

From Newsrooms to Newsfeeds, Social Media's Impact on News Consumption in the U.S.

The rise of social media has reshaped how people access news and Americans are increasingly turning to social media as their primary source.

While social media offers unmatched convenience, it also poses significant risks as a news source. Professionally trained journalists, including James King, editor for *Reuters Magazine*, have expressed concern about these potential dangers.

“When people start to rely on social media for news it eliminates an important gatekeeper,” said King.

The risk of spreading misinformation is a legitimate concern shared by many social media news consumers. According to Pew Research Center, 40% of U.S. adults who get news from social media dislike the inaccuracy of information the most in 2023.

There is a large portion of people who use social media as a source of news and information. According to Pew Research Center, in 2025 53% of adults at least sometimes get their news from social media. Donovan Parker, 21 is a senior at CU Boulder who sees social media as an effective way to receive news.

“I use social media as my main source of news, most of the time I end up looking it up to verify it through a more reliable news source but not every time. I think that getting my news from social media is an easier way to know what's going on,” said Parker.

Social media is widely accessible and is an efficient way to get news. According to Pew Research Center, 20% of social media news consumers like convenience the most. While this convenience can be beneficial, it also presents serious problems. The rapid spread of misinformation can distort public understanding of events.

As social media has grown as a news platform, more individuals now identify as news influencers. Unlike freelance journalists who sell their work to established outlets, influencers earn directly from online audiences. According to the Pew Research Center, 21% of adults get news from social media influencers, and 54% of followers say influencers help them understand current events. However, most influencers lack formal journalistic training, raising concerns about integrity, objectivity, and who should be serving as journalism's gatekeepers.

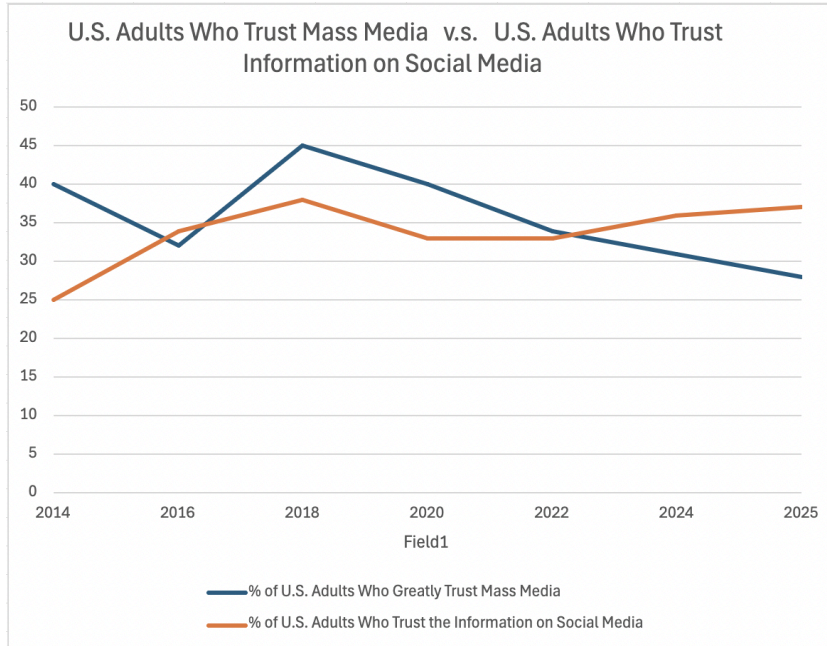
"The problem with independent journalists focusing on one topic is unintended bias," said King.

Established news organizations are better equipped to uphold standards of accuracy, balance and diversity. While some news influencers don't hold themselves to journalists standard, some distribute accurate and objective news. While King is in favor of a traditional gatekeeper he is not against independent journalism.

"Anyone who can go out there and be a journalist without working for a big company and survive is a good thing, as long as you're honest in what you're telling people and showing your bias," said King.

The state of traditional journalism is rapidly changing, the advance of modern media can allow for inaccurate information to spread faster than ever. According to the National Library of Medicine, false news online is six times faster than the spread of truthful content and 70% of users could not distinguish real from fake news.

According to Gallup research, Trust in mass media is at an all time low in the United States, while according to Pew Research Center, trust in social media has risen by 3% since 2016.



The data from this graph is taken from Pew Research Center and Gallup. Find sources at the bottom of the page.

Although these trends are related, one does not solely cause the other. As trust in mass media declines, social media has become a more prominent source of news. Despite the risks of misinformation, it offers convenience, efficiency, and open discussion. Nick Lawson, a 52-year-old from Chicago, Illinois, finds this especially helpful.

“I wouldn’t say I get most of my news from social media, but it’s a good way to stay up to date. I work a lot, so it’s a more efficient way to stay informed,” said Lawson.

While social media presents both benefits and risks as a news source, its influence on current events is unavoidable and continues to grow. As a result, developing solutions to limit the spread of false or inaccurate information is essential.

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