

Millennials' Engagement with News on Twitter

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Abstract

Studies show that social media sites are on the rise to becoming notable news outlets among young adults. This study was conducted to determine whether Millennials are using Twitter as a news source outlet. Two hypotheses were tested during the study: if Millennials' activity on social media is high, then they will report receiving news from Twitter, not from traditional sources and if Millennials use social media to receive news, then they will report using credible news sources. The research also wanted to see if respondents' college majors affected how respondents interact with news online.

The study was conducted by distributing 302 surveys to Spring Hill College students. Questions asked in the survey related to social media and Twitter in general, interaction with news on Twitter and source credibility. Data was collected and input into SPSS software where four tests were run to analyze what respondents answered.

Introduction

The Internet has become an essential way for people to communicate with one another. As our world becomes more technologically based and environmentally friendly, society has shifted from print to digital. Over the past 15 years, the digital shift has directly affected societal interaction. More recently, social media have become a common way for people to communicate and interact with one another. Not only are users interacting with peers, but also with companies, brands and journalists. The quick access to information that social media provide now allows society to be updated on information within seconds, compared to traditional daily newspapers. With the Millennial generation's over activity on social media, is it possible that Twitter has become the new way to find and share information?

Social media sites allow users to control what information their accounts display. On Twitter, the user has the option to "follow" different ideas and topics. This free will given to the users makes each set of "followings" per profile unique. To support why Twitter users follow particular accounts is the Elaboration Likelihood Model. Proposed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo, the Elaboration Likelihood Model is a model of attitude change based on decisions and behaviors. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) believe that the Elaboration Likelihood Model, "provides a fairly general framework for organizing, categorizing, and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications" (p. 125). Users are in full control of the accounts they choose to follow. The users must persuade themselves into whom to follow, what information to expose themselves to and what information to share.

The selectiveness or randomness of accounts users follow is determined by the amount of elaboration used. Elaboration is when a person uses a cognitive process to evaluate a situation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Thelwall (2008) notes in his research that, "the concept of 'discussing

the news' benefits from elaboration..." (p. 730). When high elaboration is used, a person is fully weighing options on how to best handle a situation. When low elaboration is used, a person is acting more on instinct than reason, not using clear judgment on long-term outcomes. The Elaboration Likelihood Model recognizes two different routes of thought, which reflect the amount of elaboration used. High elaboration of a scenario takes a central route, while low elaboration of a scenario takes a peripheral route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The different routes of elaboration that social media users exhibit affects the information the users are exposed to and whom the users follow. Since most Millennials have lived their entire lives with computers, online language and use is less formal. The amount of time that Millennials spend on computers and the Internet is more often for entertainment than for education. Numerous studies show that Millennials are the most highly active generation on social media (McGlynn, 2010).

This research will study the following: if Millennials' activity on social media is high, then they will report receiving news from Twitter, not from traditional sources. Following the hypothesis will be another hypothesis that will study if Millennials use social media to receive news, then they will report using credible news sources.

Literature Review

Digital Shift of News

As more people were becoming accustomed to computers, journalists and news organizations looked to the Internet as a new way to disperse news to society. Originally, there were some speculations on whether online posting would be trusted by computer users. With the new phrase "digital journalism," many did not know what to expect in articles and news reports. People feared that there would be a sense of unprofessionalism online from journalists. Since

anyone can access the Internet, how can users trust information on the Internet regarding disasters and high-risk issues? Unsurprisingly, the digital shift of news was a very effective way to disperse news to the general public (Papacharissi, 2005). With digital advancements, “technology has transformed the way we produce, distribute, and receive information” (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009, p. 471). People from all around the world would be able to access information from anywhere they wished. New titles for journalists were developed to emphasize their journalistic presence online. The digital shift was headed in the right direction (Papacharissi, 2005).

