

There are some [clear differences](#) from previous generations in how Millennials—the first group of Americans to grow up with digital technology—consume news and information.

The term Millennials, however, which covers a loose generational category of those born between 1980 and 1998, is in some ways too broad. The word—the implication of a monolithic group that doesn’t change with age and different circumstances—masks some important differences inside this generation in the ways they encounter the world and follow news about it.

A new in-depth analysis by the Media Insight Project, a collaboration between The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the American Press Institute, suggests that Millennials’ news and internet habits fall into four distinct types.

This report, which is based on a deeper analysis of our nationwide survey of adults age 18-34 conducted in early 2015, presents a new typology of Millennials as it relates to their information use and the way they consume information about different topics, and it has important implications for publishers who want to reach them.<sup>1</sup>

The four groups are:

- **The Unattached:** These are younger Millennials, age 18-24, who get their news and information mostly by just bumping into it. They tend to have not yet started families or established careers. Their online lives are spent largely keeping up with their social circles, schooling, or first-time job hunts. Less than 1 in 3 personally pay for a digital or print news subscription, and the more conventional news subjects like community or world news are not a central interest to their daily lives. Few of them follow current events or news-you-can-use. Most go online primarily for entertainment activities such as playing games or streaming music and movies. Still, news is not completely irrelevant to this group. Half of this group still keeps up generally with what is going on in the world, and many investigate opinions contrary to their own on social media.

<sup>1</sup> The Media Insight Project. 2015. How Millennials Get News: Inside the Habits of America’s First Digital Generation. <http://www.mediainsight.org/PDFs/Millennials/Millennials%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

- The Explorers:** These are younger Millennials, also age 18-24, who actively seek out news and information. These Millennials are relatively similar demographically to the Unattached (i.e., they have not yet developed families or careers), but this group consists of slightly more men than women. They are highly connected (97 percent have smartphones), and they are interested in news and are more active in pursuing it online. These Millennials follow a variety of current events and news-you-can-use topics. They are motivated by their belief in the social and civic benefits of following news, and they use the internet and social media to both gather information and connect with others.
- The Distracted:** These are older Millennials, age 25-34, who have begun to have families and are part of the middle class. They tend not to use news or information for civic or social purposes. They mostly bump into news and information rather than actively seek it out, and a majority do not personally pay for a news subscription. They also tend to get less news and information online and from social media in general than other Millennials; though still, nearly half of these Millennials get most of their news and information online, and many follow a variety of lifestyle and news-you-can use topics that show direct relevance to their jobs, their families, or solving problems in their personal lives.
- The Activists:** This is another group of mostly older Millennials, age 25-34, but Activists, unlike the Distracted, are more likely to actively seek out news and information. These Millennials tend to have already established families, careers, and a connection to their community. They are racially and ethnically diverse—the only group that is a majority non-white. They have acquired enough experience in the world to care about certain issues, and enough stability in life to spend energy on those issues. A majority of these Millennials personally pay for a digital or print news subscription, and they are likely to follow current events and report using the news for civic reasons. They get news online but are less likely than other Millennials to frequently use the internet for social or entertainment purposes.

	Unattached	Explorers	Distracted	Activists
Percent who regularly go online to keep up with what's going on in the world	53	85	53	80
Percent who pay for news subscription	31	44	40	51
Percent who use news to talk with others about what's going on	49	74	44	55
Percent who say news helps them stay informed to be a better citizen	56	64	47	67
Percent who regularly follow music, TV, and movies	73	67	63	59
Percent who regularly follow national politics or government	34	57	33	60

Understanding these distinct segments within the Millennial generation offers some clarity for publishers seeking to reach Millennials. The data show that a single content or publishing strategy for all Millennials may be misguided and that there are different opportunities to reach and engage each of these four distinct types of Millennials.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

The typologies are based on the results of a survey conducted by the Media Insight Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The nationally representative survey of 1,045 adults between the ages of 18 and 34 was conducted between January 5 and February 2, 2015. The final response rate was 14 percent, and the overall margin of error was +/- 3.8 percentage points. Using multivariate regression analysis, two factors were found to be highly predictive of many news attitudes and behaviors: age, and the tendency to either actively seek out news or more often bump into it in the course of other activities. Millennials were sorted into the four categories based on these factors.

## THE UNATTACHED

### 34 percent of all Millennials



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A third of all Millennials and two-thirds of those who are age 18-24, the Unattached are still making their way in the world. They are less likely to be employed and make somewhat less money than other young Millennials, though they are somewhat more likely to be starting families. Their online life is more focused around entertainment than news reports—but they are far from newsless and in some ways are more oriented to it, and some of them may be more likely to be heavier news consumers than the Distracted cohort that is older.

**Demographics:** The Unattached are 18 to 24 years old, and many have not yet established families or started careers.

Fewer than 1 in 4 (23 percent) are either married or have children, and only about 1 in 5 have a college degree yet. In terms of education, the Unattached are similar to their young Millennial peers, the Explorers, with about 1 in 3 having a high school degree (33 percent) and another 1 in 3 having some college education (38 percent). Nearly 4 in 10 (38 percent) are not employed, which is the highest unemployment rate among these four groups of Millennials.

The Unattached have lower incomes than older Millennials but have earnings comparable to Explorers. About half of the Unattached have family incomes of less than \$30,000 a year (47 percent), and only about 1 in 5 have family incomes of more than \$75,000 a year (19 percent).

In terms of race and ethnicity, the Unattached are similar to other Millennials, especially the Explorers. About half of the Unattached are non-Hispanic white (52 percent), 13 percent are non-Hispanic black, 18 percent are Hispanic, and 15 percent identify as other.

The Unattached consist of an even mix of men (50 percent) and women (50 percent), and the gender breakdown is similar to the Distracted.

**Motivation and interest in news:** At this point in their lives, at least, most of the Unattached have a relatively low motivation about news. They say they mostly tend to bump into news and information, rather than seek it out. News is a part of their lives, as about half (53 percent) say they keep up with what is going on in the world. At the same time, the Unattached are far more likely to go online to stream music, TV, and movies (79 percent) than to get news.

Eighty-five percent of the Unattached say they pay for at least one type of entertainment or news service, and they are as likely as other Millennials to pay for content or a service. However, 48 percent of the Unattached use a paid news subscription, with 31 percent personally paying for digital or print news and 17 percent using a news subscription

