

State of the Fact-Checkers Report

2023



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Introduction

The State of the Fact-Checkers Report from the International Fact-Checking Network offers an inside look at the global fact-checking community. It uncovers workforce trends, income levels, revenue sources, growth over time, focus areas, challenges and opportunities.

This year's report introduces new areas of exploration — including artificial intelligence and platform partnerships — not covered since the IFCN first presented the State of the Fact-Checkers in 2018. (See reports from [2018](#), [2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#) and [2022](#).)

The highlights for the 2023 report include:

- The most significant challenge for fact-checking organizations is raising funds to sustain operations and achieve financial sustainability.
- A majority of signatories are using AI as a research support tool.
- A vast majority of fact-checkers face harassment because of their misinformation tackling.

To compile this report, the IFCN distributed a survey to all its Code of Principles signatories from January to March 2024. (Fact-checkers sign on to the code to show they meet universal standards of transparency, independence and methodology, and they go through verification to prove it.) One hundred thirty-seven organizations across at least 69 countries completed the survey, representing approximately 80% of the network's fact-checking outlets. This marks an increase from the 91 signatories that contributed the previous year.

The insights and trends presented here are based on data for calendar year 2023. Please see the appendix for a list of IFCN signatories.

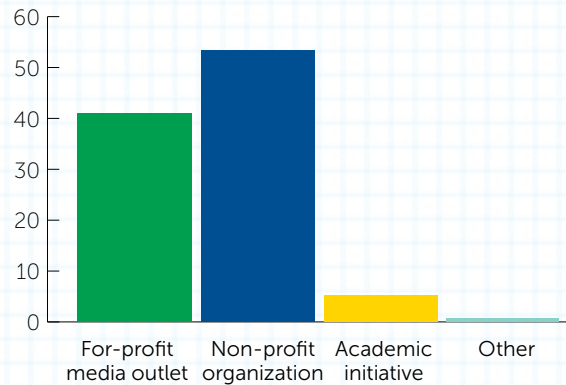
Organizational Form

What is the best description for your fact-checking initiative?

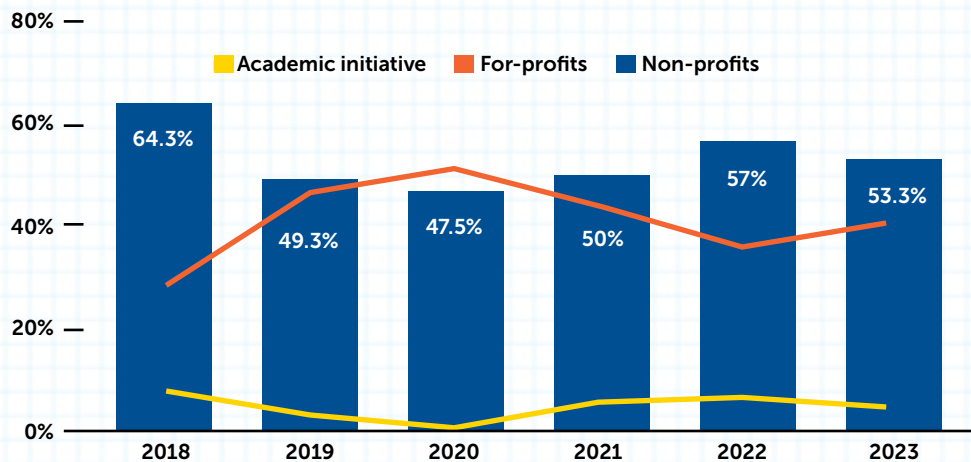
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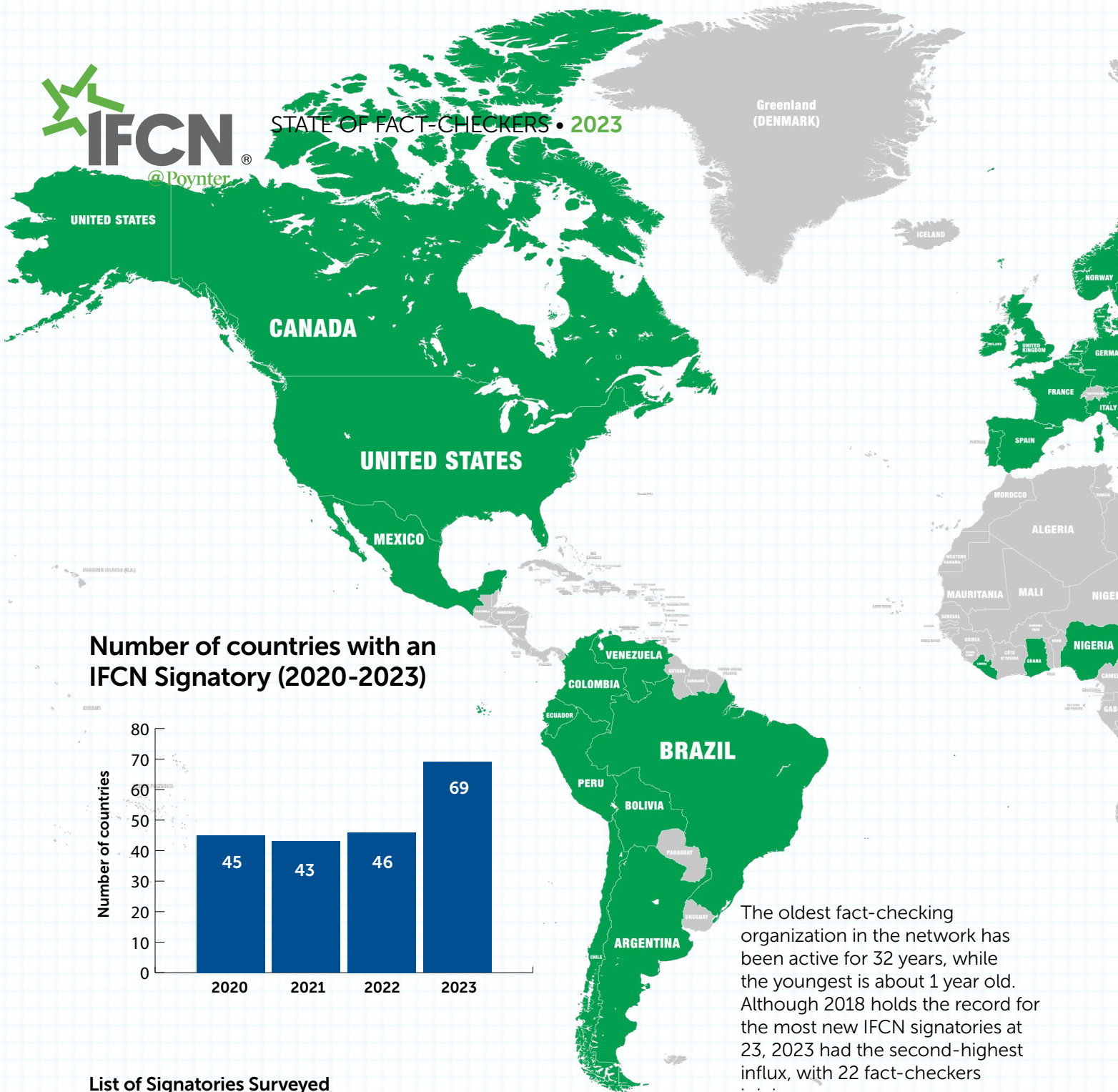
Although nonprofit organizations continue to outnumber for-profit signatories in the network, the disparity narrowed in 2023 compared with the previous year. Nonprofits were 53% while for-profit outlets consisted of 40.9% of the respondents, a 4-point increase from 2022.

The proportion of signatories attached to academic institutions remained largely stable, dropping 1 point to settle at 5.1%.