Throughout the years, online news has found its way to social media. Before the increased use of social networks, online news posting from the public was done through blog sites. When social networks started attracting more attention, popularity of blogs slowly diminished. Researchers questioned if this shift would reduce news-related discussion online (Thelwall, 2008). Reported by Weeks and Holbert (2013) “...news use within social media has grown by over 50% since 2009 such that 9% of all traffic to news websites is now driven by social media, making these sites a leading outlet for citizens to access news” (p. 213). This growth will continue to be seen in the upcoming years, as news sites and social media organizations work to make news access easier for users worldwide. On social media, the consumer can actively participate in news sharing and selecting what content they wish to read. This mass communication connects news-seeking citizens directly to news providing journalists (Weeks & Holbert 2013).

Since social networks were originally developed to connect users with one another, one can assume that users are communicating with one another on social media. But, are the conversations the same? Popular topics and news are typically conversations that happen face-to-

face among friends; therefore, it should be seen on social media (Thelwall, 2008). Studies have developed within recent years to better understand the uses and effects that news on social media is having on society. Researchers theoretically know that users will share or read information that has personal meaning. The connection the user feels to the information will cause him or her to express feelings towards the news. This causes dissemination of news content, which is the sharing of news to a vast amount of people. If users are finding news on social media, they will be more likely to share the news they access (Weeks & Holbert 2013).

In 2011, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism along with Nielson found that 60%- 65% of traffic to top news sites was direct traffic while only 35%- 40% of traffic was from links. The research did note that social media sites were becoming prominent news referring sources. Yet, Twitter's news traffic statistics were not as high as Facebook's statistics. (Olmstead, Mitchell & Rosenstiel, 2011).

One year later, a different study was performed to determine how social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter, were affecting news. Researchers noticed a rise in social media, and wondered what this would potentially do for news. Twitter, still a growing network, is already making a name for itself in online news sharing. Still having low numbers as drivers of news, researchers note that social media are still pathways to news and not replacing traditional sources. Because of the way users link with one another on Twitter, news is presented from many different types of accounts: friends, family, journalists and news organizations. This allows users to be exposed to different types of news and different sources of news (Mitchell, Rosenstiel & Christian, 2014).

Millennials

Millennials are a technologically comfortable generation born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. Being so technologically advanced is what sets this generation apart from all

other generations. Through research, Millennials are seen to be the generation most actively using social media, smartphones and the Internet (McGlynn, 2010). Research has found noticeable gaps in social networking activity for each generation. In 2010, a high of 75% of Americans from ages 18- 24 used social media sites, while only 10% of Americans from ages 55-64 used social media sites (Miller, 2013). Of all the generation groups, Millennials have the highest presence on Twitter. With the high use of social media on smartphones and Millennials' on-the-go lifestyle, the use of social media for information becomes portable and instant for the generation (McGlynn, 2010).

Being the first generation completely immersed in technology, Millennials have only known a digital environment. The generation constantly searches for reasons to use technology and typically communicate through all forms of technology. The technological capabilities of Millennials can be seen transitioning from personal use to inside the classroom and workplace. But, the constant reliance on communication may stunt face-to-face communication skills (Miller, 2013).

Most Millennials never experienced a home without a computer, phone or Internet. Research was done by the Pew Internet & American Life Project in 2005, which surveyed 12 to 17-year-olds, along with their parent/guardian, to determine how technologically active teens were. The data concluded that Millennials are more likely to use advancements in technology to communicate with others. Not only are Millennials using Internet content, but they are also creating it. The generation is building social networks worldwide through posts of videos, photos, texts and more (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009).

Studies show that many Millennials are not properly educated in media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to attain, understand, dissect and correctly communicate technologically,

through print and through word-of-mouth (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009). Educators have started to realize the importance of teaching media literacy “for Millennials, [because] technology and media are intricately interwoven in their lives” (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009, p. 479). Being constantly surrounded by images, texts and sounds does not mean that this generation will fully understand the context of the medium. It is the job of educators and mentors to, “build a bridge between the knowledge students already have and the content that they need to learn to be successful...” (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009, p. 471). By educating Millennials on media literacy, they should be able to better interpret online information as trustworthy and truthful or fabricated stories.

