



SENSIKA

HOW REPUTATION DRIVES MEDIA ATTENTION

Air travel is safer, but recent crash trends (2023–2025) reveal new risks. This report analyzes changing patterns, causes, and outcomes to assess whether current safety measures are effective. It also identifies gaps highlighted in media and areas needing more attention.

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How Reputation Drives Media Attention

Fatalities Fuel the Fire, But Airline Fame Keeps the Blaze Burning

In aviation, it's not always about the crash but the name on the tail. Big airlines dominate media coverage, with **Opinion-Making Sources** giving them a megaphone regardless of incident severity. Smaller carriers, on the other hand, struggle to get their fair share of the spotlight, **even when their incidents are just as serious.**

This disparity in coverage contributes to a skewed public perception, where the reputation of an airline often overshadows **actual** safety record. Media prioritization tends to focus on well-known carriers, amplifying their incidents disproportionately and sometimes **neglecting** critical attention to lesser-known airlines.

The Influence of Opinion-Making Sources

Opinion-Making Sources play a pivotal role in shaping airline reputations and public sentiment. Their choices significantly impact which incidents gain attention and which are overlooked.

These sources often highlight sensational stories involving major airlines, leading to broader public discourse but sometimes at the expense of a balanced view. Their influence extends beyond reporting facts; they frame narratives that can either reassure the public or amplify fears.



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Crash Volume and Geographic Distribution

Analysis of crash data shows that surges in content correspond to key events but vary widely by region. Certain geographic areas experience more incidents due to factors like air traffic density, terrain, and regulatory environments.

Coverage often mirrors these geographic trends but is also influenced by media presence and audience interest in different parts of the world. This interplay affects how the public perceives aviation safety globally.

Wing Wars: Boeing vs. Airbus in the Spotlight

Boeing and Airbus are the most mentioned manufacturers in media coverage, driven by their dominance in the commercial aviation market. Their aircraft represent most fleets worldwide, naturally generating more attention when incidents occur.

However, media focus can also reflect competitive narratives and public interest in their rivalry, sometimes emphasizing issues beyond safety concerns. Understanding this dynamic helps contextualize their media portrayal versus actual risk.



So, is it safe to travel?

The official data says yes! Air travel remains one of the safest modes of transportation, with rigorous safety standards and continuous improvements. While Boeing and Airbus are frequently in the media spotlight due to their large fleet sizes, this doesn't mean they are inherently more dangerous. The high number of mentions simply reflects their visibility in the skies. Reputation often flies higher than reality, but when it comes to safety, the numbers speak for themselves.

When Media Plays Favourites

- ▶ A side note (it can be with smaller font in italic; it is related to the charts of the report) - The data highlights major airline crash incidents for each listed year. It does not provide comprehensive reports on all incidents involving the airlines mentioned, nor does it reflect the overall safety record or operations of each airline.
- ▶ General annotation for all 3 charts - While **fatalities do drive attention**, it is the size and fame of the **airline that largely dictates** the extent of **media coverage**. As a result, well-known airlines attract significantly more media attention, regardless of **crash severity**.
- ▶ **Airline Volume Breakdown: 2023**

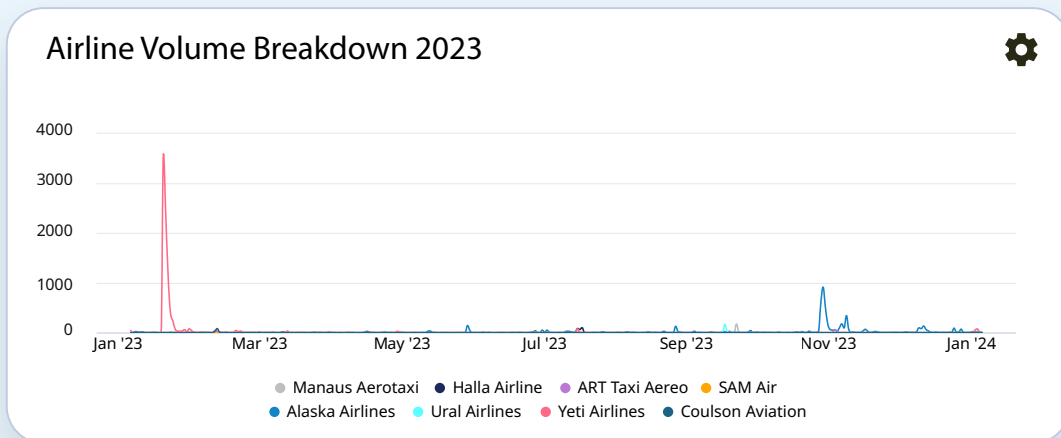


Figure 1: Airline Volume Breakdown 2023

High-profile carriers like **Yeti Airlines (72 fatalities)** and **Alaska Airlines (0 fatalities)** consistently dominated headlines, regardless of the number of fatalities. In contrast, smaller operators such as **Manaus Aerotaxi (14 fatalities)** and **SAM Air (6 fatalities)** barely registered in the media.

