

Norway - Media Landscape

Author(s): Helge Østbye

Copyright © European Journalism Centre (EJC) 2025 - MediaLandscapes.org

Table of contents

- Introduction
- Media
 - Print
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Digital Media
 - Social Networks
 - Opinion Makers
 - Sources
- Organisations
 - Trade Unions
 - Journalist Associations
 - News Agencies
 - Audience measurement organisations
 - Sources
- Policies
 - Media legislation
 - Accountability systems
 - Regulatory authorities
 - Sources
- Education
 - Universities and schools
 - Professional development
 - Sources
- Conclusions
 - 5.1 Conclusion
 - 5.2 References

Overview

Norwegians became newspaper readers, mobilised by a political conflict with Sweden (1860-1905) and class struggle from 1900 to 1935. Radio was available to the population from the second half of the 1920s, to reach its golden age in the 1950s.

Television was officially opened in 1960 and the diffusion among the population was very rapid. After a few years the press, radio and television reached daily approximately the same proportion of the Norwegian population. In 1983, 87 percent of Norwegians read a newspaper on an average day, 82 percent watched television and 75 percent listened to radio, with very small differences according to gender, education, class, geography. The only sociodemographic factor that distinguished between users and non-users, was age - people under 25 years were less frequently newspaper readers, but when the young settled and established their own family, they too became newspaper readers.

When television was introduced, the focus on radio was reduced, but radio maintained its importance as an important channel for dissemination of information in the society for another ten or twenty years, when television and - later - the Internet, took over the role as the prime source of updated news.

The role of the printed newspapers was challenged by the Internet from the 1990s. The share of the population watching television on an average day surpassed the share of print newspaper readers for the first time in 1998. Since then, there has been a drop in both print newspaper circulation and in the share of population that reads newspapers. The fall started for the popular newspapers and spread to most other segments of the newspaper industry. The papers that have done best in this situation are the national quality opinion newspapers and the small, local newspapers. Both these two types of newspapers contain much information that is not found elsewhere on the Internet.

The first newspapers started to present news on the Internet in 1995. Ten years later almost all newspapers had some kind of news service on the net, without any kind of payment system. It has been difficult to introduce payment systems, but today many newspapers have all or some of the news and commentaries behind a payment firewall. The total share of the population that read newspapers, either in printed or in electronic form, is more or less the same as in 1980s, but now more people read the electronic versions than the printed newspapers.

This means that the newspapers are still an important source for the spread of information in the Norwegian society. And most of the stories that are presented in the other media (radio, television, Internet), come from journalists that work for the newspapers.

Much of the consumption of radio and television has also been transferred to the Internet. This has opened for new actors (like YouTube and Netflix), but also for new forms of nonlinear listening and viewing of programmes initially published on the traditional media.

Initially radio was regulated through telegraph legislations and the state licenced four regional, private radio companies in the mid-1920. In 1933 the Parliament decided to merge the four regional companies and create a state-owned monopoly, based on public service principles, *Norsk Rikskringkasting* (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation – NRK). The Broadcasting Act of 1933 also gave NRK a monopoly of television. Despite the close relations between the NRK and the Ministry (the Ministry of Church and Education until 1982, the Ministry of Culture from 1982), there have never been any examples of state interference in the programmes, but it is possible that the NRK in certain periods has been too cautious when covering controversial issues. Until 1996 the director-general was appointed by the government (formally by the King), while he (so far, no woman has held this position) is now appointed by the Board of the NRK. The Board is appointed by the government. There have been complaints that the NRK has a leftist bias or favours the Labour Party, but it is difficult to find any evidence of interference from the party or the Ministry in periods when the Labour Party has been in power.

In 1981-82 the monopoly was broken when local radio and television was introduced outside the NRK. Commercial, national radio and television channels started ten years later. Local television has never been strong in Norway. Local radio was popular in the 1980s, but lost much of its audience when it got competition from the national commercial channels. The NRK has the largest market share in both radio and television. The private channels have connections to the business elites, but

no direct links to the political sector.

The first political parties in Norway were established in 1884, but already from the 1860s many newspapers took a stand in the conflict between Norwegian national opposition and the pro-Swedish government in questions related to Norwegian independence from Sweden (Norway gained full independence in 1905). When the parties were formed in 1884, most of the newspapers flocked around either *Høyre* ("right" - the Conservative party) or *Venstre* ("left" - the Liberal party). When the labour movement gained strength around year 1900, new newspapers were established by local branches of *Arbeiderpartiet* and trade unions. Several parties were established later, but they had difficulties in establishing their own newspapers. Cities and towns all over the country had a selection of newspapers, representing three or four different political parties or popular movements like the temperance movement or low church organisations. During the period when the party press was at its strongest, strong links to the parties prevented the formation of organisations that could represent the press as a whole, as each party had its own organisations for newspapers, journalists and editors. A reduction in the general, political antagonism after the Second World War led to the formation of national organisations of the categories, and to a professionalisation of the press.

