

## THE PERSONAL NEWS CYCLE: A FOCUS ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC NEWS CONSUMERS



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Conducted by the Media Insight Project

An initiative of the American Press Institute and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

Rethinking the digital divide in news consumption: Coverage lacking diversity may be a bigger problem than access or interest

### INTRODUCTION

The predicted digital divide, in which people of color would be left behind in the use of technology, is not playing out as many of those forecasting the digital future anticipated, at least not when it comes to news, according to a new survey released today.

The two largest minority groups in the United States—African Americans and Hispanics—are in many ways using digital technology for news at similar rates as the American population overall. Yet these Americans do not believe that the growth of web and mobile media has fulfilled the promise

of more coverage, and more accurate coverage, of underserved ethnic communities. The new survey—the second to be released by the Media Insight Project—was produced in collaboration with the Maynard Institute, New America Media, and the McCormick Foundation.

The new study adds to the growing body of evidence that the digital divide has not materialized as expected when it comes to technology use. The study also adds nuance to our understanding of the means by which people navigate and think about technology, particularly when it comes to news.

#### Technology use is high, but confidence in coverage of African Americans' and Hispanics' communities is low<sup>1</sup>

% Who...	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Find it easier now to keep up with news generally	58	57
Find it easier now to keep up with news about [African American/Hispanic] community	39	41
Think the media covers [African American/Hispanic] community accurately	25	33
Think the media covers [African American/Hispanic] community regularly	51	49
Own a smartphone	70	65
Use smartphone to access news (among owners)	85	78

<sup>1</sup> Full question wording is available at [mediainsight.org](http://mediainsight.org).

African American and Hispanic American adults have come to rely on a variety of technologies and devices to get their news today, and in rates similar to adults in the United States generally. At least two-thirds of American adults across all racial and ethnic groups, for instance, are now online and own a smartphone, and African Americans and Hispanics use new technologies at similar rates for news. The average American across these different groups uses about four different technologies to get news every week.

If anything, African Americans and Hispanics are adapting to mobile technology at even higher rates than non-Hispanic whites (with the exception of Hispanics acquiring tablet computers). Both African Americans and Hispanics also agree with the majority of adult Americans that it is easier to follow news in general today than it was five years ago.

Far fewer African Americans and Hispanics, however, believe that the changes in the news landscape have made it easier to learn about their own racial or ethnic community.

For instance, relatively few African Americans and Hispanics—which combined make up approximately 30 percent of the U.S. population—believe they see in the media an accurate portrayal of their own communities. Only a third of Hispanics and a quarter of African Americans believe their communities are accurately portrayed in the media, and a major reason for this may be that they feel their communities are not paid much attention in the news. Only half of adults in either group believe their communities are covered regularly in the media today.

The perception that, even in the networked age, it is difficult to see regular or accurate coverage of African American and Hispanic communities may also be inhibiting these Americans from being more avid news consumers. While large majorities of African Americans and Hispanics are daily news consumers, and while pluralities access the news throughout the day, those with concerns about the accuracy of the media's coverage of their communities attend to the news much less often.

These findings contradict two theories about the web that have been prominent for much of the last decade. One is that racial and ethnic minorities might lag in digital access and adoption. The advent of wireless technology, among other things, may have confounded that expectation. The other is that as barriers to entry for publishing fell, reporting on more diverse topics would emerge, thus better serving historically underrepresented communities. The survey reveals that those communities are not finding that to be the case.<sup>2</sup>

This study is the second by the Media Insight Project. The first study, released in March of 2014, found that, rather than demographics such as age and political orientation guiding news coverage, the topic of the story largely determines where people go to learn about events and what path they take to get there.

The new report, which includes previously unreleased data, adds a new dimension to prior findings by probing the news consumption habits of African American and Hispanic adults nationwide and comparing them to adults nationwide, as well as to non-Hispanic whites alone. It also adds new questions about ethnic news and news consumption.

Even though the classic concerns about a digital divide based on connectedness do not fully describe the landscape, the survey finds some important differences among racial and ethnic groups when it comes to news consumption. Those differences mainly have to do with where people go for news, and potentially the availability of news, as well as the topics about which they are concerned.

In general, for instance, African Americans tend to rely on local news stations, whether on television or the web, for information about their communities. They are more likely than Hispanic Americans to own tablets, use news alerts, and to find news about their own community through social media. Hispanic Americans, on the other hand, rely more on ethnically focused media outlets for news. They are also much less likely to read news in print.

The word “news” itself may even be a source of confusion, bringing a certain kind of information to mind. For most people, news may actually encompass a wide range of topics, from weather and traffic to political infighting to the latest celebrity scandal. To clarify how Americans get different types of information, regardless of whether they consider it news, the survey assessed consumption of 17 different topics, asking people if they followed these topics, how, and where. This process revealed some significant differences by race and ethnicity. For example, while a majority of Hispanics follow news about immigration, a much smaller percentage of whites and African Americans do so, only about 1 in 3. Moreover, these three different racial and ethnic groups tend to rely on distinct reporting sources for news on different topics.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Hugo Lopez, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, and Eileen Patten, Closing the Digital Divide: Latinos and Technology Adoption (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, Pew Research Center, 2013). [http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/03/Latinos\\_Social\\_Media\\_and\\_Mobile\\_Tech\\_03-2013\\_final.pdf](http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/03/Latinos_Social_Media_and_Mobile_Tech_03-2013_final.pdf)

## SURVEY METHODS

This survey was conducted by the Media Insight Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute (API) and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research from January 9 through February 16, 2014. The margin of error for this telephone survey of 1,492 adults 18 and older is +/- 3.6 percentage points. The sample includes oversamples of 358 Hispanic adults and 318 non-Hispanic African American adults. The margin of error for the Hispanic sample is +/- 8.5 percentage points, and for the non-Hispanic African American sample it is 7.9 percentage points. Interviews were completed with respondents on landlines and cell phones, and interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The discussion of results often refers to point estimates from the overall national findings as a benchmark to compare the racial and ethnic subgroup estimates. These national findings among 1,492 respondents represent the general population of Americans age 18 and older, including whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and any other racial or ethnic combinations in which respondents identified.

Using a battery of new questions designed for the digital age, the survey sought to examine whether people distinguish between a reporting source (that is, the news organization that gathered the news) from the means by which they discovered the news (social media or a search engine, for instance) and what device they used (for example, print publications or smartphones). Rather than asking people about news in general to learn these things, moreover, the survey identified 17 different news topics and probed consumption habits on each one, a specificity that both unlocks a broader definition of news and reveals more nuance about consumption.

For each news topic (e.g., business news vs. traffic and weather) or type (e.g., breaking news, slow-moving trends, and news people feel passionately about), we asked respondents to tell us how they generally follow news about that topic. All verbatim responses were collected and then coded by the research team. Each response was coded along three dimensions:

- *Device* categorized the coded mentions of the device or technology the respondent used to get news. For example, watching television, listening to the radio, reading the print version of a newspaper, or reading an article on a smartphone.
- *Discovery method* categorized the coded mentions of how the respondent found the news regardless of the device used. For example, hearing it directly from a news organization, seeing it on social media, or hearing about it through word of mouth.
- *Source* categorized the coded mentions of the organization that gathered the information and did the news reporting. For example, reporting done by local television news stations, newspapers, online-only news sites like *The Huffington Post*, or magazines like *Time*.

Additionally, if a respondent did not mention one of these dimensions about how they generally follow news, the dimension was coded as “No specific mention.” This coding scheme allowed the research team not only to quantify how people get their news, but also to describe how people think about news consumption and what dimensions are most salient in different news contexts.

One of the reasons for this approach is that it is less clear, now that people have so many choices, what consumers pay attention to when seeking out news. This has led to confusion in past data about what was meant by a news source versus a news platform, and it has made interpreting the data more difficult.

These distinctions are not only important for trying to understand behavior. They also are important to publishers who are trying to find the best ways to reach their audiences. They also matter to brand advertisers trying to figure out how to reach customers.

## AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISPANICS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY OF NEWS ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THE PORTRAYAL OF THEIR COMMUNITIES BY THE MEDIA GENERALLY.

In general, people feel it is easier to get news today than five years ago and this is true for African Americans and Hispanics as well as Americans overall. Six in 10 American adults think it is somewhat or much easier to keep up with the news, including 60 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans, 58 percent of African Americans and 57 percent of Hispanics. By contrast, 27 percent say there is no real difference from five years ago (27 percent of African Americans, 30 percent of

Hispanics). Only a small percentage of any group says it is harder to keep up with the news these days (12 percent of adults overall, 11 percent of Hispanics, and 15 percent of African Americans).

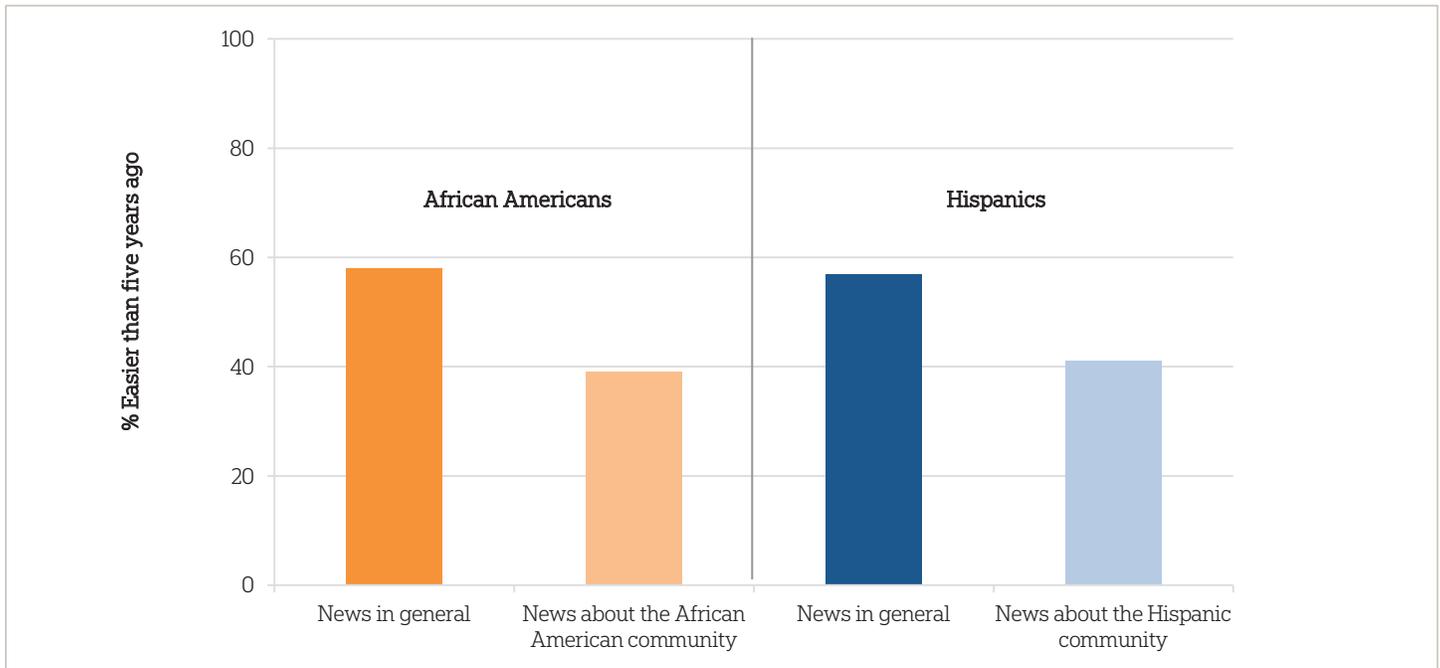
Yet among African Americans and Hispanics, the sense that technology and the rapidly changing news landscape have made it easier to stay informed applies less to learning

specifically about their respective racial or ethnic communities. Indeed, African Americans and Hispanics are just as likely to say nothing has changed in the last five years.

