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Qualitative Discussion Report

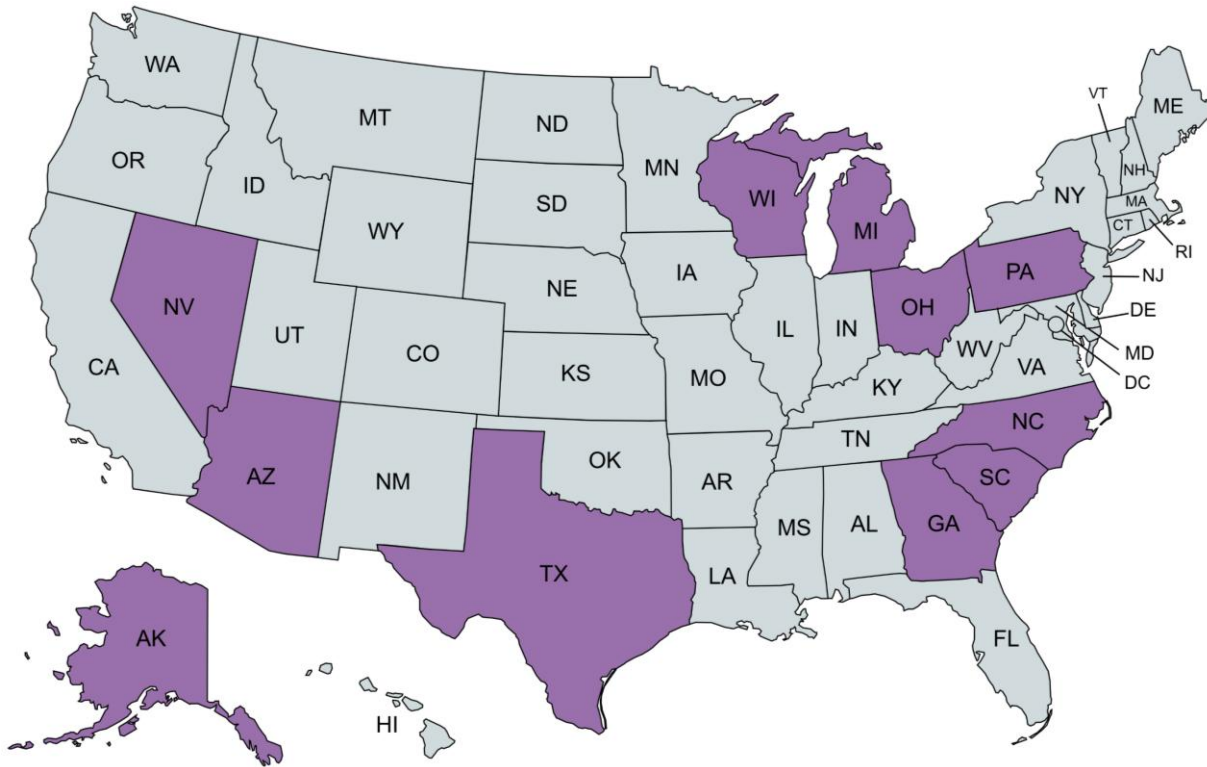
Monday, August 3, 2026

Young Passive News Consumers on
the Media



Methodology

On July 14-16, 2026, GBAO conducted an online qualitative discussion with 26 18–44-year-old passive news consumers (those who do not seek out the news and say the news “comes to them.”) Participants were in battleground Senate and presidential states and were independents or weak partisans and a mix of race, gender, and education.



An online qualitative discussion (QualBoard) is similar to a discussion board. Participants logged on over three days to answer pre-programmed question with written responses, pictures, links, and videos. Participants were not able to see others' responses until they answered the question themselves. Moderators followed up with participants when necessary to get more detailed responses.

*AK, AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, OH, PA, SC, TX, WI

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Key Takeaways

- Passive news consumers are pessimistic about the state of the country
- Instead of not getting news at all, passive news consumers are obtaining a lot of news and information - including political news - just not from traditional sources
- Passive news consumers, similar to everyone else, like content that is straightforward, informative, authentic, and fact checked
- Many seek alternative sources and stories, and value being entertained or seeing something debunked or discovered
- News is often seen as depressing, and people are looking for amidst division

Many See The Country As Dangerously Divided, And Worry Many Are No Longer Willing To Respectfully Disagree

Moderator: What word would you use to describe how things are going in the country today?



PA man, white weak Republican

"Relatively speaking I think that the country is doing fine but we are **quite polarized**. I picked this word because generally people are either on one side or the other and sometimes have trouble talking about controversial topics."



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"Divided. It seems like both political sides **want to divide the other on key topics** and put them in a box. Identity politics from certain topics and groups doesn't help in that regard either."



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I would use the word divided. I picked that word because I **see the rise of 'in' and 'out' groups** where people are either accepted or rejected based on their political/religious/social opinions."



WI man, white independent lean Republican

"The country is divided. **Too many things are partisan** and neither side is working together to get things done for the best of our country."



TX man, Black independent lean Democrat

"**Divided**. It appears as no one wants a resolution, to compromise. They just want to be right but more so make the other side wrong."