Credibility

Unfortunately, source credibility becomes an issue with Twitter. News sharing activity can be done by any user on Twitter, meaning an average person can try and report information as a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist. Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide (2014) state that there are three dimensions of source credibility: “expertise/competence (i.e., the degree to which a perceiver believes a sender to know the truth), trustworthiness (i.e., the degree to which a perceiver believes a sender will tell the truth as he or she knows it), and goodwill (i.e., the degree to which a perceiver believes a sender has his or her best interests at heart)” (p. 172-3). If a user fears that the information they are given is not accurate, it will shift the user to another information source (Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide, 2014). The connection between the sender and the receiver must be positive, to accurately engage users with news on Twitter. The importance of credibility, especially in disaster and high risk situations, is essential for active engagement.

To keep credibility, news organizations worked to create ethical guidelines on how their journalists should use social media. Some journalists have developed separate accounts for personal and professional posts, while others have used only one account for both. When journalists do not separate their accounts, a grey area of determining what is fact and what is fun develops. How will the journalists' followers trust each individual post? Many notable sources such as the Wall Street Journal and Associated Press have already developed ethical guidelines for their journalists to follow when using social media. Because of the high activity of journalists, both young and old, on social media, these prestigious sources wanted to ensure that their organization's credibility remained high (Podger, 2009).

Often, users are uneducated about what is considered a credible source. A popular source for information, BuzzFeed, is sometimes considered by online users as a credible news source. The problem with BuzzFeed is that the information posted on the site is not by eye witnesses or first party journalists. Information is found through other news sources, and relayed to the BuzzFeed audience. Currently, the website mixes all of its content together from quizzes determining which television character the user is most like, to breaking news about the Ebola virus. BuzzFeed plans to develop an app similar to those already existing with credible news sources such as *The New York Times* and *Yahoo News Digest* (Sebastian, 2014). The app will be used to filter out entertainment and focus on news. Sebastian (2014) reports that, "the company has since hired a number of top journalists, including Chris Hamby, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist" (pg. 2). Starting as simply a site for entertainment, BuzzFeed hopes to earn source credibility by taking a more professional, traditional journalist route.

Gatekeeping vs. Gatewatching

Twitter serves as a middle-man by delivering online news articles to society. But, is Twitter also the gatekeeper? Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide (2014) define gatekeeping as, “the process through which content creators decide what stories will be covered and reported, and thus, what information is released to consumers” (p. 173). Twitter serves as the link to information, but the user is the actual gatekeeper. Users filter individual accounts to their preferences and interests, building a personal learning network (Mahoney, 2013).

Typically, journalists and editors serve as news gatekeepers, by selecting the stories, verifying information and providing information that will benefit the general public. On Twitter, the user is responsible for making these decisions without professional journalistic help. A new term was proposed to better describe the gatekeeping actions of social media users called gatewatching. An idea developed by A. Burns, gatewatching occurs when a person is unable to stop the information being passed through to society, yet the person can choose to be aware or not aware of the information. From there, the watcher may choose to either follow the information or disregard the information. The gatewatcher can then share the information with others. The process continues from person to person, each having the ability to add their opinion on the information (Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide, 2014).

Users must be cautious when gatewatching. Some scholars note that the role of news on social media will cause censoring of information. For example, a user that belongs to a specific political party will only absorb news from sources that support the same ideas the user believes. This biased gatewatching may hide important social, economic and political news stories from the user (Moon & Hadley, 2014).

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The elaboration likelihood model helps explain why Millennials are using Twitter to access news and how credible the sources are that the generation uses to retrieve news. There are two different routes that the brain can take when a person analyzes a situation using this model. If elaboration is high, the user is taking a central route. The user will actually search for news and read articles posted by the accounts the user follows. On the other hand, if elaboration is low, the user is taking a peripheral route. The user will ignore posts and disregard possibly important information (Magee, 2012).

