

TECHNOLOGY



# Facebook, Social Media Is Where Millennials Get News

BY JULIE VALLONE, FOR INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY  
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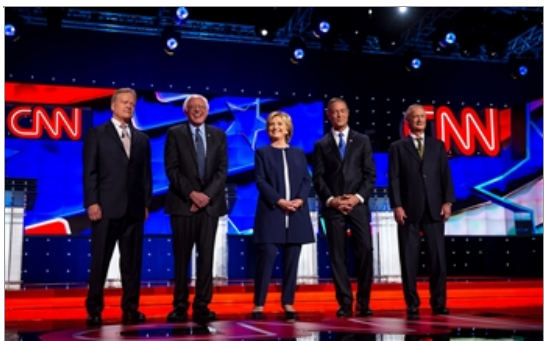
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Chin Lu, 27, doesn't read print newspapers. In fact, she says the only time she reads any printed material (including books and magazines) is when she has to get on a plane and is about to lose her Web connection.

Nor does she tune in to network news.

"I never seek out local TV news, ever. All my media consumption is on the Web, or on the phone," said Lu, who works as a social media strategist at a marketing agency. She also, by the way, graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in . . . mass communications.



CNN tailored its Democratic presidential debate in October (candidates are shown above) to social websites. [View Enlarged Image](#)

Lu's disinterest in traditional media is shared by most millennials, studies have found.

A Pew Research Center study in June on political news found that 61% of millennials (respondents ages 18 to 34) get at least some political news from **Facebook** (NASDAQ:FB), but only 37% watch political news on local

TV.

The percentages are the opposite for baby boomers (ages 51 to 69), with 60% watching local TV, and only 39% getting any political news from Facebook.

In a separate study, this one by the American Press Institute, 85% of millennials surveyed said keeping up with the news was important to them, but most don't go to traditional news providers to get it. Rather, they get their news through social media, often on mobile formats, where they say they can engage with the content.

"People actively navigate and make choices about which sources in their social media feeds they consider to be reliable, and they take other steps of

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participating in news as well, including posting news stories, commenting on them, liking or favorite-ing them, and forwarding them to others," said the report.

### 'Control' Over The News

For the same reasons, many marketing and public relations executives note that millennials, including [business](#) owners in this age group, tend to be less interested in getting coverage in traditional news media than did past generations. That's partly because they don't get their news directly from traditional media, and partly because they want more control over what's said about them.

Veteran marketing consultant Sarah Browne has organized focus groups of millennials for clients targeting this demographic. She said many of the focus group participants weren't familiar with some major network news personalities.

"At least 70% of the particular group I had said they never had seen the evening news, so they didn't know the names of the newscasters, like Tom Brokaw," she said. "They did know Brian Williams, though, because he was on (Jimmy) Fallon ('The Tonight Show')."

In terms of getting coverage, this group knows they have many options, Browne says.

"There are so many opportunities — Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, etc.," she said. "Traditional media is just one."

Joseph Anthony, CEO of New York-based marketing agency Hero, which focuses on millennials, points out that this generation has lived through the advent of social media and, more than other age groups, they understand its value. This makes them less reliant on traditional forms of publicity to determine their success.



Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson participates in a Q&A with Facebook before the Aug. 6 Republican presidential debate. [View Enlarged Image](#)

"They've grown up in a user-generated world where their social influence has been dictated by their own efforts, rather than interest of a third party creating content about them," Anthony said. "They want to be the content publishers themselves."

Laurie Petersen, a former executive editor at AdWeek who has worked for top media

companies for more than three decades, also sees the change in people's attitudes toward traditional news media.

"Social presence is really important to millennials," said Petersen, now a digital media specialist with marketing firm RoseComm, based in Hoboken, N.J. "They're really creating their own follower base and engaging with them, often in real time."

### Media Goes Mobile

The changing news preferences of millennials has not been lost on traditional media, with newspapers and broadcasters moving more news to digital and

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mobile formats.

In October, the **New York Times** (NYSE:NYT) released a memo outlining its strategy for expanding its subscriber base. Its plans included trying out new features, like mobile alerts connected to readers' interests, and other technologies designed to create personalized experiences.

"Our organization was built for the print era and now must be redesigned for the mobile era," the memo states.

Many newspapers are asking their reporters to build their online presence. Last year, the San Francisco Chronicle set up a boot camp to help its journalists learn how to use social media and other digital tools.

The broadcast media is also transforming to attract younger viewers. When CNN hosted the Oct. 13 Democratic presidential debate in Las Vegas, social media played a big part in the network's coverage.

"We wanted to reach new audiences, to make sure we were where those people were, which was on mobile and social," said Samantha Barry, head of social media for CNN, at a recent Web Summit conference.

CNN's coverage on Facebook included event footage and interactive opportunities, such as letting users send in questions for candidates. CNN also tailored debate content for Instagram and Snapchat, shooting its content in vertical, rather than horizontal, video to fit mobile screens better.

Barry says that using social media and mobile as an integral part of the coverage greatly extended the network's reach and impact.

"We turned a two-hour TV event into a two-day trending social conversation," she said.



CNN tailored its Democratic presidential debate in October (candidates are shown above) to social websites. [View Enlarged Image](#)

### Engaging With The News

Lu points to many reasons that she gravitated toward social media, both in her personal life and career. For one, the self-described feminist hasn't been impressed with the way women have been portrayed in news, advertising and entertainment. Social media, she says, offers an opportunity

to change that.

She also likes the way social media provides a platform for every person to get their message out. On **Alphabet's** (NASDAQ:GOOGL) YouTube, for example, everyone can be a star.

"If you have a camera, you just upload it and, hopefully, the quality of your content will get you eyeballs, instead of how much fame, money and connections you already have starting out," she said.

Finally, social media gives her the chance to plug into what's happening in the world.

"On social, it's a bit more engaged consumption than skimming a newspaper or having a TV on in the background while you cook or something," she said. "I like



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to think it's a bit more focused."

She says that she must remind her clients not to ignore older audiences who use traditional media, because they have spending power.

"You just have to meet your audience where they are," she said.

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