

MOROCCO

Media Landscape Guide

MARCH 2022



NETWORK

communicating with disaster-affected communities



Preface

This guide is one of a series of Media Landscape Guides which map the media landscape in different countries. The guides have been produced by the CDAC Network in cooperation with DW Akademie and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. This project is part of the global initiative “Transparency and media freedom - Crisis resilience in the pandemic”.

*CDAC Network would like to thank **Mahdi Bouziane**, the consultant who led the research for the Morocco Media Landscape Guide in-country and **Sarah Routley** and **HRI Ltd** for methodology and guide design, and support throughout its development. This work has been made possible with inputs from individuals and organisations working in media, government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and CDAC Network partners who kindly agreed to provide valuable insights to the research. **This Media Landscape Guide was written and edited between April and November 2021.***

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SECTION I:

Introduction

1.1 About The Guide

This Media Landscape Guide provides a snapshot of the media in Morocco, including the audiences, the producers, the preferences of different groups in the community, the communications culture, and the languages associated with the media. It gives an insight into the role of media in development work, crisis preparedness, recent disasters, and the (at time of writing¹) ongoing COVID-19 response. The guide also gives an overview of each media sector including, digital and social media, radio, television, print and other traditional forms of mass communication.

It should be noted that with the constantly changing nature of the media landscape, this is not a comprehensive overview of all media outlets and platforms but rather a snapshot summary of those most relevant at the time of writing.

The guide has been written as an introduction to help organisations and individuals engage with media in their work. For example, it can be used by:

- » Community, development, and humanitarian organisations; government and local authorities; non-government organisations (NGOs) and UN relief agencies to work with the media on community engagement, communication, outreach, and messaging and mobilisation.
- » Development workers building societal resilience to disasters by working with media in disaster preparedness.
- » Relief workers using media to engage communities to work together in early recovery from crises.
- » Media outlets (including news outlets): to improve their communication and engagement with different groups, particularly during disasters.
- » Media Development Organisations: to inform advocacy and capacity-building work to improve people's access to quality information and further development goals through better outreach.

¹ April to November 2021



1.2 What Does The Guide Cover And Why It Is Needed

Without an understanding of how a society communicates, any communication efforts may struggle and potentially miss large numbers of those for which those efforts are intended. This can cause difficulties when attempting to work with the community in a development project; in an emergency, it could be even worse, as an incoming relief operation may not have time to carry out audience research before communicating vital information, without which communication may use the wrong channels and miss those who need it. However, by engaging media in a country, you are engaging vital partners who know the communications landscape of any given country well and have the means by which to effectively disseminate information.

The aim of this guide is to act as a starting point for communicators, indicating the most effective media to use to communicate with different demographics. Many existing resources for identifying media users and audiences in Morocco are either out of date or limited in scope: this guide will help identify which media is operable at the time of writing and so help facilitate the communication of reliable, trusted and timely information, helping to make the media part of the solution in a humanitarian response.

1.3 Methodology

Research for the guide was carried out in-country and aided by an in-country reference group who provided guidance, expert advice, and quality assurance. Information and data were collected through a detailed desk review and interviews. Interviews were carried out with media organisations, media experts and academic researchers, government officials, media staff (including producers and journalists), humanitarian agencies, UN agencies, and NGOs.

1.4 Potential Role Of The Guide In Disaster Preparedness And Crisis Response

Effective, consistent, and timely communication is vital in humanitarian response and in building sustainable early recovery from crises. Communities, authorities, and responders must be kept informed of the situation of any disaster and planned response, and of any actions they need to take. Proactive communication to dispel rumours or misinformation is vital, as is the building of trust with audiences, which can be facilitated through developing mechanisms for two-way communication. The media can also play a proactive role in early warning which can influence population and response behaviour and potentially mitigate the effects of a disaster.

In aid responses and disaster preparedness it is important to know how best to use media to reach marginalised groups, with considerations of literacy levels and language preferences. It is also important to be aware of, and to address, any enhanced needs, risks, and information gaps. Good communication requires creative thinking, adapting communication tools, message formats. Working with existing media professionals can help to achieve this.

This guide is intended to help practitioners improve their communication, particularly during humanitarian responses – whether they work in the media or are using it to reach affected communities. The goal is for it to be used to improve communications, messaging and information dissemination and contribute to an effective response.

SECTION 2:

Overview Of Communications Culture

THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE CURRENT MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN MOROCCO AND HOW IT CATERES TO DIFFERENT GROUPS. IT ALSO LOOKS AT THE MEDIA PREFERENCES AND ACCESS, AND THE BARRIERS PEOPLE FACE TO RECEIVING THE INFORMATION THEY NEED.

2.1 Media Background

Figure 1 Administrative map of Morocco



Map Sources: UNCS, ESRI.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in Aug 2013.

Morocco is an African, Mediterranean and Arab Monarchy situated in northwest Africa and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea in the north, by Mauritania in the south,² and by Algeria in the east. Morocco claims ownership of the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara (according to UN nomenclature), which it has designated its Southern Provinces. The country's population is estimated to be 37.13 million,³ mostly from Amazigh/Arab backgrounds. 99% of Moroccans are Muslims (this is the state religion) with a small Jewish community estimated at less than 6,000 individuals. 64% of the population lives in urban and suburban areas.

The development of the media in Morocco is linked to the introduction of modern communication techniques and to the country's historical, political, cultural and

linguistic evolution. The media landscape in Morocco evolved from being dominated by media outlets linked to the French and Spanish Protectorate to a situation where a partisan press reigned, and it is now moving towards an era of greater diversity, characterised by greater liberalisation and political openness. According to media writer Fathallah Daghami, "The current media situation has its roots in history... as well as in politics and economics..... it is essential to look at the evolution of the media in this country...in a context of control of both colonial and state power...over information" (Fathallah Daghami, 2012) Daghami identifies three main eras in the development of media in Morocco:


- » Monopoly era (1870-1960): this period saw the development of an abundant but closely monitored French-speaking press (1864). The first radio station was launched in 1928 and controlled by protectorate authorities and the first TV television station was launched in 1954 but closed after 15 months of broadcasting.
- » The partisan era (1960-1990): with a booming but muzzled bilingual partisan press and state-controlled broadcasting services.
- » Liberalisation era (since 1990): Moroccan media has witnessed important changes, with a strong trend toward liberalisation. This began with print media and, from 2004, involved radio channels and gradually broadcast TV too.

2.2 Media Landscape At A Glance

Information and media history has partly been shaped by a distrust of the authorities (from the protectorate authorities onwards) by parts of society, which has led to the development of alternative forms of expression and information sharing. These include sermons in mosques, handwritten newspapers in Arabic and most recently satellite

2 After Spain agreed to decolonize the territory in 1975, it ceded its control to Morocco and Mauritania. Mauritania abandoned the control the southern part of the territory in 1979. As per today, 80% of the territory is under Moroccan control and a peace process under UN supervision is launched since 1991.

3 dataportel.com as of January 2021.



television.⁴ Moroccan Audiences are open to “foreign” content thanks to the wide dissemination of Satellite TV (around 50% of Moroccan TV audiences watch foreign TV channels).⁵

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT) was established in 1998 and is the public body responsible for the control and regulation of the telecommunications sector. ANRT regularly conducts studies and investigations relating to the telecommunications (ICT) industry. They aim to collect reliable indicators using strict methodological approaches to provide useful information on the sector and have carried out ICT studies on the equipment and its use in 2018 and 2019.

The High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HACA) was established in 2002. It is the independent body responsible for regulating the audio-visual communication sector. Its mission is to ensure: “the respect of the principles of pluralism and freedom of speech in the audio-visual communication sector and compliance to the fundamental civilizational values and the laws of the Kingdom”. The creation of the HACA, the removal of the state monopoly as regards radio and television, along with the law on audio-visual communication are important steps in modernising the audio-visual public sector, favouring the establishment of private companies of radio and television. This brings both freedom of communication and enterprise, through a regulated liberalisation by an independent administrative authority.

