

#UseTheNews

Literature study

 journalismlab

Lectoraat journalistiek van de Hogeschool Utrecht

Young people and News 2006 - 2022

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Foreword

Due to digitization and the emergence of social media, young people in the Netherlands are no longer the so-often-mentioned "news consumers of the future," but those of today. Media developments over the past seventeen years have been so profound that no one can take a wait-and-see attitude anymore. Societal concerns about young people's news consumption no longer resolve themselves over time.

Young people have been offered many alternatives to traditional (or mainstream) media since the rise of Facebook and other socials. These also no longer play the main role in their news consumption. Young people have their own definition of news. They seek relevance to their own lives and identities in many more places than other generations ever could. That makes this generation unique.

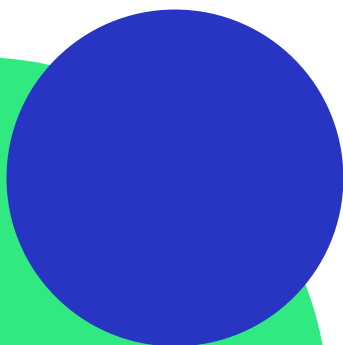
This can be read - in much more detail - in this literature study, commissioned by #UseTheNews Netherlands and conducted by researchers from the Lectoraat Kwaliteitsjournalistiek in Digitale Transitie of the Hogeschool Utrecht (Journalismlab). This study is a first small milestone for #UseTheNews Netherlands in our short existence.

The study, for which nearly eighty sources were reviewed and compared, now provides a clear and measured understanding of what we need to know about the relationship between young people and news. However, it is not just a status update and overview, but above all a call for further thought and action and, where necessary, critical (self)reflection.

I am greatly indebted to Yael de Haan, Sophie Duvetkot, Wiebe de Jong and Camila Valgas of Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. They systematically reviewed many dozens of studies and articles with a readable and usable result that this study has become. Special thanks to Yael who guided this research process in an extremely pleasant way.

I also thank the board of #UseTheNews Netherlands, which recognized the importance of this literature study. Finally, a special thanks to my #UseTheNews colleague, Maja Micudova. Her constructive criticism, creativity and process guidance were crucial in this project.

Patrick Selbach
Director #UseTheNews Nederland
April 2023



Summary

What do we know about how young people view news and what that means for their news consumption and behavior? In this report, we summarize the scientific research conducted from 2006 through 2022 on young people (ages 15-24) and news. The starting date of 2006 was chosen because that is when social media, particularly Facebook, became accessible to anyone over the age of 13.

With digitization and the emergence of social media, the media landscape has changed dramatically over the past two decades, with profound implications for young people's news consumption. Based on a literature review of 76 scholarly empirical articles and policy reports, this study addresses key issues about young people's definition of news. It looks at ways they consume and use news in their daily lives, and at how they experience and evaluate news.

A number of clear trends emerge from the literature review. The first conclusion is that young people have a broad understanding of what news is. They see news as everything that is currently happening in the world and important to their lives. News, according to them, is recent, current and factual.

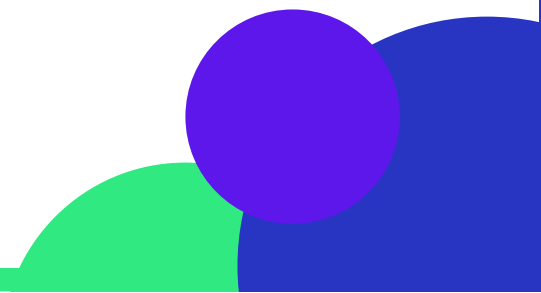
Both news from "mainstream" media (major news organizations such as NOS and Volkskrant), also called the professional media, and from "alternative" media (influencers and news through social media channels such as TikTok, YouTube and Instagram) are considered forms of news by young people.

Compared to mainstream media, alternative media, according to young people, relate more to their personal interests. Moreover, these media help them broaden their horizons. They also feel that these media make often clearer what point of view is being taken, something they see less in mainstream media.

The smartphone is the device on which young people interact with news the most. The themes and topics of news that young people consume are diverse. In addition to so-called lifestyle topics, such as music, movies and celebrities or influencers, many young people are also interested in news and events with a strong mobilizing character or news about ongoing matters, such as the climate crisis.

There is no dominant type of media for young people's news consumption. For example, young people use the Internet and social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube, to consume news. But search engines are also a central route to news for a part of young people.

Young people come into contact with news in different ways. On the one hand, they actively search for news and make conscious choices about what they do and do not consume ("news-à-la-carte"). On the other hand, young people assume that they do not need to actively seek out news because it will find them anyway ("news-finds-me"). At the same time, this behavior does not necessarily imply that they are uninformed or uninterested.



The social aspect of news is crucial for young people. They want to be informed about news so they can form their own opinions about important issues and participate in conversations with their social network. As a result, their news consumption is heavily influenced by the people in their social networks: friends, parents, teachers, influencers and experts they follow online.

For young people, evaluating news is not always based on a rational, measured choice. Rather, they rely on their own gut feelings. The large news offer means that young people often experience news as overwhelming and find it difficult to determine its reliability.

Despite the fact that young people think they are quite capable of recognizing fake news, it appears that they are more inclined to believe and spread fake news. In addition, they have difficulty understanding the mechanisms behind Google and social media algorithms.

While this literature study provides insights into important trends regarding young people and news, it is worth remembering that young news users cannot be viewed as one homogeneous group. It is striking that few studies explicitly examine or name the differences between young people, while there may be a variety of factors that influence how young people view and interact with news, such as age, gender, social class, political views, influence of parents and teachers, and so on. It is important to take this more into account in follow-up research on this topic.

Moreover, there are a number of other questions that remain unanswered in existing research. Are there certain lifestyles that young people adopt that create differences in their perceptions of news? What elements of news cause young people to perceive it as overwhelming? How do young people view the distinction between mainstream and alternative media? How do young people understand the role of algorithms when searching online for a specific topic or answer?

Answers to these questions and more insight into the Dutch context specifically, requires follow-up research into young people's underlying reasons, motivations and behaviors.

Finally, the findings of this literature study bring certain implications for news organizations. Although there is no quick fix to create more engagement between young people and news media, based on research it can be ascertained that news organizations could take two suggestions into account.

Young people appreciate it when news stories address diverse perspectives and opinions. In addition, it is important to young people that news relates to their daily lives because it helps them develop their own points of view and discuss news with their social network.

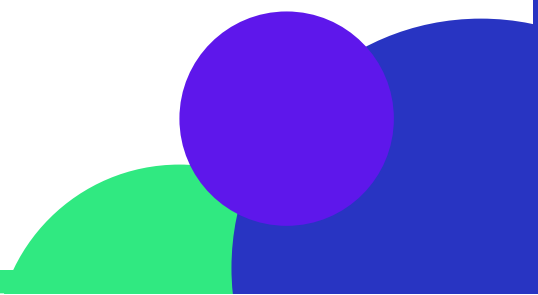


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1. Introduction

Young people in 2023 are growing up in a completely different media world than in the past. Where their parents and grandparents had a choice of only a few newspapers and radio and television channels, today there is an enormous media offer. With the emergence of social media, there is overload of news available. Moreover, the news can be accessed 24 hours a day.

Following news is seen as essential to being a well-informed citizen, making it an important prerequisite for democracy. But how do young people find the forest through the trees with so much information available? What is relevant and reliable and can they appreciate it? Or do they drop out altogether?

