

ABC Q2 2023 Newspapers: Hybrid model emerging as digital growth continues

By Danette Breitenbach

23 Aug 2023

This quarter's Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) of South Africa sees dynamic digital growth in distribution as publishers steer towards an optimised model to remain relevant and reach audiences.



Image: Bizcommunity

For example Local newspapers seem to be leaning more towards a hybrid model (the combination of a free and paid model).

In total, in fact, in Q2 2023, hybrid newspapers distribution increased to 89, 933 in Q2, 2023 (Q2, 2022, hybrid newspapers distribution was 74,606). This constitutes a 10% increase in circulation compared to Q1, 2023 and a 20% growth from Q2, 2022, to Q2, 2023.

Some stabilisation, with distribution declines

In general this quarter is characterised by flattening curves amidst growth, with some stabilisation, and a decline of distribution figures.

As the ABC says, “Publishing in the current financial climate is navigating a dynamic landscape where economic pressure, technological advancements, and shifting consumer behaviours intersect.”

Overall, the Newspaper category displayed a decline of 3,72% quarter-on-quarter and a decline of 3,73% year-on-year. An overall total of 6,378,511 newspapers this quarter.

Unfortunately, the Daily, Weekly and Weekend newspaper distribution dipped this quarter. Compared to Q2, 2021, Weekly and Daily distribution declined by an average of 26%.



Newspapers ABC Q1 2023: A quiet, stable quarter

Danette Breitenbach 23 May 2023



Daily newspapers

Daily newspapers dipped this quarter as the majority of the dailies had a decline on the previous quarter. Double-digit declines were experienced by *Isolewe*, *Daily Sun* and *Son (Daily)* as *Isolewe*, *Daily Sun* continued their downward trajectory experienced in Q1 2023.

Five dailies showed increases on the previous quarter; *Sowetan*, *Citizen*, *The (Daily)*, *Business Day*, *Herald*, *The* and *Witness*, *The* , with *Business Day*, and *Herald*, *The* continuing good gains from Q1 2023.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Daily Nation	MD, Mo-Sat	60,095		60,095	-4.8%	-14.8%
Burger, Die Daily	MD, Mo-Fr	25,515	664	26,179	-5.1%	-5.7%
Isolewe	MD, Mo-Fr	22,325	22	22,347	-10.4%	-26.0%
Bukedde	MD, Mo-Sat	19,394		19,394	-2.2%	-19.4%
Beeld, Daily	MD, Mo-Fr	19,288	628	19,916	-5.3%	-5.2%
Sowetan	Mo-Fr	17,801	8,000	25,801	4.2%	-4.8%
Daily Sun	Mo-Fr	16,536	192	16,728	-28.6%	-48.8%
New Vision	MD, Mo-Fr	16,369	150	16,519	-0.6%	-8.4%
Citizen, The (Daily)	MD, Mo-Fr	15,121	9,437	24,558	0.5%	-1.8%
Son (Daily)	MD, Mo-Fr	13,598	57	13,655	-11.4%	-25.5%
Business Day	MD, Mo-Fr	12,705	1,919	14,624	0.6%	-3.7%
Star, The	MD, Mo-Fr	12,362	11,716	24,078	-5.9%	-13.8%
Times of Swaziland	MD, Mo-Fr	12,070		12,070	-9.2%	-16.3%
Daily Dispatch	MD, Mo-Fr	10,194	159	10,353	-3.8%	-8.0%
Herald, The	MD, Mo-Fr	9,931	1,645	11,576	5.7%	0.8%
Mercury, The	MD, Mo-Fr	7,126	3,044	10,170	-4.1%	-12.0%
Cape Times	MD, Mo-Fr	6,850	3,642	10,492	-3.9%	-9.8%
Cape Argus	MD, Mo-Fr	6,268	3,934	10,202	-1.4%	-4.4%
Witness, The	MD, Mo-Fr	5,798	457	6,255	1.2%	-8.1%
Daily News	MD, Mo-Fr	4,897	2,871	7,768	-6.2%	-17.4%
Pretoria News	MD, Mo-Fr	Resigned				