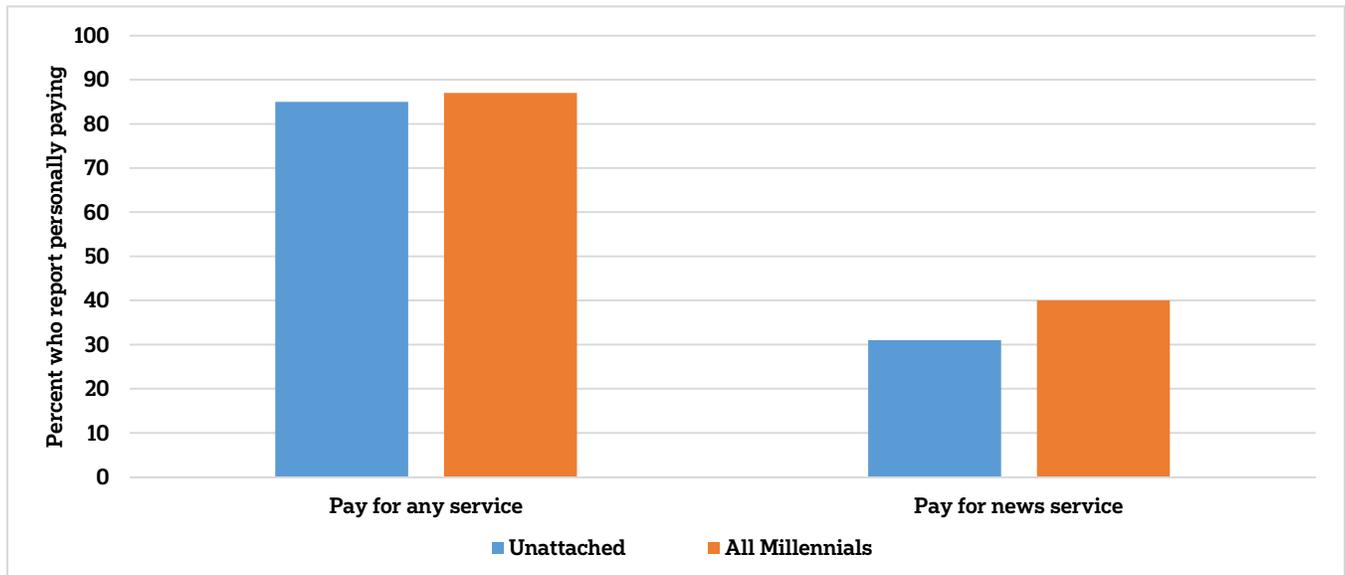
### The Unattached

**“Well, my mom always talks about [how] I should at least check up and see what’s going on...She might watch some of the news and tell me about it and I’ll look it up online.”**

**– Devon from San Francisco**

paid for by someone else. The Unattached are the only group of Millennials in which a majority do not use a paid news subscription, and they are the least likely to pay for news personally.

**The Unattached are among the least likely to pay for news**



**Question:** Please select any of the following types of paid products or services that you have regularly used in the past year. For each one, please check whether you pay for the product or service yourself, someone else pays for it, or both.

Most of the Unattached do not regularly follow current events. Nor do they tend to go online to get news-you-can-use to help them in their lives. They are more likely to get news about hobbies and entertainment.

As an example, only about 1 in 3 follow news about their job or profession (38 percent), their local community (33 percent), or do product research (32 percent).

Only 1 in 3 regularly follow national politics or government (34 percent), and only about 1 in 4 follow news about business (23 percent), international affairs (25 percent), and schools or education (26 percent). The Unattached are also less likely than all other Millennials to follow information about health care or medical information (27 percent compared with about 40 percent for the other three types).

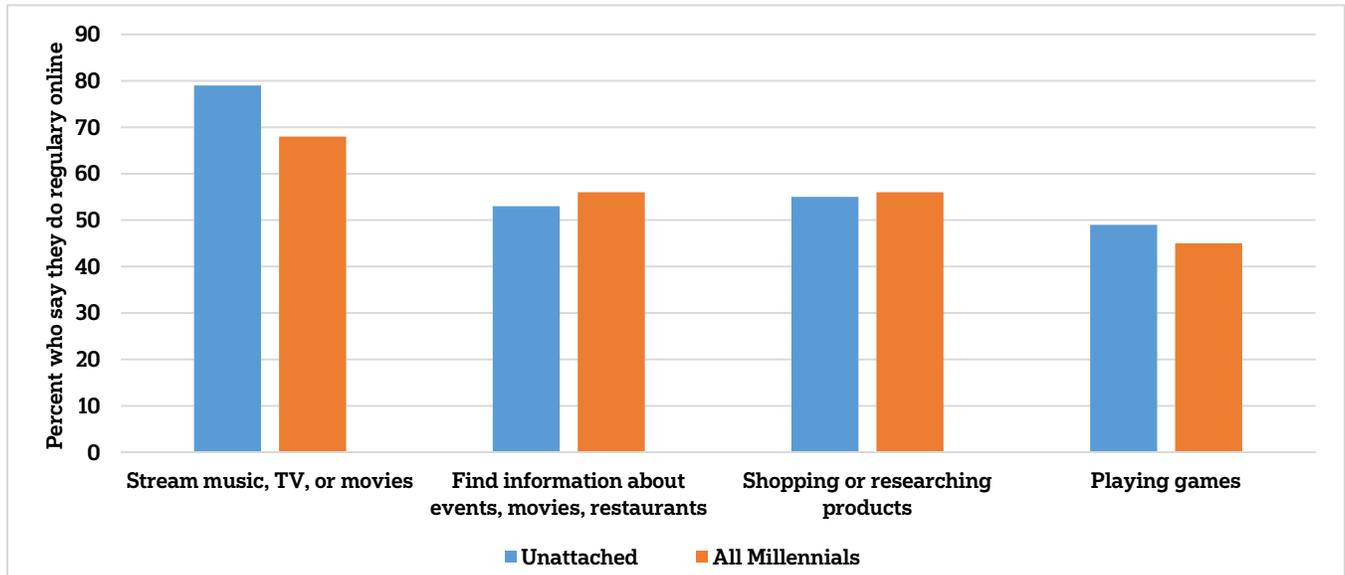
In contrast, nearly 2 in 3 follow information related to their interest or hobbies (65 percent), and 3 in 4 keep up with what their friends are doing (73 percent).

The Unattached are also among the most likely to follow news about music, TV, and movies (73 percent) and style, beauty, and fashion (29 percent).

**Online activities and social media:** While many in this group do not go online to follow news, a significant majority goes online for entertainment.

Not only do 8 in 10 of the Unattached go online to stream music, TV, or movies, 53 percent use the internet to find information about events, movies, or restaurants, and 49 percent say they play games online.

### Many of the Unattached go online for entertainment reasons



Question: Which of the following activities, if any, would you say you do regularly online?

Among Millennials who play video games, the Unattached are most likely to play at least several times a day (66 percent compared with 31 percent of gamers among Explorers, the other young cohort; 50 percent of gamers among the Distracted; and 49 percent of gamers from the Activists).

When it comes to social media, the Unattached tend to look for interesting or entertaining links to explore rather than for news. For instance, 58 percent say they go on Facebook to find entertaining things, higher than any other cohort (50 percent of Explorers, 52 percent of the Distracted, and 47 percent of Activists). Likewise, 48 percent of the Unattached go on Facebook to look for interesting articles compared with 40 percent of Explorers, 41 percent of the Distracted, and 38 percent of Activists.

The Unattached are the most adaptive when it comes to the changing social media environment. Asked about how they've changed their behavior over time, nearly 1 in 3, for instance, say they have stopped using some social network (31 percent), and 42 percent say they have tailored their use of social media.

They are also among the most likely to report they give up all of the time or fairly often on content online when it does not load fast enough (39 percent) compared with 34 percent of Explorers, 34 percent of the Distracted, and 28 percent of Activists.

## THE EXPLORERS

### 16 percent of all Millennials

Roughly half the size of the Unattached, this cohort of younger Millennials (age 18-24) also have not yet established families or started careers. But they have slightly higher employment, and they are more self-directed in their approach to the web and information. They are far more likely than the Unattached to say they actively seek out news and information rather than bump into it. They are much more likely to follow specific news topics and current events. And this group is even more likely than older Millennials to engage in certain news behaviors—including talking about the news with friends or using social networks to delve deeply into news they have heard about.

