Media Market Risk Ratings: India

www.disinformationindex.org

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Design: www.designbythink.co.za

The Global Disinformation Index is a UK-based not-for-profit that operates on the three principles of neutrality, independence and transparency. Our vision is a world in which we can trust what we see in the media. Our mission is to restore trust in the media by providing real-time automated risk ratings of the world's media sites through a Global Disinformation Index (GDI). The GDI is non-political. Our Advisory Panel consists of international experts in disinformation, indices and technology. For more information, visit www.disinformationindex.org

The Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) is a non-profit organisation in India that undertakes interdisciplinary research on internet and digital technologies from policy and academic perspectives. For more information, visit: https://cis-india.org

GDI Global Disinformation Index

THE CENTRE FOR internet & SOCIETY

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Preface

Since the invention of the web, how we live our lives online—and off—has changed in countless ways. This includes how news is funded, produced, consumed and shared.

With these shifts in the news industry have come risks. Disinformation is one of them. Disinformation has been used as a tool to weaponise mass influence and disseminate propaganda. During the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation has created an infodemic undermining public health, safety and government responses. No country or media market is immune from these threats.

To combat disinformation, we need to find ways to disrupt the system and its funding. This is where the Global Disinformation Index (GDI) has set its focus.

At the GDI, we believe that an independent, trusted and neutral risk rating of news sites' disinformation risks is needed. These risk ratings can be used by advertisers and ad tech companies to ensure that where they direct their online ad spends is aligned with their own brand safety and risk mitigation strategies for disinformation.

The GDI's research offers a trusted and neutral assessment about a news domain's risk of disinforming. By looking at content, operational and context indicators, the GDI provides a domain-level rating about a news site's risk of disinforming an online user.

The following report presents the results of applying the GDI risk rating methodology to some of the frequently visited media sites in India. The sample includes news sites published in Bengali, English and Hindi. In total we assessed 56 sites. The country was chosen because of its size, its diversity, both cultural and linguistic, and the overall risks of disinformation and misinformation that have been observed in the past. The assessment and report were done in partnership with the Centre for Internet and Society in India (CIS).

Table 1. Media sites assessed in India (in alphabetical order)

News outlet	Domain	News outlet	Domain
ABP LIVE	news.abplive.com/live-tv	Manorama Online	www.manoramaonline.com
Amar Ujala	www.amarujala.com	Mathrubhumi	www.mathrubhumi.com
Anandabazar Patrika	www.anandabazar.com	MediaNama	www.medianama.com
Asianet Newsable	newsable.asianetnews.com	NDTV	www.ndtv.com
Bartaman Patrika	bartamanpatrika.com	New Indian Express	www.newindianexpress.com
Dainik Bhaskar	www.bhaskar.com	News18	www.news18.com
Business Insider India	www.businessinsider.in	NewsTrack	www.newstracklive.com
Business Standard	www.business-standard.com	NewsTrend	www.newstrend.news
Business Today	www.businesstoday.in	Oneindia	www.oneindia.com
Calcutta News	calcuttanews.tv	OpIndia	www.opindia.com
Deccan Herald	www.deccanherald.com	Patrika	www.patrika.com
Eisamay India Times	eisamay.indiatimes.com	Punjab Kesari	www.punjabkesari.in
The Financial Express	www.financialexpress.com	Rediff	www.rediff.com
First Post	www.firstpost.com	Republic World	www.republicworld.com
Gulte	www.gulte.com	SakshiPost	english.sakshi.com
HindNow	hindnow.com	Sangbad Pratidin	www.sangbadpratidin.in
The Hindu BusinessLine	www.thehindubusinessline.com	Scroll	scroll.in
Hindustan Times	www.hindustantimes.com	Swarajya	swarajyamag.com
India.com News	www.india.com	The Economic Times	economictimes.indiatimes.com
The Indian Express	indianexpress.com	The Hindu	www.thehindu.com
India Rag	indiarag.in	The Print	theprint.in
India Today	www.indiatoday.in	The Statesman	www.thestatesman.com
India TV News	www.indiatvnews.com	The Wire	thewire.in
Dainik Jagran	www.jagran.com	Times Now	www.timesnownews.com
Jansatta	www.jansatta.com	Times of India	timesofindia.indiatimes.com
Kolkata24x7	www.kolkata24x7.com	Tribune India	www.tribuneindia.com
Hindustan	www.livehindustan.com	Webdunia	hindi.webdunia.com
Mint	www.livemint.com	Zee News	zeenews.india.com

Introduction

The harms of disinformation[1] are proliferating around the globe—threatening our elections, our health, and our shared sense of facts.

The infodemic laid bare by COVID-19 conspiracy theories clearly shows that disinformation costs peoples' lives. Websites masquerading as news outlets are driving and profiting financially from the situation.

The goal of the Global Disinformation Index (GDI) is to cut off the revenue streams that incentivise and sustain the spread of disinformation. Using both artificial and human intelligence, the GDI has created an assessment framework to rate the disinformation risk of news domains.

The GDI risk rating provides advertisers, ad tech companies and platforms with greater information about a range of disinformation flags related to a site's **content** (i.e. reliability of content), **operations** (i.e. operational and editorial integrity) and **context** (i.e. perceptions of brand trust; see Figure 1). The findings in this report are based on the human review of these three pillars: **Content**, **Operations**, and **Context**.[2]

A site's disinformation risk level is based on that site's aggregated score across all of the reviewed pillars and indicators. A site's overall score ranges from zero (maximum risk level) to 100 (minimum risk level). Each indicator that is included in the framework is scored from zero to 100. The output of the index is therefore the site's overall disinformation risk level, rather than the truthfulness or journalistic quality of the site.

Figure 1. Overview of the GDI disinformation risk assessment

The following report presents findings pertaining to disinformation risks for the media market in India, based on a study of 56 news domains (in Bengali, English and/or Hindi).[3] The data provide an initial snapshot of the overall strengths and challenges that these sites face to mitigate disinformation risks.[4]

All of these findings come from the research led by the GDI with the Centre for Internet and Society, conducted between May 2020 and March 2021.[5] The market analysis is based on 15 disinformation flags that were assessed for India by researchers at the Centre for Internet and Society and by an independent perceptions survey.[6]

This report presents the average scores for the market sample. Sites that scored above a 90 on any of the three pillars are named and profiled in the report.[7] In the case of India, this includes *The Financial Express* and *Sangbad Pratidin*, which had the best performing scores on the Content pillar. No sites reached this level on Operations or Context, due to lagging results market-wide in these areas.

The GDI risk rating methodology is not an attempt to identify truth and falsehoods. It does not label any site as a disinformation site—or, inversely, as a trusted news site. Rather, our approach is based on the idea that a range of signals, taken together, can indicate a site's risk of carrying disinformation.

