



The Social Newsroom

2015 Media Survey Report

insightful, creative, passionate

corporate communication | stakeholder engagement | media relations | digital communication | investor relations

Executive Summary

Social media and the 24-hour news cycle continues to change the way news is produced, disseminated and consumed. With consumers' unquenchable thirst for immediacy and the ever-present threat of online competition, today's newsrooms have truly integrated social media into their operations.

This year's BBS Media Survey investigates how social media influences how journalists identify and collect news, and how media organisations attract and retain readers, listeners and viewers. It also identifies what makes a great online news story and the top issues likely to grab headlines in 2015.

The year's survey involved more than 50 journalists from across the country.

BBS has conducted an annual media survey of print, television, online, and radio journalists since 2003 to gain the latest insights into Australian media.

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Key findings

1. Online traction is the number one priority
2. One pitch, multiple mediums (but stiff competition)
3. Making a story “sing” online
4. The battle to break news
5. Twitter is the media’s most important social media platform
6. Keeping an eye on each other online
7. What you’ll be reading about, listening to and watching in 2015

Who we surveyed

RESPONDENTS GENDER AND AGE WERE



RESPONDENTS PRIMARILY WORKED FOR



RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED THEIR NEWS ORGANISATION AS



The Results

1. Online traction is the number one priority

Most news organisations now have metrics in place to monitor the amount of traffic each of their online sites receives.

Online news and social media has morphed from merely an alternative way to connecting with the audience, to an integral part of delivering news. As a result, online traction is now just as important as readership, viewership and circulation figures.

More than half of respondents say their organisation’s online traction is “Very important – it’s our number one priority”

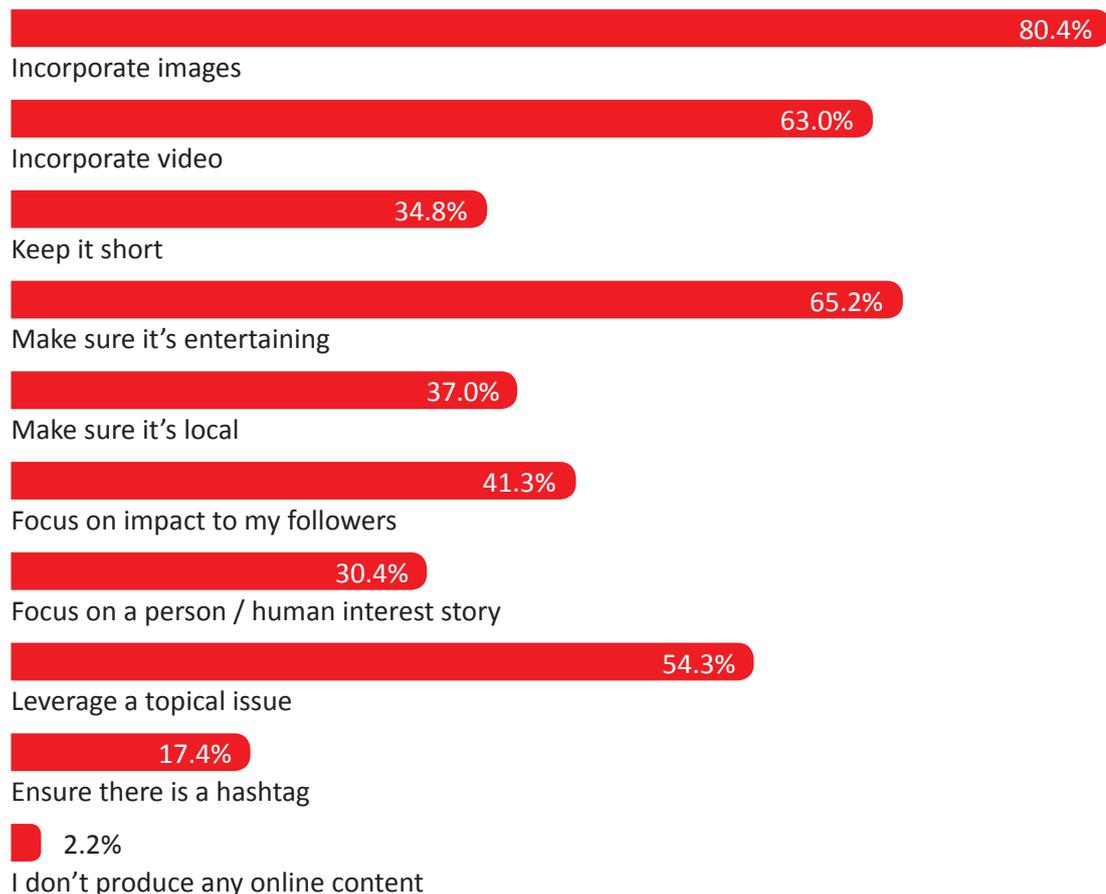
Most respondents (84.4%) say their organisation is constantly checking its online traction. More than half say online traction was the organisation’s “number one priority”.

