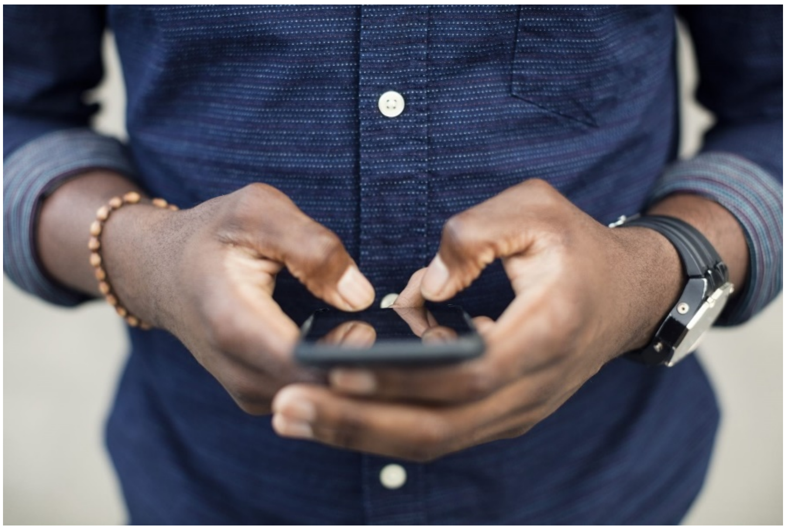


YOUNG MEDIA USE IN COVID-19 TIMES

A brief analysis of media use among students fall 2020

Wilberg, Erik
erik.wilberg@bi.no

Contents

Introduction

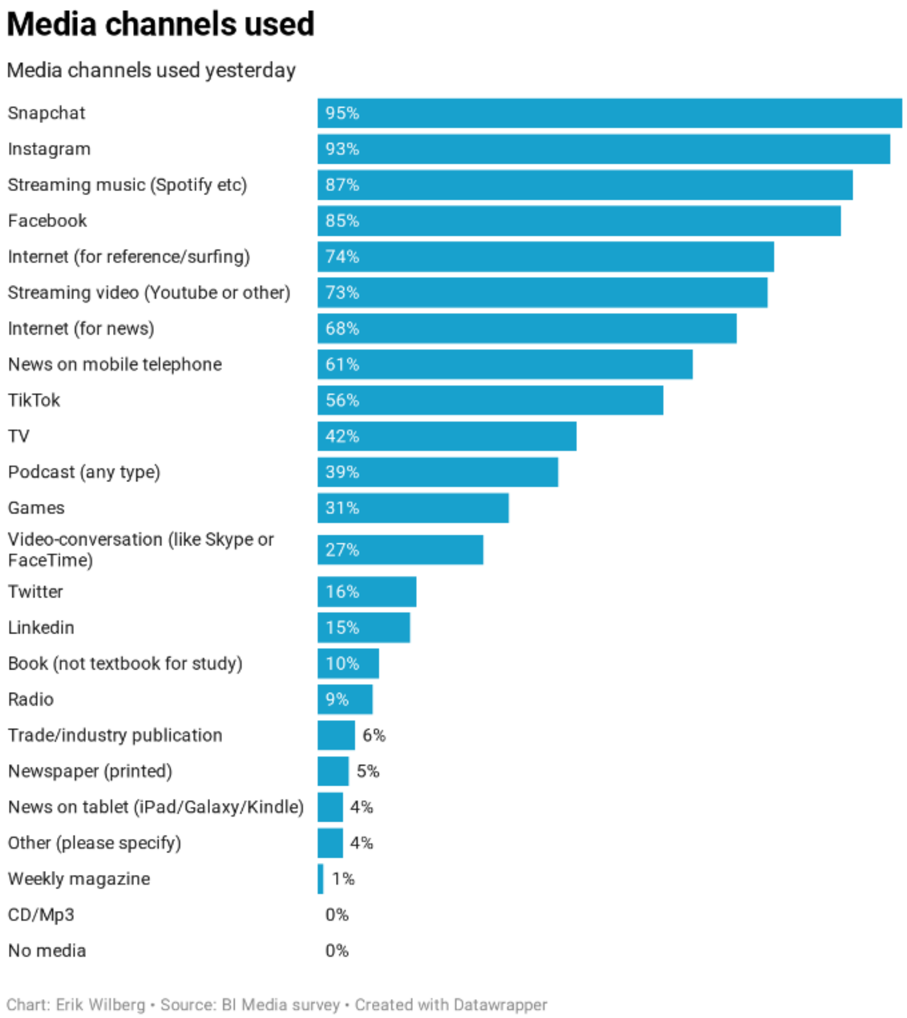
This report is on how students at BI Norwegian Business School – campus Bergen have access to and use media in the fall of 2020. The sample for this study is the 2500 students at the Bachelor programmes at the school. The fall of 2020 is extraordinary, as all teaching and campus life is subject to restrictions due to the ongoing pandemic situation. The sample is 375 students, 51% male and the average age is 22.