▶ Airline Volume Breakdown: 2024

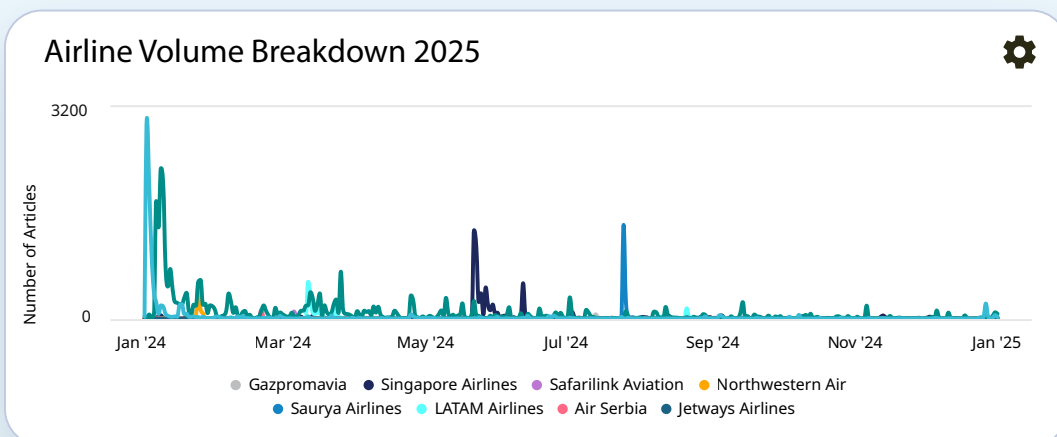


Figure 2: Airline Volume Breakdown 2024

This trend continued in 2024, when **Alaska Airlines (0 fatalities)** and **Japan Airlines (5 fatalities)** garnered significant attention due to their global recognition, while smaller carriers like **Jetways Airlines (1 fatality)** and **Safarilink Aviation (2 fatalities)** received minimal coverage.

► **Airline Volume Breakdown: 2025**

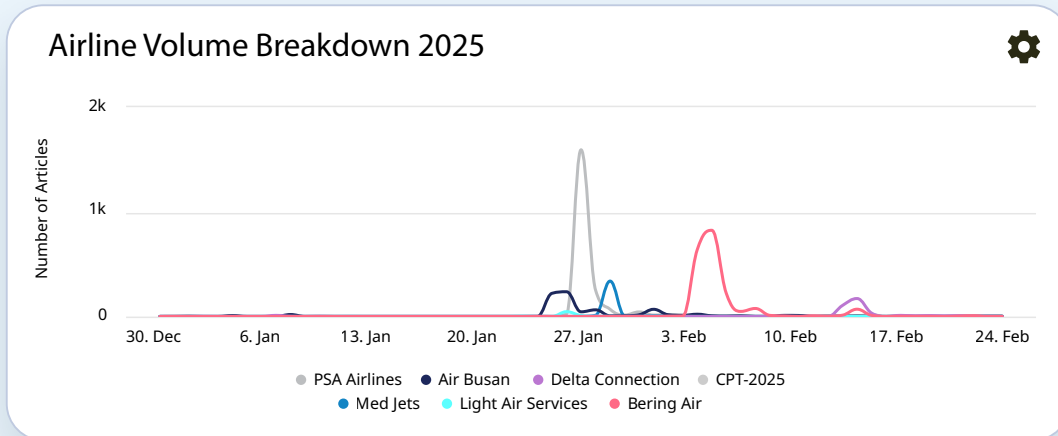


Figure 3: Airline Volume Breakdown 2025

Did the pattern shift in **2025**? **PSA Airlines (64 fatalities)** received about 97% more coverage than **Light Air Services (20 fatalities)**. Meanwhile, **American Bering Air (10 fatalities)** also emerged as a top contender in media attention. Notably, **Air Busan crash (0 fatalities)** attracted significant coverage, likely due to the media-friendly reputation of the Airbus aircraft involved.

The Power of Opinion-Making Sources in Airline Coverage

General annotation for all:

Opinion-Making Sources (OMS) play a crucial role in shaping public discourse about airline crashes, with their reports **widely republished** across media channels. The data shows that OMS consistently focus more on well-known airlines, further amplifying these airlines' media presence **regardless of crash severity**.



Selective Amplification

OMS **attention** is more closely tied to the global reach and **reputation** of an airline than to the crash's fatalities or severity.



Visibility Challenge

Smaller airlines struggle to gain **comparable visibility**, creating **challenges** in managing public perception and crisis communication.

