NEXT GEN NEWS 2

Anticipating the audiences of 2030 and the strategies to meet them

next-gen-news.com

FT STRATEGIES | NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY **knight lab**

Research and Writing by

Joe Germuska, Jeremy Gilbert, Fraser Harding,
Lamberto Lambertini, George Montagu

Additional Research by

Kelly Ann Coney, Karen Eisenhauer,
Liat Fainman–Adelman

(all contributors are listed alphabetically)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What we learned

Next Gen News 2 sharpens our understanding of next generation news consumers' behavior and how publishers can best meet those evolving needs. Understanding the habits and desires of next gen news consumers today helps anticipate how the majority of news consumers will behave by 2030. More than half of next gen news consumers engage with news at least daily, even though they also report feeling overwhelmed by a flood of news and information. We've found evidence of how next gen news consumers navigate a complex, fractured news ecosystem. We've also seen how successful emerging news producers meet the needs of these next gen news consumers.

We conducted quantitative and qualitative consumer research across five countries (Brazil, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States), with 1,000 people in each country. We also conducted interviews with news producers from around the world who are successfully adapting to changing consumer behaviors.

We found:
- While the news ecosystem continues to rapidly evolve, next gen news consumers remain inundated with information and crave low-friction ways to stay up to date.
- We have evolved the original framework to reflect how next gen consumers discover and engage with news. Audience members encounter news with or without intent, and they weigh it differently depending on how they received it and who sent it. When they choose to consume, they exhibit specific behaviors as they seek to contextualize, validate or understand.
- We observed that "emerging news producers"

— content developers with non-legacy entities — are embracing novel ways to attract, orient, and engage news consumers.
- We also found that next gen news consumers are consciously shaping their information environment in response to an overwhelming flow of content.
- Through interviews with entrepreneurial and successful news producers, we identify new paths for existing and aspiring news producers to connect with audiences.

The first Next Gen News report "found that young people have a complex and evolving relationship with the news. The original report can still be found at next-gen-news.com. They simultaneously understand the value that news can play in their lives but are often disinterested or frustrated with how it's being delivered to them." This remains true, and our latest research further emphasizes the importance of understanding how news is discovered and consumed. When asked if they "value news for [their] personal and professional development," 65% of next gen news consumers agreed or strongly agreed.

Next gen news consumers do not passively accept the information environment they encounter. Instead, they consciously tailor it, continuously adding and pruning to ensure they receive a personally ideal mix of sources and notifications — even if balance and moderation are not always the desired outcome. They are fully aware of the role algorithms play in surfacing information for them and often employ conscious strategies to thwart control over their information flow. Audience members act so their own information needs — and sometimes those of others — are adequately met.

Modes of Engagement

SIFT
How I discover information

Scroll
I incidentally stumble on news

Seek
I intentionally look for news

Subscribe
I directly receive news I signed up for

CONSUMPTION
What I get from information

Substantiate
I want to check the facts

Study
I want to develop my knowledge

Sensemake
I want to understand other perspectives

Socialize
I receive news and want to connect with others through sharing

We have evolved our original analysis into an expanded, deeper modes of engagement framework. The improved framework clarifies that sifting — defined as news discovery— is distinct from other, more focused modes of consumption. We break out three distinct discovery modes: Scroll, Seek and Subscribe. We also clarify that Socialization is bi-directional. While the original report focused on the impulse to share news, most next gen consumers place a high value on news from friends, family and other contacts.

We explored each of the seven modes of engagement to understand why next gen consumers engage in them and how news producers can prepare their content to meet their needs.

We identified specific ways next gen news consumers sift through information to choose when and how to go deeper. Depending on their mood and context, they encounter news as they scroll through their preferred platforms, actively seek it out, or receive it from trusted sources they subscribe to. How news reaches audiences shapes its reception, and news producers can integrate themselves into those habits.

When next gen consumers engage with a news topic or story, they often adopt one of three consumption modes: Substantiate, Study, or Sensemake.

The mode of Socialization is now better understood as bi-directional. Next gen consumers share interesting, entertaining or important news with others because others they care about share news with them. They value news received from friends, family or coworkers differently than news from strangers or news organizations.

Research at a glance

News Consumer Research
- Survey: 5,000 respondents ages 18+
- Diary study: 84 respondents ages 18–28
- News consumers vary in lifestage, socioeconomic background, education level, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and accessibility level across:
    - Brazil
    - India
    - Nigeria
    - United Kingdom
    - United States

News Producer Research
- Interviewed 19 news producers in Brazil, Denmark, India, Germany, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States

Putting the modes into action

We identified a cohort of emerging news producers who are succeeding in reaching next gen news consumers because they are perceived as more trusted and more relatable than those in legacy newsrooms. From them, we learned how successful emerging news producers can effectively insert themselves into the news discovery and engagement process by tapping into engagement modes. We anchored our selection of news producers in the modes framework from the original Next Gen News and identified where they successfully connected with next gen consumers. Most successful next generation producers specialize in a specific consumption mode — such as substantiate, sensemake or study. We ensured our sample reflected this diversity, spanning solo practitioners, mature producer-led media organizations, print/digital news producers, and tech platforms.

Instead of starting with a story and defaulting to a preset format, these producers immerse themselves in each channel's nuances and languages, developing an instinct for what works and why. Through constant testing and iterating, they discover that success is highly contextual. What sparks engagement on YouTube might fall flat on TikTok, what drives conversation on Reddit rarely thrives on Instagram, and what works in a two-person interview podcast might not translate to a Q&A-style text article. This trial-and-error process allows them to design stories that feel native to each environment rather than being retrofitted afterward. The result is a reversal of the traditional workflow; distribution, rather than an afterthought, now drives creativity.

Recommendations for news producers

Based on our research, we have developed recommendations for news producers tailored to each mode of engagement.

Scroll
I incidentally stumble on news

Seek
I intentionally look for news

Subscribe
I directly receive news I signed up for

SIFT

How I discover information

Scroll
> Package for the platform
> Select stories/ topics that break through
> Win the first two seconds

Seek
> Guide discovery
> Give control
> Personalize with purpose

Subscribe
> Sync with habits
> Build for completion

Substantiate
I want to check the facts

Study
I want to develop my knowledge

Sensemake
I want to understand other perspectives

CONSUMPTION

What I get from information

Substantiate
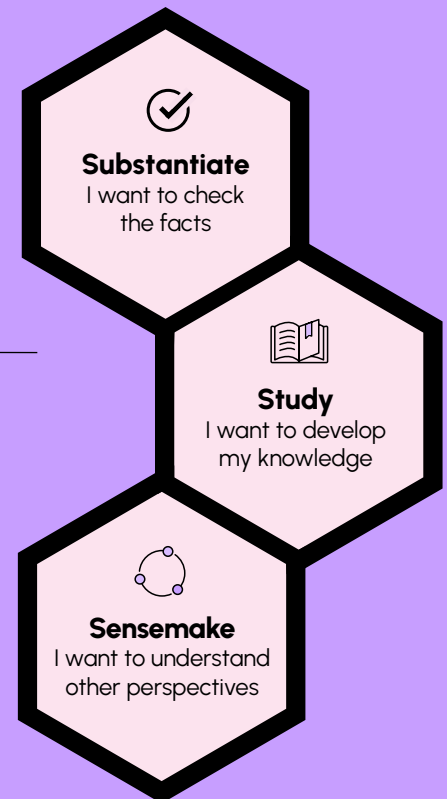> Meet your users
> Lead with facts
> Show your work

Study
> Show interest
> Go deep
> Bring it to life

Sensemake
> Create open conversations
> Orient the audience
> Include the audience
> Use satire wisely

Socialize
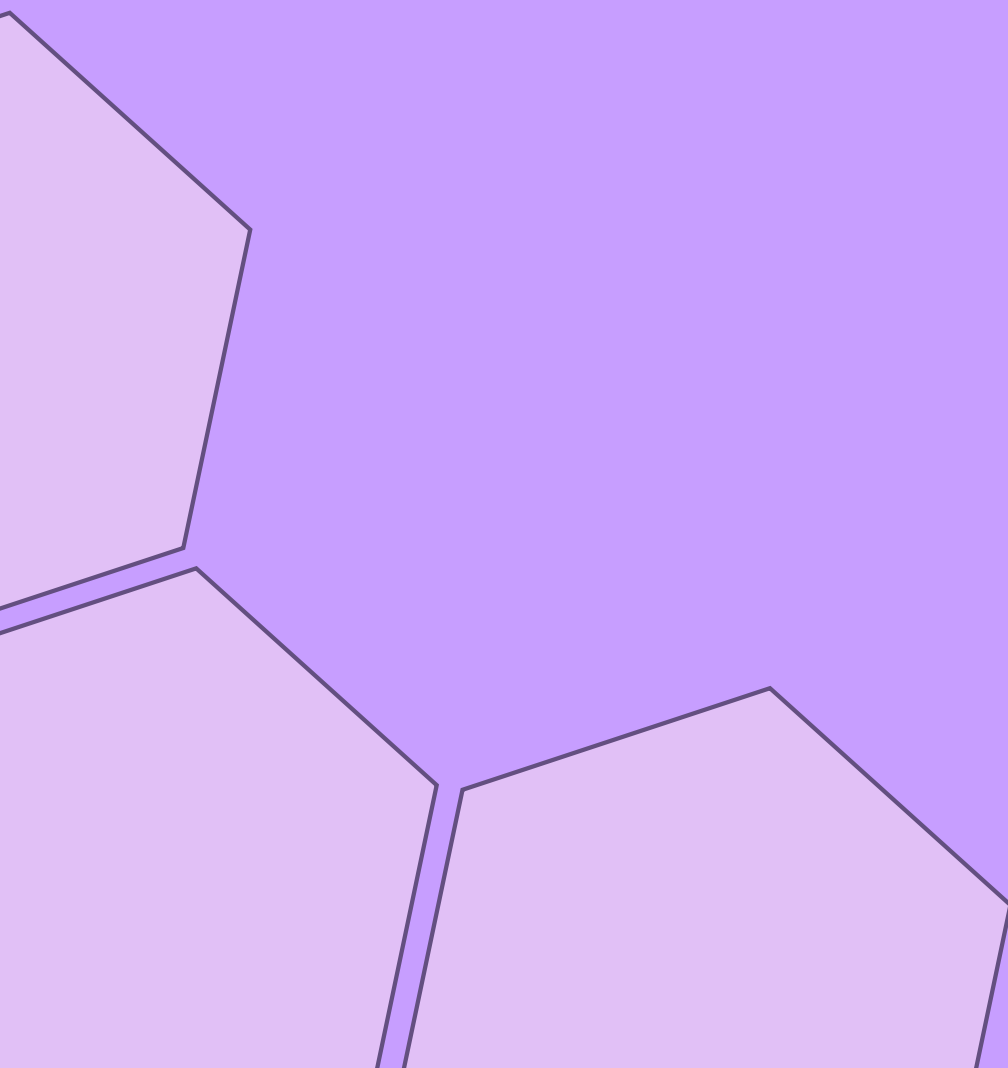I receive news and want to connect with others through sharing

> Highlight human stories

> Utilize memes for meaning and humor

> Make sharing a product feature

INSIGHTS

Next gen news consumers' habits and expectations are reshaping the information ecosystem, forcing emerging news producers to rethink long-held assumptions about how news is produced and distributed. This section distills key insights we uncovered in consumer behavior and producer innovation.

We began by mapping the audience landscape — a snapshot of how a new generation perceives and engages with news compared to their older counterparts. Their habits are shaped by abundance and fragmentation. We see some early signs pointing to the subtle but growing influence of AI on their information routines, from discovery to consumption, signaling a new layer of complexity in how audiences navigate truth, relevance and overload.

Half of the next gen audience reports consuming news at least daily; one-third reports doing so multiple times per day. But that commitment does not change the fact that they feel continuously overwhelmed by the amount of news they encounter or think they should know about. Despite other research showing the rise of news deserts and the decline of legacy news media, news consumers struggle far more to make their information diet manageable than they ever worry about decreasing access to news.

In part, this reflects a broader definition of news to next gen audiences. To them:
- It contains civic information
- It has a personal impact
- It is "what everyone is talking about"
- It is entertaining and non-fiction

This increased scope of what news is spotlights what this audience sees as a constant competition for their attention. The sense of overwhelm they feel reflects that they do not measure news content quality in the same ways that legacy news consumers do. These younger audiences rely on trust and affinity as key filters to overcome their news fatigue. Trust is less about institutional brands and more about a parasocial relationship with the news producer. These perspectives reveal a generation not disengaged, but discerning. They are seeking clarity, transparency, and authenticity from the news they consume.

These next gen consumers are aware of the algorithms that shape how information reaches them. They talk about the need to mind and manage algorithms through specific actions, such as the speed at which they scroll, the choices about what and how deeply to engage, and when to "like" or "favorite" specific content. AI is increasingly part of next gen consumers' media diets. A few of our diary study participants cited large language model (LLM) chatbots as one of their news sources, though our survey results showed notably different adoption rates across countries.

The most forward-thinking news producers and innovative news organizations are evolving their practices to meet this new landscape. These best-in-class producers are fundamentally reversing the journalism process – starting from distribution, mastering the languages of each platform, and designing content that travels natively across each ecosystem. From this, one imperative emerges: To succeed, producers must invest heavily in new distribution capabilities. The ability to reach and engage audiences is no longer a downstream function of good journalism; it is a core creative and strategic competency. Innovative producers recognize this and react by building teams, tools, and partnerships dedicated to ensuring that their work finds a receptive audience.

Audience Landscape

To ground NGN2's insights in a shared baseline, we mapped the audience landscape using a 21-question survey of 5,000 respondents aged 18–101 (1,000 each from Brazil, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States). We conducted an in-depth, two-week diary study with more than 80 young adults in the same countries who were asked to document their daily media usage.

A clear tension emerged: next gen audiences regularly encounter news and even seek it out, but still feel overwhelmed by its constant presence. Nearly 54% of young people across the surveyed countries agreed that "keeping up with the news should not take up very much time." To counter the flood of information, they employ a range of strategies, including taking breaks, deleting apps and turning off notifications. But when they encounter information that they care about, they engage. More than 65% responded that "when a topic interests [them], [they] prefer an in-depth story to a summary."

We observed a broader shift, as next gen consumers' habits are shaped by both an abundance of news and the fragmentation of the news ecosystem. There are early signs that AI is a subtle but growing force in news discovery and comprehension. For some, AI is complicating the search for truth and relevance; for others, it's a key tool for complementary news research.

Finally, when comparing news consumers across countries, there are important differences in perceptions of news and its health.

Younger audiences are not disengaged from news, but balance regular use with selective avoidance

Despite persistent perceptions that young people avoid or ignore news, our survey finds substantial engagement from next gen news consumers: across all five countries, 55% of respondents younger than 25 engage with news at least daily. In Brazil, the share for that age group was 63%. Among respondents aged 25 and older, the share of daily news consumers was approximately 75% in all countries except the United States, where it was just more than 68%.

Compared to survey respondents of other ages, next gen news consumers do not stand out for how often they avoid news. In Brazil, India, and the United Kingdom, we observed a distinctly lower share of young people generally avoiding news "often" or "sometimes" compared to older cohorts in the same country.

< SEE CHARTS 1 + 2 >

CHART #1

Most young people encounter news at least daily

Share of each age group consuming news at least 'once a day':

Legend: <25 | 25-50 | 50+

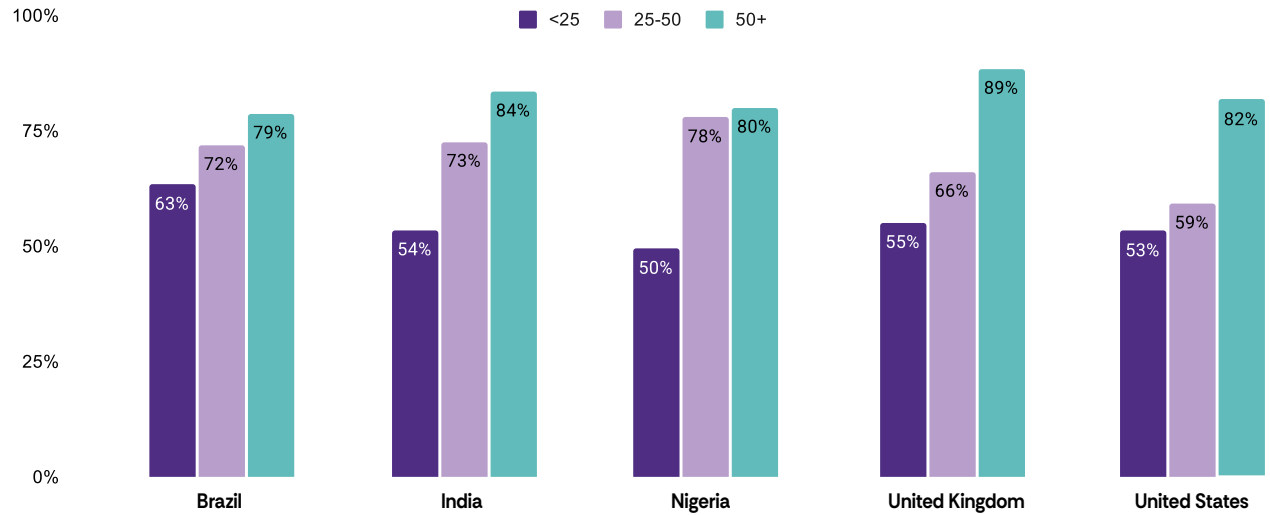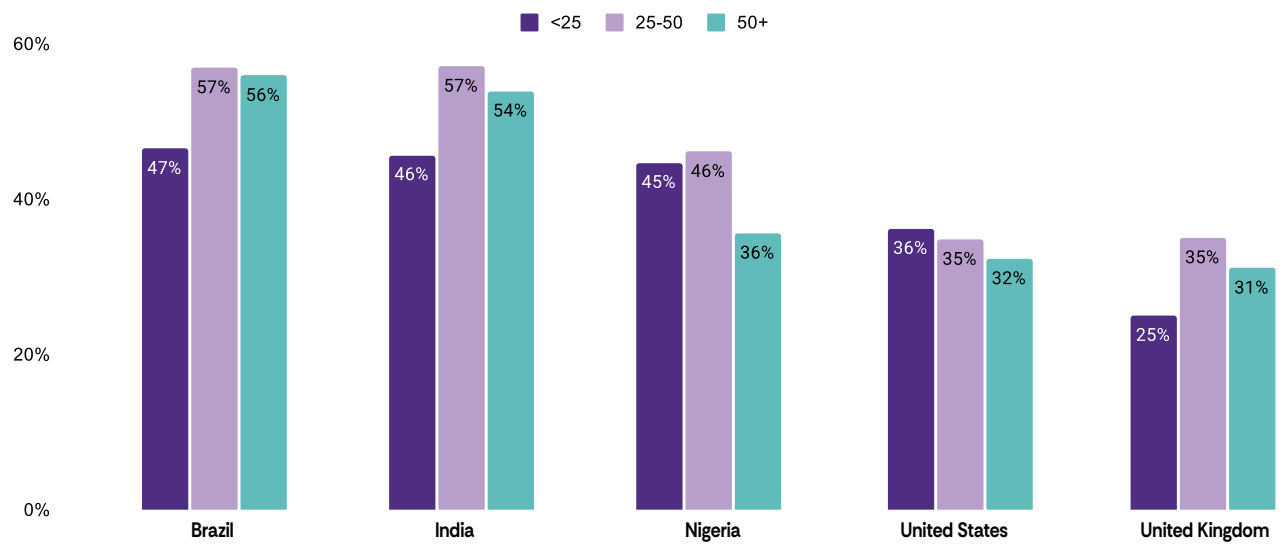| Country	<25	25-50	50+
Brazil	63%	72%	79%
India	54%	73%	84%
Nigeria	50%	78%	80%
United Kingdom	55%	66%	89%
United States	53%	59%	82%

CHART #2

Young people are not generally trying to avoid news

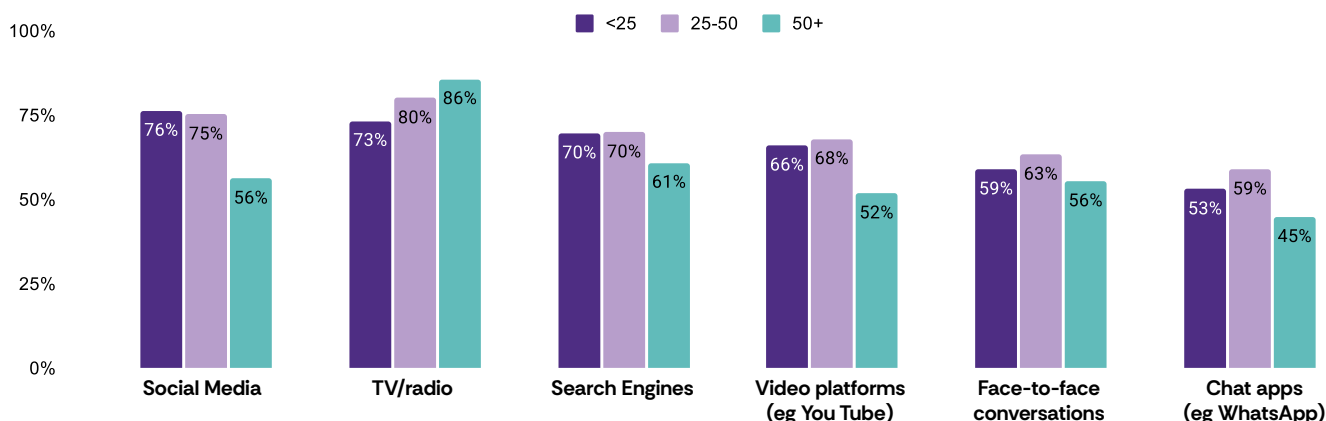Share of respondents who actively try to avoid news at least 'sometimes':

Legend: <25 | 25-50 | 50+

Country	<25	25-50	50+
Brazil	47%	57%	56%
India	46%	57%	54%
Nigeria	45%	46%	36%
United States	36%	35%	32%
United Kingdom	25%	35%	31%

INSIGHTS

CHART #3

Top six news sources for next gen consumers

Where respondents go to access news at least 'sometimes':

Legend: ■ <25 ■ 25-50 ■ 50+

	Social Media	TV/radio	Search Engines	Video platforms (eg You Tube)	Face-to-face conversations	Chat apps (eg WhatsApp)
<25	76%	73%	70%	66%	59%	53%
25-50	75%	80%	70%	68%	63%	59%
50+	56%	86%	61%	52%	56%	45%

Social platforms dominate news discovery for younger audiences, while broadcast remains central for older ones

The primary source of news differs across age groups but not across locations. For next gen audiences and a larger share of middle-aged news consumers, social media is the most frequent source of news discovery. Older audiences turn to broadcast media. For our youngest and middle-aged audience members, search engines and video platforms are nearly as widely-used as social media.

