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MEDIA INFLUENCE MATRIX

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Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC)

MJRC is an independent media research and policy think tank that seeks to improve the quality of media policymaking and the state of independent media and journalism through research, knowledge sharing and financial support. The center's main areas of research are regulation and policy, media ownership and funding, and the links between tech companies, politics and journalism.

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OBSERVACOM (Latin American Observatory of Regulation, Media and Convergence) is a regional think tank specializing in regulation and public policies related to the media, telecommunications, the internet and freedom of expression. OBSERVACOM addresses these issues from a rights perspective, focusing on access, diversity and pluralism. OBSERVACOM brings together experts and researchers committed to the protection and promotion of democracy, cultural diversity, human rights and freedom of expression in Latin America and the Caribbean.

University of Santiago de Compostela (USC)

The University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), founded in 1495, is one of the world's oldest public universities and has two campuses in the cities of Santiago de Compostela and Lugo, in Galicia (Spain). The USC partner in this project is the research group Novos Medios, which is part of the USC's Department of Communication Sciences. Novos Medios specializes in studying the relationship between technology and media, as well as the changes that affect today's journalism in terms of audiences, funding, innovation and public service.

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Overview: Consumer Trends

According to the We Are Social 2022 report prepared by DataReportal[1], 82% of the 51.39 million people residing in Colombia live in urban areas, and the vast majority of them have access to mobile devices and the internet. The country has 65.75 million mobile phones, which means that each Colombian has an average of 1.2 cell phones. Furthermore, 35.50 million users frequently connect to the internet, meaning that 69.1% of the total population has constant access to this service[2].

The We Are Social study also analyzed internet use among individuals aged 16 to 64. The findings revealed that people in this age bracket spend an average of 10 hours and 3 minutes using the internet, 3 hours and 44 minutes watching television, 3 hours and 46 minutes using social media, and 1 hour and 34 minutes reading newspapers or articles from print publications.

In 2022, Colombians spent one hour and 47 minutes listening to music through streaming services, such as Spotify, which is five minutes more than in 2021. Furthermore, they spent one hour and 10 minutes listening to the radio. Conversely, they spent one hour and six minutes using video game consoles and 51 minutes listening to podcasts in 2022, which is two minutes more than in 2021[3].

The media ecosystem in Colombia has undergone numerous changes in recent decades, similar to the rest of the world. Newspapers, radio, and television have given way to new media and platforms, leading to a fragmentation of user attention among a plethora of media outlets. Although traditional media such as television, newspapers, or radio will not disappear in the coming years, as they represent an essential part of contemporary Colombian culture, their role is not the same as in the last century. Nowadays, their primary mission is to validate legitimate content in a time of rapidly spreading disinformation[4].

[1] Datareportal. (15 February 2022). Digital 2022: Colombia. Available at: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-colombia>.

[2] Datareportal 2022, op. cit.

[3] Datareportal 2022, op. cit.

[4] Gabriel E. Levy B, "Escases de audiencias: la gran paradoja." (Shortage of audiences: the great paradox), AndinaLink, 9 November 2021, available at: <https://andinalink.com/la-crisis-de-las-audiencias/>

In Colombia, there are 35 paid on-demand video platforms (Subscription Video on Demand, SVOD) and around 13 free-to-view (Advertising Video on Demand, AVOD) platforms, according to BB, a consulting firm[5]. Video streaming has become the primary source of distribution for audiovisual content in the third decade of the 21st century.

According to the same source, Colombian users consume an average of 13.6 hours of video streaming per day, compared to 8.1 hours of traditional television. The concept of the first-screen has changed. Video streaming now occupies the first place, changing the historical equation in which it was seen as a second screen[6].

The data presented in the BB report[7] shows that, of households with internet access, 93% use at least one type of video streaming service. This means that nine out of ten households with internet access consume online video through some dedicated platform. On average, each of these households use 3.3 online platforms, meaning that Colombians have become accustomed to paying for more than one video platform simultaneously. In fact, around 5% have subscriptions to up to seven video platforms[8].

The report reveals that although Generation Z consumes the most content, millennials are the ones who contribute the most to the growth of on-demand video consumption. Conversely, the generation of “baby boomers” and X generation report the highest consumption of television content[9].



[5] BB NME. (2022). 1Q2022 –Colombia. Households with the internet.

[6] Levy, G. (2022). The battle for the attention of video consumers. Available at: <https://andinalink.com/la-batalla-por-la-atencion-de-los-consumidores-de-video/>

[7] BB NME, 2022, op. cit.

[8] BB NME, 2022, op. cit.

[9] BB NME, 2022, op. cit.

Media Ownership in Colombia

A small group of individuals, families, and businesspeople own the media outlets with the higher audience in Colombia, thereby controlling a significant portion of the flow of information. A doctoral study by Germán Caballero at the University of Rosario in Colombia concluded:

“There is a significant influence of prominent economic groups on the media, in terms of how they shape their news agenda. As a result, journalists are subject to the economic interests of conglomerates and any entity that sponsors the media, which in turn affects their work[10].”

A total of eight Colombian-owned business corporations gather 78% of the audience across four main media platforms: radio, television, press, and the web. Among them, the Santo Domingo-Valorem group and the Ardila Lülle group have the largest shares of the audience market, with 19% and 28.7%, respectively, according to a mapping project carried out jointly by FECOLPER, an association of journalists in Colombia, and Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a media NGO[11].

Despite having over two hundred radio stations, more than fifty television channels, and more than fifty newspapers, only two private free-to-air television networks (Caracol and RCN), two national newspapers (El Espectador and El Tiempo), and two radio networks (Caracol Radio and RCN Radio) attract more than 90% of the audience in Colombia[12].