The scores should be seen as offering initial insights into the Indian media market and its overall level of disinformation risk. The results are open to debate and refinement with stakeholders from news sites, advertisers and the ad tech industry. (The appendix of this report outlines the assessment framework).[8] We look forward to this engagement.

Key findings: India

In reviewing the media landscape for India, the assessment found that:

Nearly a third of the sites in our sample had a high risk of disinforming their online users.

- Eighteen sites were found to have a high disinformation risk rating. This group includes sites that are published in all the three languages in our scope: English, Hindi and Bengali.
- Around half of the websites in our sample had a 'medium' risk rating. No site performed exceptionally on all fronts, resulting in no sites having a minimum risk rating. On the other hand, no site performed so poorly as to earn a maximum risk rating.

Only a limited number of Indian sites present low levels of disinformation risks.

- No website was rated as having a 'minimum' disinformation risk.
- Eight sites were rated with a 'low' level of disinformation risk. Seven out of these websites served content primarily in English, one in Hindi.

The media sites assessed in India tend to perform very poorly on publishing transparent operational checks and balances.

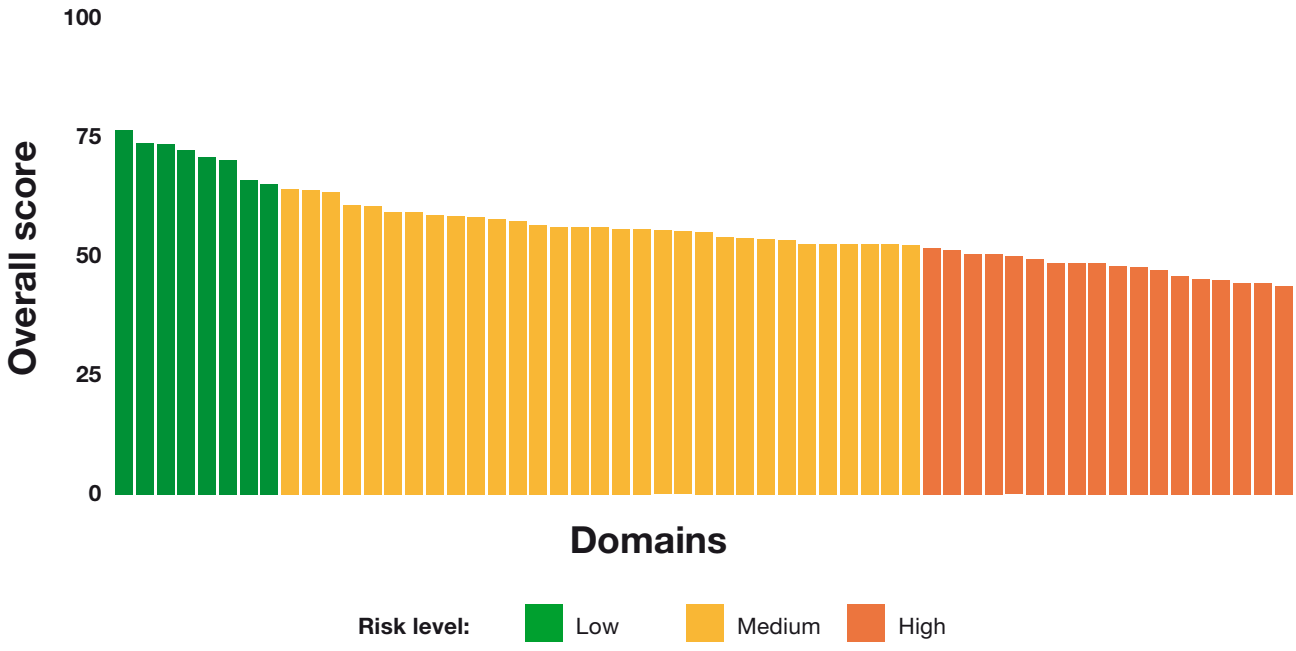
- Over one-third of the sites in our sample published little information about their ownership structure, and also failed to be transparent about their revenue sources.
- Only ten of the sites in our sample publish any information about their policies on how they correct errors in their reporting.

Association with traditional media did not play a significant factor in determining risk of disinformation.

- On average, websites associated with TV or print did not perform any differently when compared to websites that solely serve digital content.

The findings show that on the whole, Indian websites can substantially increase their trustworthiness by taking measures to address these shortfalls in their operational checks and balances. For example, they could increase transparency on the structure of their businesses and have clear policies on how they address errors in their reporting. Both of these measures are in line with universal standards of good journalistic practices, as agreed by the Journalism Trust Initiative.[9]

Figure 2. Disinformation risk ratings by site



The Indian media market: Key features and scope

India's news consumption is increasingly dominated by the internet. In 2021, it is estimated that 284 million online users in India will consume their news digitally in the country's eight top languages, a figure which has more than doubled since 2016 (up from 106 million).[10]

Among the online English-speaking populace in the country,[11] the majority of these users consume their news online rather than relying on traditional print and broadcast media. For those under 35 years of age, who account for one-third of India's population,[12] 56 percent turn to online news as opposed to print (16 percent) and television (26 percent).[13]

Yet, greater reliance on online news does not equate to greater trust. Findings show that a greater share of Indians trust news from newspapers and magazines (55 percent) than do from online sources (34 percent).[14] Given the findings in this study (see the 'Context pillar' section), brand trust indicates a clear action area in which stakeholders in the Indian media market can engage with audiences to shift their perceptions.

As more Indians come online, this issue of trust will continue to be a concern. Overall, there are an estimated 624 million internet users in the country in 2021,[15] an increase of over eight percent from 2020.[16]

The rise in the number of Indians connected has coincided with a rise in digital advertising. One recent report projects that the Indian digital advertising market will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 27 percent, and up to Rs. 58,550 crore (US$78 billion) by the end of 2025.[17] Investments in online ads made up 20 percent of this total spend. In terms of ad spending on media more generally, television (39 percent) and print (29 percent) continue to claim the largest shares of company ad spends.

In India, this combination of robust demand for online news and a growing market for ad monies provides opportunities to direct more online ad revenues to trustworthy news sites — but it also offers increased incentives for actors trying to make money from web traffic generated by disinformation.

India's internet liability regulation: A closer look

In February, the Indian government promulgated internet intermediary guidelines and a digital media ethics code, formally known as the Information Technology Rules 2021 (or 'the Rules'). These rules place onerous obligations on digital news publishers, with one of the stated aims to control misinformation and disinformation online.

Legal scholars and commentators have pointed out several concerns with the regulation. While the provisions target intermediaries (services that deal with user generated content), they extend beyond those to regulate digital news publishers (which have full editorial control of their content). In so doing, the rules exceed the scope of delegated legislation.