BBS Insight

When pitching stories to media outlets, be sure to highlight how the story might resonate with their audience – particularly online – because of the story’s visual elements, “shareability”, topical nature, or other factors.

84.4% say their organisation is constantly checking its online traction

Journalists were asked: What do you do to make any online content you produce more shareable?



2. One pitch, multiple mediums (but stiff competition)

Traditional news outlets have integrated their online news portals and now use them strategically to attract more eyes and ears to their lead stories. This means that if they cover your story, chances are it'll be published across multiple channels.

The majority of survey respondents say while they predominantly work for a particular medium (such as print), their stories appear in another medium (such as online) at least on a weekly basis. Nearly 40% of respondents say their story will always appear in another medium.

Even before the story is published, 67.4% of journalists say they always or often consider its capacity to be published elsewhere.

But attracting the attention of journalists is no mean feat. About 76% of journalists receive six or more story ideas (via emails, phone calls and media releases) each day. About 40% receive between six and 10 story ideas daily. Yet 66% of journalists three stories or fewer each day, indicating that many story ideas don't make the cut.

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Think about how you can provide additional story components – such as photos and videos – that could improve the chances of your story being published across multiple mediums.

39.6% say their stories always appear in another medium

76% receive more than five story ideas each day

66% file three stories or fewer stories each day

3. Making a story “sing” online

Journalists use a number of techniques to make their online content more attractive to viewers and more shareable. These include incorporating images (80.43%), making sure it’s entertaining (65.22%), incorporating video (63.04%) and leveraging a topical issue (54.35%).

When asked what stories made the best online stories, journalists said:

- Anything with a good photo (56.52%)
- Human interest (56.52%)
- Issues-based (43.48%)
- Entertainment (36.96%)

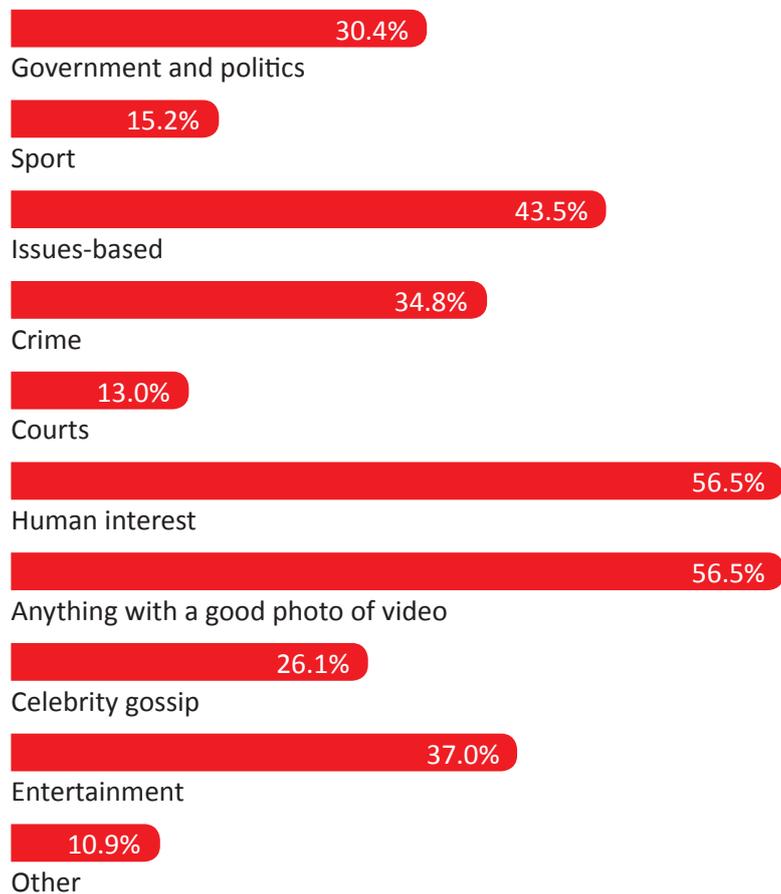
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Learn from journalists. Framing your story the way a journalist would will help them see the story’s potential.

Journalists were asked: In your opinion, what are the top three attributes a great online story needs to have compared to a great news story in traditional media?



Journalists were asked: From your experience, what stories do you think make the best online stories?