[10] Germán Caballero, “Estudio sobre los efectos de las presiones de los grupos económicos en la agenda informativa: una mirada a la concentración de medios en Colombia” (Study on the effects of pressure from economic groups on the news agenda: a look at the concentration of media in Colombia), University of Rosario: Colombia, 2019, available at: <https://repository.urosario.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10336/20109/TESIS-GERMAN-CABALLERO-REPOSITORIO.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

[11] Colombian Federation of Journalists, RSF, Media Monitoring in Colombia.

[12] Media Monitoring in Colombia, op. cit.

The Largest Media Groups

Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Corporation

Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo is a Colombian businessman whose primary investment portfolio is banking. As the largest personal banker in Colombia, he has been ranked by Forbes Magazine as the richest man in the country. His fortune is estimated at US\$ 11.1 billion, positioning him as the 85th richest person in the world. His corporation’s portfolio extends to various sectors, including the financial sector, agribusiness, mining and industry, energy and gas, infrastructure, hospitality, construction, and media.

In 2012, he decided to venture into the media business by acquiring all the shares of Casa Editorial El Tiempo, which had historically belonged to the Santos family. Currently, he controls 28 of the highest audience media outlets throughout the country.

Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Media Outlets

Newspapers	El Tiempo
	Portafolio
	Llano 7 Días
	Boyacá 7 días
	ADN (Bogotá, Cali, Medellín and Barranquilla)
Magazines	Revista Don Juan
	Lecturas Dominicales
	Revista Carrusel
	Revista Motor
	Revista Elenco
	Revista Bocas
	Revista Aló
Television	City TV
	Canal El Tiempo
Digital media	eltiempo.com
	diarioadn.co
	motor.com
	portafolio.co
	revistadonjuan.com
	alo.com
	futbolred.com
	revistacarrusel.com.co
	citytv.com.co

Carlos Ardila Lülle Corporation

The Carlos Ardila Lülle corporation, which is owned by the heirs of the late magnate with the same name, owns more than fifty companies in various sectors such as agro-industrial, industrial, communications and entertainment, finance and insurance, real estate, and automotive. The group owns several sugar refineries that produce most of the agro-industrial derivative and is also the owner of the main producer of soft drinks, Postobón S.A. In the media sector, the group has a wide portfolio that includes the recent addition of the newspaper La República and the traditional brand that it has been historically identified with, RCN.

Carlos Ardila Lülle Media Outlets

Newspapers	La República
Television	RCN Televisión
	NTN 24 Horas
	Mundo Max
	RCN Novelas
	Win Sports
	Nuestra Tele
Radio	RCN radio
	Fantástica
	La Carifosa
	La FM
	Antena 2
	Amor Estéreo
	El Sol
	Fiesta
	La Mega
	Radio Uno
	Radio Red
	Rumba
	Digital media
Antena 2	
Años Maravillosos	
Boleros RCN	
RCN Televisión	
Caribe y Son	
Clásica	
Colombianísima	
	Electrofiesta

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 · Created with Datawrapper

Valorem-Santodomingo Corporation

The Julio Mario Santo Domingo Business Group is one of the most significant corporate organizations in the country. It is currently consolidated through the company Valorem S.A. (formerly Valores Bavaria). The Santo Domingo group has a vast portfolio of investments in various economic sectors, including real estate, tourism, logistics, transportation, commerce, industry, communication, and entertainment. The organization was founded by Julio Mario Santo Domingo Pumarejo, and after his death in 2011, the leadership of the group was inherited by his son, Alejandro Santo Domingo Dávila.

Valorem-Group Santo Domingo Media Investments

Newspapers	El Espectador
Magazines	Shock
	Cromos
Television	Caracol Televisión
	Caracol Novelas
	Caracol Internacional
	VmasTV
	Época
Radio	Blu Radio
Digital media	Shock.com
	Cromos.com.co
	Elespectador.com
	Caracoltv.com
	Caracolinternacional.com
	Pulzo.com
	Bluradio.com

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

PRISA Corporation

The Prisa Group is a Spanish media conglomerate that operates in 24 countries worldwide. It is the largest Spanish-speaking media holding in Latin America. Founded in 1972 by Spanish businessman Jesús de Polanco, the group operates in the press, radio, television, and publishing sectors. The group boasts a vast portfolio of companies, including the Santillana publishing house and the Spanish newspaper El País.

Prisa Group (in Colombia)

Radio	Caracol Radio
	W Radio
	40 Principales
	Bésame
	Oxígeno
	Q´ Hubo Radio
	Radioactiva
	La Vallenata
	Tropicana
Digital media	Caracol.com.co
	WRadio.com.co
	Los40.com.co
	Bésame.fm
	Tropicanafm.com
	Oxigeno.fm
	Lavallenata.com

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Influential Media

Press

According to the consultancy firm Cifras y Conceptos[13] , El Tiempo, the national newspaper with the highest circulation in Colombia, is the most influential media outlet in the country with a 30% recognition rate among opinion leaders.

Casa Editorial El Tiempo is a media conglomerate and the owner of the main national newspaper in Colombia. It was founded in 1911 and was owned by the family of former presidents Eduardo Santos and Juan Manuel Santos during the 21st century. In March 2012, the business group led by Luis Carlos Sarmiento acquired 88% of the shareholding, and two months later, they negotiated to acquire all the company’s shares.

El Tiempo

Type	Large format daily newspaper
Founded	30-Jan-11
Ideology	Center-right liberalism
Founder	Alfonso Villegas Restrepo
Publication day	Monday to Sunday
Owner	Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Group
Director	Andrés Mompotes

Source: authors’ own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[13] Cifras y Conceptos, Opinion panel, 2022 Edition, available at: <http://www.cifrasyconceptos.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Panel2022-2.pdf>

El Espectador is the second most influential newspaper in Colombia in terms of recognition among opinion leaders, with a 27% recognition rate, according to the Cifras y Conceptos[14]. It was founded by Fidel Cano Gutierrez in Medellin in 1887, making it the oldest newspaper currently published in the country and one of the oldest in the Americas. El Espectador identifies itself as the “extreme center” by not taking sides in the political polarization of the country. It is currently managed by Fidel Cano Correa and owned by the Valorem group, which also owns Caracol Television.

