



We help assess
the integrity of news
growing fast.

Trust Project ReFresh

2020 - 2021 Global Research & Workshops

Review Trust Indicators.
Gauge the Landscape of Trust in News.

V0.8 Chris Kurjan & Willa Crolius. WAN-IFRA Revision.

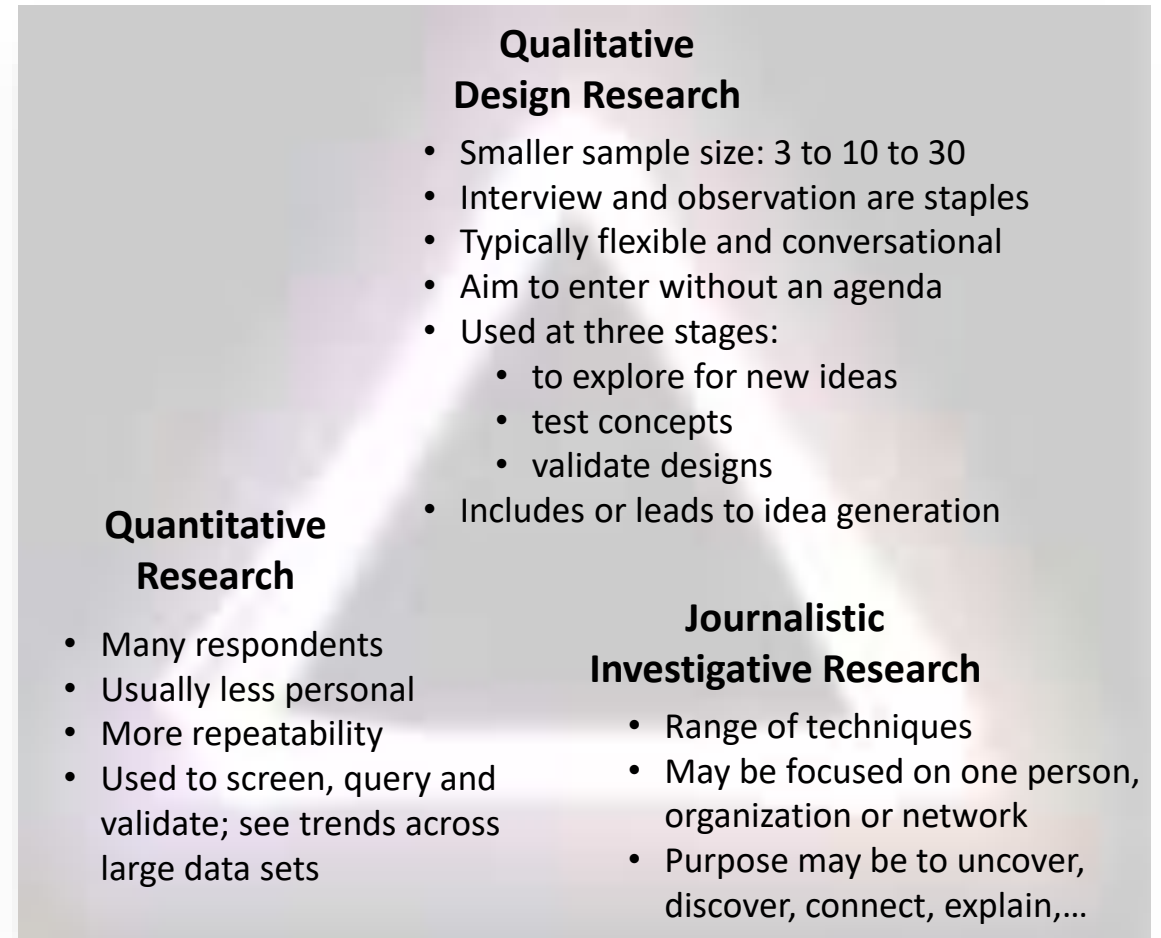
Review: Sally Lehrman.

