

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Teens are living in a media saturated world. Social media sites not only facilitate communication with peers and provide perpetual entertainment, but also serve as a way of accessing news and political information, in real time.

A 2011 report by the Media Awareness Network indicates that online spaces are the preferred avenue for young people to engage in social, cultural and political issues (van Hamel, 2011). This report cites results from a 2008 Statistics Canada survey, which found that 58 percent of internet users ages 18-24 had accessed information about a political issue online. Furthermore, 35 percent of this group sought out the opinions of their peers, while 21 percent initiated online discussion related to these issues (van Hamel, 2011; Veenhof, Wellman, Quell, & Hogan, 2008).

Since then, these numbers have only increased, as evidenced by a Statistics Canada report, published in 2015. This report includes results from a 2013 survey which reveals that 71 percent of youth aged 15 to 19 accessed news media and content online. Young people between the ages of 20

Relevant and credible online news sources for teens

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and 24 were slightly more engaged online, with 83 percent of youth following the news

using digital media channels (Turcotte, 2015). It's clear that young people care about global issues. The internet provides a way for teens to learn about and act on issues that are important to them, including climate change, gun control, the rights of refugees, women and LGBTQ+ groups, and advocating for diverse representation in media (Pires, 2018).

In addition, the lines between entertainment in media and political reporting are becoming more ambiguous in the current social and cultural environment. In 2017, online news outlets and social media sites provided internet users with immediate reporting on the tragic terrorist attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester and the Las Vegas shooting at the Route 91 Harvest country music festival (Haupt, 2017; Weaver, 2017).

It is important to acknowledge the distressing nature of these, and other violent political events, and recognize that some teens may not want to engage. However, the tools and resources available in the digital age make it easier than ever to access and share information, often making news stories difficult to avoid.

One way to help young people navigate the changing digital environment is to provide recommendations for credible news sources that are relevant and appropriate. The following resources will provide teens with valuable information related to local and global issues and facilitate effective online civic engagement.

Canadian Content

Rabble: provides an alternative to corporate owned media corporations in Canada. Readers will find reporting on a diverse range of issues and can also participate in moderated discussions on an online message board.

FactsCan: is an independent organization that aims to provide Canadians with accurate information regarding federal politics by sharing succinct critical commentary on current issues.

Kate McKenna: is a journalist and news reporter affiliated with CBC. In addition to reporting on current issues and events, she is the author of *No Choice: The 30-Year Fight*

for Abortion on Prince Edward Island.
Follow her on Twitter @katemckenna8.

Global Perspectives

YR Media: shares content created by aspiring journalists and activists about issues that matter to young people around the world, including news, identity and health.

Democracy Now: is an independent organization that produces daily news hours that can be streamed online. This show focuses on global issues and breaking news stories.

Up First NPR: is a serial news podcast that covers the spectrum from politics to pop culture. A new episode is posted every weekday morning to provide a daily dose of news in ten minutes.

References

Houpt, S. (August 9, 2017). Teens are avid consumers of news online, research suggests. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://tgam.ca/2wLKLJg>

Pires, C. (May 13, 2018). 'Young people are angry': the teenage activists shaping our future. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2rGrgr7>

Turcotte, M. (October 7, 2015). Insights on Canadian society: Political participation and civic engagement of youth. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Vy5LX9>

van Hamel, A. (2011). From consumer to citizen: Digital media and youth civic engagement. *Media*

Awareness Network. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Im21EH>

Veenhof, B., Wellman, B., Quell, C., & Hogan, B. (2008). How Canadians' Use of the Internet Affects Social Life and Civic Participation. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2U4YOeN>

Weaver, M. & Lartey, J. (October 3, 2017). What we know so far about the Las Vegas shooting. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2xS3Gff>

Resource Links

- <http://www.rabble.ca>
- <http://factscan.ca>
- <https://yr.media>
- <https://www.democracynow.org>
- <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510318/up-first>