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From Basics Like Food To Simple Pleasures Like A T-shirt, Everything Is Seen As Unaffordable

Moderator: Thinking some more about costs, where are rising costs affecting you the most in your own life?

n. OH woman, Black weak Republican

"The cost of **food, rent, and utilities** [is increasing]. I own my home so I have a mortgage, but the rising cost of food is going to price me out of my house eventually."

n. GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I'm a student, so I feel rising costs hitting my wallet every day. When I buy **everyday essentials like meats, fruits, and dairy**. Even when I want to **enjoy my life and go out to eat** or get the occasional study coffee I feel like I **spend more and more on these things that should just be normal life**. It hurts when I can only work part time while being a student and my wages have stagnated as well."

n. NC woman, Black independent lean Democrat

"The cost of **gas fluctuates so much like hormonal mood swings**. Food! Egg prices outside of Sams is so high, I do not understand! The rising cost of canned goods is also out there."

n. TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat

I remember growing up, \$20 for a t-shirt was considered too much, movie tickets were mostly affordable, you could easily eat at any fast food place for \$5-8, maybe treat yourself to a casual restaurant for \$15ish, but **that's all just a memory as I face much higher costs.**"

n. TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I remember when **SNAP was cancelled for a month or two**. We really had to figure out how to make up that amount which was already very minimal compared to the current hiking prices of food. We had to get creative. Eat less, maximize on what's cheap and filling. Seek out free food pantries. If they did it then, they can do it again."

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Most People Have Taken Some Kind Of Action To Help Understand, Handle, Or Track Their Finances

Moderator: Have taken any of the following actions recently to handle rising costs? [list provided]

n. SC man, Hispanic independent lean Republican
"I cleaned my room fully a month ago and **set aside a bunch of stuff I don't use anymore just so I could have some emergency funds.** I like to use ChatGPT just to help give me structure in planning. After a friend convinced me about Klarna I used it a bit here and there, but debt freaks me out so I stopped using it."

n. WI woman, Black independent
"I have started working **extra hours at my job to supplement my income.** I also sell things on eBay to earn extra income. I use the pay in four to help with big expenses where I can."

n. GA woman, white independent lean Democrat
"Alongside my job, I have **started teaching piano lessons to supplement income.** I also sell stuff on Depop and Facebook marketplace which makes me some extra money throughout the month. I've also followed many financial creators that talk about investing and not buying frivolous things and where to save so that my dollar can go further."

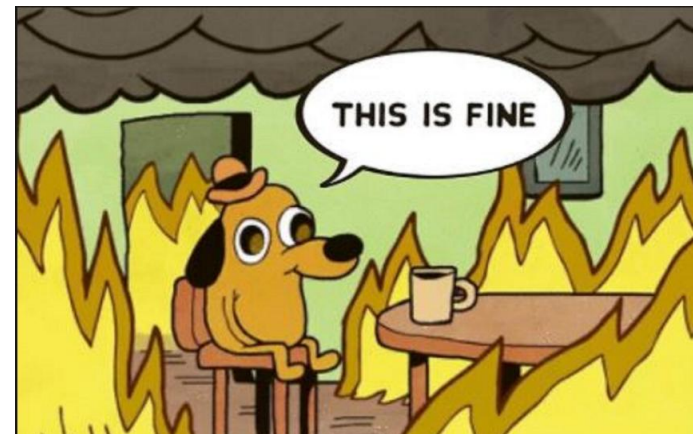
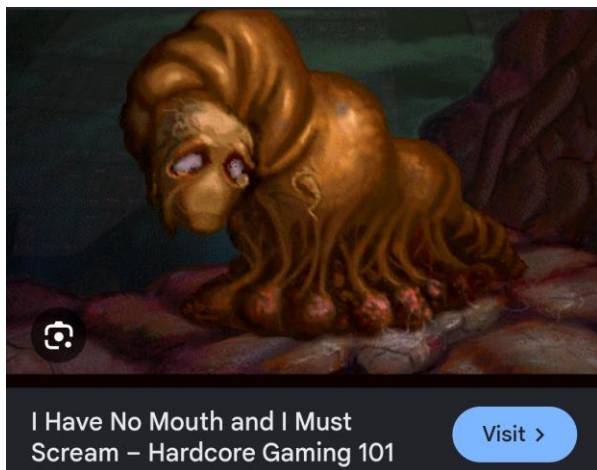
n. AK man, white independent lean Democrat
"**Combed through my items** and tried to minimize but also make some money if I am not using something. I have **opened up two/three new cards recently** to better try and optimize my cashback/rewards."

n. OH woman, white weak Republican
"**Buy now pay later for nonessentials,** I can't imagine paying it for something like groceries for small splurges like vacation things is generally where I do this. Like VRBO rentals. I [also] sell things personally to pay bills and fund trips."

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Images Used To Illustrate The State Of America Center On Concerns Over Costs, Corruption, And Polarization

Moderator: I'd like for you to find something online that represents how you feel things are going in the country today.