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Research Program

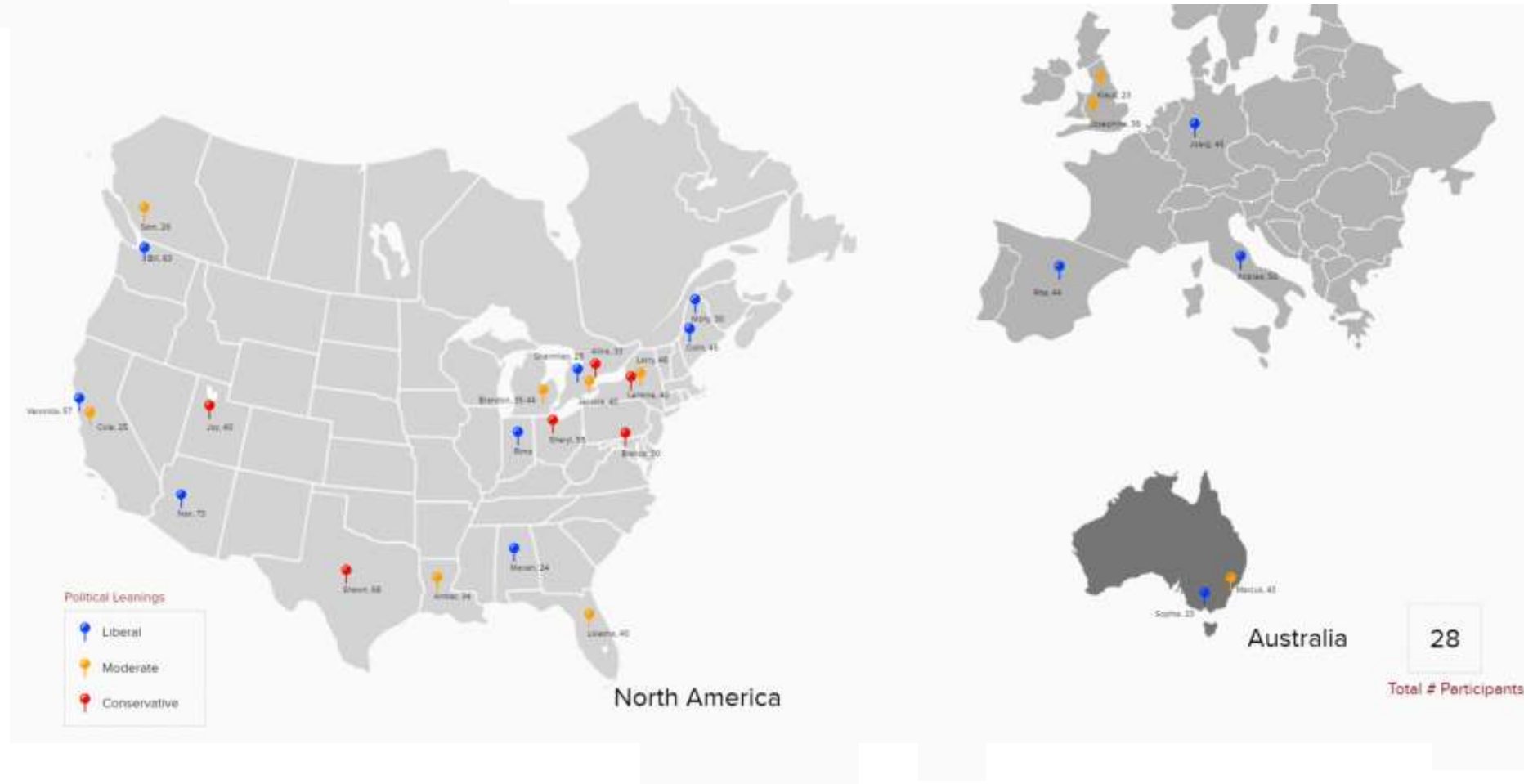
In 2016 the Trust Project design research team heard from the news audience in the US and Europe and created an engagement spectrum from Avid to Avoidant, even Angry. The research helped to narrow the 30 possible Trust Indicators to eight.