In 2023, Yeti Airlines and Alaska Airlines received significant attention from OMS, despite differences in crash severity.

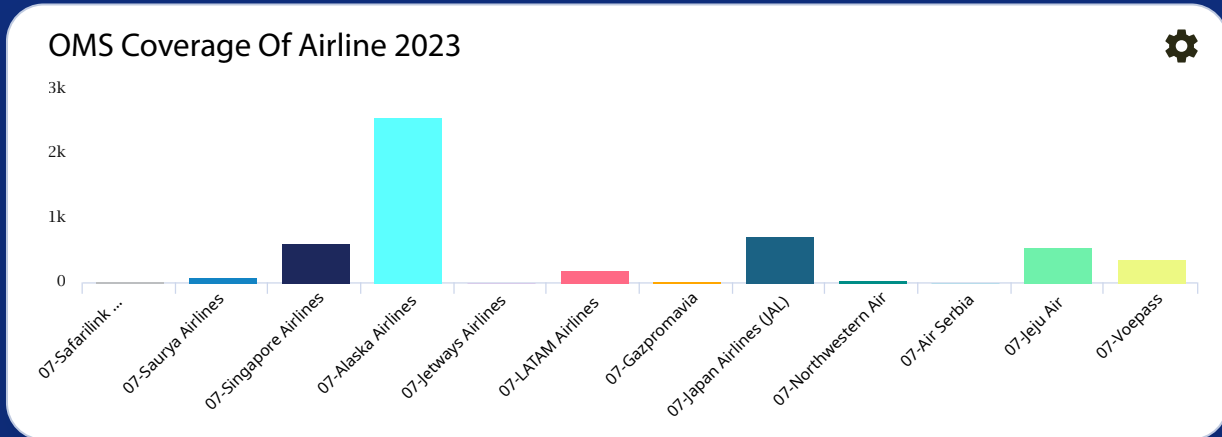


Figure 4: OMS Coverage of Airline 2023

This pattern continued in 2024, as Alaska Airlines, Japan Airlines, Jeju Air, and Singapore Airlines dominated OMS headlines.

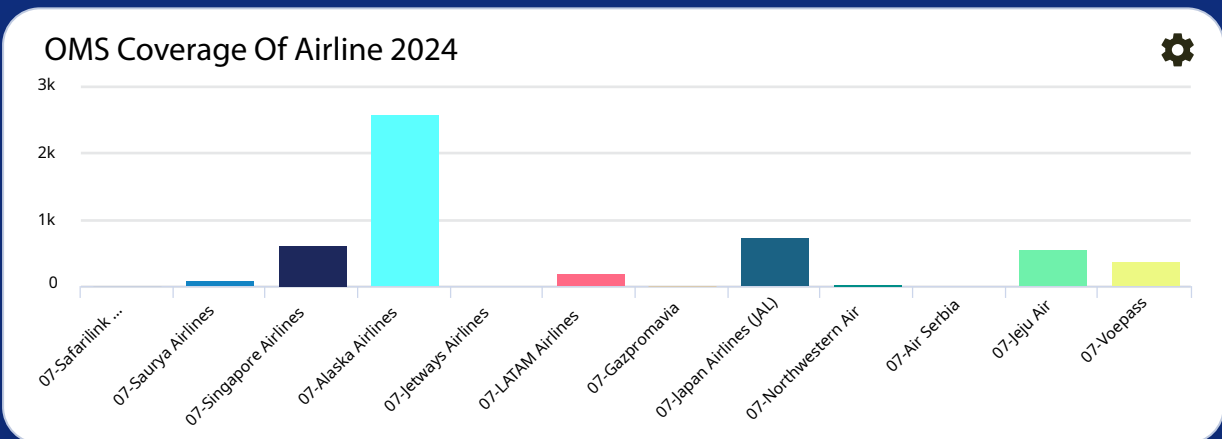


Figure 5: OMS Coverage of Airline 2024

2025 follows suit, with PSA Airlines and Bering Air gaining the most attention so far.

