

# Where Consumers Place Their Trust and Why It Matters in the Era of Fake News

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By Hadassa Gerber

PARTNER CONTENT



A reporter for local Houston, Texas, news station KPRC 2 covers flood conditions during Hurricane Harvey. Local TV news coverage is a consistently popular and trusted source for information, especially during major events. KPRC 2 & Click2Houston.com/YouTube

It's easy to recall a time when "fake news" wasn't a term firmly entrenched in the ongoing national conversation, but it's important to understand the implications of its rise in use. The ubiquitous (and notorious) phrase was first used to describe inaccurate content spread by fraudulent accounts on social media sites; it has more recently been used by President Donald J. Trump in his ongoing battle against a critical press. In a culture where reporting — and by extension journalistic integrity — is questioned, where can consumers turn and who do they trust for accurate information?

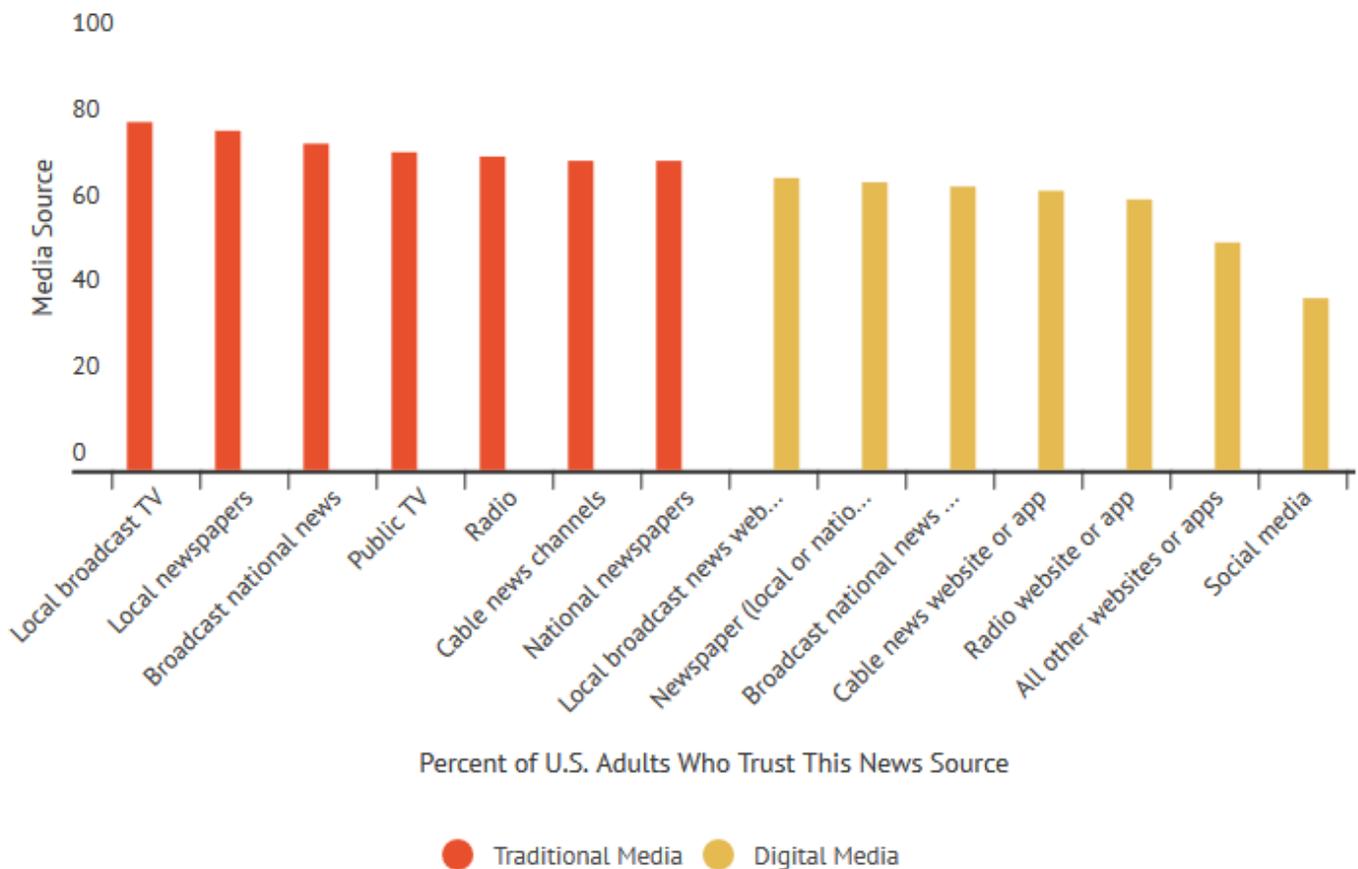
## What Are the Most Trusted News Sources?

In a June 2017 report from the CMO Council, 75 percent of respondents said they are worried about the growing number of fake or biased news sites. Sixty percent said it caused them to consume more content from trusted sources and channels.

