



Can Local TV Stations Find an Audience for News Among Generation Z and/or Millennials?

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Abstract

In June 2022, Nieman Lab reported “Media organizations around the world can agree on one thing: Young people—despite being critical audiences for publishers and journalists, and to the sustainability of news—are increasingly hard to reach and engage” (Eddy, 2022). That should come as no surprise to local TV station news departments, but researchers wanted to dig deeper into that younger audience (18-34 years of age) to determine its news consumption habits, following up on previous research in this area.

Results of this survey from the summer of 2021 show that while the number of young people who engage with local news content remains low, there are some opportunities for local stations to reach that audience. The survey shows both specific news topics that might appeal to this audience, as well as delivery platforms used by this audience outside of traditional linear TV broadcasts.

Introduction

In 2013, a Master’s Degree thesis by a Midwest college professor asked the question, “Is There a Future Audience for Small Market Broadcast Television News?” The author’s conclusion at the time was that while “results indicate the younger audience [18-24 and 25-34-year-olds] for local TV news is shrinking, there are positive signs for local TV stations hoping to increase the size of those young audiences for the future” (Madsen, 2013). Then, in 2016, realizing that in the few years since his original research, digital and social media had become ubiquitous communication platforms, the author worked with a colleague at his institution to repeat the original research to determine

what changes may have occurred in the consumption of local TV news by younger audiences. That study reinforced the researchers’ hypothesis that while the younger audiences “continue to be interested in local news, [they] are increasingly accessing that news via social media” (Madsen, 2016). The report continued, “While 25-34 year olds watch more local TV news than younger Millennials, regular viewership of local TV news among this important group has declined sharply...while social media access has increased. Therefore, media outlets must include strategies to increase presence on social media as part of their business model” (Madsen and Eastman, 2016).

Then, in 2021, several factors once again sug-

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gested a need to revisit the two previous studies:

- “Local television stations cannot live and grow only from dependence on advertising” (Friedman, 2021).
- “While TV news has seen audience declines across many age categories, the biggest losses are with younger viewers...but research shows that young people today are at least as interested as previous generations were in consuming news” (Schoettle, 2019).
- “Almost half of adults 22 to 45 years old are watching absolutely no content on traditional TV platforms, according to a new study by Omnicom Media Group agency Hearts & Science” (Schoettle, 2019)
- “The long-term challenge [to local TV newsrooms] may be how to build a sustainable model around a new generation of consumers who will never watch a linear newscast at 5, 6, or 11” (Heyward, 2021).
- “A large majority of U.S. adults (84%) say they often or sometimes get news from a smartphone, computer or tablet, including 51% who say they do so often. The portion who gets news from digital devices continues to outpace those who get news from television” (Matsa and Naseer, 2021).
- Major television ownership groups such as Gray and Sinclair are beginning to see revenue increases in streaming services that provide local TV news and syndicated programming outside the traditional broadcast model (Careless, 2021).

Taking that into consideration, this project attempted to address these hypotheses:

H1: More people in the 18-34 age category are accessing local news through digital sources than through traditional linear TV.

H2: More people in the 18-24 age category (Gen Z) are accessing local news through digital sources than the 25-34 age category (Millennials).

H3: More people in Gen Z and Millennial age groups are accessing local news through digital sources rather than traditional TV in 2021 than in previous surveys.

H4: There are some local news topics that would interest Gen Z and Millennial audiences, and perhaps encourage them to get more news from local news sources, although probably not through traditional linear TV models.

Table 1: Frequency of Viewership of Local TV News 2012 & 2016

	18-24 years			25-34 years		
	2012	2016	% +/-	2012	2016	% +/-
Once or Twice/month	43	37	-14%	21	27	29%
1 or 2 days/week	24	24	0%	30	16	-47%
Never	22	30	36%	10	30	200%
3-4 days/week	8	8	0%	20	16	-20%
5-6 days/week	2	1	-50%	12	8	-33%
7 days/week	0	1	NA	5	2	-60%

Literature Review

With the advancement of digital technology in recent years, viewership of linear television channels has continuously declined. Specifically, studies conducted over the past ten years have pointed to the fact that the younger demographics of Gen Z and Millennials are not regularly tuning into TV newscasts. In 2012, for example, a survey conducted in the Midwest found that roughly 90% of then 18 to 24 year olds did not regularly watch local broadcast news, meaning they only tuned in one to two times a week or less. This was also the case for 61% of the older age group, 25 to 34 year olds (Madsen, 2013). More specifically, 22% of the younger group and 10% of the older group indicated that they never watch local news. Instead, 45% of the younger age group and 52% of the older age group said they seek local news on the internet or the mobile apps of TV stations (Madsen, 2013).