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Trump Is Mostly Reviled, Views On Political Parties Are More Mixed

Moderator: I'd like you to rate and give your immediate and brief impressions of each person or group.

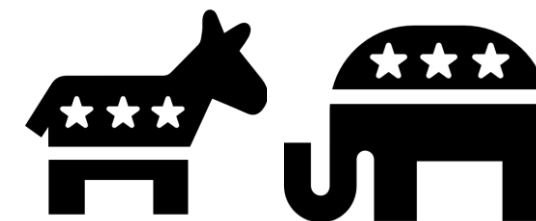
n. SC man, Hispanic independent lean Republican
"Watching everyone lie back and forth for years, I just don't really care for either side, but I think I look down on Democrats more. I don't like how much they **pander to the idea of them being the 'correct option'** ; they're just as bad as everyone else. I've always hated PC stuff."

n. GA woman, white independent lean Democrat
"The Democratic party has grown on me, ever since the Republicans turned MAGA....The **Republican Party has disappointed me**. They were the party of my youth and I just no longer agree with them and their sucking up to DJT."

n. TX man, white independent
"Donald Trump: an **inept man** who only bullies people and does not know how to make a good deal. The Democratic Party: a party that **only favors its own agenda** and does not represent the people who align with it. The Republican Party: A party who **only favors corporations and money**."

n. OH woman, Black weak Republican
"I find Trump and the existing political factions **extremely unfavorable** as none of them are doing anything to support the types of change everyday Americans need to live better."

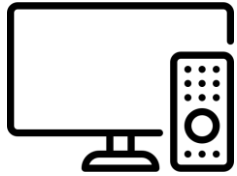
n. GA woman, white independent lean Republican
"Trump is **messing everything up** and going into wars we don't need to be in. The liberals are just whining but **not doing anything**. The Republicans are just letting Trump run this country into the ground."



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"The Media" Often Means CNN, Fox, Etc., But Several Also Thought Of Social Media Sites

Moderator: When someone says "the media" what comes to mind?



MI man, AAPI weak Republican

"Mainly mainstream news channels like **CNN**, **Fox**, **MSNBC**, **CBS**, etc."



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

"I first think of traditional media news sources such as **CNN** or **Fox**. That is, news reporting outlets either on television or online. But I also think about **social media** falling under this umbrella too. Independent sources rather than branded companies."



SC man, Hispanic independent lean Republican

"Social apps such as **Instagram**, **Facebook**, and **Twitter**."



PA woman, white weak Democrat

"I think of **online social media**, and the news. A lot of the time I think of independent journalists online and TikTok."



TX man, Black independent lean Democrat

"News outlets. **CNN**, **FOX**, **NBC**, and the other major networks and newspapers like **NYTimes**."



NV woman, Black weak Democrat

"I immediately think of news outlets such as **CNN** and **Fox News**. Then my next thought is **social media** since so many of us consume news that way as well, whether it be Facebook, Instagram or X."

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Whatever “The Media” Is Conceived Of, Most View It As Biased, Divisive, And Getting Worse



AZ man, Hispanic independent

“When I hear 'the media,' I just picture a **massive noise machine** that's trying to keep everyone stressed out and angry for clicks. It's not even just traditional cable news anymore; it's also those **massive YouTube commentary channels and TikToks blowing everything out of proportion**. It all just feels like a constant, exhausting stream of **sensationalism** instead of actual, straightforward information.”



WI man, white independent lean Republican

“**Not trustworthy, not consistent**, biased towards certain things, parent companies that politically lean one way.”



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

“Rather than simply delivering information, these entities seem to **spin things their way**. I am favorable to some individual creators since they can be more likely to at least reveal their incentive rather than just spinning something.”



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

“I feel like **almost every news channel has more allegiance to a political figure or party** than to delivering the actual news anymore.”



PA man, white weak Republican

“My view of the news has **absolutely gone downhill** and I feel that there is a whole lot of fake news. A lot of it is just toxic negativity that is unnecessary.”



TX man, Black independent lean Democrat

“**More unfavorable over the last few years**. More opinions than facts, and repetition as if things are facts but very unsupported. Many times things they say don't make sense or they leave out details.”

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News Is Also Stressful, Which Is The Reason Most Give For Not Following The News More Closely

What's holding you back from spending more time following news and information?

n. OH woman, white weak Republican

"Mental health... sometimes it just seems that the **news is full of disappointing things** and it's not great to hear that all the time especially right now there's war [and] people are upset. Prices are high. People are struggling. There's a border crisis. It's all a lot."

n. GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"**Burnout.** I already hear so much news that disheartens me that I don't want to consume more in my free time. **The opportunity cost** of spending time in the real world is too high."

n. NC woman, Black independent lean Democrat

"**My mental health is holding me back** from following news and information. I follow what I can without causing too much damage. I believe many of the news is negative and leaves people feeling hopeless."

n. OH woman, Black weak Republican

"**Stress. There is no need to stress myself out over things I cannot change.** I can vote out crappy congress people but I cannot make the government care about its citizens more than they care about money."

n. TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat

"I believe that there's **only so much new 'scary' information you can take in** on a daily basis, and overloading that is more detrimental than it is beneficial."

n. PA woman, white weak Democrat

"I try to avoid looking up the news as it can be too **depressing** for me."

