

# An introduction to Next Gen News

Understanding audiences in 2030  
*#NextGenNews*



*Supported by the Google News Initiative*

# NEXT GEN NEWS

Understanding  
the audiences  
of 2030



Researched and produced by



*Supported by the Google News Initiative*

# Today's agenda

## 1. Project overview 30 minutes

- What did we research?
- What were the most important findings?

## 2. Panel discussion 60 minutes

- How can news producers leverage our findings?
- What are the ways forward for the industry?
- Q&A with the panel

## 3. Wrap up & networking



## ➤ **Why the Google News Initiative supported this work**



## > Project overview







# What is Next Gen News?

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in the hope that news producers can use these insights to **bridge** what we call **the Ideal News Experience gap**



# Our research approach

## Field research

We conducted **45 in-depth interviews** with 18-25-year olds in **India, Nigeria and the United States**. We used a **human-centred design** approach to unearth unarticulated needs and desires that can unlock new opportunities for innovation.

## Literature review

To complement our field research, we completed a thorough literature review of leading secondary research to distil **critical themes and factors** that have and are expected to continue shaping the news industry.



*Our research involved 2-3 hour long interviews where we ran exercises with young people. The research phase concluded with a week-long team-wide synthesis in Evanston.*

# To complement our research, we convened the Next Gen Advisory Board who participated in 1:1 interviews and group working sessions throughout



**Carolyn Powers**  
Director for US Programs,  
Internews



**Bayo Olupohunda**  
Editor-in-Chief,  
Opera



**Trei Brundrett**  
Non-Exec Board Member,  
The Guardian



**Kirsten Eddy**  
Senior Researcher,  
Pew Research Center



**Mohit Jain**  
Board Member & Executive  
Director, Times India Group



**Chanpreet Arora**  
Business Head AVOD,  
Viacom18 Digital Ventures



**Jodie Jackson**  
Director,  
News Literacy Lab



**Justin Arenstein**  
Founder & CEO,  
Code For Africa



**Chris Krewson**  
Executive Director,  
LION Publishers



**Jack Kelly**  
Founder & Content Creator,  
TLDR News



**Kamal Ahmed**  
Editor-in-Chief &  
Co-founder,  
The News Movement



**Olivia Ma**  
Former Senior Director of  
News Partnerships,  
Google News Initiative



**Ruona Meyer**  
Freelance Media Trainer  
& Researcher



**Jocelyne  
Muhutu-Remy**  
Managing Director  
Sub-Saharan Africa, Spotify



**Pradeep Gairola**  
VP & Digital Business Head,  
The Hindu Group



**Yvette Uloma Dimiri**  
Director,  
Stears Insights



**Jeff Yang**  
Research Direction &  
Head of Digital intelligence  
Lab, IFTF



**Joseph Teasdale**  
Head of Tech,  
Enders Analysis



**Lucky Gunasekara**  
Co-Founder & CEO,  
Miso AI

## Key finding 1:

- The next generation are exhibiting **distinct news behaviours** and **adopt different modes of consumption**



# We found that the next generation exhibit emerging behaviours that are distinct in four ways

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They fluidly transition between dissimilar tasks while they're on their phones

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They rely on the personal opinions of others in digital contexts to frame and understand the news



