

# THE UK MEDIA LANDSCAPE

by former journalist and current PHA employee, Sean Hamilton

“One of my favourite sounds ever is the sound of a crisp new newspaper being read over breakfast for an hour or so. The popping out of it, the folding, the scribbling on the crossword... I hope it never goes out of fashion in our digital world. It is too romantic.”

Taylor Swift

We have one of the most vibrant news media and newspaper cultures in the world – with 11 daily newspapers and 10 sister Sunday titles.

Sadly, for Taylor Swift, sales of physical print editions of newspapers are in decline (decreasing at a rate of around ten percent a year). But the UK news media is thriving.

Digital consumption of news continues to grow through websites, apps, and social media. There have been many exciting recent developments in the news in recent months, including the explosion of podcasts, the appearance of new channels GB News and Talk TV, and the launch of Times Radio. British news sites are also expanding rapidly in the USA, especially Mail Online and The US Sun.

The media landscape has been constantly changing ever since the first newspapers were produced in the eighteenth century. Since then, we've seen the rise of radio, TV, and the internet. The media landscape has been constantly changing.

At PHA, we place a big importance on knowing the media landscape, being aware of the news agenda and cultivating relationships with journalists. We encourage all staff to read the news widely every day from a variety of sources as it helps with ideas and in conversations with clients.

Our clients recognise the prestige of appearing in mainstream news publications, and still see value in the print editions of newspapers. Social media is increasingly people's first destination for news, however, it scores low for trust.

It is still the major newspaper brands which dominate the news media, whether that is through their websites, digital editions, podcasts, newsletters, or Tweets. The Daily Mail/Mail On Sunday/Mail Online and The Sun are the two most-read newspaper brands in the UK across their print and digital editions. These two popular newspapers give their content away for free online but both have digital subscription models and a print edition.



The other most important popular newsbrands are the Mirror and Express. The Metro and Evening Standard are also still highly-read, with their free print editions being handed out to commuters. Some people still refer to these popular titles as 'tabloids' because their print editions are in a tabloid format.

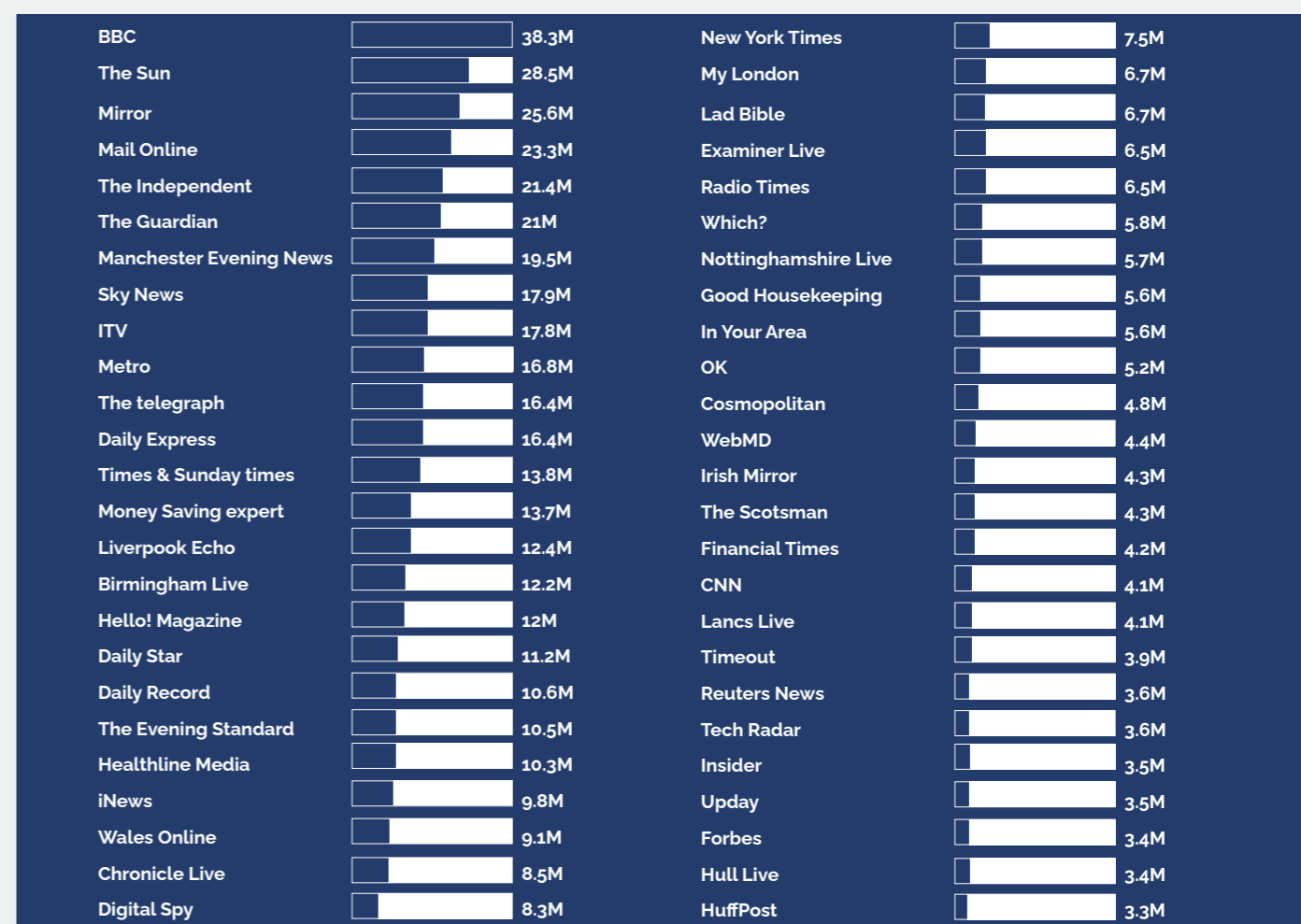
Of the 'quality press', the Guardian (which is free online but asks readers to make a voluntary contribution) and online-only Independent both have a wide reach. The Times, Telegraph, and Financial Times all have digital subscription models, so you have to pay to see their content online. But they remain hugely influential, especially in the business community and for politicians.