Madsen's and Eastman's 2016 follow-up research (Table 1) then showed that between 2012 and 2016, the frequency of viewership decreased further. This time, 91% of the younger age group answered that they watched local TV news one to two times per week or less, which included 30% who indicated that they never tune in. In the older group, 73% reported watching one to two times per week or less, and more particularly, 30% said they don't watch local TV news at all. (Madsen and Eastman, 2016).

In 2018, Wihbey and Beaudet analyzed data collected by Pew Research (Table 2) and found that “People over the age of 50 are much more likely to tune in to television for news, whether it's local, network, or national. Only 28 percent of people age 30 to 49 say they often watch local news on TV. That number drops to just 18 percent for people age 18 to 29.” (2019)

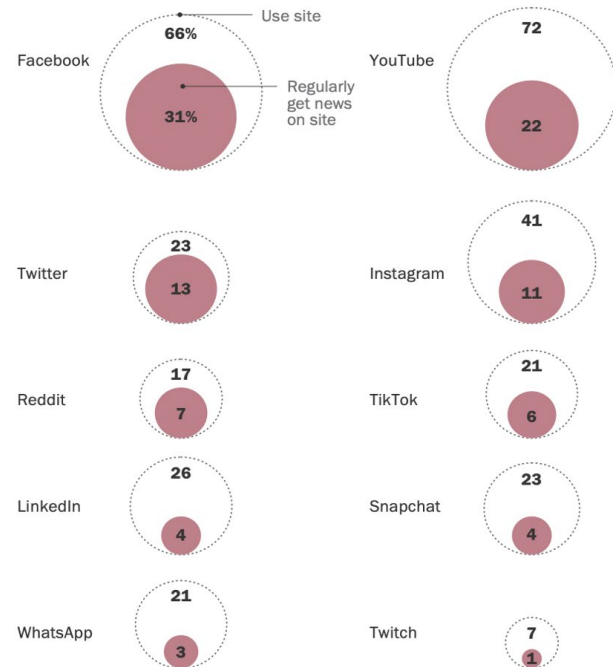
In 2020, the downward trend of viewership of local news was temporarily interrupted. As found by Matsa and Liedke, the viewership of local newscasts for evening (4-7 p.m.) and late-night newscasts (11 p.m. - 2 a.m.) increased by 4% (Matsa and Liedke, 2021). This rise in viewership can be attributed to the out-of-the-ordinary events of 2020 (Malone, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, people increasingly looked to local TV news stations to receive up-to-date information about the situation in their local communities. The same was the case for the Black Lives Matter movement and the presidential election which also both happened in 2020 and affected Americans all around the country. In all three cases, local TV stations effectively connected viewers with the information that was the most immediate to them and as a result, temporarily enjoyed the status of being many people's daily news sources (Malone, 2021).

Part of the reason for the continuous decline in viewers is the advancement of digital services like social media apps and websites. Instead of watching local newscasts, a lot of Americans now look to those online options to get news. Walker and Matsa from Pew Research in 2021 (Table 3) found that "...about a third of U.S. adults (31%) say they get news regularly on Facebook, while about one-in-five Americans (22%) say they regularly get news on YouTube. Twitter and Instagram are regular news sources for 13% and 11% of Americans, respectively. Other social media sites are less likely to be regular news sources. Fewer than one-in-ten Americans say they regularly get news from Reddit (7%), TikTok (6%), LinkedIn (4%), Snapchat (4%), WhatsApp (3%) and Twitch (1%)." Regarding younger adults, those aged 18-29, however, Walker and Matsa found that they are far more likely to regularly get news on Snapchat and

Table 3
News Consumption Across Social Media in 2021

Nearly a third of Americans regularly get news on Facebook

% of U.S. adults who ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 26-Aug. 8, 2021.
"News Consumption Across Social Media in 2021"

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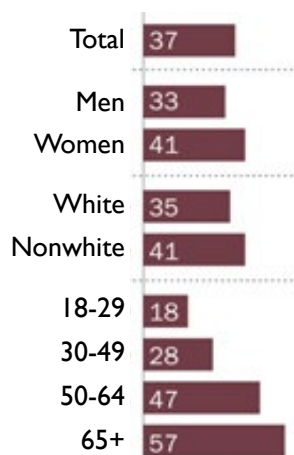
TikTok than other groups.

