



**INTERNATIONAL
FACT-CHECKING
NETWORK®**

at Poynter.

STATE OF THE FACT-CHECKERS REPORT

2025

Executive summary

Fact-checking organizations entered 2025 under financial strain and left it more exposed. But they are still growing their audiences, deepening collaboration, and adapting their work to a faster, more visual information environment shaped increasingly by AI.

The year brought a reversal the 2024 report had anticipated: funding tightened, and revenues fell across much of the industry. In 2024, nearly half of organizations reported revenue increases. In 2025, 45.3% reported declines. Asked to describe their current financial position, only 22.6% of organizations called themselves sustainable. Another 67.2% said they were vulnerable, and 8.8% said they were in crisis. Taken together, 76% ended the year either vulnerable or in crisis.

Yet the same organizations reached more people. Despite shrinking budgets and staff cuts, 62% reported audience growth in 2025. Collaboration intensified: 94.9% of organizations partnered with at least one type of organization, and the share collaborating monthly or more rose from 35.3% to 58.4%. AI adoption also deepened. More than half of organizations, 53.3%, said they had integrated AI tools into their workflows, while most said they expected AI to play a supporting rather than leading role in their work.

The pressures were not only financial. Lawsuits rose, affecting 20.4% of organizations in 2025, up from 16.4% in 2024. Nearly 3 in 10 faced pressure, restrictions or interference from government authorities. Harassment rates fell from 78% to 65%, but coverage narrowed too: every fact-checking topic category declined year over year, with climate science and historical claims seeing the steepest drops.

The findings in this report are drawn from 141 organizations across 71 countries, representing 77.5% of IFCN signatories worldwide. They offer a snapshot of a global community that absorbed a difficult year and kept working.

Methodology

The International Fact-Checking Network at the Poynter Institute surveyed all [signatories of the IFCN Code of Principles](#) from Feb. 3 to Feb. 15, 2026. A total of 141 organizations across 71 countries responded, representing 77.5% of fact-checking outlets in the network. The findings and trends are based on data from the 2025 calendar year, covering January through December.

The IFCN Code of Principles requires fact-checkers to transparently disclose their journalism goals, methods, correction policies, funding sources, ownership and contact information. It also requires fact checks to be thoroughly documented and sourced so others can replicate the findings.

Funding

Meta’s withdrawal from independent fact-checking in the United States was announced in January 2025, and many organizations were already facing tighter funding conditions. While the program formally ended only in the United States, other developments put funding pressures on news organizations globally. Most notably, the ending of USAID reduced media spending around the world, particularly in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The result was a more uneven funding picture. More organizations clustered at the lower end of the budget scale. More also clustered at the top. The middle thinned.

Nearly three-quarters of organizations, 74.5%, reported 2025 budgets under \$500,000, roughly in line with 71.6% in 2024. The share of organizations operating on less than \$20,000 rose from 11.3% to 14.2%. The \$100,001 to \$500,000 band also grew, from 31.2% to 37.6%.

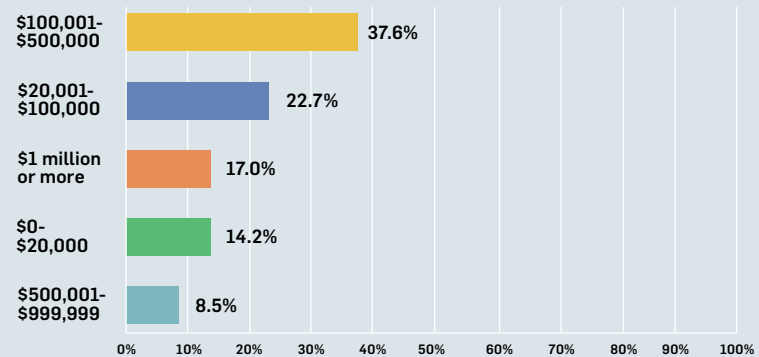
Meanwhile, the \$500,001 to \$999,999 range nearly halved, falling from 17% to 8.5%. At the top, the share of organizations with budgets of \$1 million or more rose from 11.3% to 17%.