MEDIA FREEDOM Morocco was ranked 136th in the 2021 Reporters without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom ranking.⁶ According to Freedom House (2017) the media in Morocco faces considerable restrictions with a range of laws limiting media freedom. In areas such as Western Sahara, journalists are unable to report freely and often encounter harassment. Advertising, subsidies, and financial harassment are used to encourage favourable coverage and discourage critical reporting. However, the internet, satellite broadcasts, and some independent radio stations do provide access to independent voices (particularly for the wealthier individuals and organisations). Reforms introduced in 2016 made improvements to the legal situation for the press, but the government retained powers to censor news content, suspend outlets, and pursue fines and prison sentences for journalists.⁷

Since 2005, there has not been a state monopoly on broadcasting. According to the Media Ownership Monitor (MOM), by RSF and Le Desk,⁸ in 2017, 9 of the 36 media companies involved in the most influential media are directly linked to the state, the government, or the royal family.⁹ Other owners include some of Morocco’s richest businessmen (who have stakes in five of the nine French-language publications) and several government ministers. Most viewers watch state TV channels and state radio stations also have many listeners. The TV sector remains majority State-owned. The radio sector is dominated by the state, but its ownership is more diverse, consisting of several smaller companies. The audience share of these privately-owned radios is 64.23%, showing their rapid success over the years.

Ownership of online media is the most fragmented. The print media is split between Arabic-language outlets, which are on the rise and whose owners mostly come from the world of journalism, and French-language outlets that are becoming less popular and whose shareholders include leading figures from the business and financial sectors. Many leading figures from the business and financial world invest in newspapers that make no profit, with their investments often outweighing returns. These are often closely affiliated with entities of power and have editorial lines designed to promote rather than question or jeopardise the economic or political and order.

4 Fathallah Daghami (2012). MÉDIAS ET PUBLICS AU MAROC. GRESEC, Les Enjeux de l’information et de la communication

5 CIAUMED. (2020). Rapport du Centre Interprofessionnel d’Audience des Médias.

6 RSF’s 2021 World Press Freedom Index (I is the freest), is published annually. The Index measures the level of freedom available to the media. It provides information about advances and declines in respect for media freedom in 180 countries and is used by the World Bank to evaluate a country’s respect for the rule of law.

7 Freedom House (2017) <https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco>

8 <http://maroc.mom-rsf.org/en> MOM The “Media Ownership Monitor” (MOM) has been developed by RSF as a mapping tool in order to create a publicly available, continuously updated database that lists owners of all relevant mass media outlets - press, radio, television sectors and online media. In Morocco, RSF worked with independent news site Le Desk.

9 The royal family itself is a leading media owner, its holding company the Société Nationale d’Investissement (SNI), has shares in four media companies, three of which are among the top five media companies (SOREAD, EcoMedias and Radio Méditerranée Internationale).

There is a lack of transparency in advertising in the media. According to MOM¹⁰ Some outlets have had to tone down editorial lines to avoid advertising boycotts, and the favouring of outlets makes it hard for independent media to survive. The monitoring of investments shows the biggest media owners are not particularly motivated by audience size. Data and measures of audience size often not publicly available and ownership structures often not transparent.

The Freedom House score for internet freedom in Morocco is 53/100 (2021), listed as partly free.¹¹ The government is said to maintain surveillance systems, which have sometimes been used to constrain online content. The space for independent online media is continuing to shrink, whilst pro-government outlets continue to proliferate. Authorities have targeted online users domestically and abroad, and pro-government news websites are said to publish false information about journalists. Moroccan YouTubers living abroad have been told by authorities that they could face criminal charges for expressing critical views online. Media freedoms were also restricted by COVID-19-related measures, with the printing and distribution of newspapers halted by the Culture Ministry. Authorities also arrested people they have accused of spreading false news.¹²

MEDIA ACCESS Recent developments in internet access, combined with national and international political upheavals, have helped online platforms to extend their reach and significantly increase their share of the marketplace. This has paved the way for the creation of more outlets¹³ and has helped to make new types of media content such as video more accessible to the population.

According to dataportel.com as of January 2021:¹⁴

- » Morocco had a population of 37.13 million with an almost 50/50 gender split.
- » Urban dwellers make up 60.8% of the population, while 36.2% live in rural areas.
- » Internet penetration stands at 74.4% and there are 27.62 million internet users in the country (9% increase from 2020).
- » 22 million people use social media, equivalent to 59.3% of the total population.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN agency and the official source for global Information and Communication Technology (ICT) statistics,¹⁵ in 2020 mobile cellular coverage reached 100% of the population, while 99% was reached by at least 3G and 4G mobile networks.

Figure 2: Communication Infrastructure at a glance from ITU data 2020

Service	Fixed-line telephone	Mobile cellular	Mobile broadband	Fixed-line Broadband
Number of connections	2,357,286	49,421,023	27,743,105	2,102,434
Per 100 inhabitants	6%	134% ¹⁶	75%	6%

According to the ANRT study on ICT equipment and use during 2019 (see charts below from the study),¹⁷ access to internet infrastructure has increased year on year. Over half a million households have been newly equipped with internet access in 2019, accounting for 80.8% of the population. internet connectivity remains lower in rural and mountainous areas, with highspeed internet access (4G, 3G, Fibre) concentrated in main cities and the most populated areas. Mobile internet remains the main driver for expanding internet access for households, especially in rural areas where access to landlines is very low.

10 <http://maroc.mom-rsf.org/en> MOM The "Media Ownership Monitor"

11 Scores are based on a scale of 0 (least free) to 100 (most free)

12 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-net/2021/scores>

13 <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2019/03/268763/moroccan-digital-media-clicks>

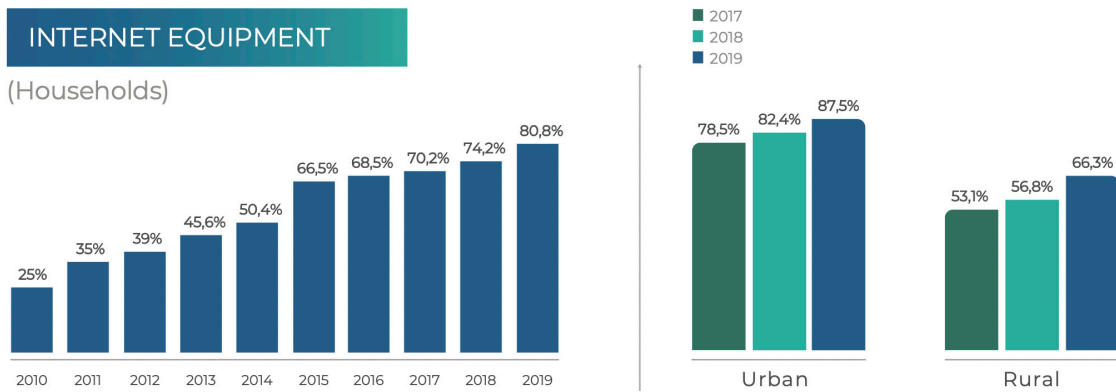
14 <https://dataportal.com/reports/digital-2021-morocco?rq=morocco> note some users own more than one device, therefore statistics for internet and social media users and mobile connections may not equate to unique individuals

15 https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/DDD/ddd_MAR.pdf

16 Individuals may have more than one mobile phone or device

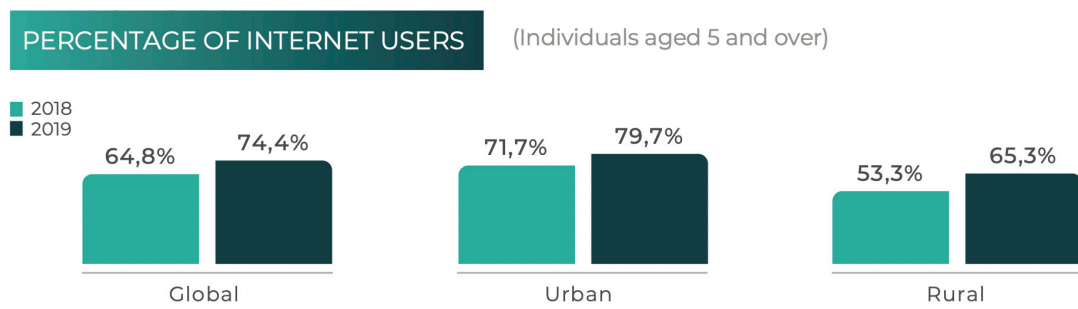
17 ANRT ICT Equipment and uses during 2019 <https://www.anrt.ma/sites/default/files/publications/enquete-tic-2019-en.pdf>

Figure 3: Internet Equipment In Morocco



In 2019, there were 24.3 million internet users, an increase of 17% compared to 2018. The increase is significant among the rural population.

