ANALYSIS OF TOP NEWS SITES OFFERS INSIGHT ON HOW CONSUMERS ARE READING NEWS ON MOBILE VS OTHER PLATFORMS

A new report from the Engaging News Project finds that when comparing news platforms, consumers spend more time on news apps than on news websites on smartphones, tablets or desktops.

While desktop and smartphone browser versions of news websites have the highest number of unique visitors and average daily visitors compared to other platforms, news organizations' apps have the highest average minutes per visitor. Using ComScore data, researchers found that app users spend an average of 96 minutes (for smartphones) and 112 minutes (for tablets) per month on news apps. That is significantly higher than the platform with the next highest average minutes per visitor, which is 12 minutes per month on desktop news websites.

These findings are a result of a content analysis and analysis of traffic data from 25 of the top news websites conducted by the Engaging News Project and funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. For each organization, the Engaging News Project looked at up to five platforms, depending on availability: desktop, iPad browser, iPad app, iPhone browser, and iPhone app. In total, the group evaluated 114 different sites and apps.

"With news habits changing, it is important to understand how news organizations are responding to the increasing prominence of mobile and what is available for news audiences across various platforms," said Dr. Talia Stroud, director of the Engaging News Project. "Our analysis shows that while questions may still remain about news apps, there's no denying that users spend a significant amount of time on them."

Other trends that emerged from the Engaging News Project analysis include:

- More ads appear on desktop homepages than on mobile and tablet devices.
- Apps offer a different news experience than browser-based news sites; they are more likely to give people the option to save content for later, less likely to require users to sign in, less likely to have comment sections, and less likely to include social media buttons.
- Across the sites and apps examined, 21% used infinite loading, which allows site visitors to continue scrolling without any apparent end to the articles that loaded.
- Having more navigation options related to having more visitors for desktop and tablet news websites.
- Those with low incomes and those who are Black/African-American tend to be underrepresented as news users, particularly on desktop and tablet browsers.

"News organizations must consistently examine audience preferences and behavior in order to stay relevant in a fast-changing media environment. This data provides valuable insights into the ways in

which people interact with the news and how design can be used to increase engagement," said Luz Gomez, Knight Foundation director for learning and impact.

The Engaging News Project provides research-based techniques for engaging online audiences in commercially viable and democratically beneficial ways. Learn more at engagingnewsproject.org

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