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There Are A Variety Of Popular Non-Traditional News Outlets

Moderator: What specific outlets would you say you find most valuable in learning about what's going on in the country?



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I follow an account called **Bikini Bottom News** on Instagram that delivers news in a mostly neutral way while staging it like SpongeBob which I think is fun. I keep up on current events with just a scroll too and if I need to do more digging. I also follow the New York Times to receive posts such as those on my page."



NC woman, Black independent lean Democrat

"I follow **Aaron Parnas** on TikTok, so I get some updates about the news such as topics on ICE, Trump, health and laws etc. Resourceful and informative. I have seen so many updates on the Cyclosporiasis outbreak from Aaron Parnas, **NowThis Impact**, **Daily Show** and other smaller creators on TikTok and YouTube."



NV woman, Black weak Democrat

"First, I would go to **Reddit** so I can read unfiltered opinions on the news articles. I find that is where people feel free to share their opinions regardless of how others might feel."



SC man, white independent

"I check out **Joe Rogan's podcast** frequently and I'd say a good 30–40% of guests have something topical, newsworthy or political to talk about."



OH woman, Black weak Republican

"I find **Reddit** and **Nextdoor** useful for learning about what is happening in my community. When it comes to national news I tend to read Google News."



AZ man, Hispanic independent

"On YouTube, I rely on channels like **Johnny Harris**, **Vox**, and **TLDR News**. These creators actually break down the history, economics, and context behind events."

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For Many, Trustworthy News Sources “Offer Multiple Perspectives,” Are Not “Owned By The Bigger Corporations”

Moderator: What makes a source of information not trustworthy?



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

“If it **didn't play political favorites** and just told the news like it happened [I would trust it more]. People are allowed to have opinions of course, however, when it is presented in a way to purposely divide people politically, it makes it untrustworthy.”



NC woman, Black independent lean Democrat

I would trust a news source that was **not owned by the bigger corporations**. I would trust the news source more if they actually reported honestly on the events occurring unbiased.”



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

“If it's coming from a huge corporation news reporting, I feel less trusting of it.”



WI man, white independent lean Republican

“Having X have **verified reporters and news outlets** – I can quickly see who is real and who is fake. I do my due diligence before reposting something or sharing.”



AZ man, Hispanic independent

“To truly trust a news source, it would need complete **immunity from both government control and funding pressure**....Since that's nearly impossible in the real world, the absolute closest thing is finding independent creators who are completely **transparent** about who is paying their bills and where their biases lie.”

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What's Not Trustworthy, Popular, Or Persuasive Is Content From Elected Officials



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I find elected officials or candidates to be **too polished**. I don't find them trustworthy."



SC man, white independent

"I rarely consume content from an elected official or candidate (with a few exceptions) as I feel that most of them are **constrained by their talking points** and appealing to their voters or donors."



NC woman, white independent lean Republican

"The last person I would trust is a politician."



TX woman, white weak Republican

"**Politicians are so far left or so far right** you can't get me to change my mind based off of something that they've posted."



WI woman, Black independent

"I try to **steer clear of anything that is politically related** until I hear the unbiased facts."



TX woman, Hispanic independent

"**Nothing has reached my interest** as the current state of America seems to not improve."



WI woman, Black independent

"There has been **no time that made me change my mind about something that came from the political candidate**."

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Content About A Candidate Or Elected Official Participants Did Like Felt Honest And Emphasized Results For People

Moderator: Share with me a piece of content by or about a candidate or elected official that you enjoyed.



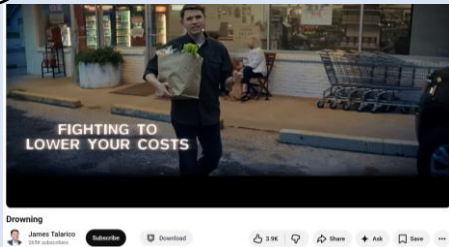
NV woman, Black weak Democrat



"I've been following **Susie Lee** over the past few years, and she works hard on the Hill for her citizens. Here is another example of that. I enjoy her weekly emails on **what she's done that week to fight for Nevadans.**"



TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat



"I enjoyed this commercial because it **feels honest and like he actually cares about us.**"



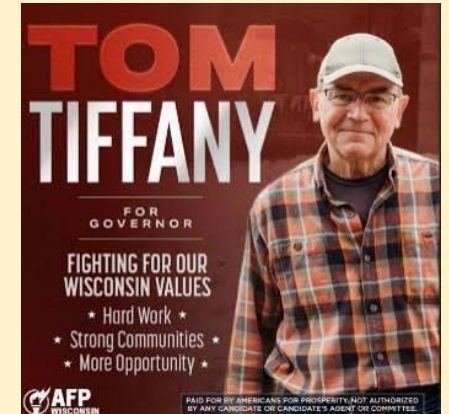
GA woman, Black independent



"I love everything that this woman stands for. She stands for justice and her delivery is authentically amazing."