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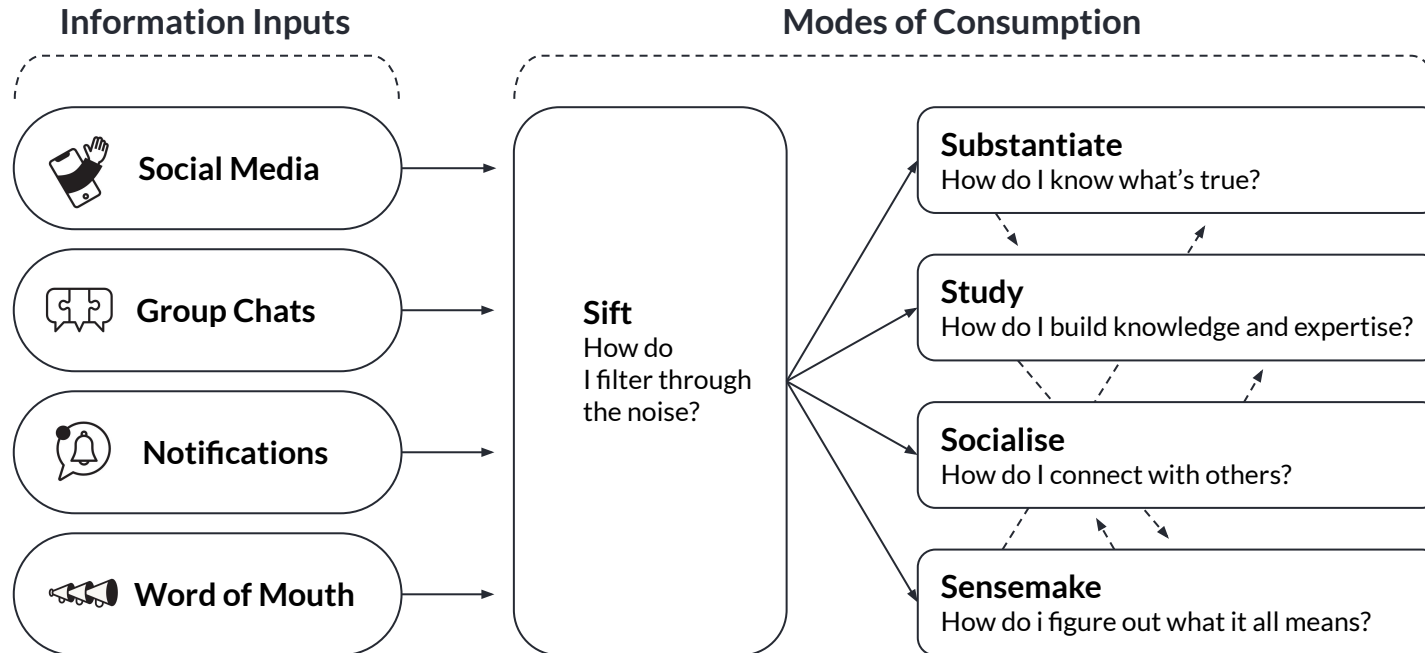
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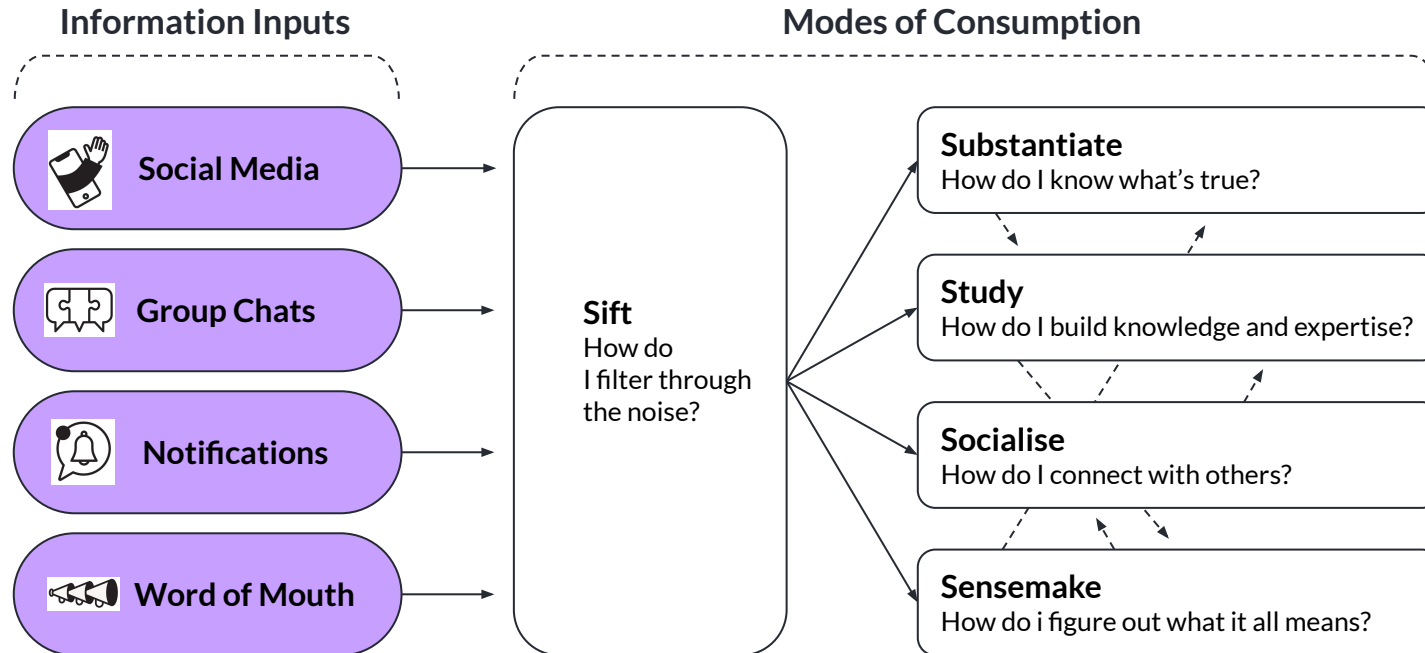
## Sophisticated searching

