



# Law Firm Online Newsrooms

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**A REPORT BY**  
Infinite Spada

# Catering for the media online

A first port of call for many seeking information about a law firm is its website. Sometimes those seekers of information are journalists, who may be looking for specific data on the firm, or about its research and opinions, or simply for details of who best to contact for more information or comment.

Most large organisations today include an online newsroom as part of their website. Whether or not they call it an 'online newsroom', it is the section or collection of dedicated pages that offers information primarily aimed at the media.

At the very least this includes media contact details and press releases, but some organisations include content such as data on financial performance, locations, leadership structures or biographies, and downloadable high-resolution photographs or logos and usable video content. In short, an online newsroom is simply a user-friendly resource for journalists that takes away some of the straightforward and more routine queries from the 'human press office'.

Law firms take different approaches to how they cater for the media on their websites. Some, of course, are not interested in media attention or wish to control it tightly and that is reflected in the information they provide on their websites and how it is presented. But our experience is that most law firms do want a positive relationship with legal and business reporters and editors.

The key finding of our report is that some minor changes to most law firm websites would make them considerably more media-friendly. Few firms consistently provide additional online newsroom content such as factsheets, leadership structures or biographies, or downloadable hi-res photographs or logos.

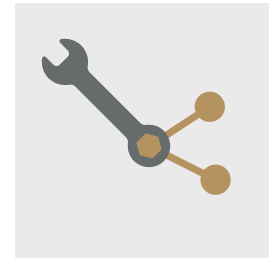
Fundamentally, in a surprisingly large number of cases media contact information is difficult to find or limited to office telephone numbers and/or a single named contact – with no out-of-hours numbers or alternative contacts.

This report sets out the details of our findings.



**The harder they are to contact  
the quicker I switch to looking up  
their competitors for comment instead.**

features editor of a leading UK legal magazine



# About this research and report

We looked at the websites of 100 of the world's largest law firms. Of these, half were headquartered in the US and the remainder were headquartered in the UK.

We counted an 'online newsroom' as having press releases and media contact information in the same area or closely connected areas of a firm's website.

For each website, we started from the home page and tried to find media contact information, press releases and various other types of information that can be of interest and use to journalists. The report sets out what we found and, in some cases, how easy it was to unearth that information. The research was undertaken over the course of one week in March 2016.

We have chosen not to provide the "results" for individual firms. This is absolutely not a ranking exercise; there is no right or wrong way of doing things. Firms choose different approaches to the information they make



public and how they present it based on what is right for their business strategy.

Instead what we seek to do is to set out the variety of approaches taken by law firms so that PR and communications teams can see where their own approach to the 'online newsroom' sits and can consider if theirs is the right tactical one for them.



**It is not just out-of-hours contact details that are hard to find.**  
**Many firms seem to bury even their normal working hours press contacts**

correspondent on UK national newspaper



# Is there an online newsroom?

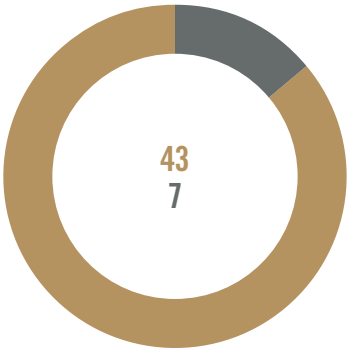
Not all law firms have online newsrooms. UK firms are more likely to have an online newsroom - **43 out of 50 firms** in our survey. US firms less so - **35 out of 50 firms**. Some of the firms without an online newsroom do have both media contacts and press releases on their website but they are separate and unconnected. In such cases, press releases are often found via a tab such as 'News', 'Insight' or 'Resources' but without media

contact information attached. The media contact information is instead usually located via a general 'Contact' tab on the home page and without links to press releases or other resources of relevance to journalists. So the basic information can be found, but it is not well joined-up and requires the visitor to hunt around for it.

