Media & Trust: Exploring the Differences Between Traditional and New Media Forms

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Alexandra L. Jones

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Abstract

This research seeks to explore how news media, traditional versus new, influences public trust, as well as, what types of consumers use traditional versus new media. My hypotheses are that (A) that those who use primarily new media to access news will have less trust in the news they are consuming and (B) those who have at least a college degree, are below 30 in age, and use, daily, a computer in the course of their work, will use primarily new media to access news. Using an online survey administered through the platform Qualtrics, distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk, I surveyed over 1,000 American citizens and was able to conclude that my hypothesis (A) was true, those who use new media are less trusting; and that my hypothesis (B) was false in totality, but that those who do use a computer daily use new media and when age is not categorized, it is true that as people get older, they are less likely to use new media.

Keywords: trust, media, media types, use of media, age, education, computer use
Overall, this study is important because trust in the media for news is an essential part of a well-functioning democracy and society. People depend upon the news to make decisions and to process the world around them. Unfortunately, though, trust in the media is quickly eroding due to the changing media landscape (proliferation of new media forms in online and social media) and the propagation of “fake news” from all corners of the media. Under this new guise, it becomes important to explore how news media, traditional versus new, influence public trust. This research seeks to do just that by asking questions like: Is there a difference in trust between those who consume traditional versus new media? What is the difference? Additionally, what types of consumers use traditional versus new media. Is there a difference in consumers’ media consumption based on age, education level, or work type?

I expect to find differences between those who consume primarily traditional media such as TV and newspapers, compared to those who consume primarily newer media such as websites and social media. For the purposes of this study, media is solely consider based on form. So, for example, the New York Times is a physical newspaper and a website, but they will be considered independently, to see if there is a different trust level between the physical newspaper and the online version and who / what types of people prefer to access which form. Additionally, for the purposes of this research, I have categorized all media forms into two categories: traditional and new; traditional media forms are newspapers (physical, print papers), cable television news (such as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, etc.), and radio stations, while new media forms are social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat) and news website or blogs.
From this, my argument has two strands. First, people that utilize new media for news will be less trusting than people that use traditional media and second, certain types of people are more likely to rely on new media use for news.

For the rest of this paper, I will analyze existing scholarly work on my topic, what my hypotheses are and how I developed them, and expectations for my research findings. I will then discuss how I tested my hypotheses and what the results of my tests were. I will analyze the tests using descriptive statistics and regression analyses and highlight the relationships and findings my tests produced. I will then cover a deeper exploration into additional testing and results and end with a discussion of my results, shortcomings of my research, and ideas for directions of future research.

**Analyzing the Relationship: Scholarly Explanations and Expectations**

In an era of “fake news,” trust in the media seems to be sparse amongst most of the US populous (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). Everyone is struggling to decipher the truth, on both sides of the political spectrum. Trust is an important factor to understand and analyze because some trust in the media is needed for the proper functioning of the democratic process (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). The proliferation of social media and online news has drastically changed the way people access news. These things have radically affected the way people trust the media (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). Therefore, this research is important because if there is a difference in trust levels between traditional and new media forms, then it is important to understand what that difference is and who it affects. By also determining who uses what form of media, based of factors like education level, age, type of work,
etc., one can analyze who, by what media they consume, are more or less likely to trust. While these are certainly only a few of the demographics that could be used to analyze this relationship, they are important and insightful. Because of the proliferation of social and online media, along with the increasing claims of "fake news," is relatively new there is not much research into how they affect public trust compared to traditional media sources. Additionally, the proliferation of new media (social and online) has given more people access to create, share, and post "news," thus likely correlating with the increasing claims of “fake news.”