< SEE CHART 3 >

Perceptions of whether news is better or worse than the past vary sharply by country, not by age alone
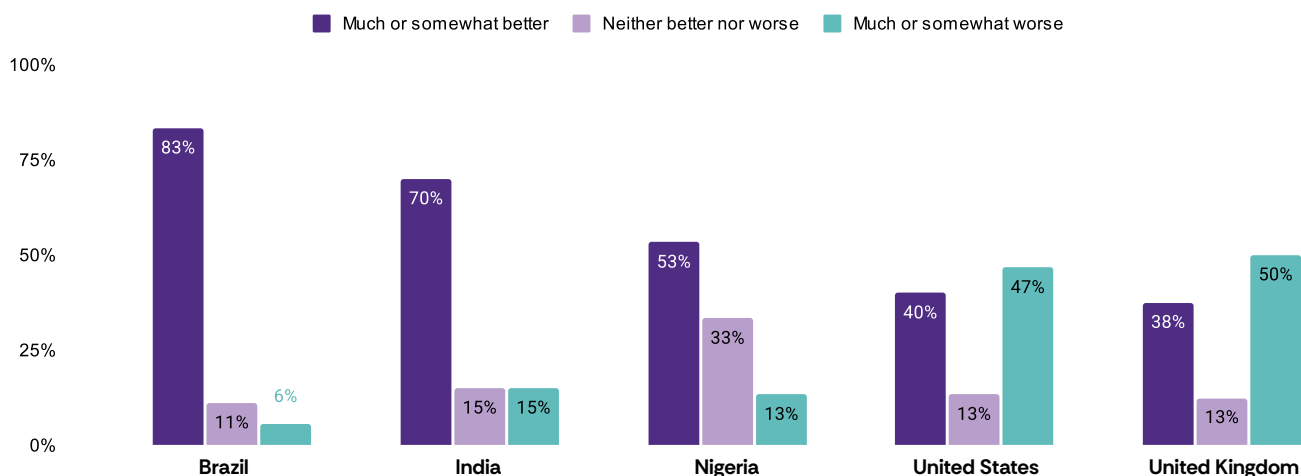
When next gen diary study participants were asked whether the news media are better or worse than they were 30 years ago, we observed significant differences across countries. More than half of the respondents selected "much better off" or "somewhat better off." In India and Brazil, 70% or more answered *somewhat* or *much better off*. Of those, most answered "much better off." This stands in sharp contrast to United States and United Kingdom respondents, among whom fewer than 15% chose much better off, and around half chose *somewhat* or *much worse off*. Nigerian respondents were in between but still mostly positive.

< SEE CHART 4 >

CHART #4

Geography, not age, determines whether news media seem better or worse off than 30 years ago

Share of respondents ages 18–28 assessing changes in the news media:

■ Much or somewhat better ■ Neither better nor worse ■ Much or somewhat worse

	Brazil	India	Nigeria	United States	United Kingdom
Much or somewhat better	83%	70%	53%	40%	38%
Neither better nor worse	11%	15%	33%	13%	13%
Much or somewhat worse	6%	15%	13%	47%	50%

When asked why they answered as they did, respondents, regardless of their choice, widely cited the increase in available sources. The increased number and diversity of sources were positive in some cases — providing greater access to different points of view — but negative in others — making it more difficult to trust these news sources. Respondents say:

"Information is much more accessible than 30 years ago but with that comes a set of 'problems'/difficulties such as fake news and the manipulation of news for bad intentions. Another difficulty is that perhaps education hasn't fully adapted to the new technologies making a generation that sometimes struggles to identify what news are real and which are not."

Paula B
UK

"...News is much more accessible and diverse now than it was 30 years ago. With the internet and social media, we can get real-time updates from different perspectives all over the world. There is more accountability as mistakes get called out faster and there is more pressure to be transparent."

Dev K
India

Additionally, regardless of their value judgments, respondents frequently cited concerns about misinformation, negativity and bias.

"I feel there is always an agenda being pushed, and the language used is cleverly done so [as] to sow fear and confusion in the average person."

Savio F
UK

CHART
#5

Getting news from AI varies widely by country

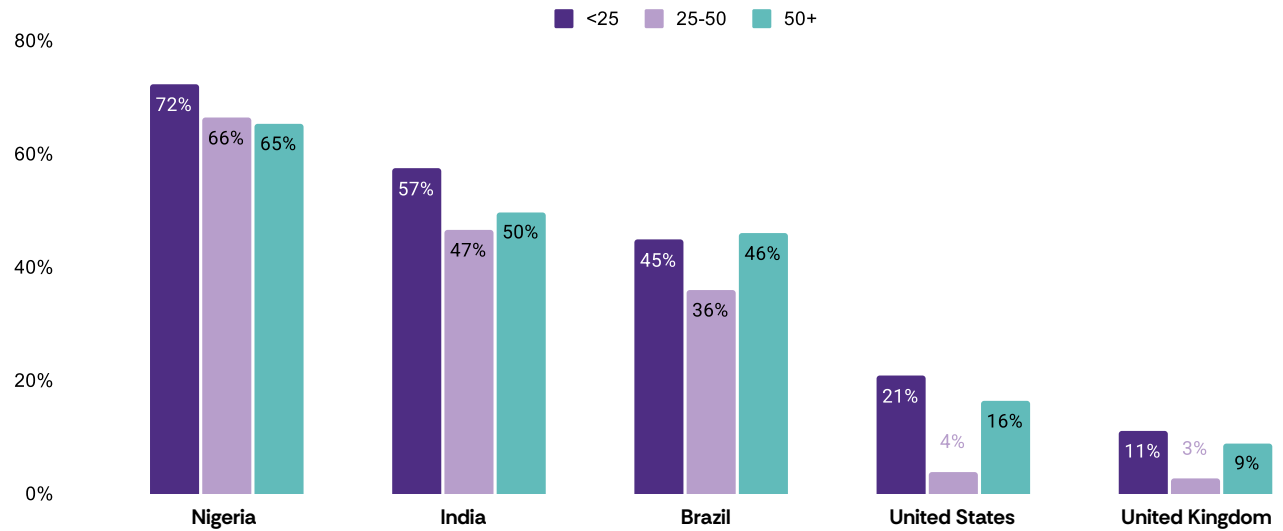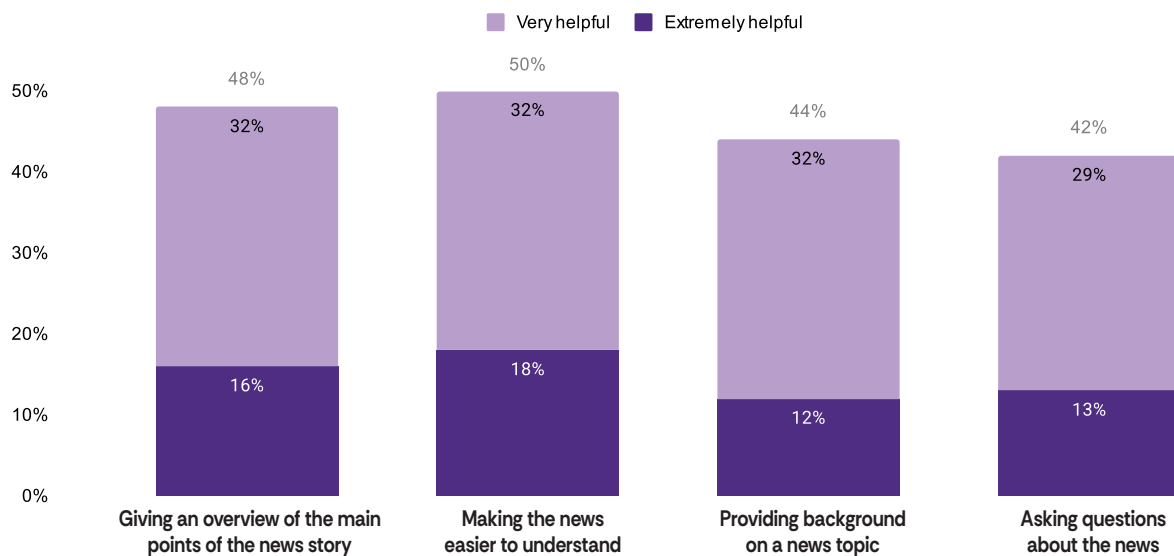Share of respondents who get news from AI at least 'sometimes':

Legend: ■ <25 ■ 25-50 ■ 50+

Country	<25	25-50	50+
Nigeria	72%	66%	65%
India	57%	47%	50%
Brazil	45%	36%	46%
United States	21%	4%	16%
United Kingdom	11%	3%	9%

CHART
#6

Many next gen consumers find AI helpful for news

Share of respondents under the age of 25 who believe AI is either 'extremely helpful' or 'very helpful' for news consumption:

Legend: ■ Very helpful ■ Extremely helpful

	Total	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
Giving an overview of the main points of the news story	48%	32%	16%
Making the news easier to understand	50%	32%	18%
Providing background on a news topic	44%	32%	12%
Asking questions about the news	42%	29%	13%

"I find media now really oversells a story or makes it 10x more dramatic in order to keep attention. The media has always been one for fear mongering but I find it is more prevalent now."

Morgan F
UK

Use and acceptance of AI for news varies widely

Artificial intelligence was not a significant factor in the underlined original Next Gen News research. Today it is clear that AI is already a core part of some news consumer's habits and certain to increase in prominence and importance over the next five years.

Openness to AI

One notable pattern in our survey was the consistently more positive responses about AI among Nigerian respondents. Participants from the United States and United Kingdom were notably more skeptical.

We asked survey respondents, "How often do you get news from these sources," with a list of 16 sources, including *Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity)*. Just more than 33% of all Nigerian respondents — the largest share — told us they often receive news from AI programs. For Nigerians younger than 25 years old, the share was nearly 40%. In contrast, fewer than 5% of United States and United Kingdom respondents reported often getting news from AI programs.

< SEE CHART 5 >

When audiences use AI for news, they treat it as a support for understanding — not a trusted authority

Some of the diary study participants reported making AI a part of their more active news consumption, using AI chat tools to learn more about a subject or assist in their learning about a new topic.

"Usually I start off with a simple Google search and gain a little bit of an insight about things then if I still wanna continue to understand it further I go to ChatGPT or an AI assistant as they can help you with my query very efficiently however I do doublecheck what they tell me as sometimes they can get things wrong."

Ayoub A
UK

"Every single time I go [to] ChatGPT or Copilot to inform me about a new situation in the world, I find I have to fact check it. … I will literally just go online and just go do my own research instead of just believing people online because sometimes they just not even been telling the truth most of the time."

Dionna
US

Some younger users are more willing to ask AI about news than people, but this comfort is not universal.

Generally, younger news consumers believe AI can help them understand news. It was seen as especially helpful in offering overviews and helping them understand news events.

< SEE CHARTS 6 + 7 >

CHART #7

Comfort with asking AI questions about news varies widely

Share of respondents who agree that they feel more comfortable asking an AI tool questions about news than a person:
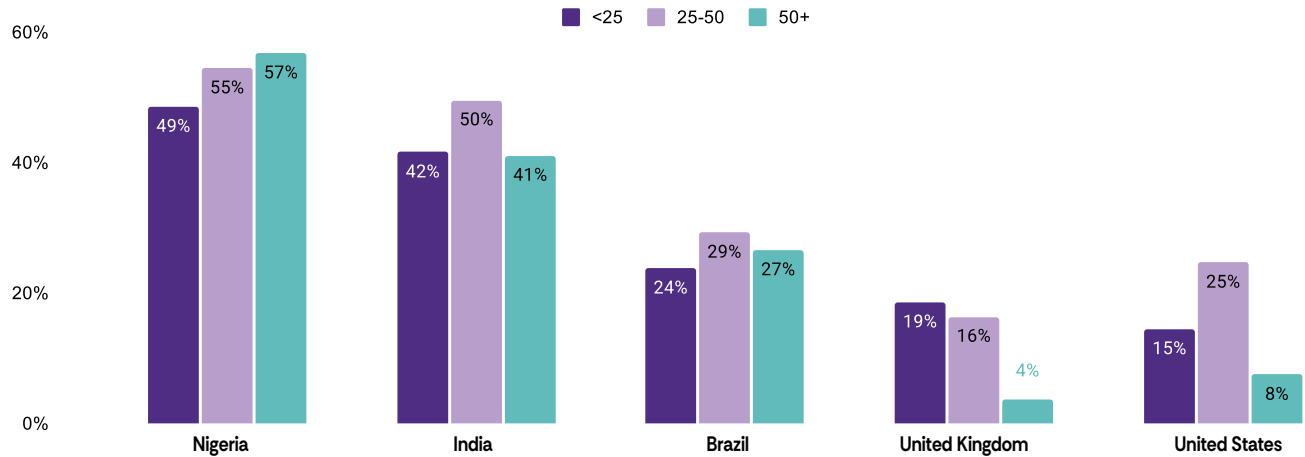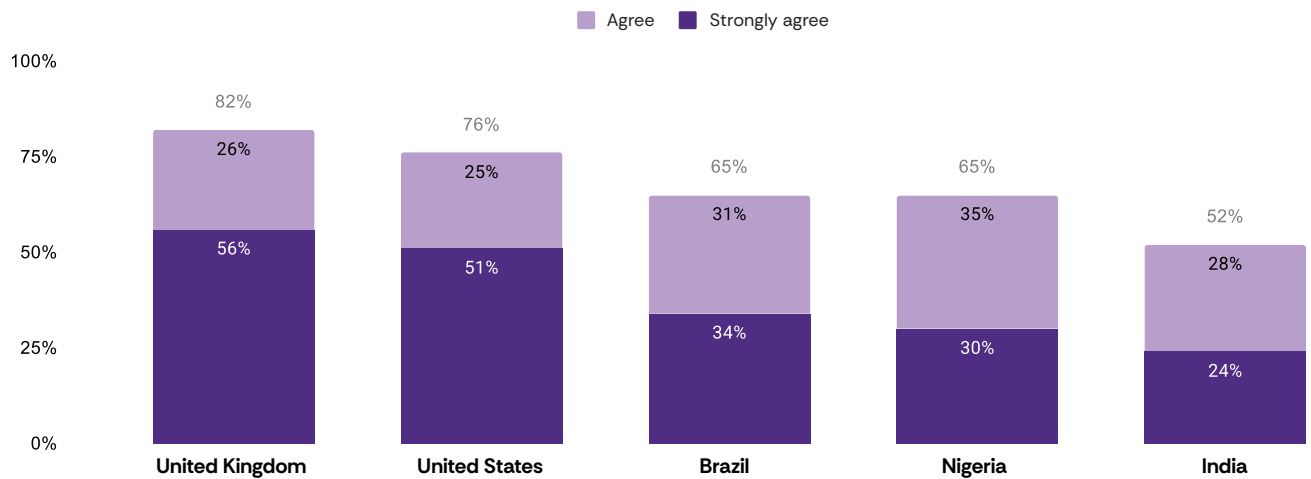
Legend: ■ <25 ■ 25-50 ■ 50+

	Nigeria	India	Brazil	United Kingdom	United States
<25	49%	42%	24%	19%	15%
25-50	55%	50%	29%	16%	25%
50+	57%	41%	27%	4%	8%

CHART #8

Next gen consumers prefer news created by humans over AI

Share of respondents under the age of 25 who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they value human–created news more than AI-generated news content:

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

	United Kingdom	United States	Brazil	Nigeria	India
Total	82%	76%	65%	65%	52%
Agree	26%	25%	31%	35%	28%
Strongly agree	56%	51%	34%	30%	24%

A similarly broad gap can be seen in responses to the statement, "I feel more comfortable asking questions about news to an AI tool than a person." Nearly half of Nigerian respondents younger than 25 agree or strongly agree with the statement. In contrast, fewer than a fifth of United Kingdom respondents feel more comfortable asking AI, and the share was even smaller in the United States.

Even as AI enters news workflows, audiences consistently prefer news created by humans

Even young news consumers expressed a clear preference for human-created news. A majority of respondents across all age groups and countries agree or strongly agree with the statement, "I value human-created news more than AI-generated news content." Here too, respondents from the United States and the United Kingdom expressed markedly greater resistance to AI than those from the other countries we surveyed.

‹ SEE CHART 8 ›

Content Overwhelm

A substantial number of our diary study respondents described their news experience as overwhelming:

"One of the biggest challenges for me when trying to stay informed is the fact that there's just so much content out there. I sometimes don't even know where to start."

Hedavam S
US

"One of the biggest challenges I face in staying informed is dealing with the information overload. There is so much news out there from so many sources, and it can get overwhelming. It's also hard sometimes to figure out which sources to trust, like, which one is authentic, especially with misinformation spreading quickly online."

Dev K
India

Our analysis revealed that a feeling of overwhelm may be the result of broad shifts in how news is produced and delivered.

News was...	Now, news is...
finite / "finishable"	infinite / unfinishable
defined by news organizations and broadcasters	defined by consumers
recognizable based on familiar formats and styles	often delivered in the same forms and styles as many other kinds of content

Finite content → infinite stream

News formats used to be stable and distinctive. Whether it was a newspaper, a magazine or an evening broadcast, the news existed in a finite package or period of time that consumers could opt in to or out of. Stable formats gave consumers clear signals about where to invest their attention and how much attention was required to feel like an informed citizen.

Today, news is pervasive, embedded in many forms of entertainment and information gathering — from social media and short-form video content to search engines. It is no longer easy or even possible to opt in or out of news; it is always potentially right around the corner.