They have their own sophisticated search skills on social media platforms and online communities to help them manage information overload

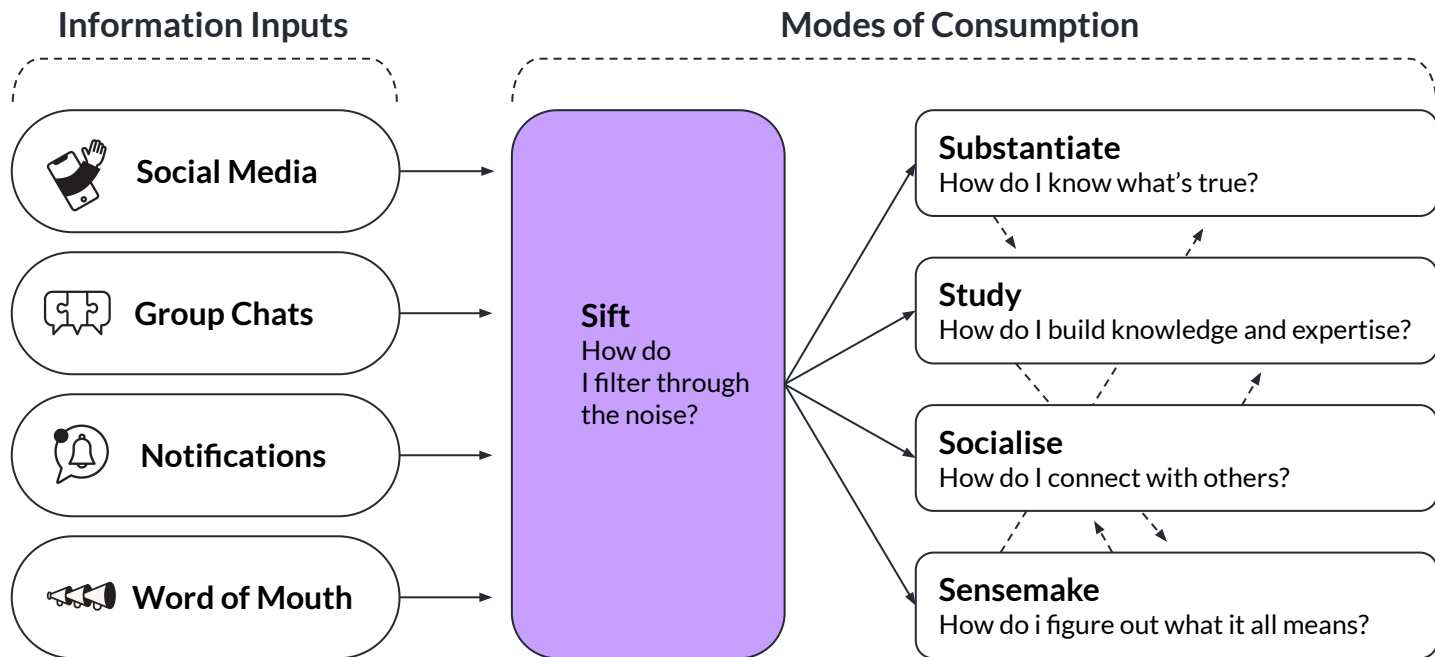
# From the emerging behaviours, we were able to extract a set of audience modes that explain how the next generation engages with news