Another major cause besides the improvement of digital services is the creation of the various streaming services that now crowd the internet. As services like ESPN+, Disney+, HBO Max, and Peacock have debuted, they have not only created competition for Netflix, but also linear TV networks and local stations. To put it into quantitative terms, a Deloitte study has found that the average American already pays for four streaming services (Sherman, 2021). Looking at data from past surveys, the reasons for Gen Z and Millennials to flock to streaming services are the content and the on-demand watching style that offers viewers the possibility to schedule when and what to watch themselves. In Madsen's 2012 research, for example, respondents of both above-mentioned age groups responded to the question of why they don't watch local newscasts. The top mentioned answers concerning content were that local newscasts were too boring, too sad, or that they didn't affect the respondents and therefore didn't interest them. The fourth most mentioned reason was that respondents experienced

Table 2:
Regular Local TV News Consumption 2018
Television news consumption varies most by age

% of U.S. adults who
often get news from
Local Television

Source: August 2017 Pew Survey, [Pew Research Center](#)



scheduling issues and didn't have the time to tune in (Madsen, 2013).

This current research will reevaluate whether young people today still have the same reasons for watching or not watching local newscasts. This determination of the current state of local news is what the following survey section of this paper seeks to accomplish. As a follow-up to the 2012 and 2016 research, it will particularly address the viewing habits of the generations of Millennials and Gen Z to determine how often, why, or why not they tune in to local television news.

Research Questions

For the online survey, the following research questions were asked:

- (R1): Where do people aged 18-24 or 25-34 go when they want local news (TV, radio, newspaper, Internet)?
- (R2): How often do people aged 18-24 or 25-34 watch local news, if at all?
- (R3): Have people aged 18-24 or 25-34 watched local TV news in the past seven days?
- (R4): Do people aged 18-24 or 25-34 expect to watch local TV news in the next seven days?
- (R5): If people aged 18-24 or 25-34 access Internet options for local news, what platforms are used (Website, Facebook, Twitter, Mobile App)?
- (R6): What reasons do people aged 18-24 or 25-34 give for why they watch local TV news?
- (R7): What reasons do people aged 18-24 or 25-34 give for why they DO NOT watch local TV news?
- (R8): What topics would interest people in watching local TV news?

Methodology

A quantitative research study was designed to ascertain the local news habits of people between the ages of 18 and 34. The study was in the form of a Survey Monkey online poll, (Appendix A) during the period of June 29, 2021 through July 21, 2021. Survey participants were asked questions about their current news consumption and why they do or don't watch TV news. Basic information such as age, gender, and education were also collected from the respondents. The questions in this survey were basically the same as questions from a 2016 survey and 2012 survey that were used by researchers in previous studies.

The original proposal was to survey a variety of people, hoping for a final tally of at least 400 participants.

At a small, private Midwest university, an email was sent to all students, faculty, and staff on the campus (approximately 2,000 people) asking for participation in the survey. The survey was also sent to a database of 3,057 alumni from the university who had graduated between 2009 and 2021, which would put those alumni within the age range desired for this project. Researchers also sent the survey link to friends and family who would be in the targeted age range. The author also engaged several colleagues from other institutions to distribute the survey to students at those institutions.

Adding to the distribution of the survey, a link to the survey was added to the researchers' social media pages, as well as social media pages from the author's university, such as Facebook and Twitter. Then, researchers used a snowball method of asking respondents to send the survey link to their friends. The survey generated a returned sample of 697 people, well over the hoped-for 400.

For this study, the following operational definitions are used:

- Local News: news and information from a local geographic area, rather than from national news networks.
- Local Television Newscast: a newscast broadcast by a local TV station at early morning, midday, 5 pm, 6 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm or 11 pm.
- Gen Z: people born between 1997 and 2012 ("Age Range by Generation"). In our survey, Gen Z makes up the Nielsen TV ratings age group of 18-24.
- Millennials: people born between 1981 and 1996 ("Age Range by Generation"). In our survey, Millennials make up the Nielsen TV ratings age group of 25-34.

Survey results

Demographics: As previously mentioned, a total of 697 people responded to the survey. Of that number, 43% were in the 18-24 age group which in this survey is referred to as Gen Z. The other 57% were in the 25-34 age group, referred to as Millennials. Respondents were 63% female, 36% male, and 1% non-binary. 70% of respondents self-reported that they had gone through 4 or more years of college or grad school. Another 20% indicated that they had completed 1-3

years of college and 10% reported to have only graduated from high school.

(R1): Primary Source for Local News

The question: “What is your primary source for getting LOCAL news and information? In other words, what is the FIRST place you would go for local news and information, rather than national news?” Across both generations, the majority of respondents (65%) picked one of the digital internet platforms as their primary source of local news. For reasons of easier comparison with data from previous years, the chart includes the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram under the option Internet or Mobile App. (Table 4) Among Gen Z, 65% of respondents indicated one of the digital internet platforms as their primary source, 14% selected TV, and 15% responded that they don’t seek local news at all. This last number is a drastic increase from 2016 when only 6% said they never seek local news. The percentage of those who selected TV as their answer (14%) also constitutes an increase, as in 2016 only 11% selected it as their primary source of local news. It is notable that out of the three social media options, Facebook was selected the most by Gen Z respondents (16%). Twitter was cited by 11%, and Instagram was selected by 4%.

