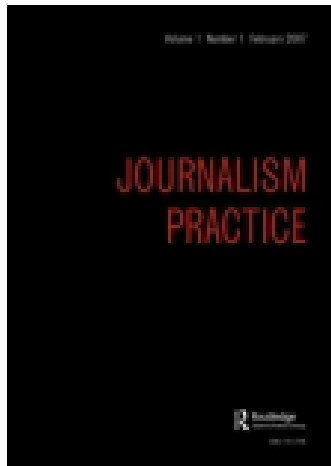


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Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, Sharon Coen, James Curran, Toril Aalberg, David Rowe, Paul Jones, Hernando Rojas & Rod Tiffen
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ONLINE THREAT, BUT TELEVISION IS STILL DOMINANT

A comparative study of 11 nations' news consumption

Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, Sharon Coen, James Curran, Toril Aalberg, David Rowe, Paul Jones, Hernando Rojas, and Rod Tiffen

As news media change, so media news consumption changes with them. This paper, part of a larger international research project involving 11 countries in four continents (Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia), is focused on news consumption. As the range of media outlets has increased dramatically in recent years, this paper asks which news sources are people regularly watching, listening to or reading to understand what is happening in the world. Moreover, the paper tries to detect whether television news remains at the top of the news hierarchy, seeking to identify differences in news consumption in different countries with different media cultures and, consequently, different media behaviour, as well as to reveal differences in news media uses between older and younger generations.

KEYWORDS audiences; media content; media exposure; media use; news consumption; news media; TV news

Introduction

The history of audience research suggests, as Sonia Livingstone has noted, that “relations between reception and consumption are themselves historically contingent” (2004, 84). In effect, recent developments in the media landscape have had a profound impact on consumption modes and users’ demands for new services, such as user-generated content, ubiquitous access on demand, social and community media, and content personalization (Kennedy 2008). In this new era, convergence and digitalization are the major drivers for the demand of new media services since they have affected the structure of whole media environments. Citizens in advanced societies have media choices like never before. On any given day the average citizen can choose among dozens of TV channels delivered terrestrially or by cable or satellite; several FM or internet radio stations; newspapers in both paper and online formats; and, of course, access to the Web and other alternative media and related devices.

Although TV and its programmes remain popular, the way that audiences, especially young people, access and consume media content has dramatically changed. The media landscape is thus moving from a traditional press-broadcasting approach to more personalized and on-demand “solutions”, with an impact also on the infrastructure and the access technologies required (for example, content awareness, and advanced tools and systems for intuitive content creation and multimedia-based search). We have entered

a new media environment that is jointly constructed from the interaction of "structures" (media/producers) and "agents" (audiences) resulting to a "media duality" (Webster 2011) and at the same time citizens "now have the power to do more than just receive information; they can choose whether or not to evaluate, reshape, add value, and pass the information along to others" (Hayes 2008, 30).

The advent of digital media, their portability, and convergence have accelerated the fragmentation of media around the world with a whole new generation of consumers bypassing newspapers and television to source their news on the internet. This shift is compounded by new consumption patterns and users' demands for new services, while, at the same time, it affects the ways in which people consume news. This new media environment "enables those with an interest in news to indulge in round the clock exposure. On the other hand, it provides those with little or no interest with endless opportunities to avoid the news" (Ksiazek, Malthouse, and Webster 2010, 551).

This paper aims to highlight key features of this picture based on the findings of our international survey based on 11 countries. More precisely, it asks which news sources are people regularly watching, listening to or reading to understand the events around the world. Additionally, it aims to detect whether television news remains at the top of the news hierarchy in different countries from four continents (Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia). Furthermore, it tries to identify differences in news consumption among different countries with different media cultures and subsequent different media behaviour, as well as to reveal differences of news media use between older and younger generations. This study and the data it presents, therefore, aims to cover a general lack of research into news audiences because it develops a comparative international dimension.

Media Changes

The media universe is changing, not only in content, but also in the ways that audiences discover, use, consume and interact with content. Nowhere is this more evident than in media-rich and diverse media markets, where the transition from the old to the new media, from the traditional to advanced media societies, from analogue to digital media, is clearly evident (Prior 2007). Citizens of the so-called Western world 30 years ago had to choose among a few, in most cases two public TV channels, three to four radio stations and a number of print outlets (magazines, newspapers and books), and they commonly visited a cinema to see at least one film per week. Today, they are able to choose among numerous media outlets within their homes, in most cases in front of their TV or PC monitors, or even on their smart mobiles. In fact, the media have flooded Western societies (as well as an increasing number of Asian countries) in the last two decades. Hand-in-hand with the growth in media available to citizens has been a change in the content available to them. A substantial part of the media industry is now devoted to creating and distributing content specifically aimed to cater to the particular segments of the audiences from children and adolescents to executives and the elderly. Television has moved from family programming to thematic outlets, and complete channels aimed at large or niche market segments (Papathanassopoulos 2002).