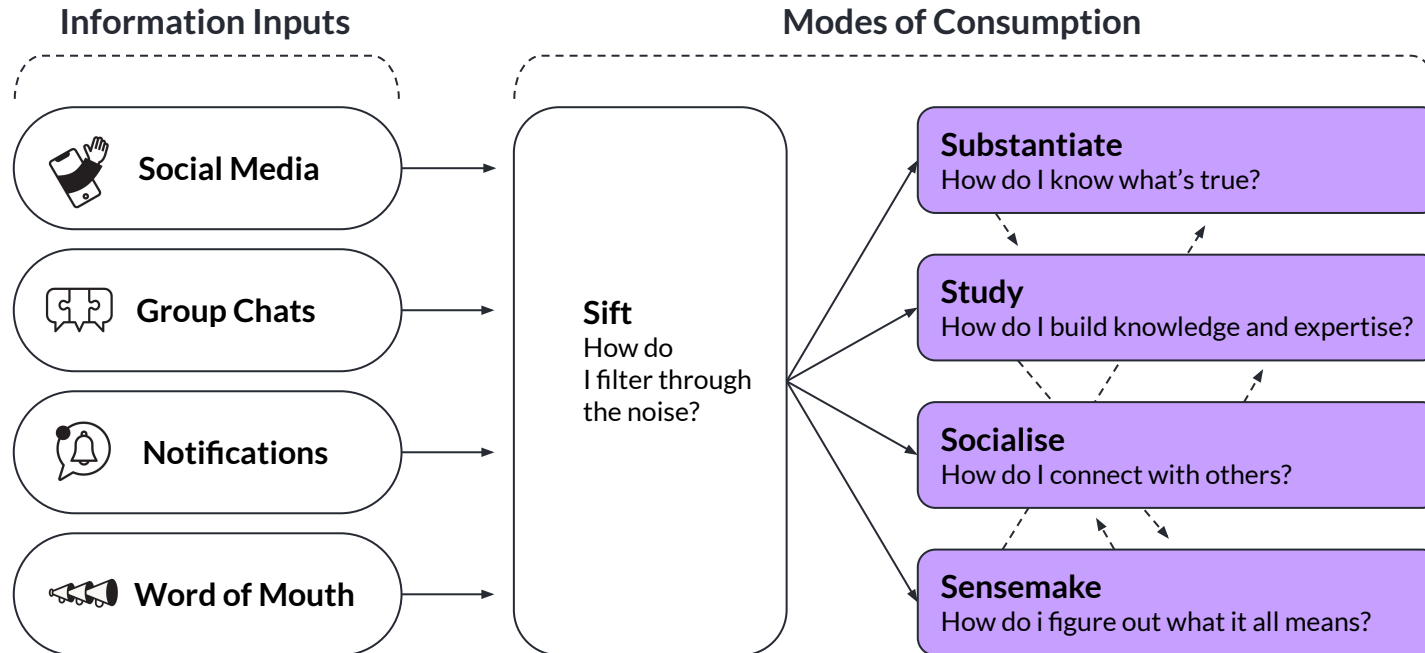
# The Next Gen is inundated with information triggers all day, everyday, whether from social media, group chats or daily conversations



# The Next Gen are constantly sifting information and want simple, short, and low-effort ways to discover relevant content without feeling overwhelmed



# The Next Gen may stay in Sift, or they may want to dive deeper, entering into one or more of the four active modes of consumption



## Key finding 2:

- There is a **gap** between the news experience the **next generation wants** and **what they're currently being provided with**

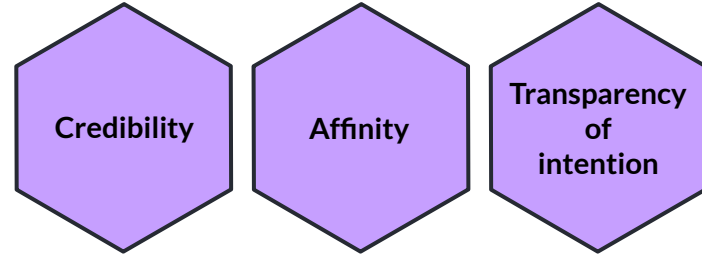




# The Ideal News Experience

## Trusted Source

“I want information from a source that I know and trust.”



