

How news media influence society

Australia has a rich media heritage, with sections of society and families often defined by the paper they read or the station their radio is tuned to. The morning news habit - the ritual of checking the headlines over breakfast or on the morning commute - has long been an important part of Australian life, as it is around the world.

A [2018 US study of digital news-reading behaviour](#) found many respondents following the same routine of reading news online at specific times every day, as well as monitoring throughout the day. And a [Harvard study in the same year](#) revealed that the type of news we look for can be an indicator for how we consume: sports news tends to get more “scanners” (people quickly looking through articles and headlines), while those reading how-to news (such as DIY, lifestyle guides and recipe articles) tends to see users take their time and read more slowly.

Newspapers really are everywhere

If you've ever watched breakfast television, you might have come across news anchors going through the morning newspapers to see what's making the headlines.

Here's the team at *Today* (Channel Nine) with their copy of the *Telegraph*:



Over on Channel Seven, the *Sunrise* team can be spotted digging through a pile of morning newspapers:



And now we all carry laptops and smartphones, the newspaper and the morning news TV can come with us wherever we go.

Impact of digital news media

Digital technology has [“dramatically reshaped the news and media industries in the past decade”](#), according to David Levy, director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

For example, digital forms of news media have given consumers greater ease of access to news, seeing the morning ritual of reading the newspaper shift to a tap-and-swipe journey through the day’s headlines.

However, those who want to stay informed still turn to news media when it comes time to find out what’s happening.

The [Reuters 2019 Digital News Report](#) found that people around the world are starting to worry about the quality of information they received from sources such as social media. Across countries, 26 per cent of participants in the study said they have started relying on more ‘reputable’ sources of news, rising to 40 per cent in the US. A further 24 per cent said they had stopped using sources that had a dubious reputation in the last year.

The report also found that news found through social media was considered much less trustworthy (23 per cent) than news overall (42 per cent). Reuters puts this down to factors such as uncertainty in the environment of social media, where information goes unchecked and it is difficult for users to distinguish news from rumour.

This is in line with the [AdTrust study completed by NewsMediaWorks](#), which found that social media was considered the least trusted platform for content.

Some things change, some stay the same

Yet despite the huge shift to digital that has taken place, news media continue to set the daily agenda.

The [Reuters Institute study](#) found that online services are the first source of daily news for 39 per cent of those sampled in the U.S. (ahead of TV at 36 per cent) and for 31 per cent in the U.K. (where TV stands at 32 per cent).

And when it comes to news brands, trust and reputation continue to reign supreme:

“Even though business models and news habits are changing, large audiences still trust traditional news brands when they’re looking for in-depth content and analysis. These major brands are also where many people turn for breaking news.”

NewsMediaWorks’ analysis of news media consumption habits finds that [17.6 million Australians stay informed with news media throughout the week](#). This covers around 95 per cent of the population aged over 14.