A new question this year asked organizations to describe their current financial status. Only 22.6% of the 137 organizations that answered described themselves as sustainable, meaning they had diversified revenue, multi-year commitments or reserves sufficient to weather disruption. Nearly 7 in 10, 67.2%, described themselves as vulnerable, meaning they were still operating but faced structural weaknesses such as dependence on a single funder, short grant cycles or inadequate reserves. Another 8.8% said they were in crisis, facing an immediate financial emergency such as trouble meeting payroll, significant deficits or possible closure within six months.

What was your organization's 2025 budget?

Exclude the parent organization's budget. Estimates are acceptable.

Answered: 141 Skipped: 0



Taken together, 76% of organizations described their financial position as either vulnerable or in crisis.

IFCN support reached 53.3% of the 137 organizations that answered that question, down slightly from 55.3% in 2024. In 2025, that support included the Global Fact Check Fund through its BUILD, GROW and ENGAGE rounds, the Legal Defense Fund, and travel assistance to attend GlobalFact 12 in Rio de Janeiro.

Revenue sources

Grants replaced Meta as the largest revenue source in 2025. Across the 137 organizations that answered the question, grants accounted for an average of 46.2% of revenue, up slightly from 45.3% in 2024. The Meta third-party fact-checking program fell to 34.3%, down from 45.5% in 2024, a decline that reflects the program's uncertain future, following the phaseout in the United States last year. The TikTok fact-checking program more than halved, dropping from 11.9% to 5.1%. Most other revenue streams also declined, including user donations or memberships, advertising, media partnerships and academic partnerships.

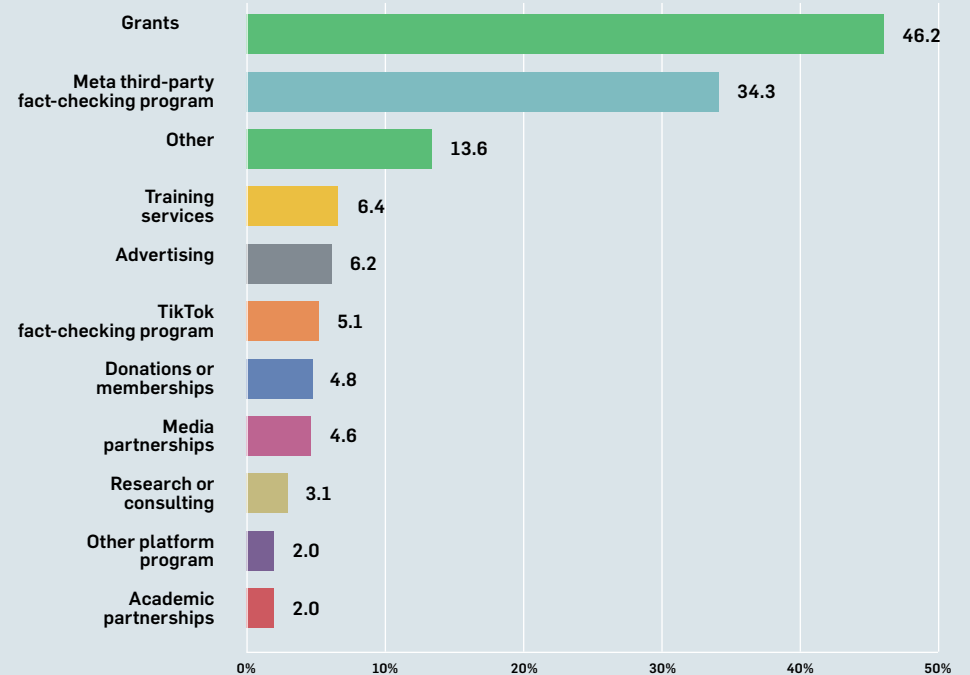
That left the industry more exposed. Fact-checking organizations entered 2025 with two dominant revenue pillars. By the end of the year, many had only one.

More than a third of organizations, 34.3%, said their single largest revenue source accounted for 75% to 100% of total income. Another 22.6% said it accounted for 50% to 74%. Combined, 56.9% of organizations depended on a single source for at least half their revenue. Only 10.9% reported that no single source exceeded 24% of their income.

What percentage of your organization's 2025 revenue came from each source?

Enter a number (0-100) for each. The total must equal 100%. (Estimates are acceptable. Enter 0% if not applicable. Please count each revenue source only once.)

