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## **News Source Preferences and News Source Credibility among College Staff, Faculty, and Students**

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The Rochester Institute of Technology

Department of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

News Source Preferences and News Source Credibility among  
College Staff, Faculty, and Students

by

Larissa A. Bolalek

*A Thesis submitted*

in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science degree  
in Communication & Media Technologies

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....4

Introduction.....5

Literature Review.....7

    Source Content.....7

    News Sources.....8

    Source Credibility.....10

    New Media.....14

Method.....15

Results and Discussion.....17

    Research Question Testing.....19

Conclusion.....21

References.....22

Appendix .....25

NEWS SOURCE PREFERENCES AND NEWS SOURCE CREDIBILITY AMONG  
COLLEGE STAFF, FACULTY, AND STUDENTS

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Degree: Master of Science in Communication & Media Technologies

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Abstract

News consumption practices in the United States have been studied for decades. Recent technology has influenced traditional news consumption by allowing people to access news through the Internet and social media. Today, people have more options than ever as to where to obtain news. People remain interested in getting news that is credible and trustworthy. A survey was distributed in order to learn where people say they turn to for their primary sources of news and the credibility people assigned to various news sources. Respondents were split up into two groups, heavy and light social media users. Results suggest that regardless of social media use, there was no difference in judgments of credibility for different news sources.

*Keywords:* news consumption, source credibility, source preferences, social media, television, news

## News Source Preferences and News Source Credibility among College Staff, Faculty, and Students

From densely populated areas to rural communities, Americans have a strong interest in reading, listening to, watching, and discussing news. From breaking live news to daily news summaries, people want to be well informed on what is going on in their town, city, country, and world.

Once, a limited number of radio, newspaper, and television options were the most commonly used media to obtain credible news. Americans can now choose from dozens of news channels on television and subscribe to newspapers from towns and cities across the nation. Traditional media users now have more options than ever when it comes to obtaining news.

More options to obtain news may be due to technology and related innovations, such as the Internet. The Internet offers the combination of video, audio, and text-based news all on one single website (Thorson, Vraga, & Ekdale, 2010). There are multitudes of websites that offer news in whatever form a news seeking person desires. As aforementioned, this includes videos, pictures, text, and audio. The Internet has created a shift in the way in which individuals obtain, share, and use information including news.

Along with news web sites, social media have become increasingly popular and have changed the way individuals communicate all over the world. Smart phones allow users to easily access their social networks any time, any place. Some social media users access several social networks multiple times each day. Additionally, mobile devices

have further expanded people's options as media content is available online through such technology as smart phones (Taneja, Webster, & Malthouse, 2012).

Not only are social media beneficial for creating and maintaining social relationships but also, because of their popularity, social media have become a way to access news. News organizations and journalists now participate in sharing the news via social media. Additionally, anyone has the ability to post freely on social networks. "Citizen journalist" is a term that describes everyday people who share newsworthy information on his or her social networking pages. Twitter and Facebook are perhaps the most common forms of social media used to obtain and share news.

With more outlets than ever for news consumption, people have many options to choose from when selecting their news source. People want and need to be informed by news that is credible. Additional news sources have raised concerns about the credibility of new and traditional news sources. Which news outlet is most credible? How do people know the news they are receiving is legitimate and accurate? Do people use a certain source for news because it is their preference? Do people use a certain source for news because they perceive it to be most credible?

The purpose of this study is to discover where people say they turn to for their primary sources of news and the credibility people assign to various news sources.

Therefore the following questions are raised:

*RQ1.* What differences are there between heavy and light social media users in perceived credibility of news reporting (on printed newspapers, newspaper's website, television, TV station's website, and social media)?

*RQ2.* What differences are there between heavy and light social media users and traditional media source users in preferred primary news sources?

### Literature Review

#### Source Content

News seeking audiences may be attracted to a particular media outlet to consume their news for a number of various reasons. A reason news seeking audiences may be more interested in one news outlet over another is the content of news offered. However, research has showed that the content among various news outlets are more similar than one would assume (Maier, 2010).

