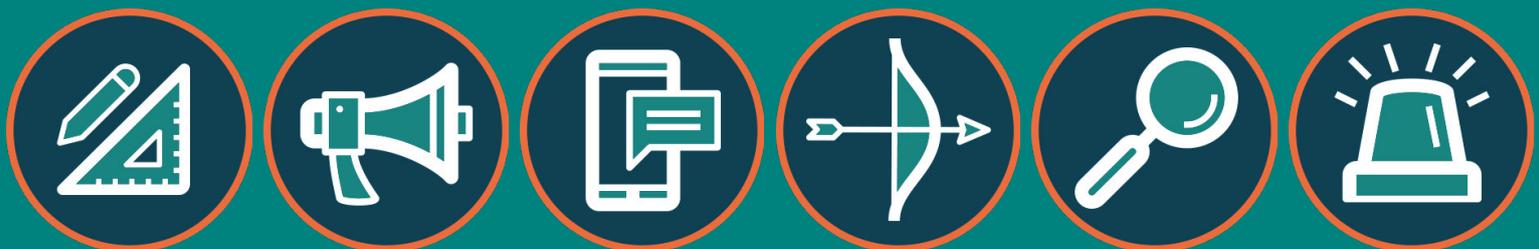


# TOP TRENDS IN JOURNALISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

---

Cision's 2017 Social Journalism Study reveals how journalists are using social media in their work



# SUMMARY

Social media may be maturing as a medium but journalists are finding new ways for making social networks and platforms work for them in their day-to-day jobs.

This year's edition of the Social Journalism Study, which Cision conducts annually with Canterbury Christ Church University, reveals the emergence - from a social media perspective - of a new group of journalists, who we call the messengers, and who use social media to communicate with the public more than any other group.

The study shows that social networks, such as Facebook, have replaced Twitter and other microblogs as the most used platforms but time spent on social media and views about its importance to journalism have remained stable. Publishing and promoting content are key drivers of use.

This White Paper, using new findings and the UK 2017 Social Journalism Study, explains how journalists use social, the nine key ways social media is affecting UK journalism, journalists' concerns over fake news and, ultimately, explores what all of this might mean for PR and comms professionals.

# THE TOP FINDINGS IN THE 2017 SOCIAL JOURNALISM STUDY

- 1.** Social networks have replaced microblogs as most used platforms, but half of journalists use five or more types of social media **06**
- 2.** UK journalists fit into six distinctive types of social media users including a new group – the Messengers **08**
- 3.** Time spent on social media and views about its importance remain relatively stable **16**
- 4.** News, current affairs and political journalists are most likely to perceive fake news as a serious problem **17**
- 5.** Audience interaction is a constant activity for many journalists **18**
- 6.** Only 6% of respondents agree that social media has decreased their workload; 15% think that automation and algorithms make their work easier and more interesting **19**
- 7.** PR sources and Industry contacts are main sources used by journalists **20**
- 8.** Social media makes no impact on how journalists and PRs communicate with email remaining the dominant form of contact **21**
- 9.** Age no longer determines the extent to which journalists use social media for work, but older journalists use the platforms differently than their younger colleagues **22**

# INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth time we've looked at the way UK journalists are using social media in their work and it's clear the medium is maturing as a platform and tool for earned media.

But, while more journalists than before see social media as essential for their day-to-day work, there are some surprises.

In the nine top trends for journalism and social media identified in this year's report, we see the emergence of the Messengers – a group of journalists who use social platforms differently from their peers – and the rise in popularity of social networks.

The popularity and importance of social media is a point echoed by most of the editors and journalists in our successful programme of media briefings across the year.

