



# Exploring Digital Newsroom

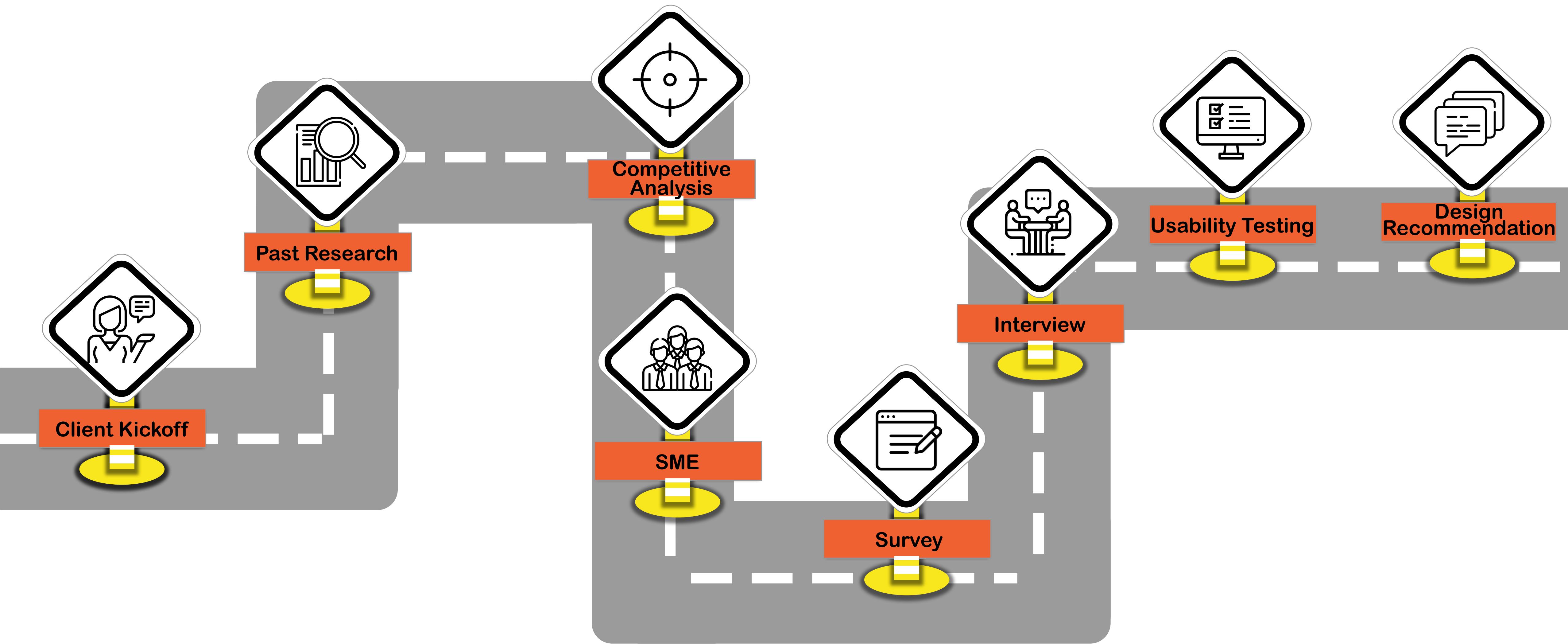
Becky C.



The University of Texas at Austin  
School of Information

# Agenda

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Client Kickoff

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Mon, 09/17/18, UTA 1.502

Attendees: Beth Hallmark, Director of Communications

By client kickoff meeting I learned that Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) wants to deliver the messages on its own will, instead of being controlled by local media. Also, they want to raise its brand awareness and bridge the communication gap between TxDOT and the public

## Problem Space

TxDOT is having trouble relying on the local media to spread the brand message because the local media is not motivated to promote the positive spin TxDOT wants to apply. However, having no idea of what would take to open their own Digital/Corporate Newsroom

## What I learned

- Its main goal is to keep people safe
- Drivers will look on their website for the service they do not provide
- There is no application from the public sectors on the list of best APP
- Drivers may have varying perspective on information based on different context
- They have several outlet to update information
  - Website
  - Social Media
  - Public information offices
  - Magazine
  - Travel information center
- People will search information on Google instead of using their website
- They are transforming the traditional way to deliver message (facebook, twitter)
- People don't know the ongoing construction projects

# Objective

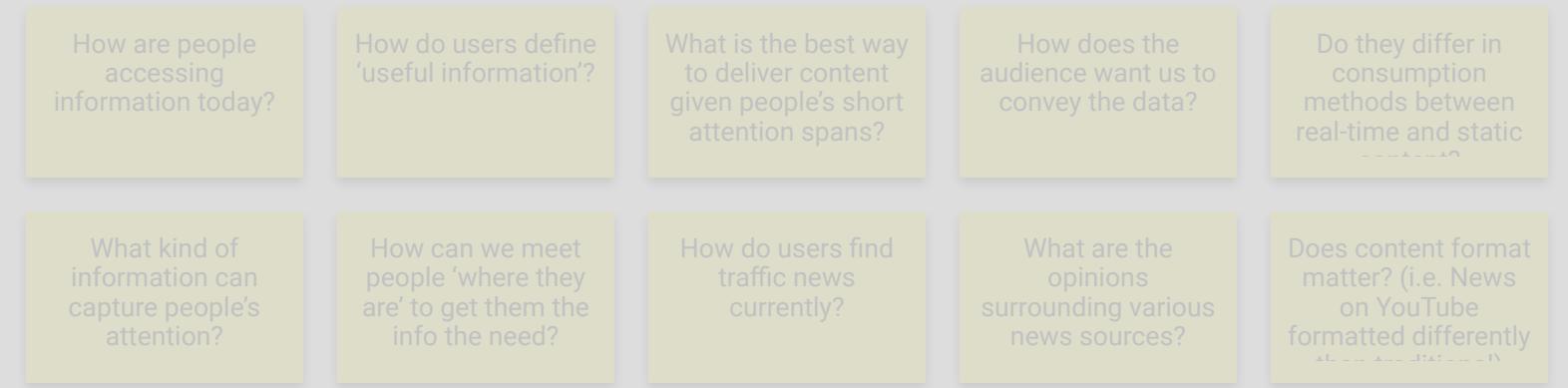
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How to build a compelling, interactive, multimedia and dynamic platform, and figure out what content can help users to be more engaged and better informed

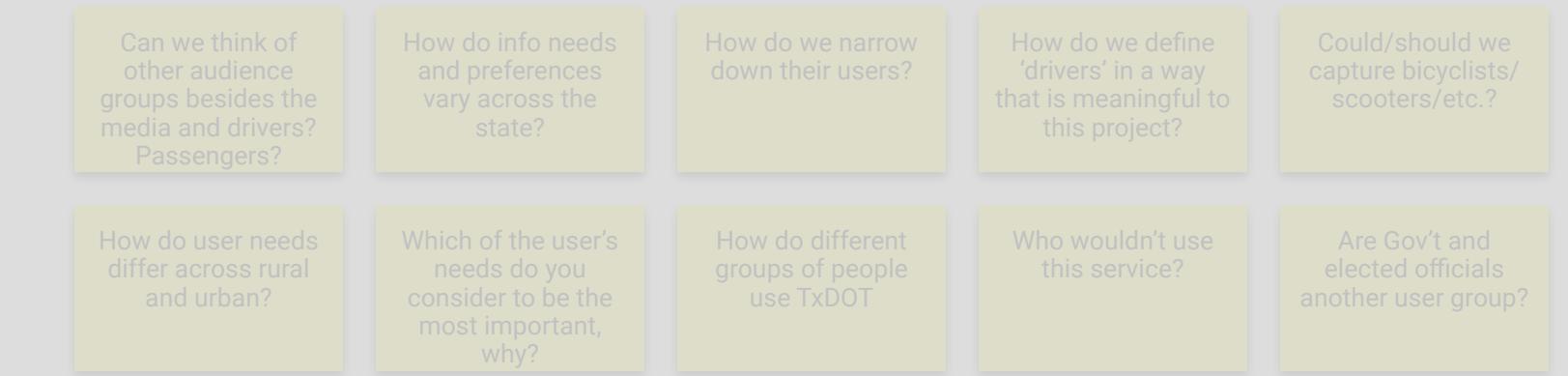
## Painpoints

- People will come to their website to look up for unprovided service (eg.driver's license)
- People will google for route suggestion instead of looking on Drive Texas
- Having hard time selling ideas
- Don't know what kinds of information will pull users in or push them out
- Don't know how to tailor information for everyone
- Don't know who the users come from
- Don't know what kind of relationship between social media and news room or how they interact
- Don't know what kinds of information should be shown

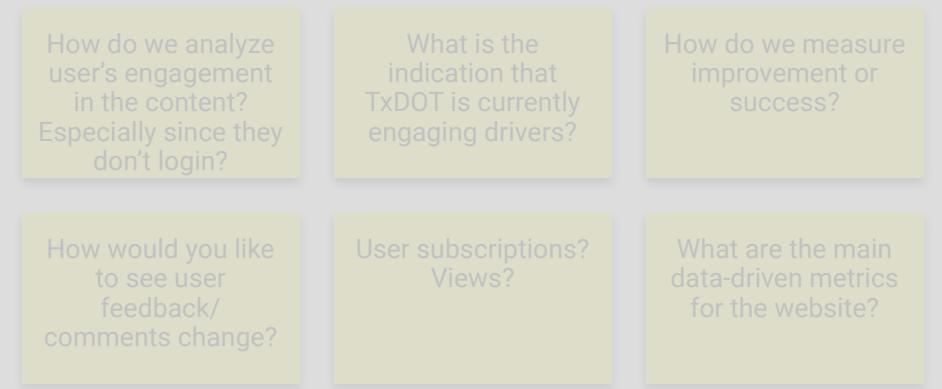
## How do users consume information today?



## Who are our users?



## What are our success metrics?



## How are users currently using TxDOT's media website?



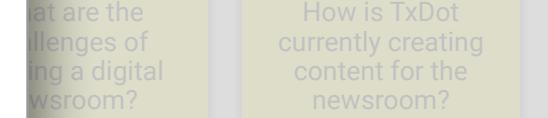
## Affinity Diagram

By affinity diagram to grasp a higher level of questions and narrow down our problem scope

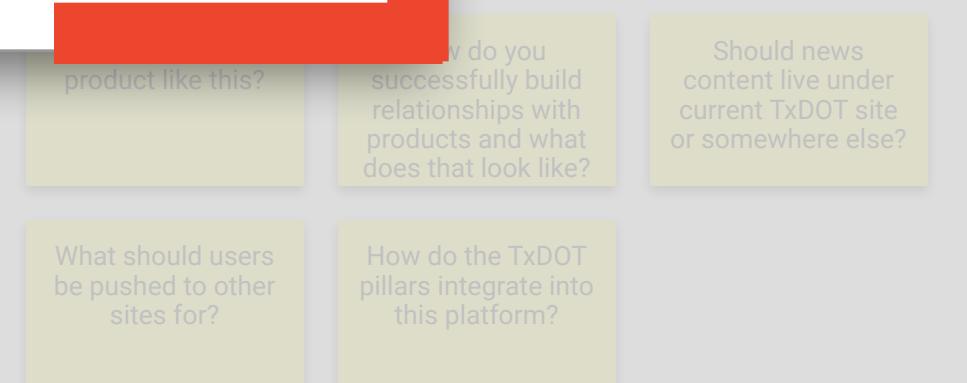
## How can a TxDOT Newsroom meet its goals?



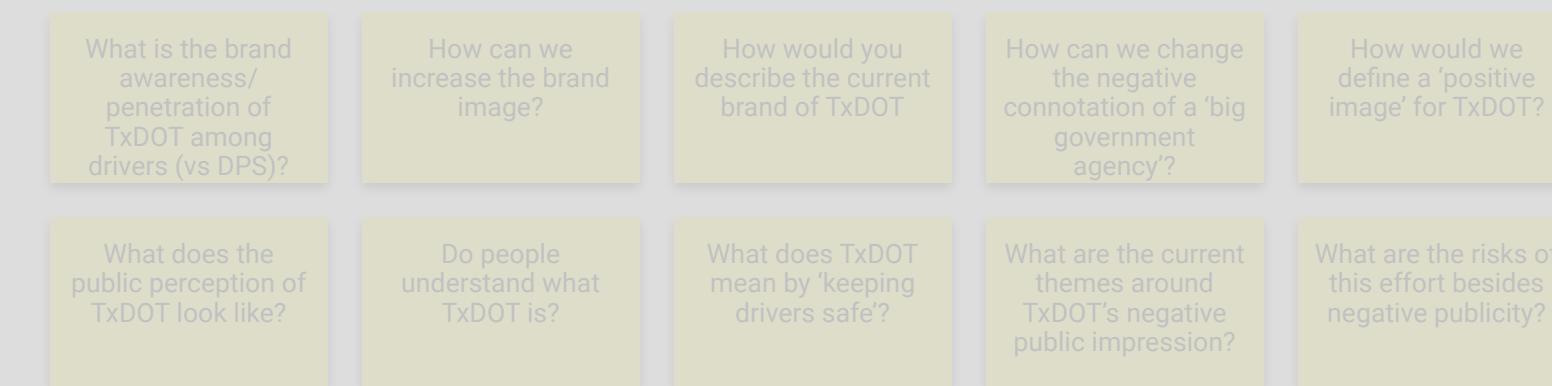
## Report/Processes



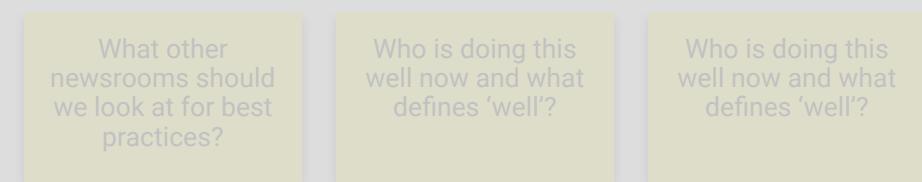
## Architecture



## Brand Awareness/Image



## Competitors (Direct and Indirect)



## Misc



## How do users consume information today?

- How are people accessing information today?
- How do users define 'useful information'?
- What is the best way to deliver content given people's short attention spans?
- How does the audience want us to convey the data?
- Do they differ in consumption methods between real-time and static content?
- What kind of information can capture people's attention?
- How can we meet people where they are to get them the info they need?
- How do users find traffic news currently?
- What are the opinions surrounding various news sources?
- Does content format matter? (i.e. News on YouTube formatted differently)

## Who are our users?

- Can we think of other audience groups besides the media and drivers? Passengers?
- How do info needs and preferences vary across the state?
- How do we narrow down their users?
- How do we define 'drivers' in a way that is meaningful to this project?
- Could/should we capture bicyclists/ scooterists/etc.?
- How do we engage new users?
- How do user needs differ across rural and urban?
- Which of the user's needs do you consider to be the most important, why?
- How do different groups of people use TxDOT?
- Who wouldn't use this service?
- Are Gov't and elected officials another user group?

## What are our success metrics?

- How do we analyze user's engagement in the content? Especially since they don't login?
- What is the indication that TxDOT is currently engaging drivers?
- How do we measure improvement or success?
- How would you like to see user feedback/ comments change?
- User subscriptions? Views?
- What are the main data-driven metrics for the website?

## How are users currently using TxDOT's news/media website?

- |  |  |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |                           |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| Are users finding the content they are looking for today?      | How do different groups of people use TxDOT?                               | What are some of the pain points of the current website?  | What do their users want?                             | What are the usability issues with the current website? | On heavy traffic times (holidays), can users get the latest information on roads from TxDOT? | Based on past metrics, what tone/content/length do users like?    | How can we best tell this narrative of Texans who use transportation everyday? | What is the context or situation users are in when they engage with the information?                | What is the incentive for a user to find news information on TxDOT's website?      | What are the scenarios where people are currently being directed to the press room? | Of the existing           |
| What are the top 3 types of information checked most by users? | How is TxDOT communicating info to drivers about impacts to their commute? | What do users like most and least about current newsroom? | What information is resonating well with users today? | Why do drivers come to TxDOT's website?                 | What information on the website and social media are people engaging with the most?          | What are the predictors of people coming to and staying at TxDOT? | What are the top 10 keyword searches for the past 6 months?                    | What are the things people search for that aren't part of TxDOT (i.e. license, registration, etc.)? | What is the current obstacle keeping people from getting this information already? | Why do TxDOT users need a newsroom?   | Backend Support/Processes |

## How can a TxDOT Newsroom meet users's future needs?

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| What are the day-to-day needs of Texas drivers/ transportation users? | What is the primary news the target audience wants? what is the secondary?                   | How does Social Media fit in to the future plan? Push vs Pull to/from TxDOT's website | What about emergency text messages, a podcast, youtube channel? | How do we show relevant content to drivers?                         | How do we improve driver safety through the Newsroom?      | What features are critical for adoption and what can be pushed to later phases? | What are the best ways to leverage existing content? | Should user be allowed to submit stories, would this increase engagement? | How do we leverage what TxDOT is already good at and move it to next-gen technologies? |
| Do users prefer visually rich or simple information?                  | Are there any Gov't/ Federal regulations that we need to be aware of? must (not) haves, etc. | How do we balance the information on social media and the website?                    | What does a media platform for safety mean?                     | How should we segment the information on the site and social media? | How to differentiate 'local news' from 'educational news'? | How can we utilize existing media such as our internal newsletters?             | How can we inform drivers of unsafe road conditions? | How can we address the lack of real-time data for users?                  | How 'local' could we make the content and should we?                                   |

## Brand Awareness/Image

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| What is the brand awareness/ penetration of TxDOT among drivers (vs DPS)? | How can we increase the brand image? | How would you describe the current brand of TxDOT | How can we change the negative connotation of a 'big government agency'? | How would we define a 'positive image' for TxDOT?             |
| What does the public perception of TxDOT look like?                       | Do people understand what TxDOT is?  | What does TxDOT mean by 'keeping drivers safe'?   | What are the current themes around TxDOT's negative public impression?   | What are the risks of this effort besides negative publicity? |

## Competitors (Direct and Indirect)

- What other newsrooms should we look at for best practices?
- Who is doing this well now and what defines 'well'?
- Who is doing this well now and what defines 'well'?

## Misc

- Why does TxDOT want to become its own media platform?

# Literature Review

By Literature review and synthesis of the past research, I want to figure out how people process information, what kinds of content match the users needs and how to leverage the power of social media to further clarify the following research question

## How do users consume information today?

- How are people accessing information today?
- How do users define 'useful' information?
- What is the best way to deliver content given people's short attention spans?
- How does the audience want us to convey the data?
- Do they differ in consumption methods between real-time and static content?
- What kind of information can capture people's attention?
- How can we meet people 'where they are' to get them the info they need?
- How do users find traffic news currently?
- What are the opinions surrounding various news sources?
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## Who are our users?