"[There's] just too much information. I mean, you can't even scroll through, like, like, Instagram or TikTok or open up a media app without just all sorts of different news outlets saying completely different things."
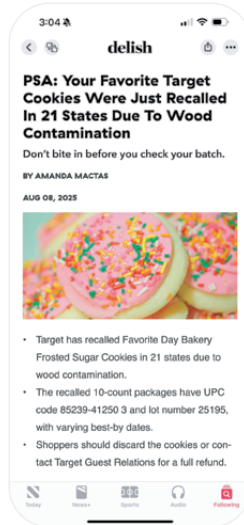
Jeffrey A
US
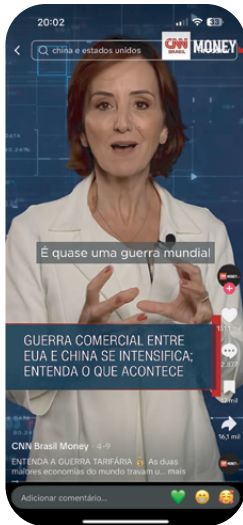
Pedro L. (Brazil) believes this story about the intensifying trade ward between the US and China is news because it is civically relevant on an international scale, and he believes it's important to stay informed.

Estazia A (US) considers this news because it personally impacts her daily life, since she lives in one of these states and frequently shops at Target.
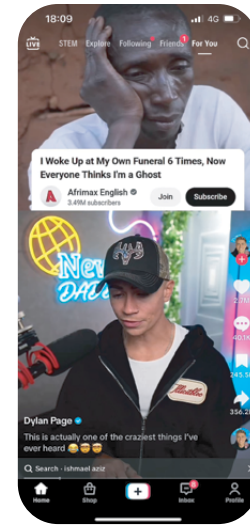
Daniel G (UK) defines this story as news because it's non-fiction, but otherwise treats it as entertainment content.

"I think for me the biggest challenge to stay informed is just the amount of media that I can consume and can find in different channels. It's hard to sort them out and to understand what to pay attention to and what to not… just because there's so much available on the platforms."

Medina B
UK

The volume of content far exceeds that of traditional news producers. A 2016 article in *The Atlantic* reported that *The New York Times* produced approximately 230 pieces of content per day on average; *The Washington Post*, more than 500 per day. Although updated statistics are difficult to ascertain, the quantity produced from even one news outlet far outpaces a single reader's capacity.

With news as a near-endless well of information, consumers must decide what their "appropriate" amount of consumption is. Some study participants express anxiety that they are not consuming enough, leaving them feeling uninformed or concerned that they are missing something important. Others are worried they are consuming more news than their mental health can handle. Both groups are struggling to answer the same question: When is enough, enough?

"I think my biggest challenge is, you know, every day you get a lot of information. …you get unnecessary information that you don't need."

Mithil S
US

"For me, the biggest challenge is the quantity of news we have access to. There are hundreds of news stories every day at city, state, national, and international levels, in different areas like culture, politics, and economy. It is difficult to follow all of them."

Maria Eduarda A
Brazil

Narrow, news organization-defined boundaries of news → Broad, consumer-defined boundaries of news

In our first report, we stated that:

> *Young news consumers… feel that anything can be categorized as news so long as it's of interest to the audience. Ultimately, consumers, rather than editors, will decide what is newsworthy given that "The distribution of power within news has changed from producers to audiences. … Therefore, what the news will look like in 2030 is what the audience wants and needs in 2030."*

This more detailed look into young consumers confirms and expands our previous findings. There is no consensus criterion for what makes information "news" — certainly not one that aligns with the traditional idea of "hard news" as defined by traditional news producers.

Concrete examples of news collected from young consumers in our data ranged from classic civic-minded headlines and personally meaningful updates on hobbies or careers to simple human-interest narratives with high entertainment value. Respondents say:

"When it comes to news, I am looking for relatable stories about things I care about, family, children, daycares, health and wellness, medicine, new discoveries, the vaccine industry, government updates, real-life stories…"

My'Asia C
US

Varying definitions complicate the choice of when and how to opt into news content. The same consumer's preference on how and when to get community updates may differ from his or her preference on personally meaningful information or entertaining human interest content. Creating a single solution or choosing a single trusted source to meet all these preferences is extremely challenging. Instead, consumers cobble together their own consumption strategies, individually defining what constitutes news and finding sources and mediums to match.

Recognizable quality markers → flattened formats

To further complicate the landscape, many traditional markers of news quality and prestige have been blurred. In the past, the difference between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, the paper and print quality of magazines, and the tone of voice and language of broadcasters determined whether a news source was legitimate and relevant. Now, many of these markers are gone.

Most consumption happens on screens, and, for the younger-than-25 cohort, often in social media applications where only the display name and a tiny avatar may perhaps distinguish professional news producers from everyone else. Beyond social media, barriers to information distribution have disappeared, leading to a news boom that fills aggregators, email inboxes, and podcast feeds with information vying for consumers' focus.

Traditional news organizations often use attention-grabbing strategies to cut through the noise, but young consumers are uncomfortable with this trend. They know they are the prize in a fierce competition for engagement and are wary of techniques that may be used to capture their attention.

"My biggest challenge when it comes to staying informed is trying to find actual news of substance between the noise (all the ads/content competing for your attention on social media), and believing/spreading misinformation."

Adaeze
Nigeria

"I think for me the biggest challenge to stay informed is just the amount of media that I can consume and can find in different channels. It's hard to sort them out and to understand what to pay attention to, and more, what to not... just because there's so much available on the platforms."

Medina B
UK

"Even the smallest of news channels are able to post information or post news on the Internet, which makes it slightly difficult for people to, you know, figure out what is reliable news, what is the true news, and what's not."

Abijeet P
India

"I'd say the biggest challenge for me when trying to stay informed about the news is finding the right articles, what you want to know about. So because there's all these different platforms, and you can't trust them all apart from news websites and watching the news on TV."

Skye J
UK

This battle for attention has eliminated many traditional markers of trustworthiness, and consumer skepticism devalues those that remain. The result is that external quality control is difficult to come by. The news landscape feels overwhelming and confusing, with few signposts; as such, young consumers must chart their own path. And they do.

Trusted Sources

Modern consumer skepticism

In our previous research, we uncovered young consumers' heavy reliance on information from sources they trust and that the modern landscape has "made it more complex for younger consumers to assess trustworthy news." Our updated data supports and extends this insight. Indeed, a variety of factors already outlined have produced a generation that is highly skeptical of news.

Consumers worry that:

- **Their news will be non-factual or non-substantiated**
  Consumers fear the news they see will be about events that never occurred. The advent of AI–generated images and videos has considerably heightened this fear.
- **The story will be sensationalized**
  Consumers worry that a minor story may be blown out of proportion or that the language used will push emotional engagement over truth. They fear clickbait–like headlines that do not have their best interest at heart.
- **The interpretation will be biased**
  The most nuanced concern is that news organizations have ulterior motives and present information in a partial or biased manner. Consumers worry about being manipulated for political or financial gain and about their own views being misrepresented unfairly.

Young consumers are on guard against these concerns when reading news and are exhausted by the skepticism required in this political landscape. Trust in news organizations is desired but difficult to find. Respondents say:

"With the rise of social media ... I find media now really oversells a story or makes it 10x more dramatic in order to keep attention. ... with the rise in polarizing political beliefs, it's hard to find media that is completely unbiased."

Morgan F
UK

"Many news sites today are also owned by people who have clear partisan interests, which bleeds into reporting."

Audrey W
US

"There's so much information that it's hard to know whether it's true or false; [it] spreads quickly, and public trust in traditional news has dropped because people are divided into opposite sides and headlines are often exaggerated to grab attention."

Tanya S
India

Defining trust in news organizations

In our previous Next Gen News study, we found that while young news consumers do not have a singular defined means of establishing trust, they weigh three important subfactors when considering a source:

Credibility
The source knows the topic, and I can count on it
Determined through reputation, personal expertise with the news producer and/or open admission of previous errors

Affinity
I feel connected to them
Determined through authentic personality, interpersonal connection and connection with the wider community

Transparency of intention
I understand their motives
Determined by transparent, slow, thoughtful communication, disclosure of funding and inclusion of a variety of sources

"These days, there is a lot of misinformation that's spread around, and people in power take advantage of it and bend the narrative. Political influence is happening in the news. So, we can't trust it because it's very polarized. That's there. And, also, not focusing on the main issues and focusing on unnecessary headlines, something that's not important but very entertaining … you know, to get the views."

Nikhil S
UK

"I think that the biggest challenge with news these days is knowing what's real and what's not. There's obviously a lot of misinformation on places like TikTok, which is kind of one of the primary places I might get news from. Not even if I'm looking for it, like, it will just come up on my "for you" page. But you'll see something and you'll think, I don't really think that that's right. A way to overcome it is to just kind of look into it yourself to see if you can find the right answer, like, through Google, but then even there, you just never know if what you're hearing is true."

Lily G
UK

"It is really difficult, especially with the advent of AI, to discern what is true and what is false. I really don't trust many things I see on social media unless it's from somewhere that's a verified page. So like The Washington Post, The New York Times, some site that has history behind it."

Audrey W
US

"I understand that it's like common practice for reporters and all to feel impartial and sound almost robotic when delivering news and headlines, but I think that's very archaic. I think this is the modern day, and I think compassion is one of the few things that human beings have adequately evolved into, and I think we should show said compassion through everything we do."

Barney
Nigeria

Trust in traditional news producers

We asked participants in the diary study about their primary news sources and to rate their trust in each one. The findings suggest a clear divide between attention and trust: Young consumers may devote substantial attention to creators and alternative news sources, yet they continue to trust traditional news producers the most. About half of respondents named at least one traditional news producer, and these almost always received the top trust ratings.

These traditional news producers were often introduced to young consumers at an early age and are associated with family, community and authority. Respondents say:

"I think I first found [the New York Times] when I was a child. It was one of the sources we were allowed to use for projects. And I just kinda have followed it since."

Thia B
US

"I first was given a premium subscription [to Financial Times] through my education as a youngster, and it is a habit that I have kept up since then. The intensity of the habit does vary but over the years it has definitely been something I do more often than not."

Savio F
UK

"I think I got to know about AajTak from [the] television channel only. My family watches it every morning so I followed it on Instagram as I'm not watching television much."

Anya K
India

Traditional news producers' reputation for credibility exists alongside deep trust among consumers who believe these sources are the final word on factuality. They often think events are factual if and only if a traditional news producer reports on it.

"The Washington Post is really good for research purposes [...] usually it has a lot of factual information that I can use if I have seen a piece of information online, on social media or YouTube or anything else that I have found [...] that I need to actually look into."

Dionna J
US

"The Hindu serves as my serious news companion. It's where I go for in-depth understanding rather than the bite-sized updates. ... For me, Hindu is like a reliable mentor, less entertaining but deeply enriching."

Piyush H
India

This reputation comes with the trust to curate. Traditional news producers' front pages, apps, social feeds and other aggregating features are trusted platforms that not only are perceived as reporting factual information but also tell invested consumers when and how to pay attention to the most important information of that moment.

"[BBC] is sort of responsible for providing news on everything. So I use it as a daily sort of way to have a look at all the main headlines to just see what's going on in my country and around the world."

Daniel G
UK

However, in the eyes of young consumers, traditional news producers crucially struggle with transparency. While most young consumers trust their information to be factual, many are deeply skeptical about biased reporting that veers into political propaganda. Consumers address this skepticism by cross-referencing multiple trusted traditional news producers via aggregators or search engines and by seeking additional perspectives outside the traditional news producing industry.

"I look for sources I consider the safest and always check the same news in different outlets. … This way I can compare and see which information seems more truthful and impartial, and I judge those as more reliable"

Maria Izabel L
Brazil

At worst, perceived unacknowledged bias can undermine trust in a traditional news producer and drive consumers to block or avoid it.

Young consumers also do not have a strong affinity for traditional news producers. They struggle to relate to their formal, depersonalized tone. This is not always a bad thing; that same tone is the foundation for traditional news producers' reputation for credibility.

Trust in next gen producers

Emerging news producers do not have the established reputations of their traditional counterparts. This makes developing a brand more difficult but also more flexible; they are free to set their own expectations to earn trust.

Trusted emerging news producers in our data demonstrated that flexibility by covering a wide range of topics. Some, such as The Daily Ketchup Podcast from Singapore, were largely entertainment outlets that occasionally added news to their feeds in an informal tone; others, such as Tangle News from the United States, are more serious in tone and attempt to cover highlights of civic news. Emerging news producers across the spectrum can earn trust by remaining consistent with the tone, transparency and topics they promise their audiences.

Successful emerging news producers excel in building trust through affinity. By putting personality front and center, they build parasocial relationships with their audience, who come to trust their information by first trusting them as people. Their credibility also stems from personal experience and expertise rather than from institutional affiliation. Transparency is key to this trust and is fostered by the authentic presentation of their personality.

This trust makes emerging news producers an important resource for sensemaking, which will be discussed later in this report. Consumers trust these news producers to help them find relevant and vital information, understand it and put it in a social context. However, traditional news producers remain the primary source for many when they seek to substantiate or verify information.

Reverse the Journalism Process

Attention is now the scarcest resource in journalism — and the most sought-after commodity. News producers today must navigate an environment in which consumers have seemingly endless choices. They can no longer rely on a "publish and hope to be found" model and instead must begin with a clear understanding of how audiences may encounter their work and design backward from there.

For most of the past century, news has followed a linear workflow:

Idea → Research → Writing → Editing → Publication → Distribution

Now, a segment of innovative emerging news producers is reversing that flow. These producers first choose their distribution medium — the format and location they will publish. They then become deeply familiar with those formats and platforms and experiment to find what works. Once they find success, they convert that approach into a repeatable template that they then deliver over and over again. The choice of story is an input, not the start of the journalism process.

This represents a new workflow:

Distribution → Idea → Testing → Editing → Publication → Community Engagement

The result is a fundamental reframing of journalistic practice. Rather than producing with the assumption of discovery, news producers design the audience experience first, investing in formats with recognizable value instead of attempting to cover every possible topic. Instead of silos such as politics or crime or sports or entertainment, they build small, cross-specialist teams that manage a channel end-to-end — TikTok, email, print, Instagram, et al.

Be native to the platform, and never shoehorn content for the sake of it

Across traditional news organizations, social and new-format teams often are positioned downstream of core editorial processes. Their output is often treated as a rerun of the homepage, and, as such, the work frequently feels foreign to the platform. Thus, it underperforms.

The inverse also holds. When teams start with the platform's language — the tone, pacing, visual grammar, humor — the work simultaneously blends in and stands out. It is native enough to be legible and distinct enough to be memorable. In these cases, the format is conceived prior to the story, and editorial calls are shaped by whether a story naturally inhabits the format and platform. Emerging news producers identify an underserved niche (a specific community or topic) or a promising audience need (deep-dives, quick news, humour-led opinion) and proactively develop a recognizable and repeatable style — in essence, a brand. Over time, audiences come to recognize the brand's promise and rhythm, and that familiarity captures and keeps attention.

"Don't try and shoehorn your existing content onto social media for clicks and to just be efficient. You need to craft your content for social media first."

Lisa Remillard
The News Girl

*"Dave [Jorgenson] is masterful at choosing the right storytelling device for each story. The first time we had to really think about that was after the murder of George Floyd. We'd mostly been doing comedy, but this was a story we couldn't ignore. We had to find a new way to tell it—still using Dave's character–driven approach, but with a different tone. Then COVID followed right after, so we were quickly adapting. **From the start, our strategy was to be authentic to the platform—not to force news until people knew and trusted us.** For the first six months, we barely covered any news. The idea was to build trust first, then inform. George Floyd's murder became the moment that made that transition natural. Later, in 2023, we spent a year tracking mass shootings in the U.S., using TikTok's duet format. It wasn't comedic, of course, but using a familiar format to audiences made the coverage really impactful."*

Lauren Saks
Local News International

Move beyond the inverted pyramid

The inverted pyramid — long the foundation of news production — remains useful in certain contexts, but it is not the dominant organizing framework for emerging news producers. We observed a shift toward structures that guide learning through experience, such as:

- **Problem - tension - reveal**
  Start with a relatable problem, build intrigue or conflict around what is at stake and then deliver insight or resolution that satisfies curiosity.
- **Question - hypothesis - test**
  Pose a compelling question, offer a possible explanation and walk the audience through the evidence or experiment that proves or disproves it.
- **Misconception - correction - takeaway**
  Begin with a common misunderstanding, clarify what people often get wrong and close with the key lesson or reframed understanding.

Packaging dictates the journalism, and what emerges are formats designed so clarity, pacing and tone draw people through the explanation. In these models, information hierarchy is still present, but it is delivered as a journey rather than a static stack.

"The traditional approach for news – arranging facts in descending order of importance – lacks creativity and flexibility. What's more, the research says this style alienates younger audiences that crave a 'more thoughtful, considered and purposeful approach' to online news. They want it to reflect the reality of their lives, rather than industry norms."

Shirish Kulkarni

Consume deeply in order to be an authentic producer

Emerging news producers who excel tend to be heavy consumers of the ecosystems into which they publish. The advantage is subtle but compounding: a shared textural sense of cadence, humor and community norms that cannot be transferred by guidelines alone. Successful emerging news producers make finer-grained decisions because they have internalized the environment's cues. This is less about chasing trends and more about fluency — understanding the dialects of a platform well enough to speak its voice authentically.

"Here's a key thing: I think you have to be a consumer to be a producer, and I think this is a huge gap. I really think this is a real problem. I think now if I started to get serious about making TikTok videos where I talk to a camera, having watched a lot more, I would be better now. And if I practiced, I'd get better. But the textural sense Mamdani has for the format — you can't just read some packet or jump in from nowhere."

Chris Hayes
on the Ezra Klein Show

Percentage of costs in Product & Tech:

MOST
SUSTAINABLE

LEAST
SUSTAINABLE

Scale Local [34%]

Regional Groups [26%]

National Challengers [25%]

Scale Local [27%]

Regional Groups [18%]

National Challengers [17%]
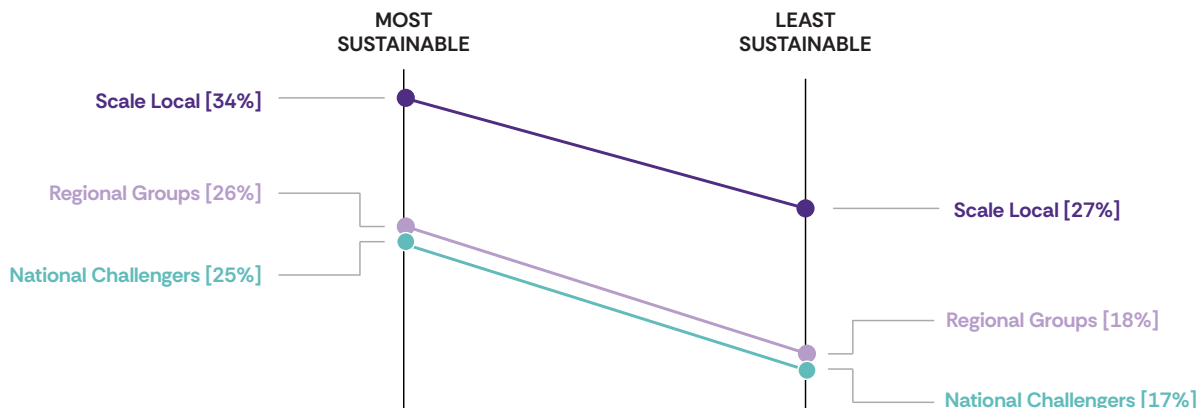
Source: News Sustainability Study, FT Strategies & Google News Initiative• Based on a database of 700 publishers worldwide.
Scale Locals refer to group–owned, generalist publications that operate within local markets, leveraging the extensive resources and operational expertise of their parent companies to achieve profitability through scale. On average, they have 13% higher profit margin.
Regional Groups are established Digital Forward titles that operate as part of a larger brand portfolio, leveraging the resources and support functions of their parent companies to achieve economies of scale. On average, they have an 8% higher profit margin.
National Challengers are digital–first publishers seeking to disrupt established national media markets. On average, they have an 8% higher profit margin.

Investment Needed for Distribution

The success of news companies in the 20th century was not merely a function of their journalism. It also was a function of their investment in and control over the distribution of information. Printing plants and paper contracts, fleets of delivery trucks, newsstands, broadcast slots, and complex logistics all contributed to the news landing in consumers' homes. Mastering distribution all but guaranteed audiences, attention and revenue.