Figure 4: Internet Users in Rural and Urban Areas



According to Freedom House 2021, 92% of Morocco's population utilise mobile phones. Of these, 73% are smartphone users - 86% of whom use their smartphones to access the internet, particularly in rural areas.¹⁸ The results of a survey undertaken in 2020 show the percentage of the population using different media:

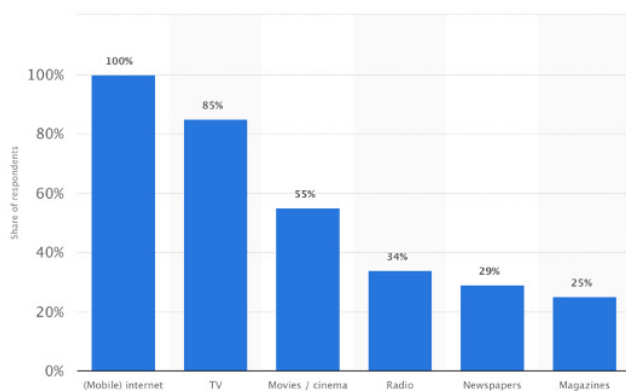


Figure 5 What kind of media (Mobile internet, TV, Movie, Radio, Newspapers and Magazines) have you used in the last 4 weeks?¹⁹

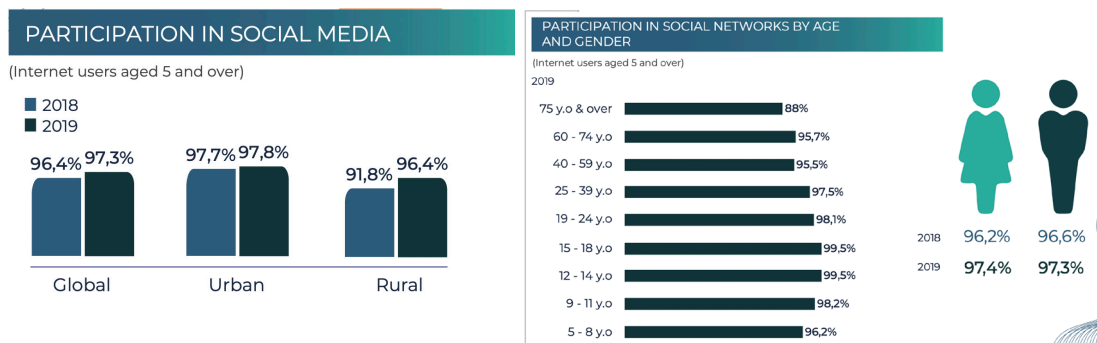
Social media penetration is very high among the entire population, with limited differences between age groups, although usage reduces slightly with age. Rural and urban participation in social media is similar, although it is slightly higher in urban areas. The growing number of internet users has led to social media emerging as one of the main sources of information for

Moroccan audiences. In 2019, 97.3% of Moroccans have access to at least one type of social media see figure 6 below.

¹⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-net/2021>

¹⁹ <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/825521/media-usage-in-morocco, survey of 2008 people in 2020>

Figure 6: Participation in social media in Morocco (global means national)²⁰



The development of social media has triggered a radical shift towards a new form of digital journalism inspired by grassroots journalism. News is no longer only produced by professional journalists or limited to written articles and increasingly encompasses audio or visual formats. Competition over audiences and advertising revenue, has led to a higher proliferation of both news reporting and more sensationalist stories.²¹ This shift has changed both news provision and media consumption habits in Morocco.

Most of the Moroccan population, even in rural areas, owns a TV. This is largely thanks to a very ambitious electrification programme (the rural electrification rate reached 99.78% in 2020).²² Over 96% of the population own a television set and 84% of households are also equipped with Satellite dishes to access international programmes.²³ Over 50% of households own a radio set. The printed press produces and distributes around 321,000 newspapers across the country per day.²⁴

2.3 Language And Dialects In The Media

Morocco has two official languages: Standard Arabic and Amazigh language.²⁵ The large majority of Moroccans speak “Darija”, a dialect of Arabic known as Moroccan Arabic, in everyday life. “Darija” is an oral language and is not used in formal writing. Standard Arabic is used in broadcasting for news and other programmes and in speeches by the king and politicians. French is widely used as a second language, especially in business and it is used by the social elite. Figures on the current use of French vary and sources use different definitions; according a 2018 study published by the French Language Observatory only 35% of Moroccans speak French,²⁶ though in the 2014 census 67.2% of the literate population noted that they can speak French. Due to its geographical proximity to Spain and the country’s past colonial presence in Morocco, Spanish is also used in the northern and southern provinces, however it is used much less frequently than French. In the northern region, it has always been possible to easily receive Spanish TV and Radio channels, and Spanish channels have a large audience. English is also used, but it is less popular than French.

Figure 7 Morocco at a glance

Official Languages	Arabic, Amazigh
Other common spoken languages (regional dialects)	Darija, Tachelhit, Tamazight, Tarifit, Hassania
Other languages widely used in broadcasting	French, Spanish

20 ANRT ICT Equipment and uses during 2019 <https://www.anrt.ma/sites/default/files/publications/enquete-tic-2019-en.pdf>

21 Lamzouwaq, S. E. (2019) <https://www.morocccoworldnews.com/2019/03/268763/moroccan-digital-media-clicks>

22 Global Rural Electrification Program (PERG) was launched in 1996 with the objective to connect all households and villages in rural areas to electricity. In 2020, rural electrification rate reached 99.78%.

23 Saudi MBC Group channel are among the most popular with almost 4.5% of Market share in 2019. Qatari Al Jazeera Channel and Being sport claims 1.5% of the audience. (Allam, 2019)

24 OJD. (2020). Récupéré sur <https://www.ojd.ma/Chiffres>

25 The Amazigh language, also known as Tamazight became and is taught in schools. Tamazight is used both as short name for the Amazigh language and to name the sublanguages used in Souss. In this guide, we use Amazigh for the Amazigh language, and Tamazight for the local dialect.

26 An annually study conducted by the French Language Observatory assesses the progress of the French language <http://observatoire.francophonie.org/2018/synthese.pdf>

According to a 2012 study,²⁷ 98% of Moroccans speak Moroccan Arabic/Darija, 63% French, 26% Amazigh, 14% English, and 10% Spanish. According to the census in 2014,²⁸ 99,2% of educated over 10 years old speak/ write Arabic in both versions (Darija and Standard).

Figure 8: Languages written and spoken by the literate population aged 10 and over, according to Moroccan census 2014

Language read and write	% Population	% Female	% Male
Arabic	99.2	99.2	99.3
Amazigh	2.9	2.8	3.1
French	67.2	68.4	66.2
English	18.7	20.2	17.6
Spanish	1.5	1.4	1.6
Other	0.5	0.4	0.5

Amazigh languages are comprised of a group of closely related spoken languages used by Imazighen peoples across North Africa. Within Morocco there are three dialects in use: Tarifit, spoken in the north of Morocco (Rif Mountains), Tachelhit, spoken in central areas, and Tamazight, spoken widely in the Souss region in the south of the Atlas Mountains. Hassaniya is a variety of Arabic spoken by the Sahrawi, and by indigenous populations from the southern provinces in the Western Sahara. The 2014 census provides a break-down of languages including by gender.

