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This study investigated the news-seeking and browsing behaviours of young adults, partly in the context of everyday life information seeking (ELIS), in order to explore their perceptions of and attitudes towards print and online news media. The study is significant because traditional print newspapers face a steady decline in their readership with the growth of free online content. Therefore, it is important to understand the online news-seeking behaviours of young adults to try and predict changes and trends in this field. A qualitative (interpretivist) approach was adopted and twenty university students were interviewed. Findings indicate that, contrary to expectations, print newspapers were still favoured by young people in this sample and the most successful online news disseminators were the ones who have attached themselves to a popular website. Finally, the impact of newspaper reading and publishing trends on library reading rooms is also discussed.

**Corresponding author: M. Asim Qayyum,
School of Information Studies, Charles Sturt
University, Wagga Wagga 2650
Email: aqayyum@csu.edu.au**

The newspaper industry has been evolving since the arrival of the Internet and the subsequent development of new online media formats. Traditional newspapers responded to this change by placing part of their content online even as they struggled with the evolving systems and debated cost recovery issues. New contestants soon entered the online news market and began offering free services through innovative means. The differences between paper-based, television, and radio news providers began to diminish in online environments as they all started offering multimedia content over the web. News aggregators soon mushroomed, resulting in news reports being gathered from

various sources and filtered down to the users according to their interests, thus transferring control over to the news readers. Immediate success was achieved by these aggregators as they attached themselves to popular existing sites. Young Internet users in the meantime gained more control over the web by generating their own information streams through social networking environments. In such a way, youth may have a special influence on the continuing evolution of news delivery. Moreover, the teens that recently turned into young adults have had limited contact with print-based subscriptions and their loyalties to a particular news publisher are uncertain.

Other worrying trends for traditional newspaper publishers are a steady decline in the reading of print publications, an ageing subscriber base, and stiff competition in the relatively youthful online environments where dynamic and free news sites are plentiful. The online user is no longer bound to a single news outlet and can move to a different site with just a click of the mouse button. Young people are being drawn to the online interactive social environments and their news seeking, web interactions, and reading behaviours are evolving with new technologies and presentation formats. It is therefore important to study these interactions in order to understand the online news-seeking behaviours of young adults and to try to predict changes and trends in this field. Given that newspapers, and other mass media, have been seen as a significant source in everyday life information seeking (ELIS) over a long period of time (Wilson 1977, Williamson 1998; Savolainen, 2008), libraries will also need to respond to these changing reading behaviours and possibly rethink their traditional newspaper reading area designs to attract younger audiences. A digital delivery model for online news readers would be one option to pursue as more readers choose to access the library remotely and libraries rethink their acquisition policies for news content. Moreover, if the newspaper publishers continue to reduce their print circulations then e-news readers, similar to Amazon's Kindle or Apple's newly launched iPad, may need to be placed in the reading areas. The British Library for example has already started providing page level PDF copies of current newspapers in its reading rooms via regular computer terminals (Fleming and King, 2009). The impact of such initiatives on library users is not known and research efforts, such as this one, form some of the initial steps in exploring this issue.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the news-seeking and browsing behaviours of young adults, defined for the study as university students aged between 18 and 25. Explored were some general perceptions of and attitudes towards print and online news media and their complementary components such as content quality, formats, technology, and consumer aspects. Important to this research was whether this sample would confirm the trends outlined above. The following key research question was posed:

How do young adults, between the ages of 18-25, use news sources and what are their perceptions of them?

Three specific questions followed:

1.   What news is of primary interest to young adults and what news is not?

2. To what extent do young adults undertake news gathering through (a) online media (b) printed newspapers, and (c) TV and radio, and what are their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, these sources?

3. What roles do social networking tools play in news seeking and generation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A decreasing number of people in the USA are accessing news services via traditional media. In the US, newspaper circulation and readership decline is accelerating with a 7.1% drop from the previous year for the period of Oct-March of 2007-08 (Metz, 2009) and the audience for evening television news declined from approximately 53 million viewers in 1980 to 28 million viewers in 2004 (Journalism.org; figures cited in Ahlers (2006, p. 31). Nevertheless, Ahlers (2006) argued that most people access online news "as a complement rather than a supplement" to offline media (p. 29). He noted, however, that "only 18 percent of eighteen to twenty-nine year-old adults watch the nightly network news, and only 23 percent of them have read a newspaper within the past day" (p. 48). This led him to conclude that print media is losing younger readers because they are not being catered for, as confirmed by the trend of publishers to direct youth-related investment into online services (Graybeal 2008, Kohl 2008).