Distribution dynamics in the 21st century have fundamentally changed. Social feeds, app stores, search engines and now AI assistants act as the new conduits to information. At the same time this new landscape was forming, news companies were actively cutting costs associated with

traditional distribution (newspapers, broadcast television) without necessarily reinvesting savings into new products, new formats, or new skills. Rapidly evolving market dynamics combined with news organizations' response have left many in a precarious position.

The path back from this precipice is challenging, yes, but possible. One path news organizations should investigate is how to increase investments of money and time into emerging news products and distribution mechanisms — video, data, audio, apps, live formats, newsletters, interactive/scrollytelling and AI features. This may not equal the 30–40% of total costs previously allocated to printing and distribution, but it likely will necessitate a meaningful shift in investment and priorities.

The chart <Chart 9> is based on data from the News Sustainability Project, illustrates this point across publisher types: the most sustainable news provider archetypes (such as: Scale Local, Regional Groups, National Challengers) allocate a materially higher share of their costs to Product and Technology compared to their less sustainable

peers. Regardless of scale or market position, sustained investment in product capability and technical infrastructure is strongly associated with stronger long-term performance.

Invest in distribution and direct relationships

News producers should consider allocating and maintaining consistent investment in distribution capabilities, not individual platforms whose algorithms will change. In practice, that may mean an investment in video and audio production, platform expertise, newsletters or notifications, content partnerships or packaging.

They also should consider prioritizing owned destinations — their own sites, apps, newsletters — to encourage audiences to come directly to them for their content. Use of rented or semi-owned platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, YouTube) should be to find and attract new audiences, but the clear objective is to convert those people to direct visitors.

Distribution should be a core part of every journalist's job, and they should be encouraged to spend more time (e.g., 30-40%) bringing stories to life for audiences. For example, successful journalists will be those who collaborate with video teams on major investigative stories to maximize social media awareness and will record audio versions of their articles to make content more convenient for audiences on the move. While this may affect the number of stories published, if executed properly, it should not negatively impact engagement.

The distribution shift also means a hiring shift

As distribution shifts, the skills required in a news organization are evolving. What matters now is a blended skill set: storytelling craft with the distribution, product, data and audience skills that turn reporting into attention and habit. Emerging news organization roles include:

FULL-STACK CREATORS
- **Role:** creating stories in new formats (video, audio, newsletters).
- **Skills:** on-camera/on-mic presence, scripting, packaging (titles, thumbnails, descriptions), editing, basic analytics.

PRODUCERS/WRITERS/EDITORS
- **Role:** overseeing and informing end-to-end content creation.
- **Skills:** creative direction setting, planning/logistics, quality control, platform strategy.

"For as many views as I have had on Instagram, I use that as a marketing tool, not as a place where I think I'm going to make much money. Substack is where we are making our money and through people who are angel investors from the outside of their chest saying, 'Hey, we like what you're doing. Here you go."

Nick Valencia
Nick Valencia News

PRODUCT MANAGERS
- **Role:** building user journeys and experiences that increase direct relationships.
- **Skills:** customer journeys (including signup), app/tech development, user experience.

VIDEO/AUDIO PRODUCTION ENGINEERS
- **Role:** capturing, processing and delivering audio or visual content.
- **Skills:** platform pacing, visual grammar, audio/video quality control.

DATA SCIENTISTS/DEVELOPER JOURNALISTS
- **Role:** producing interactive and data–led storytelling formats.
- Skills: collecting/cleaning data, data visualization, gamification, interactive design.

DATA ANALYSTS
- **Role:** analyze and share audience data to inform the content strategy.
- **Skills:** data cleansing, data analysis, storytelling, qualitative research methodologies.

"I see a decrease of production in terms of scale in basic text for us to try to make things in different formats and invest in visuals and audio and chat bots. We have to make choices and the choices that we have is to reallocate resources from one type of production that we had in scale which was text article to other types of formats and choose perhaps to make better decisions on what to cover and try to understand better what our audiences want."

Tai Nalon, Aos Fatos

Optimize staffing into small, cross-functional channel squads

Social media teams who bear responsibility for multiple platforms and channels (e.g., video, podcast) often lack the resources or specialization required to regularly create meaningful content.

Mastery is channel–specific. YouTube is not the same as TikTok, which is not the same as newsletters, which is not the same as podcasts. Thus, optimization means reorganization around small, accountable squads aligned to a priority channel or franchise, each with clear goals and the autonomy to try new things.

A typical squad blends creators, a producer/writer/editor, production specialists (video editor, motion designer or audio engineer), and commercial analysts. Squads own their schedules, KPIs, and an experiment backlog for their channel. While leadership sets standards and strategy, squads control tactics.

"I would say my franchise ('Out There') is very indicative of the path that is encouraged at Morning Brew and similar to Dan Toomey's journey with Good Work. It's basically that of someone who started doing something else, something tangentially related and then developed a style that we decided merited a full franchise and there are other people who have done that."

Macy Gilliam
on Morning Brew's idea of 'Franchises'

Community as a distribution mechanism

Publishing is the start of a conversation, not the end. For younger audiences, part of the value is belonging and participation — asking questions, seeing them surfaced into coverage, joining live sessions, and engaging in a respectful comments space. The creation of such a community becomes a distribution function that drives habit and willingness to pay. Things such as prompts in videos and newsletters, recurring AMAs, live Q&As, clear codes of conduct with consistent enforcement, fast triage, and simple workflows that turn audience questions into reporting build participation into the work output. Editorial franchises can be tied to live and virtual events so the community has a home and a cadence.

"The comments can be a blessing and a curse but the ones which are a blessing are the ones where people are asking you to help them further their knowledge, where they've misunderstood something about the video and want more information or they have follow-up questions. So treating the publication of the video as the end of the journey and all that's left to do is gather your stats and give yourself a pat on the back I think is also a massive mistake. I think treating communication as a conversation from start to finish rather than a lecture I think is the essential thing."

Dr. Adam Levy
ClimateAdam

MODES OF ENGAGEMENT
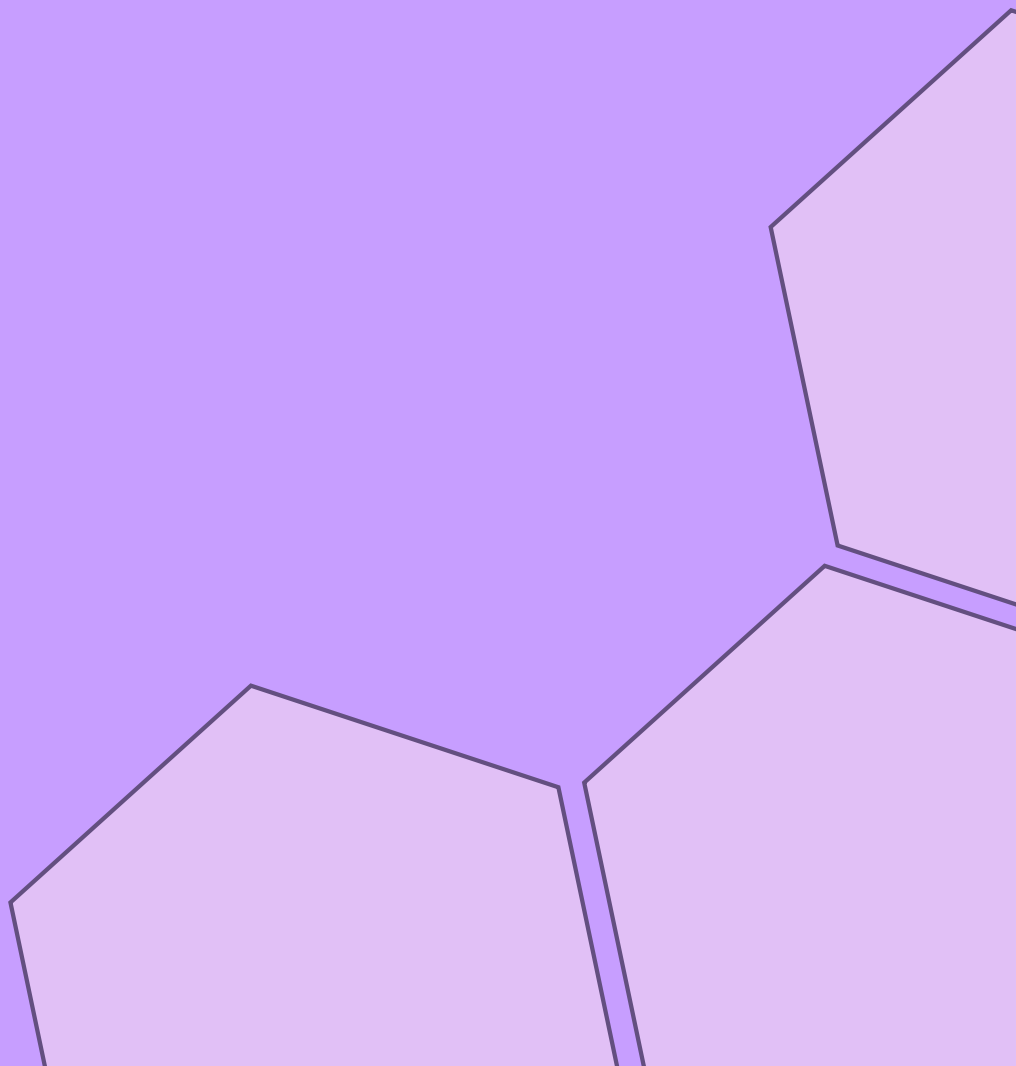
Modes of Engagement Framework

The preferences of news consumers, especially younger ones, spotlight their struggle to avoid information overload. They develop strategies to help navigate the flood of news while staying informed. Those strategies are mapped out in the Modes of Engagement. This new research enabled us to validate and expand on our original five modes. Further investigation showed the critical role sifting plays. Trust drives choices in the sifting mode, and relationships drive trust. All consumers start by selecting what to pay attention to and then transition to consumption modes that help them understand and learn from the news.

By tailoring content to specific modes, news producers can more effectively earn their way into next gen news consumers media routines.

SIFT
How I discover information

Scroll
I incidentally stumble on news

Seek
I intentionally look for news

Subscribe
I directly receive news I signed up for

CONSUMPTION

What I get from information

Substantiate
I want to check the facts

Study
I want to develop my knowledge

Sensemake
I want to understand other perspectives

Socialize
I receive news and want to connect with others through sharing
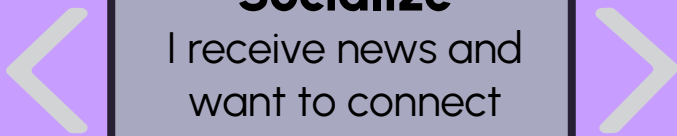
Sift Modes

In sift modes, users filter through their chosen information environments to separate news from noise.

In our previous work, we identified "sift" as one of our five modes of news consumption and described it as follows:

In this mode, the next generation of news consumers need simple, low-effort ways to keep up with and discover relevant news and information amidst a glut of available content. They want to feel updated and in-the-know, without feeling inundated. Often sifting involves passive news consumption and can lead to consumers transitioning into the other modes.

Much of our previous description is validated by the data. Sifting is not a singular behavior but a collection of related modes that help consumers deal with the feeling that news overwhelm is greater than ever. Consumers are, indeed, looking for low-effort discovery methods that inform them without overwhelming them.

However, our 2025 data challenges the idea that sifting is passive. It is easy to assume that news consumption is a reactive activity on social media; we ourselves sometimes used "scrolling" as a synonym for "sifting." The 2025 research showed that consumer sifting strategies actually cover a broader spectrum of intentionality.

Across all markets we studied, we found that young consumers actively curate their information ecosystems, seeking to reduce the daily mental load from sifting through endless content. Consumers intentionally mold their environment to refine and filter the news sources they encounter.

Observing this shaping process in the field showcases how sifting is richer than we originally defined.

**We now see Sifting as three distinct modes of news discovery.**

Scrolling through algorithmic feeds is still very much present in our 2025 research. We no longer see that as the only method of sifting.

Seeking occurs when users deliberately search for news stories or brands for deeper engagement).

Subscribing happens when users choose to receive information via channels' alerts, notifications, newsletters or group messages from specific trusted content sources.

All three sifting strategies may be ends in and of themselves. Some younger news consumers do not necessarily want to engage deeply and are looking for high-level information and headlines, content to go no further. For some, glancing at a list of headlines or knowing that news sources are in their feeds counts as discovery. These experiences of encountering news without going any deeper can still build trust in news providers and can lead to deeper future news engagement.

In this section, we discuss each sift mode in detail and recommend strategies for news producers to help them choose the right content, shape how it is presented and define how they engage with audiences across platforms. The goal is to design formats that use the right tone to support discovery and reduce cognitive load, ultimately easing pathways from sifting modes to consumption modes.
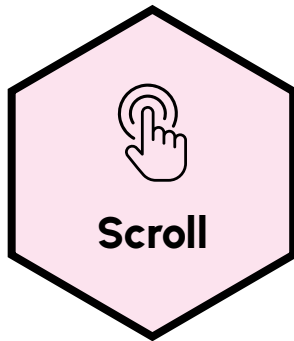
Scroll

Passively encountering news among other information

In Scroll mode, individuals encounter news while browsing social media or aggregation platforms. They are not actively seeking news but reactively sift through whatever content appears in their feeds. Their engagement is often spontaneous and fleeting, shaped by the emerging news producers they follow and platform algorithms. To reach consumers in this mode, news producers need to intentionally create content that feels native to the platform and find patterns that break through to capture fleeting attention in the few seconds before viewers scroll to the next post.

Consumer need

Scrolling consumers have varying capacities to consume news. Some purposely shape their scrolling environment to get news, following specific accounts and consciously influencing algorithms by being sensitive to how long they linger on a post and using "like" or "show more [or less] like this." They do this in the hope that their strategy will deliver the day's most important headlines to consume during their downtime. Others invest less effort and respond only toward light-hearted, personally relevant or entertaining news, while avoiding heavier civic headlines altogether. Respondents say:

"I love that I don't have to make it so intentional... [...] I can just be more casual. I can stumble across things and just see things as I scroll. If I need a break, I can look at more of the entertainment side of the app. And if I wanna learn more, I can hone in on that and do more research within the app."

Estazia
US

"[The Instagram feed is] very irregular. [...] So the topics may range from road safety to, something like terrorism or politics, things like that. [...] It's not something that you pick and choose what you want to see, but it's something that keeps you updated."

Viraj J
India

What triggers scrolling?
- Looking for entertainment
- Quick break in between tasks during the day
- Reflexive habit
- Fear of missing socially valuable information

Scrolling behaviors
- Scrolling through social media and reacting to content as it appears
- Occasionally moving from scroll to a deeper engagement mode
- Reading comments as additional content for sensemaking or substantiation

Scroll mode reshapes the production challenge; audiences won't come looking for news, so news must find them. This becomes a core principle for how news producers can respond — creating content built for fast, feed-based discovery.

How news producers can respond

Package for the platform
Package content to suit each platform's rhythm and algorithm

Leading news producers understand they win by owning the first two seconds of a consumer's attention, intentionally packaging their content to fit seamlessly within the Scroll mode on each specific platform. Most decisions about a piece of content are made during those first two seconds. Leading news producers craft repeatable formats to define a recognizable visual identity that flows naturally on social and video feeds yet still

delivers clarity, accuracy and distinctiveness to conveniently reach younger audiences (an important part of the Ideal News Experience identified in our previous research). In practice, that means aligning the publishing rhythm, pace, tone, length and style with each platform's norms to maximize algorithmic promotion and audience satisfaction.

Some best practices seen among successful news producers include:
- **Post consistently and predictably.** The more regularly and predictably content appears, the more likely algorithms are to surface it and users are to recognize and engage with it. Setting a sustainable cadence based on capacity and the type of content produced is key. Breaking news or live coverage may call for multiple posts a day across platforms, while in-depth analysis, features or visual storytelling benefit from a more deliberate cadence. The Daily Aus exemplifies the latter approach. Rather than competing to break stories first, it focuses on clarity and context, publishing explainers through carousel cards or video explainer content. This steady, structured cadence positions The Daily Aus as a trusted, low-noise brand that prioritizes quality comprehension over the quantity of updates.
- **Balance the tone to make news entertaining without trivializing serious events.** Some brands employ strategies to make news entertaining, moving away from the formal style of traditional news organizations. These brands:
  - » **Use humor.** Some write sketches (Morning Brew and Local News International) to make the news more approachable. Using satire to mock individuals in power is a way to incorporate humor without making light of stories.
  - » **Leverage personality, authenticity and conversation.** They put members of their
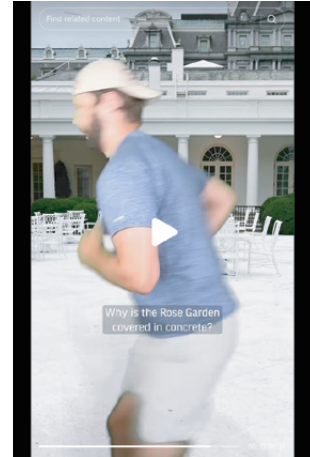
Local News International
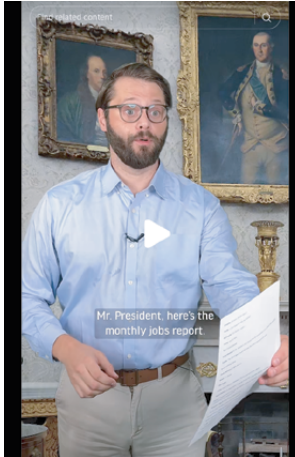
Within the first second, you know what the story is about and recognize Dave Jorgenson
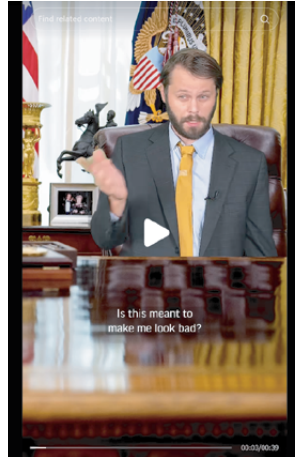
Caricatures of famous leaders (e.g. Donald Trump) make reference to, and satirize, decision making

Other characters add comedic effect and allow the video to anticipate and address audience questions

Jokes about stories in the social zeitgeist add humor and increase the likelihood of peer-to-peer sharing

staff at the center of the story and let them use a conversational and informal tone to explain a story. Zetland describes this as "being like a friend sitting next to you in a pub."

» **Approach complex or mundane subjects from unexpected angles to attract audience interest.** Journalist Lisa Remillard explored the topic of federal injunctions through the unusual lens of a judge shutting down "Alligator Alcatraz," for example.

» **Be creative with formats.** Some brands have found success by experimenting with novel news formats. For example, Quebrando o Tabu uses a quiz format in which a presenter goes onto the streets of Brazil and tests people's knowledge on topics such as women's rights before providing factual answers to raise awareness on undercovered topics.

» **Match platform aesthetics.** Successful news producers incorporate videos and imagery into their content (e.g. stitching or duet editing), clearly showing it is user-

generated content and not overproduced news. They minimize overt branding and use a consistent visual theme and color palette to develop a distinct brand.

• **Develop repeatable storytelling templates.** Successful news producers identify and refine a storytelling format that consistently drives engagement, then iterate over time to improve performance. They treat the template as a set of ingredients — tone, language, appearance, length, style, people and visuals — that they reuse across content. For example, Local News International follows a consistent creative structure:

» **Central personality:** "Dave is a constant… He's the way into a story for a lot of people."

» **Skit element and fictional characters:** "99% are skit-based."

» **Playing the viewer:** "Dave almost always plays the viewer; he's the one trying to learn."

» **Length and speed:** "We intentionally try to cover as much of a story as we possibly

can in like 38 to 41 seconds."

- » **Tone:** "We want to use relatable, direct language that is free from traditional media constraints."
- **Developing repeatable templates is applicable on other platforms:**
    - » **Instagram** – El Surtidor's six to eight card visual explainers blend illustration and data storytelling.
    - » **YouTube** – HugoDécrypte's Actus du Jour is a daily 15 to 20 minute video summarizing the main news stories with an accessible tone.
    - » **Spotify** – Café da Manhã is a 25 to 30 minute weekday news briefings from Folha de S.Paulo.

Select stories and topics that break through

Select stories that work for the platform and in storytelling templates

Leading news producers understand that not all stories (or topics) work on social or video platforms. Rather than shoehorning topics or stories into a social or video setting, these producers carefully select stories they know will perform within their storytelling template.