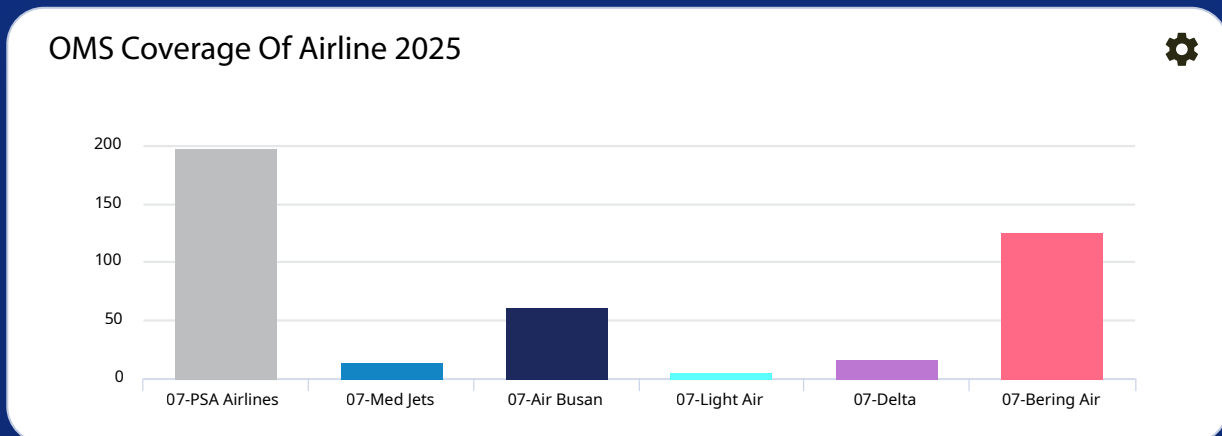


Figure 6: OMS Coverage of Airline 2025

Crash Volume Peaks and Geographic Distribution

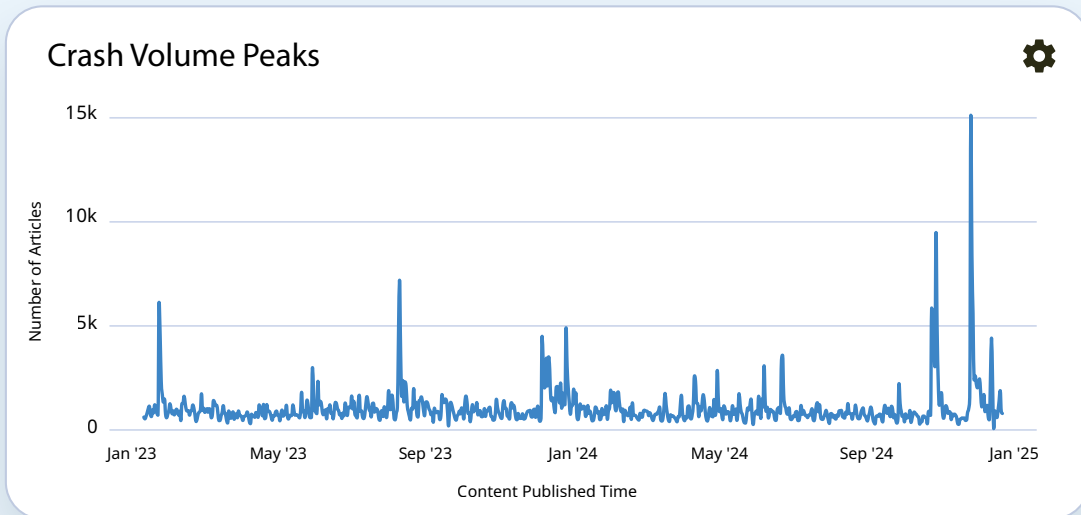


Figure 7: Crash Volume Peaks and Geographic Distribution

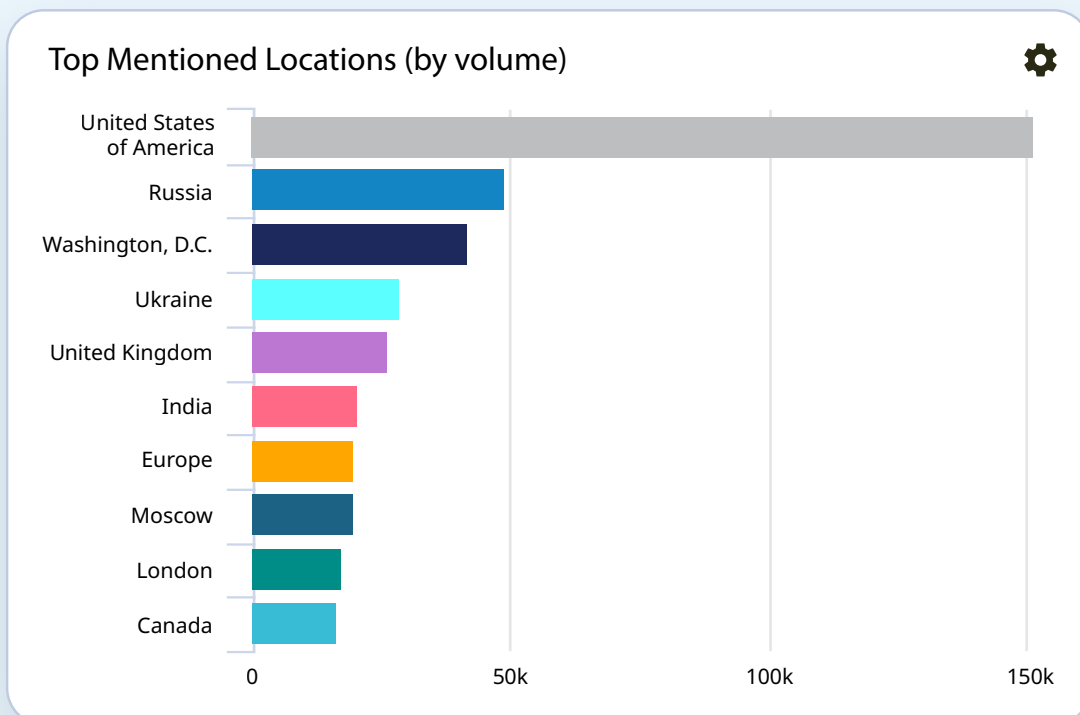
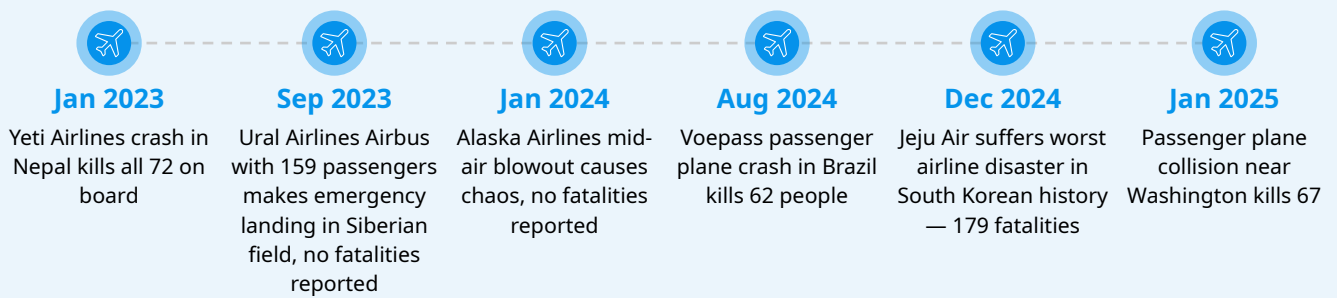


Figure 8: Top Mentioned Locations (by volume)

The **United States, Russia, Washington D.C.**, and the **United Kingdom** emerged as the most mentioned locations in aviation incident coverage from 2023 to 2025. The **US** leads not only due to its extensive aviation industry but also as the country with the highest number of fatal crashes involving major airlines. **Russia** ranks prominently with incidents such as the **Ural**

Airlines (2023) and **Gazpromavia (2024)** crashes, reflecting ongoing aviation risks. **Washington D.C.'s** prominence as a key media and regulatory hub amplifies coverage of US-related incidents. Meanwhile, the **UK**, home to major airlines and global aviation oversight, remains a focal point in aviation-related discussions.