Weekly newspapers

Boasting this quarter's smallest decline from Q1, 2023, the seven weeklies that make up this category, had almost half - three – show an increase on the previous quarter. *Daily Maverick* upward movement form Q1 2023 continued into this quarter, while *Mail & Guardian* in a reversal of fortunes, from the biggest percentage decrease on the previous quarter in Q1 2023, increased on the previous quarter.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
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Soccer Laduma	Wkly, Wed	61,297		61,297	-2.9%	-18.0%
Ilanga	2xW, Mo&Th	28,997		28,997	-7.2%	-22.0%
Post, The	Wkly, Wed	13,560	3,550	17,110	-3.9%	-12.6%
Daily Maverick,	Wkly, Sat	8,896	1,430	10,326	3.6%	24.4%
Lesotho Times	Wkly, Th	8,152	450	8,602	14.2%	30.8%
Mail & Guardian	Wkly, Fr	7,991	172	8,163	7.0%	-5.2%
Voice, The	Wkly, Fr	6,998		6,998	-0.2%	-11.7%



Independent Media broadens retrenchment scope

20 Jul 2023



Weekend newspapers

In a similar picture to Q1 2023, six of the 20 weekend newspapers had an increase on the previous quarter, (in Q1 2023 seven weekend newspapers had increases) while the rest all showed declines. The only double-digit increase came from *Ilanga LempelaSonto* while *Sunday Vision* which had a double-digit increase in Q1 2023, continued its good run with a 4.4% increase on the previous quarter.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Sunday Times	Wknd	72,350	20,232	92,582	0.6%	-17.7%
Sunday Nation	Wkly, Sun	63,962		63,962	-2.8%	-20.1%
Rapport	Wknd	60,643	123	60,766	-6.0%	-7.1%
Burger, Die Saturday	Wkly, Sat	34,780	655	35,435	-5.3%	-8.1%
Beeld, Saturday	Wkly, Sat	23,974	231	24,205	-7.0%	-8.3%
Isolezwe ngeMpelaSonto	Wknd	19,846	2	19,848	3.1%	-13.0%
Ilanga LempelaSonto	Wknd	17,505		17,505	18.4%	2.3%
Sunday World	Wknd	17,295	2,700	19,995	-10.3%	-28.8%
City Press	Wknd	14,541	312	14,853	-10.0%	-17.5%
Sunday Tribune	Wkly, Sun	14,147	3,679	17,826	-4.3%	-14.0%
Sunday Vision	Wkly, Sun	12,777	150	12,927	4.3%	11.6%
Citizen, The (Saturday)	Wkly, Sat	9,074	39	9,113	-3.1%	-7.8%
Independent on Saturday	Wkly, Sat	8,521	3,483	12,004	-4.7%	-13.6%
Weekend Post	Wknd	8,197	450	8,647	0.3%	3.4%
Daily Dispatch Weekend Edition (formerly Saturday Dispatch)	Wknd	7,482	102	7,584	-7.1%	-17.0%
Weekend Argus	Wknd	5,952	4,511	10,463	-14.6%	-18.8%
Weekend Witness	Wkly, Sat	4,973	433	5,406	0.2%	-9.1%
Saturday Star, The	Wkly, Sat	4,363	3,309	7,672	-7.2%	-8.2%
Pretoria News Saturday	Wkly, Sat	Resigned				
Isolezwe ngeSonto	Wkly, Sun	Rebranded				



