



Press Release

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Online video news driven by technology, publishers and platforms, not consumers, finds new Reuters Institute report

Growth around online video news seems to have been largely driven by technology, publishers and platforms, rather than strong consumer demand, a new report from the Reuters Institute finds – but breaking news events may hold clues to success.

The report, *The Future of Online News Video*, by Antonis Kalogeropoulos, Federica Cherubini and Nic Newman, explores the explosion in online video news seen over the last few years, and the implications for journalism. The authors interviewed around 30 news organisations to understand developing strategies and approaches – with a focus on the UK, US, Germany and Italy. Most companies have been investing in video over the past year with large publishers more than doubling their video postings through social networks like Facebook and experimenting with live services such as Periscope and Facebook Live.

The results may hold disappointment for publishers focused on news video. The report shows that just a small proportion of time spent on news sites is spent on video (an average of 2.5% across 30 websites) with even large producers of video content, like BBC News struggling to get beyond one in ten of users accessing video on a visit.

The report showed a marked increase in interest in online video news when it came to large-scale breaking events. The percentage of users accessing BBC News following the Paris attacks in November 2015 more than doubled, from 10% on an average day to 22% immediately after the attacks.

The conclusions of the report back up survey results from the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (released 15th June 2016), which showed that 78% of global sample of 50,000 saying they never or only occasionally accessed a news video. The survey showed limited growth in the use of news video and wide variations between countries.

Report author Antonis Kalogeropoulos says:

“Online video news provides a powerful and popular way of covering compelling stories, but not all everyday news coverage is equally compelling. So far, the growth around online video news seems to be largely driven by technology, platforms, and publishers rather than by strong consumer demand.”

Other key findings from the report include:

- Off-site news video consumption is growing fast – with Facebook a key focus of activity
- Some common key markers of success for off-site and social videos include brevity, the ability to play without sound, a focus on soft news and a strong emotional element
- Publishers are beginning to embrace online news video (79% of senior digital news leaders surveyed by the Reuters Institute at the beginning of 2016 said they would be investing more over the course of the year) – but most remain in an experimental phase

- The monetisation of news video remains the biggest challenge for news organisations. On-site monetisation continues to rely on pre-roll ads, despite acknowledgment that poor user experience affects growth.

Broadcasters, newspapers and digital born new organisations face different challenges in adopting content for online video, according to co-author Nic Newman.

“Newspapers, in a period of retrenchment, are finding it challenging to fund new investment and retrain a predominantly text based workforce while many broadcasters are struggling to adapt to the new grammar of digital video. Digital born companies are better equipped to take risks in new formats and distribution but many have become dependent on powerful platforms over which they have little control.”

Overall, the report is cautious about the long-term dynamics for video news. Video that adds drama and immediacy is valued and expected by consumers on news websites, but only up to a point and in certain circumstances - with both young and old still valuing the control and flexibility of text. Co-author Federica Cherubini says:

“Although we are likely to see considerable innovation in both formats and production over the next few years, it is hard to see video replacing text in terms of the range of stories, and the depth of comment and analysis traditionally generated by publishers.”

(ENDS)

Notes:

About the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the core funder of the RISJ, based in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. The RISJ was launched in November 2006 and developed from the Reuters Fellowship Programme, established at Oxford 33 years ago. An international research centre in the comparative study of journalism, the RISJ aims to be global in its perspective and provides a leading forum for scholars from a wide range of disciplines to engage with journalists from around the world. See <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/>

About the authors

Antonis Kalogeropoulos is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. He is currently working on a project aimed at assessing the production and consumption of news in more than 20 countries. His focus in this project lies in exploring the proliferation of online news videos. His research interests include political communication, journalism and audience research.

Federica Cherubini is a media consultant and editorial researcher, based in London. For the past five years she's worked for the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) in Paris on several projects exploring the future of journalism and newsrooms around the world. She now works with WAN-IFRA on engagement strategies and editorial conference planning. She was one of the three researchers behind the project 'Monitoring, moderating and managing online comments: towards best practice', funded by the Open Society Foundation, for which she interviewed dozens of online editors and social media managers worldwide in order to identify the

different ways that news organisations are approaching online commenting and investigating how citizens engage, as well as the role communities play in the society of information.

Nic Newman is a journalist and digital strategist who played a key role in shaping the BBC's internet services over more than a decade. He was a founding member of the BBC News Website, leading international coverage as World Editor (1997–2001). As Head of Product Development he led digital teams, developing websites, mobile, and interactive TV applications for all BBC Journalism sites. Nic is currently a Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. He is also a consultant on digital media, working actively with news companies on product, audience, and business strategies for digital transition.

The Digital News Project

The Digital News Project marks an expansion of the Digital News Report into a full-scale series of research pieces, thanks to the support of Google via the Digital News Initiative. Eight new reports will be released in 2016. The new series builds on the success of the Digital News Report as the world's largest comparative international survey of changing news habits, and will continue to track the transition of the news industry towards an increasingly digital and multi-platform future. 2016 sees an expanded team of researchers, sponsors and collaborators explore trends and developments across 26 countries.

Increased support from Google, co-sponsors of the initiative since 2013, has allowed the Institute to extend the report's coverage of Europe to 20 countries in 2016. The new countries included are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. These are added to the countries covered in the 2015 report; UK, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Australia, Brazil, Japan and the US.

Other sponsors for the Digital News Report 2016 are: the BBC, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Edelman UK, Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland, Hans-Bredow-Institut, Korea Press Foundation, Laval University, The University of Navarra, Ofcom, the University of Canberra and the Fritt Ord Foundation.

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