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THE KALEIDOSCOPE
YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEWS

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HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

Photo credit: ussatlantis Adobe Stock

This presentation is based on a comprehensive research study

The study was conducted in Brazil, the USA and the UK

Data were collected via a two-stage, remote, digital, qualitative process

Stage 1
Digital Assignment

74 participants completed a set of 10 activities over 3 weeks, using Craft's digital research platform

**c. 378 hours of engagement
2,635 screenshots generated**
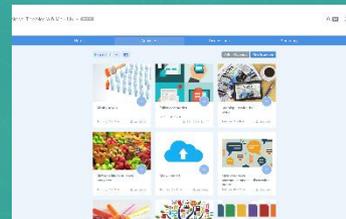
Stage 2
Depth Interviews

24 participants (a subset of the Stage 1 sample) took part in a c.45 minute interview (via Zoom)

c.18 hours of interview

Photo credit: peopleimages Adobe Stock

Synthetic cohort analysis informed our analytical framework

We looked for difference within the group as well as commonality across it, actively avoiding broad brush generalisations

Country before cohort

'The three I's' – intersectionality, individuality and inequality

Age/life course

Where behaviours and attitudes change as people grow older or go through different lifestages

e.g. moving out, getting married, having children

Period

Where everyone changes as a result of macro-trends in culture or far-reaching societal events

e.g. 9/11, recessions, the covid-19 pandemic

Cohort/generational

Where behaviours and attitudes **are** set by the formative attitudes of a generation

e.g. growing up with the social, mobile internet

Photo credit: Raw Pixel AdobeStock

Identity is intersectional

It's hard to disentangle different parts of people's identities. We all have fluid, multi-layered and contextually-dependent personas – a person's age is one layer and not necessarily always important

Values and beliefs

Location

Sexuality

Education

Generation

Gender

Identity

Job

Age/lifestage

Interests & passions

Class/socio-economic status

Religion

Ethnicity

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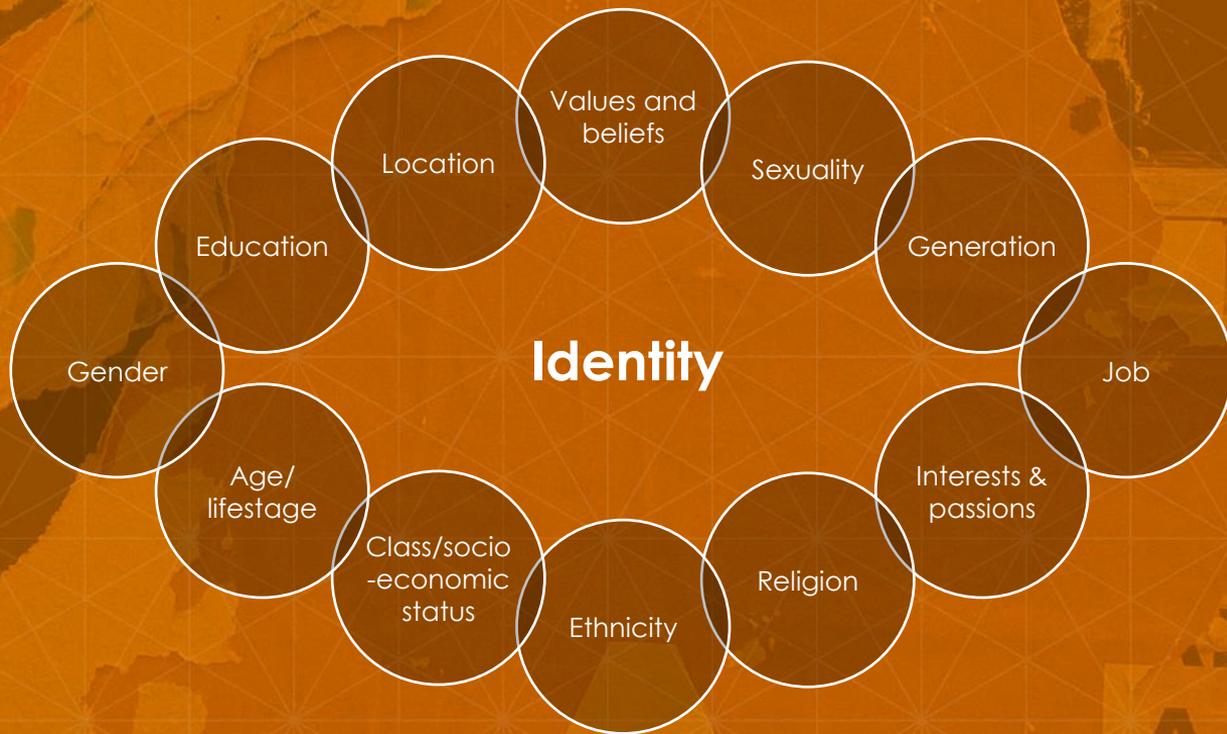
Young people have grown up with the social, participatory internet – 'Web 2.0.'