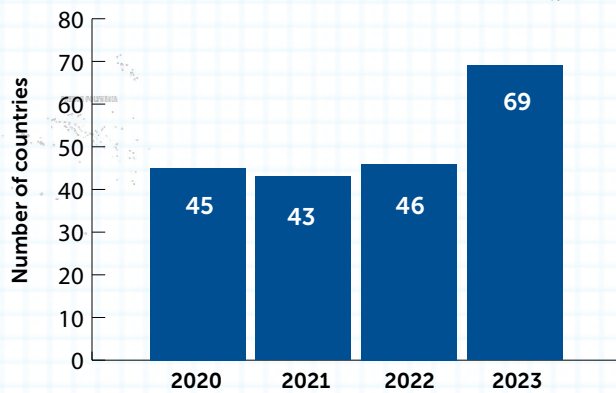


Organizational Form Over the Years





Number of countries with an IFCN Signatory (2020-2023)



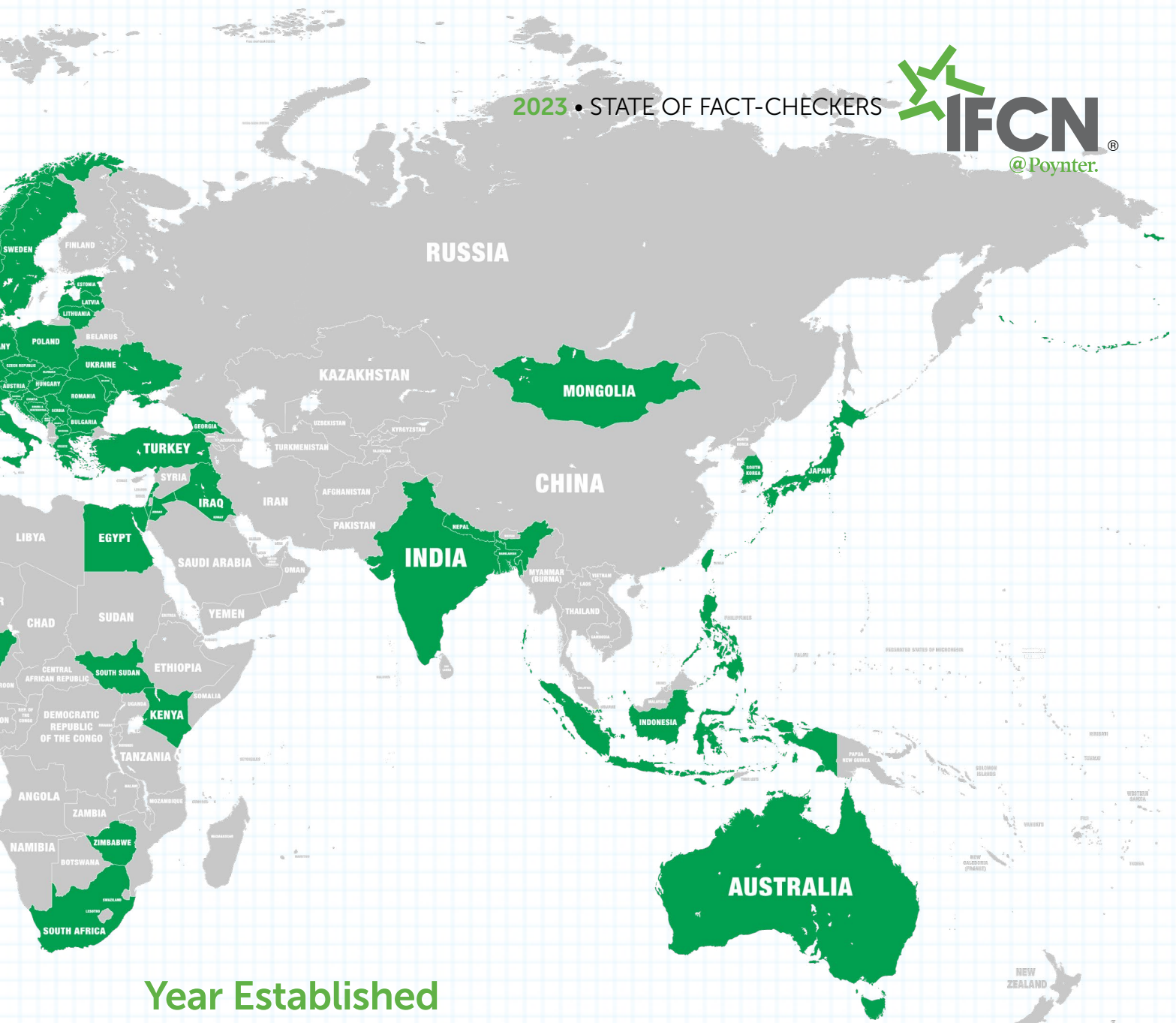
The oldest fact-checking organization in the network has been active for 32 years, while the youngest is about 1 year old. Although 2018 holds the record for the most new IFCN signatories at 23, 2023 had the second-highest influx, with 22 fact-checkers joining.

The number of new fact-checking organizations being established has been slowing since 2022.

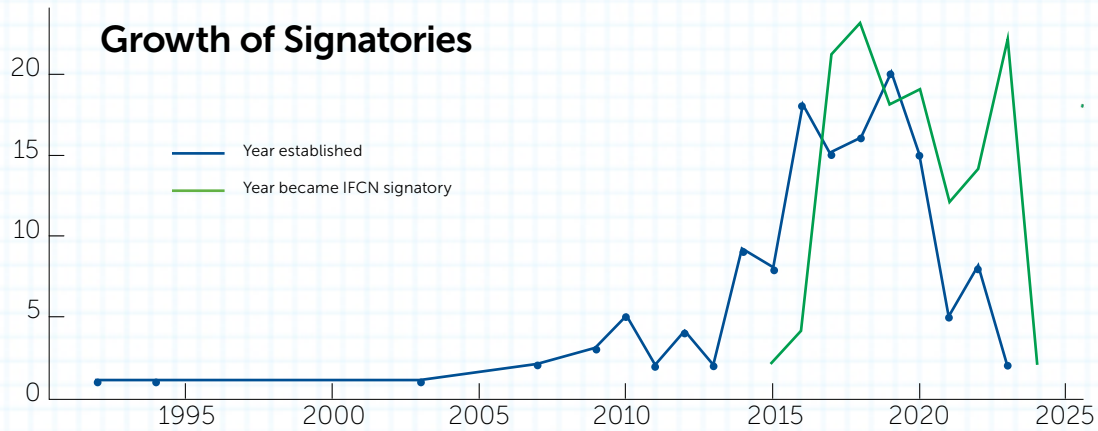
In 2023, 23 organizations from countries without an IFCN signatory joined the network, representing the largest yearly increase since 2020.

