication Commission (GNCC). According to the report, the income has grown by 50 percent since 2010. More than two thirds of the total advertising went to four broadcasters - *Radio Holding Fortuna*, *Imedi Radio*, *Radio Jako* and *Radio GreenWave*. While the remaining market is not big enough to sustain high-quality, diverse programming and innovation, it is sufficient for low-cost operations. Regional stations supplement their income with grants from international donors.

The global trend for increased Internet consumption have affected the Georgian radio sector as well. Radio stations acquired websites and streaming services. Some radios, such as *Dzveli Kalaki*, *Radioway*, *Hereti*, *Nor*, *Marneuli* offer both on-air and original content on their websites. A few, most notably, *RFE/RL*, started producing podcasts and blogs as well as video content. Broadcasting through specific apps (*Georgian Radio Live*, *Radio Georgian*) is also available. A positive trend has been the establishment of online only radios, targeting the youth. These radios are: *MTC Youth Radio*, *Helping Hand Radio* (associated with association Helping Hands), *CSJM Radio* (associated with the Caucasus School of Media at the Caucasus University).

Television

Television is the most preferred medium in Georgia and up to 72 percent of Georgians said they get news primarily via television in the NDI 2017 poll. According to GNCC, there were 98 active TV channels in 2017, including 21 nationally reaching broadcasters. Tbilisi-based stations *Rustavi 2* and *Imedi* are leaders in terms of programmatic diversity and audience share. *Imedi TV* had 28.08 percent of audience share in 2017 and the share of *Rustavi 2* was 26.76 percent, followed by *Imedi's* affiliate *GDS* (5.61 percent), and *Rustavi 2's Comedy Channel* (3.86 percent), according to TV MR Ge website. *Kavkasia TV*, *Iberia TV*, and *Pirveli TV* compete with the leaders for audiences and revenues.

GPB's Channel 1 is fifth with an audience share of 3.63 percent. It is a publicly-funded entity, and required by law to "provide accurate and up-to-date information that is free from political and commercial bias" and "to address the needs and interests of the larger Georgian society through diversity of programs and viewpoints" (Article 15, Law on Broadcasting). *GPB* and *Ajara TV* are public broadcasters funded by public funds. *GPB* has been continuously yielding criticism for having grown "more friendly with the authorities" (Freedom House, Freedom of World Report, 2009) and "distinctly pro-government" (IREX/MSI 2017). Pre-election news monitoring by the Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics (2017) showed that Channel 1 favored candidates from the ruling party. The public expressed discontent over the Parliament of Georgia's introduction of the controversial amendments to the Laws on Broadcasting, at the initiative of the GPB's management, which allows public broadcasters to sell advertising and forgo strict public procurement rules for equipment and content purchases.

Regional stations have limited programming, and have less viewers than national channels at their own locales. *Trialeti TV*, *Gurjaani TV*, *Mega TV*, *Borjomi TV*, *Guria TV*, *Metskhre Talga*, *Rioni TV*, *Imervizia TV*, *Odishi TV*, *Tanamgzavri TV* are leaders on the regional market.

The Georgian Orthodox Church also operates a satellite-based TV station called Unanimity.

The TV sector is highly politicised and polarised, and has recently witnessed a wave of ownership changes and takeover attempts, often, politically motivated. *Rustavi 2*, which has ties to the oppositional United National Movement (Freedom House, 2016), declared its editorial support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration and Eurocentric political parties. *Imedi TV*, which has put forward no such manifesto, is seen as aligned with the Government. Recently, *Imedi TV* formed a holding company with two major TV companies, *Maestro* and *GDS*, the latter owned by the son of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the ruling Georgian Dream and former Prime Minister. This move reinforced perceptions that *Imedi TV* is aligned with the ruling elite.

The ownership of the biggest TV station, *Rustavi 2*, is contested. *Rustavi 2* was sued by one of its former owners, Kibar Khalvashi, who claimed his shares were illegally seized while the UNM was in power in 2015. After losing the case in Georgia's lower courts, and after the March 2, 2017 decision by the Supreme Court of Georgia to uphold a lower court's decision to transfer ownership rights to Mr. Khalvashi, *Rustavi 2* took the case to the European Court of Human Rights, which has suspended the enforcement of the Georgian Supreme Court ruling for an indefinite period, until it's issuing of a verdict.

A nationwide digital switchover occurred in 2015. Georgia now operates seven multiplex platforms with national coverage and additional 21 regional low-power multiplexes. The government has purchased set top boxes, devices to transform analogue signal to digital, for free of charge distribution to some 220,000 vulnerable households. Upon the completion of the switchover, the Georgian National Communications Commission has dropped the licensing requirement for TV stations as a result.

