

Digital Literacy: Skills to Survive in the Digital Age

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Overview

Digital Literacy – Abilities/Competencies/Skills for the Information Age

- Information Sources
- Managing/Coping with Technology
- Analyzing Information

Citizens of the Digital Age

The “Information Age”

Greater access to information than before

We are not always prepared to use these information sources wisely

New skills are needed

Citizens of the Digital Age

Digital Literacy

The set of competencies/abilities required for full participation in a knowledge or information-based society

Sources of information - not only books, newspapers, magazines, TV and radio, but also to the Internet, Internet blogs, social media, and video games



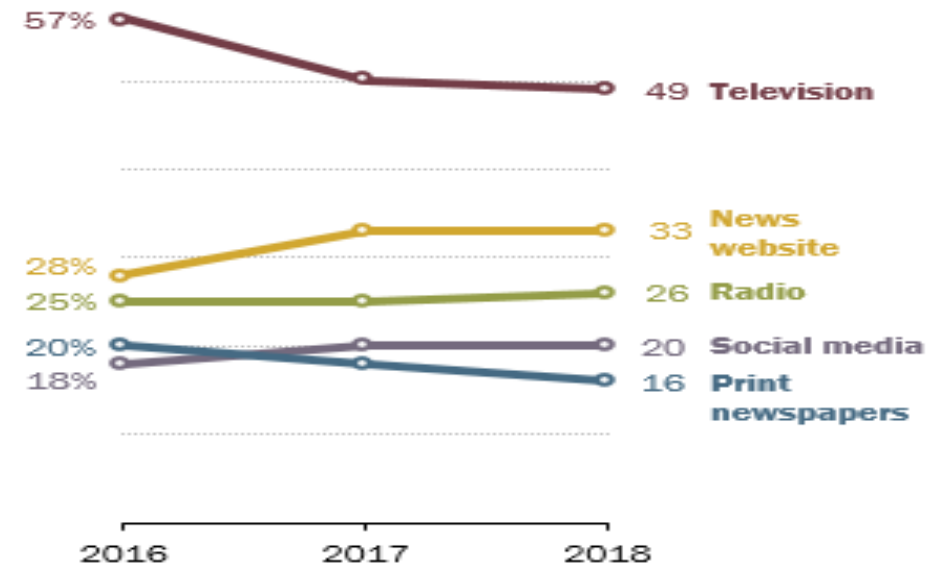
Information Sources

News by source:

- Television
- News websites
- Radio
- Social media
- Print newspapers

More Americans get news often from social media than print newspapers

% of U.S. adults who get news often on each platform



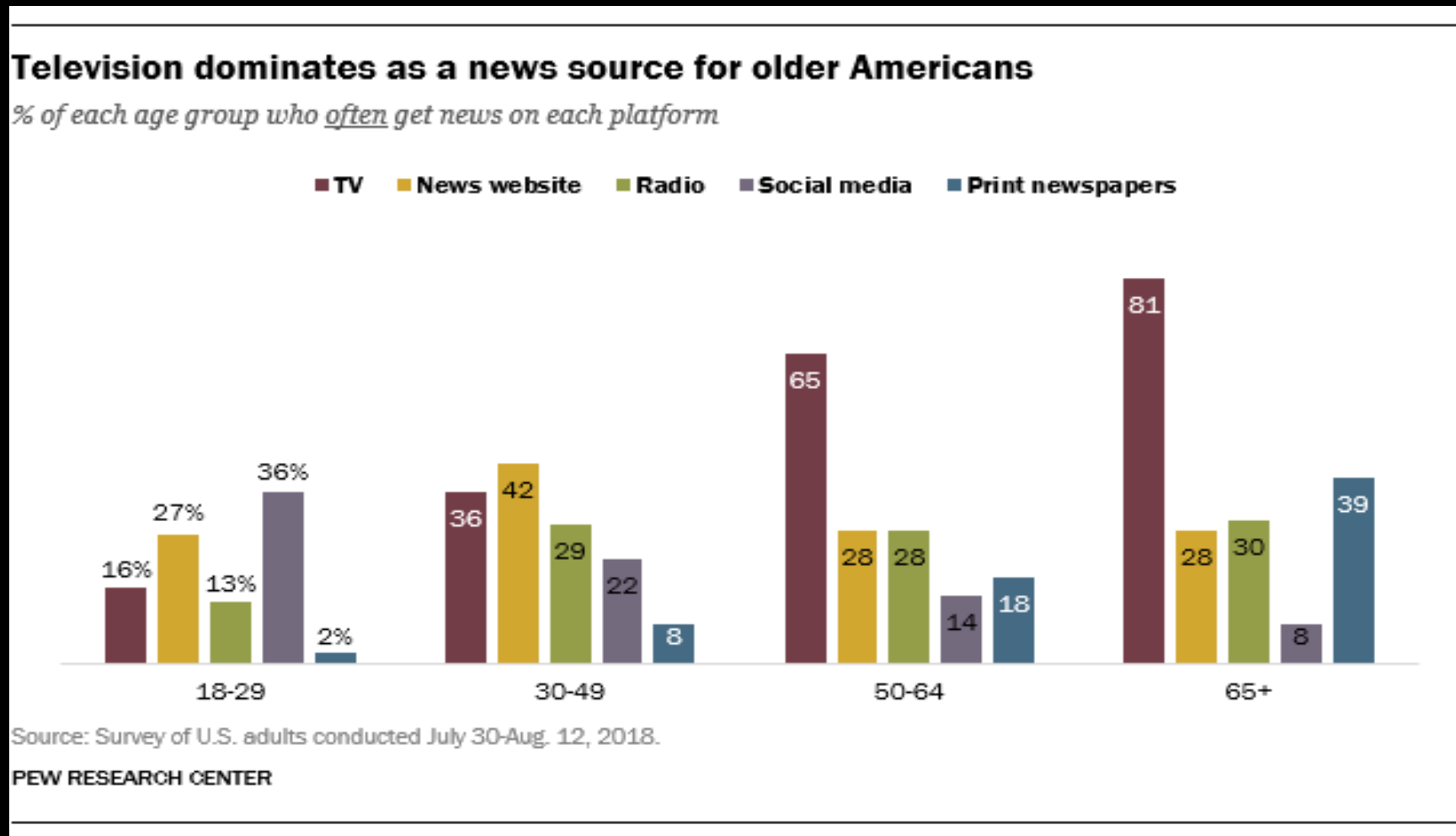
Note: The difference between social media and print newspapers in 2017 was not statistically significant.

Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.

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Information Sources

News by age group:



Information Sources

TV and Radio: Commercial



Over-the-air broadcast (TV and radio):
ad-supported

Pay TV (cable or satellite):
subscription + advertising

Information Sources

TV and Radio: Noncommercial

Governmental access:

Fairfax County Government Channel 16

Educational access:

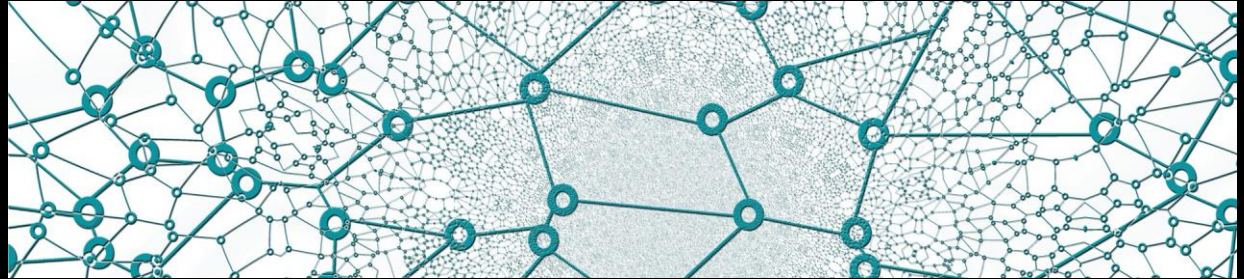
public schools, George Mason, NoVa

Public access: FCAC (Fairfax Public Access)

National: Public Broadcasting Service (PBS, NPR)

Information Sources

Internet - information



Web sites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, etc.