WI man, white independent lean Republican



"Tom Tiffany is running for governor in WI. He is **consistent and authentic** in portraying himself as an everyday man in our state."

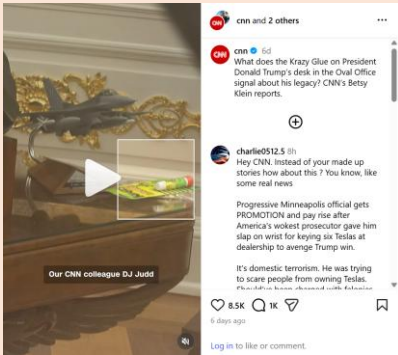
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Disliked Content About Candidates Is Seen As Sensationalist, Trivial, Or Dishonest

Moderator: Share with me a piece of content by or about a candidate or elected official that you didn't enjoy.



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat



"It's a CNN story about Krazy Glue on Trump's desk. I'm so sorry but **who actually cares**, and I'm not going to analyze the 'hidden significance' of this."



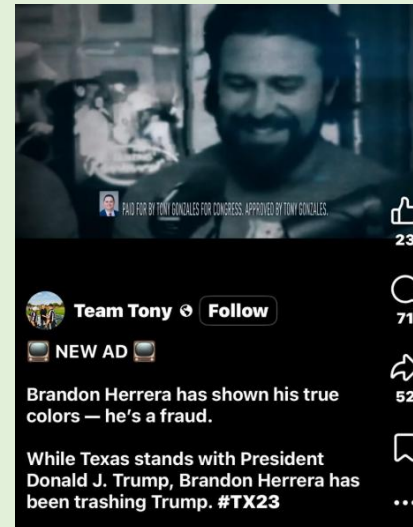
AK man, white independent lean Democrat



"I don't appreciate the message since it comes across as a bit **patronizing and minimizes the actual challenges that we face** on a day-to-day basis."



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat



"I don't like the tone of this content. I don't really know who to believe anymore. This made me **feel like we don't have a good pool of candidates to begin with.**"



TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat



"A slander campaign on Talarico, feels very **disingenuous and dramatic**, obviously targeting people susceptible to fear."

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Interesting News Stories Have It All—Positivity, Brevity, Compassion, Accuracy, Relevance, And Engaging Creative

Moderator: What are some characteristics of what you find to be an interesting news story?

n. SC man, white independent

"Characteristics that I tend to find interesting are **novel information** (things I, and probably many in the general public would not be aware of). Other characteristics are **candor, levity, and humor.**"

n. NV woman, Black weak Democrat

"Mainly **relatability!** Is this something that I can relate to or empathize with? Does it lighten the mood since I tend to steer clear of heavy story lines."

n. PA woman, white weak Democrat

"Usually for an interesting news story it has to be something intense like a **huge statistic shown in my face** about the damage done to a community or people in general or it would be a shocking event that transpired. It usually just has to **catch me by surprise and educate me.**"

n. MI man, AAPI weak Republican

"Something that is either **new and positive**, or something that immediately **impacts my personal life.**"

n. PA man, white weak Republican

"Of course I am going to listen to an opinion from someone who I agree with and trust, **short summaries are ideal as well as easily interpretable charts/graphs.**"

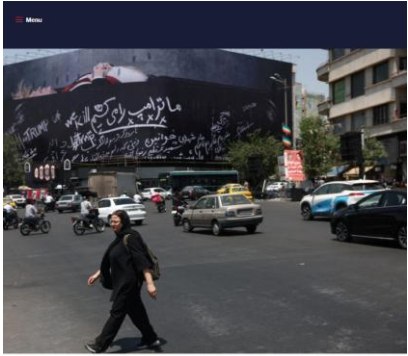
n. AZ man, Hispanic independent

"I just want to see how the gears of the world actually work without all the clickbait drama. I'm always down for stories that **show you the weird, unexpected connections behind the scenes.** Just give me the actual facts and let me piece it together myself."

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Recent Interesting Stories That Stuck Out Include “Traditional” Big News Stories Like ICE, Iran And The World Cup...

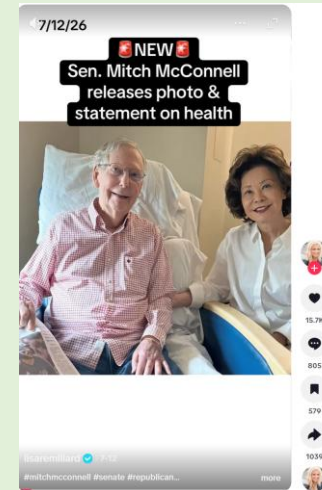
Moderator: What online stories or pieces of content over the last day did you find interesting?



U.S. reimposes blockade and steps up strikes as Iran threatens to halt all energy exports from the region



OH woman, white weak Democrat



“I thought that this whole thing is interesting because he’s so old and ill that they had to **make him pose with the newspaper** to show that he’s alive.”



WI man, white independent lean Republican

“World Cup and how people from other parts of the world are amazed by how great the USA is. It's the media telling them a different story than how things really are. It is a bit refreshing to see and hopefully more people will come to the USA to enjoy what we have and spend money here.”