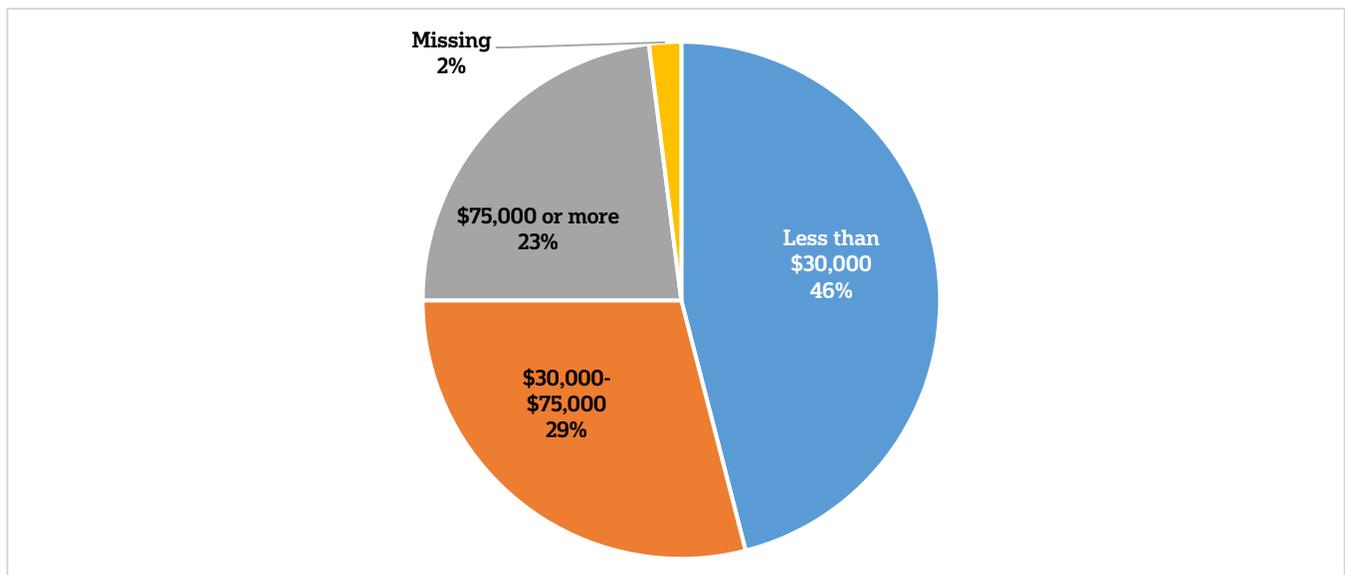


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**Demographics:** In all, 7 in 10 Explorers are employed, which ranks in the middle range of Millennials.

Many Explorers have household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year (46 percent), but about 1 in 4 Explorers have incomes of \$75,000 or more, which ranks behind only the older Activists.

### About 1 in 4 of the Explorers have household incomes of more than \$75,000 a year



**Questions:** Does your total household income fall below \$50,000 dollars, or is it \$50,000 or higher? And in which group does your total household income fall?

Many Explorers, like the Unattached, are still in the midst of their education. More than 1 in 3 have a high school education (39 percent), 1 in 3 have some college education (31 percent), and 1 in 5 have a college degree (24 percent).

Only 18 percent have families, which ranks lowest among the four groups. The group consists of more men (56 percent) than women (44 percent) and is racially similar to the Unattached (51 percent non-Hispanic white, 15 percent non-Hispanic black, 15 percent Hispanic, and 18 percent other).

Explorers are highly connected, and 97 percent have a smartphone, which ranks among the highest for all Millennials.

**Motivation and interest in news:** Most Explorers believe following news is important for both social and civic reasons, and many follow a variety of different current events and news-you-can use topics.

Indeed, Explorers are more likely than all other Millennials to consume news as a part of their social lives, that is, to report that they use news to talk with friends, family, or colleagues about what is going on in the news (74 percent). That is a higher number than even Activists, older Millennials who are active news seekers and consumers (55 percent of whom say they consume news because they like to talk about it) and also higher than the Unattached (49 percent) or the older but Distracted (44 percent).

In addition, nearly 2 in 3 (63 percent) of these young Explorers report that they find following the news enjoyable.

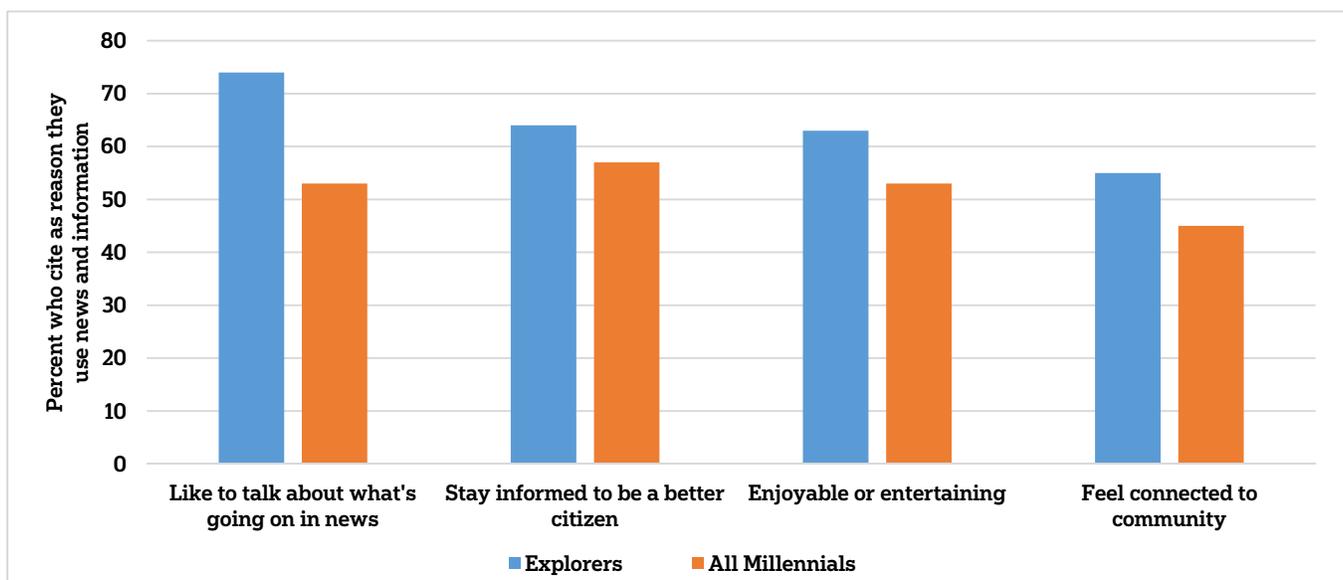
The majority of Explorers cite other more civic motivations for following events in the world (64 percent say they do so because it helps them stay informed, and 55 percent because it helps them feel connected to their community).

## The Explorers

**“The news plays a big role in my life. Between school and work, I need to keep up to date with certain aspects of the news. I access the news everyday via the internet and social media. I usually use my laptop or smartphone to access news.”**

– Breanna from Chicago

### Many of the Explorers use news and information for a variety of social and civic reasons



Question: People use news and information in different ways. What are the main reasons you, personally, tend to use news and information?

Sixty-one percent of Explorers regularly use paid news content, with 44 percent paying for it personally and another 17 percent using a service that someone else buys.