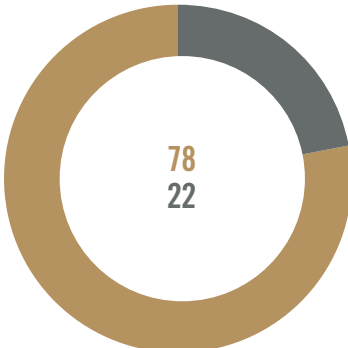
Have a newsroom

No newsroom found

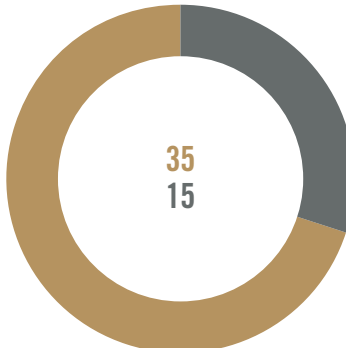
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# Finding the online newsroom

Where there is an online newsroom, in most cases finding it is easy, with either a direct link from the home page to 'Media Information' or 'News' or a fairly obvious two-stage approach such as via "Insight" or "Resources" or "About Us" before finding the link to the media pages. In a few cases, however, it is difficult to find or the route is far from intuitive. With one firm, the only way we could locate the newsroom was by

doing a search on the name of one of the PR executives we happened to know and work back from there; a very well hidden online newsroom!

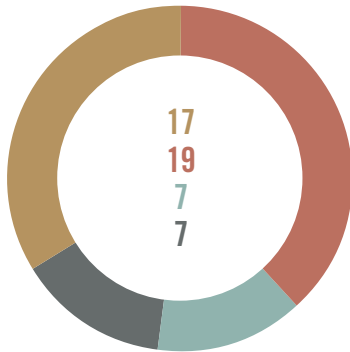
**Direct and clear link from home page**

**Hard to find/multiple steps**

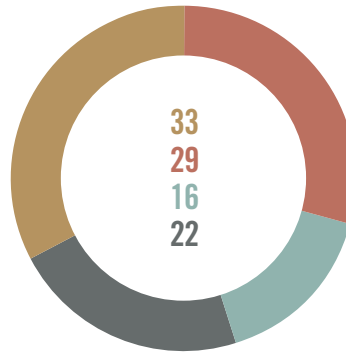
**Indirect route from home page but straightforward**

**No newsroom found**

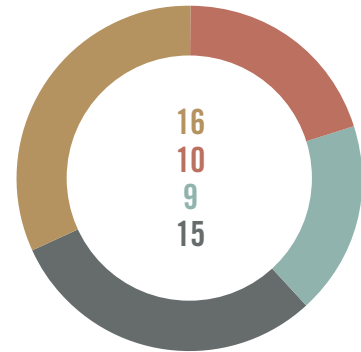
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# Named media contacts

Named media contacts are useful to journalists. Eighty-five of the 100 firms provide these, most via the online newsroom. A few firms (four, all UK headquartered) prefer not to name their media contacts in favour of providing a general phone number and/or email address. Two other UK firms provide only partner contact names rather than dedicated media/communications specialists.

Nine firms provide no media contact information at all.



**Named media contacts in newsroom**

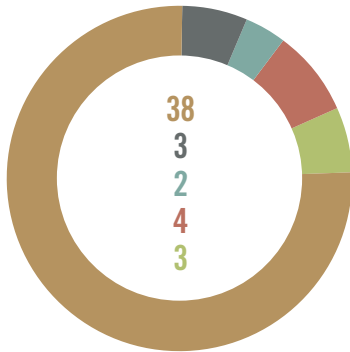
**Have newsroom but no named media contacts**

**No newsroom but named media contacts available on website**

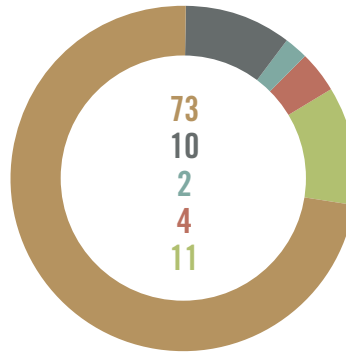
**No newsroom and no named media contacts anywhere on website**

**Partner contacts in newsroom; no named media specialists**

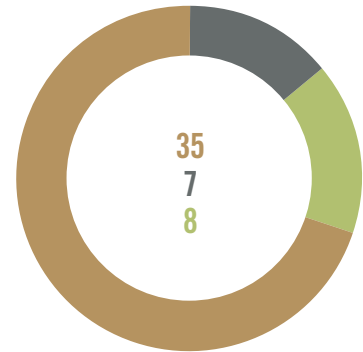
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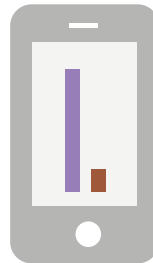


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# Media contact details

Most firms (83%) provide a named media contact's telephone and email details. Among these, five also provide a general/group email and/or phone details. Only a few (15 out of 100) firms provide cell/mobile phone details enabling out-of-office and out-of-office-hours contact.



