

Initial Sign-Up (Week of July 8)

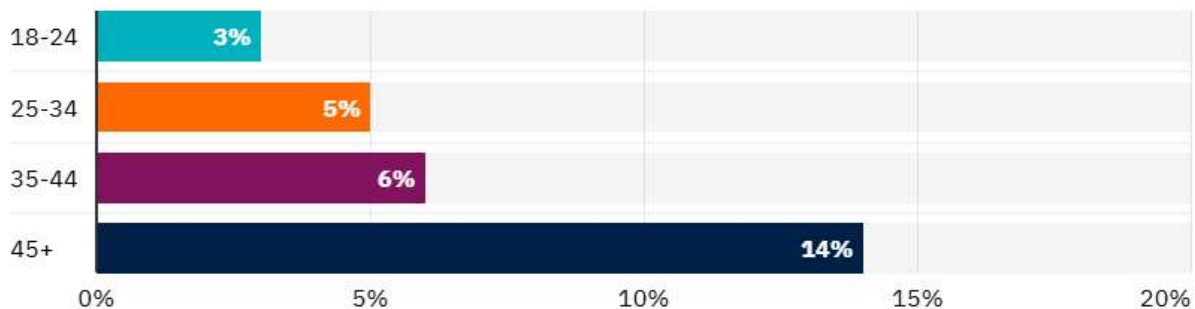
Description: First small-scale experiment for the news source question. We chose to sign up to newsletters from ten different news outlets. Through this initial sign-up, we hope to gain familiarity with receiving newsletters from these news outlets and with the interaction engine.

Background: Newsletters have opened opportunities for individuals and small publishers to publish content, as well as attract new customers and build loyalty among mainstream media outlets. A Digital News Report made by Reuters Institute shows that in the United States 22% of people use newsletters or email alerts. A distinguishing feature of email newsletters that appeal to people today, noted by Reuters Institute, is the personality of newsletters.

Proportion who say email is their main way of accessing news online – by age

United States of America

41% of **18-24s** say social media is their main access point for news



Q10a. Which of these was the ****MAIN**** way in which you came across news in the last week? *Base: All who accessed news online in the last week: 18-24 = 180, 25-34 = 332, 35-44 = 250, 45-54 = 54, 55+=802.*

However, email newsletters remain popular among older individuals (like shown in the figure above) [3]. Social media continues to grow to become very popular and meaningful among Gen Zs and Millennials [4]. Why may social media so popular among young individuals? Social media is run by computer programs that collect massive quantities of data to create content for its users [5]. Media outlets find themselves competing with social media platforms as many news outlets struggle to get clicks from readers. The voices in the online spaces like social media overshadow many news outlets [6]. This raise concerns as many social media platforms spread misinformation, fake news, and disinformation [7]. As media outlets compete with social media platforms and grow in reaching more readers

digitally, we aim to learn more about the newsletters of different media outlets (mainstream, secondary, and tertiary sites). After an analysis of CNN's privacy policy, we have structured our question to ask how data usage and collection may affect the contents readers receive [8]. How are media outlets using data to reach more readers and create more personalized newsletters to engage readers? Through this experiment, we hope to see the interaction behaviors of newsletters and improve the current system of U&A.

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1. How we chose media outlets

Left		Lean Left	Monthly Visits (in millions)	Center	Monthly Visits (in millions)
MSNBC		CNN	372.7	BBC News	104.6
The New Yorker		New York Times	464.4	Forbes	77.6
		USA Today	140.8	Wall Street Journal	71.6
		The Washington Post	116		
		Yahoo News	93		
Lean Right	Number of unique visitors 9/2023(in thousands)	Monthly Visits (in millions)	Right	Number of unique visitors 9/2023(In thousands)	Monthly Visits (in millions)
New York Post		127.5	Fox News		262.1
Washington Examiner	5968		Daily Mail		116.3
Epoch Times	5820		Newsmax	3753	
National Review	1881		The Blaze (Blaze Media)	2822	
The Washington Times	1786		Daily Wire	2794	
*Sources					
Most popular news websites U.S. by monthly visits 2023 Statista					
U.S. most visited conservative & right-wing websites 2023 Statista					

Link to image above: [Media Outlet \(News Source Research Setup\).xlsx](#)

Using the media bias chart created by [AllSides](#), we chose 2 media outlets from each bias category. The selection of media outlets from each bias category came from the monthly visits reported by Statista[1][2]. For the left, we were not able to find any statistics to back up our selection. We chose MSNBC and the New Yorker based on how well known it is. However, we do not believe that this would affect our experiment heavily because our focus is to gain familiarity with the interaction engine with newsletters.