El Espectador

Type	Tabloid
Founded	22 March 1887
Ideology	Center
Founder	Fidel Cano Gutiérrez
Publication day	Monday to Sunday
Owner	Valorem Group
Director	Fidel Cano Correa

Source: authors’ own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[14] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

Semana magazine has the third highest recognition rate among opinion leaders. It was established in 1946 by politician and former Colombian president Alberto Lleras Camargo and was later refounded in 1982 by journalist Felipe López Caballero. In 2020, Semana was acquired by the Gilinski Group, a financial group that decided to shift its editorial line towards an ultraconservative profile, calling itself “the Colombian version of Fox News.” The new policy emphasizes the digital aspect, and controversial journalist Vicky Dávila was appointed as the general director.

The sudden shift in the magazine’s management and ideology, along with its rapid transformation, led to the mass resignation of its most prominent investigative journalists and opinion columnists, many of whom had been on staff for decades. As a result, Semana has suffered a significant loss of credibility in recent[15] years[16], with the Cifras y Conceptos study rating it at only 12% as an influential media outlet in 2022[17].

Semana

Type	Magazine
Founded in	1982
Ideology	Ultraconservative
Founder	Felipe López Caballero
Publication day	Sunday
Owner	Gilinski Group
Director	Victoria Eugenia Dávila Hoyos

Source: authors’ own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[15] Santiago Torrado, Sally Palomino, Camila Osorio, “El ocaso de la revista colombiana ‘Semana’” (The decline of the Colombian magazine Semana), El País, 15 November 2020, available at: <https://elpais.com/internacional/2020-11-15/el-ocaso-de-la-revista-colombiana-semana.html>

[16] Daniel Coronell, “Mingilinski,” Los Danieles, Revista Cambio, 12 June 2022, available at: <https://cambicolombia.com/opinion/los-danieles/mingilinski>.

[17] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

In fourth place is La República newspaper, a business newspaper with a print audience of over 200,000 readers and an average national circulation of 70,000 copies of mixed circulation. The newspaper was co-founded in 1954 by former president Mariano Ospina Pérez and businessman Julio C. Hernández. In August 2016, the Ardila Lülle Organization (OAL) acquired it, buying all the shares of the newspaper along with the printing press. The Cifras y Conceptos panel study rates its credibility at 5%.

La República

Type	Business journal
Foundation	1954
Ideology	Center-right economic liberalism
Founder	Mariano Ospina Pérez
Publication day	Monday to Saturday
Owner	Ardila Lülle Organization
Director	Fernando Quijano Velasco

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper



[18] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

Television

In the television sector, the Cifras y Conceptos study has ranked Caracol Noticias, the news program of Canal Caracol, as the top performer. Canal Caracol is one of the two private television channels in the country and belongs to the Valorem-Grupo Santo Domingo group, which also owns the newspaper El Espectador. Caracol Television was a significant audiovisual player in Colombia’s mixed television system in the 20th century. Although the broadcasting networks belonged to the state, private entities were granted broadcasting spaces, and Caracol was one of the main licensees at the time. In 1998, it obtained one of the two licenses for free-to-air private television with national coverage.

Caracol was founded in 1969 as a television programming company (programadora) under the leadership of Fernando Londoño Henao. In 1998, it became a television channel under the control of the Valorem Group, which was owned by magnate Julio Mario Santo Domingo at the time. According to a Cifras y Conceptos panel, 31% of those surveyed claimed to consume Caracol Noticias, making it the most influential free-to-air TV news provider in the country[19].

Caracol Noticias

Type	TV news channel
Founded	1969 (as a brand)-1998 (as a news channel)
Ideology	Center-right economic liberalism
Founder	Fernando Londoño Henao
Broadcast	Monday to Sunday
Owner	Valorem Group
Director	Juan Roberto Vargas Vera

Source: authors’ own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[19] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

In second place is the independent news channel Noticias Uno, which is broadcast through the internet and cable TV. Its first broadcast was in 1992 on Canal Uno, but in 2019 it was removed from Colombian free-to-air television. Historically, Noticias Uno has been awarded the India Catalina Awards as the best news program in the country in 2003, 2006, from 2010 to 2016, and consecutively from 2018 to 2022. The news channel belongs to the independent production company NTC television.

According to the Cifras y Conceptos study, 20% of the interviewed opinion leaders consume this news program to stay informed and consider it influential in the country’s media agenda.

Noticias Uno

Type	TV news channel
Founded	1992 free-to-air TV
	2019 paid TV
Ideology	Center-left
Founder	Daniel Coronell
Broadcast	Saturday and Sunday
Owner	NTC TELEVISIÓN
Director	Cecilia Orozco Tascón

Source: authors’ own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

In third place is the news channel Noticias RCN, which is owned by the Ardila Lülle Group and is part of a conglomerate of press, radio, and television media. Like Caracol Television, it was established as a production house in the 20th century during the mixed television model and became one of the largest companies licensed to broadcast. In 1998, it was also granted the license of private free-to-air television in the country.

According to Cifras y Conceptos, Noticias RCN is a source of information for 13% of the opinion leaders surveyed. It is noteworthy that this news outlet took a clear political stance in support of Álvaro Uribe Vélez during and after his government, which apparently led to a loss of credibility and a decline in leadership it once shared with Canal Caracol in the news market. As a result, its audience levels have significantly decreased over time[20].