Although TV programming remains fashionable, the way that the new generation of audiences access and consume content in the developed world has changed dramatically. Based on existing research, we can identify a number of characteristics of this new media

consumption environment. First, the internet is becoming a primary means of information and entertainment at least in the developed world. In effect, the ways in which people use new media, especially the internet, are various and many: for work, for study, to read websites and blogs, and to shop. Second, citizens of advanced societies spend more and more time consuming content on the internet. Most importantly, this internet usage constitutes more time commitment than reading print media, watching movies offline or playing video games. The main reason for this shift is that high-end internet-enabled devices (e.g. interactive TV sets, game consoles, 3G devices, etc.) are flooding the market.

Third, as Taneja et al. (2012, 2) note, "media consumption seems to have become an 'anywhere, anytime' proposition. Yet, no one person uses all these media. Instead, people cope with the abundance of choice, by relying upon relatively small subsets, or 'repertoires' of their preferred media". Fourth, social networks have become popular worldwide, especially among younger people. With this type of media flood, it would be expected that citizens could get news from a variety of sources and hear radically different points of view. However, the multitude of media outlets available (as in the case of TV content; Bermejo 2009) does not necessarily mean an increased diversity of viewpoints. Although the means by which we can receive TV are expanding rapidly, it cannot confidently be claimed that its content has become more diverse and better in quality. But, as Cushion has pointed out, the ways in which television content is watched is now less under the control of broadcasters: "For audiences, this is interpreted as empowerment since they can tune in and out, pick and choose, email-on or delete in a flash the 'vast swampland' of programming" (Cushion 2011, 26).

Fifth, total media exposure has increased around the world. People consume more media content (either linear or non-linear), have greater access to media and content, and consume multiple media (linear and non-linear) at the same time. This does not mean, however, that they pay more attention to media and the relevant content, but that the media surround them and have increased in volume. At the same time, the increase of media outlets has increased the fragmentation of media markets (Tewksbury 2005). Additionally, each generation creates new media consumption patterns, and the media are forced to follow this path, and gradually, generational change results in dramatically different profiles of media consumption. This change is occurring because the new media environment offers more media content and more media options and, at the same time, allows for "higher mobility and more control over content selection in the hands of their users" (Yuan 2011, 999). It seems, then, that we have entered an age-segmented media environment that, while not unprecedented in media history, is more pronounced than in previous eras.

News Consumption

In effect, the growth of new media and their relevant delivery systems enables changes in patterns of consumption. It seems that people's experience of news is being reshaped by technological changes assuming, of course, that those people pay attention to the news. As in the case of other media content, news consumption relies on multiple new media outlets. But, changes in news consumption have far-reaching implications (Maier 2010). The new media environment leads to a fragmentation of news audiences as well as increasing the selectivity of the members of the audiences (Webster and Ksiazek 2012;

Webster 2005). It may also affect patterns relating to voting behaviour (Prior 2007) or even civic participation (Norris 2000; Putnam 2000), if not polarization (Sunstein 2007; Iyengar, 2011) and isolation from a larger public discourse (Chaffee and Metzger 2001). As Yuan notes "individual news users integrate multiple media platforms to form personal news repertoires of their own gratifications... News users actively combine different news media sources, old and new, into complex patterns of media use" (2011, 999).

However, it must be noted that news consumption has been undergoing changes in the last decades as audiences shift from printed to electronic media and then, as noted above, migrated to online sources (Maier 2010, 549). This trend can be seen in various research studies, among them the latest reports by the Project for Excellence in Journalism. In the last decade, weblogs and social media have also gradually captured new audiences in the United States. However, there are surveys which indicate that the supposed audience migration from the traditional news media to online news media has not taken place, at least to a degree that can precipitate the demise of the traditional news media (Ahlers 2006). Recent research also indicates that, despite there being more ways to consume news now than at any other time in history (Risk 2011), TV is still people's main news source. This phenomenon is demonstrated in the data we present below.