Figure 9: Local languages in Morocco (2014 population census)

Local Dialect Used (not exclusive)	Males	Females	Global
Darija (Arabic dialect)	92,2	89,7	90,9
Tachelhit	14,2	14,1	14,1
Tamazight	7,9	8,0	7,9
Tarifit	4,0	4,1	4,0
Hassania	0,8	0,8	0,8

Literacy rates vary between genders and rural and urban areas. Many of the dialects spoken are not written. In many areas girls stay at home because school is taught in Arabic and state teachers almost never know the local dialects. Almost 90% of women and girls in rural areas are illiterate, including in the countryside and highlands.²⁹ According to the 2014 census, 32.2% of the total population is illiterate, 22.2% of men and 43.1% of women.

BROADCAST LANGUAGES Public service television and radio stations, as well as printed and online media, mainly use standard Arabic, which is not understood by all Moroccans. They also use formal French. Private radio stations and online media tend to relay content in a language somewhere between modern standard Arabic and Darija that is accessible to their listeners. As part of its public services mission, the national broadcasting company has dedicated a national TV and Radio Station to Amazigh (Berber) programmes. Many media outlets (especially those using text such as print and online) have French-language content, and most broadcasting services dedicate various proportions of airtime to French-speaking programmes.

A study carried out in 2014³⁰ on the two main TV channels, Al Oula and 2M, found that 35% of their shows use a mix of Darija and Arabic, 17.9% use French alone, 15.4% use Modern Standard Arabic alone, 15.4% use Darija, 10.3% use a mix of Darija and French, and 2.6% use a mix of Tamazight and Darija. It is important to note that whilst a higher percent of shows use a mix of Darija and Arabic (35%), 33.3% use either Arabic or French. According to Bouziane, “The choice of language allows access and participation for only the wealthy and highly educated classes of Morocco. Moroccans speak Darija, a derivative of Arabic, in their everyday life, but both public service television stations mainly use formal Arabic and French”. According to ARNT in 2018 (data not available for 2019) **French and National languages were the most used and popular languages on the internet.**³¹

27 <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/embajadas/rabat/es/noticias/documents/lengesparr.pdf>

28 The Sixth General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH 2014) see https://rgph2014.hcp.ma/downloads/Resultats-RGPH-2014_t18649.html and <http://rgphentableaux.hcp.ma/Default/> and The result of the Sixth General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH 2014)

29 <https://borgenproject.org/womens-education-in-morocco/>

30 Bouziane, Quantitative content analysis of Moroccan public service TV, 2014

31 ANRT ICT INDICATORS COLLECTION SURVEY WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR 2018 <https://www.anrt.ma/sites/default/files/publications/>

Figure 10 Languages used on the internet (2018)

National Languages	51%
French	47%
English	2%

2.4 Barriers To Accessing The Media

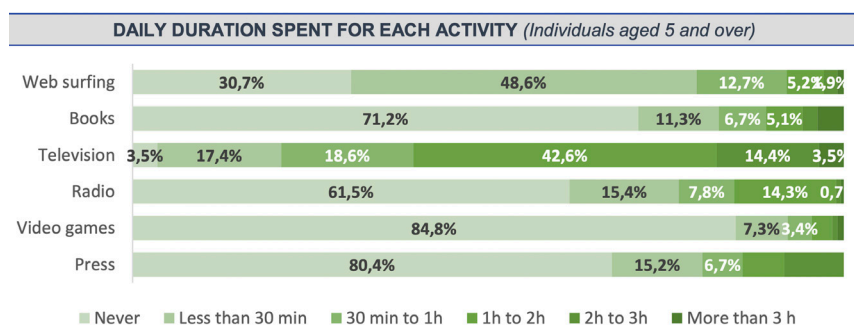
Literacy remains the most important barrier to accessing the media. More than 70% of the population has no or very low education and consequently cannot access written media content in Arabic. Language is also a barrier for some as discussed above. According to the Freedom House overview,³² Morocco scored 5/6 on a scale measuring whether infrastructural limitations restrict access to the internet or the speed and quality of internet connections. However, internet access has been slowly increasing in recent years. Speed has also increased (in 2021 the average download speed was 40Mbps). Improvements have been made to the ICT sector over the years. Internet usage remains relatively affordable, although there are price differences between urban and rural areas.

2.5 Media Preferences And Trusted Media

According to the ANRT National ICT Indicators survey (data from 2018),³³ television and the internet are amongst the most widely accessed information sources in Morocco, followed by radio. Printed media continues to decline in popularity with the low levels of literacy in the country confining it mostly to urban areas. Key data from the study includes.

- » Moroccans spend 1 to 2 hours a day on the following activities: TV 42.6%, Radio 14%, Press 7%, Reading 5.1%
- » Nearly 60% of internet users spend over 1 hour per day on the internet, the most adept, those who spend more than 3 hours on the internet (22%) are urban men.
- » At the national level, daily internet connections account for 75% of the population, 21% connect once a week, 4% less than once a week.
- » 79.2% of internet users Moroccans use social media daily or almost
- » Almost half of internet users spend more than one hour a day on social media
- » One out of every two rural households access the internet via a mobile phone

Figure 11: Daily duration spent for each activity



Government-owned broadcasting companies Al Oula and 2M reach 49% of the total television audience.³⁴ Moroccan audiences use satellite to access a wide range of international content, with the main preference being for pan-Arabic channels. The Saudi MBC Group channel is amongst the most popular of these with almost 4.5% of market share (2019). Qatari Al Jazeera Channel and Being sport reach 1.5% of the audience.³⁵

[enquete_2019_eng.pdf](#)

³² <https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-net/2021>

³³ ANRT ICT INDICATORS COLLECTION SURVEY WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR 2018 https://www.anrt.ma/sites/default/files/publications/enquete_2019_eng.pdf

³⁴ CIAUMED. (2020). Rapport du Centre Interprofessionnel d'Audience des Médias.

³⁵ .Allam, A. (2019) <https://www.telesatellite.com/actu/53775-2m-est-la-chaîne-de-tele-la-plus-regardee-au-maroc.html>



A study conducted by the research group Sunergia in 2019³⁶ concluded that Moroccan audiences prefer to consume information via television. Television was found to be the main source of information for 48% of Moroccans, social networks for 28%, radio for 7%, online press for 6%, friends for 4%, and written press for 2% (the preferences of 3% are not known). In terms of content, while no individual news or information programmes figured in the top 20 most viewed programmes during 2020, except for some Covid19 related programmes,³⁷ news itself is the second most watched programme type on television (2016), after movies and soaps. Research by Arab Barometer³⁸ found an increasing reliance on social media for breaking news during the Covid pandemic, with 36% of Moroccans indicating that they use social media as their primary source of breaking news. The study shows that those who attended higher education reported using social media as their primary source of breaking news much more than those whose schooling finished after secondary education or earlier. According to various sources, entertainment content attracts the largest audiences.

According to Sunergia, television remains more popular among older people and those living in rural areas. This may be linked to low uptake of new technologies amongst this group, or the fact that they could have less efficient internet connections or be more likely to be illiterate. People living in rural areas and the over 45s are the groups most likely to get their information via TV. 60% of people living in rural areas get information from TV, 56% of 45-54 of year olds, 63% of 55-64-year-olds and 80% of those aged 65 and over. The situation is quite different for younger and more educated groups - academics and those under 34 prefer to get their information via social media.

2.6 Two-Way Communication With Communities

Several online media outlets such as ChoufTV are known for allowing “normal” citizens to talk and comment on ongoing events. However, the search for sensationalism has led to tabloid-like practices. These outlets’ main revenues come from advertising, so the focus is the number of views/ audience numbers rather than the quality of the content. Radio Stations in Morocco have a long history of call-ins, with most stations having several programmes receiving calls from audience members. These programmes allow direct participation of listeners and are mainly focused on entertainment, medical and social topics and issues considered to be related to women.