First off, it is important to understand why trust in the media is important. In a 2014 paper by Bernd Blöbaum, a professor for Communication Studies at the University of Münster, Blöbaum discusses what the advantages of trust are and why trust is important. He sums it up nicely by explaining that: “trust is a social mechanism that helps to deal with social complexity and reduces it in a suitable way” (Blöbaum, 2014). Essentially, what Blöbaum is saying is that trust allows us to digest information that would otherwise be overwhelming. Blöbaum goes further and notes that without trust, all people would have to rely on would be first-hand experiences; he explains this [trust as a social mechanism] as a reaction towards a lack of clarity resulting from increasing complexity and variation in modern society (Blöbaum, 2014). Finally, Blöbaum argues that: “trust allows us to get in touch with information, thoughts, knowledge, action, events and topics outside our own area of experience. If one did not trust a news organization, one would hardly know about a conflict in Afghanistan or who suggested a tax raise and for what reason” (Blöbaum, 2014). Trust is important because it connects us to the rest of the world and allows us to understand and process society around us.
So, with this understanding of why trust is important, one can then consider how media form impacts trust and who uses what media form for news. Currently, eighty-five percent of U.S. adults get their news from a mobile device (Bialik and Matsa, 2017). Using a mobile device to access news would be considered “new” media form as it is through the internet which, for purposes of this project, is considered a new media form. Previous research has concluded that as the use of new, social and online, media increases, trust in media decreases (Gronke and Cook, 2007; Turcotte et al., 2015; Smith and Son, 2013; and Bialik and Matsa, 2017). Is this growing distrust rooted in traditional media, new media, or both? Is there a difference in trust decline between media forms? Some research has been done on this and findings have concluded that the media’s credibility depends on the interaction between media type and news content, meaning that media form and type of news subject are vital to the credibility of the media (Jo, 2005). Furthermore, this study found that the overall data indicated that subjects were more likely to believe newspaper (traditional media) news stories than those in online press releases (new media) (Jo, 2005). However, it is important to note that this study was conducted in 2005 and a lot has changed in fifteen years, especially the development of new media in online and social media platforms and proliferation. Additionally, in a different study, it was found that receiving a Facebook post from a friend was perceived as more trustworthy compared to traditional news sources (Turcotte et al., 2015) These studies lead to the opposite conclusions. It seems likely that the discrepancy in results of the studies is due to the fact that one is analyzing new versus traditional media forms and the other is analyzing a specific new media form, in which news is shared by a close friend, compared to a generalized news story in a traditional media form. People tend to
trust their friends and family, so it makes sense why they would be more likely to trust a news story that was shared by a friend than a generalized one. But, what if the social media post was not shared by a friend? How does trust in a general social media news post compare to trust in a newspaper article? Both above articles had important discoveries, the studies had a few limitations including the test groups being only college students, in both cases. A more comprehensive study with a broader study group is needed.

In another similar study, it was revealed that there were no significant differences between trust in traditional, social, and citizen media (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). However, this study did conclude that those who consume traditional media news and social media news will tend to consume their news from traditional news sources in the future (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). Furthermore, the study showed that those who trust information from alternative "new" media, like blogs and citizen media, are using social media to access those alternative sources. This is supported by the fact that alternative information and citizen generated news are distributed through social media (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). It is important to note that many social / new media news platforms are also mainstream news sources, very few are alternative or citizen media, this is simply a small subsection of the new media news forms.

The above research and conclusions all seem to indicate that those who use new media will be less trusting in their media. But again, these studies are outdated, only tested college students, and often focused on subsections of new media, such as Facebook posts or citizen media. I want to expand upon this research and see if this trust relationship is true at a broader, more general level. Thus, this inspired my first
hypothesis: that those who use primarily new media to access news will have less trust in the news they are consuming.

**New media → Less Trust**

However, all the current research and aforementioned studies are incomplete, as they leave out a very important aspect of analysis on this topic: who uses new media. Again, trust in the media is important for a functioning democracy, so if new media does lend to less trust in the media, then it is essential to know who is using this new media, and thereby who is less trusting. The questions I am asking here are, “Who is using traditional media for news?” and “Who is using new media for news?” I am interested in learning whether there are groups of people who can be identified as consuming one or the other primarily for news. Obviously, there are some people who may not consume any news whatsoever, but this study is not focusing on or including that group due to cost and time limitations. So, focused on those who do consume news media, do most people under 30 use primarily new media? Or, do most people with a college degree primarily use new media? I seek to characterize these types of groups and understand how their choice in news media form affects their level of trust in the media.