In an effort to explain the reasons for change in news consumption, Christine Ogan (2009) notes that news-consuming audiences have declined since reaching a peak sometime in the twentieth century. In effect, there has been a constant and steady decline in newspaper reading, and later in TV viewing of major networks, radio audiences, etc. Various studies that track long-term trends in specific news media suggest an overall decline in news consumption. This decline is not only due to the advent of a new medium in a particular period, but also to the fact that the increasing number of media outlets increased the media competition and, consequently, led to a further fragmentation of the audiences. But, as Ogan points out, "media competition-driven fragmentation is not the only reason for declines in audience. Societal changes have also contributed to the process". One major contributing change has been the increase in the number of women in the workforce. As she explains, "when women began to work outside the home in greater numbers, they devoted less time to the media and other family members took on greater responsibilities in the household. Increased variety of leisure time activities also competed with media for audience attention". Moreover, technological and lifestyle changes contributed to changing patterns of news consumption. Needless to say, the diffusion of new media such as broadband internet has made it both easier and faster for people to get their daily news, thereby driving traditional media outlets to either migrate to the internet or also to provide their online version.

Ksiazek, Malthouse, and Webster (2012, 552–523) also trace recent trends in news consumption, finding, first, that those who once relied heavily on broadcast news or newspapers now often divide their news consumption across multiple platforms. Second, they found that the most important effect of increased choice is a growing polarization of news consumption, whereby people selectively attend to or avoid the news. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether the use of online news media complements the consumption of news in traditional media or presents a quite different experience (Dutta-Bergman 2004), since news audiences can take a more interactive role in their engagement with the news media that was previously impossible (Boczkowski 2004; Mitchelstein and Boczkowski 2010). In effect, the internet seems to be used to complement rather than replace traditional news (Blekesaune, Elvestad, and Aalberg 2012). Additionally, traditional news

media outlets taking into account audience migration to the online sources have tried to expand their services to the online world by establishing interactive news websites and services.

In one way or another, therefore, the new abundant media landscape provides many options and ways via which citizens can be informed. They can consume news by choosing from a variety of media outlets and media platforms with, in most cases, overlapping or even replicated information (see Yuan 2011; Webster 2005; Prior 2007; Sunstein 2007). As Chaffee (1986) has pointed out, there are two patterns of multiple media use: complementary patterns and convergent patterns. Complementary patterns appear when people use different news media for different types of news. Convergent patterns occur when news consumers use different media for overlapping news and information. It also seems that, for the time being, people often use news media with parallel content to reinforce or elaborate information that they have already acquired.

Nevertheless, the total time that users devote to consuming news is a good indicator of both user availability for, and interest in, news. As Yuan has noted: "it is reasonable to assume that the more time people spend consuming news indicates the more interest they have in news. And those who have more interest tend to employ more media and therefore have more extensive repertoires than users who are less interested" (2011, 1003). Broadly speaking, then, contemporary citizens tend to reallocate their time using news platforms/sources to shift between and to exploit multiple platforms during their news consumption. They also "graze" for news all day long, while their perceptions of news media bias have grown in the last years (Iyengar 2011), which may also explain why they have lost their faith in news organizations, and why they aim to use different news sources and rely on different platforms for news on different subjects (see Rainie 2012).

"Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Comparative Study": Research Design and Sample

This paper is part of a larger international research project called "Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Comparative Study", which involved 11 countries (Australia, Canada, Colombia, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, South Korea, United Kingdom and United States) divided in two phases (Curran et al., *forthcoming*). The choice of countries, among other considerations, was based on a sample containing different media systems (which have witnessed deregulation, privatization and internet development); different media cultures and contexts; different political histories, ranging from old to new democracies; developed and developing economies as well as partisan and bipartisan political cultures. The larger study consisted of two phases. The first phase took the form of a quantitative analysis of major news media during three pre-determined, non-sequential weeks (excluding weekends) in May and June 2010. The sampled media were television news in two leading TV channels (where available, one public and one commercial), two leading newspapers and one leading news website. The classification scheme was composed of a common set of content categories prepared in advance and applied in all countries.

The second phase of research, from which we draw the results of this paper, took the form of a survey administered to a sample of 1000 adults in each country shortly after the period covered by the content analysis. The samples were fully representative, save in

Colombia and India where the survey was confined to urban areas. The survey was conducted online, apart from in Greece and Colombia where interviews were conducted respectively by telephone and face to face. In the case of online surveys, a matching procedure was used which delivered the equivalent of a conventional probability sample on the basis of specified demographic attributes from pre-established panels.