Advantages- Immediacy and world-wide reach

Disadvantages -Little curation of sources; “Fake News,” hate speech, inflammatory language

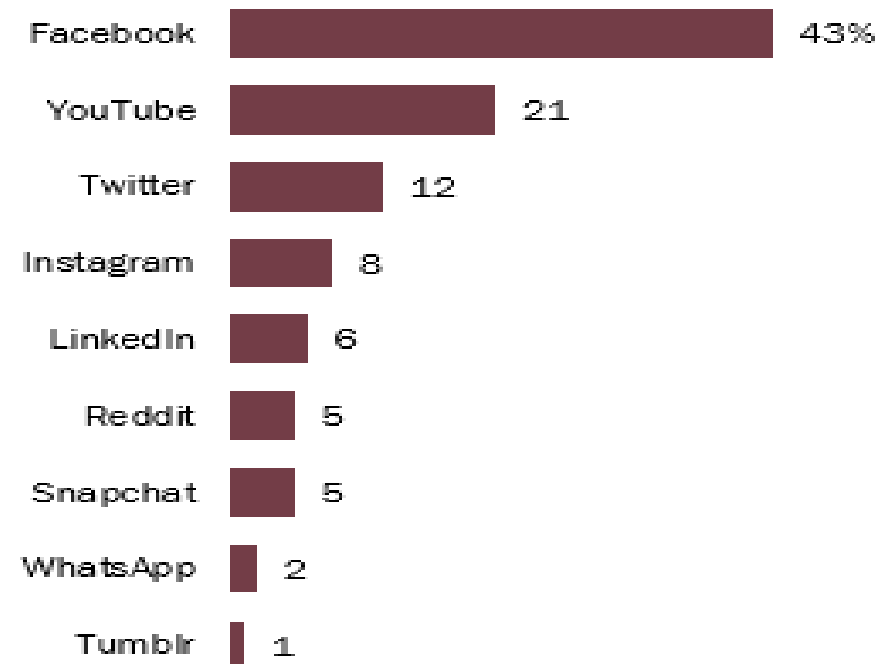
Information Sources

Social Media sites for news

- Facebook
- You Tube
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- WhatsApp

Social media sites as pathways to news

% of U.S. adults who get news on each social media site



Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.
"News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2018"

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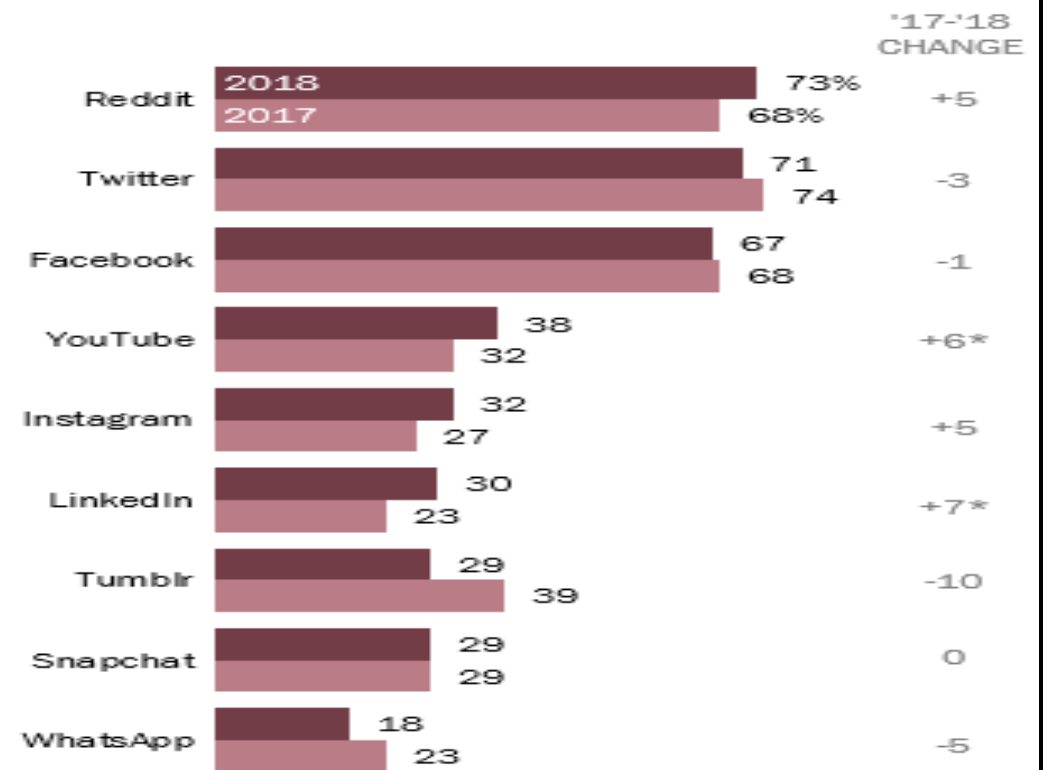
Information Sources