At the start of the year, Mark O'Donnell, Time Out's UK head of digital, told an audience of Cision clients:

**“In terms of the social content, that often provides the biggest spikes in terms of our day to day traffic – and that comes from our social channels. So, from Facebook we tend to find that exclusives, if we're breaking news, that gives big spikes. If we're doing behind the scenes content, that's often stuff that resonates with our audience.”**



## Changing channels

Becky Lucas, GQ engagement manager, who spoke at a separate media briefing, also concurred:

**“The important social media channels for GQ are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook is probably the most important for us, because it drives the most traffic by far to the website. But that is changing. We've seen Twitter overtake Facebook on some days. And Instagram is great as a source of engagement in itself. So, more and more, we're creating content which just lies on Instagram.”**



This has implications for communicators, of course. While social media is not the obvious channel for pitching stories or ideas to most journalists, it can drive the content formats they use (video and visually appealing content are successful on social platforms) and the speed with which they need to publish.

In addition, it is clear that PR sources and contacts are the main sources used by journalists.

However, the study picks up on the role social has played in the 'fake news' phenomenon - news, current affairs and political journalists perceive fake news as a serious problem. In the UK it is a complex - and changing - media landscape and the nine key trends that follow will show you how social media is changing the way journalists operate.

# METHODOLOGY

In 2017, Cision and Canterbury Christ Church University conducted an online survey about the uses, behaviours, attitudes and perceptions of social media among journalists. Respondents were taken from Cision's and Gorkana's media database of more than 1.5 million global influencers. This particular report takes a closer look at those in the UK and is based on 439 responses from journalists and media professionals collected during January and February 2017. Throughout the survey the term 'journalist' is used to include all media professionals, e.g. researchers, editors, bloggers etc, who took part.

The survey is designed to enhance the media industry's understanding of social media uptake and the impact of social media technologies and processes on journalists' work. Cision conducts this survey on an annual basis to continue to inform on best practice within the PR and communications field and to deepen the industry's understanding of how journalists and professional communicators use and value social media and other resources. The research examined patterns of social media adoption by journalists, how and what for social media is used in journalists' work, and how they view the impact of social media on journalistic practices and the profession.

## UK JOURNALISTS FIT INTO SIX DISTINCTIVE TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS - SEE DESCRIPTIONS ON PAGE 09



**ARCHITECTS**



**PROMOTERS**



**MESSENGERS**



**HUNTERS**



**OBSERVERS**



**SCEPTICS**

# FINDING #1

## **“Social networks have replaced microblogs as most used platforms, but half of the journalists use five or more types of social media regularly”**

Social networks (e.g. Facebook and Google+) and microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Snapchat) have been the two most popular types of platforms ever since the Social Journalism Study began in 2011. In previous years, however, respondents reported to use microblogs more than social networks. In 2014, for example, 89% of participants said that they used microblogs at least weekly in their work, while the figure for social networks was 75%. Indeed, in international comparison, UK journalists were notable for their preference for microblogs as a professional tool, while journalists in other countries we surveyed tended to favour social networks. This year the trend has reversed with respondents reported using social networks more for work in a typical week (83%) compared to microblogs (74%).

Table 1

% of regular users of social media types (% of using it at least weekly)

Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Google+)	83%
Microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Snapchat)	74%
Professional networks (e.g. LinkedIn)	55%
Content communities (e.g. Wikipedia)	51%
Video Sharing (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)	45%
Blogs	44%
Image Sharing (e.g. Instagram, Pinterest)	44%
Messaging (e.g. Whatsapp, Vchat)	31%
Live Video	19%

But a key feature of journalists' use of social media is that they regularly work with a number of platforms. This year half (50%) of respondents reported that they use more than five types of social media at least once a week for work, 86% used more than three kinds of platforms and only 4% worked with just one type of social media. Journalists' specialisms emerged as a key influencing factor regarding the number of platforms respondents used.

While social networks and microblogs are the most widely used platforms, around half of respondents also use professional networks (55%), content communities (51%) and video sharing services (45%) regularly. Blogs, however, appear to be losing their professional appeal, as the percentage of

respondents who used them for work at least weekly declined from 79% in 2014 to 44% in 2017. Messaging services, such as Whatsapp and Vchat, and live video services are used regularly by a smaller section of journalists with 31% of respondents using the former at least weekly and 19% the latter.



Cision media briefing with 5News:  
Jack Leather, digital editor (far left) says Facebook helps  
it engage with audiences.