In his Study in 2014, Bouziane, found that neither of the two state-owned TV channels, Al Oula and 2M, had significant mechanisms for audience feedback or the chance for the public to participate in the production of content. The study found that none of Al Oula’s shows offered viewers the opportunity to offer feedback and only 16.7% of 2M’s programmes offered audiences this opportunity. There were no TV shows on these channels that allowed viewers to offer feedback by phone.

³⁶ https://groupe-sunergia.com/market-insights/principales-sources-information-marocains?ihc_fail_captcha=true

³⁷ CIAUMED. (2020). Rapport du Centre Interprofessionnel d’Audience des Médias.

³⁸ <https://www.arabbarometer.org/>

SECTION 3:

The Media In Disasters And Emergency Response

MOROCCO FACES SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO MAJOR RISKS, BOTH NATURAL AND MAN-MADE, SUCH AS THE RISKS OF FLOOD, DROUGHT, EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI, WHICH AFFECT MANY AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. THE RECENT IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND THE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN PRESENT A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

3.1 Disasters and Response Overview

Flooding and flash floods can cause substantial human and economic damage, particularly to major urban centres. Frequent episodes of droughts cause significant loss of GDP, due to their effect on the agriculture sector. The harsh effect of floods on rural populations has led to an exodus of people to the suburbs of large metropolitan areas. There is a risk of earthquakes in the Rif Mountains and the Agadir region in the Northern part of the country, one of the largest tourist centres in Morocco. The last major earthquake in the North, which took place in 2004, killed over 600 people and destroyed 12,000 homes. Morocco faces industrial, technological, environmental, and chemical risks in areas of major industrial infrastructure (Mohammedia, Jorf Lasfar, Safi) and in urbanised industrial areas.

The first case of COVID-19 in Morocco was on 2 March 2020. As the outbreak widened the Government closed schools and suspended international passenger flights. On 20 March, Morocco declared a state of medical emergency which allowed the Government to impose restrictions on freedom of movement, including curfews, travel restrictions and other preventative measures. An almost total lockdown was imposed throughout the country for four months. Schools were closed and distance learning was imposed. During the 2020-2021 academic year, Morocco imposed hybrid learning and allowed physical attendance for only 50% of the capacity of educational institutions. According to WHO, from 3 January 2020 to 6 December 2021, there have been 950,591 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Morocco with 14,788 deaths. As of 4 December 2021, a total of 48,993,040 vaccine doses have been administered. Many sectors have been impacted by measures which were imposed to control the spread of Covid-19 and almost 600,000 jobs were lost in 2020 due to the pandemic, according to the Government.


3.2 The Role Of The Media In Disaster Response

Following the Al Hoceima earthquake in 2004 in the North of the country, a large-scale solidarity campaign was launched to support the relief effort, both in Morocco and at the international level. Since then, Morocco has not witnessed any large-scale disasters beyond local events, most of which have not triggered an international focus. Nowadays, with the rise of online and social media, information about minor or major disasters almost immediately becomes the top news item and is relayed through major national media outlets and the state-owned news agency Maghreb Arab Press.

While flourishing web media has enriched information sharing and broadened local reach, it has also allowed for increased sensationalism and misinformation. This means that public authorities often find they need to comment on events before official communication is planned. Social media is used regularly to publicise fundraising campaigns by individuals; for example, in November 2014, when severe floods devastated parts of the south, fundraising campaigns mobilised mainly through social networks (particularly the Twitter users' community) raised more than 800,000 dirhams/\$70 000) of donations.³⁹

A greater presence of media outlets in cities skews reporting towards urban areas, with events in Rural areas, especially remote ones, not always seeing the same media coverage; for example, reporters were unable to reach remote areas in 2006 when cold weather cut off the Atlas Mountains and led to deaths (particularly of babies). Gaps in the media in the regions limits its capacity to react nationally during a disaster. Most of the media depends either on information dispatched through the official News Agency (MAP) and its TV channel, or on local and unverified sources which risk spreading inaccurate news. During a crisis, local NGOs, Human Rights organisations, and local press correspondents are often the main sources of information. Local authorities are often criticised for their lack of communication during crises.

³⁹ <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2014/12/146189/100dhpouraider-campaign-helps-flood-victims-in-morocco>



In 2016, the National Audit Office in Morocco highlighted the lack of pre-established plans to manage involvement of the press and NGOs during disasters.⁴⁰ They felt that the action plans of the National Strategy for Natural Disaster Risk Management⁴¹ lacked a national strategy for raising citizens' awareness of risks and supporting preparedness. The report recommended involving the media and civil society, and the use of new technologies and social networks in communications strategies during an emergency.

MEDIA AND COVID-19 The Moroccan health ministry has initiated an unprecedented communications campaign to provide information about COVID-19 and the evolution of the pandemic. This campaign has been rapid and effective compared to those of other African countries and neighbouring European ones.⁴² Morocco receives vaccines via the COVAX initiative and in January 2021 a national Covid-19 vaccination campaign was launched. Health authorities mobilised a massive advertising initiative to promote the free, non-obligatory vaccine and to provide information and reassure people. This involved television, Radio, Print press and the internet. The Moroccan King Mohamed VI was the first person in the country to receive the vaccine. His vaccination was an official event which was broadcast on all media outlets. Other senior officials of the country were among the first to be vaccinated. Media outlets have dedicated numerous programmes to the benefits and safety of the vaccine. The official Government website⁴³ provides information in Arabic and French. It offers information about vaccine appointment sites, target groups and contact numbers along with extensive FAQs about the vaccine. Local authorities have also communicated using more traditional methods such as town criers to make public announcements in the streets.⁴⁴ In some rural areas, weekly Souks (traditional markets) have been used to promote vaccination.

Most radio and television services made major changes to their regular programming during the pandemic. New programmes were created to provide regular updates and information for the general public. According to HACA monitoring, more than 45% of TV and radio programmes were related to the pandemic during the lockdown period. They provided epidemiological information and medical advice, and facilitated two-way communication with citizens, allowing them to have their questions answered. The media worked with a large number of experts, specialists and public officials to provide data and information. Magazines and news magazine programmes represented 30% of COVID-19 related coverage, advertising campaigns represented 39% and talk shows represented 10%. 19% of COVID-19 related TV programmes allowed some form of interaction with the public.⁴⁵

At the same time as participating in the national fight against the pandemic, most TV and radio channels have been required to provide a distance education service. As soon as schools closed Channel 4 (the cultural channel) was tasked with broadcasting school television lessons. Other channels such as "Amazighia," "Al-Ayoum" and "Arriyadiya" were also required to contribute to the effort covering education of all levels, from primary school to undergraduate studies.

The media have helped raise money for the emergency fund "Fonds spécial pour la gestion de la pandémie du Coronavirus (Covid-19)" which has been used to upgrade health infrastructure and support the worst affected economic sectors and poorest households. The fund has raised more than 33 billion dirhams (\$3 billion) with contributions from the government, the public and private sector and individuals and international partners such as the EU and USAID. The media have also been involved in several voluntary initiatives by citizens and civil society to provide logistical assistance and moral support to health sector professionals and to provide help and shelter to vulnerable groups.⁴⁶

40 http://www.courdescomptes.ma/upload/MoDUle_20/File_20_288.pdf

41 https://www.gestionrisques.ma/web/files/Plan_operationnel_2021_2026.pdf

42 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8083781/>

43 www.liqahcorona.ma

44 (Assabah, s.d.) Récupéré sur <https://assabah.ma/454840.html>

45 HACA. (2020, August). *Synthetic report on the contribution of Moroccan radio and television services*. Read at: https://www.haca.ma/sites/default/files/upload/Rapport%20de%20synth%C3%A8se%20-%20couverture%20m%C3%A9diatique%20du%20Covid%2019_V%2005.08.2020.pdf

46 <https://www.haca.ma/sites/default/files/upload/Rapport%20Services%20audiovisuels%20Coronavirus%2009%20avril%202020%20%282%29.pdf>



The Moroccan authorities took a radical decision in March 2020⁴⁷ to stop the distribution of all printed newspapers due to the lockdown. Many readers were not technologically prepared for this switch to online editions and, as a result, were unable to access newspaper content. The four-month lockdown, restrictions on travel and the imposition of homeworking proved an impediment to journalists researching stories.