In Australia there appears to be a different pattern of media usage. Here, the most popular source of news was found, in a nation-wide survey, to be commercial televison, with 65% of respondents accessing it daily, and a further 16% accessing it several times a week (Nguyen and Western 2007). The corresponding figures for other media were: radio (63%, 21%); public television (41%, 28%); newspapers (40%, 26%); Internet (11%, 16%), and news magazines (5%, 8%). Ahlers (2006) and Nguyen and Western (2007) noted that the trend to use online services was more marked amongst youth or those under 40 years of age. Neither study indicated how much of the browsing involved translates into serious online reading.

A question that arises is how the decline in newspaper reading will affect the degree to which citizens, especially the young, are informed for their everyday lives. Just as early use and gratification studies of information and the mass media typically show that users of print media are better informed than users of electronic media (Wade and Schramm, 1969; Warner, Murray and Palmour 1973), so Snowball (2008) concluded that the online activity of teenagers, although considerable, is not equated with reading and, by implication, with informed citizens in the making. She found that reading habits and library use varied considerably amongst teenagers. Print newspaper reading programs, such as the one at Penn State University libraries, have been created to develop educated and informed citizens (Catherine, 2007). Most other ongoing efforts in the libraries however focus on digitising old newspapers for historical preservation and research purposes only, with little attention being given to digital delivery of current newspapers to library subscribers. Newspaperdirect.com's agreement with EBSCO ("Current Awareness", 2007) is one effort being made to provide digital access to newspapers for libraries in parts of Asia. Newspaperdirect has

also made its entire library of more than 1400 newspapers available on Amazon's Kindle reader (Sabroski, 2010). Such digital models will need to be adopted by libraries as publishers move to replace the free online news content to subscriber-only services, and continue to reduce print publications.

Issues affecting choice of media

A key issue here is credibility and trust between (1) different media channels and (2) different sources within the same channel. For example, in a survey of over 800 US university students, Kiousis (2001) found that newspapers were rated as more credible than television or online news, while Raeymaeckers' (2004) survey of 1,200 Belgian students found that 48% of her respondents agreed that newspapers offered more complete information than television. Day (2008) found that newspaper readers exhibited strong brand loyalty with those buying the print version visiting the same organisation's web site. Surveying young US people, aged 15-30, Huang (2009) found they had more trust in information provided through the web sites of established news sources than in other sites.

Armstrong and Collins (2009), in a survey of over 1,900 University of Florida students, found that, although they were less likely to read a newspaper, they were more likely to find it credible than the older generation; that exposure to a newspaper was of itself a strong predictor of credibility, and that "students whose parents encouraged them to read a newspaper found [them] more credible than did their peers" (p. 97). They also found, as did Raeymaeckers (2004) in her study of Belgian youth, that the perception that a newspaper's content is relevant to the lives of its readers was important to its credibility. Raeymaeckers found that young people wanted a mix of entertainment and hard news, with local news of immediate relevance being more valued than economics or politics, although educational level had a strong impact. Surveying young people between the ages of 15 and 30, Huang (2009) found them to be most interested in reading sports (46%), world news (43%), local news (43%), and entertainment news (34%).

Related to relevance is the notion that newspapers require more background knowledge to be understood, compared to other media (Raeymaeckers (2004). Finding that his participants were interested in being informed citizens, Huang (2009) suggested that, as young people mature, their choice could change in favour of print media.

The perceived depth of reporting has also been found to have an impact on the choice of media - whether the purpose is for entertainment, relaxation, or to acquire specific information. For example, Huang (2009) found that students read long stories less than once a week, and then only if they are very interested in the subject matter. Raeymaeckers (2004) found that many young people read to reduce boredom, as a habit, or for relaxation. Length of articles was important, with shorter articles preferred and scanning a strategy. Surveying 250 Spanish online newspaper readers, Flavian and Gurrea (2006a) identified four reasons for consulting news online: to search for specific information such as sports results, to search for news updates, for leisure or entertainment, and out of habit. They found a concentration on specific subjects, fairly rapidly accessed, particularly in

the initial moments. In contrast, newspapers were typically read more thoroughly, but in a more relaxed manner, mostly on weekends (Flavian and Gurrea 2006b).

A number of researchers have found that parental influence had a significant impact on young people's attitudes to print newspaper reading and were important in forming information seeking behaviour (Raeymaeckers 2004, Armstrong and Collins 2009, Huang 2009). Immediacy, accessibility, and free cost are also cited as relevant factors in the decision to access electronic news (Flavian and Gurrea 2006a, Spyridou and Veglis 2008).