Four years later, we have refreshed the research, seeking an update on peoples' attitudes and behaviors. How do they respond to the current Trust Indicators? What's changed in their consumption and use of news? What directions would support greater engagement and trust?



Geography

We conducted remote interviews with 28 people in North America, Europe and Australia.



Breadth

Diversity was represented across geography, political spectrum, ethnicity and gender.

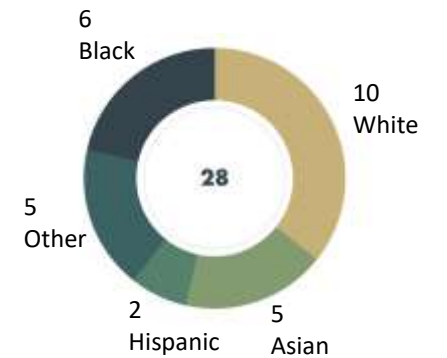
Political Leanings



Gender Identity



Ethnic Identity



Trust Indicators

LEGEND



Highest value or usefulness



Used more frequently



Best Practices

What are the news outlet's standards? Who funds it? What is the outlet's mission? Plus commitments to ethics, diverse voices, accuracy, making corrections and other standards.



Journalist Info

Who made this? Details about the journalist, including their expertise and other stories they have worked on.



66 Citations & References

What's the source? For investigative or in-depth stories, access to the sources behind the facts and assertions.



Type of Work

What is this? Labels to distinguish opinion, analysis and advertiser (or sponsored) content from news reports.

TOP ROW Audience appreciation level, great or small, is "stable" and only small refinements needed, if any.



Actionable Feedback

Can we participate? A newsroom's efforts to engage the public's help in setting coverage priorities, contributing to the reporting process, ensuring accuracy and other areas. Readers want to participate and provide feedback that might alter or expand a story.



Diverse Voices

What are the newsroom's efforts and commitments to bringing in diverse perspectives? Readers noticed when certain voices, ethnicities, or political persuasions were missing.



Locally Sourced

Was the reporting done on the scene, with deep knowledge about the local situation or community? Lets you know when the story has local origin or expertise.



Methods

How was it built? Also for in-depth stories, information about why reporters chose to pursue a story and how they went about the process.

BOTTOM ROW These exhibit a more nuanced, complex conversation and usage. A growth-oriented refresh could be timely and impactful.

People Are Saying

“After the 2016 election, I realized I needed to support the news. Now I subscribe to KQED, Seattle Times, and the NY Times.... I’d like to subscribe to the Washington Post, too, but I think I’m already doing enough. I might still do it because there’s some interesting stuff (behind the paywall).”

Bill

Hearing from local news was important to him: *“Often they are the only people reporting on things that you’d just hear about through word-of-mouth”*

Xxxxx

“I wanted to drive down and support the people in Texas after the hurricane... but learned through the news that the governor did not want people driving to Texas during covid...no place to stay.” Utah woman

About Comments sections:

“Revealing” “Insightful”

“Leads me to deeper research”

“A place to debate” “Crazytown”

“I share if I can make a difference; if my voice is needed.”

“I think I’ve read sponsored news stories and not realized it. (Discussing this Indicator)...makes me think I should pay more attention.” Xxx

“Yes, well, they’re all good.”
in reference to the 8 Trust Indicators.

“I like the news to be news, as in, the facts on what happened.” Xxxxx

“The Citations let me know the journalist did their homework.”

Xxxxx

“I love the Best Practices: this one is for me.”

Xxxxx

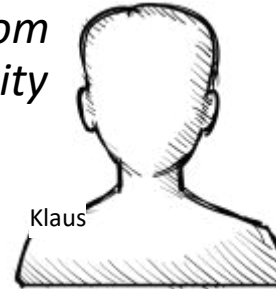
People Are Saying

“I’ve seen people use their credentials before, saying that makes the validity of their reporting high. But that’s not really true.”