The newspaper market was almost completely dominated by regional and local newspapers until the mid-1960s, when two Oslo-based newspapers started transforming into national, popular mass circulation newspapers.

Media

Print

As long as the World Association of Newspapers (WAN - IFRA) has published newspaper statistics, Norway has been close to being world leader when it comes to newspaper reading. Of the nations listed in the World Press Trends 2016, Japan has the highest density of paid-for dailies total circulation with 400 copies per 1000 adults. Switzerland (386) and Norway (341) top the list of European countries. There are several reasons for the high newspaper readership in Norway: high early literacy, strong regions and high identification with local communities. Major political and social movements have mobilised support via newspapers, writing for their (potential and actual) followers.

The typical Norwegian newspaper is small (circulation 2000 - 5000), serving one or a few local communities. But there are also regional and national newspapers. With the exception of some of the smaller newspapers, almost all newspapers used to have close links to a political party, but these links were ended between 1970 and 1995. Political ambitions have been replaced by a profit motive for most papers.

Of the 228 newspapers in Norway in 2015, 57 had six or seven editions per week, 59 had three to five editions, 35 had two and 77 were weekly newspapers. Most of these weeklies are small, but there are a few important national weekly newspapers.

The total circulation of Norwegian newspapers increased until about 1990. Then there was a ten-year period with stable circulation (3.1 - 3.2 million copies). Then, the circulation of the popular newspapers started to decline and this was followed by a more general fall in the circulation and readership of printed newspapers - the total circulation was just above 2 million copies in 2015.

The fall in subscriptions and single-copy sales, has hit newspapers' revenues both directly and indirectly via the decreasing advertising revenues. Income from electronic publishing of the content has not been enough to compensate the losses from the printed content. As a result, the workforce in the newspaper industry has reduced.

The first newspapers in Norway were established in the 1760s, mostly serving the administrative and economic elites. The four newspapers that were established before 1800, were located in the four cathedral cities, giving the Norwegian press a regional foundation. A certain degree of freedom of printing and freedom of expression was granted by the constitution of 1814, when Norway entered a union with Sweden. The relationship with Sweden became politicised in the 1860s and there was a close interaction between the establishment of a political opposition and the establishment of new, more liberal newspapers, drawing their readers from peasants and the urban middle class. After Norway had gained full independence from Sweden, also the working class was recruited as newspaper readers through the establishment of a number of local and regional newspapers founded by the labour movement. For 100 years from 1885 onwards, most Norwegian newspapers supported a political party.

A system with local competition between several newspapers, representing different political parties, was the typical structure of the press until the German occupation of Norway in 1940. Following the liberation in 1945, the political press was re-established, but a process of monopolisation of local markets started in the 1950s. Competition for market shares gradually became more important than political content.

Until 1985, each of the 200 - 220 newspapers had their own individual owners (with very few exceptions). Since then, there has been a strong concentration of ownership.

Throughout most of the 20th century, *Aftenposten* was the largest selling newspaper in Norway. It was established in 1860 by Christian Schibsted and, after his death in 1878, the paper was owned by his descendants. In 1968, a (then) small popular newspaper, *Verdens Gang - VG*, was taken over by the Schibsted family. Within 13 years, the circulation had increased by more than ten times and had it replaced *Aftenposten* as Norway's largest newspaper. The Schibsted family company was transformed to a limited company and listed at the Oslo Stock Exchange in 1991. The Schibsted Group started to buy shares in other major newspapers and in 2008 the company took full control over three of the largest newspapers in Norway: *Bergens Tidende*, *Stavanger Aftenblad* and *Fædrelandsvennen*. In addition Schibsted - along with its ally, the Swedish NWT group - controls, or at least has a strong influence over the third largest newspaper owner in Norway, Polaris Media.

Important newspapers owned by Schibsted:

- VG, national, popular newspaper, Oslo (a tradition as a non-party-political, non-socialist paper) - Circulation 2015: 113,000;
- *Aftenposten*, national and regional, Oslo (previously conservative) - Circulation 2015: 172,000;
- *Bergens Tidende*, regional, Bergen (previously liberal) - Circulation 2015: 59,000;
- *Stavanger Aftenblad*, regional, Stavanger (previously liberal) - Circulation 2015: 50,000;
- *Fædrelandsvennen*, regional, Kristiansand (previously liberal) - Circulation 2015: 30,000.

Important newspapers owned by Polaris:

- *Adresseavisen*; regional, Trondheim (previously conservative) - Circulation 2015: 58,000;
- *Sunnmørsposten*; local/regional, Ålesund (previously liberal) - Circulation 2015: 25,000.

From 1985 onwards there has been a strong concentration of ownership. One of Norway's biggest businesses, Orkla (chemistry and consumer articles), started buying newspapers. In 2006 the group owned 29 local newspapers, then all the

media activities were sold, the newspapers to the British Mecom Group (David Montgomery).