In a 2012 Beverly Bondad-Brown, Ronald Rice, and Katy Pearce studied influences on TV viewing and online user-shared video use, specifically looking at demographics, generations, contextual age, media use, motivations, and audience activity. While different from my own study because of the focus on online user-shared video use, rather than online / new media use for news, this study still found important pieces of demographic information in online use. For example, Bondad-Brown et al., looked at age, education, race, marital status, income, gender, economics, computer
internet use, and others. In their study, they found that younger, non-white persons with greater computer Internet use, were more significantly influenced to online user-shared video use, while education roughly influenced online and television video use in the same amount (Bondad-Brown, Rice, Pearce, 2012). Again, this study differs because of the focus on motivations and influences on TV viewing versus online user-shared video use, but it is revealing that those who are younger in age and use a computer more frequently are more likely to be motivated to use an internet based platform (new media) to access videos, rather than television (traditional media). So, what about when it comes to access the news? Will the same trends hold true, that younger people who use a computer are more likely to access news on new media platforms? Does the education variable change when you consider accessing news rather than video viewing? This research helped me form these questions, which lead to my second hypothesis: that those who have at least a college degree, are below 30 in age, and use, daily, a computer in the course of their work, will use primarily new media to access news.

\[
\text{College degree } \rightarrow \text{ Use of new media}
\]

\[
\text{Age 30 and below } \rightarrow \text{ Use of new media}
\]

\[
\text{Daily use of computer } \rightarrow \text{ Use of new media}
\]

This information is vital because, as stated earlier, those who do not trust the news might be less apt to participate in government and some level of trust in the media is needed to ensure that democracy can function properly. Trust is important because it connects the world and provides insight to understand and process society. Therefore, again, it is essential to understand how media form affects trust in the news and understanding who uses new media is vital to know who the least trusting people likely
are (assuming my hypothesis as correct). Hopefully, this research will expand our understanding of how types of media affect a person’s trust level and whose trust levels are most likely affected.

**Hypotheses Testing**

To test my hypotheses, I created an original online survey (see Attachment 1) administered through the online survey platform Qualtrics, distributed through Amazon. Mechanical Turk is the crowdsourcing program Amazon uses and, despite being a newer tool, it is inexpensive and documented to produce reliable data (Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Mason and Suri 2012; Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2010; Levay, Freese, and Druckman 2016). I chose this method because it allowed me to reach a large amount of people in a short amount of time (a convenience sample). The twenty-seven-question survey included questions designed to tap into media use and preferences as well as general demographics. The survey, available for one week during January of 2020, recruited respondents by paying them $0.40 upon completion of the survey. The survey had a total population of one thousand and three respondents. The average time of completion for respondents was four minutes and fifteen seconds.

The universe I studied is the general American public that is over the age of eighteen. These are the people who had access to the online survey, thus necessitating access to a computer and internet. Therefore, some limitations are imposed upon my study, as only those with internet access and a computer would have been able to take my survey. Nonetheless, given the constraints of doing this research, I believe this was still the best way to effectively reach a wide variety of people and gain data for my study.
My results, in summary, were that the average person who completed my study was more likely to use new media versus traditional media, trusts their news source (and is generally trusting), is a Democrat and liberal, uses a computer frequently, works a white-collar job, and is white and college educated. One of the dependent variables (what I am measuring in the experiment and what is affected during the experiment) of my study is a person’s trust in the media. To measure this, I asked the question: How much do you trust the accuracy of the news and information that you get from your main news outlets? The answer options were as follows: A great deal, Some, Not much, and Not at all (see Attachment 1). I retrieved this question and answer wording from the Pew Research Center. I chose to ask this question because it will precisely measure how much people trust the accuracy of the news they get from their preferred media outlets. Without having the data for this question, I would be unable to answer my research questions of trust in the media. Thus, the survey question I listed above is imperative in the understanding of my research question.