Ethnic minorities have access to two Armenian-language TV stations, *Parvana* in Ninotsminda and *ATV12* in Akhaltsikhe. *TOK TV*, a Russian-language broadcaster, started in 2017. *GPB Channel 2* broadcasts news in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages. In the Kvemo Kartli, *Marneuli TV* and *Bolnisi TV* have been re-broadcasting *GPB's* Azerbaijani language news.

Independent studios produce feature and documentary films, series and shows for TV stations. *FormulaCreative* (films and TV series), *Studio Re* (political and topical talk-shows), *Studio Monitori* (investigative documentaries), *SakDocFilm* (documentaries), *ArteFact Production* (documentary and experimental film production) produce high quality content.

Advertising income in the TV sector was 73.98m Georgian lari (about US\$30m) in 2017, according to the GNCC's analysis of advertising revenues in the TV sector. While the revenues have grown over the past five years by 16.7 percent from 63.35 in 2012, the growth is diffused by the currency depreciation of the Georgian national currency, such that the market has effectively shrunk in US dollar terms. Up to 81 percent of the income belongs to *Rustavi 2* and *Imedi TV* and their affiliate channels. This income comprises advertising sales, sponsoring, teleshopping and product placement services. Until recently, the advertising seller Inter Group has been selling airtime for *Rustavi 2* and *Imedi TV*. Since the market is not big enough to sustain a plurality of TV channels, some stations' financial injections from private owners, derived either from more profitable media assets or other business holdings.

TV is the primary source of public affairs content for the Georgian population. In every poll conducted by NDI and Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) in Georgia from 2011 to 2017, most respondents said TV was their primary source of news about politics and public affairs. However, the number of users for whom TV was the primary source of news fell by 17 percent to 72 percent from 89 percent in 2011, which should be attributed to the growth of Internet news consumption in the same period (see Digital media).

Trust in TV is diminishing. In 2017, only 19 percent of those polled by CRRC's Caucasus Barometer study said TV journalists did a quality job informing the population, down from 34 percent of respondents polled in 2009. Also, 12 percent of respondents, up from 9 percent in 2009, said TV journalists worked poorly. The number of respondents in the middle increased from 49 percent to 60 percent between 2009 and 2017.

Digital Media

Online news media are developing in Georgia but at a slower pace than elsewhere in Europe. The reason is partial Internet penetration, the lack of technological skills among the older population and weak business incentives for the media. The Internet penetration in Georgia is 50 percent, and concentrated in the capital city of Tbilisi and other large cities. While the number of citizens who use the Internet every day has grown by 223 percent from 13 percent in 2011 to 42 percent in 2017 according to time-series data from the Caucasus Barometer study, there remains a sizable segment of Georgians who have never used the Internet (35 percent) or do not know (3 percent) what it is. The vast majority of households access the Internet from a home computer or laptop (89 percent) and from personal mobile phones (59 percent). Internet is free of government control.

Film and music-sharing sites, such as Myvideo.ge and Imovies.cc, top the list of most-viewed media websites. However, the number of users who rely on the Internet for public affairs information is growing. Roughly one fifth of media users (21 percent) said in the NDI 2017 poll that the Internet was their primary source of public affairs content, up by 375 percent from 2011, while 23 percent of users said they used the Internet as the secondary source.

According to the Georgian Internet metrics company Top.ge, *Ambebi.ge* is the most-viewed news website, yielding up to 1.8 million unique users per month (January, 2018), followed by *Interpressnews.ge*, *Newposts.ge*, *Palitravideo.ge*, *Rustavi2.ge*, and *On.ge*. *Ambebi.ge* received most mentions as the favorite news source in the IRI 2017 poll, followed by *News.ge*, *Interpressnews.ge*, *Presa.ge*, *Myvideo.ge*, and *Newposts.ge*. Some of these outlets, like *Interpressnews.ge*, have started as news agencies but are increasingly consumed by individuals as well as businesses.

On.ge, operated by OMedia group, and *Netgazeti.ge* are reliable, fact-based online newspapers, which offer hard news and analysis, and employee multimedia tools. *Liberali.ge* is an online version of popular print magazine, *Liberali*, which transferred to the online domain. It offers serious news and analytical content, with strong interest in social issues and liberal agenda. *Indigo.ge* is a companion website of *Indigo* magazine with in-depth, long-form storytelling and rich multimedia content. *Civil.ge* is one of the oldest quality online news outlets operating in Georgia.

