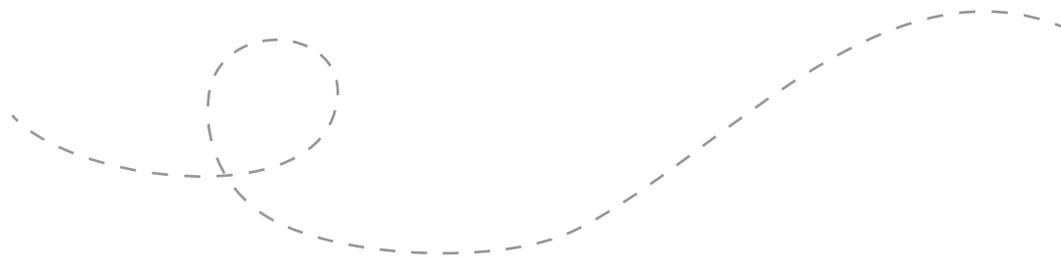


Watch It, Read It
or Tweet It

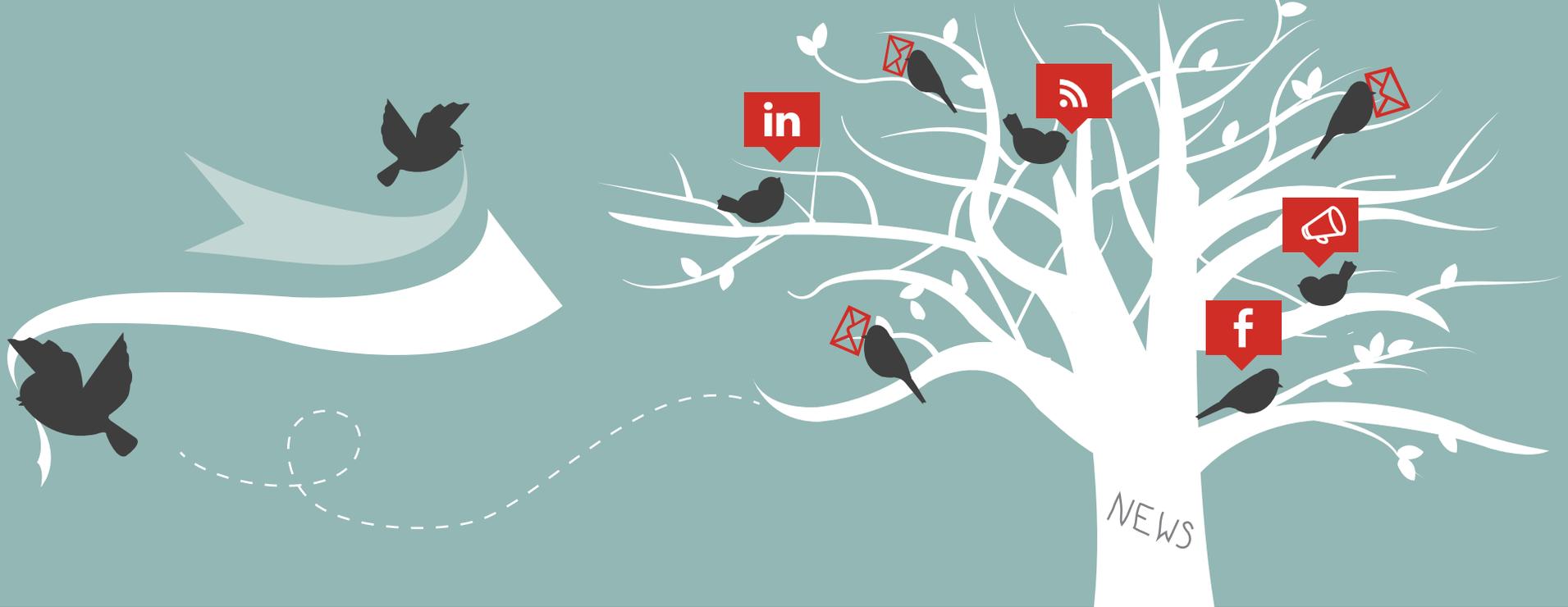
How Americans View
and Share News



inkhouse®

 **GMI** A LIGHTSPEED
RESEARCH
COMPANY





Headlines break by the minute, one wrong tweet by an executive can go viral in seconds, and anyone can speak his or her mind online any time. Americans' news consumption and sharing habits are changing almost as quickly as the news outlets themselves. At the same time, we're sharing our entire lives online through social media and blogs. And those same channels are sprouting new types of media properties whose online audiences dwarf those of our nation's top newspapers.