- **Reverse the journalism process.** Successful news producers start with the storytelling template — the tone, language, appearance, length, style, people and visuals — and then select a story that complements the template. As the Local News International Team explained, they ask themselves, "What are the big stories today? Do we or Dave have a unique take on this? Does he have a way of making it approachable, interesting or humorous? We definitely don't try to just cover the main headlines." Similarly,

Macy Gilliam has created an "Out There" series, which is now a separate franchise within Morning Brew where she spends a day with someone while they do their job. Her approach is distinctive not only for the topics she chooses but also in how she reverses the process. For instance, rather than simply telling viewers that hotdog stands are a tough business in New York because of all the permits required, she spends a day with a hotdog vendor to truly understand the job and the people behind it and creates an original piece of informative and heartwarming content.

- **Choose the right story for the platform.** Successful news producers recognize that stories that perform well on social and video platforms typically evoke emotion — curiosity, hope, anger, joy. Human or emotional narratives perform best on visual platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, while complex stories or those with multiple perspectives benefit from the space and pacing of YouTube or newsletters. For example, James Li uses YouTube videos to debunk myths that require complex investigation, while on TikTok he focuses more on breaking news events. Short–form clips, quotes or visual hooks from longer pieces can be repurposed for social platforms to draw audiences toward more in–depth reporting using teasers, highlights or explainer cuts that bridge the gap between immediacy and depth. The Rest is Politics uses short clips from its longer podcast episodes on social platforms to spotlight moments of humor, disagreement or emotion between hosts Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart. These snippets often capture relatable or surprising insights about current affairs and serve as conversational hooks that drive audiences to listen to the full episode.

The storytelling template is formalized by being given its own minibrand, making it easily discoverable
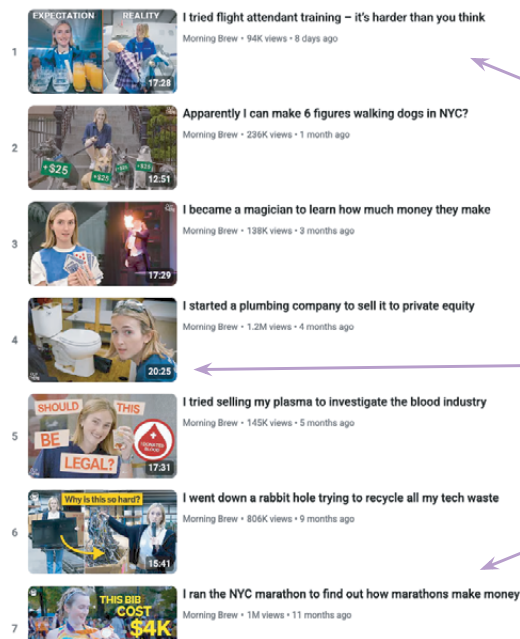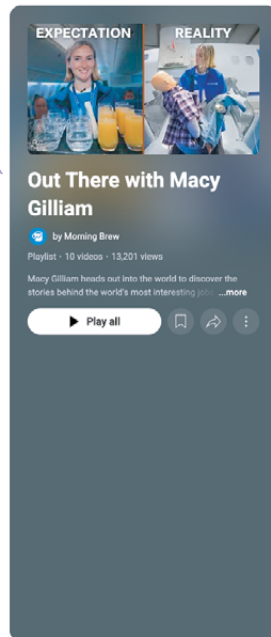
All episodes revolve around Macy "in the field" learning about a job or an industry that captures the audience's attention

All episodes are of a similar length (10–20 mins), include interviews with real people and subtle amount of humor

All episodes have the goal of helping the audience learn something new

Win the first two seconds

Grab attention within seconds using hooks and visual cues

Leading news producers know attention is won or lost almost instantly. Within a couple of seconds, viewers decide whether to keep watching or keep scrolling. Successful producers use clear hooks, strong visual cues and distinctive openings to signal the topics and why they are personally significant to the individual (another component of the Ideal News Experience).

- **State your topic upfront.** Successful news producers make it clear what story or question they are addressing within the first two seconds, in the opening frame, headline text or caption. They use headline-style leads, question framing, or list logic to make scanning effortless. For example, Lisa Remillard uses captions within her TikTok videos and on the thumbnails to help audiences know as soon as they see her video what she is going to cover.

"Lower Gas Prices starting tomorrow (Except California) is one instance of this.

- **Use a hook to make people stop and listen.** Successful news producers design a hook that captures audience attention by:
  - » **Using cultural moments and personal relevance.** They put themselves in the viewer's shoes and consider which element of the story is most interesting or personal. They then include that within the first few seconds.
  - » **Introducing questions that spark curiosity** at the beginning of videos or in thumbnails. For example, The Pioneer always titles episodes in a way that intrigues audiences, such as "Can Trump Stop the War in Ukraine?"
  - » **Challenging assumptions and introducing the answer first.** They frame videos by addressing misconceptions or information gaps. ClimateAdam intentionally uses "spoiler alerts" at the beginning of videos to introduce the answer, even if it doesn't go into the details at the top.

James Li wears the same bucket hat in all videos to make himself immediately recognizable in feeds

Makes reference to the topic and asks an open-ended question that captures the audience's attention

Includes recognizable faces an imagery to draw people into the story

Makes use of verbal hooks that encourage people to watch on

» **Using visual hooks or imagery.** They often show recognizable faces to stop the scroll and capture the audience's attention.

» **Adopting a signature opening line.** For example, Aaron Parnas, an emerging news producer who cover politics, uses "We have some breaking news…" to help viewers instantly recognize him, even when they are half-watching.

• **Build a unique, recognizable visual identity.** Successful news producers develop clear visual cues so audiences can instantly identify them in their feeds. This includes consistent clothing, jewelry, background setting or hairstyle that becomes part of their on-screen signature. As James Li explains: "On scrolling platforms, viewers aren't choosing you. The algorithm is serving you up. That means you need something instantly recognisable, whether it's clothing, hairstyle or background. For me, it's a San Diego Padres hat — it helps people spot me right away."

Seek

Actively looking for news or even specific news topics

In the Seek mode, consumers intentionally choose to engage with news through a trusted source. Their goal may be to stay informed, learn something new or find clarity on a topic they have already encountered. This is a highly intentional mode of engagement, where consumers look for efficient, information-rich content that delivers depth and relevance without distraction.

Consumer need

In the Seek mode, next gen consumers actively look for news content. Whether they are searching for a broad overview of the day's news or a specific update, consumers are highly intentional in this mode and seek efficient, information-rich content.

In cases where seeking is not topic-specific, consumers rely on trusted sources to curate their news for them and educate them on what is important for them to know that day.

Consumers are more likely to engage deeper when they are in Seek mode than in other discovery modes, because they are already in the mindset to consume news. Respondents say:

"I don't use the Times of India consistently every single day, but a few times a week, I visit it when I really want to catch up on important news or to find some specific information. Usually, something triggers my interest like hearing about a major event, political update, sports result, or a trending story—and I go to the app or website to get the full details. I trust it because the news is well-structured, easy to read, and covers both national and international topics, so I can quickly get a clear picture of what's going on."

Tanya S
India

"This news story I was actually looking for personally, because I saw something near my house where it was all police taped-off. So I wanted to have a look, see if it had been put on, and it did get put on."

Skye J
UK

MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

What triggers seeking?
- Wanting a summary of important news for the day
- Looking for updates on an ongoing story of interest
- Investigating a story they heard about from family, friends or online discourse
- Reading updates on a specialized interest (e.g., hobby, career field, activist interest)

Seeking behaviors
- Visiting a trusted news-exclusive website or app for top headlines
- Visiting an emerging news producer for headlines or a news roundup
- Pulling up and listening to an aggregator or headlines podcast (e.g., The Guardian's Today in Focus, NPR Morning Edition or Il Post's Morning Post)
- Scrolling an aggregator for top headlines
- Searching for a topic on a search engine, paying special attention to trusted sources in the results

In Seek mode, audience members arrive with purpose. They know what they want and expect to find it quickly. The production challenge is to anticipate these information needs and make depth accessible without friction, ensuring that credibility, clarity and efficiency guide every interaction.

How news producers can respond

Guide discovery
Ease discovery through thoughtful curation and an intuitive interface

Leading news producers facilitate Seek mode by helping their audiences find content that feels purposeful and personally relevant while meeting the desire for convenience. They demonstrate a strong understanding of what their readers are looking for and show clear editorial intent and judgment that aligns with those needs, supported by product design that makes discovery effortless and intuitive.

- **Deliver curated briefings.** These leading news producers apply editorial judgment to select and package news stories that matter most to their audience. They deliver them consistently across channels (for example, newsletters or audio) and times of the day to build routine and repeat engagement. The Pioneer Briefing — the flagship audio product from The Pioneer — capitalizes well on this approach. Framed as "news without noise," it filters the day's events into five essential stories and two deeper explorations, designed to leave listeners feeling informed and educated.
- **Offer live formats that capitalize on immediate interest.** Successful news producers use real-time channels, such as on-site live blogs and social live streams, to blend updates, evidence, imagery and short explanations for major unfolding events. The Guardian's live blogs exemplify this principle. Prominent "Key events" and "What we know so far" cards ground readers from the outset, while a mix of rapid

InShorts App landing page takes you directly to a story, as opposed to a homepage – encouraging instantaneous discovery and reducing overwhelm/choice

Social cards are designed to intentionally avoid clutter and only share key information (with the option to "tap to know more")
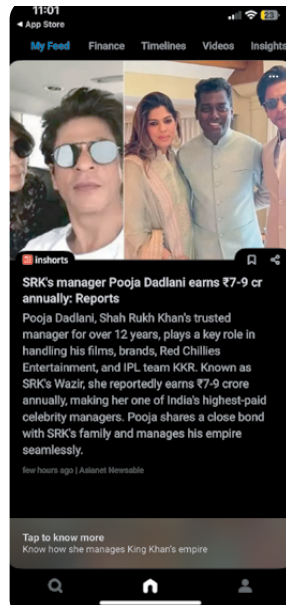
All story cards follow the exact same format (image size, amount of text, citations)

Users can simply "flick up" to go to the next story (mirroring behavior on popular social platforms like TikTok)
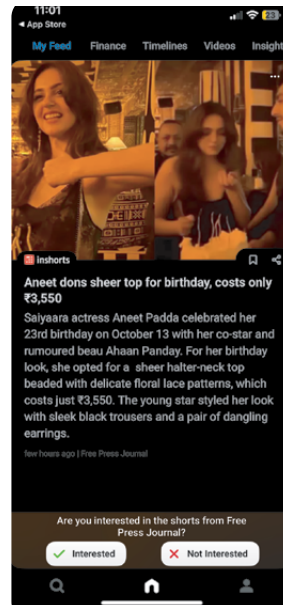
updates, contextual analysis and multimedia maintains clarity and momentum throughout coverage. Each post carries the journalist's name and icon, lending a human presence and approachable tone that makes the coverage feel dynamic. The format manages to be both fast and coherent, delivering the urgency of live news without sacrificing clarity or depth.

- **Create seamless, intelligent discovery experiences.** Leading news producers optimize on-site and in-app search to support both keyword and semantic queries, with filters for date, author and format, and options to sort by relevance or recency. Advanced news producers extend this with generative AI tools that provide summarized, citation-backed answers based on verified reporting. For example, the Financial Times has built its own GenAI Chatbot, "Ask FT," that uses Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), first retrieving relevant snippets from the Financial Times article archive and then using an LLM to generate an answer based solely on that trusted, retrieved content.

- **Design intuitive interfaces within owned and operated platforms.** Successful news producers keep interfaces low-clutter, with clear signposts for key themes on landing pages. Where possible, they integrate advertising that feels native and non-disruptive. A good illustration of this principle is InShorts (above) and its clean, card-based mobile interface. Each story is distilled into a 60-word summary, allowing users to absorb headlines at a glance while maintaining narrative coherence. The swipe-based navigation reinforces momentum, reducing friction and matching mobile-first reading habits. For deeper engagement, each card expands into a full-length article or related coverage, giving users seamless control over how much detail they consume.

MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

Give control
Create ways for users to customize their news experience to improve discoverability

Leading news producers provide customization features within owned and operated platforms that let audiences shape their experiences of the news. In practice, customization elevates what matters for each person and tunes delivery to individual preferences so content is immediately relevant and worth attention.

- **Successful news producers enable meaningful personalization and control.** They allow readers to follow topics or authors and use these preferences to shape personalized feeds across email, websites and apps. The Verge's follow buttons (example on the next page) create a custom homepage and daily email digest tailored to each user. As Jacob Kastrenakes, executive editor, explains: "You'll notice this feels a lot like the way an RSS feed or a social network works. That's very much by design. Everything is a feed now, and everything is customizable. We think our site should work the same way. What you're seeing today is the first step toward adding deeper personalization features." In addition, top news producers make it easy for audiences to update preferences or mute content they no longer want via inline chips, a central preference center or gentle prompts.
- **Successful news producers allow audiences to tailor content to their preferred format, whether reading, listening or watching.** Zetland offers narrated versions of its articles, read by the reporters themselves. These leading news producers sometimes leverage generative AI to produce alternative formats at relatively low cost. For example, the Financial Times partners with ElevenLabs to produce lifelike

audio versions of articles. News producers are also using AI to offer customizable summaries of content. Particle News (example on the next page), an AI-powered news aggregation app, allows users to choose from a selection of AI-generated summaries that include "The 5Ws," who, what, when, where, why, and "Opposite Sides," which offers contrasting viewpoints on a story.

Personalize with purpose
Blend user control and intelligent personalization

Leading news producers facilitate Seek mode by balancing editorially led curation, audience-led customization, and data-driven personalization to meet individuals' need to consume topics of personal significance. Younger audiences seek discovery that feels guided but open — an experience that recognizes their interests while continually serving them new perspectives and ideas. This is typically achieved through a carefully designed onboarding journey.

- **Recommend content that is likely to be of interest to an individual.** Leading news producers combine behavioral signals (what they consume) with demographics (location, age) to inform content recommendations. They label personalized recommendations — for example, "because you read about climate policy" — to help users understand and trust personalization logic. They also allow users to opt out of content personalization via account settings or preferences. For example, *The New York Times* recently made "one of its biggest changes" by launching a bottom navigation to the "You" tab customized by a user's behavior. As Kristen Dudish, vice president of product design, explained: "We wanted to balance discovery
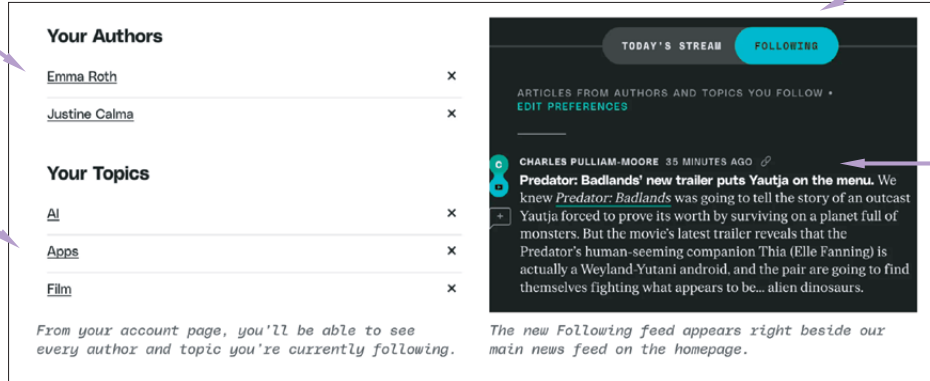
The Verge

Users can select authors or topics that they are interested in

Topic categories are intentionally granular and more specific than section headers

Preferences are stored – and can be updated – via a central account page

Your Authors

Emma Roth   ✕

Justine Calma   ✕

Your Topics

AI   ✕

Apps   ✕

Film   ✕

From your account page, you'll be able to see every author and topic you're currently following.
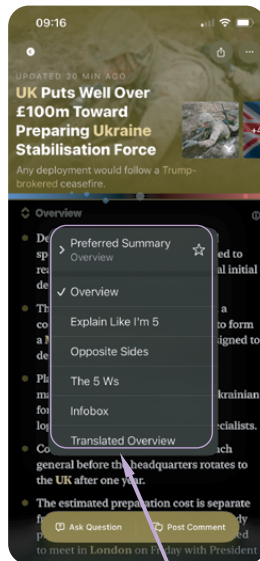
The "Following" page is a separate location where audiences can see their customized topics / authors

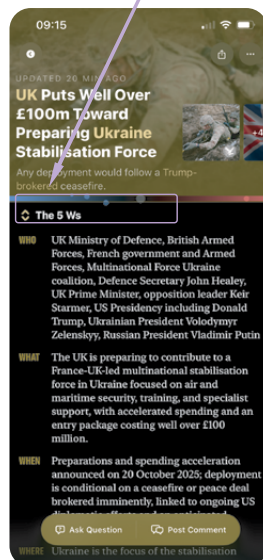Information is presented as a feed with summaries and the opportunity to click–through to learn more
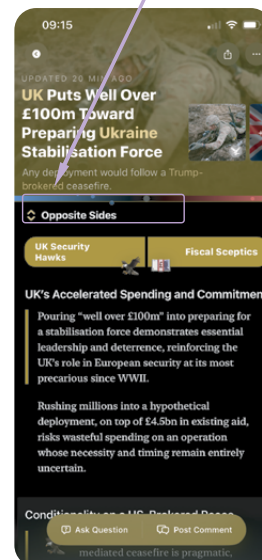
TODAY'S STREAM   FOLLOWING

ARTICLES FROM AUTHORS AND TOPICS YOU FOLLOW •
EDIT PREFERENCES

CHARLES PULLIAM-MOORE 35 MINUTES AGO
Predator: Badlands' new trailer puts Yautja on the menu. We knew *Predator: Badlands* was going to tell the story of an outcast Yautja forced to prove its worth by surviving on a planet full of monsters. But the movie's latest trailer reveals that the Predator's human-seeming companion Thia (Elle Fanning) is actually a Weyland-Yutani android, and the pair are going to find themselves fighting what appears to be… alien dinosaurs.

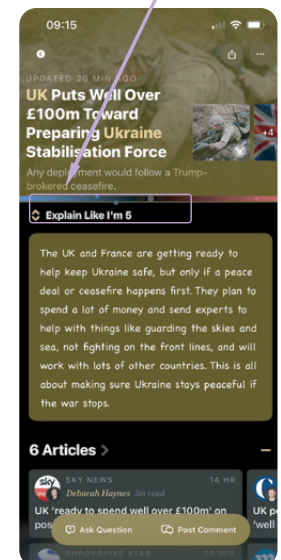*The new Following feed appears right beside our main news feed on the homepage.*

Particle News

The 5 Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why)

Opposite takes on the same story

Explain like I'm 5, for simple explanation

Using AI, Particle gives readers the option of displaying a news story in 6 different ways

"You" Set Up Journey

"You" Feed Page

To set up the You tab, NYT asks for your interests and preferences to inform algorithmic selection

Options include newsletters, audio and video formats to cater to different audience preferences
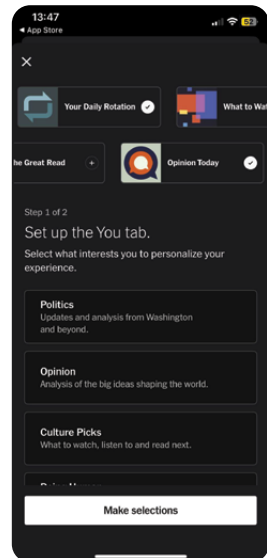
"Your Daily Rotation" offers 10 personalized stories each day based on your interests, behaviors and demographics

The "You" tab is a permanent bottom navigation feature to encourage discovery and engagement
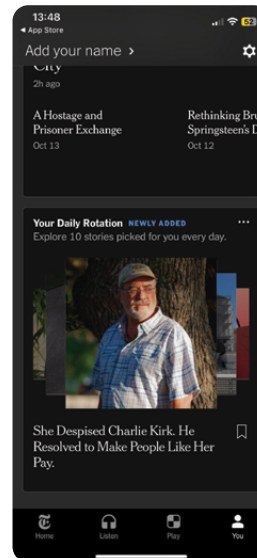
with finding something to read or watch based on their habits or the affinities that people have for specific sections." The New York Times also offers personalization in the Today feed, though it is an "80/20 split between editorial curation and personalization".
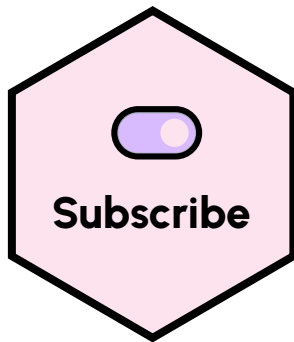
Subscribe

Receiving news from trusted people and sources

In the Subscribe mode, individuals receive news unprompted from a small set of sources they have deliberately chosen. These sources might include an emerging news producer they trust, a broadcast WhatsApp channel, a journalist, an expert or a publication.

