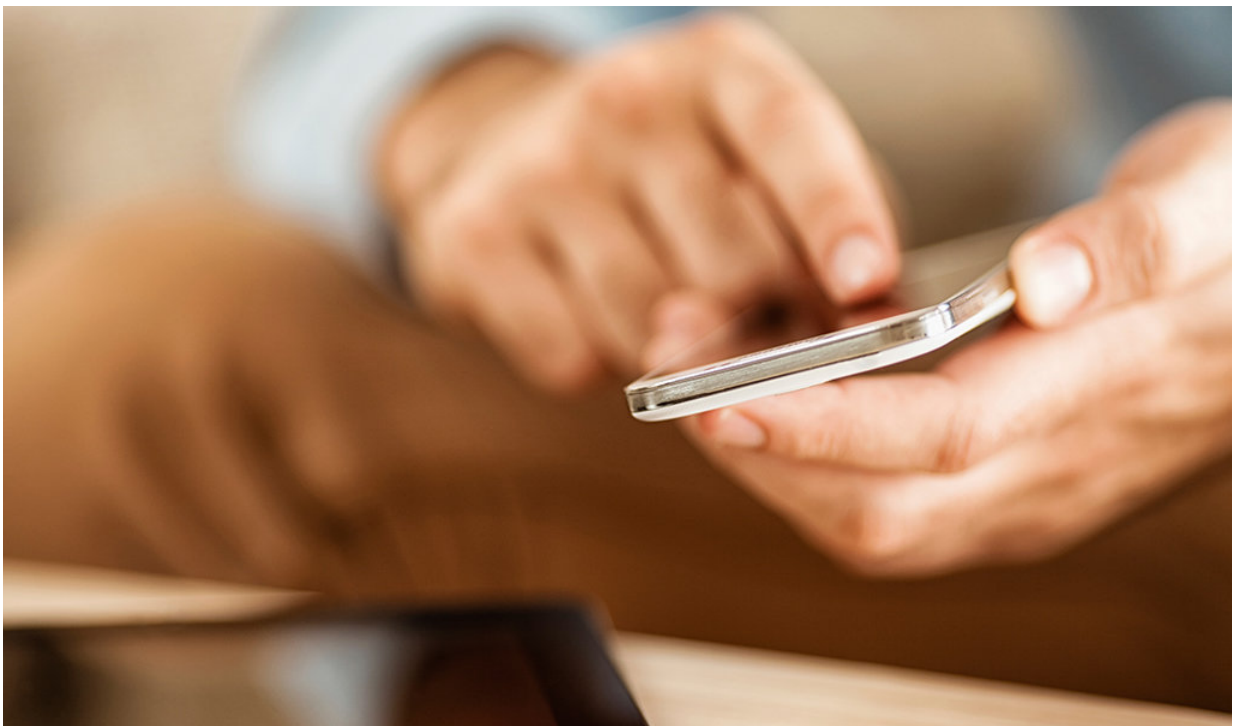


# Smartphones and the internet cited as primary sources of news consumption in Arab world

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Northwestern University in Qatar's Media Use in the Middle East survey, is the fifth edition of a longitudinal study on media consumption patterns and attitudes towards media and the news in the Arab world. Credit: Northwestern University

Digital news consumption is high and growing in the Middle East, with more than half of the Arab nationals choosing the internet as their main

source of news and more than two-thirds relying on their smartphones for news updates.

This is among some of the findings in Northwestern University in Qatar's Media Use in the Middle East survey, which is the fifth edition of a longitudinal study on media consumption patterns and attitudes towards media and the [news](#) in the Arab world.

"With five years of data, we are now positioned to draw comparisons and to show patterns and trends on media use in the Middle East," said Everette E. Dennis, dean and CEO. "One of the more revealing findings over the past five years is that since 2015, the percentage of Arab nationals using their smartphones to connect to the internet rose by 13 percent, while the percentage of laptop/computer users dropped by 11 points. We have found that this is also correlated to the rise in digital news consumption via smartphones."

In breaking down these numbers, the survey discovered that within the Middle East nationals from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates were more likely to turn to the internet for news than citizens of Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia who tend to rely on TV as a main news source.

For smartphones, however, use has increased substantially in all countries since 2013, but most notably in Jordan, with an almost 50 percent increase, and in Tunisia and Lebanon with an approximate 40 percent increase.

Another change over the five-year period is the choice of language. Initially respondents reported English as the primary language used for accessing content on the internet, but in the year's survey there was a significant increase in the use of the Arabic language – from 58 percent in 2013, to 78 percent in 2017.

The repercussions on traditional media, resulting from the increased digital usage, similar to other parts of the world has been substantial, with rates of newspaper readership declining sharply from 47 percent in 2013 to 25 percent in 2017. Radio and magazines have also seen a decline, dropping nearly 10 percent each since 2013.

Other key findings on news consumption include:

- Two-thirds of Arab nationals trust mass media, but fewer than half trust news they get via social [media](#) (66 percent, 47 percent).
- Two-thirds of Facebook users get news on that platform (65 percent).
- More than 90 percent of nationals in Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE own a [smartphone](#), with Jordan not far behind. In comparison, only 77 percent of Americans own a smartphone; among the countries surveyed only Tunisians own smartphones at a lower rate than the U.S. at 65 percent.

**More information:** Media Use in the Middle East, 2017:  
[mideastmedia.org/survey/2017/](http://mideastmedia.org/survey/2017/)

Provided by Northwestern University

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