Magazines ABC Q2 2023: Digital magazines the star of the Q2

Danette Breitenbach 23 Aug 2023



Local newspapers

An unhappy category with only the increases on the previous quarter. However this category's figures also reflect its move more and more into a hybrid space, which was also a factor in Q1 2023.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Witbank News, Fri	Wkly, Fr	19,352		19,352	-1.2%	-3.8%
Middelburg Observer, Fri	Wkly, Fr	17,140		17,140	0.0%	-0.1%
African Reporter	Wkly, Fr	13,781		13,781	0.8%	-4.5%
George Herald (Thursday)	Wkly, Th	8,676		8,676	-3.5%	-8.6%
Mpumalanga News	Wkly, Wed	7,413		7,413	-4.4%	-0.3%
Paarl Post	Wkly, Th	6,040	49	6,089	-7.9%	-9.4%
Weslander, The	Wkly, Th	4,686	205	4,891	-3.7%	-10.1%
Worcester Standard	Wkly, Th	4,678	7	4,685	-9.0%	-11.2%
Zululand Observer Weekend (Formerly Friday)	Wkly, Fr	4,576	490	5,066	-3.6%	-14.5%
Limpopo Mirror	Wkly, Fr	3,803		3,803	-11.8%	-9.9%
Mosselbay Advertiser	Wkly, Fr	3,787		3,787	-7.3%	-11.9%
Vaalweekblad	Wkly, Th	2,759		2,759	-4.7%	-12.1%
Zululand Observer Monday	Wkly, Mon	2,365	320	2,685	-2.9%	-19.8%
South Cape Forum/Suid Kaap Forum	Wkly, Th	1,475		1,475	-12.4%	-16.9%
Knysna Plett Herald	Wkly, Th	1,088		1,088	-6.6%	-1.2%
Talk of the Town	Wkly, Fr	1,057		1,057	-10.2%	-23.2%
Streeknuus	Wkly, Fr	939		939	-5.5%	-17.2%
Oudtshoorn Courant	Wkly, Fr	868		868	0.9%	-9.2%
Graaff Reinet Advertiser	Wkly, Th	797		797	-6.0%	-1.5%
Bosvelder Review	Wkly, Fr	648	887	1,535	46.5%	13.8%
The Courier	Wkly, Fr	Terminated				
Daller, Die	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				
Estcourt and Midlands News	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				
Northern Natal Courier	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				
Northern Review Weekend	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				
Vryheid Herald	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				

Free newspapers

The largest category, Free Newspapers distribution is still 24% higher than Q2, 2021. However, compared to Q1 2023, there was a 4% drop in circulation.

Year-on-Year, Free newspapers distribution exhibits a stable performance with Q2, 2022 distribution being 5,534,590 compared to Q2, 2023 of 5,427,591.

Free Newspapers also see a few mergers where two or three titles become one. This highlights publishers' challenges and how they find ways to remain relevant.

Publication	Frequency	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Vuk'uzenzele	Mtly	849,950	-5.6%	0.1%
PE Express	Wkly, Wed	119,995	0.0%	0.0%
Soweto Urban News	Wkly, Th	102,021	-6.5%	-6.5%
Sedibeng Ster	Wkly, Th	90,980	0.0%	0.0%
Plainsman	Wkly, Wed	89,536	0.0%	0.0%
City Vision	Wkly, Th	85,461		
Rekord East/Oos	Wkly, Tue	78,921	0.2%	-0.2%
Vukani	Wkly, Wed	78,056	0.0%	0.0%
Mthatha Express	Wkly, Wed	69,995	0.0%	0.0%
Tabletalk	Wkly, Wed	67,844	0.0%	0.0%
Merebank & Chatsworth Tabloid	Wkly, Wed	64,980	0.0%	11.6%
North Coast Rising Sun	Wkly, Wed	64,860	0.0%	0.0%
Randburg Sun	Wkly, Th	60,095	-0.2%	0.4%
Rekord Centurion	Wkly, Wed	60,026	0.3%	-0.4%
Phoenix Tabloid	Wkly, Tue	55,980	0.0%	0.0%
Athlone News	Wkly, Wed	54,151	0.0%	0.0%