Nowadays young people live not only with media, but in media.⁽¹⁾ At the same time, there is a general perception that young people have little interest in news, find the news boring and prefer to scroll through their feeds on social media on their phones. This literature review reviews seventeen years of research on young people and news to examine how young people define, consume, experience and evaluate news.

There is a lot of talk about young people and how they view news. Every year, reports and scholarly publications appear that take a close look at this topic. This literature study provides insight into the scientific knowledge that exists on this topic, but which has not previously been brought together in this way.

How do young people define news? How do they find news? With what perceptions do they view news? And what has changed in young people's use of news over the past seventeen years due to digitalization? Getting answers to these questions is more important than ever. The time to consider young people only as the future news consumers is over. They are, after all, today's news users.

This literature study provides insights into all the essential questions surrounding young people and news using scientific empirical articles and empirical policy reports from 2006 to 2022. The method is discussed in the next chapter. It then discusses the main findings with regard to the following three questions:

1. How do young people define news?
2. How do young people use news?
3. How do young people experience and evaluate news?

¹Deuze, M. (2012). *Media Life*. New Jersey: Wiley

2. Method

Between October 2022 and January 2023, researchers from the Lectoraat Kwaliteitsjournalistiek in Digitale Transitie of Hogeschool Utrecht (JournalismLab) conducted an academic literature review of empirical research on young people and news on behalf of #UseTheNews Netherlands. The main goal of this research is to get a better grip on how young people view news and what that means for their news use and behavior.

2.1 Data collection

The researchers systematically searched for scientific empirical articles and empirical policy reports surrounding young people and news from 2006 to 2022. The year 2006 is the starting point because that is when social media, especially Facebook, became accessible to anyone over the age of 13.

Social media play an important role in the transformation from offline to online news consumption and changing news consumption patterns of young people.⁽²⁾ This literature review provides insight into those developments and the corresponding consequences for news consumption and behavior of young people.

The term "young people" is broadly defined in academic studies. In several studies, it begins at age 12 and ends at age 30. In this literature review, researchers focused primarily on the target group of young people between the ages of 15 and 24. This is because the news consumption of young people under 15 is still largely driven by parents, caregivers and teachers at school.⁽³⁾ From the age of 15, the influence of friends and the environment becomes stronger.⁽⁴⁾ In addition, the high school years are crucial for the formation of critical thinking.⁽⁵⁾ In addition, studies related to young adults and college students were included.

The researchers applied a so-called triangulation method by using different search strategies.⁽⁶⁾ First, a search was conducted in the scientific database EBSCOhost. Next, a search was also conducted in Google Scholar. In both cases, the following search terms: 'youth', 'teenagers' and 'adolescents' in combination with 'news' and 'social media' were searched. Since there is a specific focus on research on young people in the Netherlands, a search was also conducted for the terms in Dutch: 'youth', 'teenagers' and 'young adults' in combination with 'news' and 'social media'. Following these searches, the researchers again searched for relevant studies in the most prominent academic journals within media and journalism, including Journalism, Journalism Studies, Media, Culture & Society and Digital Journalism. Finally, using a so-called snowball method, the researchers collected other relevant publications that were named in key studies.

2 Boczkowski, P., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. (2018). "News comes across when I'm in a moment of leisure": Understanding the practices of incidental news consumption on social media. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3523–3539; Collao, K. (2022). *The Kaleidoscope: Tracking Young People's relationships with News*. Craft & Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism; Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C., Eddy, K., & Nielsen, R. (2021). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2022*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
3 Lindell, J., & Sartoretto, P. (2018). Young people, class and the news: Distinction, socialization and moral sentiments. *Journalism Studies*, 19(14), 2042–2061.
4 Klopfenstein Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age": Four dimensions of youths' news consumption. *Journalism*, 14648849221123385.
5 Ku, K. Y., Kong, Q., Song, Y., Deng, L., Kang, Y., & Hu, A. (2019). What predicts adolescents' critical thinking about real-life news? *The roles of social media news consumption and news media literacy*. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 33, 100570.
6 Boeijs, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. Sage Publications; Dundar, Y., & Fleeman, N. (2014). Developing my search strategy and applying inclusion criteria. In: Boland A., Cherry G. and Dickson E. (eds). *Doing a Systematic Review: A Student's Guide* (pp. 35–62). London: SAGE.

Using the above search strategies, 76 sources were eventually collected, including 65 scientific articles and 11 policy reports, related to young people and news. Most of the studies were conducted in Europe, particularly including the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden, and the United States.

2.2 Data analysis

After collecting the scientific empirical articles and empirical policy reports, the researchers set to work using what is known as an iterative process. This literally means a process of repetition. The purpose of this process is not so much to create a summary of existing studies, but to look for the main concepts, patterns and cross-links in the literature.(7)

The first step in analyzing the data involved extensive reading of the articles and reports. A number of recurring themes were then identified. These are the following overarching themes: news consumption, news experience, news evaluation, political and civic engagement, and media literacy. Based on these five themes, the researchers searched the literature for differences and similarities. (8)

Based on this, a number of patterns and interrelationships were again identified that allowed the researchers to make more generalizing statements. The main patterns were recorded in memos, creating a "chain of reasoning."(9)

Throughout this process, the researchers met regularly to review the preliminary analysis with each other. This analysis forms the basis of this literature study that focuses on providing insights about a younger generation of news users. These insights can be a starting points for journalistic organizations in thinking about ways how to reach and engage young people.

7 Webster, J. & Watson, J. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: writing a literature review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2), pp. xiii-xxiii.

8 Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

9 Cutcliffe, J., & McKenna, H. (2004). Expert qualitative researchers and the use of audit trails. *Journal of advanced nursing*, Vol. 45(2), pp. 126-135.

3. Findings

In this chapter, we will discuss the findings which emerged from the literature study. First, we will discuss how young people define news. Then we will show in what way(s) young people use news in their daily lives. Finally, we will discuss how young people experience and evaluate news.

3.1 How do young people define news?

In most studies that have been conducted on young people and news, the definition of news is taken for granted.⁽¹⁰⁾ The researchers determine in advance what news means.

This is particularly evident in quantitative studies, such as surveys, in which young people are asked how they define news based on predetermined categories. For example, young people are shown a list of news brands or platforms and then asked to rank them by personal preference.⁽¹¹⁾ In qualitative surveys, the question is often skipped and the focus is more on how young people use and evaluate news.⁽¹²⁾

Another factor is that young people seem to find it difficult to define news in a unified way. Changes in the news landscape have led some researchers to question whether news should be defined at all: "The very genre of 'news' has come to an end."⁽¹³⁾

Because young people are in an age where they are exposed to news at all times of the day and through a variety of channels, it seems outdated to ask whether or not young people follow the news.⁽¹⁴⁾ Other researchers also indicate that news can be anything.⁽¹⁵⁾

In the studies where the definition of news is explicitly mentioned, it emerges that young people have a broad understanding of what news is.⁽¹⁶⁾ By news, they mean anything that is currently happening in the world and is important to their lives. According to young people, news is something that is recent, current and factual. It also brings people together and is part of the conversation of the day.⁽¹⁷⁾ What young people do distinguish is if news is "hard" or "soft".⁽¹⁸⁾

10 Condeza, R., Bachmann, I., & Mujica, C. (2014). News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents: Interests, Motivations and Perceptions on the News Agenda. *Comunicar*, 22(43), 55–64; Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018b). New Media, New Relationship to Participation? A Closer Look at Youth News Repertoires and Political Participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 95(1), 192–212.

