RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
- Where do college students get their news and why (e.g., characteristics of online news)?
- What news sources do college students trust?
- Is there a relationship between news use and trust?

METHODOLOGY:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
The uses and gratifications theory explains this trend well. In a study done by Barton (2009), she states that the theory examines what people do with media:

- “This is the core of the uses and gratifications approach: how audience members use the mass media, and what gratifications they receive to enact.” (p. 41)
- Nguyen (2010) and Alders (2006) found that most people still use newspapers the same amount that they did before online news joined the game:
  - Study six percent of people still use newspapers the same amount.
  - Alders found that in terms of being informative, more satisfying, more likeable, enjoyable, reliable, and trustworthy, the majority of surveyors found no difference between online and offline news.

Nguyen and Jarvis, Stroud and Gilliland (2009) found through their respective surveys that the constant accessibility of online news was a key reason as to why it is preferred among college students. Jarvis, Stroud and Gilliland also found:

- “... the students in our sample reported that they are most likely to get their news from the Web.” (p. 37)
- “Young people who use media for interpersonal and parasocial reasons seemed to seek online, cable, and local news.” (p. 36).

A recent study by Alders (2006) found that newspaper readership began decreasing in 1984, and has continued dropping at a steady rate since then:
- Newspaper readers in America have dropped by almost 10 million, from 62 million to 54 million.
- More experienced with users spend about five minutes per week reading online news.

- In regards to American households, the last 15 years in the country have seen a drastic decline in newspaper readership.
- The same study also found that the ability to multitask (i.e., being able to do multiple things such as check email, browse social media sites, etc.) was another advantage of reading news online.

Wise, Bolles, Myers and Sternad (2009) found that with the accommodation of video and other multimedia features, news stories can become more memorable.

* It should be noted that the Nguyen’s study was a survey of randomly selected Australian households.

PARTICIPIANTS:
- 113 undergraduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and various other Midstates colleges
- Male ≥ 20 participants 20 years old
- Male year in school junior status
- Total: 34 male and 78 female participants

Although 653 students were contacted with a request to participate, only 113 agreed to participate. Of the 113 responses, one could not be used due to incompleteness. The final number of usable responses was 112, producing a response rate of 17%.

PROCEDURE:
The Qualtrics survey program was used to poll the sample audience of college students. Convenience sampling, a sub-genre of non-probability sampling, was used to gather an audience. Facebook was used as the medium for participants to take a survey via a Facebook group linked to the Qualtrics survey. The data was completely confidential; results were received, but names were not asked of any participants.

Due to the short time allowed for reviews, a follow up reminder was issued to the participants.

Participants were invited to a Facebook group carrying a link to the Qualtrics survey. The graph page contained a recruitment message with a description of the purpose and value of the study.

MEASURES:
Variables for the study were:
1. Mode Forum (Independent)
2. Trustworthiness of news source (Dependent)

RESULTS:
RQ1: Where do college students get their news, and why (e.g., characteristics of online news)?
- 65.37% of students choose online news
- 51.83% of the 113 students interviewed have newspapers as their primary news source
- 11.50% of people responded television, while one person did not answer
- The best indicator of preference was the correlation between news source and whether or not newspapers will still be around in 20 years [t (113) = 3.059, p = 0.05]
- 57.3% of people were in agreement that newspapers were not going to be around in 20 years

RQ2: What news sources do college students trust (online vs. print)?
- 59 students believe newspaper
- 54 students believe online news
- 49 students believed the two types of news media were equally trustworthy

RQ3: Is there a relationship between news use and trust?
Of the 19 respondents who primarily use newspapers:
- 11 said that newspapers are more trustworthy
- One student said online news were more trustworthy
- Three students replied that both are equally trustworthy

Of the 75 respondents who primarily use online news:
- 26 said that newspapers are more trustworthy
- 26 said that online news is more trustworthy
- 45 students replied that both are equally trustworthy

Despite the fact that more people view online news and more people find newspapers to be trustworthy, the chi-square test showed that use and trust have a very significant relationship [X2 (1) = 24.756, P = 0.05].

WORKS CITED:

STUDENT OPINION OF NEWS CHARACTERISTICS: PRINT VS. ONLINE

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS:
The research showed that college students prefer to use online news over newspapers.

- The only reason why that proved significant was the question that asked whether the respondent believed that newspapers would still be around in 20 years. This significant because if one believes that newspapers will not be around in 20 years, one will not be currently reading a newspaper.

The results also show that students find newspapers to be more trustworthy than online news, yet students still prefer online news.

- This was the case even though trust and news use were statistically significant.
- It is possible that the chi-square test too small to account for the large amount of people who find newspapers be equally trustworthy as online news.
- The fact that people are using something they do to be less trustworthy than another option correlates with the Uses and Gratification Theory.

IMPLICATIONS:
The uses and gratification theory explains that an audience typically seeks out media to gratify a specific need. The study has similar results in the study done by Jarvis, Stroud and Gilliland.
- The respondents regarded newspapers as one of the most completed and strongest sources, giving it the highest overall degree of source credibility.
- Their results also showed that respondents were more likely to see easily accessible and consistent news (p. 37). According to the results, brevity and easy accessibility will lead to an increase in readership.

LIMITATIONS:
Sample size and demographics could have made the results less accurate.

- Out of 633 only 113 people responded.
- 70% of the respondents were female, and this is probably not representative of the make-up of college students nationally.
- The respondents who were female live primarily in the Midwest which obviously does not take into account larger numbers of this country’s populations.
- Amount of Questions:
- Only one survey question as to why a college student prefers one news source over another had a significant relationship with news awareness.
- More questions were asked, there could have been more accurate results.
- Convenience sampling may have also been a limitation.
- The survey link was only given to Facebook friends. If the respondents were not friends, it is possible that they would not have taken the survey.
- There was a lack of time to invite a survey and get a wide array of people to answer the survey.
- A research project done on this topic in the future will allow for more than four weeks of total time.