## FINDING #2

### “UK journalists fit into six distinctive types of social media users including a new group – the Messengers”

Since 2012, the Social Journalism Study has repeatedly identified five clear groups of social media users among UK journalists, each of which demonstrates specific patterns of social media use, views and attitudes. These 'Social Suspects' are: Architects, Promoters, Hunters, Observers and Sceptics. This year a new type has emerged – the Messenger – a group which is particularly keen on using social media for messaging and keeping in touch with general public. This new Social Suspect suggests that journalists are increasingly fragmenting and adopting particular approaches to their use and attitude towards social media.

With the exception of the new Messengers, this year's profiles are very similar to the groups in 2012 (Table 2) with Hunters representing the largest group and making up almost a third of all respondents. Sceptics and the Architects remain one of two equally small groups with the Sceptics at the other end of the scale being of equally small size, both of which have declined over the last four years, and continue to represent the two extremes of use, behaviour and attitude.

Architects are the most active social media users and sceptics are the least active.

Table 2 - Size of each group of social media users as proportion of respondents (% of respondents)

	2012	2016	2017	Change (over 5 years)
Sceptics	10	10	8	-2
Observers	19	30	21	+2
Messenger	-	-	14	n/a
Hunters	35	21	32	-3
Promoters	25	27	17	-8
Architects	12	13	8	-4

This year's results found that the characteristics of the five main groups are steadfastly the same as last year, with the exception of the new group which represents a group with average use, views and behaviours with a strong focus on audience engagement and high use of messaging apps to build conversations with their audience.



## ARCHITECTS (8%)

This group is now showing a decline from five years ago and last year, although in terms of their actions they still represent the most proactive of all the groups. They could be described as the trailblazers in terms of their journalism work and social media. They have always shown greater use of social media, although this is not surprising as many of them (78%) reported working in online journalism as well as having the highest group working in broadcasting (27%). And this group are also most likely to agree that social media has had a positive impact on journalism (69%) although they are also aware of the pitfalls, with the highest number (42%) claiming fake news is a problem and that social media undermines objective journalism.

With a male bias (60%), journalists in this group are found across the ages but mostly in full-time employment (80%). This group spend longer using social media with all of them spending more than 2 hours per day (Table 16) using social media for their work and a surprising 23% more than 8 hours per day (20%).

Table 16 - Time spent using social media for work (% of each cluster)

Number of Hours	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
Do not use social media for work	0	0	0	0	4	24
A few hours a month	0	0	4	0	18	36
A few hours a week	0	0	8	16	31	32
Up to 1 hour a day	0	5	37	35	34	4
Up to 2 hours a day	0	33	25	37	10	4
2-4 hours a day	4	49	22	12	3	0
4-8 hours a day	74	13	4	0	0	0
More than 8 hours a day	22	0	0	0	0	0

They use social media across a range of tasks but are the highest of all groups for checking and verifying information, monitoring and sourcing. This group use social media for a range of tasks on a daily basis and undertake a range of activities every hour. Around three quarters (73%) of Architects stated they regularly used user generated content and are more aware of the need to produce a commercially viable journalistic product than all the other groups.

This group is less likely than all the other groups to use industry and professional contacts (39%) and most likely to use the general public,

although this remains at less than a quarter (23%) to source information compared to the other groups. As with most groups, their most important source of information remains PR professionals/wires/press releases. Despite their heavy use of social media, Architects prefer being contacted by email (100%), telephone (42%) and then social media (19%). This group are very positive about the role social media plays in their work, with 77% saying they couldn't work without it and 56% saying it has improved their productivity, both the same as last year. Although most (64%) claim they have a good relationship with their PR contacts they feel social media is leading them to be less reliant on PR (58%) and they also are least likely to agree PR practitioners are a reliable source of stories (23%).



### PROMOTERS (17%)

The Promoters use social media across a range of professional tasks (Table 17) but they see social media most important for interacting with their audience, publishing and promoting their work, monitoring and networking.

