

News as They Know It

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**NEWS AS THEY KNOW IT: YOUNG ADULTS' INFORMATION REPERTOIRES IN
THE DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

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News as they know it: Young adults' information repertoires in the digital media landscape

Abstract: Despite an 'audience turn' in journalism studies, confusion persists about the experiences driving audience engagement. Young adults are especially intriguing in this regard, as they have grown up in digital environments, are less willing to pay for journalism, and lack key historical catalysts for the formation of news habits. Accordingly, this article investigates the information repertoires of this group, using a mixed-method approach to focus upon the preferences and experiences of Danish youth, aged 18-24. Crafting an innovative research design integrating individual interviews, Q-sort methodology, and think aloud protocols, the article explores five repertoires: the online traditionalist, depth-seeking audiophile, digital news seeker, interpersonal networker, and non-news information seeker. In these repertoires, 'traditional' journalistic media is often eschewed, while 'new' media come to the fore. The paper also examines two analytical themes cutting across repertoires: a tension between the seamlessness of where news is ('platform newsiness') versus how it is conceptualized ('traditional journalism'); and the guiding role of face-to-face communication and social networks when engaging with news. In sum, by exploring the formation of information repertoires at this crucial life stage, the article provides insights into a key demographic, whose practices and preferences shape the news industry's ongoing sustainability.

Keywords: Facebook, Face-to-face communication, Interviews, Life stage, News audiences, News repertoires, Popular culture, Q-sort methodology, Social media, Young adults

Introduction

Much of the discussion surrounding the so-called ‘crisis of journalism’ over the past decade might also aptly be characterized as a ‘crisis of audiences’. Confusion persists about what news audiences want and what this means for civic engagement, despite what is now a relatively established track record of researching their changing preferences. Digital news audiences have been studied in depth for well over a decade, through mostly quantitative reports such as the ‘State of the News Media’ first appearing in the US in 2004 (Pew, 2004) and the multi-country ‘Reuters Digital News Report’ first appearing in 2012 (Newman, 2012), as well as through a number of influential mixed-method studies of sense-making practices (e.g. Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2007; Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink, 2015). Chief among the most pressing concerns are not knowing the relationship between what news audiences want, are willing to pay for, and find civically and personally relevant. The sense that sustainable journalism demands a more comprehensive understanding of audiences continues to captivate both industry and scholars, so much so that in recent years favourable declarations of an ‘audience turn’ have swept across journalism studies (e.g. Costera Meijer, 2016; Heikkilä & Ahva, 2015; Peters, 2015, Picone, 2016, Schröder, 2016). Former academic claims that audiences are ignored in media and communication research no longer hold water.

Nonetheless, given the ever-changing informational ecology, resting on the significant gains made into understanding audiences over the past decade is done at our peril, as evidenced by ongoing concerns around the practices and preferences of news audiences. One key group who continue to demand attention are those who historically would be on the cusp of becoming regular news consumers, namely young adults. Worries about young adults adopting a (paying) news habit as they enter adulthood are nothing new and with good reason; despite the fact that each ‘new’ generation going through this life stage transition experiences a different media ecology, studies indicate a cohort trend wherein each ‘new’ generation of news consumers is smaller than the previous (Kaufhold, 2010). Moreover, emerging ‘replacement’ channels for journalism – from entertainment programs, to blogs, influencers, social media

and beyond – are the sorts of media practices which are manifest within this population at the current time, and are possibly also beginning to affect older age demographics.

In this respect, Generation Z¹ are especially intriguing for digital journalism studies as they share in common: experiences of growing up and engaging in environments where digital (social) media plays a complex role (Livingstone, 2010); a tendency to view news as a ‘free’ resource, meaning they are less willing to pay for journalism (Kammer et al., 2015); and the increasing absence of a historical catalyst for the formation of news habits, namely the visible consumption of news in public life, as news use moves to personal media devices (Peters & Schröder, 2018). Accordingly, this article investigates the information repertoires of this group, focusing upon the preferences and experiences of 24 Danish youth, aged 18-24. Its central research question is to uncover what elements compose their information repertoires, while key sub-questions include: what distinguishes different repertoires; what reflections and experiences of young people are associated with these choices; what analytical commonalities exist across repertoires; and what roles do ‘non-traditional’ news items play for these participants? Based on the descriptive-interpretive snapshot of their repertoires, along with interrelated thematic findings around potential sources of information, the article explores the complexity of young adults’ everyday acquisition of information in the digital landscape. It begins to uncover novel constellations of young adults’ information repertoires, as well as specifying under which circumstances and conditions different elements are potentially recognized as meaningful. By exploring these experiences underlying the formation of information repertoires at this crucial life stage, the article provides insights into a key demographic, whose practices and preferences shape the news industry’s ongoing sustainability.

Audiences and news repertoires

In recent news audience research, a concept which has been increasingly developed to capture the realities of digital news consumption is the notion of repertoires (e.g. Edgerly 2015, Lee and Yang, 2014; Schröder, 2015; Swart et al., 2017; Yuan, 2011), a framework that conceptualizes news use not as discrete

media choices, nor aggregated individualized selections, but as cross-media practices that form ensembles based upon demographic, technological, and contextual factors (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017). As opposed to closely-related concepts in audience research, like ‘reception’, ‘consumption’, or ‘use’, the point of departure for repertoires is the idea that as people navigate the media ecology they live in, they regularly use a variety of media – including but not limited to journalism – in order to meaningfully fulfill their needs for information and diversion. Moreover, such uses are not discrete but relational within a broader ‘media manifold’ (Couldry & Hepp, 2016), as well as to different contexts of everyday life. While there are many possible terms to describe what people ‘do’ with news – from terms used during the mass media era such as read, listen, watch, and discuss, to newer phrases that resonate in the digital age such as surf, scan, share, participate, and prosume (Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink, 2015) – the particular conceptual strength of repertoires is its encouragement of an expressly holistic focus that allows all these possibilities.² It is a term that creates space to consider the interrelation of diverse modes of audience engagement, by formulating research inquiries dynamically around the diverse temporal experiences of media (Peters & Schröder, 2018), and prefiguring a social dimension of shared approaches toward navigating the digital landscape (Heikkilä & Ahva, 2015).

From the ensemble of media that are available at a given point of time in a culture, people (in conjunction with their social and peer groups) gradually build up a set of media devices, genres, and platforms (including but not limited to news outlets, TV programs and streaming services, online discussion fora, podcasts, social media platforms, etc.) into repertoires which they routinely and habitually draw upon in different locational and situational contexts (workplace, commuting, chat rooms, etc.) (Taneja et al., 2012; Wolf & Schnauber, 2015). This is something large media platforms and producers recognize, and their efforts – heightened by algorithms and recommender systems – to shape and direct audience attention towards certain practices and content are a powerful force when it comes to how news is distributed and repertoires formed (cf. Wallace, 2018). News repertoires thus do not exist in a state of

inertia nor are they entirely within the control of the individual. Nonetheless, they do tend to become automated and habituated over time (LaRose, 2010).

Accordingly, adopting a repertoire perspective on news should, by definition, focus attention not only on traditional journalistic outlets but also on the broader concourse of possible information sources in the digital media landscape, which can be drawn upon to aid sensemaking in everyday life. While most scholars working with the concept would likely agree, in practice many earlier studies of news repertoires, including by the authors, tended to be somewhat conservative in this regard. Partially for reasons of methodological necessity, partially attributable to the strength of traditional conceptions of what news 'is', the typical approach has been to focus primarily on conventional media devices and/or professional news outlets that comprise journalism, generally adding a small selection of new, social, and mobile media options and/or popular news alternatives to indicate possible diversions from tradition (e.g. Edgerly, 2015, Lee & Yang, 2014; Schröder, 2015; Swart et al., 2017; Yuan, 2011). Yet in an era where the media environment is often characterized as hybrid, the 'news-ness' of a particular item to audiences may not conform with traditional conceptions of journalism (Edgerly & Vraga, 2020). Relatedly, there is a longstanding recognition that popular communication provides ample fodder for political engagement and audience sense-making, across age groups (e.g. Nærland, 2020). Although different fields of research may not agree on the 'learning effects' from 'soft news' and entertainment (cf. van Aelst, 2017), audience studies have repeatedly found people engage with prominent social issues like race, class and gender through popular culture, which often acts as a form of 'critical intertextuality' that invites reflection on these concerns when raised in other media (Gray, 2006). In this respect, it is fair to say if we want a more complete picture of how people encounter information and learn about public affairs, and how this relates to pressing questions of trust, legitimacy, and sociopolitical literacy, the traditional focus on the fourth estate demands expansion.

