



PROJECT
Information Literacy

NEWS RELEASE - PROJECT INFORMATION LITERACY (PIL)

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National Study on Young Adults' News Consumption Launched

Support from the Knight Foundation and the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association

Santa Rosa, Calif. -- [Project Information Literacy](#) (PIL), a nonprofit research institute, has launched a [national study](#) on how young adults consume news and gather information. The research, conducted in partnership with faculty at Northeastern University and Wellesley College, will focus on two of the most pressing issues of what has been called our “post-truth” era: currency and authority.

The report will look to break new ground as an empirical and quantitative study of many issues -- such as “fake news” and misinformation -- to help better ground public discourse and potential policy solutions. It will also formulate a set of recommendations for professionals directly implicated in addressing relevant problems, offering insights to three groups in particular working with young adults on the front lines: librarians, journalists, and educators.

“This study investigates how students find news, and, more importantly, how the news finds them through social media and other channels they might use,” said Dr. Alison J. Head, the director of the new study and an information scientist and a senior researcher at the metaLAB (at) Harvard. “Our research is unique in that it tackles some of the deeper questions about the cognitive habits of young people in this digital-first environment.”

The research is supported by funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), the largest division of the American Library Association (ALA). The study, set to be concluded in fall 2018, will be one of the largest of its kind, with surveys and interviews on college campuses and other educational settings across the country.

The Knight Foundation is supporting this project for \$60,000, and the ACRL for \$53,000. Northeastern University Libraries and College of Arts, Media and Design (CAMD) and Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) will also contribute support to the project.

The other principal researchers involved include Daniel J. Cohen, Dean of Libraries and Vice Provost for Information Collaboration at Northeastern University; John Wihbey, Assistant Professor of Journalism and New Media at Northeastern; and Panagiotis “Takis” Metaxas, Professor of Computer Science at Wellesley College, where he is also Faculty Director of the Albright Institute. A podcast on fake news and the next generation is available at <https://soundcloud.com/whatsnewpodcast/episode2>

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