For Millennials, the change in numbers was similar to that of Gen Z; 14% chose TV as their primary source, 68% selected internet platforms, and 10% indicated that they never seek local news. In comparison, in 2016, 6% answered that they never seek local news, and 11% selected TV as their primary source. As with Gen Z, among Millennials, Facebook received the most votes of the internet options with 24%; 8% picked Twitter as their answer and 1% selected Instagram. (Table 5)

(R2): Frequency of Viewership of Local Newscasts

Question: “How often do you watch a local TV station’s LOCAL NEWSCAST (for example: in the early morning, midday, 5 pm, 6 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, or 11 pm)?” Table 6 shows 39% of Gen Z respondents

Table 4: Primary Source of Local News 18-24

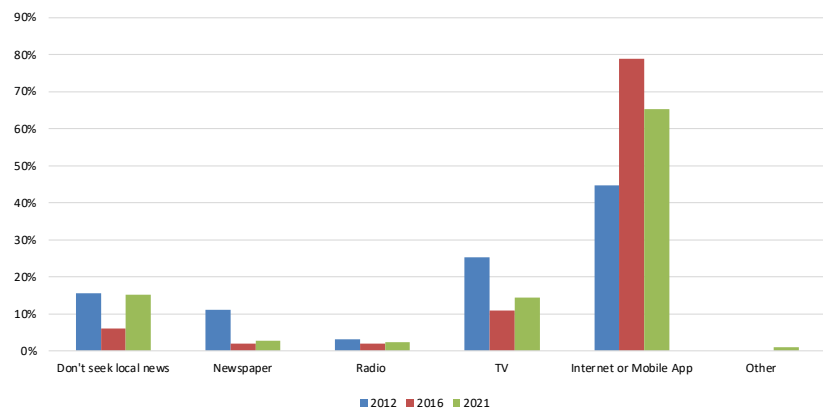


Table 5: Primary Source of Local News 25-34

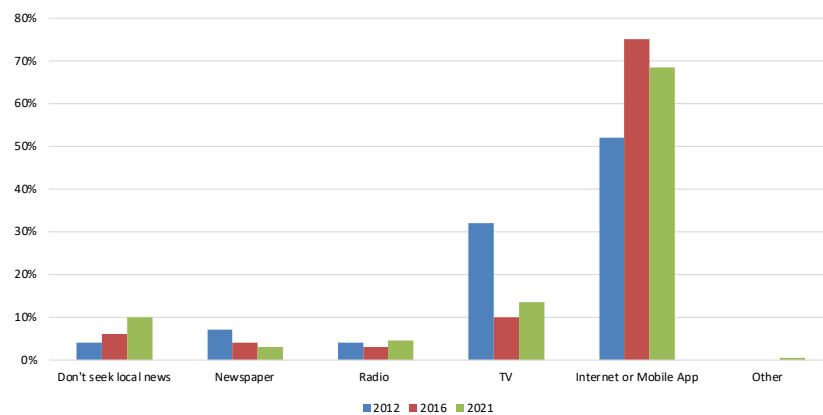
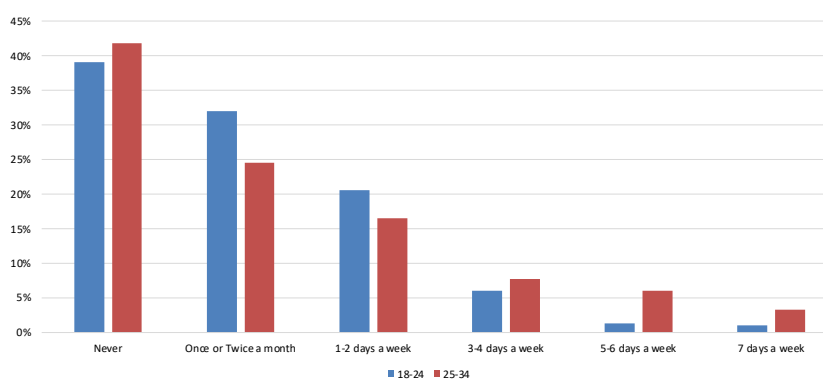


Table 6: Frequency of Viewership, 2021



and 42% of Millennials answered that they never watch local newscasts while another 32% of Gen Z and 25% of Millennials indicated they only tune in once or twice a month. In terms of trends over time, (Table 7) there was a small increase from 2016 in both Gen Z and Millennials who watch local newscasts seven times per week and also a small increase in Gen Z respondents who watch five to six days a week. Overall, while Millennials are still the ones watch-

ing local newscasts more regularly than their Gen Z counterparts, millennial respondents also chose the option of ‘Never’ more often. Altogether, it can be said that the trend is going towards watching less local TV.