4. The battle to break news

With the ability to publish instantly, it's no surprise that journalists see online news websites as their organisation's biggest competitor for breaking news and exclusive stories.

But interestingly print media remains the second biggest competitor, despite the medium suffering from the time delays that come from printing and distributing.

Surprisingly, Twitter (8%) and Facebook (4%) barely rated a mention by journalists.

The fact that print media remains a potent news breaking force might be reflective of the greater resources (time and experienced journalists) some print outlets have and the tendency for organisations to offer exclusives to print outlets.



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Offering exclusives to a particular media outlet can be a powerful strategy to maximise coverage of your story. However, it does have pitfalls depending on the medium, outlet and journalist the exclusive is given to.

38% see online news websites as their biggest competitor for breaking news or exclusive stories

30% see print as their biggest competitor for breaking news or exclusive stories

5. Twitter is the media’s most important social media platform

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are just some of the social media channels today’s media outlets are using to generate an audience for their content.

But Twitter is the social media platform of choice for journalists whereas only 30% ranked Facebook as their most important platform.

More than half ranked Twitter as the most important platform in their role as a journalist.

However, 40% of journalists say they ‘rarely’ use Twitter to source their story ideas. No respondents say it is their first point-of-call for sourcing their story ideas.

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With journalists promoting or sourcing stories on social media, organisations need to consider their social media policies. Does your organisation have a social media policy regulating your organisations online content? Is your organisation monitoring social media to identify if and when stakeholders, including media, are “talking” about you?

55% say Twitter is the most important social media platform

Journalists were asked: To rank the following social media platforms in order of importance in their news reporting role.

-
- 1. Twitter
 - 2. Facebook
 - 3. Google+
 - 4. Instagram
 - 5. Blogs
 - 6. YouTube
 - 7. LinkedIn

6. Keeping an eye on each other online

It's not just the average Australian who is following news outlets online and monitoring their social media accounts, with the vast majority of journalists admitting they always keep an eye on what their competitors are doing.

There is a constant and unrelenting demand for news, and survey respondents are turning to their competitors to leverage ideas and identify new stories.

When asked who they mostly followed on their social media accounts, journalists said:

- Other news organisations (83.67%)
- Governments and councils (69.39%)
- People they've done stories with in the past (67.35%)
- Politicians (57.14%)
- Local community leaders (57.14%)

Journalists said they used their social media accounts to:

- see what competing media outlets are covering (83.67%)
- source story ideas (79.89%)
- promote links to their own stories (77.55%)
- keep track of what my sources are saying (75.51%)

Unsurprisingly, every single respondent to the survey said they used some form of social media.

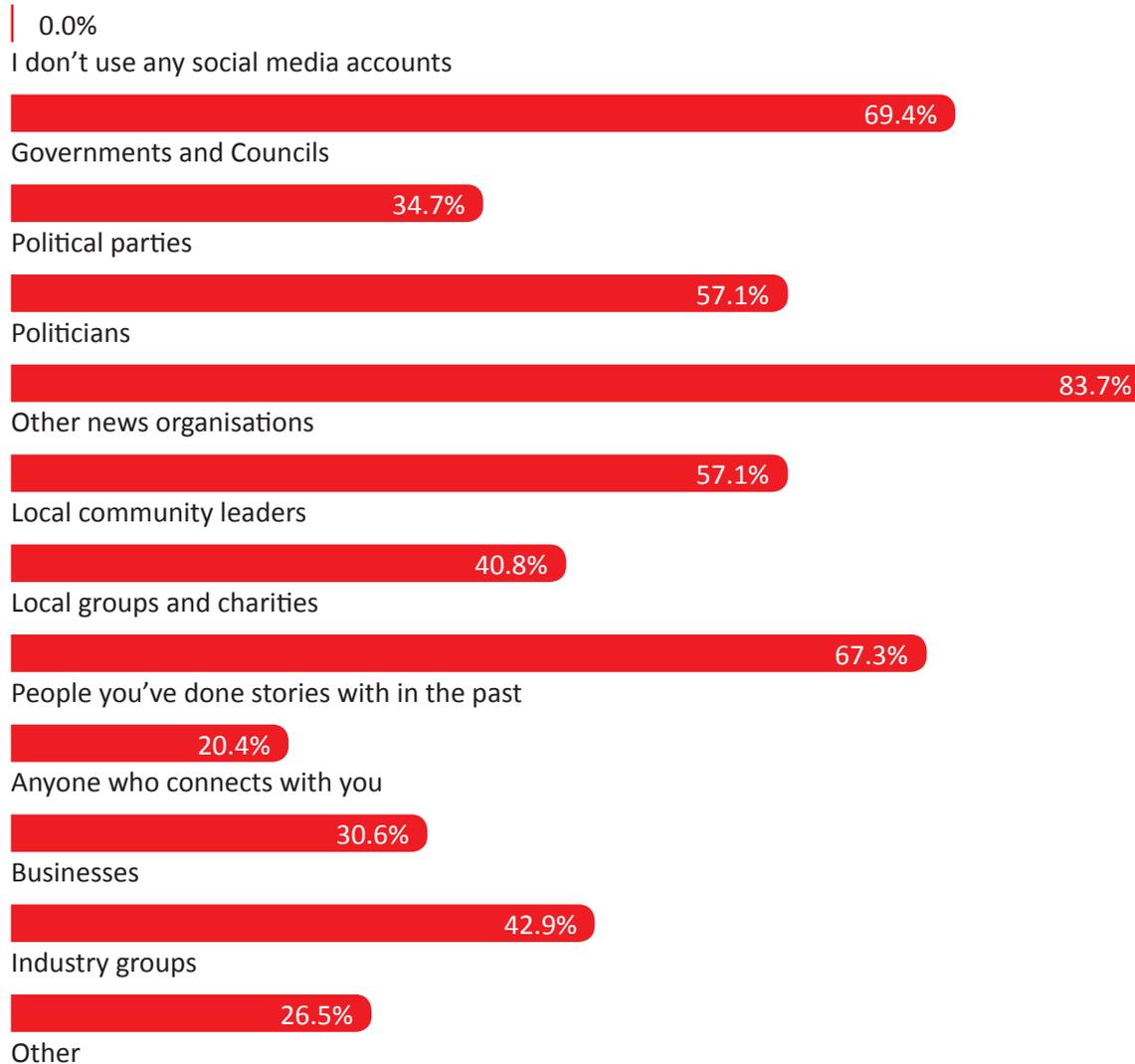
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Do you know if journalists are following your organisation's social media accounts? What does that mean for your social media policy and media strategy?