Updates arrive through various direct channels — emails, push notifications, group chats or platform alerts — when someone has turned on notifications for a specific account. In this mode, people expect timely, important or novel updates from sources whose judgment they rely on and do not want to miss.

Consumer need

Once a consumer has chosen to subscribe to a source, subscribe is the most reactive of all discovery modes. In this mode, consumers encounter news content brought to their personal devices from an external source, typically a newsletter, podcast or notifications from an app.

These discovery streams require a high level of trust from consumers, as they invite interruption and potentially include challenging or upsetting information. However, notifications in particular were shown in the research to be unlikely to result in deeper engagement, unless the news was breaking or highly personally relevant. Often, as with scroll, headlines are as much as consumers need. Subscribing establishes and maintains a

critical connection between brands and next gen news consumers, especially as those consumers move to other modes. Respondents say:

"I'm able to follow and set notifications for news outlets that post about news that I'm interested in, and I get those notifications on my phone. I don't necessarily always open and read them. When I see the notifications, I do get information on what is happening, so I do appreciate that."

Longji
Nigeria

"I really like getting the notifications about the news but also making it easy to ignore if I'm not in the mood to look at it. I tend to just read the headings which doesn't take long but then if I want to know more, I can easily click on the notification."

Jessica P
US

What triggers Subscribe content?
- Subscribe is unique because content discovery is not directly triggered by consumer action.
- Receiving push notification from news or aggregator app
- Finding newsletters in an email inbox

Subscribe behaviors
- Reviewing headline and preview summary, with no further action
- Clicking through to skim content in embedded links

In subscribe mode, news interrupts the flow of life. It appears unprompted through notifications, newsletters or messages and must immediately prove its worth. The production challenge is to make each interruption feel valuable, offering clear, relevant and timely information that rewards attention in that moment.

How news producers can respond

Sync with habits
Design delivery around audience routines and preferences, not output cycle

Leading news producers put users first by delivering critical, relevant information that fits naturally into their day. Delivery feels timely and considerate, not intrusive. They give users control over what they receive and when, transforming push alerts into a helpful service. This also reflects the growing demand for customizable experiences, echoing our previous finding of a convenience gap in how audiences find news.

- **Offer customizable delivery.** Top news producers let audiences choose which topics they receive updates on — such as breaking news, lifestyle or tech — and also the specific journalist, format or keywords they care about most. Some news consumers may want alerts tied to a favorite columnist, while others desire a recurring series, data stories or a specific theme. Successful news producers provide multiple delivery options, from app notifications, newsletter and SMS to messaging broadcasts on platforms such as WhatsApp. For example, The Guardian's myGuardian (example on next page) lets readers follow individual journalists, newsletters, podcasts and specific formats and receive dedicated push notifications, rather than only general "breaking news" or topic alerts. Michael MacLeod, the solo creator of The Edinburgh Minute, is planning to build section filters on his newsletters so readers can "take the full hose" or customize their newsletter to specific modules. Meanwhile, Politico has returned to SMS texting to reach busy lawmakers and political staff with "personal and urgent" news to cut through the clutter of email inboxes and notifications.
- **Leverage smart scheduling by aligning delivery to daily habits and knowing when to hold back.** A well-timed morning briefing or pre-commute digest feels useful and builds routine; predictable timing becomes a form of trust. As Moritz Klein of The Pioneer notes, "Most people… will just start the podcast because it's part of their morning routine or their commute. It's super key that we land at 6 a.m." Being truly user-centric also means managing alert fatigue by sending fewer, better-timed notifications that feel essential rather than intrusive. The Times of London, for example, caps its alerts at four per day to avoid over-communication, while the Financial Times uses a hybrid model — broad news alerts for all users and personalized

In article, The Guardian allows you to follow specific topics and authors, and turn on dedicated notifications

Anytime the author (in this case) Jonathan Wilson releases a new article, the user receives an automatic push notification

A centralized myGuardian hub allows users to review their followed topics / authors / newsletters and adjust notifications to personal preferences

5 p.m. updates for subscribers, complemented by morning briefings and weekend long-read digests. The Hindu has recently introduced a personalized push-notification strategy that sends alerts at optimal times based on each user's past behavior. This has resulted in an eight-fold increase in click-through rates.

Build for completion

Make Subscribe content dense and easy to complete

Leading news producers understand that many consumers interact with notifications, alerts, newsletters and chats in short time windows, between meetings or the first thing after waking up. This small window calls for information density and quick-to-complete content. Our previous research highlighted information density as key to closing the convenience gap — a need that has only grown as more people consume news via social media.

- **Standardize the skeleton for instant scanning — and lead with why the news matters.** Successful news producers use a consistent, predictable layout so readers know exactly where to look — an opening line that explains the one big thing they will take away, clear section headers, visual signposts (emojis or icons), bullets, and links. The Edinburgh Minute exemplifies this discipline. Every issue follows the same structure, ordered by impact on daily life, participation and light relief. As founder Michael MacLeod notes, "I will always keep this exact same structure so that it is scannable... I'll even include an introductory note to help people skip to the most relevant part." This is tapping into the 1/5/10 strategy outlined by newsletter

Plain language updates on the key contents of the newsletter

The Edinburgh Minute 🕐 Wednesday 15 October 2025

80,000 facing poverty, North Bridge scaffolding update, tourist tax could change + local football legends reuniting

MICHAEL MACLEOD
OCT 15, 2025

♡ 21   💬 4   ⟳   Share •••

The Community Noticeboard after the news, where members can share links to events and things happening in the city

📌 **Edinburgh Minute Community Noticeboard**

↳ Please get in touch using this form. < It's the only way to get something featured in the newsletter.

📌 *Thursday 16 October: Ospreys event at at the Cornerstone Centre, St John's Church, Princes Street: The 25 year story of establishing a breeding population of the iconic Osprey bird in the Scottish borders. Noteworthy is that this year has been unique with never before observed Osprey behaviour attracting significant national news interest.* - Thanks to the Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians Group volunteers for sharing this.

📌 *Thursday 16 October 2025 - Join Hibs official historian Tom Wright and some Hibs legends including John Blackley, John Brownlie, Neil Martin, Jim McArthur and Pat Stanton to celebrate the launch of Tom's latest book, 'The Story So Far: 150 Years of Hibernian Football Club'* - Thanks to Luath Press for sharing this.

📌 *Thursday 16 October 2025 - North Edinburgh Arts screens Tish - a documentary about photographer Tish Murtha by Paul Sng as part of their Local Resistance programme this Thursday from 5pm. Free event with soup beforehand and Paul will be in conversation with a local photographer after the screening.* - Thanks to Morvern Cunningham, Local Resistance Coordinator, for sharing this.

A softer tone for the introduction usually focusing on weather or the author's mood

😊 *Good morning Edinburgh. It's a colder start today, 7C outside just now. I definitely got this wrong earlier in the week but the sun is forecast to make an appearance today, according to the Met Office. Here's Wednesday's Edinburgh Minute.*

A long list of key stories, each with two sentences max, along with an emoji to introduce the topic, and a follow-up link

🧑 The level of **poverty** in Edinburgh has been described as an 'absolute disgrace' by the city's council leader as she shared plans to open new neighbourhood centres to fight the crisis. Around **80,000 people** in Edinburgh – including one in five children – face 'relative poverty'. - Local Democracy Reporter, Joe Sullivan, in Midlothian View.

🚓 Police are investigating after two groups of men in balaclavas armed with knives faced off near **Waverley Station**. - Calum Loudon, STV News.

⛴ The boss of **ferry** firm NorthLink was 'dismayed' after one of its boats was **blocked in a dock in Leith** by another ship unloading wind farm equipment. The ferry was due to leave on Monday but could remain stuck there until the end of the week. - Alastair Dalton, The Scotsman.

💷 The city's new **tourist tax** charge began on 1 October this year, affecting bookings for stays after 24 July 2026. But questions have been raised after it emerged major

EDINBURGH

A post shared by @firefly_international

📌 *"Looking for therapy that is focused, financially accessible, and time-bound? CATS is launching Time-Limited £20 or Pay-What-You-Can Therapy in January 2026. 1 Free Consultation with up to 3 therapists to find your fit. Register your interest today. Write "Time-Limited Therapy"" in referral reason."* - Thanks to Mar for sharing this.

🚩 *Anything missing? Please share your local news and events here.*

👀 **The most-visited links from the last newsletter:**

1. 🏛 Suspended Historic Environment Scotland boss breaks silence.
2. 📄 New Tenement Town local history post on Rankeillor Street address.
3. 💚 Councillors voting on whether to to switch to 100% plant-based food.
4. 📘 Spurtle review of new Cockburn Association book.
5. 🥚 Edinburgh's egg business club supports and uplifts women-led businesses.

Most-visited links from last newsletter, to help people stay up to date in case they miss any edition

---

specialist Dan Oshinsky. In this theory, the key insight comes first, deeper content follows, and a bite-sized bonus section finishes. This consistency gives readers confidence and makes attention a habit. Tone then completes the experience. Hard news formats are direct, neutral and fact-led, while personality-driven newsletters tend to be warmer and conversational.

- **Keep it short, but provide options to go deeper.** Top news producers include only a short headline for alerts and notifications, with an image, a subject line of six words or less. They make newsletters readable in less than three minutes, and they keep broadcast messages short — one to three sentences per update. These news producers give people the option to learn more (e.g. via external links). Deepit Purkayastha, co-founder and CEO of InShorts, notes that to meet this user need, they have recently "launched something known as daily digests of your interests. … You tell me what are the two, three or five things that you want a sense of completion on every day [and we will notify you of those]." InShorts also allows people to tap in the app to click on specific story cards that they are interested in to go deeper on a topic.

Consumption Modes

In consumption modes, users have chosen to explore a subject, topic or piece of content more deeply.

Audiences are more likely to engage further when a story feels personally relevant, emotionally resonant or sparks their curiosity. How they first encounter that story does not dictate what happens next. Differing motivations shape how individuals choose to go deeper, whether by verifying facts, exploring context, or interpreting different perspectives.

In many cases, successful sifting leads to a deeper engagement mode, as news consumers delve further into a story of interest. Our 2025 findings reinforce the three modes we previously identified that capture how audiences engage more deeply with the news once they move beyond sifting. These modes are:

Substantiating, in which users verify and cross-check information to confirm facts. This remains a central behavior, but our new findings suggest it is mainly triggered by suspicion — vague headlines, sensationalism, low-quality content or politicized topics.

Studying, in which individuals dive into long-form or explanatory content to build understanding. Our findings disprove commonly held views that next gen audiences do not consume long-form content. With appropriate framing, structure and production value, young people will spend hours on a single piece of content.

Sensemaking, in which audiences explore diverse perspectives and discussions and then form their own opinions. Our findings suggest that subtle design decisions and clear signpostings for the news producer's own biases are increasingly important to next gen audiences as a signal that they are entering a space to learn and debate.
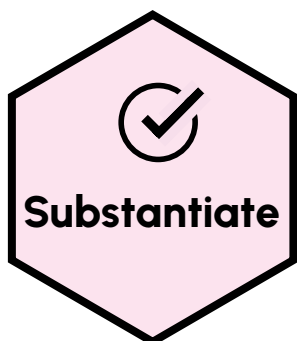
Substantiate

Checking and verifying news stories

In Substantiate mode, an individual has found a piece of information and wants to quickly and credibly confirm it. The desire is not full context or deep explanation. Audiences want to verify through trusted sources in a self-directed way that preserves their sense of agency, ensuring the information is factual, timely and fairly framed. To reach consumers in this mode, successful news producers create content that is promptly delivered after a breaking news event, focusing on main claims and facts, with simple, clear and digestible evidence at its core.

Consumer need

Substantiate mode begins when a consumer looks to verify a piece of news that has sparked suspicion. Consumers are not seeking deep understanding. Rather, they are looking to ensure the information they have come across is factual, timely and fairly framed.

Consumers tend to hold national and international political updates to a higher standard, especially if the subject is politicized in their media ecosystem. These subjects are more likely to trigger the Substantiate mode because the consequences of misinformation are perceived as greater than with other types of news.

In the Substantiate mode, audiences seek to verify information while preserving their own agency and understanding of truth. This often results in deep reliance on trusted news producers as fact-checking sources. In other cases, users rely on aggregating apps more than any individual news producer and draw conclusions about truth for themselves.

"If something sounds unbelievable or too hyped, I check it against my trusted sources before believing it."

Dev K
India

"If I'm reading something tabloid-y or I think something might not be true, I read multiple sources and just compare what seems the most consistent."

Morgan F
UK

"Sometimes I verify news from TikTok when the comment section is 90% against what's being said in the news, if there's a 90% disagreement about what's being reported or presented."

Okwuchi E
UK

"Typos set off mini-alarms in my head. Good media houses run checks on everything they put out. So, to have typos, there has to be something wrong somewhere."

Oluwatomiwa
Nigeria

What triggers Substantiating?
- A desire to better understand a headline
- Content that seems too good (or too bad)
- Overly sensational language
- Civic or political content that reads as unfair or unbalanced, usually unflatteringly framing the consumers' political leanings
- Rough grammar or image quality
- Possible use of generative AI for text or images

Substantiating behaviors
- Reading comments for fact-checking or shared suspicion
- Verifying headlines with trusted sources
- Searching to see if multiple sources reported similarly
- Checking bias-reporting aggregators to understand the "whole story"

The production challenge is to quickly provide clear, credible verification focusing on accuracy and simplicity without unnecessary context. Leading news producers ensure audiences can easily confirm what is true and move forward with confidence.

How news producers can respond

Meet your users
Deliver promptly, meeting users where they are and when they expect

Leading news producers facilitate substantiation by publishing information promptly after significant events occur or are reported. Next gen audiences expect emerging news producers to be on top of and help their audiences stay on top of timely news. They substantiate information on the platforms where their audiences spend their time.

- **Prioritize accuracy and relevance over speed or volume.** Leading news producers publish as soon as information is verified, ideally on the same day or within a few hours, but never at the expense of accuracy. Victor Marcello, co-founder of Quebrando o Tabu (QoT), a Brazilian digital media organization known for accessible, social-first journalism, explained: "We have a very deep understanding that we don't consider ourselves a news agency… We are not trying to be the first to provide information; instead, we focus on digesting and explaining the facts for the user." Leading news producers without significant team size and capacity avoid trying to substantiate every event. Instead, they focus on timely stories in which the issue has broad social or civic importance and there is a risk of misinformation or disinformation.
- **Push information directly to audiences.** Successful news producers build products that fact-check information or directly answer audience questions, including custom chatbots, Whatsapp communities or push notifications.

Integration with WhatsApp for convenience

Ability to ask free-text open questions

Includes citation and links

"Was this useful" AI reinforcement learning

"I don't know how to answer that" response if no relevant materials are returned via Retrieval-Augmented Generation

For example, after regularly receiving emails and messages from its audience asking if certain facts in different pieces of content were true, Aos Fatos (example above) created a self-service chatbot (FátimaGPT) available across WhatsApp, Telegram and the web that allows audiences to fact-check information in the moment.

Lead with facts
Start with the most important information and prioritize clarity

Leading news producers promote substantiation by delivering information audiences need for verification. In practice, this means providing essential factual information in a familiar, easy-to-consume format.

- **Start with the claim.** Successful news producers make it immediately obvious to users what story they are substantiating. For example, The Daily Aus (example on the next page) uses Instagram Carousels in which the first card and caption tell the audience exactly what has happened ("Jane Goodall, the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees, has died aged 91"). As founder Sam Koslowski told us, "We believe in giving people the facts and information and explaining what it all means in as simple a way as possible, so that people can make their own decisions from there… We want to help everyone start from the same spot [of shared truths]."

- **Create quick, easily digestible formats.** Successful news producers use consistent templates to make information consumption fast and effortless. These templates include bullet-pointed slide carousels, short videos, or 50–100 word news cards. They write in a clear, accessible style that prioritizes understanding

Instagram Card 1

Instagram Card 2

Simple, very short, to-the-point title

Plenty of empty space to avoid information overload

Image/photo to further substantiate what happened / who was affected

Brief descriptive sentence in the caption

Reiteration of what happened (in case people only see Card 2)

Supporting evidence for the story

Short context explanation

Branding, in case screenshotted or sent

over analysis and use straightforward vocabulary, short sentences and paragraphs, and a neutral tone with little or no humor. As Tatton Spiller, founder of Simple Politics (SP), explained: "If you want hard-hitting journalism, we're not the page for you. ... If you just want a human friend talking you through what's going on, that's what SP is and that's where SP lives."

Show your work
Include evidence and show your process

Leading news producers facilitate substantiation by including information directly from the original source and making it available to the audience. This includes documents, datasets, original posts, video or audio. The point is to provide "receipts, not rhetoric," and to teach by showing people information rather than telling them.

- **Stitch primary source materials into the content.** Leading news producers clip or duet videos/ audio, overlay screenshots of documents and include images so audiences can self-verify. UnderTheDeskNews (example on the next page) often presents sources behind the presenter, such as maps of military facilities, to promote substantiation. These successful news producers clearly annotate from where information has come using overlays on videos or references in text, and they include links in captions and bios. TLDR News provides a full list of sources under each of its videos and categorizes them into sections that include links to the original materials. Equally important, these successful news producers are transparent when uncertain. They clearly state what has not been verified, avoid speculation and update or annotate previous posts as facts become clear. Akash Banerjee, creator of The Deshbhakt, follows this principle in livestreams

Address the truth
00:00 – 0:04

Transcription excerpt
"Facts matter, Qatar is not building an air force base in Idaho…"

Listen to the source
00:16 – 0:35
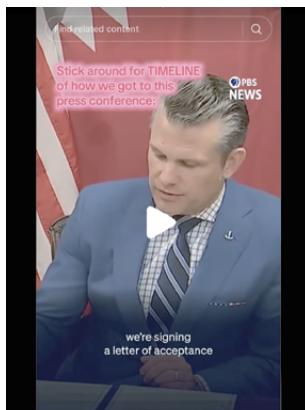
Transcription excerpt
"Listen for yourselves about what Pete Hesgeth had to say about the facility"

Show the evidence
00:35 – 0:45

Transcription excerpt
"Here is a publicly available map that shows the facility"

---

by openly acknowledging when information is incomplete or outside his expertise, building credibility through honesty and by avoiding overconfidence.

- **Show your working.** Successful news producers speak in the first person to make the verification visible and relatable. For example, they say, "In this video, we found an anomaly" before explaining the methods used to confirm or challenge a claim. They walk audiences through each step of their process, such as reverse image searches, metadata checks, open-source database retrieval and data analysis. They also demonstrate how evidence was gathered and interpreted to help audiences understand the rigor and the limitations of the work. Aos Fatos provides a strong example of this practice. It publishes "all the sources that we used to subsidise our investigation and our fact checks. We also give the readers a brief review of how the investigation was conducted from the start to the end, which tools we used, what data we accessed and what decisions we made. This

allows our readers to make a full assessment of how journalism is made."
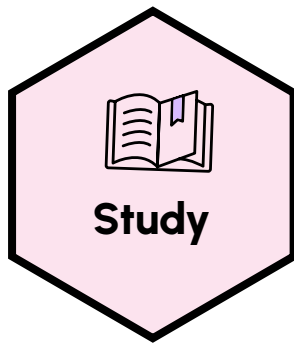
Study

Deep-diving into a particular topic or ongoing story to build knowledge

In Study mode, individuals dive deeply into a topic or ongoing story that has captured their interest or supports their personal or professional growth. This mode is driven by a desire to learn, upskill and be inspired. But for some, Study mode is a pleasant distraction. To reach consumers in this mode, producers can create long-form, information-dense content that has high-production value to keep engagement high, while showcasing their lived experience as a means to draw users into the story.