(R3): Viewership of local newscast in past seven days

Question: “Have you watched a local TV station’s LOCAL newscast in the past 7 days?” Across both age groups, respondents answered almost exactly the same. 34% of Gen Z respondents answered yes and 66% answered no while 35% of Millennials answered yes and 65% answered no. When compared to the survey data from 2012, there is one clear finding. In 2012, the two age groups answered much differently from each other. In the 18-24 age category, 71% answered no, while in the 25-34 age category 65% answered yes. Keeping in mind, that in 2012 Millennials were in the 18-24 age category but in 2021 they made up the 25-34 age category (“Age Range by Generation”), their answers to this research question have remained roughly the same. (Table 8) Therefore, it can be argued that they have not grown into the local news habit of the previous generation, Gen X.

(R4): Expected Viewership of local newscast in the next seven days

Question: “Do you expect to watch a local TV station’s LOCAL newscast in the next 7 days?” Millennial respondents answered the same (65% no, 35% yes) while only 31% of Gen Z respondents answered yes and 69% answered no. (Table 9)

(R5): Local News Platforms Accessed

Question: “Have you ever accessed local news/information from a local TV station via: (Check all that apply)?” Respondents were able to check several answers and add other options. Here, “Website” was the most selected answer (59%), followed by “Facebook” (54%) and “Mobile App” (33%). In comparison with the author’s previous research from 2016, Facebook and mobile apps increased in the number of those who had used it before – from 50 to 54% and 19 to 33% respectively – while websites decreased from 65 to 59%.

Table 7: Frequency of Viewership (both age groups)

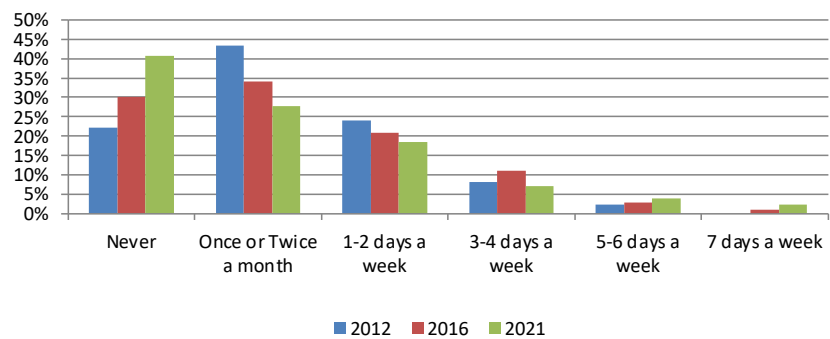


Table 8: Viewership in Past 7 Days – 2012 vs 2021

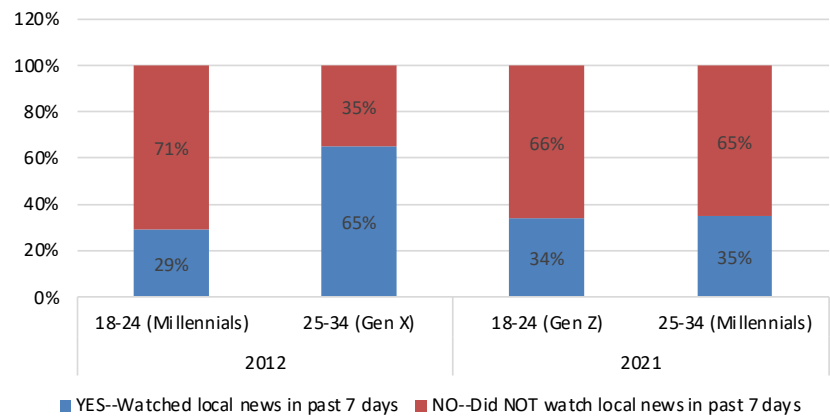
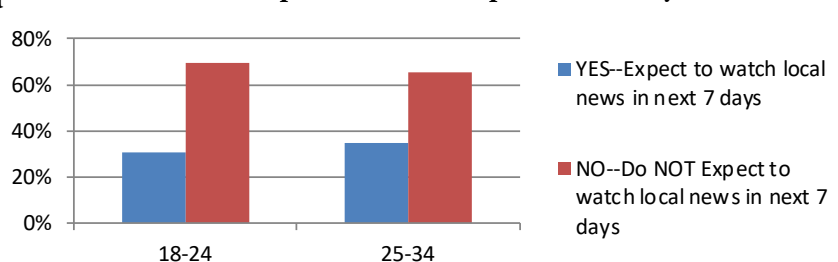


Table 9: Expected Viewership in Next 7 Days



(R6): Reasons why respondents watch local TV news

Question: “Please complete this sentence: I LIKE to watch local TV news because __: (Check all that apply).” Respondents could check several of the pre-given answers as well as add their own ideas below the other options.