Their news behaviours are to a large extent an extension of their wider media behaviours.

Digital, mobile, social, integrated, continuous, fast, fleeting, discovered passively but interacted with actively.

Much of the time…
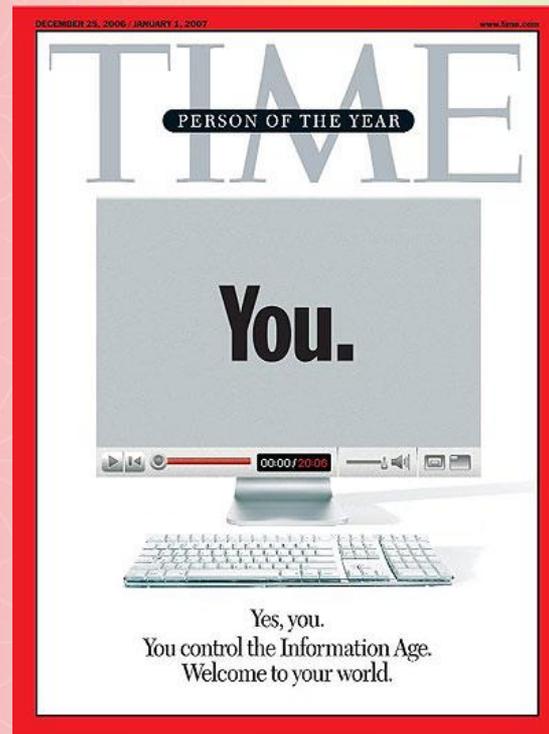
Growing up with Web 2.0 has several implications that contextualise and condition young people's news consumption

1 How they consume news

2 What they consider 'news' to be

3 Their trust in information, in general
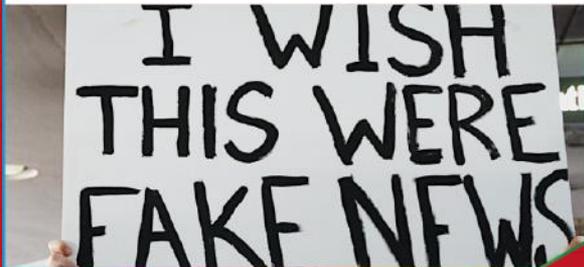
4 Who they trust to deliver news

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Myriad variables interact to influence news consumption, leading to largely unpredictable individual outcomes

PERSONAL

CONTEXTUAL

The individual – 'me' Demography and personal characteristics
The motivation Why they are accessing the content in that moment
The market The wider prevailing conditions in which the moment occurs
The moment The conditions in which the content is actually consumed

lifestage
gender
country
location
mindset/worldview
job
interests/passions
trust in media
engagement with politics
language
political landscape
news agenda
culture of news
brands/accounts available
prevailing platforms and services
the story
the occasion
trigger
route to content
device
platform/service
brand
supporting a hobby
entertainment/distraction
self-improvement
supporting work/education
connection to others
practical utility
duty

Slide 8

We can identify three groups of (young) people – each engages differently with 'the news'

Hobbyist & Dutiful
For enjoyment or out of a civic duty to know what is happening and contribute to the discourse. Can be activist, though by no means always 'woke'

Need to Know
Attuned to the practical need to keep up with developments as they impact day-to-day life

Main Eventer
Need to know the unavoidable 'big' things going on in society – practical impacts and connection to others

