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# THE KALEIDOSCOPE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEWS



**CRAFT.**  
HUMAN INTELLIGENCE





The study was  
conducted in Brazil,  
the USA and the UK

Data were collected  
via a two-stage,  
remote, digital,  
qualitative process

## Stage 1 Digital Assignment

74 participants completed a set  
of 10 activities over 3 weeks, using  
Craft's digital research platform

**c. 378 hours of engagement**  
**2,635 screenshots generated**



## Stage 2 Depth Interviews

24 participants (a subset of the  
Stage 1 sample) took part in a  
c.45 minute interview (via Zoom)

**c.18 hours of interview**





### Age/life course



Where behaviours and attitudes change as people grow older or go through different lifestyles

e.g. moving out, getting married, having children

### Period



Where everyone changes as a result of macro-trends in culture or far-reaching societal events

e.g. 9/11, recessions, the covid-19 pandemic

### Cohort/generational



Where behaviours and attitudes **are** set by the formative attitudes of a generation

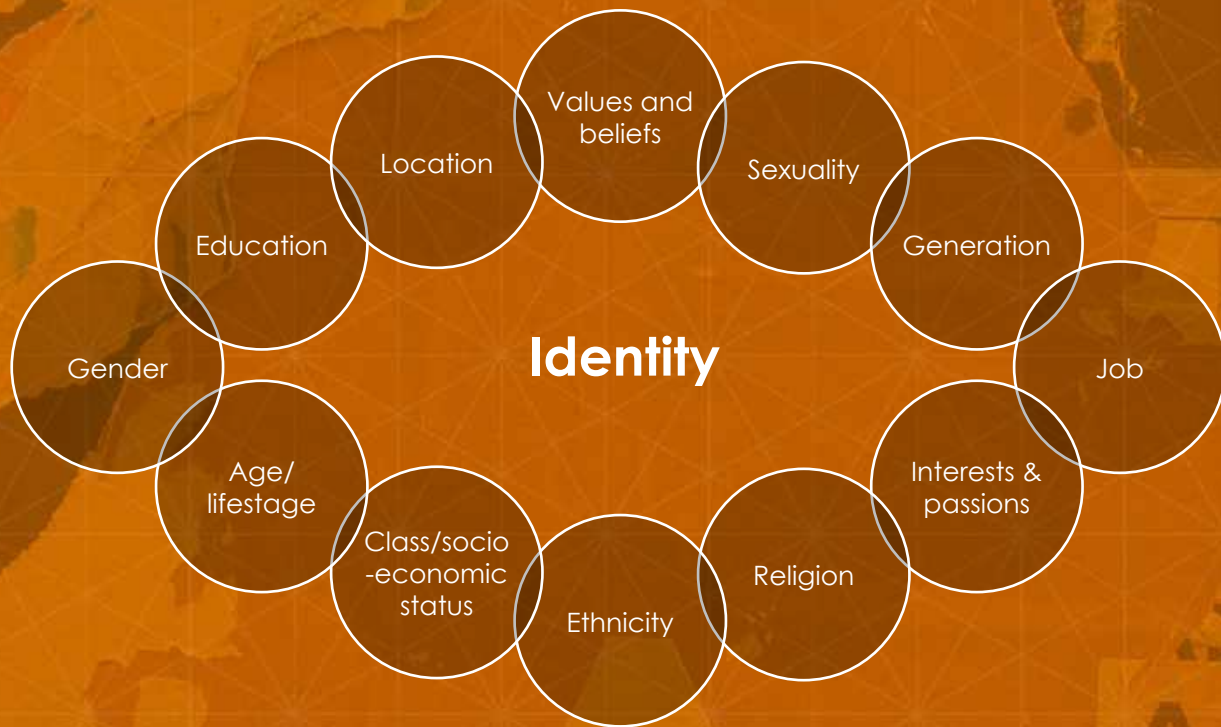
e.g. growing up with the social, mobile internet

Country before cohort



## Identity is intersectional

It's hard to disentangle different parts of people's identities. We all have fluid, multi-layered and contextually-dependent personas – a person's age is one layer and not necessarily always important