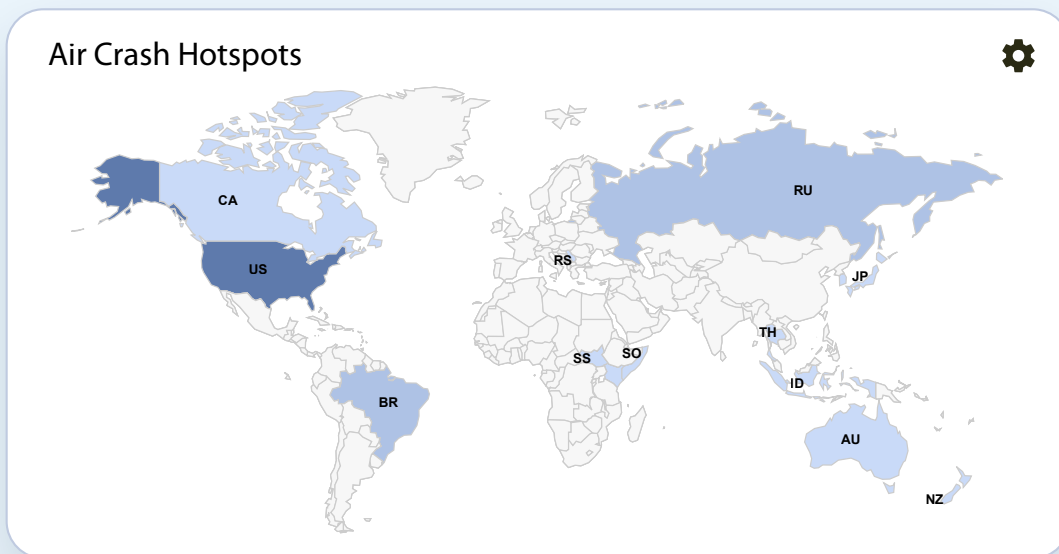


Figure 9: Air Crash Hotspots

Wing Wars: Boeing vs. Airbus in the Spotlight

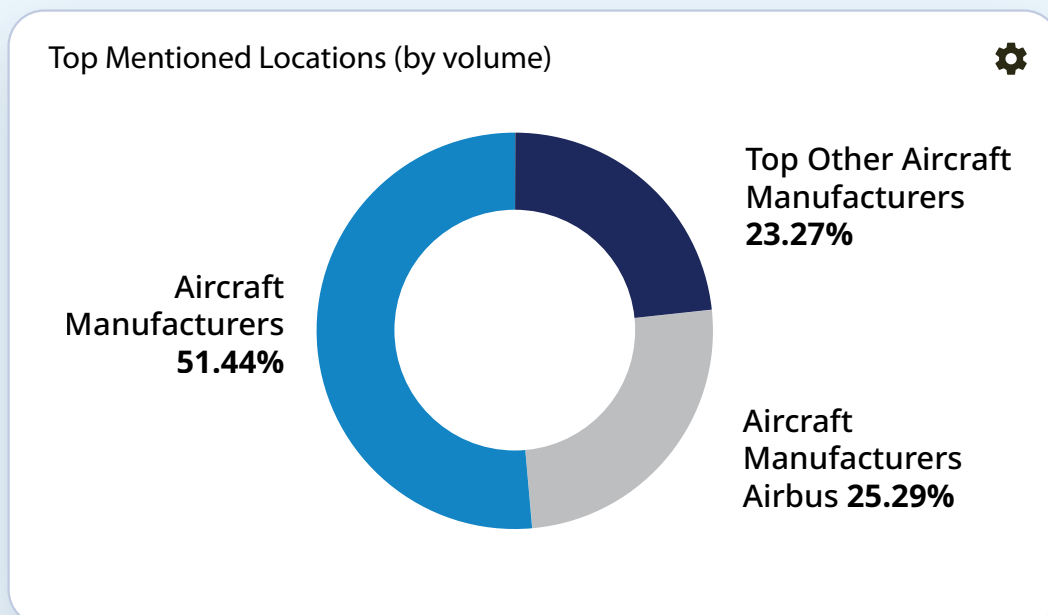


Figure 10: Wing Wars: Boeing vs. Airbus

When looking solely at media mentions of the **top airplane manufacturers** in passenger airplane crash coverage, **Boeing** and **Airbus** overwhelmingly dominate. Boeing leads with approximately **52%** of the mentions, followed by Airbus with around **25%**. Combined, they account for **77%** of the total coverage among top manufacturers. The remaining **23%** is divided among several other well-known but smaller manufacturers. This concentration reflects the significant visibility of **Boeing** and **Airbus** in crash reporting, likely due to their large global fleets and market dominance.

Leading Aircraft Manufacturers Mentions for 2023-2025

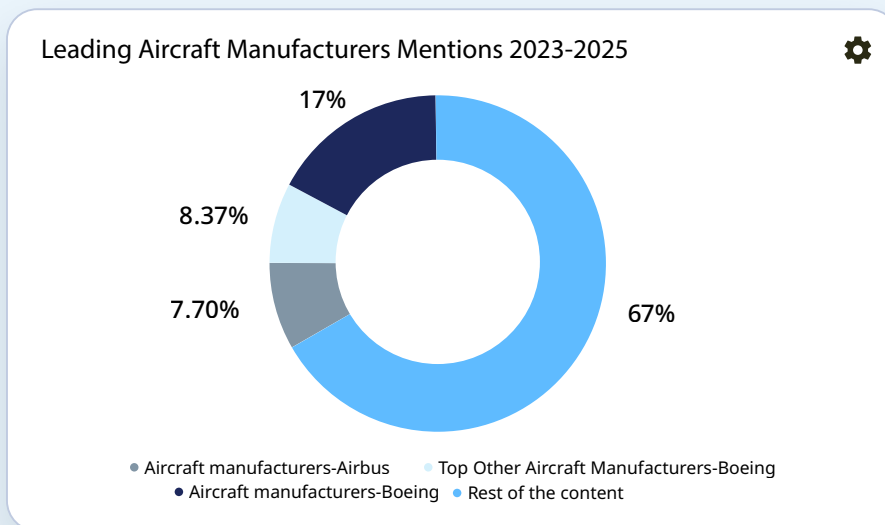


Figure 11: Leading Aircraft Manufacturers Mentions for 2023-2025

Between 2023 and 2025, the media coverage of passenger airplane crashes shows that **Boeing** was mentioned in about **17%** of reports, Airbus in approximately **8%**, and other major manufacturers in another around **8%**. Notably, about **67%** of the content did not mention a specific manufacturer or referred only to smaller, lesser-known companies.