Table 17 - Respondents who said that social media was important/very important for carrying out the following journalistic tasks (% in each group)

Task	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
Sourcing information	82	74	74	67	41	25
Checking / verifying information	62	31	45	31	15	11
Interacting with my audience	85	98	86	94	60	4
Publishing / promoting content	92	97	96	96	76	32
Networking	64	74	71	69	51	11
To receive PR pitches	19	21	14	9	7	4

This group reports spending 3-4 hours a day on social media (49%) and just over a quarter (38%) spending 1-2 hours a day using social media for their work. Looking at specific social media tasks, this group are very active across a whole range of activities using written and audio-visual content to present their story. Their most popular activities are replying to comments on social media (93%), sharing others' content in posts and monitoring discussions on social media about own content (90%), and using social media to connect with new people/contacts (both 87%).

Two-thirds of this group state they are happy with their relationship with PR professionals (66%), a fall of 6% since last year, and almost less than half (48%) believe that PR practitioners are a reliable source of information.



## MESSENGERS (14%)

This year, for the first year, a new group has emerged from the data showing a group of media professionals who are actively using social media for a range of work related tasks (Table 17) although less than Architects and Promoters, but using a variety for platforms, particularly messaging, to reach their audience and publish and promote content. Messengers are most likely of all groups to read posts of others they follow (96%), use messaging sites such as Whatsapp (75%) and watch video content on a social media site (65%). Of all the groups they are also more likely to read content communities (51%). Messengers use social media to communicate with the general public more so than any other group (78%)

They also reported they are more engaged with their audience (90%) and that it has changed their roles as a journalist but with only a quarter stating social media has improved their productivity, so Messengers noted the specific benefits but do not see it as helping them in their work.

In addition, although 61% of them claim to be happy with their relationship with PR practitioners Messengers are also most likely of all the groups to distrust PR professionals (Table 18) and similar to the other groups, just under a quarter rely on them to produce good content. However this group is also the least likely of all groups to turn to PR professionals as an important source of information (45%).

Table 18 - Percentage of respondents who agree/strongly agree with these statements about their relationship with PR professionals.

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
Cannot always be trusted	46%	49%	48%	42%	60%	44%
Can be counted on to produce good content	23%	23%	24%	31%	23%	4%



## HUNTERS (32%)

This is the largest group of journalists in the UK this year. Over the past few years, Hunters have generally sit in the middle of the groups in terms of their use and views of social media – never as active as Promoters and Architects but more than Sceptics and Observers, and this continues to be the case. They are focussed on a few platforms and tasks, tending to favour social media for publishing and promoting (96%) and interacting with their audience (94%), and using Facebook and Twitter extensively but less so other platforms. In fact, among their most frequent daily activity is reading posts of people they follow (66%), followed by reposting on microblogging sites (61%).

Hunters are fairly happy with their relationship with PR practitioners (67% report having a good relationship with them) (Table 19) and just under half (49%) see them as a reliable source of information but when it comes to trust, they are most likely to rely on experts (70%) and use social media (72%) to contact them.

Table 19 Percentage of respondents in each cluster who agreed/strongly agreed with the following views about their relationship with PR professionals

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
PR practitioners are a reliable source of stories for journalists	23	48	49	41	35	36
I am happy with my relationship with PR practitioners	64	66	67	78	61	52

Hunters are not heavy users of social media compared to some of the other groups. 25% report spending 1-2 hours per day and 49% up to one hour per day but that includes some who use it weekly or less (12%).



## OBSERVERS (21%)

This is the second largest group of journalists this year, although a decline of 9% from last year is actually quite consistent with findings from 2012.

Observers use social media for all aspects of their work, keen on using Twitter, Facebook and is the keenest user of LinkedIn of all the groups (Table 19). However, their overall use is less than the other groups discussed and are between Hunters and Sceptics in their general use of social media. They are most likely to use social media for

publishing and promoting their work (76%) followed by monitoring what's going on as they like to 'Observe' what's happening before engaging.

This group are not very active on an hourly basis or daily basis and their preferred tasks tend to focus on reading what is being posted and reading content with very little activity related to posting and creating unique content on social media. For example, just over a half (54%) read posts of people they follow but only 3% report adding or replying to comments made on social media.

Table 19 - Percentage of respondents in each cluster who use social media for publishing/promoting (% of respondents).