The next thing I did was to ask questions covering my independent variables (the thing that is changed or controlled in an experiment to represent the reason for an outcome). Since my hypothesis predicts that new media use is related to trust in the media, I included questions that will collect this data. The questions covering media preference was phrased as: “Which of the following would you say you prefer for getting news?” The answer options were: a print newspaper, radio, television, a social media site (such as Facebook, YouTube, or Snapchat), or a news website or blog (see Attachment 1). This question and answer set allowed people to choose their preferred media-type for receiving news information and I expected to find that those who use new media would
be less trusting in the media. I turned the variable into a dichotomous one of New Media and Traditional Media. All those who chose social media or news website / blog were coded as new media, while those who chose newspaper, radio, or television were coded as traditional media. I made the decision to dichotomize this variable in this way because my hypothesis on new media is centered around the “newest” media forms (i.e. those centered around the internet). These groupings allowed me to best analyze who uses new versus traditional media and how that affects their trust levels. Additionally, due to the low volume of respondents in the “traditional media” category, it made sense to group those media forms together, for the most accurate analysis.

For my other independent variables, I asked basic demographic questions. The question regarding education level was phrased as: “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” The answer choices were as follows: High school incomplete or less, High school graduate or GED (includes technical/vocational training that doesn’t count towards college credit), Some college (some community college, associate’s degree), Four year college degree/bachelor’s degree, Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree, and Postgraduate or professional degree, including master’s, doctorate, medical or law degree (see Attachment 1). Once again, I chose to dichotomize this variable for testing purposes. All those that chose four year college degree/bachelor’s degree, some postgraduate or professional schooling (no postgraduate degree), or postgraduate or professional degree, including master’s, doctorate, medical or law degree were coded as “College” and all other answer choices were coded as “No College.” To determine age, I asked: What is your age? The answer options were a drop box from 18 – 99 (see Attachment 1). Once
again, I dichotomized this variable by coding all respondents from age 18 – 30 as “Under 30” and all respondents from age 31 – 99 as “Over 30.” For the question regarding computer use, I asked: How often do you use a computer at work? The answer options were: Constantly, Several times an hour, Several times a day, About once a day, Every few days, Less often, and Never (see Attachment 1). This variable was also dichotomized and all answers of constantly, several times an hour, several times a day, and about once a day were coded as “Daily Computer Use” and all other responses were coded as “No Daily Computer Use.”

I expected to find a negative relationship between my independent variable, using new media and my dependent variable, level of trust in the media. I also expected to find a positive relationship between using new media and being under age 30, college educated, and use a computer daily. In order to draw statistically significant conclusions from the data I received, there needed to be variation in all variables: trust, use of new media, age, education, and computer use.

All my variables are discrete, and I am examining a relationship between two variables, so I decided to use a regression analysis to test my data. I believed that this was the best test because it can tell me how, how strongly, and under what conditions the dependent and independent variables relate. This was also the best way to get at a relationship between my variables, which is what I was most interested in.

By choosing to perform a survey and analyze descriptive statistics and regression analyses, I was able to design my own questions rather than rely on the existing measures of others and got access to 1,000+ people. However, by choosing this route, I potentially built-in bias because people taking this survey were doing so online and were therefore
more likely to be comfortable using new media and what I gained in breadth by talking to 1,000 people, I lost in depth (which I might have gotten with qualitative approach like interviews or focus groups).

**Results & Analysis**

Again, I am looking to see if using new media for news results in people being less trusting of the media and if those who use new media are under age thirty, college educated, and use a computer daily. Looking to the descriptive statistics of my dependent variable, trust in the media, we see that of the 1,001 people who answered the question, 853 chose responses that signify they are trusting of the media and 148 chose responses that indicated that they are not trusting of the media. 85.21% of survey respondents chose answers that designated them as trusting the media, which means that on average, people are trusting of the media they consume (see Table 1).

Moving onto one of my independent variables, type of media use, we see that out of the 1,003 people who answered this question, 574 use new media and 429 use traditional media. 57.23% of respondents use new media, so slightly more people use new media than traditional, but overall, it is a fairly even distribution (see Table 1). Onto the other independent variables, age, education, and computer use, we find that of the 1,003 people who answered these questions, 340 people were under age 30 and 663 were over age 30. Thus, 33.9% of respondents were under age 30, meaning that the population skewed older than 30 somewhat significantly (see Table 1). Regarding education, of the 1,003 respondents who answered this question, 603 noted that they did have a college degree and 400 did not have a college degree. This means that 60.12% of people have a
college degree, therefore skewing the population towards those with a college degree (see Table 1). Lastly, regarding computer use, of the 1,003 people who answered the question, 928 use a computer daily and only 75 do not use a computer daily. This means that 92.52% of people do use a computer daily, therefore significantly skewing my results towards those who do use a computer daily (see Table 1). This is not altogether surprising, especially considering that the survey was electronic and completed on a computer or other mobile device.

