

Social media transforming how Canadians get the news, study finds

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A new study finds nearly 60 per cent of Canadians the equivalent of more than 15 million people regularly visit social networking websites, with the majority of users saying social media exposes them to a broader range of news and information than traditional media.

These findings, from a new study by Prof. Alfred Hermida of UBC's Graduate School of Journalism, help to illustrate the dramatic impact that Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms are having on news production and consumption in Canada.

"News is increasingly becoming a shared social experience online for Canadians thanks to new digital platforms and services," says Hermida, whose study is the third in a research series for the Canadian Media Research Consortium (CMRC), which is based at UBC. "This study shows how Canadians are using social networks as personalized news streams, with news selected and filtered by family, friends and acquaintances."

While Canadians still consider traditional print and broadcast media an important source for news, the study finds that 36 per cent of Canadian adults consider social media an equally important source of news, with that figure jumping significantly to 61 per cent for Canadians below the age of 34.

The study, based on data from a survey of nearly 1,700 Canadian adults

by Angus Reid Public Opinion, finds that 71 per cent of Canadians who visit [social networking](#) sites use them to keep up with the news. Nearly 60 per cent of social media users say it exposes them to a broader range of news and information than traditional print and broadcast media, with that figure jumping to 69 per cent for younger news consumers.

Although global media organizations have increasingly embraced social media to distribute news, the study finds that Canadian social media users rely on their personal networks to filter their news. The number of social media users surveyed who said they get news links and recommendations from their friends on social networks is double that of those who report getting their news directly from news organizations or journalists on sites such as Facebook.

Despite the rapid adoption of social media in Canada, the study finds that Canadians find it significantly less reliable and trustworthy than traditional media. Twenty-five per cent of those surveyed say online social networks are reliable, compared to 90 per cent for television, print, online news sites and radio. Students and younger adults are more likely to trust information from [social media](#) than older Canadians, the study suggests.

The study found some surprising gender and geographic differences. For example, online recommendations accounted for 50 per cent of the daily news intake of Canadian women, compared to 36 per cent for men. The study also found that nearly 50 per cent of Francophones got their daily news from friends and family.

The study, [Social Networks Transforming How Canadians Get The News](#), was co-authored by Hermida and fellow UBC researchers Donna Logan, Fred Fletcher and Darryl Korell.

More information: View the full report at www.mediaresearch.ca

Provided by University of British Columbia

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