Young adults and news use

While adults are the typical population in news audience studies, concerns about how young adults potentially engage with the news are not exclusive to the digital era, enjoying a longer history intimately linked with questions surrounding the life stage transition from youth to adulthood. Barnhurst and Wartella (1991: 208) noted the problem succinctly in their study of American university students, which concluded that the problem of getting young people to read newspapers resulted from a mismatch between the types of facts covered, and the type of citizenship promoted: '[they] do not see themselves as citizens, participating in democracy; they are more likely to see themselves as consumers seeking pleasure in the way that the entertainment media position audiences.' The challenge, then, in getting young people to read the news is not one of interest but of genre convention and content. Flash forward almost three decades later and this challenge has not been resolved. Edgerly et al. (2017) found over half the American teenagers in their study could be classified as news avoiders, in all senses of the term, eschewing journalistic content in all guises and platforms. Both studies, 27 years apart, found a correlation between this disposition and a lack of civic engagement. Outside the US context, Sveningsson's (2015) study of Swedish youth uncovered a contradictory relationship; there was strong association between news use and conceptions of being a 'good citizen', however, the preferred way of getting news for youth, through social media, damaged their self-perception as it was not regarded as 'real news'. Costera Meijer's (2007) extensive study of Dutch youth, aged 15-25, uncovered what she referred to as a 'double viewing paradox': recognizing the importance of 'serious' news did not cause young adults to watch it and conversely, a contempt for soft news programs did not prevent consumption and enjoyment of them.

But the picture is highly complex. Edgerly et al. (2017) found three repertoires – traditional-news-only, curated-news-only, and news omnivores – that had positive, albeit varied dispositions toward news consumption. Tendencies towards avoidance and avid consumption of news both appeared to be fixed relatively early as teenagers, indicating the potential importance of socialization practices in childhood for news use. Moreover, Banaji and Cammaerts' (2015) study of European youth found a high level of

interest in public affairs across all groups, although trust and reliance on traditional news sources was sharply bifurcated based on advantaged or disadvantaged backgrounds. Although studies of Danish youth and news are relatively scarce, Møller Harley's (2018) study of young Danes aged 15-18 similarly found sharp distinctions based around respective levels of cultural capital.

In this regard, questions around youth, news and their affective dispositions toward its consumption are tied up with issues of life stage, social stratification, cultural orientations, and perceptions of citizenship, which are embodied and experienced in a dynamic media ecology. A recent Reuters (2019) report of Americans and British, aged 18-35, found key differences in habits linked to motivation, the moment of encounter, and media device or platform. 'Indirect' moments of stumbling upon an interesting story tended to occur incidentally amongst young people while doing something else on social media or messaging apps, while dedicated news consumption practices were more closely associated with reflective participants using traditional journalism outlets. Similar findings by Boczkowski et al. (2018) of Argentinian youth note that incidental exposure is shaped by constant connectivity, online sociability, and the routinization of checking Facebook and Twitter. Simply put, the centrality of digital platforms as a mediating force is especially crucial when considering young adults, where social media is key to the experiences of interpersonal relationships and can often be seen as a guiding step towards engaging in civil society (Clark & Marchi, 2017).

While national surveys of news consumption in recent years have consistently shown all age groups rely on news sources that are hybrid between legacy and algorithmic media, these two categories are balanced differently between young and old. In 2019, young people in Denmark, aged 18-24, reported a weekly news usage relying heavily on social media, especially Facebook, with 57% having used news from social media in the past week (national average 45%); 31% declared this their most important source (national average 12%). In comparison, just under 20% stated that TV news, online legacy newspapers, or online news from broadcasters were most important (Schrøder et al., 2019). Qualitative and quantitative research increasingly points to this rising importance of new media alternatives for young

people's news consumption, while the significance of popular culture and social networks is also well-established. However, how these options come together in relational assemblages – i.e. informational repertoires – is far less clear. This paper follows a growing trend for research to more vigorously assess such hybrid news consumption practices, prioritizing youth who are studied less frequently, and considering how value judgments around journalism are reflected in their priorities.

Methodology

Building on previous insights around news audience repertoires, alternatives to traditional journalism, and young adults' news habits, a research design that integrated individual interviews, Q-sort methodology, and think aloud protocols into a processual framework was developed for this study, with the aim of capturing young people's information-seeking practices in a broad sense. The primary motivation for choosing this mixed-methodological approach was to allow the qualitative insights into participants' everyday news use and preferences to be anchored in the reality and visual representation of the Danish media environment through the media cards of the Q-sort, with subsequent factor analysis revealing relational patterns that would be difficult to discern through qualitative methods alone (See Appendices A and C.) Quota sampling was employed, using a market research firm, to recruit 24 young adults, aged 18-24, to ensure an equal proportion of participants in terms of: gender (male/female), geographic distribution (provincial city or rural/capital city), and job status (employed or seeking employment/continuing further education) (see Appendix B).³ Sessions were conducted one-on-one with each participant in June/July 2019, lasted between 90-120 minutes, were held either at the respondent's home or in a public location, and were recorded and then later transcribed and coded in NVivo. Participants were given a gift voucher of DKK 500 for participating.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of questions and interviewing probes referring to key topics of interest and practices around news and information. The Q-sorting exercise served to map participants' current cross-media information repertoires, focusing on finding patterns within the

participants' subjective universe from the broader 'concourse' of possibilities, with the participants (rather than media options) being treated as the statistical variables (Brown, 1993).⁴ In line with our argument above, we did not limit the relevant concourse of media options to 'established' news organizations only, using recent literature as well as a pilot study to capture a broader picture of the wider media universe which might have particular relevance for this group (e.g., social media, influencers, popular culture, satire, podcasts, etcetera). Participants were given 36 cards (including one blank they could specify themselves) and were instructed to place them on a grid, where one end corresponded to media types which played a 'big role for them to find out about things going on in society and the world around them', while the other end was for types that 'did not play a role'. Accordingly, news, journalism, and information were not pre-defined by the researchers, but rather allowed to emerge from the emic perspectives of the participants, which – as the findings below demonstrate – indicates that whatever distinction participants' may or may not hold between these labels, and what value they place on such a distinction, does not necessarily hold for their sensemaking practices. Cards placed in the middle section of the grid indicated options which participants were subjectively ambivalent about (i.e., neither agree nor disagree).

Transcripts from the interviews and the talk-aloud aspects of the Q-sort activity were analysed in NVivo through successive coding rounds, further evaluating and refining emergent themes; shared memos were maintained between the research team throughout this process, to enable collective analysis of this data (Charmaz, 2006). In turn, the transcript verbalizations were read against the factor solution arrived at using the Q-sort exercise to determine the most robust solution⁵, and in order to formulate thematic analyses and patterns anchored in the participants' own subjective declaration of their media repertoires.