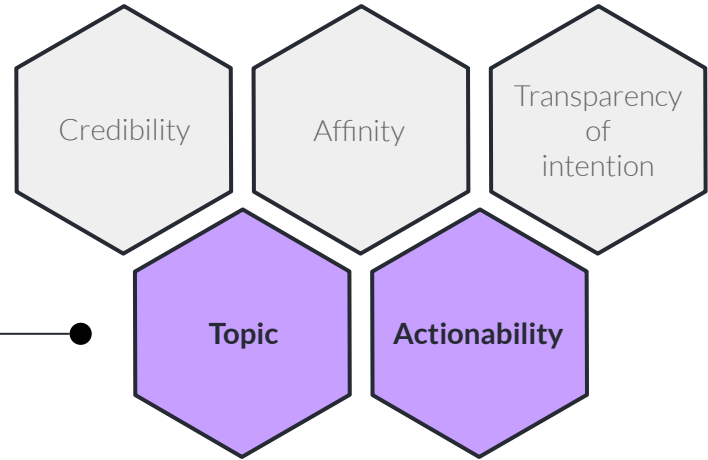
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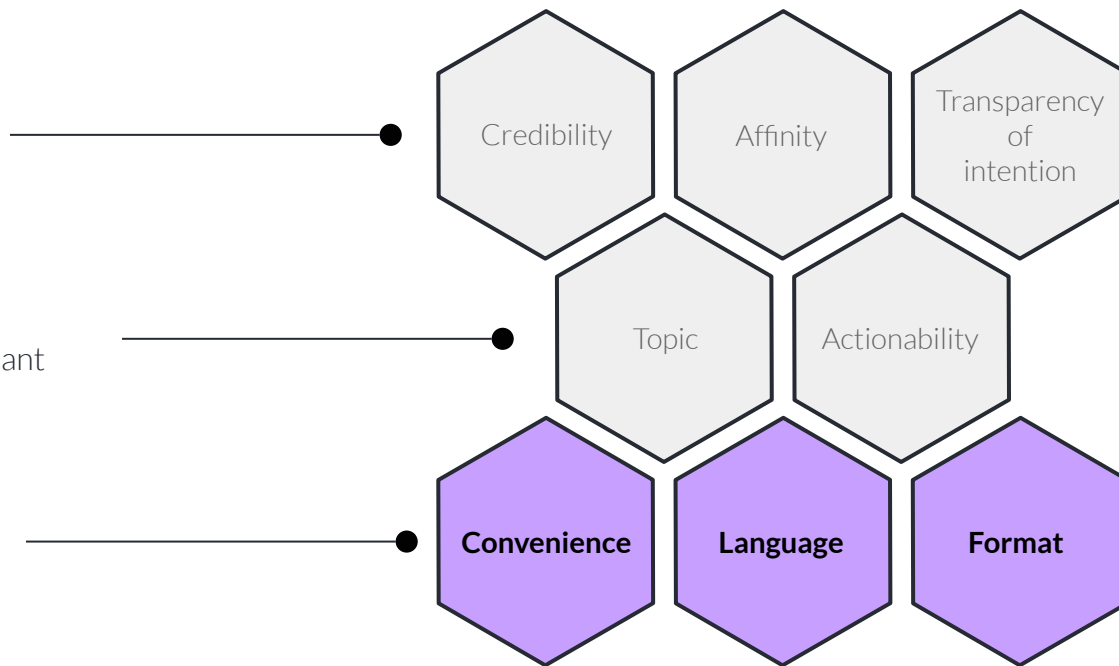
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## Personal Significance

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## Desired Storytelling

“I want information presented in a way that works best for me.”



# The Ideal News Experience

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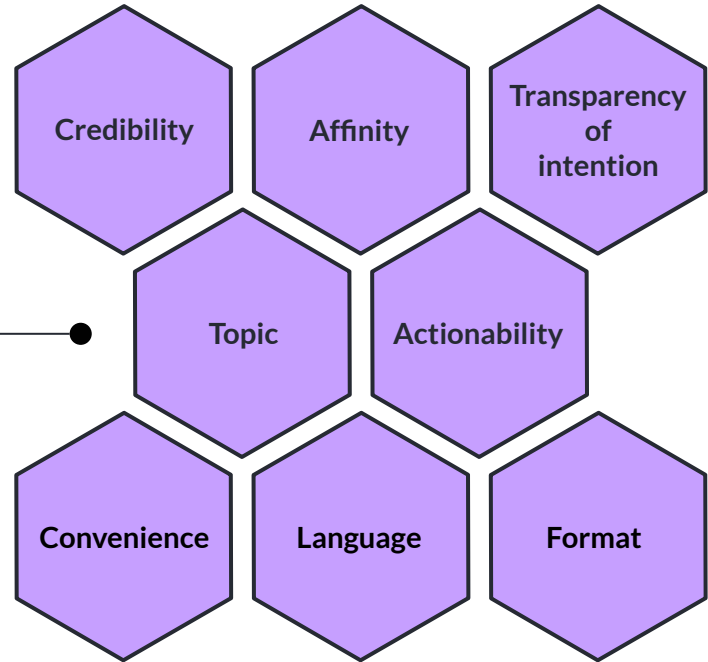
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## Credibility - “They know their stuff and I can count on them”