These quality newsbrands are sometimes still called 'broadsheets' as historically, they were printed in the larger broadsheet size. Only the Financial Times, Sunday Times, and Telegraph are still printed in that format today. The print edition of The Times has been, confusingly, a tabloid size for many years.

Regional and local press is also very influential, and a crucial part of the media, despite the decline of local print newspapers. These can be very useful outlets for PR. The #1 regional title in the country is Manchester Evening News, followed by Birmingham Live, Evening Standard, and Liverpool Echo.

Scotland has its own news ecosystem, dominated by Scottish editions of national papers, plus its own distinct publications like the Daily Record, The Scotsman, and The Herald.

## Top 50 Newsbrands in the UK in November 2021 (according to IPSOS)



## The top sources for news on Social Media (2021)



### Some interesting facts and developments:

- Tik Tok's reach for news has increased from **1%** in 2020 to **7%** in 2022. Half its user base are 16-24.
- Internet is next at **66%**, followed by social media at **46%**, radio at **40%**, word of mouth at **31%**, printed newspapers at **24%**, and printed magazines at **6%**.
- The Rest Is Politics has become the '#1 news podcast in the UK. The News Agents hit 10 million downloads in December 2021, three months after its launch.
- GB News beat Sky News for prime time ratings in December 2021.
- Television remains most people's source of news, with **74%** using it.

# JARGON BUSTER

The jargon buster is a list of commonly used keywords and phrases within the Public Relations, Social Media, and Digital Marketing industries to help with your learning throughout the programme.

Use the space below to add any additional words or terms you learn.

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## A

**Above the fold:**  
The section of a web page that is visible without scrolling down.

**Advertorial:**  
A newspaper or magazine advertisement giving information about a product in the style of an editorial or objective journalistic article.

**Affiliate marketing:**  
Revenue sharing between clients and online publishers/influencers, whereby compensation is based on performance measures, typically in the form of sales that a publisher/influencer drives.

**Algorithm:**  
A set of rules that rank content on a social media platform; it decides what content shows up, and in what order, on users' feeds.

**Article of interest (AOI):**  
When we think an article may be of interest to a client, so we flag it to them, or sometimes only internally.

## B

**Backlink:**  
Also known as inbound links or incoming links, they are created when one website links to another, and are beneficial to include in online articles to drive traffic for clients.