From the 1920s, the newspapers owned by local Labour party organisations and trade unions all over the country, have cooperated and from time to time acted as an informal corporation. A formal parent company was formed in 1990 and became owner of all the newspapers that belonged to the labour movement, with the exception of the party's main newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet* (The Labour Newspaper), which changed name to the politically neutral *Dagsavisen* (The Daily Newspaper). Several other newspapers have also been bought. In 2011-2012 Mecom's Norwegian newspapers were sold to A-pressen, which changed name to Amedia.

Important newspapers owned by Amedia:

- *Romerikes Blad*, local, Lillestrøm (previously Labour party) - Circulation 2015: 24,000;
- *Drammes Tidende*, local, Drammen (previously conservative) - Circulation 2015: 24,000.

Important newspapers owned by other groups:

- *Dagens Næringsliv*, national, financial, Oslo (non-party, liberalistic, owned by important businesses) - Circulation 2015: 57,000;
- *Dagbladet*, national, popular newspaper, Oslo (previously liberal, owned by Magazine publisher Allers) - Circulation 2015: 57,000;
- *Klassekampen*, national (politically radical, formerly Marxist-Leninist); Circulation 2015: 21,000;
- *Vårt Land*, national (politically independent, Christian, owned by Mentor Medier) - Circulation 2015: 21,000
- *Dagsavisen*, national/local, Oslo (previously Labour party, owned by Mentor Medier) - Circulation 2015: 21,000.

The three major newspaper owners are:

- Schibsted, which owns 16 newspapers, including the three largest in Norway. The group has a market share of 27 percent of the total national circulation. Schibsted has one major owner, Stiftelsen Tinius, a foundation created by Tinius Nagell-Erichsen in 1996 in order to secure independent journalism. Nagell-Erichsen was the only member of the Schibsted family who kept (and slightly increased) his shares in the company when it was introduced on the stock exchange. In addition to the founder's 26 percent of the shares, only 15 percent is owned by Norwegian shareholders. International financial investors (banks, pension funds, etc.) dominate among the shareholders.
- Amedia is the second largest newspaper owner. The group controls 62 newspapers with a combined market share of 24 percent. The newspapers are found all over the country. During the expansion of Amedia, the newspaper chain was owned mainly by Telenor (a Norwegian telecommunications conglomerate), the national organisation of trade unions (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge) and trade unions. In 2016 it was sold to a foundation established by surplus from bank savings all over Norway.
- With close links to Schibsted, Polaris Media is the third largest newspaper group. Polaris owns 30 newspapers with 10 percent of the total national circulation. The Polaris newspapers are located in central and northern Norway. Schibsted is the largest shareholder in Polaris (29 percent) and the Swedish NWT newspaper group has 26 percent. Schibsted and NWT usually cooperate and together they control Polaris.

Ownership of the remaining 120 newspapers (with 39 percent of the circulation) is divided; there are several small newspaper chains (like Mentor Medier, Agderposten Medier, etc.), but many newspapers have their own, local owners.

Radio

Radio was established in Norway in the mid-1920s. In 1933 the four private, local/regional radio companies were merged into a national, state-owned radio company, *Norsk rikskringkasting* (NRK). The NRK introduced its second radio channel in 1984 and a third channel in 1993. The NRK had a monopoly until 1981, when local organisations were allowed to establish local radios. The NRK always made most of its revenues from a licence fee (introduced in order to finance the private radio companies from 1925). The NRK has not been financed by commercials since 1940.

When local radio was introduced in 1981-82, commercials were not allowed - the programs had to be financed by support from organisations etc. This was the epoch of the happy amateurs. Still, local radio was a success. New legislation in 1988 opened for radio commercials and this is now the main source of income for most stations. This led to professionalisation and commercialisation of local radio.

In 1993, a privately owned company, P4, was given permission to start a national radio service, financed by advertising. In 2004 a second, commercial actor started a national radio channel, *Kanal24* (now *Radio Norge*). All these channels have operated on the FM band.

Since 1995 some channels have been available in digital form - DAB (now: DAB+). Gradually more and more new channels have been available only in DAB. The parliament decided in 1995 and 2011 that the FM band will be closed down. During 2017 no national radio channels will yet be available only on DAB. Also some local radio channels will still remain on FM.

In the "golden age" of radio listening - the 1950s, before the introduction of television - Norwegians listened to radio in average 2.5 hours per day. This was reduced by 0.5 hours when television was introduced. Different ways of measuring radio listening, give very different results. Survey data indicate that the proportion of the population that listens to radio on an average day is lower than in the 1990s and that the average Norwegian listens to the radio 90 minutes per day. Automatic registration (Portable People Meter - PPM) indicates a substantially higher level of radio listening.