As with previous reports, this study is a description of media preferences and attitudes. To some extent, we will also refer to earlier studies that have been published over the years. The media situation is changing, and this is also reflected in the results in this report. The changes are not dramatic but relatively incremental.

Bergen, September 14, 2020

Erik Wilberg

Teaching Professor

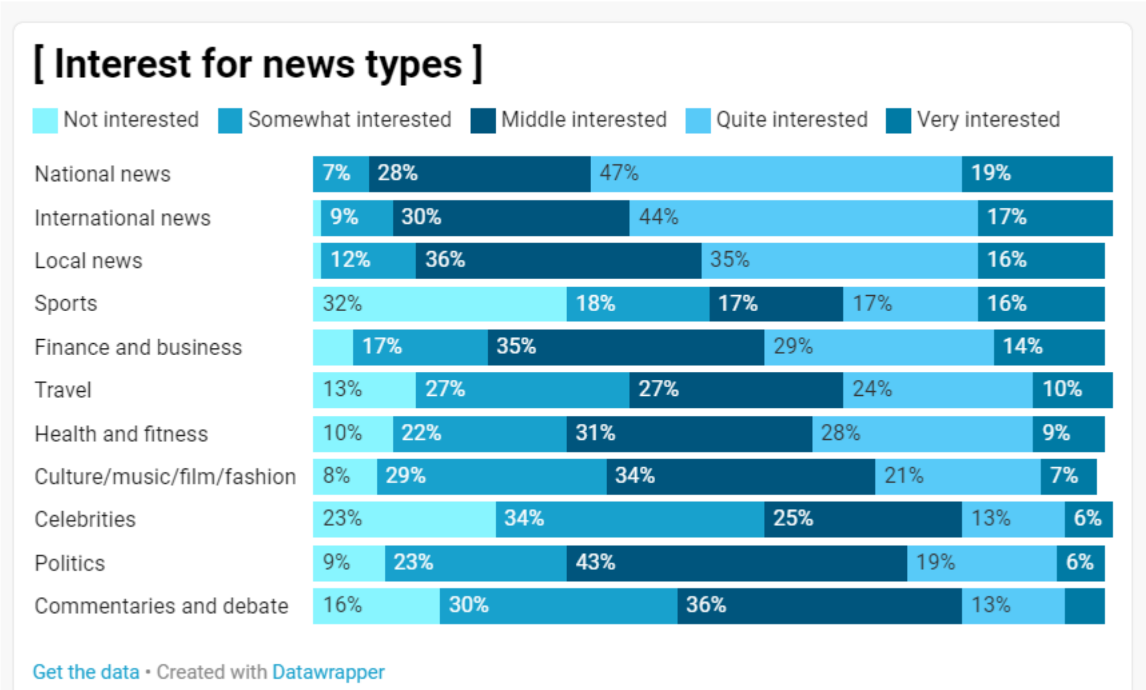


Young media life and social media are intertwined closely. The top three positions here (Spotify excluded) are all social media, and they are all above 80% and the top ones over 90%. For years the social media have had a tight grip on the young students, and this year is no exception. If we go back to a similar report from 2017, we find that the changes are relatively small, but with one big difference: TV has fallen from 71% to 40%. The classic printed newspaper was at 18% in 2017, but is almost gone now and comes in at 5%.

TikTok is new to the list and is represented at 55%, and is significantly higher (65%) among females.