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
Professional networks	54%	57%	57%	56%	60%	46%
Blogs	54%	36%	27%	52%	38%	18%
Social networks	92%	95%	92%	88%	72%	39%
Video Sharing	73%	69%	43%	38%	35%	1%
Microblogs	89%	85%	82%	80%	73%	32%
Content communities	69%	56%	65%	44%	51%	50%
Image Sharing	69%	61%	57%	46%	34%	14%
Live Video	42%	44%	18%	10%	5%	-
Messaging	73%	56%	65%	14%	12%	4%

When sourcing information Observers prefer to source from PR professionals, wires and press releases the most (61%), industry and professional contacts (50%). However, they are starting to see the usefulness of social media with over half (54%) saying that they use social media mostly for communicating with the public, higher than all the groups.



### **SCEPTICS (8%)**

True to their name, the Sceptics consistently remain the least active and most cynical about the benefits offered by social media and although their use is growing, probably out of necessity rather than choice, their attitudes remain generally negative. Equally they do not seem to identify any particular benefits widely

acknowledged with social media, such as engaging with their audience and compared to the other groups strongly feel that social media is undermining traditional journalistic values (Table 20).

Table 20 - Agreement with views on social media (% of each cluster)

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Messengers	Observers	Sceptics
Overall, social media has had a positive impact on journalism	69%	63%	57%	56%	35%	11%
Because of social media I am more engaged with my audience	89%	97%	90%	94%	49%	11%
Social media is undermining traditional journalistic values such as objectivity	42%	46%	54%	47%	57%	82%

As with all groups, Sceptics (86%) stated that email remains their preferred communication method with PR professionals, although 39% stated that they would prefer contact by telephone and 18% face to face.

Of all the activities this group felt that social media is most important for publishing and promoting content although this is less than a third (32%) and a quarter using it to source information. However, they have little overall engagement in any social media activity on a daily basis/weekly basis and are most likely just to read content.

When communicating with their audiences, Sceptics are mostly likely to use social media with PR professionals (43%) and the general public (29%) compared to the other groups.

Sceptics can be found spread across the age range with no particular gender bias although there is a tendency for journalists in this group to work for magazines. This group spends the least time of all the groups with 25% stating they do not use social media for work and only 8% spending up to 2 hours per day using social media for their work and 68% spending only a few hours per week/month using it.

Cision media briefing with International Business Times UK: the title has embraced innovation and platforms like Facebook Live



## FINDING #3

### “Time spent on social media and views about its importance remain relatively stable, with publishing and promoting a key driver of use”

The majority of respondents (75%) in our survey reported using social media for their work on a daily basis with 29% saying that they use the tools for three hours or more a day (Table 3).

In general, there have not been significant shifts in relation to time spent on social media over the past few years, which is interesting given the growth in social media brands and changes in the media industries during the period. The proportion of those using the platforms for work for more than two hours a day stayed remarkable stable between 2014 and 2017 with 31% and 29%, in each year, respectively.

Where we do see some change is in relation to a smaller group of journalists (about 10% of respondent population) who used social media for work weekly or monthly in 2014 and who now use the platforms daily. Thus there was an increase in the number of respondents who use social media for two or less hours a day from 35% in 2014 to 46% in 2017. This change reflects how social media is now embedded in the work of news and media organisations and how the platforms have become part of the technological infrastructure of journalists.

Table 3 - Time spent using social media for work (% of respondents)

	2014	2016	2017
None	5%	6%	3%
A few hours a month	13%	9%	7%
A few hours a week	16%	12%	15%
2 or less hours per day	35%	47%	46%
3-4 hours per day	18%	15%	18%
5-8 hours per day	9%	9%	9%
More than 8 hours a day	4%	2%	2%

Similarly, views about what professional tasks social media is important for have stayed relatively stable over the past few years. Although journalists use social media for a variety of reasons, the three key areas of importance are publishing/promoting content, interacting with the audience and monitoring other media/what’s going on.

