

No time to sit down: Adapting to journalists' schedules

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Abstract.

Four times a year, a research group at Statistics Norway (SSB) publishes economic forecasts. These forecasts are an important planning tool for individuals, businesses, and public authorities.

For many years, SSB launched the forecasts with a press conference. Journalists were the main target group. They attended to learn about the forecasts, ask questions, and conduct individual interviews after presentations. This resulted in broad media coverage.

In recent years, attendance declined. In 2024, only a few journalists attended, and they were mainly interested in interviews rather than the presentations. The journalists' feedback was that they could not prioritise attending the presentations when everything they needed was in the report and the news article – published an hour before the press conference started.

In 2025, SSB redesigned the launch to better fit journalists' busy schedules, while aiming to maintain or increase media attention. The press conferences were replaced with short, pre-recorded videos embedded in the news article on ssb.no and shared on social media.

The new approach led to higher-quality coverage of the forecast. The short format of the videos forced the researchers to practice voicing – and focus on – their key messages. The researchers were also available for interviews from the moment the forecasts were published. These Interviews took place in studios, by phone, or via video calls.

To make the videos efficiently with the right level of professional look was, and still is, a journey. From a provisional studio in a meeting room, through AI transcribing, a detour via green screen, to a small, but useable studio with plug-and-play properties. With each launch we have made improvements and come up with better solutions.

The videos may not be the final stage. We will keep working to find the format that gives the most value to our users and to our organisation.

Keywords: News media, video, spokespersons, research dissemination

1. A press conference with declining interest

For several years, Statistics Norway (SSB) has published economic forecasts every quarter ("Konjunkturtendensene in Norwegian). On publication day, the report and a news article are released on ssb.no at 8 a.m.

At 9 a.m., SSB held a press conference at its offices in Oslo. Journalists and others could attend in person or watch online. The press conference usually lasted around 30 minutes and covered three topics.

The main target group was journalists, who were given the opportunity to ask questions in plenary and able to conduct one-on-one interviews with the researchers afterwards.

In recent years, especially after the pandemic, attendance declined. At the same time, media interest in the forecasts remained high. Many news outlets relied on the report and news article published at 8 a.m., and several requested interviews with our spokespersons immediately after publication.

This created a practical challenge. The spokespersons were expected to do interviews right after the report was published, while also preparing the press conference shortly afterwards. The time spent preparing and presenting could instead have been used to conduct more interviews with different media outlets.

The decline in attendance suggested a change in how journalists prioritised their time. Since the report and news article were already available, few saw value in attending a presentation an hour later.

2. Deciding on a new format

Ending the press conference required support from both the Research and Communication divisions. In autumn 2024, the directors agreed to test a new format.

The goal was to take a small step away from the traditional press conference while keeping the main elements journalists found useful. SSB decided to replace the live presentation with a pre-recorded video highlighting the main findings from the report.

For us communication advisers, this was a satisfactory solution, but we were clear that it should be viewed as a test. We wanted to analyse the results and let them guide the direction going forward.

3. The first step: finding our path

Our goals - We defined five goals for the new launch:

- Approximately the same number of media mentions as previous launches
- More interviews and quotations in the media than previous launches
- All solutions must meet accessibility requirements
- Less overall resource use for communication advisers
- A solution that is better suited to journalists' working day

A new format: Videos

We had decided to replace the press conference with pre-recorded videos, but several choices remained. Should we film in the auditorium or in a studio? Should we make one long video or several short ones? How should the videos be distributed?

After testing different options, we chose to make three short videos in a small studio setup. Each video gave a short summary of one main topic and was placed in the relevant part of the news article.

We wanted the videos to look professional, but still simple enough that we could produce them efficiently. To achieve this, we used:

- A temporary studio in a meeting room that had the correct background and enough room for cameras and lighting.
- Two cameras: one close-up camera for the introduction and ending, and one wider shot for the main section with graphics.
- Adobe Premiere Pro for editing, graphics and subtitles.