Answered: 137 Skipped: 4



Challenges

Funding and financial sustainability remained the overwhelming top challenge in 2025, cited by 89.1% of the 137 organizations that answered the question, essentially unchanged from 89.3% in 2024. For many fact-checking organizations, financial pressure was not a passing shock. It remained a defining condition.

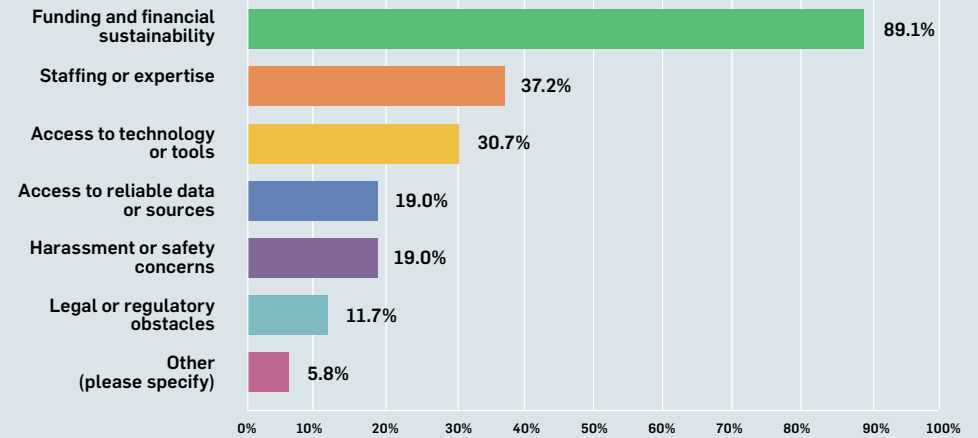
Below that, the picture changed. Staffing and expertise as a challenge fell from 46.4% to 37.2%. Access to technology or tools dropped from 44.3% to 30.7%. Both declines are notable, though their meaning is less clear. They may reflect progress in those areas. They may also reflect a field so dominated by financial strain that other pressures ranked lower by comparison.

Harassment or safety concerns appeared as a standalone category this year and was cited by 19% of organizations. It was not listed separately in the 2024 chart, which limits direct comparison, but the figure places it on par with access to reliable data or sources, also at 19%. Legal or regulatory obstacles fell slightly, from 14.3% to 11.7%.

What were your organization's biggest challenges in 2025?

(Select up to three.)

Answered: 137 Skipped: 4



Platform partnerships

Meta's fact-checking program

A year ago, this report noted that Meta's withdrawal from independent fact-checking in the United States was expected to reshape funding models across the industry. In 2025, that reshaping began in earnest.

Participation in Meta's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program fell from 61.4% in 2024 to 56.2% in 2025. Among the 85 organizations that answered the follow-up question, dependence on the program remained significant. More than a third, 37.7%, said Meta accounted for more than half their revenue: 21.2% drew 76% to 100% of their income from the program, and another 16.5% reported between 51% and 75%. Only 3.5% said Meta's share was below 10%.

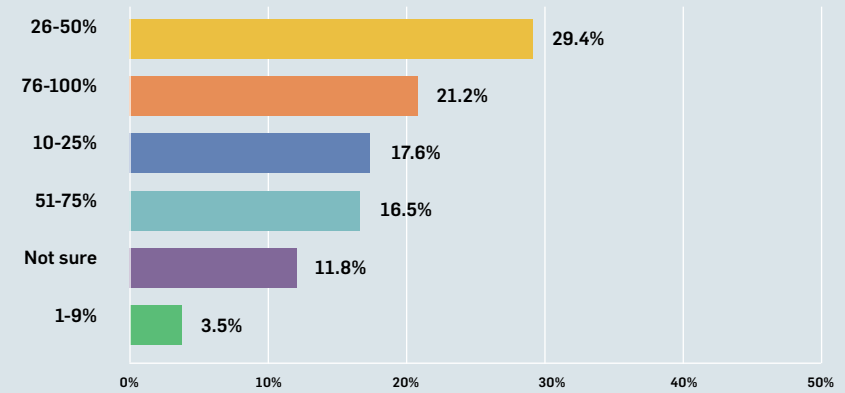
The losses extended beyond Meta. Asked whether their organization lost any partnership or funding agreement with a tech platform in 2025, including fact-checking programs, content partnerships or platform support, 18.2% of organizations said yes. Another 73.7% said no, while 8% were unsure.