11 Drok, N., Hermans, L., & Kats, K. (2018). Decoding youth DNA: The relationship between social engagement and news interest, news media use and news preferences of Dutch millennials. *Journalism*, 19(5), 699–717.

12 Lancaster, K., Hughes, C. E., & Spicer, B. (2012). News media consumption among young Australians: Patterns of use and attitudes towards media reporting. *Media International Australia*, 143(1), 16–27; Nygren, T., & Guath, M. (2019). Swedish teenagers' difficulties and abilities to determine digital news credibility. *NORDICOM Review*, 40(1), 23–42.

13 Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albæk, E., & de Vreese, C. H. (2022). Anything Goes? Youth, News, and Democratic Engagement in the Roaring 2020s. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(3), 557–568, p. 560.

14 Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albæk, E., & de Vreese, C. H. (2022). Anything Goes?

15 Swart, J. (2021a). Experiencing algorithms: How young people understand, feel about, and engage with algorithmic news selection on social media. *Social media + society*, 7(2), 20563051211008828; Swart, J. (2021b). Tactics of news literacy: How young people access, evaluate, and engage with news on social media. *New Media & Society*, 0(0); Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation': Early adolescents' views on news and news literacy. *Journalism*, 23(4), 806–822.

16 Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy: A Focus Group Study of How Teenagers Define News and Why They Consume It. *Electronic News*, 10(3), 143–160; Edgerly, S. (2017). Making sense and drawing lines: Young adults and the mixing of news and entertainment. *Journalism Studies*, 18(8), 1052–1069; Head A. J., Wihbey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News: Five Takeaways for Educators, Journalists, and Librarians. *Project Information Literacy*;

Klopfenstein Frei Frei (2022). "It's a matter of age"; Swart, 2021b. Tactics of news literacy; Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations? How young social media users in Switzerland evaluate the functions and quality of news.

The International Journal of Press/Politics, 27(3), 609–628.

17 Swart (2021b). Tactics of news literacy.

18 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope; Craft (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really": Young people's experiences

of social media as a source of news about public affairs. *Social media + society*, 1(2); Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation';

Yanardagoglu, E. (2020). 'I stopped reading newspapers because of the internet!': News consumption behaviour of youth in Greece and Turkey.

Journal of Digital Media & Policy.

For example, Sveningsson(19) conducted a study in which young people in Sweden were asked to keep a media diary. This method showed that these young people consider news appearing on social media less 'hard' compared to news appearing on news organizations' websites.

As media become more ubiquitous, it also becomes more difficult to define them.(20) Thus, both "mainstream" and "alternative" media may be considered news organizations by young people. Young people report using both because it helps them broaden their view. Since "alternative" media is a relatively new phenomenon, young people do not yet seem to have a unified view on it.

However, there are also different views among researchers about the distinction between "mainstream" media, also called professional media, and "alternative" media.(21) The Digital News Report 2021 distinguishes between these two types of media by contrasting different news brands. By mainstream media, for example, one can think of major news concerns such as NOS, RTL News, NRC, Trouw in the Dutch context and BBC, CNN, The Guardian and New York Times in the international context.

What these mainstream concerns have in common is that they say they bring factual news, although young people consider this to be one-sided.(22) Young people do not write off mainstream media, but supplement it with a counter voice from the alternative media. For the Dutch context, these include influence channels, news via social media channels such as TikTok, YouTube and Instagram, as well as De Andere Krant, Gezond Verstand and Café Weltschmerz.(23)

Finally, in order for something to qualify as news, according to young people, it must be important and relevant.(24) Young people's definition of news is in a way in line with the definition as it has traditionally existed: "News is news if it is relevant."(25) The only question is what exactly young people consider relevant. Do they label something as news when it is relevant to society or when it is relevant to the individual?

In general, there seems to be little difference between the different ages of young people and their definition of news. A 2007 study by Costera Meijer does suggest that the distinction between news and entertainment is clearer for young people aged 20 to 25 compared to those aged 15 to 20.(26)

In addition, research among young people in Switzerland shows that younger participants (12 to 14 years old) have a more open attitude about what is news compared to older participants (18 to 20 years old). For example, younger participants also refer to public transportation schedules or weather forecasts as news. The researchers argue that the older the participants get, the more traditionally they define the concept of news.(27)

19 Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really".

20 Ederly, S. (2017). Making sense and drawing lines.

21 Macek, J., Macková, A., Pavlopoulos, V., Kalmus, V., Elavsky, C. M., & Šerek, J. (2018). Trust in alternative and professional media.

22 Eggink, G., & Drok, N. (2020). Meten met twee maten. Kenniscentrum Media, Hogeschool Windesheim.

23 Commissariaat voor de Media (2021).

24 Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation'.

25 Klopfenstein Frei Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age", 13.

26 Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity: How young people experience the news. *Journalism studies*, 8(1), 96-116.

27 Klopfenstein Frei Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age". 28 Evens, T., Henderickx, A., & De Marez, L. (2021). Generation stream: the audiovisual repertoire of teenagers. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 65(2).

3.2 How do young people consume news?

Now that we have a better understanding of how young people define news, the question arises of when, in what way and for what reason they consume news. Below, we first discuss what devices young people use and how that has changed with digitization. Then we address the type of media young people use to find news and the two different ways they can interact with news. Finally, we pay attention to what type of content young people use and under what circumstances they share it.

3.2.1 Devices

Young people consume news on multiple different devices and not just the smartphone as is sometimes thought. A survey of Flemish youth between the ages of 13 and 18 found that youth are consuming audiovisual news content through multiple channels.(28) Although the smartphone has become more prominent over the past 15 years, on a global level, teens are just as likely to change platforms (e.g., television) if it suits them.(29) Young people exhibit these "second screening activities" more than older generations.(30)

In Boczkowski et al.'s study of smartphone use among 18 to 29-year-olds, young people see the phone "as another hand (...), that is more convenient than opening a computer or turning the television on."(31) This shows that the smartphone has become an integral part of young people's lives. Nevertheless, television is still important to young people.(32) Not necessarily for following politics or economic news, but rather for watching sports and following events with a company rather than alone.(33)

The choice between the type of medium or device young people use is closely related to parental choice.(34) Research in Switzerland shows that especially teenagers aged 12-14 are very dependent on their parents in terms of news use, also because of restrictions imposed by parents.(35) By the group of 15-17-year-olds, this is already diminishing and gradually young people choose more and more independently from their parents. From that age, young people are more receptive to the opinions of their peers. They inform each other about the news through social media, for example through Whatsapp.(36) The recommendation of news sources by teachers at school also plays a role in their news consumption.(37)

29 Yanardağoğlu, E. (2021). 'Just the way my generation reads the news': News consumption habits of youth in Turkey and the UK. *Global Media and Communication*, 17(2), 149–166.; Berthelsen, R., & Hamelaers, M. (2021). Meet today's young news users: an exploration of how young news users assess which news providers are worth their while in today's high-choice news landscape. *Digital Journalism*, 9(5), 619–635.; Boczkowski, P., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. (2018). "News comes across when I'm in a moment of leisure"; Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Klopfenstein Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age"; Peters, C., Christian Schroeder, K., Lehaff, J., & Vulpius, J. (2022). News as They Know It: Young Adults' Information Repertoires in the Digital Media Landscape. *Digital Journalism*, 10(1), 62–86.

30 Lowenstein-Barkai, H., & Lev-on, A. (2022). News videos consumption in an age of new media: a comparison between adolescents and adults. *Journal of Children & Media*, 16(1), 78–94.