Maier's (2010) study sought to identify the differences of news content between online sources and mainstream media such as radio, television, and newspapers through content analysis. The study found that online news media content were similar to mainstream news media (Maier, 2010). For example, about six in ten of the top stories online were consistent with the leading stories in newspapers, on television, or on radio (Maier, 2010).

Online news services did not just reflect the news stories in print and broadcast (Maier, 2010). For example, online news sources could be updated immediately as news happens. Online news sources also offered interactive videos, audio, and more photos. News seeking audiences that turn to online news sites found dominant daily stories, and news that offered perspectives on events related to the nation and the world (Maier, 2010).

Curtain, Dougall, and Mersey's (2007) research analyzed online users' behaviors on the Yahoo! news website over a month long period. The study suggests that when users are given the choice, they access more entertainment and odd news stories online than they might find in their daily newspaper (Curtain et al., 2007). However, the study found that users also want mainly hard news stories on important topics such as national, political, and world news (Curtain et al., 2007).

Moreover, the results of the study suggest that users access news online for different functions and not just for different topics (Curtain et al., 2007). In addition to reading text, different functions include viewing images, videos, and audio clips. The study concludes that users want to be both entertained and informed when they are seeking news on the Yahoo! news website (Curtain et al., 2007).

Research offers evidence for the similarities in the content that is provided regarding news stories across various media outlets; individuals still have many options as to which news media outlets to obtain their information from.

### News Sources

Making news begins with sources (Gans, 1980). People want to be well informed by a source that is accurate and reliable. Today there are numerous places that people can turn to for news. Sources help determine news content, credibility, diversity, and how people understand and make sense of information (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press has tracked changes in news consumption for decades. In 2008 the Pew Research Center researched audience segments in a changing news environment (Pew Research Center, 2008a). The Pew

Research Center conducted telephone survey research and found that integrators (people who get news from both traditional sources and the Internet) were 23% of the public, net-newsmers (people who predominately turn to the web for news) were 13% of the public, traditionalists were 46% of the public, and those disengaged (low interest in news and news consumption) were 14% of the public (Pew Research Center, 2008a). Although traditionalists have the highest percentage of users, the Pew Research Center discovered that there has been an increase in online news consumption (Pew Research Center, 2008a).

Additionally, the Pew Research Center reports that the proportion of Americans who say they read a print newspaper yesterday dropped down from 34% in 2006 to 27% in 2008 (Pew Research Center, 2008a). From 2006 to 2008 the Center found those watching cable news increased from 34% to 39% (Pew Research Center, 2008a). From 2006 to 2008 the Pew Research Center found that the percentage of people who go online for news at least three days a week increased from 31% to 37% (Pew Research Center, 2008a). In regards to social networking, the Pew Research Center found that in 2008 only 10% of those with social networking profiles regularly got new from these sites (Pew Research Center, 2008a).

Many studies have sought to discover people's news source preferences. Two hundred and forty-four people participated in an experimental study where they were asked to view a short television news story and then fill out a questionnaire regarding media use (Miller & Kurpius, 2010). The questionnaire results found that television is the main source of news for 48.3% with 30.7% watching news every night (Miller &

Kurpius, 2010). The second most used source of news was the Internet with 30.2% (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

News seeking behavior among young adults, ages 18 to 25, was investigated through an interview process (Qayyum, Williamson, Liu, & Hider, 2010). The study found that participants used a variety of sources to obtain various kinds of news and online news sources played a minor role in news seeking behavior for this study (Qayyum et al., 2010). Instead, participants fumbled across interesting news stories that popped up online when doing other things such as checking their emails (Qayyum et al., 2010). The study found that participants did not find it particularly important to gather news from a certain source, but just to gather the news (Qayyum et al., 2010).

The Pew Research Center found that although there are various ways to obtain news, 34% of young people get no news on a typical day compared to only 25% getting no news in 1998 (Pew Research Center, 2008a).

### Source Credibility

News seeking audiences want to be well informed by sources that are credible and trustworthy. Credibility is defined as “the extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject” (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000 p. 43). Expertise refers to knowledge of the subject. Trustworthiness is a combination of believability, honesty, and lack of bias (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Credibility may affect the opinion about what is actually news of those who turn to certain news sources rather than others.