In the initial project, a survey instrument was designed to reflect citizens' knowledge (awareness of hard and soft news, and familiarity with domestic and foreign news). This included a set of common questions that were asked in all countries about international events, locations and people featured in the news preceding the administration of the survey. Items were carefully selected in order to vary the level of difficulty of the question (reflected in how often the topic had been reported in the preceding period, and how extensively it was reported in different parts of the world). This common set of questions also included one domestic question about national unemployment. In addition, we asked five country-specific questions which were carefully matched. These were in relation to a leading policy debate in each country, the identity of the premier of a neighbouring country, a sports personality, a celebrity and a current scandal. Nine out of the 10 common questions, and two out of the five country-specific questions, were about hard news topics.

In addition, there were a number of attitudinal questions. Political efficacy was measured in terms of self-assessed democratic competence, civic duty and the perceived effectiveness of voting. Interest in politics was gauged in terms of self-reported interest for local, national and international events and issues. Polarization was assessed in terms of both ideological and affective difference.

Needless to say, considerations of the topic and the relevant questions of this paper are, to a certain extent, biased since it was largely grounded in the existing relevant literature, which is rather Euro-American in nature following the emergence of a Euro-media culture in recent decades (Tunstall 2008). Nonetheless, the study embraced scholars and countries from other parts of the world. In effect, our knowledge of how the media "work" and are received and used in different national communities and on a comparative, transnational level is still elementary (Nordenstreng 2004).

Among other areas of focus, the research addressed national differences in news diets and media use. The general picture, for example, in Europe is a high level of newspaper readers in Northern countries, fewer readers in Southern countries, with Central and Eastern European countries tending to be located in the middle (Elvestad and Blekesaune 2008). In the case of the internet, there are divides around the world. For example, the penetration of the internet in 2011 in North America, in Oceania and Europe was 79, 68 and 62 per cent, respectively, whereas in Latin America, Asia and Africa it was 40, 26 and 13.5 per cent, respectively (Internet World Statistics 2012). There are definite divides within these regions, either North–South and/or East–West. Within the second phase of the larger project, a set of common questions were asked in all countries regarding media use. This article is focused on news consumption as reported by the respondents in the panel of the 11-countries project. Of course, consideration must be given to those respondents—at least in the 9 out of the 11 countries in our sample—who were users of the internet since, as noted, the surveys were administered online (for similar considerations see also Strabac and Aalberg 2011). Moreover, one has to take into consideration that: "Self-reports of regular news exposure are reliable measures of how

much news people think they watch. As measures of people's actual news exposure, they lack validity" (Prior 2009, 137).

Our survey has three central research concerns in, first, seeking to detect whether television news remains at the top of the news hierarchy among different countries from four continents (Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia); second, to identify differences in news consumption among different countries with different media cultures and so (potentially) also different media behaviour; and third, to reveal any emergent differences of news media usage between older and younger generations. For this purpose we categorized news users as follows: "high, medium and low exposure" scores for each medium were computed as follows: "high exposure": every day; "medium": 3–4 or 5–6 days a week; "low": hardly ever or 1–2 days a week. "Omnivores" were, therefore, individuals who reported high exposure (every day) across all media. "TV Only", "Only Press" and "Born Digitals" reported high exposure (every day) to TV, newspapers or internet, respectively, but not in any other category (i.e. they would have medium or low exposure to the other two). For the mixed categories, once again, they would have daily exposure to two out of three categories. The Norway cohort had medium or low exposure to all, i.e. they did not attend to news on a daily basis. The criteria for such a choice were:

1. Social desirability: one could expect that people would inflate their exposure to news to appear more engaged than they actually were, as it is socially desirable to keep up to date and attend to the news.
2. Using only high and low exposure would significantly reduce the number of participants in some subcategories, thus making it impossible to run reliable statistical analyses.

Despite Alternatives, TV News Viewing is Steady

Media preferences and habits seem to depend not only on taste and culture, but also on the status of the available infrastructure (Webster 2005). Our research confirms the findings of other studies which indicate that, although we have entered the "internet galaxy", the proportion of people claiming to attend regularly to television news is higher than is applicable to the internet in 9 out of 11 countries, the exceptions being Norway and South Korea. This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that both of these countries have very high penetrations of broadband internet. This, to an extent, echoes Prior who has noted that "news consumption, learning about politics and electoral volatility have changed not so much because people are different today, but rather because the media environment is different" (2007, 19).