Named person's email, phone and mobile/cell

Named person's and group email/phone

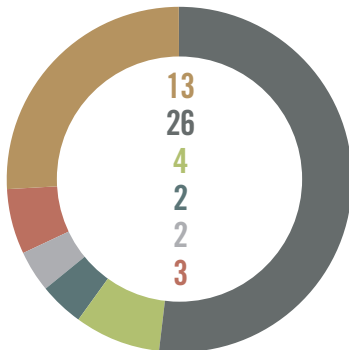
Named person's email and phone

Named person's email only

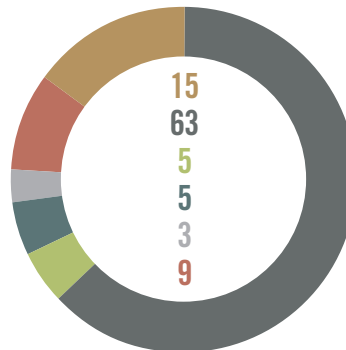
Group (unamed) email and phone only

No media contact information available

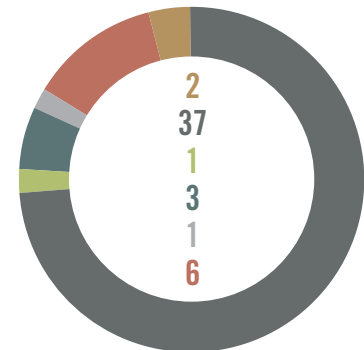
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# Number of named media contacts

Even with a named media contact, it can still be difficult for a journalist to get hold of the right person when they want to. For instance, nearly one in three firms that do offer a named media contact's details provide them for only one person, without an obvious alternative should that person be unavailable.

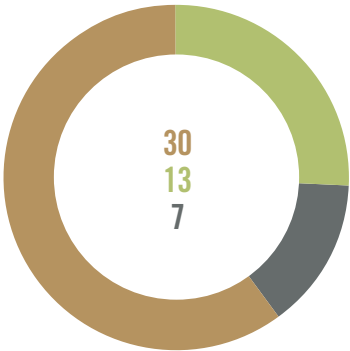


**More than one named media contact**

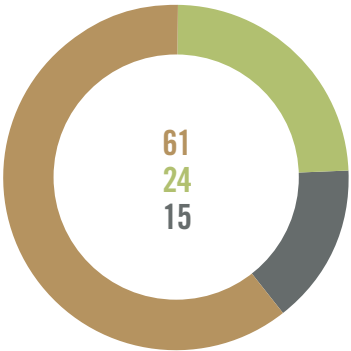
**One named media contact**

**No named media contacts on website**

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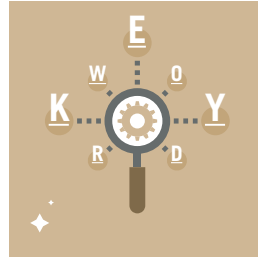
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# Searching press releases

While nearly all the firms have press releases on their websites, the ability and approach to searching them varies considerably. Over a quarter of firms (the majority UK-headquartered ones) provide no easy search facility, while 63% provide for a 'keyword' search.

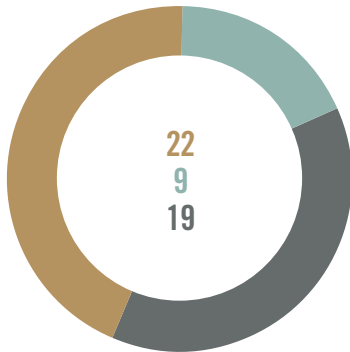


## Keyword search facility

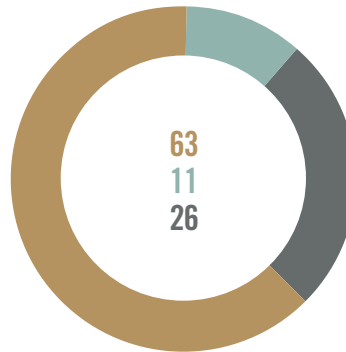
Can be sorted by location, sector, service/practice or a combination of these but no keyword search