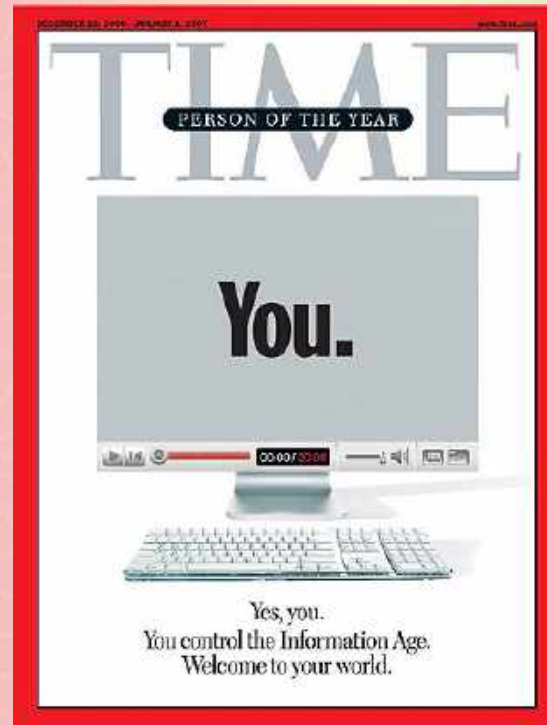


## Young people have grown up with the social, participatory internet – 'Web 2.0.'

Their news behaviours are to a large extent an extension of their wider media behaviours.

**Digital, mobile, social, integrated, continuous, fast, fleeting, discovered passively but actively interacted with.**

**Much of the time...**





# Growing up with Web 2.0 has several implications that contextualise and condition young people's news consumption

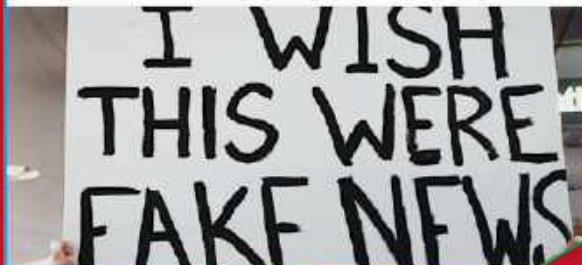
## 1 How they consume news



## 2 What they consider 'news' to be



## 3 Their trust in information, in general



## 4 Who they trust to deliver news





## Several inter-related trends contextualise and condition how young people experience news

### How news is encountered

- Digital dominates
- Always-on and ambient
- Receive more than seek
- Fewer carved-out occasions