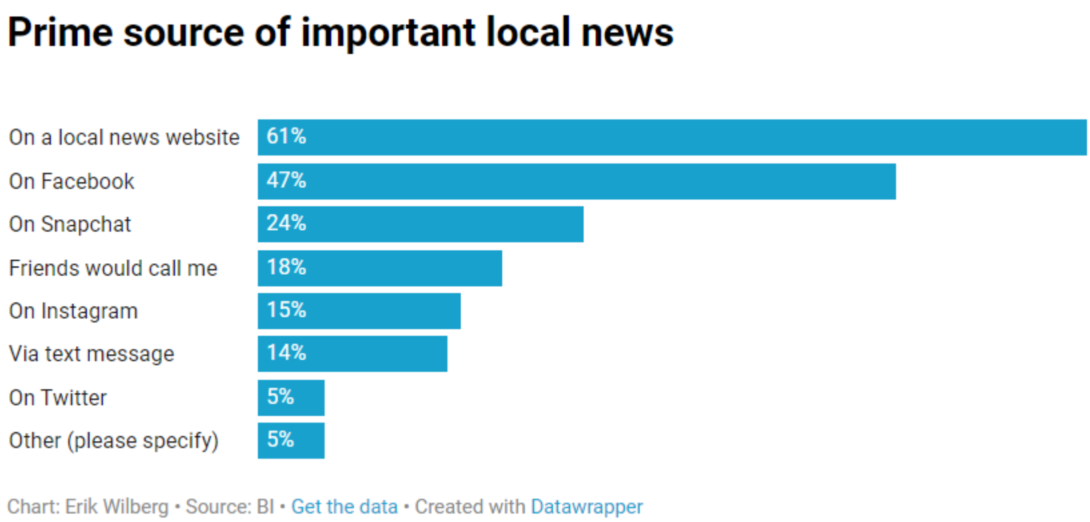
Last year TV was at 53% and is now at 40%. The legacy media are losing the grip, and one can wonder what kind of media world and influences that

National news is more attractive than local news



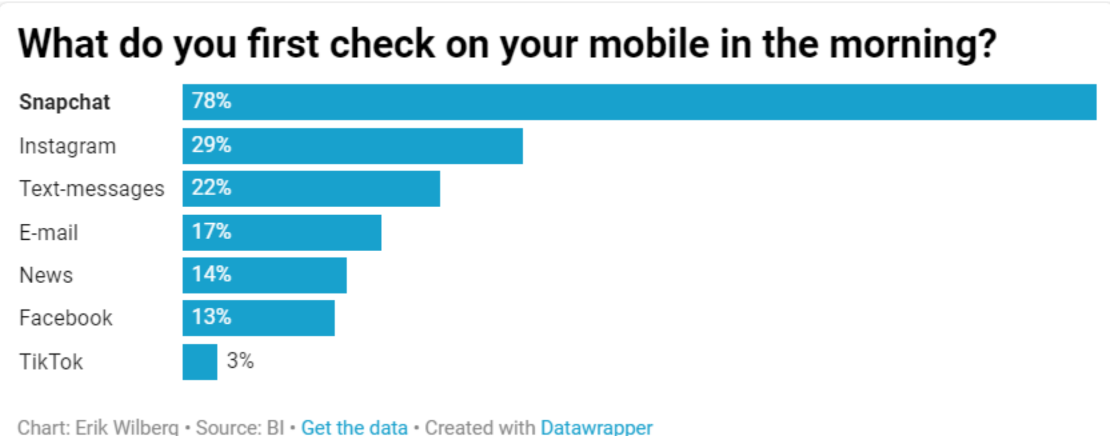
There is a relatively high interest in national and international news. This is not surprising, given the current circumstances. Two of the lower rankings here differ on gender. If you are male, you lean towards sports and females go after celebrities. The orders are almost identical to last year.

Local news matters after all when something happens locally



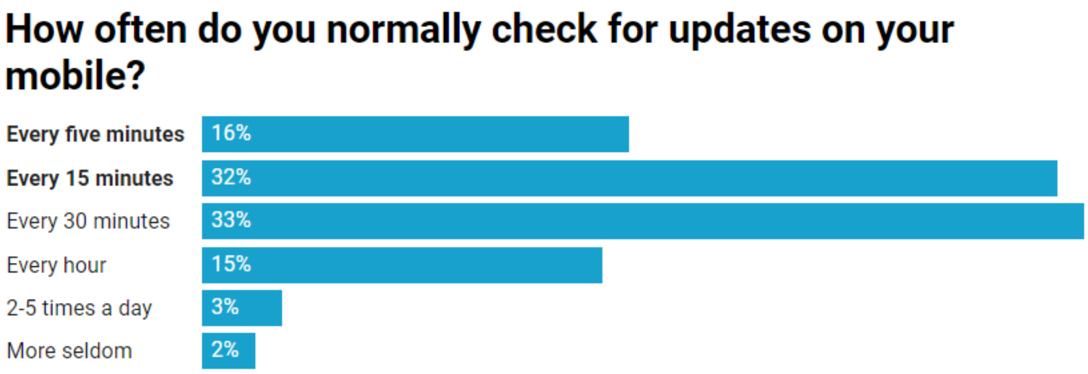
The local news sites are in demand if something big happens locally, but we see that there is quite stiff competition from Facebook. Here Snapchat and Instagram do not matter much. No significant changes can be noted from last year.   So the question is – what do you trust? With Facebook at such a high level, questions can be raised on the quality of the information in local news.