List of Signatories Surveyed

Factnameh • Estádio Verifica • Africa Check • Annie Lab • Fatabyyano • Mongolian Fact-checking Center • Logically Facts • PressOne.PH • Newsmobile Fact Checker • Nieuwscheckers • FactCheckHub • Verify-Sy • The Fact Checker • Delfi 'Melo detektorius' • FactCheckNI • Stopfals.md • Wisconsin Watch • Mafindo • APA-Faktencheck • Demagog.sk • The Whistle • Belarusian Investigative Center • Factcheck.bg • Fast Check CL • MediaWise • VRT • Digital Forensics, Research and Analytics Center • Aos Fatos • Ecuador Chequea • Rumor Scanner • BOOM • Demagog • India Today Fact Check • Funky Citizens • Demagog.cz • Factchequeado • PolitiFact • EFE Verifica • Raskrinkavanje.ba • Full Fact • Ellinika Hoaxes • The Healthy Indian Project (THIP) • Tirta.id • Patikrinta 15min • Chequeado • vistinomer.mk • News Verification • Mala Espina • Observador Fact Check • Telugupost.com • FactWatch • AAP FactCheck • Reuters Fact Check • Litmus • StopFake.org • NewsToF • VishvasNews • Raskrinkavanje • Krypometer • FakeNews Tragac • The Stage Media-Liberia • Science Feedback • PTI Fact Check • Probe: Tsek / Eks • Détecteur de rumeurs • El Sabueso • FactCrescendo • El Detector de Mentiras • Maharat News • PesaCheck • Factcheck Georgia • Myth Detector • The Dispatch Fact Check • The Quint • NGO GWARA MEDIA • Pagella Politica • Lakmusz • Bolivia Verifica • Knack • Verificador - La República • Lupa • Cotejo Info • Digiteye India • Faktisk.no • Faktograf • Raskrikavanje • ReCheck • AkhbarMeter Media Observatory • Newschecker • Wojowniczy Klawiatury • First Check • BR24 #Faktenfuchs • 211 Check • VERA Files • Eesti Päevaleht • Medizin Transparent • Fact Check Zimbabwe • Greece Fact Check • RMIT FactLab • RMIT ABC Fact Check • FactCheck.org • Istinomjer • Taiwan FactCheck Center • Snopes.com • Les Surligneurs • PA Fact Check • The Journal FactCheck • Colombiacheck • Dubawa • Razkrinkavanje • 20 Minutes • Tejit • Check Your Fact • USA Today FactCheck • HKBU Fact Check • Fakta • UOL Confere • Fact-Check Ghana • Tech4Peace • Newtral • Poligrafo • Istinomer • NewsMeter • dpa Factchecking • Pravda • Lead Stories • AFP FactCheck • NepalFactCheck.org • Tempo Cek Fakta • Factcheck Lab • factcheck.vlaanderen • TjekDet • Doğruluk Payı • Källkritikbyrån • MyGoPen • Factly • Japan Fact-check Center



Year Established



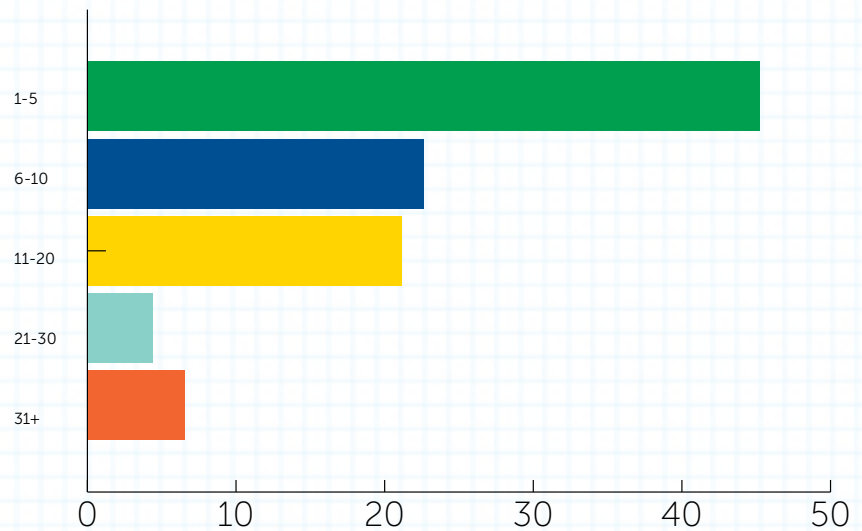
Workforce

Full-Time Employees

Sixty-eight percent of fact-checking organizations have 10 or fewer employees, whereas only 6.6% employ 31 or more people.

How many full-time employees work for your fact-checking operation?

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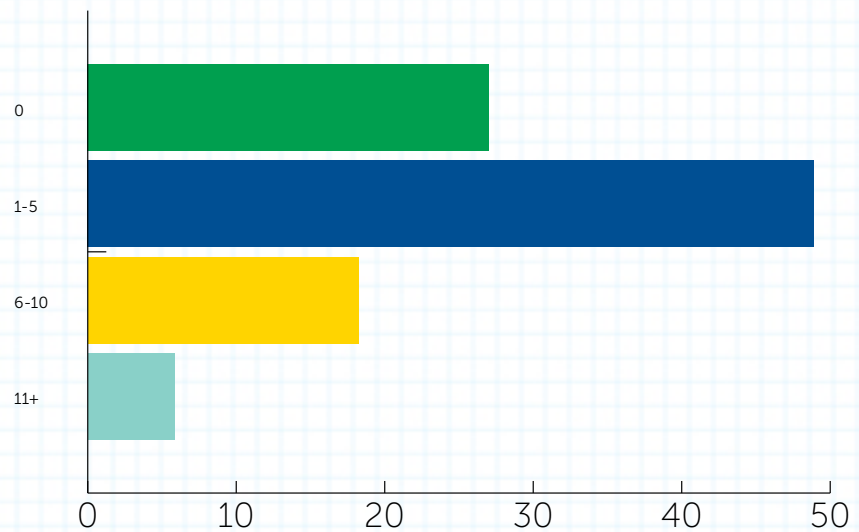
An overwhelming majority of organizations maintained or expanded their fact-checking teams, with 49.6% of respondents reporting an increase in staff. Only eight organizations, or 5.8%, reported reducing their workforces.

Part-Time Employees

Part-time staffing trends at fact-checking organizations have remained largely unchanged compared with the previous year; about 49% employed part-time workers and 27% operated without temporary staffers. Six percent of organizations had 11 or more part-time employees on their payroll.

How many part-time employees work for your fact-checking operation?

Answered: 137
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The survey revealed that 70% of the organizations have no regular volunteers, but 22% have one to five attached to their operations.

Resilience

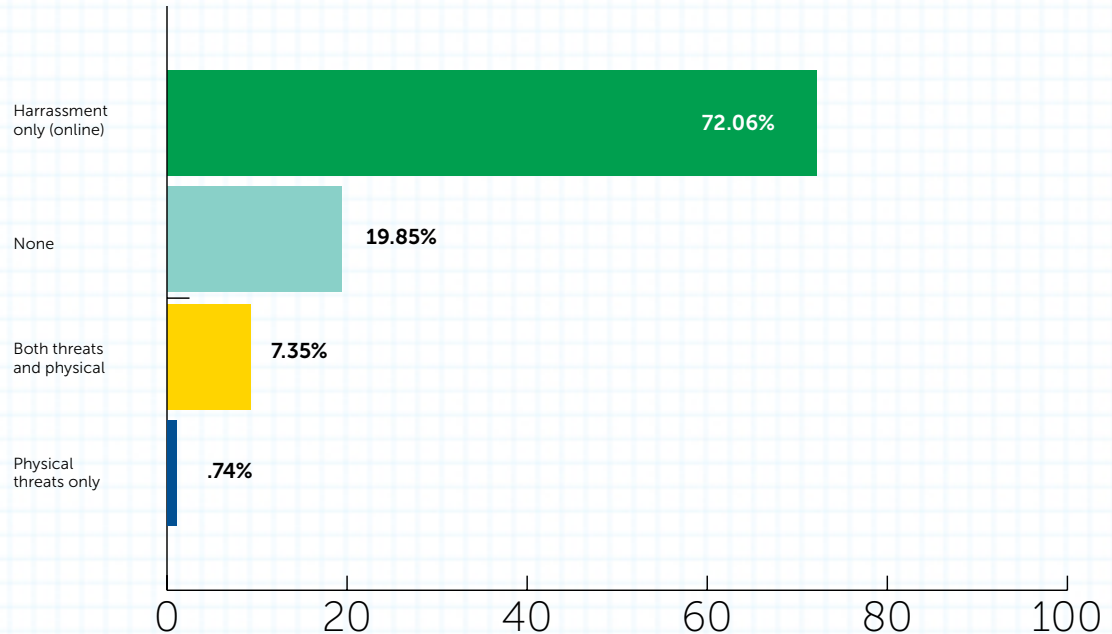
Harassment

About 72% of the signatories reported facing harassment in 2023 because of their fact-checking work, most of which was directed at the organization and individual fact-checkers online. Some of the attacks, at 7%, involved physical threats on the journalists. A majority of organizations surveyed said the volume of attacks has either matched the 2022 number or increased. Fifteen percent reported improved safety.