Exactly how much has changed when it comes to how Americans read and share the news? We wanted to know, so InkHouse and GMI, a Lightspeed Research Company, teamed up on a study of 1,000 Americans ages 18 and over to separate the hype from the reality.

The Big Takeaways

- 1** We still trust TV. A lot. **73%** of us prefer to get our news from TV, and we trust it more than other outlets.
- 2** We like email (for sharing news, at least). Email edged out social media as the preferred way to share articles (**34%** vs. **29%**).
- 3** We love Facebook humor. But we don't want to know what you ate for breakfast or who you voted for.
- 4** We still read! Despite vocal debates about the detriment of social media on our ability to focus, **45%** of us read entire articles as opposed to headlines alone.



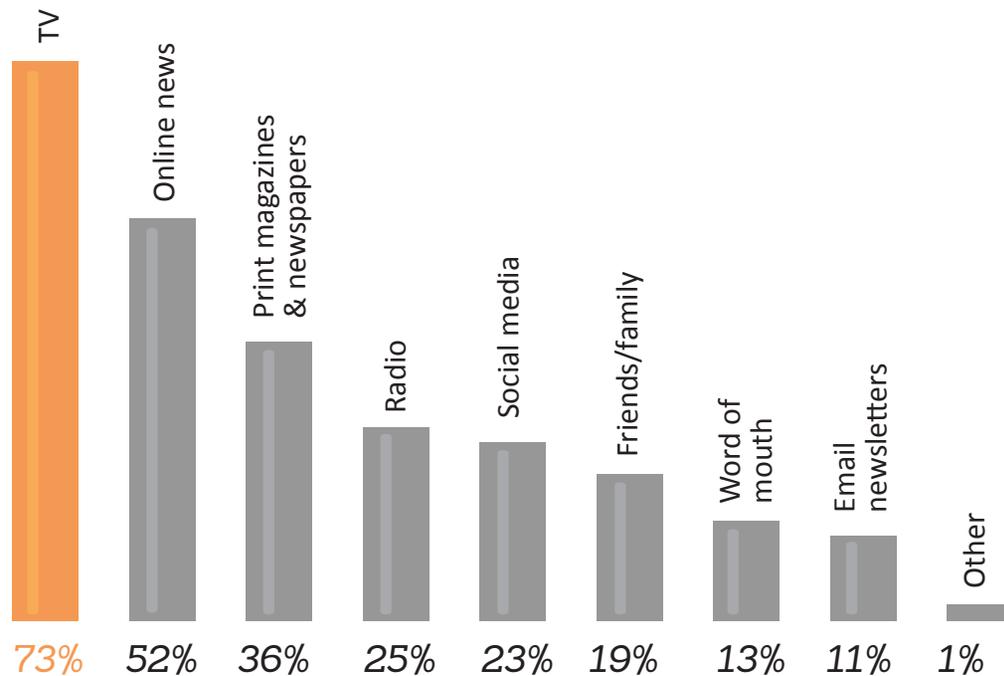
- 5** We think online news should be free. Only **10%** of us pay for an online subscription, but more than half pay for a print subscription (**56%**).
- 6** What are BuzzFeed and Reddit again? Most of us still don't know.
- 7** We trust press releases (hey, we were surprised too!). Consumers still trust press releases more than any other source of company-generated news.
- 8** We're divided by age and technology. The young and tech-savvy are more likely to turn to social media, trust non-traditional media channels and to use mobile and online news sources.

This eBook outlines these findings in more detail, along with our recommendations for PR and communications professionals.

1 TV Wins Hearts and Minds

We love TV.
We prefer it and trust it the most.

