

National Newspapers: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - May 2020

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Interest in news has surged as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, but newspaper publishers are struggling to reap the benefits. The already declining print national newspaper market has been hit hard as lockdown restrictions have kept people indoors. While readership of online national newspapers has increased significantly, and digital subscriber numbers are growing.

– **Rebecca McGrath, Senior Media Analyst**

This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour in the UK national newspapers market.
- How COVID-19 will impact market performance.
- Changing national newspaper readership and payment behaviour.
- Consumer attitudes towards national newspapers.
- Perception of national newspaper coverage on key issues in the last year.

COVID-19 will have a significant impact on national newspapers in 2020, as it will on most markets. While circulation of print newspapers has been in significant decline for many years, the drop will be far steeper in 2020 as government restrictions keep people at home and therefore less likely to purchase print newspapers. Online readership of national newspapers is surging as people try to keep up with the rapidly changing crisis, and greater willingness to pay online is being shown. However, a sharp drop in digital advertising revenue means that newspapers are struggling to financially benefit from the surge in online readership.

Outside of the coronavirus crisis context, more publishers had already been reporting positive increases in digital subscription take-up, which many titles see as the key to long-term financial stability. Audio is also becoming a more important content format for newspapers, with publishers releasing new podcasts and radio stations.

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The BBC's dominance continues as penetration of newspapers edges up

Over half of online newspaper readers listen to a newspaper podcast

One in four pay for a national newspaper subscription

Many feel newspapers focus too much on entertainment/celebrity and the Royal Family

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