After looking at the descriptive statistics, I performed regression analyses to test my hypotheses. My first hypothesis is that those who use primarily new media to access news will have less trust in the news their consuming. Here are the results from a bivariate test: as you can see, those that utilize new media are less likely to trust the news. The coefficient for this test is -0.087 which means new media use has a negative relationship to trust (see Figure 1). The p-value is 0.052 and this is statistically significant at the 94.8% level (see Table 2). Thusly, we can confidently conclude that those using new media are less trusting. This proves that my first hypothesis is correct. Additionally, it is important to note that there are other factors contributing to new media use and less trust in the news and this will be further explored in my multi-variate regression below.

Next, I ran a multi-variate regression and put all the variables together. From this, I saw the following: those using new media are less trusting of the media (p-value of 0.041 and coefficient of -0.091), those with a college degree are more trusting of the media (p-value of 0.002 and coefficient of 0.140), there is no relationship between age and trusting in the media (p-value of 0.189), and there is no relationship between computer usage and trusting in the media (p-value of 0.806) (see Table 3 and Figure 2).
Moving onto my second hypothesis, which is that those who have at least a college degree, are below 30 in age, and use, daily, a computer in the course of their work, will use primarily new media to access news. The tests found that those under age 30 do not use new media at a statistically significant rate. The p-value for this test is 0.465 (see Table 4). Therefore, this is clearly not a statistically significant relationship. However, the coefficient is 0.024 which does indicate a positive relationship between being under age 30 and using new media, just not a statistically significant one (see Figure 3). Next, the test regarding college education found that those with a college degree do not use new media at a statistically significant rate. The p-value for this test is 0.610 (see Table 4). Clearly, this is again, not a statistically significant relationship. However, as with age, the coefficient for this test is 0.016 which denotes a positive relationship between being college educated and using new media, but not a statistically significant one (see Figure 3). Lastly, the test between daily use of a computer and new media use did show a statistically significant relationship. The p-value for this test was 0.030 so this is statistically significant (see Table 4). The coefficient for this test is 0.128, so the statistically significant relationship is also a positive one (see Figure 3). From these tests, I have found support for part of my second hypothesis: those that use a computer every day are more likely to use new media. I did not find support for a relationship between being under age 30 and using new media or between having a college degree and using new media.

From this, I chose to examine different measurement of my independent variables. Specifically, I am presenting the results from the models previously discussed but not using dichotomized variables. The only significant change in this test is regarding
the age variable. When not dichotomized into under 30 and over 30, but rather all individual ages are analyzed, the p-value is 0.001 and the coefficient is -0.004 (see Table 5 and Figure 4). This is a statistically significant value, which means that the conclusion can be drawn that there is a negative relationship, meaning that as people get older (in general), they are less likely to use new media. Therefore, while I cannot conclude that those under age 30 use new media, I can conclude that younger people are more likely to use new media. The other variables remain fairly consistent in this test as with previous tests (see Table 5).

A Deeper Exploration

Next, I took it another step further by breaking down my new media variable and specifically looked at social media, as it can be one of the most controversial media forms. I found, when considering just social media, the p-value for the education variable was 0.027 and coefficient was -0.062 (see Table 6 and Figure 5). This test was statistically significant and demonstrates a negative relationship, meaning that the more educated a person is, the less likely they are to use social media to get their news. Similarly, when testing age and social media, it was found that the p-value was 0.000 (statistically significant) and the coefficient was -0.016 (demonstrating a negative relationship) (see Table 6 and Figure 5). From this I can conclude that the older a person is, the less likely they are to use social media to get their news. Once again, computer use and social media use for news was found to be statistically significant and positive with a p-value of 0.005 and coefficient of 0.063 (see Table 6 and Figure 5). This leads to the conclusion that with more computer use, people are more likely to use social media to get
their news. It is also important to note, that from this analysis it can be concluded that social media is not where more educated and older people get their news. This suggests something deeper, that all new media is not trusted (or used) equally, especially by those who are older and more educated.