TikTok's fact-checking program

Participation in TikTok's fact-checking program rose slightly in 2025, with 14.6% of the 137 organizations saying they partner with the platform, up from 12.9% in 2024. The increase is modest, but it runs counter to the broader trend of platform partnerships contracting.

If yes, approximately what percentage of your organization's 2025 revenue came from the Meta program?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 56



Audience engagement

Even as revenues fell and staff contracted, fact-checking organizations reached more people. Of the 137 organizations that answered the question, 62% said their audience grew in 2025. Only 13.9% reported a decline, while 19% said their audience stayed the same.

The formats driving that growth continued to move away from text and toward visual and video formats. Short-form video remained dominant, cited by 72.3% of organizations as among the most effective ways to reach new audiences, though that was slightly down from 74.3% in 2024. Visual explainers, including infographics and carousels, rose from 39.3% to 44.5%. Social media posts across platforms including Facebook, X, Threads, LinkedIn and Bluesky were cited by 40.1%, up from 28.6% in 2024, though the categories are not directly comparable, as the 2024 figure covered posts on X only.

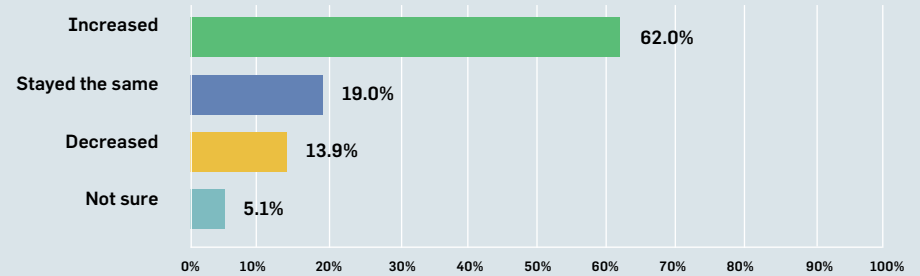
Written formats continued to lose ground. Brief fact checks fell from 35% to 29.9%. Long-form written reports dropped from 24.3% to 18.2%. Newsletters fell from 20.7% to 14.6%.

Fact-checkers are following their audiences toward visual and video formats, and the data suggests that strategy is working.

Platform expansion reinforced that direction. When asked which formats or platforms they tried for the first time or significantly expanded in 2025, more than half of organizations, 54.7%, pointed to short-form video. WhatsApp channels were next at 27.7%, followed by podcasts or audio content at 19%, Bluesky at 14.6%, and interactive tools at 11.7%.

How did your audience size in 2025 compare to 2024?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 4



The share of organizations publishing in more than one language also grew. In 2025, 35.8% said they did so regularly and 24.8% occasionally, for a combined 60.6%. That was up from 52.5% in 2024. The share publishing only in one language fell from 47.5% to 39.4%.

Fact-checking content remained almost universally free to access. In 2025, 96.4% of organizations said they used no paywall for any fact-checking content, while 3.6% said they placed restrictions on some content.

Sources of misinformation

Meta platforms — Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Threads — were the most commonly cited sources of false or misleading content that fact-checkers dealt with in 2025, named by 78.1% of 137 organizations. X followed at 59.9%, with TikTok close behind at 59.1%. YouTube was cited by 24.8% of organizations and Telegram by 13.9%.

Most commonly cited sources of false or misleading content

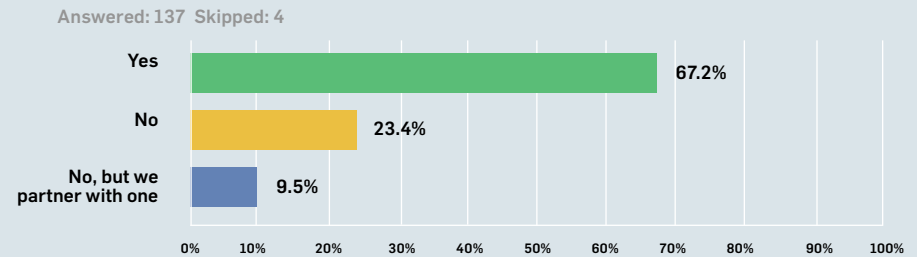


Media literacy

Fact-checking organizations maintained their commitment to media literacy in 2025. Among 137 organizations, 67.2% said they run a media literacy program, unchanged from 67.2% in 2024, when that figure combined those with established programs and those running smaller operations. Another 9.5% said they partner with a media literacy program, bringing total involvement to 76.7%, up from 74.5% in 2024.