- Can we think of other audience groups besides the media and drivers? Passengers?
- How do info needs and preferences vary across the state?
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- How do we define 'drivers' in a way that is meaningful to this project?
- Could/should we capture bicyclists/scooters/etc.?
- How do we engage new users?
- How do we analyze user's engagement in the content? Especially since they don't login?
- What is the indication that TxDOT is currently engaging drivers?
- How do we measure improvement or success?

## What are our success metrics?

- How would you like to see user feedback/comments change?
- User subscriptions? Views?
- What are the main data-driven metrics for the website?

## How are users currently using TxDOT's news/media website?

- Are users finding the content they are looking for today?
- How do different groups of people use TxDOT?
- What are some of the pain points of the current website?
- What do their users want?
- What are the usability issues with the current website?
- On heavy traffic times (holidays), can users get the latest information on roads from TxDOT?
- Based on past metrics, what tone/content/length do users like?
- How can we best tell this narrative of Texans who use transportation everyday?
- What is the context or situation users are in when they engage with the information?
- What is the incentive for a user to find news information on TxDOT's website?
- What are the scenarios where people are currently being directed to the press room?
- Of the existing information channels, which is most active and which is least?
- What are the pain points of building and maintaining a digital newsroom?
- What are the challenges of running a digital newsroom?
- How is TxDOT currently creating content for the newsroom?

## Backend Support/Processes

- What are the pain points of building and maintaining a digital newsroom?
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## How can a TxDOT Newsroom meet users's future needs?

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## Information Architecture

- What is the IA of a product like this?
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- Should news content live under current TxDOT site or somewhere else?
- What should users be pushed to other sites for?
- How do the TxDOT pillars integrate into this platform?

## Subject Matter Expert

By subject matter expert, I want to sort out how different platforms interact with each other, and what are the content preferences among different groups of consumers

## Brand Awareness/Image

- What is the brand awareness/penetration of TxDOT among drivers (vs DPS)?
- How can we increase the brand image?
- How would you describe the current brand of TxDOT?
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## Misc

Why does TxDOT want to become its own media platform?
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## Survey

By survey, I want to determine what are the contents users expect to see by looking up the frequency of the visiting website. Furthermore, I am also interested in device preference used to access these information

What media do we push to other sites for?	How do the major pillars integrate into this platform?
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## Interview

By interview, I want to learn who are the current users to further determine what kinds of content would fit user's need in terms of their driving behaviors. Also, to know the current perception of TxDOT and how much people know about them to tweak its brand image

## Information Architecture

What are the pain points of a newsroom?	How do you successfully build relationships with products and what does that look like?	Should news content live under current TxDOT site or somewhere else?
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What is the brand awareness/ penetration of TxDOT among drivers (vs DPS)?	How can we increase the brand image?	How would you describe the current brand of TxDOT	How can we change the negative connotation of a 'big government agency'?	How would we define a 'positive image' for TxDOT?
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## Backend Support/Processes

What are the pain points of building and maintaining a social media presence?	What are the challenges of running a digital newsroom?	How is TxDot currently creating content for the newsroom?
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## Usability Testing

By usability testing, I can understand how people are using the TxDOT website, including whether they can find what they want on the website as well as the workflow. What's more, to identify the timepoint they feel upset or delighted while using it

## Information Architecture

What is the IA of a product like this?	How do you successfully build relationships with products and what does that look like?	Should news content live under current TxDOT site or somewhere else?
What should users be pushed to other sites for?	How do the TxDOT pillars integrate into this platform?	

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## Literature Review

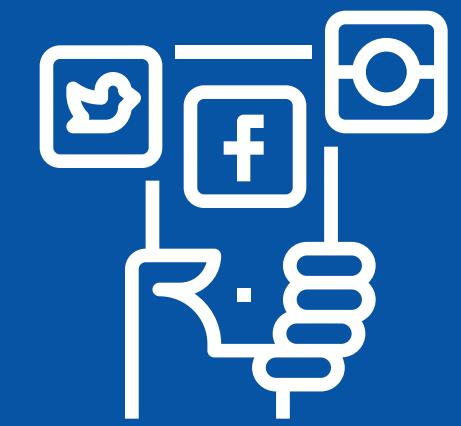
# Literature Review

By Literature review and synthesis of the past research, I want to figure out how people process information, what kinds of content match the users needs and how to leverage the power of social media to further clarify the following research question

What I want to know



How people perceive information



What other ways to reach audience



What content is useful

## Multimedia

Your newsroom should boast **original images, infographics, company videos**, and any other **image** driven assets your brand owns.

(Rebekah Iliff, Inc. Magazine, 2015)

Create topical or product based **galleries** for and provide **web-friendly** and broadcast quality **video** (TEKGROUP, 2018)

Cisco forecasts that **82%** of all consumer Internet traffic will be **video**.

(Ryan Holmes, Forbes, 2018)

Ensure that your site is viewable on small screens to create **mobile-friendly** (TEKGROUP, 2018)

# Literature Review (Cont'd)

## Social Media

In our experience, unless you are receiving incredible interactions and huge reach for every post, **3-4 Facebook posts per week** is more than enough. (*Reshift Media, 2018*)

Ultimately, who's watching your videos—and **what they do after they watch**—is far more **important** than how many people are watching. (*Ryan Holmes, Forbes, 2018*)

**Social media** may promise **bigger audiences** and more return on investment than ever. (*Ryan Holmes, Forbes, 2018*)

## Interactivity

**Reach the right people with the right posts at the right time.**  
(*Reshift Media, 2018*)

Create content on your website that is about them. People **enjoy** being part of the **conversation** and will almost always **share** it to their own social networks on your behalf. (*Reshift Media, 2018*)

Encourages interaction with the customers, asking **relevant question** to your audience. (*Reshift Media, 2018*)

One strategy we have found effective in **generating interactions** is to create posts that **share** customer **stories**. (*Reshift Media, 2018*)

# Literature Review (Cont'd)

## Content

Helps **solidify your relationship** with the customer. By **sharing** their **story** from your **brand page** you make them feel special, which everyone enjoys.

*(Reshift Media, 2018)*

Important question should be asked like, is the copy written **using language** and a tone that will **resonate** with them. *(Reshift Media, 2018)*

Companies need to challenge themselves to really think about the **needs of their audience segments** in order to create and share content that people will **react and converse** about. *(Jen McDonnell, Reshift Media, 2018)*

## Key Takeaways

- Using multimedia can help to create content diversity
- What people react is more critical than viewership
- Social media can help to broaden the audience group
- Make sure your website fits well on every device
- Using the language that the users use to resonate the content
- Segment the audience group and personalized the message delivered toward audience group will help reach out more people
- Sharing stories of the users can build the affinity with the organization, increase interactivity and the opportunity to reach potential customers

# Past Research

We use Persona generated by past research and use them as our index when looking for suitable interview candidate.

There are two groups of people that we would like to know more about, one is the average driver, and the other is the CDL driver

## Average Driver

TxDOT Website Analysis and Evaluation Report

Page 1

### Melanie — Travel (Personal)

**Texas Traveler (Primary 1a)**

- Age: 31
- Family Status: Married, two children - ages 5 and 8
- Location: Slaton, Texas
- Education: Bachelor's degree from Texas Tech
- Occupation: Homemaker
- Annual HH Income: \$46,000
- Web Experience: Moderate
- Primary Use: Email, banking, social networking, DIY Information, shopping
- Favorite Websites: Yahoo mail, Chase, Facebook, Instructables.com, Overstock
- Technical Setup: Desktop used at home, 17" LCD (1024x768), IE, Windows XP, JavaScript and Cookies enabled, Flash and Adobe Acrobat Installed
- TxDOT.gov Experience: Melanie has never visited the TxDOT website before, but she is confident it will have the information she needs about traveling conditions on Texas Interstates.

 "I would like to plan a route that best accommodates my family's needs."

**Profile**

Melanie plans to visit her sister in Dallas with her children while her husband, Clint, is away on business. The family has driven to Dallas plenty of times before, but Melanie has never done the six hour trip without Clint. Melanie is especially worried about the road conditions, considering the increased snow and ice storms this winter.

Her children, Bradley and Claire, are highly energetic and easily tire of watching DVDs in the back of their minivan. Therefore, Melanie would like to stop at a rest area every couple of hours to let the children stretch, play, and release some of their energy. Their new family dog, a six month old puppy named Rufus, will also be traveling with them for the first time. Although Rufus is housetrained, Melanie is not sure if his training will transfer to the car as well, which makes rest stops even more essential.

Melanie has also heard about increased police presence on Texas highways, and various safety initiatives that have recently taken effect. Specifically, she wants to make sure that she is complying with state regulations concerning seat-belt safety and child booster seats.

Lastly, she wants to know about the construction on her route in advance. The last time Clint drove the family to Dallas, they ran into construction near Abilene, which added nearly two extra hours to the trip. The children were stir-crazy by the time they arrived at her sister's, which was well past dinner time. Melanie would like to avoid construction this time around.

**Melanie's Needs and Goals**

- Find alerts on weather and road conditions
- Read updates on traffic and road construction
- Check availability of rest areas
- Keep her children calm and safe throughout the drive
- Confirm compliance with safety regulations

**Melanie's Personal Values**

- Credibility
- Accuracy
- Predictability

**TxDOT can help...**

- Communicate current information on construction, high traffic areas, and rest stop maps
- Display alerts from weather websites
- Offer publications and resources for children
- Provide information about safety campaigns
- Send regular updates via email and dynamic message signs (and in the future, potentially send text message updates)

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TxDOT Website Analysis and Evaluation Report

Page 5

### Russell — Travel (Commercial)

**Motor Carrier (Primary 1c)**

- Age: 50
- Family Status: Married, no children
- Location: Odessa, Texas
- Education: High School diploma
- Occupation: Truck Driver
- Annual HH Income: \$38,000
- Web Experience: Moderate
- Primary Use: Road condition updates, email, entertainment
- Favorite Websites: Hotmail, TxDOT, Google maps
- Technical Setup: Desktop computer, 15.6" LCD (1280x1024), IE, Windows XP, Adobe Acrobat Installed, dial-up connection
- TxDOT Experience: Russell has recently started to use the TxDOT site to complete Weight Tolerance Permits and check for approved freight routes through the state.

 "Give me real-time information to help me plan the most optimal routes and stay compliant with the state laws."

**Profile**

Russell worked for Central Freight Lines out of Odessa for nine years before branching out as an independent motor carrier. Becoming self-employed has brought many changes to Russell's daily work, specifically in how he plans his routes, checks road conditions in real time, plans ahead for detours and traffic congestion, checks weather reports, and finds load restricted bridges. When he worked for Central Freight Lines, he would contact the company's receptionist to keep him informed by checking the TxDOT website. Now, Russell plans his trips and checks road and traffic conditions the night before he leaves. From the road, he contacts his wife, Dolores, to access the website in case he needs to change routes or update information.

Aside from some recent changes to the TxDOT website concerning his Motor Carrier Registration and Weight Tolerance Permits, which he must now complete through the Texas DMV, he or Dolores can accomplish most of his daily tasks on the TxDOT site.

Additionally, when Russell spends more than several hours behind the wheel, he is required by law to stop driving and rest. Russell prefers to stop at rest areas that have specific amenities, including showers, electricity, and food options. He uses TxDOT to locate rest areas that meet his needs beforehand. When he needs to make an emergency stop, he calls Dolores to help him find the nearest rest area.

Considering that neither Dolores nor Russell had extensive web experience prior to Russell's self-employment, they have both become more adept at navigating the web and finding information online. Occasionally, Russell will walk Dolores through the TxDOT site over the phone to help him find what he needs, but she is learning quickly.

**Russell's Needs and Goals**

- Identify restricted bridges en route to his destination
- Check traffic and road conditions
- Locate rest areas that meet his needs
- Register for Weight Tolerance Permits

**Russell's Personal Values**

- Immediacy
- Accuracy
- Convenience

**TxDOT can help...**

- Complete job-related tasks concerning weight restrictions
- Provide information about safety requirements and road conditions
- Publish real-time information to optimally plan his route
- Display rest area information throughout the state

Design for Use LLC Proprietary & Confidential July 2010

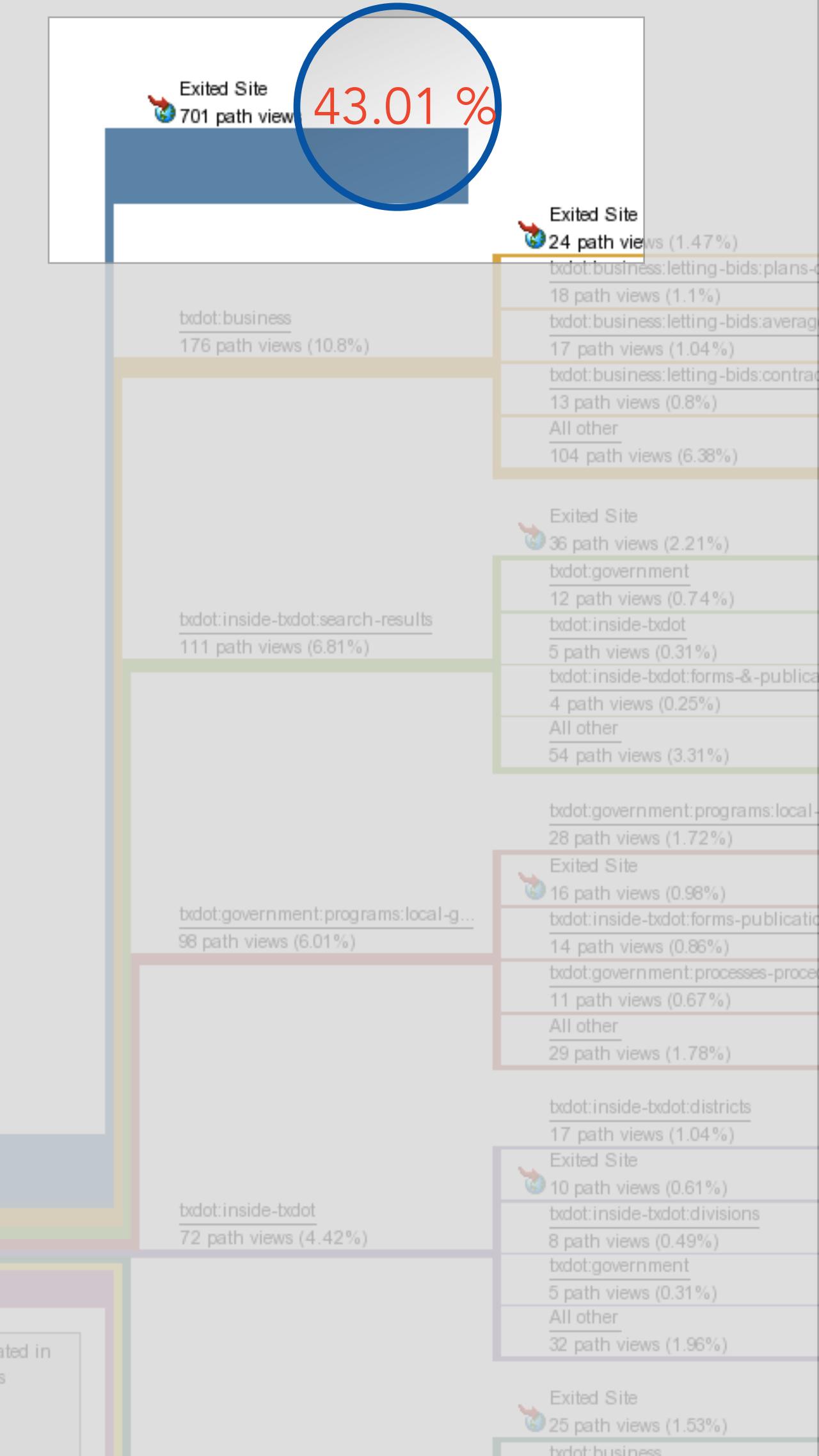
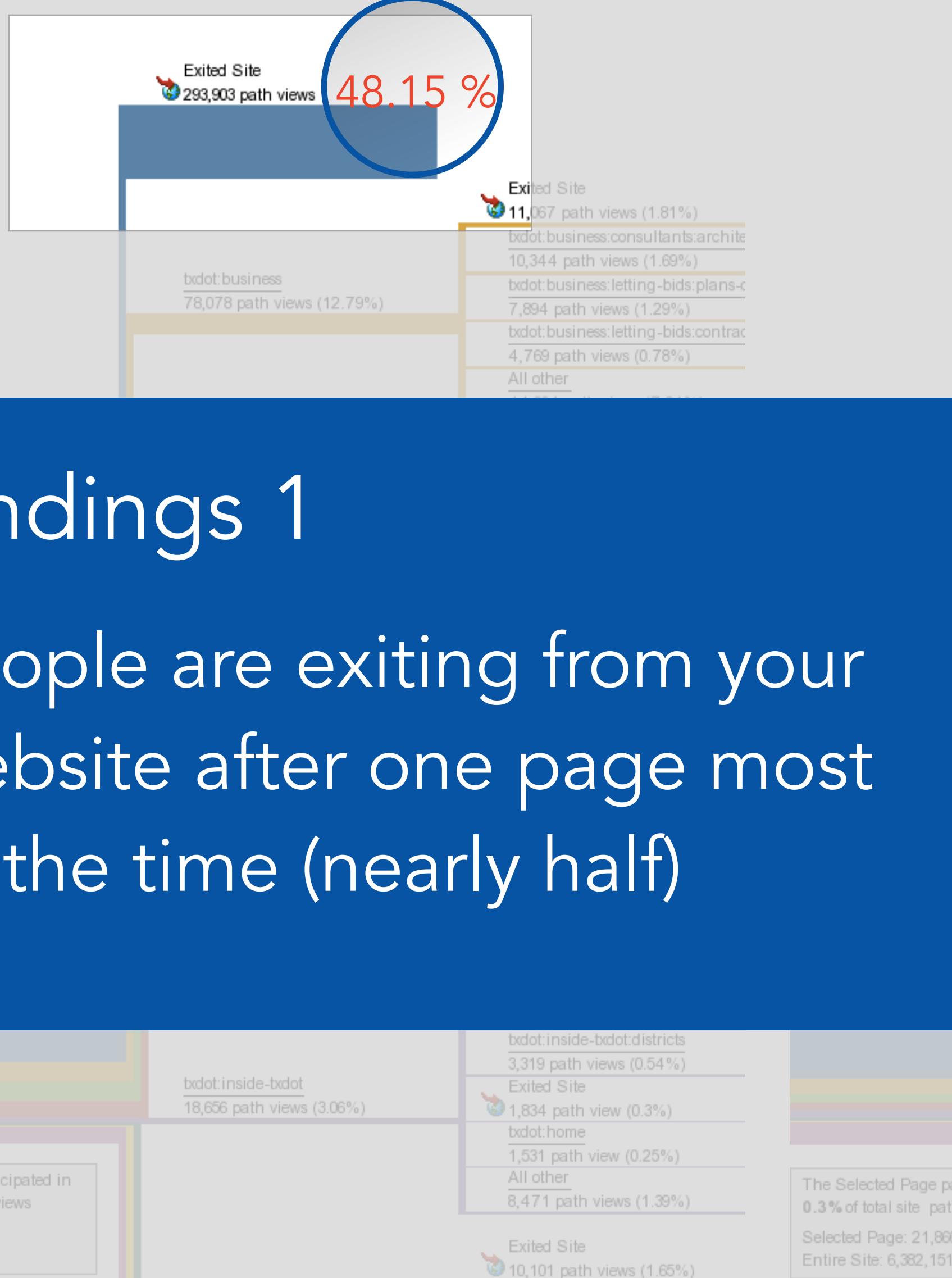
Web Analysis +