NC woman, white independent lean Republican



“I originally saw it on TikTok **before I searched for the article myself**. The video of the ICE agents pulling him out of the vehicle was gut wrenching....I think the ICE agents and DHS are 100% at fault for this.”

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As Well As More Niche Stories That Center On “Debunking” Or Uncovering Hidden Facts

Moderator: What online stories or pieces of content over the last day did you find interesting?



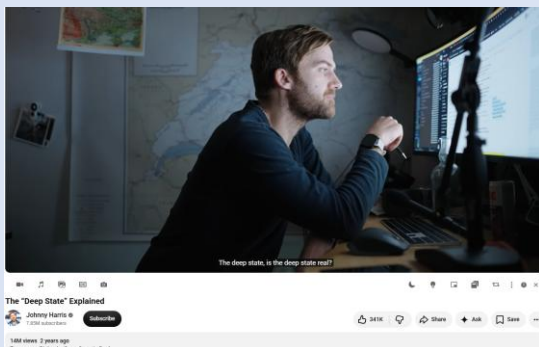
GA woman, Black independent



“It reminds me that everything that we as humans were taught here on his planet may and could be, or is a lie.”



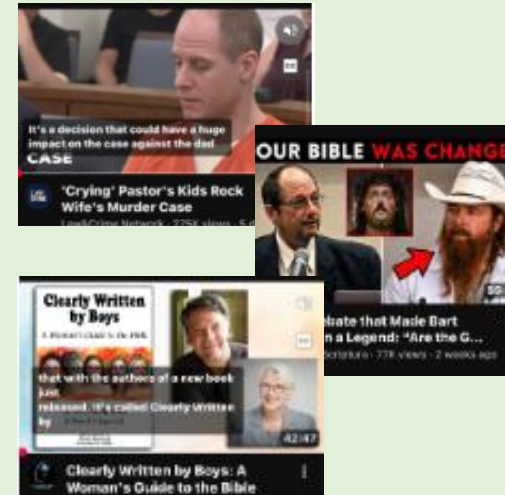
AZ man, Hispanic independent



“I picked this video from Johnny Harris's channel: “The ‘Deep State’ Explained.” I chose this one because it's a perfect example of why this style of news is so much better.”



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat



“They all deal with religious deconstruction, as well as information on religious leaders that have been connected to some type of crime, and the process of exposing them.”



PA man, white weak Republican



“This is an article talking about how McGregor may have been injured before the UFC fight this past weekend which I already had thought. This article is memorable because it confirmed a hunch of mine.”

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Many Say The Person Presenting The News Is More Important Than The Outlet, Or Even The News Itself

Moderator: When it comes to making the news interesting, how important is the person explaining the news versus the show or outlet itself?



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"If the person is lackadaisical or not interested themselves in the topic, then it **can become uninteresting**. But if the deliverer is intrigued, invested, and intent on covering that story and explains it well then it remains or **becomes more interesting**."



SC man, white independent

"I think the person explaining the issue carries **significantly more importance** than the show or outlet. If a knowledgeable and/or unbiased guest appears on an otherwise biased show or platform, and is allowed to speak their piece, I'm often interested in what that individual has to say."



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

"For me, the show/outlet is not important. I put a lot more weight on the individual reporter over the outlet itself. For example, when I grew up my family watched a lot of Fox....We **preferred individual reporters/anchors over others even though they were associated with the same outlet**."



OH woman, white weak Democrat

"I think the person relaying the news is more important than the show/outlet itself when it comes to being interesting. This is because the outlet can be really 'boring' but sometimes **the way a person delivers the news can make it interesting** and easier to hold attention."



NV woman, Black weak Democrat

"I think the person explaining the news is much more important than the show or outlet itself because **'delivery' of the news is what determines its effectiveness**. Tone matters in how it will be interpreted by those consuming it."

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There Is A Widespread Desire For More Positive News – And Less About War and Tragedy

Moderator: What stories do you feel you get too much of? What stories do you feel you aren't getting enough of?

n. GA woman, white independent lean Democrat
"The good things happening in the world. Let me see **cancer being cured, climate change mitigated, hungry being fed, and cats saved from trees.**"

n. SC man, white strong independent
"I feel like I'm not getting enough "good news" or positive stories about **new science or innovative technologies.**"

n. OH man, white weak Republican
"I feel like there's not a lot of good news out there. I mean, I try to watch Good Morning America and The Today Show so that I get a little sense of **feel-good news**, but it feels like the actual news itself is just full of negativity and hurt and hate.

n. MI man, AAPI weak Republican
"**War in the Middle East.** It's always a different variation of tragedy, bombing, and usually the same outcome."

n. PA woman, white weak Democrat
"I get **too much of the 'it's the end of the world'** posts, like talking about how bad everything is now...it's become too sad."

n. TX man, white independent
"Sometimes it is the **attacks on Iran.** It is like content being recycled or they are reporting off each other's content."



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Some Determine The Veracity Of News Using Google Or X Or Wait To See The Information From Multiple Sources, Others "Take It At Face Value"

Moderator: What do you do when you're not sure whether a news story or fact is real or not?