Social media’s perceived importance for these areas mirror previous year’s survey findings although rankings changed. Social media is now perceived

less important for other journalistic tasks. For example, the percentage of those who thought social media was important for sourcing information declined from 73% in 2011 to 62% in 2017, and for networking from 74% and to 62%, respectively. Social media is also perceived to be less important for checking and verifying information with 48% agreeing that they were useful in 2011 compared to 31% in 2017. These figures indicate that although there are no fundamental changes in perceptions journalists are most likely to use social media mainly or only for publishing/promoting content, interacting with the audience and monitoring other media/what's going on.

## FINDING #4

**“News, current affairs and political journalists are most likely to perceive fake news as a serious problem, and business and financial journalists feel least reliant on social media to be informed”**

Behind the general trends, discussed above, social media use and views about the platforms vary according to journalists' professional settings and demographic characteristics. The factors that influence journalistic practices the most in this context, however, are shifting. Media sector used to be a key variable that impacted on how a journalist used social media in their professional work. But the traditional categorisation of media sectors (i.e. newspaper, magazine, broadcasting, online journalism) is losing its relevance in the digital era as the boundaries between sectors are fading and journalists increasingly produce multimedia content for different platforms.

A factor that is important in terms of its impact on social media use and practices is the type of content journalists produce.

Our study categorised journalists in four main groups in relation to this variable:

- 1) General news, politics and current affairs;
- 2) Business and industry specialist;
- 3) Lifestyle, culture, fashion, sports and entertainment; and
- 4) Other.

News, politics and current affairs journalists generally are most concerned about fake news being a serious problem in their area of specialism (40% thinking that compared to 24% in the other groups). They also use user generated content the most (55% of them do that compared to about a third in the other groups).

News, politics and current affairs journalists are also the ones who are most concerned about copyright, 27% agreeing that they do not use social media more because they have copyright concerns, while the figures in the other groups were between 15% and 17%. Lifestyle, culture, fashion, sports and entertainment correspondents felt the strongest (84% agreeing) about social media having changed their role fundamentally as a journalist, while only 56% of the business and industry specialists thought that. The latter group was also the least attached to social media in their work with 32% of them saying that they could not carry out their work without social media.

Table 4 - Use of social media platforms for work  
(% of respondents use it at least weekly by area of specialism)

	General news, politics & current affairs	Business & Industries	Lifestyle, Fashion, Sports and Entertainment, Culture	Other
Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Google+)	91%	72%	90%	82%
Microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Snapchat)	81%	76%	74%	79%
Professional networks (e.g. LinkedIn)	34%	74%	62%	61%
Content communities (e.g. Wikipedia)	60%	39%	69%	48%
Video Sharing (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)	52%	35%	49%	37%
Blogs	40%	41%	57%	49%
Image Sharing (e.g. Instagram, Pinterest)	35%	34%	69%	42%
Messaging (e.g. Whatsapp, Vchat)	38%	25%	38%	27%
Live Video	29%	4%	25%	16%

## FINDING #5

**“Audience interaction is a constant activity for many journalists with 14% of respondents engaging with their audience hourly and a further 48% daily”**

One of the key reasons why journalists use social media is to interact with their audience. In fact, social media are perceived to have helped journalists with their relationships with the audience, and this view has been constant since the beginning of our Social Journalism study. In 2011 78% of the respondents agreed that they were more engaged with their audience because of social media, while this figure was 80% in 2014 and 76% this year. Interacting with the audience is a frequent activity for many journalists with 62% of respondents reporting they carry it out daily, 14% of those

hourly. Only 9% of respondents said they never interact with their audience on social media.

Correspondingly, many journalists felt completely or to a large extent reliant on social media for engagement with their audience. 18% of respondents felt that they relied completely on social media in this regard, 51% said they were reliant to a large extent, and only 3% thought that they do not need social media for this purpose at all. The nature of audience engagement, however, do not seem to focus on information gathering and sourcing. Only 37% of respondents reported that they use user generated content regularly in their work, although this was a slight increase from last year when 34% of respondents said the same.

## FINDING #6

**“Only 6% of respondents agree that social media has decreased their workload and 15% think that automation and algorithms make their work easier and more interesting”**

More than half of the respondents agreed that overall social media has had a positive impact on journalism. Journalists’ view about the impact of social media on their work and their profession have been mixed in our previous surveys and this trend continues this year.

