



News Consumption Patterns in American Politics

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Overview

Since Kennedy and Nixon it's been acknowledged that politics and media go hand in hand. Each U.S. election serves as a tentpole subject for the media industry that year, showcasing the developments in media coverage that have happened since the last election cycle. At the start of Obama's presidency, digital outlets like BuzzFeed and the Huffington Post were only fledgling websites, and Twitter and Facebook were merely social media entities – now, these platforms are all key outlets for breaking news.

As the political climate changes, so does the nature of media coverage. This begs the question: what are the media consumption habits of Americans today? Moreover, how do their politics affect their media consumption, and vice versa?



Wibbitz, a technology startup that works with top global names in publishing to automatically turn text articles into videos, set out to unveil the connection between politics and media, diving into the unique personas in American politics. The results offer a compelling picture of today's political landscape and media viewing habits.

Methodology

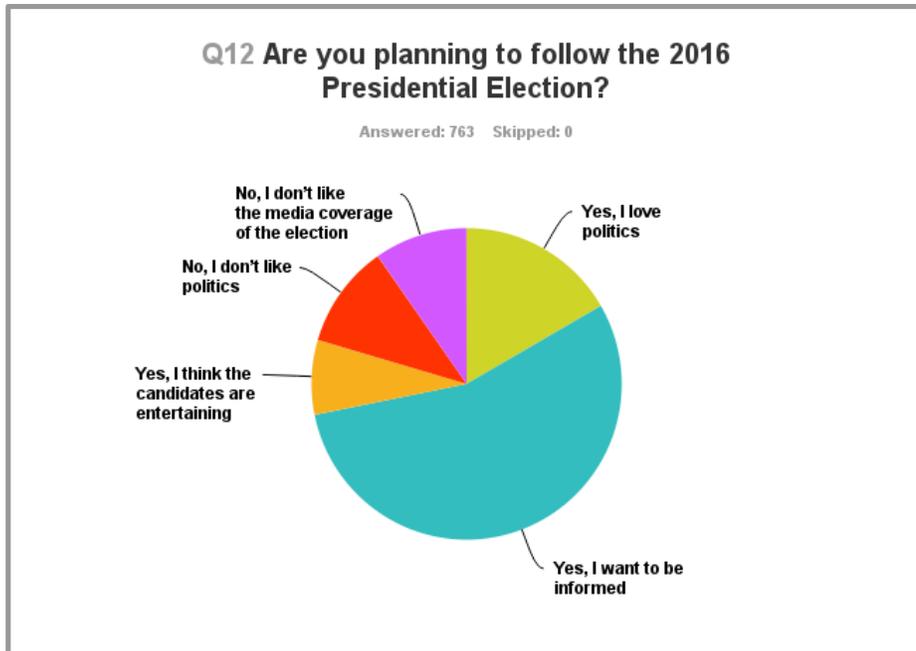
Wibbitz conducted an online survey via SurveyMonkey of over 1100 consumers in September 2015. Respondents were between the ages of 18 and 59 and lived in the United States. The goal was to examine consumer news consumption habits and preferences.

Part I: Who's following the 2016 election?

Overall, survey respondents were very interested in keeping up with the 2016 election season, with 4 out of 5 respondents reporting that they were planning to follow the election (79.55%). While over half of respondents are keeping an eye on election coverage to stay informed, about 1 in 5 identify as avid politics followers who are planning to keep up with the election simply because they love politics. Some are only in it for the entertainment value, with almost 10% of respondents following because they think the candidates are entertaining.

Still, 20.45% of respondents stated they were not planning to follow the election at all. About half of those respondents stated that their reasoning for not following was that they didn't like politics, while the rest didn't plan to follow the election because they dislike the media coverage (9.70%). In particular, millennials (ages 18-29) were the least likely to be interested in politics, with only 12.04% stating that they planned to follow the election because they love politics.





To get a better sense of how election sentiments correlate with media consumption habits, we've identified five personas and broken down their unique behaviors and preferences.

1. The Average News Consumer: following the election to stay informed
2. The Politics Junkie: following the election because they love politics
3. The News Amused: following the election because they think the candidates are entertaining
4. The Politics Hater: not following the election because they don't like politics
5. The Media Hater: not following the election because they don't like the media coverage

The Average News Consumer

Highest Ranked Political Party: Democrat – 41.33%

Highest Ranked Candidate (decided voters): Sanders – 33.62%

They're...average: 51.78% want to be “as informed as possible,” while 41.57% only follow the stories they're passionate about.



Compared to other ways of receiving the news, they rely heavily on digital publications: Over a third (34.86%) prefer to get their news from digital outlets.