Snapchat wakes me up in the morning



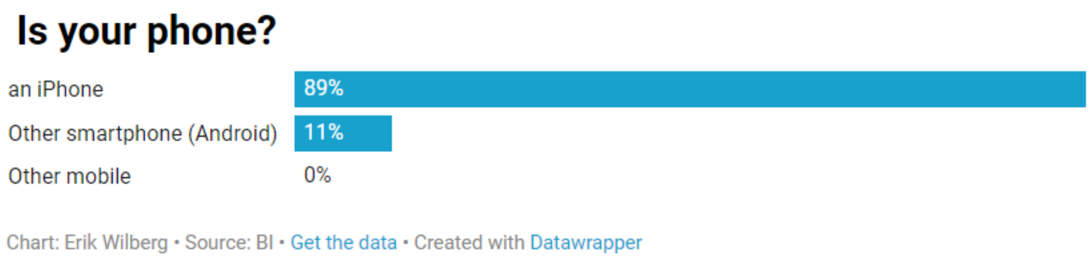
The morning ritual´s beginning is Snapchat – it is the winner here. No other social media site is near in popularity. Last year´s result gave Snapchat 56%, so the rise is significant. All other alternatives are more or less identical with the previous year. So if the setting of the daily news agenda is filtered through Snapchat, then newsmedia has a way to go. Young people want their updates on close friends and social groups they belong to.

Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) is real



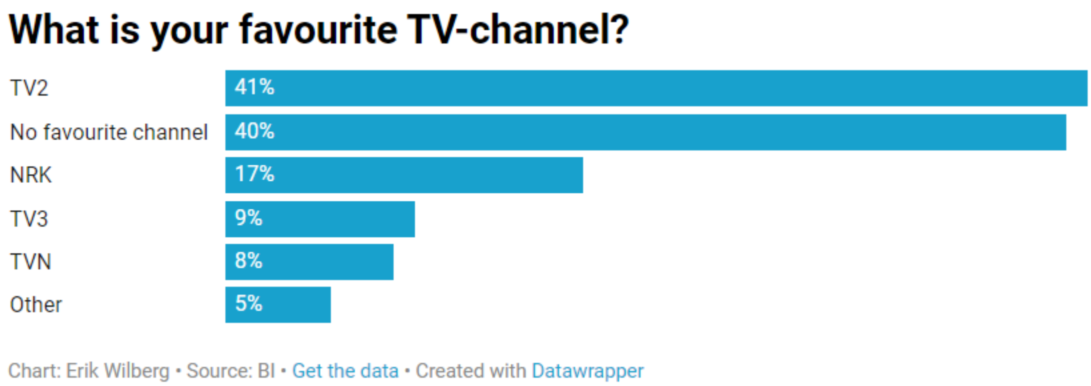
There has been an increase since last year in the frequency of mobile use. If we add up the five to the 15-minute slot, we arrive at 48%. Last year it was 36%. And there is no big surprise that females check the mobile significantly more frequently than males. The figures are 54% for females and 43% for males. Pure observations in and around the auditoriums at the business school show that almost all carry their mobile in their hands at all times.