31 Boczkowski, P., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. (2018). "News comes across when I'm in a moment of leisure".

32 Qayyum, M., Williamson, K., Liu, Y. H., & Hider, P. (2010). Investigating the news seeking behavior of young adults. *Australian academic & research libraries*, 41(3), 178–191.

33 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope; Evens, T., Henderickx, A., & De Marez, L. (2021). Generation stream; Abbasi, N., & Huang, D. (2020). Digital media literacy: Social media use for news consumption among teenagers in Pakistan. *Global Media Journal*, 18(35), 1–7.

34 Edgerly, S., Thorson, K., Thorson, E., Vraga, E., & Bode, L. (2018a). Do parents still model news consumption? Socializing news use among adolescents in a multi-device world. *New Media & Society*, 20(4), 1263–1281; Lindell, J., & Sartoretto, P. (2018). Young people, class and the news; Shehata, A. (2016). News Habits Among Adolescents: The Influence of Family Communication on Adolescents' News Media Use — Evidence From a Three Wave Panel Study. *Mass Communication & Society*, 19(6), 758–781; Yanardağoğlu, E. (2021). 'Just the way my generation reads the news'.

35 Klopfenstein Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age".

36 Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter? The assessment of information sources in teenagers navigation regimes. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*; Herrero-Diz, P., Conde-Jiménez, J., & Reyes de Cózar, S. (2020). Teens' Motivations to Spread Fake News on WhatsApp. *Social Media & Society*, 6(3); Swart, J. (2021b). Tactics of news literacy.

37 Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter?; Lindell, J., & Sartoretto, P. (2018). Young people, class and the news.

3.2.2 Type of media

Over the past 15 years, there have been many changes in the type of media young people use to consume news. Until the introduction of the smartphone around 2010, television still played a prominent role and, to a lesser extent, newspapers.(38) Since 2006, young people have been using more news via the Internet and social media.(39) First Facebook, later other social media. Which type of social media depends on what is on offer at the time. For example, in the UK, Facebook has fallen out of favor with young people and is now seen more as an "organization tool."(40) Instagram has replaced Facebook, but is not the platform of choice to consume news. This is also the case in the Netherlands.(41)

In studies about the social media use of young people in twenty different countries, researchers find that children mainly use TikTok and YouTube.(42) Teenagers use Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube. Facebook also emerges as an adult application in this study. In addition, young people see Twitter, Google News and Apple News as platforms where news is gathered, known as news aggregators.(43) These news aggregators are used by about 10 percent in the under-34 group.(44) However, the extent to which teens and 20-somethings within this group use news aggregators is unknown.

In many cases, young people do not primarily use social media to look up news, but primarily to interact with each other. They do not actively search for news on these social media, but are pointed to it by peers(45) or encounter it by chance while checking their feed. The latter is called the "incidental exposure" effect.(46)

Many young people trust their friends, parents and acquaintances more than professional journalists or the established media.(47) As a result, they may rely on the judgment of their friends as to whether specific news topics deserve their attention. Similarly, Costera Meijer points out that young people are less interested in "news" and information as a goal in itself than as a source of talking points, a sense of community and a sense of meaning in their lives.(48)

So while consuming news is not the main purpose of following social media channels, it may cause young people to stumble upon news through social media. For example, an international study of English, American and Brazilian youth found that through social media, young people informed themselves about Black Lives Matter and climate change.(49)

38 Kim, M. (2019). Parental Influence on Adolescent Preference for Television Public Affairs Content: A South Korean Panel Study. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(2), 497-515; Lancaster, K., Hughes, C. E., & Spicer, B. (2012). News media consumption among young Australians; Rosengard, D., Tucker-McLaughlin, M., & Brown, T. (2014). Students and social news: How college students share news through social media. *Electronic news*, 8(2), 120-137; Graybeal, G. M. (2009). Want Young Readers? All it takes is Money, Time, Staff and Space : a Resource-Based View of Newspapers' Strategies For Luring Kids and Teens to News. *ESSACHESS*, 2(1), 127- 149; Yanardagoglu, E. (2020). 'I stopped reading newspapers because of the internet!'; York, C., & Scholl, R. (2015). Youth Antecedents to News Media Consumption: Parent and Youth Newspaper Use, News Discussion, and Long-Term News Behavior. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 92(3), 681-699

39 Abdullah, N., Hassan, I., Fazil Ahmad, M., Hassan, N. A., & Ismail, M. M. (2021). Social media, youths and political participation in Malaysia: A review of literature. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Forthcoming.

40 Galan, L., Osseman, J., Parker, T., & Taylor, M. (2019). How young people consume news and the implications for mainstream media. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

41 Commissariaat voor de Media. (2021). Digital News Report: Nederland 2021.

42 Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albak, E., & de Vreese, C. H. (2022). Anything Goes? Youth, News, and Democratic Engagement in the Roaring 2020s.

43 Galan, L., Osseman, J., Parker, T., & Taylor, M. (2019). How young people consume news and the implications for mainstream media; Peters, C., Christian Schroder, K., Lehaff, J., & Vulpius, J. (2022). News as They Know It; MPFS. (2022). JIM-Studie 2022. Jugend, Information, Medien; The Media Insight Project. (2022). Knowing the News: How Gen Z and Millennials get information on essential topics.

44 Commissariaat voor de Media. (2021). Digital News Report.

45 Marchi, R., & Clark, L. (2021). Social media and connective journalism: The formation of counterpublics and youth civic participation. *Journalism*, 22(2), 285-302.

46 Bergström, A., & Jervelycke Belfrage, M. (2018). News in social media: Incidental consumption and the role of opinion leaders. *Digital journalism*, 6(5), 583-598; Antunovic, D., Parsons, P., & Cooke, T. R. (2018). 'Checking' and googling: Stages of news consumption among young adults. *Journalism*, 19(5), 632-648; Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope; Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018b). New Media, New Relationship to Participation?; Nelisse, P. (2022). The Future of News: An analysis of developments, scenarios and initiatives to increase the value of news in 2030.

47 Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Lindell, J., & Sartoretto, P. (2018). Young people, class and the news: Distinction, socialization and moral sentiments.

48 Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity.

49 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope.

While news consumption through social media is undoubtedly a common daily habit in young people's lives, there are also non-adopters of social media.(50) This small group of young people generally has a less stable financial situation, more fragmented educational paths and less parental and social support than social media users.

Search engines such as Google are the central route to news for many young people.(51) The reason for this is that Google provides a much wider range of news than other channels. Moreover, there is a choice; you can choose from different results.(52)

In the Netherlands, 38 percent of young people use a search engine to go to a news website.(53) Research in Denmark also shows that search engines are "vehicles of intentional knowledge-seeking."(54) The intention to search for news is thus greater through search engines than through social media. Based on keywords, young people actively search for news, and have learned to accept Google's authority.(55) Google is known to them as a medium that provides accurate and reliable news. Nevertheless, young people lack knowledge and critical evaluation of the mechanisms behind Google's algorithm.(56)

But in the end, several researchers conclude that there is no dominant type of media for young people's news consumption.(57) A study in the United States shows that video, images and audio are attractive to young people. The combination of multimedia makes young people feel they have a choice.(58)

The type of media used depends on its purpose. It may be to watch something shocking, bizarre or funny, out of personal interest or because you want to be well informed.(59) Research among young people between the ages of 18 and 30 from Brazil, the United States and the United Kingdom shows that they often have an unerring sense of which type of media is appropriate for which specific purpose.(60)

3.2.3 Strategies for engaging with news

There are two ways young people can get in touch with news. First is the so-called "news-finds-me" way: young people come into contact with news without having searched for it. Young people receive news via friends or family or stumble upon news via their social media profiles - while scrolling.(61) Research in the Netherlands shows that few young people have news apps installed on their phones. (62)

50 Bobkowski, P., & Smith, J. (2013). Social media divide: characteristics of emerging adults who do not use social network websites. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(6), 771–781.