How Americans Prefer to Get Their News



But that's not all. There are directional clues in our data.

Of those between the ages of 25 and 44, **60%** chose news websites after TV, compared to **43%** of those over age 55.

And of those who consider themselves to be tech-savvy, only **37%** trust TV (compared to **50%** of those who don't consider themselves tech-savvy).



What It Means

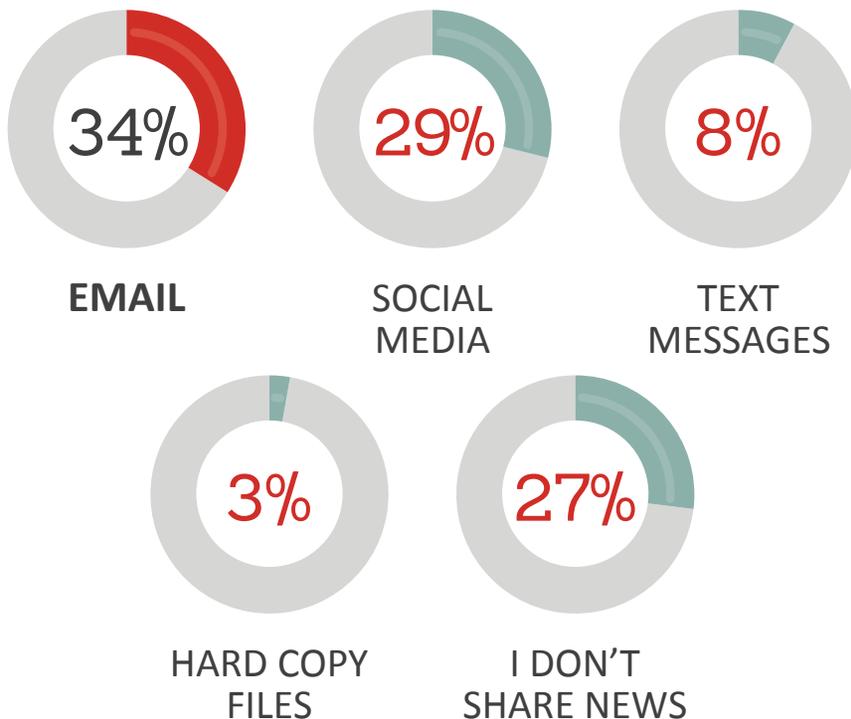
Online video is growing dramatically and will continue to do so.

[DigiDay offered a succinct article](#) with important statistics, including this: ComScore reports that in the U.S.,

89 million people watch **1.2 billion** online videos every day. But traditional television is a critical channel, and one that comes with built-in credibility. However, not all brands have the right assets for TV coverage. Remember the tenets: your story must be visual, timely, easy to understand (craft a story for the average American), and brief!

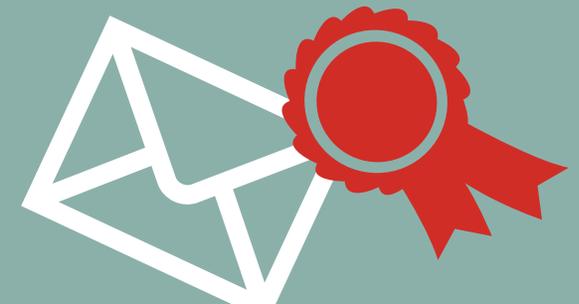
2 Email Me that Article Please!

How We Prefer to Share News



Social media stood a fighting chance,

but good old-fashioned email won the prize for article sharing, coming in first place with **34%**. Social media was a close second with **29%**. Not surprisingly, younger people are more likely to share news on social media: **50%** of those ages 18 to 24 and **45%** of those ages 24 to 35, compared to **8%** of those 55 or older.



What It Means

In PR, getting coverage is only the first step. Merchandising the coverage helps extend its benefits to your target audiences. By now, we're all familiar with the mainstay social sharing icons on infographics, videos, blog posts and articles. But don't forget to make it easy to click and email too. Consider taking your most valuable content a step further through email marketing.