I also decided that it was important to analyze trust, not just in the sources that people frequently use, but in those that they do not use as well (see Question 4, Attachment 1). Here, I found that all three variables, education, age, and computer use, have statistically significant relationships with trust in new outlets one does not typically use, with p-values of 0.001, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively (see Table 7). Additionally, education had a positive relationship with trust, with a coefficient of 0.075, age had a negative relationship with trust, with a coefficient of -0.016, and computer use had a negative relationship with trust, as the coefficient was -0.065 (see Figure 6). Thus, based on this data, the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to trust news they do not usually utilize. Furthermore, the older a person is and the more likely they are to use a computer, the less likely they are to trust news they do not usually utilize. I believe that the reason a more educated person is more likely to trust news they do not typically use is because in higher education, specifically collegiate level and above, people are confronted with differing opinions and sources and learn to work through those things that challenge their own ideas. More educated people are also more likely to be more confident in their ability to decipher between “good” (trustworthy) media and “bad” (non-trustworthy) media. Additionally, I believe that those who use a computer more often are less likely to trust media forms they do not typically use because computer use is linked to new media use, which is shown to demonstrate lower trust levels.
independently. I think the age factor is less explainable but perhaps due to distrust of new forms / new media in general.

All in all, I can conclude some important things from my results and analysis. First off, looking to my hypotheses, my first hypothesis is that those who use primarily new media to access news will have less trust in the news their consuming, which I found to be true. Those using new media are less trusting. My second hypothesis was that those who have at least a college degree, are below 30 in age, and use a computer daily during their work, will use primarily new media to access news. In whole, I found this to be false, as there was no statistically significant relationship. But, when considered in part, I did find that those who use a computer every day, regardless of age or education, are more likely to use new media. Additionally, I found that when I did not force a dichotomization to occur as over and under age 30, that as people get older (in general), they are less likely to use new media. Also, when I just focused on social media, I was able to conclude that the more educated, the more likely you are to trust social media; the older, the less likely you are to trust social media; and the more likely to use a computer, the less likely you are to trust social media. Finally, when I examined trust as how much people trust media types they typically do not use, I was able to conclude that the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to trust news they do not usually utilize and the older a person is and the more likely they are to use a computer, the less likely they are to trust news they do not usually utilize. While only one of my hypotheses was correct, all of these conclusions and relationships are very important because they give insight to trust levels and media form, as well as demographical preferences for media use, and again, trust is essential to a well-functioning society and therefore knowing how
media form affects trust and who is most likely to use which media form allows for specific targeting to improve trust in the least trusting. These conclusions and relationships are also significant as they further the study of media and trust by demonstrating that new media forms for news use are correlated with less trust in the media and that typically, those who are younger and use a computer daily are most likely to use new media forms to access the news.

Discussion

There were some shortcomings to my research such as survey platform and demographics. Specifically, I used an online platform to distribute the survey, so all those who took it had to have access to a computer, cellphone, tablet, etc. So, it is not surprising that a greater percentage of my respondents use new media that is internet-based access. I would ideally like to distribute my survey in a variety of ways, such as through a mailer as well. I think that likely would have yielded more variety of respondents, especially regarding those who do not typically use computer / internet-based technologies. Nonetheless, this was the best choice for my situation, given the time constraints. Additionally, I really would have liked to have a more diverse sample. Most of my respondents use a computer frequently, again because it was a web-based survey, so I do believe that population was skewed. Additionally, I would have liked to see more representation from minorities and blue-collar workers, as those important populations were underrepresented.