Local news cuts across these groups more than most types
Even the disengaged want to know what is happening close to them, even if they are not interested in what is happening day-to-day nationally or on the other side of the world

Traditional newsbrands are under pressure from three directions

Weaker engagement with narrow news, stronger engagement with broader news among some young people

Proliferation of brands from beyond the mainstream competing for time and attention, playing different roles

A suspicious, sceptical approach to information meaning newsbrands are not inherently valued for their impartiality

For young people, news can be 'narrow' or 'broad'

Narrow – '<u>the</u> news'

- Associated with mainstream, traditional media

- Narrow focus on traditional party politics, international relations and 'current affairs'

- Defined by what is happening in Westminster or Wall Street, for example

Broad – 'news'

- Developments and (new) things that are happening in all walks of life

- Includes sports, entertainment, celebrity gossip, culture and the arts, technology, science etc

'News' can fall into one of three categories

The lines between them are blurry – a spectrum more than three discrete categories

- Narrow news agenda – the big issues of the day
- Things that affect my life directly (personal utility)
- Narrow set of mostly mainstream newsbrands

- Broader news - hobby-related, entertaining but with deeper roots than 'fun'
- Depends on personal tastes
- The long tail of subject specialists – brands and individual accounts

- Throwaway, almost random content for easy entertainment
- Can come from anywhere, often serendipity or social share
- Anything in a social feed – professionally-produced content, UGC, memes

Politics and international relations

Local

'Serious' personal interest e.g. climate, finance, science

Tech, gaming, sports, culture, TV, film, entertainment

Celebrity gossip, weird and wonderful, memes

The model has implications for brand perceptions and perceptions of 'importance'

'The news'

'News'

| Need to know/serious | Personal interest | Fun |

"More important"

"Less important"

Perceptions of 'importance' do not necessarily translate into greater consumption of 'serious' news

Need to know/serious	Personal interest	Fun

Narrow consideration set of well-known newsbrands

Higher audiences per brand

Broader set of brands and individual accounts relied upon

Lower audiences per brand (usually)

But occasions can be more frequent – in aggregate, this kind of news occasion seems to be more frequent

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An event such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine can transcend usual relationships with 'the news'

Stories of this magnitude become 'need-to-know' for almost everyone

Slide 15

Photo credit: mikhail-volkov Unsplash

Mainstream brands, live news and on-the-ground reporting became more important – some even turned on the TV!

The access that mainstream media offers really came into its own – but alternative media sources were still used to supplement the diet of mainstream reporting
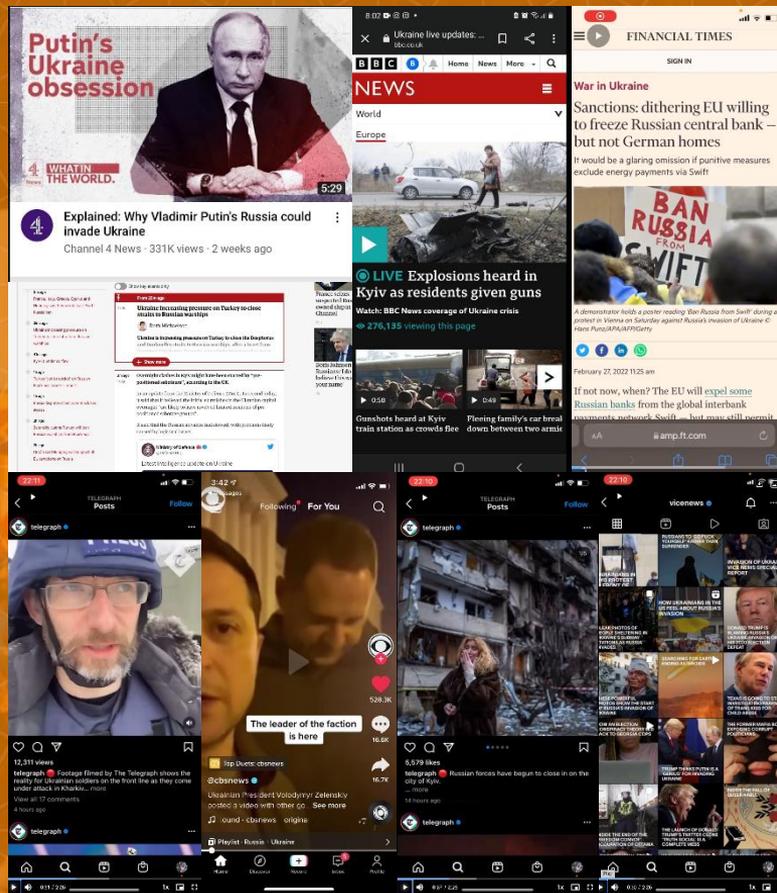
Engagement isn't black and white, though