News-focused users

- Reddit
- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Tumblr
- Snapchat
- WhatsApp

Reddit, Twitter, Facebook stand out as sites with the most news-focused users

% of each social media site's users who get news there



*Change from 2017 to 2018 is statistically significant.

Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.

"News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2018"

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Information Sources

Internet - video

Internet (“over-the-top”) video streams video to your device over the Internet

Free offerings: YouTube, Roku Channel, ad-supported sites

Subscription offerings: Netflix, SlingTV, Direct TV Now, CBS All Access, etc.

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Coping with the Technology

“Digital literacy” includes managing the *technologies* used access the information

“Smart” devices: TVs, streaming devices, speakers, etc.

Computers - a gateway to get information

Mobile devices: smart phones, tablets

Coping with the Technology

Try not to let technology leave you behind

Can expand our information base to improve our decisions

Essential for some sources, such as Wikipedia

But don't need to keep up with all the latest fads or devices – viral news, apps, etc.



Coping with the Technology

New technologies/apps help us communicate with family and friends and navigate the world

Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, multiplayer online games

Devices may be more or less user-friendly. Choose what's right for you – Don't give up!

Navigation/Home automation apps/devices – Waze, Google maps, Alexa, Google Home

Coping with the Technology

Control the technology, not vice versa

Online contact shouldn't take the place of face-to-face contact

Managing one's attention becomes a necessary skill

High tech vs. High touch – the need for balance and for a moral compass

Coping with the Technology

Sources of assistance

Children and Grandchildren

Technology providers: Apple Store (Genius Bar)

Classes at libraries, schools, associations



Coping with the Technology

Sources of assistance (continued)

Continuing Learning Organizations: Lifetime Learning Institute (NOVA/LLI); Older Adults Technical Service (OATS)

User Groups and Forums: Personal or business; many topics like computers, tablets, smartphones, software; Meetup.com

State/Government Agencies: The State Grant for Assistive Technology Program for people with disabilities; The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS.org)

Coping with the Technology

Content Creation

Digital technology
also makes it much
easier to be a content
creator (YOU!)



Coping with the Technology

Content Creation

Public access and other resources can help show us how to make our own photo galleries, commentaries, videos

YouTube – place your own videos to show your hobby or how to fix something

Coping with the Technology

Privacy and “big data”

Businesses models are eager to collect data about us and sell it to advertisers etc.

Sometimes we hand it over deliberately: e.g., Facebook

Consider the possible uses and abuses

Keep abreast of the policy debates, legislation

Coping with the Technology

Online safety



Malware (viruses)

Scams

“Phishing”

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Analyzing Information

“Digital” or “media literacy” in another sense

Knowing how to evaluate information

Thinking critically about the information with which you are confronted

“The unexamined source is not worth reading”
- So we should examine it carefully.