In Table 1 it is shown that television is the most regularly consulted source of news, with the press and the internet vying for second place. The internet more often features in second place in those countries, like South Korea and the United States, where the press is relatively weak, with its use as a source of news least, among our sample, in Colombia. India's high newspaper reading levels are likely to be related to the low penetration of broadband internet. Broadly speaking, it can be proposed that, considering the average exposure to news media across all countries, TV comes first, followed by the online media outlets and newspapers, which share a similar frequency of exposure.

As is demonstrated in Table 2, younger people (aged 18–34) tend to use the internet as a source of news more than middle-aged (aged 35–54) or older people (55 and above) in the sample as a whole, and especially in Australia, Greece, Japan, South Korea and the

TABLE 1

Average self-reported exposure to news media across countries*

Medium	AS	CA	CO	GR	IN	IT	JP	KR	NO	UK	US	Total
TV	4.18	3.68	4.37	3.87	4.47	4.48	4.37	3.73	3.97	4.07	3.83	4.09
Newspapers	2.78	2.88	2.67	1.99	4.47	3.19	3.3	2.72	3.90	2.87	2.75	3.05
Online	3.12	2.78	2.08	2.23	3.4	3.68	3.46	3.8	3.97	2.95	3.58	3.19
Radio	3.37	2.94	–	2.35	2.51	2.92	1.86	2.04	3.25	3.30	2.86	2.74
Overall	3.10	3.07	2.87	2.68	3.55	3.38	3.01	2.86	3.41	3.08	3.19	3.11

*Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 =hardly ever and 5 =every day.

AS, Australia; CA, Canada; CO, Colombia; GR, Greece; IN, India; IT, Italy; JP, Japan; KR, South Korea; NO, Norway; UK, United Kingdom; US, United States.

A MANOVA with country as the only between-participants factor reveals reliable differences across countries in the five measures of media exposure ($F(50, 41,844) = 123.30, p < 0.001$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.11). All univariate analyses led to reliable differences across countries (all F values > 53.14, all $p < 0.001$).

United Kingdom. Younger people, therefore, have greater access, at least in principle, to an abundance of information about public affairs. But this access to abundant information does not result in younger people knowing more about hard news: in fact, the reverse is the case. Nor does it result in younger people feeling more empowered: younger people tend to feel less empowered than other age cohorts (see [Table 2](#)). While there are underlying societal causes for these differences, the internet has not, on the evidence presented from our study, offset or neutralized them.

The way in which the media are organized has a significant impact on what the media report (Althaus, Cizmar, and Gimpel 2009), the way that their content is consumed, and, finally, on the quality of informed citizenship (Aalberg and Curran 2012, 193). In effect, it seems there is a clear association between the level of TV exposure and the level of hard news knowledge across countries. The more citizens watch TV news, the better informed they seem to be. Indeed, the evidence from the study suggests that those people who rely only on the internet for news are not especially well informed, regardless of the variations among countries and between younger and older generations.

Knowledge of the news, and a sense of civic competence, is associated not with reliance on the internet but with multiple media use (Prior 2009). In profiling different types of news consumer, we identified among the heavy consumers of Web news those who can be described as “Omnivores”—heavy internet consumers who also regularly access news on the TV and in the press. Those news consumers we call “Audiovisuals” are heavy internet consumers who also regularly attend to TV news, but their use of newspapers is less frequent, while “Digital Press” are heavy internet consumers who also regularly read newspapers but do not attend to TV news as often. “Born Digitals” we define as those who tend to rely exclusively on the internet to keep up to date with the events. Among the light internet users, we have the “Traditionals”, who rely mainly on TV and newspapers, and those who privilege either the TV only or the Press. Notably, with regard to sources of news, television tends to be used more by mature adults in all the countries in our sample.

Althaus, Cizmar, and Gimpel (2009) have noted that the size and complexity of information markets influence levels of exposure to news media. In effect, our survey also indicates that the majority of people use more than one news source. [Table 3](#) displays

TABLE 2

Average scores for news consumption, knowledge and self-efficacy across age groups in the sampled countries