51 MPFS. (2022). JIM-Studie 2022.

52 Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?.

53 Commissariaat voor de Media. (2021). Digital News Report.

54 Peters, C., Christian Schröder, K., Lehaff, J., & Vulpius, J. (2022). News as They Know It. 55 Davies, H. (2018). Learning to Google: Understanding classed and gendered practices when young people use the Internet for research. *New Media & Society*, 20(8), 2764–2780.

56 Davies, H. (2018). Learning to Google.

57 Head A. J., Whibey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News. Kleemans, M., & Eggink, G. (2016). Understanding news: the impact of media literacy education on teenagers' news literacy. *Journalism Education*, 5(1), 74–88.; Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really"; Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation'; Livingstone, S. (2007). The Challenge of Engaging Youth Online: Contrasting Producers' and Teenagers' Interpretations of Websites. *European Journal of Communication*, 22(2), 165–184.

58 Vogels, E., Gelles-Watnick, R., en Massarat, N. (2022). Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022. Pew Research Center.

59 Baumgartner, J., & Morris, J. S. (2006). The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth. *American Politics Research*, 34(3), 341–367.; Berthelsen, R., & Hameleers, M. (2021). Meet today's young news users; Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity". *Journal of communication inquiry*, 36(3), 246–262.; Condeza, R., Bachmann, I., & Mujica, C. (2014). News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents; Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity; Huang, E. (2009). The causes of youths' low news consumption and strategies for making youths happy news consumers. *Convergence*, 15(1), 105–122.

60 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope.

61 Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter?.

62 Bobkowski, P., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. (2018). "News comes across when I'm in a moment of leisure"; Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016).

Elements of News Literacy; Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really".

62 Swart, J. (2021a). Experiencing algorithms.

The "news-finds-me" principle shows that young people prefer to consume news sent by friends via YouTube, Instagram, or Whatsapp. Why search for news yourself when it comes to you?

A second, more active way in which young people interact with news is the phenomenon called "news-à-la-carte".⁶³ Like this young people do not consume the news completely, but make conscious choices in what they do and do not consume. They "snack" on a bit of everything.⁶⁴

For example, a study in Sweden asked young people to keep a media diary which showed that they mainly read headlines and short articles.⁶⁵ Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink investigated this fragmented way of looking for news in the period between 2004 and 2014 and saw the trend only growing due to social media.⁶⁶ This is also because the quantity of news has increased. Although young people snack a lot, it appears that news that really interest them do end up on their "menu."⁶⁷

3.2.4 Types of news users

The way young people interact with news is closely related to the type of news users they are. Collao⁶⁸, based on a survey of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 from Brazil, the United States and the United Kingdom, distinguishes three types of news users:

1. 'The Hobbyists/Dutifuls' consume news because they are intrinsically interested or because they feel they need to stay informed as good citizens.
2. 'The Main Eventers' are pragmatically minded and feel a need to monitor daily developments because it can affect them. Unlike the 'Hobbyist/Dutiful,' these news users are not intrinsically motivated.
3. 'The Disengaged' avoid much of the news, although they do keep up with the highly necessary.

This typology shows that most young people consume news to a greater or lesser extent. This has to do with the fact that young people want to be able to participate in the conversation of the day.⁶⁹ Indeed, young people are - no less than older generations - politically engaged.⁷⁰ A study of American adolescents aged 13-17 shows that social media makes these teens well informed about what is going on in the world. That they "snack" on news does not diminish their involvement, according to the researchers.⁷¹

On the other hand, research shows that there is news avoidance among a small group of young people. News avoidance is a way for young people to protect themselves from the overload of information that often focuses on what is not going well in the world.

63 Antunovic, D., Parsons, P., & Cooke, T. R. (2018). 'Checking' and googling; Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018b). New Media, New Relationship to Participation?; Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity".

64 Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity; Yanardağoğlu, E. (2021). 'Just the way my generation reads the news'.

65 Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really".

66 Costera Meijer, I., & Kormelink, T. G. (2014). Checking, Sharing, Clicking and Linking. Changing Patterns of News Use Between 2004 and 2014; Digital Journalism.

67 Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalman, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation'.

68 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope.

69 Condeza, R., Bachmann, I., & Mujica, C. (2014). News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents.

70 Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins: Investigating how marginalized teens use digital media for political participation. *New Media & Society*, 0(0).

71 Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins.

Particularly during the corona epidemic, researchers saw young people starting to avoid the news en masse.(72) For this group, good citizenship does not necessarily mean following the news; working or going to school is good enough.(73)

American research among young people shows that half of 12- to 17-year-olds try to avoid the news. (74) The question, however, is whether the more polarized society in the United States compares well with Dutch society. For example, Dutch youth show relatively high trust in the media compared to other countries.(75) That said, trust in the media fell among young people aged between 18 and 24 from 56% in 2018) to 34% in 2022.(76)

In addition, there is a difference between age groups in the level of interest and engagement with the news. In the Dutch context, young people in the 12-16 age group show little intrinsic interest in news. (77) There is a passive way of seeking news and little critical evaluation of news among these young people. Earlier research by Costera Meijer and more recent research by Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink shows a similar pattern.(78)

3.2.5 Content of news

The specific content of news that young people consume is diverse. They are interested in news stories, especially when they feel a sense of urgency. Live broadcasts where breaking news is delivered make young people feel that important information is being conveyed.(79) Video, images and audio attract more young people. The combination of multimedia makes young people feel they have a choice.(80) In addition, whether it is "hard" or "soft" news does not necessarily matter to young people. It should be relevant to them.(81) For example, because the news relates to their personal interests or because it is exciting. Especially news that directly relates or has consequences for their daily lives attracts the attention of young people.

In a comparative study in Turkey and the United Kingdom, for example, it was found that compared to young people in Istanbul, young people in London were much more likely to look for news about the Brexit.(82) Indeed, that development affected studying abroad, vacations and their future.

A number of studies show that young people are interested in topics related to lifestyle, including music, movies and celebrities and influencers. In addition, political topics are perceived as interesting by a portion of young people.(83) For example, a survey of young people between the ages of 20 and 25 in Switzerland(84) showed that they are interested in news and events with a strong mobilizing character, such as the climate crisis and the Friday for Future Movement.

72 Cotter, K. & Thomson, K. (2022). Judging Value in a Time of Information Cacophony: Young Adults, Social media, and the Messiness of do-it-Yourself Expertise

73 Edgerly, S. (2017). Making sense and drawing lines.

74 Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maks, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins.

75 Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albaek, E., & de Vreese, C. H. (2022). Anything Goes?

76 Nelisse, P. (2022). The Future of News.

77 Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalman, S. (2022). 'We are a neeeew generation'.

78 Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity; Costera Meijer, I., & Kormelink, T. G. (2014). *Checking, Sharing, Clicking and Linking*.

79 Tuggle, C., Huffman, S., & Rosengard, D. (2007). Reporting live from the scene: enough to attract the 18–24 audience? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51(1), 58–72.

80 Vogels, E., Gelles-Watnick, R., en Massarat, N. (2022). *Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022*. Pew Research Center.

81 Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maks, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Head A. J., Wihbey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News; Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?