DIS-INFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION Disinformation and misinformation reached high levels during the pandemic, particularly on social media and instant messaging services such as WhatsApp.⁴⁸ Forged official documents announcing different government measures were shared through instant messaging applications. At the start of the pandemic a new law was passed declaring a health emergency and setting penalties and jail for anyone breaching orders and decisions taken by public authorities through “writings, publications or photos”. Amnesty reports show that, in the two months following the adoption of this new law, the authorities prosecuted 91,623 people for violating it. Amnesty International has also documented the arrest of five human rights activists and citizen journalists in April and May 2020 following online and social media posts critical of how local authorities were managing the distribution of aid in the face of COVID-19. The government passed another law in March 2020, under which the dissemination of “fake news” is punishable by up to five years in prison when carried out with the intention of endangering “national security”. This law was later suspended for revision following broad opposition.⁴⁹

An unprecedented effort has been taken by the media to counter false and misleading news, videos and audio messages circulating on social media and instant messaging applications. This has mostly taken the form of fact-checking articles. The Official News Agency MAP launched a website “mapanticorona.map.ma” dedicated to the publication of verified and credible information.

47 http://www.mincom.gov.ma/slide_a_la_une/le-ministere-de-la-culture-de-la-jeunesse-et-des-sports/

48 https://telquel.ma/2020/03/04/fake-news-lautre-epidemie-virale-au-maroc_1671445?fbrefresh=2

49 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/morocco-and-western-sahara-end-prosecution-of-activists-under-new-health-emergency-law/> and <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/10/POL3047512021FRENCH.pdf> and <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2020/05/in-a-post-covid19-world-fake-news-laws-a-New-Blow-to-freedom-of-expression-in-algeria-and-morocco-western-sahara/>.

SECTION 4:

Media Overview

THIS SECTION PROVIDES A CONCISE OVERVIEW OF EACH OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA IN MOROCCO: DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, SOCIAL MEDIA, TELEVISION, RADIO, PRINT AND TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION. IT DOES NOT AIM TO GIVE AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF ALL MEDIA, INSTEAD IT FOCUSES ON THE MAIN MEDIA PROVIDERS FOR EACH CATEGORY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT CURRENT DATA WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR ALL MEDIA TYPES AND THE INFORMATION PRESENTED HERE IS DEPENDENT ON AVAILABLE PUBLISHED WORK AND INTERVIEWS

4.1 Digital Media Platforms

Digital media has become increasingly popular in Morocco. The government has attempted to curb online media through the 2016 reform of the press code, obligating online news outlets to be authorised by official authorities to be eligible for press credentials and state support. The quality of content varies significantly, for example Chouf TV, with the largest audience in Morocco, is reported to adopt an editorial slant based on sensational video reporting by largely untrained correspondents.⁵⁰ According to Alexa 2021, 34 out of 100 top websites⁵¹ are online media. See table below for the top news sites:

Figure 12 Alexa 2021 Ranking of top news sites in Morocco

Ranking	Site	Type	Daily Time on Site	Daily Pageviews per Visitor
1	Google.com	Search engine	17:38	18.33
2	Youtube.com	Video	19:36	10.47
3	Chouftv.ma	press	03:07	2.20
4	Almaghreb24.com	Press	04:48	2.90
5	Hespress.com	Press	05:43	2.40
6	Facebook.com	Social media	18:32	8.74
7	Anbaetv.ma	press	07:23	2.90
8	Hibapress.com	press	03:38	1.90
9	Rue20.com	press	03:29	2.30
10	Amazon.com	Online shopping	10:58	9.87
11	Aabbir.com	press	04:55	3.50
12	Al3omk.com	press	05:18	2.70
13	Elbotola.com	press	04:13	2.70
14	Le7tv.ma	press	02:00	1.50
15	2m.ma	press	03:47	1.90

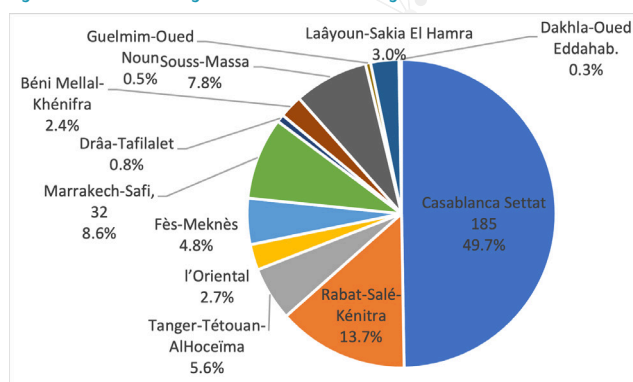
In 2018, according to ANRT, over 62% of websites visited by Moroccan internet users were international websites (including social media platforms) while only 38% of web traffic is to local websites.⁵² The regional distribution clearly shows a high concentration of platforms in the Casablanca/Rabat region.

50 Bouziane, Z. (2011). Mapping Digital Media: Morocco. OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS.

51 <https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/MA>

52 ANRT ICT INDICATORS COLLECTION SURVEY WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR 2018 https://www.anrt.ma/sites/default/files/publications/enquete_2019_eng.pdf

Figure 13: Media Online regional distribution according⁵³



4.2 Social Media Platforms

Social media is currently an important means of communication and news consumption in the country, particularly for young Moroccans. According to Statcounter, in 2021 the top social media sites by users in Morocco are: Facebook 65.84%, YouTube 25.18%, Twitter 3.22%, Instagram 2.53%, Pinterest 2.35% and LinkedIn 0.28%.⁵⁴ These, alongside WhatsApp, widely share news articles, videos, and media-like content. Use of social media by internet users is over 90% in 2019, depending on age, gender and rural and urban locations.

Most social media influencers focus on providing entertaining content. According to a ranking of Moroccan influencers which tracks 7819 influencers in Morocco (who use Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) with between 1000 and 10m followers, their content is largely, music, comedy, fashion, beauty, celebrity and cooking. None of the top 100 social media stars produce news and information content, most content is entertainment.⁵⁵

In 2016 the Press Code was revised. According to the new regulations, all information websites must be run exclusively by professional accredited journalists with an official 'Press Card.' As a result, many Facebook pages, websites and blogs covering local news in small cities and citizen journalists were either closed by their owners or shut down by the authorities, with some facing legal charges. According to figures from the Ministry of Culture and Communication, of the 4,000 to 5,000 information websites that existed in 2016, only 372 sites conformed to the revised code by 2019.⁵⁶ Even though most of major national, regional, and local online medias continued to operate, it has jeopardised the existence of hundreds of small local media, journalist blogs and Facebook pages run by local activists.

4.3 Television Stations

Television in Morocco remains the most popular source of news and entertainment. A list of popular TV channels is available on ranker.com (2019).⁵⁷ Much of what is watched is broadcast on cable and satellite, with programming created both in-house, or by a studio or other production facility (sometimes these are directly affiliated with the station). There is limited data available on audience numbers, although the regularly updated Media Ownership Monitor (MOM), launched by Reporters without Borders, provides some insights and is referred to in this guide.⁵⁸

There were 10 registered TV providers in 2017, eight state owned, one private-public and one private. Despite the ending of the state monopoly in 2006, the state has a large presence through the two most important companies, the state-owned SNRT⁵⁹ which operates 80% of the TV Channels and the private-public company SOREAD (71% state owned). Between them they have held a monopoly of the TV sector and capture 47.41% of television audiences. Details of the main stations are provided below and in figure 14.