Highway Mail	Wkly, Fr	54,037	0.5%	5.8%
Kathorus Mail	F	54,025	0.0%	0.1%
The Springfield Weekly Gazette	Wkly, Th	53,249	1.5%	1.5%
Chatsworth Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	53,050	0.0%	0.0%
Sandton Chronicle	Wkly, Wed	50,477	0.6%	0.8%
YOUREThekwini	Mtly	50,000	0.0%	
Southern Mail	Wkly, Wed	48,853	0.0%	0.0%
Kempton Express	Wkly, Th	48,664	-0.5%	0.3%
Thembisan	F	48,006	-2.4%	-3.6%
Southern Suburbs Tatler	Wkly, Wed	47,238	0.0%	0.0%
Roodepoort Record	Wkly, Th	46,548	-0.3%	-0.3%
Bloemfontein Courant (formerly Krant)	Wkly, Th	44,890	0.0%	0.0%
Overport Rising Sun	Wkly, Th	44,850	0.0%	0.0%
Bedfordview & Edenvale News	Wkly, Wed	44,614	-0.4%	0.3%
Boksburg Advertiser	Wkly, Tue	43,196	0.2%	-1.1%
Bloemnuus	Wkly, Th	41,700	0.0%	-0.1%
Ster, South	Wkly, Tue	41,460	0.0%	0.0%
Rosebank Killamey Gazette	Wkly, Tue	41,182	0.2%	0.2%
Ethekwini Times	Wkly, Fr	40,980	0.0%	0.0%
Umlazi Times	Wkly, Th	40,980	0.0%	0.0%
Diamond Fields Advertiser	Wkly, Fr	40,000	0.0%	
People s Post Mitchells Plain	Wkly, Tue	40,000	-20.0%	-20.0%
Echo Eyethu	Wkly, Th	39,948		
Rekord North/Noord	Wkly, Th	39,947	0.0%	0.2%
Benoni City Times	Wkly, Th	38,049	0.1%	-0.2%
Alberton Record	Wkly, Wed	37,666	0.0%	-0.3%
Go & Express	Wkly, Th	37,291	0.0%	-0.1%
Helderberg Gazette & District Mail	Wkly, Wed	36,993	0.0%	4.8%
Fourways Review	Wkly, Wed	36,884	0.1%	0.7%
Noordkaap Bulletin	Wkly, Th	35,259	0.1%	0.0%
Vista	Wkly, Th	35,232	0.0%	0.0%
Tongaat & Verulam Tabloid (former Northern Star)	Wkly, Tue	34,980	0.0%	0.0%
South Coast Fever	Wkly, Th	34,938	0.4%	0.1%
Ridge Times	Wkly, Tue	34,400	0.0%	-0.5%
Rekord Moot	Wkly, Th	33,577	0.1%	0.0%
Ster, North	Wkly, Tue	32,760	0.0%	0.0%
Constantiaberg Bulletin	Wkly, Wed	31,316	0.0%	0.0%
Tygerburger Elsies-, Eersterivier & Ravensmead	Wkly, Wed	31,166		
Northcliff & Melville Times	Wkly, Tue	30,904	0.4%	1.2%
False Bay Echo	Wkly, Wed	30,879	0.0%	0.0%
Atlantic Sun	Wkly, Wed	30,794	0.0%	0.0%
Eyethu Bay Watch (Formerly Baywatch)	Wkly, Wed	30,470	0.4%	1.3%
Bolander	Wkly, Wed	30,461	0.0%	0.0%
Tygerburger Table View	Wkly, Wed	30,064	0.0%	-1.5%
Express	Wkly, Wed	30,042	-11.8%	-11.8%
UD Express	Wkly, Wed	29,995	0.0%	0.0%
Germiston City News	Wkly, Tue	29,965	0.7%	0.1%
Dolphin Coast Mail	Wkly, Wed	29,960	4.0%	0.0%
East Coast Mail	Wkly, Wed	29,960	4.0%	0.0%
Maritzburg Sun	Wkly, Wed	29,956	0.0%	0.0%
Public Eye	Wkly, Th	29,952	0.0%	0.0%
Rekord Mamelodi	Wkly, Fr	29,950	0.0%	0.0%
Rising Sun Lenasia	Wkly, Wed	29,925	0.0%	0.0%
North Coast Courier	Wkly, Wed	29,919	0.1%	0.1%
Issue Mangaung	Wkly, Wed	29,900	0.0%	0.0%
Umlazi Eyethu	Wkly, Fr	29,881	0.0%	0.0%
Polokwane Observer.	Wkly, Th	29,754	0.1%	0.0%
Rekord Noweto	F	28,950	0.0%	0.0%
Midrand Reporter	Wkly, Th	28,375	0.8%	0.6%