Noticias RCN

Type	TV news channel
Founded	1967 as TV concessionaire 1998 as TV channel
Ideology	Right-wing economic liberalism
Founder	Carlos Ardila Lülle
Broadcast	Monday to Sunday
Owner	Ardila Lülle Group
Director	José Manuel Acevedo

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[20] Guillermo Zafra, "¡En RCN ni las noticias ya son noticia!" (At RCN not even the news is news anymore!", Enfoque, 22 November 2017, available at <https://www.revistaenfoque.com.co/opinion/en-rcn-ni-las-noticias-ya-son-noticia>.

In fourth place is CM& News, which was created by renowned journalist Yamit Amat. Like Noticias UNO, it was established in 1992 with Canal UNO, a media outlet in which Amat is a partner. It continues to be broadcast uninterrupted and serves as the main news program of this free-to-air television channel. Although it is considered a public channel, all of its broadcast spaces have been granted to the Plural Comunicaciones SAS group, of which Amat has been a partner since 2016, when this concession was awarded. According to the Cifras y Conceptos, 8% of those surveyed consider this news program influential[21].

Noticias CM&

Type	TV news channel
Founded	1992
Ideology	Center-right
Founder	Yamit Amat
Broadcast	Monday to Sunday
Owner	Plural Comunicaciones SAS
Director	Yamit Amat

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[21] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

Radio

Radio continues to occupy a significant place in the lives of Colombians, not only due to high consumption but also because it offers the most extensive news analysis. According to Cifras y Conceptos, W Radio, an FM radio station owned by Caracol Radio, is placed in the first place for credibility. Additionally, W Radio is part of the W network of stations present in several countries worldwide. Caracol Radio previously belonged to the Valorem Group; however, they decided to sell their participation a few years ago to the Spanish company Prisa as part of their corporate reorganization. Some 28% of those surveyed named W as a highly influential radio station in Colombian public opinion, mainly due to the news segment led by journalist Julio Sánchez Cristo [22].

W Radio

Type	News radio broadcaster
Funded	2003
Ideology	Center-right
Founder	Julio Sanchez Cristo
Broadcast	Monday to Friday
Owner	Caracol Radio (Prisa Radio)
Director	Julio Sánchez Cristo

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[22] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.

In terms of radio influence, the opinion leaders interviewed by the Cifras y Conceptos panel ranked Blu Radio, owned by the Valorem Group, in second place with 20%. Valorem, which also owns Caracol Television and El Espectador, founded the Blu radio network years after selling Caracol Radio to the Spanish group Prisa as a way to re-enter the market.

Blu Radio

Type	News radio broadcaster
Founded	2012
Ideology	Center-right
Founder	Valorem Group
Broadcast	Monday to friday
Owner	Valorem Group
Director	Néstor Morales

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Caracol Radio's main station occupies the third place, also with a 20% influence rate as ranked by Cifras y Conceptos. This station belongs to the Spanish group Prisa Radio and is one of the oldest and most traditional in Colombia. Well-known journalists have held the helm of this radio station, including Yamid Amat and Darío Arismendi. Currently, it is managed by the journalist Gustavo Gómez.



Caracol Radio

Type	News radio broadcaster
Founded	1948
Ideology	Center-right
Founder	Humberto Restrepo Arango
Broadcast	Monday to Friday
Owner	Radio Prisa Group
Director	Gustavo Gómez Córdoba

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

According to Cifras y Conceptos, RCN's flagship radio network was ranked fourth in terms of influence in 2022, with 7%. This radio network is owned by the Ardila Lülle Group and, like Caracol, is one of the oldest and most recognized broadcasters in the country.

RCN Radio

Type	News radio broadcaster
Founded	1948
Ideology	Right
Founder	Roberto Ramírez Gaviria
Broadcast	Lunes a viernes
Owner	Ardila Lülle Group
Director	Yolanda Ruiz

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Online

The growth of internet penetration in Colombia In recent years has significantly increased the consumption of news on digital platforms. According to the 2022 We Are Social by Datareport, Colombians spend an average of one hour and thirty minutes consuming digital news[23].

As in the case of the printed press, the website of El Tiempo, which belongs to the Sarmiento Ángulo Group, occupies the first place with 14%, according to Cifras y Conceptos[24].

ElTiempo.com

Type	News portal
Founded	30-Jan-11
Ideology	Center-right liberalism
Founder	Alfonso Villegas Restrepo
Owner	Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Group
Director	Andrés Mompotes

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

[23] Datareportal 2022, op. cit.
 [24] Cifras y Conceptos, 2022, op.cit.



The news portal of El Espectador has achieved a 13% rating in the Cifras y Conceptos survey, putting the news site in second place, in line with the trend of print media consumption. El Espectador is owned by the Valorem Group of the Santo Domingo Corporation, which also owns the print version of this media outlet, as well as a wide range of publications, television channels, and radio stations.

On multiple occasions, El Espectador has implemented strategies to migrate its audience exclusively to digital platforms. For a limited period, it restricted its circulation to Sundays only. Currently, although it prints its publication daily, it only distributes it in Bogotá. In the rest of the country, the print publication only circulates on Sundays, making digital services a vital component of this media outlet's distribution strategy.

ElEspectador.com

Type	News portal
Founded	22 March 1887
Ideology	Center
Founder	Fidel Cano Gutiérrez
Owner	Grupo empresarial: Valorem
Director	Fidel Cano Correa

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper



The exclusively online magazine Cambio holds the third position in terms of influence. It is an independent journalistic initiative that drew inspiration from the previously printed magazine Cambio 16, which was founded in 1993. The online publication aimed to rebuild an alternative investigative journalistic initiative, but this time in a completely digital format. It was relaunched on 6 February 2022.

Similar to the newspaper El Espectador, the opinion leaders interviewed by Cifras y Conceptos awarded this magazine 13%, making it the third most influential digital medium in the country.