To elaborate accurately through the central route, there are two factors that must be met: motivation and ability. Motivation is how much the outcome of the decision will affect the target and ability is having the capability to understand the message cognitively (Dainton & Z Kelley, 2005). If the information will not affect the audience, it is more likely that the audience will take a peripheral route in elaboration. But, if the outcome of the decision directly affects the audience, decisions will be made with more thought and take the central route. If the audience does not care, there is no motivation to elaborate the message. This process cannot be completed if the audience does not have previous knowledge of the message being elaborated. This means the audience does not have the ability to fully understand what is happening. Motivation and ability work hand-in-hand to develop an effective elaborated message (Dainton & Z Kelley, 2005). If a user is exposed to an article about the economy and is willing to read the article posted, the user will only be able to fully understand the information if there is previous knowledge of the economy. In the same way, if the user does have previous knowledge of the economy, but does not care to read the article, the central route cannot be taken.

In regards to credibility, the central route is taken when the user fully analyzes a source and understands how the articles shared by the source are to be assessed. This means that the user understands if the source is reliable or merely for entertainment purposes. The peripheral route is taken when the user believes shared information without regarding from what source the information was found (Magee, 2012). When news is shocking, it is hard for a user to disregard peripheral thoughts and think centrally. To successfully use Twitter as a news source, the central route must be used.

Methodology

The researcher performed and studied a survey to further access information on how Twitter has affected the Millennial generation's news intake.

The researcher gave a survey (Appendix A) to 302 students at Spring Hill College. This number was determined by finding the total enrollment of undergraduate students at Spring Hill College for the Fall Semester of 2014 and applying the total to a table for sample size based on population. There were 1,274 undergraduate students (Appendix B) enrolled for the Fall Semester 2014 (Darring, 2014). In analyzing the sample size table (Appendix C), about 297 surveys should be collected (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Paper surveys were distributed in the cafeteria, a location on Spring Hill College's campus where students constantly filter in and out. A table was setup in the back of the cafeteria for students to pick-up and submit surveys. The researcher also went up to tables in the cafeteria and cluster sampled groups to complete surveys. Since not enough surveys were taken in the cafeteria, the researcher cluster sampled at different meetings throughout campus including the following: Greek life chapter meetings, Residence Life staff meetings and core Spring Hill College classes. The participants were asked to complete the survey in one sitting and

individually work on the survey to avoid peer-persuaded responses. Only students were invited to take the survey. This ensured that only Millennials were responding to the survey. One survey was allowed to be submitted per student.

Prior to distribution, the survey was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (Appendix D). The researcher asked the Institutional Review Board for an exempt review, since the questions were of minimal risk to the participants. The beginning of the survey included a paragraph explaining the following: purpose of the questionnaire, acknowledgment of participant consent in using data received for research, confidentiality of personal responses and instructions on where to submit completed questionnaires.

The majority of questions were focused on social media and Twitter in general, the participant's interaction with news on Twitter and the participant's knowledge of credible news sources on Twitter. The survey was 12 scale questions ranking as follows: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Some questions yielded responses that were either highly supportive or highly not supportive of the hypotheses under study. Participants responded to statements such as "I check social media for news, not television, newspapers, etc.," "I check Twitter to get information on breaking news," and "I click on tweeted links that lead to more in depth articles." The answers participants provided were important in supporting or not supporting the first hypothesis: If Millennials' activity on social media is high, then Millennials will report receiving news from Twitter, not from traditional sources. Participants responded to statements such as "I follow credible news sources (Associated Press, CNN, Fox, etc.) on Twitter," and "I take into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine the reliability of the information." The answers participants

provided were important in supporting or not supporting the second hypothesis: If Millennials use social media to receive news, then they will report using credible news sources.

In a separate section are two nominal questions, three ordinal questions and one free response question. Nominal questions included gender and what is the preferred media outlet participants go to for breaking news. Ordinal questions included class ranking, years active on social media and years active on Twitter. The free response question asked the participant to list the participant's current college major. The different format of questions was necessary to analyze data. The nominal question "I go to ___ for breaking news" was assessed to support or not support the first half, if Millennials' activity on social media is high, of the first hypothesis. The ordinal question "Years of activity on social media" was also asked to support or not support the first half of the first hypothesis.