Likesh

“This is a delicate balance, it’s bad for the reporting if you are getting the perspective on an issue from someone who has had years of developed bias from living within that community bubble.”



Klaus

“Sometimes my personal opinions feel attacked, and then I think they are putting their opinion on this.”



Bianca

“The thing is, even if I agree with it every news site has a point of view.”



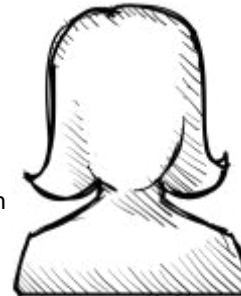
Molly



“I’m always looking for information that isn’t just to scare or to push bias; I’m looking for actionable information I can then participate on.”



Mariah



“I feel like I need to do research. I can’t just read news and take it as it is. I have to do more digging, and I think, ‘Wasn’t that supposed to be your job as the reporter?’”



Leilanie



What we are hearing

Interviewees

Bianca, 30



"I trust major news sources; it's just how they are tacking on opinions that become the problem. However sometimes my personal opinions feel attacked, and then I think they are putting their opinion on this."

Washington, DC
July 10th, 2020

News Behaviors:

Bianca spends most of her day with news playing in the background. But also gets a lot of news from her phone through out the day. When something comes into her news feeds that she is unsure about she will google it to double check that what she is seeing is true.

"If something feels fishy to me, I then go into google and type in the same headline to see what comes up. I want to know the truth."

She feels a great deal of guilt around the news and staying on top of what is going on. "Sometimes I think watching news is a civic responsibility, because sometimes I feel tired of it all and want to stop, but then I feel guilty." She thinks this has gotten a lot stronger, and the guilt has increased.

News types she is looking at:



Daily Events



Local



Global



Military



Government



Economy

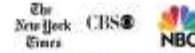


Health



Entertainment

Subscribes to / Follows:



Trust indicators:



Best Practice

"I'll be honest: I'm sure this information is out there, but I've never searched for it." She would expect to see this in the About section for each organization.



Type of Work

"I'm used to this. When I'm looking at the top stories, I see this" if it's marked sponsored, she ignores it. "I don't trust sponsored articles at all. Even if there is good information in that, I skip it."



Citations & References

She's seen it but doesn't really look into it.



Locally Sourced

"I think this means someone has boots on the ground" But she likes the idea of adapting that definition to someone who's from the community and understands those voices.

Cards selected:

- Concerned about Other Perspectives
- Understanding Myself
- Voting & Gov Purposes
- Engaged
- Think About our Future
- Enjoy a Fresh Perspective
- Informed
- Knowing my Community
- Keep my Family Informed

Closing thoughts

"A lot of the time I think of news as info-tainment. They are trying to inform while keeping people watching. I've thought about this, and some do it better than others. I do think there are people out there trying to put out bad info, and the damage is already done by the time we figure it out." She said her level of worry about that is a 10 because she has family members who would absolutely see a fake news piece, and it will change their beliefs with no going back.

Here are a few examples of 24 1-page profiles created to summarize interviewee discussions, their news behaviors and perspectives.

Interviewees

Here are a few examples of 24 1-page profiles created to summarize interviewee discussions, their news behaviors and perspectives.

Rita, 40

Spain
July, 2020

"I tend to avoid friends or generally anyone who accepts fake news as real news."

News Behaviors

Rita looks at the news daily in the morning and after work. She follows reporters and now looks at news more through web TV, so it's not just television news these days. She uses the news to help her remain informed but thinks of the news as manipulative, believing that about 30% of the news she sees is 'fake news.' When asked when she would subscribe to a paper, she said sometimes when she sees a new group putting out good articles, or she might identify that she likes a particular author. It starts to feel bad taking their pieces repeatedly without paying for it.

Types of News

More Trust

- Entertainment
- Global
- Economy
- Health

Less Trust

Trust Indicators

Local

Rita sees local news as, for the most part, very traditional. "they are immobile in what they choose to report on."