Fewer than half of African Americans (39 percent) and Hispanics (41 percent) think it is easier to keep up with news

about their specific communities today compared with five years ago; the same proportion believes there is no difference (41 percent of African Americans, 41 percent of Hispanics). Ten percent of African Americans and 17 percent of Hispanics think it is now harder to keep up with news about their respective communities.

#### More African Americans and Hispanics find it easier to keep up with general news than news about their own community these days



Questions: "Overall, compared to five years ago, do you think it is easier or harder to keep up with the news, or is there no real difference compared to five years ago?" "Overall, compared to five years ago, do you think it is easier or harder to keep up with the African American/Hispanic community, or is there no real difference compared to five years ago?"

### AFRICAN AMERICANS THINK LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS ORGANIZATIONS REGULARLY COVER NEWS ON THEIR COMMUNITY, WHILE HISPANICS SEE MORE REGULAR COVERAGE OF THEIR COMMUNITY FROM ETHNICALLY FOCUSED MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS.

Concerns among African Americans and Hispanics about how easy it is to keep up with news about their respective communities are linked to how much coverage they see of those communities in the media. Few people report seeing frequent coverage of their community in the news media, with just 21 percent of Hispanics and 23 percent of African Americans saying their communities receive coverage "very regularly."

The majority of both groups—71 percent of African Americans and 74 percent of Hispanics—falls in the middle and says their communities are covered just "somewhat regularly" or "only occasionally." Most of that group, about 4 in 10 overall, say their communities are covered only occasionally. And 3 percent of African Americans and Hispanics say they feel their groups are basically never covered.

Another striking finding in the survey concerns which types of media African Americans and Hispanics think cover their respective communities most often. Here there are marked differences.

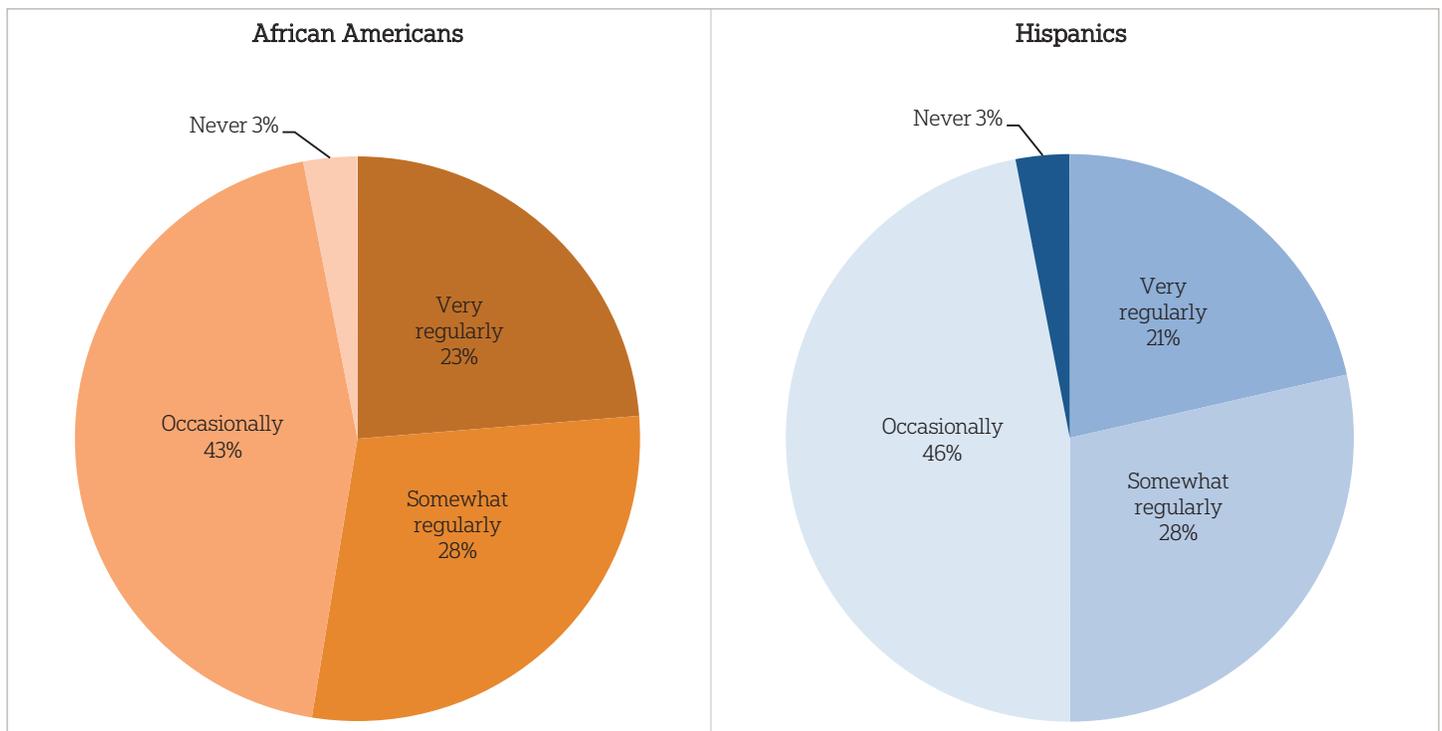
In general, African Americans believe their community is most regularly covered by local television news. African Americans are more than 3 times as likely as Hispanics to say that local television news stations most regularly cover their community's people and issues (23 percent vs. 7 percent).

Hispanics are far more likely to say they must turn to ethnic media to see regular coverage of their own community. While 42 percent of Hispanics say that ethnic media sources such as Univision, the Spanish-language television network, most regularly cover their community's people and issues, just 15 percent of African Americans cite an African American-

centered media source—such as Black Entertainment Television or African American newspapers—as the media source that most regularly covers their community’s people

and issues. These types of sources are cited throughout the survey as a preferred source for news by a sizable proportion of Hispanic respondents.

**How regularly African Americans and Hispanics think their communities are covered in the news media**



Question: “How regularly do you think African American/Hispanic people and issues are covered in the news media?”

**Sources African Americans and Hispanics report most regularly cover their community’s people and issues**

	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Local news station	23*	7
National broadcast TV news program	1	1
24-hour news	5	10
Online-only sources	1	1
Newspapers	9	9
News wires	0	0
Radio programming	7	2
Specialty	<1%	<1%
African American or Hispanic specific news	15	42*
Unspecified TV station	3	4
Friend, family, colleague	3	2
None	2	1
Magazines	2	<1%
Journals	0	0
Non-specific	<1%	<1%
Other	1	1
Did not specify	26	19

\*Indicates significant difference at p<.05

Question: “Out of the sources you use for getting news, which most regularly covers African American/Hispanic people and issues?”

## AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN HISPANICS TO QUESTION THE ACCURACY OF THE NEWS MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF THEIR COMMUNITY.

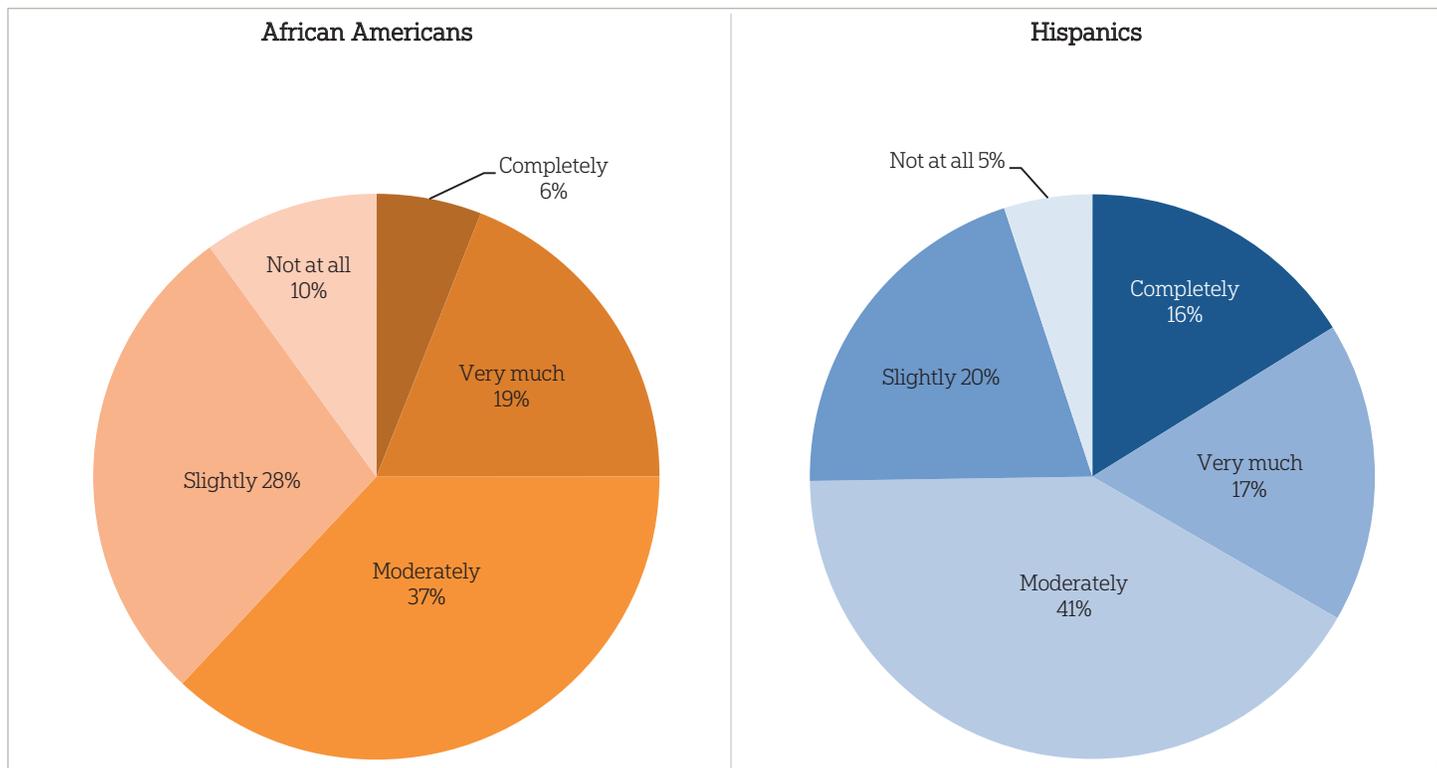
And how accurately do African Americans and Hispanics feel the media they turn to covers the concerns and issues of their specific racial or ethnic community? Here there is an even more distinct divide.