This report in no way endorses these measures, which are currently being legally challenged. The purpose of this report is to advocate for digital news publishers to adopt better practices to increase their transparency and accountability to the public. Additionally, the findings can also serve as a critical resource for advertisers and ad services to best direct their ad spends to quality and trusted news sites. We encourage companies to make ethical decisions about where they choose to advertise. State regulation can often be a disproportionate—and potentialy unconstitutional—response to combating disinformation online.

Disinformation risk ratings

This study looks specifically at a sample of 56 Indian news websites in English, Hindi and Bengali, all of which have programmatic advertising.

Market overview

The sample was based on the sites' reach (using each site's Alexa rankings, Facebook followers, and Twitter followers), relevance, and the ability to gather complete data for the site.

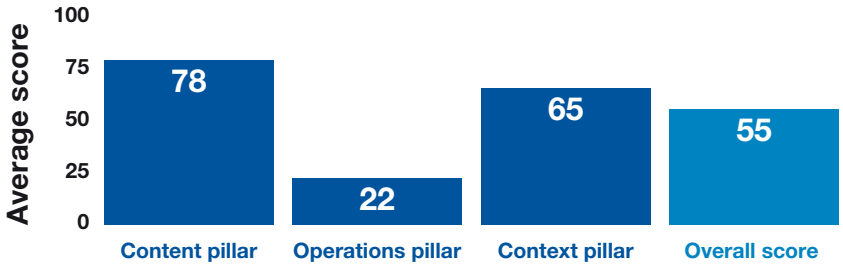
In the reviewed domains, we found only slight differences in the average pillar scores of domains across print, digital and TV-related media sites.[18] In the overall sample, 25 websites were associated with print newspapers, 12 were associated with television news channels, and 19 provided news solely through digital platforms.

Our findings show that most Indian sites have a medium to high level of disinformation risk. Over half (30 out of 56) of the media websites we assessed had a **medium risk** rating. Overall, many of the risk factors in India come from weak public accountability mechanisms (measured by the Operations pillar of the index). On average, websites lacked transparent journalistic and editorial checks, and were likely to lack public information about business operations and ownership (see Figure 4). On the other hand, websites showed high ratings on actual article content. With a few exceptions, all media outlets generally covered notable contemporary events and affairs, used headlines that accurately summarised the article, and did not negatively target sections of the population.

No Indian website received a **minimum risk** or **maximum risk** rating, which is explained by most of them performing fairly well on the Content and Context pillars.

There are eight sites in India that were rated as having a **low risk** of disinformation. These sites — all except one of which were in English — performed relatively well on the content indicators, having neutral and non-sensational content that does not negatively target any specific individual or groups.

Figure 3. Overall market scores, by pillar

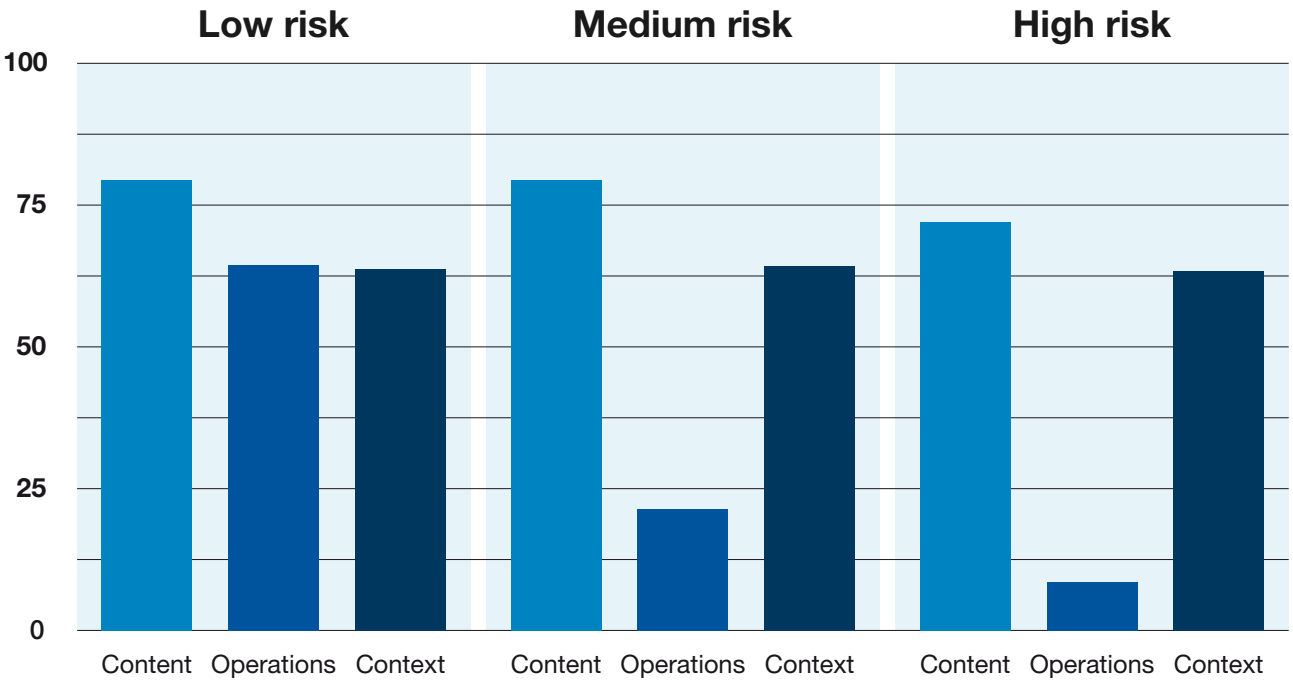


Eighteen sites were assessed with a **high risk** rating. While these sites generally perform well on providing reliable and unbiased content, they lack key operational policies, including information on their funding sources and journalistic independence. Such policies are associated with strong universal journalistic standards, set by the Journalism Trust initiative (JTI).[19]

Most of the sites that currently fall in the middle to high range for risk could move into a lower risk group with improvements to their site's operational and editorial policies.

Many of the websites in the overall sample showed similar levels of brand trust based on the survey responses compiled for the Context pillar indicators.[20] These findings reveal that informed readers' perceptions of news sites vary only slightly across the sample. However, further analysis shows that perceptions of a site's accurate coverage of news do make a difference in forming brand trust. Perceptions of a site's accuracy are highly and significantly correlated with perceptions that the site makes corrections, labels news from opinion pieces, and does not frequently use clickbait.[21]

Figure 4. Average pillar score by risk rating level



Pillar overview

Content pillar

Indicators in the 'Content' pillar focus on the reliability of the content provided on the site. Our analysis for the Content pillar is based on an assessment of ten anonymised articles for each domain. These articles are drawn from among the most frequently shared pieces of content during the data collection period. All article scores are based on a scale of zero (worst) to 100 (best), as assessed by the country reviewers.