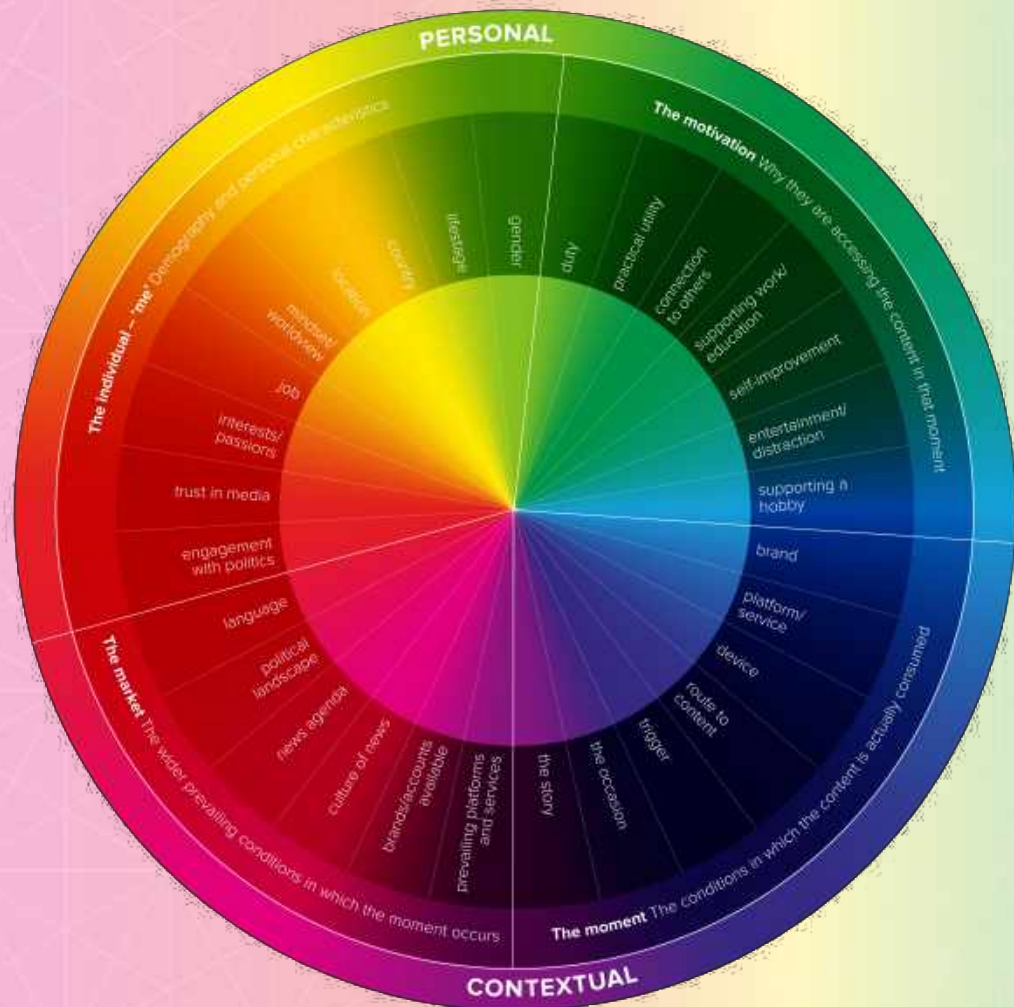
### The brand landscape they navigate

- Broad
- Flat
- Fragmented
- Aggregated





Myriad variables interact to influence news consumption, leading to largely unpredictable individual outcomes







For young people,  
news can be  
'narrow' or 'broad'

## Narrow – 'the news'



- Associated with mainstream, traditional media
- Narrow focus on traditional party politics, international relations and 'current affairs'
- Defined by what is happening in Westminster or Wall Street, for example

## Broad – 'news'



- Developments and (new) things that are happening in all walks of life
- Includes sports, entertainment, celebrity gossip, culture and the arts, technology, science etc



## 'News' can fall into one of three categories

The lines between them are blurry – a spectrum more than three discrete categories

### 1 Need to know –

- Narrow news agenda – the big issues of the day
- Things that affect my life directly (personal utility)
- Narrow set of mostly mainstream newsbrands

### 2 Personal interest –

- Broader news - hobby-related, entertaining but with deeper roots than 'fun'
- Depends on personal tastes
- The long tail of subject specialists – brands and individual accounts

### 3 'Fun' –

- Throwaway, almost random content for easy entertainment
- Can come from anywhere, often serendipity or social share
- Anything in a social feed – professionally-produced content, UGC, memes