**Boilerplate:**  
A word-for-word description of what a company does that appears at the bottom of a press release, containing the key messaging and facts about the client.

**Boosted:**  
Another phrase for paid e.g. 'we will boost this social media post with paid spend'; meaning we will put money behind it in order for it to be seen by more users.

**Bounce rate:**  
The percentage of visitors who leave after viewing a single page on a website.

**Briefing document:**  
A document shared with clients prior to an interview which details the opportunity, information about the publication/journalist, as well as expected questions.

**Business-to-business (B2B):**  
Businesses that sell products or provide services to other businesses.

**Business-to-consumer (B2C):**  
Businesses that sell products or provide services to the end-user consumers.

**Byline:**  
A line at the top or bottom of a newspaper or magazine article giving the writer's name; while for client-related content, the byline will be attributed to the client's spokesperson.

## C

**Call rounds:**  
When you call journalists on your media list instead of pitching via email or another form of written communication.

**Call to action (CTA):**  
The part of a marketing message that attempts to persuade a person to perform a desired action (e.g. click, sign-up, purchase, etc.)

**Carousel:**  
A post containing more than one photo or video, which users can view by swiping left.

**Circulation:**  
The number of copies of a particular publication that is distributed.

**Conversion rate:**  
The percentage of people who complete a specific action (sign-up, contact form, purchase, etc.).

**Copy:**  
The text that is featured in any documents or social media captions.

**Cost per click (CPC):**  
The cost paid per click-through from an advert.

**Cost per lead (CPL):**  
An online advertising payment model in which payment is based on the number of qualifying leads generated.

**Cost per action (CPA):**  
The main indicator of success from an advert; every time someone completes an action we want (website click, video view, etc.), Meta will divide this by the amount of spend to give a CPA e.g. for every £1 spent, one person clicked through to the website.

**Cost per engagement (CPE):**  
The price that gets paid when someone engages with an advert.

**Cost per mille (CPM):**  
The cost per thousand impressions.

**Coverage:**  
When you secure a media article about your client in any form of media; most commonly an article, broadcast/radio interview, or news release.

**Creative asset:**  
The image or video that goes alongside the copy in social media posts.

## D

**Daily unique users (DUU):**  
The total number of copies of a print publication that is available for readers, or the total number of daily website visitors viewing their page.

**Dark post:**  
A brand new post which won't be seen on your social media timeline and cannot be accessed unless someone has been served it in their feed.

**Data Studio:**  
A free tool from Google that is used to make custom reports with data from Google's marketing services and external sources.

**Desk drop:**  
A campaign to communicate a message to journalists via an eye-catching gift that is delivered to their desk; it is often printed with a logo or message, possibly accompanied by literature, and is often used in consumer product campaigns or for event invites.

**Dimensions:**  
These are the measurements of the creative asset; each channel has different preferred dimensions for each social asset.

**Domain authority (DA):**  
An indicator of a website's relevance for a specific subject area or industry.

## E

**Earned media:**  
Publicity gained through promotional efforts other than paid-for advertising or branding.

**Engagement:**  
Any action the audience make on a post, whether it be a like, comment, re-share, or video view.

**Exclusive:**  
'When you offer an exclusive article to a publication, they are guaranteed the first piece of coverage for a certain campaign or topic before anyone else sees it.

## F

**Feed:**  
Also known as a timeline, the content a user sees when scrolling on a social platform through various posts.

**Feed post:**  
A social media post that appears within the primary social media feed.

**Format:**  
The type of content you put out, such as a reel, long-form video, carousel, or static image.



# G

## **Gated content:**

These are online materials, such as white papers, articles, and videos that require users to fill out a form before they can access them.

## **Geo-targeting:**

A method of detecting a website visitor's location (by country) to determine the language, currency, and specific content a user sees based on location.

## **Google Analytics 4 (GA4):**

The latest version of Google Analytics released by Google, replacing previous versions from 1 July 2023.

# K

## **Key messages:**

Main messages that clients want to push within coverage.

## **Key performance indicator (KPI):**

A type of performance measurement agreed with the client e.g. 12 pieces of coverage per quarter.

## **Keyword:**

A word or phrase used when performing a search within a search engine such as Google.