82 Yanardagoglu, E. (2020). 'I stopped reading newspapers because of the internet!'

83 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land: Youth and news consumption in Europe. *Journalism Studies*, 16(1), 115-132; Carter, C. (2009). Growing up Corporate: News, Citizenship, and Young People Today.; Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maks, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy.; Drok, N., Hermans, L., & Kats, K. (2018). Decoding youth DNA: The relationship between social engagement and news interest, news media use and news preferences of Dutch millennials; Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018b). New Media, New Relationship to Participation? A Closer Look at Youth News Repertoires and Political Participation; Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins: Investigating how marginalized teens use digital media for political participation.

84 Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?

News stories about dramatic events, such as the murder of George Floyd in the United States, also pique the interest of these young people. Such events matter to this generation because it motivates them to be actively involved. It also leads to greater engagement with the news and discussions with peers.(85)

The five-year Dutch Monitor Jongeren en Nieuws 2021 (86) shows that young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in the Netherlands are more interested in news from close by (their own city or village and the Netherlands) than news from far away (Europe and the world). The differences in news interest of teenagers and twentysomethings are small, according to this study. The 'latest news' is something that all young people are most interested in. However, teens are more interested in "lifestyle and fashion" and "film, music and entertainment," which the researchers refer to as "lighter" topics.

3.2.6 Sharing news

Young people live in social media and sharing news is part of their identity formation.(87) News and identity have traditionally been linked, but nowadays, with the emergence of social media, anyone can follow and see. The accessibility of news and information can be a driving force and lead to increased engagement.(88) Research shows that American youth expressed their commitment to local environmental issues by sharing, for example, photos, personal stories, links, memes and videos.(89)

Young people have become extra sensitive to what they actually share because everyone can see. Role models have always been important to young people, but the concept of influencers is a fairly new phenomenon. They have a prominent place in the world of young people.(90) Among themselves, young people share the views of these influencers, as these influencers are a kind of "discussion catalysts". They set the agenda for which news has an important function.

Most news is shared among people of the same age, called peers. A study of young people in Switzerland shows that news is shared online, but discussions continue offline.(91) It is by sharing news that young people become more activist. Research from Sweden shows a comparative pattern: online news sharing has a threshold lowering effect to become politically active.(92)

For the marginalized youth, such as immigrants or youth from a lower socioeconomic class, sharing news has an empowering effect. Their voices are heard more strongly than before.(93)

Despite the overload of news and overwhelming diversity in devices and types of media, international research shows that young people do want to be in control of what they consume. They make their own choices about what they do and do not consume and what they do and do not

85 Condeza, R., Bachmann, I., & Mujica, C. (2014). News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents: Interests, Motivations and Perceptions on the News Agenda. Klopfenstein Frei, N., Wyss, V., Gnach, A., & Weber, W. (2022). "It's a matter of age": Four dimensions of youths' news consumption; Marchi, R., & Clark, L. (2021). Social media and connective journalism: The formation of counterpublics and youth civic participation; Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?

86 Drok, N., & Duiven, R. (2021). Monitor Jongeren en Nieuws.

87 Courtois, C., Mechant, P., Paulussen, S., & De Marez, L. (2012). The triple articulation of media technologies in teenage media consumption. *New Media & Society*, 14(3), 401-420; Ward, L., Day, K., & Thomas, K. (2010). Confronting the assumptions: exploring the nature and predictors of black adolescents' media use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(1), 69-86.

88 Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins.

89 Marchi, R., & Clark, L. (2021). Social media and connective journalism.

90 Bergström, A., & Jervelycke Belfrage, M. (2018). News in social media; Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albæk, E., & de Vreese, C. H. (2022). Anything Goes?: Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter?

91 Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?

92 Ekström, M., & Shehata, A. (2018). Social media, porous boundaries, and the development of online political engagement among young citizens. *New Media & Society*, 20(2), 740-759.

93 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land: Youth and news consumption in Europe.

share. Most important measure is that news is relevant to them. Relevance is however a broad term. Fun and exciting may be enough for some young people. For others, it should lead to a better understanding of the world. The "snacking" of news can be better understood in this context, since there is so much news coming at young people. They decide in no time whether or not to consume certain news. But does that make them less conscious news consumers? That remains to be seen. Many studies show that young people are engaged and well aware of what is going on in the world. (94)

3.3 How do young people experience and evaluate news?

3.3.1 Perception of news

Young people often find news negative, depressing and uninspiring.(95) They experience a mix of hopelessness and optimism about the possibility of change in the face of world problems.(96) At the same time, the majority feel that news is important in a democracy, and that engagement with the news is part of good citizenship.(97) For this reason, they feel that news should not be fun because it is something serious, educational and important.(98) In some cases, the use of memes is welcomed as a dose of humor amid news about world problems.(99)

Many teens and young adults believe that national television news and major national newspapers portray them negatively and one-sidedly.(100) This perceived "demonization" of young people by news broadcasts causes youngsters to avoid such news sources and worry about how this anti-youth rhetoric may affect quality of their life. This negative valuation of the news is more common among marginalized youth.(101)

The five-year Youth Monitor shows that a large proportion of Dutch youth prefer to consume positive news.(102) For example, the statements most often agreed with are "News should highlight positive things more often," and the related statement "News focuses too much on what is going wrong". Around 50 percent of young people (strongly) agree with these statements. Furthermore, nearly 42 percent of young people (strongly) agree with the statement "News should contribute to the solution of social problems".

Other research shows that young people experience alternative media as "fun, opinion-setting and explanatory."(103) These media also feature more niche news that young people feel relate more readily to their personal interests.(104) A survey of young people aged 14-25 in the Czech Republic, Greece and Estonia found that alternative media helps them broaden their horizons. They experience it as something that complements their news consumption as they are trying to get a grip on the complexity of the world.(105) Finally, with alternative media, young people often find it

94 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land; Carter, C. (2009). Growing up Corporate: News, Citizenship, and Young People Today. *Television & New Media*, 10(1), 34-36; Drok, N., Hermans, L., & Kats, K. (2018). Decoding youth DNA; Kaskazi, A., & Kitzie, V. (2021). Engagement at the margins.
95 Drok, N., & Duiven, R. (2021). Monitor Jongeren en Nieuws. Zwolle: Windesheim; Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy; Galan, L., Osseman, J., Parker, T., & Taylor, M. (2019). How young people consume news and the implications for mainstream media.
96 Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of News Literacy.
97 Head A. J., Wihbey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News; Sveningsson, M. (2015). "It's only a pastime, really"; Huang, E. (2009). The causes of youths' low news consumption and strategies for making youths happy news consumers.
98 Costera Meijer, I. (2007). The paradox of popularity.
99 Head A. J., Wihbey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News; Literat, I., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2019). Youth collective political expression on social media: The role of affordances and memetic dimensions for voicing political views. *New media & society*, 21(9), 1988-2009.
100 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land; Vandenplas, R., Truyens, P., Vis, S., & Picone, I. (2021). Tuning Out the News. A Cross-Media Perspective on News Avoidance Practices of Young News Users in Flanders During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journalism Studies*, 22(16), 2197-2217; Condeza, R., Bachmann, I., & Mujica, C. (2014). News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents.
101 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land.
102 Drok, N., & Duiven, R. (2021). Monitor Jongeren en Nieuws.
103 Baumgartner, J., & Morris, J. S. (2006). The Daily Show Effect.
104 Berthelsen, R., & Hameleers, M. (2021). Meet today's young news users.
105 Macek, J., Macková, A., Pavliopoulos, V., Kalmus, V., Elavsky, C. M., & Šerek, J. (2018). Trust in alternative and professional media.

clearer what point of view the medium is taking, something they are less likely to recognize in mainstream media.(106)

Research shows that the preference of young people in the Netherlands seems to indicate a two-speed journalism. "Fast" journalism is more often associated with news that is free and available anytime, anywhere. "Slow" is the kind of journalism you pay for.(107) A survey in 2015 found that one-third of young people in the Netherlands have an interest in "slow" journalism. This interest stems from a preference for in-depth stories and context, diversity of perspectives and solution-oriented angles.