African Americans are more skeptical of the media's portrayal of their community than are Hispanics. Nearly 4 in 10 African Americans (38 percent) report that the news they consume does not at all accurately portray their community or does so just slightly. Only 25 percent give the media they use high marks for accuracy when covering the African American community, with 6 percent calling it completely accurate and 19 percent very much accurate. Another 37 percent give the

media they use a middle rating, describing it as moderately accurate.

Hispanic adults are more likely to see themselves positively portrayed in the media. While nearly 4 in 10 African Americans believe the portrayal of their community is inaccurate, just a quarter of Hispanic adults say the media they consume inaccurately portrays their community. Further, just a quarter of African Americans consider the portrayal of their community accurate, whereas a third of Hispanic adults say that the Hispanic community is accurately portrayed in the media. Another 41 percent of Hispanics consider the portrayal of their community moderately accurate.

**African Americans' and Hispanics' assessments of how accurately the news media portrays their respective communities**



Question: "How accurately do you think the news you watch, read, or hear portrays African American/Hispanic people and issues?"

One possible reason for the differing levels of skepticism about the accuracy of media portrayal of the two communities may be the news ecosystem itself. Hispanics in the United States today have access to a sizable amount of Spanish language media on television, including the national network Univision, as well as media online from other countries. The African American press in the United States has contracted to

the point where there are no longer daily print African American papers (they are either weekly, or less frequent and publish daily online), and cable channels aimed at African Americans do not feature a daily general interest news program. The news ecosystem itself, in short, is uneven, potentially creating uneven perceptions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Emily Guskin, Amy Mitchell, and Mark Jurkowitz, "African American: A Year of Turmoil and Opportunity," in *The State of the News Media 2013* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2013). <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2013/african-american-2/>

The survey also probed respondents about which news sources, of those used, they consider most accurate in coverage of their respective communities. Here there are also differences.

Hispanics overwhelmingly cite news sources targeted at Hispanics as most accurate in their portrayal of that community. Roughly half of all Hispanics (49 percent) point directly to ethnic media as the most accurate source for news about the Hispanic community. No other source even registers in double digits.

African Americans, by contrast, have less of a distinct preference about the best place to see accurate coverage of African American issues and people. An equal number point to local television as to media sources aimed specifically at African Americans, such as Black Entertainment Television or the African American press, and no one source stands out.

In all, 19 percent cite local television news and 18 percent cite African American-centered media, while 10 percent cite newspapers as the most accurate sources and 6 percent cite online-only sources. Fully 15 percent of African Americans volunteer that no media sources accurately portray their community; 1 percent of Hispanics say the same.

**Sources African Americans and Hispanics report most accurately cover their community's people and issues**

	<b>% African Americans</b>	<b>% Hispanics</b>
Local news station	19*	5
National broadcast TV news program	0	1
24-hour news	6	8
Online-only sources	<1%	1
Newspapers	10	6
News wires	0	0
Radio programming	4	2
Specialty	<1%	0
African American or Hispanic specific news	18	49*
Unspecified TV station	2	3
Friend, family, colleague	<1%	2
None	15*	1
Magazines	1	<1%
Journals	0	0
Non-specific	<1%	<1%
Other	3	3
Did not specify	21	15

\*Indicates significant difference at p<.05

Question: "Out of the sources you use for getting the news, which most accurately portrays African American/Hispanic people and issues?"

For African Americans, perceptions of how accurate their community is portrayed in the media relate strongly to how much coverage they perceive. People who perceive a good deal of coverage are more likely to believe the coverage is accurate.

Fully 3 in 4 African Americans who say their community is covered regularly also think the portrayal of their community is at least moderately accurate. Yet of those who perceive that their community is covered only occasionally, most think that coverage is inaccurate.

This correlation to amount of coverage and perceptions of accuracy does not exist among Hispanics, a group more inclined to turn to ethnic media for this information. Among Hispanic respondents, 79 percent who think their community is covered regularly also think that coverage is accurate. Yet, 69 percent of those who perceive only occasional coverage of their community in the media still think that what they did notice is accurate.

**African Americans who perceive more regular media coverage of their community are more likely to say coverage is accurate.**

<b>African Americans</b>		
<b>Portrayal of African Americans in the news is...</b>	<b>% Saying African Americans are covered in the news...</b>	
	<b>Regularly</b>	<b>Occasionally or never</b>
At least moderately accurate	78	47
Not at all or slightly accurate	22	53

**For Hispanics, there is less of a correlation between perceived regularity of media coverage and accuracy.**

Hispanics		
Portrayal of Hispanics in the news is...	% Saying Hispanics are covered in the news...	
	Regularly	Occasionally or never
At least moderately accurate	79	69
Not at all or slightly accurate	21	31

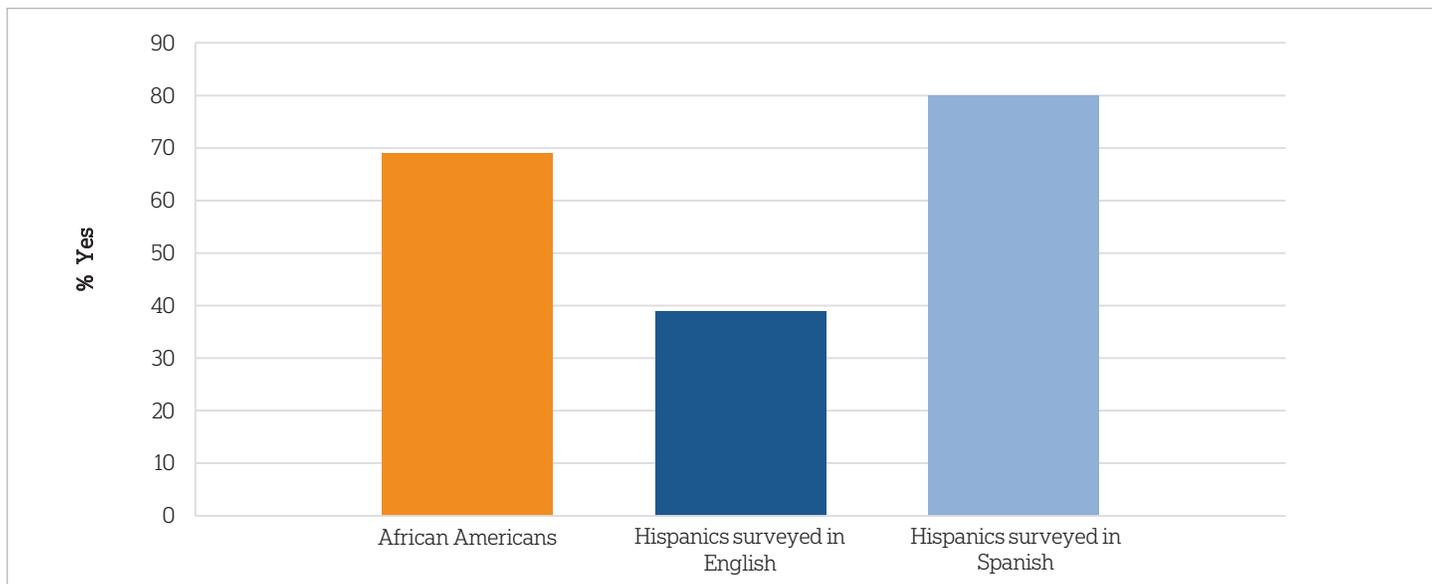
Questions: “How regularly do you think African American/Hispanic people and issues are covered in the news media?” “How accurately do you think the news you watch, read, or hear portrays African American/Hispanic people and issues?”

As a baseline to understanding the relationship between news and race or ethnicity, the survey also probed the extent to which African American and Hispanic adults try to keep up with news about their respective racial or ethnic communities. Majorities of both groups say they do try to keep up with their communities, but there is a noticeable difference in those numbers.

Nearly 7 in 10 African American adults (69 percent) report that they try to keep up with news about the African American

community. By contrast, a much smaller majority of Hispanic adults (53 percent) report that they try to keep up with news specifically about Hispanics. Among Hispanics, there are marked differences between those who took the survey in English versus Spanish. An overwhelming 78 percent of those who took the survey in Spanish report that they try to keep up with news about the Hispanic community, compared with 39 percent of the Hispanic adults who took the survey in English.

**Proportions of African Americans and Hispanics trying to follow news about their respective communities**



Question: “Do you, personally, try to keep up with news about the Hispanic/African American community, or not?”

The next question for those who do try to follow news about their racial or ethnic community was which technology and news sources they used to do so. The survey was unusual, as noted above, in probing consumers for the extent to which they distinguished among technology, means of discovery, and news gathering sources in their news consumption. There is more detailed description of those findings below.

As it pertains to technology devices, and getting news about one’s own ethnic community in particular, television is the source of choice for Hispanics but is less so generally for African Americans.

Fully 60 percent of Hispanic adults cite television as the device they use for news about the Hispanic community. Next, far fewer Hispanics cite the internet (19 percent) and then mention no particular technology (16 percent).

By comparison, just 39 percent of African American adults volunteer television as the device they use for news about the African American community. No mention of a particular technology was next (30 percent), followed by the internet (25 percent).

And how do Hispanics and African Americans who follow news about their community tend to discover or acquire this news? Is it through social media, word of mouth, or internet searches? For both groups, majorities say they discover this news more actively by going to the news organization directly, either on television, online, in print, or by some other means, but there are still distinct differences.

Fully 71 percent of Hispanics say they get their news about the Hispanic community directly from a news organization; fewer African Americans (52 percent) say they get news about the African American community directly from a news organization. African Americans are more likely to cite a range of other sources in slightly higher numbers.

Finally, beyond the type of technology used or the means of discovery, what kinds of news gathering sources do Hispanics and African Americans use for news about their respective communities? As noted above, Hispanic adults (48 percent) are far more likely to use sources focused specifically on their community than African Americans (17 percent) are to go to media focused on African American issues or concerns, either the historic black press or sources such as Black Entertainment Television. African Americans are most likely to cite local television news (23 percent), but in reality their news consumption is split fairly evenly among other sources, including newspapers (17 percent), African American-centered media (17 percent), or no particular source specified (19 percent).

Given the relative dissatisfaction of African Americans with the portrayal of their community in the media, and the absence of a particular source for that news that stands out, the findings suggest a potential unmet market for news about the concerns of—and issues affecting—African Americans.

**Top three devices, means of discovery, and sources African Americans use for news about their community**

Top Three Devices	
1	Television (39%)
2	No device mentioned (30%)
3	Internet, device unspecified (25%)
Top Three Means of Discovery	
1	Directly from a news organization that reports the news (52%)
2	No discovery mentioned (10%)
3	Directly from a specialty news organization that reports the news (8%)
Top Three News Sources	
1	Local news station (23%)
2	African American community specific news (17%)
3	Newspapers (17%)

**Top three devices, means of discovery, and sources Hispanics use for news about their community**

Top Three Devices	
1	Television (60%)
2	Internet, device unspecified (19%)
3	No device mentioned (16%)
Top Three Means of Discovery	
1	Directly from a news organization that reports the news (71%)
2	Word of mouth (8%)
3	No discovery mentioned (7%)
Top Three News Sources	
1	Hispanic community specific news (48%)
2	Local news station (12%)
3	No source mentioned (11%)

## THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMMUNITIES MAY NOT BE AS GREAT WHEN IT COMES TO THE NEWS.

One major concern with the advent of digital technology was the potential for creating a racial and ethnic digital divide—the worry that African Americans and Hispanics would be left behind in the use of technology. Whether an economic issue or one relating to broadband wiring, the worry was that the 21<sup>st</sup> century would disadvantage racial and ethnic minority populations in new ways.