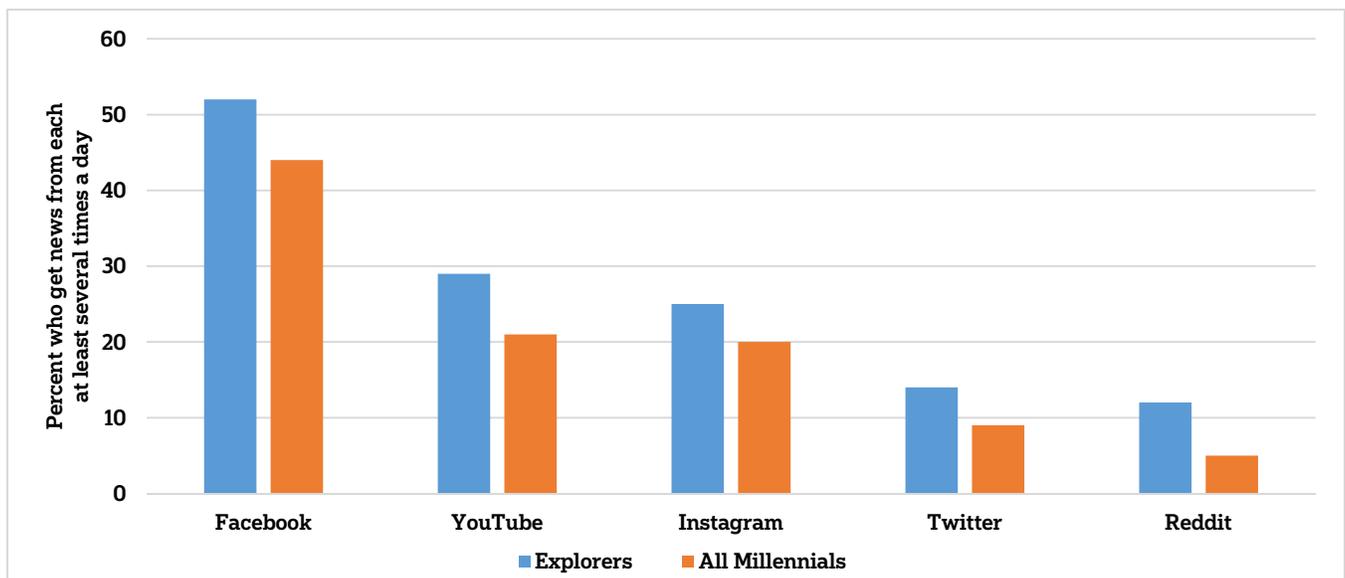
A majority of Explorers say they regularly follow news on national politics or government (57 percent) and science and technology (54 percent). Nearly half follow business news (44 percent) and news about schools and education (43 percent).

Explorers are also among the most likely Millennials to follow practical news. For example, Explorers are more likely than the Unattached to follow information related to their job (52 percent vs. 38 percent) and information about their town or city (47 percent vs. 33 percent).

**Online activities and social media:** While the Unattached are more likely to use the web for entertainment, Explorers are more likely to use the internet and social media to gather information and connect with people.

This sense of the web as a source of information and connection can be seen in their higher likelihood than other groups to do a variety of tasks online. A majority, for instance, say they get news at least several times a day from Facebook (52 percent). Explorers also are among the most likely to get news at least several times a day from Reddit (12 percent), Twitter (14 percent), Instagram (25 percent), and YouTube (29 percent).

**The Explorers are among the most likely to get news at least several times a day from a variety of social media platforms**



Question: How often, if at all, do you get news and information from each of the following?

Many Explorers also report using Facebook to get more information on something they heard about in the news (39 percent). That is higher than any other group, including Activists, the most news-oriented older Millennials (24 percent of whom do this kind of deep diving of news on Facebook), the Unattached (28 percent), or the older Distracted (31 percent). At the same time, Explorers are also more likely than other Millennials to use Twitter for social rather than news purposes—that is, in order to see what is happening with friends (21 percent compared with 15 percent of the Unattached, 8 percent of the Distracted, and 10 percent of Activists).

Explorers are also among the most likely to click on or investigate social media opinions that are different from their own. Fully 40 percent always or often click on different opinions compared with 28 percent of the Unattached, 18 percent of the Distracted, and 26 percent of Activists.

## THE DISTRACTED

### 27 percent of all Millennials

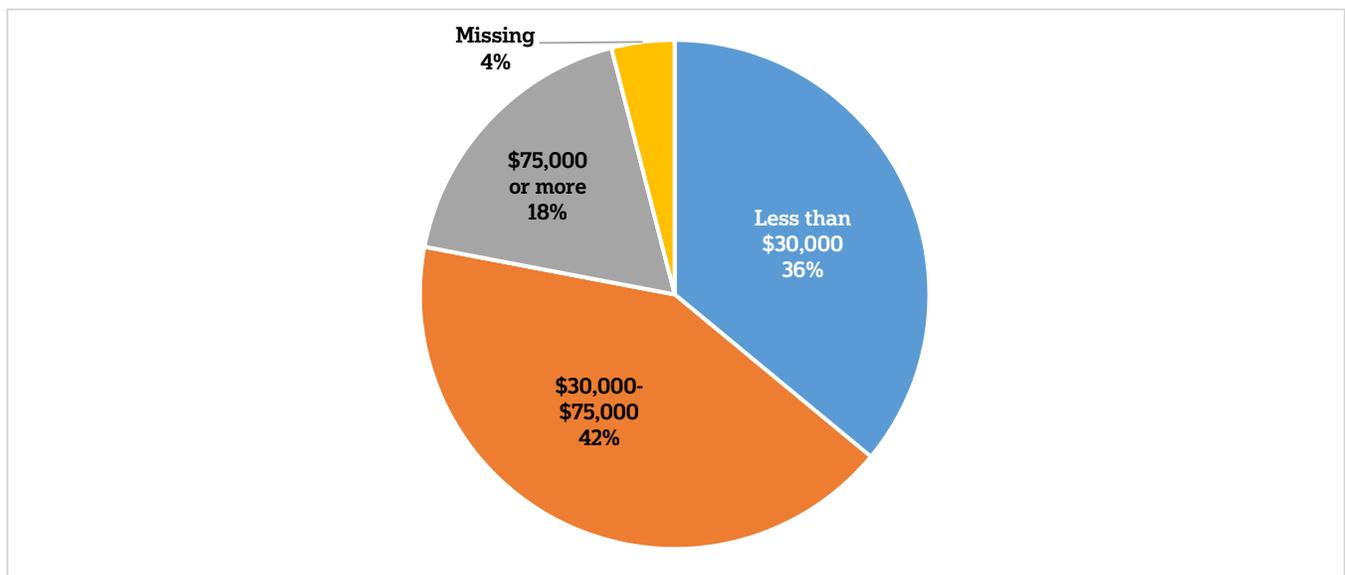
Making up roughly about a quarter of all Millennials and half of the older cohort (age 25-34), the Distracted tend to be heavily focused on their young families or burgeoning careers. In some ways, this group is the least news-oriented of all Millennials—certainly less so than the younger people we call Explorers and in some ways even less so than some of the younger Millennials who are Unattached. Popular culture is a draw online for the Distracted, along with keeping up with friends—though news is not part of that social conversation. This group may be the most challenging for some publishers to reach.

**Demographics:** Seven in 10 (68 percent) of the Distracted are either married or have kids, and 75 percent are employed. Most of the Distracted tend to be middle or lower-middle class: 42 percent have incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000, and only 18 percent have incomes of more than \$75,000.



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### Nearly half of the Distracted have household incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000 a year



**Questions:** Does your total household income fall below \$50,000 dollars, or is it \$50,000 or higher? And in which group does your total household income fall?

The majority of the Distracted have at least some college education, and there is little difference between the education levels of the Distracted and the other older Millennials, the Activists. Twenty-six percent of the Distracted have a high school degree, 17 percent have some college education, and 40 percent have at least a college degree.

A majority of the Distracted are non-Hispanic white (57 percent), which is the highest proportion of whites among the four Millennial groups. However, the Distracted are still racially diverse, as 14 percent are non-Hispanic black and 21 percent identify as Hispanic.

Similar to the Unattached Millennials, the Distracted are relatively evenly split between men (51 percent) and women (49 percent).