Findings – Young people’s information repertoires

While, as noted above, aggregated quantitative overviews give a good sense of general trends and attitudes, in qualitative fieldwork, generally-speaking, the primary aim is to use the participants’ verbalized sense-making about an area of life to discern multiplicities, complexities, and ambivalences in the practices, meanings, perceptions, and attitudes that constitute their everyday life-worlds. In order to capture this, we invited participants to talk about the role of 36 mostly mediated sources of information in their lives, including a range of media not traditionally viewed as helpful for the building of informed citizenship, and then translate the resulting rich verbal data into a subjectively plausible relational map of media/information types (see Appendix A). The 24 taxonomies thus created constitute a mapping of individual informational universes, which lend themselves to analytical generalization through factor analysis. It is important to note that the factors arrived at by such calculations are not rank-order lists nor are they Weberian ‘ideal types’; rather, they are better understood as subjective, relational clusters anchored in the media ecology the participants navigate – a real-world information repertoire that a number of them share a positive correlation towards. Five factors that were both statistically significant and aligned with the qualitative accounts of our participants were arrived at; each brings together a number of individuals whose news and information worlds share enough features to warrant seeing them as a groups of like-minded individuals, with respect to their navigation of their culture’s information landscape (see Table 1). The members of a repertoire share a certain constellation of information sources, but may use those resources in very different ways. One difference has to do with time spent on the favorite information sources – some are avid users, others moderate. Another difference has to do with lean-back versus lean-forward pathways to information: some actively seek a regular flow of information, others talk about information exposure which originates in serendipitous practices. The sensemaking comments from participants given below to illuminate each repertoire’s information constellation are mostly drawn from ‘prototypical’ repertoire members, selected for their ‘exemplary’ rather than ‘exciting’

character. In other words, we have purposely chosen to highlight participants whose individual information repertoires have an optimal fit with the ranking calculated for the repertoire as a whole.

<i>Factor</i> Correlated media (top 5 in factor)	1 ‘The Online Traditionalist’	2 ‘The Depth-Seeking Audiophile’	3 ‘The Digital News Seeker’	4 ‘The Interpersonal Networker’	5 ‘The Non-News Information Seeker’
1	News from Facebook	Podcasts	News from YouTube and video streaming	Face-to-face, from family & friends	Books (fictional)
2	Broadsheet national papers	Radio news – debate and current affairs	News from search engines, Wikipedia	Via SMS and message services	Satire
3	National TV broadcasters – app and online	Radio – news updates on music stations	Memes	TV series (fictional)	Books (non-fiction)
4	News from Instagram	Radio – news program	National TV newscasts	News from Instagram	Memes
5	Local/regional TV news	National TV newscasts	News from Facebook	Face-to-face, from colleagues & acquaintances	Local/regional newspapers

Table 1. Information Repertoires of Young Danes, 18-24

Young Danes navigating the information landscape: Five repertoires

The five information repertoires produced by the factor analysis of the 24 young adults’ constellations of news and information sources can be seen, first, to fall into three overall forms of repertoires, all built in hybridized fashion from the current Danish media ensemble of legacy journalism outlets (i.e. the established ‘mass media’ of radio, TV, and newspapers), algorithmic media (i.e. social media, search engines), and non-news alternatives (i.e. popular culture), in addition to interpersonal face-to-face forms of information-seeking, which characterize their life-world. All five repertoires include all these four media forms, but organize them into quite different prominence patterns. In the following analysis, we focus especially on the top-ten ranked information sources in the repertoire lists, and the repertoires participants bore most affinity towards (see Appendix C for complete factor analysis).

Two of the five repertoires, ‘The Online Traditionalist’ and ‘The Depth-Seeking Audiophile’, encompass the majority of participants, and are similarly anchored in different forms of legacy media, interspersed with algorithmic media, mostly from the social media family. Two other repertoires, ‘The Digital News Seeker’ and ‘The Interpersonal Networker’, share the feature that legacy media take more of a back seat, while algorithmic, non-news media, and face-to-face (F2F) interpersonal communication come to the fore. The fifth repertoire, ‘The Non-news Information Seeker’, shows a distinctive preference for non-journalistic media like literary fiction, satire, non-fiction books, and memes, supplemented by the local newspaper, search engines and F2F communication.

Repertoire 1: The Online Traditionalist (9 participants)⁶

Although news from Facebook is top of the list for these individuals, legacy media like national broadsheets, public service broadcasters’ online news, and local/regional TV news dominate their news repertoire. This ‘online traditionalism’ is characteristic of Camilla’s day-in-the-life narrative, which specifies her allegiance to public-service broadcasters DR and TV2 and the English newspaper, The Guardian, all encountered on her smartphone:

Well, I get up around 7:00 and scroll through different media. Facebook, Instagram, my mail.

And then, sometimes, I visit different news sites. Things like TV2, or maybe The Guardian, or

DR. Whatever pops up that day. (...) And then in the evening I watch the news. Mostly on TV2.

(...) I mostly get my news through my mobile.⁷

As we shall see, more or less, across all five repertoires, Facebook has arguably become so widely used as a hub, also for news, that it can be dubbed ‘legacy social media’:

Most of it is actually through Facebook and Instagram. And that goes for YouTube, and it goes for Historiebladet [history magazine], and it goes for Go’Morgen Danmark [morning TV talkshow]. Everything. All of it, except things like WhatsApp and SMS. (Camilla)

Mark similarly noted that the urge to check different news stories from diverse sources was afforded through Facebook, which he could ‘easily sit and do it while sitting watching TV’. Considering how extensive adoption of ‘new media’ is often thought to be amongst this group, it is striking that six such media types – including Twitter, YouTube, digital-born media, and discussion forums – turn up jointly at the bottom of the Repertoire 1 list.

Their preference for news media like tabloid newspapers, short-form social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat), and SMS and messenger services appears to indicate a wish to stay tuned-in during the day, rather than to seek the depth and background knowledge provided by information vehicles such as current affairs, debate and documentary genres, and podcasts, all ranked as something which participants in this repertoire have a negative affinity toward.

In addition to using mostly traditional and some algorithmic news media, people in Repertoire 1 also find some non-news media helpful for being attuned to the news agenda, for instance they enjoy satire as a way to adopt a critical perspective on people in power. However, influencers and memes play little role in their pursuit of useful everyday knowledge, perhaps because they are perceived as entertainment rather than informational media:

I couldn’t care less about influencers. (...) I’m sure there are people out there who think they are just fantastic to follow, but to me they just sound like ‘look at me! I’m amazing!’. (...) I really don’t see the appeal. (Camilla)

Repertoire 2: The Depth-Seeking Audiophile (6 participants)

Most striking about the six members of Repertoire 2 is the extent to which they use audio legacy media as information sources on an everyday basis. With the long-form podcast leading their list, they also have a preference for overview and background audio genres like radio current affairs, regular radio news bulletins as well as the news which appears at intervals on radio music channels:

I listen to DR's [public broadcaster] radio channels and Radio24syv [public service talk radio] a lot. (...) And I listen to podcasts a lot. I actually listen a lot to that one from DR called Den Daglige Dosis where they do a 20-25 minute rundown of the most important stories that day (...) and I often listen to P1 Morgen [public broadcaster, morning talk radio program]. (Christian)

There is a blurred line between flow radio and podcasts: 'When I listen to podcasts, I'll go in and find whatever radio programs have been on and listen to them there. I don't actually hear them on the radio that often.' (Stefan) Without using the term, Christian almost describes himself as a podcast addict:

I think I just like the format. Because you can find long episodes about something and you can find a lot of stuff that's shortened, like a quick morning briefing or something. (...) at my old job I listened to podcasts maybe seven hours every day. Because it was a good way to get informed about basically anything while I was doing something else, and while biking to work. (Christian)

These sources are supplemented with legacy news providers like public service TV news and national broadsheet newspapers:

DR and TV2's news sites. Those are definitely the ones I use most. And also DR and TV2's news apps on my phone, and I also usually watch TV2 News on TV. (...) I also like to watch the news on one channel and then on the other, because the same story might be explained in two different ways. (...) I think I trust newspapers that also exist in a paper format more. (Stefan)

Among social media sources, only Facebook has a noticeable presence in the repertoire as a hub platform for accessing both general news sources and theme-focused media:

I spend a lot of time on Facebook, where I follow Berlingske and Jyllandsposten [newspapers] and TV2 and DR (...) I mostly follow all of those, you know, news media. And Illustreret Videnskab [Science Illustrated], and Videnskab.dk [science journalism], and National Geographic. (...) The only websites I actually go and visit, independently, are TV2 and DR. All the rest I get because I follow them on Facebook, and then it links to their website. (Stefan)

As with Repertoire 1, the non-news media used for public connection with some regularity are satire and TV series, while influencers and memes are dismissed as low-importance phenomena.