Among Gen Z respondents, the two most picked answer options were “It helps me stay up to date on local events” (43%) and “It interests me” (23%). These were followed by “I grew up watching them and continue to do so” (21%) and “It affects me” (18%). 14% picked “I am familiar with the local news anchors”, 10% answered that “Local news outlets are more trustworthy than national ones”, and 5% like local news because “There is a diversity of stories.”

In the millennial group, respondents answered similarly with the sole exception of more people checking the option of “It affects me” than “It interests me.”

(R7): Reasons why respondents don't watch local TV news

Question: “Please complete this sentence: I DON'T watch local TV news because __: (Check all that apply).” The biggest reason for both age groups to not watch local TV news was that respondents don't like appointment-style watching; 38% of all respondents indicated that they would rather have the option of viewing the content whenever and wherever they want.

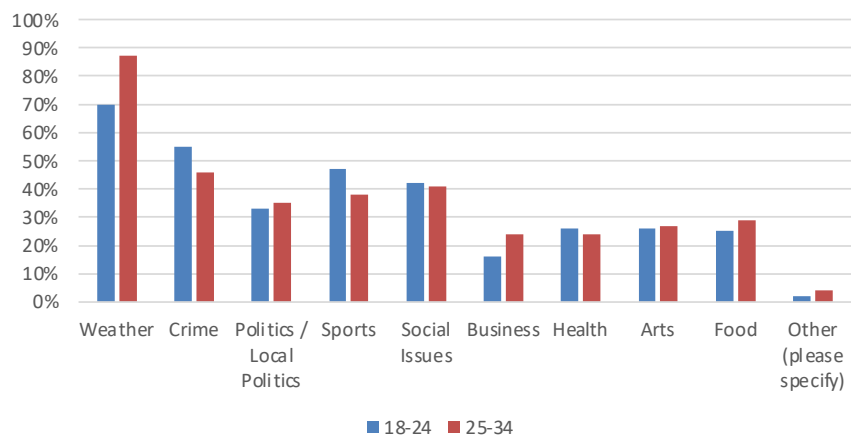
For Gen Z, the second biggest reason is that they don't follow the news in general which was chosen as a reason by 30% of the generation's respondents. Another 28% indicated that they don't receive cable or satellite and 14% reasoned that they don't have convenient access to a TV. It is also notable that 20% of Gen Z respondents said the content of local newscasts is too boring or unrelatable – specifically for their generation.

The relatability or boringness of local news didn't quite matter as much for Millennials as only 12% chose this answer. The generation's second-biggest reason for not watching local newscasts is not receiving cable or satellite. In total, 25% of millennial respondents chose this option. Also worth mentioning is that 18% of millennial respondents thought that local newscasts are too repetitive.

(R8): News Topics respondents are interested in

Question: “If you search for LOCAL NEWS, which news topics are of most interest you? (Check all that apply).” The most selected answer option among both generations was “Weather” (Gen Z: 70%; Millennials: 87%). Table 10 also shows 55% of Gen Z respondents then answered “Crime” and 47% selected the “Sports” option. Another 42% indicated interest in “Social Issues” and 33% watch local news for “Politics/Local Politics.” Among Millennials, the second most selected answer was also “Crime” but with only 46%. Another 41% picked “Social Issues”, 38% answered “Sports”, and 35% selected “Politics/Local Politics.” Among the total of 21 respondents who wrote in another news topic under the category “Other”, 17 specified local topics like education, city planning, community

Table 10: Interest in News Topics - Both Generations



events and activities, as well as any stories happening in the local area.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the research done for this project:

- Although the survey was completed by people in many different geographic areas, including some areas outside the U.S., a majority of respondents came from the Midwest. That could skew the results.
- The majority (70%) of respondents to the survey had a bachelor's or graduate degree. According to the U.S. Census, only about 42% of Americans have that same level of education. Those without post-secondary education were severely underrepresented in this survey.
- The research didn't differentiate between respondents who were current college students and those who were of college age but not necessarily college students.
- The research was done using an online survey, rather than a random phone survey, which means respondents could self-select whether or not to participate.
- The research is not representative of the entire population of adults 18-34 years old.
- Since the summer of 2021 when this research was completed, the social media platform TikTok has ballooned into the fastest-growing such platform of 2022 (Greenwood, 2022). TikTok was not listed as one of the options in the survey that was done in summer 2021. It should definitely be included in any future research.