There are also some indications that journalists’ views have hardened and that they see the impacts of the platforms in a less positive light. For example, in 2014 58% of our respondents thought that social media has improved the productivity of their work, while this year only 33% of respondent agreed with that (Table 6). Similarly, the percentage who agreed that social media has decreased their workload declined from 12 to 6 between 2014 and 2017. The proportion of those who thought that they would not be able to carry out their work without social media has also dropped from 54% in 2014 to 42% this year. At the same time the ratio of those who agreed that social media was undermining traditional journalistic values have slightly increased during the period from 49% to 52%.

Table 6 –  
Selected statements of views about impact of social media (% of respondents)

	2014	2017
My workload has decreased because of using social media	12%	6%
I would not be able to carry my work out without social media	54%	42%
Social media has improved the productivity of my work	58%	33%
Social media is undermining traditional journalistic values	49%	52%

## FINDING #7

### "PR sources and industry contacts are the main sources used by journalists"

Journalists stated that PR sources (54%) and industry and professional contacts (47%) are the most important sources of information (Table 7) both of them showing an increase since last year. These figures have remained very stable since last year suggesting that there is little change in who journalists turn to for information and social media is not changing this. The general public has not become a key source of information with only 13% of respondents claiming it was one of their two key sources and declining since last year suggesting caution around using such sources for gathering stories.

Table 7- Preferred sources of information for journalists (% of respondents)

Source type:	2016 (%)	2017 (%)
PR sources/press releases	53	54
Industry and professional contacts	45	47
Experts	37	38
Other media	n/a	27
General public/crowdsourcing	18	13

Overall social media is not proving to be a main channel for communication for sourcing information, although it has increased since last year. Not surprisingly more than half (57%) stated that social media was the first choice of communication with the general public as this affords journalists a unique method of communication, whereas for professional work contact, email and telephone remain favourite options.

However it is also proving to be of more importance for industry and professional contacts this year (Table 8) but only a quarter would communicate with PR sources (25%). Overall it is evident that while social media is used to communicate with various groups it is the contact with the general public which are the main reason for using social media.

Table 8 - Respondents who agreed they were more likely to communicate on social media with the following sources (%)

Source type:	2016 (%)	2017 (%)
PR sources/press releases	16	25
Industry and professional contacts	24	39
Experts	24	23
Other media <sup>11</sup>	n/a	16
General public/crowdsourcing	67	57

## FINDING #8

### **“Social media makes no impact on how journalists and PRs communicate with email remaining the dominant form of contact”**

Social media is a small part of the communication channels shared between PRs and journalists as email still dominates this relationship. Email dominates the way PRs contact journalists and remains the method which journalists prefer, and that this has increased since last year suggesting social media is playing a minor role in professional communication.

Interestingly preference for hard copy formats are about the same as social media (12% and 15%, respectively) suggesting that social media really has very little impact on the channel of communication given it is about the same as post. What is also noticeable is that journalists would like to see a little more (5%) contact by social media and much less (19%) contact by telephone from PRs.

This finding has been consistent over several years as telephone remains an overused communication tool by PRs as far as journalists are concerned. In comparison to all the other reasons journalists use social media, it is of very little importance to receive PR pitches and suggest that most PR pitches are taking place on the phone or via email.

Differences in communication patterns do appear according to the sectors that journalists work in and how important it is to receive PR pitches via social media, with lifestyle and fashion journalists finding social media to receive PR pitches.

## FINDING #9

### “Age no longer determines the extent to which journalists use social media for work, but older journalists use the platforms differently than their younger colleagues”

Age has been another factor that has influenced journalists’ use of social media. This year’s survey results show that although age continues to impact on how journalists use social media, it no longer determines the extent to which journalists use the platforms for work. Our surveys in previous years found that older journalists used social media less for work compared to their younger colleagues. However, while frequency of social media use of younger age groups has not changed significantly, older journalists’ use of social media has increased. Table 4 illustrates how the 46-64 age group is now a much more regular user of social media for work compared to three years ago. In particular, it is notable that the percentage of those using social media less than daily decreased from 38% to just 13% percent between 2014 and 2017 (Table 14). There are different possible reasons for this change, including that this age group have come to value the platforms more, or developed their digital skills, or there are more expectations in media organisations to use social media daily.

