News in Motion

How Young People Get their Press

By: Carla Caal

On a quiet Sunday morning, Rachel Huefner flips through her physical copy of The New York Times with a cup of coffee in hand. The smell of fresh print mixes with her coffee. For her, this ritual is a balance between old and new, a way to stay informed in an age when most news breaks faster than it can be printed. It is a way to slow down from her daily dive into her mobile application of The New York Times to get the news.

In today's media landscape, young people are redefining how news is consumed, shared, and trusted. From traditional publications like The New York Times to social media feeds on TikTok and Instagram, the question is not just where they get their news, but also how they decide what is credible. According to the Pew Research Center, "a little under half (48%) of U.S. adults say they get news from social media 'often' or 'sometimes.' Showing how social media continues to play a dominant yet complicated role in how information spreads online (Pew Research Center, 2021).

For many, the answer reflects both convenience and caution. "I get my news from the New York Times and Atlantic", Rachel Huefner, 29, explained during our in-person interview in the Law Office conference room. "The Atlantic tends to have more opinion pieces, so I also look at external sources". When asked if she goes on any other platforms to get news on social media,

she stated that “Social Media is full of misinformation, lies, and idiots trying to get a message out there”.

Rachels represents a smaller but steady group of young readers who continue to value established vetted journalism. Her subscription, both digital and print, bridges two generations of news consumption, one that scrolls to choose a story and one that sits down to read what is already predetermined.

Meanwhile, others take a different approach. “I get my news from Instagram,” said Priscilla Magallon, 36, in an in-person interview. “I only fact-check certain news stories if something feels to out there to make sure it is real.” Priscilla’s habit mirrors a growing trend among social media users whose algorithms mix trending funny videos with current news stories. According to Giansiracusa (2012), the pressure for constant content creation online often causes bloggers and mid-level media outlets to share stories without carefully tracing or fact-checking their sources, simply to keep up with the endless demand for new material. This reflects how even casual social media users like Priscilla can feel overwhelmed by the constant stream of stories, choosing to verify only the ones that seem suspicious. While her attention starts on Instagram to see the posts that her feed has posted, news gets intermixed in there. It is inevitable as the news media tries to keep pace with the constant demand for updates in a algorithm driven space.

Then there is Lizzy Saikali, 20, who scrolls on TikTok and casually sees the news mixed into her algorithm. “It is fast and simple, I sometimes get my news from the Breaking News Fish,” she said in an in-person interview. “I usually trust the media creators I follow”. When asked if she double checked the new stories, she laughed and said “no”.



Lizzy Saikali showing one of the creators she gets

her news from on Tik Tok.

That “no” reflects a larger problem. While social platforms give instant access to breaking news, they can also blur the line between journalism and entertainment. The speed of short-form video makes it easy for content to go viral before it even gets verified. Additionally, those stories from unverified content creators do not go through vetting. Anyone can pick up their phone and press record to talk about any local, national, or global story.

Despite the risks, platforms like TikTok and Instagram continue to dominate the flow of information for younger generations. They offer accessibility, immediacy, and a sense of community that traditional outlets cannot always match. But this accessibility comes with a cost, one that depends on how actively users question what they see.

As Rachel turns another page of her Sunday paper, her routine feels almost nostalgic. Yet, she is part of a much larger movement, one where the press is no longer limited to presses. Whether it is on paper or a phone screen, news is still being consumed, questioned and reshaped by a generation determined to make sense of the world on its own terms.

Interviewees

Rachel Huefner, 626-622-3515, rhuefner12@gmail.com

I chose Rachel because we talk about the news on a daily basis during lunch. She shares her "The New York Times" subscription with me. Which I am truly grateful for. Additionally, she sends me opinion pieces from the Atlantic during the week.

Priscilla Magallon, 323-952-0253, Pris.Magallon8@gmail.com

She is a work colleague. We usually talk about breaking news together at work. We usually break down the legal implactions of certain pieces.

Lizzy Saikali, 562-879-6466, Elizabeth@saikali.us

She is a work colleague whom I asked if I could interview. She is also a bright student at Cal State Long Beach.

Reference

Mason Walker. (2021). *News Consumption Across Social Media in 2021: More than half of Twitter users get news on the site regularly*. Pew Research Center.

(I chose this Research Report from our Library's database as it talked about social media news consumption)

Giansiracusa, N. (2021). *How algorithms create and prevent fake news : exploring the impacts of social media, deepfakes, GPT-3, and more*. Apress Media LLC.

(I chose this book from our Library database as it talks about fact-checking.)