The Politics Junkie

Highest Ranked Political Party: Both Democrat and Republican – 38.58% Democrat and 37.01% Republican

Highest Ranked Candidate (decided voters): Clinton – 22.73%

They're very informed: 90.55% of respondents who are following the election because they love politics reported following the news because "they want to be as informed as possible."

They like to read: 31.50% read more than 20 articles a week.

Digital outlets and cable are their favorite outlets, but old fashioned newspaper is still popular: 25.20% get their news from digital, 25.98% get their news from cable, and 18.11% get their news from the newspaper.

They love Twitter: 29.13% get their news from Twitter, making Political Junkies the top tweeters out of all the political personas.

They have their minds made up about the election: 69.29% have picked a candidate to support in the election, more than any other group.

The News Amused

Highest Ranked Political Party: Independent – 35.59%

Highest Ranked Candidate (decided voters): Donald Trump – 40.54%

They tend follow what they like: 49.15% only follow the stories they're passionate about.

Media is all about entertainment-value: 13.46% primarily follow entertainment news, a higher percentage than any other group.

They like to watch their news: 53.85% prefer to get their news from videos or TV shows.

They like to get their news from broadcast TV: 32.69% get their news from broadcast TV.



The Politics Hater

Highest Ranked Political Party: Independent – 42.68%

Highest Ranked Candidate (decided voters): Clinton – 29.63%

They're not concerned with being informed on current events: Only 13.41% said they like to be as informed as possible, while a whopping 34.15% don't follow current events at all.

They're locally-minded: 31.48% primarily follow local news.

They don't consume much news overall: 61.11% watch less than 2 hrs of news per week, and 51.85% read less than 5 articles per week.

Broadcast TV is their favorite, but digital publications and social media are also very popular: 24.07% get their news from broadcast, while 22.22% get their news from digital outlets and social media respectively.

They're the most likely to be undecided: 67.07% are undecided about the candidate they support, with 54.44% of those respondents stating they don't like any of the options available.

The Media Hater

Highest Ranked Political Party: Democrat – 35.14%

Highest Ranked Candidate (decided voters): Bernie Sanders – 38.71%

They choose their own path when it comes to news: 62.16% only follow the stories they're passionate about.

They're locally-minded: 31.67% primarily follow local news.

Digital outlets are their favorite place for news: 38.33% get their news from digital outlets.

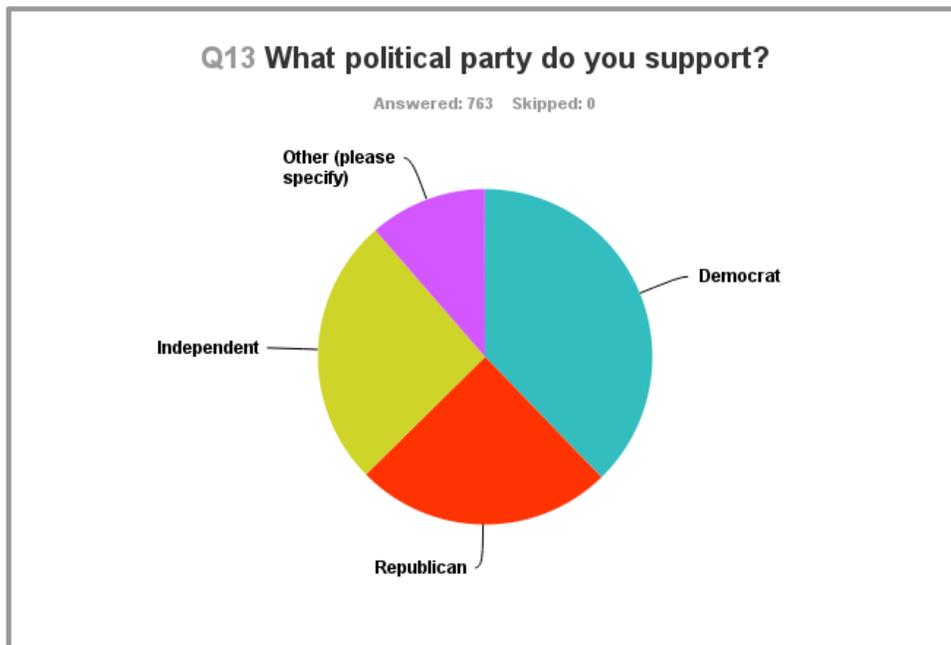
They're more likely to read their news than watch it: Only 11.67% watch more than 6 hours of news a week, while 68.33% read more than 5 articles a week and 28.33% are reading more than 15.

Mobile is their primary news device: 35% prefer to get their news via smartphones.



Part II: What does your political party say about your news habits?

Just over a third of respondents identified as Democrats, while about 25% each identified as Republicans or Independents. The remaining respondents identified as “Other,” including the Green Party, Libertarian Party, and more.