With the Internet, radio stations all over the world can be accessed, but if we look at the listener's behaviour, radio is still a local and national media.

NRK has a market share of 65 percent of the total listening (only the channels that take part in the PPM registration are included, most local radio stations are not included; survey data indicate that the PPM figures lack data about radio channels with between 5 and 10 percent of the radio listening. NRK's *P1* is the single largest radio channel with 45 percent. *P4* has a market share of 19 percent and the combined market share for all other MTG radio activities is 3 percent. *Radio Norge*'s market share is 10 percent and other Bauer channels add up to 3 percent.

The NRK is owned by the Norwegian state. Of the two privately owned national radio companies, *P4* has since the start in 1993 been owned by the Swedish Modern Times Group (MTG). *Radio Norge* has had a more unsettled ownership. In 2015 it was sold by American Discovery to the German Bauer Media Group. MTG and Bauer are also actors in the local radio market. The French NRJ group established some local radio channels in Norway, but these are now operated by MTG. There three foreign groups dominate among the larger local radio stations in major cities, while most of the smaller stations have local owners.

The licence fee for NRK is set by the parliament and thereby the NRK is independent of fluctuations in the advertising market, as well as in the audience markets. The government announced in 2016 that the present form of licence fee will be abandoned, but it is not clear what will replace it. The commercial sector is dependent on advertising. Radio advertising is a small part of the total advertising market. Since 2000 there have been some variations in the revenues from radio advertising, but there is no clear trend.

Television

If we combine reach and time spent on each of the media, television is today the most important medium in Norway.

When the Broadcasting Act was passed in 1933, NRK's monopoly included ordinary sound broadcasting and "broadcasting of pictures", which is a fairly accurate definition of television. The NRK started planning for television shortly after the Second World War, but the process took some time. The first test programs were broadcasted in 1954. Regular tests started in 1957. The official opening of television in Norway took place in 1960 -good timing, only a few days later the Olympic games in Rome started, giving television a boost.

NRK's monopoly ended in 1982-83, when a handful of local radios (via FM) and televisions (in community-based antenna/cable systems) were allowed. Local television has never been a hit in Norway, but some stations still exist. At the same time, distribution of satellite television via cable started in small scale. The first satellite channel that was distributed in Norway was the forerunner of Sky Channel.

In 1988 two Nordic-language satellite channels were launched: *TV3* was a pan-Nordic channel owned by the Swedish company Kinnevik (Modern Times Group, MTG) and *TVNorge* was a Norwegian channel, started by a group of enthusiasts with some experience in television and little money. These channels were distributed via cable and could also be received via a satellite dish.

The first real competition for the NRK came in 1992, when *TV 2* was established. The two important owners of *TV 2* was the Norwegian newspaper company Schibsted and the Danish media conglomerate Egmont (which had been present in Norway as a magazine publisher since 1911).

The NRK, *TV3*, *TVNorge* and *TV 2*, still represent the core of the Norwegian television market. All of them operate several television channels. The state-owned NRK is the only television company with a Norwegian ownership. *TV3* is still owned by MTG. The ownership of *TVNorge* has changed over time. It is now part of the American media giant Discovery. From 2012 Egmont is the sole owner of *TV 2*. All these channels are part of multimedia companies.

- The NRK: 3 (4) television channels (*NRK1*, *NRK2*, *NRK3/NRKSUPER*, 11 regional news programmes, programs in Sami), radio, Internet
- MTG: 3 general TV channels (*TV3*, *TV6*, *Viasat4*), sports and film channels, radio
- Discovery: 4 general TV channels (*TVNorge*, *FEM*, *MAX*, *VOX*), sports and documentary channels
- Egmont: several general and news TV channels (*TV 2*, *Zebra*, *Livsstil*, *Humor*, *Nyheter*), sports channels, magazines, books, Internet.

NRK1 is the channel with the highest market share, 32 percent - the three NRK channels have a total share of 40 percent. The market share of *TV 2* channel is 18 percent and the total share of listening for all the channels operated by the *TV 2* company is 27 percent. *TVNorge* is the third largest TV channel (market share: 7 percent). MTG's *TV3* has a market share of 4 percent.

The NRK channels and *TV 2* offer daily news programmes. In addition the *TV 2* system includes a 24/7 news channel. The audience can also subscribe to foreign news channels, like *BBC World*, *CNN*, *Russia Today*, *Al Jazeera* and *Sky News*; news programs on other channels, mostly Swedish and Danish public-service channels, are also available for many viewers.

NRK's revenues come mainly from a licence fee. The fee is based on the possession of receiving equipment for television: 2,0 million Norwegian households pay almost 2,800 NOK (around €310) per year.

The commercial television sector relies on revenues from advertising, distribution and special subscription services. The change from analogue to digital signals and from terrestrial to partly Internet distribution, means that the television companies have found new sources of income. The operating revenue has increased year by year for TV 2 and TVNorge (the economy of MTG/TV3 is less transparent).