No search facility

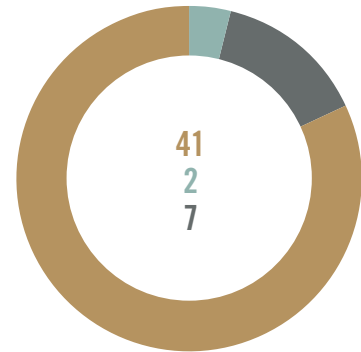
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# Obtaining background information

While media contact information and press releases are the essentials of an online newsroom, a newsroom can be enhanced with other resources and information of relevance to journalists. Ideally, the most useful information for journalists is either within the online newsroom or with easy to find links from the newsroom.

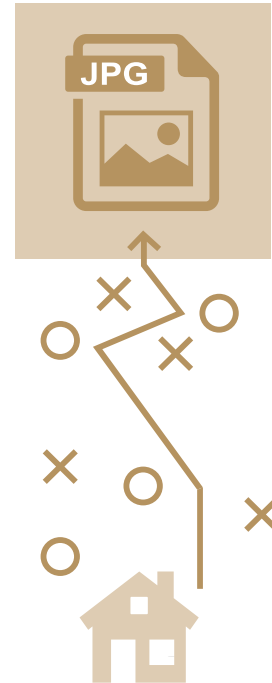
We looked for a number of useful items of information for journalists – financial performance, headcount, firm history, leadership structures and thought leadership/opinion on topical issues – to see if they were available on the website and how easy/obvious they were to navigate to via the home page or the online newsroom.



**It can be frustrating trying to find the details of a suitable media contact at some firms**

correspondent on leading US legal industry magazine

”



# Financials

A minority of firms provide financial performance information on their website. Only 16 out of the 100 firms (and only two of these US headquartered) provide as much as a reference to the firm's annual turnover. In many cases this was not found within the newsroom or from an obvious link from the newsroom and instead required a search around the website.



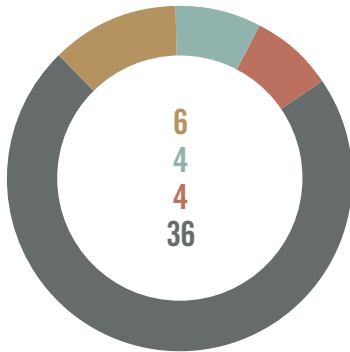
Easy to find

Less than obvious navigation

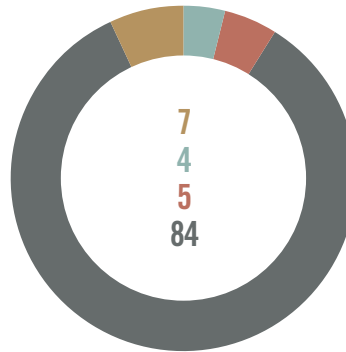
Hard to find

Not found

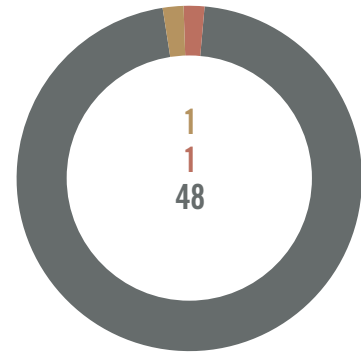
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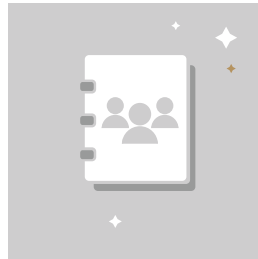


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# Headcount

Firms are more forthcoming about headcount information, though more than half do not provide any references to their overall numbers of lawyers or staff. Again, US headquartered firms are more reluctant to provide information than UK ones.