Online media outlets, which target Caucasian and global audiences and are available in several languages, have grown in numbers. *Codastory.com* is a startup by the team of internationally renowned reporters, which provides in-depth reporting from Europe and Eurasia. *Eurasianet.org* is one of the oldest websites with quality public affairs content from the region, available in English and Russian. *Jamnews.com* is a multilingual (Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, English) website by GoGroup Media, which carries news and in-depth analysis by professional journalists and eyewitness reporters in the South Caucasus. *Chai-khana.org* and *Oc-media.org* are targeting Caucasus and international audiences with quality reporting from the region. *Chai-khana.org* is available in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian and English, and *Oc-media.org* is available in English and Russian. *iFact.ge* is set by the team of investigative journalists.

The trend has been for the traditional media to expand and diversify content available on their websites. All lead newspapers and TV stations have accompanying websites. Some popular media outlets, like TV station *Tabula*, news magazine *Liberali* and newspaper *Batumelebi* have moved to the web and are only available online.

Online media are developing fast in the regions. *RegInfo.ge*, together with the affiliate *Mtisambebi.ge*, and *Radioway.ge* form a group, known for in-depth, high-quality investigative reporting from the regions. *Qartli.ge* is a reliable source of hard news and multimedia stories from Kvemo Kartli region. *Samkhretis Karibche - Sknews.ge* is a successful regional news outlet, which operates *Radio Samkhretis Karibche* and attracts substantial traffic in the Samtkhe-Javakheti region. *Kakhetis Khma* newspaper reports original content from the Kakheti region on *Kknews.ge* and *Agromedia.ge* websites, the latter devoted to agricultural journalism. Kakheti news are also available from online newspaper *Speqtri.ge*. *KutaisiPost.ge* produces an innovative web journalism from the Imereti region, as do *Livepress.ge* (Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region) and *Batumelebi.ge* (from the Ajara Autonomous Republic).. Regional TV and radio stations such as *Trialeti TV*, *MegaTV*, *Borjomi TV*, *Metskhre Talga*, *Metskhre Arkhi*, *Gurjaani TV* and *Radio Dzveli Kalaki* produce original content for their websites. A welcome development has been the establishment of *JNews.ge*, a portal in Russian language in Armenian-populated Akhalkalaki. Azerbaijani-language content is provided by *Marneulifm.ge*, a website of the Marneuli community radio, and the *Az.kvira.ge* website, while Armenian-language content is also available at *Nor.ge*.

Still, the quality of news available to the Internet users in Georgia varies. Among the most used websites there are outlets, which offer quality news (*On.ge*, *Netgazeti.ge*) as well as websites with less stringent standards (*Ambebi.ge*, *Newposts.ge*). While *Indigo.ge*, *Liberali.ge*, *Chai-khana.org*, *JamNews.com*, *Sknews.ge* have all produced reporting recognised by journalism awards *Geworld.ge* and *Sakinform.ge* have been reported to carry xenophobic content and Russian propaganda sources (MDF, 2016).

Social Networks

The most popular social media network in Georgia is Facebook, with a number of users estimated at 2 million, according to *Internetworldstats.com*. The 2017 IRI poll showed that Facebook was by far the most preferred social network (87 percent of users), followed by *Odnoklasniki* (16 percent), Twitter (3 percent), *V Kontakte* (1 percent) and LinkedIn (1 percent).

While Facebook use is increasing, the use of other social networking sites, especially Russian-language social media, is diminishing. Up to 62 percent of respondents, up from 26 percent in 2011, said in the CRRC's Caucasus Barometer 2017 study that Facebook use was their most frequent activity on the Internet while only 25 percent of respondents said they used other social networking sites, down from 40 percent in 2011.

Facebook is the platform of choice for public affairs discourse. It is where a substantive segment of Georgians (18 percent) obtain news, according to the IRI 2017 poll. The influence of Facebook-based discussions on the public opinion is high. According to the Freedom House, the Internet penetration is driven partly with interest in Facebook and other social networking networks (2013).

With nearly two third of the voting population on Facebook, especially politically active youth, the social networking site is increasingly targeted by politicians. Key politicians have well-managed pages and profiles, and increased their use of the Internet. President Margvelashvili, Prime Minister Kvirikashvili, Mayor Kaladze, lead opposition figures all have *Facebook* accounts, with hundreds of thousand of registered fans and connected YouTube, Twitter, and Flickr accounts.

News media are very active in social media, relying on the networks for traffic and user engagement. News outlets with over half a million fans on Facebook are *Newposts Georgia*, *Starfm*, *Goga TV*, *Rustavi 2*.

Opinion Makers

Tbilisi has a nascent blogging community. Most popular blogs (among those measured by *Top.ge* web metrics) are for niche

topics, such as personal care, fashion, sports, gardening and such. Blogs are popular among socially active youth. Facebook group *Georgian Bloggers* lists some 60 bloggers in the community (September 22, 2013), with more bloggers identified in comments.