Digital Media

As much as 96 percent of the population (age group 9-79 years) have access to the Internet in their homes, 75 percent a tablet and 85 percent a smartphone. This means that the whole population has access to the digital world.

The press, radio and television have adapted to this new situation and have services on the Internet.

Regarding printed newspapers, 95 percent have some kind of electronic services, usually a news service. The first newspapers to offer news on the net did not charge the customers for this service. Later on the newspapers discovered that they do not get much revenue from online advertising and that the free distribution of news on the web reduced the sales of the paper editions. The newspapers now experiment with different forms of payment systems for their online services. More than 50 percent of the newspapers have content that is available for paying customers only.

It is possible to subscribe to electronic versions of most newspapers in pdf or other formats.

In 2013 one fifth of the advertising revenues for newspapers came from the digital editions, but only a few percent of the revenues from sales to customers. From 2014 to 2015 the number of electronic subscribers increased by more than 50 percent, but it is still much lower than the number of paper subscribers.

National radio and television channels also use Internet in the dissemination of information. All of them use it to promote the channel and specific programmes. The radio channels can be accessed online, along with playlists etc. NRK and P4 also have news services.

The NRK's news service on the Internet includes international, national and regional news free of charge. There have been complaints from the newspaper owner's organisation that NRK's news service makes it difficult for the newspapers to compete on this market. NRK and its supporters replied that the public service obligations necessitate an extensive news service on all platforms and that this service is important for the dissemination of information and thereby for democracy.

The television channels have services where programmes that have already been transmitted, can be downloaded for watching. This service is free of charge for the NRK, while it is part of a subscription system for the commercial channels.

Social Networks

Email and social networks like Facebook have become very important means for personal communication.

According to an IPSOS survey from the 3rd quarter of 2016, 87 percent of the population (18+) regard themselves as YouTube users. Almost the same number (82 percent) are Facebook users. For other social media the figures are: Snapchat users, 52 percent; Instagram users, 43 percent; Google+ users, 28 percent; LinkedIn users, 26 percent; Twitter users, 25 percent and Pinterest users: 14 percent.

It is of course difficult to define a “user” for the different media. Most of the YouTube users are passive consumers, while the users of Facebook frequently are active creator of texts (in the broad media studies sense of “text”).

Along with search engines, the social media have also become important channels for advertising, but it is difficult to find exact figures. In the debate, however, Google and Facebook are mentioned among the important explanations for the fall of advertising revenues for the traditional media.

Journalists, newspapers and many radio and television channels and programmes distribute information on social media, like Facebook. In 2016 there was a debate about censorship on Facebook when the famous picture of the nine year-old Kim Phúc fleeing from American napalm bombing in the Vietnam war in 1972 (photo: Nick Ut/AP) was removed from an article that was shared on Facebook by the Norwegian prime minister Erna Solberg.

Opinion Makers

In sectors like fashion, entertainment, etc, social media appear to be important for the formation of public opinion. But in fields like foreign news, national and local politics, economics etc, the old media maintain a strong position. Most news stories originate in the newspapers (they can be published in paper editions or digitally). Their news items are picked up and further developed by the radio and television news programmes and discussed in other radio and television programmes.

Sources

Newspapers

- [Adresseavisen](#)
- [Aftenposten](#)
- [Bergens Tidende - BT](#)
- [Dagbladet](#)
- [Dagens Næringsliv](#)
- [Dagsavisen](#)
- [Drammens Tidende](#)
- [Fædrelandsvennen](#)
- [Klassekampen](#)
- [Romerikes Blad](#)
- [Stavanger Aftenblad](#)
- [Sunnmørsposten](#)
- [Vårt Land](#)
- [Verdens Gang - VG](#)

Publishers/Owner groups

- [Agderposten Medier](#)
- [Amedia](#)
- [Mentor Medier](#)
- [NWT](#)
- [Polaris Media](#)
- [Schibsted Media Group](#)

- [Stiftelsen Tinius - Tinius Trust](#)

Radio

- [Bauer Media AS Norge](#)
- [MTG Norway \(Radio\)](#)
- [Norsk riksringkasting - NRK \(NRK/P1, NRK/P2, NRK/P3 and 12 other radio channels\)](#)
- [P4 - Radio Hele Norge](#)
- [P5](#)

Television

- [Egmont](#)
- [Norsk riksringkasting - NRK \(NRK1, NRK2, NRK3 and NRKSuper\)](#)
- [TV 2/TV 2 Group](#)
- [TV3, TV6, Viasat4/MTG](#)
- [TVNorge/Discovery](#)

Digital media

- [Nettavisen](#)

Organisations

Trade Unions

In general, trade unions play an important role in the Norwegian society. More than 900,000 are members of the largest trade union in Norway, *Landsorganisasjonen i Norge* (The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions - LO). This also includes technical and clerical workers in the media. *Landsorganisasjonen* has always had ties to the Labour party. Administrative personnel in the media are also frequently members of non-socialist trade unions, like UNIO (340,000 members), *Yrkesorganisasjonenes sentralforbund* - YS (220,000) and *Akademikerne* (185,000).