83.7% say they follow other news organisations on social media

100% use social media

Journalists were asked: On social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc) who do you mostly follow?



7. What you'll be reading about, listening to and watching in 2015

The turbulent political landscape looks set to dominate the headlines once again this year, both in Queensland and nationally. Economic issues, such as budget and debt, will also attract their fair share of media attention.

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For quick coverage, look at how your organisation can leverage those issues media are already interested in. Can you provide commentary, research, profiles or other angles that relate to a topical issue?



Queensland's top issues in 2015:

1. State election and leadership changes
2. Weather
3. Economic performance

Others:

- Education
- Terrorism
- Health
- Sport
- Murder court stories



Australia's top issues in 2015:

1. Federal politics and Tony Abbott's leadership
2. Terrorism
3. Budget

Others:

- Gay marriage
- Cost of living
- Celebrities
- Sports
- Immigration
- Natural disasters
- Bali 9

The Questions

1. For which type of media do you PRIMARILY file your stories?
2. How often do your stories ALSO appear in another medium? (For example, if you file for a newspaper, how often do they also appear online?)
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your age category?
5. How would you classify your news organisation? (you may pick more than one)
6. How many years' experience do you have as a working journalist?
7. On average, how many story ideas do you personally receive each day? (e.g. emails, phone calls and media releases)
8. On average, how many stories do you FILE on each day?
9. Please RANK the following list according to where you MOST COMMONLY source your story ideas
10. In terms of breaking news or exclusive stories, which type of media do you see as your organisation's biggest competitor?
11. Please rank the following social media platforms in order of importance to you in your news reporting role (1 most important)
12. How do you personally use your own social media accounts as part of your job? (You may pick more than one)
13. On social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc) who do you mostly follow? (You may pick more than one)
14. When deciding the value of a story, to what extent do you consider its capacity to be published in multiple mediums? (eg in print and online, on television and online etc)
15. What do you try to do to make any online content you produce more shareable? (You may pick more than one)
16. From your experience, what stories do you think make the best online stories?
17. In your opinion, what are the top three attributes a great online story needs to have compared to a great news story in traditional mediums?
18. How important to your organisation is online traction? (e.g. page hits, email views, Facebook posts, retweets, YouTube video views etc.)
19. As far as you know, how regularly does your media organisation monitor its online traction? (e.g. page hits, email views, Facebook posts, retweets, YouTube video views etc.)
20. What do you predict will be the three hottest issues to make headlines in QUEENSLAND in 2015? (If your outlet covers Queensland)
21. What do you predict will be the three hottest issues to make headlines in AUSTRALIA in 2015?
22. For your chance to win a \$50 Coles Group & Myer Gift Voucher, please enter your details below (N.B. your contact details will remain confidential):