The share reporting no media literacy involvement rose from 13.1% in 2024 to 23.4% in 2025. But that comparison comes with an important caveat: the 2024 survey included a separate “planning to start” category, which accounted for 12.4% of organizations and likely absorbed some of that group.

Does your organization run a media literacy program?



Collaboration

In a year of financial pressure, fact-checking organizations drew closer together. Of the 137 organizations that answered the question, 94.9% said they collaborated with at least one type of partner in 2025, up from 92.9% in 2024. But the more telling change was in frequency.

In 2024, 35.3% of organizations said they collaborated regularly, meaning monthly or more. In 2025, that share rose to 58.4%. The proportion collaborating occasionally, two to five times during the year, fell from 46% to 29.9%. What had been periodic for many organizations became routine.

The types of partnerships also changed. Other fact-checkers remained the most common collaborators, cited by 81% of organizations, up from 79.4% in 2024. NGOs and civil society organizations saw the sharpest increase, rising from 52.5% to 70.8%. Academic or research institutions also grew, from 56.7% to 65%. Media outlets, by contrast, fell from 70.9% to 65.7%. Technology companies held nearly flat at 46%, compared with 45.4% in 2024.

Focus areas

Most fact-checking organizations continued to cover both political and nonpolitical content in 2025. Among the 137 organizations that answered the question, 56.9% said they fact-checked both categories in roughly equal parts, nearly unchanged from 57.7% in 2024. But the balance between those who lean one way or the other changed. The share focused mostly on nonpolitical online falsehoods fell from 31.4% to 24.1%, while those focused mostly on political content rose from 11% to 19%.

Across specific topics, coverage declined broadly. Social issues remained the most common area of focus, cited by 89.8% of organizations, down from 93.4% in 2024. Elections and political claims fell from 95.6% to 87.6%. Public health dropped from 95.6% to 86.1%.

The steepest declines came in areas that had been widely covered the year before. Climate science fell from 75.2% to 55.5%, a drop of nearly 20 percentage points. Historical claims declined by a similar margin, from 59.9% to 40.1%. Media reporting fell from 67.9% to 51.8%, and technology issues dropped from 58.4% to 43.1%.

Every topic category declined. Whether that reflects teams doing less across the board as resources contracted or a deliberate narrowing of scope, it's unclear. What it shows is an industry covering less ground in 2025 than it did the year before.

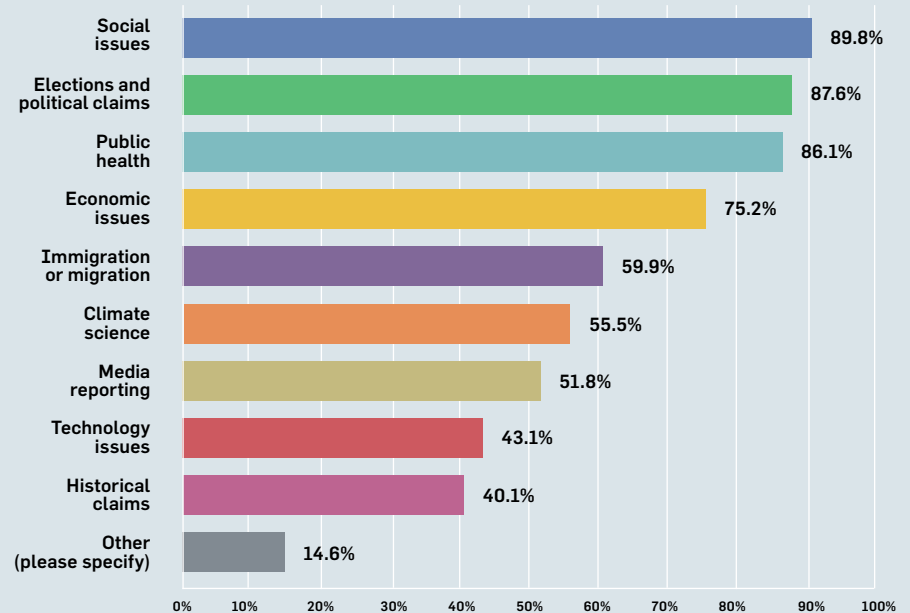
Regional networks

Membership in regional fact-checking networks grew in 2025. Asked whether they belong to a formal regional network, 77.4% of 137 organizations said yes, up from 73% in 2024. Another 21.2% said no, and 1.5% were unsure.