Repertoire 3: The Digital News Seeker (4 participants)

With the exception of public service TV news, the highest-ranked information sources of these four participants all belong to the algorithmic category. The prominence of news from YouTube and their strong reliance on search engines stand out, together with the inclination to follow influencers, and appears to originate in a wish to find information about specific topics or stories that are relevant to their life-worlds:

I'm just really random. I mean, I Google everything. (...) I Google so much. I'll maybe be sitting around and think about what a home costs in some area, and then I'll Google the housing market here and there and check out the prices, just for fun. (...) and I often Google nutritional information about my food. I rarely look up news, because then I've already seen it somewhere else, right? (William)

This 'somewhere else' is very often Facebook: it's a premise that Facebook delivers the information he needs, civic news interspersed seamlessly with news from personal networks:

I'll probably sit down in front of my computer and check out what's going on in the world on a daily basis. And I'll usually probably use Facebook. (...) I mean, I try to keep up with politics as much as possible. (...) A lot of people are graduating right now, so I see that all of the time. But that isn't really news. (...) And I follow stuff like *Illustreret Videnskab* [Science Illustrated] and things like that because I'm a huge nerd. (William)

To Nedim, the cards labelled influencers (bloggers) and YouTube appear to be almost the same thing: He follows influencers on YouTube, because that's where they communicate their ideas. YouTube is also interwoven with search engines, because instead of subscribing to specific YouTube channels/bloggers, Nedim searches for those bloggers he likes, in order to pursue his curiosity about

different opinions:

I don't know if you know Speakers Corner in England? (...) I've never been there myself, but I've seen it on Youtube. (...) And there are some specific people, who I know are very active over there, who I like to listen to. And then I'll listen to their opponents, where they exchange knowledge with each other, you know.

Q: Are you subscribed to their channels?

No. I just do searches (...) I just search for them and check if there are any new videos, right? (...).

I actually think I do that every day. (Nedim)

Among the social media options, only Facebook makes it into their top-five. R3 members' attachment to a more mainstream news agenda is assured especially by following national TV news on flow channels or broadcasters' online news sites:

TV-news. Yeah, that plays a big role – especially online and on TV, right? (...) I read that every day. (...) I feel like it's important for me to keep reading TV2 – TV2's articles – or DR's articles, for that matter, because that's what people generally read, right? So to keep myself on the same level as other people, I kind of have to read along. (Nedim)

Repertoire 4: The Interpersonal Networker (3 participants)

This repertoire received its descriptive label because of the appearance of two interpersonal (F2F) sources of information, alongside news from SMS and messenger services, as well as news from Instagram comprising four of the top-five rankings. For these participants, everyday social networks of both strong (family, close friends) and weaker (colleagues, acquaintances) ties are essential to keep informed about things that matter. For Mads, Instagram, Messenger and Facebook often serve as the starting point of conversations about events in culture and society across social media and different face-to-face contexts, which are only separated by porous boundaries:

Then I'll usually send a Facebook post to a friend, or my girlfriend, or some family, and then we

can discuss it, or (...) I mean usually online, but otherwise face-to-face. And then I'll be sitting in the office with two other guys with the same interest as me, and one will say something like 'hey, did you see a new movie is coming out with this guy', and then it will become a sort of forum for discussion for the three of us. (Mads)

Anna laughingly dismisses the idea that she would need to read any local newspaper in the part of Copenhagen where she lives: 'If I want to know something about Nørrebro, I'll just walk out the door and see what's going on or talk to other people who live here, too – I know so many locals that [the local paper] kind of doesn't matter'.

Conversely, their connection to mainstream news agendas is fragile and coincidental, as most legacy news providers are relegated to the very bottom of their list: 'I actually don't think I follow DR. I'll sometimes end up on DR's website if I look up some news story. It will show up in the Google results. (Anna). Mads's friends play a dual role in this regard, first as story 'alerter' and later, as he bumps into the paywall, story provider:

One of my friends will share an article, but it's very subscription-based, so I don't pay for that, and then I can't read the article even though I might want to. (...) So I'll be able to read four lines, and then I'll have to close it again and say 'I'll have to see if it shows up somewhere else', or hope that some of my friends have read it and can tell me what's going on. (Mads)

The members of Repertoire 4 also find valuable the fictionalized realities of TV series:

I've watched a lot of Black Mirror, but that's also because it's thought provoking. (...) And then I'll actually watch quite a lot of Grey's Anatomy – that's kind of a guilty pleasure – and I have to admit it deals with a surprising lot of dilemmas. (...) Both things like transsexuality, abortion, and then it's kind of interesting to think about in relation to something like the new abortion law that was just passed multiple places in the USA. (Anna)

Memes also play a role for information acquisition, even if attitudes towards them may be ambivalent: 'I mean, memes aren't actually important to me. They are just something that's out there (...) and then I

can laugh for two seconds and then move on to the next one. It's kind of a waste of time in a way. But you get caught up in it (Mads).

Repertoire 5: The Non-News Information Seeker (2 participants)

When these participants want valuable and useful information, they direct their attention towards the imaginary worlds offered by fictional books and the factual representations of non-fiction books, supplemented by satirical takes on culture and politics, and the humorous intertextualities of memes.

I read a lot of romantic books, I mean I used to read a lot, a lot, of fantasy books. (...) I don't know if it's some kind of escapism, with a whole different universe that you can imagine yourself in (...) and that's also evolved into movies and TV series and things like that. (Lotte)

For Freja, reading non-fiction is sometimes driven by enthusiastic curiosity, at other times by a wish to better understand the situation of someone who may need her help:

Some of those kinds of political books would put me to sleep, fast. But the kind of thing where it's about animals, for example. How they live or something like that. I'll really want to read that. And some of those 'facts' books that you can buy in Flying Tiger – I'll read those front-to-back, and then they're gone, right. Sometimes biographies, depending on who they're about, (...) also because I like that kind of, being there for another person. And sometimes I feel like [biographies] help me be understanding when I have to help someone with something or other.

Freja is also 'really into' satire, a genre she defines in very broad terms as something that spans the field from comedy through memes to satire proper:

Sometimes I need a laugh, I think. (...) It can be anything from comedy, to movies, to memes, videos, games. (...) also some of those, like in Jyllands-Posten [newspaper] where they made fun of religion [Muhammad cartoon controversy]. (...) And then I like some of that kind that makes fun of Trump – calling him a clown, or an orange, or whatever else. (...) Memes, I use those a lot.

My phone is so full of memes, I need to get it cleared. (...) We have a whole group where we just share memes with each other on something called Discord.

It is not that R5 members don't use social media like Facebook, but it has become a sort of invisible conduit to transport them to other sources of information, often to online tabloid newspapers which are their most prominent mainstream media; legacy news media appears to be almost a nuisance to be avoided:

Often it's also whatever pops up on Facebook. In this case, I follow BT [tabloid], and then sometimes when you get to the bottom, there are a bunch of other suggestions. Maybe about celebrities or sports. Right now, because of the election, there's been a lot about politics and stuff, which I've followed a bit, but not that much. BT is more gossip. (...) Radio music programs with news briefings: I listen to those whenever I'm driving, even though I kind of rather wouldn't. It's not as bad as commercials, because commercials are worse, but it's just that, often, when I listen to the radio, it's actually for the music. (Lotte)

With the exception of local newspapers, legacy media like national newspapers and public broadcasters are met with lukewarm interest or ignored. While online news stories from DR and TV2 sometimes pop up in her Facebook newsfeed, Lotte no longer has the DR app: 'It got deleted because I didn't have that much space on my phone.'