Figure 1: Our temporary studio setup with two cameras, lighting and a prompter screen



Figure 2: Screenshot from the news article on ssb.no with one of the videos embedded.

– Handelskonflikter vil svekke den samlede verdiskapingen i verden, men vil likevel ikke hindre klar vekst i norsk økonomi. Oppgangen er imidlertid betinget av at Norge ikke blir direkte berørt av tiltak som EU innfører som en reaksjon på USAs tolløkninger, sier Thomas von Brasch.

Se Thomas von Brasch, forskningsleder i Statistisk sentralbyrå, legge frem de økonomiske prognosene frem mot 2028:



Oppgangen drives av innenlandske forhold

Ifølge prognosene stimulerer høy inntektsvekst og lavere renter husholdningenes konsum.

Meeting accessibility requirements

Pre-recorded videos must meet accessibility requirements under WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). Live videos are exempt from these demands, so in changing the format, we had to make sure the videos were understandable if the viewer either could not see the screen or could not hear the sound.

An early victory

When the first launch in the new format went live, the report, article and videos were published as planned. The viewing numbers were moderate, as expected, but the response was positive. Both researchers and stakeholders inside and outside SSB were pleased with the result. For us in communication, the biggest sign of success was the front-page coverage in the business newspaper Dagens Næringsliv.

Figure 3: Front page and spread in Dagens Næringsliv.



4. Learning and adjusting throughout the year

The production of the videos was a learning process from start to finish. With each publication, we tested new ideas and made small adjustments. Some worked better than others, but each launch taught us something new. Over time, we moved from an improvised meeting room setup to a small but usable studio with a simpler workflow.

In the new studio, we wanted to keep the professional look and continue with a two-camera setup, but the room was too small. Instead, we tested a green screen solution. This turned out to be more difficult than expected. With limited equipment, it was hard to get the lighting right, and we ended up spending extra time on editing. We learned a lot about what worked – and what did not.

We also started using AI-based transcription to create subtitles. Earlier, this had been done manually. The new solution saved time and made production more efficient.

5. Where we are now: No videos, just news media

In 2026, it was time for another step. After a year of testing, we concluded that the videos did not seem to affect the level of media coverage.

The videos were appreciated by researchers and others with a strong interest in the forecasts, but they were not essential for journalists. This led us to test launching the forecasts without videos.

We have used this approach for the first two launches in 2026. So far, the results show that our main goals are still being met.