Research participant

**“I trust the people who lived through that experience over those that were reporting on the experience.”**

Faith, 24, Female, Lagos

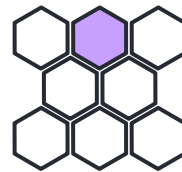


Advisory Board

**“My daughter follows Cloda [a reporter at The News Movement] because she goes to the festivals, has the same kind of vibe, so she is willing to listen to her.”**

Kamal Ahmed, Editor-in-chief & Co-Founder,  
The News Movement





Trusted Source

## Affinity - “I feel connected to them”

Research participant

“There’s this **guy I follow on Twitter**. His name is [prominent Nigerian entrepreneur]. I won’t say I trust everything he says but **I listen to what he says, like I always consider his opinion as very valuable...**”

Olisa, 25, Male, Abuja



Advisory Board

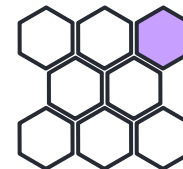
“Influencer culture is still going to be big. **People turn to influencers to do the job that some newsrooms don't do: aggregate the news for them and tell it to them in a more authentic way.**”

Ruona Meyers, Freelance Media Trainer & Researcher





## Transparency of intention - *“I understand their motives”*



Trusted Source

Research participant

**“Sharing unverified content** or something [the organisation] is not sure of - **maybe for the engagement sake** - [is] something that makes me **lose trust.**”

Faith, 24, Female, Lagos



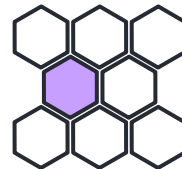
Industry Leader

**“Many private news organizations do not disclose, in real-time or ever, who funds, majority owns, or invests in the media company.** This is a problem.”

Heidi R Legg, Former fellow, Future of Media Project,  
Harvard University



## Topic - *“I am interested in this subject”*



Personal Significance

Research participant

“I will pay attention to some of the things that are really big... the two [topics] that come to mind are **LGBTQ rights and women's reproductive rights.**”

Rylie, 20, Female, Chicago



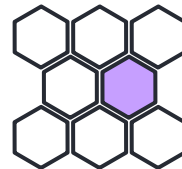
Advisory Board

“There will be **more diverse coverage as people are moving away from pure politics** which has dominated Indian society. It's not just about politics, but about many other things, **and ultimately it's about curiosity.**”

Mohit Jain, Board Member & Executive Director,  
Times India Group



## Actionability - “I can do something with this information”



Personal Significance

Research participant

“What does this [piece of news] **mean for me?**  
What does this **mean for the person who this article affects?** **What should we do about it?**  
What's the **call to action** for it?”

Gavin, 21, Male, Birmingham



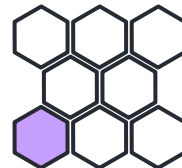
Advisory Board

“There is **big demand for solutions journalism** by younger audiences. A BBC World Service Survey showed that **64% of under 35-year-olds wanted the news to report solutions to problems**, making it their top content request.”

Jodie Jackson, Director,  
News Literacy Lab



## Convenience - “I don’t want this to require more effort than is necessary”



Desired Storytelling

Research participant

“I like reading news from the **apps I have**, because the **newspaper and the TV channels give so much information** it is not easy to understand.”

Harsheet, 18, Male, Delhi



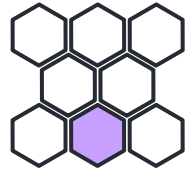
Advisory Board

“On the whole this generation is just **out of the habit of intentional, traditional news consumption**. There definitely is some intentionality, as people are still choosing to watch our videos, but I think there's **an expectation that the news comes to you.**”

Jack Kelly, Founder & Creator,  
TLDR News



## Language - *“I want words that I understand and a tone that is welcoming”*



Desired Storytelling

Research participant

“Things are **written in a really complicated way** where I feel like **I need to be more educated or literate...** I have a degree [from Northwestern University], and I am still like, **‘I don’t know that I’m smart enough to be intaking this information.’**”

Hope, 23, Female, Chicago



Advisory Board

“**Traditional news organisations need to get rid of their dogma.** If you really want to reach young people, you **need to use emojis, memes and new formats of language as well as leveraging creators as distribution tools.** Either **get with the dialect, or leave the core business.**”

Ruona Meyer, Freelance Media Trainer & Researcher



## Format - “I want this in a form that works for me and my situation”



Research participant

“In the evening, I like to take on ‘chill’ content... Maybe I just want to come home at the end of work and watch a Youtube video.”