This survey adds to the growing body of evidence<sup>4</sup> that the digital divide has not materialized in the ways imagined when it comes to technology use; it also adds nuance about the means by which people navigate and think about technology, specifically when it comes to news.

First, African Americans and Hispanics, much like the American adult population overall, now incorporate a variety of technologies into their lives and use them in ways that fit time of day, circumstance, and convenience for their news consumption habits.

Overall, Americans today use 4 different devices or platforms to get news in a given week, including television, radio, print, computers, cell phones, tablets, e-readers, and so-called “smart” internet television connections. Those numbers do not differ dramatically by ethnic group. The average number of devices used among whites is 3.9, 4.2 among African Americans, and 3.5 among Hispanics.

Among all adults, television is the most used (87 percent), followed by laptops/computers (69 percent), radio (65 percent), and print newspapers or magazines (61 percent).

There are some slight differences by race and ethnicity. African Americans (95 percent) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (87 percent) and Hispanics (86 percent) to say they used a television to get the news in the last week.

Whites and African Americans are more likely than Hispanics to say they read a print newspaper in the last week (65

percent of African Americans, 64 percent of whites, and 46 percent of Hispanics). These findings—the prevalence of television use among African Americans and the lack of print publication use among Hispanics—are echoed elsewhere in the report on various news consumption behaviors.

There is some sign of a divide in computer use for news by race and ethnicity, but, if anything, the growth in mobile technology appears to be making those differences not just vanish, but appear in reverse.

Overall, about 7 in 10 adults nationwide say they used a desktop or laptop computer to get news in the last week. That number is over 7 in 10 for whites, just over 6 in 10 for African Americans, and 56 percent for Hispanics.

But the use of cell phones for news actually tilts the other way. Hispanics (93 percent) and African Americans (97 percent) report that they own a cell phone in similar proportion to adults nationwide (95 percent). And 75 percent of African Americans who own a cell phone say they used it to get news in the last week; 64 percent of Hispanics say the same. The percentage of African Americans and Hispanics saying they used such a device exceeds the percentage of whites (53 percent).

Additionally, similar proportions of Hispanics (70 percent) and African Americans (65 percent) report that they own a smartphone (a cell phone that connects to the internet) relative to the proportion of whites (63 percent). Further, Hispanics (78 percent) and African Americans (85 percent) use smartphones to access the news at similar rates to whites (74 percent).

Mobile technology, in other words, appears to have rendered the divide in technology use for news consumption something of a moot point.

**Technology Americans use for news, by race and ethnicity**

	% Whites	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Television	87	95*	86
Radio	66	67	60
Paper newspapers or magazines	64	65	46*
Desktop or laptop computer	72	62*	56*
Cell phone (asked of those with a cell phone)	53	75*	64*
Tablet (asked of those with a tablet)	74	72	61
E-reader	10	13	4*
Smart TV	8	20*	17*

\*Indicates a statistically significant difference from whites at p<.05.

Question: “Please tell me if you used each device or technology to get news in the last week, or if you did not.”

<sup>4</sup> Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, and Patten, *Closing the Digital Divide*.

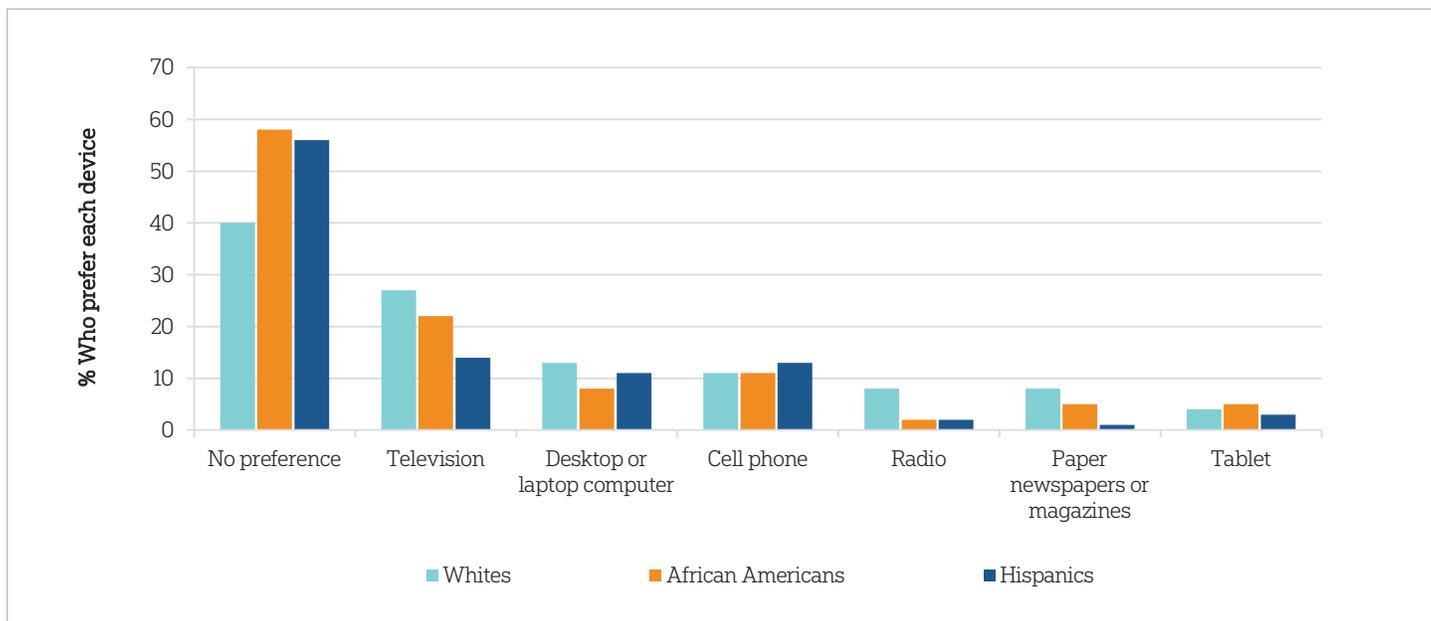
As Americans increasingly incorporate a mix of devices or technologies into their lives, one question is whether they have a preferred device, or whether it is a matter of circumstance and context. All things considered, do people prefer to get news one way or another, or is it just a matter of what is convenient in a given context?

The answer appears to be context. The most common response among all Americans is that they have no preferred device at all (45 overall), but a lack of preference is even more

prominent among African Americans (58 percent) and Hispanics (56 percent) than whites (40 percent).

Television ranks second behind no preferred device for the population overall. Among all Americans, 24 percent say they prefer to get news on television today. Twenty-two percent of African Americans and 14 percent of Hispanics say the same. Among African Americans, 11 percent prefer using a cell phone, 8 percent a computer, 5 percent print, and 5 percent a tablet. Among Hispanics, 13 percent prefer using a cell phone, and 11 percent prefer a computer.

**Most Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, have no preferred technology for news**



Question: "Is there a device or technology you prefer for getting news, or do you not have a preference?"

**MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON NEWS CONSUMPTION ACROSS RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS**

Nearly everyone in the publishing world is trying to understand the impact of mobile technology, which is spreading rapidly. Earlier, this report noted that a majority of the general population of Americans—and majorities of non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Hispanics specifically—now report owning cell phones, and that many Americans across racial and ethnic groups describe themselves as all-day or continuous news consumers, something that is made easier by mobile device ownership. How else is mobile technology influencing news consumption across racial and ethnic groups?

One notable finding in the survey is that African Americans are even more likely than whites to have signed up for news alerts, the push technology in which people ask a news organization to send them an email, text, or push notification

on a smartphone, when it has an important or breaking news story. These news alerts are often customized by topic, and as we just noted above, rank highest among all groups as a trusted means for getting news—perhaps because it is news that has been specifically requested. In all, a majority of African Americans who use the internet, own a cell phone, or own or use a tablet (58 percent) say they have signed up for a news alert, as have 46 percent of the same group of Hispanics and 42 percent of whites.

As noted earlier, at least 6 in 10 adults across racial and ethnic groups report in the survey that they own a cell phone that connects to the internet. News is a major part of the activities people engage in with these devices. Among these smartphone owners, 78 percent say they have used their device to get news in the last week, including 85 percent of

African Americans, 78 percent of Hispanics, and 74 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

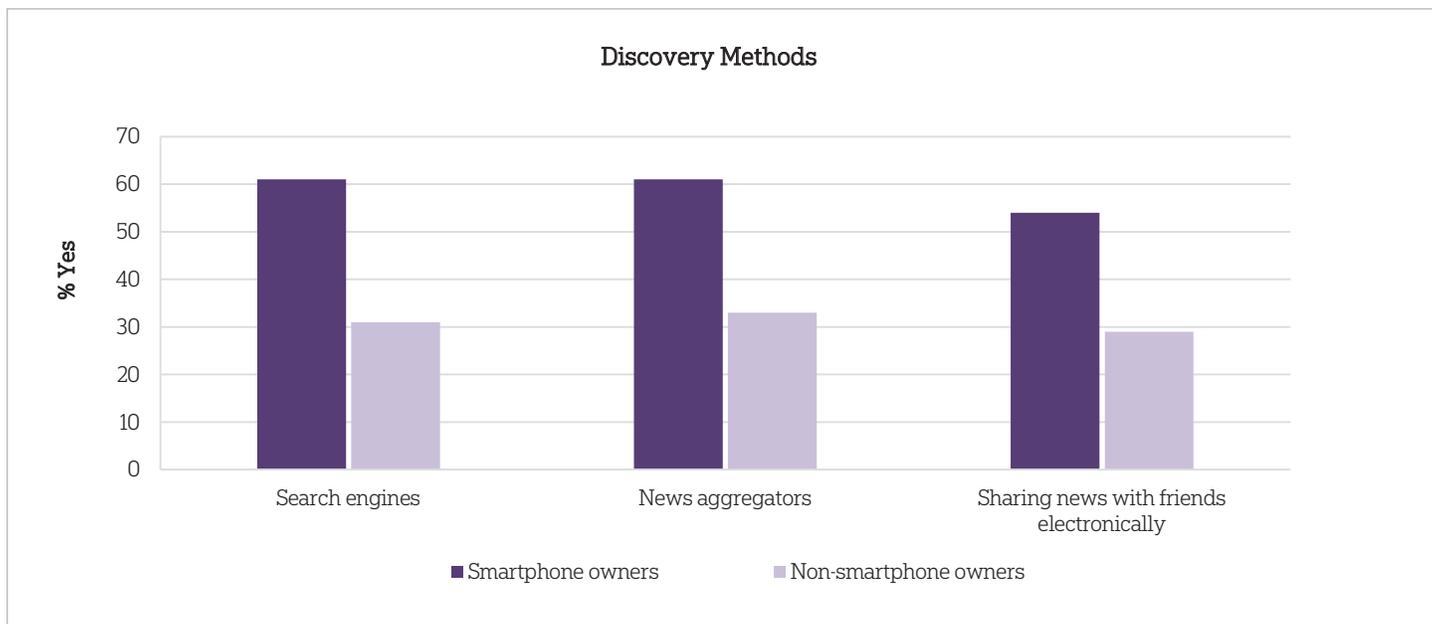
Tablet devices are another form of mobile technology option for accessing the news. Overall, 39 percent of adults in the survey say they own or use a tablet, including 41 percent of white adults and 38 percent of African American adults. Hispanic adults are less likely than white adults to report owning or using a tablet (28 percent). Of these tablet users, 73 percent say they use it to get the news, including 74 percent of whites, 72 percent of African Americans, and 61 percent of Hispanics.