Analyzing Information

1. Understand the source

2. Balance your media diet

3. Get training

Analyzing Information

Understand the source

Incentives and purposes of the information provider

Original versus derivative sources: the “telephone” game

Reliability of information provider

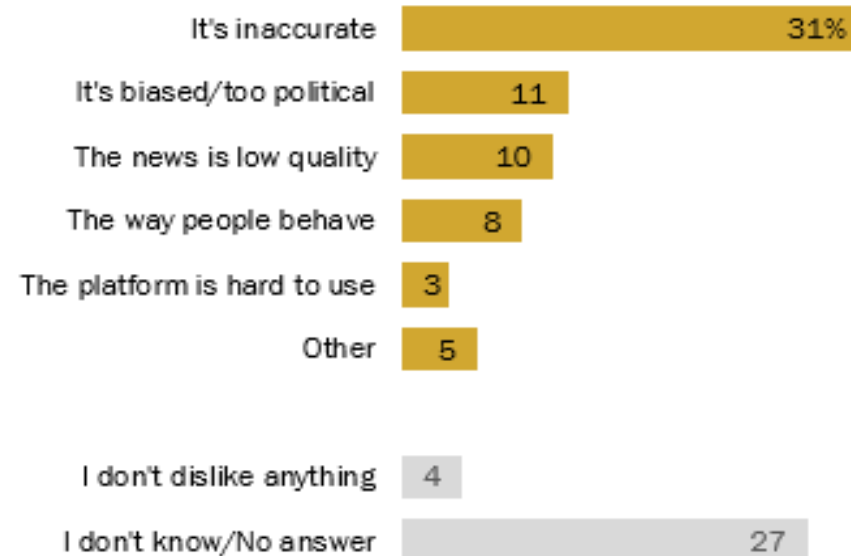
Analyzing Information

Problems with social media as a news source

- Inaccurate
- Biased/too political
- Low Quality
- People's behavior
- Hard to use
- Other

Inaccuracy tops people's concerns about social media

% of social media news consumers who say the thing they dislike most about getting news on social media is ...