Journalist Info

Rita was one of the few people we interviewed who could name specific journalists. Following a particular journalist is enough to make her want to subscribe to a specific source of news.

Trustworthiness

Rita used to trust sources such as the World Health Organization, but she is now starting to be warier of news or facts that they are putting out. She worries that these places' information is likely to be 'duped' or misinterpreted than lesser-known organizations following the COVID pandemic. These feelings have been steadily increasing today. She questions about 20-30%, whereas before, she used to question about 5-10%. When it comes to getting essential health information, she primarily chooses to read the white paper directly. "I'm looking for that seal of approval from an academic."

Tone / Emotion

The primary way Rita does not trust the news has to do with how it is written. "If there is a preachy tone like they are trying too hard to sway how I think or act." She has learned to altogether avoid right-wing options such as the Daily Mail or El Mundo.

News Attitude (Cards selected)

- _ Take a Stand
- _ Enjoy a Fresh Perspective
- _ While I'm eating
- _ Voting & Govn
- _ Engaged
- _ With My Coffee
- _ Historic Perspective
- _ Informed
- _ Talk With Friends
- _ Keep my Family Updated
- _ Make Change
- _ Have Fun

Subscribes to or Follows

- abc
- The Guardian
- EL MUNDO
- sky news
- EL PAÍS

What we are hearing

Interviewees

Here are a few examples of 24 1-page profiles created to summarize interviewee discussions, their news behaviors and perspectives.

Klaus, 23



North Wales, U
July 24th, 2020

"This is a delicate balance, it's bad for the reporting if you are getting the perspective on an issue from someone who has had years of developed bias from living within that community bubble."

News Behaviors:

Klaus looks at the news through out the day. Now he's trying to look for right-leaning or conservatively written articles. "But it's hard because [with] the language that they are using and how they say it feels like they are trying to push particular agendas."

He doesn't share news very often with those outside of his immediate family. He talked about how he really wants to gain different perspective on the news but he has a hard time finding resource that around so filled with emotion and clear bias. "The issue is all the people I talk to and read are all pretty much of the same mind as me, but when I look into conservative or different sides, I find myself asking where are these people? How can I meet them and talk with them? But this feels impossible because the news is already setting us up to hate each other."

News types she is looking at:



Celebrity



Entertainment



Sport



Military



Global



Government



Economy

Trust indicators:



Locally Sourced

He would expect that to be something about North Wales. "A lot of the time I'm getting information about UK / England, which is useless to me, actually. Now I pay much more attention to just North Wales information. I'd like to know if the reporter is local. But that brings along opportunity for bias in different ways"



Citations & References

"I do follow the link when they are given, and, yes, sometimes it's not clear whether I can trust that as well. It can be a lot, when I'm trying to figure out if I trust what I'm looking at and it takes me somewhere else, so now I need to try to work out if I can trust that... I think this would be useful"



Actionable Feedback

"It would be interesting if we could write something at the end of the article, and the news site could put out a statement of 'This is how our community has responded to this piece.' You'd have someone curate the feedback channels in a way. I think this is something we are missing for sure. If we could have a place where people could come together and talk civilly, not just the people, but also the journalist and experts."

Burn out: Brexit

When it comes to reading something that spurred him to actions, he said he almost had the opposite reaction when Brexit happened "I had more of a 'Oh, what's the point...' feeling, no matter how clued in to the news I was or how much I talked with friends and tried to be an activist online, nothing mattered.

At the end of the day I'm powerless, I should just take a step back, I've got a lot to do, it's hard to pay the bills and be an activist. Particularly when being an activist gets you nowhere," "it was so confusing; I mean there is a huge building just down the road that was completely funded by the EU; and all those people I have been talking to love the EU, so how did this happen? Why wasn't that reported on? When I woke up in the morning of Brexit, it was just a complete shock."

Ideas that came from the interview

"Maybe articles should be broken down into sub-sections of 'This is the problem(s), This is what is being done about it, and This the what we are predicting the future could be.' Or 'This is the problem, These are the people at the heart of the problems, and These are the people or ideas being put forward to try to fix the problem.'"