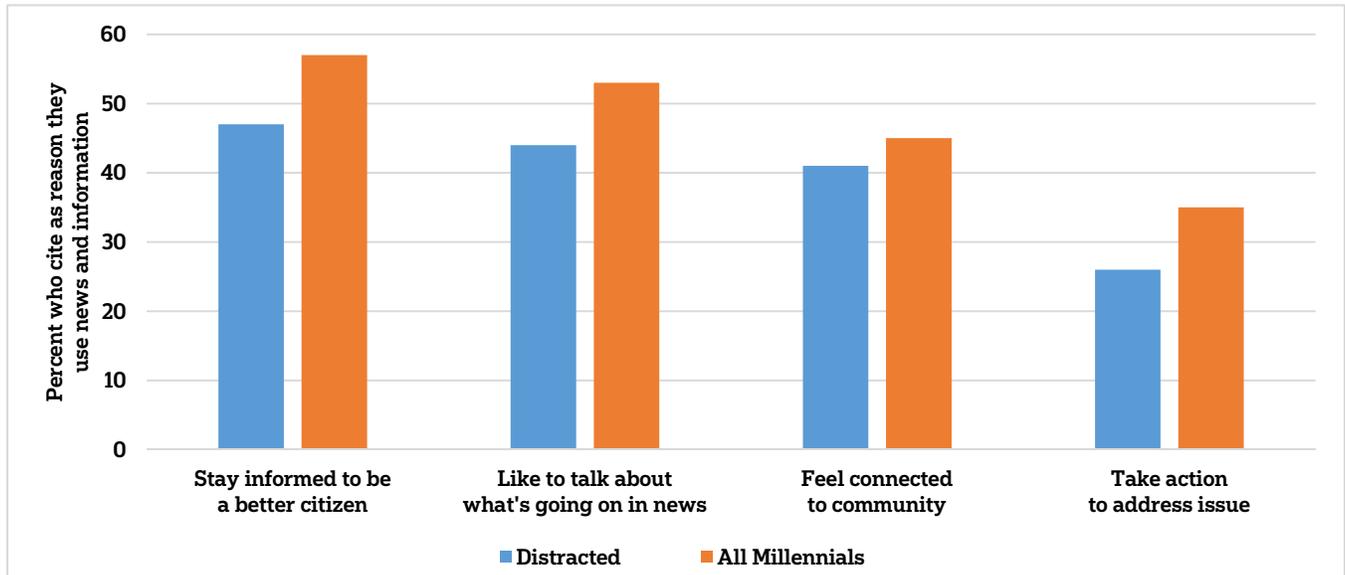
**Motivation and interest in news:** Like the younger Unattached Millennials, the Distracted mostly get their news and information by bumping into it in the course of other activities. Their reasons, however, tend to be different from those of younger more accidental news consumers. Where the Unattached may be too young or inexperienced to care about general news, the Distracted are likely too busy.

What limited news they do follow tends to be of direct relevance and usefulness to their jobs, their kids, or problems in their lives. In other words, they tend to pay attention to information that saves them time and betters their lives. The Distracted, along with the Activists, are among the most likely to report that they use news because it helps them care for their family (20 percent), and they are more than twice as likely to cite this reason than either the Unattached (8 percent) or Explorers (7 percent).

The Distracted are less likely to use news and information for civic or social purposes. Members of this group are less likely than all other Millennials to say news and information helps them take action to address issues they care about (26 percent compared with 35 percent of the Unattached, 38 percent of Explorers, and 44 percent of Activists).

Likewise, only 47 percent of the Distracted say news and information helps them stay better informed to be a citizen. That is lower than any other group. Fully 56 percent of the Unattached cite civic reasons for getting news, which compares to 64 percent of Explorers and 67 percent of Activists. Only about 44 percent of the Distracted say they like to talk with friends or family about what is going on in the news compared with 49 percent of the Unattached, 74 percent of Explorers, and 55 percent of Activists.

**Many of the Distracted do not use news and information for civic or social reasons**



**Question: People use news and information in different ways. What are the main reasons you, personally, tend to use news and information?**

Lacking a strong interest in the news, only 40 percent of the Distracted personally pay for a news subscription, and just another 12 percent use a paid news subscription that someone else buys. However, the Distracted are willing to pay for services when including non-news options. About 9 in 10 report paying for at least one entertainment or news subscription, and they are just as likely as other Millennials to pay for entertainment.

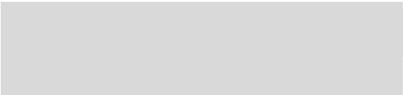
The Distracted are also unlikely to follow many current events topics. Among this group, 1 in 3 follows national politics or government, and 1 in 3 follows science and technology. Less than 1 in 5 (18 percent) follows foreign or international news and business news. Sixteen percent of the Distracted say they do not follow any of the 10 current events topics asked about on the survey, which compares to 16 percent of the Unattached, 6 percent of Activists, and just 3 percent of Explorers.

The Distracted do, however, follow lifestyle and news-you-can-use topics at relatively the same rate as other Millennials.

One area that is followed by relatively small numbers across all age groups is culture and the arts, and here the Distracted (24 percent) are similar to the Unattached (26 percent), while Explorers and Activists are similar to each other (36 percent and 34 percent).

**Online activities and social media:** The Distracted tend to get less news and information online and from social media than any other group.

They are the only group in which a majority does not get at least 75 percent of its information online. Only 44 percent say they get at least that much of their news online, while 14 percent report getting less than 25 percent of their information online.



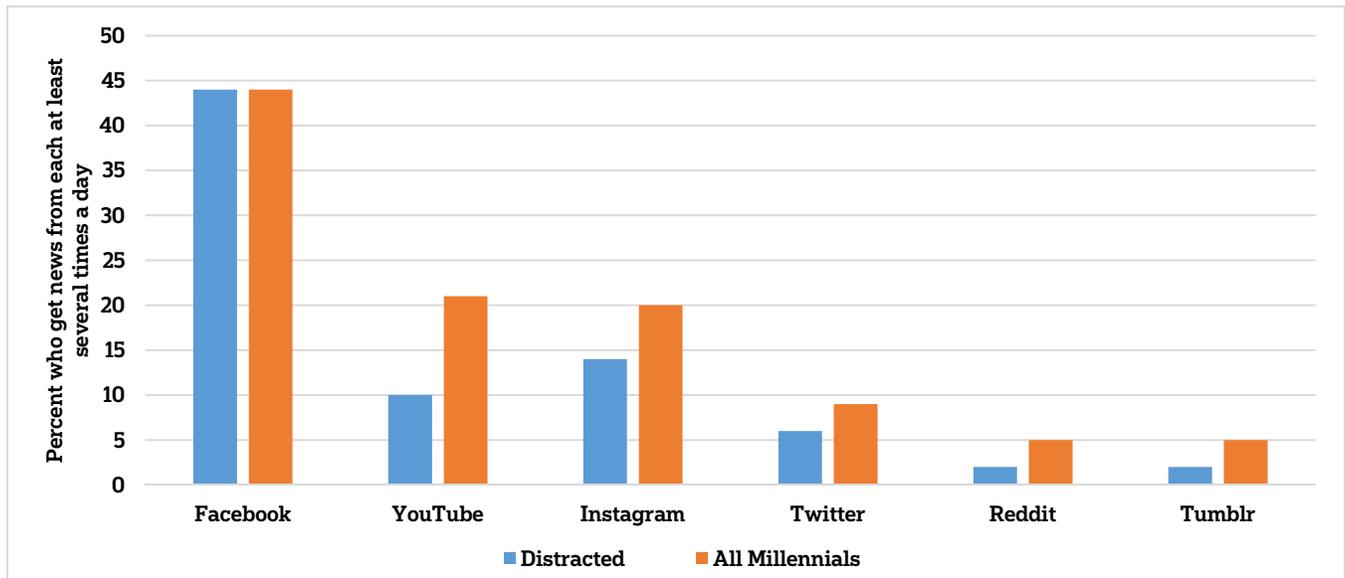
**The Distracted**

**“I really should be connected to/pay attention to the news more than I do. I occasionally watch Fox News or read some articles but I do not regularly have time to read up on what is happening.”**

**– Friend of Lauren from Chicago**

The Distracted also do not get a lot of news or information on social media. This group is also less likely than all other Millennials to get news several times a day from YouTube (10 percent vs. 27 percent of the Unattached, 29 percent of Explorers, and 19 percent of Activists). This group is also less likely than younger Millennials to regularly get news and information from Twitter (6 percent), Reddit (2 percent), Tumblr (2 percent), and Instagram (14 percent).

