

# Millennials still consume news, but on their phones, survey finds

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Roger Fidler, the retiring program director for digital publishing at RJI, conducted a national survey of 1,000 smartphone users to better understand how they used their devices, particularly when consuming news. The survey revealed that 75 percent of adults 18-44 years of age use their smartphones frequently to consume news.

According to the Pew Research Center, more than two thirds of U.S. adults own smart phones and more than 85 percent of millennials own the devices. As the journalism industry searches for ways to adapt to this changing technological landscape, researchers from the Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI), housed at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, conducted a national survey of 1,000 smartphone users to better understand how they used their devices when consuming news. The survey revealed that 75 percent of adults 18-44 years of age frequently use their smartphones to consume news.

Roger Fidler, program director for digital publishing at RJI (retired) and digital media expert, believes this result and others from his survey reveal important habits of smartphone users that can be valuable for [news organizations](#). He says news organizations can use this information to strategically maintain and expand their readership in a time of economic upheaval for the industry.

Here are a few of the important findings from Fidler's survey:

- "Phablets" are a growing market for news organizations. More than 40 percent of smartphone owners own "phablets," or large smartphones with screens between five and six inches that have much the same functionality of tablets such as iPads. Nearly half of phablet users reported consuming news on their devices in the previous week, as opposed to only 23 percent of regular smartphone users. Fidler says the proliferation of these large screens present news organizations with opportunities to design compelling content for those readers.
- Phablet users are more likely to interact with advertisements. Nearly 60 percent of phablet owners who consumed news content on their large-screen smartphones said they responded to at least one advertisement in the previous week. Fidler says this is important for news organizations as they can sell

advertisements targeting phablet users specifically.

- News content often is encountered on social media. More than 60 percent of adults younger than 45 years of age discover news when browsing social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, while less than one-third of adults 45 and older find news on [social media](#). Fidler says that this distinctly different method for accessing news among younger readers should motivate news organizations to better attract readers using these social platforms.
- Professional journalism is still valued by all demographics. Despite several major differences in how adults of different ages use their smartphones and consume news, the RJI survey did reveal one commonality: a value of professional journalism. More than 80 percent of all [users](#) either agreed or were neutral toward the indication that they preferred news stories by professional journalists. However, Fidler found millennials are twice as likely as older generations to prefer receiving [news](#) from people they know.

**More information:** Survey results: [www.rjionline.org/stories/series/mobile-media-research](http://www.rjionline.org/stories/series/mobile-media-research)

Provided by University of Missouri

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