Mobile Phones: News Consumption, News Creation, and News Organization Accommodations

Kristine Johnson
Rowan University, USA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses how mobile phones have impacted the way news content is consumed and created. It also covers the accommodations made by news organizations based on these changes. The consumption of news content refers to accessing news in any way that is available through the use of a mobile phone. This can include using applications, which are more commonly referred to as apps. It can also involve accessing webpages on a mobile phone browser, viewing videos, and listening to audio stories. It also includes receiving mass news text messages known as short message services (SMS) and multimedia messaging services (MMS). SMS are text-based only messages, while MMS contain both text and multimedia components. The creation of news content refers any way an individual can create news stories with their mobile phone. This can involve the creation of videos, audio recordings, photographs, and written components. News organization accommodations include changes made to the way news is distributed and created. The term, "mobile phone" refers to both smartphones and non-smart phones. In addition, any mention of the term, "phone" refers specifically to a mobile phone. The use of the term, "tablet" refers to a portable media device such as an iPad, Kindle or other similar technology. The term "news" refers to the process of communicating information about current events through the use of mass media, including mobile phones.

OVERVIEW

Researchers have long examined advances in mass media technologies and how they change the way people consume media content. Early studies include an examination of how people used videocassette recorders (VCRs) to take control of their media experience by viewing recorded television programs (Lin, 1993). Scholars also examined audience use of cable television and the impact of multiple program choices (Jacobs, 1995). Research concerning podcasting looked at the same capabilities associated with VCRs and cable TV (control and program choices) plus the mobility of programming based on the use of a portable digital media device (McClung & Johnson, 2010). In particular, this chapter discusses how mobile phones relate to news content. This includes news consumption, news creation, and news organization accommodations. Although the topic of mobile phones and news consumption is still in its infancy, there are scholars who opened to the doors for the opportunity to explore a topic such as this. This includes the work of Dr. Louis Leung from the University of Hong Kong and Dr. Ran Wei from the University of South Carolina (see Leung & Wei, 2000). Another pioneer also includes Dr. Rich Ling (2004) from the University of Copenhagen. Today, Oscar Westlund (2008, 2010, 2014) is a leading expert in the area, and Ran Wei (2013, 2014) continues to contribute valuable knowledge to this body of literature.

CURRENT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

News Consumption

What was once used primarily for interpersonal communication purposes (i.e., phone calls and text messages) has now become a means for accessing mass communication content. Based on the technological advances of mobile phones coupled with faster connections and widespread availability, these devices are commonly used for accessing the news. More than 80 percent of Americans own a cell phone, and about one-third of these individuals use their devices to consume news content, with that number continuing to rise (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010). Research also suggests more than half of those who own more technologically advanced phones, namely smartphones, use their device to keep up with the news (Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Christian, 2012).These individuals are believed to be highly involved with news content, as they tend to read longer and more in-depth articles The amount of time spent doing this on a smartphone trails slightly behind other common phone activities such a`s checking email and playing video games (Mitchel, Rosenstiel, Santhanam, & Christian, 2012).

People turn to their phones for the news in part because the device enables them to bypass the time constraints of traditional media (Baron, 2013; Dimmick, Feaster, & Hoplamazian, 2011; Gerard & Larissa, 2009; Goggin, 2011). Given the mobility of portable phones, people can now dictate when and where they tune into the news In essence, consumers have become accustomed to checking the headlines regardless of the location or time of day and are no longer confined to waiting for the evening news or delivery of the morning newspaper. However, despite the freedom of accessing information whenever one wishes, study findings indicate most people tend to seek out news content on their phones during certain times of the day. Those who typically check the headlines once a day primarily do so before 12:00 pm, with a quarter of these individuals accessing the news before 8:00 am. Among those who check stories multiple times a day, about half examine the headlines both during the morning and evening hours. Yet when breaking news occurs, most users rely on their devices to check for news throughout the day (Mitchel, et al., 2012).

There is a subgroup of heavy users among those who use their phones to consume news content. Members of this group are referred to as "on-the go news consumers," and it is these individuals who regularly use their phones to check the at all hours. The typical on-the-go consumer tends to be male, mid-thirties, college educated, and when compared to the general U.S. population, is more likely to be the parent of a small child. These individuals also tend to have an interest in a number of different news topics and are more likely to sign up for news alerts and updates (Purcell et al., 2010).

Research suggests the use of mobile phones to access the news is not used to replace news from other media, but rather as a means of supplementing content from other sources, including traditional and new media. In particular, support for this is noted in number of individuals who own multiple digital devices. For example, more than half of those who own a smartphone also own a tablet, and these individuals report accessing news by using both devices. In addition, smartphone users also report getting news from their laptops or desktop computers as well as from print media, including newspapers and magazines. Almost one quarter of smartphone owners indicate consuming news using four platforms–smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop, and print media. However, when comparing the level of involvement associated with the use of each platform, individuals tend to be most consumed with news content when using a smartphone news app. In particular, people spend more time when using a smartphone app and tend to return to the news source more often than when compared to other news options. Yet, despite the

Related Content

The Mediation of Identity: Key Issues in Historic Perspective
Stephen Marmura (2013). *Handbook of Research on Technoself: Identity in a Technological Society (pp. 137-156).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/mediation-identity-key-issues-historic/70352

Design and Implementation of IoT-Based Smart System for Monitoring Soil and Parameters in the Agricultural Scenario
Parth Gautam, Ashutosh Kumar Bhatt, Anita Rawat, Om Prakash Nautiyaland Saurabh Dhanik (2022). *Artificial Intelligence for Societal Development and Global Well-Being (pp. 107-117).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/design-and-implementation-of-iot-based-smart-system-for-monitoring-soil-and-parameters-in-the-agricultural-scenario/309190

The Techno-Religious Age
Susan Ella George (2006). *Religion and Technology in the 21st Century: Faith in the E-World (pp. 82-105).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/techno-religious-age/28391

Enabling Technologies for Pervasive Computing
João Henrique Kleinschmidtand Walter Cunha Borelli (2009). *Human Computer Interaction: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1037-1043).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/enabling-technologies-pervasive-computing/22298

Gaps Between Valuing and Purchasing Green-Technology Products: Product and Gender Differences
Mei-Shiu Chiu (2012). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 54-68).*
www.irma-international.org/article/gaps-between-valuing-purchasing-green/69399