Overall, India showed mixed results in disinformation risk in terms of content. Most of the individual indicators in this pillar, including negative targeting, degree of bias (tone), and accuracy of headlines (title), received a strong average score. It was also found that for most of the domains reviewed, there is a positive correlation between domains adopting accurate headlines and the impartial, factual tone of reportage, i.e., domains which consistently had accurate, non-sensational headlines, also displayed similar levels of restraint and neutrality in the text of the article.[22] Such correlation also meant that most domains received high scores on the targeting indicator. That is, in the articles sampled for most domains, we found very few instances of negative targeting against specific groups. Moreover, our findings show a significant and positive correlation between sites that do not engage in negative targeting and sites perceived to rarely use clickbait, as measured in the Context pillar.[23] Two domains consistently received low scores across the title, tone and targeting indicators, indicating a generally high risk of disinformation.

Among the sites performing strongly on this pillar, only two domains, *Sangbad Pratidin* and *The Financial Express*, had an average score higher than 90 across all the content indicators. This was because there were no instances of negative targeting in the sample articles selected for these domains, and very high scores on the tone and title indicators.

Across the entire sample of sites, we found that the scores for common coverage and byline indicators were consistently lower than all the other indicators discussed. While there was common coverage across domestic political developments for the domains reviewed, several sites also provided more tailored, 'soft news' content that would be of interest to their users. In the absence of stronger operational and editorial standards in place, such tailored content can hold the potential for being manipulated.[24] A majority of domains also performed poorly when it came to the provision of detailed information about the authorship of the articles reviewed, with only one in four sites receiving scores of 90 and above. We recognise that there might be strong political and editorial reasons for providing less information (targeted violence and killing of journalists is prevalent in India).[25] However, given the overall lower amount of trust placed on online news in India,[26] bylines might introduce more transparency and accountability in the news produced. An alternative measure to restore such trust and credibility could also be having clear and justified policies explaining the need for author anonymity, similar to the ones *The Economist*[27] has in place.

Figure 5. Average Content pillar scores by indicator

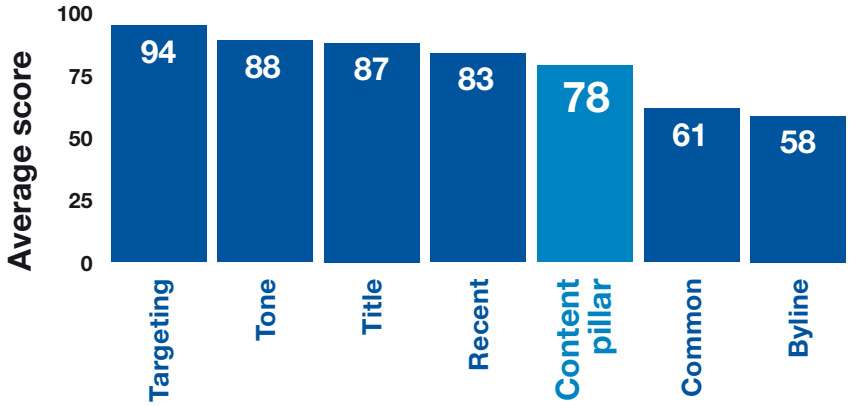
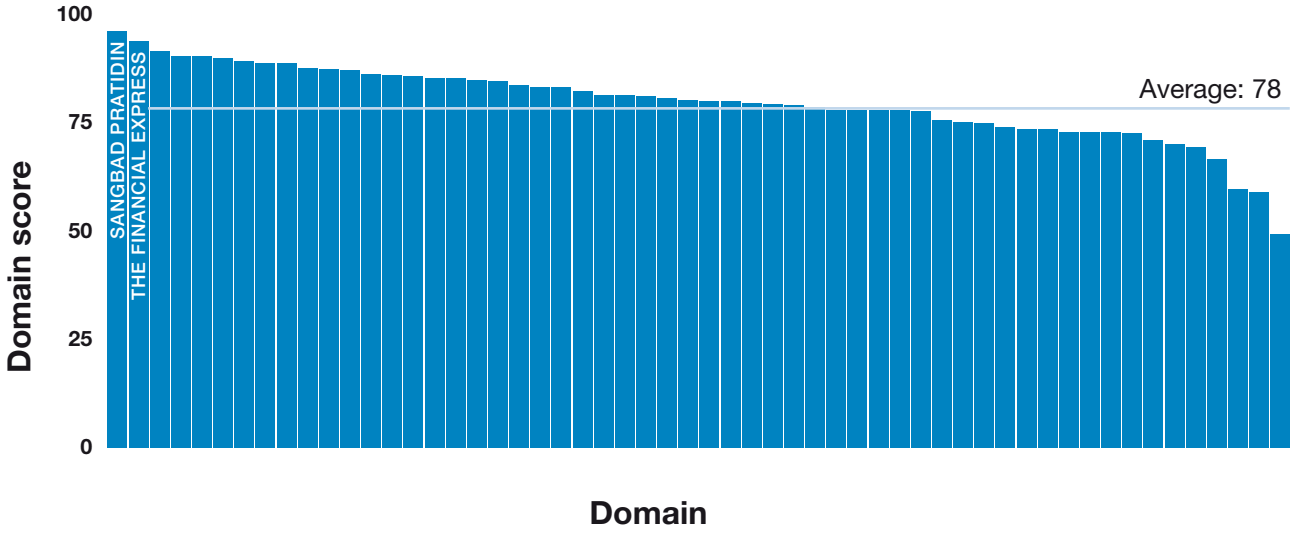


Figure 6. Content pillar scores by site



*Note: Sites that performed above a score of 90 are named.

Operations pillar

Indicators in the 'Operations' pillar assess the operational and editorial integrity of a news site and the checks and balances it has in place. All scores are based on a scale of zero (worst) to 100 (best), based on data collected by the country reviewers according to the information available on the site. The operations indicators are the quickest wins to reduce disinformation risk ratings, as they represent policies that domains can immediately establish and make public.[28]

There is a very high risk of disinformation associated with the operational and editorial policies of a majority of the domains reviewed. None of the domains had all of the necessary information in place to achieve a score of 100 on this Operations pillar. Only twelve domains featured full disclosure about who owned the outlet, while nine domains presented full information about their sources of revenue and funding. Given the corporatisation and the increasingly concentrated ownership of media in India,[29] the plurality and diversity of the news covered and the opinions presented are always potentially affected.[30] Additional transparency regarding ownership, funding, and checks and balances which regulate outlets' behaviour can therefore allow for better decision-making by the large part of the Indian populace which accesses news online. This lack of transparency is also critical vis-a-vis the need for more editorial independence and clearer policies for error corrections. Only ten domains had any policy declaring such independence publicly, and only five domains had a complete policy regarding corrections and the subsequent publication of corrected errors in stories. Overall, only one domain received a score higher than 80 on this pillar, and four domains received a score higher than 70.