The majors were classified in reference to the Spring Hill College Bulletin of Information for the 2014-2015 school year. Science majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: Pre-Health, Pre-Med, Engineering, Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry and Marine Biology. Social Science majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: History, International Studies, Political Science, Pre-Law, Sociology and Criminology. Business majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Financial Economics, International Business and Business Administration. Communication Arts majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: Digital Video Production, Journalism and Public Relations and Advertising. Fine/Performing Arts majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: Theater and Graphic Design. Languages and Literature majors were classified as respondents who identified as the following: English, Spanish and Hispanic Studies. Philosophy, Theology, Mathematics and

Nursing majors were classified in their individual categories. Psychology and Management Marketing majors were also individually categorized for further analysis of the responses.

Once all data was collected, it was input into the SPSS data calculating software. Tests including frequencies, descriptives, crosstabs and Cronbach's Alpha tests were run. Frequencies determined which questions went answered, which questions went unanswered and the number of participants that responded to each answer option. This data helped the researcher determine what percent of participants chose each individual answer. Descriptives helped the researcher check that all data input was entered in the correct scale (1-5). This test allowed the researcher to determine the average response of participants and the variety of responses to each scale question through standard deviation. If the question resulted in a high standard deviation, there were a variety of answers to the question; if the question resulted in low standard deviation, there were not a variety of answers to the question. Crosstabs were run to help determine if the response to one question affected the response to another question. This also helped determine if class ranking, gender, years of activity on social media, etc. affected responses of participants. Finally, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were run to measure how questions matched up in relation to one another.

Data Analysis

Frequencies were run on all 18 questions of the survey. The data shown gives the percentages of respondents' answers with the frequency in parentheses. Of the 302 respondents, 59.6% (180) were female and 40.4% (122) were male. There were a variety of respondents from each class level. Freshmen were 18.5% (56), sophomores were 34.8% (105), juniors were 21.2% (64) and seniors were 25.5% (77) of respondents. The majority of respondents, 67.9% (205), have been active on social media for five to seven plus years. A high number of respondents, 88.1% (266), spend no longer than one hour on Twitter daily. Of this percent, 64.6% (195) of the

respondents reported spending less than 30 minutes on Twitter. When respondents were asked which breaking news outlet was preferred, the majority answered with social media, 40.1% (121), or news websites, 39.1% (118). Few respondents selected television, 18.2% (55), and even fewer selected radio or other sources, 2.7% (2 radio and 6 other). Surprisingly, of the 302 respondents, none of the respondents selected newspapers as the individual's top breaking news source.

Each question asked on the survey was answered by all respondents, leaving no questions with blank responses. The questions were chosen to focus on different aspects of the two hypotheses under study. The following are the results to questions focused on social media and Twitter in general (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q8, Q11 and Q12), emphasizing percentages of the majority. Some questions (Q2, Q3, Q5 and Q11) also focus on interaction with news on Twitter. When it came to checking social media for news (Q1), 64.3% (194) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to using social media over other traditional news sources. Although, 59.6% (180) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to checking Twitter daily for information on breaking news (Q2). There was a split on whether or not the respondents clicked on tweeted links to lead to more in depth articles (Q3). Answers showed that 43.4% (131) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 16.6% (50) remained neutral and 40.1% (121) agreed or strongly agreed to clicking on links. Almost exactly half, 49% (148), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to feeling more often exposed to news on Twitter than through traditional news sources (Q4). The majority of respondents, 56.9% (172), disagreed or strongly disagreed to sharing news articles through personal accounts (Q5). There were 46.1% (139) of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that Twitter serves as a middle man between news articles and society (Q8). There were a large number of neutrals, 25.5% (77), about Twitter as a middle man. Exactly half,

50% (151), agreed or strongly agreed to following both local and global news sources (Q11).