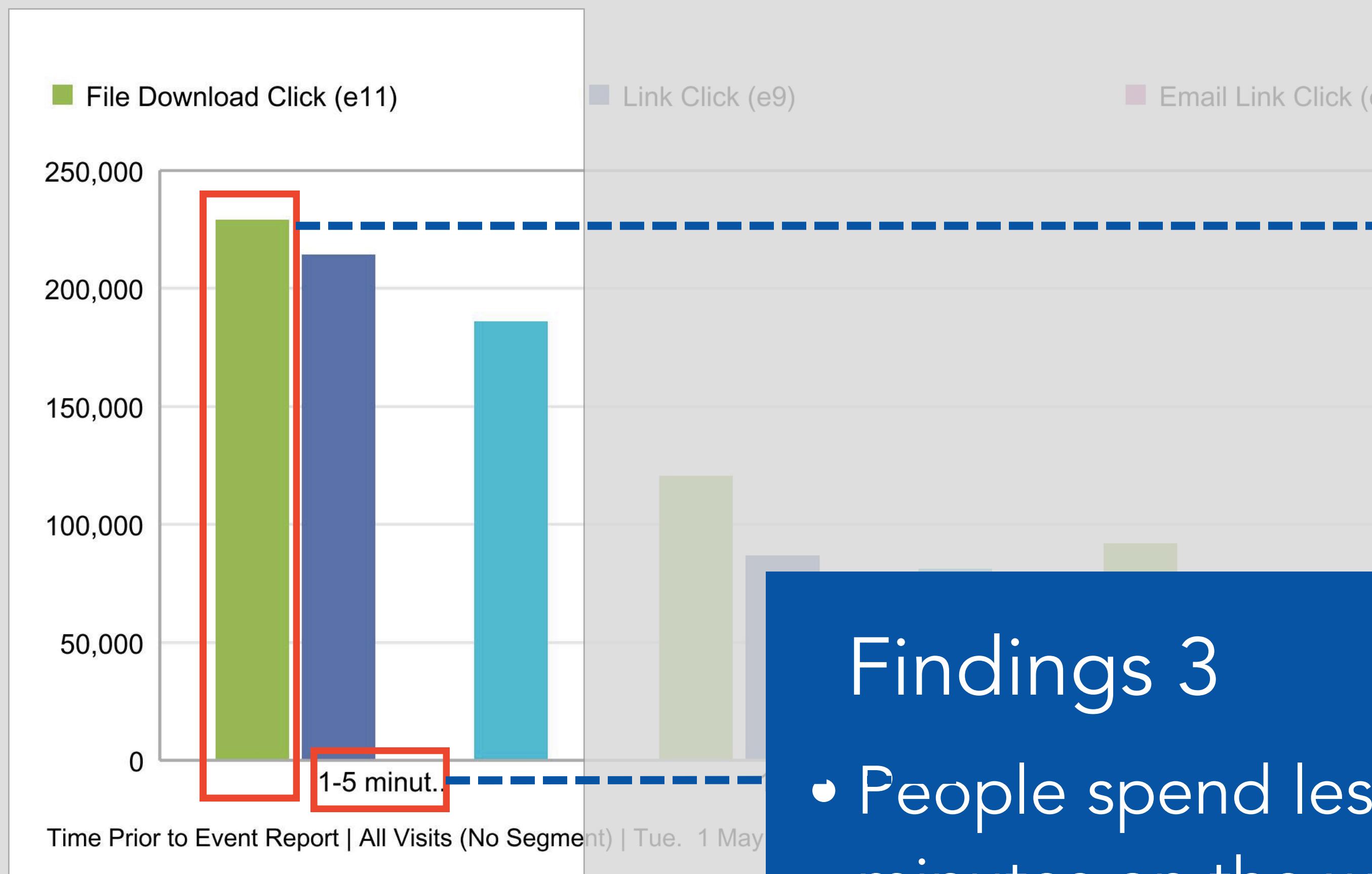
# Web Analysis

# Findings 1

- People are exiting from your website after one page most of the time (nearly half)



# Web Analysis



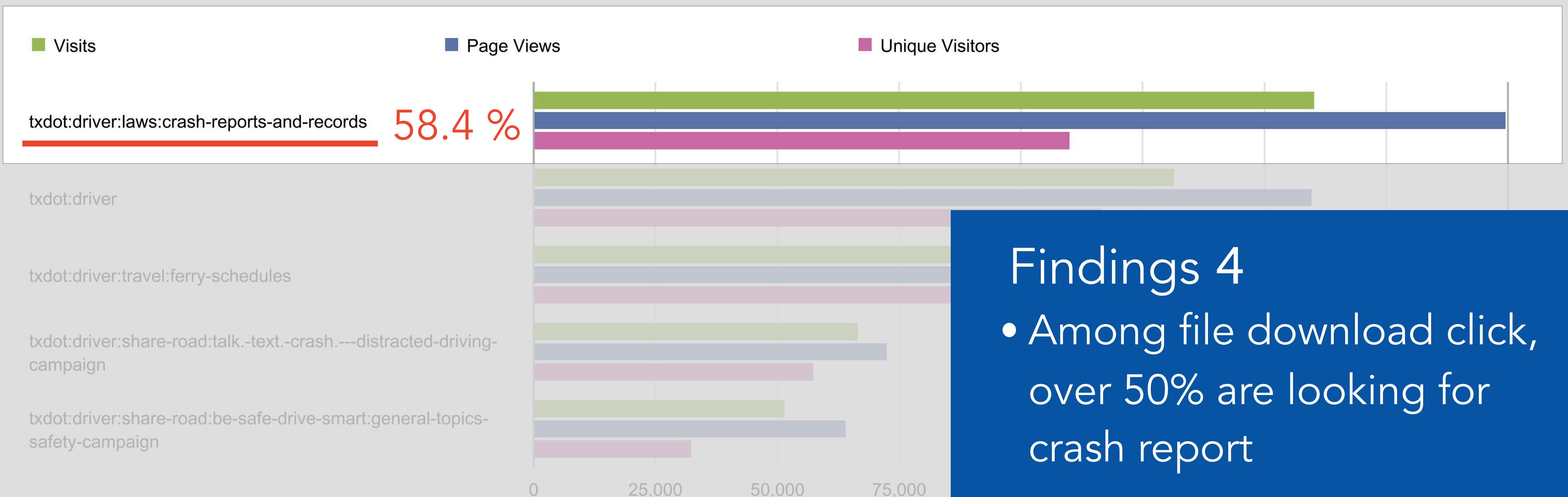
## Findings 2

- People mainly download the file they need when visiting website

## Findings 3

- People spend less than five minutes on the website

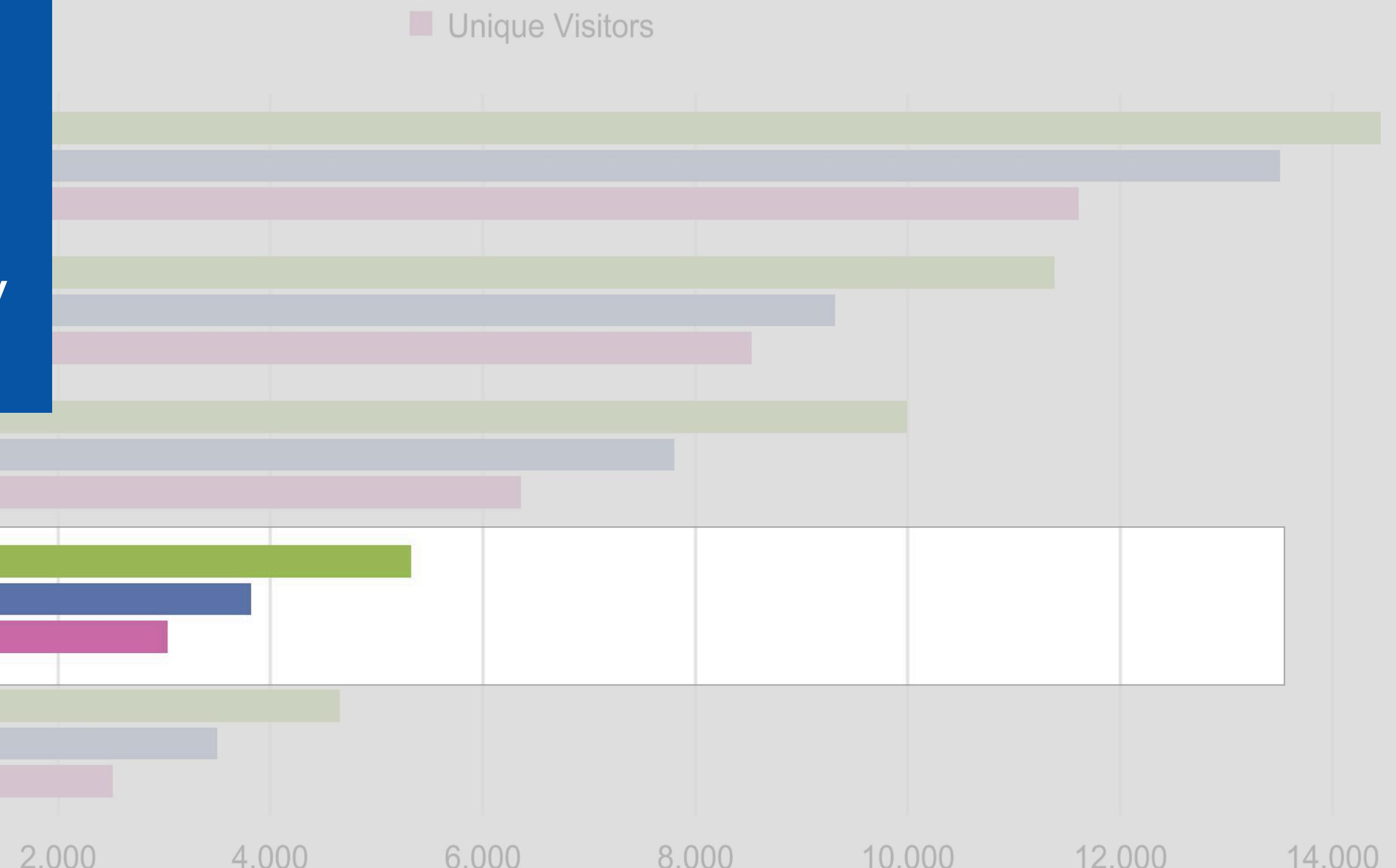
# Web Analysis



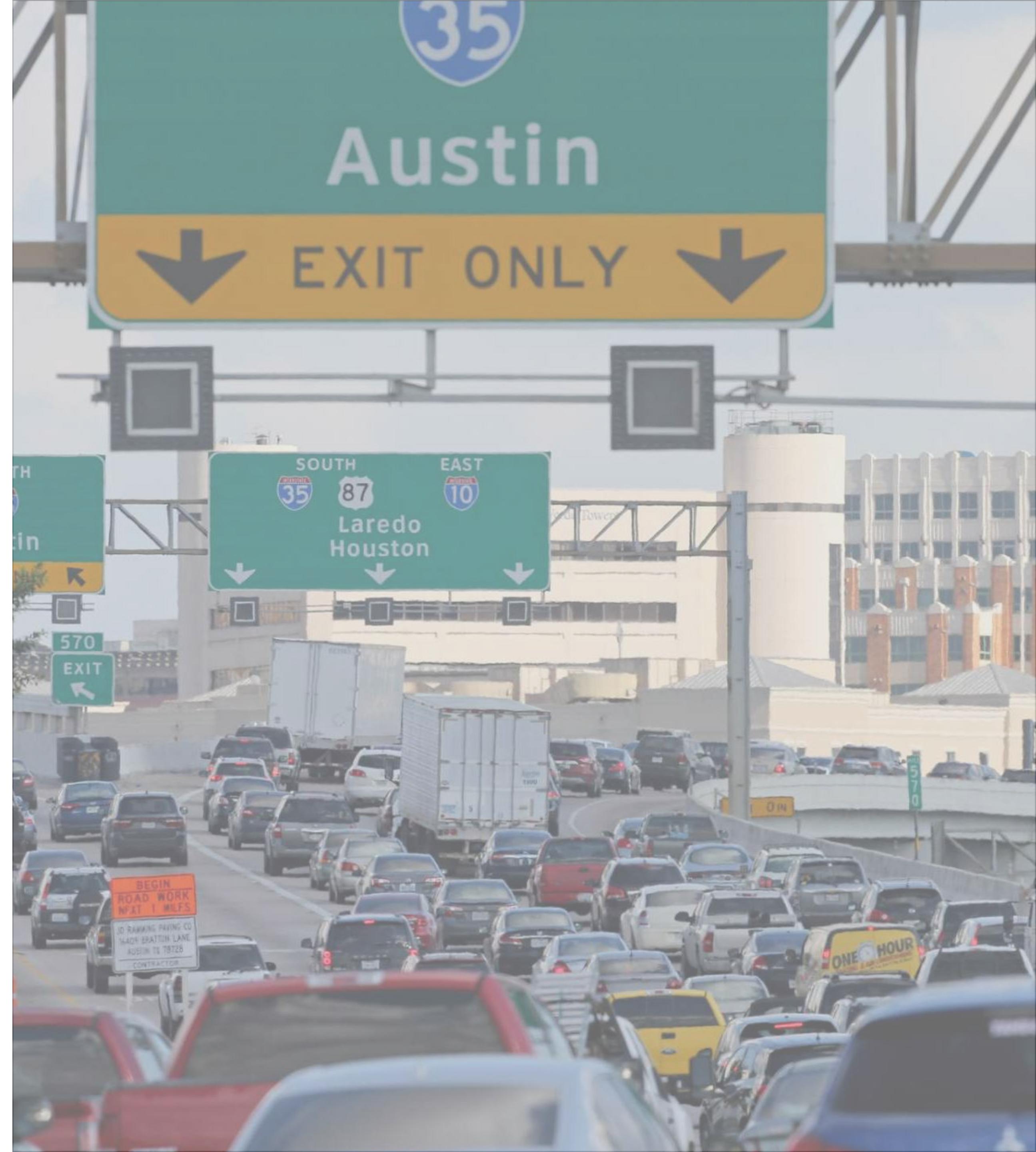
# Web Analysis

## Findings 5

- People enter media center to search for El Paso news frequently



Subject Matter Expert

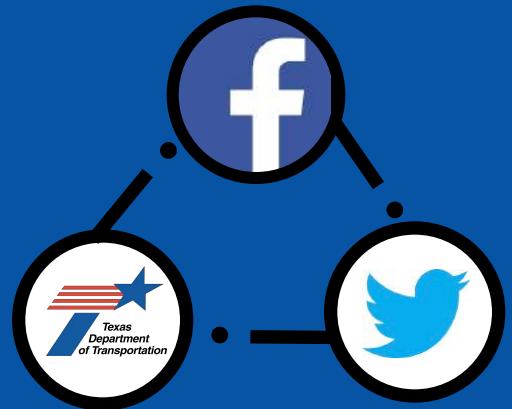


# Subject Matter Expert (SME)

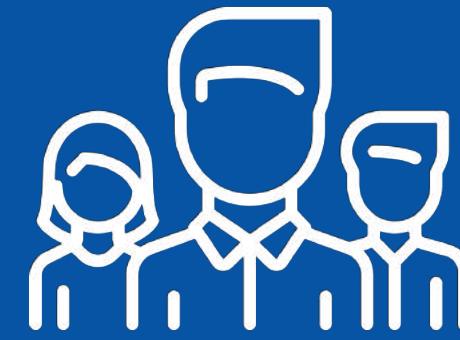
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By subject matter expert, I want to sort out how different platforms interact with each other, and what are the content preferences among different groups of consumers

What I want to know



Relationship between platforms



Preferences among consumers

# Subject Matter Expert (SME) #1

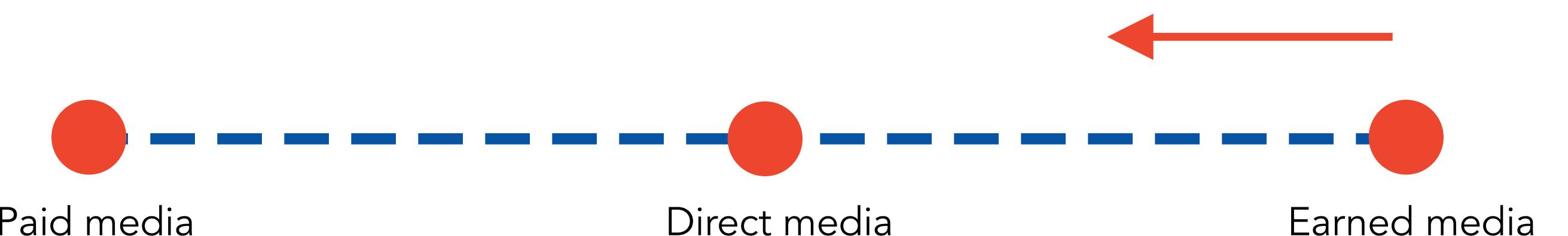
Mon, 10/08/18, UTA 1.502

Attendees: J.B. Bird, Director of Media Relations and Newsroom from UT Newsroom

By consulting subject matter expert, I had a better understanding of how the newsroom work and further identify who are the competitors and what elements to look at

There are a few points J.B. indicated:

- TxDOT want is shifting from earned media to direct media



- Contents itself should be balanced between entertained and informative (broccoli vs. dessert)
- Strike a proper portion between website and mobile



# Subject Matter Expert (SME) #1

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- Using tracking system to see traffic of the stories across social media at once
- Figure out how many people are responsible for the newsroom
- The policy for posting on social media policy should also be considered
- Check on some Universities website to look for more suitable example
- Design the newsroom looks like a news room instead of blog



A photograph showing three women in professional attire looking at a laptop screen together. One woman is leaning over the others, who are seated at a desk. They appear to be engaged in a collaborative discussion or review of the content on the laptop.

