



Media Use in Somalia 2013

Key Takeaways

- The majority of Somalis (65.6%) access news at least once per day. More than one in four Somalis (27.9%) share news daily or most days.
- Radio is the most popular means for obtaining news in Somalia, with more than four in five (83.9%) reporting they get news via radio at least once per week.
- More than seven in 10 Somalis (72.4%) say they personally own a mobile phone.
- South-Central Somalia has the most vibrant media mix in the country, with SMS (48.0%), television (48.7%), newspapers (28.5%), mobile apps (33.9%), and Internet (34.8%) all receiving their largest weekly rates as news sources.
- Somalis are most likely to be interested in media reports covering religion (95.7%), followed by health (94.8%), arts and culture (83.0%), and education (81.6%).
- When Somalis are asked to name the country's three most serious problems, terrorism garners the most mentions, at 46.0%.

Methodology

This study contains results from a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of 2,000 Somalis aged 15 and older. Interviewing was conducted Jan. 26 through Feb. 13, 2013, in Somali and Arabic. The survey covers 100% of the national population residing permanently in their households and represents about 5,555,000 Somali adults [source: Population Reference Bureau, 2012].

Access to News and Media Sources

Two-thirds of Somalis (65.6%) access news at least once per day. Those with a secondary education (76.8%) or at least some college education (78.8%) are most likely to access news this frequently. Urban dwellers (70.4%) are slightly more likely to access news every day than people in rural areas (64.0%), while Somalis aged 55 and older are the least likely demographic to access news daily (56.6%).

More than one in four Somalis (27.9%) say they share news with their family, friends, or people in their social network daily or most days. Urban residents (37.8%) are more likely than people in rural areas (24.7%) to say they share news that frequently. More than half of Somalis with some college education (51.8%) do so.

Radio most widespread source of news in Somalia

Radio is the most popular means for obtaining news in Somalia, with more than four in five adults (83.9%) reporting that they get news via radio at least once per week. Urban (83.7%) and rural (84.0%) residents are equally likely to use radio as a news source on a weekly basis.

Reflecting radio's status as the leading source of news in Somalia, more than eight in 10 adults (83.7%) say they have a working radio in their home. By comparison, less than one-third (30.3%) have a television. Of note, almost one in five Somalis overall (18.7%) and more than one in four in urban areas (26.7%) say they have Internet access in their home. These are relatively high numbers for sub-Saharan Africa and may be partially explained by mobile Internet access; one-third of the country's mobile phone owners say they go online using their phone.

Urban residents are more likely than their rural counterparts to have more media devices in their household. By a margin of 52.1% to 23.2%, Somalis in urban areas are more likely to have a television in their household, as well as a mobile phone (70.8% vs. 63.3%), computer (26.8% vs. 8.9%), and Internet access (26.7% vs. 16.0%). In rural areas, where Internet and television access are scarcer and the population is more heavily reliant on radio for getting news and keeping up with events outside of their local community, radio ownership is about as common as it is in urban households (81.1% vs. 84.5%).

Radio: FM most prevalent, except in Puntland

Overall, about seven in 10 Somalis (70.7%) say they listened to the radio in the past week, with results relatively similar among residents of South-Central Somalia (69.0%), Puntland (77.0%), and Somaliland (72.1%). FM is the most commonly accessed waveband, used by almost half of the population (48.0%) in the past week. However, there is substantial regional variation in waveband use, with Puntland residents far less likely than other Somalis to use

the FM band — just 15.4% have done so in the past week, while half (49.6%) say they have used the AM band and more than one-fourth (27.1%) have used shortwave.

Television: Satellite dishes most common means of reception

Three in 10 Somalis say they have a television in their homes, and 35.2% say they've watched television in the last seven days. South-Central Somalis are the most likely to have watched TV during that time (41.5%), followed by Somaliland residents (28.0%) and Puntland residents (15.7%).

Somali adults are most likely to receive a TV signal via satellite dish (22.5%), followed by terrestrial antennas (12.0%) and cable connections (7.2%). Cable is virtually unheard of outside the Somaliland region. Results for each method of reception are lower among Puntland residents, reflecting the low incidence of televisions in the region.

Nearly three in four Somalis own a mobile phone

Despite the country's lack of development and government authority, Somalia has a relatively technologically advanced and competitively priced telecommunications industry. Somalis are able to conduct banking activities and perform payments using their mobile phone, services that are not available in many African countries. More than seven in 10 Somalis (72.4%) say they personally own a mobile phone. There are some regional disparities in access, with mobile phone ownership rates at 78.5% in South-Central Somalia, 73.1% in Puntland, and 56.2% in Somaliland.

Somalis are most likely to use their phone for communication purposes; aside from making phone calls, 63.6% of the total population has used SMS text messaging in the past week, and 42.1% have sent or received emails on their mobiles. About one-third of Somalis (34.8%) have listened to the radio on a mobile phone in the past week. About one-fourth overall (25.4%) say they have accessed the Internet on their mobile during that time, and a similar proportion (21.8%) have accessed social networking sites.

One in four Somalis go online weekly

Despite the strict monitoring and regulation of Internet cafés by Al-Shabaab militants in some areas, one in four Somalis (24.9%) now access the Internet every week. Weekly Internet users in Somalia tend to be younger, more urban, and better-educated than the population at large. Most Somalis with a secondary education (54.0%) or at least some college education (68.4%) use the Internet on

a weekly basis. Those with only a Koranic education are among the least likely to access the Internet, at 10.3%. Weekly Internet access is far more common in South-Central Somalia (35.0%) than in Somaliland (9.0%) or Puntland (2.7%). In Mogadishu, slightly more than half of residents (51.3%) go online each week.

Population shows interest in range of topics

When asked about their level of interest in 11 selected topics, more than eight in 10 Somalis say they are either "very interested" or "somewhat interested" in media reports covering religion (95.6%), followed by health and healthcare (94.8%), arts and culture (83.1%), and education (81.5%). Somalis show less enthusiasm for coverage of sports (54.7%) or weather reports (47.7%). Younger Somalis (those aged 15 to 24) are more likely to be interested in sports and education than the rest of the population. Meanwhile, Somalia's oldest media consumers, aged 55 and older, tend to be less interested in most topics than younger people.

Contact

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