Mobile technology ownership is also linked in important ways to using social media, with more than 4 in 10 Americans across racial and ethnic groups finding news through social media. But not surprisingly, this social media orientation strongly correlates to mobile device ownership. That holds true across racial and ethnic groups. African American smartphone owners are two times more likely than African Americans without smartphones to say they used social media to access the news in the last week; Hispanic smartphone owners are nearly four times as likely as Hispanics without smartphones to say the same.

Interestingly, users of social media for news are not that trusting of it, something we found in the population overall, and that holds true across racial and ethnic groups, though trust is somewhat higher among Hispanics and African Americans than it is among whites. In all, just 23 percent of Hispanics who get news from social media say they very much or completely trust that news. Twenty-one percent of African Americans and 12 percent of whites trust social media for news very much or completely.

Mobile technology also correlates with other digital news activities across racial and ethnic groups. Mobile device owners are more likely than others to find news through search engines, news aggregators, and sharing news with friends electronically. Sixty-one percent of smartphone users say they have found news through search engines, compared with just 31 percent of adults without a smartphone. Sixty-one percent of smartphone users say they have accessed news from online news aggregators, compared with just 33 percent of adults without a smartphone. And, 54 percent of smartphone users say they have discovered news by sharing it with friends through email or text messaging or other ways online, compared with just 29 percent of adults without a smartphone.

**How smartphones influence the ways people “discover” news, among all adults**



Question: “Have you found news in any of the following ways in the last week, or not?”

## THE NEWS SOURCE VERSUS TECHNOLOGY CONUNDRUM: DO PEOPLE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

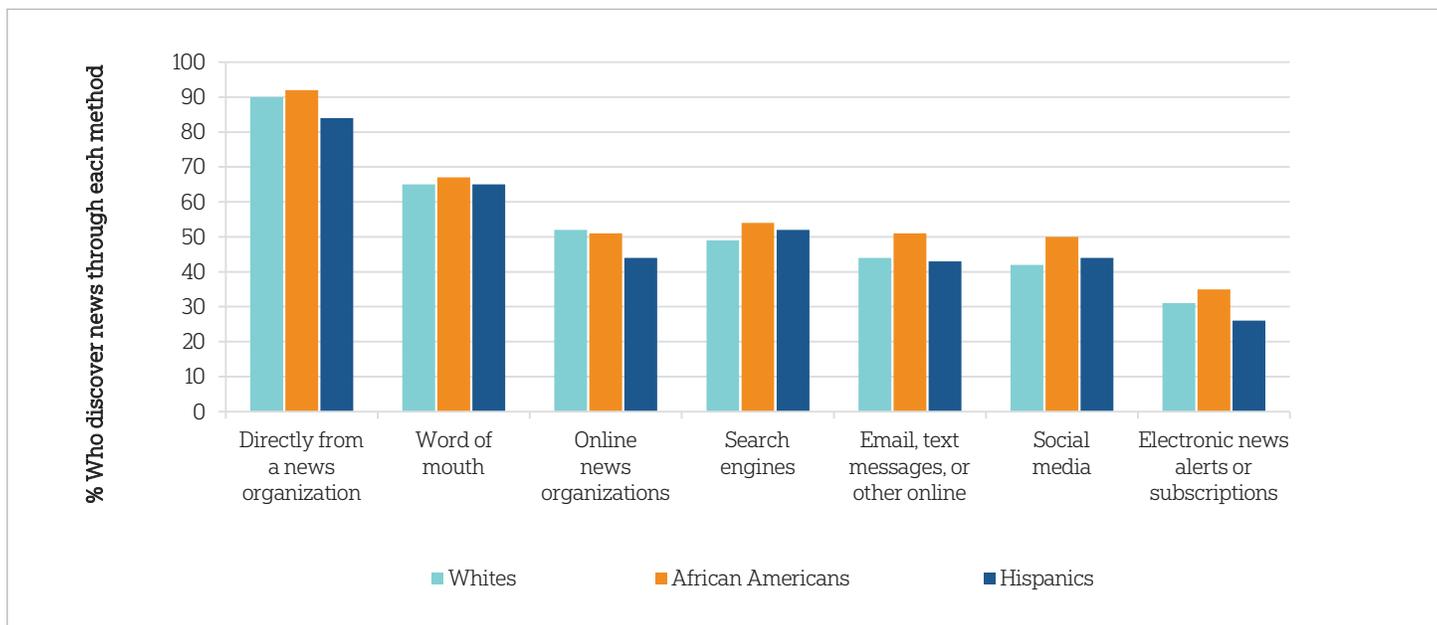
With technology changing so rapidly, sometimes knowing what people mean in their answers to survey questions can be a challenge. Recent survey research, for instance, often struggles to know whether adults today can distinguish between the internet as a platform (such as a television or a physical paper) versus a news reporting source (such as CBS News or their local newspaper). When people say they get news from Twitter, what do they mean? Do they see social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, which are ways of discovering news, as new news reporting organizations?

This survey set out to address that issue by asking people a series of questions to see if they knew the differences. The

findings suggest that while they do not have preferences about technology, Americans do distinguish among news reporting organizations and discovery platforms. And here they do have a distinct differences, and those differences hold across racial and ethnic groups.

First, people across racial and ethnic groups report that they discover news today in a multiplicity of ways—from old-fashioned word of mouth to electronic alerts and social media. And those proportions are similar for non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Hispanics—further evidence that the digital divide is something far different than once imagined.

**Most Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, discover news directly from a news organization**



To begin with, majorities of Americans report getting news directly from news organizations either on television, via print, audio, or digitally each week. Nearly 9 in 10 adults overall say they do so, including 92 percent of African Americans and 84 percent of Hispanics.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans (65 percent) say they get news via word of mouth in person or over the phone, and those numbers do not differ significantly by race and ethnicity (67 percent of African Americans and 65 percent of Hispanics). A small majority across groups also report getting news via search engines (51 percent overall, 54 percent of African Americans, and 52 percent of Hispanics).

About half of Americans overall (51 percent), 51 percent of African Americans, and 44 percent of Hispanics say they use news aggregators, organizations such as Google News or Yahoo News, which mostly combine news from other sources.

Similar proportions across racial and ethnic groups also use social media to discover the news. Overall, 44 percent of American adults today say they get news through social media such as Facebook or Twitter, including 44 percent of Hispanics and 50 percent of African Americans.

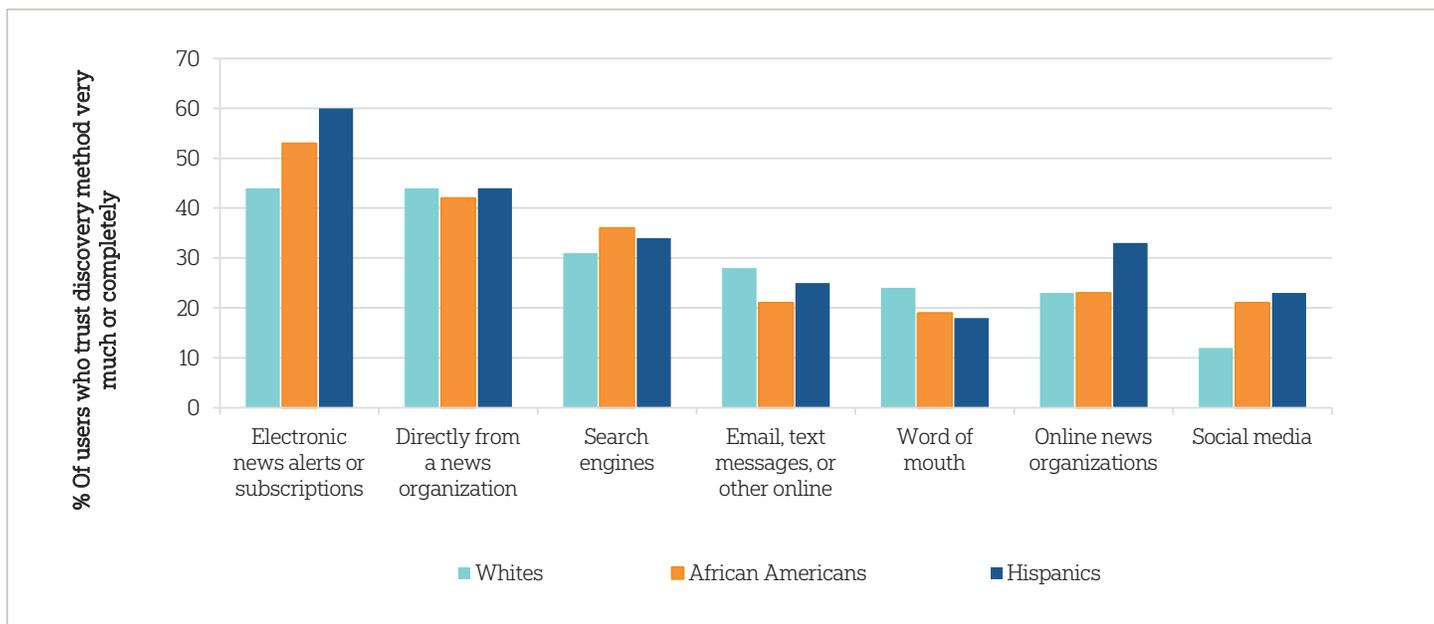
And nearly a third of American adults overall (31 percent) say they get news through alerts for which they have signed up, including 35 percent for African Americans and 26 percent of Hispanics.

Although Americans do not have clear preferences for the devices they use to access news, people across racial and ethnic groups do have preferences for the way they discover news. In the survey, respondents were asked in an open-ended question for their preferred means of discovering the news. At least 6 in 10 African Americans (66 percent), whites (61 percent), and Hispanics (60 percent) prefer getting news directly from news organizations rather than through a technology that curated or delivered it for them such as social media or an aggregator.

One reason for this preference might be related to trust. Respondents were asked, of the means by which they discovered news, what their level of trust was for each. News alerts people sign up for yield the highest level of trust, across all groups. Half of adults overall trust news received from news alerts, as do 60 percent of Hispanics and 53 percent of African Americans.

Seeking out the news directly ranks as the second most-trusted way of getting news, whether on television, online, on the radio, or in print (43 percent of adults overall, 44 percent of Hispanics, 42 percent of African Americans).