The three most common channels for issuing threats, in order of frequency, are emails, Facebook and X, with about 3% of threats occurring in person.

Has your organization or any of its staff members faced harrassment or physical threats because of your work in tackling false information?

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Skipped: 1



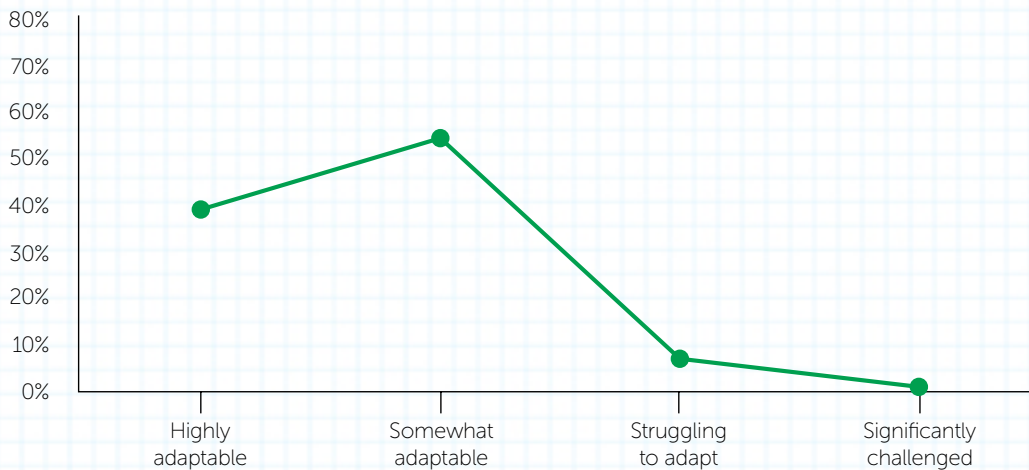
The threats and coordinated campaigns against professional fact-checkers sometimes involved legal action; 17% of the signatories reported new lawsuits against their fact-checking work in 2023. With shoestring budgets at many of the organizations, fact-checkers must turn to external funding support, such as the IFCN's [Legal Defense Fund](#), to defend themselves against the existential threats that lawsuits, often frivolous, can present.

Adaptability

The rapidly evolving misinformation landscape presents significant challenges. Less than 40% of respondents consider themselves highly adaptable, with 7% struggling to keep pace with the changes.

How would you rate your organization’s adaptability to the rapidly changing misinformation landscape?

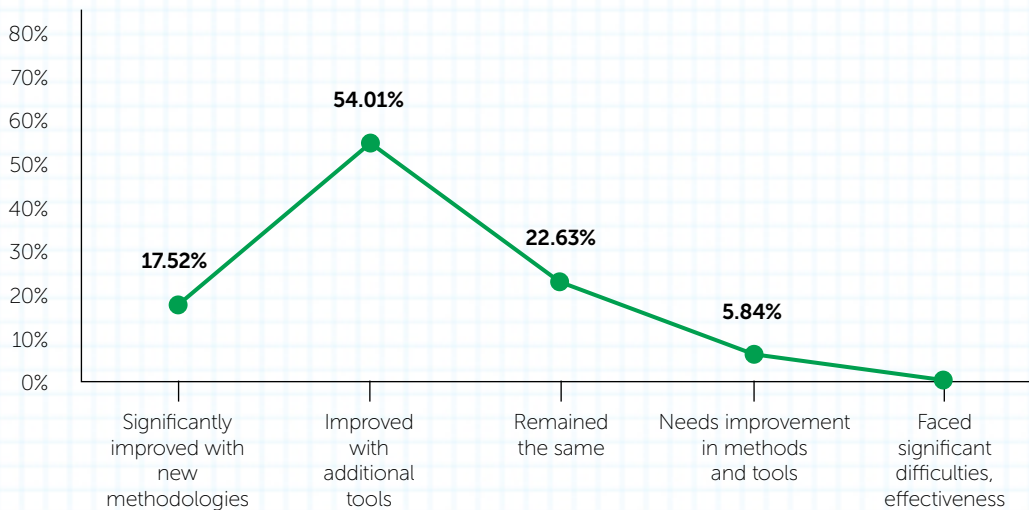
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Given the evolving landscape, about 72% of fact-checkers have adapted their work practices. A small number still need support to keep pace with the rest of the community.

Have your fact-checking techniques evolved in the past year?

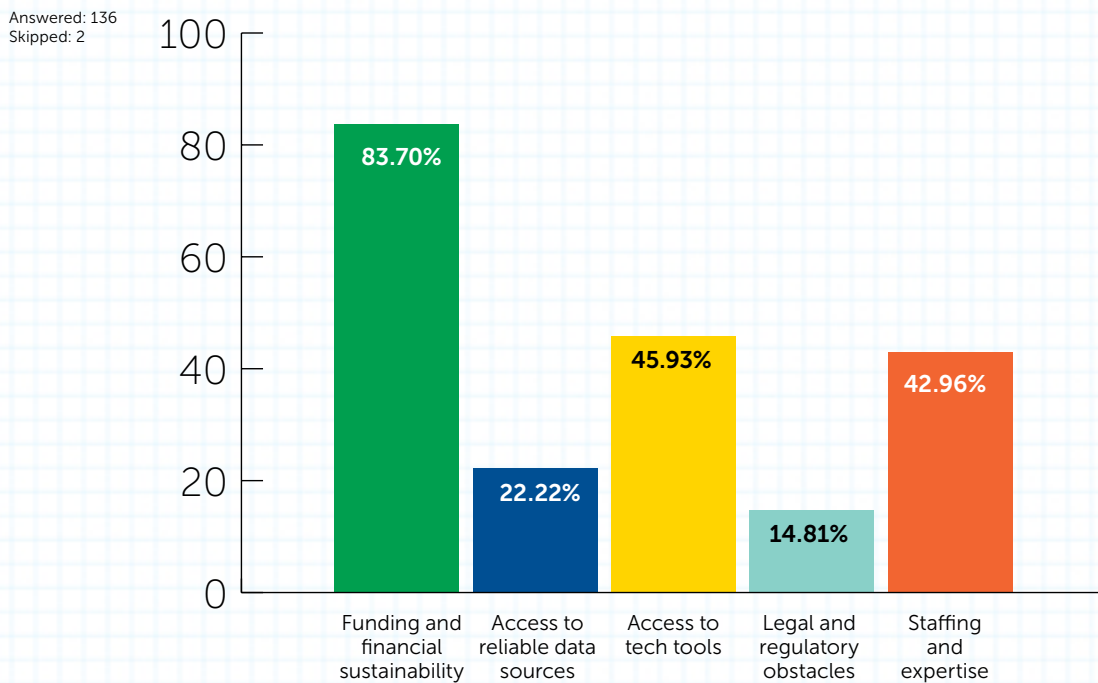
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Funding

Fact-checkers said their biggest challenge by far is raising money to sustain fact-checking operations and become financially sustainable.