3.3.2 Evaluation of news

Young people find it difficult to evaluate news. There are several reasons for this. First, the cause must be sought in the large supply of news. Because so much news can be consumed at any time, there is little time to decide what is reliable and what is not.(108) Second, it is not always clear to young people what is professional journalism and what is not.(109) It is also not always clear whether there is a commercial component to news.(110)

Third, young people feel that the news is a cacophony of different opinions and it is often difficult to draw an unambiguous conclusion. It is far too diffuse.(111) Young people therefore find it difficult to assess news sources critically.(112) Studies also indicate that young people almost always lack prior knowledge to be able to evaluate news critically.(113) They rely mainly on their gut feeling. That together makes it difficult for young people to evaluate news and trust it without question or at least make a rational decision about what to believe and what not to believe.

Several studies suggest that young people have difficulty with the traditionally objective role of news organizations.(114) They see from the broad media offer that there are multiple sides and points of view on an issue. They do not always see these reflected by mainstream media organizations.(115) This is also the reason why they do not expect media to cover an issue objectively or neutrally.(116)

But because mainstream media claim to be objective, young people question the underlying reasons or motivations for certain news topics or angles.(117) Young people have become more critical and skeptical about how the mainstream news industry works. In some cases, they have the impression that mainstream media manipulate the news for political purposes or suspect the media of a hidden agenda.(118)

106 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope.

107 Hermans, L., & Drok, N. (2015). Is there a future for slow journalism. *Journalism Practice*.

108 Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter?. Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2022). The Trust Gap: Young People's Tactics for Assessing the Reliability of Political News. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(2), 396-416.; Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2022). 'We are a neewew generation'; Vanderplas, R., Truyens, P., Vis, S., & Picone, I. (2021). Tuning Out the News.

109 Almeida, C., Macedo-Rouet, M., de Carvalho, V. B., Castilhos, W., Ramalho, M., Amorim, L., & Massarani, L. (2022). When does credibility matter?. Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018b). *New Media, New Relationship to Participation?*; Peters, C., Christian Schröder, K., Lehaff, J., & Vulpius, J. (2022). News as They Know It; Swart, J. (2021a). Experiencing algorithms.

110 Nygren, T., & Guath, M. (2019). Swedish teenagers' difficulties and abilities to determine digital news credibility.

111 Cotter, K., & Thorson, K. (2022). Judging Value in a Time of Information Cacophony: Young Adults, Social media, and the Messiness of do-it-Yourself Expertise.

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112 Vanderplas, R., Truyens, P., Vis, S., & Picone, I. (2021). Tuning Out the News.

113 Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2022). The Trust Gap; Corbu, N., Oprea, D., & Frunzaru, V. (2022). Romanian adolescents, fake news, and the third-person effect: a cross-sectional study.

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114 Head A. J., Wihbey J., Takis Metaxas P., MacMillen, M., & Cohen, D. (2018). How Students Engage with News; Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity".

115 Huang, E. (2009). The causes of youths' low news consumption and strategies for making youths happy news consumers; Lancaster, K., Hughes, C. E., & Spicer, B. (2012).

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118 Banaji, S., & Cammaerts, B. (2015). Citizens of nowhere land; Baumgartner, J., & Morris, J. S. (2006). *The Daily Show Effect*;

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3.3.3 Fake news

Apart from the wide range of news young people can choose from and the credibility of which they have to evaluate, they also have to deal with fake news, which they find difficult to recognize.(119) This causes them to spread fake news easily. The fact that news is shared by someone they know can sometimes be enough for them to trust it - and forward it on to someone else.(120)

Young people themselves think they have the ability to recognize fake news.(121) They believe they can do this because they spend so much time online and are therefore better able than other generations to distinguish real news from fake news. But paradoxically, this turns out not to be the case. They are "skilled, but vulnerable media users."(122) Young people with a practical education score lower on identifying fake news than young people with a theoretical education.(123) This is attributed to the third-person effect: this happens to others around me, but not to me.(124) One reason for this is that they rely too much on their "gut feeling" instead of checking the facts. But in doing so, they overestimate their own qualities. This also appears to be the case with Dutch young people.(125)

3.3.4 Algorithms

Algorithms and news personalization can influence the way people consume news. The older young people are, the more they are aware of the existence of algorithms.(126) Education level also plays a role here: theoretically educated young people often know better than practically educated young people that they are in a kind of "echo-chamber" where a certain type of news is reproduced.(127) That does not mean, by the way, that young people can explain how algorithms work, let alone in what ways their news consumption is subject to algorithms.(128)

Swart indicates that algorithms and news personalization are perceived as elusive for many Dutch young people:

Young people's intuitive and experience-based insights into news personalization do not automatically enable young people to verbalize these, nor does having knowledge about algorithms necessarily encourage users to intervene in algorithmic decisions.(129)

That intangible feeling makes some young people indifferent to algorithms, an American study shows. (130) They know the phenomenon exists, but shrug it off. After all, there's nothing you can do about it anyway. Other young people, however, see the usefulness of algorithms: if you click on news you find interesting, you are more likely to receive recommendations of similar news.(131) They also do not

119 Geers, S., Boukes, M., & Moeller, J. (2020). Bridging the gap? The impact of a media literacy educational intervention on news media literacy, political knowledge, political efficacy among lower-educated youth. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 12(2), 41-53; Herrero-Diz, P., Conde-Jiménez, J., & Reyes de Cózar, S. (2020). Teens' Motivations to Spread Fake News on WhatsApp; Nygren, T., & Guath, M. (2019). Swedish teenagers' difficulties and abilities to determine digital news credibility; Abbasi, N., & Huang, D. (2020). Digital media literacy; *Netwerk Mediawijsheid*. (2020). Tien jaar onderzoek Mediawijsheid.

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122 De Leyn, T., Waeterloos, C., De Wolf, R., Vanhaelewyn, B., Ponnet, K., & De Marez, L. (2022). Teenagers' reflections on media literacy initiatives at school and everyday media literacy discourses. *Journal of Children & Media*, 16(2), 221-239.

123 Geers, S., Boukes, M., & Moeller, J. (2020). Bridging the gap?; Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?.

124 Corbu, N., Oprea, D., & Frunzaru, V. (2022). Romanian adolescents, fake news, and the third-person effect.

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126 Ku, K. Y., Kong, Q., Song, Y., Deng, L., Kang, Y., & Hu, A. (2019). What predicts adolescents' critical thinking about real-life news?

127 Kruike-meier, S., & Shehata, A. (2017). News Media Use and Political Engagement Among Adolescents: An Analysis of Virtuous Circles Using Panel Data.

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128 Davies, H. (2018). Learning to Google.