Moving forward, I think it is important to further investigate how trust varies across new media platforms, like social media versus websites. Since I found that more
educated and older people are less likely to use and trust social media, what affect does that have on less educated and younger people who are trusting / using social media for news? Are they more likely to consume and believe “fake” news? This will certainly have impacts on normative implications about information gaps, citizenship, democratic representation and participation, etc. Also, it could be interesting to further dive into social media and trust by analyzing what people trust on social media. For example, do people trust news platforms social medias or posts shared by friends? There are a variety of aspects of social media that are important to explore, especially as it proliferates more and more every day. This research was important because I have established that new media results in less trust, but it would be worth looking more into why that is and what aspects of social media are related to that. Social media and new media are becoming the most prevalent forms of accessing news, so it is important to understand how people and trust related to them, because again, trust is essential to a well-functioning society.
References


Survey Questions for “Media and Trust: The Differences Between Old and New”

*Question 1-13 will be in a randomized order to guard against question order effects

1. Thinking about your news (by news we mean information about events and issues that involve more than just your friends and family) habits…
   (These questions will appear in grid form in randomized order.)
   a. How often do you read any newspapers in print?
   b. How often do you watch cable television news (such as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, etc.)?
   c. How often do you get news from a social media site (such as Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat)?
   d. How often do you get news from a radio station?
   e. How often do you get news from a news website or blog?

Answer choices:
   a. Often
   b. Sometimes
   c. Hardly ever
   d. Never

2. Which of the following would you say you prefer for getting news?
   a. A print newspaper
   b. Radio
   c. Television
   d. A social media site (such as Facebook, YouTube, or Snapchat)
   e. A news website or blog

3. How much do you trust the accuracy of the news and information that you get from your main news outlets?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
4. How much do you trust the accuracy of the news and information you get from news outlets you don't come across often?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all

5. How much of a problem do you think made-up news and information is in the country today?
   a. A very big problem
   b. A moderately big problem
   c. A small problem
   d. Not a problem at all

6. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?
   a. I consider myself to be loyal to the news source(s) I get my news from
   b. I am not particularly loyal to the news source(s) I get my news from

7. Which statement best describes how you get news?
   a. I mostly get news because I'm looking for it
   b. I mostly get news because I happen to come across it

8. How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat)?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all

9. How much, if at all, do you trust the accuracy of the news and information you get from print newspapers?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all
10. How much, if at all, do you trust the accuracy of the news and information you get from television?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all

11. How much, if at all, do you trust the accuracy of the news and information you get from radio?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all

12. How much, if at all, do you trust the accuracy of the news and information you get from news websites and blogs?
   a. A great deal
   b. Some
   c. Not much
   d. Not at all

13. Which comes closer to describing your view of the news media?
   a. All the news media are pretty much the same to me
   b. There are a few news sources I trust more than others

14. Which of the following are you more likely to watch to get news content (television sources)?
   a. CNN
   b. Fox News
   c. MSNBC
   d. CBS
   e. Other
   f. None

*For questions 14-18 the “Other” option will include a textbox where people can write in their choice.
15. Which of the following are you more likely to use to get news content (social media sources)?
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Snapchat
   d. Instagram
   e. Other
   f. None

16. Which of the following are you more likely to listen to to get news content (radio sources)?
   a. National Public Radio (NPR)
   b. Local radio channel
   c. Other
   d. None

17. Which of the following are you more likely to read to get news content (newspaper sources)?
   a. The Wall Street Journal
   b. The New York Times
   c. USA Today
   d. The Washington Post
   e. The Guardian
   f. Other
   g. None

18. Which of the following are you more likely to read to get news content (website and blog sources)?
   a. The Huffington Post
   b. BuzzFeed
   c. Mashable!
   d. TechCrunch
   e. Business Insider
   f. Other
19. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?
   a. If D or R: Do you consider yourself to be a Strong or Not Very Strong Democrat/Republican?
   b. If I: Do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party? (R, D, or neither as options)
20. In general, would you describe your political views as...
   a. Very conservative
   b. Conservative
   c. Moderate
   d. Liberal
   e. Very liberal
21. How often do you use a computer at work?
   a. Constantly
   b. Several times an hour
   c. Several times a day
   d. About once a day
   e. Every few days
   f. Less often
   g. Never
22. Would you consider your work to be more white collar or blue collar?
   a. White collar
   b. Blue collar
23. Are you male or female?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other
24. What is your age?
   [drop box from 18 – 99]
25. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
   a. High school incomplete or less
b. High school graduate or GED (includes technical/vocational training that doesn’t count towards college credit)

c. Some college (some community college, associate’s degree)

d. Four year college degree/bachelor’s degree

e. Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree

f. Postgraduate or professional degree, including master’s, doctorate, medical or law degree