The question asking if respondents feel in control of the news the respondents are exposed to on Twitter (Q12) yielded a variety of responses. Answers showed that 41.1% (124) agreed or strongly agreed, 31.8% (96) remained neutral and 27.1% (82) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

There were four questions (Q6, Q7, Q9 and Q10) in the survey that focused on source credibility. About half, 49.7% (150), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to following credible news sources on Twitter (Q6). Although respondents did not report following credible news sources on Twitter, 57% (139) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to trusting credible news source articles on Twitter (Q7). Respondents answered with 67.9% (205) agreeing or strongly agreeing to taking into consideration the source that posted/shared news to determine reliability (Q9). Responses were spread across the scale in regards to respondents checking multiple sources to receive unbiased information about news (Q10). Results showed that 31.1% (94) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 24.8% (75) remained neutral and 44.1% (133) agreed or strongly agreed to checking multiple sources.

The researcher wanted to calculate whether a Millennial's college major affected how respondents answered questions. The following are the majors respondents identified with and the percentage of responses to each major (Q18): Business, 13.2% (40), Communication Arts, 13.6% (41), Education, 7% (21), Fine/Performing Arts, 1.7% (5), General Studies, 1% (3), Languages and Literature, 4% (12), Management Marketing, 7.9% (24), Mathematics, .3% (1), Nursing, 5.3% (16), Philosophy, 1.7% (5), Psychology, 13.2% (40), Science, 18.5% (56), Social Science, 6.6% (20), Theology, 2% (6) and Undecided, 4% (12).

The descriptive statistics that were run on all scale questions showed that the questions had a minimum response of one (strongly disagree) and a maximum response of five (strongly

agree). The average for the questions was between a middle two and a high three. This means that the average respondent disagreed or felt neutral about each question. The high three was found in two questions, checking social media for news and taking the source into consideration for reliability, meaning the majority of respondents felt neutral or slightly agreed. The middle two was found in three questions, checking Twitter daily for breaking news, sharing news articles on personal accounts and exposure to news on Twitter, meaning the majority of respondents were in-between disagreeing and feeling neutral towards the questions. All of the questions in the survey yielded a high standard deviation. This means that questions were answered inconsistently by all respondents. Standard deviations ranged from 1.183- 1.542 for all scale questions asked.

Crosstabs were run to determine if the response to one question affected the response to another question. There were 22 total crosstabs run using scale, nominal and free response questions. Of the 22, 16 of the crosstabs yielded a Pearson Chi-Square of less than .05, meaning there was a statistically significant relationship between the questions, while six crosstabs yielded a Pearson Chi-Square above .05 meaning there was not a statistically significant relationship between the questions. There were 15 crosstabs run to analyze and test the hypotheses and seven crosstabs run to analyze how college major affected respondents' answers. Of the six crosstabs that did not show a statistically significant relationship, five were related to respondents' major. There was only one crosstab related to the hypotheses that did not show a statistically significant relationship.

The scale question about checking social media for news and not other traditional sources was run against five other scale questions: checking Twitter daily for breaking news, clicking links that lead to more in depth articles, feeling exposed to news on Twitter, sharing news

articles on personal accounts and following credible sources. Each of the crosstabs yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions being tested. The following shows the Pearson Chi-Square of checking social media for news and not other traditional sources against these questions: check Twitter daily for breaking news, .000, click links that lead to more in depth articles, .006, feeling exposed to news on Twitter, .000, sharing news articles on personal accounts, .000 and following credible sources, .013.

The scale question about checking Twitter daily for breaking news was run against three other scale questions and one nominal question: clicking links that lead to more in depth articles, feeling exposed to news on Twitter, sharing news articles on personal accounts and preferred breaking news outlet. Each of the crosstabs yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions being tested. The following shows the Pearson Chi-Square of checking Twitter daily for breaking news against these questions: clicking links that lead to more in depth articles, .000, feeling exposed to news on Twitter, .000, sharing news articles on personal accounts, .000 and preferred breaking news outlet, .000.

The scale question about following credible sources was run against three other scale questions: sharing news articles on personal accounts, trusting credible source articles and checking multiple sources for unbiased information. Each of the crosstabs yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions being tested. The following shows the Pearson Chi-Square of following credible sources against these questions: sharing news articles on personal accounts, .000, trusting credible source articles, .000 and checking multiple sources for unbiased information, .007.