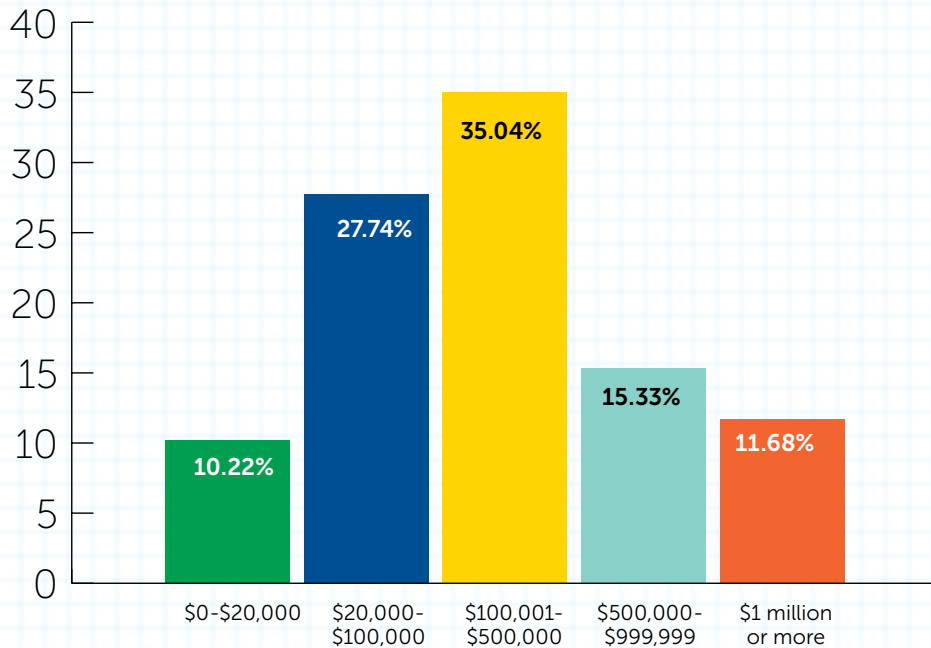
What is the biggest challenge your organization is facing?



In 2023, 35% of the organizations operated with budgets between \$100,000 and \$500,000, while 10% managed on \$20,000 or less, mirroring the previous year's figures. Nearly 12% of fact-checkers had budgets of \$1 million or more, up from 9.7%.

What was the budget of your fact-checking operation (excluding parent organization) in 2023? Please provide the amount in USD (U.S. Dollars). If you are unsure, it's okay to estimate.

Answered: 137
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Income from Meta’s Third-Party Fact-Checking Program and grants remain fact-checkers’ predominant revenue streams. Notably, grants now support approximately 87% of survey respondents, overtaking Meta’s 3PFC as the most common funding source. Other significant sources include training activities (55%) and memberships or user donations (50%).

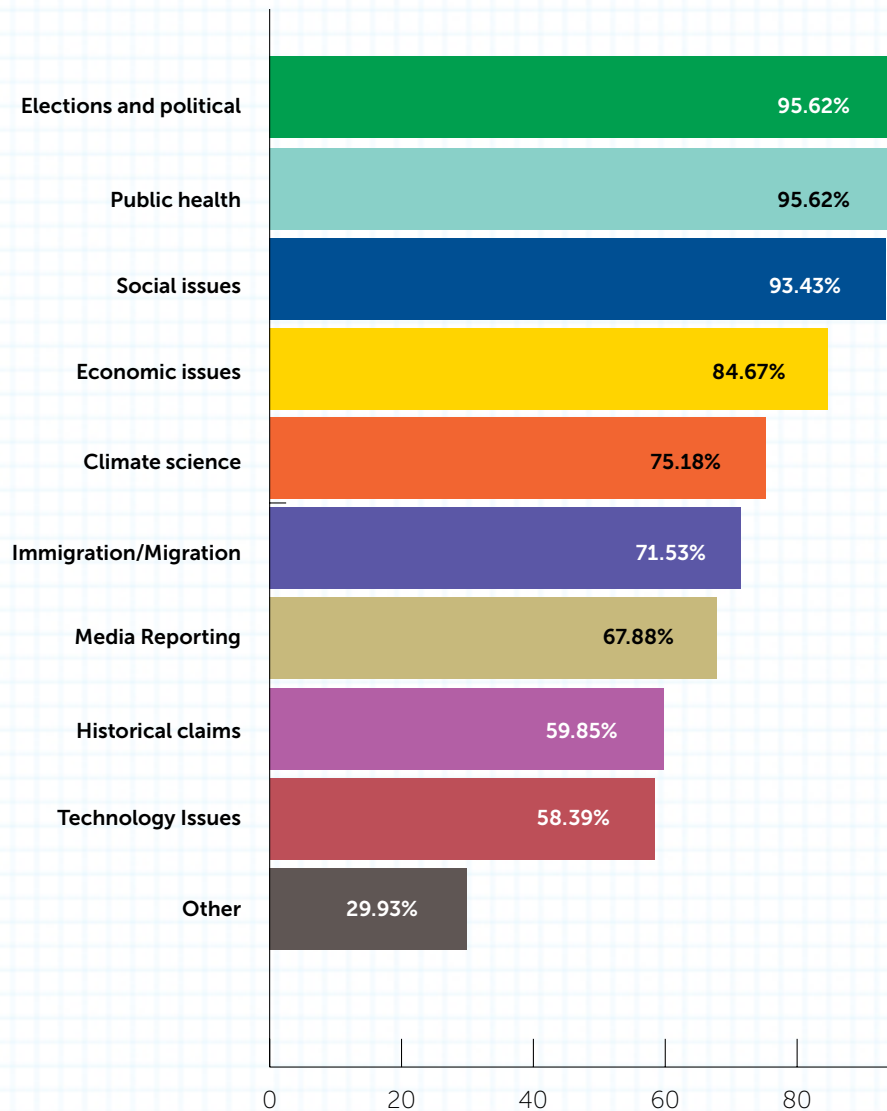
The revenue of 40% of the respondents remained unchanged from the previous year, while 42% reported an income increase.

Focus Areas

Fact-checkers continued to address a diversity of topics; the most common were politics and public health, followed by social and economic issues.

Select the topics your fact-checking organization covers?

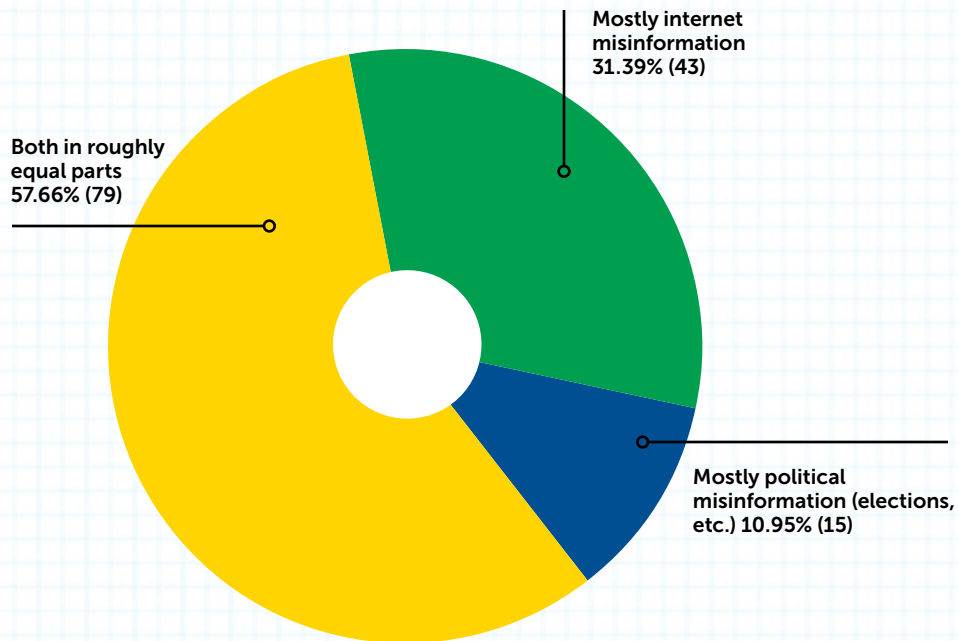
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While some fact-checkers specialize in online misinformation or political fact-checking, the large majority reported handling both.

Does your website fact-check primarily internet misinformation, political content, or both?