⁵³ Source: (Ministry of Culture and Communication, 2018)

⁵⁴ <https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/morocco>

⁵⁵ www.influencerglory.com

⁵⁶ <http://www.mincom.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Communique%CC%81-Journaux-e%CC%81lectroniques-conformes-dans-le-Royaume-.pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://www.ranker.com/list/tv-channels-of-morocco/tv-channels>

⁵⁸ Maroc.mom-rsf.org

⁵⁹ In 2004, benefiting from a "context of liberalization of the audio-visual sector," the RTM (Ratio Télévision Marocains) changed from a public administration into the independent state-owned company the SNRT.



2M TV; launched by SOREAD, and now majority state owned. By far the most popular channel, broadcasting predominantly in Arabic, and also in French and Tamazight. Its main focus is entertainment shows, although some programming includes news broadcasts, documentaries, and news magazines. Its news programmes, broadcast at 1PM in Arabic and in French at 9pm, remain the most important sources of news.

» 2M TV has 33.09% of the audience share

SNRT; the National Radio and Television Broadcasting Corporation was established in 1962 and is the official state-owned channel. It ranks 2nd with 11.5% of the market share. A large part of its airtime is news bulletins in Arabic, French and Tamazight and it covers subjects such as official Royal activities, parliamentary debates and government communication. The main news programme is broadcast at 8pm in Arabic.

» Audience share of main channels: Al Aoula (8.67%), Al Maghribia (3.19%) and other SNRT channels (2.46%) = 14.32 %⁶⁰

SNRT has launched several thematic and regional TV channels. These have poor audience figures with more than 51% of Moroccan audiences continuing to be attracted to foreign channels; with pan-Arab broadcasters being most popular. Other channels launched by the SNRT including a sports' channel, a cultural channel and a dedicated channel focusing to religious content

Laayoun TV; by SNRT the first regional TV station in the Maghreb area, it covers the entire southern region of Morocco. Content includes educational, cultural, social, political, and religious content.

TV Tamazight; launched in 2010, by SNRT as a general TV channel broadcasting 80% of its programmes in Tamazight. The remaining 20% of its airtime focuses on programmes dedicated to the promotion of Amazigh culture in other languages (Arabic and French).

Medi 1 TV; the privately owned free to air channel launched in 2006, is the third-largest channel and broadcasts in Arabic and French via terrestrial and internationally via satellite. The channel's main focus is news programmes, and audience numbers are relatively low.

» No audience data could be found

⁶⁰ <https://maroc.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/indicators/#!9fed61067e34232006ff7dcd0ed479d0>

There are several satellite channels

» Tele Maroc-Morocco airs specific content from Spain

Note Al Aoula and 2M only require an aerial antenna making them amongst the most accessible channels⁶¹ - although half of the TV audience relies on Satellite TV rather than these channels.

Figure 14: Moroccan Television channels

Station	Weblink	Ownership
Al Aoula	http://www.alaoula.ma/	Government owned
LAËYOUNE TV	https://www.snrt.ma/	Government owned
2M MAROC	https://2m.ma/	Government owned
Arriyadiya	https://arriyadiya.snrt.ma/	Government owned
Arrabiâ / al thaqafia	http://www.athaqafia.ma/	Government owned
ASSADISSA	http://www.assadissatv.ma/	Government owned
AFLAM TV	http://www.aflamtv.ma/	Government owned
CHAÏNE TAMAZIGHTE	http://www.tamazight-tv.ma/	Government owned
MEDI 1 TV	http://www.med1tv.com/	Privately owned
CHADA TV	https://chadatv.com/	Private company
2M TV;	https://www.2m.ma/ar/	Public-Private majority state owned

The main programmes according to audience are broadcast by 2M and Al Aoula channels and are as follows:

Figure 15: Top 20 TV programmes according to audiences (September 2019 to September 2020)⁶²

	Channel	Programme	Topic
1	2M	MCHITI FIHA 5	Entertainment
2	2M	LCOOPERATIVE	Fiction
3	2M	TASTAHOLO KOUL KHIR	Social
4	2M	CONFINEMENT -RABAT-	Covid
5	2M	QUESTIONS SUR CORONAVIRUS	Covid
6	2M	QUOTIDIENNE SAYIDATE SHOPPING	Entertainment
7	AL AOULA	SOUHLIFA 2 -INEDIT-	Fiction
8	2M	CH HIWA MAA CHOUMICHA	Entertainment
9	2M	FINE GHADI	Fiction
10	2M	RAJEL LEMRA	Fiction
11	AL AOULA	YAQOUT WA ANBAR -INEDIT-	Fiction
12	2M	JAZIRAT AL KANZ 2020	Entertainment
13	2M	PROCEDURE POUR BENEFICIER DES AIDES FINANCIERES LES NON-RAMEDISTES	Covid
14	2M	FORSA TANIYA-TURC	Fiction
15	2M	ZMANE KENZA	Fiction
16	2M	QUOTIDIENNE CHKOUN YISTATMAR FMACHROUII	Entertainment
17	2M	FED TV	Entertainment
18	AL AOULA	L HAMZA -INEDIT-	Fiction
19	2M	CHNO TAALAMTI FI AL HAJR ASSIHI	Covid
20	2M	CAPSULE AHSANE PATISSIER	Entertainment

61 <https://maroc.mom-rsf.org/en/media/detail/outlet/2m/>

62 CIAUMED. (2020). Rapport du Centre Interprofessionnel d'Audience des Médias.

4.4 Radio Channels

Radio is one of the most diverse media types in Morocco, allowing debates and a wide range of shows. Like television, it is a popular source of news and information. The state is well represented through the state-owned company SNRT and the private-public company SOREAD, which together attract 32.35% of the total radio audience. In 2017, SNRT owned four national radio channels and eight regional channels, attracting more than 25% of the daily audience. In 2006, licenses were given to two high profile media figures Ahmed Charai, CEO of Global Media Holding was given a licence for Med Radio and the Lahlou family a licence for MFM Radio network. The remainder of the licences are owned by small entities, where infotainment represents the majority of their airtime. According to the regulatory body's 2020 annual report,⁶³ there are 37 stations in total, 16 state owned and 23 privately owned:

- » 5 public radio stations with national coverage (National, Amazigh, Radio 2M, Chaîne Inter and Mohammed V of the Holy Quran);
- » 11 public radio stations with local coverage (Casablanca, Fez, Meknes, Tangier, Dakhla, Laayoune, Marrakech, Agadir, El Hoceima, Oujda and Tetouan).
- » 21 private radio stations, including 7 FM radios with national coverage national, 4 FM radios with multi-regional coverage
- » 2 radio networks with regional coverage (MFM and Radio Plus)
- » 1 radio with multi-local coverage (Radio SAWA)

According to Radiometrie Maroc (July-Sept 2021), Medi 1 radio is the top national station, after Radio Mohammed VI du Saint Quran'. Among the top 10 radio stations most listened to, four are public broadcasting services with a focus on news, general education and entertainment. These four radio stations, combined with 11 regional stations, attract more than 40% of audiences.

Figure 15: Ranking of Radio Channel by audiences from Radiometrie Maroc 2021⁶⁴

The public broadcasting services with the highest audiences are;

- » Radio Mohamed VI; state owned and is fully dedicated to religious content (Islamic), mainly in Arabic with some programmes in Tamazight
- » Idaaa Al Watania is a generalist Radio station broadcasting in Arabic
- » Radio 2M is a generalist radio station with a focus on entertainment and information broadcasting, with a significant part of its programmes aired in French
- » Al Idaaa al Amazighiya is a generalist Radio station broadcasting in Tamazight

Privately owned Radio station with the highest audience figures;

- » Medi1 Radio is among the very first privately owned Radio stations focusing on news and entertainment, with a balanced linguistic mix between French and Arabic
- » MedRadio focuses on the theme of mediation and conflict resolution and will therefore be open to associations and civil society.
- » MFM Radio is a regional Radio station in Casablanca and consists of a conglomerate of 6 regional Radio stations focusing on news, entertainment and several "open mic" programmes allowing interaction with the audiences on various subjects
- » Hit Radio: hit Radio is most popular among youth, with editorial content combining music (modern national and international music) and talk shows programmes.