More than a brand – Apple is the winner



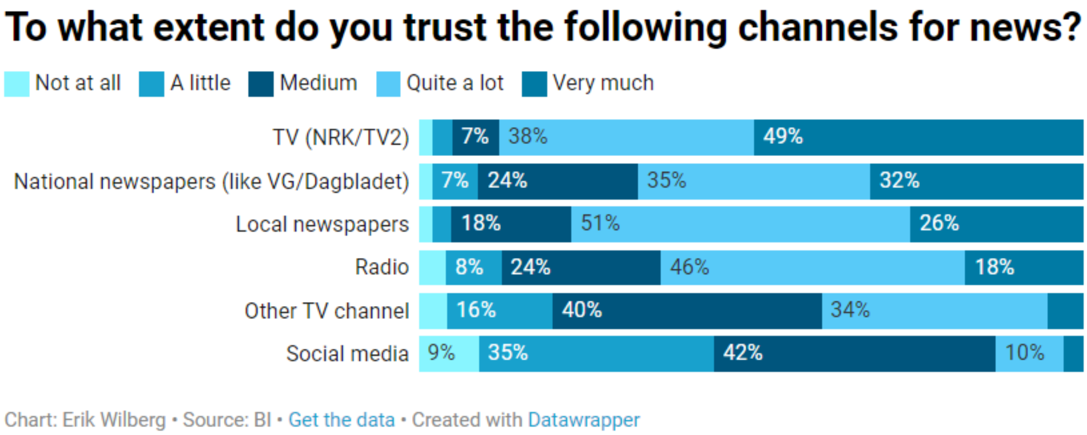
The strength of Apple as a mobile device is more or less a monopoly. Apple has a firm grip on the students. And among females the Apple clocks in at 96%. With males, the figure is 82%. The market share has risen for Apple – last year, it was 77%. When looking out over the students sitting in the large auditoriums, the Apple logo is visible everywhere.

TV2 is the top TV brand – or is it?



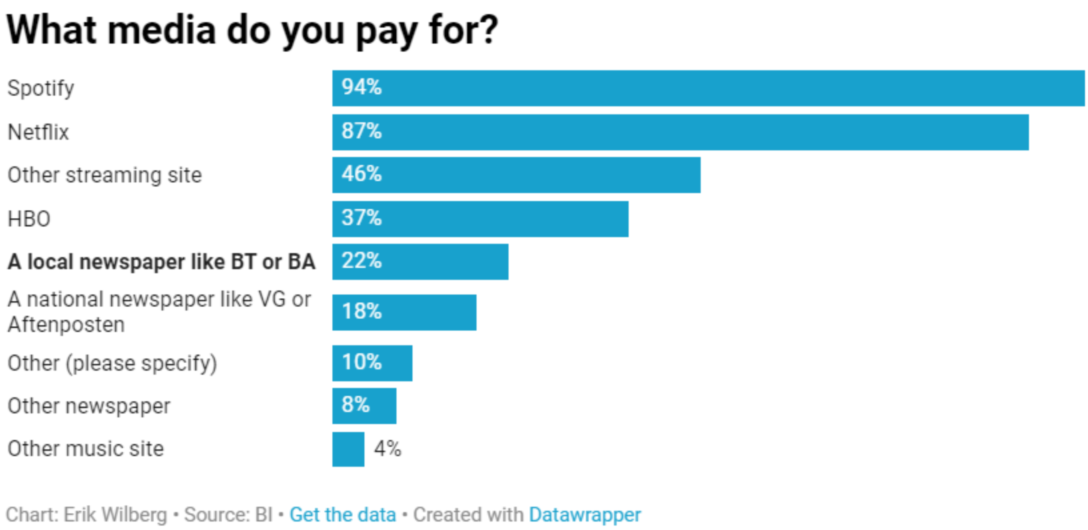
Many students are free in choices when it comes to TV-channels. One student commented, "Who watches TV in 2020, anyway?" But among the traditional channels, TV2 has the upper hand, and has the largest brand stamp in this age group, probably because of its "lighter" program profile. Last year NRK bumped up to 25% but was back at 17% as in earlier reports. We can assume that streaming services and social media take away linear TV-viewing as we traditionally have had it.