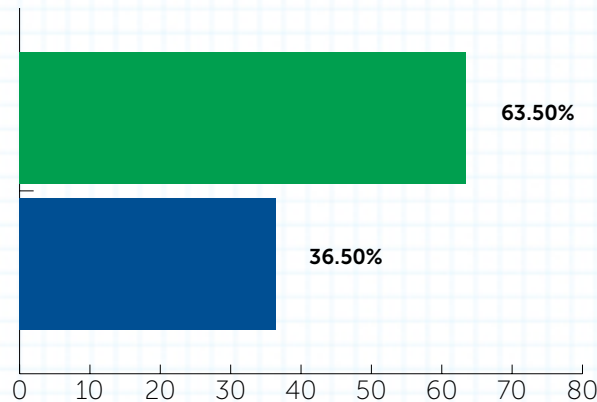
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Platforms

Meta

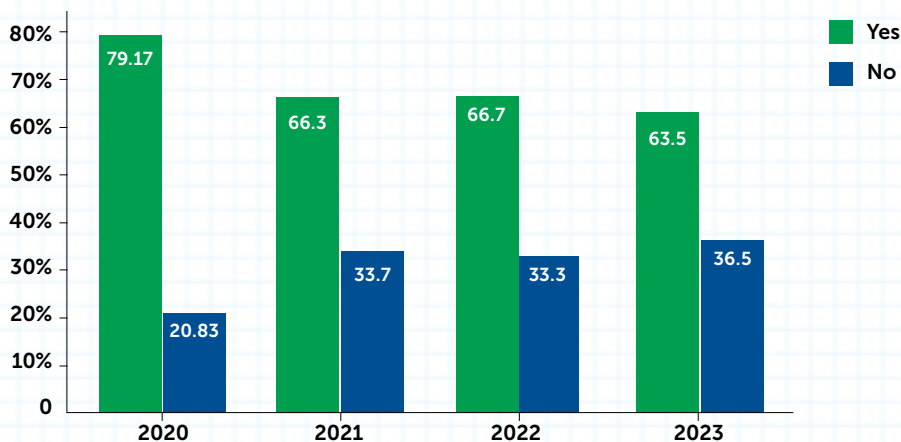
The survey shows that 63.5% of respondents participate in Meta’s Third-Party Fact-Checking Program, allowing approved signatories to rate the factual accuracy of posts on its platforms about public interest issues.



The percentage of IFCN signatories in the program has declined over the past four years, though the number of organizations has increased. This trend shows the pace of new organizations joining the IFCN exceeds the rate at which Meta adds partners to the program.

Participation in Facebook’s Third Party Fact-Checking Program (3PFC)

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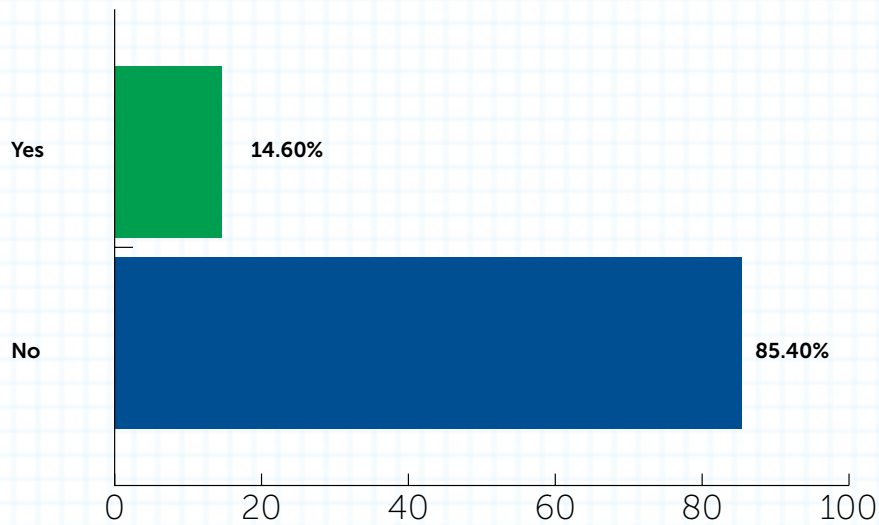
Reports over the years have shown the program is the leading income source for fact-checking organizations that participate in it, leading to calls for signatories to diversity revenue sources. In October 2023, the IFCN announced a working group on the financial sustainability of fact-checkers.

TikTok

Despite TikTok's global rise as a popular social media platform, less than 15% of fact-checkers participate in the company's third-party fact-checking program.

Does your organization partner with TikTok in their fact-checking program?

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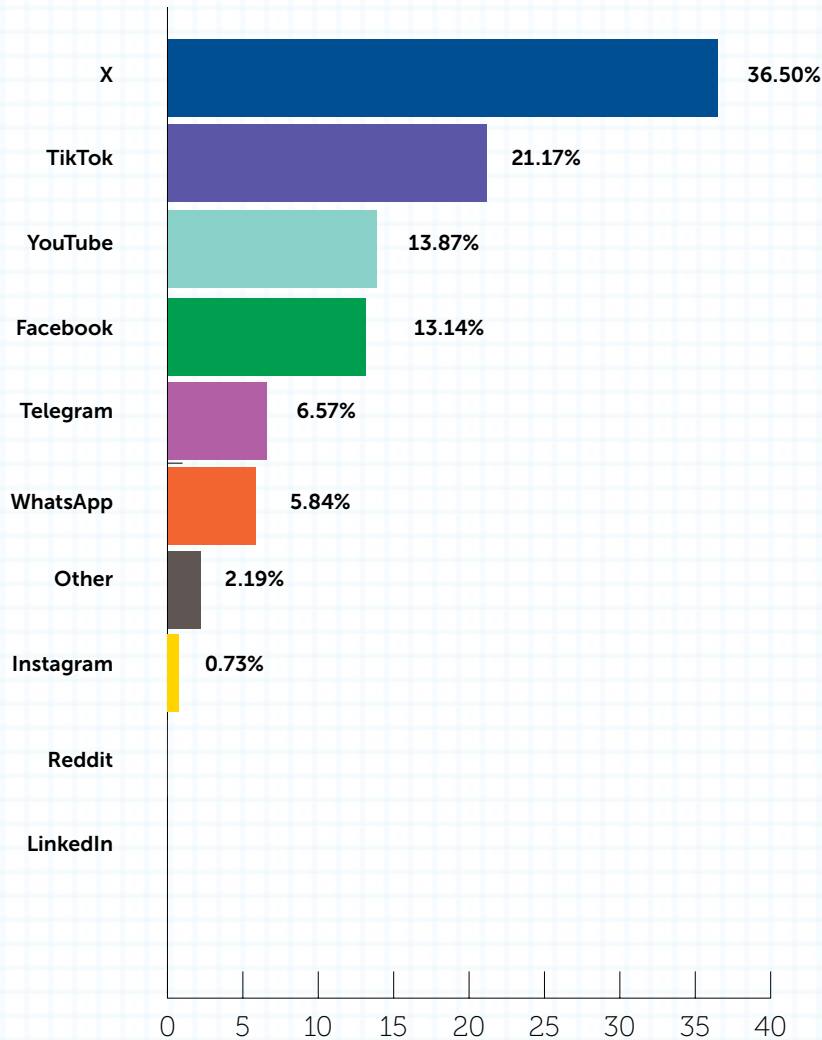
Interestingly, all fact-checkers in the TikTok program also work with Meta to flag misinformation on Facebook and Instagram.

Concerns

In 2024 and beyond, the platform causing the most disinformation concerns for fact-checkers is X, followed by TikTok and YouTube. Given Elon Musk’s increasing attacks on fact-checkers since acquiring X, and his tendency to share misinformation and conspiracy theories, this concern probably won’t surprise many observers.

In 2024 and beyond, which platform concerns you the most regarding the risk of weaponized disinformation if things remain as they are today?