⁶³ https://www.haca.ma/sites/default/files/upload/Rapport_Annuel_Haca_2020_VF.pdf

⁶⁴ RADIOMETRIE MAROC (2021) <https://observateur.info/article/101272/maroc/audience-radio-medradio-toujours-en-tete-apres-radio-mohammed-vi-du-saint-coran>

Currently, the Moroccan audio-visual law does not permit community radio stations⁶⁵ to broadcast over the airwaves. This means that the internet is the only free media in Morocco that is able to overcome such restrictions. Since 2015, according to a study conducted by UNESCO.⁶⁶ Although Morocco experienced a significant increase in the number of community web radio stations, with 69 created since 2012, according to monitoring by the E-joussour⁶⁷ portal, there are now less than 15 active on a regular basis. These include:

- » Radio Sawt Ouarzazate: is a trilingual, Arabic, Berber and French Radio station. This station offers its listeners diverse leisure content including music, culture and live sports news. It produces local content and broadcasts from Ouarzazate region. <https://radio.co.ma/sawt-ouarzazate/>
- » Radio Imsli: is a web radio run by an NGO (the Voice of the Amazigh Woman) known as “IMSLI”. The Voice of the Amazigh Woman is considered to be the first NGO for Amazigh women which defends the rights of women in Morocco and, in particular, those of Amazigh women, who suffer double discrimination: sexism and identity. <https://www.imsli.org.ma/>
- » Kech Radio: is a non-commercial NGO-owned radio station which aims to develop and promote initiatives of NGOs and the inhabitants in the region of Marrakech Safi, in the centre/south of Morocco. <http://kechradio.org/>.

According to Radiométrie Maroc audience data July-End September 2021, 52.49% of the Moroccan population (14 million people) listen to the radio every weekday and on average 48.6% on an average weekend day. Listening time per listener was 2h53m on weekdays and 2h57m on weekends, with an average daily listening time of 2 hours 51 minutes. Radio is more popular among urban populations (62.2%) and educated populations. (82.02%). The demographics of audiences varies a lot depending on the station. Hit Radio, for example, is most popular among young and urban populations, while AL IDAA AL AMAZIGHIA has a larger audience among rural and 55+ groups.⁶⁸

4.5 Print

Morocco has a rich and diverse printed press. According to the Ministry of Culture, which oversees the sector, in 2018 there were 252 titles, including 171 published in Arabic, 53 in French and six in Tamazight, plus 16 with a regional outreach. Although French language outlets are in the minority (just over 20% of market share in 2016) they have immense influence according to RSF MOM. There is often a language divide with economic and business content mainly in French while Arabic content focuses on social and political issues. The penetration rate of dailies (the number of copies distributed per 1,000 inhabitants) remains very low compared with neighbouring countries, around 12 copies per 1000 inhabitants.⁶⁹

The sector mainly consists of generalist dailies aimed at a national audience. Regional press is poorly developed and has limited circulation. The press generally lacks investigative journalism and its pages are mostly filled with dispatches from official press agencies, press releases, partisan pieces, and pieces from individuals, organisations or material gleaned from the internet

In 2015-2016 according to MOM, the print sector is divided between an Arabic-language press mainly constituted of small print companies, reaching 72.26% of the surveyed readership and the less popular French language papers (20.67% of the surveyed audience) and addressed the elite, under life support.

4 media companies attracted 75% of readers; Massae Media (23.7%), ECOMEDIA (22.9%), AWAL (21.6%) and MEDIA21 (7%). The most popular newspapers by individual purchases are: Al Akhbar, Al Massae and Assabah.

65 Community radio is a radio service offering alternative model of radio broadcasting that serves geographic communities and communities of interest. They broadcast content that is popular and relevant to a local, specific audience but is often overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and influenced by the communities they serve.

66 <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Rabat/images/CI/20160225LivresEtatdeslieux.pdf>

67 The Forum des Alternatives Maroc Association, initiated in 2010 as a partnership with Oxfam Novib and Alternatives/AlterInter the project of the Maghreb/Machrek civil society Portal Ejoussour which aims to promote greater participation of the Maghreb/Machrek civil society partners in social movements. Ejoussour Since 2011, in addition to continuing its commitment at the regional level through the portal, e-Joussour, has launched the webradio ejoussour, the first associative radio in Morocco, available to the various components of civil society and with several regional branches and support through several projects and programmes.

68 RADIOMETRIE MAROC. (2021). Mesure d'Audience de la Radio - VAGUE 36 2021 - Janvier - Mars 2021. IPSOS.

69 Hidass, A. (2016). Quand « l'exception » confirme la règle. L'encadrement juridique de la liberté de la presse écrite au Maroc. L'Année du Maghreb, 15, 29-44.

Figure 16: Top 10 printed newspaper according to Circulation 2020⁷⁰

Support	Periodicity	Language	Circulation
ALAKHBAR	Daily	Arabic	37.320
AL MASSAE	Daily	Arabic	27.432
ASSABAH	Daily	Arabic	26.484
LE MATIN DU SAHARA ET MAGHREB	Daily	French	20.215
LA VIE ECO	Weekly	French	16.948
AKHBAR AL YOUM AL MAGHRIBIYA	Daily	Arabic	14.436
L'ECONOMISTE	Daily	French	14.174
SANTE + MAGAZINE	Monthly	French	11.272
LES INSPIRATIONS ECO	Daily	French	10.602
L'OPINION	Daily	French	10.227

The major challenges facing the printed press have always been a limited readership, due to the low rate of literacy, and the increasing economic difficulties experienced by press companies who are faced with a shrinking advertising market. This situation was further aggravated when, during the Covid pandemic, the Moroccan authorities decided to suspend the edition and circulation of printed newspapers for several months.

4.6 Traditional Forms Of Communication

In rural areas, the weekly souks still occupy a prominent place in terms of trade, social gathering and the strengthening of social relations. Their role goes beyond the commercial to life in the broadest sense and they are an important occasion for mass communication. The local administration uses them to announce or publicise up-and-coming plans such as vaccination campaigns, literacy campaigns and issues relating to the schooling of children. Political parties also take advantage of them during election campaigns to share their campaigning messages with the population. There are reported to be almost 900 souks across the country (2020).⁷¹

4.7 Media Training Opportunities

In Morocco, two main higher education institutions offer undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in journalism:

- » ISIC (Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication -Rabat); the oldest Moroccan education institution specialising in training in journalism and communication professionals. Created in 1969 and taught in French and Arabic. (<http://isic.ac.ma/>)
- » ESJC (Ecole Supérieur de Journalisme et de Communication – Casablanca, created in 2008 by media and higher education journalism professionals to meet the needs of the Moroccan job market and to train journalists and communication professionals both in Arabic and French (<http://www.esjc.ma/>)

Other private or public institutions offering programmes at various entry levels related to journalism include:

- » Ecole des Sciences de l'Information – Rabat (Public)
- » Institut de Journalisme et d'Information (Private)
- » Université Mohamed Ier (licence Média et Communication Interactive - Oujda)
- » Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah (Licence d'étude fondamentale sciences de l'information et de la communication - Fès)

70 OJD. (2020). Récupéré sur <https://www.ojd.ma/Chiffres>

71 CESE. (2020). Récupéré sur https://www.cese.ma/media/2021/06/Avis_Souks-hebdomadaire-VF-2.pdf



This guide is one of a series of Media Landscape Guides which map the media landscape in different countries. The guides have been produced by the CDAC Network in cooperation with DW Akademie and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. This project is part of the global initiative "Transparency and media freedom - Crisis resilience in the pandemic".



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