The scale question about taking into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine reliability was run against the scale question about checking multiple sources. The

crosstab yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions with a Pearson Chi-Square of .000.

The nominal question about preferred breaking news outlet was run against two scale questions: checking multiple sources for unbiased information and seeing Twitter as a middle man between news and society. One of the crosstabs yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions while one did not. The following shows the Pearson Chi-Square of preferred breaking news outlet against these questions: checking multiple sources for unbiased information, .332 and seeing Twitter as a middle man between news and society, .025. With a Pearson Chi-Square higher than .05, checking multiple sources for unbiased information does not show statistical significance with preferred breaking news outlet. With a Pearson Chi-Square of lower than .05, seeing Twitter as a middle man between news and society does show statistical significance with preferred breaking news outlet.

The free response question about the respondents' majors was run against six scale questions and one nominal question: checking social media for news and not other traditional sources, checking Twitter daily for breaking news, following credible sources, taking into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine reliability, preferred breaking news outlet, checking multiple sources for unbiased information and sharing news articles on personal accounts. Two of the crosstabs yielded data showing statistical significance in the two questions while five did not. The following shows the Pearson Chi-Square of the respondents' majors against these questions: checking social media for news and not other traditional sources, .748, checking Twitter daily for breaking news, .177, following credible sources, .507, taking into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine reliability, .033, preferred breaking news outlet, .000, checking multiple sources for unbiased information, .479 and sharing

news articles on personal accounts, .364. With a Pearson Chi-Square higher than .05, checking social media for news and not other traditional sources, checking Twitter daily for breaking news, following credible sources, checking multiple sources for unbiased information and sharing news articles on person accounts do not show statistical significance with the respondents' majors. With a Pearson Chi-Square lower than .05, taking into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine reliability and preferred breaking news outlet do show statistical significance with the respondents' majors.

Finally, Cronbach's Alphas were run to determine the relationship between scale questions. There were four total Cronbach's Alphas run using scale questions. All scale questions (Q1-Q12) were tested together yielding a .869 alpha coefficient. This supports the idea that the scale questions asked throughout the survey are statistically related to one another. All questions related to credibility (Q6, Q7, Q9 and Q10) were tested together yielding a .642 alpha coefficient. This concludes that questions asked throughout the survey that were related to credibility are not statistically related to one another. Responses did not show internal consistency with one another for credibility questions. All questions related to interaction with news on Twitter (Q2, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q10 and Q11) were tested together yielding a .815 alpha coefficient. This supports the idea that the scale questions related to interaction with news on Twitter asked throughout the survey are statistically related to one another. All questions related to social media and Twitter in general (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q8, Q11 and Q12) were tested together yielding a .812 alpha coefficient. This supports the idea that the scale questions related to social media and Twitter in general asked throughout the survey are statistically related to one another.

Results

After researching, collecting data and testing data, results did support the hypothesis: If Millennials' activity on social media is high, then they will report receiving news from Twitter, not from traditional sources. With 64.3% (194) of respondents reported checking social media for news and 67.9% (205) having used social media for five to seven plus years, it can be determined that Millennials' are using social media actively. Crosstabs run with checking social media for news all yielded statistically significant results, supporting the first portion of the hypothesis.

Supporting the second half of this hypothesis, 40.1% (121) of respondents reported using social media as the preferred breaking news outlet. Yet, 59.6% (180) of respondents reported not checking Twitter daily for information on breaking news. Perhaps these results were concluded because respondents are not using Twitter daily, but still using Twitter as a news source. When crosstabs were run with checking Twitter daily, all tests yielded statistically significant results, supporting the second half of the hypothesis. Considering the percentages of survey responses to individual questions, and results of crosstabs, Twitter as a news source is accurate, but it is not checked daily. With the results discussed, the first hypothesis, if Millennials' activity on social media is high, then they will report receiving news from Twitter, is supported.