The classic media are the most trusted after all



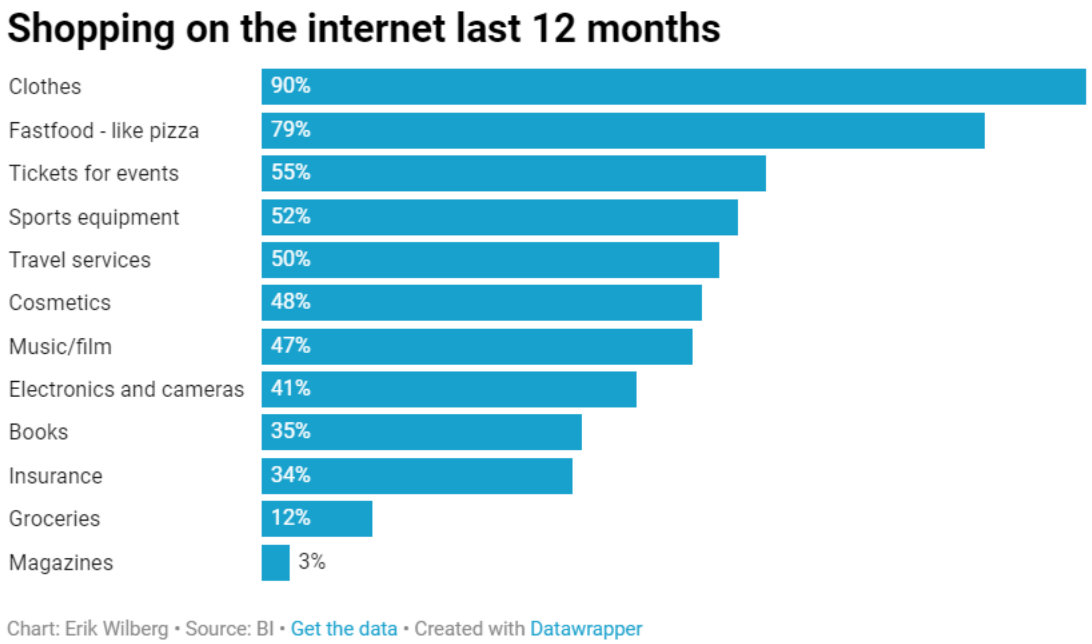
After all, TV and local papers have the highest levels of trust among the students – and social media are at the bottom. A paradox emerges among the use and the level of trust in media. The media channels that we rely upon for accurate and informative journalism are **not** top of the list when it comes to consumption. They are more looked upon as a free convenience, and not a part of the daily conversation. It is also worth noticing that local newspapers have less impact than national newspapers.

The music in my ears comes from Spotify



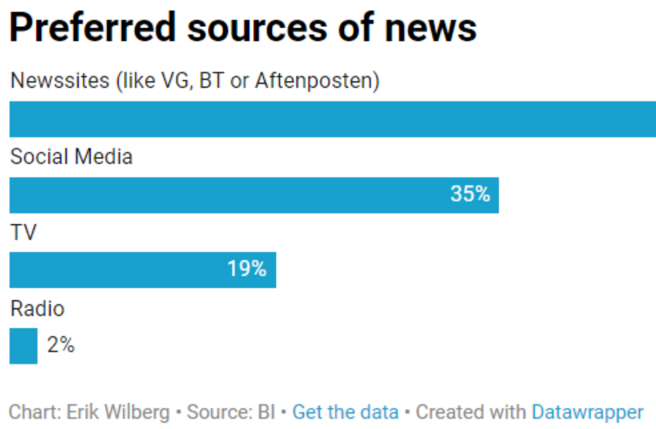
We made a slight change in the survey this year and asked the students to tick the boxes for the kind of media that they subscribe to – and we can see that Spotify and Netflix are the leaders of the pack. On average, the students subscribe to 3,2 of these media, which means that the money for media use is present. Last year we only asked about Spotify, and the result was 90%. Students have the resources for paid media consumption, but it has not yet "taken off" when it comes to the legacy media brands – with VG as the exception. And only 22% pay for a local newspaper site.

Shop till you drop – on the net



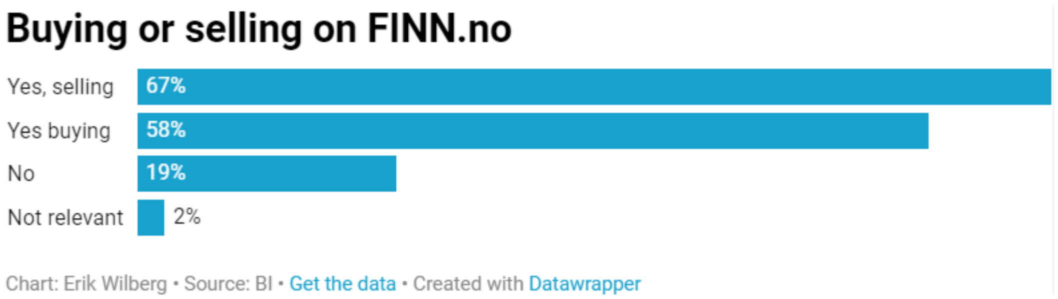
There are changes in the shopping patterns this year – partly due to the Covid-19 situation. Clothes are at 90% (85% last year). Fastfood has risen sharply from 63% to 79%, and tickets have dropped from 72% to 55%, all due to the Covid-19 situation. Groceries have increased from 8% to 12%, but since they have been open for business all the time during the lockdown, the growth has not been phenomenal, but it is definitely on the rise.   An increase from 8 to 12 % is a change that sets the course for further growth. The shopping patterns in the other categories are relatively stable over time – and there are significant gender differences in two categories: cosmetics and electronics.