Commonalities across repertoires

The five information repertoires were created by having participants translate their qualitative sense-making into computable positions on a relational map, with values from +4 to -4 (including 0) assigned based on where they placed a card in the Q-method grid. Processing these values using factor-analytical pattern-finding, the found repertoires are thus the output of a qualitative analytical process (i.e. sets of subjective opinion clusters), aided by statistical scores. In this regard, one must avoid claiming representative generalizability; the scores should be understood as exploratory and subject to further

large-scale examination among a nationally representative sample. Nonetheless, such calculations are verified using established statistical tests and measures, and are extremely valuable to bring out the relative prominence of a given information source among the great diversity of scores given by the 24 participants in the study, as well as indicating possible commonalities to further scrutinize across repertoires. It is clear that a traditional qualitative analysis of the data would not enable us to spot such relationships with any similar degree of accuracy.

With these caveats in mind, it is striking that many of the most prominent information sources among this age group for learning about public affairs do not belong to what is traditionally considered ‘news media’, a finding that may be unsurprising to some, but one still reflected in many research designs investigating youth and news, which tend to focus use of conventional journalism. ‘News from Facebook’ tops the list, the most highly-rated information source in this age group, which positively correlates to four of the five repertoires – a staple news source leading to incidental news encounters, as many of the qualitative think-aloud reflections substantiate. It is closely followed by ‘Search Engines and Wikipedia’ (positively correlated with all five repertoires), which are vehicles of intentional knowledge-seeking. Interpersonal sources, in the form of ‘Face-to-face’ information from the close ties of family and friends or from colleagues and acquaintances also tend to score high in terms of positive correlation across all five factors. The same cannot be said for legacy media, which exhibit highly varied – and often negative – correlations, with news from public service organizations tending to correlate most positively across the different repertoires. Significantly, two media types associated with the realm of popular culture rather than the institutions of deliberative democracy, ‘TV Series’ and ‘Satire’, also enjoy a number of strong positive correlations across the five repertoires. Also worth mentioning is that the role of ‘Influencers’ is not as prominent as expected and that, apart from Facebook, other social media such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are not generally seen as important sources of information (see Appendix C for details).

The common information media profile of young people in Denmark can thus be said to significantly stretch the notion of ‘hybrid media’ from its adult definition in terms of legacy and online news media, also including entertainment media and interpersonal networks. By comparison, a 2014 Danish study using the same methodology, with 36 participants spanning demographic age groups, found that with the exception of ‘News from Facebook’, the highest-ranked news sources were all legacy media like national public service TV and radio news, national broadsheets and tabloids, TV current affairs, and regional TV news (Schrøder, 2016).

Discussion

Platform ‘newsiness’, Facebook, and traditional journalism

Facebook stood out significantly in our study, a centrality that corresponds with recent research on social media penetration amongst youth in Denmark (Schrøder et al., 2019). For this population, social updates, contact with friends and family, games, event planning, important life information (i.e. finding an apartment or job), as well as promoted content, all converge on Facebook, reflecting the influence that growing up digitally has had on quotidian social practices (Livingstone, 2010). Simultaneously, Facebook is described by the majority of our participants as the ‘place’ from where they access news and information in the broadest sense of the word – it can thus be conceptualized as an informational ‘hub’ or ‘gateway’, where news happens to ‘pop up’. While many participants associated using Facebook with boredom and wasting time, this appeared to be outweighed by its convenience, accessibility, and – crucially – centrality in their social network (cf. Clark & Marchi, 2017). Twitter, a darling of many production-oriented studies of journalism, is basically irrelevant to this group.

However, an important caveat is that where participants get news was not synonymous with their evaluations of what news is. Participants like Nadja, Morten and Lærke often spoke of ‘getting news from’ various social media – however, they rarely described or explained from which providers or news outlets this came, unless directly asked. This convergence, alongside the recognized intertextual influence

of TV series, satire, and other forms of popular culture as important sources of sense-making (cf. Gray, 2006; Nærland, 2020), seemed to lead to mixed perceptions and confusion about what content experiences ‘count’ as news experiences. This relates to what Edgerly and Vraga (2020) call ‘news-ness’, the degree to which audiences are able to characterize something as news to varying degrees, even though they have difficulty defining what news ‘is’. Lærke, Victor and Peter, for example, did not necessarily have one definition or understanding of what news was, but instead used access through platforms to make sense of the ‘newsiness’ of media content, how much something feels and seems like news. ‘I don’t think there’s that much news [on Snapchat], noted Peter, going on to elaborate, ‘It’s more like ‘ten things you never knew existed’ and things like that. And then it’s that type of BuzzFeed-like stuff. Without a lot of substance. So, no. I don’t think I’ve seen news, as such.’ Content from legacy outlets accessed directly through their own website was not difficult for participants to discern as news but the lines became blurred once it was accessed via Facebook. For instance, some like Lotte and Mads voiced a sentiment of wondering if it ‘counted’ as having ‘read the news’ when a headline and brief description from a major national broadsheet was read on Facebook, but the full story had not been accessed or consumed, because of paywalls and a lack of willingness to pay.

These blurring lines can possibly be explained by the seamlessness ingrained in digital news contexts and related repertoires (Peters & Schrøder, 2018). The feel of the media content, medium, and mode of consumption through which news is accessed seem to matter for how ‘news-like’ the experience felt for participants, with news through social media almost ‘devaluing’ the practice. This finding offers an interesting complement to previous studies, which have found that paying for news was almost viewed as an act of civic engagement in-and-of-itself (Swart et al., 2017), in an era where news is often perceived to be a free resource (Kammer et al., 2015). Perhaps more significantly, similar to Sveningsson’s (2015) study, how such practices were evaluated in normative terms seemed closely linked to how different platform preferences made participants feel. A cultural hierarchy of media content genres was evident in many of the think-aloud reflections, wherein conventional news outlets were often deemed to be more

useful, legitimate and ‘adult’. Similar to the paradox that Costera Meijer (2007: 105) noted, although many of our young adults were not inclined towards traditional journalism they were, nonetheless ‘very aware of the social status and civic importance that are attributed to quality news. ... they use these conventions to make a distinction between real and other news, between important and trivial news, between weighty matters and light news, between quality information and entertainment’. This social desirability was reflected by many respondents who recognized, as they transitioned to adulthood, that there were certain media options that they were expected – and expected themselves – to begin consuming, even if they currently did not. As such some of these options were likely ranked higher in their Q sorts than one might expect, corresponding to previous findings that people do not always use news they value, and may not value news they use (Swart et al., 2017).

The guiding influence of face-to-face communication on information repertoires

This paradox between ‘important’ and ‘real’ news, on the one hand, and participants’ lived experiences of ‘newsiness’, on the other, was intertwined with another key analytical theme, namely the significance of face-to-face communication as an augmenting and oftentimes guiding force in the informational landscape. With respect to the nature of the information acquired in face-to-face interactions, participants emphasized its supplemental role, providing them with information about topics and views that were not independently integrated into their information repertoire, and providing an intimate and safe space for news exploration and engagement that was in stark contrast to engaging with the news on Facebook. Nadja and Mads, for instance, both mentioned their partners’ influence, Mark mentioned friends, while Louise explained that a good thing about getting news from family members:

is that you aren’t always reading the same news, for example because we’re different ages right now. So then it works out well that my mom knows about some story because she’s heard

something or read something somewhere, right? That might not be the kind of thing I would have searched or opened because it's maybe not a topic I use a lot.

Similar to Barnhurst and Wartella (1991), encountering and engaging with serious topics as a citizen was viewed as the province of adulthood for many respondents, as opposed to the more entertainment-focussed priorities of youth. In this regard, it is telling that Martin – who had transitioned to working life – valued getting a variety of perspectives because of different political convictions, ‘I think that’s important, too: being able to discuss things from both sides. And of course it becomes kind of a goal to convince them, but it’s also nice to kind of try to understand why they think what they think.’ In short, as other studies have found (Heikkilä & Ahva, 2015), social networks were a vital structure prefiguring online and offline news use, in terms of rendering it meaningful.