Since the first hypothesis was supported, the second hypothesis was partially supported. But, results did not fully support the second hypothesis: If Millennials use social media to receive news, then they will report using credible news sources. As reported previously, respondents did report using social media as the preferred breaking news outlet and actively checking social media for news. These results support the first part of the hypothesis. Crosstabs about checking social media for news and checking Twitter daily supported Millennials' use of Twitter for news.

The second half of the hypothesis was not fully supported. Data showed that almost half of the respondents did not report following credible news sources on Twitter. But, when respondents are exposed to news, they report taking into consideration the source that posted/shared news to determine reliability. The researcher can assume from this data that respondents are cautious of the sources that post information, yet they do not actively seek information from sources. Crosstabs about following credible sources did show statistical significance, supporting the hypothesis, but survey responses did not show support. Assuming all of the tests and data, the second hypothesis was not supported.

Some results were surprising, considering what aspects of the hypotheses were found plausible. Twitter serving as a middle man between news articles and society was favored, but received many neutral responses. Perhaps Millennials are not utilizing the immediate and credible news updates that Twitter has to offer because Millennials are not aware of the amenities of Twitter. While respondents did not report following credible sources, respondents did report trusting articles shared by credible sources. The engagement that the researcher was searching for with Twitter and news was shaken at these results. The respondents trusted the sources, but did not engage with the sources. Again, respondents may not be utilizing Twitter's benefits. Reliable information at one's fingertips is a technological advantage that Millennials are not utilizing.

Data compiled about respondents' major was interesting. The top four majors of respondents were Science, Communication Arts, Business and Psychology. Choice in major did not affect checking social media for news or following credible sources. Although, choice in major did affect taking into consideration the source that has posted/shared news to determine

reliability and preferred breaking news outlet. The field of study respondents identified with slightly affected responses.

The alpha coefficients tested on all scale questions, questions about interaction with news on Twitter and questions about social media and Twitter in general yielded high alpha coefficients above a .8. These results suggest that the first hypothesis has a high chance of being supported if crosstabs are statistically significant. Alpha coefficients tested on credibility questions yielded low alpha coefficients. These results suggest that the second hypothesis has a low chance of being supported if crosstabs are statistically significant. Considering frequencies, crosstabs and alpha coefficients, the first hypothesis is fully supported while the second hypothesis is not fully supported.

Conclusion

Social media have allowed people to be instantly connected with one another throughout the world. The quick convenience to update news has brought news organizations and journalists to Twitter. With the high activity of Millennials on social media, has news presence on Twitter made information more accessible to the generation and are Millennials retrieving information from credible sources?

Through the study, it is concluded that Millennials do use Twitter as a news source. Although, it is also concluded that Millennials are not using credible news sources. The news Millennials are receiving on Twitter may not be reliable information and, therefore, an unreliable news outlet. Yet, Twitter has the potential to become an effective news source for this rising into adulthood generation. Secondary sources provided information to support Twitter as a possibly effective news outlet. But, the social media site needs to be used correctly to attain accurate and credible information.

According to the elaboration likelihood model, Millennials must apply themselves to understanding what information is reliable and informative. Twitter users' direct engagement with news and news sources means that users need to take a central route when thinking online. Users will need to practice high elaboration to ensure the information is reliable. By taking a peripheral route with low elaboration, fiction news can be interpreted by users as truthful. With the variety of information and the amount of time spent online, Millennials are expected to find news on social media. Understanding the importance of reliable news, one can expect Millennials to use credible sources on Twitter to find news. If this is the case, news organizations and journalists may shift their publications to social media, knowing that the information will be used and shared.

Although much was learned from the study, there were some aspects that could have been changed for better results. The survey questions were very much geared to assume that respondents use Twitter. There were some respondents that did not use Twitter and were not sure if they strongly disagreed or were neutral to questions. There should have been a "not applicable" option or a question directly asking if the respondent has an active Twitter account. Also, it would have been interesting to only select respondents that are active on Twitter. By asking participants of Twitter, perhaps answers would have been stronger.

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