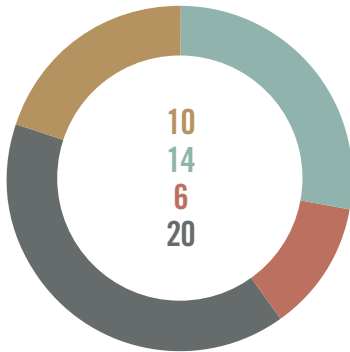
Easy to find

Less than  
obvious navigation

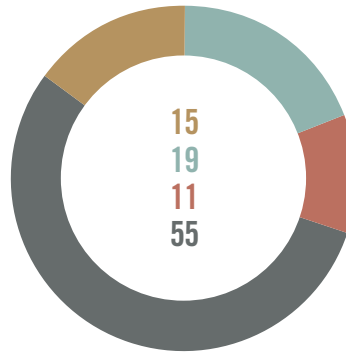
Hard to find

Not found

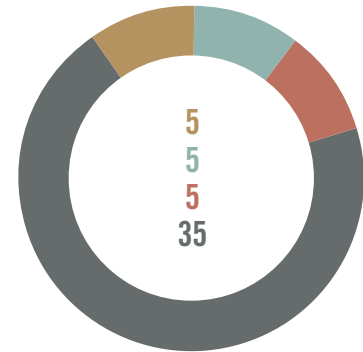
UK-HEADQUARTERED FIRMS



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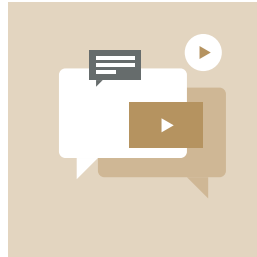


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# Firm history

A majority of US-headquartered firms provide details of their history and it is usually very easy to find from either the online newsroom or from the home page. Overall, nearly two-thirds of law firms provide at least some history of their organisation on their website.



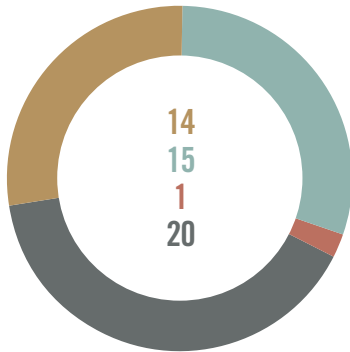
**Easy to find**

**Less than obvious navigation**

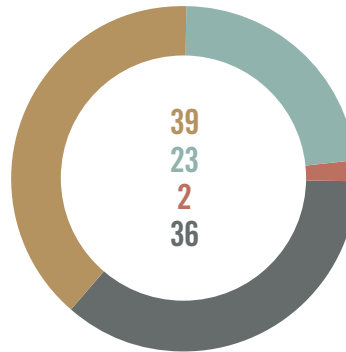
**Hard to find**

**Not found**

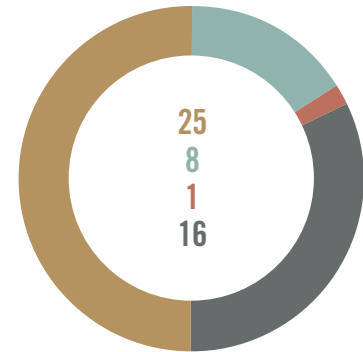
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**ALL FIRMS**

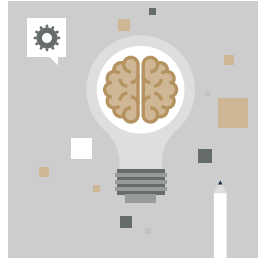


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# Insight and opinion

Most (91%) of firms include legal or industry sector insight or opinion on their websites. In most cases this is easy to find, though only a third of firms provide a direct link from their online newsroom area.