26. Which of the following describes your race? Choose as many as apply.

a. White

b. Black of African-American

c. Asian or Asian-American

d. Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native

e. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders

f. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin such as Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban

g. Other

27. Last year, that is in 2018, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?

a. Less than $10,000

b. $10,000 to less than $20,000

c. $20,000 to less than $30,000

d. $30,000 to less than $40,000

e. $40,000 to less than $50,000

f. $50,000 to less than $75,000

g. $75,000 to less than $100,000

h. $100,000 to less than $150,000

i. $150,000 or more
TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the Media</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Not Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85.21% 853</td>
<td>14.79% 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Media</td>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>Traditional Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.23% 574</td>
<td>42.77% 429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>Over 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.9% 340</td>
<td>66.1% 663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>No College Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.12% 603</td>
<td>39.88% 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>Daily Use</td>
<td>Not Daily Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.52% 928</td>
<td>7.48% 75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cell entries include percentage of respondents (raw frequency in parentheses)

TABLE 2: Relationship with Trust in Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Trust in Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>-0.087* 0.052</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level *p<0.10

TABLE 3: Relationships with Trust in Media (Multi-Variate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Trust in Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>-0.091 0.041</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (College Degree)</td>
<td>0.140 0.002</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Under 30)</td>
<td>(0.189)</td>
<td>No Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use (Daily)</td>
<td>(0.806)</td>
<td>No Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level
### TABLE 4: Relationship with New Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Use of New Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (Under 30)</td>
<td>0.024 (0.465)</td>
<td>Not Statistically Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (College Degree)</td>
<td>0.016 (0.610)</td>
<td>Not Statistically Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use (Daily)</td>
<td>0.128 (0.030)</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level.

### TABLE 5: Relationships with New Media Use (Non-Dichotomized Variables)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Use of New Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.004 (0.001)</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.005 (0.705)</td>
<td>Not Statistically Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>0.055 (0.000)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level.

### TABLE 6: Relationships with Social Media Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Use of New Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.062 (0.027)</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.016 (0.000)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>0.063 (0.005)</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level.
TABLE 7: Relationships with Media Outlets not Typically Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Use of New Media</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.075 (0.001)</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.016 (0.000)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>0.065 (0.000)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell entries include regression coefficients, (p-value in parentheses), and statistically significant % level

FIGURE 1:

![New Media & Trust](image1)

FIGURE 2:

![Relationships with Trust](image2)
FIGURE 3:

Demographics & New Media Use

LESS FREQUENT TO MORE FREQUENT NEW MEDIA USE

OVER AGE 30 TO UNDER AGE 30
NON-COLLEGE DEGREE TO COLLEGE DEGREE
NON-DAILY COMPUTER USE TO DAILY COMPUTER USE

Under Age 30 College Degree Daily Computer Use

LESS FREQUENT TO MORE FREQUENT NEW MEDIA USE

FIGURE 4:

Non-Dichotomized Variables & New Media Use

LESS FREQUENT TO MORE FREQUENT NEW MEDIA USE

OLDER TO YOUNGER
LESS EDUCATED TO MORE EDUCATED
LESS COMPUTER USE TO MORE COMPUTER USE

Age Education Computer Use
FIGURE 5:

relationships with social media

LESS FREQUENT TO MORE FREQUENT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

LESS EDUCATED TO MORE EDUCATED
OLDER TO YOUNGER
LESS COMPUTER USE TO MORE COMPUTER USE

Education Age Computer Use

FIGURE 6:

relationships with media forms not frequently used

LESS TRUSTING TO MORE TRUSTING

LESS EDUCATED TO MORE EDUCATED
OLDER TO YOUNGER
LESS COMPUTER USE TO MORE COMPUTER USE

Education Age Computer Use