3

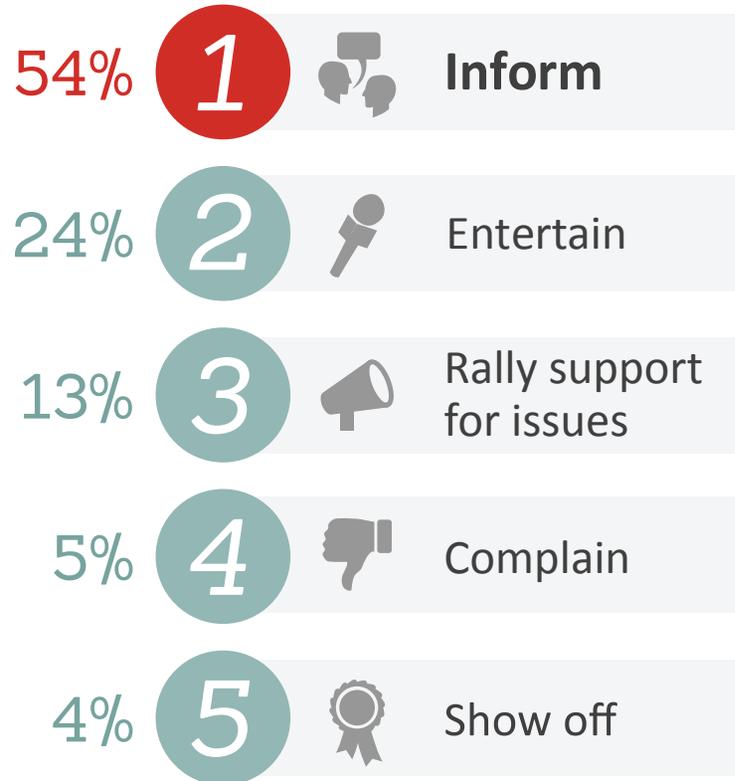
Tell Me Something Funny or Interesting: Why We Share News

As we've noted, news sharing is an important piece of any PR program (as it is for news outlets) – it proliferates the news to broader audiences. Yet, we also need to consider what makes content sharable:

humor and useful information.



The Top 5 Reasons Americans Share News



The Top 6 Types of News We Share



What It Means

Communications departments are often the creators of social content. Before you commit time and money to these efforts, consider what makes a piece of content sharable. BuzzFeed has this down to a science. For more, see our blog post [Tips from BuzzFeed](#) on how to create viral content. These tips focus on how to construct your content, but first, know your audience, their interests and needs. Make it relevant and then focus on the types of content that people tend to share the most.

4

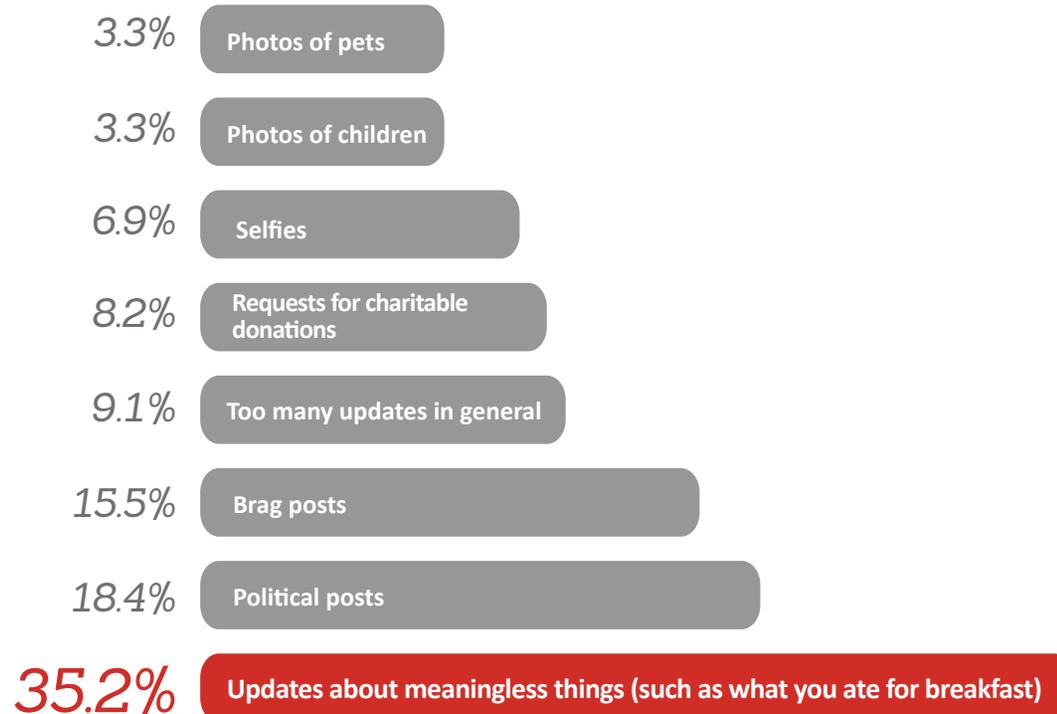
Facebook Has Unofficial Rules...Follow Them!