People s Post Athlone & Landsdowne	Wkly, Tue	28,000	0.0%	0.0%
Northglen News	Wkly, Fr	27,509	0.6%	3.1%
Berea Mail	Wkly, Fr	27,113	0.3%	1.9%
Roodepoort Northsider (FormerlyNorthside Chronicle	Wkly, Th	26,656	-0.4%	-0.3%
Krugersdorp News	Wkly, Wed	26,462	0.0%	0.3%
Springs Advertiser	Wkly, Th	25,897	0.4%	-0.6%
Southern Courier	Wkly, Tue	25,402	0.8%	0.0%
People s Post Woodstock & City	Wkly, Tue	25,000	0.0%	0.0%
People s Post Grassy Park & Retreat	Wkly, Tue	25,000	0.0%	0.0%
Eikestadnuus.	Wkly, Th	24,089	1.1%	1.3%
Intshonalanga Eyethu	Wkly, Fr	23,780	0.0%	0.0%
Tygerburger Durbanville	Wkly, Wed	22,012	8.3%	7.4%
People s Post False Bay	Wkly, Tue	22,000	0.0%	0.0%
Xpress Times	Wkly, Wed	21,980	1.1%	0.0%
Issue, Eastern Free State	Wkly, Th	21,900	0.0%	0.0%
Comaro Chronicle	Wkly, Wed	20,988	0.0%	0.9%
Hermanus Times.	Wkly, Wed	20,736	0.2%	0.6%
Rekord West News/Wes Nuus	F	20,200	0.0%	0.0%
Isolezwe lesiXhosa	Wkly, Th	20,000	0.0%	
People s Post Claremont/Rondebosch	Wkly, Tue	20,000	0.0%	0.0%
People s Post Constantia/Wynberg	Wkly, Tue	20,000	0.0%	0.0%
Kouga Express	Wkly, Th	19,995	0.0%	0.0%
Heidelberg/Nigel Heraut	Wkly, Wed	19,980	1.8%	1.9%
Umgungundlovu Eyethu (former Umngeni)	F	19,960	0.0%	0.0%
UGU Eyethu	Wkly, Wed	19,930	0.4%	0.4%
Bonus Review	Wkly, Wed	19,881	0.0%	0.2%
South Coast Sun	Wkly, Fr	19,863	0.4%	3.5%
Merebank Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	19,850	0.0%	0.0%
Md South Coast Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	19,850	0.0%	0.0%
Representative	Wkly, Mon	19,616	-0.4%	-26.6%
Swartland Gazette (formerly Swartland Monitor).	Wkly, Tue	19,360	0.6%	0.2%
Tygerburger Bellville	Wkly, Wed	19,235	-0.2%	-0.3%
Brakpan Herald	Wkly, Fr	19,179	-0.9%	-0.5%
Tygerburger Kuilsrivier	Wkly, Wed	19,074	0.0%	-0.4%
Rekord Central/Sentraal	F	18,500	0.0%	0.0%
Randfontein / Westonaria Herald.	Wkly, Tue	18,256	0.4%	0.5%
Tygerburger Brackenfell	Wkly, Wed	18,229	-0.5%	-1.8%
TygerBurger De Grendel	Wkly, Wed	18,082	0.0%	-0.9%
Southlands Sun	Wkly, Fr	17,786	0.7%	2.7%
Steelburger	Wkly, Th	17,700	0.0%	0.0%
TygerBurger Tyger Valley	Wkly, Wed	17,085	-0.1%	-0.6%
Tygerburger Minerton	Wkly, Wed	17,051	0.0%	-2.0%
Potchefstroom Herald.	Wkly, Fr	16,938	0.0%	0.0%
Northern Eyethu	Mtly	15,888	0.1%	0.2%
Tygerburger Kraaifontein	Wkly, Wed	15,341	-10.2%	-12.7%
Weskus Nuus	F	14,995	0.0%	0.0%
Alex News	F	14,790	0.0%	0.1%
Tygerburger Parow	Wkly, Wed	14,069	0.0%	-0.6%
Tygerburger Goodwood	Wkly, Wed	14,060	0.0%	-0.1%
Queensburgh News	F	13,028	1.4%	1.6%
Herrie	Wkly, Th	12,621	-1.3%	-0.2%
Vrystaat Kroon	F	12,413	0.2%	0.6%
Breederivier Gazette.	Wkly, Wed	12,351	1.8%	0.4%
Carletonville Herald.	Wkly, Fr	11,990	0.7%	0.7%
Zululand Eyethu (formerly Eshowe Watch)	Mtly	11,972	0.3%	1.0%
Village Talk	Wkly, Wed	11,946	0.0%	0.0%
Highvelder, The	Wkly, Fr	11,760	0.0%	0.0%
Daily Sun On the GO - EC	Wkly, Th	10,995	0.0%	0.0%
Greytown Gazette	Wkly, Mon	9,980	0.0%	0.8%