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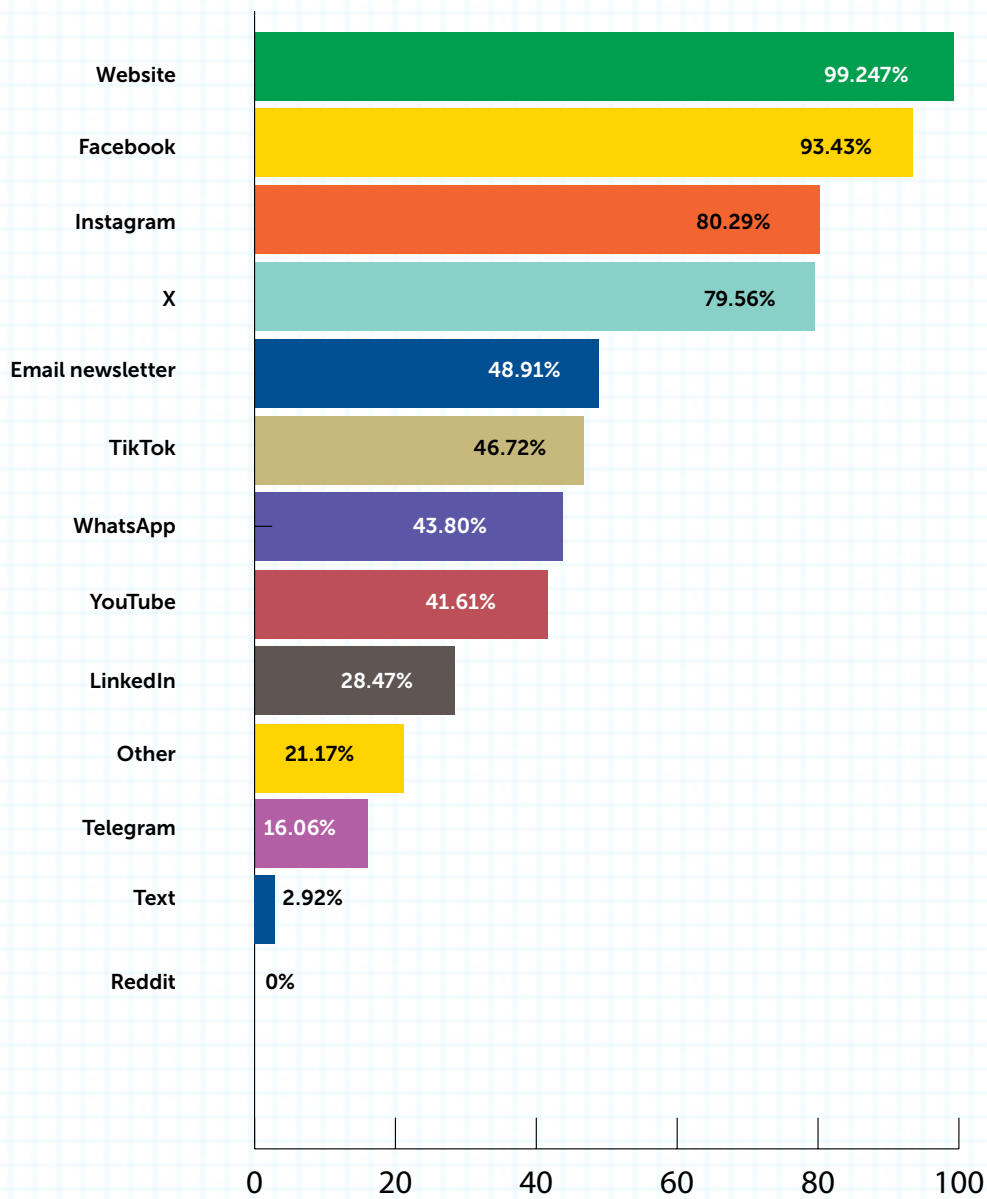
Instagram, Reddit and LinkedIn presented the least worries for fact-checkers, even as generative artificial intelligence develops rapidly.

Distribution

Although websites remain the primary channel for distributing fact-checking content, signatories are increasingly embracing the rising trend of newsletters. Facebook, Instagram and X are still being used widely.

Which channels do you use to distribute your fact-checking content?

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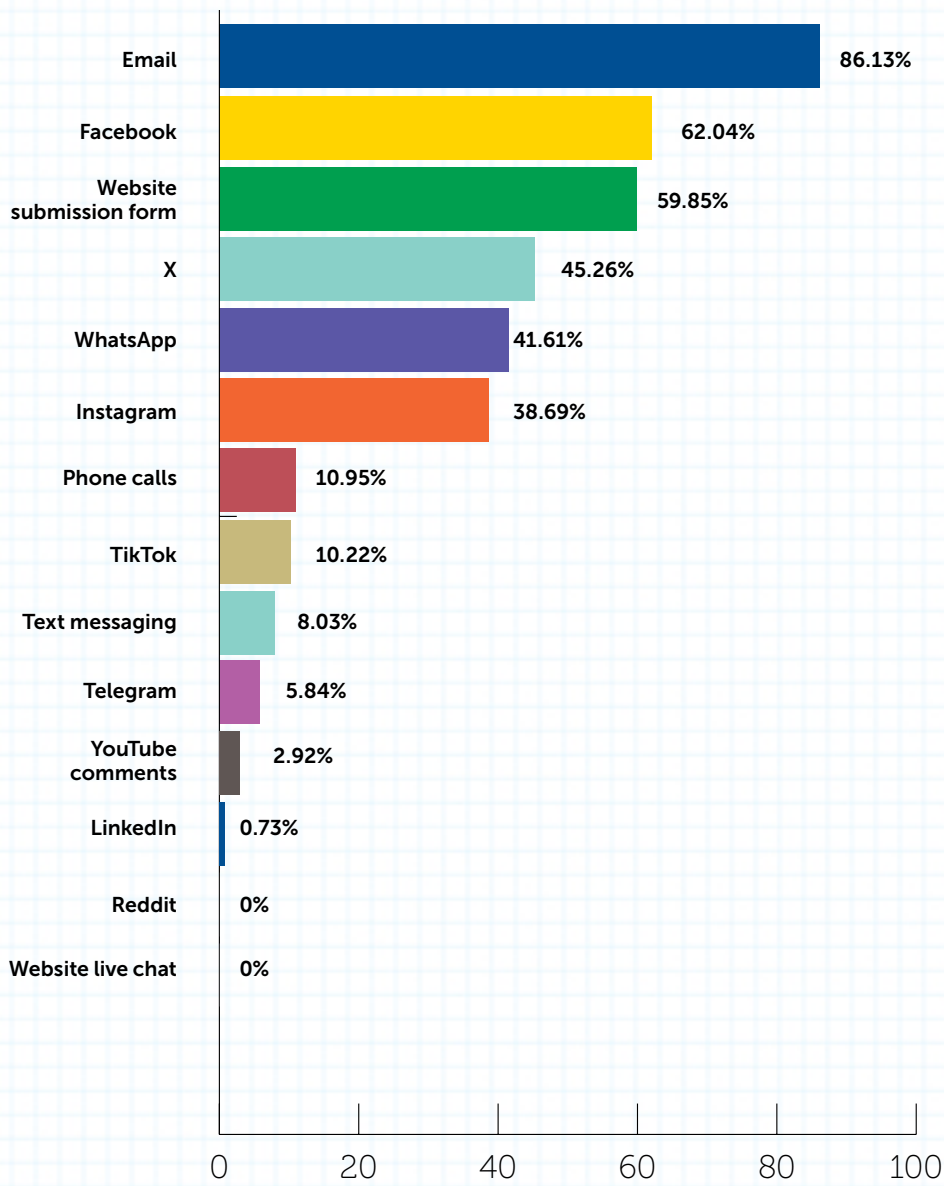


Audience Engagement

The top five channels audiences used to submit claims for fact-checkers to investigate are, in order of popularity: email, Facebook, website submission forms, X and WhatsApp.

Which channels do your audience use to submit fact-checking requests?