Which topics did your organization fact-check in 2025?

(Select all that apply.)

Answered: 137 Skipped: 4



The comparison is approximate because the 2024 question included a separate option for organizations that were unsure or working to establish a network. Still, the direction is consistent with the broader collaboration trend.

Artificial intelligence

Fact-checking organizations moved deeper into AI adoption in 2025. More than half, 53.3%, said they integrated AI tools into their workflows, and another 27.7% tested tools without adopting them. Only 5.1% said they do not use AI at all, down from 20% in 2024.

Research and information gathering remained the most common application, cited by 77.4% of organizations. Translation emerged as a major use case, used by 55.5%. Content production, including images, video and audio, was cited by 37.2%, and writing or editing by 30.7%.

As adoption expanded, governance caught up. Half of organizations, 50.4%, said they had formal guidelines for using AI tools, up from 32% in 2024. Another 27% said guidelines were in development. Among those with guidelines, 79.8% said they included ethical standards such as disclosure practices, up from 62.5% in 2024.

The challenges of using AI remained significant and in some cases grew. Ethical or editorial concerns were the most commonly cited barrier, named by 54% of organizations, up from 48.5% in 2024. High costs followed at 48.9%, limited reliable tools at 44.5%, poor support for non-English languages at 36.5%, and lack of technical expertise at 35%.

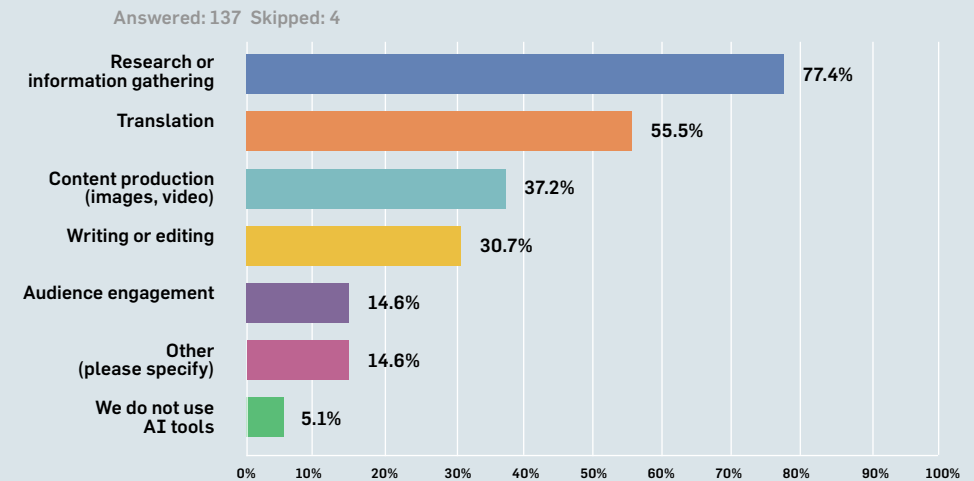
AI-generated content posed a parallel threat from the outside. When asked how significant a challenge deepfakes and synthetic media were to their work, 49.6% of organizations called it a major challenge and 42.3% called it a moderate one. Only 7.3% said it was minor or not a challenge at all.

Among 137 respondents, 73% said they expect AI to play a supporting role in their work over the next three years, up from 66.9% in 2024. The share expecting AI to take the lead fell from 12.9% to 5.8%.

But transparency to readers still lagged behind internal policy. Of the 130 organizations that answered the disclosure question, 40% said they tell readers when AI is significantly used in producing a fact check. Another 4.6% said they do

How does your organization use AI tools?

(Select all that apply.)



not, while 51.5% said the question was not applicable.

Organizations also remained divided on how to handle external access to their content. In 2025, 62.8% said they did not block AI crawlers from scraping their website content, 14.6% said they did, and 22.6% were not sure. On reuse more broadly, 35.8% said they allow open distribution of their content, 24.8% require permission or compensation, and 30.7% said they have no formal policy.