Politics and international relations

Local

'Serious' personal interest e.g. climate, finance, science

Tech, gaming, sports, culture, TV, film, entertainment

Celebrity gossip, weird and wonderful, memes



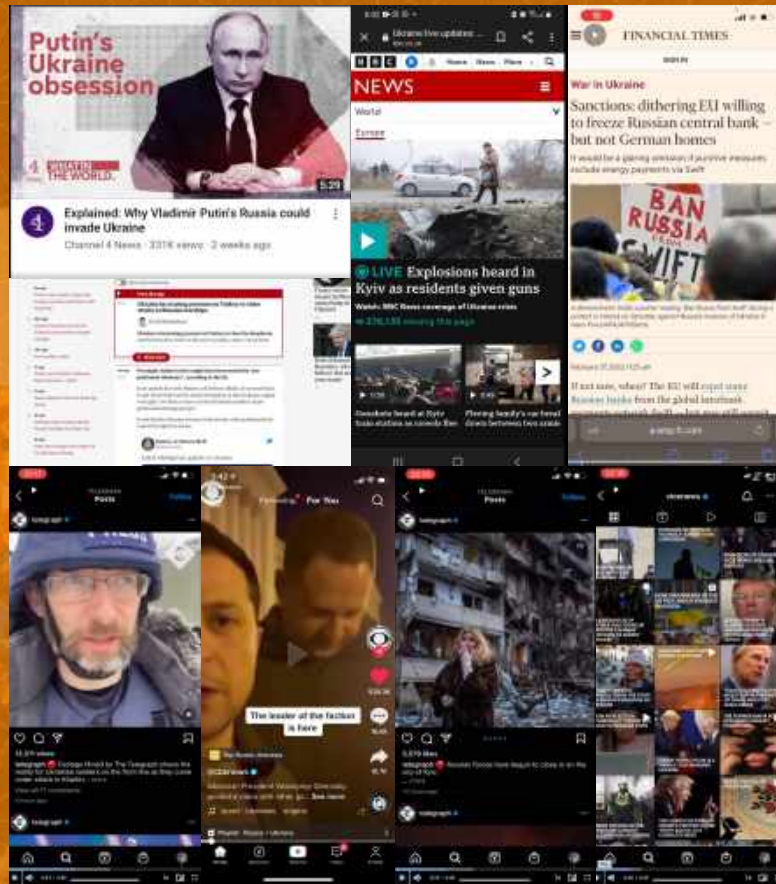
**An event such as the  
Russian invasion of  
Ukraine can transcend  
usual relationships with  
'the news'**

**Stories of this magnitude  
become 'need-to-know'  
for almost everyone**



Mainstream brands, live news and on-the-ground reporting became more important – some even turned on the TV!

The access that mainstream media offers really came into its own – but alternative media sources were still used to supplement the diet of mainstream reporting





## News is provided by brands and actors along a spectrum

Alternative media is not judged by the same standards. Instead, it adds something different to young people's news mix

**Mainstream**

Serious, objective, accurate, emotionless reporting

**Alternative**

Opinions permitted and welcomed, can still be serious and thoughtful

**User-generated**

Broadest emotional/tonal range – serious, frivolous, angry, funny, off-beat, politically incorrect

Increasing scope for topical variety, opinion, bias and emotion/personality



Engagement isn't black and white, though

Even amongst the highly engaged there were signs of **selective avoidance of negativity**

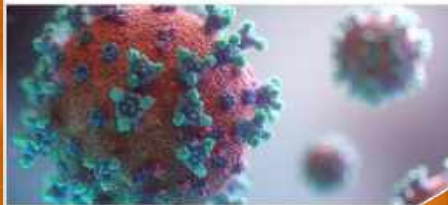
Rather than total news avoidance, there was the **avoidance of certain kinds of news or stories, at certain times** – to guard mental health



## Fatigue over long-running stories that never seemed to be resolved was the most common reason for avoidance

There was a recognition that these stories were 'important' – as such engagement could be sporadic, especially at the initial stages of 'a crisis' or at inflection points

### Covid-19



### Political news



### Brexit



### The culture wars



### Death and violence



### The war in Ukraine





**Avoidance of  
'narrow news' has  
implications for  
newsbrands, who  
are felt to operate  
primarily at the  
serious end of  
the spectrum**

'The news'	'News'
<b>Need to know/serious</b>	<b>Personal interest</b> <b>Fun</b>
<b>The preserve of newsbrands</b>  <b>Avoidance tends to happen here</b>	<b>The preserve of a wider range of digital-only brands, alternative media and user-generated accounts – in addition to newsbrands</b>  <b>Little to no avoidance here</b>





**There is great commonality in the idea that all information is put into the public realm for a reason – ‘an agenda’**

Explanations for agendas can range from the innocent to the sinister, but they all have the same effect

**A commercial need to speak to audiences' beliefs**



**The impossibility of there being an objective truth**



**Active, purposeful manipulation of opinions**



**Very little information is taken on trust**



Only half of 12-15 year-olds  
**(49%)** think the news they  
see on news websites is  
mostly or totally true...