The media’s focus on **Boeing** and **Airbus** may inadvertently shape public trust, potentially placing undue pressure on these manufacturers while overshadowing the need for a broader, more nuanced **understanding** of aviation safety across the

entire industry. This serves as a reminder that, while the giants of aviation dominate the skies, it is crucial to remain **vigilant** and critical of the **narratives** shaping our views on safety, incidents, and accountability.



Contributing Factors to Airplane Crashes

While **environmental factors** are the most commonly cited causes of passenger airplane crashes, the data also reveals that **regulatory** and **oversight issues** play a significant role. This suggests that gaps in regulation or supervision contribute notably to safety risks and deserve immediate attention. Other key factors include **mechanical failures, mid-air collisions, bird strikes, and human error.**

Although addressing mechanical problems, pilot error, and collisions remains critical, strengthening regulatory frameworks and oversight mechanisms could be vital to reducing future incidents. This combination of environmental conditions, operational factors, and regulatory oversight underscores the need for a comprehensive, systematic approach aimed at improving aviation safety.

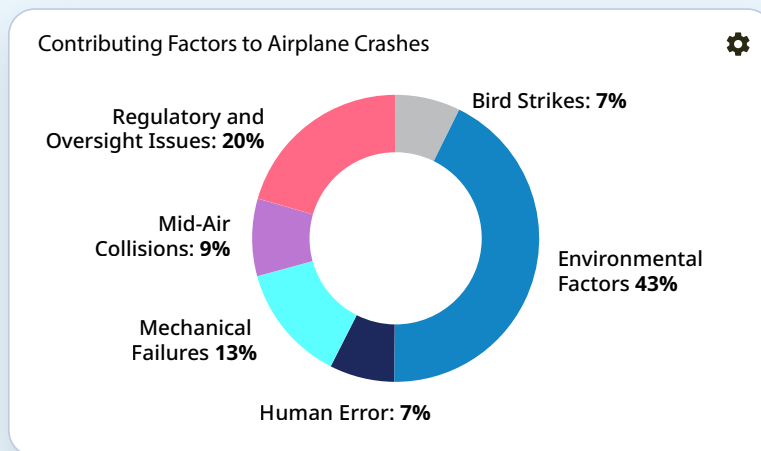


Figure 12: Contributing Factors to Airplane Crashes

Boeing vs. Airbus Mentions During Regulatory Issues

▶ In the context of regulatory and oversight issues, Boeing and Airbus have received as many mentions as their top seven competitors combined over the same period. Their mention peaks align with major crashes but also reflect broader safety concerns. Boeing’s highest spike in January 2024 corresponds to the **Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 MAX 9** door panel failure, and January-February 2025 mentions coincide with the **American Eagle mid-air collision** and **Delta Connection crash**. Airbus saw a rise in September 2023 linked to the **Ural Airlines A320** emergency landing and another in January 2025 with the **Air Busan Airbus A321-200** crash.

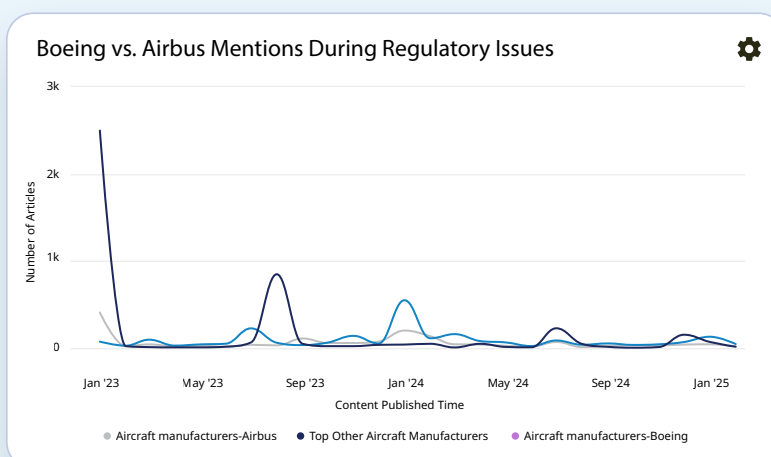
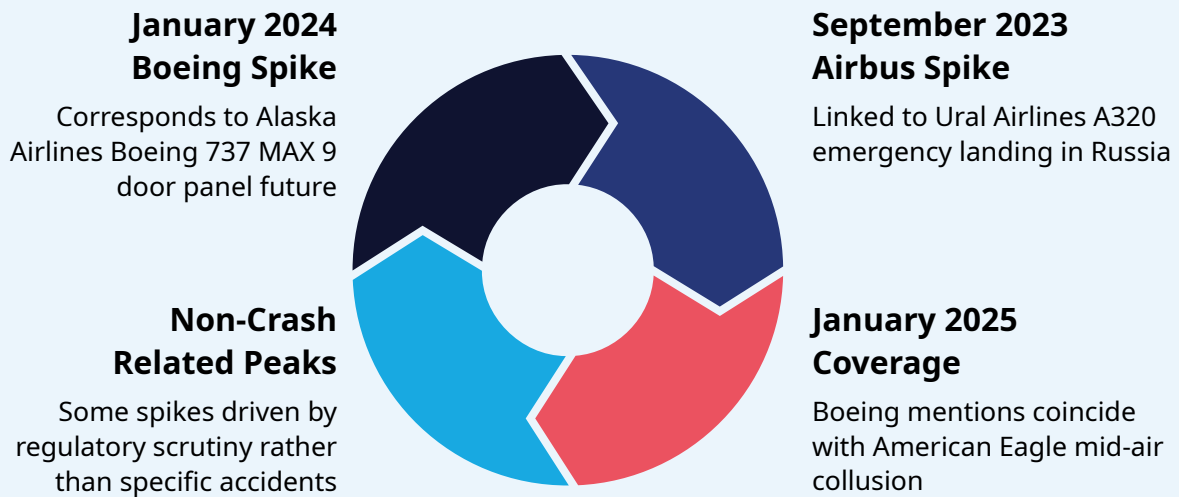