# Subject Matter Expert (SME) #2

Attendees: Amelia Acker, iSchool expert on Social Media

Dr. Amelia Acker provides us some information for up to date research on Americans and their information habits on Pew Research Center. It's non-partisan, always looking at cutting edge topics and has a comprehensive commitment to different demographics. They also do a great job at cross-cutting tech studies, e.g. how mobile phone penetration is impacting news consumption.

Indeed, even in early 2016 this **youngest** age group was about **twice** as likely to often **get news online** as on TV (50% vs. 27%), about as large as the gap seen today (52% vs. 23%). (*Pew Research Center, 2017*)

The **two oldest age groups** saw considerable **increases in online news** use – 10 percentage points for those 65 and older (30% vs. 20% in early 2016) and 6 points among those ages 50 to 64 (35% vs. 29%). (*Pew Research Center, 2017*)

# Subject Matter Expert (SME) #2

**Twitter, YouTube and Snapchat** — had an increase in the share of their audience that gets news on the site. (*Elisa Shearer & Jeffery Gottfried, Pew Research Center, 2017*)

The result: 18% of all Americans now get news on **YouTube**, making it the **second most common** social media site for news – albeit still **far behind Facebook**. (*Pew Research Center, 2017*)

**Follow-up actions** most likely when news is **from friends' emails and texts; community** and health news among topics most acted upon. (*Pew Research Center, 2017*)

Even though a large number of **older adults** are getting news on **mobile** devices, that **doesn't** mean they **prefer** it. (*Kristine Lu, Pew Research Center, 2017*)

## Key Takeaways

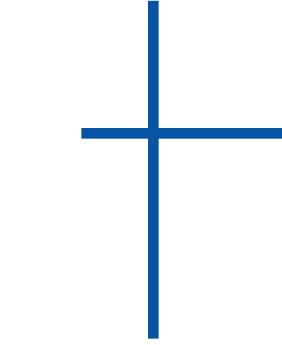
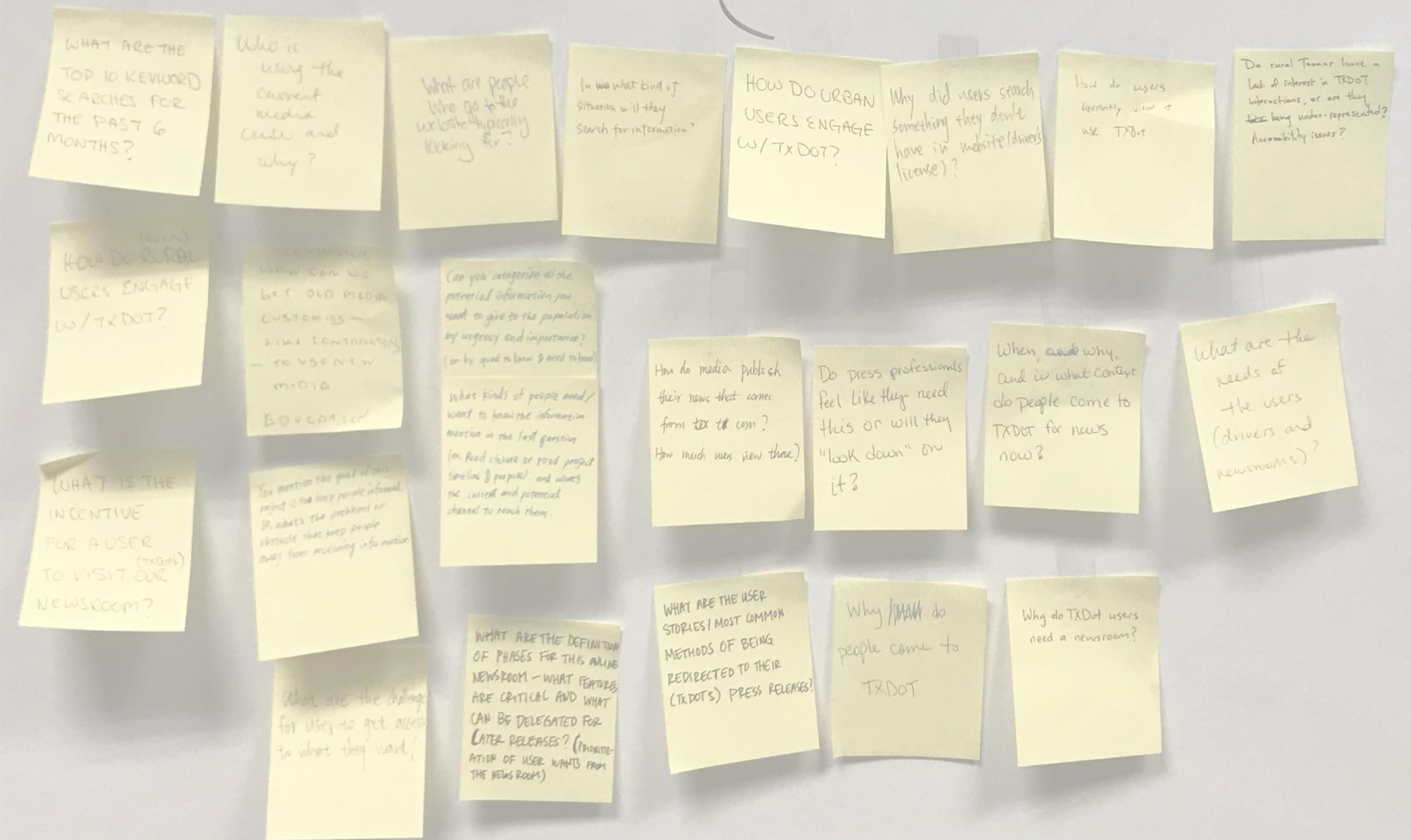
SME #1

- Find out the pillars of what TxDOT has
- Make sure to calibrate the stories in different channels
- Using tracking system to see how the society engaged in the website

SME # 2

- While young people are the biggest audience of the online news consumer, elders are the most potential part to consider
- Sharing by friends via social media is a powerful tool for spreading the words
- While facebook has a stable and big user population, twitter and other social media has the potential of future audience growth
- Young adults prefer to get news on mobile, while elders prefer computers

# Current Use = Analytics Research Study (Part 1)



## Competitive Analysis

# Competitive analysis

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By competitive analysis, I want to find out what elements or contents existing within a good newsroom, vice versa. Also, how they interact and communicate with users on social platforms in order to maintain its brand or even promoting it

## Direct Competitors



[austin.texas.gov](http://austin.texas.gov)  
the official website of the City of Austin



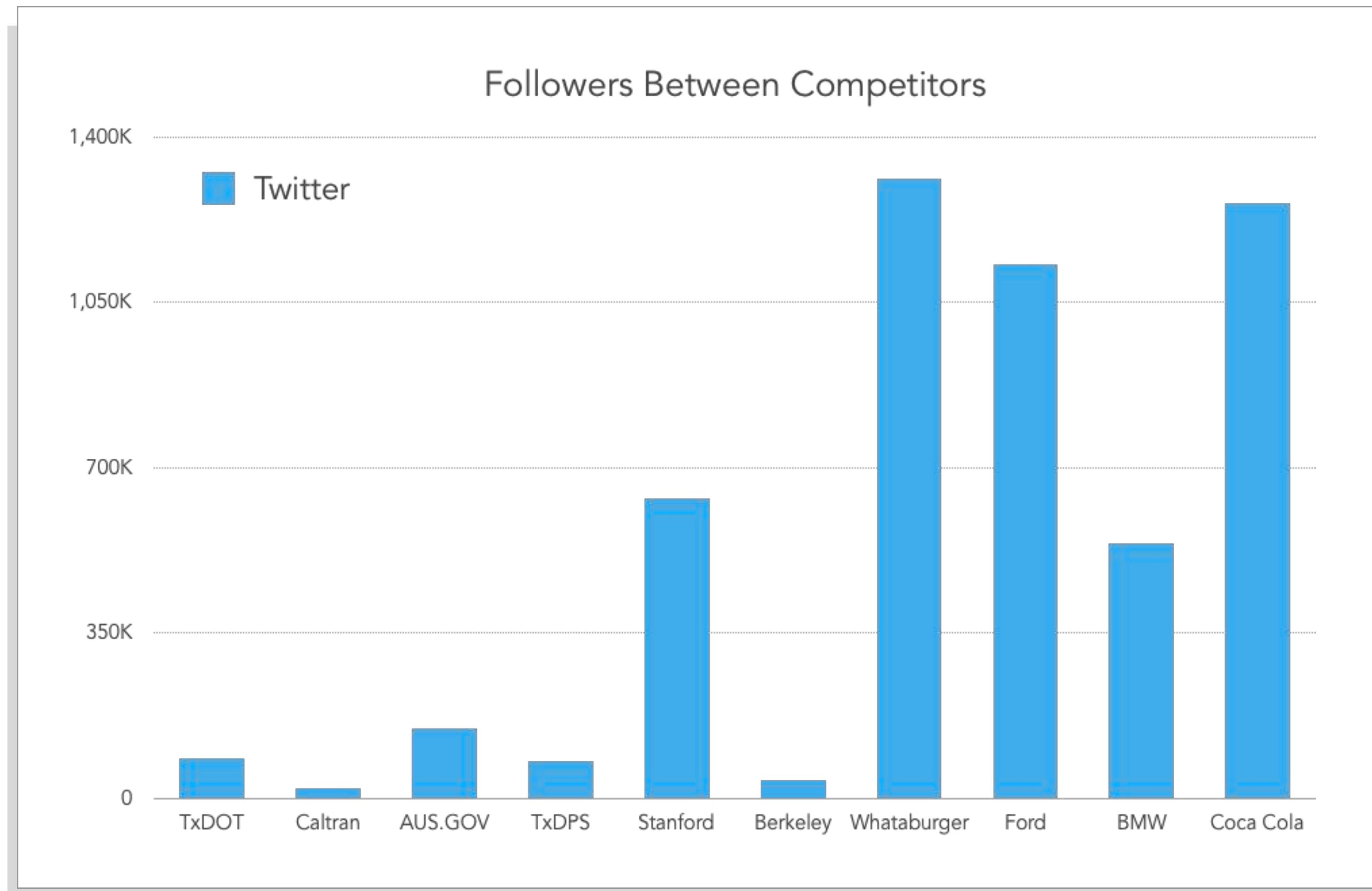
## Indirect Competitors



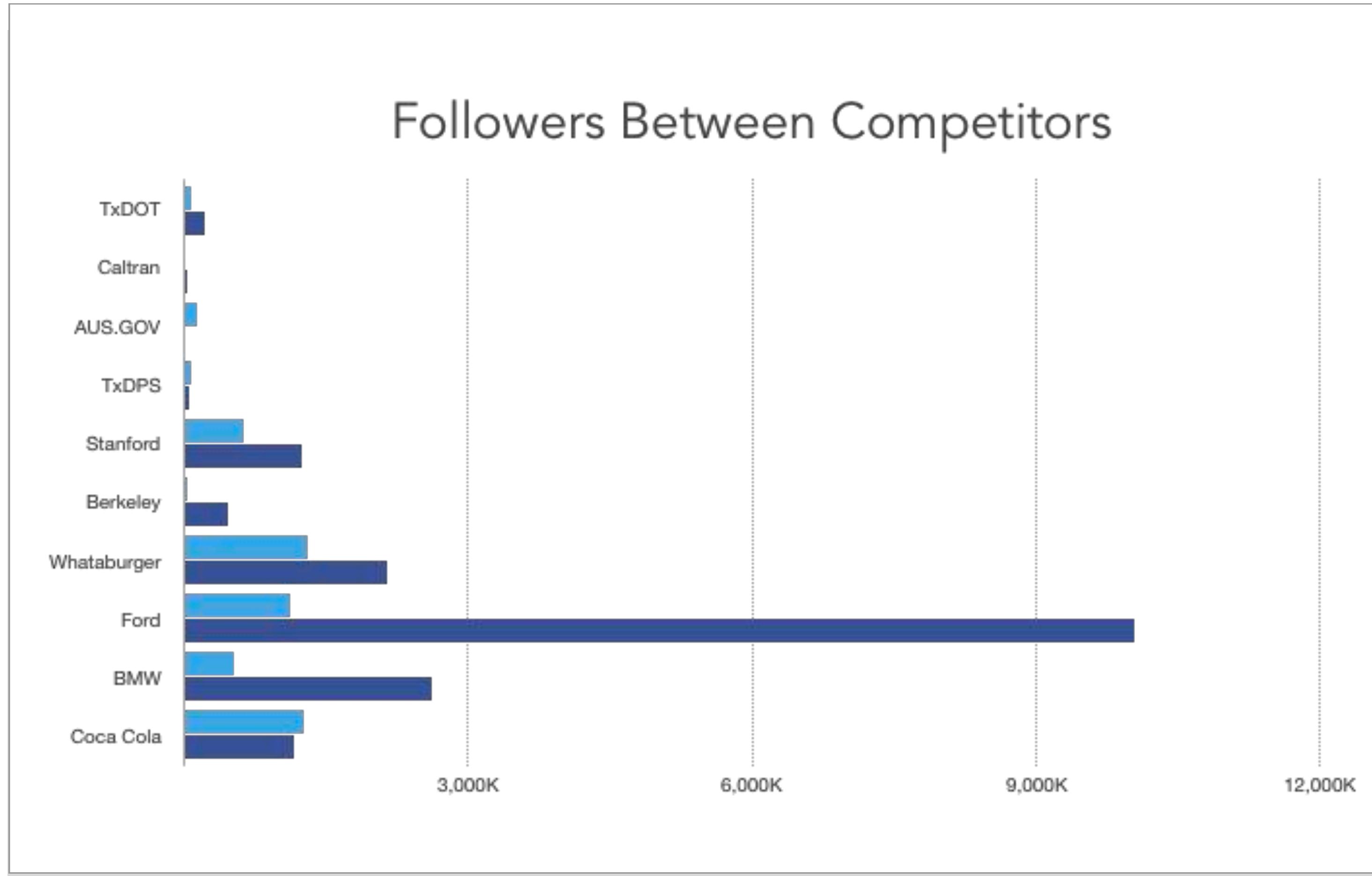
*Coca-Cola*

# Twitter Followers

- TxDOT, AUS.GOV and TxDPS have similar number of the followers
- As simply being a local food restaurant, Whataburger owns a great number of the followers, even able to compete with big international company, like Coca Cola



# Followers between Twitter and Facebook



- Most of the competitors are using Facebook as their main social media
- Compared to corporation, there is a great difference gap of the followers between government sector and corporation

# Competitive analysis

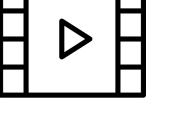
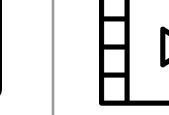
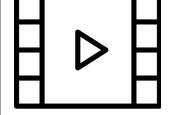
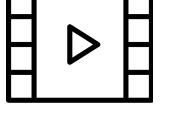
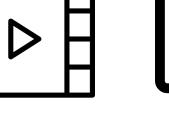
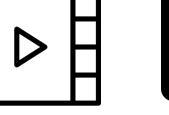
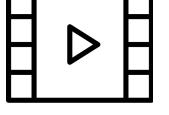
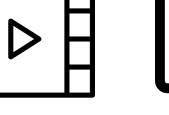
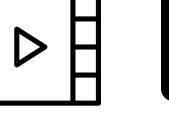
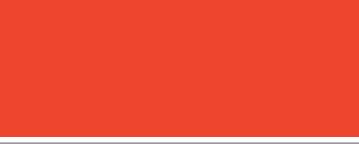
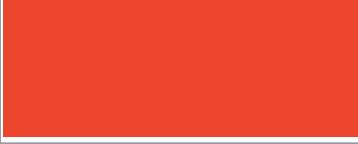
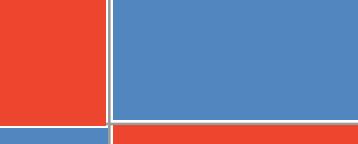
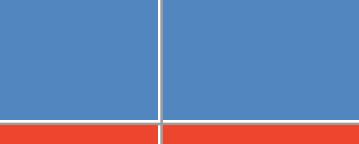
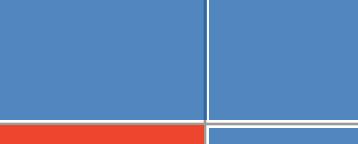
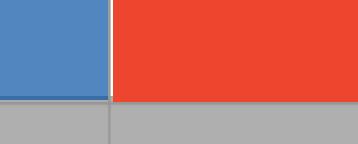
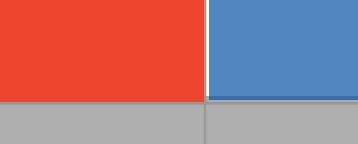
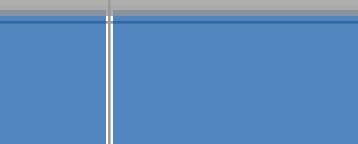
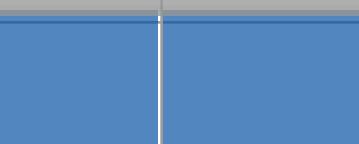
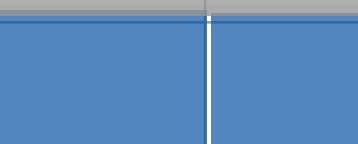
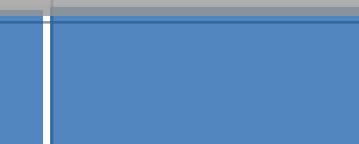
## Direct Competitors

									
Customization									
Bilingual provided	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue
Section Divided	Red	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Blue
Past news Archived	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Red
Content									
Attractiveness	Red	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Literacy Loading	low	low	high	medium	medium	low	high	medium	medium
Update Frequency	10/month	10/month	30↑/month	30↑/month	30↑/month	Unclear	30/month	30↑/month	Unclear
Recommended article	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue

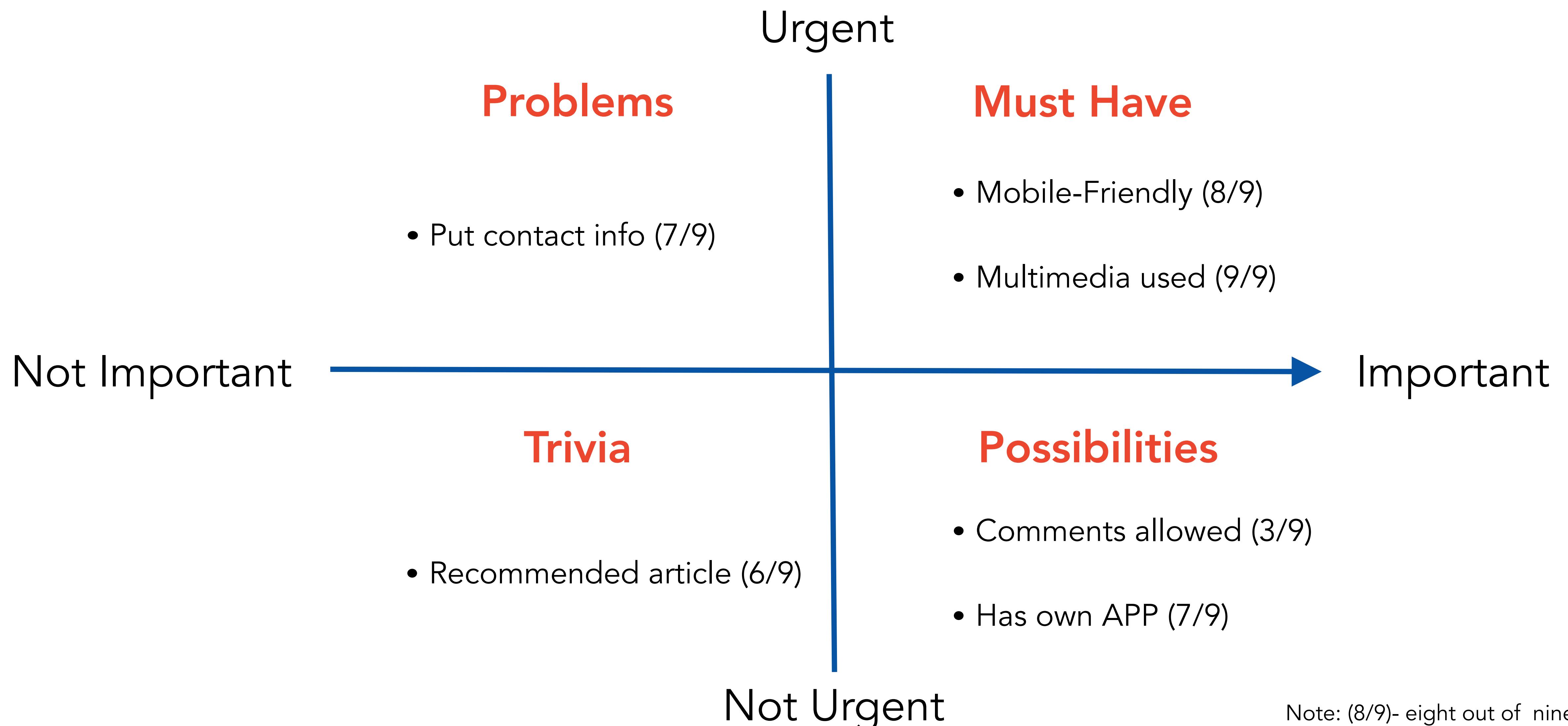
## Indirect Competitors

Cont'd

## Direct Competitors

									
Interactivity									
Sharing Outlet	5	4	3	3	6	4	7	4	9
Main social platform									
Multimedia	  	  	  	  	  	  	  	  	  
Comments Allowed									
Mobile-Friendly									
Own APP									
Connectivity									
Contact Info									
Subscription									
Person to contact									

# Competitive Analysis



# Competitive Analysis

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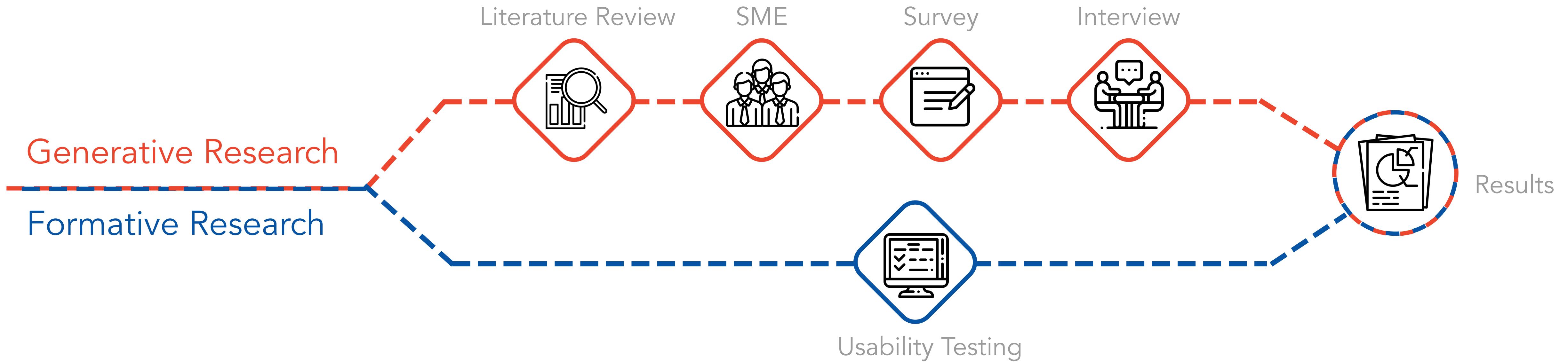
These are some other features that a GREAT NEWSROOM SHOULD HAVE :

- Add comment section to increase the interaction with consumers
- Subscription function can help consumers to stay tuned of the information
- The function of recommending articles to read next is not necessary at this time for people come to the website just for specific purpose

## Key Takeaways

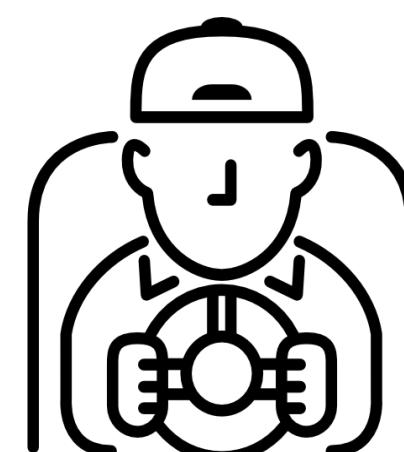
- Facebook is the major social platform for companies
- The function of sharing newsfeed should be added on the website to spread the information in a more efficient way
- Easy-reading news would increase engagement (DPS & Caltran)
- Release 10 news per month should be enough

# Recruit

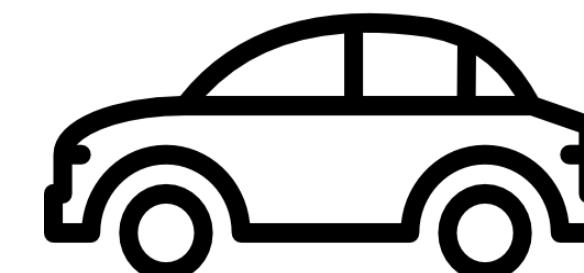


Target Users (Persona from past research)

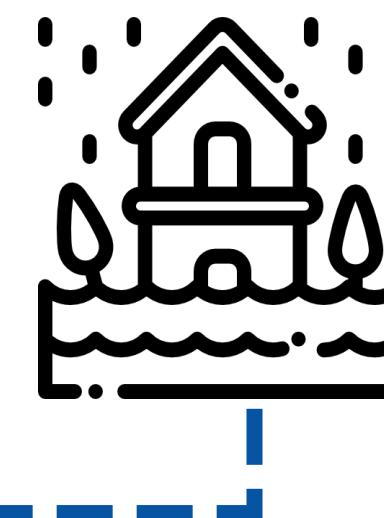
CDL driver



Normal



Evacuee



Average driver

# Target

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Using screener to decide who are qualified to be participants, participants should be

- Over 16 yrs old and owns a driver license
- Have been driving in Texas for at least past six months
- Using car, bus, public transportation, bike as the most frequent means of transportation
- Have traveled over 2 hours to other city within the last year
- Using Internet at least on weekly basis

As for evacuee,

- Had evacuated from primary residence due to a natural disaster within the last year
- Route plan was provided by local government during evacuation



Survey +



# Survey

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By survey, I want to determine what are the contents users expect to see by looking up the frequency of the visiting website.

Furthermore, I am also interested in device preference used to access these information

What I want to know



What content to provide



What device they use



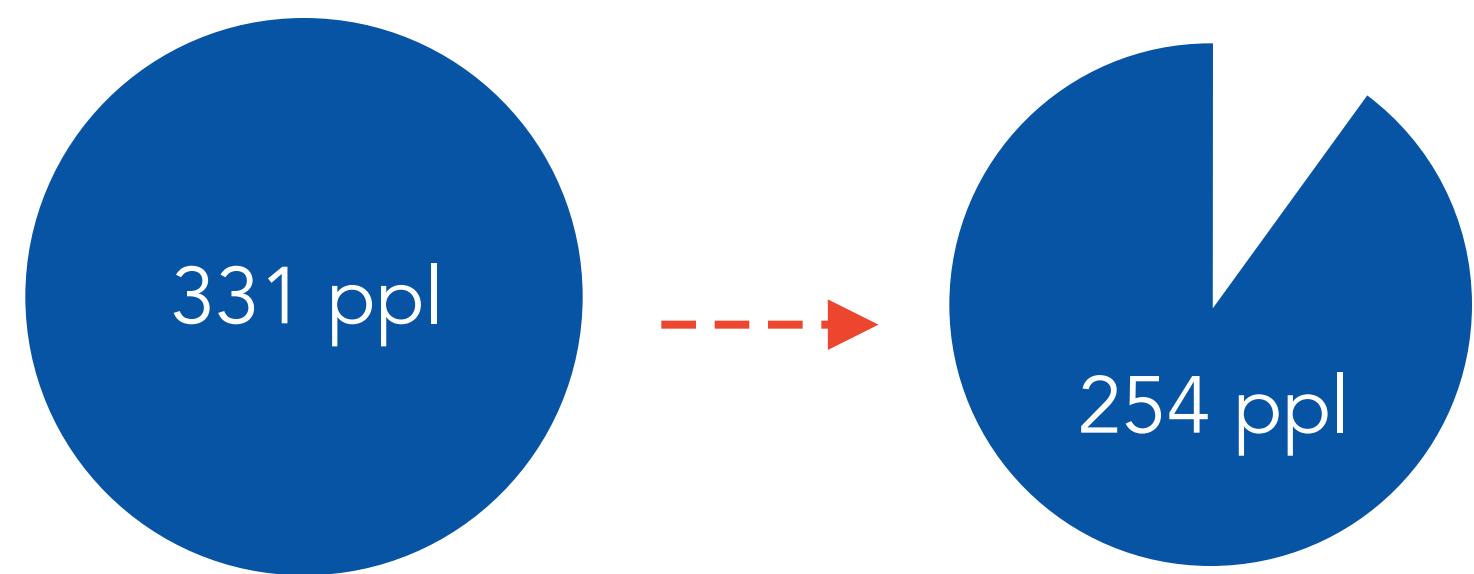
Where do they go

# Survey

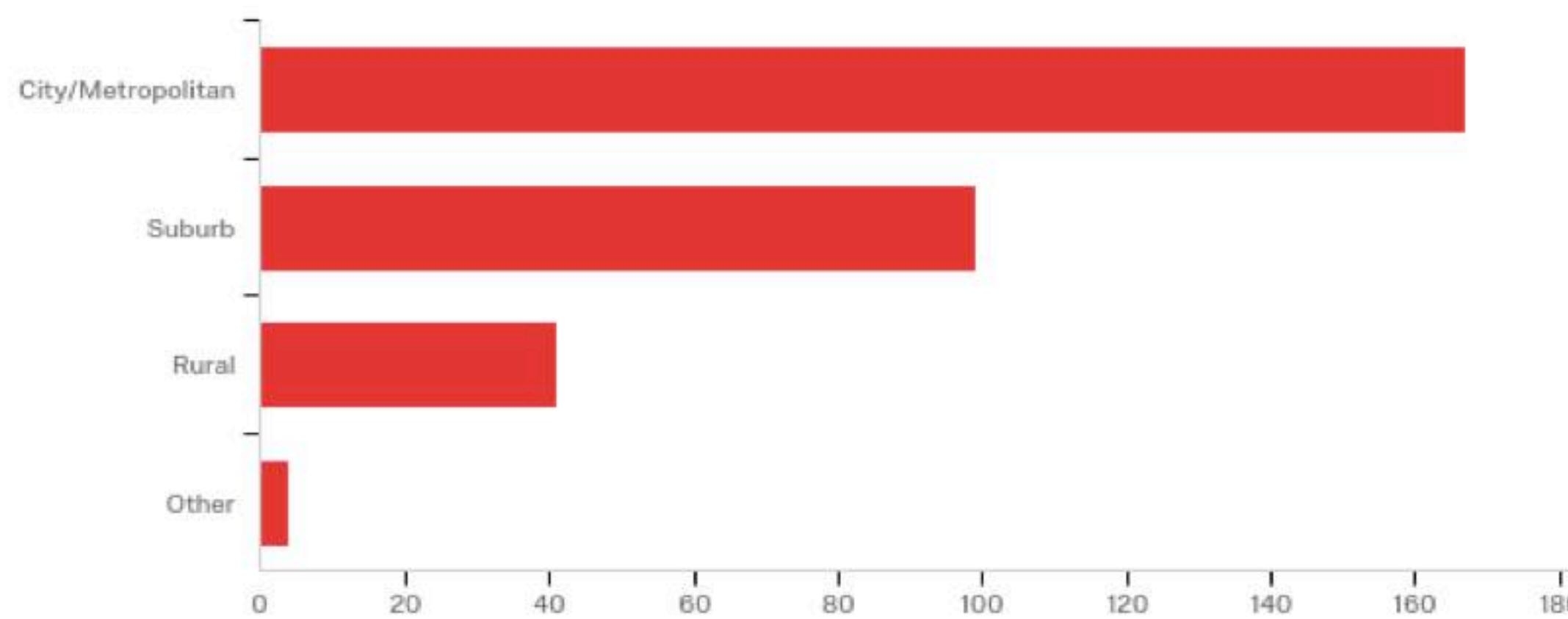
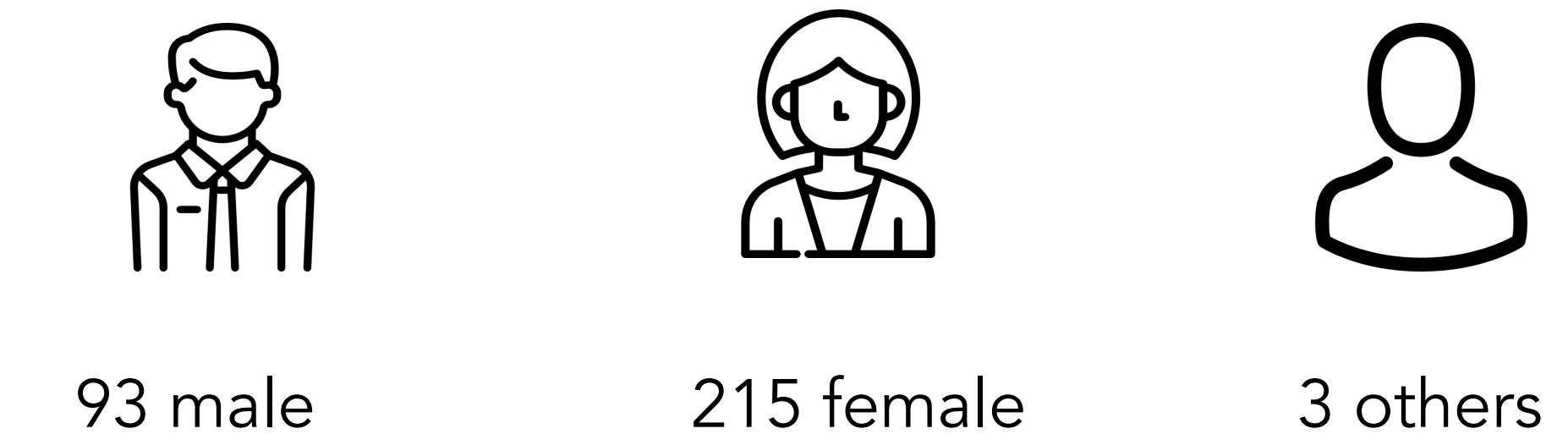
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## Background

