

SOCIAL MEDIA: NEWS – UK – 2023

Generative AI presents new challenges for social media platforms looking to limit misinformation. However, the technology also provides opportunities to engage users



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Social Media: News - UK - 2023

This report looks at the following areas:

- Trends in usage of major social media platforms.
- Interest in potential features to tackle misinformation.
- How people respond to news content on social media.
- Preferred types of content from news organisations on social media.
- Opportunities and concerns regarding the use of AI for news on social media.



Generative AI presents new challenges for social media platforms looking to limit misinformation. However, the technology also provides opportunities to engage users

Overview

Improvements in the economic environment and consumer financial confidence is being reflected in growth in advertising revenue across social media platforms. People's willingness to spend more will boost the uptake of the new paid features that are being incorporated into social media.

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Report Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opportunities for news on social media

- AI news chatbots appeal to young men
- Threads will need to embrace news
- Opportunity for a social media platform dedicated to reputable news

Market dynamics and outlook

- The five year outlook for news on social media
- Advertising revenue picks up
- AI developments ramp up but many have concerns

What consumers want and why

- X's paid features could eat into engagement
- Short video needs to be a priority for social media news strategy
 - Graph 1: type of social media post from a newspaper/news organisation most likely to click on, 2023
- Brands need to be cautious about ad placement on social media
- Reading comments is the most common response to a news post on social media
 - Graph 2: most likely (top three) to do in response to social media post on an interesting news story, 2023
- Many TikTok users would like a trust button

Innovation

- Twitter rebrands to X
- Threads is not the only platform looking to take advantage of X controversy
- Facebook shifts further away from news

MARKET DYNAMICS

Macro-economic factors

- Consumer sentiment: the recovery has begun...
 - Graph 3: the financial wellbeing index, 2016-23
- ...and people feel more confident about their financial prospects
 - Graph 4: the financial confidence index, 2016-23
- Advertising revenue picks up
- Improving consumer confidence will aid focus on paid features

Social, environmental and legal factors

- AI developments ramp up but many have concerns
- EU ramps up pressure on social media platforms over misinformation
- Online Safety Bill ready to become law

WHAT CONSUMERS WANT AND WHY

Use of social media platforms

- TikTok growth continues
 - Graph 5: usage of top social media platforms, 2019-23
- X's paid features could reduce engagement
- Young people embrace many platforms
 - Graph 6: use of social media platforms in the last three months, 16-24s, 2023
- Threads has a long way to go but could still become a major player

News organisations' social media content

- Building a following on social media is crucial for news organisations
 - Graph 7: news accounts followed on social media, 2023
- Short video can help newspapers attract younger social media followers
- Short video needs to be a priority for a social media strategy
 - Graph 8: type of social media post from a newspaper/news organisation most likely to click on, 2023
- Parents of young children are particularly interested in bite-sized news videos
- Utilising long video news on social media
- FT video on banking gets over 1.5 million views on YouTube

Response to news on social media

- Reading comments is the most common response to a news post on social media
 - Graph 9: most likely (top three) to do in response to social media post on an interesting news story, 2023
- Moderating comments is crucial for social media platforms role in news

Attitudes towards AI news on social media

- Consumers see the negatives and potential of AI news
 - Graph 10: attitudes towards AI and social media news, 2023
- Consumers need reassurance of human oversight on AI-generated news content
- There is interest in AI social media chatbots for news
- Potential to engage young men through AI news chatbots

Attitudes towards misinformation on social media

- People think misinformation is getting worse on social media

- Graph 11: attitudes towards misinformation on social media, 2023
- Brands should be cautious about ad placement on social media

Social media news habits

- One in four social media users would click on an unfamiliar news source
 - Graph 12: social media news habits, 2023
- Young people use social media for their breaking news
 - Graph 13: more likely to follow breaking news stories on social media than news website/app, by age, 2023
- Threads will need to embrace its news role
- Sport is the breaking news that Threads should look to dominate
- Opportunity for a social media platform for reliable news
- X's removal of headlines creates a more difficult environment for publishers

Features on social media to tackle misinformation

- There is appetite for a variety of features that could combat misinformation
 - Graph 14: features that users think social media platforms should have, 2023
- Young men are more wary of features to tackle misinformation
 - Graph 15: features users think social media platforms should have, by age and gender, 2023
- Reddit users are interested in verification for trusted users
 - Graph 16: features that users think social media platforms should have, by Reddit users, 2023
- A trust button could be used as a tool to boost factual content
- Many TikTok users would like a trust button
- Warnings appeal to Pinterest users

INNOVATION

Launch activity and innovation

- Twitter rebrands to X
- Threads launches as an alternative text-based platform
- Threads is not the only platform to take on X
- X explores charging new users
- Facebook further shifts away from news
- Community Notes demonstrates a way to utilise user moderation

APPENDIX

Report scope and definitions

- Market definition
- Abbreviations and terms

Methodology

- Consumer Research Methodology

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