The founders and owners of the magazine are Patricia Lara, Maurice Armitage, Gabriel Silva, and Daniel Coronell. Since 2022, journalist Daniel Coronell has been serving as the president of the media outlet, while Federico Gómez Lara has been appointed as the director. The magazine’s return to the market has generated high expectations among the public, to the extent that it sold thousands of digital subscriptions in December 2021, even before starting its operations.

CambioColombia.com

Type	News portal
Founded	14-Jul-93
	6-Feb-22
Ideology	Center
Founders	Patricia Lara (2022)
	Maurice Armitage (2022)
	Gabriel Silva (2022)
	Daniel Samper Pizano (1993)
	Juan Tomás de Salas (1993)
Owner	Cambio Comunicaciones SAS
Director	Federico Gómez Lara

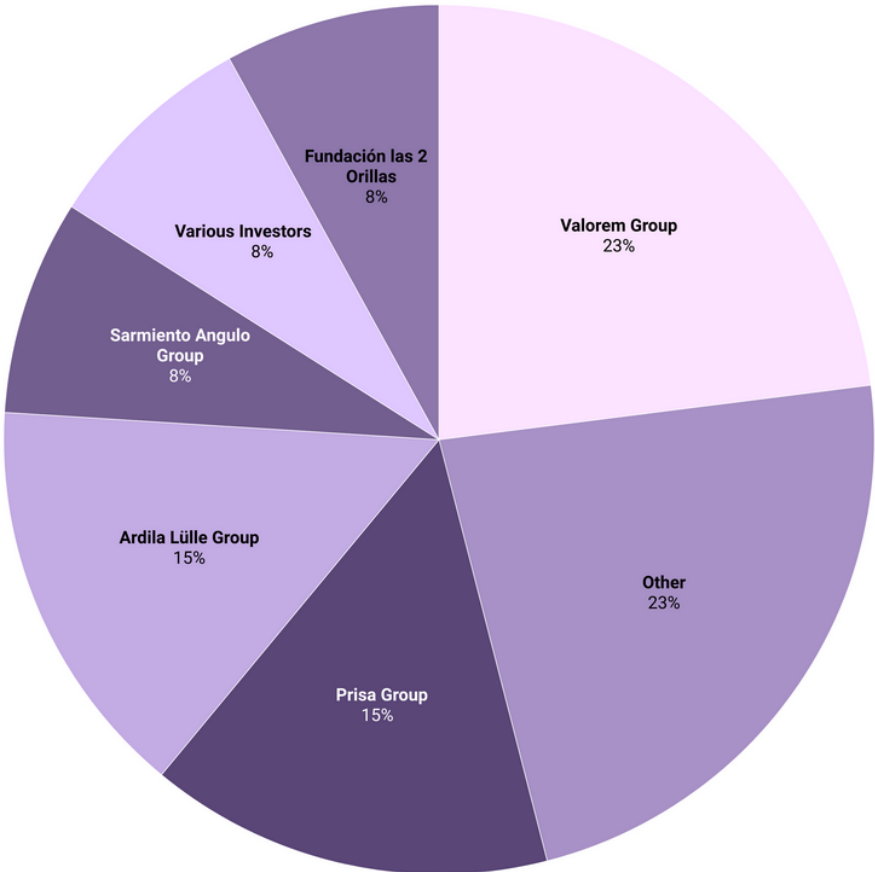
According to Cifras y Conceptos, the online media outlet La Silla Vacía holds the fourth position in terms of influential media. It was founded by the esteemed journalist Juanita León and primarily relies on donations from non-governmental organizations for its financing.

LaSillaVacía.com

Type	News portal
Founded	2009
Ideology	Center
Fundador	Juanita León
Propietario	Juanita León
Director	Juanita León

Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Main owners of online news portals in Colombia, market share, 2022



Source: authors' own research, May 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Main Sources of Financing

Advertising

As in other countries on the continent, advertising is the primary source of income for media outlets. However, due to the convergence phenomenon, a significant portion of those resources has migrated to digital platforms. The online market is currently experiencing the highest growth and interest from advertisers.

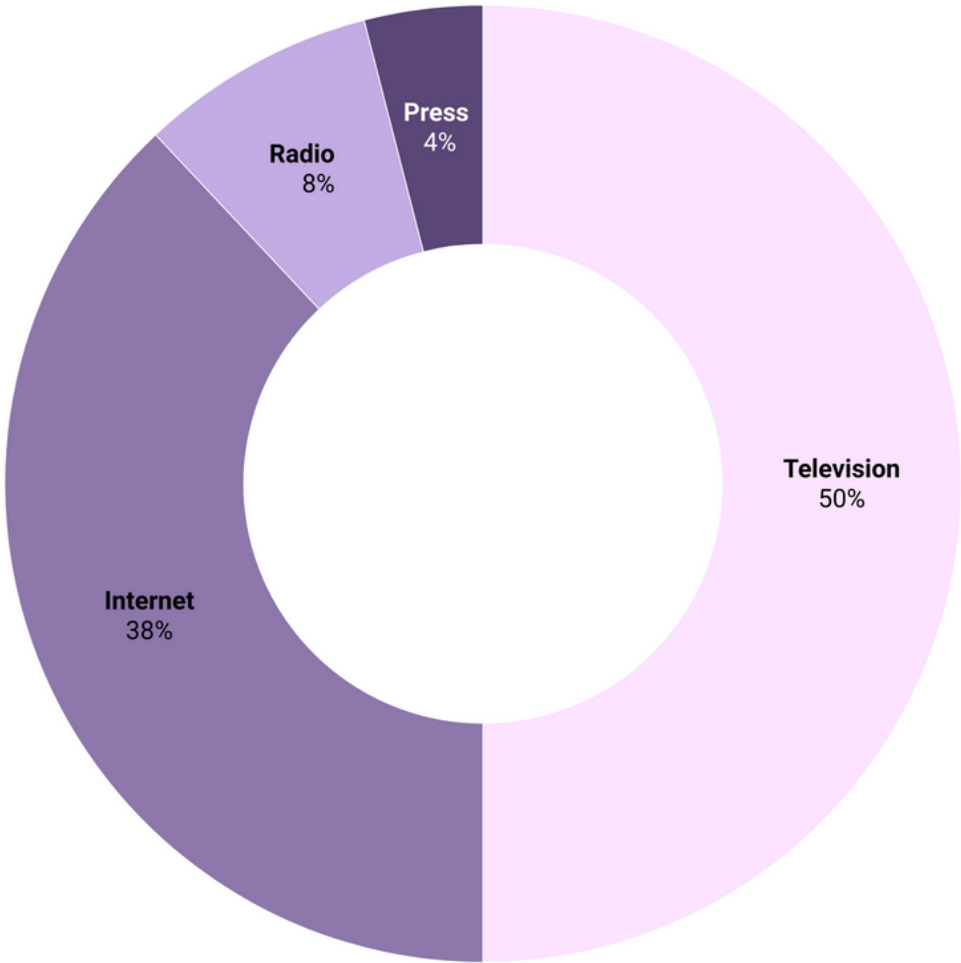
According to figures from Zenith on advertising spending in Colombia for 2022, television gets the largest share of the ad pie, some US\$ 1.915bn, followed by digital advertising with US\$ 1.438bn. In third place is radio with an estimated budget of US\$ 321m followed by printed press with approximately US\$ 157m.