Percent who trust ways of discovering news by racial and ethnic groups



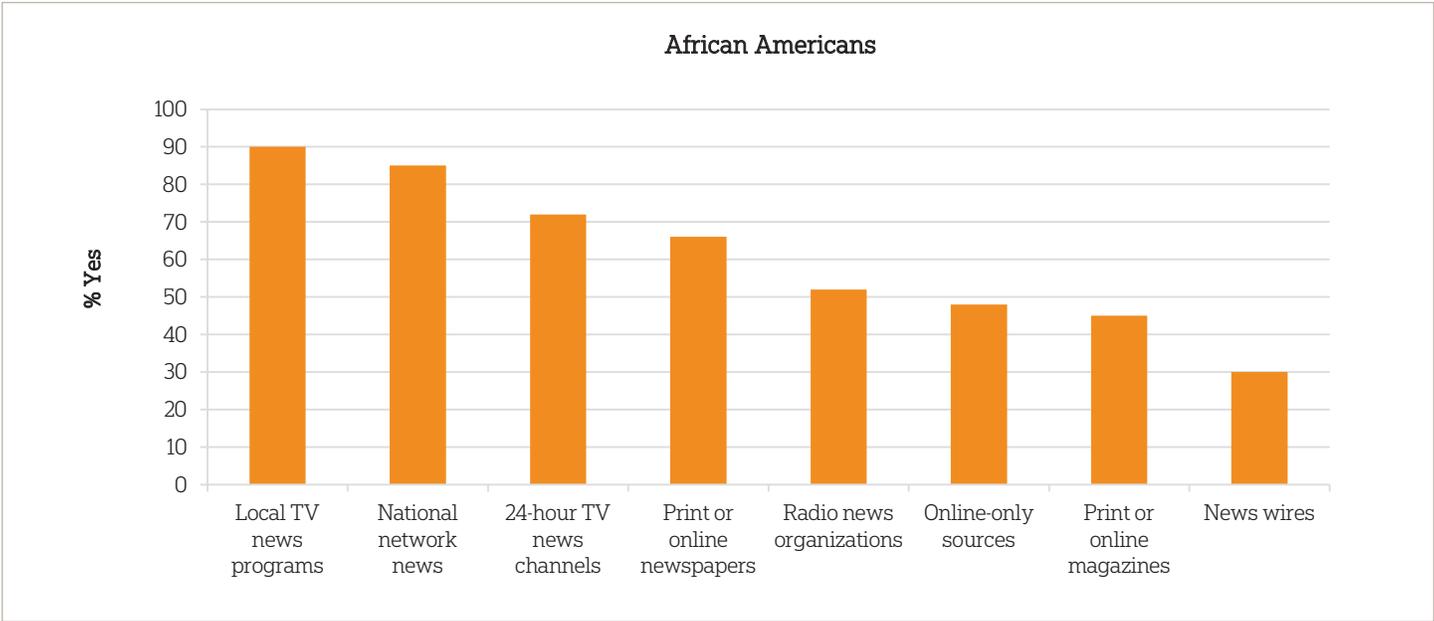
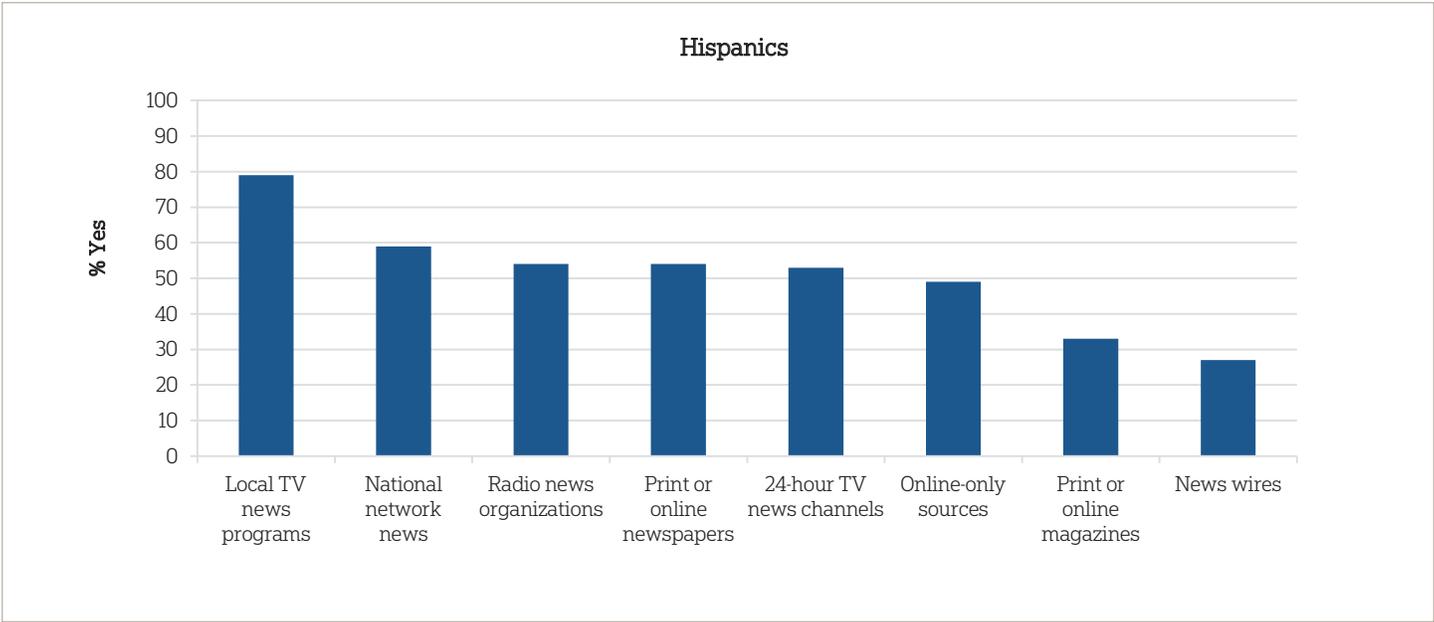
Question: “How much do you trust the information you get from each method of news discovery?”

Finally, the survey probed Americans’ attitudes about which kinds of reporting organizations they use as sources for their news. On this dimension of news consumption, there are more differences than in some other qualities in the degree to which specific sources are used and trusted. This theme—that the type of news sources used varies to a degree across racial and ethnic groups—reemerges depending on the news topic accessed.

Network news is the second most-used news source, but here there is some notable variation across racial and ethnic groups. Seventy-three percent of Americans overall say they watched broadcast network news such as ABC, CBS, or NBC in the last week. Yet 85 percent of African Americans say they watched such news, far outpacing the share of Hispanics who do the same (59 percent).

Across racial and ethnic groups, the survey finds that local television news represents the news source used in the last week by more people than any other. Overall, 82 percent of adults say they got news from local television news outlets in the last week, either on television or online, including 90 percent of African Americans, 80 percent of whites, and 79 percent of Hispanics.

**The reporting sources Hispanics and African Americans look to for news**



Question: "Did you watch, read, or hear the news from the following types of news reporting sources in the last week, or not?"

Interestingly, while there are differences in the degree to which sources are used, there are relatively few differences among non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Hispanics in the level of trust assigned to these different news reporting sources. Two notable exceptions emerged in the survey. Non-Hispanic whites are much more likely than

African Americans to say they trust the information they get from newspapers very much (42 percent vs. 30 percent). And Hispanics are much more likely than whites to say they trust the information they get from national network news very much or completely (60 percent vs. 45 percent).

## NEWS CONSUMPTION HABITS GENERALLY

Even with concerns about coverage of their communities in the news, large majorities of African Americans and Hispanics are avid news consumers and their general news habits are similar to national averages. Substantial numbers of Americans say they watch, read, or hear the news at least once a day (76 percent) and also say they enjoy keeping up with the news a lot or some (88 percent).

But there are some differences by race and ethnicity in the frequency of news consumption. Non-Hispanic whites (80 percent) are more likely to say they get news daily than are African Americans (70 percent) or Hispanics (70 percent).

But those distinctions change when people are asked if they enjoy keeping up with the news. Although large majorities across the racial and ethnic groups compared in this study say they enjoy the news, there is no difference between non-Hispanic whites (89 percent) and African Americans (91 percent) on this attitude. Yet, somewhat fewer Hispanics (78 percent) say they enjoy keeping up with the news.

The digital age brought with it a new kind of news consumer, people who get news throughout the day, something that has increased even more with mobile technology. In all, 33 percent of American adults report that they usually get their news throughout the day rather than more heavily at certain times, with 37 percent of African Americans, 32 percent of whites, and 31 percent of Hispanics sharing that pattern. Similar proportions of African Americans (28 percent), Hispanics (25 percent), and whites (23 percent) prefer to access news in the morning. There is more of a difference in the evening: whites (29 percent) are more likely than African Americans (18 percent) to say they prefer to get news in the evening; 22 percent of Hispanics prefer accessing news in the evening.

And what is the nature of Americans' news consumption habits? To what extent are they grazing across headlines versus reading deeply? A more cursory scan of the news dominates. Only about 4 in 10 Americans (41 percent) report delving beyond the headlines into a story in the last week. Whites (44 percent) and African Americans (37 percent) are more likely than Hispanics (24 percent) to say they accessed news stories beyond the headlines.

And is delving deeper into a news story more likely to happen at a certain time of day, or might it happen at any time during the day? The answer, across groups, is that there is no prescribed time in which people go deeper into the news. It is most common to watch, read, or hear in-depth news stories—beyond the headlines—all throughout the day, with smaller but sizable proportions across groups accessing in-depth stories in the morning and in the evening.

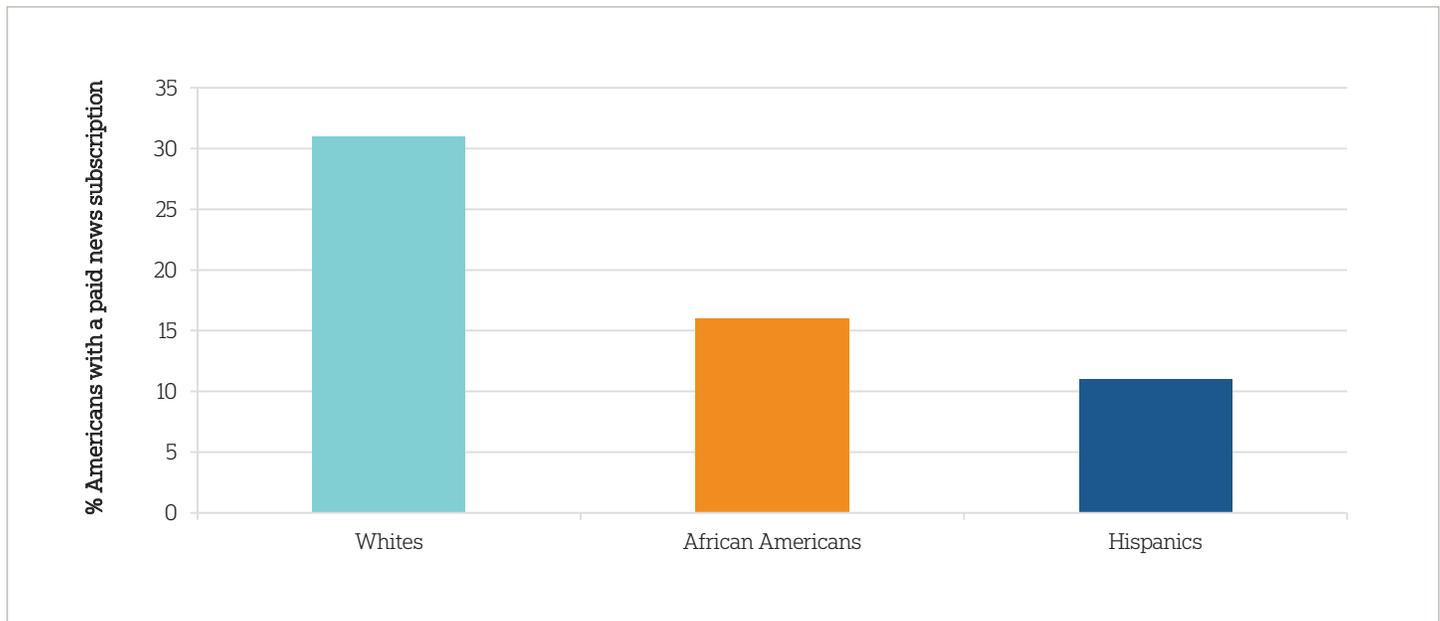
While the news in general may not get most Americans to read beyond the headlines, slightly more people report delving beyond the headlines when their curiosity is triggered by a breaking news story. Half of adults (49 percent) say they tried to find out more about the last breaking news story to which they paid attention. The tendency to delve deeper into a breaking news story does not vary by race or ethnicity, with about half of whites (50 percent), 48 percent of African Americans, and 48 percent of Hispanics saying they tried to find out more information about the last breaking news story they could recall.

## AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISPANICS ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WHITES TO PAY FOR NEWS SUBSCRIPTIONS.

About a quarter of adults nationwide (26 percent) report that they currently pay for any news subscriptions. Whites (31 percent) are much more likely than African Americans (16 percent) and Hispanics (11 percent) to say they currently pay for any type of news subscription. Among those Americans

who pay for a news subscription, there are no significant differences across racial and ethnic groups in the types of news subscriptions for which they pay.

### African Americans and Hispanics are less likely than whites to pay for news subscriptions of any kind



Question: "Do you currently pay for any news subscription, or not?"

## RACE AND ETHNICITY AND THE NEWS TOPICS PEOPLE FOLLOW

The word "news" itself may even be a source of confusion, bringing a certain kind of information to mind. News actually encompasses a wide range of matters, from traffic snarls to political infighting to concerns about school lunches. To get at this confusion, the survey broke news down into 17 different topics and asked people if they followed them, how, and where. While 17 may not be fully inclusive, it provides a range that illuminates the nature of news consumption in the digital age in new ways.

One of the major findings of the first release from this project is that the most important determinant in where and how people seek news is not their age or political orientation but the topic of the news about which they want to learn. Audiences are seeking out different sources for news depending on the subject, going one place for weather, another for sports, another for politics, and so forth. In an age when the audience is in charge of their own information diet, the internet rewards specialization. This is a challenge, but also an opportunity, for local publishers.

Are there any significant differences in the topics people follow by race and ethnicity? The answer here was a fairly resounding yes.

On average, Americans consume news about a wide variety of subjects. At least 40 percent overall report following 14 of the 15 topics asked of all racial and ethnic groups on the survey. (Some topics were asked only of African Americans and Hispanics.)

Distinct differences emerge, however, across racial and ethnic groups, in the news topics people choose to follow. Non-Hispanic whites are more likely to say they try to keep up with news about social issues (62 percent vs. 40 percent of African Americans vs. 44 percent of Hispanics). The same is true, with even more variation, when it comes to national government and politics: 78 percent of whites say they try to keep up with this issue, compared with 63 percent of African Americans and 38 percent of Hispanics.

While 3 in 4 Americans overall follow news about the town where they are living, Hispanic adults (64 percent) are less likely to follow this type of news than whites (81 percent); 72 percent of African Americans follow such news. Similarly, while 71 percent of adults overall follow news about business and the economy, Hispanic adults (53 percent) are least likely to follow such news across racial and ethnic groups (73 percent of African Americans and 71 percent of whites).

There are also differences in curiosity about foreign affairs. Overall, 67 percent of adults say they follow this topic, but the percentage following foreign affairs news is lower among African Americans (45 percent) and Hispanics (61 percent) than whites (70 percent).

Hispanics are more likely than African Americans to keep up with the news about science and technology (67 percent vs. 45 percent, respectively) and more likely than whites to keep up with news about entertainment and celebrities (54 percent vs. 32 percent, respectively). Finally, African Americans are much

more likely than whites to say they try to keep up with the news about schools and education (73 percent vs. 52 percent).

Some topics are followed at similar levels across the general population, with no major variation across racial and ethnic

groups. These include traffic and weather (84 percent overall), the environment and natural disasters (78 percent), health and medicine (66 percent), crime and public safety (68 percent), sports (46 percent), lifestyle topics (45 percent), and art and culture (35 percent).

#### Differences in the news topics Americans follow, by race and ethnicity

	% Whites	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Traffic and weather	82	78	88
Your local town or city	81	72	64*
National government and politics	78	63*-	38*
The environment and natural disasters	77	76	81
Business and the economy	71	73	53*
Foreign and international news	70	45*	61
Health and medicine	66	74	65
Crime and public safety	65	76	75
Social issues like abortion, race, and gay rights	62	40*	44*
Science and technology	58	45-	67
Schools and education	52+	73	62
Lifestyle topics such as food, exercise, or parenting	46	53	46
Sports	44	62	51
Art and culture	36	31	30
Entertainment and celebrities	32	46	54*

\*Indicates significant difference compared to whites at  $p < .05$ ; + indicates significant difference compared to African Americans at  $p < .05$ ; - indicates significant difference compared to Hispanics at  $p < .05$ .

Question: "Please tell me whether you personally try to keep up with news about each topic or not."

## RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS UTILIZE DIFFERENT REPORTING SOURCES FOR 11 OF THE 15 NEWS TOPICS THAT THE SURVEY PROBED.

Americans turn to different reporting sources for different news topics. While the topic drives news consumption habits, regardless of a consumer's racial or ethnic group, the sources preferred within each topic do vary by race and ethnicity. Of the 15 news topics that all groups were asked about in the survey, the most commonly used news source for individual topics differs across racial and ethnic groups for 11 topics.

For example, newspapers (either online or in print) are the source most cited by non-Hispanic whites for news about their local town or city and schools and education. Local television news is the source most cited by African

Americans and Hispanics for those topics. Similarly, whites most often cite newspapers to get lifestyle news. African Americans and Hispanics, on the other hand, most often cite specialty news sources like E! or the Food Network for lifestyle topics.

On 3 topics where African Americans and whites tend to seek out 24-hour cable news sources—national government and politics, foreign or international issues, and social issues—Hispanics report using ethnic media most often. At least 1 in 10 Hispanics reports using an ethnic media news source for 14 of the 17 news topics assessed of Hispanics in the survey.

**Most commonly cited source for different types of news topics across racial and ethnic groups**

	<b>Whites</b>	<b>African Americans</b>	<b>Hispanics</b>
Your local town or city	Newspapers	Local news station	Local news station
Science and technology	Specialty	24-hour news	Local news station
Traffic and weather	Local news station	Local news station	Specialty
Schools and education	Newspapers	Local news station	Other
Social issues like abortion, race, and gay rights	24-hour news	24-hour news	Community specific news
National government and politics	24-hour news	24-hour news	Community specific news
Entertainment and celebrities	Specialty	Specialty	Specialty
Environment and natural disasters	Unspecified TV station	24-hour news	Unspecified TV station
Lifestyle topics such as food, exercise, or parenting	Newspapers	Specialty	Specialty
Health and medicine	Online-only sources	Local news station	Online-only sources
Crime and public safety	Local news station	Local news station	Local news station
Foreign and international news	24-hour news	24-hour news	Community specific news
Business and the economy	24-hour news	24-hour news	Local news station
Art and culture	Newspapers	Newspapers	Specialty
Sports	Specialty	Specialty	Specialty

Question: "Where do you usually go for news about this topic?"

Few differences emerge when comparing the devices used to keep up with various news topics by race and ethnicity, with the exception of local news. African Americans and Hispanics are nearly twice as likely as whites to watch television to keep up with news about their local town or city (49 percent each vs. 26 percent). About half of whites (48 percent) do not identify the device they used to follow local news, compared to 28 percent of African Americans and 24 percent of Hispanics.

When it comes to news discovery, getting information directly from an organization that reports the news is most popular across all racial and ethnic groups for every topic except entertainment and celebrities, lifestyle, or sports.

## **HISPANICS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO KEEP UP WITH NEWS ON IMMIGRATION.**

At the time the survey was conducted earlier in 2014, most Americans reported not following news about immigration. Overall, just 43 percent of Americans said they follow this subject, a proportion similar to sports or lifestyle topics.<sup>5</sup>

That disinterest becomes even more pronounced if one breaks the topic down by race and ethnicity, though perhaps not as much as some might imagine. A majority of Hispanics say they try to keep up with immigration news, but only a small majority (56 percent). Still, that is significantly more than African Americans (35 percent) or non-Hispanic whites (34 percent).

Where do people get their immigration news? Nearly half of Americans (49 percent) who try to keep up with immigration news say they usually watch television for news about this topic, and 30 percent do not specify a device. Hispanics are much more likely than whites to say they watch television for news about immigration. Sixty-nine percent of Americans who try to keep up with immigration say they usually get news about this topic directly from a news organization that reports the news. This finding is consistent across racial and ethnic groups; 72 percent of whites and 69 percent of Hispanics say they find news about immigration directly from a news organization that reports this news. Hispanics most often cite ethnic media as the source of their immigration news, whereas whites turn to unspecified television stations and African Americans turn to 24-hour news sources.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that while the survey was in the field in January and February 2014, immigration was not a main topic in the news. Immigration news heated up over the summer with debates in Congress, failed legislation, and the influx of Central American children crossing the border, all during a midterm election year.

## TYPES OF NEWS: DIFFERENCES IN NEWS HABITS BETWEEN BREAKING NEWS, SLOW-MOVING TRENDS, AND NEWS TOPICS AMERICANS ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT

In addition to different topics that comprise the word “news,” there are also different kinds of news. Some is fast breaking. Other news involves slower-moving trends. Still others are passion topics that people follow out of a continuing, intense level of interest.

To understand how people consume news, the survey probed behavior based on all 3 of these different categories of news.

To assess behaviors around fast-breaking news, the survey asked people to identify the last breaking news story they watched, read, or heard about as it unfolded.

Fully 85 percent of American adults surveyed could recall the last breaking news story they watched, read, or heard. That percentage does not vary much by race and ethnicity. Yet the particular types of news stories Americans recall do vary by race and ethnicity to a certain extent.

The survey was conducted in January and two weeks of February of 2014. During that time, there were several breaking news stories, including a political scandal involving

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, a nearly nationwide winter weather event, the run-up to the Winter Olympics, a school shooting in New Mexico, and a large chemical spill in West Virginia.