Blogs are the medium of choice for activists. LGBT rights group Identoba has an active blog.

Those interested in public affairs and politics can visit *24/7 blogmedia.ge*, a joint platform for bloggers launched by *24 hours* and *Azrebi.ge*.

In all, there are 504 blogs registered on Georgian Internet audience-measurement site Top.ge. Top-viewed blogs get between 2,000 to 10,000 unique hits a day on average. Popular blogging platforms are Wordpress.com and Blogspot.com.

Since Facebook is the most popular network, bloggers share content mostly through Facebook. The Institute for Development and Freedom of Information notes that “citizen activeness in forums and blogs is very low.” Freedom on the Net 2017 notes that “even though the Georgian blogosphere has grown impressively, there are few bloggers who create content that has an impact on the political agenda, or who spark widespread discussion online.”

Blogs that are devoted to public affairs are typically incorporated into news websites, such as blogs on *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Radiotavisupleba.ge* website, *Tabula.ge* and *GPB's 1tv.ge*. *Tamada Tales* is an excellent blog by George Lomsadze for *Eurasianet.org*.

Internet forums have gone down in popularity. *Forum.ge* is the biggest discussion forum.

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- [Bolnisi](#)
- [Chemi Imereti](#)
- [Didgorelebi](#)
- [Financial](#)
- [Guria News](#)
- [Georgia Today](#)
- [Kakhetis Khma](#)
- [Kviris Palitra](#)
- [Lelo](#)
- [Literaturuli Gazeti](#)
- [Literaturuli Sakartvelo](#)
- [Msoplio Sporti](#)
- [PrimeTime](#)
- [Qronika Plus](#)
- [Resonance](#)

- [Sakartvelo da Msoplio](#)
- [Samkhretis Karibche](#)
- [Sarbieli](#)
- [Sitkva da Sakme](#)
- [Speqtri](#)
- [Sport Info](#)
- [Svobodnaya Gruzia](#)
- [The Georgian Journal](#)
- [The Messenger](#)
- [Trialetis Expressi](#)
- [The Georgian Times](#)
- [Versia](#)
- [Vecherni Tbilisi](#)

Magazines

- [Amarta](#)
- [Auto Build Georgia](#)
- [Bomondi](#)
- [City Magazine](#)
- [Gza](#)
- [Forbes Georgia](#)
- [Hello Georgia](#)
- [Indigo](#)
- [Liberali](#)
- [National Geographic Georgia](#)
- [OK Georgia](#)
- [Sarke](#)
- [Shin](#)

Radio

- [Abkhazetis Khma](#)
- [Ar Daidardo](#)
- [Atinati](#)
- [Autoradio](#)
- [Dzveli Kalaki](#)
- [Fortuna](#)
- [Fortuna Plus](#)
- [Green Wave](#)
- [Harmonia](#)
- [Hereti](#)
- [Imedi](#)
- [Imeri](#)
- [Jako](#)

- [Maestro](#)
- [Marneuli](#)
- [Mozaika](#)
- [Nor](#)
- [Odishi+](#)
- [Palitra](#)
- [Radio Channel I](#)
- [Radio Channel I Music](#)
- [Radio GIPA](#)
- [Radio Tavisupleba](#) (RFE/RL Georgia)
- [Radioway](#)
- [Samkhretis Karibche](#)
- [Shokoladi](#)
- [Trialeti](#)
- [Ustnobi](#)
- [MTC Youth Radio](#)
- [CSM Radio](#)
- [Helping Hand](#)
- [Vrastan FM](#)

Television

- [Ajara Public Broadcaster](#)
- [Bolneli TV](#)
- [Borjomi TV](#)
- [Comedy Channel](#)
- [GDS](#)
- [Georgian Public Broadcaster Channel 1](#)
- [Georgian Public Broadcaster Channel 2](#)
- [Guria TV](#)
- [Gurjaani TV](#)
- [Iberia](#)
- [Imedi](#)
- [Imervizia](#)
- [Kavkasia](#)
- [Marao](#)
- [Marneuli TV](#)
- [Metskhre Arkhi](#)
- [Metskhre Talga](#)
- [Mega TV](#)
- [Music Box](#)
- [Odishi](#)
- [Parvana](#)
- [Rioni TV](#)
- [Rustavi 2](#)

- [Trialeti](#)
- [TOK TV](#)
- [TV Pirveli](#)
- [Unanimity](#)