Moreover, the converse relationship was also found, with news facilitating social relationships. In their family lives, several participants such as Louise and Nedim mentioned news as dinner conversation. In less close-knit social interactions, Martin and Jakob referred to news as typical ‘small talk’ in quotidian situations, although this should not be misconstrued as being socially superficial. Ayesha and Tine, for instance, both reported feeling a need to prepare for impending news conversations at school or at work to be ‘in the loop’ and avoid embarrassment or exclusion. All-in-all, quite a few participants indicated that news played a social role in their relations, relating to dominant themes in the literature about the domesticating and social-spatial aspects of news consumption (Barnhurst & Wartella, 1991; Peters, 2012). The essence of engagement in the news, for these young people, was closely linked to emotions and other situational aspects of social life, which complicates the growing tendency to ‘count’ engagement only when it is associated with a measurable behaviour (Steensen et al., 2020).

The context of how our young adults experience the media environment – primarily with Facebook acting as the intermediary, offering affordances to engage with news in numerous ways – was clearly shaping how many develop a relationship to information, news and journalism, and what civic affordances may be interwoven. Nonetheless, some participants appeared to prefer the more ‘intimate’

conditions of F2F communication, which provide a setting for this age group to practice and explore talking about mature topics, formulating an opinion, and building an understanding of current events. Similar to Edgerly (2017), this finding points to the potential centrality of the family in forming habits around engaging with public affairs, something which should be a key research concern in an era where news consumption increasingly ‘disappears’ from domestic view, as adults switch from traditional TV news and newspapers to ‘invisible’ consumption on personal media devices (Peters & Schröder, 2018; Wolf & Schnauber, 2015). By contrast, supporting previous studies (Swart et al., 2017), discussing news online was adversely experienced by some as threatening and potentially uncomfortable. Facebook was a hub for accessing news, but not necessarily engaging with it, apart from ‘small’ acts of engagement (Picone et al., 2019), such as liking and sometimes sharing to specific individuals. One dimension which came to the fore in this regard was accountability, in that engaging online entails visibility, which in turn can create face-threatening feelings such as of needing to be right, having to defend a viewpoint, or risk being misunderstood. In sum, most respondents were clearly interested in the world around them and public affairs (cf. Banaji & Cammaerts, 2015), and often used F2F communication to these ends, but this did not necessarily translate into civic action or even active journalistic consumption.

Conclusion

Within journalism studies, for many years, making the claim that audiences were understudied was defensible. However, the audience turn has increased attention dramatically; for instance, a recent study of keywords and abstracts in the first five years of *Digital Journalism* found that the audience ‘theme’ was the third most common cluster, trailing only ‘technology’ and ‘platform’ (Steensen et al., 2019). Civic engagement, participatory practices, technological affordances, political attitudes, device and platform preferences, network connections, identity considerations, representational reflections, value and worthwhileness of different options and many other foci have been studied through surveys, interviews, focus groups, network analysis, ethnography, experiments, and other methodological approaches, often

in combination – audiences are no longer an afterthought. However, while studies of audiences are striving ahead, de-centring and situating journalism by considering informational alternatives is taking a little longer to catch up. Adopting a repertoire perspective on news audiences helps focus attention not only on traditional journalistic outlets but also on the broader concourse of possible informational sources in the digital media landscape, which can be drawn upon to aid sense-making in everyday life.

Earlier studies have tended to be somewhat conservative in this regard, in terms how they define the concourse of relevant media for participants (e.g. Edgerly 2015, Lee and Yang, 2014; Schröder, 2015; Swart et al., 2017; Yuan, 2011), although recent work on repertoires is clearly moving to expand the notion of what ‘counts’ as news from an audience-based perspective (Peters & Schröder, 2018; Edgerly & Vraga, 2020). And well it should. Answers to the main questions posed for this paper indicate the overwhelming sense-making significance of ‘new’ as well as ‘popular’ media options within the current repertoires of young adults, a group who will be significantly impacted by the future development of pressing societal issues, the same types of issues journalism aims to raise societal understanding of, and awareness about. Moreover, our findings point to how important social networks and face-to-face interaction are to prefiguring these choices (Clark & Marchi, 2017; Edgerly et. al, 2017; Heikkilä & Ahva, 2015), which further complicates hopes around what forms of media potentially facilitate ‘active’ and ‘informed’ citizenship (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2007). Young adults are undoubtedly aware of the social norms around expectant news consumption associated with the transition to their next life-stage (Sveningsson’s, 2015), and doubts persist amongst the participants in this study whether their incidental encounters really ‘count’ as ‘proper’ news habits. This parallels a tendency in research to neglect alternatives to civic engagement from non-traditional informational sources and, in this respect, this study’s main (self-)critique of work-to-date is that the concourse of possible sources of news should probably be defined in a way that bears greater affinity to the lived reality of how people navigate the terrain of public affairs.

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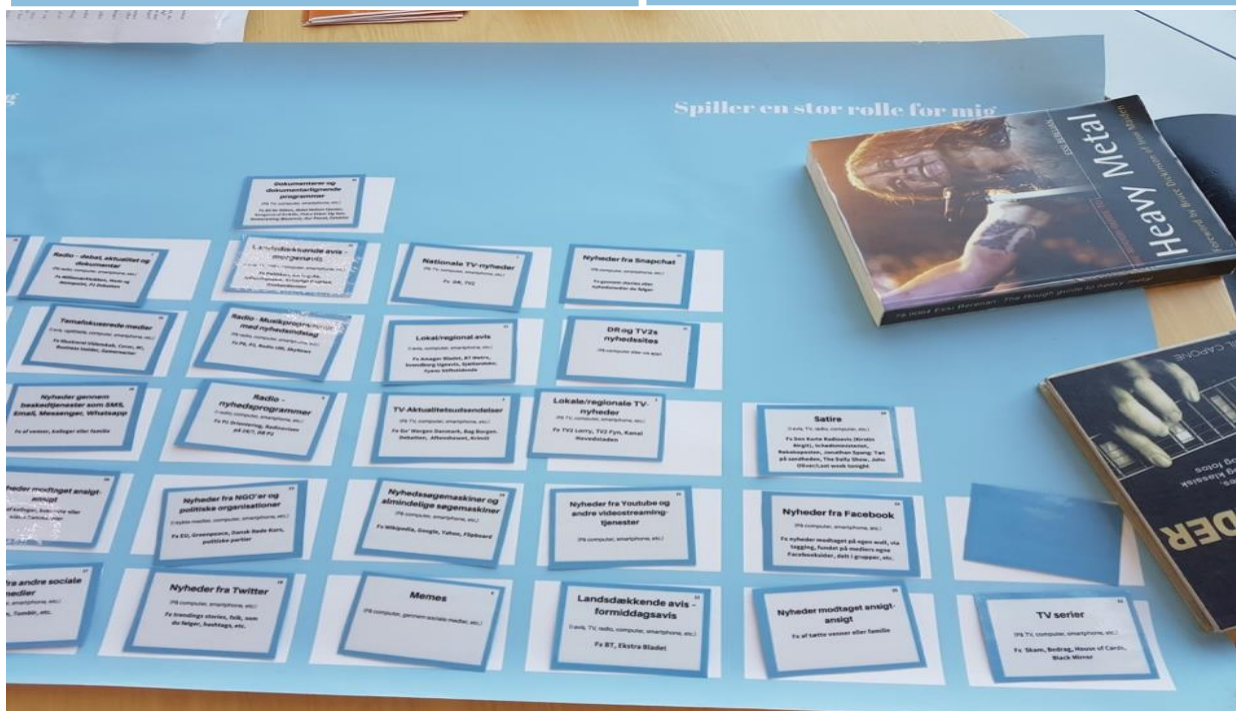
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Appendix A – Q-sort materials and grid example (N.B. Danish language, actual fieldwork)