	AS	CA	CO	GR	IN	IT	JP	KR	NO	UK	US	Total
Newspapers												
Young adults	2.57	2.29	2.58	1.98	4.27	2.78	2.39	2.23	3.38	2.59	2.15	2.79
Adults	2.65	2.70	2.75	1.99	4.65	3.07	3.35	2.94	3.63	2.73	2.64	3.05
Mature adults	3.13	3.46	2.90	1.99	4.60	3.51	3.95	3.09	4.48	3.51	3.30	3.40
Total	2.78	2.88	2.67	1.99	4.47	3.19	3.30	2.72	3.90	2.87	2.75	3.07
Online												
Young adults	3.34	3.00	2.04	3.08	3.33	3.58	3.49	3.93	3.98	3.38	3.35	3.31
Adults	3.07	2.88	2.11	2.48	3.51	3.68	3.70	3.84	3.95	2.95	3.60	3.34
Mature adults	3.07	2.52	2.16	1.53	3.17	3.73	3.09	3.22	3.98	2.35	3.73	3.02
Total	3.12	2.78	2.08	2.23	3.40	3.68	3.46	3.80	3.97	2.95	3.58	3.24
TV												
Young adults	3.77	2.90	4.26	2.97	4.34	4.18	3.79	3.15	3.20	3.70	3.10	3.65
Adults	4.08	3.67	4.49	3.73	4.58	4.36	4.36	3.97	3.71	4.11	3.84	4.10
Mature adults	4.60	4.24	4.57	4.44	4.71	4.78	4.86	4.19	4.70	4.50	4.37	4.55
Total	4.18	3.68	4.37	3.87	4.47	4.48	4.37	3.73	3.97	4.07	3.83	4.09
Total hard												
Young adults	0.39	0.34	0.57	0.64	0.43	0.45	0.45	0.32	0.39	0.62	0.44	0.45
Adults	0.42	0.44	0.61	0.70	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.44	0.44	0.69	0.53	0.51
Mature adults	0.54	0.53	0.64	0.64	0.57	0.55	0.59	0.44	0.69	0.68	0.57	0.59
Total	0.45	0.45	0.59	0.67	0.46	0.51	0.51	0.40	0.53	0.66	0.52	0.52
Political efficacy												
Young adults	2.53	2.74	2.77	2.83	2.92	2.63	2.38	2.81	2.74	2.98	2.98	2.79
Adults	2.60	2.76	2.78	2.97	3.00	2.66	2.53	2.80	2.72	2.95	3.20	2.81
Mature adults	2.66	2.91	2.82	3.03	2.99	2.80	2.75	2.85	2.95	2.93	3.24	2.91
Total	2.61	2.81	2.78	2.97	2.96	2.70	2.56	2.81	2.82	2.96	3.15	2.83

See [Table 1](#) for country abbreviations.

A MANOVA with 11 (country) \times 3 (age group) reveals reliable differences across countries and age groups in the measures of media exposure, knowledge and political efficacy ($F(100, 52,180) = 8.07, p < 0.001, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = 0.015$). All univariate analyses led to reliable main effects and interactions (all F values > 5.75 , all $p < 0.01$).

the proportion of respondents reporting different patterns of news consumption across countries. Among the Omnivores, the heaviest consumers are Indian, Norwegian, Japanese and Italian, while among the Audiovisuals, they are Italian and Korean. For the Digital Press, Norwegians are far ahead of all others in our survey. Among the Born Digitals, the heaviest consumers are in the Korean, Norwegian and Greek samples. Among the Traditional, Indian and Japanese news consumers are most prominent, while those who rely on TV only are headed by Colombians and Greeks, and those who prefer the Press by India and Norway.

Finally, there is a category of users who reported low consumption of news across all media (the "No News" category in [Table 3](#)). [Table 4](#) reports the average knowledge scores for the different categories of news consumers. Our survey reveals little difference in the knowledge scores of consumers who rely only on one medium (as shown by the same indicators "c"), while participants who reported sourcing news from several media performed better in the knowledge test.

It is reasonable to assume that the more time people spend consuming news indicates the more interest they have in news but it is questionable to argue that repeated

TABLE 3
Proportion of respondents reporting different patterns of news consumption across countries