The division of political parties in the U.S. go beyond ideological differences. The survey found that political party affiliation can be a strong predictor of media consumption preferences and habits. In particular, while Democrats and Independents prefer to read the news, Republicans prefer to watch it. The results below break down the media consumption trends of each major political party.

The Democrat

They tend to prefer reading the news, but only by a slight margin: 54.58% like to read, while 45.42% prefer to watch.



They rely on digital outlets for their news, but are also the most likely group by party to read the newspaper: 32.06% get their news from digital outlets, and 12.60% get their news from the newspaper.

They're most likely to follow the election because they like to be informed: 60.42% stay tuned because they said they like to be informed.

The Republican

They're not interested in following international news: Only 6.82% like to follow international news, the least of any party group.

They prefer to watch the news: Nearly 3 in 5 respondents stated that they preferred to watch news videos or shows (57.95%). A quarter of respondents watch more than 6 hrs of news per week, the most of any group by party (25.57%).

They rely on broadcast TV for their news: 31.82% get their news from broadcast.

They're most likely to feel that the news is biased towards a political party: 34.09% cited their biggest frustration with today's media as bias.

They're the most likely to follow the election because they love politics: 24.74% stated that they love politics.

The Independent

They greatly prefer to read the news: 64.20% like to read the news, with 83.52% watching less than one hour of news per day on average. 25.57% read more than 20 articles per week.

Digital outlets are king, but social media is also important for news: 35.80% get their news from digital outlets, but 15.34% get their news from social media, the most of any group.

They're the least likely to get news from Facebook, the most popular social media site for news: Only 63.64% get their news from Facebook (compared to 79.39% and 80.86% for Democrats and Republicans, respectively). Independents are also the most likely to get their news from LinkedIn (23.30%) and Snapchat (6.82%).

They're the least susceptible to clickbait headlines: 64.14% would choose a more objective headline over a subjective one.

They're the most likely to not follow the election, or follow because they find the candidates entertaining: 27.78% aren't planning to follow it, 10.61% are following for entertainment.

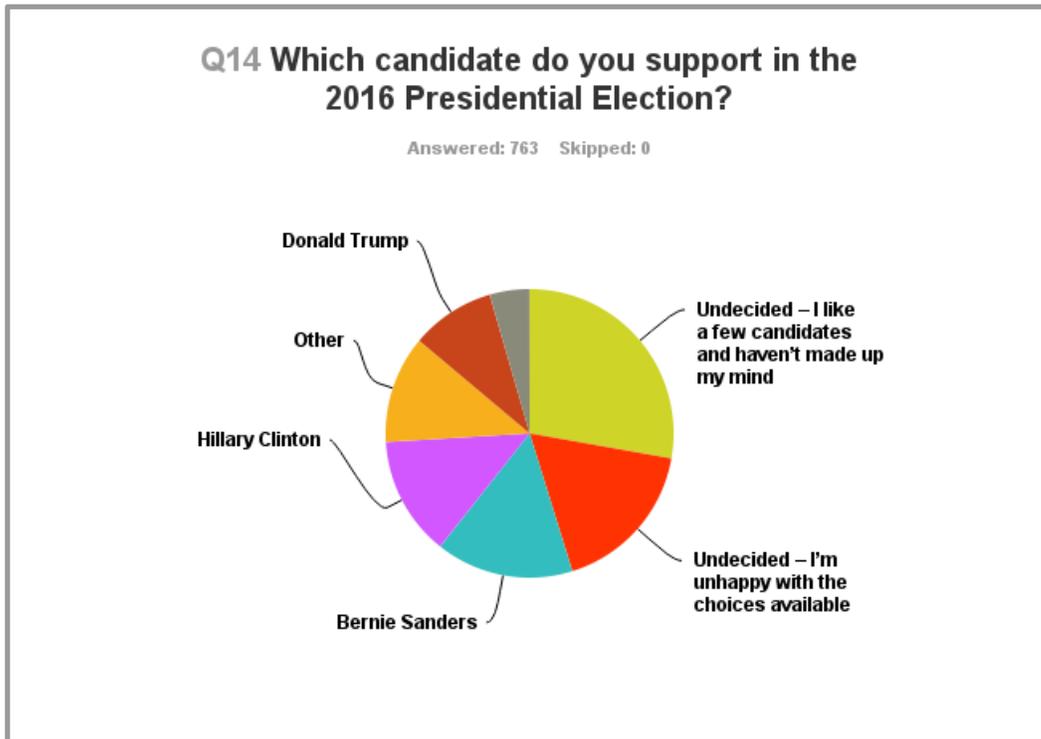




Part III: How do each candidate's supporters get their news?