GA woman, Black independent

"I have the **gift of discernment**. I can listen to information and hear the tones of the individual delivering the information; by mental data collecting, I can **decipher if the information is truthful**, even when there are inconsistencies within stories where the truth may be mixed with lies."



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

"I usually search for the news event **across other outlets** to see if it is being reported similarly. Especially from outlets **across the political spectrum**. Elements of the truth will often lie somewhere in the middle of these."



PA man, white weak Republican

"If I care enough, I'll **fact check** it. If not, I'll let it go and move on with my life."



SC man, white independent

"I do a **Google** search, check **AP, Reddit**, and/or **X**."



AZ man, Hispanic independent

"Check how many other places are reporting it and sources."



OH woman, white weak Democrat

"**Take it at face value**. Sometimes if it's an interesting enough topic, I try to look up more information about it online."

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News Consumption Is a Largely Solitary Affair

Moderator: Where are you typically when you are following news and information about what's going on?



MI man, AAPI weak Republican

"I'm **typically at home and/or alone**...but there are times when I'm not at home and I'm on social media where I see some new or interesting news, and many times I am with friends here, and it's interesting and I'm with friends who share commonalities on the news topic, I may discuss it with them as well."



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I'm **usually alone and on an internet connected device**. I'm not paying attention to those around me and consuming media for myself."



OH woman, white weak Democrat

"Typically, I am **alone or with my family but usually at home**. Sometimes I am sitting by myself scrolling on my phone or in my kitchen with my family in the living room listening to the news while I am cooking or cleaning."



SC man, white independent

"Typically, I am **at home and alone, in my bedroom**, which doubles as my work from home space, taking a break from work or other household activities. Occasionally I encounter new information when I am in the living room with my family and they have a news program on television...but I do not tend to stick around to watch that much."



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

"I am **usually at home alone**. I might make a cup of coffee and if I have time after some house chores, I'll sit down and scroll through a few apps to check and see what's happening."

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Many Have Changed Their Lifestyle As A Result Of News Stories, But Few Have Taken Political Action

Moderator: Describe a time you (made a lifestyle change/took a political action) because of news or information you saw online.



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I went out to an anti-ICE protest in my town because I knew there would be one going on from information I saw online. I also didn't like the info I saw about Trump and used my vote to oppose it."



GA man, weak Democrat

"When it comes to politics, I find myself out of the conversation completely for the most part, so nothing has encouraged me to take political action because I know my efforts won't matter enough to make a change."



NV woman, Black weak Democrat

"I read an article a couple years ago that said 'you're not getting old, you just need to stretch.' It literally made me sign up for stretch sessions and I've made it a part of my wellness lifestyle. It's changed a lot for me and as I get older, joint health is important."



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"Never happened to me. I am aware that I can be politically involved however I'm not interested in taking sides and being loud about specific issues or backing up political figures."



NC woman, white independent lean Republican

"I started drinking hot water with lemon and chia seeds every morning because of a Chinese medicine video I watched. I've lost 10 lbs since I started."



TX woman, white weak Republican

"It hasn't happened for me mainly because it doesn't feel like I'm going to make a difference."

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An Aaron Parnas Video On Trump Losing Court Cases Is Generally Viewed As Fair And Credible, Though Some Question The Medium



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I'd like to see screenshots about the sources he's getting his information from. However, for the most part, it seemed neutral in telling the news. He didn't bash Trump and say he was an awful person for this, nor did he side with Trump and ask for 'justice' or anything."



NC woman, white independent lean Republican

"My first reaction is disbelief. I don't know who this is, he looks like a TikTok influencer."



WI man, white independent lean Republican

"He did a good job reporting on the facts of the day about what happened to the president in court. Did not tip his hand on whether or not he agreed or disagreed with the decisions."



MI man, AAPI weak Republican

"For the most part, he tries to give off the vibe that he is unbiased, and most of the time he does give factual information, but the only caveat is that he almost only covers negative news surrounding Trump, rather than negative AND positive views surrounding him. For that reason, I find it informational, but irrelevant and negative."



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I find this news pretty neutral and still informative....He gave names and numbers which I can easily do further research on if I want to verify it. I like the lack of emotion that way I can simply focus on the news itself."

navigator.

Dr. Jessica Knurick on SNAP Was The Best Liked Video, With Many Finding Her Compelling and Authoritative



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I really like this creator because she's **not afraid to clock people spreading misinformation online** about scientific health facts. Almost always provides something in her videos either on screen or mentioned that backs up scientifically what she's saying."



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I really appreciate this type of content.... **She changed my mind, she educated me.** She showed me information that I didn't know about, opened additional questions I have, and I know that this content directly impacts my family and my community."



WI man, white independent lean Republican

"She was strong on her stances but would not consider the **opposing views** and how taxpayer dollars should be spent sensibly. It was a one-sided argument she made."



PA man, weak Republican

"Dr. Knurick makes a **clear and logical argument** for her case."



TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat

"I actually watched this video before! She's a great content creator and **provides a good argument that's both detailed yet simple.** I like how she does the visual sources which I enjoy and also presents the whole clip to minimize misunderstanding and the risk of 'but you cropped it to your convenience' argument."



MI man, AAPI weak Republican

"**Negative.** This lady also has **very anti-Trump admin** views, and I've seen her videos as well. There are some basic common-sense arguments that I can easily make against her opinions here..."

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A Clip Posted By Don Lemon Of Trump Confusing Nicki Minaj Was Least Popular, Mainly Eliciting Reactions That Conform To Preexisting Views Of Trump

n* AK man, white independent lean Democrat
"Not sure if this is real. There is some awkward blurring. This makes me wonder if it's being posted as click-bait. Or what the motivation is of the poster."

n* TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat
"Negative, all around, just one of his many mess ups that make us question his capabilities."

n* PA man, white weak Republican
"I didn't think he was slurring - people are very quick to point fingers at Trump for every little mistake."

n* GA man, weak Democrat
"Just mainly entertainment for someone that is anti-Trump."

n* GA man, weak Democrat
"Not surprised here, the man is way too old to be running the country....Times are changing and we need to bring younger, more educated people into politics."

n* AZ man, Hispanic independent
"Another grain in the sand of embarrassing stuff he's said."

n* GA woman, white independent lean Democrat
"Not helpful to society and continues to push a divisive narrative."

n* NC woman, Black weak Democrat
"My least favorite, mainly because it's not informative and strictly for entertainment."

navigator*

AI Evokes A Wide Range Of Anxiety And Excitement

Moderator: What emotion comes up for you when you hear the phrase "AI"?



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"I dislike the idea of using AI to create fake news. I **have seen my elderly parents and in-laws fall for certain information that cost them money.** I have also seen even friends and family that I expected to be better at detecting AI fall for misinformation as well."



OH woman, Black weak Republican

"I'm worried about people that think it's actually capable of thinking, reasoning, or explaining the truth. That **it will become another echo chamber that people don't know how to escape.** And that this misuse of AI will increase its environmental footprint. Data centers are negatively impacting the quality of life for so many people."



TX, AAPI independent lean Democrat

"It's a **mixed bag of excitement and distrust.**" woman



SC man, white independent

"Probably **my biggest concern is cybersecurity.** The ability for AI systems and/or quantum computers to break current encryption protocols and the need for white hat AI systems and/or quantum computers to counter such attacks is troubling."



WI man, white independent lean Republican

"Fear is a big emotion as **many are unsure if their jobs could be replaced by cheaper AI** in the future."



PA man, white weak Republican

"**Wonderful, helpful, efficient.**"

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Most Think Of LLMs When They Think Of AI, But In The News And Social Media It's Less Top Of Mind

Moderator: What do you consider AI? Are there specific platforms, websites, or uses that come to mind?



TX man, Hispanic independent lean Democrat

"AI is a broad general term but colloquially in conversations about "THE" AI, I would consider LLMs that generate content/responses such as Claude, Grok, and Gemini."



PA man, white weak Republican

"I consider AI to be the variety of chatbots integrated into our daily lives and as a tool to help us. ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini, among others come to mind (especially those built into websites)."



OH woman, white weak Democrat

"I do not think I have ever seen [AI news]. I look and see who posts the videos I see and none of them scream AI to me."



GA man, weak Democrat

"I feel like people are going to get misinformed by AI generated news, especially if it is portraying false information. Not everyone is good at detecting AI, especially those who are new to seeing the content online."



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

"I feel like the AI content I'm prone to receive is more brainrot than political. I generally don't like to engage with political information on social media if it doesn't come from a real personal account or news network, so I don't come across that type of content."

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Passive News Consumers Wish “The Media” Knew That They Were “Normal,” “Intelligent,” “Hard Working”

Moderator: What do you wish people who write or produce news stories knew about people like you?



PA man, white weak Republican

“That we are **hard working and willing to help people** in the world. The news should promote everyone being nice to each other.”



TX woman, AAPI independent lean Democrat

“That I am **interested in exposing the good** that is happening around us because it brings much more hope and unity. I also like seeing news where justice was brought to victims.”



SC man, white independent

“That we exist, that **we are intelligent, that we are capable of forming our own opinions given straight facts**. That we are interested in what kinds of proactive and positive things can be done and don't want to complain.”



AK man, white independent lean Democrat

“I **don't like feeling like a vote that can be manipulated/influenced**. Let me make my decisions without trying to rally me/stir my emotions.”



GA woman, white independent lean Democrat

“That **we're normal, everyday citizens that just want to feel like we're making an impact** on the world around us. If we're constantly beat down with disheartening news, it discourages action in communities. Fuel the citizenry with support and hope at least from time to time!”



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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO.

About the Study

On July 14-16, 2026, GBAO conducted an online qualitative discussion with 26 18–44-year-old passive news consumers in battleground Senate and presidential states who are independents or weak partisans. Participants were a mix of race, gender, and education.

For Press Inquiries Contact:

Press@navigatorresearch.org

To learn more about Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

@NavigatorSurvey on Twitter

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*AK, AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, OH, PA, SC, TX, WI