Consumer need

In Study mode, consumers dive deep into a particular topic or ongoing news story that has piqued their interest for the sake of personal fulfillment or professional development. A segment of consumers also study as an enriching form of entertainment.

Although consumers spend much of their time scrolling through news content or engaging with it only at a very high level, they still are willing to move into Study mode and engage deeply with the nuance and context of complex news stories. When they enter this deeper mode, they crave spaces that educate, upskill and inspire them with rich, well-researched information.

"I searched for in-depth videos about the economy right now. I wanted to know about, like, inflation and the whole tax tariff thing. So it was something I felt like I have basically no knowledge of, but I do worry about it because of how I hear word-of-mouth between family and friends....I honestly don't have a lot of knowledge about this. So I looked up on YouTube maybe just trying to get acquired or just understand a point overall what's occurring..."

Summer S
US

"When I watch a [long-form] video, I not only hear the news, but also see interviews, visuals, and detailed breakdowns, you know, which help me understand a bigger picture and what's actually happening."

Mithil S
India

What triggers Studying?
- Highly relevant news stories that extend personal interests or upskilling
- Civic stories that require higher understanding levels for full context, such as the intricacies of tariffs
- Ongoing, recurring news stories that require timelines and context, such as the history of the Israel/Palestine conflict
- Desire for entertainment that passes time during another task, such as exercising, cooking or eating, and feels productive and educational

Studying behaviors
- Moving from a headline to the actual content from the same source
- Searching for long-form content from a trusted source
- Consuming long-form video and audio content as pastime

In Study mode, audiences choose to slow down and go deep. They seek context, expertise and well-crafted explanations that help them understand complex issues or build personal knowledge. The production challenge is to reward this deliberate attention with depth that educates and inspires — transforming information into lasting understanding.

How news producers can respond

Show interest
Highlight personal interest in a story and share what was learned along the way

Leading news producers understand that people want to learn from passionate individuals. To do that, these producers share their personal curiosities, professional experiences, gaps in knowledge and occasional errors as part of the learning journey. This openness becomes a teaching device. It also addresses a deeper shift we identified in our previous research: Audiences feel greater affinity for news producers who come across as family or friends rather than distant teachers.

- **Open with the motive, not just the topic.** In the first 15–30 seconds or first paragraph, successful news producers state why they care. They reveal the puzzle or lived experiences that informed the story. They also keep it specific and verifiable. For example, they refer to "A price increase on my grocery receipt I couldn't explain." Mohak Mangal (example on the next page) continuously does this in his videos, grounding complex national issues in his own curiosity and daily life before expanding to the larger story. When exploring the fake paneer scandal — the widespread adulteration of India's popular cheese in which producers use cheap substitutes or even chemicals — he connects with viewers by beginning with a personal hook. Another example is BellaNaija, which was launched in 2006 to spotlight Africa's beauty amid news that frequently focused on violence and poverty. The founder's

In Mohak's introduction, he addresses why he's interested in the topic and what pushed him to investigate

00:00 – 0:50

Transcription excerpt

"The Paneer you're eating happily, is it real or fake?... My family and friends know that I live on Paneer. So my team and I decided to investigate this fake Paneer scam taking over India."

He then uses on-the-ground interviews as well as animations to 'set the scene' and place it in the wider context
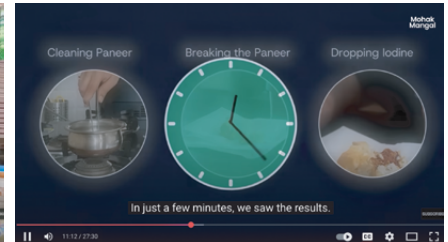
00:50 – 10:40

Transcription excerpt

"That's why we collected Paneer samples from across Delhi: from dairies, restaurants, stalls...We carried out the Iodine test for each sample and got some unexpected results."

Lastly, he shows how he created an experiment to debunk or prove his hypothesis

10:40 – 27:30

Transcription excerpt

"That's why we followed Dr. Aparna's advice. We washed the Paneer, we broke it down into pieces, then we added the iodine to the inner and clean portions and in just a few minutes we saw the result."

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personal frustration grew into a platform that continues to change perceptions of Africa.

- **Use mini-brands or shows as a creative sandbox.** Successful news producers experiment with sub-franchises that have their own unique names, tones, talent and aesthetics with subtle ties to the parent brand. Morning Brew uses this franchise approach by spinning off some of its most-known shows (Good Work) or by acquiring new emerging news producer-led shows (A Show About The News). As Macy Gilliam explained, "One creator does start to finish [ideation, writing, filming, editing], which I think is part of what makes it so good. It lets us each have individual styles where it's not like we're all going through the same editor that then makes everything feel very similar."

Go deep

Use long-form and information-dense content to build lasting value and understanding

Leading news producers meet the demand for knowledge with long-form, information-dense content that serve as mini-modules. They introduce a clear question as a foundation and build concepts, show evidence and synthesize takeaways. The result is durable value and content that is saved, watched and rewatched long after publication.

- **Start with a learning goal to orient the audience and prime attention.** Successful news producers open with one clear line — "By the end, you'll be able to explain..." — so viewers know what they will gain and why it matters. HowTown's videos exemplify this by examining the evidence behind commonly held claims, asking, "How do we know that X happened?" As co-founder Adam Cole explained, "Our job is to share information and help people understand where the information comes from so they can evaluate it themselves." From there, these successful news producers frame deeper civic or societal questions. They explicitly name what is at stake, who benefits or how policy decisions shape everyday life. Economics Explained, for instance, publishes only a few videos per month, each anchored to a big civic question such as, "Is this the recession the US needs to have?" Together,

these techniques address a broader shift identified in our previous research: Younger audiences increasingly expect news to be directly actionable — something that helps them understand, decide or do something, not just helps them stay informed.

- **Favor evergreen or under-explored themes.** Leading news producers prioritize topics that matter in the long term, such as macroeconomics, history, science or common myths. As Jan Diehm, founder of the data-driven and long-form scrollytelling producer The Pudding explained, "Our projects take two to six months, sometimes over a year. So, we're purposely picking things that have a really long shelf life and a really long tail." The Observer's weekly The Slow Newscast is a similar example via audio. It mixes investigation into lesser-known details of topical stories — such as wars, economic policy and crime — with explorations of evergreen topics like immortality, childcare or the quest to save whales.

- **Build concepts progressively.** Successful news producers move from fundamentals to nuance and summarize each section in one clear sentence before moving on. This chunking guides understanding and prevents audiences from becoming lost in detail. Ros Atkins, the BBC presenter known for his 5-10 minute explanatory videos, has a seven-step method to achieve this: ① set up, ② find, ③ distill, ④ organize, ⑤ link, ⑥ tighten, ⑦ deliver. HowTown (example on the next page) goes a step further with its 15-plus-minute long-form videos that have clear chapter markers and distill key information while allowing users to easily go back or skip specific sections.

Bring it to life
Show on-the-ground reporting and add production value

Leading news producers understand that audiences want to learn directly from the source and see things for themselves. To do this, these producers clearly show how they have gathered information and add smart design elements as cognitive aids. The combination of presence and production craft signals care, credibility and purpose — key ingredients in deep learning. These also respond to a wider need identified in our previous research: News producers feel more credible when they showcase lived experience and demonstrate proximity to events and the people affected by them.

- **Gather original evidence and showcase it in original ways.** Leading news producers collect first-hand material through research, data gathering, open-source intelligence (OSINT) and interviews with experts or the people directly involved. Original data and primary sources signal rigor, broaden what counts as evidence, and strengthen their ability to explain not just what is happening but how and why. The Pudding <example on Page 66> built an original dataset from thousands of films to quantify Asian representation in Hollywood. As journalist Jan Diehm explained, "In the data viz world there are two schools of thought. One says minimalism works best — the data should speak for itself — and the other more experimental field, where we fall, creates memorable capsules. There's a famous chart we once made that is shaped like a monster, with the jagged data-line as its teeth, and research shows people remember that version far more than a simple line chart." Another key principle successful news producers show

Interlude between animation and live interviews for pacing. Live interviews are used at end of each section as recap and explainer

As this story focuses on the tectonic evolution of the world, HowTown uses a visual timeline across entirety of the video to locate 'where in time'

Clear timestamp in the video title to set expectations

Clear chapter-markers for people to understand which part of the video they are in
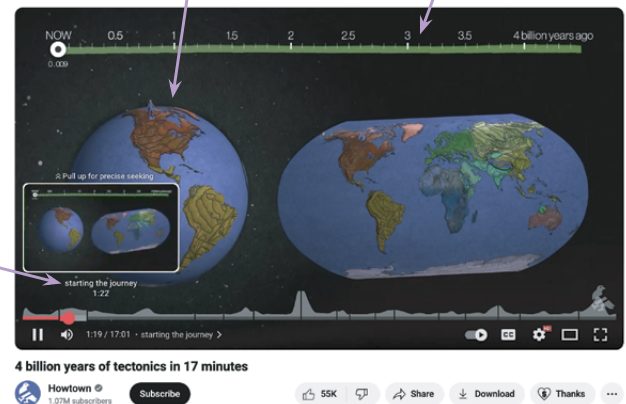
is the importance of being on-the-ground: They go on location to add sensory detail and context. Creator [Cleo Abram](#) combines studio explanations with field reporting — filming inside a zero-gravity facility to explore the science of space travel, for example — to bring experiential evidence to her work.

- **Show your process and develop a signature form.** Successful news producers break down stories step-by-step so audiences can follow their reasoning and see how conclusions take shape. They use visual walkthroughs — maps, timelines or annotated documents — to make topics tangible. [Johnny Harris](#) exemplifies this in his map-led explainers. He does not just use maps. He designs and redesigns them on screen, walking viewers through how he combines satellite imagery, historical cartography and his own graphic layers to uncover patterns and meaning. The act of constructing the map

becomes the story itself. [Sportsball](#) applies the same principle through its hand-drawn charts and diagrams, which take shape in real time as the host unpacks the business of sport. The evolving sketch clarifies ideas and creates a recognizable aesthetic. In both cases, form mirrors process, and audiences see the thinking unfold.

The Pudding "Asian misrepresentation in movies"

The Story

Complete accuracy
Partial accuracy
Complete inaccuracy

Explaining their reasoning behind how they gathered data and showcasing it through a 'scrollytelling' format with original design

Gathering original data. In this case: 80 films from 1982 to 2023, with 160 Asian actors playing 236 characters that are central to the film, to investigate whether they are misrepresented.

Social

Use of a personal story behind why The Pudding looked into this topic

Use of cartoons to stand-out while people 'scroll' through their feeds

Clear follow-up action to read the whole story
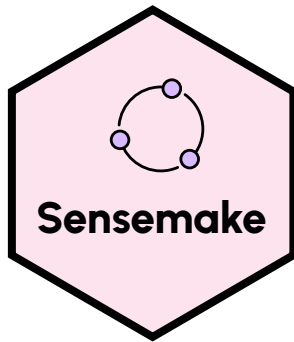
Sensemake

Processing complex topic by exploring different perspectives

In the Sensemake mode, individuals are looking to explore different viewpoints and perspectives on complex topics. Unlike Study, where the goal is factual depth, Sensemake is about exploring different viewpoints to form opinions. This mode is driven by curiosity and a desire for co-learning spaces where producers and audiences engage openly, and sometimes combatively, to make sense of the world together.

Consumer need

In Sensemake, next gen news consumers search for accessible ways to process and understand complex topics. Unlike the Study mode, in which the goal is deeper factual understanding, Sensemake is how consumers explore different viewpoints and perspectives about the news to form their own opinions. In this mode, they hope to weigh different perspectives as part of a broader quest to understand their own political and social position on current events.

This mode is highly social. Consumers are looking for spaces to reach consensus with others about what is happening or to situate themselves near to or apart from others' opinions online. Consumers in this mode value transparency and authenticity, as they promote better alignment with their beliefs. Respondents say:

"If there is some breaking news that is starting a lot of chatter, I'll go to Reddit to see what people have to say about it."

Hedavam S
US

"X helps me keep up with the breaking news and trends in real time. Unlike traditional news, I can quickly see reactions from different people and get a sense of public opinion. It's great for discovering updates quickly and seeing a variety of viewpoints."

Dev K
India

"The best part of [Raiam Santos's YouTube channel] is that I can see other people's opinions, people without the filter that journalists usually have. Journalists have to remain impartial, but here I can see someone's position on a subject, which is interesting because I can agree or completely disagree. [Raiam Santos] is good because he has many polemical opinions, sometimes very good, well-thought opinions. That's the difference. This possibility of agreeing or disagreeing is very good. It's easier to interact with him than with a journalist, and since he has a big audience, I also find other people with similar opinions. That's really good."

Ebenézer L
Brazil

What triggers Sensemaking?
- Seeing updates and synthesis along with the crowd as breaking news or other information is still coming out
- When arguments are obvious online
- When bias feels obvious or assumed based on topic
- When a topic is too broad to understand

Sensemaking behaviors
- Talking with friends/family in person or over text
- Reading comments
- Reading online social commentary
- Searching social media for opinions on a specific topic or story
- Seeking relatable, human-to-human content explaining context and interpretation

In the Sensemake mode, audiences search for help interpreting complex or contested stories. They want to see how others are thinking through and weighing viewpoints, reactions and emotions to arrive at their own position. The production challenge is to create spaces that invite perspective and transparency, helping audiences process disagreement and find orientation amid uncertainty.

How news producers can respond

Create open conversations
Host long-form unscripted conversations that let people share their perspectives

Leading news producers know audiences value

spaces where those they trust can think aloud, test ideas and listen to others do the same. Openness about beliefs and uncertainties builds trust and makes conversations more engaging, as audiences witness opinions forming and evolving in real time. This concept of transparency of intention — being transparent about any conflicts of interest, agendas or biases a person may have — was a key principle we identified in our previous research.

- **Create open spaces for honest conversation where producers and audiences can think aloud.** Leading news producers use podcasts and long-form videos to invite audiences into this process, turning explanation into conversation and performance into shared understanding. Channel 5 with Andrew Callaghan exemplifies this by letting people speak at length, reclaiming a form of dialogue that traditional broadcast interviews have largely lost to confrontation and control. His open, unhurried questioning spans two distinct formats — street interviews with everyday people and longer conversations with public figures — designed to create space for reflection rather than reaction. His Two Years Later series extends that ethos by re-interviewing individuals and communities from earlier videos to show how they have evolved over time, making continuous coverage a central element of accountability and care in reporting. The Ezra Klein Show, by contrast, demonstrates openness through structured intellectual exchange. Each episode begins with a clearly stated argument or hypothesis, which Klein tests through reflective, clarifying questions and careful summarization of his guest's perspective.
- **Clearly disclose your intention, bias or viewpoint.** Successful news producers encourage hosts to briefly explain their point of view, making their opinions clearly visible. This builds credibility and honesty, inviting audiences to examine their own biases with openness as well. The

Ezra Klein sets the context of the conversation with a 3-10 minute introduction explaining what the topic will be, what his position on it is and why he invited his guest:
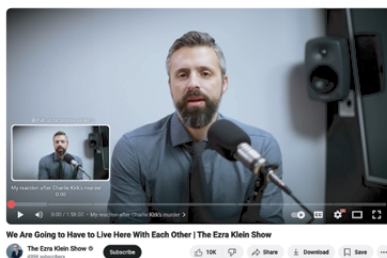
Transcription excerpt
"I want to create a space that takes our disagreements seriously…but does so without deepening our divisions irreparably. I taped an episode with Ben Shapiro, he is well to my right, a person with whom I have many disagreements and also good conversations. And this one was no different. You learn things talking to people you don't expect."

After the context, he welcomes his guest who then explains their own position, hypothesis, or experience on the topic.

Transcription excerpt
"So, let's get into your book. You have a theory of two groups here, lions and scavengers. What's a Lion? What's a Scavenger?"

Throughout the conversation, Ezra tries to clearly summarize his guests points and follows-up with either rebuttals or further questions.

Transcription excerpt
"This feels to me like a more narrow argument of political strategy and I don't even totally disagree with it. But I want to push you a little bit into something more fundamental here…"

Rest is Politics achieves this by grounding the hosts' differing political backgrounds and by making those perspectives an active part of their exchange. Rather than simply stating their positions, Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell prompt each other to reflect on how their past experiences shape their interpretations of current events. This conversational questioning makes their viewpoints feel organic and exploratory, turning their personal experiences into a shared way of understanding and contextualizing the news.

Orient the audience
Use clear, thoughtful design to highlight perspectives and aid understanding

Leading news producers complement long-form unscripted conversations with intentional structure, using visual, audio and editorial cues that help audiences easily understand which perspective is being presented.
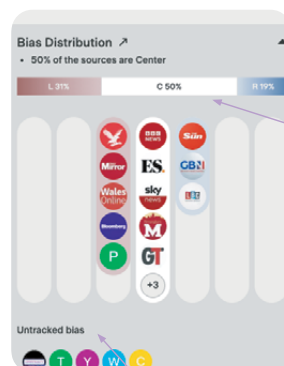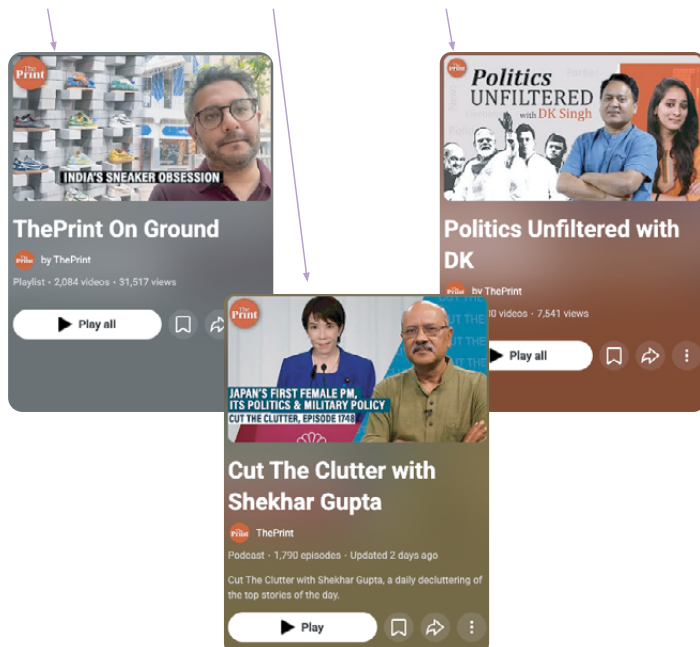
- **Vary show formats to deepen engagement and reach audiences across information needs.** Successful news producers create deep-dive episodes that unpack background, add follow-up Q&As to respond to audience questions, and showcase interviews with key players offering fresh perspectives. The Print <example on Page 70> demonstrates this effectively across its ecosystem: ThePrint On Ground focuses on the lived experiences of everyday people; Cut the Clutter uses thoughtful design choices to show different perspectives and make breaking news easier to follow; and Politics Unfiltered with DK frames deeper civic questions through a longer explanatory Q&A style. This approach provides audiences with a variety of formats and multiple ways to connect with the same ideas, something our previous research revealed to be vital.
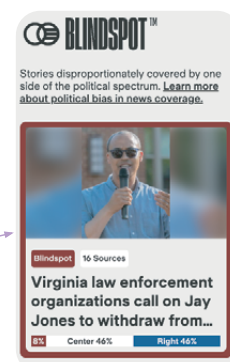
The Print effectively creates 3 types of YouTube shows each with a unique purpose of either showing: 1. people's perspectives, 2. expert opinion, or 3. two people openly discussing

ThePrint On Ground
by ThePrint
Playlist · 2,084 videos · 31,517 views
Play all

Politics Unfiltered with DK
by ThePrint
10 videos · 7,541 views
Play all

Cut The Clutter with Shekhar Gupta
ThePrint
Podcast · 1,790 episodes · Updated 2 days ago
Cut The Clutter with Shekhar Gupta, a daily decluttering of the top stories of the day.
Play

Bias Distribution
• 50% of the sources are Center
L 31%   C 50%   R 19%
Untracked bias

GroundNews' product focuses on highlighting how different sides of the political aisle cover the same stories, clearly showing which news sources have reported on the story based on their proprietary spectrum that classifies news sources from 'far-left' to 'far-right'

It clearly indicates whether sources not yet classified on their political spectrum are also covering the stories

BlindSpot is another feature that identifies stories receiving uneven coverage: extensively reported by one side but scarcely, if at all, by the other

BLINDSPOT
Stories disproportionately covered by one side of the political spectrum. Learn more about political bias in news coverage.