According to Kantar's recent "Trust in News" global survey of 8,000 individuals across Brazil, France, the U.K., and the U.S., traditional print and broadcast media has the highest levels of trust while digital-only levels are much lower. Social media is by far the least trusted medium. While it appears that fake news has impacted trust in digital media, the reputation of mainstream news media for legitimate news remains largely intact.

In 2017, market research firm GfK, in conjunction with the TVB, conducted the "Purchase Funnel Study" to assess how different media affect consumers' purchasing decisions. The 3,000 participants were asked how much they trust news from various media sources; GfK found that 81 percent of respondents trust local broadcast TV news, compared to 72 percent for cable news. Social media registered as the least-trusted platform, at 40 percent. The most trusted digital platform was websites or apps from local broadcast TV news sources; 68 percent trust those websites/apps more than websites or apps from other media, including newspapers and cable news.

## Trust in Traditional Media News Sources Remains High Among U.S. Adults



source: 2017 GfK TVB Purchase Funnel Study

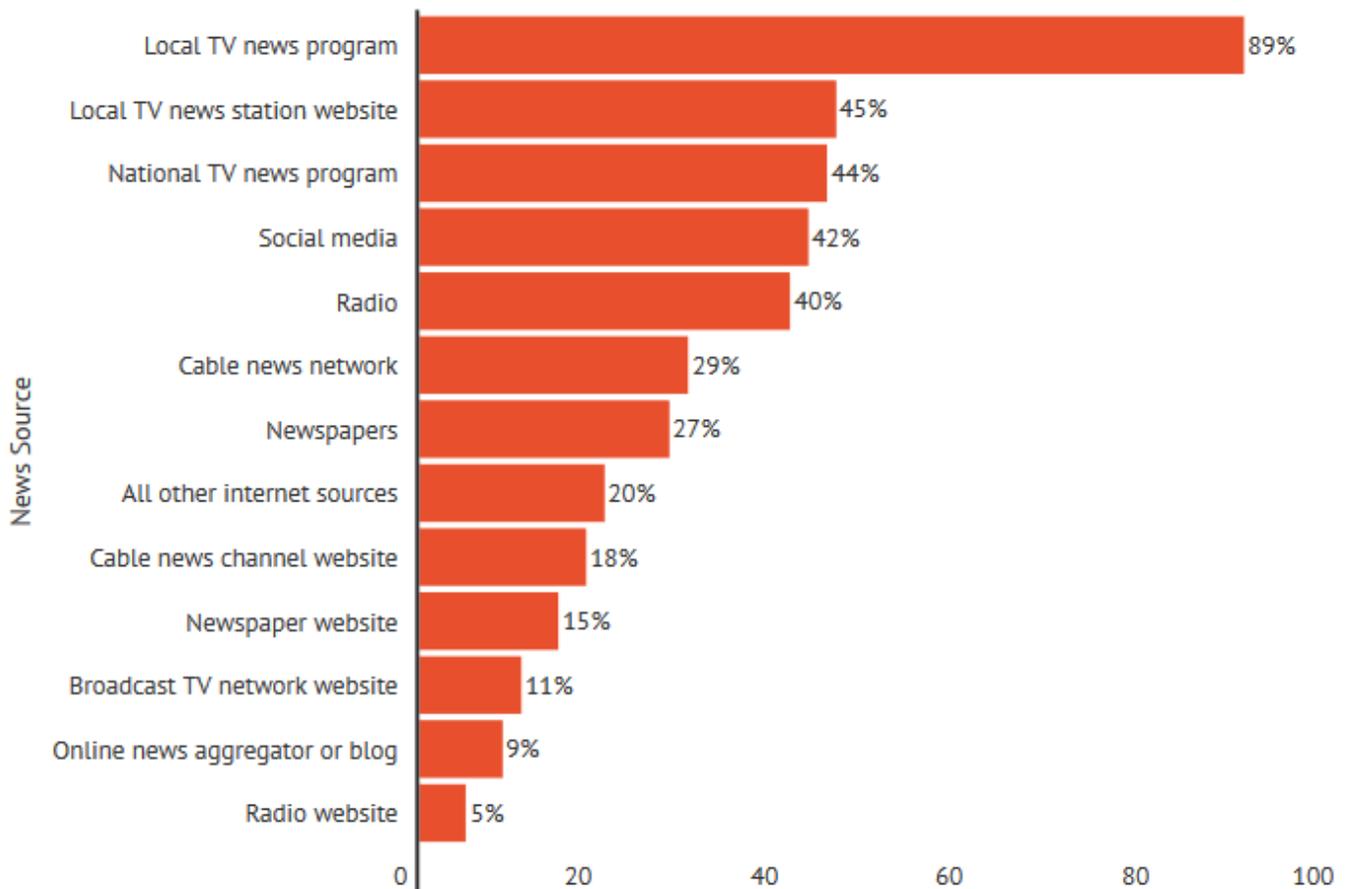
## Media Usage During Disasters

Information is most vital during emergencies. When faced with natural disasters, the media people choose to turn to for critical information is reflective of the media they most value and trust.