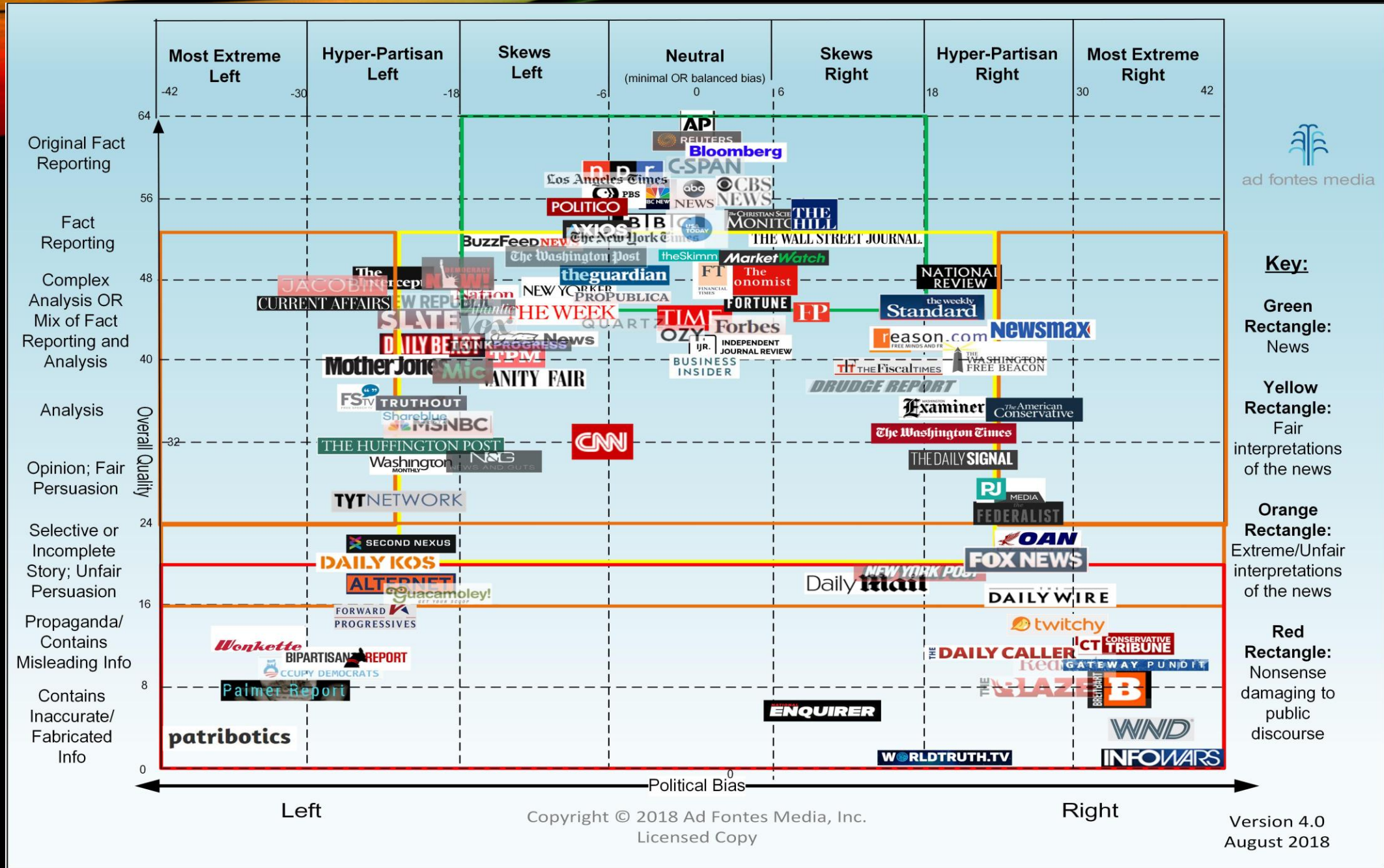


Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.

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Analyzing Information

Cultivate a balanced media diet



Take stock of your current media consumption

Identify reputable news sources

Consume a balanced diet - not one source

Limit “junk food” sources - sensationalism

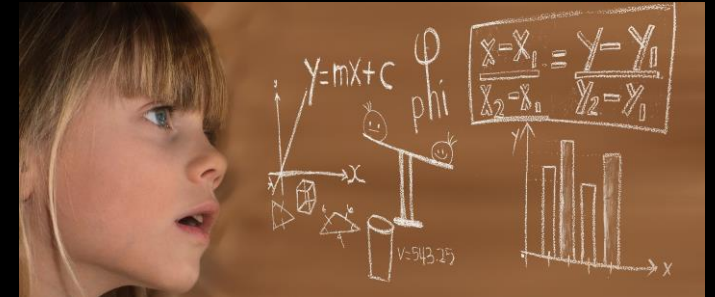
Trim the fat - spending too much time on FB

Practice mindful media consumption - focus

Analyzing Information

Training – on Media literacy

Classes on logic, critical thinking, media literacy, statistics, scientific method



Examples (besides NOVA/LLI!):

- ❑ Fairfax County library workshop: “Fighting Fake News with Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse”
- ❑ Comcast (internetessentials.com/learning)
- ❑ National Association of Media Literacy Educators (namele.net)
- ❑ Older Adults Technical Service (OATS) (oats.org)

Conclusion

With a vast and growing array of sources of information and news and technologies delivering it – We must learn to use the technologies effectively, critically evaluate those sources and mindfully consider ourselves as sources



Questions?

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Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Communications Policy and Regulation Division

Assists with cable-related problems and cable safety and construction issues

- Call: 703-324-5902 or • email: CPRD@FairfaxCounty.gov or • Web: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/cable

Consumer Affairs Branch

Includes cable billing and all complaints against a business in the County

- Call for advice: 703-222-8435 • File complaints: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer-complaint-form-information