2. Created IDs

Total IDs: 96

Media Outlet	Newsletter
MSNBC	Daily (3)
The New Yorker	Daily (3) Weekly (3) News & Politics (3)
CNN	Breaking News (3) Five Things (3) What Matters (3) Meanwhile in America (3) Meanwhile in the Middle East (3) Fareed's Global Briefing (3)
NY Times	The Morning (3) Breaking News (3) On Politics (3)
BBC News	BBC News Briefing (3) US Election Unspun (3)
Forbes	Daily (3) Weekly (3) News Alerts (3)
NY Post	Morning Report (3) Evening Update (3) News Alerts (3) Israel War Update (3)
Washington examiner	Examiner Today (3) Daily on Defense (3) Breaking News (3) News Alerts (3) Eye on the Biden (3)
Fox News	Breaking News Alerts (3) Fox News First (3) Antisemitism Exposed (3) Fox News Politics (3)
Daily Mail	Daily (3)

Link above: [News ID Sheet.xlsx](#) + [News Question Mods - Copy.xlsx](#)

In total we will sign up to ten different media outlets and 32 different newsletters. Three fake IDs will be signed up to each newsletter to interact in a specific way.

For each ID signed up to one newsletter, we will either:

- Open email.
- Don't open email.
- Open email and click on the first article.

This will be a big part of this experiment. As we interact with the newsletters, we anticipate seeing differences based on the interaction.

3. Sign-ups & Data Collection

On the first day we will sign up for all the newsletters. Each sign-up is estimated to take 2-3 minutes. On the days following, we will collect and record the data in an excel sheet ([News Coding Sheet.xlsx](#)). While we collect the data, it is crucial that we mark the newsletters we choose to interact with to prevent mistakes. We will divide the emails among ourselves, so that the same people will check the same emails. This will prevent one email from being opened multiple times, as well as opening emails we chose not to open..

As we interact with each newsletter, we will also look at all the articles linked in the newsletter (count, record titles of articles, paywall on articles, etc.) - all this will happen if time allows since our primary focus is on completing the paper for the birth control + interacting with newsletters

Analysis of specific newsletters (thoughts or for future):

Breaking News Newsletters: CNN, NY Times, Washington Examiner, Fox News.

- Can we look these newsletters and compare what they include as “breaking news?”

Daily Newsletters:

- What is the distribution of topics in the newsletters received?

Can we look at the characteristics of the headlines?

4. Future

Initially we decided to look at the most popular/viewed/used media outlets because it seemed the most relevant. However, as we create the rubric for categorizing secondary

and tertiary media outlets, we hope to move to study newsletters from those media outlets. With platforms like Substack, Revue, and Bulletin, that are open for individual journalists to publish their work, we may study the reliability, trustworthiness, data usage, or personalization of newsletters among sites that are not mainstream.

We may also investigate “pop-up” newsletters. Can we compare them to long-term newsletters and see the difference in strategies for creating and sending newsletters to readers?

5. *Timeline*

July 9th: Sign-up for the emails

July 10th- 19th (latest): Interact with the newsletters + collect data and record on the [excel sheet](#).

July 19th: Transfer all emails to csv file.

During July 10th – 19th, we will interact with emails each day. On the weekends we will not interact with emails. If we receive emails during the weekend, we will interact with them on Monday (on Monday we will open emails received on Saturday and Sunday).

After we finish interacting with the newsletters, on the last day July 19th (tentative) we will go back and go through all the emails from the control group by looking at the csv file or email server. Preferably we want to look through the CSV file to see the formatting of texts. In a big scale project, we will not be able to go through thousands of emails in an email server. A potential concern when pulling out the emails to a csv file is the format of the texts. Newsletters may follow a template that may not be easily converted into a text file. Additionally, we will not be able to transfer links if there are any. Our current limitations are copying the URL to open a link, but in the case that a link is embedded into a text we may face minor inconveniences. However, this will be something we investigate as we get closer to the end of the interactions. This could also be another potential improvement for our current system.

**There may be potential changes or modifications throughout this small experiment. Since our focus for this summer is publishing the paper for the Birth Control question, we may focus more on interactions rather than collecting data from the newsletters each day. The analysis of each newsletter can be done later after we finish interacting with the newsletters. The end date may change (will not go past July 19th) depending on our current

process for writing the paper. By the end of this experiment, any modifications made will be recorded on this document.