The majority of the survey taker is Texan



Most of them are 22-30 yrs old



Over half of them lived in city

53.7% - City/Metropolitan

31.83 - Suburb

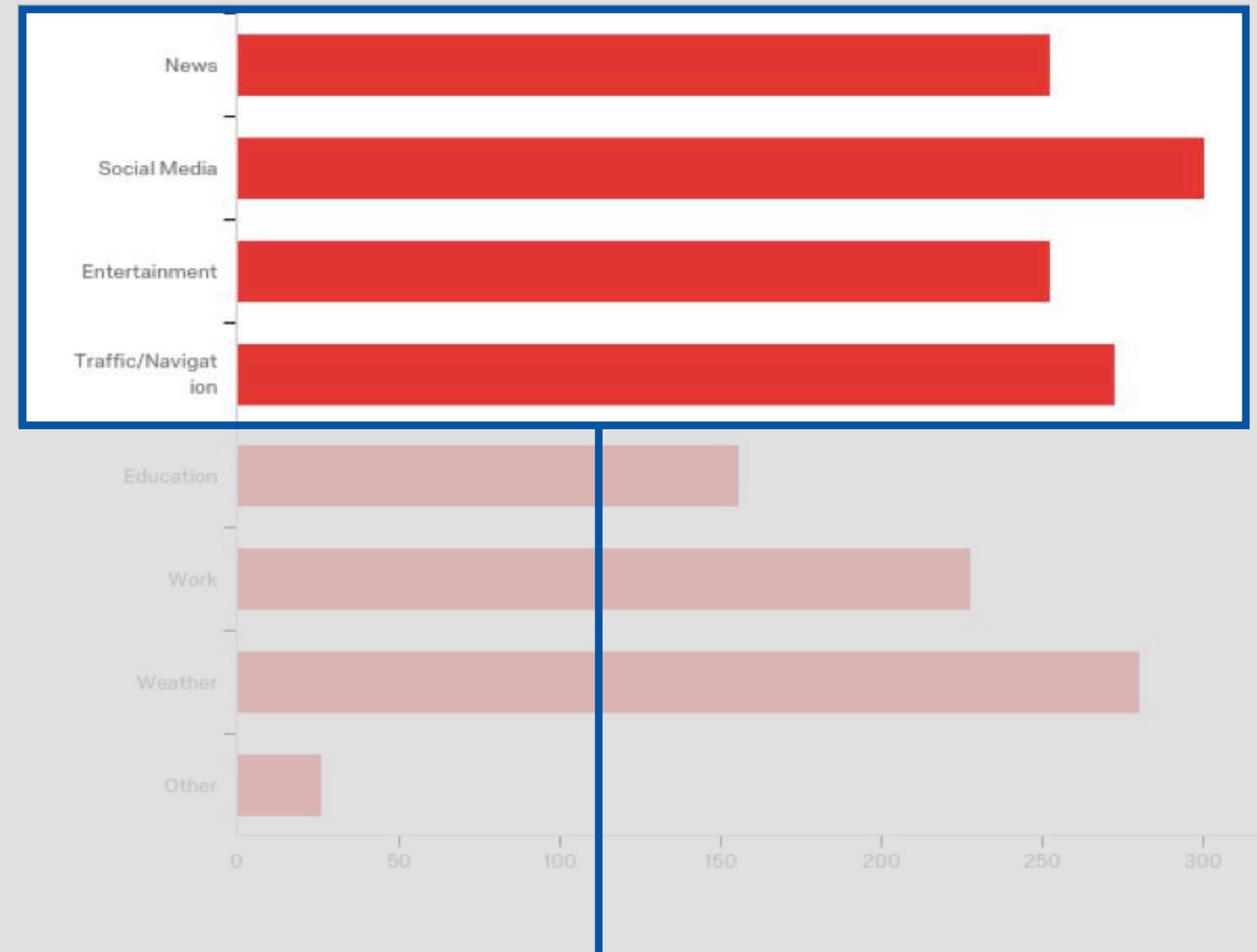
13.18% - Rural

# Survey



## Findings 1

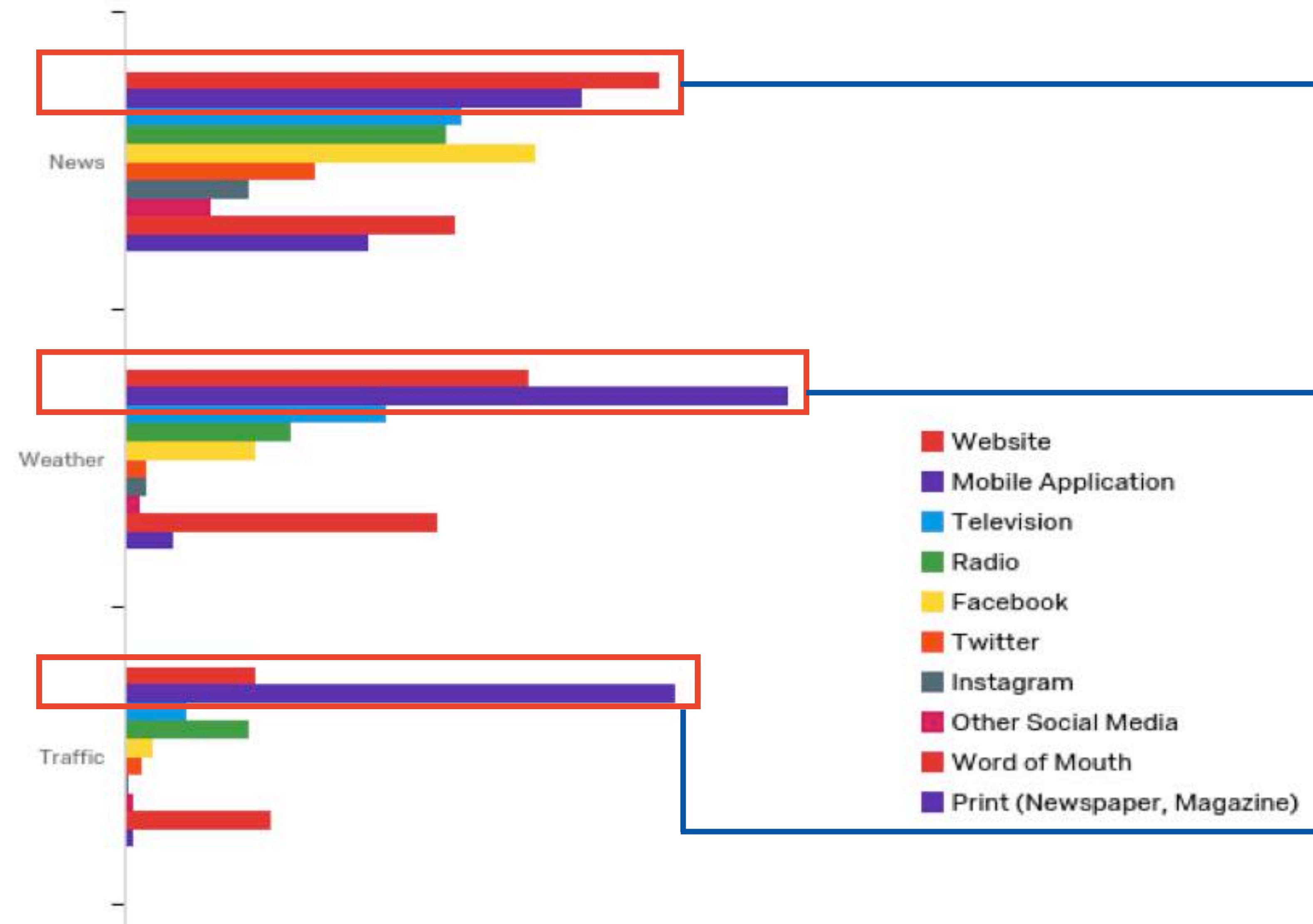
- People use desktop and mobile phone the most to get access to information



## Findings 2

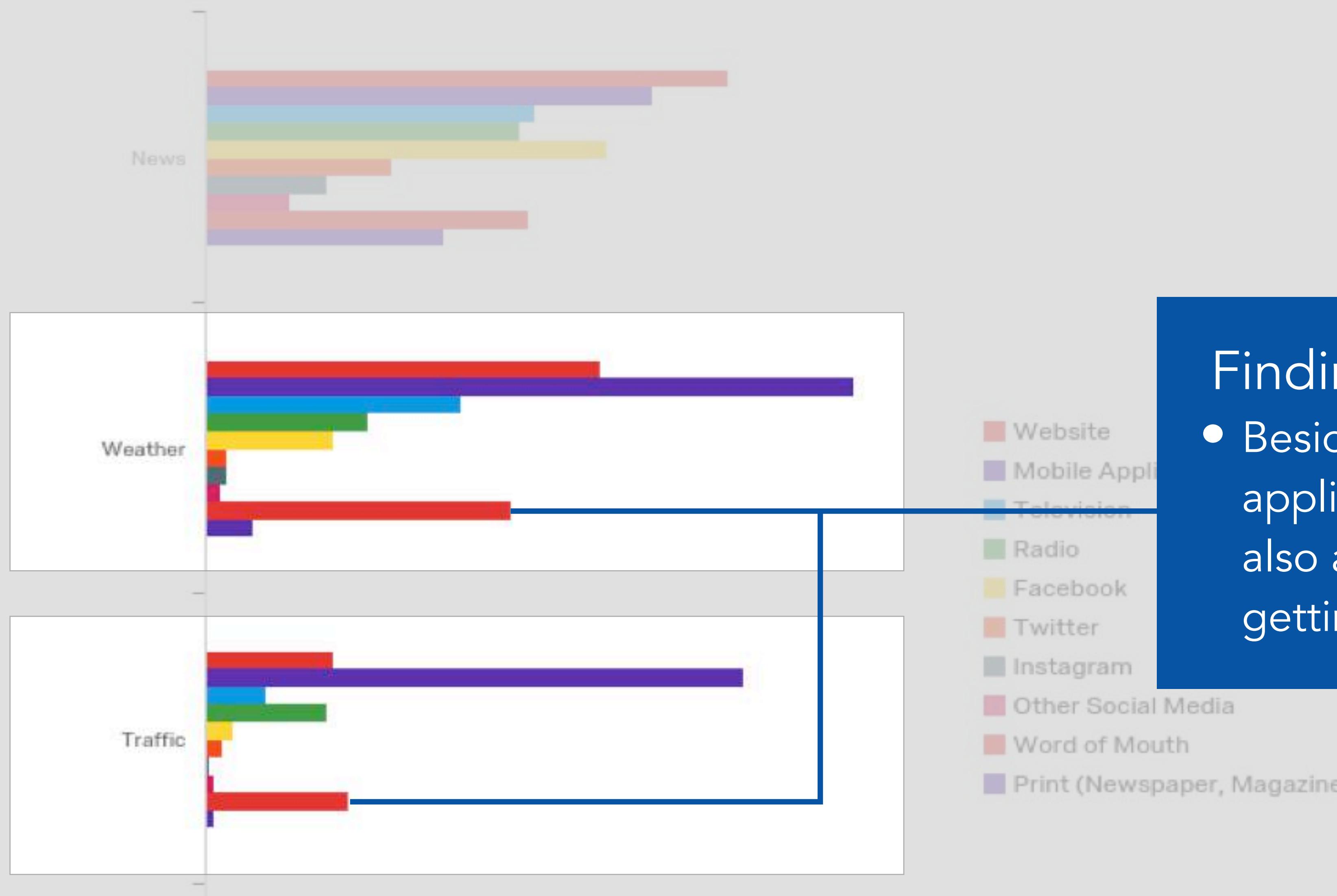
- Social Media, Traffic, News, and Entertainment are the most popular contents

# Survey



- ## Findings 3
- Website and mobile application are the most common way people look up for news, weather and traffic

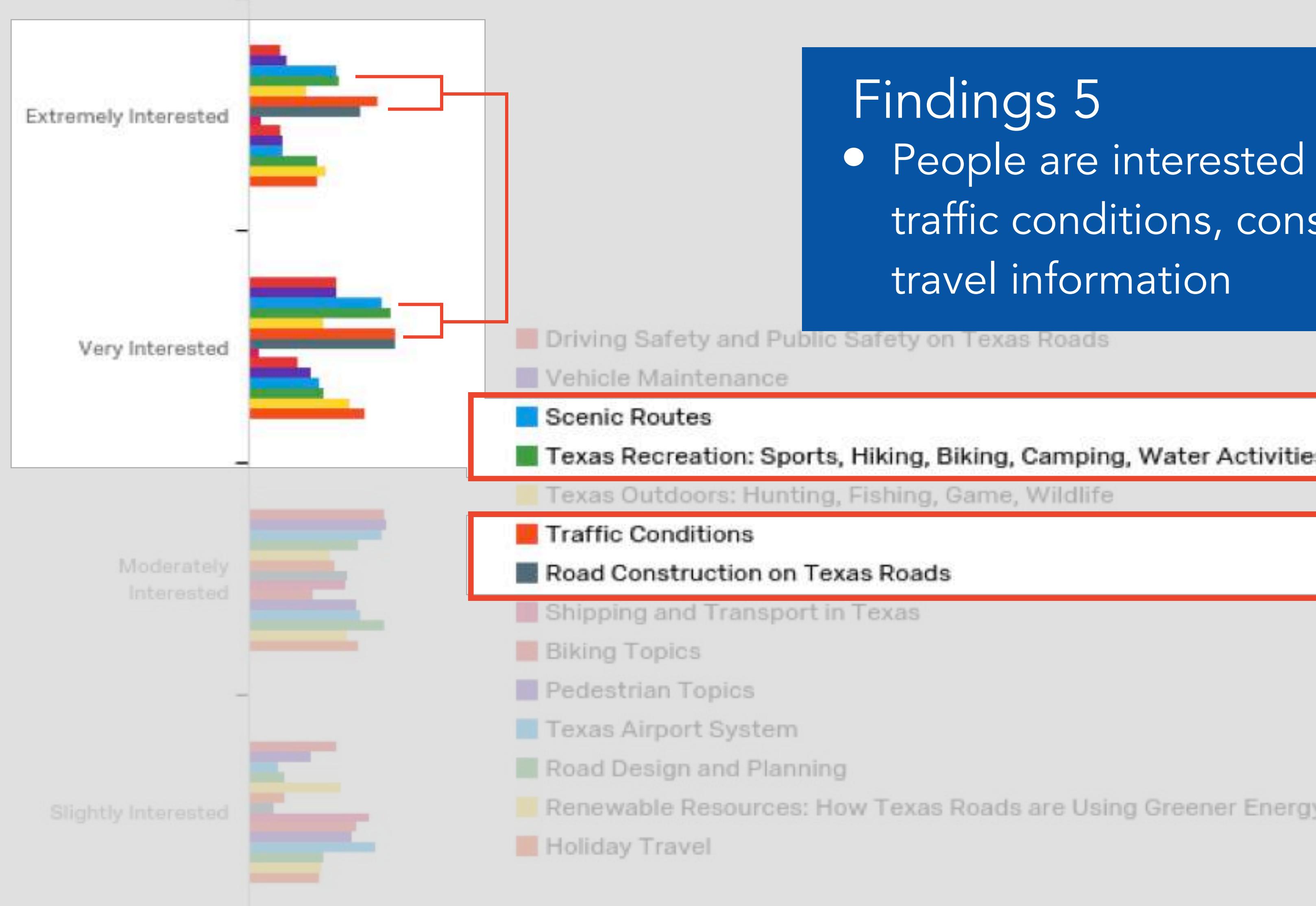
# Survey



## Findings 4

- Besides website and application, word of mouth is also an important source of getting traffic and weather info

# Survey



# Key Takeaways

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- People use desktop and mobile phone the most to get access to information
- Social Media, Traffic, News, and Entertainment are the most popular content
- Website and mobile application is the most common way people look up for news, weather and traffic
- Besides website and application, word of mouth is also an important source of getting traffic and weather info
- People are interested in receiving traffic conditions, constructions and travel information



Interview

# Interview

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Through survey, I've already known what is happening, instead, interview provides me a better understanding of why it is happening

By interview, I want to learn who are the current users to further determine what kinds of content would fit user's need in terms of their driving behaviors. Also, to know the current perception of TxDOT and how much people know about them to tweak its brand image

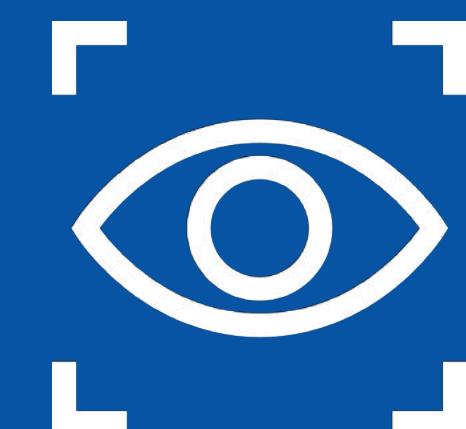
What I want to know



Who are the users



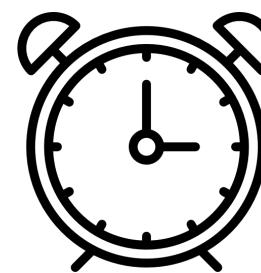
What are the driver's behavior



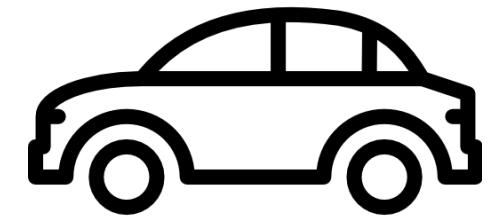
How people perceive TxDOT

# 1x1 Interview

## Background



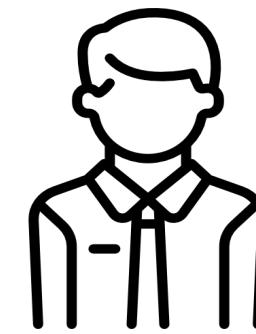
50 min



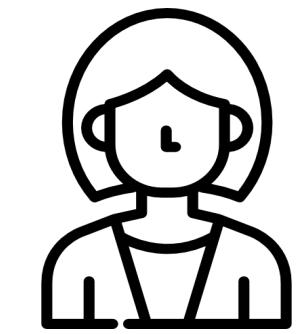
10 Average drivers



1 CDL driver



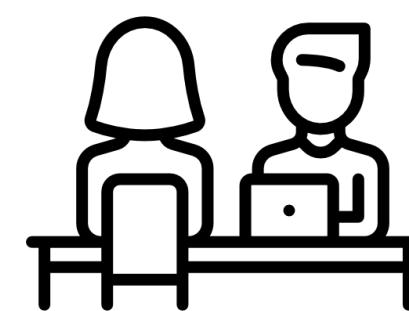
3 male



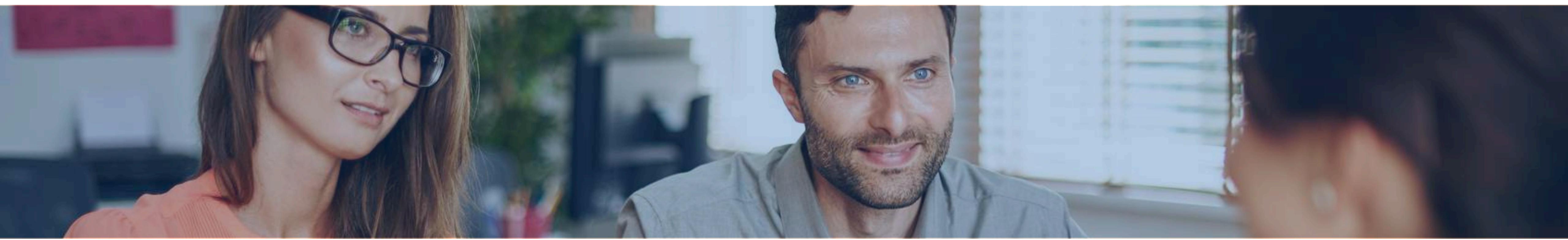
8 female



4 remote conference



7 in-person



# Findings #1

---

- People mostly use Google map and Apple Weather to check on road condition, however, they also use other local applications, like waze, storm radar, which could help them attain more accurate information

“ I probably use google map more than Waze, although I think Waze is actually a better predictor, it’s a habit (using Google map). ”

“ I have three different weather apps, I have weather underground, weather channel, one is called storm watch. It’s local, sponsored by the local station. It is very good. They tell me different things. ”

## Findings #2

---

- Older people have a better knowing of what TxDOT do, in contrast, younger generation doesn't know what TxDOT do or have misunderstanding of it

“ ”

I think they do a lot of things,  
one of which would be maintain  
certain highway or sections of  
highway, bridges, overpasses.  
They are not DPS and DMV.

“ ”

I don't know, but something to  
do with safety.