Media use	AS	CA	CO	GR	IN	IT	JP	KR	NO	UK	US	Total
Omnivores												
N	109	55	14	0	253	188	192	122	220	93	137	1383
%	11.2	6.8	2.4	0.0	26.2	19.4	19.7	12.2	22.7	9.7	14.1	13.6
Audiovisuals												
N	148	65	22	100	40	193	122	145	94	119	169	1217
%	15.2	8.0	3.8	10.0	4.1	19.9	12.5	14.5	9.7	12.4	17.4	12.0
Digital Press												
N	15	21	5	0	33	16	15	39	107	13	33	297
%	1.5	2.6	0.9	0.0	3.4	1.7	1.5	3.9	11.0	1.3	3.4	2.9
Born Digitals												
N	73	71	7	119	17	45	75	159	133	78	107	884
%	7.5	8.8	1.2	11.9	1.8	4.6	7.7	15.9	13.7	8.1	11.0	8.7
Traditional												
N	104	104	66	0	345	94	206	57	131	154	70	1331
%	10.7	12.8	11.4	0.0	35.8	9.7	21.1	5.7	13.5	16.0	7.2	13.1
TV Only												
N	262	176	256	372	74	276	178	132	57	223	150	2156
%	26.9	21.7	44.3	37.3	7.7	28.5	18.2	13.2	5.9	23.2	15.5	21.2
Only Press												
N	22	44	18	0	103	8	41	27	49	39	28	379
%	2.3	5.4	3.1	0.0	10.7	0.8	4.2	2.7	5.0	4.0	2.9	3.7
No News												
N	241	275	190	405	99	149	148	319	180	244	275	2525
%	24.7	33.9	32.9	40.7	10.3	15.4	15.1	31.9	18.5	25.3	28.4	24.8
N	974	811	578	996	964	969	977	1000	971	963	969	10,172

See Table 1 for country abbreviations.

exposure to TV news leads to gains of public knowledge, as well as to an increased sense of being informed (Curran et al., [forthcoming](#)). Political interest may increase news exposure and greater news exposure may contribute to greater knowledge, and so on, since those who have more interest tend to employ more news media. Perhaps the key

TABLE 4
Hard news knowledge across different types of media user

Media use	Political self-efficacy	Trust in politics	Hard knowledge
Omnivores	2.98 a	1.88 ab	0.60 a
Audiovisuals	2.93 ab	1.76 c	0.56 b
Digital Press	2.98 ab	1.95 a	0.56 abc
Born Digitals	2.86 c	1.75 cd	0.53 c
Traditional	2.87 bc	1.87 a	0.56 b
TV Only	2.79 d	1.73 cd	0.51 c
Only Press	2.81 cd	1.82 abcd	0.51 c
No News	2.68 e	1.76 cd	0.42 d

A MANOVA with the types of audience (8) as the only independent variable reveals reliable differences across media use groups in the measures of trust in politics, knowledge and political efficacy ($F(21, 31,365) = 40,28, p < 0.001, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = 0.026$). All univariate analyses led to reliable main effects and interactions (all F values > 16.63 , all $p < 0.01$, all $\text{Partial Eta Squared} > 0.01$). Scores labelled with the same letter are not significantly different from each other (pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni's Adjustment).

Downloaded by [91.140.98.215] at 00:15 09 September 2014

TABLE 5
Media consumption: demographic characteristics

	Media use								
	Omni- vores	Audio- visuals	Digital Press	Born Digitals	Traditional	TV Only	Only Press	No News	Total
Age									
Young adults	22.2	24.5	35.1	44.5	17.0	21.5	26.6	43.6	29.4
Adults	43.7	48.4	47.6	45.4	41.4	42.0	47.8	42.2	43.7
Mature adults	34.1	27.1	17.2	10.1	41.6	36.4	25.6	14.2	26.9
Education									
Low	43.1	40.0	30.9	40.2	52.3	48.9	55.4	46.1	45.8
Medium	10.0	9.2	19.7	11.9	9.9	6.9	8.0	9.1	9.4
High	46.8	50.8	49.4	48.0	37.8	44.2	36.7	44.8	44.8
Income									
Low	35.6	45.4	39.3	44.8	40.7	52.5	43.1	51.5	45.9
Medium	21.0	18.2	21.8	14.3	21.2	13.7	19.0	14.2	16.9
High	43.4	36.4	38.9	40.9	38.1	33.7	38.0	34.3	37.1
Gender									
Male	56.4	54.9	56.1	54.7	51.6	44.4	52.9	40.3	48.8
Female	43.6	45.1	43.9	45.3	48.4	55.6	47.1	59.7	51.2

Chi-square tests indicate reliable differences in the distribution of different types of media users across the demographic categories (all Chi-squares >146.77, all $p < 0.001$).

point to register here is that, in liberal democracies across the globe, there remains a stubborn “hard core” of people who rarely consume the news from any medium. These disconnected individuals or “news avoiders” account for a quarter of the population as a whole in the 11 states. They tend to have a low level of public affairs knowledge (this score is significantly lower than all other categories, as shown by the different indicator “d”), a low sense of personal efficacy (this score is significantly lower than all other categories, as shown by the different indicator “e”), and to be drawn disproportionately from the young and the disadvantaged (see Table 5). This, on the one hand, might be an indication that today’s news media fail to increase viewers’ political information or comprehension. On the other, it shows that wider societal factors can influence levels of knowledge and political engagement above and beyond mere exposure to the media (see also e.g. Aalberg and Curran 2012). Furthermore, differences in the social structure, culture, economies and political systems of national societies can also affect the extent to which people are informed and politically engaged.

