DW GLOBAL AUDIENCE

METHODOLOGY

Market and Audience Insights | DW, August 2026

DW Global Audience is a statistical extrapolation in which an overall result is inferred from an available partial result. The objective is to determine the worldwide, average weekly usage of all DW journalistic content.

Deutsche Welle currently provides multimedia content in 32 languages. These are made available to users worldwide via a wide range of platforms. Given this complex global distribution strategy, conducting a comprehensive annual census of usage is not feasible from a research-efficiency perspective alone.

International competitors face similar challenges when determining their weekly audiences. Through the media organizations affiliated with DG8, Deutsche Welle is also in dialogue with the CIBAR, the Conference of International Broadcasters' Audience Research Services, on methods for determining global audience in order to ensure comparability of results and develop methodological approaches further.

A user of DW's journalistic content can use different content types — video, audio, and text — and their respective distribution platforms:

Video-Content

a. **Linear TV**, both on DW's own TV channels and in the programming of Deutsche Welle's partner broadcasters

b. **Online** via DW's social media offerings, its own websites (dw.com, DW apps), and online partners (e.g. social media collaborations, OTT platforms, or news websites)

Audio-Content

c. **Radio**, via FM partners or FM reception on mobile phones (shortwave broadcasting was discontinued in October 2025)

d. **Online** via podcasts, apps, audio content on the website, or digital partners such as voice assistants

Text-Content

e. **Online** on dw.com, the DW apps, and partner websites

The calculation of DW Global audience makes it possible to examine the development of usage of the journalistic offering as a whole over a longer period of time and to position DW within its competitive environment. It is explicitly not intended to evaluate individual language services or formats, for which more specific methods are used.

DATA BASIS AND METRICS

The data basis for determining the global audience is diverse and varies depending on how the content is accessed. With regard to usage measurement, two groups can be distinguished:

Users of linear video and audio content are measured through representative surveys in target countries and through technical measurement ("TV ratings"). This includes all users of DW content via linear TV channels, TV partner broadcasters (hereinafter "TV"), and FM partners (hereinafter "radio").

Online users of video, audio, and text content are evaluated using the relevant digital analytics tools.

Measurement of Linear TV and Radio Usage

DW Global audience uses representative surveys and TV ratings from the past four years to determine weekly users of its TV and radio offerings. Only reach data reflecting the current state of the offering and distribution situation at the time of calculation are included. The exact number of countries covered and the number of studies included varies slightly from year to year. In 2026, a total of 92 individual surveys from 86 countries were included in the calculation. Overall, 433,500 people were surveyed.

The studies in the individual countries are conducted in accordance with the standards agreed within CIBAR, in a standardized manner and exclusively by ESOMAR-certified institutes.

Representative Surveys

- In the core markets of DW's TV and radio offerings, DW conducts **nationally representative surveys** to determine users of DW offerings who are representative of the adult population (generally aged 15 and above).
- In some markets, due to infrastructure or security conditions (e.g. in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa or the Arab world), only **urban-representative studies** are possible.
- In these studies, the weekly users ("last seven days") of DW television or radio offerings are surveyed in accordance with CIBAR standards[1].
- Based on the latest population figures from the United Nations, the measured reach in the sample is extrapolated to the total population.

[1] *The English-language templates used prior to translation are generally as follows:*

Radio: "Have you listened to Deutsche Welle in each of the following languages in the last 7 days?" /"You can listen to Deutsche Welle/DW radio programs on local radio stations. Have you listened to DW radio program on any of the following radio stations in the last 7 days?" /"I'd like to ask you about some specific programs by Deutsche Welle you may have heard on the radio. Have you listened to any of the following programs in the last 7 days?"