Blindspot 16 Sources
Virginia law enforcement organizations call on Jay Jones to withdraw from...
Center 46%   Right 46%

Successful news producers pair this diversity of format with consistent, visible signposts that help audiences navigate complexity. They clearly label sections such as 'The Facts,' 'The Debate' or 'Why It Matters', and support them with visual cues such as side-by-side frames or on-screen graphics to help orient audiences. Outlets such as AllSides, Semafor, GroundNews and Tangle News exemplify this, using structured design and transparency tools such as AllSides' Bias Checker to create more convenient, low-effort means to engage with information.

Include the audience
Be responsive to audience demands and incorporate their viewpoints

Leading news producers understand that Sensemaking is social and participatory.

Audiences do not just receive information; they help steer it. As such, live or semi-live formats such as Q&As, comment responses or reaction explainers help news producers turn the news into actionable information for their audiences. This is a vital component of their Ideal News Experience.

- **Use livestreams to transform news into a shared, real-time act.** Successful news producers turn live moments into spaces where journalists and audiences make sense of events together. Livestreaming creates immediacy and intimacy, bridging the distance between news producer and news consumer. Rather than treating live formats as simple broadcasts, these news producers use them as forums for participation, a place to react, ask, debate and co-create meaning. HasanAbi, one of Twitch's most-watched political streamers, exemplifies this approach. His long, free-flowing daily broadcasts mix reactions to the day's headlines with live responses to breaking news,

Hasan watching TV segments and reacting to tweets, usually using humor to give his takes to his audience
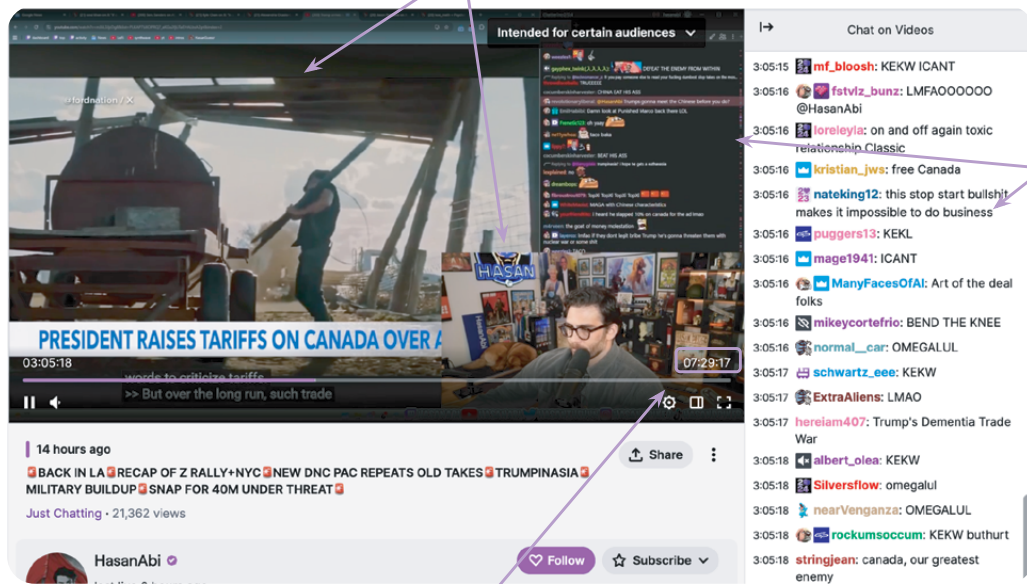
Live chat that respond to video asking questions (and often just reacting to Hasan's takes)

Seven-hour long unscripted daily streams, making sense of the biggest news of the day

offering unfiltered commentary that evolves in real time. He makes his own perspective part of the story, turning opinion into a tool for connection and making the act of following the news feel communal. Live interactions further deepen this connection. By surfacing questions from comment sections, direct messages or polls, he leverages audience curiosity to guide the discussion and decide where to dwell. Rewarding participation through on-air recognition or direct replies strengthens this bond and reinforces journalism as a shared act. The Deshbhakt illustrates the same principle in its Saturday Night Livestream, where host Akash Banerjee answers questions — including from paid "super chat" followers — to turn audience engagement into both a community ritual and a revenue stream.

Use satire wisely
It should stimulate critical thinking

A segment of leading news producers uses satire to open up space for reflection, often on difficult, divisive or emotionally charged topics. This approach helps people engage with issues that might otherwise feel too polarizing, overwhelming or abstract, and makes them more palatable without diluting their importance. This approach directly meets the language demands of next gen news consumers who want news to be delivered in a way that is informal, humorous and entertaining, as outlined in our previous research.

- **Authentically plug into the zeitgeist.** Successful news producers borrow the viral trends and stories of the moment — memes, formats, viral audio clips — and connect them to the real story. A timely meme can be the on-ramp to

Always linking to the original business story to anchor it to one company and how it's being covered

Always using the Morning Brew office as the setting and background to make it recognizable and approachable

Nvidia, OpenAI, and Oracle pulling off the classic investment circle jerk
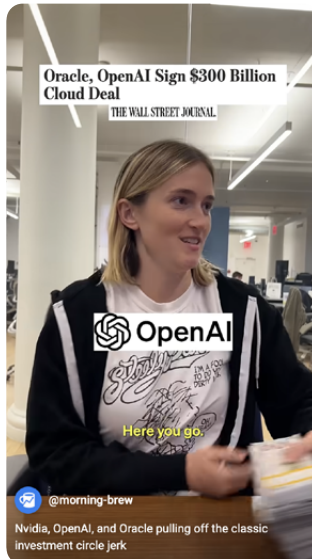
Creating satire of the news through the use of props or funny captions

Creating satire through the use of over-the-top personas or characters
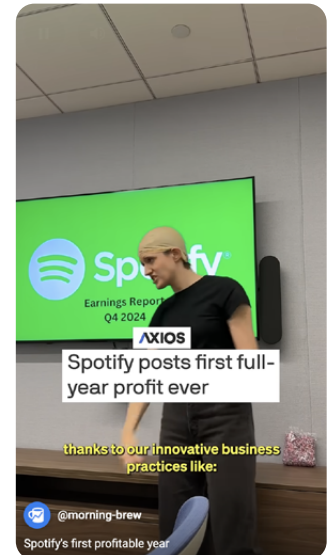
Sensemaking, allowing people to understand the context, not just the punchline. As Dave Jorgensen of The Local News International explained, "We want to come at it in a comedic way that allows people to get the news but also acknowledge that this story is wild … there's a lot going on and there's news fatigue … so we're going to do it in a format that's more entertaining than a traditional news report." Jorgensen anchors his short-form videos in viral formats and memes — such as through the use of a famous scene from The Wolf of Wall Street to explain a CDC story — and meets audiences where they already are by turning internet culture into a gateway for news literacy.

- **Build recurring inside jokes to make complex topics feel approachable and foster a sense of belonging.** Successful news producers create a shared language for their audiences that turns critique into connection. The Daily Show under Jon Stewart mastered this through its recurring correspondent segments, in which exaggerated archetypes — like the overconfident pundit or clueless foreign reporter — parodied broadcast news tropes and built continuity through humor. Similarly, adopting characters or personas to clarify a point can make ideas more tangible. Morning Brew's parody videos (example above), such as its mock Palantir ad, use the voice of a slick corporate spokesperson to expose the absurdities of business culture, sharpening the critique while keeping it entertaining and accessible.

Socialize

Sharing news content to connect with others

Socialize mode describes the interpersonal nature of modern news consumption. While our previous work listed this as an individual mode, our current data suggests sharing news is less a discrete consumption habit and more of a long–term relational action to be considered in its own context.

Consumer need

Socialize was one of the original modes in our previous report; at the time, we understood it primarily in terms of content consumption: "In the Socialize mode, young consumers want to deepen social ties through the content they consume in a way that makes them feel smart, connected and socially validated." Today, we realize that Socialize is bidirectional. It contributes to our expanded understanding of both the Sifting and the Consuming modes. News consumers weigh content sent from trusted sources differently during their sifting process. Sharing news can be important for building bonds, improving social standing and educating peers because news consumers believe their knowledge might help others.

We learned that for many of our respondents, there is no more valued, trusted source than friends and family, and often these connections help cut through content overwhelm. Respondents say:

"When friends or trusted contacts share news, I tend to pay more attention because it feels more relevant and relatable."

Piyush H
India

"I think it more potent when someone you know shares news with you because it concerns them enough to share it and then by extension it affects you. Overall its more valuable than regular browsing news"

Viraj J
India

"When people I know personally share news content with me it feels valuable and very relatable, it can be news that I have probably missed and when it comes from them I'm more likely to engage with it."

Adunmide O
UK

Socialize remains an important part of consumption. Sometimes, people want to ask friends, family or other trusted people to help substantiate or sensemake. Other times, they want to be seen as knowledgeable. And still other

times, they just have information they think other people need to know.

"Sharing news content with friends has a lot of value for me. It's not just about passing along information—when I share news, I get to hear my friends' opinions and see their reactions. Sometimes they notice details I missed, or offer a side of the story I hadn't considered. It makes discussions more meaningful and helps all of us understand issues from different perspectives. Sharing news also keeps our group connected, encourages debates, and sometimes even helps us support each other when serious topics come up. For me, it's a way to stay engaged, learn more, and feel closer to the people I care about."

Dev K
India

"I find value in sharing news with friends because we're able to discuss it and it allows me to get other perspectives on the topic."

Estazia A
US

"Sometimes I share a piece of news to see what other opinions people have around me. It's a great way to start conversation as well as think a bit yourself."

Paula B
UK

What triggers Socialize?
Socialize is bi-directional, having characteristics of both the Sift and Consumption behaviors.
- **Like Sift modes:** Receiving links from friends, family or co-workers via emails, group chats or direct messages
- **Like Consumption modes:** Sharing links with friends, family or co-workers via emails, group chats or direct messages

Socialize behaviors
- **Like Sift modes:** Committing to consume a news story that otherwise would not be interesting solely because of a relationship to or connection with the sender.
- **Like Consumption modes:** Sharing news with personal connections to improve social standing, establish personal expertise or to signal good taste. And, interpreting the import of a news story differently because of conversation with personal or professional connections

How news producers can respond

Build for sharing
*Create content that people want to send to their peers*

This is how audiences become distributors. Instead of information being pushed by news producers, it travels laterally — among peers, in group chats, across feeds. The most effective news producers design content that sparks this behavior, content that is emotionally resonant enough to share, simple to grasp and easy to repost. It also helps close the affinity gap identified in our previous research, as producers move beyond stating facts to build genuine

When a user takes a screenshot of the podcast or song they are listening to

Spotify then creates a designed card that automatically appears after the screenshot, and provides an easy way to share
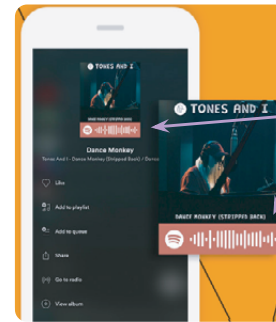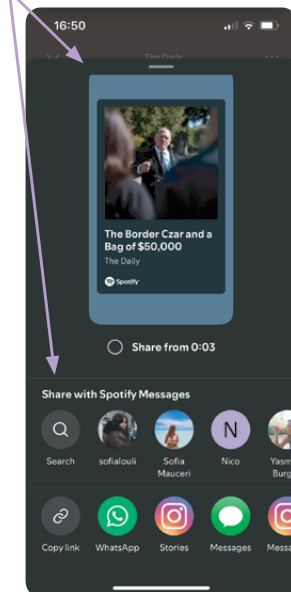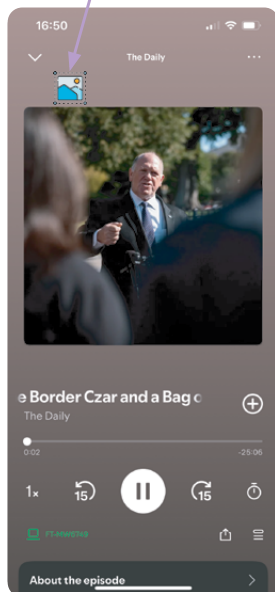
Spotify also creates unique and scannable QR codes of their song to enable easier offline 'sharing'
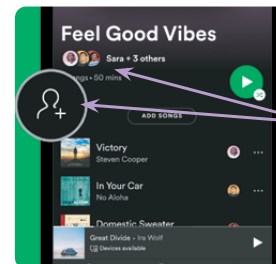
Spotify also enables the ability of co-create playlists (of songs or podcasts) between various users

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relationships that make audiences want to share.

- **Leading news producers tell human stories.** People are far more likely to share a moment of warmth or recognition than a data-heavy or complex story. These producers focus on local and personal narratives that celebrate small wins, resiliency or creativity. For example, Morning Brew's Out There with Macy Gilliam spotlights local entrepreneurs in short clips that "feel good to share," building reach and brand affinity.

- **Successful news producers sometimes use memes to condense meaning and inject humor.** Litquidity, a finance and investment social brand, uses humor to comment on market news and expose the irrationalities that often define it. Across its feed posts, Reels, and Stories, it draws on viral movie clips, celebrity quotes, famous punchlines and playful graphics to deliver quick, witty takes on the day's financial stories. The result is distinctive memes that make complex market behavior feel more understandable and entertaining. FT Alphaville — a free mini-brand within the Financial Times — illustrates how humor and cultural fluency can attract new

audiences to a traditional news organization. Its tagline — 'We love financial plumbing, debt crises, balance sheets, margin calls, economic puns and snark' — captures its strategy. It often engages on Reddit 'Ask Me Anything' to drive interest back to the site, while also using playful chart edits that are more shareable, such as this Halloween-based markets story.

- **Successful news producers optimize for effortless sharing.** They design each product with frictionless distribution in mind, thinking of how a story, clip or social card looks when screenshotted, linked or forwarded. They add clear share buttons, social-friendly visuals and one-sentence summaries. Shareability is not luck for these producers but rather a product feature, and the easier it is for audiences to recirculate work, the more likely it becomes part of their online identity. Most news producers today have share buttons on their articles, but there is room to learn from beyond news. For example, Spotify detects when users take screenshots while in the app and automatically generates a custom-designed share card. Every song also has its unique QR code for offline sharing.

METHODOLOGY

Why We Chose These Countries

As we did in the original Next Gen News, we set out to study next gen news consumers. We combined large-scale quantitative research to better compare next gen audiences with older ones, paired it with in-depth qualitative diary studies, and compared it with strategies from emerging news producers.

We conducted research across five continents. We revisited the original three countries from Next Gen News: India, Nigeria and the United States; and added two more: Brazil and the United Kingdom. We selected these locations based on several demographic considerations and their importance in shaping global news consumption through 2030.

Brazil

Brazil is the largest country in South America by area and population, with more than 200 million people. It has a robust media ecosystem with active digital audiences across socioeconomic groups. Brazil's traditional news ecosystem reflects the societal political polarization. It also has a fast-growing cohort of independent, digital-native news producers.

India

India is the world's most populous country with about 1.5 billion people. Its working-age population may be larger than that of any significant economy, and it is set to grow significantly. It is a country at the forefront of the digital revolution. With its youngest demographic having leapfrogged directly into a mobile-only reality, it has distinct expectations for news distribution, particularly at a time of limited press freedom.

Nigeria

Nigeria has an informed, empowered and tech-literate demographic, with around 70% of the population under the age of 30. By 2050, it is projected to become the seventh-youngest population in the world and overtake the United States as the third-most populous country, indicating that its political and economic decisions will have wider global ramifications. Although emigration is high due to the quality of education and disillusionment with the country's political leadership, its growing middle class is expected to wield greater influence. This is likely to fuel demand for a robust and healthy news ecosystem.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a historically mature traditional news ecosystem with a long history of

national public journalism and a variety of for-profit media organizations at the national and local levels. Like much of Europe, news consumers in the United Kingdom have been wrestling with significant societal and political upheaval over the last decade.

United States

Although media research often places the United States at the forefront due to its rapid adoption of new technologies, it is a worthwhile counterpoint to Brazil, Nigeria, and India, given demographic shifts projected between now and 2030. The proportion of underrepresented racial groups is expected to increase significantly, and the non-Hispanic white population is predicted to make up less than half of all Americans by 2050. This makes it more important to expand coverage to address the information needs of historically underserved communities. This diversity is particularly pronounced among Gen Z, which accounts for roughly a quarter of the population today.

Consumer research

We worked with YouGov to conduct an extensive survey of news consumers in Brazil, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States. The survey comprised 21 major questions plus follow-ups, gathering information on news and information consumption behavior, attitudes and beliefs. YouGov recruited 1,000 respondents in each country. While the focus of the Next Gen News project is on younger audiences, the survey pool ranged in age from 18 to 101, allowing us to compare younger and older audiences.

In addition to the survey, we conducted diary studies with 84 participants in the same five countries: Brazil, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Diary studies are a qualitative research method in which respondents document their activity and reflections over a period of time; in this case, the study lasted about 10 days. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 and lived in diverse areas of each country, varying in lifestage, socioeconomic background, education level, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political position and accessibility level. Our design was broken into four separate activities, each combining classic open- and closed-ended survey questions with multimedia responses (e.g., image uploads, screenshots, recordings, selfie-style videos).

The diary study activities were as follows:
- **Introductory survey:** Participants filled out a media-rich survey telling us their opinions and habits and the state of news consumption today
- **Inventory of trusted sources:** Participants completed multiple surveys, each providing in-depth information about one of their primary news sources as defined by the consumer.
- **Daily diary:** For five days, participants submitted daily entries about the highs and lows of news consumption that day, and they showed us a specific news story that stood out to them.
- **Reflection:** Participants gave their final thoughts and recommendations for news producers

The resulting data consisted of 258 examples of trusted news sources and 417 individual news stories, which were then analyzed for common emotional and behavioral themes.

Producer research

To complement our broader audience research, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 19 emerging news producers operating across diverse formats, audiences and geographies.

We sought to capture a wide range of approaches to storytelling and audience engagement by selecting producers who differ along several key dimensions:

- **Platform:** Representation across TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Substack, owned-and-operated websites and apps, WhatsApp, and podcasts, with a balance of producers focused on short-form and long-form content, and spanning video, audio and text.
- **Type of creator:** A mix of solo news producers, emerging news producers, traditional news organizations and technology companies.
- **Audience mode:** Inclusion of producers whose primary focus aligns with one of our six core audience modes: Scroll, Seek, Subscribe, Substantiate, Study and Sensemake.
- **Geography:** Coverage of news producers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany.
- **Gender:** A balance across male, female and non-binary individuals.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours and was conducted online. Conversations explored how these producers founded and developed their media, the choices underpinning their formats and the strategies they use to engage younger audiences, as well as the distinctive qualities and secret ingredients they believe are behind their success.

We are deeply grateful to all the interviewees for generously sharing their time, experience and perspectives with us:

ALL SIDES
Julie Mastrine
Director of Marketing & Media Bias Ratings
Henry Brechter
Editor-in-Chief

AOS FATOS
Tai Nalon, *Executive Director and Founder*
Bruno Fávero, *Director of Innovation*

BELLANAIJA
Oluwadunsin Sanya, *Head of Editorial & Innovation*

CLIMATEADAM
Dr Adam Levy, *Creator*

THE EDINBURGH MINUTE
Michael Macleod, *Creator*

INSHORTS
Deepit Purkayastha, *Co-founder and CEO*
Tanisha Jain, PR Manager for Inshorts and Public

JAMES LI
James Li, *Creator*

LISA REMILLARD
Lisa Remillard, *Creator*

LOCAL NEWS INTERNATIONAL
Micah Gelman and Lauren Saks, *Co-Founders*

MOHAK MANGAL
Mohak Mangal, *Creator*

MORNING BREW
Macy Gilliam, *Creator*

NICK VALENCIA
Nick Valencia, *Creator*

PAUL RIVERA
Paul Rivera, *Creator*

THE PIONEER
Moritz Klein, *Director of Growth & Product*

THE PUDDING
Jan Diehm, *Senior Journalist-Engineer*

QUEBRANDO o TABU
Victor Marcello, *Brand Development Director*

LEGIT.ng
Rahaman Abiola, *Editor-in-Chief*

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