Uthukela Eyethu	Wkly, Th	9,958	2.5%	0.7%
Hazyview Herald	F	9,795	0.0%	0.0%
Corridor Gazette	F	9,710	0.0%	0.0%
Daily Sun On the GO - FS	Wkly, Th	7,995	0.0%	0.0%
Ystervark	Wkly, Th	7,925	0.0%	0.0%
Parys Gazette	Wkly, Fr	7,480	0.0%	0.0%
Sentinel News	Wkly, Wed	7,145	0.0%	0.0%
Daily Sun On the GO - KZN	Wkly, Th	5,995	0.0%	0.1%
Capricorn Voice ..	Q	5,880	0.0%	-0.2%
Daily Sun On the GO - WC	Wkly, Th	4,995	0.0%	0.0%
The Hilton	Mtly	4,960	0.0%	0.0%
Free State Sun	Wkly, Th	4,937	0.0%	3.9%
Northern Review Weekend	Wkly, Fr	4,836	-0.3%	
Standerton Advertiser.	Wkly, Tue	4,750	0.0%	0.0%
Maluti News	Wkly, Fr	1,595	-36.1%	-36.1%
Maseru Metro	Wkly, Th	Terminated		
IDISKI TIMES	Wkly, Tue	Suspended		
Inner City Gazette	Wkly, Th	Resigned		
City Vision (Khayalitsha)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
City Vision (Langa/Gugulethu)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
City Vision (Lwandle / Nomzamo) former Kasi Vision Helderberg	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Maritzburg Echo	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Msunduzi Eyethu (former Edendale)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Southern Star	Wkly, Fr	Rebranded		
Tygerburger Eersterivier/Blue Downs	Wkly, Wed	Rebranded		
Tygerburger Elsiesrivier & Ravensmead	Wkly, Wed	Rebranded		
Komani Karoo Express	Mtly	Discontinued		
Coastal Weekly	Wkly, Th	Ceased Publishing		
Stanger Weekly	Wkly, Wed	Ceased Publishing		

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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