

Ecosystems: An Analysis of Generation Z News Consumption, Its Impact on Evolving Concepts and Applications in Journalism

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Abstract : The world pandemic led to a change in the way social media was used by audiences, with young people spending more hours on the platform due to lockdown. Reports by Ofcom have demonstrated that the internet is the second most popular platform for accessing news after television in the UK with social media and the internet ranked as the most popular platform to access news for those aged between 16-24. These statistics are unsurprising considering that at the time of writing, 98 percent of Generation Z (Gen Z) owned a smartphone and the subsequent ease and accessibility of social media. Technology is constantly developing and with this, its importance is becoming more prevalent with each generation: the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) consider it something useful whereas millennials (1981-1997) believe it a necessity for day to day living. Gen Z, otherwise known as the digital native, have grown up with this technology at their fingertips and social media is a norm. It helps form their identity, their affiliations and opens gateways for them to engage with news in a new way. It is a common misconception that Gen Z do not consume news, they are simply doing so in a different way to their predecessors. Using a sample of 800 18-20 year olds whilst utilising Generational theory, Actor Network Theory and the Social Shaping of Technology, this research provides a critical analyse regarding how Gen Z's news consumption and engagement habits are developing along with technology to sculpture the future format of news and its distribution. From that perspective, allied with the empirical approach, it is possible to provide research orientated advice for the industry and even help to redefine traditional concepts of journalism.

Keywords : journalism, generation z, digital, social media

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