Even amongst the highly engaged there were signs of **selective avoidance of negativity**

Rather than total news avoidance, there was the **avoidance of certain kinds of news or stories, at certain times** – to guard mental health

Fatigue over long-running stories that never seemed to be resolved was the most common reason for avoidance

There was a recognition that these stories were 'important' – as such engagement could be sporadic, especially at the initial stages of 'a crisis' or at inflection points

Covid-19
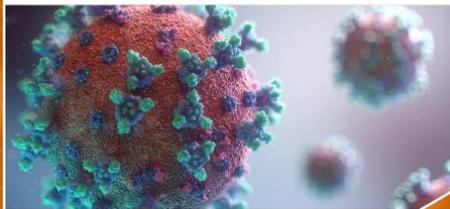
Political news

Brexit

The culture wars

Death and violence

The war in Ukraine

News is provided by brands and actors along a spectrum

Alternative media is not judged by the same standards. Instead, it adds something different to young people's news mix

Serious, objective, accurate, emotionless reporting

Opinions permitted and welcomed, can still be serious and thoughtful

Broadest emotional/ tonal range – serious, frivolous, angry, funny, off-beat, politically incorrect

Increasing scope for topical variety, opinion, bias and emotion/personality

Photo credit: mikhail-volkov Unsplash

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Avoidance of 'narrow news' has implications for newsbrands, who are felt to operate primarily at the serious end of the spectrum

'The news'	'News'	
Need to know/serious	Personal interest	Fun
The preserve of newsbrands	The preserve of a wider range of digital-only brands, alternative media and user-generated accounts – in addition to newsbrands	
Avoidance tends to happen here	Little to no avoidance here	

There is great commonality in the idea that all information is put into the public realm for a reason – 'an agenda'

Explanations for agendas can range from the innocent to the sinister, but they all have the same effect

A commercial need to speak to audiences' beliefs

The impossibility of there being an objective truth

Active, purposeful manipulation of opinions

Very little information is taken on trust

Photo credit: pawel-chu Unsplash

Only half of 12-15 year-olds **(49%)** think the news they see on news websites is mostly or totally true…

…compared with almost nine in ten **(87%)** of 12-15 year-olds (young Millennials) in 2008

Ipsos MORI, Beyond Binary: The Lives and Loves of Generation Z

There is little consistency in what 'young people' want in terms of format – it's usually a matter of personal taste

Far from the consistent traits which are often ascribed to them, there is a lot of variability, which is unsurprising considering the increasing plethora of options available

Formats being added to a wider mix, rather than replacing others

Formats being **better/ worse suited to different contexts and occasions**

The **blending of formats** into multimedia experiences

Variability in preferred platforms – each platform having its own codes and conventions

Mainstream newsbrands do not need to abandon narrow news, nor 'traditional' ways of delivering news digitally

It's a case of an 'as well as' evolution in the offer, more than an 'instead of' revolution

Brands may wish to make their core services more accessible, or create specific services targeted at young people, or a mix of the two

Retain existing credibility

Topically broaden

Embrace warmer tones

Make socially native content
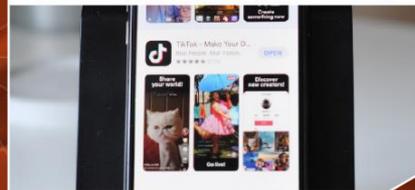
Respect each platform's conventions

Consider new brands, sub-brands and individuals

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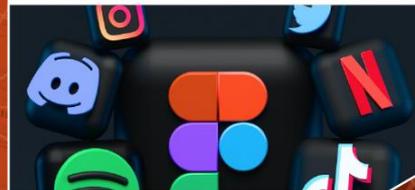
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