

How are the Mexican media doing?

Report by Tec, WAN-IFRA, and Facebook



Tec de Monterrey together with the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and Facebook Journalism Project conducted a special study to understand media trends in Mexico.

This study was based on 4 areas: 1) business model, 2) make-up of the newsroom, 3) organization of the company, and 4) knowledge of digital tools.

The main findings of this [2021 Media Report](#) include the following:

- **85% of media outlets believe they must change their business model.**
- **80% have implemented or are planning a paid content model.**
- **75% of people in digital newsrooms are under the age of 40.**
- **6% of media directors are women.**



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The 2021 Media Report

32 regional print media and **19 local digital media outlets** in Mexico participated in the report titled “**Waking a Sleeping Giant?**”

*“We investigated (whether media outlets) were **servicing** their **communities**, how newsrooms were being shaped, but above all how the **industry** has been **transformed** in recent years”, explains **Alejandro Martín del Campo**, director of the **Tec’s National Journalism Program**.*

WAN-IFRA is the **World Association of News Publishers**, a global world press organization, while the **Facebook Journalism Project** collaborates with media outlets to address the sector’s **challenges** and **difficulties**.

*“We invited participants in 2 media ecosystems to take part. We **investigated** them, **interviewed** them, and applied a **questionnaire**.”*

*“The Tec provided the **academic methodological** component and the **surveys**. Facebook specifically reviewed the **methodological aspect**,” adds del Campo, explaining that he had already participated in several areas with **WAN-IFRA**.*

85% of media outlets are looking to change their business model

The report notes that media **advertising revenue has declined more than 30%** in print advertising, from **55 million dollars** in 2015 to **31 million** in 2021.

Meanwhile, advertising in **digital format rose by 34%**, from **9** to **12 million** in the same period.

Given this scenario, **85%** of Mexican **media outlets** believe they will need to **change** their **business model** to survive.

Meanwhile, **40%** are considering implementing certain content payment options as a **possible model**.

“In the subscription revenue model, Mexico lags far behind Latin American and international levels,” says Martín.

Only **21%** of **digital media** and **22%** of **regional media outlets** are not working on a **payment** or **subscription** model, while the rest are or plan to within a period of 3 years or less.

“We’ve focused on our local audience. That’s who might be able to pay for our content. National media outlets don’t provide local content like we do,” says **Kowanin Silva** of the **Vanguardia** news outlet in the report.

“In the subscription revenue model, Mexico lags far behind Latin American and international levels.”

Martín del Campo adds that one of the new **challenges** of the **subscription models** is the **different content** paying users get.

“Advance information, being part of a community, roundtable discussions, or even some books, the transition will be gradual,” he says.

The report includes not only **advertising** and **payment models** but also a growing **diversification** of **revenues** that **72%** of **regional media** and **47%** of **digital media outlets** consider necessary to explore.

Branded content, commercial services, events, conferences, e-commerce, editorial services, and donations are some of the **revenue sources** that Mexican media outlets are exploring to sustain their business model.

Del Campo says one of the **findings** that **drew his attention** the most is that there were **12 digital journalistic ventures** in the last 5 years that are sustainable on their own.

We found 12 digital journalistic ventures that are sustainable on their own.



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Generational change in newsrooms and few women managers

The study found that **most newsrooms** were staffed by **young people** with **parity** between **men** and **women**.

People **under the age of 40** make up **75%** of **digital newsrooms** and **58%** of **regional newsrooms**, while women make up **58%** of digital newsrooms and **48%** of regional newsrooms.

However, **women hold only 6% of managerial positions**.

“We found that gender parity is present in newsrooms, but it decreases higher up (at management levels).

*“We looked to see if this was a phenomenon exclusive to Mexico, but no, those **challenges** are present in the **international industry**, except in the United States,”* says del Campo.

“Gender parity is present in newsrooms, but it decreases higher up (at management levels).

The challenge of competitive wages and mobility toward parallel professions

The same **crisis** that the media outlets are going through due to changes in their **economic models** has caused **another challenge: retaining talent** in newsrooms.

68.2% of digital media and **38.1%** of regional media outlets say that the main **challenge** in **attracting** and **retaining** talent is the difficulty of offering **competitive salaries**.

Del Campo adds that this factor, coupled with the **diversity of knowledge** among **current journalists**, allows professionals to successfully venture into areas where they sometimes find **greater economic compensation**.

*“It’s an industry with a lot of **turnover** among the **different players**. Journalists are doing **public relations, marketing, and external communication**.”*

That becomes a challenge for the industry, not only economically but also in terms of emotional challenges,” he says.

“It’s an industry with a lot of turnover among the different players. Journalists are doing public relations, marketing, and external communication.”

Other **factors** the report presents in this area include **unattractive** companies, lack of **internal innovation**, difficulty of offering **professional development**, and recruitment not adapted to current needs.

The report also analyzed **protocols** on **workplace** and **sexual harassment**. In digital media outlets, **52.6%** report **not having protocols** against **both types of harassment**, while the figure is **25%** in regional media outlets.

40% do not yet have an audience metrics team

Del Campo says that the **new work schemes** need **specialists** who hold **new positions** and are capable of **listening** to **audiences** and **interpreting** the **data** they receive from them.

The report states that only 56% to 57% of media outlets have **teams** made up of just **five or even fewer people** dedicated to **monitoring media metrics**.

*“The challenge of **how to listen** is coming. This will serve to develop **2 articles a day** that generate **100,000 views**, instead of **100 articles** that generate **2,000 views**,”* says del Campo.

What’s more, another of the new **positions** needed is focused on the **development and production of new digital audiovisual narratives** such as **storytelling, podcasts, infographics, and live video**.

*“There will be **new roles**. Aside from **content** and **audiences**, there are very specific roles that are needed.*

*“For example, there’s the **journalist** who knows how to **interpret** the **language** of an **editor**, of an **editorial board**, but who can also **understand** the engineers. That’s a **more comprehensive vision** of many worlds,”* adds del Campo.

According to the report, **digital media outlets** prioritize **training** in **data analysis**, **management**, **social media metrics**, and **project management**.

Meanwhile, **regional media outlets** prioritize **new** audiovisual **narratives**, **digital marketing** and **advertising**, and **data analysis**.

However, the majority (**63% to 65%**) only have **digital audiovisual production teams** of **fewer than 5 people** and only **9.4% to 15.3%** have teams of **more than 5 people**.

The Tec looks to help the media with training

Finally, when asked directly, del Campo says that the **Tec** is working on **initiatives** in conjunction with organizations and platforms to **prepare students in new skills and help with media training**.

*“We’ve proposed the **new model of journalism** and the importance of offering **data journalism** at the Tec.*

*“It’s becoming more **important** to know how to **interpret**. **Data analysis** is becoming more **attractive** to journalists all the time,” he said.*

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