Digital media

- [1tv.ge](#)
- [Agromedia.ge](#)
- [Ambebi.ge](#)
- [Az.kvira.ge](#)
- [Batumelebi.ge](#)
- [Borjomi.tv](#)
- [Chai-khana.org](#)
- [Civil.ge](#)
- [Codastory.com](#)
- [Eurasianet.org](#)
- [Geworld.ge](#)
- [Gurjaaniv.com](#)
- [iFact](#)
- [Indigo.com.ge](#)
- [Interpressnews.ge](#)
- [Jam-news.net](#)
- [Jnews.ge](#)
- [Kknews.ge](#)
- [Kutaisipost.ge](#)
- [Liberali.ge](#)
- [Marneulifm.ge](#)
- [Megatv.ge](#)
- [Metkhre Arkhi](#)
- [Metskhre Talga](#)
- [Mtisambebi.ge](#)
- [Netgazeti.ge](#)
- [Newposts.ge](#)
- [News.ge](#)
- [Nor.ge](#)
- [Oc-media.org](#)
- [On.ge](#)
- [Palitravideo.ge](#)
- [Presa.ge](#)
- [Qartli.ge](#)
- [Radiodk.ge](#)
- [Radioway.ge](#)
- [Reginfo.ge](#)
- [Rustavi2.ge](#)

- Sakinform.ge
- Sknews.ge
- Tabula.ge
- Trialeti.ge

Opinion makers

- [24/7 Blogmedia](#)
- [Georgian bloggers Facebook group](#)
- [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty blogs](#)
- [Blogs on Tabula.ge](#)
- [Tamada Tales on Eurasianet.org](#)

Organisations

Trade Unions

Georgia does not have active professional associations. The oldest association, the Georgian Federation of Journalists, is the successor of the Soviet-era Union of Journalists and is currently dysfunctional. The Trade Union of Mass Media Workers, set up in 2010, became also dysfunctional. In October of 2016, the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC) established Georgian Media Trade Union (GMTU) to unite journalists, photographers, cameramen, editors, and other employees of the media sector. Most recently, the GMTU and GTUC has been defending the rights of employees laid off by the Georgian Public Broadcaster.

Journalist Associations

Several journalist associations were set up with international donor funds between 2005 and 2007. The Georgian Regional Media Association (GRMA) and the Georgian Association of Regional Television Broadcasters (GARB), which unite regional media organisations, have been the two most visible organisations, and their influence has grown over years.

GARB has lobbied successfully for legislative changes to serve interests of the regional television stations and took active part in the digital switchover process. By the end of 2017, the group of member TV stations, along with the director and staff journalists, left GARB. These stations, along with new founding members, launched a new association, the Alliance of Broadcasters (AB).

The Media Advocacy Coalition, established in 2011, is highly effective in advocating new and progressive legislation and in supporting independence and pluralism in media. The coalition has been instrumental in introducing the “must carry/must offer” rule into the Georgian broadcasting, obliging cable operators to carry signals of all TV stations and TV stations to offer signals to all cable operators. Presently, the coalition is actively monitoring the developments in the reform of the Georgian Public Broadcaster.

Some watchdog organisations, such as Transparency International–Georgia, have strong media support and advocacy programs. TI Georgia has investigated irregularities on the media market, such as cross-ownerships and non-transparent

advertising practices and monitored GPB's fulfilment of public service function. The Media Development Foundation is active in tracing the effects and links between Georgian media and Russian propaganda channels as well as hate speech and discrimination in the media. The Institute of Development Freedom of Information has been active in access to information and Internet regulation activities. The Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics has also been active in uniting journalists around 11 standards of ethical reporting (see in 3.2 Accountability systems).

Media.ge, *Mediachecker.ge* and *Mythdetector.ge* are industry publications, which report news and analyze about the developments in the Georgian media, and also publish research, standards and guidelines. *Marketer.ge* often discusses advertising trends and projects in the news media.

News Agencies

A number of local and international news agencies operate in Georgia. The trend is for news agencies to expand their content offerings beyond headline news, adding long-form, feature and analytical stories, interviews, and multimedia content. Thus, news agencies are transforming into digital news outlets, targeting general users rather than news media clients.

Interpressnews.ge and *NewPosts.ge* as news agency catering both to media audiences and media organisations, and get most hits, according to *Top.ge* (see under Digital media). Other top news agencies are: *PrimeTime*, *GHN*, *IPress*, *Info News*, *Leader*, *Info 9*, *For.ge*. *Agenda.ge* is the news agency of the Georgian government, available in several languages.

RegInfo is the agency of choice for regional news. *RegInfo* collects content from Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta Mtianeti Information Centers.

The agencies are independent, profit-making enterprises, however, news agencies also show the signs of political and commercial pressures. Most news agencies are based in Tbilisi.