Hollander (2008) claims “people who find data inconsistent with their beliefs tend to perceive those sources as less credible” (p. 25). In addition, group membership can play a role in perception of media fairness or credibility (Hollander, 2008). News consumption patterns may be influenced by source credibility (Williams, 2012).

As previously described, two hundred and forty-four people participated in an experimental study where they were asked to view a short television news story and then fill out a questionnaire regarding media use (Miller & Kurpius, 2010). In addition to media use, the questionnaire had questions in regards to news source credibility. The study found that 22.7% of participants said that television is credible, or very credible (Miller & Kurpius, 2010). Additionally, TV news received a 7.27 mean of credibility out of 10 (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

The study also discovered that TV news viewers perceive stories with official sources as more credible than stories with unofficial or citizen sources (Miller & Kurpius, 2010). In addition, the study found that TV viewers also perceive hard news stories as more credible than soft news stories (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

Thorson, Vraga, and Ekadle (2010) studied how credibility of a news story is affected by the context in which it appears. The study discovered that judgments of news credibility are in fact affected by surrounding opinion commentary (Thorson et al., 2010). In addition, news credibility was influenced by the context in which the story is read (Thorson et al., 2010). On both Facebook and Twitter users have the ability to write comments on posts. In addition on online news websites, users have the ability to comment on news stories and create discussions. Due to surrounding commentary on

social networking sites or news stories, users may form judgments in regards to the story or its credibility which may influence their own personal opinions. Differences in opinion posted by others may affect an individual's feelings in regards to credibility of the news source or news story.

Some of the components of credibility in news include trustworthiness, fairness, completeness, bias, and accuracy (Meyer 1988). Trust is a component of credibility among news media. Williams (2012) studied the significance of media trust and the relationship between an individual's level of media trust and news attention. The study was conducted through telephone interviews. The three types of media trust studied were trust of information, trust of those who deliver the news, and trust of media corporations (Williams, 2012). People choose a particular news source that satisfies their definition of credibility. People want a news source that is fair, tells the whole story, is accurate, separates facts from opinions, and has well trained reporters to present the news. Perhaps people are more likely to pay attention to news or a news source if they consider it to be credible.

Results of the study confirmed that the three different types of media trust do in fact relate to those who follow the news. For example, a positive relationship was found between trust in those who deliver news and those who pay attention to the news in regards to newspapers (Williams, 2012). The relationship between reporter trust and attention given to the television news was found to be insignificant (Williams, 2012). Additionally, no significant relationship was discovered in regards to trust measured

among Internet news (Williams, 2012). In conclusion, the study provided evidence that media trust is an important factor in regards to news attention decisions (Williams, 2012).

In a survey of over 800 U.S. college students, Kiouisis (2009) found that newspapers were rated more credible than television or online news. Huang (2009) found that people between 15-30 years old had more trust in information provided through web sites of established news sources than other sites.

The Pew Research Center reports that from 1998 to 2008 almost every news organization or program has seen its credibility ratings decline (Pew Research Center, 2008b). Believability trends for TV news outlets have decreased from 1998 to 2008. For example, CNN was rated by 42% as credible in 1998 and rated 27% credible in 2008 (Pew Research Center, 2008b). Print credibility has also been found to be lower. *USA Today* was rated 23% credible in 1998 and decreased to 16% in 2008 (Pew Research Center, 2008b). Although credibility has decreased, traditional news sources (newspapers, television, and radio) have been rated a three out of four on a one to four credibility scale (Pew Research Center, 2008b).

The Pew Research Center found online news to be viewed with more skepticism than any other news outlet (Pew Research Center, 2008b). Google News and Yahoo News were the only two online sources to receive positive ratings for credibility. Online magazines also received low credibility ratings. Of the seven online organizations measured in The Pew Research Center's study, none were viewed as a highly credible source (Pew Research Center, 2008b).