75% of respondents report using Facebook and their sharing preferences are clear. People prefer posts with humor, kids and pets to those about breakfast preferences, bragging and “selfies.”



How to Get “Unfriended” on Facebook

The Top Reasons Americans Cite for Unfollowing or Unfriending Someone on Facebook. They dislike too many...



On the other hand, when we asked people what they wanted to see more of from their friends' Facebook posts, some interesting trends appeared.

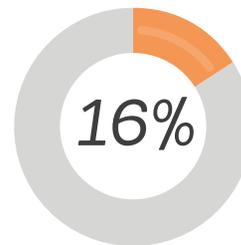
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How to get “Likes” on Facebook

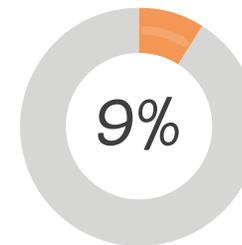
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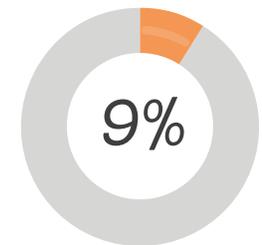
**HUMOR -
JOKES OR
COMMENTARY**



**PHOTOS OF
YOUR KIDS**

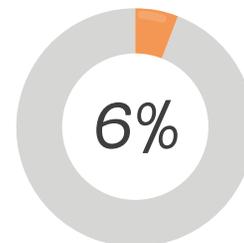


**PHOTOS OF
YOUR PETS**

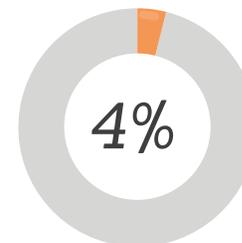


**POLITICAL
POSTS**

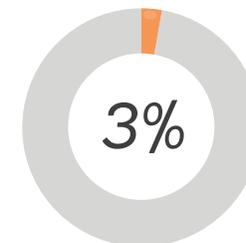
The Types of Posts
People Want to
See More of on
Facebook



SELFIES



**REQUESTS FOR
CHARITABLE
DONATIONS**



BRAG POSTS

Men vs. Women on Facebook

The percentage of men and women who rank the following posts as the #1 thing they'd like to see more of on Facebook

Humorous posts – jokes or commentary on what's going on in the world



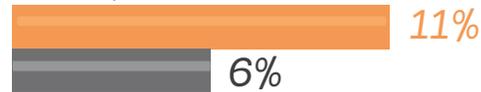
Photos of their friends' children



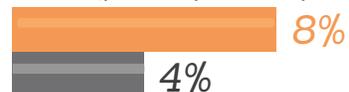
Pet photos



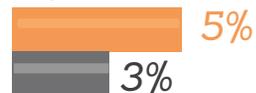
Political posts



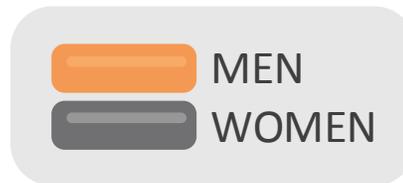
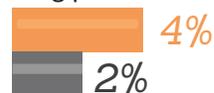
Selfies (photos you take yourself)



Requests for charitable donations



Brag posts



Men and woman disagree about politics.

