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When it comes to media, nothing is easy. Behind the news that reaches you every day on your digital device lies an enormously complex and multi-layered media system driven by a multitude of divergent agents and their interests. This media ecosystem can become vulnerable, unstable, and untrustworthy very easily and quickly in ways and places you may not even see.

To protect the media system you inhabit and to preserve its independence – along with our freedom of expression and right to information as the cornerstone of democracy—you should understand its various dimensions and their interconnections, including their fault lines and breaking points.

To this end, researchers at the Deutsche Welle Academy, led by Laura Moore, have developed the MEDIA VIABILITY INDICATORS, a framework that helps you grasp the five key societal dimensions and factors influencing the functioning and quality of news media: economics, politics, content and expertise, technology, and the community they are serving.

Have a look at...

... the full scale of a viable media ecosystem behind the surface of your device.

01 Politics

- 1. RULE OF LAW**
Government actions are determined by laws that are fairly applied and enforced.
- 2. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**
The country has a strong legal framework supporting freedom of expression.
- 3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**
Citizens and journalists can access public information.
- 4. LEGAL EQUALITY**
Laws and regulations affecting news media organizations are comparable to those applied to other industries and are impartially enforced.
- 5. MEDIA WITHIN SOCIETY**
Relations between government and news media organizations are mutually respectful and professional.

02 Economics

- 6. NATIONAL ECONOMY**
The national economy is strong enough to make news media organizations financially viable.
- 7. FINANCIAL STABILITY OF NEWS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS**
News media organizations are financially stable.
- 8. FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE OF NEWS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS**
News media organizations' sources of capital do not constrain their editorial independence.
- 9. COMPETITION**
Moderate competition among news media organizations exists, allowing for quality journalism.
- 10. AUDIENCE DEMAND**
Audience demand for quality journalism content supports a strong news media industry.

MEDIA VIABILITY

03 Community

11. **CITIZEN EDUCATION**
Citizens are able to consume and evaluate the quality of news and information content across multiple platforms.
12. **SOCIAL COHESION**
Society is generally cohesive and peaceful, with the majority of citizens sharing accepted political and social values across diverse ethnicities, political and religious affiliations.
13. **TRUST AND CREDIBILITY**
Citizens have a generally high level of confidence in the credibility of news media organizations and their content.
14. **PARTICIPATION**
Citizens contribute to the content produced and distributed by news media organizations.
15. **AUDIENCE DATA**
News media organizations have regular access to reliable data about audiences and their media uses.

04 Technology

16. **PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION RESOURCES**
News media organizations have access to the necessary production and distribution resources.
17. **NEWS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS' ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGIES**
News media organizations' access to production and distribution technologies is fair and apolitical.
18. **AUDIENCE ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGIES**
Citizens can access and afford the technologies over which news media content is distributed.
19. **DIGITAL EXPERTISE**
News media organizations have the technological expertise to optimize their use of digital production, distribution, and management technologies.
20. **CITIZENS' DIGITAL RIGHTS**
The government, news media organizations, and private companies respect citizens' digital rights, allowing them to communicate freely and safely online.

05 Content & Expertise

21. **QUALITY CONTENT**
The public has access to quality news media content.
22. **JOURNALISM EXPERTISE**
News media organizations have the necessary structures as well as professionally educated and trained journalists to produce high-quality content that meets international standards.
23. **OWNERSHIP OF NEWS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS**
Ownership of news media organizations is transparent and does not prevent diversity of perspectives or quality journalism.
24. **BUSINESS STRUCTURE**
News media organizations have the structures to be viable.
25. **BUSINESS EXPERTISE**
News media organizations have the personnel and expertise to be strategically and financially viable.



→ Learn more about the Media Viability Indicators of Deutsche Welle Academy.



→ And don't miss out on getting to know the more detailed sub-indicators, which will give you an even more comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships within your media ecosystem.

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