Russian-language news agency are *NovostiGruzia* and *Sputnik Georgia*. *Sputnik Georgia* is part of Kremlin-backed Russian-language news network *Sputnik*, and is also available in Russian and Georgian.

International agencies are represented in Georgia: *Reuters* and *Associated Press* have regional bureaus, while *Bloomberg*, *BBC* and *AP Images* have freelance correspondents based in the country.

Audience measurement organisations

The television market in Georgia is measured by two companies, *TV MR Georgia*, associated with *Nielsen*, and *Tri Media Intelligence*, licensed by *Kantar Media*.

TV MR Georgia, an associate of *Nielsen*, operates in Georgia since 2005, while *Tri Media Intelligence* started in 2016.

The fact there are two measurement organisations on a small market like Georgia reflects the level of polarisation and lack of trust in the sector. *Rustavi 2* and its affiliate channels subscribe to ratings measured by *TV MR Georgia*, while *Imedi Media Holding* and *GPB* work with *Tri Media Intelligence*. According to *IREX Media Sustainability Index (2017)* two measurement systems confuse advertisers and negatively affect the market. Many media companies use the services of *Top.ge*, which measures web audiences

Sources

Trade and journalists unions

- [Alliance of Broadcasters](#)
- [Coalition for Media Advocacy](#)
- [Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics](#)
- [Georgian Regional Media Association](#)
- [Georgian Association of Regional Television Broadcasters](#)
- [Media.ge](#)
- [Mediachecker](#)
- [Mythdetector](#)
- [Marketer.ge](#)

News agencies

- [Agenda.ge](#)
- [Allnews](#)
- [For.ge](#)
- [GHN](#)
- [Info 9](#)
- [Interpressnews](#)
- [IPress](#)
- [Leader](#)
- [NewPosts](#)
- [Novosti Gruzia](#)
- [PrimeTime](#)
- [PIA](#)
- [Reginfo.ge](#)

Audience measurement organisations

- [Top.ge](#)
- [Tri Media Intelligence](#)
- [TV MR Ge](#)

Policies

Media legislation

Georgia has a liberal and progressive media legislation. The Constitution of Georgia and the Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression guarantee freedom of press. The Law on Broadcasting regulates activities in the broadcast sector. The Civil Code has important provisions guaranteeing access to public files.

Article 19 of the Constitution states:

- Every individual has the right to freedom of speech, thought, conscience, religion and belief;

- The persecution of a person on the account of his/her speech, thought, religion or belief as well as the compulsion to express his/her opinion about them shall be impermissible;
- These rights may not be restricted unless the exercise of these rights infringes upon the rights of other individuals.

Article 24 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of media and information:

- Everyone has the right to freely receive and impart information, to express and impart his/her opinion orally, in writing or by in any other means;
- Mass media shall be free. Censorship shall be impermissible;
- Neither the state nor particular individuals shall have the right to monopolise mass media or means of dissemination of information;
- The exercise of the rights listed in the first and second paragraphs of this article may be restricted by law, to the extent and insofar as is necessary in a democratic society, in order to guarantee state security, territorial integrity or public safety, to prevent crime, to safeguard rights and dignity of others, to prevent the disclosure of information acknowledged as confidential, or to ensure the independence and impartiality of justice.

The new version of the Constitution, which was adopted in 2017 to enter into force in 2018, incorporates important provision guaranteeing the freedom of access to the Internet. Article 18, para 4 will read: "Everyone has the right to have access to the internet and to freely use the internet" (Matsne.gov.ge). The new edition also guarantees the independence of the Public Broadcaster from political and commercial pressures (Article 18, para 5) and the institutional and financial independence of the Georgian National Communication Commission (Article 18, para 6).

The Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression, adopted after the Rose Revolution, is the key legislation guaranteeing the free practice of journalism. The law recognises and protects the right to freedom of expression as an inherent and supreme human value. The law ensures and protects the freedom of every individual living on the territory of Georgia in addition to institutions such as newspapers and publishers and the Public Broadcaster. It protects confidentiality of sources. One of the important provisions of the law concerns court guarantees for the freedom of expression. According to Article 6 of the law, any person may apply to a court with a request, "to prevent a violation of a right guaranteed and protected under this law" or "to eradicate the consequences of the violation." Importantly, the burden of proof lies with the initiator of the restriction and not with the journalists.

The law has decriminalised libel. It recognises distinctions between defamation of private person and of a public figure. According to the Articles 13 and 14, public figures should accept much more criticism than ordinary citizen because they are elected and have a higher responsibility to citizens. Their decisions and actions might have an influence on society. The law explicitly states that any interpretation of it should be in compliance with the Constitution of Georgia and the principles of the European Convention of Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Thus, the law clearly considers international democratic standards of protection of freedom of expression.

