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STUDY of
JOURNALISM

Press Release

Digital News Project: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism releases media and technology predictions for 2016

Robo-journalists, an ongoing battle between publishers and adblockers, bendy smartphones and social media for the workplace; the Reuters Institute launches its new Digital News Project with a set of technology and industry predictions for the global media's year ahead.

Eight industry-focussed reports will feature this year from the Reuters Institute, as an expanded team of researchers, sponsors and collaborators explore digital developments across 26 countries. The Digital News Project is the biggest international research project examining cross-national developments in journalism and news media, combining the annual Reuters Institute Digital News Report with a range of additional publications looking at journalistic innovation and news media strategy across the world. RISJ Director of Research Dr Rasmus Kleis Nielsen says: "We know for a fact that the same technological trends have different implications in different countries. The Digital News Project is aimed at understanding these differences better, and at helping journalists and media decision-makers navigating a rapidly-changing environment."

The series launches with **Journalism, Media and Technology Predictions, 2016**, a fascinating glimpse into some of the technology and industry trends which could emerge this year, according to digital media consultant **Nic Newman**, a research associate at the Reuters Institute. Newman's research includes a survey of 130 senior digital leaders across 25 countries, designed to identify and measure key industry challenges and opportunities.

"News organisations enter 2016 worrying about digital revenues in a world increasingly affected by ad-blocking and the rise of distributed content. They also know they need to keep an eye on the future with the rise of online video, new immersive storytelling and Virtual Reality" – Nic Newman.

Online video: vertical, immersive, mobile and social

78 per cent of digital leaders surveyed said they'd be investing more in online news video this year. Exponential growth in video consumption is expected over the next few years driven by faster cheaper connectivity and mobile consumption

Newman predicts key online video developments will include:

- Increased presence and discussion of vertical video
- Immersive storytelling, 360 and live video coverage
- More experimentation with VR around the Olympics and US election
- Traditional publishers looking to harness the talents of new, innovative creators of viral video content like NowThis and Vocativ

Mobile: glanceable content, bendy phones...your new PA?

Smartphones are projected to reach around 80% of the world's population by 2020. Newman predicts we'll soon be using 3D touch technology on foldable, waterproof smartphones. Wireless charging will be more commonplace while increased data speeds and processing power will open up new possibilities:

- Mainstream use of personal assistants, as Facebook introduces 'M'
- Mobile payment and 'M-commerce'
- Growth in push notifications
- Further slow growth of wearable technology and glanceable content.

Online advertising – ad-apocalypse?

Already around 20% are using ad-blockers but the story has only just begun. Newman expects:

- Adblocking to move to mobile platforms in 2016
- Adblocking wars as publishers look to encourage readers to turn off them off
- New moves for legal protection for publishers
- Facebook, Google and Apple to remain largely immune
- More advertising in videos where it's harder to block
- Higher quality advertising in an attempt to win audiences.

Other trends to look out for:

- The disruption of television – the video enabled internet will put pressure on broadcasters and talent
- Podcasting is on the rise. Barack Obama made his podcast debut last year, and the economics of podcasting are changing for the better.
- Social media and messaging apps – long form social content, new in-app services, enhanced security and more breaking news through chat apps are all on the cards for 2016. Newman predicts more of us will be using social tools in the workplace like Slack HipChat and Facebook at Work

Implications for publishers:

Confidence remains mixed around the business prospects for 2016. Some publishers without solid digital revenues or who relied on digital advertising are more worried about revenues than last year (22 per cent) but some with paid content or mixed business models are less (20 per cent) or equally worried (50 per cent) compared with last year.

What should publishers expect in 2016? Newman says look out for:

- Growth in crowd-funding and membership schemes
- Subscription innovation and more experiments with micropayments
- The rebirth of COMtent for a mobile age
- A focus on audience engagement analytics
- Robo-journalism – advances in pattern recognition and natural language generation mean innovation will increase in content creation as well as distribution

ENDS

Extra resources

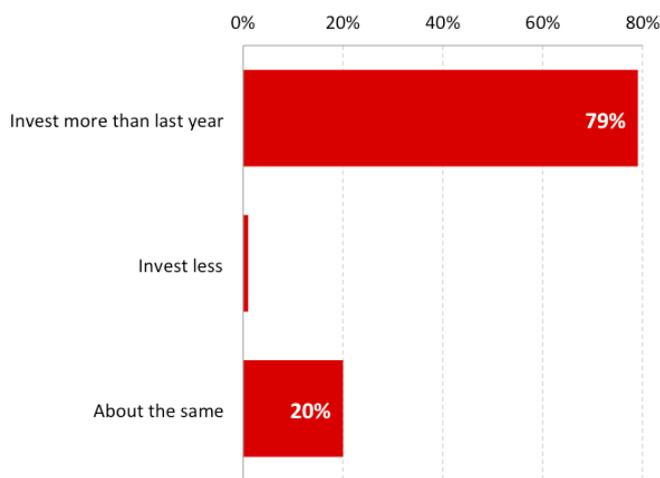
At a glance summary of Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016