Television: "Have you watched Deutsche Welle or any programs made by Deutsche Welle in the last 7 days?" / "DW (Deutsche Welle) produces several TV programs that can be seen on local TV stations. Have you seen any DW program on the following TV stations in the last 7 days?" /
"DW (Deutsche Welle) can be received in various ways. In which of the following ways did you watch TV programs made by DW / Deutsche Welle? Did you watch it on DW's TV Channel / In the program of a national TV channel"

Technical Measurement

- In some markets, technically measured television reach (TV ratings) for programs on partner broadcasters or segments within national broadcasts is used. This applies particularly to markets where DW provides only a limited TV offering, e.g. in European target markets in the Balkans.
- The metric used is the deduplicated weekly reach (RCH) per broadcaster/country.

Within the surveys and when purchasing TV ratings, all products, distribution channels, and languages offered by DW in a given country are surveyed. The question modules are always the same, regardless of whether DW conducts its own study or participates in CIBAR studies. Each user is counted only once in the total, regardless of how many offerings and languages they have used. The calculation therefore includes a deduplicated weekly reach for each distribution channel (radio or television) and country.

Share of estimated data

Since DW conducts studies in its high-priority target countries and these cover the markets with the largest populations, reach only needs to be estimated for a small number of markets. For these few countries where no reach data are available and which have more than five million inhabitants, a conservative estimate is made based on the distribution situation, media usage situation, population data, knowledge of the languages in which DW offerings are distributed in the respective country, and usage in neighboring markets with comparable infrastructure.

These are generally countries where DW is accessible only via satellite or pay TV and where the security situation does not allow research to be conducted (e.g. Syria and Sudan, or currently Russia and Afghanistan). In addition to the distribution situation and usage in neighboring countries, current media usage figures from external studies are also used for the estimates.

Due to the generally rudimentary distribution situation in these countries (because they are not priority countries or because DW has no access to the market due to censorship), the estimated share of the global audience in 2026 is less than 0.5% [2]. This share is continuously declining as technically measured online usage becomes increasingly important for the global audience.

[2] *In 2025, the estimated share was 2.4 million / less than 1%.*

Measurement of Usage via Online Platforms

For DW's video, audio, and text offerings distributed online, usage is evaluated using analytics tools that vary depending on the distribution platform. In general, all usage of DW journalistic content online is recorded directly, with no further extrapolation of the data. Weekly averages for the previous 12 months are included. Due to the extensive technical measurement, a wide range of metrics is available for most platforms, capturing different aspects of usage. For the purpose of the global audience, the metric representing a weekly user is used for each platform. In individual cases, platforms do not provide such a metric. In these cases, an appropriate calculation model is developed based on the available usage data to determine weekly users.

For DW-owned platforms (DW website, apps) and most full-text partnerships, measurement is carried out using the in-house web analytics tool PIANO (PIANO Analytics); the relevant metric is the "Weekly Unique Visitor." All data are retrieved from our database via this system, where they are stored for analytical purposes.

For all DW content on third-party platforms, the available metrics must be assessed individually.

For social media profiles, operated by DW on Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and Telegram, data are obtained either via the social media analytics provider Facelift, from our database, or directly from the analytics section of the respective platform. On YouTube, for example, "Weekly Unique Viewers" are included in the global audience, i.e. the number of weekly users of a DW YouTube channel.

For all other DW content on online partner and external platforms , access to the respective platform's own analytics is generally available (e.g. MSN or Spotify). Here too, the level of detail of the available metrics varies:

- Large platforms such as MSN provide access to their own dashboard, which explicitly displays usage of DW content. The "Unique User" metric is available here and is converted into a weekly figure.
- For social media collaborations on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat, partners generally provide only video views. These video views are converted into users based on the ratio of suitable metrics, such as video views relative to weekly users on DW's own social media channels.

The continuous development of the digital distribution strategy requires the global audience calculation model to be adapted accordingly. Whenever DW expands onto new platforms or establishes new partnerships, an assessment is made of which metric can be used to incorporate the platform into global audience. Currently, in addition to DW's own offerings and social media profiles, users on more than 500 digital partner platforms are included in the global audience calculation.

