



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
of Philadelphia

United States (U.S)

United States of America



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall): Ranked 48 (25.69)

Head of State / Head of Government: President Donald Trump

Capital city: Washington D.C

Population: 329,256,465 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): the US has no official national language, but English has acquired official status in 32 of the 50 states; Hawaiian is an official language in the state of Hawaii, and 20 indigenous languages are official in Alaska.

Ethnic Groups: white 72.4%, black 12.6%, Asian 4.8%, Amerindian and Alaska native 0.9%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.2%, other 6.2%, two or more races 2.9% (2010 est.)

Currency: United State (U.S) Dollar

Gross domestic product (PPP): 19.39 trillion USD (2017)

Internet penetration: 95.6%

Most trusted medium of information: N/A

Legal System: common law system based on English common law at the federal level; state legal systems based on common law, except Louisiana, where state law is based on Napoleonic civil code; judicial review of legislative acts

Political system: constitutional federal republic

Journalists Jailed/Killed 2019: 0

Media Environment: 4 major global TV networks with affiliate stations throughout the country, plus cable and satellite networks, independent stations, and a limited public broadcasting sector that is largely supported by private grants; overall, thousands of TV stations broadcasting; multiple national radio networks with many affiliate stations; while most stations are commercial, National Public Radio (NPR) has a network of some 900 member stations; satellite radio available; in total, over 15,000 radio stations operating as of 2018. In 2016, 57 percent of Americans said they often get news from TV, 38 percent online, 25 percent from radio and 20 percent from print newspapers. In terms of advertising revenue, in 2017 Internet-based media had the largest share. According to one estimate, Internet-based media

accounted for 38.4 percent, Television 31.5 percent, Radio 8.1 percent, Newspapers 7.5 percent Consumer Magazines 7.4 percent and Other, 7.2 percent.

Media Issues: Press freedom has continued to decline in the second year of President Donald Trump's presidency. Rhetorical attacks from the government and private individuals alike grew increasingly hostile, and in June they became physical when a gunman entered the Capital Gazette newsroom in Maryland, killing four journalists and one other staffer in a targeted attack on the local newspaper. Since then, President Trump has continued to declare the press as the "enemy of the American people" and "fake news" in an apparent attempt to discredit critical reporting. At least one White House correspondent has hired private security for fear of their life after receiving death threats, and newsrooms throughout the country have been plagued by bomb threats and were the recipients of other potentially dangerous packages, prompting journalism organizations to reconsider the security of their staffs in a uniquely hostile environment. The Trump administration repeatedly attempted to deny journalists access to events of public interest in 2018, breaking multiple records for the span of time without a White House press briefing, denying a CNN reporter access to an open-press White House event and even revoking reporter Jim Acosta's press pass, which was only restored by court order. Meanwhile, the nation still waits for the Trump administration to hold the Saudi authorities responsible for the murder of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi, who was brutally killed in Saudi Arabia's Turkish consulate in October 2018.

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Radio: Many radio stations belonging to large chains, since the government relaxed rules on the number of stations a particular company could own. The top three are iHeart Media, with 862 stations, CBS with 117 and Cumulus Media with 449. Most emphasize music and have little news or discussion of public affairs. However, National Public Radio (NPR) has gained audience particularly since the 2016 election, with its leading news broadcasts drawing about 14-15 million listeners daily, making them among the most significant news broadcasts nationally. NPR has also had success with a new market in podcasts, with several million people a year downloading its podcasts.

Print: The economic state of newspapers in the US has been direr than the state of their audience. US newspapers have historically depended more on advertising than circulation revenue, with the share of advertising reaching 80 percent of revenue in some periods. As advertising has shifted online, particularly after the 2009 recession, newspapers have been hit hard. Between 2006 and 2016 total newspaper industry revenue declined from \$49 billion to \$18 billion.

Television: TV remains extremely important in the United States, even if it is challenged by new media. It remains the most important source of news for Americans, with 50 percent saying they often get news from television, still higher than online sources, though the latter are gaining. In 2016, 46 percent of Americans said they often got news from local TV, 31 percent from cable news and 30 percent from national broadcast news. The flagship broadcasts of the national networks have audiences of about 7-10 million viewers nightly, the top cable news broadcasts have audiences a bit under 3 million daily, and Univision's leading broadcast has an audience of a bit under 2 million daily.

Social Networks: In terms of time spent on any media, social media are second after television, with YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter leading in usage. About two thirds of Americans get some news on social media, and many news organizations produce news specifically for social media sites, often entering into partnership with social media companies to facilitate this. Facebook is by far the most important in the flow of news, with 45 percent of the population getting some news on the site in 2017. Yet, at the beginning of 2018 Facebook announced changes in its system that are likely to de-emphasize

news content, and it is possible that in the long run Facebook will not prove a reliable way for news organizations to reach audiences.