6. Did we reach our goals?

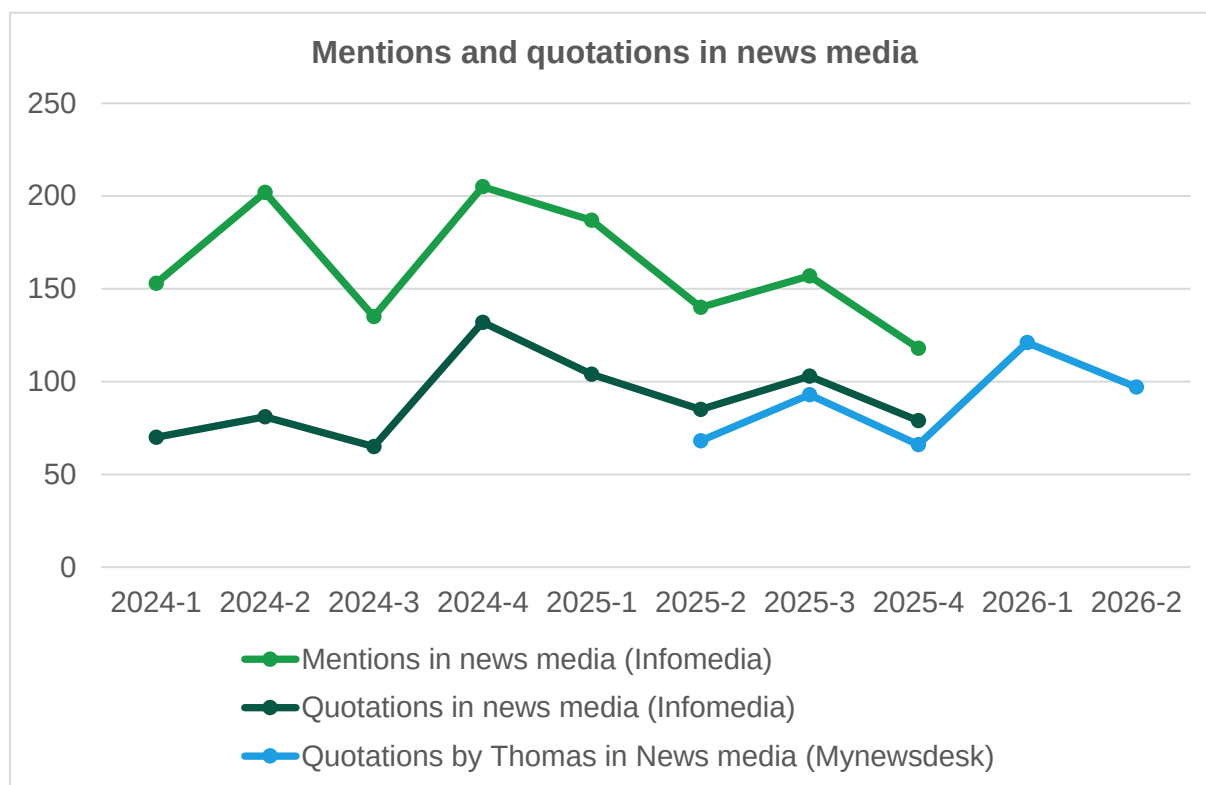
Goal: Approximately the same number of media mentions

One of our goals was to maintain the same level of media coverage. The results suggest that removing the press conference did not reduce media attention.

It is important to note that we changed our media monitoring tool in autumn 2025, which makes comparisons difficult. In general, media analysis is never exact, so the numbers should be read with caution.

The forecasts continued to receive broad coverage in national, regional and trade media. This strengthened our belief that media attention was driven primarily by the press release, the report itself and our media outreach efforts, rather than by the press conference.

Figure 4: Mentions and quotations in news media



Goal: More interviews and quotations in the media than previous launches

Without the press conference, spokespersons were available for interviews as soon as the report was published, and could meet with different media outlets throughout the morning.

The biggest change was not necessarily in the number of stories, but in the type of coverage. More live TV interviews were carried out, and journalists had better access to researchers for direct comments.

This often resulted in broader coverage with more context, analysis and direct quotations.

Goal: All solutions must meet accessibility requirements

We met this goal in every launch. AI-generated subtitles reduced the time spent on subtitling, and the spokespersons adapted well by explaining clearly without relying too much on visuals.

Goal: Less overall resource use for communication advisers

The videos did not reduce the total workload, but they changed how the work was spent. Less time went to practical arrangements such as hosting guests, and more time could be used on communication tasks.

The biggest reduction came when we stopped making videos. Today, our work is focused on article support, media pitching and media training, which requires fewer resources.

Goal: A solution that is better suited to journalists' working day

It is difficult to measure whether the videos were a better solution, but we saw little evidence that journalists missed the press conference. A few said they did, but most seemed to value quick access to the main findings and easy access to spokespersons. In that sense, the new format appeared to fit better with the way many journalists work today.

7. Conclusion

By replacing the press conference with pre-recorded videos, and later removing the videos as well, we tested new ways of meeting journalists' needs while using fewer resources.

The press conference itself was not the main driver of media attention. What mattered most was quick access to the report, clear key messages, and spokespersons who were available for interviews from the moment of publication.

The process also showed the value of testing and adjusting. Each launch gave us new insights, whether about production, accessibility or media needs. The solution we use today is simpler than where we started, but it is better adapted to the way journalists work.

The work is not finished. Media habits continue to change, and so must we. Formats should not be treated as fixed traditions, but as tools that need to be tested, improved and, when necessary, replaced.