**The Distracted are among the least likely to get news at least several times a day from a variety of social media platforms**



Question: How often, if at all, do you get news and information from each of the following?

This group also does not engage in a participatory way with news when on social media. Among Twitter users, the Distracted are less likely than all others to compose their own tweet about something news-related (11 percent compared with 33 percent of the Unattached, 29 percent of Explorers, and 27 percent of Activists). This group is also less likely than most other Millennials to retweet a story (20 percent vs. 38 percent of the Unattached, 33 percent of the Distracted, and 39 percent of Activists).

The Distracted tend not to worry much that there is too much personal information available online. Only 16 percent report worrying a lot or a good deal about their information online compared with 22 percent of all three other groups. Among those worried, only 1 in 4 of the Distracted worry about government collecting information on them compared with 37 percent of the Unattached, 44 percent of Explorers, and 35 percent of Activists.

## THE ACTIVISTS

### 23 percent of all Millennials



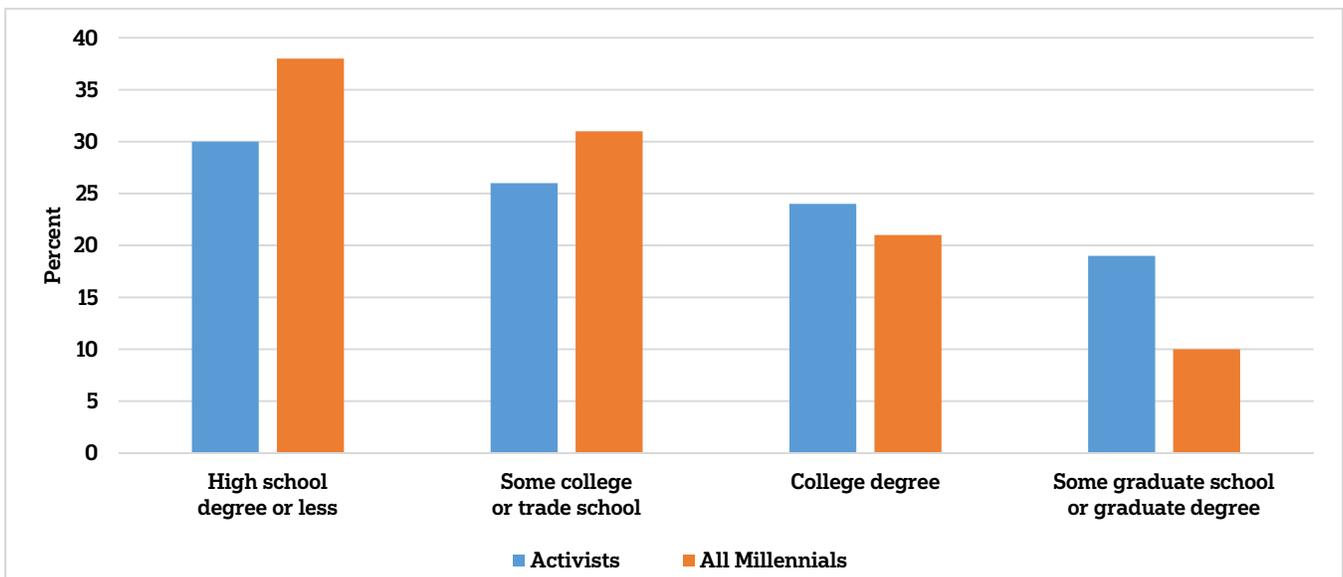
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Making up a quarter of all Millennials and just under half of the older cohort (age 25-34), the Activists are further along in life and likely to have established families, careers, and a connection to their community. They form a core target community for news publishers—they are among the most engaged with news, most likely to use it to be informed citizens and to take action. They are most likely to be online to stay informed and the least likely to be online for social connection. Yet, this typology also makes clear that they are not the only news audience—just one that can be approached in a particular way.

**Demographics:** Members of this group are likely to have a family (70 percent either married or have kids) and be employed (81 percent), which is the highest employment rate among the Millennial groups.

Nearly half of Activists have at least a college degree (43 percent), which is the highest proportion of the four groups, and another 26 percent have some college or technical training.

#### The majority of the Activists have more than a high school education



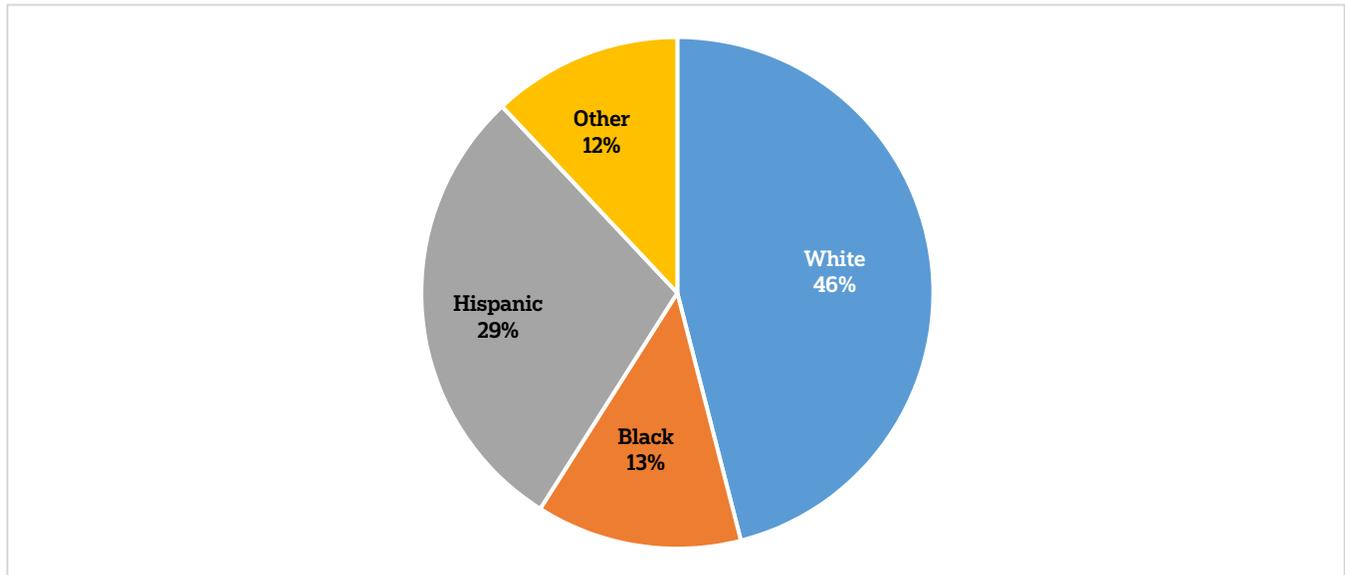
Question: What is the last grade of school you completed?

A majority of Activists have a household income of more than \$30,000 (61 percent), and 18 percent have incomes of more than \$100,000 a year, which is the most among the four groups.

About 8 in 10 Activists (83 percent) rate their community as excellent or good compared with about 7 in 10 Millennials in the other three groups.

The Activists are the most racially diverse of the Millennial groups, and they are the only group in which a majority does not identify as non-Hispanic white (46 percent). About 13 percent of Activists are non-Hispanic black, and 29 percent are Hispanic. Activists are nearly twice as likely to be Hispanic as the two younger groups, the Unattached (18 percent) and the Explorers (15 percent).

