

Significant rise in number of people paying for digital news in UK

June 21 2013



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A large-scale Oxford University report shows that over the last 10 months there has been a significant shift in public attitudes towards online news - with more people willing to pay or expecting to pay for it in future.

Of the 2,000 [internet users](#) surveyed in the UK, 9% had paid for online [news](#) compared with only 4% last year.

The survey of 11,000 internet users across nine countries, including the UK, is one of the biggest studies of online news habits ever carried out and is the second of the annual [Reuters](#) Institute [Digital News](#) surveys, published by the University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ).

You Gov online polls commissioned by RISJ were conducted in the UK, US, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, urban Brazil and Japan. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013 identifies 25-34 year olds as the age group most willing to pay for online news across all nine countries surveyed, including the UK. This age-group represents one quarter of those with an annual income of £25,000 to £50,000. The report suggests that this relative affluence may be one reason why they have embraced digital news and are willing to pay for it.

Of those who are not currently paying, across all the countries more than one in 10 (14%), on average, said they were very likely or somewhat likely to pay for digital news in the future. This compares with just 5% of those surveyed in the UK. By contrast, in Brazil the figure was a striking 58%.

Of those in the UK who had not already paid for online news, nearly one quarter (23%) said the main reason for paying for the service in future was if news outlets started to charge rather than provide [free news](#) sites.

Study author Nic Newman, a research associate at the RISJ and digital strategist, said: 'We're starting to see significant shifts in [public attitudes](#) to online news, with more people starting to pay for digital news or seeming to accept that in future they will probably have to pay for a service that they currently get for free. "Pay-walls" and apps are no

longer regarded as novelties, but are now increasingly part of everyday life for many of those wanting to access news.'

Among online news users, the report identifies marked differences between countries in the extent to which traditional news brands are being challenged by the online only news sites. In countries such as the UK and Denmark traditional news brands dominate, capturing 80% or more of the online audience, whereas in Japan and the US online-only [news sites](#) and aggregators are used far more by consumers.

It seems that the UK public still trusts traditional news brands and well-known newspaper sites more for news than blogs or social media. Broadcaster websites, such as the BBC and Sky, were trusted by 79% of online users polled in the UK for the study, with newspapers being trusted by over 60% of those surveyed.

Meanwhile, the report highlights that brands with a reputation for breaking news do well on mobile devices. In the UK, while 15% of those surveyed said they accessed Sky News on their computer, a striking 25% watched Sky News on mobile devices - a rise that the report attributes to a strong app offer and TV promotion.

In the UK, the percentage of those using their tablet to access news has doubled in the 10 months since the last survey, rising from 8% to 16%. When asked how they accessed news while travelling on public transport, in the UK nearly half (48%) said they used their mobile phones, with one third (34%) preferring to read newspapers and 6% using a tablet. The report also notes that young people in particular are adopting smartphones to access news.

Of the under-35s in the UK who were surveyed, 30% said they used social media to discover news while 18% shared news stories each week.

The survey also reveals that for many of us, the mobile phone is the main way of accessing news when we are on the move. In [Denmark](#), people using public transport are twice as likely to get news on their mobile phone (63%) than read a printed newspaper (33%). In the UK, on public transport almost half (48%) of those surveyed said they used their mobile phones for news, with one third (34%) preferring to read newspapers and 6% using tablets. In contrast, the computer dominates news use in the office and the radio remains king for those travelling by car.

More information: www.digitalnewsreport.org/

Provided by Oxford University

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