

reason.com

The website for Reason, a libertarian opinion magazine favoring a reduced role for government. Reason has featured work from prominent writers and economists including Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman.

 100 / 100

High Credibility: This website adheres to all nine standards of credibility and transparency.

- ✓ Does not repeatedly publish false or egregiously misleading content 22 points
- ✓ Gathers and presents information responsibly 18
- ✓ Has effective practices for correcting errors 12.5
- ✓ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly 12.5
- ✓ Avoids deceptive headlines 10
- ✓ Website discloses ownership and financing 7.5

- ✓ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information 5

Criteria are listed in order of importance. [Learn More.](#)

Ownership and Financing

Reason.com is a publication of the Reason Foundation, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit research and educational organization. The foundation is supported by contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations, as well as by event fundraisers.

The website generates revenue from advertising, sponsored content, and donations. The Reason Foundation took in approximately \$15.2 million for fiscal year 2022, according to its U.S. Internal Revenue Service Form 990 filing. Of that, nearly \$14 million came from contributions and grants; \$1 million came from program services; \$183,000 came from investments; and \$127,000 came from other sources.

Major donors to the Reason Foundation have included private organizations such as the Charles Koch Foundation and the Sarah Scaife Foundation, corporate sponsors including American Airlines and AT&T, and hundreds of individual donors, according to a list of 2019 donors. In 2022, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gave \$900,000, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation gave \$700,000 to the Reason Foundation

Content

Articles primarily cover U.S. government, politics, and culture, with a particular focus on the economy, regulatory policy, and government spending. The Video section of the site publishes short documentaries and editorials on similar topics.

Reason.com hosts The Volokh Conspiracy blog, which was previously published on The Washington Post's website and is written by lawyers and law professors who are "generally libertarian, conservative, centrist, or some mixture," according to the site. The blog covers topics that are similar to the rest of the site, although it is editorially independent.

The website offers seven podcasts, including "The Reason Roundtable," in which "the libertarian editors of the magazine of 'free minds and free markets' ... discuss and debate the week's biggest stories and what fresh hell awaits us all."

Reason is not officially connected with the Libertarian Party, and the publication is often criticized by party activists. "It's pretty common for supporters of [2016 Libertarian Party presidential candidate] Gary Johnson, [U.S. Sen.] Rand Paul, or others to be mad at various Reason writers on any given day because we've critiqued their favorite candidates on some policy issue," Reason.com Editor-in-Chief Katherine Mangu-Ward said in a 2016 Poynter interview with James Warren, who is currently the executive editor at NewsGuard.

Credibility

Articles on the website typically rely on reputable sources such as government reports and data, scientific journals, and articles from reliable news organizations including The Wall Street Journal, NPR, The Associated Press, and The Boston

For decades, Reason has published work produced by some of the best-known libertarian voices, including author Ayn Rand, economist Milton Friedman, author-economist Thomas Sowell, and, more recently, PayPal co-founder and entrepreneur Peter Thiel. The publication has been credited with proposing ideas that later became the basis of new businesses or government initiatives. In 1972, Reason published an article that provided research arguing for the deregulation of taxis and jitneys, decades before the rise of on-demand, ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft.

Reason.com is up-front about its philosophical perspective on the About page, which describes Reason as “the nation’s leading libertarian magazine” and “the magazine of free minds and free markets.” Articles on the site are consistent with that point of view. Therefore, NewsGuard has determined that the site handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Although Reason.com does not articulate a corrections policy, the site regularly publishes corrections that explain mistakes, typically at the bottom of erroneous articles.

At the 2022 Southern California Journalism Awards, Reason Editor-at-Large Matt Welch won in the sports commentary category for his article, “How Government Devastated Minor League Baseball.” Senior producer Zach Weissmueller won in the investigative category for his video, “Los Angeles is Squandering \$1.2 Billion While Homeless Face a ‘Spiral of Death.’”

In 2021, Reason won two first-place awards in the annual Southern California Journalism Awards competition overseen by The Los Angeles Press Club. ReasonTV contributor Qinling Li's “Meet the Trans Activists Fighting for Sex

Transparency

Reason.com discloses on the About page that it is owned by the nonprofit Reason Foundation. The About page also links to the Reason Foundation website and a recent list of Torchbearer Society members, donors who contribute \$1,000 or more to the foundation.

Reason.com includes a Staff section that provides the names and titles of the site's editorial leaders, producers, reporters, and contributing writers. Email addresses are provided for most of the site's leadership, and clicking on their names takes readers to their biographies.

Articles include author names, which generally link to their biographies and email addresses.

Advertisements are distinguishable from editorial content. Sponsored content is labeled with the phrases "sponsored content" or "sponsored videos."

History

Reason was founded as a print magazine by college student Lanny Friedlander in 1968, according to his 2011 New York Times obituary. The print magazine began with a circulation of a few hundred copies, which has increased to more than 50,000 along with approximately 4 million monthly website visits, according to Reason Foundation's tax filings and the site's About page.

In 1971, the magazine published "The case for education vouchers," which argued in favor of giving families vouchers to use in choosing their children's schools.

the early arguments calling for the deregulation of airlines and privatization of space travel.

Reason.org was registered in 1995, and Reason.com was registered in 1997. Nick Gillespie led the print magazine as editor-in-chief from 2000 to 2008 before becoming editor-in-chief at Reason.com and Reason TV. He is now an editor at large for the magazine.

In 2004, the magazine made headlines for its cover art that used a database to customize every magazine with a satellite photo of each reader's neighborhood and their home circled. "Everybody, including our magazine, has been harping on the erosion of privacy and the fears of a database nation," Gillespie told The New York Times. "It is a totally legit fear. But they make our lives unbelievably easier as well, in terms of commercial transactions, credit, you name it."

In 2020, The Daily Beast reported a Reason opinion columnist had been fired for having anti-Trump views. The columnist, Shikha Dalmia, announced her departure from the magazine on Facebook, stating Reason believed her views had become "too out-of-step" with the publication. Dalmia also said her "staunch and uncompromising anti-Trump voice" had made libertarians "uncomfortable" and alleged that the publication did not want to defend her work to donors and stakeholders. Reason Editor-in-Chief Katherine Mangu-Ward commented on Dalmia's post, stating she disagreed with Dalmia's characterization of the parting. Mangu-Ward also said in a statement to The Daily Beast that Dalmia's exit was a personal issue and she would not discuss details.

Editor's Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on Jan. 23, 2024. The label was previously updated on Jan. 20, 2023, Feb. 7, 2022, Dec. 17, 2021, Aug. 19, 2020, and Dec. 19, 2019.



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Edited by: [Amy Westfeldt](#), [Peggy Ackermann](#), [Dina Contini](#)

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