All 56 sites in our sample have the potential to score perfectly on all the indicators of the Operations pillar if they adopt and disclose such operational policies and information. The indicators for the Operations pillar are taken from the standards which have been set by journalists as part of the Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI).[31] As the JTI points out,[32] adopting these standards raises credibility in the eyes of the public, compels traditional media to reassess their practices in the digital age, and encourages new media outlets to be more transparent about their business models.

Figure 7. Average Operations pillar scores by indicator

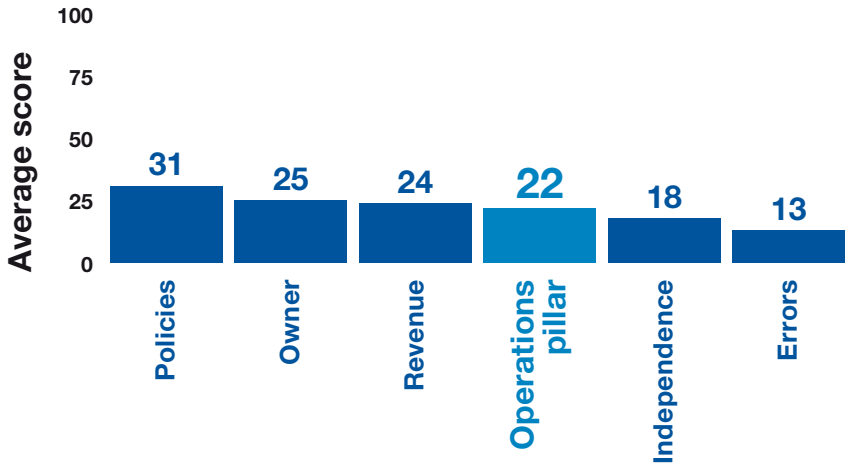
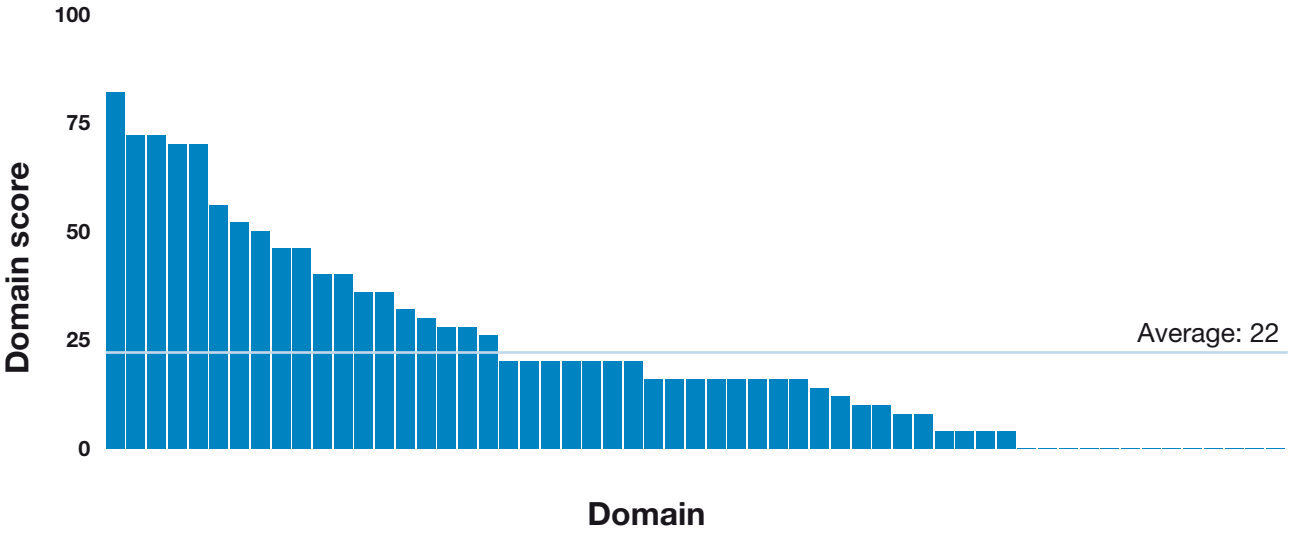


Figure 8. Operations pillar scores by site



Context pillar

A site's performance on the 'Context' pillar is a good measure of brand trust in a given media site, influenced by factors such as perception of accuracy in news coverage, use of clickbait headlines, and publication of corrections. All scores in the Context pillar are based on a scale of zero (worst) to 100 (best), as rated by online users.

The Context pillar findings are based on an independent survey conducted to measure informed online readers' perceptions of brand trust in the media sites included in our sample for India.[33]

Context pillar scores have room for improvement for many domains, although online users' perceptions can be shifted only over the medium to long term. This is partly due to the fact that perceptions can be 'sticky' and take time to realign with a site's current realities. Compared to the scores for the Content pillar, the overall average for this pillar is low, with an average score of only 65. The findings for this pillar demonstrate a cautiously positive perception of the media domains sampled.

Further analysis shows that the average score across certain indicators is considerably higher than that across others. For example, perceptions of site accuracy and a site's ability to differentiate news from opinion are generally high. Only five domains received a score lower than 70 on the accuracy indicator, while no domain received a score lower than 70 on the news versus opinion indicator.

