

La France à la loupe

The media in France

The **media** generates **substantial economic activity** in France today: €10.62 billion in print media (in 2006), €10 billion in television (in 2006) and €1.353 billion in radio (in 2004).

■ PRESS AGENCIES

Presse agencies play a **key role in the information chain**. **Upstream**, they fuel the various information media providing texts, photographs, sound, film and more. The concept of a press agency was born in France in 1835, thanks to Charles Havas. The Havas Agency was the precursor of Agence France Presse (AFP) created in 1945. Its legal status is set out in [Law 57-32 of 10 January 1957](#).

The AFP has some 4,000 employees with 81 nationalities and is present in 165 countries. It **covers news events all over the world**. Information is circulated in dispatches, photographs and computer graphics.

■ THE PRINT MEDIA

In 2005, the number of publications in France stood at 4,450, which is 115 more than in 2004. They can be divided into six major categories:

- **Specialized press for the general public:** 1,898 publications accounting for 39% total sales. It is the most prolific with 78 additional titles in 2005. Examples include *Science et vie*, *Elle*, and *Capital*.
- **Specialized press for professionals in a technical field:** 1,475 publications accounting for 10% of total sales. Examples include *01 Informatique*, *Le Monde de l'éducation* and *Le Quotidien du médecin*.
- **Free advertising publications:** 592 publications accounting for 8% of total sales. Examples include *Paru Vendu* and *Logic Immo*.

•**Local press specializing in politics and general news:** 463 publications accounting for 29% of total sales. Examples include *Ouest France* and *Nice Matin*.

•**National press specializing in politics and general news:** 76 publications accounting for 14% of total sales. Examples include *Le Point*, *Le Monde*, and *Paris Match*.

•**Free news publications:** 46 publications accounting for 1% of total sales. Examples include *20 minutes* and *Femme en ville*.

Print media receives **government subsidies**. The State strives to develop dissemination, defend pluralism and support modernization and diversification of press companies towards multimedia with a **modernization fund**. Such subsidies are intended for publications that are registered with the Joint Commission for Publications and Press Agencies (*Commission paritaire des publications et agences de presse-CPPAP*).

The State has been tasked with safeguarding **freedom of the press** since the **Law of 29 July 1881 on freedom of the print media**. With this legislation, a balance could be found between freedom of expression, the protection of individuals and upholding law and order.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

•Radio

Law 82-652 of 29 July 1982 on audiovisual communication put an end to the state monopoly on the use of airwaves. **More radio stations and a wide-ranging radio landscape ensued**. There are currently nearly **1,200 radio operators** in France, including three major general-interest stations (RTL, France Inter, Europe 1), theme-based networks (mainly for music, but also for news and community-oriented stations), private local radio stations as well as nearly 600 local community radio stations.

The company **Radio France** includes **public service stations** such as France Inter, France Info, France Culture, France Musique, France Bleu (local stations), FIP and the Mouv' (targeting a young audience). The **private sector** includes such stations as RTL (with the largest audience in France, 13.3% in the 2nd quarter 2007 compared to 10% for France Inter), Europe 1 and Radio Monte Carlo (general-interest stations) and many music, theme-based, community and regional stations.

France also has three radio stations which **broadcast abroad**: *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) (with 44 million listeners), *Monte-Carlo doualiya* (broadcast in the Near and Middle East), and *Medi 1* (broadcast in the Maghreb).

•Television

Television is the **favourite pass time** of French people. On average, they watch three hours of television a day. The exact figure for **2006 was 3 hours 24 minutes** according to Mediametrie, the French audience measurement and survey company, two minutes less than in 2005. Adults aged 35 to 59 watch the most television (3 hours 33 minutes a day). The world average is 3 hours 5 minutes. On average a person watches 4 hours 31 minutes of television a day in the United States compared to 1 hour 46 minutes in India. The average in France is lower than in other European countries: 3 hours 59 minutes in Italy, 3 hours 32 minutes in Germany and 3 hours 36 minutes in the United Kingdom.

There are **several hundred** television stations in France:

- 5 national public stations (France 2, France 3, France 4, France 5 and France ô) ;
- 3 national private stations (TF1, M6 and Canal Plus) ;
- 1 Franco-German station (Arté) ;
- Cable, ADSL and DTTV (Digital Terrestrial Television) or satellite channels;
- Two operators for French radio and television broadcasting abroad (TV5 and Canal France International) ;
- The international news station, FRANCE 24 (www.france24.fr) was launched in December 2006. It's the first station in France to provide international news 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is available in France, English, and Arabic (from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.).

Since [Law 2000-719 of 1 August 2000](#), the three national channel companies France2, France3 and France5 have formed the group **France Télévision**. It aims to determine strategic guidelines for stations, coordinate the policy of programming and service offerings and carry out development action.

Public television funding is mainly provided by a **television licence fee** charged to households and professionals. It is €116 euros per television in metropolitan France. The whole of public funding accounts for over 76% of the public television and radio funding, which is mainly supplemented by **advertising revenues**.

Since [Law 86-1067 of 30 September 1986 on freedom of communication](#) (known as the Léotard Law), the entire television and radio sector has been under the authority of a regulatory body, the **Higher Council for Radion and Television (CSA)**. It issues broadcasting permits to private operators. It checks whether requirements in the technical specifications are being respected, especially public service ones. It ensures that laws and regulations are respected in such areas as pluralism of information and protection of children. It also appoints heads of public radio and television companies.

THE LEGAL STATUS OF JOURNALISTS

The legal status of journalists is enshrined in the law of 29 March 1935, in the collective agreement on journalists' work and in the [law on the media of 29 July 1881](#).

In addition to professional regulations and legislation, journalists must adhere to ethical rules. In 1918, a [charter on professional duties of French journalists](#) was adopted by the French Union of Journalists.

WEBSITES AND REPORTS

Media Development Directorate (DDM)

<http://www.ddm.gouv.fr/>

- Report on print media: http://www.ddm.gouv.fr/mot.php3?id_mot=22

- Report on radio and television: http://www.ddm.gouv.fr/mot.php3?id_mot=33

Agence France Presse

<http://www.afp.com/francais/home/>

English version: <http://www.afp.com/english/home/>

Spanish version: <http://www.afp.com/espanol/home/>

German version: <http://www.afp.com/deutsch/home/>

Joint Commission for Publications and Press Agencies (CPPAP)

<http://www.cppap.fr/>

French Federation of Press Agencies

<http://www.ffap.fr/>

Médiamétrie: the inter-professional audience measurement and survey company.

<http://www.mediametrie.com/>

Portail-Press: the website for all French print media, managed by the National Federation of French media.

<http://www.portail-presse.com/>

Higher Council on Radio and Television (CSA)

<http://www.csa.fr/>

French Audiovisual Institute (INA)

<http://www.ina.fr/>

French Union of Journalists (SNJ)

<http://www.snj.fr/>

Foreign Press Centre in Paris (CAPE)

<http://www.capefrance.com/fr/>

English version: <http://www.capefrance.com/en/>

Radio and television policy (1980-2004) / *Vie publique* website

<http://www.vie-publique.fr/politiques-publiques/politique-audiovisuel/index/>

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Télévision et politique / Arnaud Mercier. - *La Documentation française, Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, no. 900, May 2004.

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