CALCULATION OF USER CONTACTS ACROSS ALL MEDIA

Within the individual platforms — TV (video usage via TV channels and TV partners), radio (FM usage), and online (video, audio, and text users via online platforms) — users are deduplicated. In other words, each user is counted only once in the total for the respective platform, regardless of how many TV offerings/languages, for example, they have used.

Therefore, it is possible to speak of users of the respective distribution channels. However, deduplicating users across different platform is hardly possible. The very small amount of cross-platform usage is therefore disregarded. Strictly speaking, this means that across platforms the metric should be referred to as weekly user contacts rather than users. To avoid misunderstandings and to use established terminology, external communication refers to weekly users/users.

CALCULATION BY REGION, COUNTRY, AND MEDIA

In addition to the total number of users and the breakdown by content type and platform used, users are also categorized according to the regions from which usage originates. For reach studies and TV ratings, the respective countries are assigned to regions. For users reached through digital distribution channels, the relevant geo-information provided by the individual platforms is used. The level of information available varies enormously, particularly on external platforms, partly for data-protection reasons. Examples include:

- Website and tracked partnerships: Unique Visitors are assigned to continents based on geolocation.
- Facebook: Video watch time on DW Facebook accounts by country or region is converted into weekly users.
- YouTube: Usage by region is determined based on the "Engaged Views" metric and converted into Unique Viewers.
- Instagram: The "Reached Audience by country" metric is used to determine weekly users by country.
- TikTok: Users are determined based on viewer shares and mapped to the "weekly unique viewers" metric.

Some platforms, particularly external partner platforms, do not provide information on the geographic location of their users. In these cases, users are assigned to the respective target region of the offering. This makes it possible to provide a regional assessment, but there is in some cases a data gap at country level. For approximately 12% of the users no country data is available (mostly Instagram and TikTok).

In combination with the RSF World Press Freedom Index, an analysis is being conducted for the first time in 2026 of the proportion of users from countries with restricted press freedom (“noticeable problems”, "difficult situation", "very serious situation").

CALCULATION BY AGE AND GENDER

The 2026 calculation also introduces, for the first time, a breakdown of users by age and gender. For reach studies and TV ratings, the information provided is used where available. For users reached through digital distribution channels, the relevant demographic information from the individual platforms or DW channels is taken into account.
The following age categories are used:

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45 or older
- Data not available

Gender is reported using the following categories:

- Male
- Female
- User-specific
- Data not available

Examples of Digital Distribution Channels

- YouTube: To obtain a breakdown by age or gender, the "weekly unique viewer" metric is weighted by the share of "engaged views" by age or gender.
- Facebook: The number of unique users by age group/gender who viewed content from a specific page is based on the share of viewing time by age group/gender and weekly Unique Video Views.
- Instagram: The "Reached Audience by age & gender" metric is used to determine users by age and gender and is mapped to the "Weekly reach per Account" metric.
- TikTok: Users are determined based on viewer shares by age and gender and mapped to the "weekly unique viewers" metric.

The level of available information varies enormously, particularly on external platforms:

- For most partnerships, this information is not available. An exception is the Indian short-video platform Josh, which is the largest partnership among the digital distribution channels.
- When purchasing TV ratings, socio-demographic data have not always been supplied by the respective service providers or have not corresponded to the defined age groups. Therefore, this information is not available comprehensively.
- This information is also unavailable for users of the DW website and app, X, and most digital partnerships.

In summary, for the 2026 data, no age information is available for approximately 16% of users, and no gender information is available for approximately 13% of users.

COMPARABILITY WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The DW Global audience methodology has been applied in this form annually since 2013, thereby enabling changes in usage to be monitored over time. The global audience calculation model is continuously reviewed and further developed in consultation with CIBAR colleagues in order to take newly established distribution channels and platforms into account.

For many platforms, particularly those that have only recently become established, only limited analytics information is available. Changes to data-protection regulations or third-party platform algorithms may also affect the availability or reliability of the metrics provided. Each year, changes in the information available from external platforms are reviewed, as are any new data sources. This ensures that the metric most closely corresponding to a natural person is always selected.