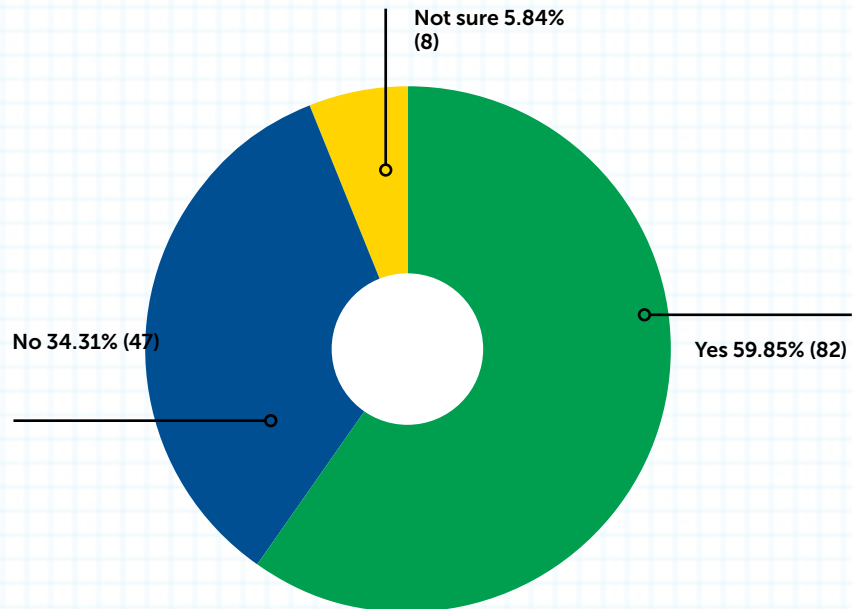
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ClaimReview

Do you use ClaimReview when you publish your fact checks?

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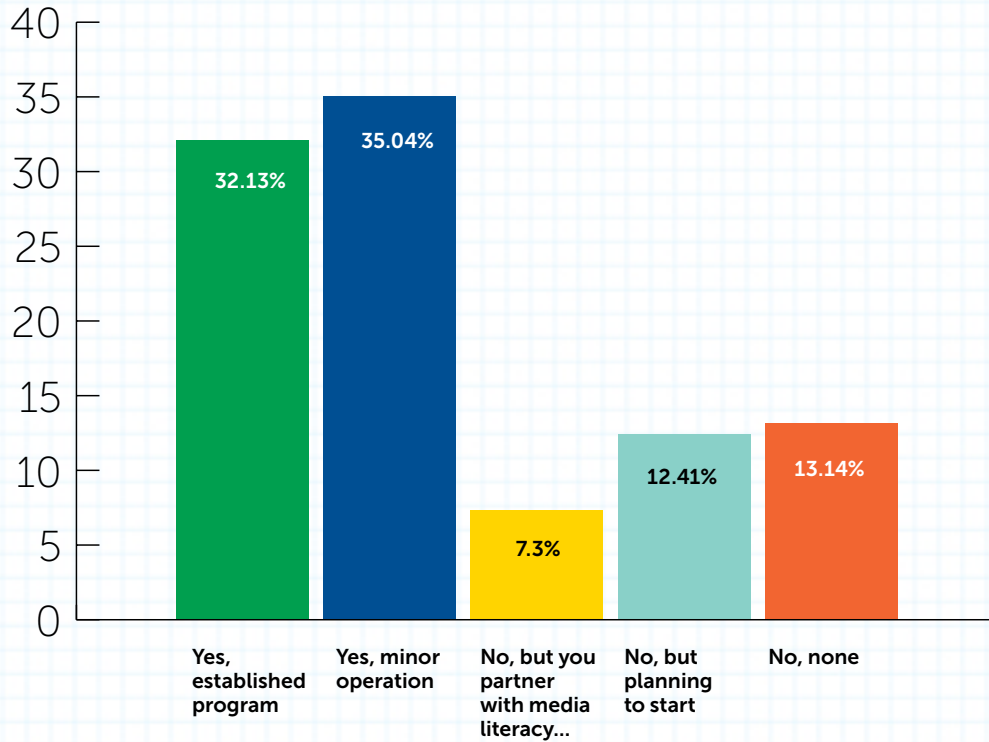
The use of ClaimReview, a structured data schema enabling fact-checkers to tag their articles online for more efficient online distribution, decreased from 69% to 60%.

Media Literacy

An overwhelming majority of signatories currently offer media literacy programs or are planning to start them, with 13% reporting no immediate plans to venture into the field. Media literacy programs aim to train audiences to become critical consumers of information.

Does your fact-checking organization run a dedicated media literacy program to help the public navigate and understand misinformation?

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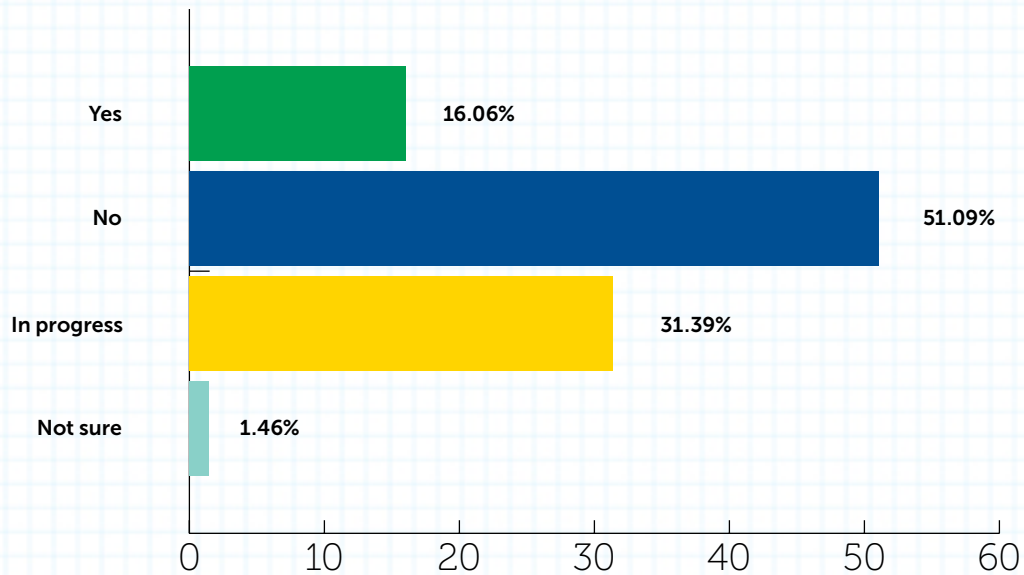


AI and Fact-Checking

Fifty-five percent of participants use generative AI to support early research. Moreover, 47% of participants are finalizing editorial guidelines for AI or developing them, with a substantial 98% in support of an IFCN-led effort to establish recommended guidelines for the community. Within the next three years, 69% expect AI to have a “limited role” in their fact-checking workflows.

Does your organization have established editorial guidelines for the use of AI chatbots like ChatGPT and Google’s Bard?

Answered: 137
Skipped: 0



Every fact-checker surveyed calls on leading AI companies, whose technologies sometimes create misinformation, to support the community in tackling misinformation. Although **other news outlets have blocked AI bots** from crawling their sites, a vast majority of fact-checkers have not. About 82% say they wish to see their public-interest journalism distributed “as widely as possible.”



About the International Fact-Checking Network

The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) at Poynter was launched in 2015 to bring together the growing community of fact-checkers around the world and advocates of factual information in the global fight against misinformation. We enable fact-checkers through networking, capacity building and collaboration.

IFCN promotes the excellence of fact-checking to more than 100 organizations worldwide through advocacy, training and global events. Our team monitors trends in the fact-checking field to offer resources to fact-checkers, contribute to public discourse and support new projects and initiatives that advance accountability in journalism.

We believe truth and transparency can help people be better informed and better navigate harmful misinformation.

The IFCN does not take sides in any policy discussion beyond access to information and fact-checking. Our staffers cannot be members of political parties nor publicly support candidates for elected office.

The major donors of The Poynter Institute are listed [at this link](#). Tax filings are available [here](#).

[International Fact-Checking Network Comparative Income Statement: 2019-2023](#)

For more about the IFCN transparency statement, please visit [here](#).