Klaus is looking for ways for the news to tell him more then just what he wants to hear as well as offer more positive step forward for him to know what is being done and what he can do.

What we are hearing

Interviewees

Here are a few examples of 24 1-page profiles created to summarize interviewee discussions, their news behaviors and perspectives.

Bill, 63

Teacher, artist, musician



"The human brain gets an endorphin rush when it senses the 'Ring of Truth'; it doesn't matter the facts or reasons... it just lights up. You honestly think the DNC is financing the anarchists. ... People just choose to believe the wrong thing."

He commented just once on a Fox news thread... and now gets a link from them and makes a comment each day. "It's like going into the Lion's Den."

Seattle
June, 2020

News Behaviors:

Bill subscribed to more publishers in 2016-17 with the advent of Trump and stays engaged because of the urgency level, but is also attracted to great articles. These almost have him spending for a next subscription, even though he feels he subscribes supportively to enough news. Engaging often in article comments as well as discussion threads in social media is a daily habit.

Bill reads "Conservative" (Fox) and "Liberal" (NYT) forums and participates in them to present rational thought. He's motivated to contribute by seeing the size of the need and that his support is required. He uses comments sections as a first clue as to what to research, and sometimes finds the comments to have more value than the original post.

Bill wants quick access to the back up facts at least one level deeper (original source in any medium) but will also search on his own. This desire for facts goes for both the news and for the rebuttals to the news (e.g., Snopes).

Subscribes to:



How he trusts the news:



What he likes in trustworthy news:

Bill would like news that aims to evoke less emotion, even in subconscious ways such as music and unrelated manipulated imagery.

He likes Snopes: "They explain why they are making the call. Not just 'That's B.S.' but because of these reasons."

"I want a Trust-O-Meter... hey, even an audible one! A 'ring of truth!' or an 'ooogaah... this is not right!' [These particular flourishes may come to him due to his gaming hobby and also growing up in a military family.]

Trust indicators:



First of all, he believes in science. Then who it is is super-important, their history and credentials



Comments point him to further research and also motivate him to add his voice where needed.



Methods connect to the "scientific" part of things.



Labeling is important for credibility

Approach to the news:

"Engage with other perspectives. Talk through and test ideas."

Cards selected:

Engaged
 Understanding myself
 Discussion groups
 Take a stand

Be concerned about other perspectives.
 Historical perspective
 For voting and governmental purposes

Ideas that come from interview:

"_How to get or point out the best mix of "big name" and local credibility
_Is there a way for people to become aware of confirmation bias or "ring of truth"? As compared to real facts?
_Are truth meters getting any more possible?"

"_Are Maps of News Views possible for this month's Top 10 Topics?
_What might a Share Index be for an article? For a person? ("This person mostly shares science." vs "This person shares left and right." vs "This person shares sensational or celebrity news.")

Summer 2020 Themes



ENGAGEMENT

Is “engagement” wearing a mask... a rally... donating... voting... clicking? People identify with engagement more in 2020-21 than four years ago.



EMOTION

How do people view the role of emotion in their news interactions? Does it help or hurt their trust?



LANDSCAPE OF TRUST

How do we place ourselves, our news in a landscape of trust? We’re workshopping a Trust Indicator refresh and more.