# M

## **Media channel:**

A medium between a brand and its target audience, helping to communicate advertising messages to customers effectively via the most suitable channel.

## **Media list:**

The PR term for a list of relevant contacts to send a press release to.

## **Media meet:**

A meeting between a PR and journalist.

## **Monthly unique users (MUU):**

The total number of copies of a print publication that is available for readers, or the total number of monthly website visitors viewing their page.

## **Morning scan:**

A scan conducted (either internally or externally) to search the internet for any news stories that have been published since the last scan that could be relevant to a client.

# P

## **Paid media:**

External marketing efforts that involve a paid placement, such as pay-per-click advertising, branded content, and display adverts.

## **Perishable content:**

Content that expires after a certain length of time, usually 24 hours, e.g. Instagram and Facebook Stories.

## **Pitch:**

A short, personalised message that outlines the value of a story and explains why it should be published.

## **PPC (Pay-Per-Click):**

The advertising side of search engines; clients pay for every click someone makes on an advert they have placed.

## **Product placement:**

Also known as product integration, the practice of providing branded production in exchange for sponsorship and media exposure.

# S

## **Sample size:**

The number of participants or observations included in a study.

## **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO):**

The activity of updating a website and writing content to make our client's site rank higher than a competitor within search engines such as Google.

## **Sell in:**

When someone calls or emails a list of journalists to tell them about a story or product launch on behalf of clients.

## **Served:**

A phrase used when someone is shown a social media advert e.g. 'I have been served this advert from Building Blocks!'

## **Shared media:**

Any content posted to social media regarding a brand.

## **Share of voice (SOV):**

A measurement of the market a brand owns compared to its competitors.

## **Silo:**

Allows a company to decentralise its efforts by assigning specific channels to the people or agencies most proficient in their use.

## **Soft launch:**

Also known as a 'soft opening', a preview release of a product or service to a limited audience prior to the public; sometimes used to gather data or customer feedback prior to making it widely available via an official release.

## **Soundbite:**

A short extract from a recorded interview speech, chosen for its succinctness or concision.

# H

## **Hero coverage:**

How we refer to our best pieces of coverage.

# L

## **Letters to editor:**

Included at the bottom of a press release, additional information that we would not like the editor to see and potentially use when writing up coverage.

## **Link building:**

The process of increasing the number of inbound links to a website in a way that will increase search engine rankings.

# N

## **News gen(eration):**

When you are developing a survey to generate a news moment on behalf of a client, as opposed to them having proactive corporate news, product, announcement, etc. to publicise.

## **News hook:**

A critical piece of newsworthy information that will capture the attention and interest of both the news media and their audiences; usually used to ensure a pitch is timely and in reaction to the current affairs agenda.

## **News-jacking:**

Also known as news reaction, the process of adding a client's thoughts and opinions into breaking news stories i.e. piggybacking on trending news topics to get clients into the news.

# O

## **Op-ed:**

Short for 'opposite the editorial page'; devoted to personal comment, feature articles.

## **Optimised:**

To ensure that posts and their assets are created to be as effective as possible for the platforms they are being posted on.

## **Organic:**

Content posted on social media channels for free.

## **Owned media:**

Media under companies' direct control such as websites, newsletters, catalogues, and blogs.

# R

## **Reach:**

Measurement of the total number of people who interact with a particular communications item. e.g. the number of readers of an article in The Guardian.

## **Reels:**

Full-screen vertical videos that can be up to 90 seconds long and can have effects, music, and sound added to them on social media.

# T

## **Response Source:**

A service that helps you find great opportunities to get your client into the media by sending daily journalist requests via email.

## **Return on investment (ROI):**

The practice of attributing profit and revenue growth to impact marketing initiatives.

## **Thought leadership:**

The expression of ideas that demonstrate someone's expertise in a particular field, area, or topic; often a piece written by a company's CEO or another expert in the business.

## **Stories:**

These are photos or videos that are posted on social media, but disappear from a profile after 24 hours.

## **Stories of interest:**

Similar to articles of interest, these are stories we flag to clients that we think will be of interest to them, sometimes including a call to action e.g. putting out a comment.

# I

## **Impressions:**

The number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not.

## **Infographic:**

A graphic, visual representation of information, data, or knowledge used to present information quickly and clearly.

