

Consumption of current affairs information. New habits of audiences regarding the news


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Description and core topics

The widespread availability of internet-connected devices has been a key factor in the transformation of current affairs consumption across various audience segments. These changes are partly due to the broader range of information channels beyond traditional media. In the digital domain, the inclusion of news into platforms and social media (Catalina-García et al., 2021) has enhanced communication and enabled instantaneous dissemination (Aïmeur et al., 2023).

Equally noteworthy is the rise of alternative channels for news sharing through messaging apps or platforms such as Reddit, which enable users to create communities centred around aggregated news content (Mok et al., 2023). Media organisations have adapted to these new consumption patterns by producing multimedia and multichannel formats, reflecting an increasingly common media convergence (Solimani & Ahmed-Mohamed, 2024). Media outlets frequently employ strategies like mobile notifications (De Solá-Pueyo, 2023) or clickbait tactics, despite the negative impact on credibility (Kaushal & Vemuri, 2021).

While new patterns of news consumption have not yet replaced traditional ones, they are increasingly prevalent, especially among younger generations raised in hybrid media environments. This shift has led to changes in news routines and a lack of loyalty to specific media outlets (Wunderlich et al., 2022). Traditional media, particularly television, remain relevant, largely due to family and parental influence (Feio & Oliveira, 2024; Dennen et al., 2021), however social media and non-traditional sources are now the most frequently used channels (Anderson, 2025).

This broader consumption spectrum has expanded the traditional concept of news, especially among young people, who often define news as any recent information. They assign a different perspective on what makes information relevant, as it does not need to be important in general or to everyone, but rather to themselves (Swart & Broersma, 2024). They equate news with useful content, including entertainment (Wunderlich et al., 2022), and prefer very short, almost telegraphic content (Boczkowski et al., 2017) and audiovisual formats (Solimani & Ahmed-Mohamed, 2024). This has led to the emergence of new sources, such as influencers, who increasingly comment on a wide range of topics, including political and social issues (Peter & Muth, 2023).

This perception of what constitutes news and the ease of access to all types of information have led to a more global consumption pattern, with greater source diversity and interest in content beyond local contexts (Widholm, 2019). This can help audiences appreciate current affairs content and foster news sharing (Anderson, 2025). However, there are also negative consequences. On one hand, the use of a second screen may increase interest in news content but also causes fragmented attention and lower retention of information (Lowenstein-Barkai & Lev-On, 2021). On the other hand, it encourages incidental access through the “News Find Me” phenomenon, where people feel informed without actively seeking news (Gil de Zúñiga & Cheng, 2021).

Likewise, the growing concern about disinformation, mainly on social media, is also relevant (Shu et al., 2020). This is a problem exacerbated by the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (Salaverría & Cardoso, 2023). These developments are only a sample of the wide-ranging transformations in how news is consumed. Research should continue to explore these and other consequences arising from new forms of access to news, its reconceptualisation, its perception among different audiences, and the reliability of the content and the media, sources, and channels through which it is disseminated.

Therefore, this monograph invites deeper exploration of current affairs consumption habits and their implications for changing media routines. These changes have expanded the definition of news, the adaptation of traditional media, and the rise of digital platforms and social media. While this transformation has quantitatively increased access to information—through more sources and interest in content beyond geographic and temporal boundaries—it has also qualitatively affected the landscape through disinformation, declining trust in journalistic media, and a questionable self-perception among audiences, especially younger generations, but also among the adult population, about what it means to be well-informed.

Themes

- Current affairs consumption and engagement among diverse audiences.
- New media for news dissemination and adaptation of traditional media.
- Youth and news: new forms of access and avoidance.
- Algorithms and personalisation on news consumption: impacts on information plurality.
- Segmentation and specialization: their impact on current affairs consumption.
- Audience perceptions and interest in news: motivations and gratifications.
- Past and present of news reception and journalistic media use.
- Social media and other digital platforms as primary and/or secondary screens.
- Reconceptualization of news: The influence of and consumption habits.
- Consequences of new access: incidental consumption and misinformation proliferation.
- Information management among different publics: Reliability, content creation, and sharing.
- News consumption, confidence and source credibility.
- The role of emotion in the circulation and consumption of current affairs.
- News consumption and political polarization.
- News avoidance and information fatigue: strategies and behaviours.
- New digital communities around information.
- Disinformation and its management: sources and channels; opportunities and risks of AI in current affairs.
- Journalistic ¿vs.? non-journalistic information: influencers and other opinion makers.
- Social and political implications of current affairs and access of news channels.
- New and “old” methods for researching news consumption.

Keywords:

News, current affairs information, news audiences, information channels and sources, adaptation of traditional media, reconceptualisation of news, uses and risks in current information.

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