Table 14 – Frequency of social media use by 46-64 age group  
(% of respondents by age group)

	2014	2017
None	6%	1%
A few hours a month	19%	3%
A few hours a week	19%	10%
2 or less hours per day	32%	47%
3-4 hours per day	17%	27%
4-8 hours per day	5%	12%
More than 8 hours a day	2%	0%

Although the differences are much less significant, some variations in extent of social media use remain between the main age groups, as Table 15 illustrates. It is interesting to note that the 46-64 age group is now the most frequent users in some categories, for example, 27% of them reported to use social media for 3-4 hours a day, while this figure was 17% and 15% for the 18-27 and the 28-45 age groups respectively.

Table 15 – Frequency of social media use by age group (% of respondents by age group)

	18-27 years	28-45 years	46-64 years
None	2%	4%	1%
A few hours a month	11%	8%	3%
A few hours a week	9%	18%	10%
2 or less hours per day	46%	45%	47%
3-4 hours per day	17%	15%	27%
4-8 hours per day	15%	8%	12%
More than 8 hours a day	0%	2%	0%

There are, however, some considerable differences between the age groups in relation to how and why they use social media. Figure 15 shows some of these differences in relation to what professional tasks journalists think social media are particularly important for. Compared to their younger colleagues the oldest age group perceive social media less important for publishing and promoting their content (78% as opposed to 92%), for audience engagement (70% as opposed to 83% and 88%) as well for networking (55% as opposed to 62% and 71%).

Cision media briefing with James Longman:  
The BBC reporter (now at ABC News) uses Facebook live and Snapchat for content.



## ABOUT THE SURVEY

**For more information about the survey, please contact:**

### **CISION UK & EMEA**

**Editor:** Philip Smith

**Email:** philip.smith@cision.com

**Project Co-ordinator:** Andrea Gilgenbach

**Email:** andrea.gilgenbach@cision.com

**Author:** Dr Ágnes Gulyás

Professor in Media and Communications, School of Media, Art and Design, Canterbury Christ Church University

**Email:** agnes.gulyas@canterbury.ac.uk

**Author:** Kristine Pole

Senior Lecturer Marketing, Business School, Canterbury Christ Church University

**Email:** kristine.pole@canterbury.ac.uk

**White Paper designer:** Omar Baisar

Digital designer EMEA, Cision

**Email:** omar.baisar@cision.com

## ABOUT CISION

Cision Ltd. (NYSE: CISN) is a leading global provider of software and services to public relations and marketing communications professionals. Cision's software allows users to identify key influencers, craft and distribute strategic content, and measure meaningful impact.

Cision has more than 3,000 employees with offices in the UK and 14 other countries throughout the Americas, EMEA, and APAC. For more information about its award-winning products and services, including the Cision Communications Cloud™ visit [www.cision.com](http://www.cision.com) and follow Cision on Twitter @Cision.

**CISION**<sup>®</sup>

# ABOUT CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

Canterbury Christ Church University is a modern, multi-campus University offering higher and professional education across key Kent and Medway locations: Canterbury, Broadstairs, Medway and Tunbridge Wells..

It has a strong community of 17,000 students and 2,000 staff, studying and teaching across four faculties: Arts and Humanities, Education, Health and Wellbeing, and Social and Applied Sciences.

Canterbury Christ Church was established in 1962 and is a Church of England Foundation University, welcoming all faiths and none.

Today the University continues to shape courses and research around critical social issues, the latest industry developments and public service need. Nearly 90% of its research submitted to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) was assessed as world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised, and 96% of its UK undergraduates, and 98% of postgraduates, were in employment or further study within six months of completing their studies, with nine out of 10 of our employed graduates in graduate level jobs three-and-a-half years after finishing their studies - higher than the national average.

**Visit: [canterbury.ac.uk](http://canterbury.ac.uk)**