Customisation and control over the media experience

Spyridou and Veglis (2008) found that Greek students preferred the Internet because they liked the control it gave them over the media experience. Schwartz (2005) found that web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, podcasts, and streaming media, were effective in attracting young readers. Huang (2009) found that young people wanted news on demand and to customise what information they received and how, when and where they received it. This is in keeping with findings as to how young people use new media in general. For example, Zaphiris and Sarwar (2006) found that the use of US-based newsgroups by teenagers was characterised by decentralised, peer-to-peer communication, while seniors accepted dissemination of information by a small number of more knowledgeable contributors. Ito et al. (2008) found that young people in the USA gained media literacy by playing with the media and that "online spaces enable youth to connect with peers in new ways" (p. 1). Both findings suggest that the communication function was at least as important as the information function.

METHOD

This project was intended to explore issues concerning the news gathering of young people using a qualitative (interpretivist) approach to obtain in-depth data rather than a survey, which would result in a broad but shallower picture. The sample was small (20 participants, aged between 18 and 25), all of whom were Charles Sturt University (CSU) students, whose involvement was obtained through a combination of purposive sampling (with the criteria being 'age' and 'interest in news') and convenience sampling. For the "interest in news" criterion, participants who actively read, listened to, or viewed news reports in any media or format were solicited. One of the researchers visited undergraduate classrooms, presented the study overview, and invited students to participate. Volunteers meeting the study's criteria were then invited for an interview. Those who took part were given an information sheet, providing details of the project, and signed a consent form as required by the CSU University Human Research Ethics Committee. They also received a $30 gift voucher.

The data collection involved two research instruments: a semi-structured interview schedule and a demographic questionnaire. Both instruments were developed by the team and piloted with three appropriate young people. Minor adjustments were made to the demographic questionnaire, but the interview schedule was found to work satisfactorily. The interviewing for the project took place between

16 and 31 August, 2009, in the School of Information Studies' digital library laboratory, located inside the campus library. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

The audio recordings were transcribed by trained transcription typists and then NVIVO, a package for the analysis of qualitative data, was used to elicit major themes and categories.

FINDINGS

Findings of the study begin with the news areas of interest to young adults and then proceed to a discussion of the news sources they used, including the role they perceived for social networking tools in their news gathering.

News areas of interest to young adults

Local news was of definite interest to the highest number of participants in the study (15) and of some interest to one other. As Raeymaeckers (2004) found, the reason was the perceived relevance of this kind of news: "I like listening to national news but I will focus more on local news. … It is just more relevant to myself" (#3) [The symbol # in this analysis will indicate that an interviewee number follows]. Other types of news of interest to a majority of participants were world (11 definite, 5 a little); national (11 definite; 3 a little), and health (11 definite, 2 a little). The areas that elicited at least some interest from half the sample were: celebrities (8 definite; 2 a little); environment/climate change (8 definite, 2 a little); entertainment (7 definite of whom 2 specified 'the arts only' and 4 a little); and sport (5 definite and 5 a little). Other topics where more than one-quarter of the sample had some interest were science/technology (5 definite, 2 a little) and employment (4 definite, 3 a little). These findings are in keeping with those of Raeymaekers (2004) who found that young people wanted a mix of entertainment and hard news, with local news being important. Given the lesser interest in sport, they are slightly out of step with the findings of Huang (2009).

There was a general feeling that the students in the current sample wanted to be 'informed citizens' as Huang (2009) found, but there was also an agreement with Raeymaeckers' (2004) findings in that there was a lack of interest in government/politics or social issues (4 definite, 3 a little) apart from environment/climate change. As Raeymaeckers (2004) and Flavian and Gurrea (2006a) found, for many, news gathering was regarded as a recreational activity.

In the case of some topics, students' level of interest was related to their past involvement or experiences. An example is sports news: "If there's anything on horses and stuff like that, I'll read it" (# 6). Connected to this was the influence of perceived relevance of news stories to personal situations such as studies or employment. Participants were interested in topics where there was a potential impact on their own lives: "Things about the recession, where that's impacting most because that obviously goes to employment and things like that" (#19). Another influence on topics of interest was participants' expertise in the subject area. For example, science and technology news was of interest to participants with knowledge in these domains, but of little interest to others.