Journalist Associations

Norsk Journalistlag (The Norwegian Union of Journalists - NJ) is an independent organisation for journalists in all media. The organisation represents the journalists nationally and locally. In recent years, when journalists have lost their jobs, the organisation has been important in the discussions with the media. Most journalists are members.

In wage negotiations, the journalists' counterpart is *Mediebedriftenes landsforening* (Norwegian Media Businesses Association - MBL). MBL also participates in the debate about media politics.

Norsk Redaktørforening (Association of Norwegian Editors - NR) is the association for the editors. It is an important voice in debates on freedom of expression and in legal matters related to journalistic work.

News Agencies

The major national news agency, Norsk telegrambyrå - NTB , was established in 1867. The press now collectively owns the agency. In addition to the newspapers, major radio and television channels subscribe to its services. But a reduced interest in national and international news, has reduced the revenues for the company.

Early in the 20th century the Labour Party press established its own press agency, distributing news and propaganda. In the post-war period other political parties established their own agencies. Most of these agencies disappeared when the era of the party press ended. Only the Social Democrat agency survived, called Avisenes nyhetsbyrå (ANB). There was a strong competition between NTB and ANB. This ended in 2006-2007, when NTB took over all general news services. ANB maintains only specialised and limited services.

Audience measurement organisations

For all commercial media, it is important to be able to document the size and composition of their users. Each of the major media relies on services from market-research bureaus. In order to document the readership of even small newspapers, a large survey is necessary. TNS Gallup (now Kantar TNS) has been conducting the survey that covers newspapers, online newspapers and magazines.

In order to register radio listening and television viewing, the market researchers use sophisticated, technical equipment, including portable devices (either fixed to the person or attached to the receiver). The technique used for measuring radio listening, is called Portable People Meter (PPM), while television viewing is measured by a "TV meter", which is attached to all receiving equipment in the household. For radio as well as television, there is a cooperation between the major media companies. For both radio and television, TNS Gallup has been conducting the data collection and analyses for the media companies.

In addition to the media-specific reporting, there are some annual surveys that aim at covering the whole spectrum of media use. *Statistisk sentralbyrå* (Statistics Norway) conducts an annual survey of the use of a wide range of media, called *Norsk mediebarometer* (Norwegian Media Barometer). TNS Gallup conducts a similar survey called *Forbruker&Media* (Consumer and Media).

Sources

Trade unions

- [Akademikerne](#)
- [Landsorganisasjonen](#) (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)
- [Mediebedriftenes landsforening](#) (Norwegian Media Businesses' Association)
- [Norsk Journalistlag, NJ](#) (Norwegian Union of Journalists)
- [UNIO](#)
- [Yrkesorganisasjonenes sentralforbund](#) (YS)

Journalists associations

- [Norsk Journalistlag](#) (Norwegian Union of Journalists)

News agencies

- [Avisenes nyhetsbyrå](#) (ANB)
- [Norsk Telegrambyrå](#) (NTB)

Audience measuring organisations

- [Ipsos](#)
- [Kantar TNS \(Gallup\)](#)
- [Medienorge](#) (Statistical information about the Norwegian media system)
- [Norwegian media barometer 2015](#) (Statistics Norway)
- [Statistisk sentralbyrå](#) (Statistics Norway)

Policies

Media legislation

Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution (written in 1814) and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In 2004, the Norwegian parliament modernised and extended the clause in the Constitution that secures freedom of expression. An important addition is that the government has the obligation to promote diversity in the media and public debate.

Media policy and media regulation can be set by laws, passed by the parliament; by-laws, formulated by the Ministry of Culture or the Norwegian Media Authority; decisions by the parliament, especially linked to decisions about the state budget; decisions in individual cases by the Ministry or the Media Authority. Pre-publication censorship is prohibited, with exception of cinema movies intended for children.

There are specific laws regulating (radio and television) broadcasting: *Kringkastingsloven* (the Broadcasting Act) and film and cinema: *Film- og videogramlova* (The Film and Video Act). but no press law and very little legislation specific for the Internet and other media.etc.

The *Straffeloven* (Penal Code) contains sections that are of specific interest for the media (pornography, libel, state secrets, protection of privacy, etc.). A section on blasphemy was omitted when a new penal code was passed in 2005 (and put into effect in 2015). The penal code demands that newspapers, magazines etc. and broadcasts, shall have an editor who is responsible for the content.

The relationship between the government and the state-owned broadcasting company (the NRK) is sensitive. It is up to the government and the parliament to decide on matters concerning technology, administration, new services in general, etc. But the Broadcasting Act prohibits interference from these authorities into matters concerning individual programs. Only the *Kringkastingssjef* (Head of Broadcasting) can stop or demand changes in a program. But the government and the parliament decide on the licence fee and this gives the political authorities some power over the NRK.