Research Now conducted two surveys for the TVB about media usage in the days leading up to **Hurricane Harvey** that landed in August 2017 and **Hurricane Irma** that followed in September. The surveys reveal patterns in media usage behaviors prior to dangerous weather.

Among those surveyed in Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas, 89 percent said local TV news was their top choice for information during Hurricane Harvey. Eighty-four percent said they trust the news on local TV stations, compared to 68 percent for cable news and 35 percent for social media.

## Where Houston and Corpus Christi Residents Turned for News in the Days Leading Up to Hurricane Harvey

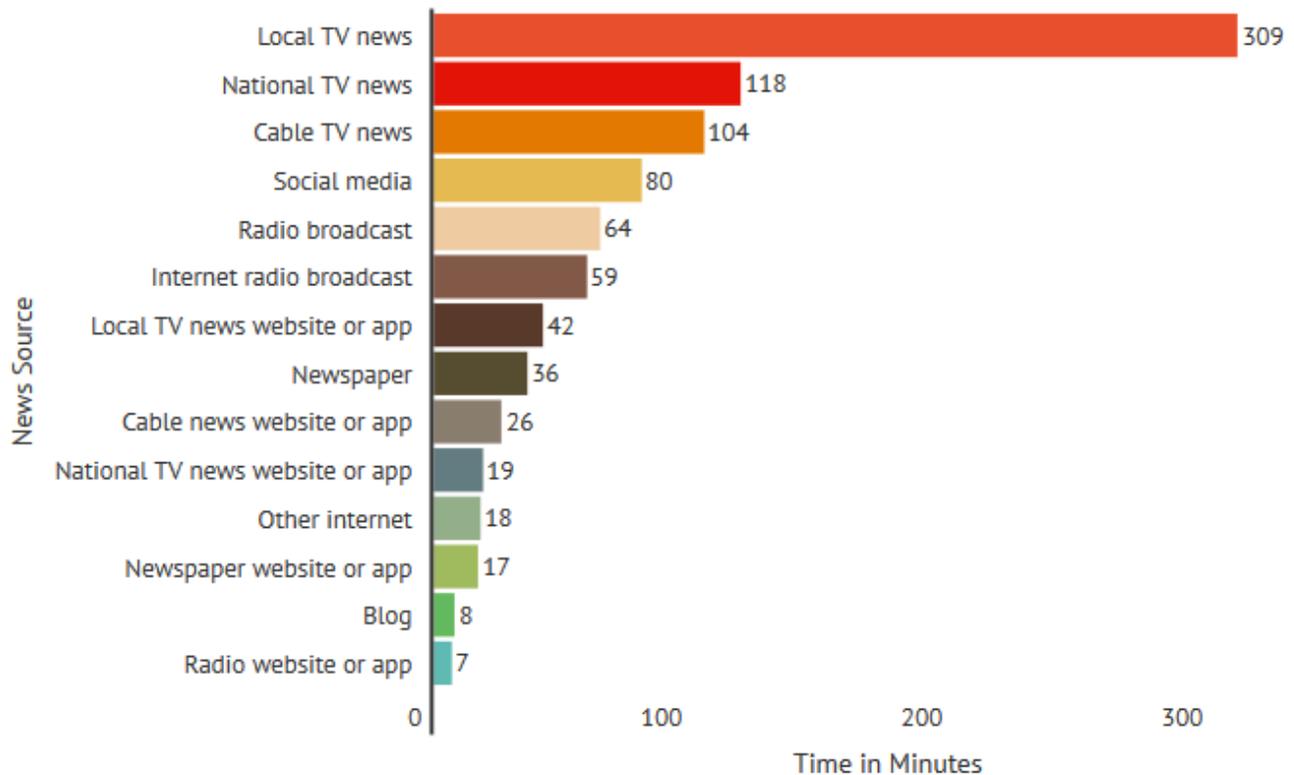


source: 2017 Research Now Hurricane Harvey Survey

Respondents to a separate Research Now survey of Florida communities in Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Tampa Bay, and West Palm Beach behaved similarly during Hurricane Irma: 85 percent said they used local TV news for information and 80 percent said they trust the news on local TV stations.

Not only did respondents use and trust local TV in preparation for these hurricanes, they also spent the most time with local TV compared to all other media. Floridian respondents bracing for Hurricane Irma spent five hours with local TV news, compared to 1.75 hours with cable. Hispanic respondents spent close to six hours with local television.

## How Florida Residents Consumed News in the Days Leading Up to Hurricane Irma



source: 2017 Research Now Hurricane Irma Survey

### TV Is the Safe Bet for Brand Safety

Advertisers put great effort into building their brands. The media platforms and environments on which they choose to showcase their message is critical. In a world of fake news, television, specifically local TV news, leads the way in trust and is a valuable information resource in critical times.

When honesty and integrity are increasingly valued by consumers, advertisers and brands should rely on the most trusted media platforms to protect brand perception.

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