### The Activists are among the most racially and ethnically diverse Millennials



Questions: Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, or not? In addition to being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, what race or races do you consider yourself to be? (Or if not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin) What race or races do you consider yourself to be?

A higher portion of Activists are men (56 percent) than women (44 percent), which is a similar breakdown to the Explorers, who also tend to seek out news and information.

**Motivation and interest in news:** The majority of Activists say they use news for a host of civic reasons.

Sixty-seven percent, for instance, say they get news because it helps them be a better citizen; nearly half (49 percent) say news helps them feel connected to their community.

Seeing a value in news, many Activists are willing to pay for news. Half of Activists (51 percent) personally pay for a subscription to a news outlet, which is more than any other group. An additional 7 percent regularly use a service paid for by someone else.

Among Millennials, this group is the most likely to follow current events. In particular, 6 in 10 follow national politics or government, and many follow less popular topics such as international news (46 percent) or business news (38 percent).

Activists are also more likely than the Distracted to follow news about science and technology (50 percent vs. 33 percent). However, Activists follow news about schools and education (33 percent), social issues (37

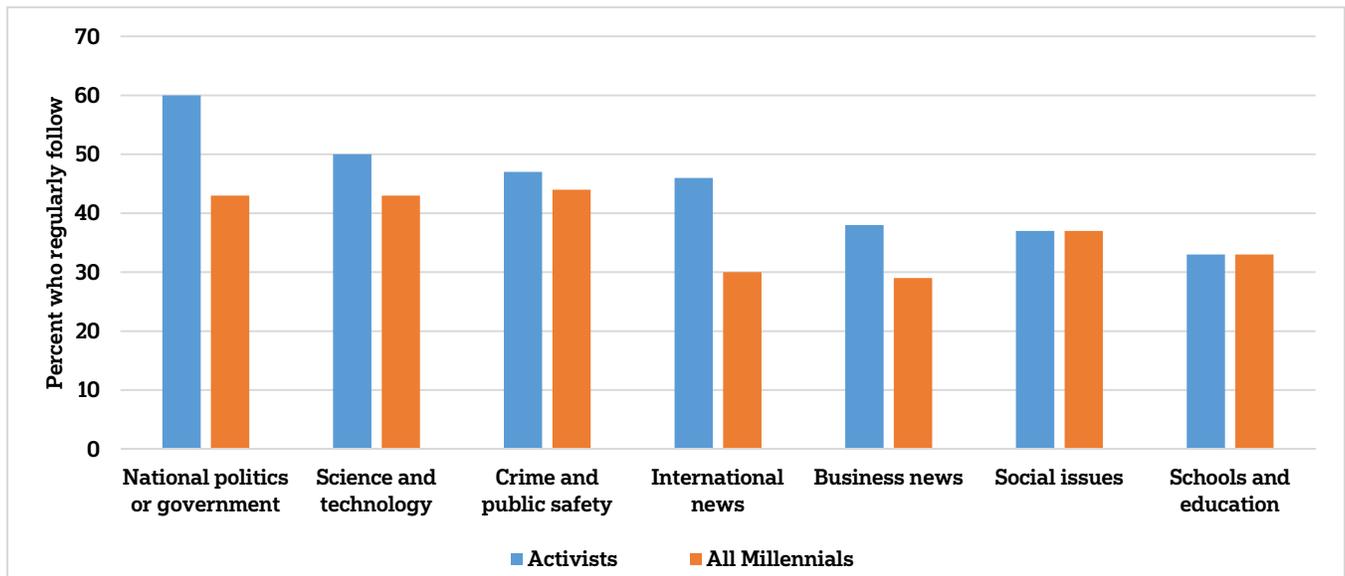
### The Activists

**“I have so much faith in my generation to change the course of this country and I love seeing that play out in the news, whether it be through healthcare changes, gay marriage acceptance, sexual education and access to information, and race issues.”**

**– Lauren from Chicago**

percent), and crime and public safety (47 percent) at rates comparable to other Millennials.

**The Activists are among the most likely to follow a number of current events topics**



Question: Here are some current events news and information topics. Which of these topics, if any, do you regularly follow?

Activists are also among the most likely Millennials to keep up with practical information. For example, 50 percent keep up with information related to their job, 49 percent follow information about their city or neighborhood, and 42 percent do price comparisons or product research.

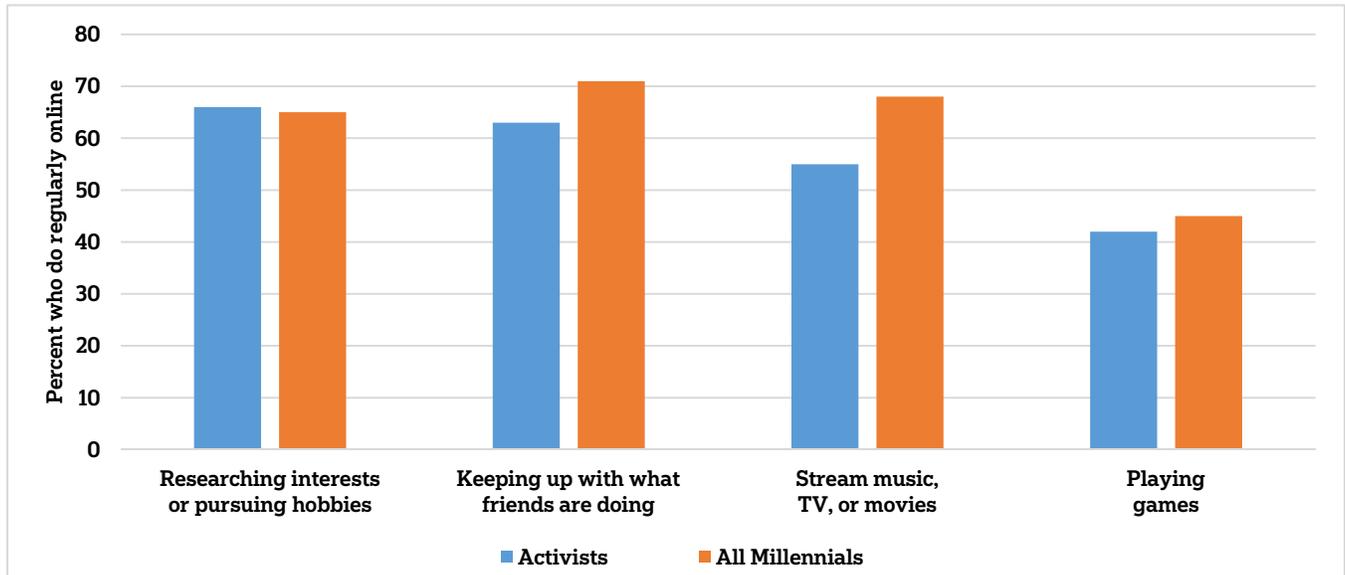
Activists follow lifestyle topics at relatively similar rates as other Millennials. However, Activists are less likely than the Unattached to follow music, TV, and movies (59 percent vs. 73 percent) and style, beauty, and fashion (20 percent vs. 29 percent).

**Online activities and social media:** Most of these Millennials get a majority of their news online, but they are less likely than other Millennials to go online for social or entertainment uses.

More than half report getting at least 75 percent of their news and information online (57 percent), and more than 8 in 10 get at least half of their news online (84 percent).

In contrast, this group is the least likely among Millennials to report regularly going online to keep up with what friends are doing (63 percent) and least likely to go online to stream music, TV, or movies (55 percent).

**The Activists are among the least likely to go online for entertainment or social reasons**



Question: Which of the following activities, if any, would you say you do regularly online?

Activists also are not likely to use social media for entertainment reasons, and they are among the least likely to go on Facebook to look for interesting articles (38 percent), to share content (33 percent), or to see what is trending (28 percent).