## New Media

The steady continued reach and use by all demographics of the Internet and social media has had a potential impact on news. Twitter and Facebook are currently two of the most dominant social networking sites that continue to gain popularity by users in all age groups. Twitter describes itself as a “real time information network that connects users to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what they find interesting” (Twitter, 2013). Twitter can be used as a breaking news tool to deliver news as it happens. Social media spheres are becoming spaces for audiences to share, discuss, and contribute to the news (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2012).

An online survey was given to 1682 randomly selected people to discover how social media are affecting news habits (Hermida et al., 2012). The study found that social networks such as Facebook have become a source for news and information for a significant number of Internet users (Hermida et al., 2012). About 10% of respondents reported that they received Twitter updates from news organizations or journalists on a typical day (Hermida et al., 2012). The study concludes that respondents prefer news links and recommendations from friends and family rather than journalists or news organization on Facebook or on Twitter (Hermida et al., 2012).

To test the effectiveness of obtaining news from social media, five journalists from French speaking public radio stations isolated themselves in a farmhouse in southern France (Tremblay, 2010). The journalists stayed informed by only using their social networks. During this experimental research the journalists relied on the Tweets or Facebook posts of individuals, organizations, government agencies, or educational

institutions (Tremblay, 2010). They did not keep in touch with any social networks from any news media stations or journalists (Tremblay, 2010). The journalists wanted to discover what kind of information emerges through social networks and what social networks help to find the most valuable information (Tremblay, 2010).

The results of the study concluded that people tend to Tweet what they have picked up from traditional news media, letting others know what they have found is interesting (Tremblay, 2010). The journalists reported that there was not much on their social networks in regards to economic news (Tremblay, 2010). In addition, Tweets from newspapers, journalists, or broadcast stories did not get retweeted that often. The study discovered that social media is not a dominant source of news (Tremblay, 2010).

Although the aforementioned studies have not supported Twitter to be a dominant source of news, an explosion in downtown Bozeman, Montana proved Twitter's role as a legitimate news-distributing tool (Lowery, 2009). With no journalists or local news organizations present, plenty of citizen journalists were posing photos, sharing details, and providing information via Twitter as it happened (Lowery, 2009). Later, the Twitter posts were acting as a larger reporting team than any individual news organization was able to assemble (Lowery, 2009).

Due to the increasing number of people who are using social media, social media has the potential to distribute breaking news worldwide as it happens.

### Method

To measure the source preferences people turn to today for news and the credibility they assign to each news source, a survey (see Appendix) was distributed in

person to a convenience sample of the students, staff, and faculty members at the Rochester Institute of Technology in October of 2013.

Professors were contacted and permission to distribute a 42 item survey in his or her classroom was sought. Everyone in the class received a printed and stapled survey.

In order to adequately measure each variable included in the research questions a variety of items were presented in the survey. Questions in Part I sought to determine self-reported differences in news source preferences. Respondents were asked to select one response for where they go for local, national, and international news. Answer options included printed newspaper, newspaper's website, television, TV station's website, and social media to ensure a range of media are accounted for.

Part II asked about respondent's ownership of Internet accessible devices and their social media use. Several questions were asked in this section about social media use: how often a respondent accessed Facebook yesterday and how often a respondent accessed Twitter yesterday. The responses from those two questions were summed, then split at the median to create two groups: (a) light social media users and (b) heavy social media users.

The questions in Part III were asked to discover the credibility of various news sources. Respondents were asked to report which news source they consider to be most believable and how often they refer to other news sources for confirmation about a story they read or heard.

Part IV asked respondents to indicate their feelings about each news source. The adjectives in each box are used to determine credibility of each source. To ensure validity

of the study, the scale to measure credibility is based on Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) credibility scale. Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) credibility scale offers two opposite adjectives with a scale of numbers one through seven in between, such as, tells the whole story and does not tell the whole story. The closer the number to the adjective the respondent selects, the closer to the meaning of the adjective presented. Additional questions in Part IV asked respondents to identify which types of news they consider to be most believable. Respondents could select hard or soft news. An additional question asked them to select local, national, or international news. The final three items on the survey were asked to better describe the sample.

