

PRESS RELEASE

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## The internet is the primary source of news for more than half of Finns

**Already more than half of Finns report the internet as their primary source of news, according to the Digital News Report 2019 survey published by the Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford. The share of Finns who get their news solely from online media is also increasing.**

The position of the internet as the primary source of news has strengthened at the same time as the role of print media has continuously diminished. The popularity of using only social media and blogs as the primary source of news has steadily increased. Now the share of social media is 9 percent, or the same as that of print media.

“The brand awareness of Finnish news brands is still strong. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in Finland, people still mainly go directly to the brands’ websites or applications, unlike in the comparison countries where the primary channels to news are social media, news portals and search engines,” says **Noora Alanne**, Director, New Growth at Finnmedia and Executive Director at the Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland.

The use of news sources has become clearly different in different age groups. For people under the age of 55, the primary source of news is the internet, whereas for older age groups, it is television. Social media and blogs have a strong foothold especially among the youngest age group. In the oldest age group, print media is the primary news source, in addition to television.

“In the youngest age group, YouTube has increased its popularity as a source of news alongside Facebook. One of the factors behind this may be the success of influencers such as YouTubers,” suggests Alanne.

The majority of Finns follow both print and online media. However, the number of people who use online media as the sole source of news has increased, while the number of people who follow news in both print and online media has decreased.

### Finns trust news

In all Digital News Report surveys since 2015, trust towards news has been higher among Finns than the citizens of any other participating country. This is the case this year, too. A total of 59 percent of Finns said that they can trust most news and 70 percent said that they can trust most news they follow themselves. Building trust plays a key role in the daily work of journalists.

“In many newsrooms, editorial staff are now contemplating more profoundly the concrete issues that affect the audiences’ trust. Insight helps create practices and make clear reforms that make it possible to strengthen trust,” comments **Kaius Niemi**, Senior Editor-in-Chief of Helsingin Sanomat.

Nevertheless, trust is declining also among Finns. Since 2015, Finns’ trust towards most news has decreased by 9 percentage points and towards news they follow themselves by 2 percentage points. “A possible interpretation is that this is associated with the general international trend, in which trust towards established political institutions is decreasing while the significance of personal networks as a source of trust is emphasized,” comments **Esa Reunanen**, Researcher, Tampere Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET), Tampere University.

### **The popularity of smartphones is increasing**

The use of smartphones as a tool for accessing news has become increasingly popular. “Thus far, the computer has been the most popular device for accessing online news, but this year, the share of people using smartphones for this purpose was already equally high,” notes Reunanen.

Already 38 percent of Finns said that the smartphone is their primary device for accessing news. This is more than ever before. At the same time, the smartphone overtook the computer as the primary device for following news. There are differences in the use of devices between genders and age groups: women and people under the age of 45 prefer using a smartphone to access online news, whereas men and people over the age of 45 usually use a computer.

“Young audiences especially yearn for profound and analytical content in a format that can be consumed quickly. Speed is essential as there are many other things competing for the smartphone user’s time. Previously, media houses competed with each other, but now Yle’s news notifications fight for attention on the smartphone start screen with all other stimuli available,” says **Jukka Niva**, Head of Yle News Lab.

### **News videos and podcasts supplement news offering**

News videos have become an established part of newspapers’ and magazines’ online content and one can also watch TV channels online. A total of 53 percent of Finns said they have watched news videos. “Clearly the most preferred news video content is ‘happening right now’ kind of live content, as well as videos that illustrate things that just could not be explained in text,” comments Erja Yläjärvi, Senior Editor-in-Chief of Iltalehti.

In Finland, news websites and news applications are more popular options for accessing news than third-party platforms. In all other countries participating in the survey, the situation is the opposite. “Finland’s difference when compared to other countries is based on the fact that here news is generally followed directly on news websites and less on social media,” observes Reunanen.

Podcasts have also established their position in the news media offering. Yle, for instance, features podcast series, and the newspapers, magazines and channels of Sanoma Media Finland offer podcasts through the Supla service. Finns are not the most enthusiastic audio listeners among the comparison participants, but they are not the least either: 26 percent report having listened to podcasts. The popularity of podcasts has increased by two percentage points from last year.

In Finland's country report, research results are also commented on by **Pekka Mervola**, Senior Editor-in-Chief of Keskisuomalainen; **Kaius Niemi**, Senior Editor-in-Chief of Helsingin Sanomat; **Jukka Niva**, Head of Yle News Lab; **Silja Tenhunen**, Content Manager at Etelä-Suomen Media; and **Erja Yläjärvi**, Senior Editor-in-Chief of Iltalehti.

The Reuters Institute Digital News Report compares the use of news in 38 countries. The survey is conducted annually, and Finland has been included since 2014. The information is based on a questionnaire with approximately 2,000 respondents from each country.

#### Further information

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