Future Research

- For this topic, future research could be done using a statistically significant national sample of adults 18-34 years old.
- This research did not specifically ask whether the use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, had affected the respondents' consumption of traditional local television news.
- While it wouldn't be statistically significant, doing several focus groups of 18-34 year olds across the United States might provide some useful anecdotal data about what that age group is looking for in a local TV newscast. It would be appropriate for this type of research be to done on a market-by-market basis, rather than trying to apply any type of national survey results to individual TV stations across the country.

Conclusion

In accordance with previous research, this paper concludes that local TV stations have not yet been able to stop and reverse the negative trend of viewership of local newscasts among younger generations. The survey attests sporadic viewership of two times or less per week by roughly 90% across both age categories. Roughly 40% of both age groups answered that they never watch local newscasts.

Despite the high percentage of respondents not watching newscasts, the percentage of those not seeking local news at all is much lower. Both Millennials and Gen Z just prefer to seek out local news more on websites, apps, or Facebook than they do on TV. The main reasons for both age groups to not seek local news on TV is that they don't like appointment-style watching and that a big part of the content is too boring or unrelatable - particularly for their generations. Respondents of both generations would rather have the option of viewing self-selected content whenever and wherever they want.

These are not particularly new findings and local TV station groups have picked up on these issues over the past few years. Developments have been made concerning both an improved delivery of content and the nature of the content itself. Regarding the delivery of content, broadcast groups and other interested parties have been exploring the venture of over-the-top (OTT) delivery of content with the creation of streaming platforms. According to Bill Hague, executive vice president of Magid Consulting "The void on the streamers (like Netflix) is local news and infor-

mation. People still want to know what the weather is going to be, and the latest on COVID." (B. Hague, Personal Communication, July 15, 2021)

One of the broadcasting groups making use of this opportunity is Sinclair. Sinclair created the streaming app STIRR which includes the latest newscasts and news stories of the Sinclair-owned local station closest to the viewer, local content made for streaming, and a selection of television series and movies. The streaming app is monetized through the use of short advertisements in the beginning, during, or after the content. As of summer 2021, the service wasn't using local commercials, but Sinclair is currently testing that option in larger markets (K. Jager, Personal Communication, July 22, 2021). Similarly, in September 2020, the broadcast technology company Syncbak developed a digital platform called VUit. The goal of the platform is to become "the Netflix of live, local, and free broadcast TV" (Sherman, 2021). Users of VUit have free access to on-demand newscasts from the day before from their local station. In between local newscasts, viewers can also access a live feed of national news from the perspective of local journalists from any of the Gray Media TV stations. The potential that VUit holds in reaching younger generations is demonstrated by Heritage Broadcasting, a local station in Cadillac, Michigan. According to the station's news director Dan Frimbach, the niche stories they post on the VUit platform, about topics like esports and high school football, are the most viewed by younger viewers. As a result, VUit helps them with sales and brings younger viewers as an audience to advertisers (D. Frimbach, Personal Communication, Nov. 9, 2021).

Concerning the nature of the content, local TV stations around the U.S. have looked into various solutions. Stations like WXIA-TV in Atlanta and WLS-TV in Chicago, for example, are placing greater emphasis on investigative work (Pallanich, 2021). Similarly, local station WRAL-TV in Raleigh-Durham now focuses on deep coverage of the legislature, education, and business - all three information topics that the local viewers rely on in their lives. Another approach to increasing the audience through a change of content is that of Salt Lake City station KSL-TV (Pallanich, 2021). Through a range of partnerships, it has gained permission to stream Major League Soccer games from the Real Salt Lake team in its apps. Furthermore, KSL-TV negotiated a deal that allows the station to stream college and

high school sports games from all over Utah. This has brought them viewership from households with high school sports players who at the moment exclusively are members of Gen Z (Pallanich, 2021).

What can be taken away from all the above-mentioned approaches is what they have in common and how they reflect the findings from the survey portion of this paper. The key factors, especially for reaching the younger generations, are deep coverage of hyperlocal news and the delivery of this local content via OTT streaming services. While the streaming approach does particularly target younger people, this approach cannot function without the hyperlocal programming also being further adapted to the interests of younger generations.

In any case, approaches to solving the issue of the decreasing viewership need to encompass a strategy to capture the attention of Gen Z and Millennial viewers. Because of that, it is important to consider what Gen Z and Millennials do and do not look for in local news. Burgess, for instance, found that Millennials see local news as a trusted source for reliable news but gravitate towards “personalized connections” meaning that their draw to news from Facebook and Instagram stems from the possibility of following individual journalists on those platforms. Furthermore, they tend to pick and mix news from multiple outlets (Burgess, 2020). Strategies that work to keep Millennials in the audience could include tailoring content to different platforms, experimenting with new content, and building a media platform that can monetize and deliver content to multiple destinations (Burgess, 2020).

