

How many people really watch or read RT, anyway? It's hard to tell, but some of their social numbers are eye-popping | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Joshua Benton

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Is RT's international audience real?

That's an important question, as [regulators and distributors debate](#) where the Kremlin-backed network falls on the spectrum from news channel to state propaganda. All across the world, RT is being [tossed off cable systems](#), [blocked by ad networks](#), [removed from app stores](#), [downranked in search engines](#), or [banned outright](#).

But the level of concern would seem inextricably linked to the size of RT's reach; propaganda isn't particularly effective if no one sees it. Is it a [rising power](#) in [an information war](#), or a [waste of Kremlin cash](#) that [fakes its own numbers](#)?

[...]

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