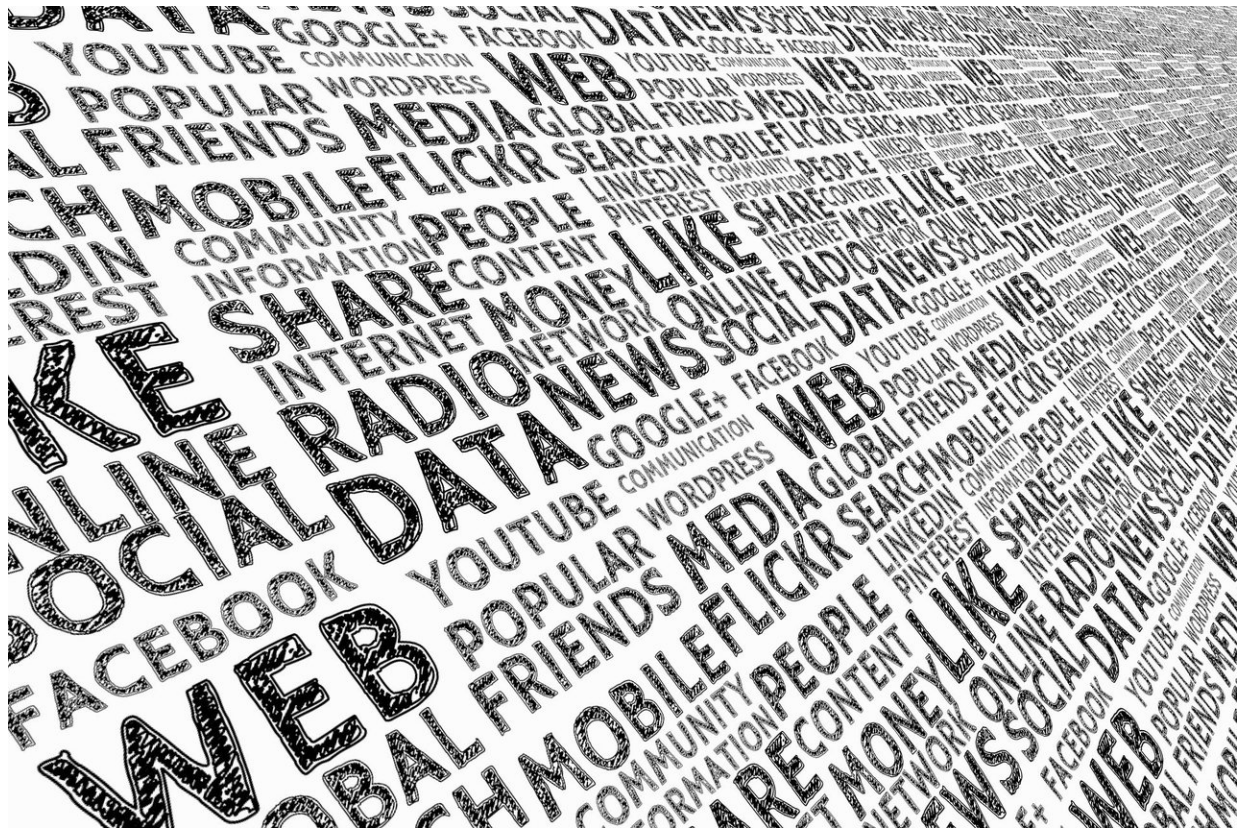


Influencer, celebrity, journalist? Teens are turning to YouTube for news, survey shows

August 14 2019, by Madeline Purdue, Usa Today



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The results are in: Teens turn to YouTube to keep up with current events instead of established news organizations.

More than 75% of teens 13- to 17-year-olds say it's important to them to follow current events, yet over half of them get their news from YouTube and [social media platforms](#) such as Twitter and Facebook, according to a new poll from Survey Monkey and Common Sense Media.

The survey of over 1,000 teens finds the majority prefer [visual media](#) to consume news. While on YouTube, 60% of teens say they are getting their news from celebrities, influencers and personalities, something Michael Robb, senior director of research at Common Sense, says is a "cause for concern."

"We don't necessarily have a great sense of whether those influencers or celebrities have standards and ethics, or what kind of disclosures they're making," he said. "Are they objective sources or not? How trustworthy is their research? There's a whole host of things that you would need to understand to know whether something is more legitimate. I'm not sure that is clear when you're getting it from a celebrity, influencer or personality."

Half of teens say they watch videos that play automatically or are recommended for them based on the site's algorithm. YouTube recently came under fire recently for its recommendations, including graphic videos being intertwined with children's content and spreading hateful messages on the platform.

Still, teens believe YouTube and other [social media sites](#) help them stay up-to-date on current events versus other sources. Only 41% of teens seek their news from print and digital news organizations, and 37% from TV news. They also recognize [news organizations](#) as more trustworthy than [social media](#) sources, with less than 40% believing social media and influencers "generally (get) the facts straight".

Common Sense Media, a [nonprofit organization](#) that aims to help families navigate media and technology, is working to educate teens about news consumption and sharing to avoid the spread of misinformation as part of their responsibility as a digital citizen, says Kelly Mendoza, its senior director of education programs at Common Sense Media.

"We live in a media-rich and time-poor world, and students are quickly scrolling and liking and sharing, and I think that's part of the problem—just slowing down, thinking very carefully about what they're seeing and also knowing how to determine if something is credible" helps them be better digital citizens, said Mendoza.

On Monday, Common Sense Education, which focuses on teaching students to critically analyze what they see and how they interact online as they navigate that space, released a new curriculum with new videos and lessons, including lessons on media literacy. The curriculum has lessons for Kindergarten to 12th-grade classrooms and is free to educators and schools.

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