Sources of news

Most participants used a variety of sources to access various kinds of news. Some participants identified one or two predominant sources, but these also varied. Whereas for a few participants the Internet was a primary source of news, in some cases even personal news, others relied much more on print newspapers, television, radio, and word of mouth for news. All sources had their advocates. Some participants valued a mix of sources to obtain a more rounded picture. The news source was not always so important for participants: "It is not important for me to get the news specifically from anywhere, but it is important to get the news in general" (#3).

Online news sources

Online news sources played very much a minor role in news seeking and gathering for most of the study sample. Nevertheless, 17 participants used the Internet for news, at least occasionally, although only two rated it as their primary source (another rating it as equal first, with print newspapers). Most could be called passive users in that they did not actively seek news stories online: "No, I don't go looking for it and if it just comes up then I'll read it" (#13). In fact, for some, online news reading was an almost unconscious activity that they undertook as part of their Internet browsing routines: "I've got Hotmail and every time I sign into Hotmail I have to go past a page [MSN] and sometimes if there's an interesting story I'll press the link"(#9). Internet news was seen as convenient by some participants in terms of this accessibility while performing other online tasks: "Internet is convenient because you go to check your email and then you check the news at the same time" (#12).

Because Hotmail was the most frequently used email package by study participants, Channel 9's MSN was their primary source of online news. Other aggregation services such as Yahoo and Google news were used by eight participants but did not seem to figure prominently in the online news reading of the sample: "Yahoo news I've been on before, but I didn't like it as much as MSN and stuff"(#14). Only one participant reported to have customised MSN; the rest were dependent on whatever news was provided.

Most participants did not read (or watch) online newspapers on a regular basis, although a minority of five people stated that they sometimes visited various local and national newspaper sites. More commonly, they visited TV news sites, such as the ABC. When given a straight choice, most participants favoured the printed version: "I prefer having something tactile … It's a lot nicer than scrolling down and having to navigate around trying to find articles" (#18). Online layouts were mentioned as one factor inhibiting usage: "I found it difficult to access" (#9). Five users mentioned that they visited a newspaper site only for research or some specific reason, confirming the findings of Flavian and Gurrea (2006a), or when they were redirected by a search engine: "From Google I've been redirected to online newspaper … but I've never gone to a web site of a newspaper [directly]" (#12).

Related to the infrequent use of online sources was a perception of their lack of credibility. This, and associated trust, has been seen as important (e.g.,

Raeymaeckers 2004; Armstrong and Collins 2009). Most study participants trusted print particularly but, to some extent, saw TV and radio as more credible and trustworthy sources than online news. Reasons varied from quality concerns: "It's not something that you can always trust because anyone just goes and writes it. It's not monitored or peer reviewed" (#19); to the dynamic web environment: "Maybe because it's easier to change" (#15); and lack of detail: "They are not as informative, but they get the point across succinctly, which at the time is good" (#5).

Nevertheless some participants made a distinction between online sources of news, in general, and the web sites of reputable newspapers. With Google often a starting point for information searching, there was an indication from these participants that trust would be placed in online news stories from known reputable sources: "If there's an article that comes up in a search, I'll always click on a newspaper article online before some random web site" (#18). This finding confirms that of Huang (2009). Wikipedia, often listed in a Google search, was mentioned as a source by four participants, although its credibility was questioned.

Most participants read news articles online more than they watched news clips, citing reasons such as familiarity with text, the time and bandwidth required to download video, and the fact that text can be more easily scanned: "I can skim through it quickly and pick out the most important parts I want to read, whereas with a video I have to watch the entirety" (#11). Video was looked at for certain kinds of news, such as sport.

Advertising on the Internet was not viewed favourably by many, especially the popup types as they were perceived to be virus prone. However participants reportedly visited online newspaper sites just to access the classifieds. Ease of searching online advertisements was cited as one reason. Indeed, a few participants saw an overall advantage in the Internet's searchability through key word indexes.

News received via mobile computing (eg. SMS and iPhones) was mostly limited to that of a personal nature. Those who did access news on mobile phones used it for national news summaries or sports. Two users reported frequent use of news and weather reports as these services were being provided free of cost by the mobile service provider. Cost was mentioned as a significant factor with regard to mobile technology. Almost all participants were unfamiliar with the RSS technology.

In the mix of news areas of interest to the sample are some topics considered as part of everyday life information, indicating that news sources are still perceived as helpful for everyday living.

Print newspapers

Print newspapers were read by 17 participants and were considered important by most of them, although only four ranked them as their primary source. There was a variety of use, ranging from those for whom reading print newspapers was a part of their lifestyle ("I love reading when I come to the library, the newspapers every day") (#12) to those who read the paper if it was available.

