



Media Use in Cambodia

Cambodia's media environment is relatively diverse, with a variety of public and private TV, radio, and print outlets. However, the media are highly politicized, with most domestic outlets openly associated with political factions and a lack of sources dedicated to objective reporting in the public interest. Reporters Without Borders and Freedom House continue to consider Cambodia one of the more repressive countries in Asia, citing attacks on journalists by security forces and the use of inconsistently applied regulations to curb media outlets critical of the government.

Cambodians are more likely to be interested in domestic news than news about any other country or geographic region. A slight majority of adults overall (52.1%) say they are "very interested" in news about Cambodia, and an additional 32.4% are "somewhat interested." About one-third of Cambodians (32.5%) are very interested in international perspectives on events in Cambodia, with a similar proportion (34.0%) somewhat interested. News about the broader Southeast Asian region follows, with 22.6% very interested overall.

A majority (57.0%) of Cambodians say they watch TV news at least weekly, with urban residents considerably more likely than their rural counterparts to do so. Radio follows, used for news by 42.9% overall and equally prevalent in urban and rural areas. About one in 10 Cambodians overall now say they turn to the Internet (9.4%) or social networking sites (10.8%) for news, with those figures rising to more than two in 10 among urban residents. Cambodians' relative use of various news media roughly parallels their overall use of media platforms, which are further detailed in this brief.

Television

Television remains the most commonly used media platform in Cambodia; two-thirds of adults overall (66.6%) say they've watched TV within the past week. Reflecting the higher prevalence of household TV ownership in urban areas, city-dwellers are more likely than rural residents to watch weekly (86.1% vs. 61.2%,

respectively). Partly because urban Cambodians have greater access to formal education, TV use also rises sharply by education level.

Quality of reception is one likely factor in the difference between urban and rural TV use. Most Cambodian TV owners (72.6%), particularly those in rural areas, continue to rely on conventional antennas. Satellite dishes are used by just 11.3% overall, and access to cable TV or pay TV network services is rare outside urban areas.

Radio

Almost half of Cambodian adults (48.5%) listen to the radio at least weekly, similar to the 2012 figure of 52.0%. Listenership rates are similar among the country's urban (47.9%) and rural (48.2%) residents. However, like other media platforms, radio use rises with Cambodians' education levels; 36.6% of those with no formal education listen at least weekly, vs. 64.2% of those with a higher secondary education or more.

Most weekly radio listeners in Cambodia (58.6%) tune in via the FM band weekly or more; the AM (8.5%) and shortwave (3.4%) bands are far less commonly used (notably, however, about one in five weekly radio listeners say they don't know which waveband they use). Though most weekly listeners (54.6%) still use a conventional radio set, a third now say they've listened on their mobile phones in the past week (many likely through FM receivers built into their phones). All other means of radio listening asked about remain rare; 2.9% of Cambodians listen to Internet radio weekly, while even fewer listen via cable TV or satellite receiver.

Internet

As the costs of low-end smartphones and mobile Internet services decrease throughout Southeast Asia, more Cambodians are able to go online.

Weekly Internet use has more than doubled since 2012, with 12% of Cambodians reporting using the Internet in the past week (compared to 4.9% in 2012). That figure rises to more than one-fourth (27.4%) in urban areas and almost half (46.9%) among those with at least a higher

secondary education. These differences in part reflect the fact that about one-quarter of Cambodians are functionally illiterate and therefore cannot read Internet content, and that literacy rates are lower among rural than urban residents.

The vast majority of weekly Internet users (89.2%) say they have used a mobile phone to go online during the past seven days; far fewer say they have used a desktop (18.6%) or laptop (15.2%) computer. While most (71.5%) say they have accessed the Internet at home during that time, 41.2% say they have used a portable device to go online at multiple locations and 33.5% say they have gone online at an Internet café or other public access point.

Those who do have Internet access typically have broadband speeds that support the frequent use of streaming video and audio. More than two-thirds of weekly Internet users say they have gone online to watch videos (80.0%) or to listen to audio (69.7%) in the past seven days. Six in 10 (59.7%) have shared videos or photos online during that time. More than half of Cambodia's weekly Web users (54.2%) have gone online to find out the latest news in the past seven days.

Mobile phones

While almost nine in 10 Cambodian adults (88.0%) say they have a mobile phone in their households, about seven in 10 (68.8%) say they have their own mobile phone. The latter figure has risen significantly from 60.6% in 2012 — an increase that is entirely accounted for by the spread of mobile phones among rural residents, from 56.5% in 2012 to 66.9% in 2014.

In recent years, a number of mobile operators have competed for market share in Cambodia, helping extend the reach of mobile networks and lower the cost of services throughout the country. Thus far, however, smartphones account for a relatively low share of the market; about one in five mobile owners (19.0%) say their phones allow them to access the Internet or download apps.

Most mobile phone owners in Cambodia still use their phones only to make or receive voice calls; three-fourths of Cambodians overall (72.9%) and 92.2% of mobile owners have done so in the past week. By contrast, just 27.3% of mobile owners have sent or received SMS text messages in the past week and 13.0% have accessed the Internet on their phones during that time. Notably, about one-third (31.4%) say they've listened to the radio on their phone in the past week, many likely using FM receivers built into the phone rather than Internet radio.

Urban residents and those with higher education levels are more likely to use all phone functions, including listening to the radio, using SMS services, and accessing the Internet.

About three-fourths of mobile owners (73.6%) say they use Roman/English fonts on their phones, but a sizeable 41.5% say their phone uses Khmer-language fonts. About three in 10 (28.9%) say they use both Roman and Khmer fonts on their phone.

Methodology

These results are from a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of Cambodian residents aged 15 and older. The national sample consists of 2,000 interviews, with an additional 300 interviews conducted in Phnom Penh in order to boost the sample of capital city residents to 500. The survey is representative of 9,504,000 adults in Cambodia overall, and 1,027,000 adults in Phnom Penh. Interviewing was conducted from June 5 to June 25, 2014.

Contact

For any questions or further information on this data, please contact the Broadcasting Board of Governors at publicaffairs@bbg.gov or 202-203-4400.

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