Accountability systems

In addition to the three media organisations mentioned in section 2.2 (NJ, NR and MBL), a fourth important organisation is Norsk Presseforbund (NP), which does not represent one particular group, but has a general responsibility for media ethics. NP is responsible for the preservation and development of the *Vær varsom-plakaten* (Codes of Ethics) for the Norwegian Press , which is also applicable to other media. NP has appointed a *Pressens Faglige Utvalg* (Press Council "- PFU) that evaluates individual cases of possible breaches of the ethical rules. The majority of the members come from the media, but there are also members who represent the general public. The Press Council cannot impose sanctions on the media, but can require offenders to publish the Council's judgements regarding unethical articles or programmes, or unethical behaviour by journalists. Because this system is regarded as fairly competent and just, the state has so far not found it necessary to formalise its control of journalistic work.

Complaints against programs in NRK's radio and television channels can be raised in the Press Council. But there is also a parallel way of handling such cases, via the *Kringkastingsrådet* (Broadcasting Council). The members of the Broadcasting Council are selected by the Ministry of Culture (8 members, formally appointed by the King) and the Parliament (6).

Radio and television channels that have to rely on a licence in order to operate, can lose this licence if they break the licence agreement. So far, these kinds of sanctions have rarely been taken.

The legal system can, of course, also be used against the media. As mentioned above, the penal code contains clauses about libel, invasion of privacy, etc. and there are specific laws on how the media can operate in courts of law, copyright legislation, etc.

Regulatory authorities

Until digitisation of radio (2017) and television (2007-2008) terrestrial distribution of radio and television required a licence from the Ministry of Culture (for national services) or the Norwegian Media Authority (for local services). In the digital networks, it is the owners of the networks that give the channels access to the network. The digital television network is operated by *Norges Televisjon* (NTV, owned by the NRK, the TV 2 and Telenor, one third each) until 2021. The digital radio network is owned by Norkring AS (owned by Telenor). Local radio stations operating on the FM platform are still required to have a licence from the Norwegian Media Authority. Telenor is and has always been an important organizer of the technical analogue and digital networks, a gatekeeper.

The private broadcasting companies have to comply with regulations concerning advertising (hours, percentages, commercial breaks in programs, etc.). But these conditions have been liberalised over time.

Newspapers and books are exempted from VAT. There is a continuous discussion about a similar exemption for magazines and journals. In recent years, the same discussion is focused on digital media versus similar content on paper. In 2016 the Ministry of Finance notified that electronic news services are also exempted from VAT.

The state-owned public-service broadcasting company is regarded as an important contributor to the diversity of the Norwegian media system.

In order to maintain local competition and national diversity, there is a system for newspaper subsidies. In 2017, direct subsidies total 313m NOK (approximately €35m) and account for some 2 percent of newspapers' total revenue. The subsidies are distributed according to specific criteria in order to reach national ideological and political newspapers, the "No 2" newspapers in areas with local competition and the smallest local newspapers. There are separate subsidies for newspapers focusing on Sami language and the Sami population. There is a continuous discussion and inquiry into the

criteria for distribution of these subsidies between the newspapers.

Since the mid-1990s, media ownership has become an important issue in media policy. In all branches of the media, there is a strong concentration of ownership. The same owners tend to exert power over several media. There is a strong integration among media owners in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Danish (Egmont and Aller) and Swedish (Kinnevik/MTG and Bonnier) media companies are important owners of Norwegian media. The Norwegian state owns NRK and is a majority shareholder in Telenor (telecommunications, satellites, cable networks and terrestrial distribution of broadcasting). Schibsted is the largest private media owner in Norway. The third major owner is Norwegian media conglomerate Amedia. The American television giant Discovery is a major actor in the Norwegian television market and the German Bauer Media Group has a similar position in the radio broadcasting sector.

In 1998, the Norwegian Parliament passed legislation (The Media Ownership Bill) to prevent ownership concentration. A new administration was established in 1999 in order to enforce the new law, the *Eierskapstilsynet* (Media Ownership Authority), which was integrated into the *Medietilsynet* (Norwegian Media Authority). In 2016 the *Medieeierskapsloven* (Media Ownership Bill) was abolished and concentration in the media is now monitored by the *Konkurransetilsynet* (Competition Authority).

