

# Just 28 percent of young people in Spain read either online or conventional newspapers each day

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Just 28 percent of young people read either online or conventional newspapers each day. Credit: Abhisek Sarda

A study at the Jaume I University in Castellón has verified the decrease in press consumption among young people between the ages of 16 and 30 years, which now stands at 28.8%. What is more, three out of every four individuals within this age bracket use social networking sites more than the television to get up to date.

News [consumption habits](#) among young people have changed radically in recent years. Since the beginning of the 21st century, various studies have indicated a decrease in [readership](#) of printed newspapers along with a constant fall in young readers.

"Just 28.8% of this entire [population group](#) read newspapers on a daily basis. On the other hand, the internet is playing more and more of a leading role, with special reference to social networks, in terms of news consumption amongst people aged between 16 and 30 years," as explained to SINC by Andreu Casero Ripollés, [Lecturer](#) at the Department of Communication Sciences of the Jaume I University in Castellón and author of study published in the '*Comunicar*' journal.

The study indicates that 77.4% of [youngsters](#) within this age range use social networks to keep informed and, as Casero states, "they enjoy a higher percentage that any other form of media, even beating the television. This is an important revelation."

The results expose a real problem for newspapers that are loosing their young readers. This has a twofold negative effect: lost audience and the ability to capture the [next generation](#).

## **Unwilling to pay for news**

The study was based on a total of 549 surveys conducted in Catalonia, Spain on the young people of different cities, all of whom had different levels of [educational attainment](#).

The majority of those surveyed strongly refused to pay for access to current news. Only 6.2% said they would be willing to subscribe to some form of media source.

"This refusal goes even further in that the majority (76.3%) would visit another free webpage if their favourite internet [news source](#) started to require payment. Only 17.1% would stop their [internet news](#) consumption if there were no free means," adds the researcher.

These figures are very low and cause a problem for the media when it

comes to selling their product, both on paper and on the internet. They also affect their new business model in the digital age.

However, young people attach high civil value to the news and take an interest in keeping informed. "It seems that the way in which journalistic information is conceived is changing. The door has been opened to understanding the news as a public service that must always be available for free whenever the reader wants," explains the author.

## **The news consumption gender gap**

In terms of gender, men have a higher leaning towards journalistic information, they consult a higher number of sources when putting together their "information diet" and they have a higher leaning towards paying for news.

Women on the other hand place higher value than men on the importance of being well-informed in order to be good citizens. "They put a higher civil value on the news than men. On a scale of 0 to 10, women gave this question a score of 8.4, compared to men who gave 7.97," ensures the expert.

According to the researcher, newspapers should look for strategies to reconnect with young people, who are highly interested in the news but not using information that fails to respond to their needs and interests. "Likewise, to reach out to young people, journalistic media should use social networks intensely since they are the preferred method of keeping informed amongst this population group," he concludes.

The study predicts that without active strategies adapted to the consumption habits or news conceptions of young people, journalistic media will face serious problems with their business models in the future and they will run the risk of disappearing.

**More information:** Andreu Casero-Ripollés "Beyond Newspapers: News Consumption among Young People in the People in the Digital Era", *Comunicar* 39: 151 – 158, 2012.

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