Landscape of Trust

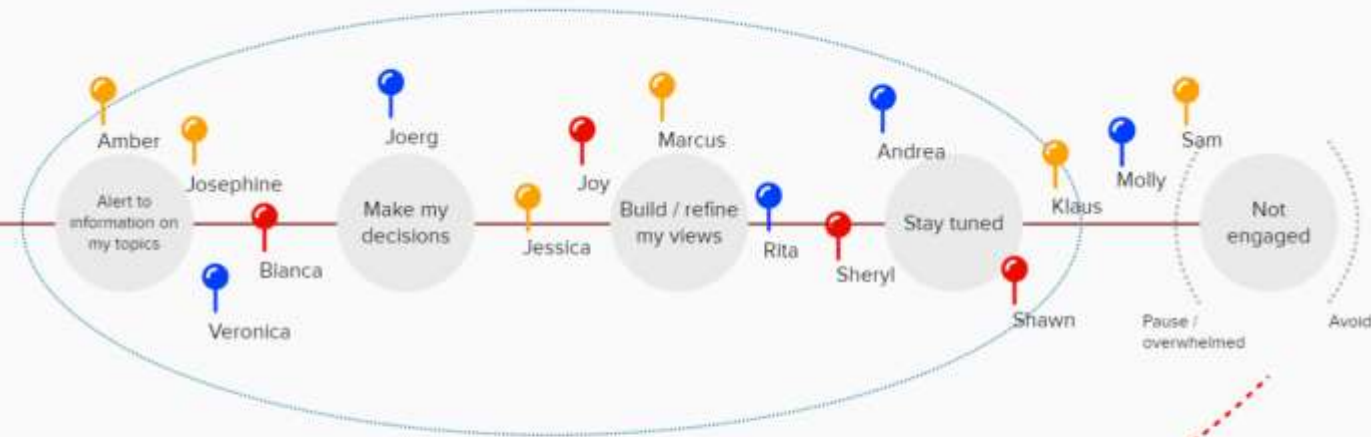
- Engagement
- Emotion & Trustworthiness

Engagement

Outwardly Engaged



Internally Engaged



How do we move users from here to there?

In general, there has been a development towards engagement in the past four years, going beyond our previously most activated interviewee.

Outwardly engaged and internally engaged categories were more likely to subscribe or follow particular news groups.

Those outside those categories took more of a passive or uninterested approach to following the news.

Some actively avoiding the news, due to negative perspectives on the news altogether, or feelings of being overwhelmed or hopeless in the face of information coming into their threads.

Emotion

The news is an inherently emotional experience due to the nature of what is being reported and the day-to-day impact those stories may have on the lives of people.

We heard repeatedly throughout the interviews about the role emotion plays in individual trust levels while consuming the news.



Trust Indicators

Response, Interaction and Refinement

Indicators that now feel complex have potential for growth.

LEVEL UP

- Four years ago readers found the Comments section to be chaotic and problematic.
- Now, more comment areas have been brought into a useful, moderated state.
- There's several possibilities for taking "Actionable" to a deeper level.

EVOLUTION

- Four years ago people who cared about Diverse Voices wanted to see diversity on staff.
- Now people are more concerned about seeking diverse views, meaning breadth of thought, in order to find truth from the greater range. Does this point to creating a map for them?

TANGLED SPACE

- People thought of the Local indicator for both their *own* locality and for whether they were getting a local view on *distant* places.
- National / Local: There's an appreciation for the complementary nature of having both on a story. National for broader perspective and Local for the contextual understanding.
- Diverse voices in the local: The audience was aware of how different local voices have their own bias and experience-set.
- Not getting enough local: Most were concerned about the loss of their own local news.

RE-FRAME

- Readers who already have a sense of "methods" in their work understand and value them in news.
- Everyone else needs a "hook" to draw them in and would expect to see them in the story itself.



Actionable Feedback

1 | 7 | 4
2

Can we participate? A newsroom's efforts to engage the public's help in setting coverage priorities, contributing to the reporting process, ensuring accuracy and other areas. Readers want to participate and provide feedback that might alter or expand a story.

★



Diverse Voices

3 | 2 | 7
6

What are the newsroom's efforts and commitments to bringing in diverse perspectives? Readers noticed when certain voices, ethnicities, or political persuasions were missing.



Locally Sourced

Was the reporting done on the scene, with deep knowledge about the local situation or community? Lets you know when the story has local origin or expertise.

★



Methods

How was it built? Also for in-depth stories, information about why reporters chose to pursue a story and how they went about the process.

These exhibit a more nuanced, complex conversation and usage. A growth-oriented refresh could be timely and impactful.

Refinements (More detail in hidden pages.)