One possible key to gaining Gen Z consumers as an audience is to offer innovative and specific content and stir viewers from social media to linear options. A typical member of Gen Z strives for a diverse community and deeply cares about others (Schultz, 2022). Generally, the generation actively searches for discussion and wants to make an impact on the world by bringing new voices to issues (Fabiani; Dorsey, 2021). The most important social causes to the generation in this context are climate change, racial equality, and social justice (Dorsey, 2021). Furthermore, Gen Z feels like they need to constantly discover new content. All this considered, the local news content best suited to reach Gen Z is inclusive and progressive content that reflects on society and challenges social norms. Another part of the kind of content Gen Z wants to see is escapist content. The generation looks for comfort

and familiarity and uses media as a way to escape reality (Fabiani, 2021).

Finally, despite the dwindling younger audience of local TV newscasts, the linear local TV economy continues to hold potential. Goldsmith and Hayes estimate that “While ad dollars are steadily shifting to streaming, there is still more than \$60 billion in annual spending on linear TV ads.” And Sherman found, “About two-thirds of all U.S. households still subscribe to a linear bundle of channels – either through cable, satellite or a digital bundle of networks, such as Hulu with Live TV or YouTube TV.”

Looking at these numbers after having reviewed the data from the survey suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Older generations will continue to prefer traditional means of seeking local news, while younger generations will gravitate towards digital on-demand options. In their search for solutions regarding the decreasing Gen Z and Millennials viewership, local TV stations will as a result be confronted with two intertwining challenges: keeping older generations engaged through the content they expect on the channels they have always used; while simultaneously capturing the younger generations by adapting to the demands of the on-demand streaming world and focusing on hyperlocal programming targeted toward the younger generations.

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Appendix: Survey Instrument

Consumption of Local News

Welcome to this survey about your consumption of local news

This is a research project that focuses on the consumption of local news by adults, age 18-34 years old. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old and not older than 34 years old.

Participation in this study will require approximately ten (10) minutes of your time. You will be asked to respond to several questions about your consumption of local news.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Your responses to this survey will be kept anonymous because the primary researcher will not have access to identifying information such as IP addresses of respondents.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at any time by contacting the author, Prof. Dave Madsen at Morningside University, 712-274-5480 or madsend@morningside.edu .

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the university, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By continuing with this survey, your consent to participate is implied. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

1. Which category below includes your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34

2. Gender: How do you identify?

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe, below
- Self-describe:

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school
- Graduated from high school
- 1 year of college
- 2 years of college
- 3 years of college
- Graduated from college
- Some graduate school
- Completed graduate school

4. What is your zipcode?

5. What is your primary source for getting LOCAL news and information? In other words, what is the FIRST place you would go to find LOCAL news and information, rather than national news?

- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV
- Internet or Mobile app
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- I don't usually seek out local news
- Other (please specify)

6. How often do you watch a local TV station's LOCAL NEWSCAST (for example: in the early morning, midday, 5pm, 6pm, 9pm, 10pm or 11pm)?

- Never
- Once or twice a month
- 1-2 days a week
- 3-4 days a week
- 5-6 days a week
- Every day

7. Have you watched a local TV station's LOCAL newscast in the past 7 days?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you expect to watch a local TV station's LOCAL newscast in the next 7 days?

- Yes
- No

9. Have you ever accessed local news/information from a local TV station via: (Check all that apply) 0

- The station's website
- The station's Facebook feed
- The station's Twitter feed
- The station's Instagram
- A mobile app from the station on your phone/tablet
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

10. Please complete this sentence: I LIKE to watch local TV news because _____: (Check all that apply)

- It helps me stay up to date on local events
- It affects me
- It interests me
- There is a diversity of stories
- Local news outlets are more trustworthy than national ones
- I am familiar with the Local News anchors
- I grew up watching them and continue to do so
- I don't watch local news
- Other (please specify)

11. Please complete this sentence: I DON'T watch local TV news because _____: (Check all that apply)

- I don't have convenient access to a TV
- I don't receive cable/satellite, or I don't want to use an antenna
- The topics are too boring/unreliable (specifically for my generation)
- The stories are too long
- The stories are too repetitive
- I don't trust local news outlets
- The internet or social media are more convenient/trustworthy
- I don't follow the news in general
- I don't like appointment-style watching (to watch at a specific time, like 6pm or 10pm)
- Other (please specify)

12. If you search for LOCAL NEWS, which news topics are of most interest you? (Check all that apply)

- Weather
- Crime
- Politics / Local Politics
- Sports
- Social Issues
- Business
- Health
- Arts
- Food
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

Thank you for taking the time to do this survey. If you have friends in the 18 to 34-year-old age range, please share the link to this survey with them. If you'd like to hear about the results of this survey, please send an email to Dave Madsen, madsend@morningside.edu. To complete the survey, please click the "DONE" button below.