Several participants read all, or most, of the newspaper while others were more selective, concentrating, eg. on sport or the classifieds.

Confirming the findings of Raeymaeckers (2004), Armstrong and Collins (2009), and Huang (2009), newspaper reading appeared to be influenced by parents many of whom purchased one or more newspapers. A corollary was that, where students were living at a particular time sometimes had an effect on their newspaper reading habits: "When I am at home, it [the print newspaper] is probably at the highest source; it is probably the first source" (#3)

There was a perception amongst some participants that printed newspapers are "real" or "actual": "If I am going to read a newspaper, I'd prefer to have the real newspaper in front of me" (#7). Some participants liked the in-depth coverage of print newspapers and found them more credible than other sources. However, the most commonly cited advantages of printed news were its physical convenience and comfort: "I'd probably still like the paper because you can take it anywhere, where you go" (#16).

There was a view from some that their allegiance to printed newspapers would continue: "I'll probably still like the paper [when employed full time later on]" (#16), and most thought they would be still reading print newspapers in five years time.

Although they were mostly referring to newspapers, there was a very strong preference for printed sources, overall. Often this was bound up with the notion that it was easier to trust printed sources: "I think where it's printed and it's all set out, it seems a bit more reliable" (#10) Nevertheless, with some participants, the trust in, and reverence for, print newspapers extended to a regard also for quality newspapers online or sites that presented news from those sources: "If I knew that they took the news from The Age or something like that, a decent newspaper, I would be inclined to read it" (#12). This finding is in keeping with those of Day (2008) and Huang (2009).

Television

Fifteen participants watched TV news at least occasionally and nine ranked TV as their top source. Nevertheless, viewing habits ranged from at least twice a day to very occasional viewing. There was also a range of TV news sources used. Participants who were dedicated followers of SBS and ABC news were usually interested in international and national news. Others were keen on local news: "I like listening to national news but I will focus more on local news. … It is just more relevant to myself" (#3). This is in keeping with the findings of Raeymaeckers (2004): that local news of immediate relevance was more valued by the young people in her sample than economics or politics.

One of the reasons participants gave for ranking TV as their top news source was the opportunity it gave for sharing new with others: "Like, with the television you can sit down and have dinner with your family and keep it on in the background and you can listen to it together, whereas on the Internet it's more of an individual thing" (#11). However, convenience was the most frequently mentioned reason for a preference for TV news: "I'll have the TV on so I listen to the news. … It's

all about convenience" (#7). Eating breakfast to Channel 7's Sunrise program was mentioned by several participants, as was the notion of relaxing and watching the news at the same time.

As with printed newspapers, habits were often affected by accessibility or lack thereof: "I live on uni campus, so if I want to watch TV, I have to sit in the common room with everyone else and they always want to watch all the crap channels" (#17). As with print newspapers, being at home with parents influenced TV news viewing: "I haven't watched it [Prime] since I was at my parents' place last" (#20).

The convenience of TV, radio and newspapers – the sources most often mentioned by participants – was also given as a reason for not using other sources: "There's already convenient sources like the radio and TV and I don't really need to get the same information from that many sources" (#13). Nevertheless, news on TV or radio could lead to further research using Internet sources, as mentioned by several participants. Mostly this was to obtain further information but, in one case, it was associated with lack of trust in TV: "I will see something on TV and I will Google it so I can find out more information because I don't really trust what the TV says" (#3).

Radio

Radio was also popular as a source of news (used by 14 participants, with three participants seeing it as their principal source). There were strong similarities in attitudes of participants towards these two media sources for news gathering. Participants often listened to radio news while in their cars, making this a highly convenient source: "because it's just convenient; if you're driving along it keeps you awake" (#2). One participant heard the news on the bus while he was travelling to and from the university, seeing it as "a hassle-free way of getting the news" (#20).

Views about the quality and degree of importance of radio news differed amongst the sample. Interviewee 8 thought that radio was good for breaking news and Interviewee 20 suggested: "I hear more in the five minutes than I generally read in 15 minutes [in newspapers]". On the negative side, there was an admission that radio only offers summary news: "You might hear something that you're more interested in, then you go to the newspaper or the television to find out more about it" (#19).

THE ROLE SOCIAL NETWORKING IN NEWS GATHERING

Participants were asked about the role of various social networking tools in their news-gathering activities. Included here are tools that enable the sharing of views and opinions, the following being those mentioned in the interviews: Facebook, blogs, MSN Messenger, Twitter, My Space, You-Tube, and Flickr.