The Freedom of Information Section of the General Administrative Code of 1999 guarantees access to public information that is not a state secret. The code specifies that requested information should be made available immediately, if possible, or within a maximum of ten days.

The Law on Broadcasting establishes rules for obtaining licenses and authorisations for air frequencies and sets the legal basis for the establishment of the Public Broadcaster. Amendments to the Law on Broadcasting, introduced in 2012 improved access to information through “must carry/must offer” provision obliging cable operators to carry signals of all television stations, preventing politically motivated suppression of certain channels. Another major improvement has been the requirement for broadcasters to submit detailed information about their ownership structure and financial sources.

Following the digital switchover in 2015, the requirement for licensing of TV broadcasters was dropped from the Law on Broadcasting. TV companies now require authorisation rather than licensing to enter the market. Radio stations still require licenses, as do multiplexes.

However, the Law on Broadcasting contains provisions, which are criticised by the industry. The latest amendments, introduced in December 2017, allows public broadcasters to sell advertising and forgo strict public procurement rules for equipment and content purchases. The amendments have been criticised by media watchdogs and industry alike as opening doors to non-transparent and potentially corrupt practices and unfair competition whereby the nationally-broadcasting station funded under the Georgian state budget will enter the commercial advertising market. Heads of independent TV stations argued that the Georgian Public Broadcaster will sway the advertising market away from small independent broadcasters and establish an unfair competition environment.

Georgia has been an active participant of the Open Government Partnership to guarantee better access and citizen engagement with government data. As of August 2013, the government requires its agencies to proactively publish public information on their websites and accept electronic requests for information. Another commitment under the Open Government Partnership, a unified public data website Data.gov.ge, is operational, with some agencies more active than others in providing data. Under its OGP commitments, Georgia has undertaken to introduce a new law on freedom of information to more clearly define open data and create stronger compliance mechanisms, however, the draft of the proposed law is still awaiting submission to the legislature.

Other legislation pertaining to the media include the Law on State Secret, the Law on Copyright and Adjacent Rights and the Tax Code.

Accountability systems

The Broadcasters' Code of Conduct, adopted in 2009, is part of the Law on Broadcasting and is mandatory for all TV and Radio stations. The Law on Broadcasting, which defines it as “a normative act, passed by the Commission [...] determining the rules of conduct for license holders.” The Georgian National Communications Commission is charged with monitoring broadcasters' compliance with the code. The law obliges all broadcasters to have their own codes of ethics.

The Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics is an association of journalists, editors and media managers, who are signatories of the Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics comprised of 11 principles of ethical and professional conduct. The charter was adopted in December 2009. It is active in building a community of journalists, who pursue quality and ethical journalism. The charter has a board, comprised of highly regarded journalism professionals, to review complaints and cases of journalism ethics violations and issues judgements. The functions of the charter are similar to press councils.

Regulatory authorities

The primary regulatory authority in Georgia is the Georgian National Communication Commission (GNCC). Created by the Law on Telecommunications and Post of 1999, the GNCC was established in 2000 as an independent government agency

with an independent source of income from licensing and regulation fees. It is charged with regulating the telecommunications sector. The commission members are proposed by the president, in consultation with the prime minister, and elected by the Parliament of Georgia. Commission members (five in total) serve for six years.

The commission aims to prevent the establishment of monopolies in the broadcast sector and create an equal and fair competitive environment. It also facilitates the introduction of new technologies. The commission holds competitions and tenders to distribute licenses on the use of frequencies, and authorisations. It monitors activities of license holders and authorised entities to ensure their compliance with the laws and regulations in the broadcast sector.

The early years of the establishment of the broadcast regulatory framework in Georgia were marred with irregularities. The commission was accused of politicising the licensing process and barring new TV and radio stations from entering the market. It has repeatedly stripped unwanted TV stations, such as *TV Maestro*, of licenses on political grounds and imposed unfair fines. The Ad Hoc Parliamentary Commission on the Georgian National Communications Commission, set up in 2014, accused the commission of aligning with politicians and entering into corrupt business deals.