Best Practices

What are the news outlet's standards? Who funds it? What is the outlet's mission? Plus commitments to ethics, diverse voices, accuracy, making corrections and other standards.



Journalist Info

Who made this? Details about the journalist, including their expertise and other stories they have worked on.



Citations & References

What's the source? For investigative or in-depth stories, access to the sources behind the facts and assertions.



Type of Work

What is this? Labels to distinguish opinion, analysis and advertiser (or sponsored) content from news reports.

ALWAYS, RARELY

- Almost everyone agrees this is useful.
- It's only needed one time.
- Good as-is.

BOTH WAYS

- Helpful as a start to digging deeper to find the perspective; good as-is.
- Readers more likely trust the publisher who hired the journalist.
- Belief that it could lead to celebrity for the journalist and then potential for less trust.

MUST-HAVE MIXED BAG

- Gives confidence
- Used when fake, too
- What if you could see the status of the link? Or a map of citation breadth?

NECESSARY, SUBTLE

- While useful, the real needs are left unaddressed; this could be made stronger.

Further Recommendations

In this time of change it's a good opportunity to level up! People are ready, if worn.

Further Recommendations Workshops

We'll brainstorm refinements and development of the eight Trust Indicators, then grapple with key topics around Emotion and Engagement in the next few weeks.

Research: Jun-Aug 2020

Trust Project Workshop Day 2 of 3 | 20 May Journalist Expertise

Journalist Info

Who made that? Details about the journalist, including their expertise and other stories they have worked on.

GOAL

...Share a story with us, we can tell how to make it more visible as an indicator for value and credibility for visually communicating the audience or standpoint of the journalist.

...Communicate the passion / motivation that drives a journalist.

BACKGROUND

...Most wanted or looked at Journalist Expertise, particularly previous work, sometimes place of work or training.

...People no longer believe that there is a voice of the nation... and miss those simpler times.

BOTH WAYS

...Helpful as a start to digging deeper to find the perspective of author; works fine as-it-is.

...Readers who were less interested already placed their trust in publisher who hired the journalist, so felt this unnecessary.

...Several pointed to the possibility that it could lead to celebrity for the journalist and then a potential for less trust.

INSTRUCTIONS (no translation)

1. Set the timer for 23 minutes.
2. Tackle each question... adding post-its as needed.
3. Vote for 1-2 minutes where recommended.
4. **AT 23 MIN** copy paste your favorite post-its here. Then "copy" that whole batch of favorites to bring them back to our All-Group Mural.
5. **AT 25 MIN** click the link to return to the main board. [--LINK HERE--](#)

The TEAM

Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here
Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here
Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here
Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here	Load Profile Here

DISCUSSION AND BRAINSTORM

Q1 (10 min)

Any immediate thoughts you've brought in with you today or that are top-of-mind? Please post stories at right.

Visual mapping of Journalist info

1

DISCUSSION AND BRAINSTORM

Q2 (10 min)

For some Journalist Expertise worked to an opposite effect than desired.

Q1) Creditable as connected with a long history of bias inspired distrust.

Q2) Too much of a spotlight beamed toward celebrity... which then leads to trying to keep up one's celebrity status and possibly compromising trust.

Any thoughts here?

Q3 (10 min)

How might we highlight the passion and work that goes into journalism? ...emphasizing the quality and rigor within the industry.

2

DISCUSSION AND BRAINSTORM

Q4 (10 min)

Are there visual ways to represent the background and breadth of a journalist?

Visual mapping of Journalist info

3

Which Insights Do You Want to Share?

(Choose one person to report orally to the full group in any language)

Q5 (10 min)

Now vote on which to share.

Vote writing time for 2 minutes. Facilitator can and only to extend.

Circle a name around, starting to pronounce on the stage.

Click on the post-its to vote and follow... right-click to change your vote.

4



[Link back to Main Board...](#)

Thank you.

Willa Crolius
Chris Kurjan

Team Contributors
Michael Rawling, Benjamin Baader, Mari Narma.