For other indicators, the performance is less robust. For example, respondents' perceptions of a site's use of clickbait and correction of errors are lower than the other indicators of brand trust. No domain received a score higher than 60 on the clickbait indicator, and only seven domains received a score higher than 60 on the corrections indicator. Such perceptions matter. Sites that were perceived to not use clickbait were also perceived as having accurate news coverage and found to not publish articles that negatively target groups.[34]

Figure 9. Average Context pillar scores by indicator

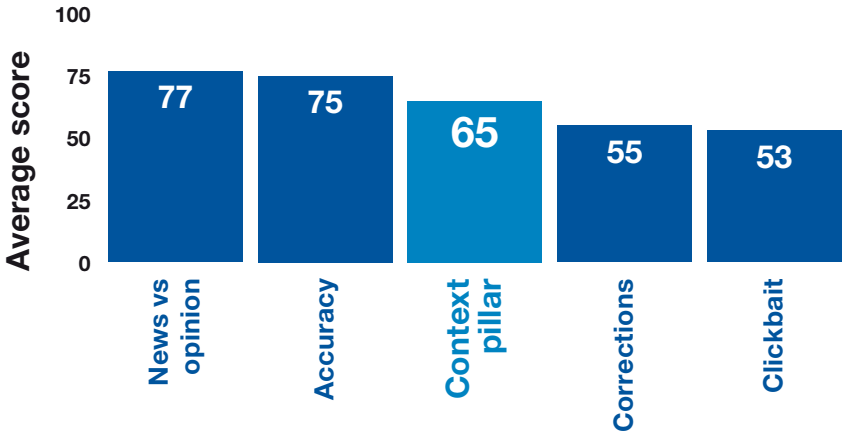
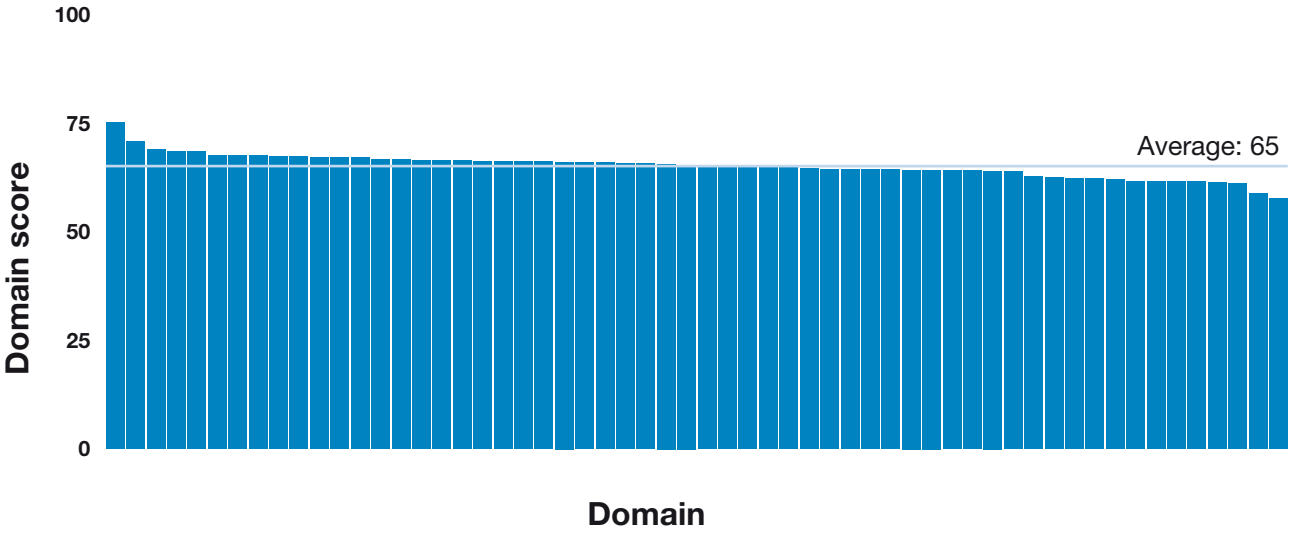


Figure 10. Context pillar scores by site



Conclusion

The assessment's findings for India show a media market that presents an elevated level of disinformation risks for its online readers.

No site in the sample was shown to have a minimum disinformation risk. Only eight news sites in the study were rated as having a low risk of disinforming their readers. Over half of the sites had a medium disinformation risk rating (30 sites) while one-third presented high disinformation risks (18 sites).

While most domains scored relatively well on the reliability of their content, many of these domains' scores were brought down because of operational shortcomings. Indian websites performed poorly across all metrics on the Operations pillar, such as disclosure of the beneficial owners, funding sources, and other operational and editorial policies.

News sites could address these operational shortcomings by taking actions that include:

- Focusing on adopting journalistic and operational standards like those set out by the Journalism Trust Initiative that make information about overall policies of the site transparent;
- Focusing on clearly publishing sources of funding on their respective websites. This information helps to build trust in the site and dispel doubts about how it is funded;
- Publishing clear statements of editorial independence, guidelines for issuing corrections, and policies for user-written and algorithmically-generated content;
- Implementing and clearly displaying a policy for correction practices in case of errors in reporting;
- Ensuring publication of bylines to ensure transparency and accountability, by mentioning the identity of the author. Alternatively, sites could strive for clear and justified policies explaining the need for author-anonymity in certain cases.

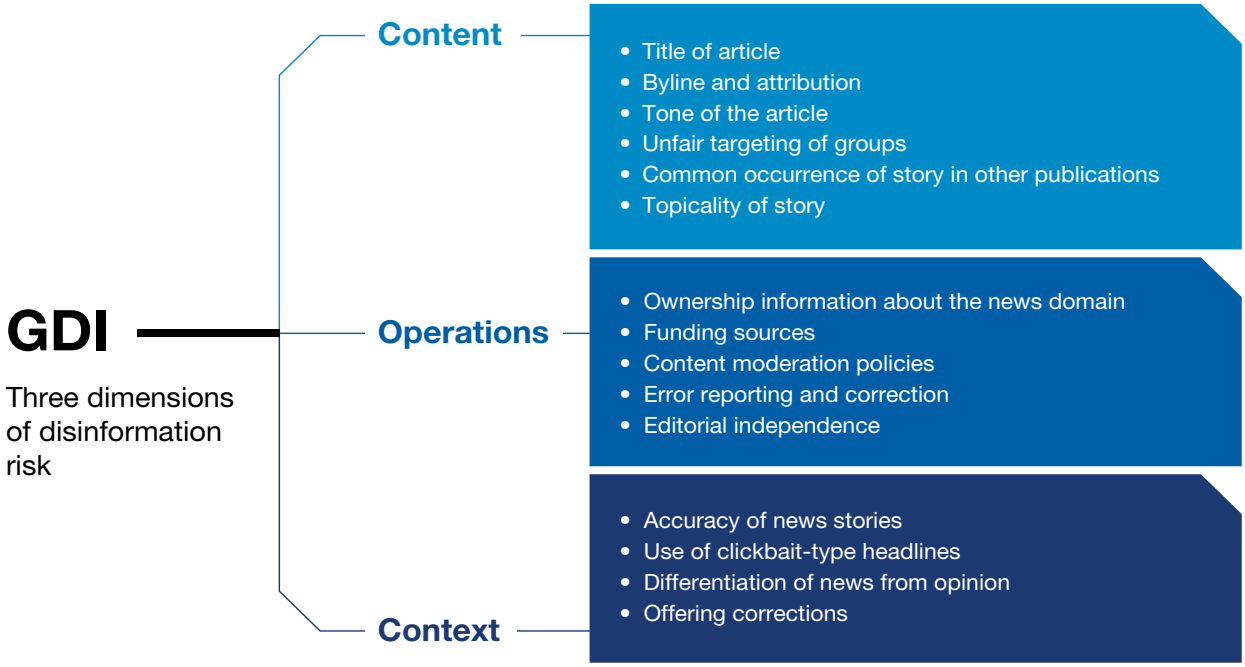
The need for a trustworthy, independent rating of disinformation risk is pressing, especially in India. This risk-rating framework has been put together with the goal of providing key information to policy-makers, news media personnel, and the advertising tech industry, to enable key decision-makers to stem the tide of money that incentivises and sustains disinformation in the country.