Olisa, 25, Male, Abuja



Industry leader

“[Young people’s] platform preferences rarely regress... there are no reasonable grounds for expecting that those born in the 2000s will suddenly come to prefer old-fashioned websites, let alone broadcast and print, simply because they grow older.”

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, Director,  
Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism





## And that completes the Ideal News Experience

### Trusted Source

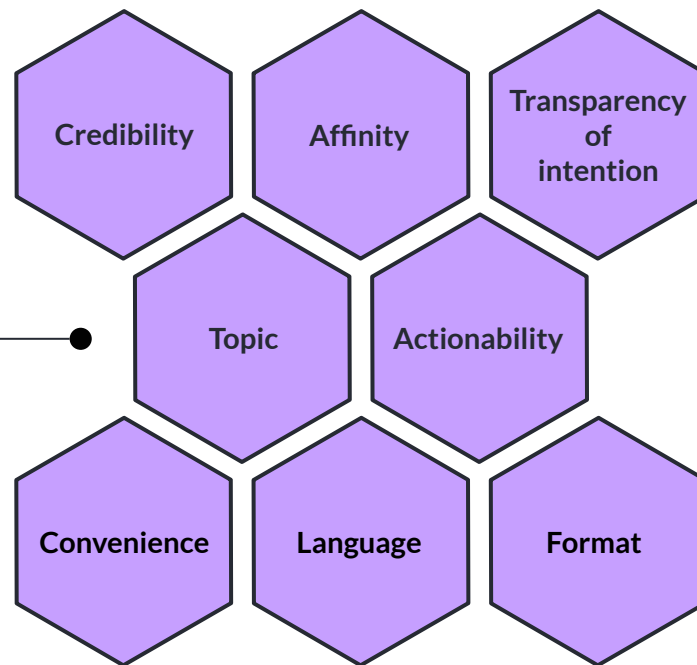
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### Personal Significance

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### Desired Storytelling

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## Key finding 3:

- There are **tangible ways** that news producers can begin to **meet the ideal news experience for the next generation**



# Panel discussion: how you can prepare for the audiences of 2030

## Research Calls to Action

1. Build affinity with audiences
2. Enhance personalisation & customisation
3. Develop socially friendly content to build direct relationships
4. Modernise language
5. Cater to different modes of consumption
6. Give hope & empower action

## Panellists



**Ruona Meyer**  
Freelance Media Trainer  
& Researcher



**Jack Kelly**  
Founder & Creator,  
TLDR News



**Jeremy Gilbert**  
Digital Media Strategy  
Professor, Knight Lab

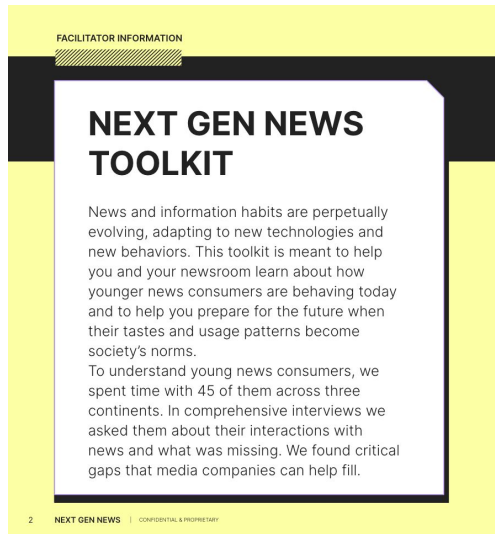


**Monika Plaha**  
Presenter & Journalist

# There are many ways you can turn this research into action...



Learn more by reading our **full report** that is hosted on the **Next Gen News website**



Use the **Next Gen News Design Toolkit** to workshop changes in your organisation



*Some members of our research team*

Reach out to the **research team** to explore opportunities for future collaboration

## Networking



Next Gen News  
**Website**



Next Gen News  
**Toolkit**