The only social networking tool that was used to any extent by interviewees was Facebook (9 participants), which was seen as providing the online equivalent of word of mouth: "At the moment everyone's on Facebook" (#2). Very often

participants emphasised that they did not use it for news but for communication: "I have lots of friends so I go on and talk to them" (#12).

Nevertheless, participants sometimes revealed that news flowed through Facebook during personal communication: "It happens [the posting of news items] about once every fortnight" (#18), leading to her often clicking on the links provided. Another said that: "Yeah, sometimes people post it [news]. Like at home, there was a shooting and someone posted a link to that, or there was a link to like Michael Jackson's death or entertainment stuff." (#17). This interviewee contributed to the discussion of the latter, although mostly participants did not contribute to news discussions on Facebook or blogs. A fair number said that they like to be informed and to have discussions about news but prefer this to be face-to-face: "I think it's more important to contribute to discussions in real life than on the Internet" (#7).

Blogs were not popular with most people in this sample. "Well mostly it's just one person going on and on about something that they care about, and it's reading someone's diary sometimes and I find it boring" (#7). One participant read blogs when looking for specific information, without contributing to them. "I don't go out looking for blogs. I just find them" (#9). There was hardly any use of My Space or Twitter – and very little comment about them, with a couple of exceptions, one of which: "We'll eventually get it but at the moment everyone's on Facebook … so I don't really need to go" (#2).

There was also very little use of MSN Messenger for news. Where it was mentioned by participants, similar comments were made about its use to those made about Facebook: that it was "just to talk to catch up with people", rather than to discuss news, although "if I were to discuss news it would pop up" (#11). Again, while most participants used You-Tube and/or Flickr, they stressed they were not for news gathering, except in the personal sense.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to explore the news seeking and browsing behaviours of young adults, aged between 18 and 25, in an academic environment. The interview data revealed that the young people in the sample were interested in a mix of entertainment, and that hard news and particularly local news of immediate relevance were perceived as important. They also obtained information for everyday life, as has been shown to have occurred through news sources in past research.

Most participants accessed various kinds of news from a variety of sources, although participants had individual preferences for their sources of news. The use or non-use of particular sources was often affected by accessibility, or lack thereof. It may be hypothesised that, for young adults in particular, news has become less connected conceptually to particular sources such as newspapers and television. It was not particularly important for participants to gather news from specific sources.

Nevertheless, the traditional print newspaper was regarded very highly by this sample. Indeed the researchers were surprised by participants' attraction to,

and trust in, print newspapers. Conversely, participants' lack of attraction to, and active involvement in, online news was unexpected in such a young age group, which was anticipated to be more inclined towards online news sources and to use them more frequently than printed sources. Apart from the accessibility issue, the infrequent use of online news was affected by the perception of the lack of credibility, and trust in, online news sources. The online content was perceived to be of poor quality and not to be in published, unalterable format. While social networking tools were used by many in the sample, participants emphasised that they were used much more for communication with friends than for the gathering of news. The popularity of television and radio with this sample is also an important finding.

An important source of print newspapers for several participants in the sample was the university library. This, coupled with the finding that print newspapers were still important for this group of young people, indicates that, at least for this sample, libraries have a continuing role in the provision of print sources. However, newspapers are under pressure on printing costs and are undergoing a continuous drop in circulation ("Newspaper circulation," 2010), a trend which could potentially lead to ceasing of print operations for some publications. Christian Science Monitor is one famous casualty ("The Christian Science Monitor", 2010). Therefore, libraries need to be prepared to replace the closed down print content with online subscription based e-news reader devices and applications to facilitate in-house reading and remote log-ins. Only then will they be able to attract newspaper readers, young and old, to their physical and/or virtual reading rooms.

The finding that parental influence had a significant impact on young people's choice of media corresponds to several previous studies of media use (Raeymaeckers, 2004; Armstrong and Collins, 2009; Huang, 2009). The strong preferences for printed sources among our sample seemed to be affected by newspaper reading habits in their families.

With this sample, news aggregators connected to popular e-mail services seemed to be the most successful in attracting user attention to their online news coverage. One important implication for news providers is that, as news gathering is increasingly integrated into personal communication through e-mail services or social networking tools, the communication function in media use is likely to be at least as significant as the information function. This trend is likely to be more pronounced among young people. Future research needs to investigate this phenomenon to a deeper level.

Acknowledgements:

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