129 Swart, J. (2021a). Experiencing algorithms, 1.

130 Powers, E. (2017). My News Feed is Filtered? *Digital Journalism*, 5(10), 1315-1335

131 Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in news access, change in expectations?

have to search for news themselves, it comes to them: the aforementioned "news-finds-me" principle.(132)

In short, the evaluation of news is not always a rational, measured choice for young people. It is much more often based on "tacit knowledge."(133) This means young people use their gut feeling to determine "what feels right." Some of them know they should check facts or consult multiple sources, but still often fall back on what they hear from other acquaintances.

The sheer volume of newsworthy events in a day means that young people, paradoxically enough, sometimes shut themselves off from certain news. News is reliable when it fits within the values and norms that young people inherit from their environment. Anything else is less reliable.(134)

132 Collao, K. (2022). *The Kaleidoscope*.

133 Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2022). The Trust Gap.

134 Debrael, M., Joris, W., & d'Haenens, L. (2022). News Story Credibility and the Impact of Dominant News Frames on Attitudes toward Refugees: Are Young People More Receptive to News than Adults? *European Journal of Communication*, 37(5), 479–494.

4. Struggles

The literature study reveals certain (apparent) contradictions that bring up a number of struggles. These are discussed below.

Evaluation of reliable news in relation to behavior

On the one hand, young people indicate that they consider the reliability and relevance of news very important. Especially when it comes to news coming from major news organizations. On the other hand, this concern is not apparent from their behavior. Young people consume news from a wide range of news media, very little of which is verified by them. They often rely on their gut feelings rather than making rational choices. Current research still provides too little insight into how those trade-offs are made.

Smartphone as extension of hand while news is perceived as overwhelming

Through their social media accounts, young people receive a continuous stream of news. That news is often perceived as overwhelming, depressing, complex and exhausting. To be part of the conversations about what is going on in the world with their online and offline social networks, they must consume news, even if they do not necessarily see it as something positive. Moreover, the phenomena of "news-finds-me" and "incidental exposure" mean that news is available virtually everywhere online.

The smartphone - and social media in particular - is a "place" where news, socializing and identity formation come together.⁽¹³⁵⁾ So although young people find the news quite overwhelming and exhausting, they cannot stay away from it on social media.

Indifference to algorithms, but critical of mainstream media

Young people are highly critical of the operation of major media companies, but less so of their own media consumption. They put mainstream media in particular under a magnifying glass. A similar trend can be seen in other countries. For example, in the view of youngsters, these media omit certain topics which the government could consider inconvenient.⁽¹³⁶⁾

In contrast, young people are less critical of their own media use and towards tech companies. For example, young people think they are quite capable of recognizing algorithms and deep fakes, but in reality this is not the case.⁽¹³⁷⁾ They do not feel influenced, but rather they see the positive effects of news personalization. One of the reasons for lack of criticism towards tech companies is that young people do not feel that these have something to hide.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Furthermore, tech companies such as Facebook and TikTok are associated with fun and positive content.⁽¹³⁹⁾

The tension between "news-à-la-carte" and "news-finds-me"

It is extraordinary to observe that young people on the one hand consciously seek out news and make choices about what they do and do not consume, the "news-à-la-carte" phenomenon, and on the other hand show a more passive attitude in consuming news because they assume that the

135 Wunderlich, L., & Hölzig, S. (2022). Types of Information Orientation and Information Levels Among Young and Old News Audiences
136 Collao, K. (2022). The Kaleidoscope: Tracking Young People's relationships with News. Craft & Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
137 Davies, H. (2018). Learning to Google; Swart, J. (2021a). Experiencing algorithms.
138 Davies, H. (2018). Learning to Google.
139 Powers, E. (2017). My News Feed is Filtered?

news will find them by itself, the "news-finds-me" phenomenon. Whereas the "news-à-la-carte" principle requires an active attitude on the part of young people, the "news-finds-me" principle, on the other hand, shows that young people need to make little effort to engage with news.

5. Questions

Despite the plethora of research that has been conducted into how young people view news and what that means for their news consumption and behavior, there is still much undeveloped ground. The struggles from the previous chapter bring also a number of questions up that remain unanswered:

- Several studies show that young people find reliability an important feature of news. However, the behavior of the younger generation shows that they are not very good at verifying the reliability of news. They mostly rely on their own gut feelings. Therefore, it is not clear on what young people base what they perceive as reliable or not. Follow-up research could focus on the following question: What considerations do young people make when evaluating news for reliability?
- Young people often experience news as overwhelming and at the same time continuously immerse themselves in news via social media channels. That struggle raises the following questions: What elements of news cause young people to experience it as overwhelming? And what strategies do they employ as they navigate through this overload of information?
- Several studies suggest that young people are critical of mainstream media and a possible hidden agenda. However, they are less critical toward tech companies such as Google and the influence of algorithms. It would be interesting to explore this contradiction further in the future. How do young people's different perceptions of (mainstream) media organizations on the one hand and tech companies on the other come about?
- The literature study shows that young people employ two different strategies to engage with news: the "news-à-la-carte" strategy and "news-finds-me" strategy. This struggle raises some interesting questions. To what extent are young people aware of the potentially different ways they interact with news? What do these two different strategies mean for the news offer young people are presented with?

In addition to the questions raised by the struggles, there are a number of other issues that are unclear as a result of this literature study:

- In some studies, differences between age groups are explicitly explored and named. In others, young people of varying ages are all included under the category "adolescents," even though we know that the stages of life in which 15-year-old teenagers and 24-year-old young adults find themselves are quite different. Moreover, not many studies have been done in the Dutch context. It is therefore interesting to address the following question in follow-up research: To what extent do differences exist in the way young people in the Netherlands from different age groups define, use and evaluate news?

- Much of the existing literature provides little insight into the differences among young people, in terms of gender, cultural background, social class, level of education, etc. The danger is that possible differences among young people may be ignored as a result. In any follow-up research, it is therefore important to consider the following question: to what extent do differences between young people's social categories influence the way they define, use and evaluate news?
- Also, little research has been done to date on different lifestyles of young people and its influence on how they define, use, experience and evaluate news. This raises the following question: Are there certain lifestyles that young people adopt that create differences in their perceptions of news?
- Several studies make the distinction between "mainstream" and "alternative" media. This distinction is often determined by the researchers. This raises the following questions: How do young people view the distinction between "mainstream" and "alternative media"? And would they make such distinction themselves?
- We know from several studies that young people have learned to accept Google's authority. They often trust that Google provides accurate and reliable news. However, a number of studies also found that there is ignorance among young people about the mechanisms behind algorithms that affect the content they receive through Google and social media. Therefore, it would be interesting to look for answers to the following question: How do young people understand the role of algorithms when searching online for a specific topic or answer?

Answers to these questions and more insight specifically into the Dutch context requires scientific follow-up research into underlying reasons, motivations and behaviors of young people. In many cases, research is done about young people rather than with young people. Young people are quite capable of explaining how they define news, in what way they use news and how they experience and evaluate news. But then they must be allowed to do so and be taken seriously.

The means to that end is to engage with young people and try to empathize with their complex world. In the same way that an anthropologist immerses himself in a society, researchers can also immerse themselves in the (media) lives of young people.

At the same time, the trends from the literature and the questions we raise bring certain implications for news organizations. From this we can conclude one thing: there is no quick fix to create more engagement between young people and news media. Nonetheless, the literature provides a number of suggestions for getting young people more involved in news.

In covering the news, media organizations could focus more on presenting a variety of perspectives and opinions. They could also put more emphasis on stories that relate to young people's daily lives. This helps young people to be able to develop their own points of view. In addition, the social aspect of news is very important to younger generation. It makes therefore no sense for young people to consume news that has no clear connection to their daily lives and the people around them.

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