Concluding Remarks

The internet has changed the communication world, but its broad effect on media usage patterns is still uncertain. Citizens have more choices now than they ever have in terms of information, reaching far beyond television to Web news pages, news aggregators and tablets. In effect, “media consumption is a matter of both supply and demand, and the social contexts and the media environment matter for both” (Shehata and Strömbäck 2011, 111). It seems that people, especially younger people, are tending to replace traditional news outlets, especially newspapers, with the internet. The replacement

process is still in its early stages, however, and for the time being it does not signal the demise of more traditional news media outlets.

And yet, despite the vast universe of alternatives, TV remains the most popular choice for news in all countries of our research. That would seem to contradict the idea of a "rapidly changing" media, especially TV audience, that has been mentioned frequently in various media studies and articles in the trade press. Given all the industry argumentation about "the changing nature of the audience", "the rush to secondary screens", etc., the fact is that audiences within the TV news remain stable. Although the audience continues to fragment, based on the current numbers, it does not seem to be fragmenting away from the TV space even while it fragments within that space, at least for the near future.

On the other hand, it seems that some people choose either TV or newspapers or the World Wide Web for parallel news content, thereby echoing a discernible convergent pattern of media choice (Chaffee 1986). It must be recognized that, as Ksiazek, Malthouse, and Webster (2010, 552) have noted: "while people have more new outlets at their disposal than ever before, they also have more non-news media competing for their attention. As a result, they are free to seek out large amounts of news, or avoid it entirely". Our survey also indicates that the majority of people use more than one news media source. This practice may suggest another indication that citizens as audiences tend not to trust the mainstream media, and so seek alternative sources (Tsfati and Cappella 2003). In our research, there is an apparent tendency for there to be an almost equal exposure to all news media categories. This pattern, however, may indicate that it is becoming more and more difficult for traditional or mainstream media to exert a comparable level of agenda-setting influence (see also Strömbäck and Kioussis 2010) as in the analogue era or that differences in media systems still play an important role in shaping individual news media behaviour, regardless of trends toward their homogenization (Shehata and Strömbäck 2011, 128–129).

Nevertheless, news media may generate a positive cycle in which exposure to news leads to increased knowledge, and this in turn encourages an increased sense of democratic competence: this strengthens political interest, and leads to increased exposure to news media, especially TV news, in a positive spiral. In this sense, news media not only conveys knowledge but can also sustain a democratic culture of citizenship based on a reciprocal relationship between being informed, acquiring a sense of personal competence in understanding politics, and forging interest in politics (Curran et al., *forthcoming*). Nevertheless, there are people in liberal democracies at least who rarely consume the news from any medium. In effect, there is no evidence from our study that the new media outlets, like the internet, provide a solution to this combination of disconnection from the news media and from the world of politics.

In one way or another, the media environments around the world are changing not only in content, but also in the ways citizens discover, use, consume and interact with that content. These new conditions have a significant impact on what the media report, the way that their content is consumed, and, finally, on the quality of informed citizenship.

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Stylianos Papathanassopoulos (author to whom correspondence should be addressed), Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. E-mail: spapath@media.uoa.gr

Sharon Coen, Directorate of Psychology and Public Health, University of Salford, UK. E-mail: S.Coen@salford.ac.uk

James Curran, Media and Communication Department, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK. E-mail: j.curran@gold.ac.uk

Toril Aalberg, Department of Sociology and Political Science, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway. E-mail: toril.aalberg@svt.ntnu.no

David Rowe, Institute for Culture and Society (ICS), University of Western Sydney, Australia. E-mail: d.rowe@uws.edu.au

Paul Jones, School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Australia. E-mail: P.Jones@unsw.edu.au

Hernando Rojas, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. E-mail: hrojas@wisc.edu

Rodney Tiffen, Government and International Relations, University of Sydney, Australia. E-mail: rod.tiffen@sydney.edu.au