## Findings #3

---

- People usually check on gas station and stops to rest besides looking up for weather and road

“

”

**Check the weather usually in consideration of driving condition. We will also look at how far apart gas station are, potential stop for grabbing food, restock the gas and continue.**

## Findings #4

---

- People is having a hard time getting information about construction, either don't know where to find it or already known for a while
  - Ten out of ten (10/10) encounter road construction every day
  - However, two out of ten (10/10) replied it is hard to know about what's going on
  - Others replied they've already known for specific roads are blocked or never thought about it

“

”

**For the most part, unless you watch the news regularly, its hard to know whether there is a construction or not.**

## Findings #5

---

- For roadtrips, younger generation has planned out the situation for not having internet connection in some area (eg. State Park)

“

”

We are going to that direction that doesn't have internet connection. I have to screenshot a lot of direction and hope for the best finding exit, even the GPS doesn't work.

# Findings #6

---

## For Evacuees

- They do not trust the evacuation route is planned enough, rather, they choose to stay put

“

”

**“My perception is the evacuation route is not sufficient, cannot withstand the volume of cars and trucks that try to evacuate in the evacuation time period. I would get stuck on the freeway not go anywhere except run out of gas.”**

# Key Takeaways

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- People mostly use Google map and Weather to check on road condition, however, they also use other local applications, like waze, storm radar, which could help them attain more accurate information
- Older people have a better knowing of what TxDOT do, in contrast, younger generation doesn't know what TxDOT do or have misunderstanding of it
- People usually check on gas station and stops to rest besides weather and road
- People is having a hard time getting information about construction, either don't know where to find it or already known for a while
- For roadtrips, younger generation has planned out the situation for not having internet connection in some area, like State park.
- For evacuees, they do not trust the evacuation route is planned enough, rather, they choose to stay put

# Usability Testing

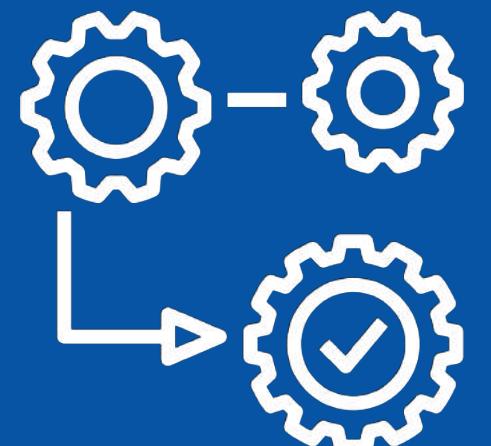


# Usability testing

By usability testing, I can understand how people are using the TxDOT website, including whether they can find what they want on the website as well as the workflow. What's more, to identify the timepoint they feel upset or delighted while using it

We will ask interviewees to share their screen, open up the TxDOT website and walk us through each task using Userzoom. After the task is complete, we'll ask them to compete the 5-point Likert scale and further elaborate "why"

What I want to know



How people find info



How they feel

# Usability Testing

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- Task 1

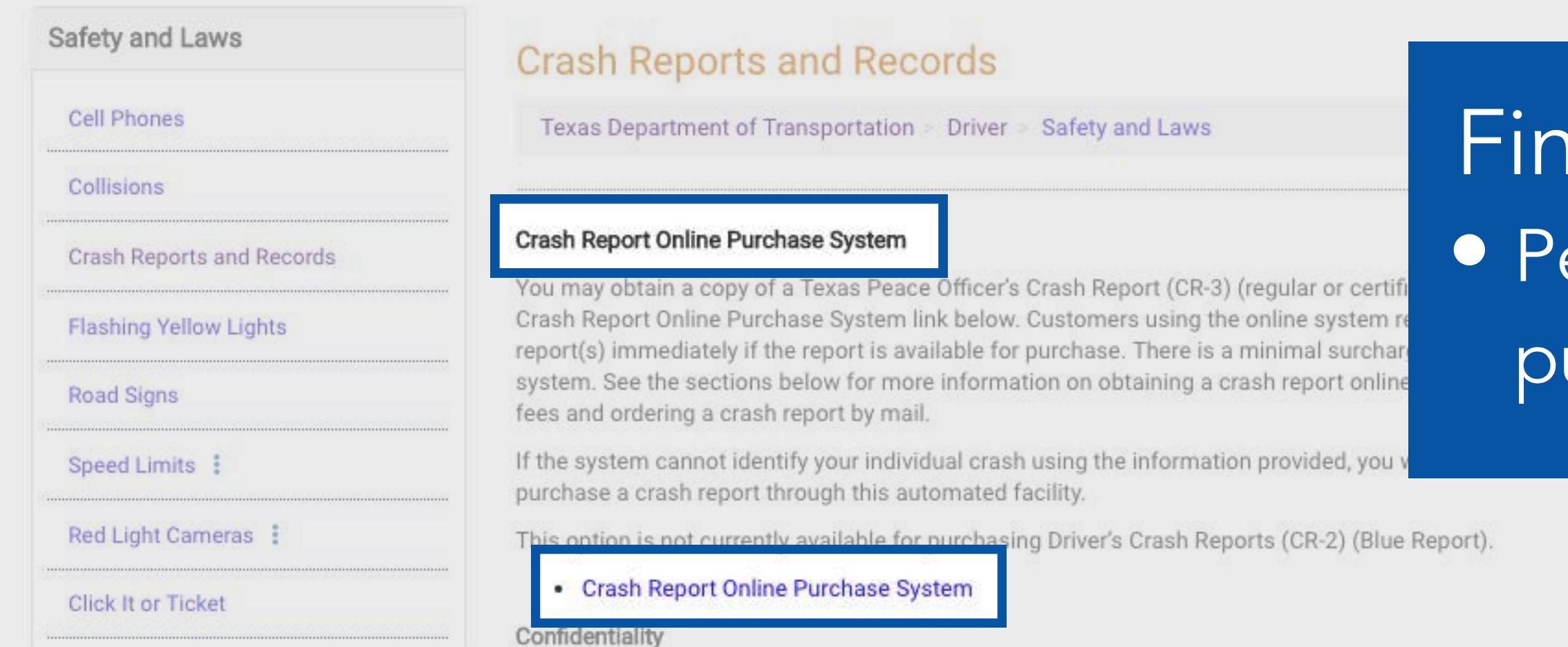
You were recently involved in a minor collision with another vehicle that did not require police involvement. Your insurance company is requesting that you fill out a crash report form and they said it was located on the TxDOT website.

From Web Analysis, we found among file download click, over 50% are looking for crash report

## Results

- (9/11) Finished the task
- (3/11) Not sure if they have to purchase it online
- The participants even felt more confused when seeing the broken link

# Usability Testing - Task 1



Safety and Laws

- Cell Phones
- Collisions
- Crash Reports and Records
- Flashing Yellow Lights
- Road Signs
- Speed Limits ::
- Red Light Cameras ::
- Click It or Ticket

Crash Reports and Records

Texas Department of Transportation > Driver > Safety and Laws

**Crash Report Online Purchase System**

You may obtain a copy of a Texas Peace Officer's Crash Report (CR-3) (regular or certified) online through the Crash Report Online Purchase System link below. Customers using the online system retain ownership of the report(s) immediately if the report is available for purchase. There is a minimal surcharge for ordering a crash report online through the system. See the sections below for more information on obtaining a crash report online, including the cost of ordering a crash report online, fees and ordering a crash report by mail.

If the system cannot identify your individual crash using the information provided, you will need to contact the Texas Department of Transportation to purchase a crash report through this automated facility.

This option is not currently available for purchasing Driver's Crash Reports (CR-2) (Blue Report).

- Crash Report Online Purchase System

## Findings 1

- People are not sure if they have to purchase it online

I was unsure of what link to click on and if the site I found to purchase a crash report is what I was looking for.

# Usability Testing - Task 1

---

Please wait...

If this message is not eventually replaced by the proper contents of the document, your PDF viewer may not be able to display this type of document.

You can upgrade to the latest version of Adobe Reader for Windows®, Mac, or Linux® by visiting [http://www.adobe.com/go/reader\\_download](http://www.adobe.com/go/reader_download).

For more assistance with Adobe Reader visit <http://www.adobe.com/go/acrreader>.

Windows is either a registered trademark or a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. Mac is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the United States and other countries. Linux is the registered trademark of Linus Torvalds in the U.S. and other countries.

## Findings 2

- They are even more confused when seeing the broken link

# Usability Testing - Task 1

that occur on any public roadway in Texas, not just crashes occurring on the state highway system. The state retention schedule for crash reports and data are 10 years plus the current year. The current retention schedule effective in 2015 contains only five previous years plus the current year. Data for years beyond this period is not available. Each year TxDOT will continue to add one year to the retention schedule until the 10-year retention schedule is met.

Effective Sept. 1, 2017, per the 85th Texas Legislature Senate Bill 312, the Driver's Crash Reports (Form CR-2) are no longer retained by the Texas Department of Transportation. The drivers involved in a crash not investigated by a peace officer should retain this form for their records. The state retention schedule for Driver's Crash Reports (CR-2) (Blue Form) is one year plus current year. Request for information outside this retention schedule is not available.

## Texas Peace Officer's Crash Report (CR-3) (FOR PEACE OFFICERS ONLY)

This [report](#) is completed by a law enforcement officer investigating a traffic crash when apparent damage is \$1,000 or more, or when the crash resulted in injury or death.

Effective Sept. 1, 2019, per the 85th Texas Legislature Senate Bill 312, all Peace Officer Crash Reports (CR-3) are to be submitted electronically. TxDOT is currently reviewing technological ways to assist paper submitting agencies with this mandate and will be providing additional information as it becomes available. TxDOT offers two electronic approved formats for submitting crash data that validates the crash when submitted:

- **Crash Reporting and Analysis for Safer Highways (CRASH):** The CRASH application was created to allow law enforcement officers to submit the Texas Peace Officer's Crash Report (form CR-3) electronically to the State of Texas. Please visit our [CRASH page](#) for more details.
- **Submission Services:** Submission Services was developed for agencies with an existing application and requires a web services client and adherence to the over 800 business rules and edits. (If interested in this option, please provide your vendor name, contact for your vendor and an agency contact to discuss implementing this option.)

## Driver's Crash Report (CR-2) (Blue Form)

This [report](#) is completed by a driver involved in a traffic crash when the crash is not investigated by a law enforcement officer, the apparent damage is not \$1,000 or more or when the crash did not result in injury or death. Effective Sept. 1, 2017, per the 85th Texas Legislature Senate Bill 312, the Driver's Crash Reports (Form CR-2) are no longer retained by the Texas Department of Transportation. The drivers involved in a crash not investigated by a police officer should retain this form for their records.

Please use Internet Explorer when downloading TxDOT forms.

## Required Information

## Findings 3

- There are too many words on the website

“

Too many words, hard to find,  
will they send it to me?

”

# Usability Testing

---

- Task 2

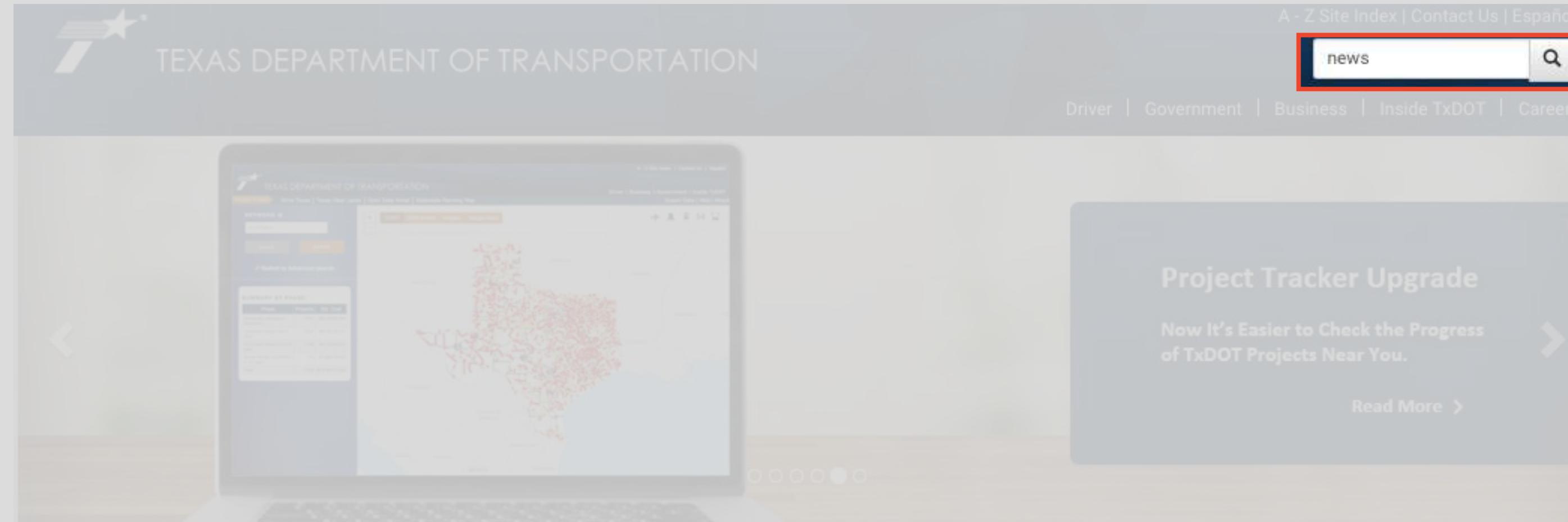
Assume you are currently living in El Paso, a friend mentioned a news article they saw on TxDOT post regarding an upcoming project in El Paso and you'd like to find it to get more information. How would you do this?

From Web Analysis, we know that people enter media center to search for El Paso news frequently

## Results

- (11/11) Finished the task
- They usually use search bar to find what they need

# Usability Testing - Task 2



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links to 'A - Z Site Index', 'Contact Us', and 'Español'. Below the navigation is a search bar containing the word 'news'. Underneath the search bar, there are links for 'Driver', 'Government', 'Business', 'Inside Tx DOT', and 'Careers'. A large banner in the center features a map of Texas and the text 'Project Tracker Upgrade' and 'Now It's Easier to Check the Progress of Tx DOT Projects Near You.' Below the banner, there are four categories: 'Driver', 'Government', 'Business', and 'Careers', each with a representative image and a brief description.

**Driver**  
Learn more about Texas travel, driving laws and highway safety.

**Government**  
Research studies and laws and learn how we work with communities.

**Business**  
Learn about Tx DOT business resources and the bidding process.

**Careers**  
We're more than a job. At Tx DOT, you can build a career.

**DriveTexas™**  
Get highway road conditions information.

**Traffic Cameras**  
Get live traffic camera information.

**Looking for These?**  
 Read about the work of the Texas Transportation Commission.

## Findings 4

- They usually use search bar to find what they need

“

I found the article after putting it in the search bar, but I should have been able to find the general news for the region easier.

”

# Usability Testing

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- Task 3 (Evacuee Conditional task)

You're in Beaumont visiting family when a mandatory evacuation is issued for the Beaumont and Port Arthur area. You plan to drive to Dallas later that day and need to locate the evacuation routes located on the TxDOT website.

## Results

- (1/1) finished the task
- Feeling annoyed and frustrated while doing the task
- The participants felt like she had to click all the video listed to find the route

“

**This is the most touchy thing I've ever seen**

“

**Don't go too fast(while moving the cursor).  
It's touchy**

”

”

# Usability Testing - Task 3

TxDOT Twitter Feeds  
Flash Floods  
Hurricane Information  
Page Options ▾

Texas Department of Transportation > Driver > Inclement Weather

The brochures below, available in English and Spanish, describe roadway contraflow routes.

Title	PDF
I-10 Contraflow Brochure	
I-10 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
I-10 Evaculane Brochure	
I-45 Contraflow Brochure	
I-45 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
US 290 Contraflow Brochure	
US 290 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
US 290 Evaculane Brochure	
US 59 Contraflow Brochure	
US 59 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
I-37 Contraflow Brochure	
I-37 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
I-37 Evaculane Brochure	
I-2/US 83 / - I-69C/US 281 Contraflow Brochure	
I-2/US 83 / - I-69C/US 281 Contraflow Brochure (Español)	
Rio Grande Valley Hurricane Evacuation Routes	

More Information

- Hurricane Information
- Contraflow Videos

## Findings 5

- The participant spent a lot of time looking through all the pdf files

“

”

I guess I have to click them all.

# Key Takeaways

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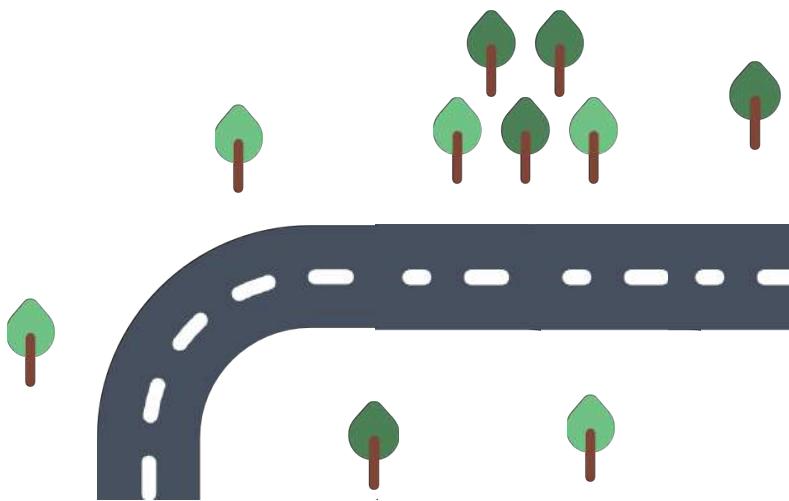
- The overall SUS score is 43.6
- They are not sure whether if they complete the task or not
- People use search bar function a lot to find what they want
- The whole text-loading page is daunting for the users to go through
- Participants are frustrated and annoyed during the whole session

An aerial photograph of the Austin, Texas skyline, featuring the Colorado River (Lady Bird Lake) winding through the city. In the foreground, the Congress Avenue Bridge spans the river. The background shows a dense cluster of modern skyscrapers and buildings. The sky is clear and blue.