...compared with almost  
nine in ten **(87%)** of 12-15  
year-olds (young Millennials)  
in 2008

Ipsos MORI, Beyond Binary: The Lives and Loves of Generation Z



## Traditional newsbrands are under pressure from three directions

**Weaker engagement with narrow news**, stronger engagement with broader news among some young people

**Proliferation of brands from beyond the mainstream** competing for time and attention, playing different roles

**Suspicious, sceptical approach to information** meaning newsbrands are not inherently valued for their impartiality



## There is little consistency in what 'young people' want in terms of format – it's usually a matter of personal taste

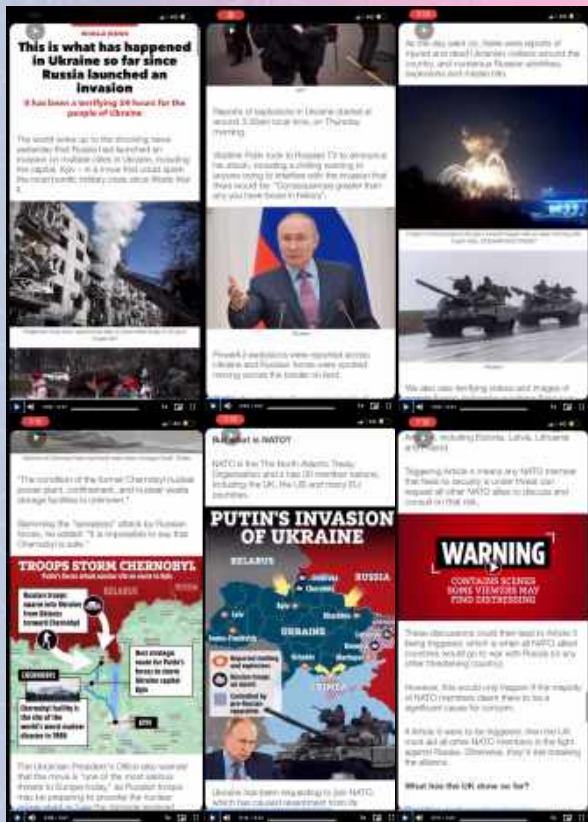
Far from the consistent traits which are often ascribed to them, there is a lot of variability, which is unsurprising considering the increasing plethora of options available

Formats being added to a wider mix, rather than replacing others


Formats being better/worse suited to different contexts and occasions

The **blending** of formats into multimedia experiences

**Variability in preferred platforms** – each platform having its own codes and conventions



This is an article posted by The Sun on Snapchat. This article was regarding Russia and Ukraine. As this had been the focus of the news lately, constantly reading articles can become quite intense. The Sun on Snapchat is a provider that I use every day. I find the articles they publish are to the point, contain the key information, yet aren't written in a serious tone which can put me off reading something.


Female, 19, UK 






## TikTok has come a long way since being the home of silly dances


NowThis has recently been showing a lot of clips that are directly from the [Ukrainian] president, just with translations of his words. I do wonder if the clips are longer, and if they're really curating these down to something more dramatic. I know TikTok can sustain longer videos. However, I know right now everyone is craving more first-hand information directly from the source. There's a lot of misinformation on TikTok especially, so these are helpful.

Female, 22, USA 


When TikTok was launched, it was just about dancing. Not today. Even though the videos are fast, they bring immediate information.

Male, 24, Brazil 

A TV reporter who also has a TikTok page gives us regular updates on the situation. It feels comforting and more intimate than watching on TV news.

Female, 22, UK 

TikTok, they're not really covering the news, just making it more attractive by going behind the scenes.

Male, 26, UK 



**Mainstream newsbrands can't please  
all of the young people all of the time  
(with their current offer)...**

**...but they can give themselves  
a better chance of being chosen  
more often**

**This does not mean abandoning  
narrow news, nor 'traditional' ways  
of delivering news digitally**



## It's a case of an 'as well as' evolution in the offer, more than an 'instead of' revolution

Brands may wish to make their core services more accessible, or create specific services targeted at young people, or a mix of the two

Retain existing credibility



Topically broaden



Embrace warmer tones



Make socially native content



Respect each platform's conventions



Consider new brands, sub-brands and individuals





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