### Results and Discussion

A total of 105 participants returned the survey. Of the participants 32.1% were male and 68.0% were female. Because the sample consisted of students, staff, and faculty the participants had a wide age range. The youngest to take the survey was 17 and the oldest was 62. The majority of respondents that took the survey were students who made up 85.9% of the responses.

Two people coded the responses of the items on the survey. Multiple coders were used to ensure consistency and reliability of the data interpretation.

The current study found that television was the most frequently selected source of news for local, national, and international news. Just over forty percent (42.3%) of respondents in the current study selected television as the one source they most often go to for local news. More than a third (37.1%) of respondents selected television as the one source they most often go to for national news, and 38.5% of respondents selected

television as the one source they most often go to for international news. The current study supports past research where it was found that the main source of news for 48.3% of respondents was television (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

In regards to type of news, the current study found that 72.9% of respondents considered hard news to be more believable than soft news. Only 27.1% of respondents considered soft news more believable than hard news. The current study's finding supports past research that found hard news stories are more credible than soft news stories (Miller & Kurpius, 2010).

The current study found some interesting results in regards to online news sources. The current study found that TV station's websites were selected by 11.5% of respondents for local news, 11.4% of respondents for national news, and 9.6% of respondents for international news as the source respondents most often go to for news. The current investigation revealed that TV station's websites were not a dominant news source preference for respondents. This supports past research that found that online news sources played a minor role in news seeking behavior (Qayyum et al., 2010).

The current investigation revealed that 35.4% of respondents selected television for the most believable source of news. The study's results support past research, which found that 22.7% of participants said that television was credible or very credible. (Miller & Kurpius 2010).

The current study yielded some interesting results in regards to social media use and Internet accessible devices. The Pew Research Center (2008a) found that in 2008 only 10% of those with social networking profilers regularly got news from social media

sites (Pew Research Center, 2008a). The current study found that 27.9% of respondents most often go to social media for local news. In addition, the current investigation found that 83.3% of respondents reported that they have a smart phone. Only 4.9% of respondents reported that they consider social media to be the most believable source of news.

The current study revealed that 68% of respondents reported that they had not checked Twitter at all the previous day. Additionally, 87.4% of respondents reported that they had not clicked on a news related link from Twitter the previous day. These findings support past research that says a small number of people are using Twitter for news (Hermida et al., 2012).

### Research Questions Testing

To discover the answers to *RQ1*, what differences are there between heavy and light social media users in perceived credibility of news reporting, independent *t*-tests were run using SPSS. First, the scores of the five belief statements for each media (newspaper, newspaper's website, television, TV's website, and social media) were summed. The belief statements included: (a) is fair/is unfair, (b) tells the whole story/does not tell the whole story, (c) is accurate/is inaccurate, (d) does separate fact from opinion/does not separate fact from opinion, and (e) has well trained reporters/has poorly trained reporters. There were numbers one through seven in between each opposing adjective. The higher the number, the less credibility the respondent assigned to the adjective of that news source. A respondent's total score could range from 5-35.

Regardless of social media use, there was no difference in judgments of credibility for different news sources.

To discover the answer to *RQ2*, is there a difference between social media use and news source preference, Chi-square tests for independence were used to compare heavy and light social media users with their preferences for local, national, and international news. No significant association occurred between heavy and light social media users and their primary preference for local news. Although one Chi-square test was significant ( $\chi^2=11.205$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=.024$ ) between heavy and light social media users and their self-reported primary preference for national news, the fragility of the data prompts a conservative interpretation. Light social media users were more likely than heavy social media users to report newspaper's websites and television as their first choices for national news. A Chi-square test was also significant ( $\chi^2=9.660$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=.047$ ) between heavy and light social media users and their primary preference for international news, but the fragility of the data prompts a conservative interpretation. Light social media users are more likely than heavy social media users to report newspaper's website and television as their first choices for international news. Heavy social media users selected social media as their first choice for international news.

The current study's findings prompted meaningful conclusions. The current study's sample did not make any discrimination in credibility among the various news sources. Additionally, the current study found that traditional media is still dominant for news.

