

Zim: Newspapers grow, state TV declines, satellite surges

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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Zimbabwe's newspaper market chalked up favourable gains during the 12 months to 31 December 2009, but the state-owned television continued to sing the blues as viewers trooped to satellite television.

This reflected a protest to the chaotic programming by the ZBC-TV, which still enjoys a monopoly in a country now taking wobbly steps to open up the airwaves.

Internet access also grew, making Zimbabwe the country with the highest internet access incidence in Africa at 19%, the Zimbabwe All Media Products and Services Survey (ZAMPS) 2009 showed.

"About 1 in 5 adults is accessing the internet," noted the research authors, Research Bureau International, who conducted the survey on behalf of the Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation.

Daily newspapers, still predominantly state-owned, experienced a healthy 14% growth in readership over 12 months, while weeklies saw an 18% growth in readership over the same period.

Monthlies experienced a significant decline in readership during the period - readership decreased by 50% across all magazines.

State television viewership plunged to 28%, from 38% during the comparable period in 2008. Viewership for state television was at 55% in 2007.

Satellite grew faster over the 12 months from 27% to 45% during the review period. Free-to-air satellite television had a 75% share of viewership, with subscription satellite taking a 25% share.

"Ownership of working satellite dishes has seen a significant increase," said the survey report.

Colour TVs, cell phones and DVD/VCD player ownership also increased, with VCRs and black and white TV ownership taking a sharp decline.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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