Figure 13: Boeing vs. Airbus Mentions During Regulatory Issues

- ▶ However, some peaks do not directly align with crashes, such as **Airbus’** surge in January 2023, driven by general aviation safety discussions, and **Boeing’s** spikes in July 2023 and March 2024, which are influenced by regulatory scrutiny rather than specific accidents.
- ▶ Exemplary:



CEO Responses and Media Attention

- ▶ The data reveals a clear alignment between **CEO** mentions in the media and significant aviation accidents. Executive visibility spikes following major crashes, especially those involving **commercial** airlines or **high-profile** regions.



Initial Response

CEOs make public statements immediately following crashes



Crisis Management

Media scrutinizes leadership actions and accountability



Corporate Responsibility

Long-term focus on safety improvements and policy changes

- ▶ Each crash has generated heavy media coverage, aligning with peaks in CEO mentions. Notable examples include the **Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 MAX 9 crash** on January 5, 2024, and the **PSA Airlines** crash on January 29, 2025. These incidents, along with the **Med Jets** crash on January 31, 2025, and the **Delta Connection** crash on February 10, 2025, occurred close to spikes in CEO mentions, suggesting they triggered increased media focus on their statements regarding the involved airlines.

- ▶ The spikes in **CEO** mentions demonstrate a clear alignment with the dates of significant aviation accidents, particularly those involving major crashes. In the **aftermath** of major crashes, the media often focuses on the airline's leadership, scrutinizing the actions and responses of the CEOs, especially in relation to **crisis management**, accountability, and corporate responsibility.

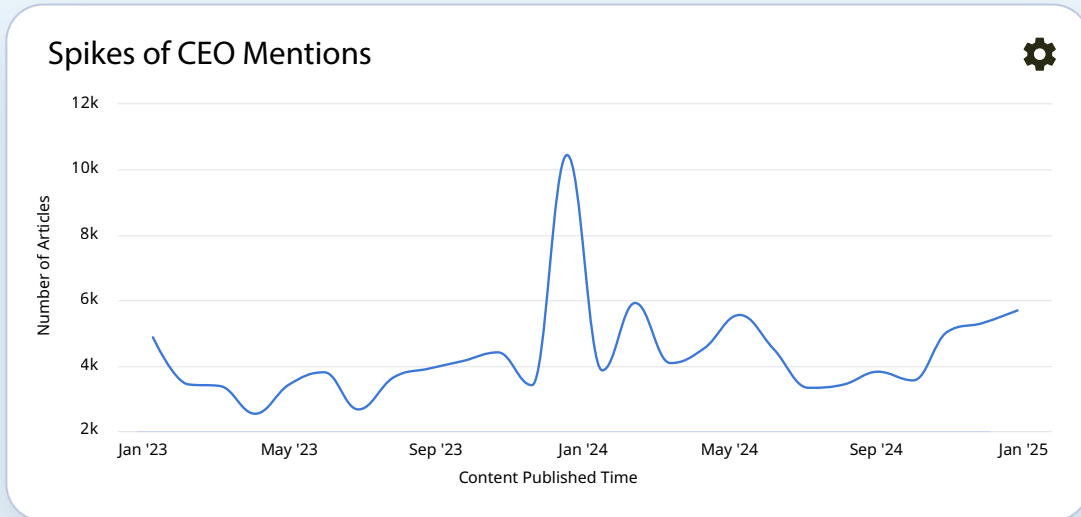


Figure 14: Spikes of CEO Mentions



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