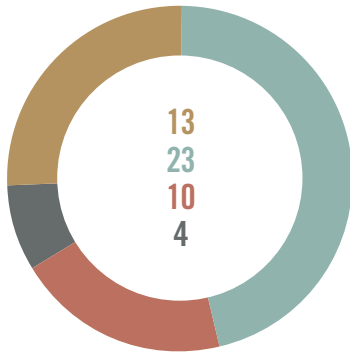
Direct links from online newsroom

Indirect links from newsroom but easy to find

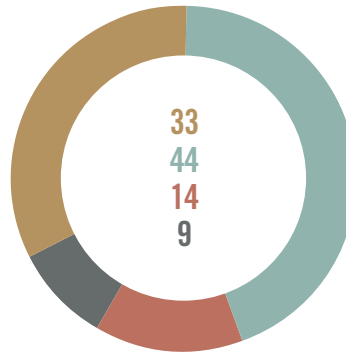
Hard to find

Not found

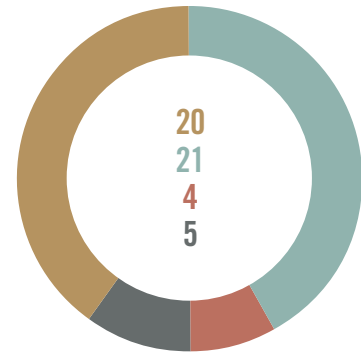
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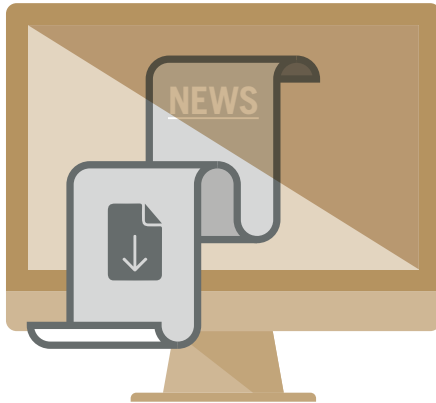
ALL FIRMS



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# Additional newsroom resources



Very few firms provide additional newsroom resources such as downloadable high-resolution photographs of their leadership or key spokespeople, or of office buildings.

Only two UK headquartered firms – and no US headquartered firms – enable those visiting their online newsrooms to download high-resolution images of key people and just two firms (the same two) facilitate the downloading of their logo.

However, a few firms explicitly provide the details of who is best to contact in order to obtain images and/or logos.



**We need decent hi-res mug-shots for our comment section, although law firms are pretty good at stumping them up quickly**

correspondent on UK national newspaper



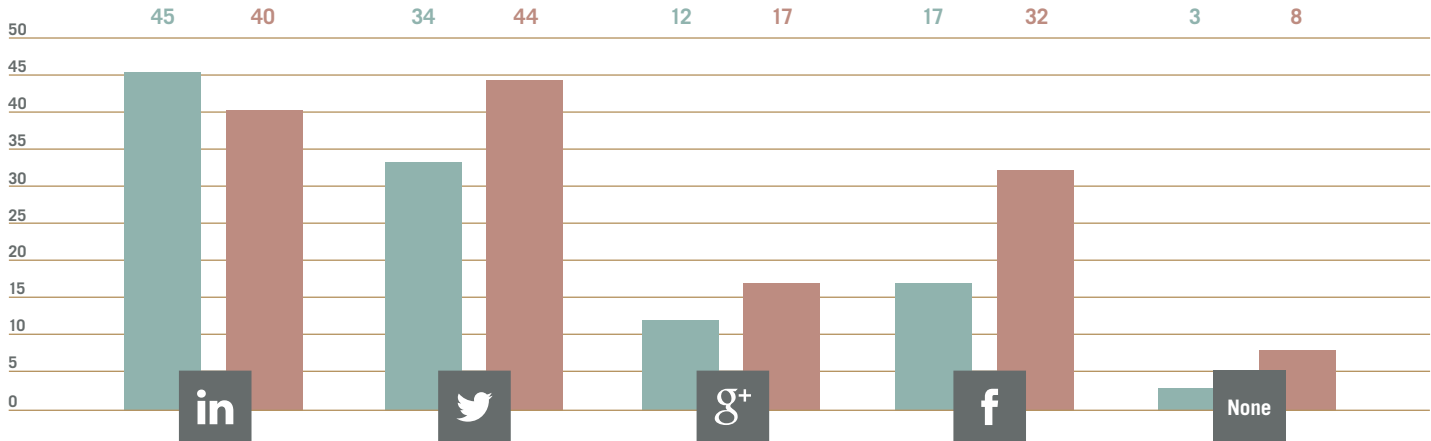
# Social sharing

It is not only journalists who visit online newsrooms so including social sharing on the website and especially within the newsroom and on press releases can also help with promotion. Social sharing options available are shown below.

LinkedIn and Twitter are the most popular. The most common combination is LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, especially for US headquartered firms: 30 US firms offer all three options, compared with 17 of the UK firms.

UK firms

US firms







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[infiniteSpada.com](http://infiniteSpada.com)

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**London**

5 Chancery Lane  
London, WC2A 1LG  
T +44 (0)20 7269 1430

**San Francisco**

400 Montgomery Street  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
T (001) 415 732 7801

**New York**

275 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
T (001) 212 687 0935

**North Carolina**

4819 Emperor Blvd. Suite 400  
Durham, NC 27703  
T (001) 919 435 128