With the numerous candidates in the race for president, the respondent pool was relatively divided amongst candidates. The top four candidates commanded 42.74% of the total: Bernie Sanders (15.47%), Hillary Clinton (13.37%), Donald Trump (9.44%), and Ben Carson (4.46%).

Still, even with all the options available, nearly half of the respondents identified as undecided (45.22%). While 27.79% of respondents were happy with their options but hadn't chosen yet, 17.43% were undecided and unhappy with their options –



claiming more respondents than any of the candidates.

The survey found that each candidate's supporters have their own unique news consumption preferences. While Donald Trump supporters tend to focus on entertainment, Bernie Sanders supporters prefer objective news stories with an



international focus. The results below illustrate the media preferences of each of the top candidates' supporters, as well as the undecided respondents.

The Ben Carson supporter

They rely on broadcast TV for their news: 31.35% of Carson supporters get their news from broadcast.

They're the most likely to get their news from Twitter: 34.38% chose Twitter as their favorite social media platform for news.

They're more likely to feel the news is biased towards one political party: 31.25% cited bias as their greatest frustration with the news.

They're the most likely to follow the election because they want to be informed: 73.53% of Carson supporters want to follow the election to be informed.

The Donald Trump supporter

They like to watch the news: Trump supporters are the most likely of any candidate to prefer watching the news (58.06%).

They are much more likely to get their news from television: A whopping 61.29% of Trump supporters get their news from TV, with 27.42% getting their news from cable specifically. 38.71% chose their TV as their preferred device for news.

They watch the most TV and video: 11.29% watch more than 10 hrs of news per week, the most of any candidate's supporters.

They are less likely than supporters of other candidates to get their news from Facebook, but more likely to get it from LinkedIn. Only 62.90% get their news from Facebook, while 27.42% get their news from LinkedIn.

They're the most susceptible to clickbait: 52.78% chose a subjective headline over an objective one.

They're more likely to feel the news is biased towards one political party: 32.26% cited bias as their greatest frustration with the news media.

They're the most likely to follow the news because they find the candidates entertaining: 20.83% plan to follow the election because they "think the candidates are entertaining."



The Hillary Clinton supporter

They are the most fragmented across platforms: Digital outlets, broadcast TV outlets like NBC News, and cable TV outlets like Fox News and MSNBC respectively garnered about a quarter of Clinton's supporters (22.99% each), followed by physical newspapers and social media at 13.79% respectively.

They read the least number of articles: 33.33% read less than 5 articles per week. They are the most likely to be frustrated by the repetition in news cycles: 40.23% stated that their greatest frustration was that the news "repeats the same stories over and over again."

The Bernie Sanders supporter

They follow the news: Only 4.24% reported that they do not follow current events, the lowest of any supporter group.

They like to follow international news, and aren't very interested in local news: 1 in 5 of Sanders supporters chose international news as their favorite to follow, the most of any candidate (20.35%). Only 8.85% liked to follow local news, the least of any candidate.

They heavily rely on digital outlets, and dislike television: 55.75% of Sanders supporters get their news from digital outlets, far more than any other candidate. Only 16.81% primarily get their news from cable or broadcast TV, the least of any group. 60.18% watch less than 2 hours of news content per week.

They are far more likely to read the news: While the other groups were a near 50/50 split between reading and watching the news, a whopping 73.45% of Sanders supporters preferred to read the news. 40.71% read more than 15 articles per week. They primarily use their computers for news: 53.98% get their news on their computers, more than any other candidate.

They're the most frustrated by clickbait: 42.48% chose clickbait as their greatest frustration with the news. They're also the least susceptible to clickbait – 78.81% chose a more objective headline over a subjective headline.

Undecided

They're not very interested in politics: Only 9.23% chose politics as their favorite type of news to follow.



They're more likely to feel that the news is biased towards one political party: 25.13% chose bias as their greatest frustration with the news media.

They're less susceptible to clickbait headlines: 61.32% chose an objective headline over a clickbait headline.

They're more likely to be a Republican: 27.83% identified as Republicans.

Undecided...and unsatisfied

They're not avid news followers: Only 37.59% reported wanting to be "as informed as possible," the lowest of any group.

They're not very interested in politics: Only 9.40% chose politics as their favorite type of news to follow. 22.56% don't plan to follow the election because they don't like politics.

About Wibbitz

Wibbitz develops text-to-video technology that allows publishers to repackage textual content into digestible, rich and informative video summaries within seconds. Its text-to-video technology and Control Room video creation platform support simple and scalable video production for thousands of videos each month. Wibbitz hosts offices in both NYC and Tel Aviv. For more information, visit www.wibbitz.com or follow via Twitter @Wibbitz.