1 Nationale TV-nyheder (På TV, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx DR, TV2	2 Lokale/regionale TV-nyheder (På TV, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx TV2 Lorry, TV2 Fyn, Kanal Hovedstaden	4 Internationale nyhedsudbydere (I avis, TV, radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx CNN, Fox, The Guardian, Time, The Economist, Spiegel, Sveriges TV	10 Landsdækkende avis - morgenavis (I avis, TV, radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Politiken, Berlingske, Jyllandsposten, Kristeligt Dagblad, Weekendavisen	11 DR og TV2s nyhedssites (På computer eller via app)	12 Landsdækkende avis - formiddagsavis (I avis, TV, radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx BT, Ekstra Bladet
3 TV-Aktualitetsudsendelser (På TV, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Go' Morgen Danmark, Bag Borgen, Debatten, Aftenshowet, Krimi5	6 Podcasts (På computer, smartphone, etc.)	5 Radio - Musikprogrammer med nyhedsindslag (På radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx P6, P3, Radio 100, SkyNews	13 Lokal/regional avis (I avis, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Amager Bladet, BT Metro, Svendborg Ugeavis, Sjællandske, Fyens Stiftstidende	14 Nyheder fra Facebook (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx nyheder modtaget på egen wall, via tagging, fundet på mediers egne Facebooksider, delt i grupper, etc.	15 Alternative nyhedsmedier (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Den Korte Avis, PloPlo, Konfront
7 Radio - debat, aktualitet og dokumentar (På radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Millionærklubben, Mads og Monopolet, P1 Debatten	8 Memes (På computer, gennem sociale medier, etc.)	9 Radio - nyhedsprogrammer (I radio, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx P1 Orientering, Radioavisen på 24/7, DR P2	16 Født online nyhedstjenester (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Zetland, Avisen.dk, Huffington Post, Vice News	17 Nyheder fra andre sociale medier (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx LinkedIn, Tumblr, etc.	18 Nyheder fra Twitter (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx trendings stories, folk, som du følger, hashtags, etc.
19 Nyheder fra Snapchat (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx gennem stories eller nyhedsmedier du følger	20 Nyheder fra Instagram (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx fra newsfeed eller gennem stories	21 Nyheder fra Youtube og andre videostreaming-tjenester (På computer, smartphone, etc.)	28 Online diskussionsfora (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Reddit, 4chan, heste-nettet.dk	29 Satire (I avis, TV, radio, computer, etc.) Fx Den Korte Radioavis (Kirstin Birgit), Schindleriet, Rokokoposten, Jonathan Spang: Tæt på sandheden, The Daily Show, John Oliver/Last week tonight	30 Dokumentarer og dokumentarliggende programmer (På TV, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Alt for Kilken, Abdul Mellem Fjender, Kongerne af Kvikkian, Petra Elsker Sig Selv, Homecoming (Beyonce), Our Planet, Detektor
22 Fagblade og faglige hjemmesider (I avis, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Dansk Metal, Magisterbladet, Faglige Fokus (3F) DGI, Studentavisen	23 Nyheder fra NGO'er og politiske organisationer (I trykte medier, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx EU, Greenpeace, Dansk Røde Kors, politiske partier	34 Nyhedsøgemaskiner og almindelige søgemaskiner (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Wikipedia, Google, Yahoo, Flipboard	31 Non-fiction bøger Fx selvhjælp, om økonomi, samfund, biografier, personlige fortællinger, true-crime, politik, etc.	32 TV serier (På TV, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Skam, Bedrag, House of Cards, Black Mirror	33 BLANK
25 Temafokuserede medier (I avis, ugeblade, computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Illustreret Videnskab, Cover, MI, Business Insider, Gamereactor	26 Nyheder gennem beskedtjenester som SMS, Email, Messenger, Whatsapp Fx af venner, kolleger eller familie	27 Nyheder fra influencers og bloggers (På computer, smartphone, etc.) Fx Olivia Salo, Jarl Courduas Blog, Fie Laursen, PewDiePie	34 Nyheder modtaget ansigt-ansigt Fx af kolleger, bekendte eller klassekammerater	35 Nyheder modtaget ansigt-ansigt Fx af tætte venner eller familie	36 Fiktion - bøger og noveller Fx historiske romaner, politiske thrillere, socialrealistisk drama, etc.



Appendix B – Participants

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Location	Age	Occupational Status
P1	Rabia	Female	Provincial /Rural	21	Student, psychology
P2	Saafia	Female	Provincial /Rural	23	Working, pedagogical assistant
P3	Sif	Female	Provincial /Rural	22	Student, pedagogy
P4	Ayesha	Female	Capital	24	Student, engineer
P5	Simon	Male	Capital	23	Student, political science
P6	Tine	Female	Provincial /Rural	24	Student, teacher
P7	Peter	Male	Capital	20	Student, molecular biology
P8	Anna	Female	Capital	23	Student, sociology
P9	Leon	Male	Capital	23	Looking for work
P10	Lotte	Female	Provincial /Rural	23	Student, business communication
P11	Nedim	Male	Capital	21	Working fulltime, guard
P12	Camilla	Female	Provincial /Rural	23	Student, pedagogy
P13	Louise	Female	Capital	22	Student, law
P14	Morten	Male	Capital	21	Student, engineering
P15	Freja	Female	Capital	20	Unemployed, chronically ill
P16	Laura	Female	Capital	21	Working, retail
P17	Martin	Male	Capital	23	Working, teaching assistant
P18	Mads	Male	Capital	24	Working fulltime, engineer
P19	Jakob	Male	Provincial /Rural	22	Unemployed
P20	Stefan	Male	Provincial /Rural	23	Student, lab technician
P21	Lærke	Female	Provincial /Rural	18	Unemployed
P22	Mark	Male	Provincial /Rural	23	Sales, electronics
P23	Victor	Male	Provincial /Rural	24	Working fulltime, postal service
P24	William	Male	Provincial /Rural	20	Sales, music products