Of those who use Facebook, **24%** of women ranked political posts as the top reason for unfollowing or unfriending someone, compared to just **12%** of men. They like humor in equal amounts. However, photo preferences vary. Men seem to like selfies a bit more than women. And women like photos of pets and kids a bit more than men.

What It Means

Facebook is addictive, but annoying posts are often more memorable than positive ones. As a brand or a company recruiting on Facebook, know your audience and use content accordingly. And if you happen to have a dog or cat mascot in your office, you might consider putting some photos of them on your Facebook page!

5 We Consume Lots of News

More than half of Americans (**60%**) read or watch the news every day, at an average of three to 10 stories each day. Those over age 55 are more likely to tune in more frequently (**72%** watch/read daily). And we're actually reading! While **45%** of us read entire articles, another **39%** read the headline and first few paragraphs. Twitter has not ruined our attention spans...yet.



What It Means

Long-form content is alive and well. Use social media's brevity and reach to draw your audiences into your more thoughtful pieces. Once you get someone's attention, they are willing to read content that is useful and relevant.

6 But We Don't Want to Pay for Online News

We still value print subscriptions.

Just over half of Americans (**56%**) pay for one. Of those, local newspapers are most popular (**68%**), with special interest magazines (e.g. cooking, pets, etc.) coming in second (**41%**), and an almost three-way tie for third between national newspapers, news magazines and women's/men's magazines).



However, our willingness to pay for online and mobile news is not there yet.

Today, **86%** of respondents believe that mobile and online news should be free, and only **10%** pay for an online subscription. Men are more willing to pay than women: **15%** versus **5%**. Directionally, this trend seems to have staying power. Of the younger demographics, **90%** of those 18 to 24 and **94%** of those 25 to 34, expect news to be free.

What It Means

Newsrooms are still hurting as they transform their business models (read more in [The Opportunity for PR in the State of the News Media](#)). PR programs with journalistic content can help fill the gap. Top media properties are accepting contributed content in the form of articles, graphics and video. And many are introducing native advertising into the mix as well (see [Is Native Advertising Right for You?](#)).

7

Buzzwhat? Reddit and BuzzFeed Are Still on the Awareness Fringe

BuzzFeed has a massive audience.

According to its site, BuzzFeed has 100+ million monthly uniques and 60% are 18 to 34 years old. Compare that to the New York Times, which has 31 million monthly uniques.

Yet, only 15% of respondents reported reading BuzzFeed, and 39% don't know what it is. Thirteen percent read Reddit and 34% don't know what it is. Among those who consider themselves to be tech-savvy, these numbers are higher. Twenty-one percent of those audiences read BuzzFeed and 18% use Reddit.

Why are people coming to BuzzFeed? It's not the cute animal photos.

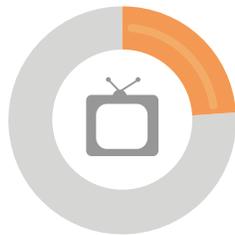
Top reasons for reading BuzzFeed

Of those who read BuzzFeed, here is how they ranked their top reasons



27%

HUMOR



24%

BREAKING NEWS



19%

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



12%

TECHNOLOGY NEWS



11%

INFORMATIONAL NEWS



7%

CUTE ANIMAL PHOTOS

What It Means

Know your audiences and craft stories that will appeal to the media properties they read. While BuzzFeed may not be widely known, it is reaching a very wide audience by proliferating content through social channels, and we suspect that lots of people have been on BuzzFeed, yet don't know it. If you've taken a quiz about which city you should live in, or which career you should have, you've probably been on BuzzFeed. Read more in our post [Who Am I Really? BuzzFeed Knows.](#)