Formal agreements with AI companies remained rare. Only 2.9% of organizations said they had entered into such an agreement in 2025, down from 5% reported in 2024.

The current profile of the fact-checking community

Types of organizations

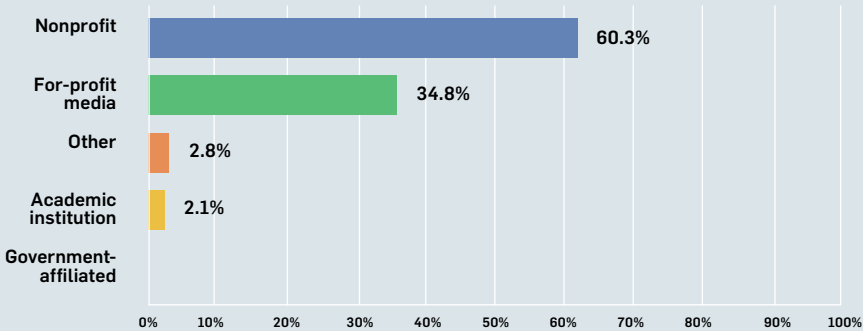
Nonprofits continued to make up the majority of surveyed fact-checking organizations in 2025. Of the 141 respondents, 60.3% identified as nonprofits, nearly unchanged from 59.6% in 2024. For-profit media outlets accounted for 34.8%, down slightly from 36.9% in 2024. Academic institutions made up 2.1%, compared with 3.5% in 2024.

This year's survey added two categories: government-affiliated organizations, which drew no responses, and "other," which accounted for 2.8% of respondents.

Direct comparisons with 2024 are approximate, though the broader pattern remains clear. Nonprofits still dominate the industry, for-profit outlets now appear to have stabilized after peaking at nearly 50% in 2021, and academic fact-checkers remain a small share of the community.

Which option best describes your organization?

Answered: 141 Skipped: 0



The current profile of the fact-checking community

Staffing changes

Fact-checking organizations remained predominantly small in 2025, but the staffing picture changed in important ways.

Organizations with 10 or fewer full-time employees still made up the majority of respondents at 61.7%. But that share fell from 73.7% in 2024. The drop came across both small-team categories: 35.5% of respondents reported having one to five employees, down from 40.4% in 2024, while 26.2% had six to 10 employees, down from 33.3%.

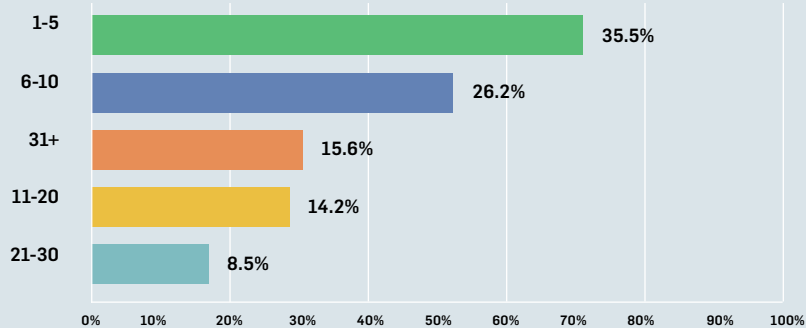
At the same time, larger organizations made up a bigger share of the field. The proportion of respondents with 31 or more full-time employees rose to 15.6% in 2025, nearly double the 7.8% reported in 2024. Organizations with 21 to 30 employees also increased, from 5.7% to 8.5%, while those with 11 to 20 employees edged up from 12.8% to 14.2%.

That might suggest a stronger workforce picture. The next finding points the other way.

In 2024, 42.6% of respondents said their full-time staff had increased and only 14.9% reported reductions. In 2025, that pattern reversed. Just 23.4% said they added full-time employees. Meanwhile, 38.3% reported staff cuts, and another 38.3% said staffing stayed the same.

How many full-time employees does your organization have?

Answered: 141 Skipped: 0



Resilience

Harassment

Fewer fact-checking organizations reported harassment in 2025 than the year before. Among 137 organizations, 65% said they faced harassment or threats, down from 78% in 2024. The decline is notable, though the picture it suggests is not entirely reassuring. Of all organizations surveyed, 24.1% said the frequency of harassment or threats increased compared with 2024. For the organizations most exposed, the pressure grew.