News from the professional sources



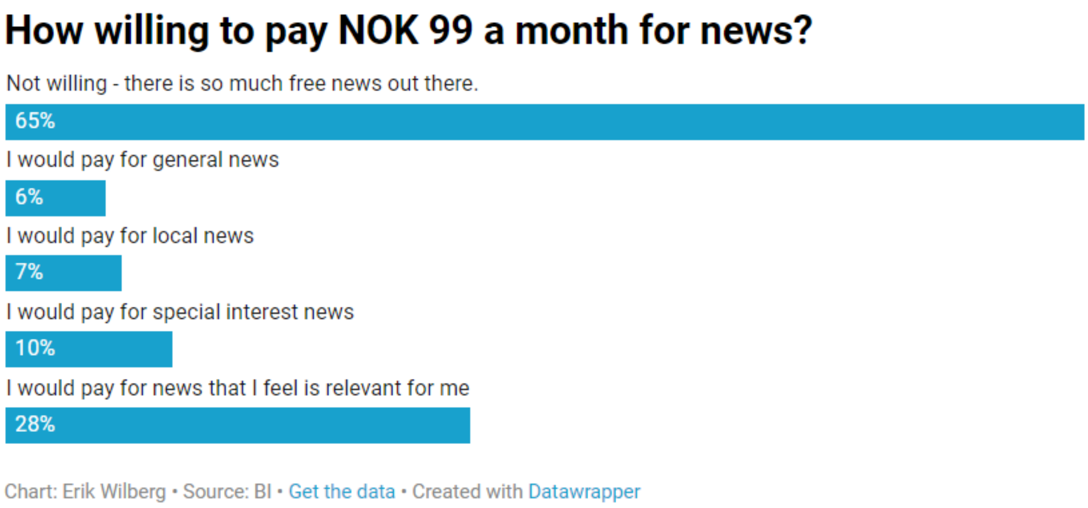
The preferred source of news is news sites, and in Norway, VG is the clear winner with coverage of half the population every day (shown in a separate study earlier this year). If we compare with last year, there is a slight drop for news sites (from 84%) and a rise in Social Media (from 28%). The lockdown can be an influencing factor in the growth of social media and the reduction of general news sites.

For marketplaces – no one beats FINN.



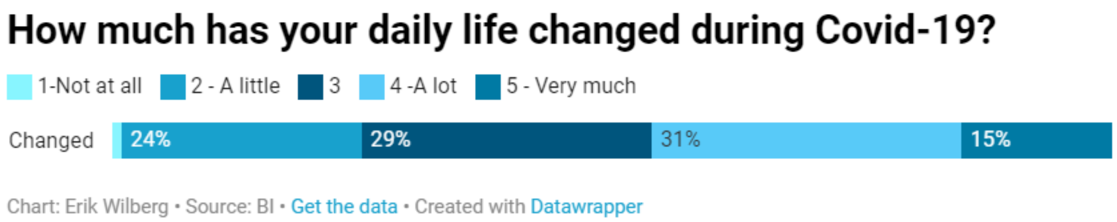
Again, we can see an example of a “winner-takes-it-all” situation. The figures are almost identical to last year. Finn has an excellent grip on the market, and they have been brilliant in building new verticals and services. For young people in a study situation – Finn is a necessity.