Advertising expenditure in Colombia, in US\$ m, 2018-2024

	Television	Internet	Radio	Newspapers	Outdoor	Magazines	Cinema
2018	1,649.1	177.9	296.7	291.4	58.3	46.7	1
2019	1,682.9	245.9	270.6	272.5	55.3	36.9	0.9
2020	1,719.7	884.3	255.6	207.9	37.7	25.1	0.4
2021	1,886.7	1,289.8	294.7	204.7	62.6	24.4	0.7
2022*	1,915.7	1,434.8	321.3	157.5	62.2	14.1	0.6
2023*	2,115.4	1,696.3	358.9	128.9	62.1	4.7	0.6
2024*	2,159.2	1,493.3	348.4	100.1	58.4	1.6	0.5

*outlook or forecast
 Source: Statista in cooperation with Zenith • Created with Datawrapper

Advertising spending, breakdown by media channels, 2022



Source: authors' own calculations based on Interactive Advertising Bureau data • Created with Datawrapper

When it comes to digital advertising, the most reliable source in the country is the annual report of the Interactive Advertising Bureau[25]. This organization represents over 500 leading companies that actively support the sale of advertising in digital media. IAB Colombia is an international non-profit association that was created in March 2007 with the objective of increasing investment in digital marketing and online advertising in Colombia. IAB Colombia brings together internet content publishers, advertising agencies, media centers, ad networks, research and auditing companies, interactive agencies, media portals, and other companies committed to the development of marketing and advertising on the internet.

[25] IAB Colombia, "Reporte de inversión en publicidad digital. Total año 2021" (Digital Advertising Investment Report. Complete Year 2021), available at https://b5bb965e-d110-46dd-b890-133b2b47508d.usrfiles.com/ugd/b5bb96_3734dca9fb26438db9c545b00ade4ead.pdf.

Media recipients of online advertising income, 2021

Recipient	Website
Canal 1	www.canal1.com.co
Caracol Radio	www.caracol.com.co
Caracol Next (Caracol Televisión, El Espectador, Cromos, Shock, Blue Radio)	www.caracoltv.com , www.elespectador.com , www.cromos.com.co , www.shock.co , www.bluradio.com
Casa Editorial El Tiempo	www.eltiempo.com
Cisneros Interactive	www.cisnerosinteractive.com
Clout	
Ediciones Gamma	www.edicionesgamma.com
Editorial La Patria S.A.	www.lapatria.com
El Colombiano S.A. Y CIA. S.C.A.	www.elcolombiano.com
El Universal	www.eluniversal.com.co
Éxito Media	www.exitomedia.co
Fluvip	www.fluvip.com
Goldfish	www.goldfish.com.co
IMS	www.imscorporate.com
KienYKe	www.kienyke.com
La República	www.larepublica.co
People Media	www.peoplemedia.digital
Publicaciones Semana S.A.	www.semana.com
Publimetro	www.publimetro.co
Pulzo.COM	www.pulzo.com
Radiópolis	www.radiopolis.fm
RCN (RCN Televisión, RCN Radio)	www.canalrcn.com , www.rcnradio.com
República Digital	www.republica-digital.com
Revista P&M	www.revistapym.com.co
Socialpubli	www.socialpubli.com
Sunmedia	www.sunmedia.tv
Teads	www.teads.tv
Turner Broadcasting System Latin America, Inc.	www.turner.com
VC Medios Colombia S.A.	www.vcmultichannel.com
www.colombia.com LTDA.	www.colombia.com

Similarly, the IAB report reveals the total revenue from digital advertising in Colombia, stated in Colombian pesos.

Total online ad revenues in Colombia, in COP, 2020-2021

Spend category	2020	2021
Total income desktop	143,356,802,987	378,372,425,263
Total income mobile	400,565,004,959	472,679,657,145
Total income of publishers, ad networks and other digital media for direct sales desktop	61,397,299,003	69,293,723,495
Total income of publishers, ad networks and other digital media from direct sales mobile	34,884,055,238	66,638,841,344
Income from other sources desktop	131,233,539,071	321,265,794,386
Income from other sources mobile	479,896,317,876	731,907,993,747
Total investment in digital advertising desktop	335,987,641,061	768,931,943,143
Total investment in digital advertising mobile	915,345,378,073	1,271,226,492,236
Total investment in digital advertising in Colombia	1,251,333,019,134	2,040,158,435,379

Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau • Created with Datawrapper

Main Sources of Funding of Media in Colombia

In Colombia, the majority of traditional media outlets are financed through advertising revenue.