Sources

Legislation

- [Lovdata](#) (Current Norwegian Laws)

Accountability system

- [Kringkastingsrådet](#) (Broadcasting Council)
- [Norsk Presseforbund](#) (Norwegian Press Association)
- [Pressens Faglige Utvalg - PFU](#) (Press Council)
- [Vær varsom-plakaten](#) (Code of Ethics for the Norwegian Press)

Regulatory authority

- [Konkurransetilsynet](#) (Competition Authority)
- [Kulturdepartementet](#) (Ministry of Culture)
- [Medietilsynet](#) (Norwegian Media Authority)

Education

Universities and schools

Formal training for journalists started in the early post war period. In 1965 the state took over responsibility for journalism education and created *Norsk Journalistskole* (Norwegian School of Journalism), which was later integrated in *Høgskolen i Oslo* (Oslo University College), now *Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus* (Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences - HiOA). The second school of journalism was established at *Høgskulen i Volda* (Volda University College) in 1971.

Four universities offer bachelor and/or master degrees in journalism: University of Stavanger (bachelor), University of Bergen (bachelor), Nord University (several campuses, with Bodø as the central location) (bachelor), University of Oslo (bachelor and master). With a bachelor degree in journalism, it is often possible to be accepted at master programmes in media studies. Two private institutions for higher education, *Norsk Lærerakademi* (NLA University College) and *Høyskolen Kristiania* (Kristiania University College) also have bachelor degrees in journalism.

In order to serve the Sami-language minority there is a special bachelor's program in Sami journalism and cultural journalism, located at the *Sámi Allaskuvla* (Sámi University of Applied Sciences) in Kautokeino.

Professional development

Journalism is somewhere between an occupation and a profession. A special education is not required to work as a journalist, but most young journalists have completed a school of journalism. It is not required to be member of a professional organisation, but most journalists are members of the Norwegian Union of Journalists. The Union of Journalism issues national and international Press Cards to its members, but there are few exclusive rights for journalists, when it comes to access to information. All journalists are obliged to follow the ethical rules of the Press Association. These rules have gradually become more and more detailed.

There is a movement of people between jobs as journalists and jobs as information officials in the public and private sector. For a long time the information officials were often members of the Journalist Union, especially those who had previously worked as journalists. But in the mid-1990s the information officials were excluded from the organisation. This process has been called a "purification" of the journalist profession.

The journalists have attempted to professionalise their trade. With reduced revenues for the media and more and more profit-minded owners, it is possible to see tendencies in the opposite direction. The frontline between advertisements and journalistic products is challenged, especially in electronic publications. The owners often prefer cheaper semi-skilled employees who can operate in various functions in the media, to professional journalists. On the other hand, there is a tendency that media outlets with high quality and original content, do better in the competition.

Sources

- Høyskolen Kristiania (Kristiania University College) - [**Bachelor in Journalism**](#)
- Nord University (Bodø) – [**Bachelor in Journalism**](#)
- Norsk Lærerakademi (NLA University College) - [**Bachelor in Journalism**](#)
- Norsk Lærerakademi (NLA University College) - [**Master in Global Journalism**](#)
- Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, [**Department of Journalism and Media Studies**](#)
- Sámi Allaskuvla (Sami University of applied Sciences – [**Bachelor in Sami Journalism**](#)
- University of Bergen - [**Bachelor in Journalism**](#)
- University of Stavanger - [**Bachelor in Journalism**](#)
- Volda University College, [**Faculty of Media and Journalism**](#)

Traditional forms of communication

Summary

Sources

Conclusions

Conclusion

The transfer of information from traditional media (printed newspapers, linear radio and television via terrestrial transmission) to new content formats transmitted via Internet (WiFi, mobile phone networks) creates problems for the old media.

Nevertheless, people are still interested in news and information. Local information and high-quality analysis are highly appreciated. Until around year 1990 or 2000, all segments of the Norwegian population consumed the same media. Today there is a strong age gap in the reading of newspapers. It is possible that this will change to a differentiation according to education (or class). Whether this will lead to an increase in the information gaps in society, depends mainly on how the other media produce the necessary information, and on how the audience will select media content. Social media also provide a source of information and political opinion. The links between politicians and the citizens may become more direct, but the quality control and the critical evaluations that are provided by journalists in the edited media may be available to a more specialised part of the population.

References

- N. Bjørnstad and K. A. Tornes (2014) [**Medieåret 2013-2014. Medieutvikling i Norge: Fakta og trender**](#), Bergen: Medienorge.
- S. Høst (2016) [**Avisåret 2015**](#) (rapport Nr. 77/2016), Volda: Høgskulen i Volda.
- [**NOU 2017:7 Det norske mediemangfoldet – En styrket mediepolitikk for borgerne**](#), Oslo: Department of Culture.
- T. Syvertsen, G. Enli, O. J. Mjøs, and H. Moe (2014), *The Media Welfare State. Nordic Media in the Digital Era*, Ann Arbor, MI, USA: University of Michigan Press.
- H. Østbye and T. Aalberg (2008), *Media and Politics in Norway*, ch. 5 (pp. 83-102), in J. Strömbäck, M. Ørsten and T. Aalberg (eds.): [**Communicating Politics, Political Communication in the Nordic Countries**](#), Göteborg: Nordicom.