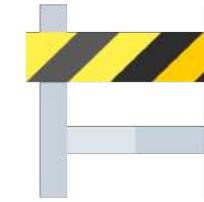
Recommendation



# Recommendation #1



People is having a hard time getting information about road safety

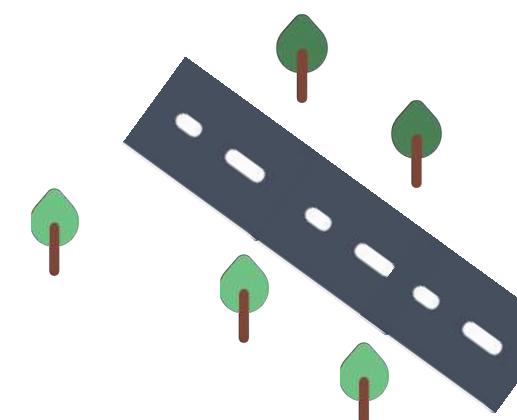


- “For the most part, unless you watch the news regularly, its hard to know whether there is a construction or not.” (Interview Findings 4)

Promote Drive Texas of being a better predictor

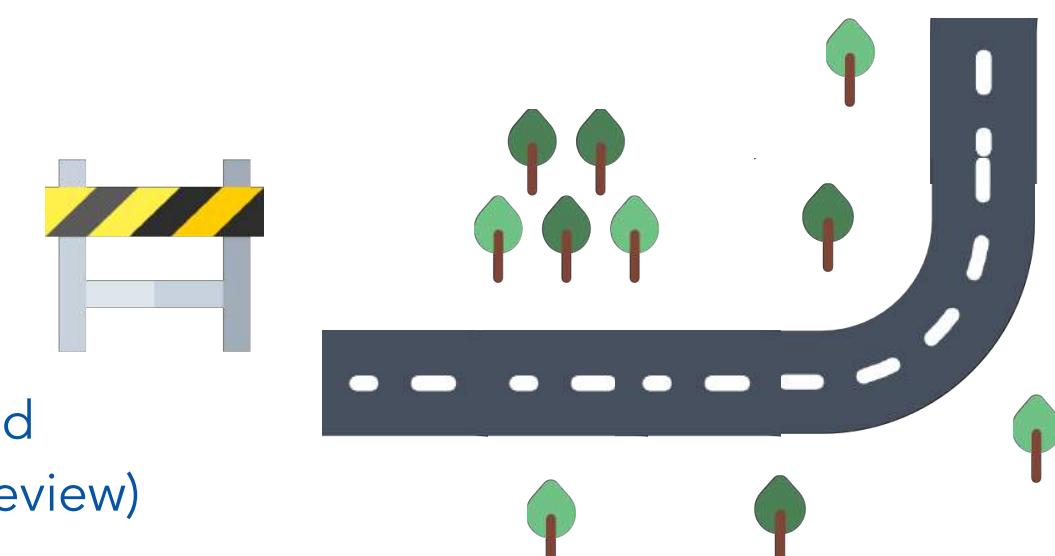


- “I probably use google map more than Waze, although I think Waze is actually a better predictor, it's a habit (using Google map).” (Interview Findings 1)



Create an APP using Google Maps toolkit

- “This is the most touchy thing I've ever seen.” (Usability Testing)
- It is a possible feature for building a great newsroom (Competitive Analysis)

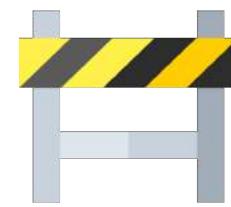


Divide audience into young and old generation



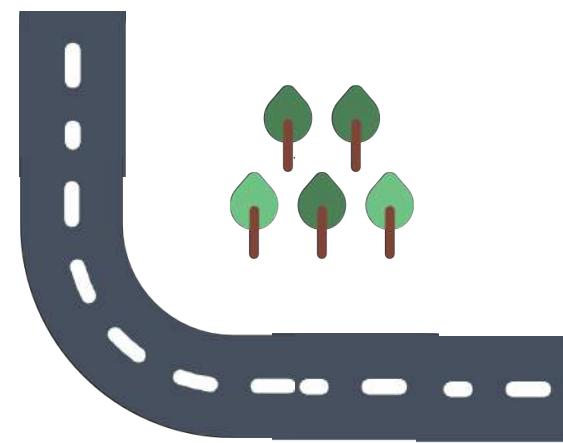
- Segment the audience group and personalized the message delivered toward audience group will help reach out more people (Literature Review)

# Recommendation #2



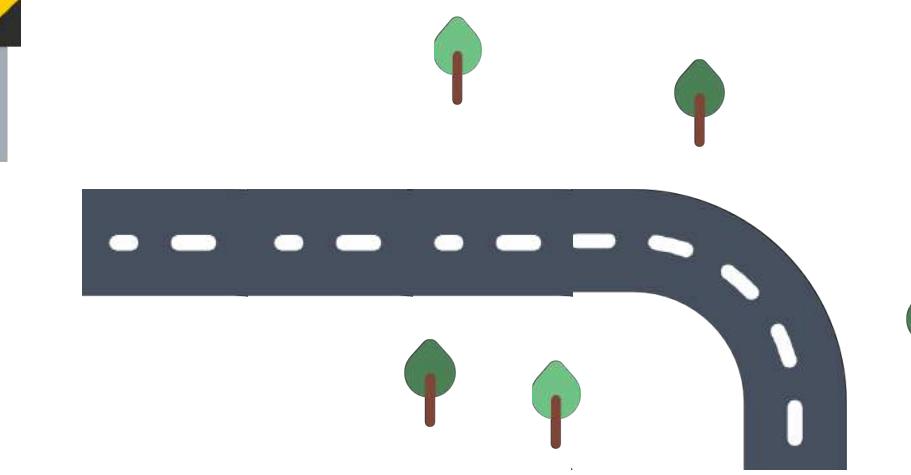
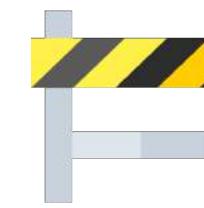
Young people normally don't know well about TxDOT

- "I don't know, but something to do with safety."(Interview Findings 2)



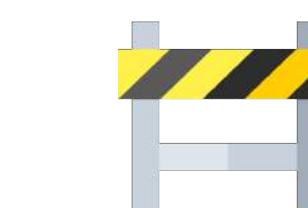
Focus on creating content for scenic route and road construction

- People are interested in receiving traffic condition, constructions and travel information (Survey Findings 5)



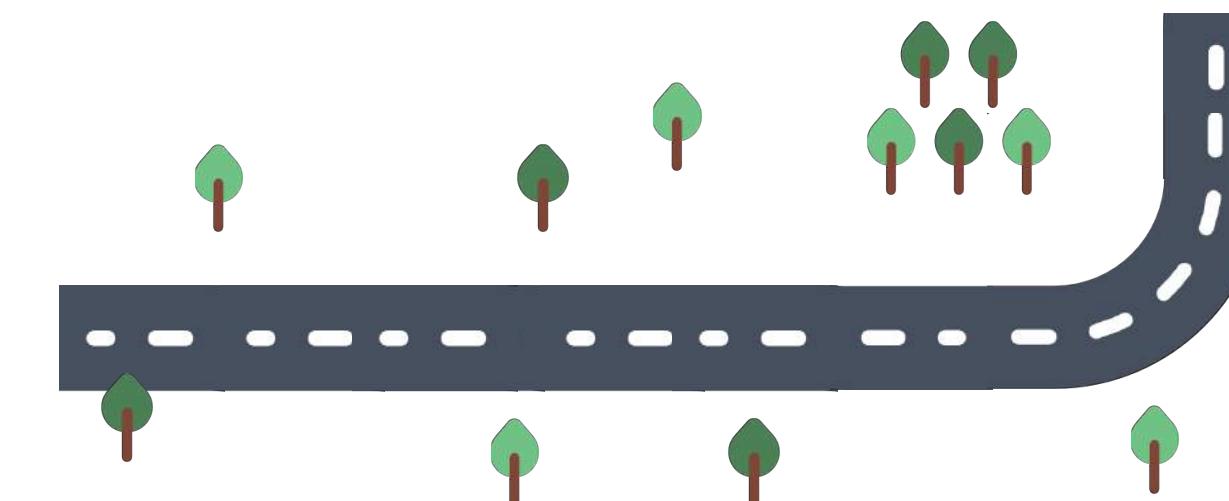
While designing scenic route, include the information for gas station and stops to rest

- "Check the weather usually in consideration of driving condition. We will also look at how far apart gas station are, potential stop for grabbing food, restock the gas and continue."(Interview Findings 3)



Add the offline mode function on Drive Texas

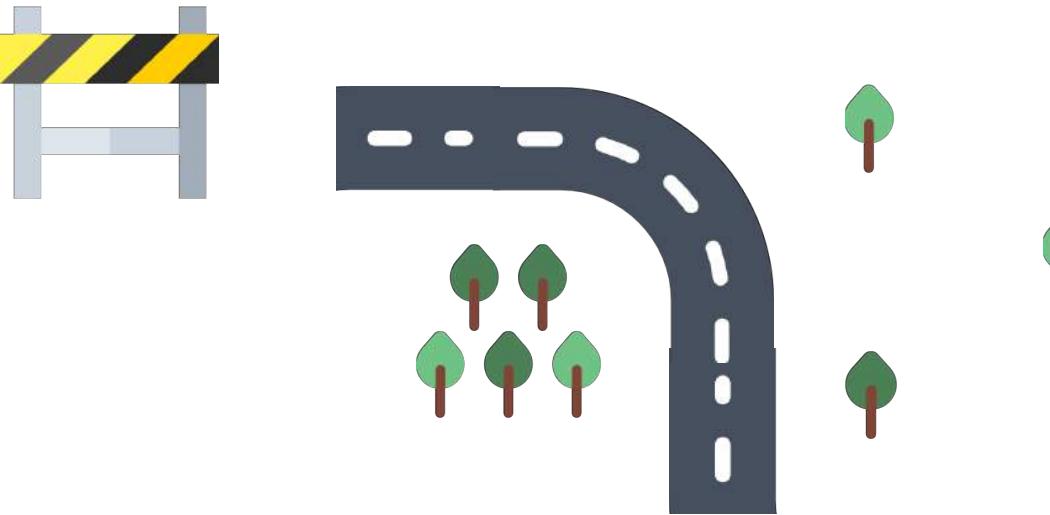
- "We are going to that direction that doesn't have internet connection. I have to screenshot a lot of direction and hope for the best finding exit, even the GPS doesn't work." (Interview Findings 5)



# Recommendation #3

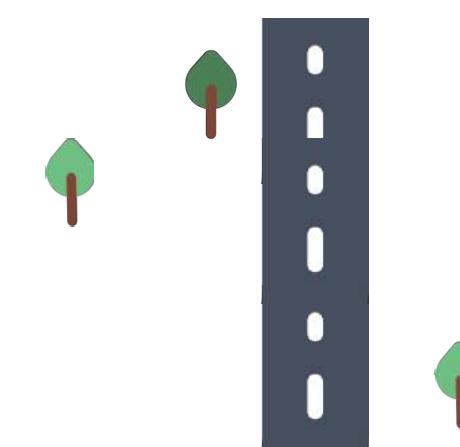
## Enable users to scroll the news smoothly on phone

- Make sure your website fits well on every device (Literature Review)
- It is a must-have feature for building a newsroom (Competitive Analysis)



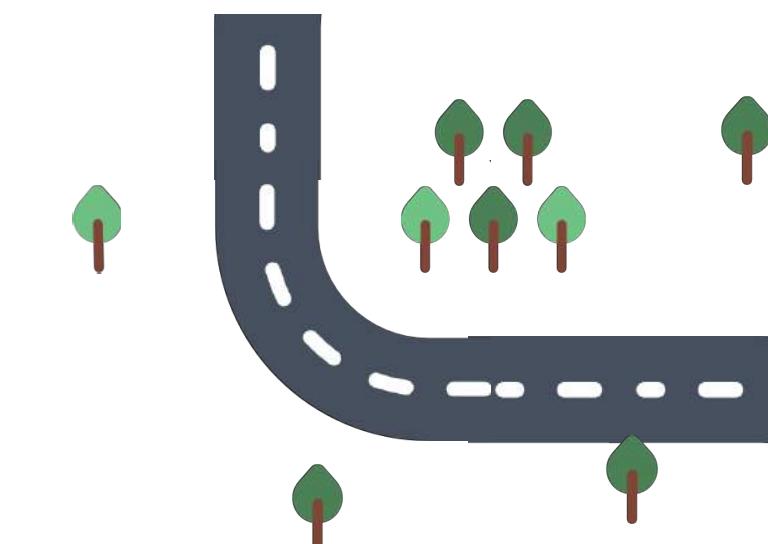
## Take the advantage of using social media

- Social media can help to broaden the audience group (Literature Review)



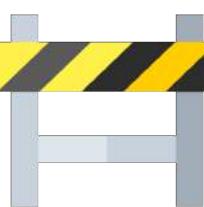
## Add sharing function on the newsfeed

- Sharing by friends via social media is a powerful tool for spreading the words (SME #2)

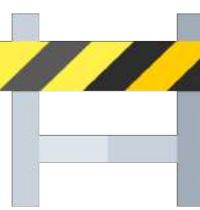


## Fix the most frequent visiting broken link of website

- "It was unclear what I was looking for in terms of a crash report or what that should look like" (Usability Testing Findings 2)
- Young adults prefer to get news on mobile, while elders prefer computers (SME #2)

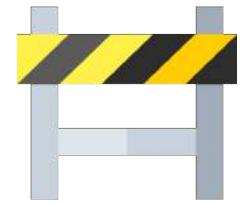
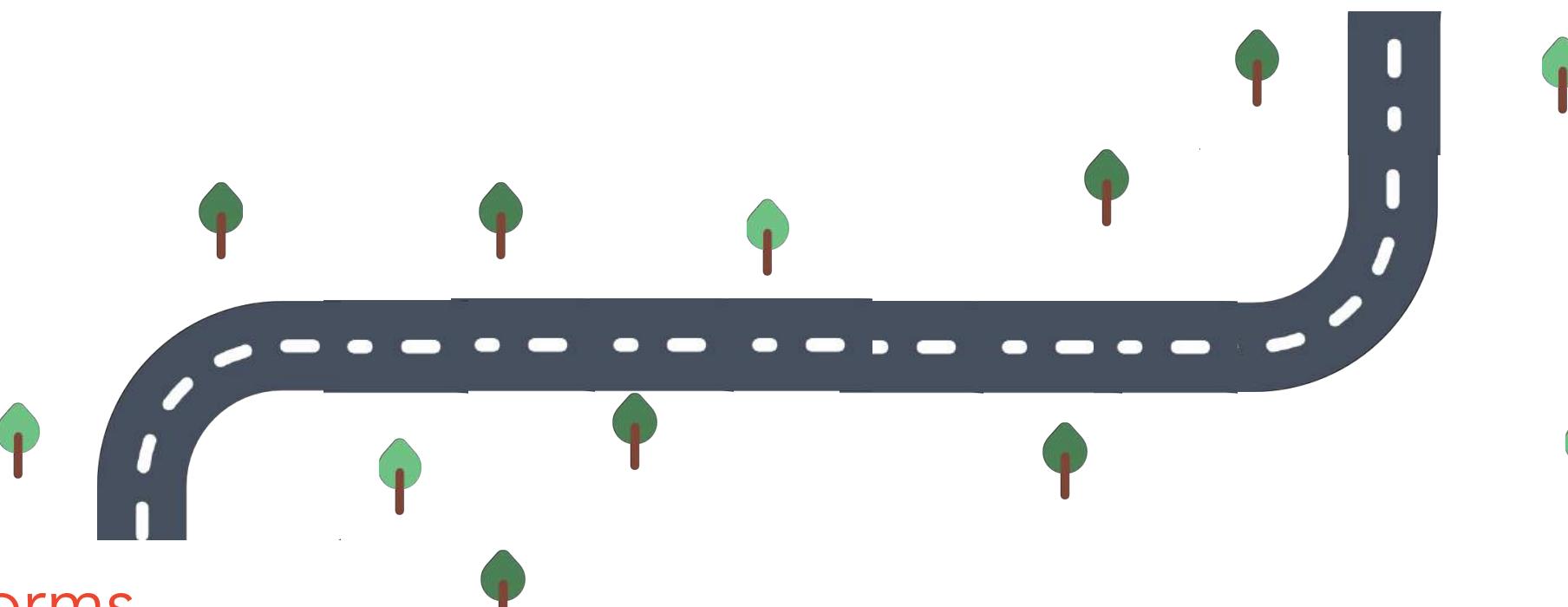


# Recommendation #4



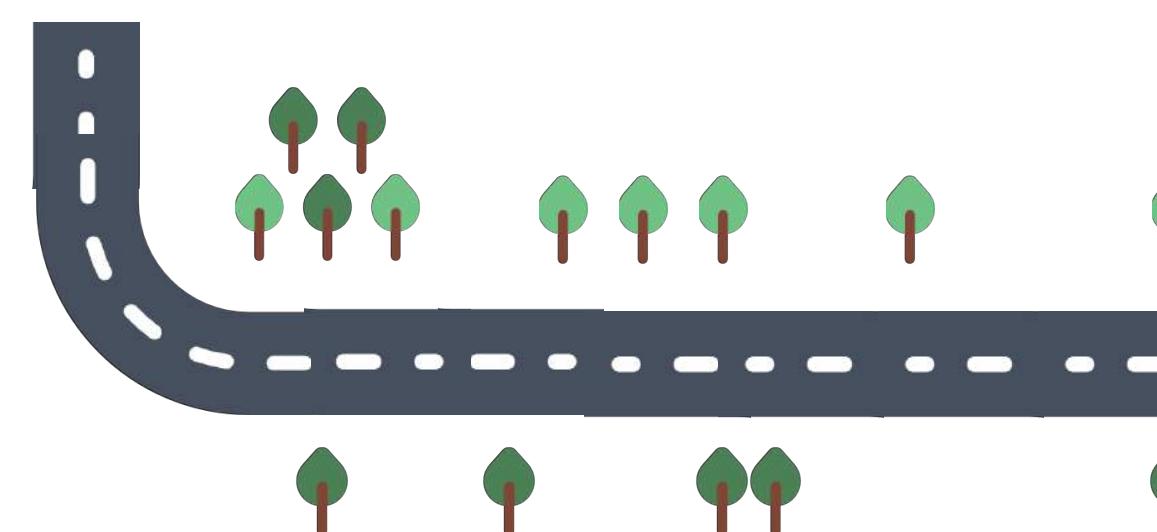
## Release 3-4 posts on Facebook weekly

- While facebook has a stable and big user population, twitter and other social media has the potential of future audience growth (SME #2)



## Post more videos on the platforms

- All of the competitors include multimedia within content (Competitive Analysis)
- The result: 18% of all Americans now get news on YouTube, making it the second most common social media site for news – albeit still far behind Facebook. (SME#2)



## Provide comment section for the public to express their thoughts

- Whataburger has a large group of loyalty audience (Competitive Analysis)
- Sharing stories of the users can build the affinity with the organization, increase interactivity and the opportunity to reach potential customers (Literature Review)