Top concerns and priorities for digital leaders in the media industry:

- 76 per cent said it was very important to improve the use of data in newsrooms
- 79 per cent said they would be investing more in online news video this year
- 54 per cent said deepening online engagement was a top priority
- 22 per cent were more worried about online revenues than last year; though surprisingly 20 per cent were *less* worried

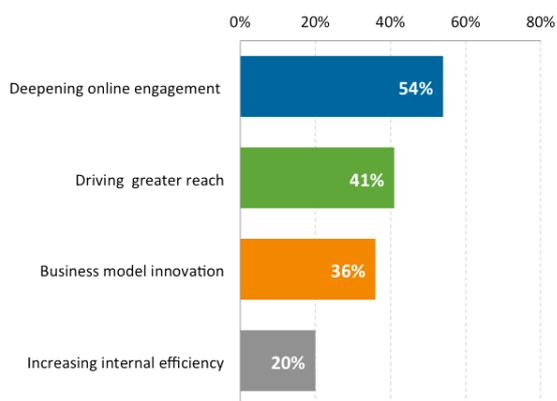
Additional charts extracted from the Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016

What are your company's plans for online video this year?



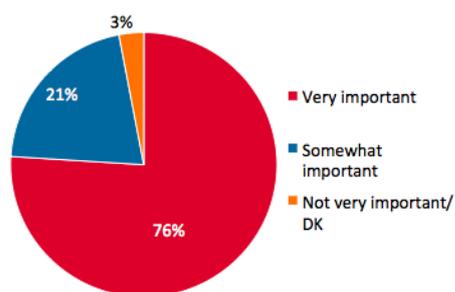
Source: Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016, n=118 (excluding don't knows)

Top strategic priorities for 2016



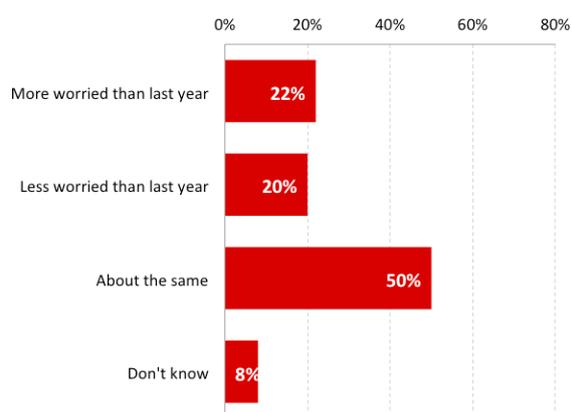
Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016 n=123

How important will it be to improve the use data in the newsroom in 2016?



Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016 n=123

To what extent are you worried about your company's digital revenues?



Reuters Institute Digital Leaders Survey 2016 n=119

Editor's notes:

Author: Nic Newman

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. Nic is a Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford and a consultant on digital media.

Survey methodology

130 people took part in a closed survey in December 2015. Participants were selected because they held senior positions (editorial, technical and commercial) in traditional or digital born publishing companies and were responsible for aspects of digital strategy. Job titles included Editor in Chief, CEO, Head of Digital, Chief Product Officer, Director of Video etc.

Most participants were from organisations with a print background but around 15% came from public service or commercial broadcasters. Over 25 countries are represented in the survey including the US, Brazil and Japan but the majority came from European countries such as the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Finland and Spain.

About the Digital News Project

The Digital News Project marks an expansion of the Reuters Institute 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 alongside the Digital News Report 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 will see an expanded team of researchers, sponsors and collaborators explore trends and developments across 26 countries, working towards the Reuters Institute's ambition to exist as a key reference point and resource for the global news industry.

Increased support from Google, who have co-sponsored the initiative since 2013, has allowed the Reuters Institute to extend the report's coverage of Europe to 20 countries in 2016 with the aim of moving to 30 in 2017/18. The new countries to be included in the main report from 2016 are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. These will be added to the 12 countries already covered in the main 2015 report; UK, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Spain, together with 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.

Upcoming reports:

- Editorial analytics: how newsrooms are developing and using audience data and metrics, by Federica Cherubini and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. February 2016
- Trends in Public Service News, Annika Sehl, Alessio Cornia, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. March 2016

More reports to follow.

About the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the core funder of the Reuters Institute, based in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. The Institute was launched in November 2006 and developed from the Reuters Fellowship Programme, established at Oxford 32 years ago. The Reuters Institute, an international research centre in the comparative study of journalism, 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/>

For more information on this report, upcoming reports or the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, contact **Hannah Marsh**, Marketing and Communications Officer:

hannah.marsh@politics.ox.ac.uk / + 44 (0)1865 611301