Against this challenging context, GNCC's current leadership sets as its priorities to provide effective leadership of the regulatory framework and lead the harmonisation of Georgia's regulatory framework with the EU's Directive 2010/13/EU (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in compliance with the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union, signed in 2014. The performance of the Georgian National Communications Commission has markedly improved in the past few years. The GNCC was praised for strong and "non-political" leadership in Georgia's successful switchover to digital broadcasting and for dropping licensing requirements for TV stations. Inversely, TV stations criticised GNCC's hasty introduction of per-hour advertisement limit – in line with the Audiovisual Services Directive – as damaging for their financial health and the advertising market in general. GNCC does not agree with the charges, claiming that new advertising limits have not affected the advertising market negatively, and that the large negative growth in the TV advertising market is a monetary effect produced by the exchange rate fluctuation, specifically, by the depreciation of the Georgian lari relative to the US dollar. GNCC has also been criticized for supporting GPB-initiated amendments to the Law on Broadcasting allowing the GPB to sell advertising and sponsorship.

Sources

- [Georgian National Communications Commission](#) (GNCC)
- [National Statistics Service of Georgia](#) (Geostat)
- [Parliament of Georgia](#)
- [Public Defender of Georgia](#)
- [The Constitution of Georgia](#)

Education

Universities and schools

There are several quality academic and training programs in Georgia.

Tbilisi State University is the oldest educational institution in Georgia. It offers bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes in journalism as part of the Department of Social and Political Sciences.

The Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs offers academic programs at bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, and is known for practical, hands-on education. It draws students from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. CSJMM has journalism, media management, audiovisual and public relations programmes.

In 2007, the Caucasus School of Media was established at the Caucasus University. It offers bachelor's and master's level programmes, with three academic tracks: journalism, media management and strategic communication.

The University of Georgia, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, offers bachelor's and master's level programmes in journalism, media management and public relations.

Several other state and private universities, such as Tavartkiladze Teaching University, Georgia David Aghmashenebeli University, Grigol Robakidze University, International Black Sea University, Ilia State University, Georgian Technical University and Theater and Film Georgia State University, offer journalism, public relations and mass communication programs.

Professional development

The Media Education Center provides journalism students the opportunity to work in an "immersive learning environment" and access to multiple media platforms. MEC is open to students enrolled in journalism programs at Georgian Universities and also started offering trainings for media professionals.

Internews Georgia offers training programs with an emphasis on multimedia, web journalism and technological tools as part of its program to strengthen independent journalism and access to quality facts and information both centrally and in the regions of Georgia.

GIPA Training Center offers regular trainings for journalists and public relations professionals. GIPA is part European Journalism Training Association (EJTA). GIPA's Frontline Georgia Club offers journalism trainings as well as public discussions and film screenings on ethics and journalistic standards. Frontline Georgia is associated with Frontline Club (UK).

The Caucasus University runs training programmes and professional courses for media professionals. Tbilisi State University, Ilia University and a number of other state and private institutions run trainings for journalists on an irregular basis.

The Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics started a media school in 2018 through funding support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED). This program will train 15 students over five months in journalism skills.

Topical journalism trainings, such as environmental journalism or court coverage, are offered by non-governmental organisations interested in better awareness and improved coverage of issues of public importance. For instance, the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation) runs annual seminars for professional journalists on current issues in public policy and administration, economics and trade, electoral politics and international relations.

Sources

University/School of Journalism

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- [Frontline Georgia Club](#)
- [Georgian Institute of Public Affairs](#) (GIPA)
- [Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies](#) (GFSIS)
- [Georgian Charter of Journalism Ethics Media School](#)
- [Georgian Technical University](#)
- [Grigol Robakidze University](#)
- [Ilia State University](#)
- [International Black Sea University](#)
- [Internews Georgia](#)
- [International Black Sea University](#)
- [Multimedia Education Center](#) (MEC)
- [Telavi State University](#)
- [Tbilisi State University](#) (TSU)
- [Theater and Film Georgia State University](#)
- [Tavartkiladze Teaching University](#)
- [University of Georgia](#) (UG) (CSM)

Conclusions

Conclusion

The Georgian media landscape reflects the transitional nature of the Georgian democratic system, whereby government interference in the media through formal and informal leverages and strong political parallelism co-exist with strong activism to free and professionalise the media and build a public service broadcasting.

The system is dominated by television – a medium of choice for the majority of the population. The digital switchover and the liberalisation of the broadcast sector serve as strong incentives for the growth of television, as does the advertising market. However, the development of Internet infrastructure and skills, and the growing web consumption by young audiences will slowly shift the market from telecentric to web based.

Traditional media are building their presence on the web, experimenting with new forms of storytelling and business models. As young audiences continue to utilize to the fullest the potential of the web for news and public affairs exchange, more traditional media sources will gravitate towards the web and appear in web-only editions.

The trust in media will continue to diffuse, especially against the onslaught of Russian propaganda and various other sources of disinformation. Georgians will learn to be media literate – use multiple media sources of information and verify facts. Georgians will continue valuing the freedom of expression and press, which, to many, is the measure of the democracy available in the country.

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