Appendix: Methodology

Pillar scoring

The Content and Operations pillars of the GDI risk ratings are designed to capture discrete, observable features of a domain by analysing a snapshot of a particular moment in time. This approach is effective at mitigating bias and standardising our analysis across domains and countries, but it is limited in scope. Historical information about a domain's content and practices is not captured by these pillars — nor are less observable disinformation flags (such as regularly disinforming readers by saying nothing about a story or topic). Both of these limitations are addressed by the third pillar, Context, which assesses long-term trends and indicators that are harder to measure. In this report, two-thirds of a domain's score is based on a snapshot of observable features (through the Content and Operations pillars), while the final third comes via a perceptions survey of informed online users that contextualises our findings. Table 2 lists the GDI indicators by pillar.

Table 2. Indicators, Global Disinformation Index



The Content pillar produces a score based on six indicators reviewed by two dedicated country analysts across ten articles published by a domain. These ten articles were randomly selected from among that domain's most frequently shared articles within a two-week period and then stripped of any information that could identify the publisher. The indicators included in the final risk rating are: title representativeness, author attribution, article tone, topicality, and common coverage of the story by other domains.

The Operations pillar is scored at the domain level by the same country analysts. We selected five indicators from the Journalism Trust Initiative's list of trustworthiness signals in order to capture the risk associated with a domain's potential financial conflicts of interest, vulnerability to disinformation in its comments sections, and editorial standards. This is not meant to capture the actual quality of journalism, as this pillar rates a domain based on its public disclosure of operations, which may differ from actual operations. The indicators included are: disclosure of true beneficial owners, transparency in funding sources, published policies for comments sections and the flagging of algorithmically-generated content, a clear process for error reporting, and a public statement affirming editorial independence.

The Context pillar score is based on results from a survey of informed online users' perceptions of a domain's content and operations. Incorporating survey data in calculating the risk rating is essential because it captures a wider range of opinions, and because online users' perceptions are based on a site's long-term behaviour and performance. This pillar offers a good complement to our Content pillar, which goes into greater depth but analyses only ten articles. The survey captures four indicators: accuracy, clear differentiation of news and opinion articles, use of clickbait titles, and error reporting.

Domains are placed into one of five risk categories based on their final risk score. The cut-offs for the categories are determined by combining the risk ratings for domains in all countries in the current version of the index, and calculating this global sample's mean and standard deviation. Domains are placed into a category based on the number of standard deviations that separate their rating from the global mean score. Table 3 shows each category and its cut-offs.

Table 3. Overview of risk bands

Total domain score	Disinformation risk level	Disinformation risk category
< -1.5 SD from mean	5	Maximum risk
≥ -1.5 and ≤ -0.5 SD from mean	4	High risk
> -0.5 and ≤ 0.5 SD from mean	3	Medium risk
> 0.5 and ≤ 1.5 SD from mean	2	Low risk
> 1.5 SD from mean	1	Minimum risk

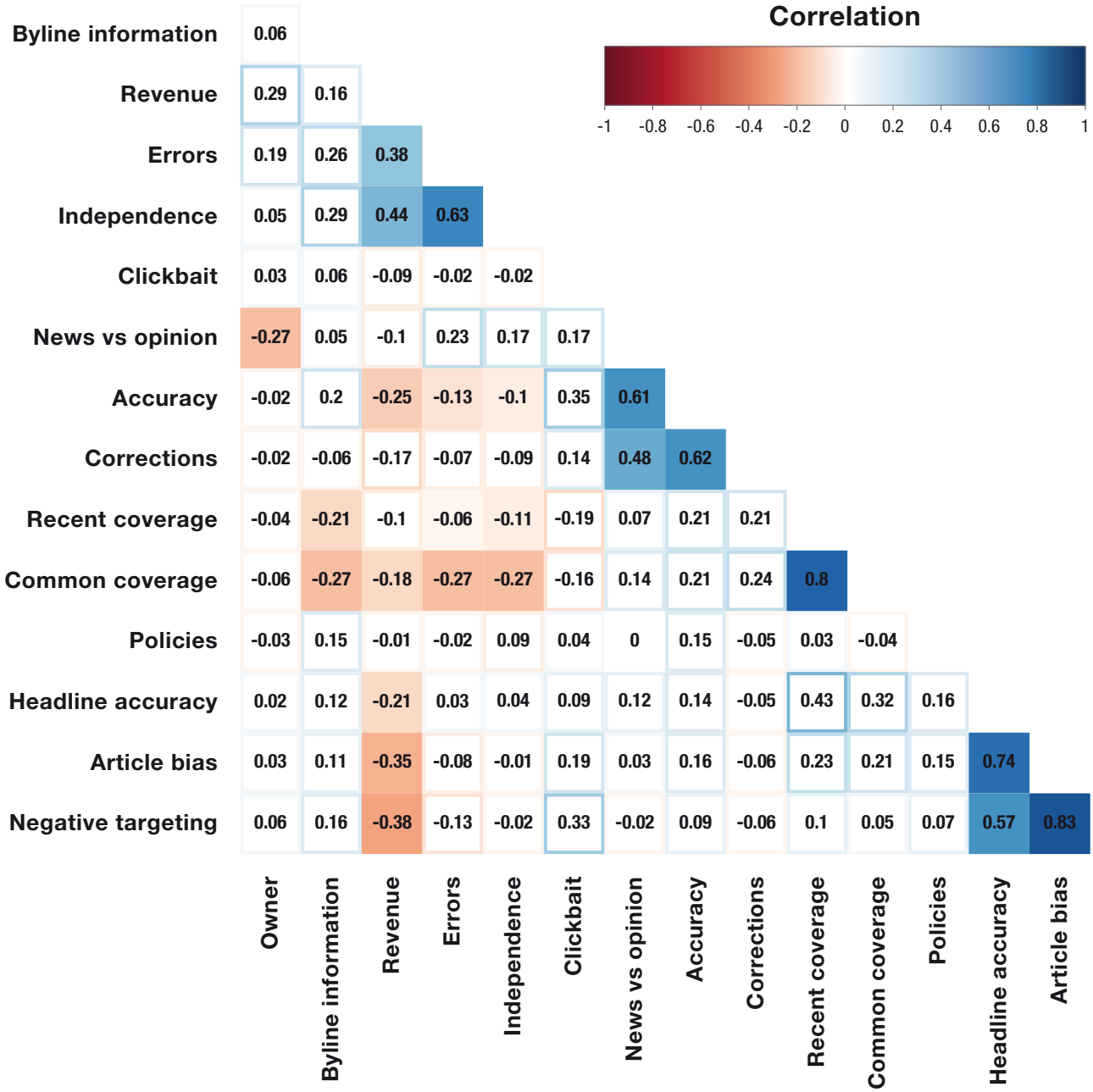
Data collection

Each of the Indian domains was assessed by two analysts who were trained on the GDI framework according to a codebook that provides detailed instructions for assessing each indicator.