The traditional advertising sector has been in crisis due to the growth of digital advertising. However, despite these difficulties, advertising remains the main source of funding for the media[26].

The second source of financing for the media is through contributions made by the state through the Unique ICT Fund (FUTIC), which not only finances the public radio and television outlets but also offers funds through various programs that benefit many content-producing industry agents.

Thirdly, many alternative media outlets acquire resources through donations, particularly from international organizations, foreign governments, and in some cases, foundations and benefactors.

The microfinancing model has become popular, being used by highly credible and widely disseminated independent media such as Noticias Uno. After experiencing a crisis with Plurales Comunicaciones SAS, Noticias Uno decided to resort to this funding mechanism[27]. A similar situation was experienced by Los Danieles, a media outlet created by Daniel Coronell, Daniel Samper Ospina, and Daniel Samper Pizano.

Additionally, a fifth financing model is introduced, which involves providing content creation services, consulting, and advice, among others.

[26] Germán Rey, "El duro destino de los medios de comunicación" (The grim fate of the media), Razón Pública, 13 July 2020, available at: <https://razonpublica.com/duro-destino-los-medios-comunicacion/>.

[27] Johana Lorduy, "Noticias Uno y Los Danieles han recogido más de \$2.250 millones en la plataforma Vaki" (Noticias Uno and Los Danieles have collected more than COP 2.25bn on the Vaki platform), La República, 19 January 2021, available at <https://www.larepublica.co/empresas/noticias-uno-y-los-danieles-han-recogido-mas-de-2-250-millones-en-la-plataforma-vaki-3112488>

How media outlets fund themselves in Colombia (1)

Media outlet	Owner	Platform	Main sources of funding
La Silla Vacía	Blogósfera Producciones	Digital	Consulting services, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding, subscriptions
Cambio	Cambio Comunicaciones S.A.S.	Digital	Advertising, subscriptions
Vorágine	Fundación Vorágine Periodismo Contracorriente	Digital	Content creation for clients, consulting services, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding, memberships
Cuestión Pública	Escarbabajo SAS	Digital	Consulting services, training services, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding, memberships
La Cola de Rata	Corporación Los Públicos	Digital	Advertising (Google AdSense), donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding
Mutante	Fundación Mutante	Digital	Main: grants Secondary: crowdfunding, content services, design services, donations from individuals, memberships, government funds.
Rutas del conflicto	Fundación Con Lupa	Digital	Organization of events, training services, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding
Colombiacheck	Consejo de Redacción	Digital	Own resources, donations from companies, grants
Verdad Abierta	Fundación Verdad Abierta	Digital	Grants, training services, corporate donations, individual donations, content creation for clients
Razón Pública	Fundación Razón Pública	Digital	Creation of content for clients, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding

Source: Authors' research, Media and Journalism Research Center • Created with Datawrapper

How media outlets fund themselves in Colombia (2)

Media outlet	Owner	Platform	Main sources of funding
Pulzo	INQLAB S.A.S	Digital	Google AdSense advertising, direct sales advertising, sponsored content, content, design and technology services
Baudó Agencia Pública	Fundación Baudó AP	Digital	Training services, donations from individuals, grants, crowdfunding
Las2orillas	Fundación Las Dos Orillas	Digital	Programmatic advertising, direct advertising, grants
La Nueva Prensa		Digital	Crowdfunding
Manifiesta	Fundación Manifiesta	Digital	Main: donations from individuals Secondary: sponsored content, training services, paid special research, donations, grants
Seguimiento.co		Digital	Google AdSense advertising, direct advertising, sponsored content, sale of content to other media, consulting services
Cerosetenta / 070		Digital	Content creation for clients, consulting services, training services, grants
Pluralidad Z		Digital	Main: donations from individuals
Con la oreja roja		Digital	Secondary: sponsored content
Consonante		Digital	Crowdfunding, holding events, sale of content to other media, training services, sales of merchandise, grants, memberships
Minuto30	Minuto 30 S.A.S.	Digital	Grants

Source: Authors' research, Media and Journalism Research Center • Created with Datawrapper

How media outlets fund themselves in Colombia (3)

Media outlet	Owner	Platform	Main sources of funding
El Tiempo	Casa Editorial El Tiempo - CEET S.A.	Print and digital	Advertising
El Espectador	Comunican S.A.	Print and digital	Advertising
Semana	Publicaciones Semana S.A.	Print and digital	Advertising
La República	Editorial La República S.A.S.	Print and digital	Advertising
Publimetro	Publimetro S.A.	Print and digital	Advertising
El Colombiano	El Colombiano S.A.S.	Print and digital	Advertising
El País	El País S.A.	Print and digital	Advertising
Canal Caracol	Caracol Televisión S.A.	Television	Advertising
RCN Televisión	RCN Televisión S.A.	Television	Advertising
Canal 1		Television	State funding and advertising
Señal Colombia		Television	State funding and advertising
Canal Capital		Television	State funding and advertising
Canal Telepacífico	Sociedad Canal Regional de Televisión Pacífico LTDA - Telepacífico	Television	State funding and advertising
Canal Teleantioquia	Sociedad Televisión de Antioquia Limitada	Television	State funding and advertising
Canal Telecaribe	Canal Regional de Televisión del Caribe LTDA - Telecaribe	Television	State funding and advertising
W Radio	Caracol Radio	Radio	Advertising
Blu Radio		Radio	Advertising
RCN Radio	RCN Radio	Radio	Advertising
Caracol Radio	Caracol Radio	Radio	Advertising
Olimpica Stérero	Organización Radial Olímpica S.A.	Radio	Advertising
La FM	RCN Radio	Radio	Advertising

Source: Authors' research, Media and Journalism Research Center • Created with Datawrapper

Philanthropic Funding

Non-governmental organizations play a significant role in financing the media in Colombia, and one of the main organizations in this regard is the Open Society Foundations (OSF). Over the past few decades, it has made substantial donations to various independent media outlets, including Las 2 Orillas, La Silla Vacía, and to independent journalists like La Puya from the newspaper El Espectador.

