

Methodology

Analysis of Comscore digital audience data

For the audience analysis of digital-native news organizations, researchers assessed all domains with at least 10 million average monthly unique digital visitors in the fourth quarter of 2019, according to Comscore. From that set of entities, they then selected digital-native news outlets using the following criteria:

- It must be “born on the web,” i.e., not the website of a legacy news brand (note: may be owned by a legacy media company).
- It is a publisher of original content about news, defined as current events affecting public life (can include both original reporting and commentary/analysis). Sites are judged by an assessment of the material appearing on their homepage. A review of top stories on the homepage must render some evidence of original reporting, such as interviews, eyewitness accounts or referral to source documents, by a dedicated reporter/editorial staff. Sites are also judged as news publishers if they self-describe as an organization that produces news, either in the subject headers/navigation bar and/or in their “about” or advertising section through usage of terms like “news,” “journalism,” “covering” or “informing.”
- It is not entirely focused on reviews, advice, recipes or unedited raw data.
- It is not primarily a user-generated or aggregated content platform (such as Medium, Reddit or Wikipedia). Branded content such as NBA.com was also excluded.

The following 46 entities were used for 2019:

247SPORTS.COM
BGR.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM
BUSTLE.COM
BUZZFEED.COM
BUZZFEEDNEWS.COM
CNET.COM
COMICBOOK.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM
EATER.COM
ELITEDAILY.COM
GAMESPOT.COM

GIZMODO.COM
HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM
HUFFPOST.COM
IGN.COM
INVERSE.COM
INVESTOPEDIA.COM
JALOPNIK.COM
LIFEHACKER.COM
LIVESCIENCE.COM
LOOPER.COM
MARKETWATCH.COM
MASHABLE.COM
MAXPREPS.COM
MEDICALNEWSTODAY.COM
PATCH.COM
PINKNEWS.CO.UK
POLITICO.COM
POLYGON.COM
POPCULTURE.COM
POPSUGAR.COM
QZ.COM
REFINERY29.COM
SCARYMOMMY.COM
SCREENRANT.COM
SLATE.COM
SNOPE.SCOM
TECHRADAR.COM
THEDAILYBEAST.COM
THEVERGE.COM
TMZ.COM
TOMSGUIDE.COM
VOX.COM
WEBMD.COM

A fresh cohort was chosen in each year using the criteria above. Audience information was calculated based on the cohort for that year to reflect the characteristics of the most popular digital-native sites at the time.

2018

The 37 sites in the 2018 cohort were:

247SPORTS.COM	ELITEDAILY.COM	SBNATION.COM
90MIN.COM	ENGADGET.COM	SLATE.COM
BGR.COM	GIZMODO.COM	TECHRADAR.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM	HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM	THEDAILYBEAST.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM	HUFFINGTONPOST.COM	THEROOT.COM
BUSTLE.COM	IGN.COM	THEVERGE.COM
BUZZFEED.COM	INVESTOPEDIA.COM	THISISINSIDER.COM
BUZZFEEDNEWS.COM	MARKETWATCH.COM	THRILLIST.COM
CNET.COM	MASHABLE.COM	TMZ.COM
COMICBOOK.COM	MAXPREPS.COM	UPROXX.COM
DEADSPIN.COM	POLITICO.COM	VOX.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM	POLYGON.COM	
EATER.COM	REFINERY29.COM	

2017

The 35 sites in the 2017 cohort were:

12UP.COM	ELITEDAILY.COM	REFINERY29.COM
247SPORTS.COM	GAMESPOT.COM	SBNATION.COM
BGR.COM	GIZMODO.COM	SLATE.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM	HUFFINGTONPOST.COM	THEDAILYBEAST.COM
BREITBART.COM	IBTIMES.COM	THEVERGE.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM	IGN.COM	THRILLIST.COM
BUSTLE.COM	INVESTOPEDIA.COM	TMZ.COM
BUZZFEED.COM	JEZEBEL.COM	TOPIX.NET
CNET.COM	MASHABLE.COM	UPROXX.COM
DEADSPIN.COM	MAXPREPS.COM	UPWORTHY.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM	POLITICO.COM	VOX.COM
EATER.COM	QZ.COM	

2016

The 36 sites in the 2016 cohort were:

247SPORTS.COM	HELLOGIGGLES.COM	RAWSTORY.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM	HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM	REFINERY29.COM
BREITBART.COM	HUFFINGTONPOST.COM	SBNATION.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM	IBTIMES.COM	SLATE.COM
BUSTLE.COM	IFLSCIENCE.COM	THEDAILYBEAST.COM
BUZZFEED.COM	IGN.COM	THEVERGE.COM
CNET.COM	IJR.COM	THRILLIST.COM
DEADSPIN.COM	MASHABLE.COM	TMZ.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM	MIC.COM	TOPIX.COM
ELITEDAILY.COM	OPPOSINGVIEWS.COM	UPROXX.COM
FIVETHIRTYEIGHT.COM	POLITICO.COM	UPWORTHY.COM
GIZMODO.COM	QZ.COM	VOX.COM

2014/2015

The 2014 cohort was compiled based on 2015 data, so the entities are the same. The 40 sites in those cohorts were:

247SPORTS.COM	ENGADGET.COM	SALON.COM
APLUS.COM	GIZMODO.COM	SBNATION.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM	HELLOGIGGLES.COM	SLATE.COM
BREITBART.COM	HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM	THEBLAZE.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM	HUFFINGTONPOST.COM	THEDAILYBEAST.COM
BUSTLE.COM	IBTIMES.COM	THEROOT.COM
BUZZFEED.COM	IJREVIEW.COM	THEVERGE.COM
CHEATSHEET.COM	MASHABLE.COM	THRILLIST.COM
CINEMABLEND.COM	MIC.COM	TMZ.COM
CNET.COM	OPPOSINGVIEWS.COM	UPROXX.COM
DAILYDOT.COM	QZ.COM	UPWORTHY.COM
DEADSPIN.COM	RARE.US	VOX.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM	RAWSTORY.COM	
ELITEDAILY.COM	REFINERY29.COM	

Analysis

For each website, unique visitors for October to December of each year come from the Comscore Media Metrix database for Total Digital Population.

Comparisons year over year are between monthly averages of October to December data in each year.

For sites that didn't meet the reporting threshold for one month out of a quarter, researchers averaged the two months for which data was available.

Digital economic analysis

Economics data for this analysis comes from eMarketer's U.S. Ad Spending estimates. Data from previous years is updated annually.