The harassment affected both people and institutions almost equally. Of the 91 organizations that answered the follow-up question, 80.2% said individual staff members were targeted and 79.1% said the organization itself was. Facebook, email and X were the most common channels, cited by 58.7%, 52.2% and 47.8% of affected organizations, respectively. A smaller share, 17.1%, said the harassment forced operational changes, such as altering bylines, pausing coverage or adding security measures.

Support for affected staff improved. The share of organizations offering no support at all fell from 21.6% in 2024 to 12.4% in 2025. Mental health support was the most common response, cited by 59.9%, followed by legal assistance at 58.4% and security measures at 48.2%. Still, 44.5% of organizations said they had no formal harassment policy.

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Resilience

Government pressure

Nearly 3 in 10 organizations, 29.2%, said they faced pressure, restrictions or interference from government authorities in 2025. The question is new to this year's survey, so no prior comparison is available, but the figure establishes a baseline: political operating environments constrained a significant share of IFCN signatories.

Cybersecurity

The share of organizations reporting cyberattacks fell from 36% in 2024 to 29.2% in 2025. Of the 137 organizations surveyed, 19% said attacks caused no significant disruption, while 10.2% reported some disruption to operations. That was only slightly above the 8.6% who reported partial operational disruption in 2024.

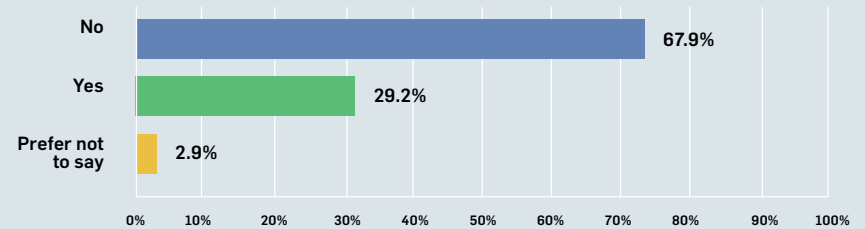
Legal risks

Lawsuits rose in 2025. Among 137 organizations, 20.4% said they faced legal action related to their journalism, up from 16.4% in 2024.

Despite the pressures, most organizations still described themselves as capable of adapting. Among 137 organizations, 45.3% said they were highly adaptable to changes in the fact-checking landscape and 46.7% said they were somewhat adaptable. Only 7.3% said they were struggling. Fact-checking methods also improved. In 2025, 78.1% said their approaches had improved over the past year, including 24.1% who said they improved significantly.

Did your organization face pressure, restrictions, or interference from government authorities in 2025?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 4



About the International Fact-Checking Network

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

IFCN promotes excellence in fact-checking for more than 100 organizations worldwide through advocacy, training, and global events. Our team monitors industry trends to provide resources, contribute to public discourse, and support initiatives that advance accountability in journalism.

We believe truth and transparency help people stay informed and better navigate harmful misinformation. The IFCN remains nonpartisan and does not take sides in policy debates beyond advocating for access to information and fact-checking. Our staff cannot be members of political parties or publicly support candidates for elected office.

Transparency and financial information:

- The Poynter Institute's major donors are listed [here](#).
- Tax filings are available [here](#).
- For more on IFCN's transparency statement, visit [here](#).

Credits

The State of the Fact-Checkers Report was produced by the International Fact-Checking Network at The Poynter Institute.

Written by: Enock Nyariki

Edited by: Angie Drobic Holan

Design: Chris Kozlowski

About The Poynter Institute

The Poynter Institute is a global nonprofit working to address society's most pressing issues by teaching journalists and journalism, covering the media and the complexities facing the industry, convening and community building, improving the capacity and sustainability of news organizations and fostering trust and reliability of information. The Institute is a gold standard in journalistic excellence and dedicated to the preservation and advancement of press freedom in democracies worldwide. Through Poynter, journalists, newsrooms, businesses, big tech corporations and citizens convene to find solutions that promote trust and transparency in news and stoke meaningful public discourse. The world's top journalists and emerging media leaders rely on the Institute to learn new skills, adopt best practices, better serve audiences, scale operations and improve the quality of the universally shared information ecosystem.

The Newmark Ethics Center, the International Fact-Checking Network, MediaWise and PolitiFact are all members of the Poynter organization.

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