Another international organization that contributes resources to finance independent media in Colombia is the Ford Foundation. It finances Silla Académica, which is run by the media outlet La Silla Vacía in association with public universities and the Red Étnica (Ethnic Network).

Membership Puzzle, an NGO based in the United States, also makes significant investments in Colombia with the aim of strengthening independent journalism. The British Embassy in Bogotá also supports independent media by financing specific media projects such as resources for electoral coverage. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), an NGO financed by the US Congress, is also financing media in Colombia through project-related grants.

[28] Open Society Foundations, Latin America Program, available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/programa-para-america-latina/es>

[29] Caballero, "Estudio sobre los efectos..." *op. cit.*

[30] Ford Foundation, see more at <https://www.fordfoundation.org/>

[31] The Membership Puzzle Project, see more at <https://membershippuzzle.org/fondos>

[32] Juanita León, "La financiación de La Silla Vacía" (Funding of La Silla Vacía), 13 June 2020, available at <https://www.lasillavacia.com/la-silla-vacia/opinion/articulos-columna/la-financiacion-de-la-silla-vacia>

Government Funding

Historically, the state has been substantially involved in the financing of public media in Colombia with the enactment of Law 182 of 1995. This was achieved through the creation of a fund for television, which is a special account under the responsibility of the state with a specific purpose. The fund is financed by resources generated through a levy on the income pulled in by private actors in the same market.

This means that a percentage of the income received from licensing, monthly payments by television subscribers, advertising sales, and marketing of audiovisual products, among others, is used to ensure the sustainability of the public audiovisual media ecosystem in the country, including regional television. The National Television Commission is responsible for collecting, administering, and managing the fund.

Following the enactment of Law 1507 of 2012, the management of the state resources for the media was entrusted to the National Television Authority. This marked the first instance in which the allocation of resources was broadened to include programs for production companies and public media producers, with a particular focus on minority population groups such as ethnic and indigenous peoples.

In 2019, the National Television Authority granted funds of over US\$ 70m to public media. With the issuance of Law 1978 of 2019, which modified Law 1341 of 2009 and modernized the ICT sector, the administration of these resources was entrusted to the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies through a new fund called FUTIC. This fund integrated the resources of the FONTV and FONTIC funds. (see chapter on regulation and policy in Colombia in Media Influence Matrix)

In line with Article 9 of the aforementioned law, the state is obligated to ensure the financing and promotion of multi-platform public interest content at both national and regional levels, with the aim of encouraging citizen participation, particularly in the promotion of civic values, recognition of diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, gender equality, political and social inclusion, national integration, strengthening democracy, and facilitating access to knowledge.

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In 2021, regional television channels in Colombia received over COP 124bn (equivalent to US\$ 31m), which represents a growth of more than 25% compared to the funds granted by ANTV in 2019 for the same purpose[33].

Over COP 23bn (US\$ 5.7m) were allocated for audiovisual programs, and for the first time, a program exclusively aimed at young people, called “The Colombia We Dream Of,” was created. This initiative was delivered through universities in the country and was allocated over COP4bn (US\$ 1m).

In the case of the national public broadcaster RTVC, FUTIC granted it resources worth over COP 125bn in 2021, representing a 21% growth compared to 2019. Together, between dedicated programs and resources for public media, the Ministry of ICT, through FUTIC, funded the audiovisual sector with over COP 290bn in 2021 (US\$ 72m) money meant to be used for creation of public interest content. The resources assigned by FUTIC constitute the primary source of financing for the entire ecosystem of public media in Colombia, including independent audiovisual producers and production companies.



[33] MinTIC. (2022). White Paper of TICS 2022. Colombia

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the media ecosystem in Colombia has undergone significant transformation in recent years. Traditional media such as print, radio, and television, while still relevant, no longer hold the same prominence as before. On the other hand, new media and platforms have not only made space for themselves but also consolidated their positions. Consequently, the country now has a much wider and more diverse media offering than before.

Similarly, the audience has changed. Their consumption habits, interests, preferred formats, and priorities are no longer the same as they were a decade or so ago. As a result, these trends have had an impact on the economy. While traditional media has seen a decline of their revenues and had to catch up with the times to slow down or mitigate the decline, new media and platforms have had to resort to creativity to finance themselves.

In any case, advertising remains an important source of revenue for the media, as it does in other countries, even though many of these resources have migrated to digital platforms, which is the market with the highest growth and interest for advertisers. Nonetheless, according to the latest figures, television still holds the largest share of the ad pie, followed by the internet, radio, and newspapers.

With that being said, although the cake is no longer distributed as it was before, the financing model of traditional media has not changed significantly. Generally, private media still heavily rely on advertising revenue. Meanwhile public media depend on a combination of funds from the state budget and advertising sales.



However, the novelty in this scenario stems from new media and platforms, particularly independent ones. Their sources of financing are diverse. While many receive resources from non-governmental entities (such as foundations or foreign governments) they also obtain funds through crowdfunding campaigns, service provision (content creation, communications, training, consulting services, among others), memberships, donations, and advertising. They are currently in a trial and error process, as there is still no proven formula that works for everyone.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that despite everything mentioned above, one aspect has remained unchanged: the concentration of media. While there are now various alternatives to those provided by large economic groups, they still possess a significant number of media outlets and have a significant impact on the dissemination of information. The Santo Domingo Group, the Carlos Ardila Lülle Group, the Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Group, and other large ones are dominant and seem to continue to enjoy their control of the media sector.



More about the project **Media Influence Matrix** at
<http://journalismresearch.org>

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