The survey was conducted by YouGov and includes 720 respondents. An online survey was conducted between 5 and 19 October, 2020. Each respondent was asked a series of questions about domains that they indicated they were familiar with. Each respondent assessed up to ten sites from the sample, based on their familiarity with the site. The maximum of respondents for a site was 137 and the minimum 32. These numbers suggest a fairly robust survey size that allows for a robust analysis.

Figure 11 visualises the relationships between each of the GDI indicators.

Figure 11. Correlations matrix



*Note: Statistically significant correlations are highlighted.

Endnotes

1 We define disinformation in terms of the verb 'to disinform': 'to deliberately mislead; opposite of inform.'

2 For more on our methodology, see the appendix and methodology at: https://disinformationindex.org/research/.

3 In 2021, media market assessments will be produced for the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria and Spain. Additional countries may also be added.

4 All sites included in the report were informed of their individual scores and risk ratings, as well as the overall market averages.

5 Note: The research for the Operations pillar was conducted in two rounds: The first round was concluded in July 2020, while the second round was concluded in December 2020. The research for the Content pillar was concluded in February 2021. Accordingly, the scores for each domain are based on the indicators as they were represented on the respective timeline when they were accessed. Any changes made by the domains in either their Operations or Content pillar after these periods have not been factored into the scores and the final analysis.

6 Two researchers assessed each site and indicator. The survey of informed online users was conducted by YouGov between 5 and 19 October, 2020. All respondents answered a standard set of questions used by the Global Disinformation Index (GDI) in all countries where it conducts risk ratings. Each respondent provided their perceptions of brand trust and credibility for up to ten sites that they said they were 'familiar' with.

7 Minimal risk is the best risk rating, followed by a low risk rating. Both ratings suggest a news site that has scored well across all of the indicators. For all countries, individual site scores were shared confidentially with the site operators to allow for engagement, feedback and any necessary changes. All sites were contacted in advance to provide them with information on the methodology and rating process. In all countries covered by the risk ratings, the composite scores are shared only for the sites assessed to have a minimal disinformation risk. As a result, the number of sites disclosed in the report will vary by country.

8 The GDI looks forward to working with the entire industry in this effort. There is strong demand for such a risk assessment of sites, and a notable concern that less trusted, less independent actors may seek to fill this gap.

9 CEN Workshop Agreement, December 2019, available at https://jti-rsf.org/fileadmin/Redaktion/documents/CWA17493.pdf.

10 Figures are based on 2016 findings and for the top eight languages used in India. See: https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/in/pdf/2017/04/Indian-languages-Defining-Indias-Internet.pdf.

11 See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf.

12 Based on 2017 figures and for those between the ages of 15 and 34. See: http://www.mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Youth_in_India-2017.pdf.

13 For respondents above the age of 35, the reliance on online news, TV and print media, are at 38 percent, 34 percent and 27 percent respectively. See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf.

14 These findings were presented in a context of a 27-country survey conducted by Ipsos in 2019, with a total of 19,541 respondents, which registered a general dip in the trust and reliance placed on digital news (on sites and platforms) across its surveyed respondents. See: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-06/global-advisor-trust-in-media-report-24jun2019.pdf.

15 See: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-india#:~:text=There%20were%20624.0%20million%20internet,at%2045.0%25%20in%20January%202021.

16 See: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-india#:~:text=There%20were%20624.0%20million%20internet,at%2045.0%25%20in%20January%202021.

17 See: https://dentsu.in/uploads/digital_reports/DAN-e4m-Digital-Report-2020-Web-C3.pdf.

18 For example, media sites associated with print and TV outlets in the country tend to score better than digital news sites for content-related indicators.

19 For more information on the JTI, which has adopted an ISO standard for the industry, please see: https://jti-rsf.org/en/.

20 The informed online readers sample used by GDI is based on YouGov's 'catalyst audience': a group considered to be the top 10 percent of its country panel, composed of change-makers drawn from civil society, business, politics, media, the third sector and beyond. They are defined by their recent activities, which include entrepreneurialism, leadership and activism. Typical members of this group include business and social entrepreneurs, organisational leaders, and political activists. The survey for India included 720 respondents and was conducted from 5 to 19 October 2020.

21 See the correlations matrix in the appendix of this report.

22 See the correlations matrix in the appendix of this report.

23 See the correlations matrix in the appendix of this report.

24 See: https://disinformationindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Georgia-Risk-Ratings-Report.pdf.

25 See: https://www.thakur-foundation.org/report-on-attacks-on-journalists-in-india-2014-2019.pdf; https://cpj.org/reports/2018/10/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder-killed-justice-3/.

26 See: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-06/global-advisor-trust-in-media-report-24jun2019.pdf.

27 See: https://www.economist.com/help/about-us.

28 The Operations pillar looks at whether relevant policies are in place. It does not assess the level of robustness of the policy based on good practice, and does not look at how the policies are being implemented. However, other indicators in the framework do capture some of the relevant practices, such as by measuring perceptions on how often sites correct errors or are viewed as presenting accurate content.

29 See: https://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/corporateownership/.

30 See: https://rsf.org/en/news/media-ownership-monitor-who-owns-media-india.

31 For more information on the JTI, which has adopted an ISO standard for the industry, please see: https://jti-rsf.org/en/.

32 See: https://www.cen.eu/news/workshops/Pages/WS-2019-013.aspx.

33 The informed readers sample used by GDI is based on YouGov's 'catalyst audience': a group considered to be the top 10 percent of its country panel, composed of change-makers drawn from civil society, business, politics, media, the third sector and beyond. They are defined by their recent activities, which include entrepreneurialism, leadership and activism. Typical members of this group include business and social entrepreneurs, organisational leaders, and political activists. The survey for India included 720 respondents and was conducted from 5 to 19 October 2020.

34 See the correlations matrix in the appendix of this report.

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