Appendix C – Z scores & Rotated component matrix, Factor analysis

Online Traditionalist		Depth-Seeking Audiophile		Digital News Seeker		Interpersonal Networker		Non-news Information Seeker	
2,12993	Facebook	1,84214	Podcasts	1,84450	Youtube & Video Streamers	1,72368	Face-to-face (Family & Friends)	2,92313	Fiction (Books)
1,92741	National Broadsheets	1,68122	Radio - Debate Programs	1,61561	Search Engines & Wikipedia	1,68115	SMS & Messaging Apps	1,86144	Satire
1,50010	Nation TV Broadcaster (Online & App)	1,61914	Radio - Short News Between Music	1,53769	Memes	1,54231	TV series (fiction)	1,26008	Non-fiction (Books)
1,49013	Instagram	1,15339	Radio - News Programs	1,20234	National TV News	1,46826	Instagram	1,03072	Memes
0,98648	Local & Regional TV News	0,99648	National TV news	1,13655	Facebook	1,38451	Face-to-face (Acquaintances)	0,98486	Local & Regional TV News
0,81493	Snapchat	0,88636	Search Engines & Wikipedia	1,10194	Influencers	1,18864	Search Engines & Wikipedia	0,95269	Face-to-face (Acquaintances)
0,77445	Satire	0,86794	National Tabloid	0,97274	Face-to-face (Family & Friends)	1,15607	Non-fiction (Books)	0,90238	Search Engines & Wikipedia
0,74972	Face-to-face (Family & Friends)	0,76159	Special Interest Magazines	0,94877	Current Affairs TV	0,79249	Podcasts	0,86400	Other (Blank Card)
0,72891	SMS & Messaging Apps	0,73521	Documentaries	0,85042	Nation TV Broadcaster (Online & App)	0,73091	Memes	0,67862	National Broadsheets
0,72290	National Tabloids	0,72222	Facebook	0,78800	Documentaries	0,57334	International News Outlets (Print & Broadcast)	0,63122	Online Discussion & Chat Fora
0,68268	National TV News	0,61941	Digital-born News Outlets	0,72576	TV series (Fiction)	0,53609	Influencers	0,46242	TV series (Fiction)
0,45572	TV Series (Fiction)	0,59520	TV series (fiction)	0,44301	International News Outlets (Print & Broadcast)	0,44998	Documentaries	0,45864	National Tabloid
0,18473	Face-to-face (Acquaintances)	0,58957	Nation TV Broadcaster (Online & App)	0,36790	Local & Regional TV News	0,38391	Fiction (Books)	0,32974	Face-to-face (Family & Friends)
0,14844	Radio - Short News Between Music	0,50855	Face-to-face (Family & Friends)	0,35545	Snapchat	0,29732	Other Social Media	0,06895	Current Affairs TV
0,11213	Search Engines & Wikipedia	0,48247	Satire	0,35306	Other (Blank Card)	0,24974	Other (Blank Card)	0,04535	Special Interest Magazines
0,09210	Documentaries	0,27476	Current Affairs TV	0,30823	NGO & Political Party Newsletters	0,06913	Facebook	0,02863	International News Outlets (Print & Broadcast)
-0,00021	Other (Blank Card)	0,25429	Face-to-face (Acquaintances)	0,15073	Online Discussion & Chat Fora	0,06851	Twitter	-0,08604	Snapchat
-0,00159	Current Affairs TV	0,17810	Fiction (Books)	-0,05567	Twitter	0,00794	Youtube & Video Streamers	-0,18709	Radio - Short News Between Music
-0,01416	International News Outlets (Print & Broadcast)	-0,02848	Youtube & Video Streamers	-0,12201	Local & Regional TV News	-0,06365	Special Interest Magazines	-0,18908	Local & Regional TV News
-0,11146	Non-fiction (Books)	-0,11334	Instagram	-0,14502	Special Interest Magazines	-0,10289	National Tabloid	-0,20302	Documentaries
-0,15897	Other Social Media	-0,18561	Other (Blank Card)	-0,35650	Satire	-0,13413	Online Discussion & Chat Fora	-0,30835	Radio Debate Programs
-0,19920	Radio - Debate Programs	-0,21183	Online Discussion & Chat Fora	-0,36975	Digital-born News Outlets	-0,33169	Digital-born News Outlets	-0,39406	Other Social Media
-0,21588	NGO & Political Party Newsletters	-0,23503	NGO & Political Party Newsletters	-0,46523	Organizational & Student Media	-0,42998	Snapchat	-0,42992	Radio News Programs
-0,23553	Radio - News Programs	-0,25159	Local & Regional Newspapers	-0,51871	Podcasts	-0,53473	Radio News Programs	-0,50619	Youtube & Video Streamers
-0,30728	Organizational & Student Media	-0,44632	SMS & Messaging Apps	-0,53035	National Broadsheets	-0,54540	NGO & Political Party Newsletters	-0,55237	Nationale TV News
-0,33517	Local & Regional Newspapers	-0,54055	Influencers	-0,55867	SMS & Messaging Apps	-0,54739	Satire	-0,57540	Organizational & Student Media
-0,35438	Memes	-0,71770	Memes	-0,64440	Face-to-face (Acquaintances)	-0,60794	Nation TV Broadcaster (Online & App)	-0,58220	Digital-born News Outlets
-0,64975	Fiction (Books)	-0,89913	National Broadsheets	-0,70126	Radio - Short News Between Music	-0,62019	Alternative (Populist) Media	-0,58455	Twitter
-0,74860	Special Interest Magazines	-0,97535	Non-fiction (Books)	-0,72637	Alternative (Populist) Media	-0,62635	National Broadsheets	-0,59464	Alternative (Populist) Media
-0,92248	Alternative (Populist) Media	-1,02562	Alternative (Populist) Media	-0,76464	Non-fiction (Books)	-0,67164	Current Affairs TV	-0,65649	Facebook
-1,00313	YouTube & Video Streamers	-1,13494	Organizational & Student Media	-0,82039	National Tabloid	-0,96742	Radio Debate Programs	-0,66811	NGO & Political Party Newsletters
-1,07763	Digital-born News Outlets	-1,24618	Other Social Media	-1,01610	Radio News Programs	-1,22859	Organizational & Student Media	-0,70310	Nation TV Broadcaster (Online & App)
-1,47748	Twitter	-1,31184	Local & Regional TV News	-1,03937	Radio Debate Programs	-1,46312	Radio - Short News Between Music	-0,86732	SMS & Messaging Apps
-1,60854	Influencers	-1,49903	Twitter	-1,45567	Other Social Media	-1,47726	National TV News	-1,00293	Podcasts
-1,85291	Podcasts	-1,59654	International News Outlets (Print & Broadcast)	-1,88041	Fiction (Books)	-1,57016	Local & Regional TV News	-1,84493	Influencers
-2,22643	Online Discussion & Chat Fora	-2,34895	Snapchat	-2,53222	Instagram	-2,38147	Local & Regional Newspapers	-2,54707	Instagram
Key	Legacy media		New/Social Media		Non-news Media		Interpersonal		
Variance captured by rotated factor									
# of participants significantly loading* (participant #)									
Top 10	Top 5	Top 10	Top 5	Top 10	Top 5	Top 10	Top 5	Top 10	Top 5
4 legacy	3 legacy	7 legacy	4 legacy	4 legacy (but 1 new	1 legacy	1 legacy (intern	0 leg.	2 legacy	1 leg.
4 new	2 new	3 new	1 new	3 new	3 new	4 new	2 new	2 new	0 new
1 non-news	x	x		2 non-news	1 non-news	3 non-news	1 new	4 non-news (r 4 non	
1 interpersonal	x	x		1 interperson	1 interpersonal	2 interpersonal	2 interp.	1 interperson	0 interp.
Bottom 10		Bottom 10		Bottom 10		Bottom 10		Bottom 10	
1 legacy		4 legacy		4 legacy		9 legacy (all mainstream)		2 legacy	
6 new		4 new		3 new		1 new		8 new	
3 non-news		2 non-news		2 non-news		0 non-news		0 non-news	
0 interpersonal		0 interpersonal		1 interpersonal		0 interpersonal		0 interpersonal	
* if participant loads significantly on more than one factor, they have been assigned to the one in which they are most closely correlated									

Rotated Component Matrix^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
var001	.641				
var002	.639				
var003	.649	.436			
var004		.624			
var005	.481				
var006		.515			.436
var007			.563		
var008				.705	
var009		.818			
var010	.510				.583
var011			.683		
var012	.734				
var013	.637				
var014			.551		
var015					.822
var016		.593			
var017		.704			
var018	.436			.745	
var019	.541	.508			
var020		.714			
var021	.447			.456	
var022	.691				
var023	.648		.477		
var024			.787		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

¹ Definitions vary, but in general one can say Generation Z is a construct to describe those born in the late-1990s and early-2000s, who – when sharing similar sociocultural and technologically-mediated conditions – potentially identify with others in a given time and location due to common life experiences and challenges, which shapes their modes of action and expression. While the more complex question of media generational effects (see Bolin, 2016) is beyond the scope and aim of this study, we nonetheless deploy this term for its increasing currency to identify this specific age cohort in Western countries.

² For a comprehensive theoretical discussion on news repertoires, see Peters & Schröder (2018).

³ Surprisingly, excepting a few slight tendencies, we found a complexity of demographics within different repertoires, meaning these are not focused on in the analysis.

⁴ Despite its established history, Q-sort is unfamiliar to many in journalism studies (see Schröder, 2016).

⁵ Each Q-sort comprises 36 unique cards that can be placed in 36 distinct positions, resulting in 36! permutations that are then refined by being assigned a numerical value from -4 to +4 based on the column in which they are placed. Multiple factor analyses were run using SPSS, employing principle component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation. 4-, 6-, and 7-factor solutions, which were statistically significant were discarded based on having too many crossloaders (4-factor), and lack of qualitative fit (6- and 7-factor). The preferred 5-factor solution accounting for 64.06% of the variance (Bartlett's $p < 0.001$; KMO=0.618).

⁶ We assigned participants to the repertoire in which they are most strongly correlated, although multiple participants loaded significantly on more than one (see Appendix C). 12 participants loaded for Repertoire 1, 8 for R2, 5 for R3, 3 for R4 and R5.

⁷ Translations from Danish to English by the researchers.