The largest proportion—23 percent of adults—cite a political topic as the last breaking news story that they watched, read, or heard. Another 17 percent mention weather, 16 percent a national crime story such as a school shooting, and 11 percent a local news story. The largest proportion of non-Hispanic whites (29 percent) cite a political event as the last breaking news story they could recall, including 17 percent who specifically mention the Chris Christie scandal. African Americans (15 percent) and Hispanics (14 percent) are less likely than whites to cite a political story as the breaking news event they last followed. Instead, the top breaking news event Hispanics cite is weather (20 percent), while weather and local news tie at 17 percent as the most popular breaking news topics among African Americans. Both groups are more likely than whites to recall a local story as the last breaking news event they followed in real time.

**Types of breaking news stories Americans recall across racial and ethnic groups**

	% Whites	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Politics	29	15*	14*
Weather	15	20	17
National crime	16	16	12
Local general	9	15*	17*
Sports	9	7	12
National general	9	6	4
International	8	7	11
Entertainment	3	3	8*

\*Indicates a significant difference from whites at p<.05.

Question: “What is the last breaking news story that you watched, read, or heard about?”

When asked where they heard about that story, African Americans and Hispanics tend to report slightly different ways of finding out about the last breaking news event they recall. African Americans (59 percent) are most likely to recall first hearing about a breaking news story from television. Another 10 percent cite the internet generally, 4 percent say radio, and the same percentage says a cell phone.

Similar proportions of Hispanics cite television (49 percent) and the internet generally (15 percent), but Hispanics are more likely to say cell phones (9 percent).

And from what kind of news organization do people generally hear about breaking news, despite device or means of discovery? Again there are differences.

African Americans (30 percent) are nearly twice as likely as Hispanics (17 percent) to first hear about breaking news from local television (22 percent of adults overall). Adding together all the different types of television reporting sources respondents mention (cable, local, network, or not specified), fully 70 percent of African Americans cite some form of television news as their primary source for the last breaking news story they could remember.

That number is lower for Hispanics (45 percent). On the other hand, Hispanic adults (17 percent) are far more likely to cite ethnic media sources (a number that might include ethnic television reporting sources).

Where people first discover breaking news is one component of understanding their behavior. Another is knowing where people turn if they want to learn more about that breaking news event. In general, about half of those who could name a breaking news story that they had recently followed say they then went deeper to find out more about it, a number that does not vary by racial or ethnic group.

The mode they turn to for more information is also consistent across groups. The internet is the top place they turn, but African Americans also turn to television in high numbers (29 percent vs. 19 percent of Hispanics); 18 percent of adults overall turn to television for more information.

Fewer people cited a specific news source to which they turned for more information on breaking news stories. But when they do, African Americans (21 percent) are again more likely than whites (11 percent) to say local television news, and Hispanics are more likely than African Americans to say ethnic media (8 percent vs. 0 percent).

**Most commonly cited devices, means of discovery, and news sources for breaking news**

	<b>Whites</b>	<b>African Americans</b>	<b>Hispanics</b>
<b>Top Three Devices</b>			
<b>1</b>	Television (50%)	Television (59%)	Television (49%)
<b>2</b>	Internet (14%)	Internet (10%)	Internet (15%)
<b>3</b>	Radio (10%)	Radio (4%)	Cell phone (9%)
<b>Top Three Means of Discovery</b>			
<b>1</b>	Direct news organization (52%)	Direct news organization (59%)	Direct news organization (54%)
<b>2</b>	Word of mouth (7%)	Word of mouth (10%)	Word of mouth (10%)
<b>3</b>	Social media (5%)	Social media (6%)	Social media (5%)
<b>Top Three News Sources</b>			
<b>1</b>	Local news station (23%)	Local news station (30%)	Local news station (17%)
<b>2</b>	TV station, unspecified (19%)	TV station, unspecified (21%)	Ethnic media 17%)
<b>3</b>	24-hour cable news station (16%)	24-hour cable news station (17%)	TV station, unspecified (14%)

Question: "Thinking about that breaking news story, how did you first find out about it?"

**Most commonly cited devices, means of discovery, and news sources for following up on breaking news**

	<b>Whites</b>	<b>African Americans</b>	<b>Hispanics</b>
<b>Top Three Devices</b>			
<b>1</b>	Internet (49%)	Internet (46%)	Internet (52%)
<b>2</b>	Television (17%)	Television (29%)	Television (19%)
<b>3</b>	Computer (4%)	Computer (2%)	Cell phone (10%)
<b>Top Three Means of Discovery</b>			
<b>1</b>	Direct news organization (39%)	Direct news organization (40%)	Direct news organization (38%)
<b>2</b>	Websites, unspecified (11%)	Search engine (16%)	Online news aggregator (16%)
<b>3</b>	Online news aggregator (10%)	Websites, unspecified (13%)	Websites, unspecified (13%)
<b>Top Three News Sources</b>			
<b>1</b>	TV station, unspecified (12%)	Local news station (21%)	24-hour cable news station (14%)
<b>2</b>	Newspapers (12%)	24-hour cable news station (12%)	TV station, unspecified (13%)
<b>3</b>	Online only source (11%)	Specialty (10%)	Local news station (13%)

Question: "Where did you go for more information?"

What about passion topics, those one or two subjects that people follow all the time no matter what is happening? What do those topics happen to be and where do they turn for them?

Twenty-one percent of adults overall volunteer a topic that relates to politics and government as the issue they followed

most passionately in the news, including 23 percent of whites and 18 percent of African Americans. The most common response among Hispanics (16 percent) is traffic and weather, followed by politics and government (13 percent). People across groups, however, cite a variety of topics, including international news, business and economic news, sports, and crime and public safety, among others.

#### Topics Americans are most passionate about across racial and ethnic groups

	% Whites	% African Americans	% Hispanics
Politics and government generally	23	18	13*
Local affairs	11	16	12
Traffic and weather	9	9	16*
Business and finance	11	6	4*
Sports	8	9	8
International news	5	7	7

Question: "Thinking about the types of news that you do pay attention to, what is a topic you are really passionate about?"

And even more so than is the case with breaking news, television is the technology most people use to follow the topics that they care passionately about; this is true across racial and ethnic groups, though with some variation (63 percent of African Americans, 55 percent of Hispanics, and 42 percent of whites). The internet comes next: 31 percent of whites, 24 percent of Hispanics, and 17 percent of African Americans cite this as the technology they use for news about which they are passionate.

And the specific news source? Again, African Americans (31 percent) are more likely than Hispanics (18 percent) and whites (13 percent) to turn to local television news sources. Hispanics, again, are most likely to cite ethnic media news sources (21 percent).

Non-Hispanic whites (13 percent) and African Americans (10 percent) are more likely than Hispanics (3 percent) to mention newspapers (whether online or in print).

Finally, there is another kind of news event, the slow-moving trend that one follows but may not do so with the same level of passion—say the economy or climate change. How do people learn about this kind of news and does that vary by race and ethnicity?

Here again the survey suggests there are differences by race and ethnicity in the types of reporting sources people turn to. African Americans are the most likely to cite local news stations as their top source for trend news; fewer whites (10 percent) and Hispanics (8 percent) mention this source. One in 5 African Americans cite 24-hour news stations as their top source for trend news. Among Hispanics, the top news source for trend news is again ethnic media (16 percent). Whites most often cite newspapers, whether print or online, as their source for trend news (18 percent); 14 percent of African Americans and 5 percent of Hispanics say they use newspapers for this type of news.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

### Study Methodology

This survey was conducted by the Media Insight Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute (API) and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The survey was conducted from January 9 through February 16, 2014. The survey was funded by API and the McCormick Foundation. The API, NORC at the University of Chicago, and AP staff, along with the McCormick Foundation, the Maynard Institute and New America Media, collaborated on all aspects of the study.

This random-digit-dial (RDD) survey of the 50 states and the District of Columbia was conducted via telephone with 1,492 adults age 18 and older. In households with more than one adult, we used a process that randomly selected which adult would be interviewed. The sample included 1,006 respondents on landlines and 486 respondents on cell phones. The sample also included oversamples of African American and Hispanic adults. The sample includes 358 Hispanic adults and 318 non-Hispanic African American adults. The discussion of results often refers to point estimates from the overall national

findings as a benchmark to compare the racial and ethnic subgroup estimates. These national findings among 1,492 respondents represent the general population of Americans age 18 and older, including whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and any other racial or ethnic combinations in which respondents identified. Cell phone respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for participating, as compensation for telephone usage charges. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. All interviews were completed by professional interviewers who were carefully trained on the specific survey for this study.

The RDD sample was provided by a third-party vendor, Marketing Systems Group. The final response rate was 23 percent, based on the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) method. Under this method, our response rate is calculated as the product of the resolution rate (57 percent), the screener rate (92 percent), and the interview completion rate (43 percent).

The sample design aimed to ensure the sample representativeness of the population in a time- and cost-efficient manner. The sampling frame utilizes the standard dual telephone frames (landline and cell), with a supplemental sample of landline numbers targeting households with African American and Hispanic adults. The targeted sample was provided by Marketing Systems Group and was pulled from a number of different commercial consumer databases

and demographic data at the telephone exchange level. Sampling weights were appropriately adjusted to account for potential bias introduced by using the targeted sample. Sampling weights were calculated to adjust for sample design aspects (such as unequal probabilities of selection) and for nonresponse bias arising from differential response rates across various demographic groups. Poststratification variables included age, sex, race, region, education, and landline/cell phone use. The weighted data, which thus reflect the U.S. population, were used for all analyses. The overall margin of error was +/- 3.6 percentage points, including the design effect resulting from the complex sample design. The margin of error for the African American sample is +/- 7.9 percentage points, and for the Hispanic sample it is +/- 8.5 percentage points.

All analyses were conducted using STATA (version 13), which allows for adjustment of standard errors for complex sample designs. All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or less) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling. Additionally, bivariate differences between subgroups are only reported when they also remain robust in a multivariate model controlling for other demographic, political, and socioeconomic covariates. A comprehensive listing of all study questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on the Media Insight Project's website: [www.mediainsight.org](http://www.mediainsight.org).

## CONTRIBUTING RESEARCHERS

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## ABOUT THE MEDIA INSIGHT PROJECT

The Media Insight Project is a new collaboration between the American Press Institute (API) and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with the objective of conducting high-quality, innovative research meant to inform the news industry and the public about various important issues facing journalism and the news business. The Media

Insight Project brings together the expertise of both organizations and their respective partners, and involves collaborations among key staff at the API, NORC at the University of Chicago, and the AP.

## ABOUT THE AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE

The American Press Institute (API) conducts research and training, convenes thought leaders, and creates tools to help chart a path ahead for journalism in the 21st century. The API is an educational non-advocacy 501(c)3 nonprofit organization

affiliated with the Newspaper Association of America. It aims to help the news media, especially local publishers and newspaper media, advance in the digital age.

## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is the world's essential news organization, bringing fast, unbiased news to all media platforms and formats.
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world.

The two organizations have established the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

The founding principles of the AP-NORC Center include a mandate to carefully preserve and protect the scientific integrity and objectivity of NORC and the journalistic independence of AP. All work conducted by the Center conforms to the highest levels of scientific integrity to prevent any real or perceived bias in the research. All of the work of the Center is subject to review by its advisory committee to help ensure it meets these standards. The Center will publicize the results of all studies and make all datasets and study documentation available to scholars and the public.

For more information, visit [www.MediaInsight.org](http://www.MediaInsight.org)  
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