Although many Activists get news online, most do not get news on social media. This group is the least likely to report getting news on Facebook (36 percent compared with 52 percent of Explorers). In addition, fewer than 1 in 10 report getting news from Twitter (9 percent) and Reddit (4 percent). Activists are about as likely as their generational peers to get information from YouTube (19 percent) or Instagram (16 percent).

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLISHERS**

Understanding these distinct segments within the Millennial generation should offer some clarity and opportunity for publishers seeking to reach these audiences.

One clear implication is that the youngest Millennials, those we call Unattached and those we call Explorers, are hardly newsless. Their habits are still forming. And how publishers try to reach them should vary. A key challenge for reaching the Unattached, for instance, is to find a way to make the accidental or random encounter happen again, and to find ways to attract the unintended visitor through Facebook to explore what other content is available. A key challenge for reaching Explorers, by contrast, probably involves attracting them with specific areas of interest and news that they want to talk about and share with friends. The social dynamic of news is more important to this group than any other.

Of the four generational segments, the Activists (25-34, highly engaged) are most likely to engage with news regularly. This is particularly true for local publishers, as Activists stand out in part by their connection to and use of local news.

But the Activists represent only 23 percent of all Millennials. To reach the other three-quarters, those in publishing may have to think differently.

The Distracted (also 25-34, but low-energy news consumers) are harder to reach. They do not pay much attention to general interest news. But they are attuned to information that applies directly to their busy lives. Journalists who put in the work to understand the distinct experiences and concerns of the Distracted could certainly produce the kind of news that resonates in the lives of these people. This may mean, for example, better coverage of families, classrooms, and office life, rather than criminals, school boards, and stock exchanges. It does not mean, as it does for Activists, orienting the news toward civic involvement.

Among the youngest cohorts of Millennials, the Unattached (18-24, weak news engagement) seem the hardest to reach with traditional news. But they may be the most attuned to entertainment and popular culture. This group, about a third of all Millennials, prefers video games, music, movies, and friends to seeking out news. BuzzFeed-style publishers can likely be successful here, opening the door with entertaining pop culture content and slipping in some hard news when possible. It's also plausible to hope that many of the Unattached gain interest in news as they age past 25, eventually joining the well-meaning Distracted group or even the highly engaged Activists. Yet, clearly the way to forge a relationship is to create material that is relevant to their lives now. Interestingly, this group, which may in some ways be closest to the classic stereotype of a Millennial, hardly defines the generation.

The Explorers (age 18-24, with high news engagement) are Millennials publishers may reasonably hope to reach at this very young age with an approach that may be more traditional—but should hardly be the full extent of a strategy. This group, though young, has a concern and interest in the world and seeks news about issues that matter. They are heavily absorbed in social media and very participatory in the way they interact with it. And that is part of a motivation for encountering news that they may, to some degree, outgrow if they become more like Activists as they mature and begin to raise families. For now, however, Explorers enjoy news so they can talk about it. They lead the way in the smaller but news-oriented social networks, Twitter and Reddit. And winning them over to your brand at this age could mean they remain loyal readers for decades to come.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

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 5 through February 2, 2015. The survey was funded by API. The API, NORC at the University of Chicago, and Associated Press staff collaborated on all aspects of the study.

The study included multiple modes of data collection. The portion of the survey involving screening for age eligibility and recruitment was completed by telephone, while the main portion of the questionnaire was administered online. The telephone component included only cell phone numbers (no landlines), and used both random-digit-dial (RDD) and age-targeted list sample from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. During recruitment efforts, a total of 6,635 adults provided age information, and 2,297 (35 percent) were deemed eligible because they fell between the ages of 18 and 34. Of those 2,297, a total of 1,759 respondents (77 percent) went on to complete the recruitment phase of the survey, which involved agreeing to receive an invitation for the web survey either by email or text message, and providing one's email address or cell phone number. Of the recruited participants, 1,045 (59 percent) completed the web survey. The final response rate was 14 percent, based on the American Association for Public Opinion Research Response Rate 3 method.

Respondents were offered one small monetary incentive for participating in the telephone portion of the survey, as compensation for phone usage charges, and another small monetary incentive for participating in the web portion of the survey. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on

respondent preference. All telephone recruitments 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 age-targeted list sample was provided by a second vendor, Scientific Telephone Samples. 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 cell phone RDD frame, with a supplemental sample of cell phone numbers targeting adults between the ages of 18 and 34. The targeted sample was pulled from a number of different commercial consumer databases and demographic data.

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 and for no coverage of the population without access to cell phones. Post stratification variables included age, sex, race/ethnicity, region, and education. The weighted data, which thus reflect the U.S. population of 18- to 34-year-old adults, were used for all analyses. The overall margin of error was +/- 3.8 percentage points, including the design effect resulting from the complex sample design.

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).

## QUALITATIVE GROUP INTERVIEWS

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, in collaboration with the American Press Institute, conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with groups of Millennials, age 18-34. Three group interviews were conducted in Chicago, Illinois, on December 11, 2014; two were conducted in San Francisco, California, on January 7, 2015; two were conducted in Oakland, California, on January 7-8, 2015; and three were conducted in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on January 22, 2015.

Select participants in each of the locations also consented to completing follow-up activities. These activities included: 1) a self-reflection, interview, and essay exercise, and 2) a data diary. These exercises were intended to gather additional information about how these Millennials think about news and information, what news and information is important to them, and how they follow a news story of interest.

All participants received a monetary incentive for the discussion and an additional incentive to complete the follow-up activities. With the consent of the participants, all but one of the interviews were videotaped. There was a lead moderator for each group, and additional researchers asked probing questions. While there was a moderator guide to provide some direction, the interviews were meant to simulate a casual conversation to learn more about 1) how Millennials conceptualize news, 2) what topics and types of news Millennials value and why, and 3) how Millennials engage with news—or not—and how this has changed for them over their lifetime.

Across all sites, 17 Millennials between the ages of 18-24, and six between the ages of 25-34, were interviewed. The Chicago interviews took place in a coffee shop downtown. The San Francisco interviews took place in a coffee shop in the Financial District. The Oakland interviews were conducted in a downtown coffee shop. The Fredericksburg interviews took place outside a dining hall in a university building.

### **Chicago, Illinois**

For the Chicago interviews, The AP-NORC Center commissioned a recruiter, FocusScope, to pre-recruit “friend groups” of Millennials, age 18-34. In each group, one participant was initially recruited by FocusScope, and he or she was asked to bring a friend or two to the discussion. The participants were recruited based on age, and to achieve a mix of demographics—income, education, race/ethnicity, and gender. All of the recruited respondents reported that they read, hear, or watch the news at least once a day.

### **Bay Area—San Francisco and Oakland, California**

For the Bay Area interviews conducted in San Francisco and Oakland, AP-NORC commissioned Nichols Research to pre-recruit four friend groups. Again, recruiting was done based on age, a mix of demographic groups were recruited, and all recruited respondents reported that they read, hear, or watch the news at least once a day. In addition, there was an emphasis on finding respondents in San Francisco who identified as being always online and connected, as well as extremely tech-savvy. For the Oakland groups, respondents who were not always online were targeted, and they were not recruited based on the tech-savvy criteria.

### **Fredericksburg, Virginia—University of Mary Washington**

For interviews conducted in Fredericksburg, AP-NORC staff used an intercept approach where participants were recruited onsite at a student center at the University of Mary Washington. Groups of friends were approached and asked if they were available to participate in the interviews in the next half hour. Three groups of participants were recruited this way, two pairs and one group of three.

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## **ABOUT THE MEDIA INSIGHT PROJECT**

The Media Insight Project is a collaboration of the American Press Institute and The AP-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 API, NORC at the University of Chicago, and The Associated Press.

## **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. 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.