News is a free commodity – and not to pay for – yet



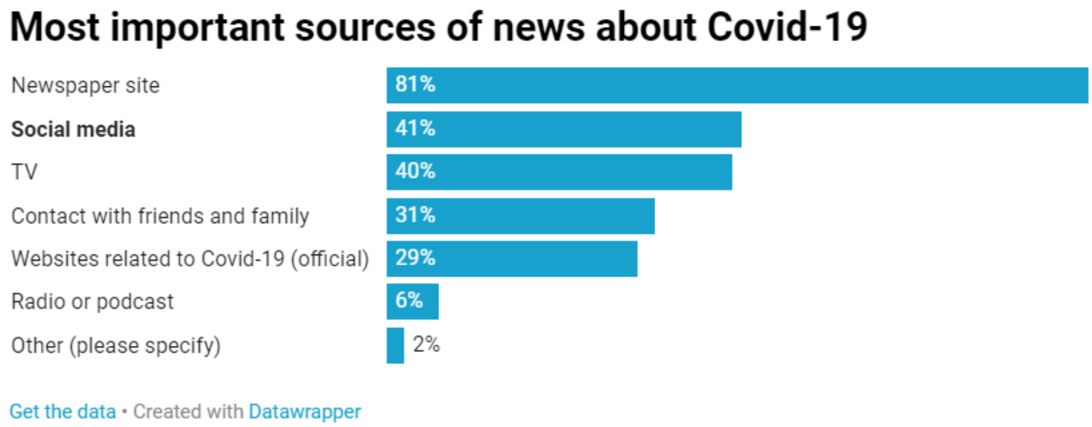
There is stability in these figures from last year – only within 2-4 points. The media houses do have an uphill struggle here. It will be interesting, so see if some of the recent and COVID-driven product and market initiatives within media brand building will take off when taking digital storytelling enters into the mainstream of news reporting. VGs Covid-19 reporting is digitized and inspired by the New York Times. It works very well. Other news brands will follow.

COVID -19 has changed lifestyles



When asked – 46% of the students have had a significant change in their life situation after COVID 19, but we can see that it has not changed the media use much. There are no significant differences between the genders on this question. For about a quarter of the students, life is more or less like everyday life before Covid.

When it really matters – trusted media are there

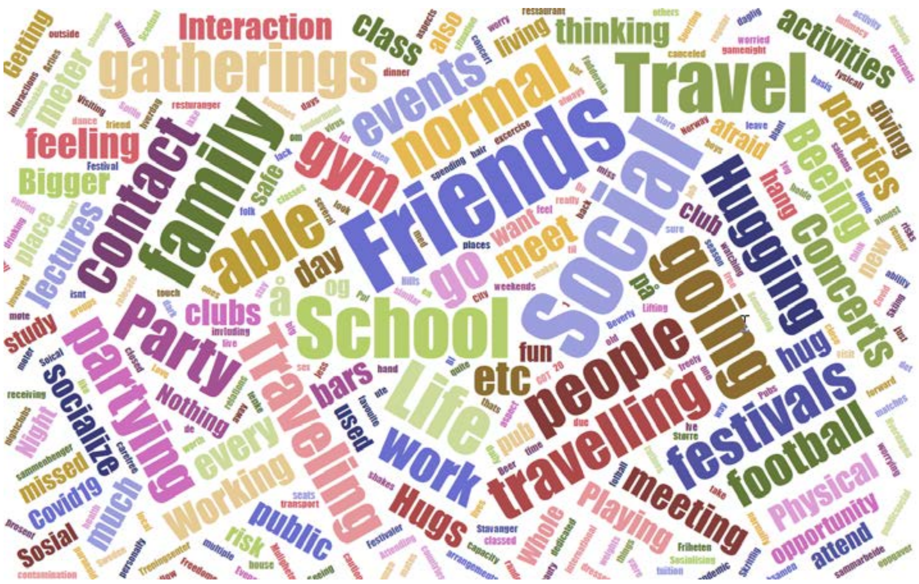


Newspaper sites (most likely VG) are the most important sources of news about the corona situation. Initially, this was more a national rather than a local phenomenon, but in recent weeks we have seen that there are vast regional differences. As this report is written, Bergen is in the "red zone", and all university-level teaching is moved online.

We can also see that social media has its impact as an essential news source – probably within social groups, more so than friends and family and official websites.

The things I miss the most

When asked what they missed the most – the following came out of 284 responses from the students:



They miss hanging out with friends and travel – and contact with the family.

Looking back to 2010

The first report made among students dates back to 2010. When looking at media channels used – Facebook was already at the 90% level and was more or less the only social media channel at the time. TV was at 86% and printed newspapers at 50%. News on the mobile scored at 32% among the students. There is no doubt that changes in media preferences have been profound and have changed the way news is consumed and considered. The mobile has even more entered into our daily lives, and with more services added as apps every day, there is a lock-in effect with the mobile phone.

Conclusion

We have been curious about the changes this year due to the Covid-19 situation. We cannot, however, see any significant changes in the patterns and the behaviour within media at large. We can see something in shopping habits, but not much else.

We see the immense strength of digital media and especially social media. It is woven into daily life all the time.

And as a consolation, we can see that the tried and trusted media brands are the ones sought after when the going gets tough.