

Social networks extend gains as news sources in US: survey

WASHINGTON, US - Social networks have made more gains as news sources for Americans in 2017, according to a study released Thursday suggesting more woes for traditional news organisations.



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The Pew Research Center report showed 67 percent of US adults are getting at least some of their news on social media, with 20 percent doing so often.

That represents a modest increase from early 2016, when 62 percent of Americans reported getting news on social media. But the rise also pointed to the steady growth in the importance of networks like Facebook and Twitter for news. And the 2017 growth was driven by increases among those who are older, less educated and nonwhite, Pew said.

For the first time in Pew surveys, more than half of Americans aged 50 or older reported getting news on social media sites, up 10 percentage points from 2016.

Significantly, the gap between television and social media as a news source showed signs of narrowing.

As of August, 43 percent of Americans reported "often" getting news online, compared to 50 percent who are consistent consumers of television news. This gap was 19 points in early 2016, more than twice as large.

Facebook's massive user base

Facebook remained the most important social media site as a source of news because of its massive user base. Pew said some two-thirds of Americans use Facebook, and a majority of those users get news on the site, similar to 2016.

This translates into just under half (45 percent) of Americans getting news on Facebook.

Some 18 percent of US adults get news on YouTube, the Google-owned video platform, and 11 percent on Twitter, according to the survey. Behind the top three, Americans reported getting some news via Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Reddit, WhatsApp and Tumblr.

"Not only have Americans grown somewhat in their use of social media for news overall, but now they are more likely than ever to get news from multiple social media sites," the report said, noting that 26 percent of survey respondents said they got news from two or more of these sites.

The survey was conducted from 8 to 21 August, among 4,971 US adults in Pew's American Trends Panel.

Source: AFP

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