8 In Press Releases We Trust

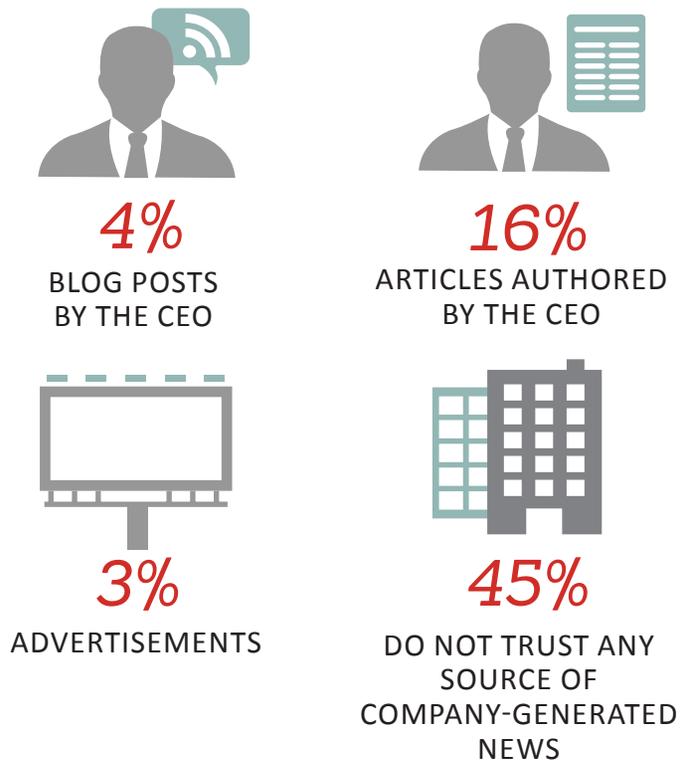
Yes, really. Press releases are the most trusted source of company-generated news.

The trust factor varies by age. Younger audiences trust blog posts a bit more (**11%** of 18-34 vs. **0%** of 55 or older) and articles by the CEO (**23%** of those 18-34 vs. **9%** of those 55 and older) more than older audiences. They also put more trust in company-generated news overall – only **30-32%** of those 18 to 34 do not trust any source of company-generated news. Older audiences are more skeptical.



Company News and Trust

Which Sources Americans Trust



What It Means

Press releases, while less common these days for technology startups in particular, are still important PR tools (and they are required public disclosure vehicles for public companies). Over time though, they have become more marketing brochure than news vehicle and this evolution has lessened their impact. Press releases were designed to be news articles that could be printed in a newspaper, and they have veered a long way from that original purpose. For more, see our post, [9 Tips for Retooling the Press Release to its Intended Audience: The Press](#). We believe this important shift in tone and content will only continue.

Methodology

These research findings are based on a survey fielded in the U.S. between January 10 and 14, 2014 asking 1,000 adults aged 18+ their habits and preferences for reading and sharing the news. The survey was completed through GMI's Global Test Market double opted in panelists who have registered to participate in online surveys. Respondents who were invited to participate in this survey were representative of adults age 18+ on age within gender, income, and region. Differential sampling was done to account for response rate differences by demographics. Quotas were also set in the survey to reflect the demographic composition of adults 18+.

About InkHouse

InkHouse Media + Marketing is a public relations and social content agency serving technology, consumer, energy, real estate and financial services organizations. InkHouse provides public relations, communications strategy planning and social content services, including its content marketing practice, that help clients connect with prospects, customers and influencers through unique story angles and social content campaigns. With offices in Waltham, Mass. and San Francisco, CA, InkHouse was founded in 2007 and has been named Small Agency of the Year by both PR News and Bulldog Reporter.

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About GMI Research

GMI empowers insights. From intelligent sampling to award-winning survey engagement software to sample management and custom reporting, GMI adds value at every stage of the research process. With millions of deeply profiled double opt-in panelists across 40 proprietary panels throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific, and with real-time respondent sourcing and advanced sample balancing capabilities, GMI offers a wide range of respondent access in a single, trusted partner.

Along with a full suite of data collection services, including specialty panels, custom panels and communities, mobile surveys, and observed digital behavior and ad tracking, GMI delivers the industry's most complete and highest-quality online research. GMI is part of Lightspeed Research, the leading provider of technology-enabled solutions and online respondents for global market research.

Contact GMI Research

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