### Conclusion

As with any survey research, a limitation is that people report on what they claim they do. Another limitation to this study is the sample. The study uses a convenience sample. A more accurate representation of RIT students and staff would have helped to make more generalized conclusions. Future research should include a larger random sample, which will also produce results that can be generalized to a larger population.

Another limitation to this study is that RIT students and staff members may not properly reflect how Americans consume news. People involved in a school setting may have a stronger desire to be connected to current events.

Future research may explore why social media is not a dominant source of news. If people worldwide are engaged in social media, why do people prefer traditional news sources? If the current study's finding suggests that people report there is no difference in credibility among various news sources, why is the news not being shared in higher volumes on social media? Follow up research should track changes, if any, in public perception of social media news credibility.

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## Appendix A

## Survey

There are now more ways than ever to obtain information regarding current events. It is of much interest where individuals, such as you, gain news and how you assign credibility to various news sources. The following survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. All responses will be confidentially interpreted.

## PART I.

*The following questions are in regards to news source preference.*

Please check one response for each of the following items

		Printed newspaper	Newspaper's website	Television	TV station's website	Social media
1	Which one source do you most often go to for local news?					
2	Which one source do you go most often go to for national news?					
3	Which one source do you most often go to for international news?					

## PART II.

*Next we'd like to learn about your Internet accessible devices and social media use.*

4. Do you have a smart phone? (choose one)
  - a. yes
  - b. no
5. How many social media apps do you have on your phone? (choose one)
  - a. 0
  - b. 1
  - c. 2
  - d. 3
  - e. 4
  - f. 5 or more
6. Do you get alerts for news on your smart phone? (choose one)
  - a. yes
  - b. no
7. How many times did you check Facebook yesterday? (choose one)
  - a. none
  - b. once
  - c. twice
  - d. three times
  - e. more than four times
8. How many times did you check Twitter yesterday? (choose one)
  - a. none
  - b. once
  - c. twice
  - d. three times
  - e. more than four times
9. How many times did you click on news-related links from Facebook yesterday?  
(choose one)
  - a. none
  - b. once
  - c. twice
  - d. three times
  - e. more than four times

10. How many times did you click on a news-related link from Twitter yesterday?  
(choose one)

- a. none
- b. once
- c. twice
- d. three times
- e. more than four times

### PART III.

*The next section asks about your views concerning the news you consume.*

11. What source of news do you consider to be most believable? (choose one)

- a. broadcast television
- b. printed newspaper
- c. social media
- d. newspaper's website
- e. TV station's website
- f. other \_\_\_\_\_

12. How often do you refer to other news sources for confirmation of a news story you have read? (choose one)

- a. very frequently
- b. frequently
- c. occasionally
- d. rarely
- e. very rarely

### PART IV.

*Next, using the 7-point scale between the phrases, indicate your feelings about each news source presented. The closer to the number you choose to one word or phrase the more you agree. Please circle one number.*

13. Printed newspapers:

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Tells the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is inaccurate
Does separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not separate fact from opinion
Has well trained reporters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has poorly trained reporters

## 14. Newspaper's website:

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Tells the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is inaccurate
Does separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not separate fact from opinion
Has well trained reporters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has poorly trained reporters

## 16. Television:

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Tells the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is inaccurate
Does separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not separate fact from opinion
Has well trained reporters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has poorly trained reporters

## 17. TV station's website:

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Tells the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is inaccurate
Does separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not separate fact from opinion
Has well trained reporters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has poorly trained reporters

## 18. Social media:

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Tells the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is inaccurate
Does separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not separate fact from opinion
Has well trained reporters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has poorly trained reporters

19. Which type of news story do you consider to be most believable? (choose one)

- a. hard news
- b. soft news

20. Which type of news do you consider to be most believable? (choose one)
- a. local news
  - b. national news
  - c. international

PART V.

*The following questions will be used for statistical purposes:*

22. How old were you on your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Sex:
- a. male
  - b. female

24. Describe item: are you a
- a. student
  - b. faculty
  - c. staff