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# How Do Millennials Like to Read the News? Very Much Like Their Grandparents

By *Derek Thompson*

*Attention publishers: For all the attention given to "bold rich multi-media experiences," young mobile news readers still prefer stories the way their great-great-grandparents did: In columns of text.*



Reuters

In the eyes of employers, marketers, and brand gurus, Generation Y tends to be treated like a separate species, forged in the primordial stew of *Internet*, whose habits are so positively alien to the rest of the country that they've inspired a cottage industry: [The How-Do-You-Solve-a-Problem-Like-Millennials?](#) genre.

But a new report from the [Pew Research Center](#) (pdf) suggests that, when it comes to reading the news on mobile devices, young people aren't so different. First, they use their tablets and smartphones to read the news at nearly identical rates to 30- and 40-somethings. According to Pew, between 30 and 50 percent of practically every demographic, except seniors, uses mobile phones and tablets to read news -

- whether it's men or women, college-educated or not, making less than \$30,000 per year or more than \$75,000. All told: Thirtysomethings and fortysomethings are just as likely as teens and twentysomethings to use their smartphones and tablets for news.

There are some small differences. Men are more likely to read longer articles. Women are more likely to use social media. Non-whites are more likely to watch videos. But the trends are consistent across the under-50 demographic. When it comes to reading the news, Millennials aren't the unique demographic. Seniors who haven't transitioned from print are.

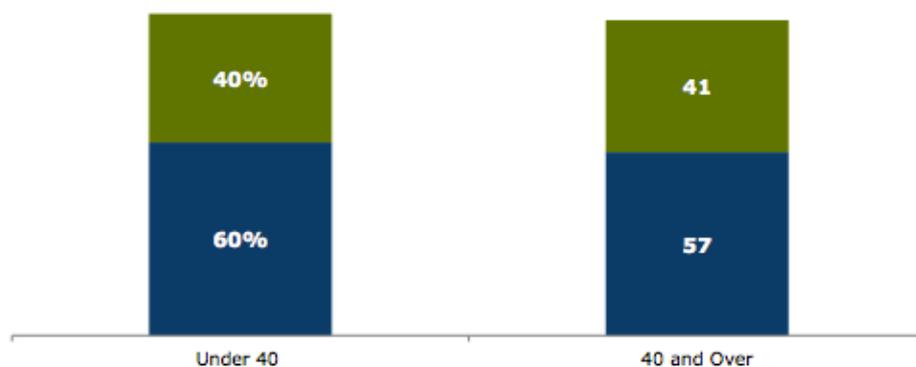
Here's another surprise. Young mobile readers don't want apps and mobile browsers that look like the future. They want apps that look like the past: 58% of those under 50, and 60% of Millennials, prefer a "print-like experience" over tech features like audio, video, and complex graphics. That preference toward plain text "tends to hold up across age, gender and other groups." [Pew reports](#): "Those under 40 prefer the print-like experience to the same degree as those 40 and over."

Publishers be warned: For all the attention given to \*rich multi-media experiences\* news-readers still enjoy reading the news the way their great-grandparents did: In columns of paragraphs.

### Younger Generations Still Want A 'Print-Like' Experience on Tablets

Percent of tablet news users with apps who prefer....

- A traditional 'print-like' reading experience
- Interactive components with audio, video or other graphical features



N=606.

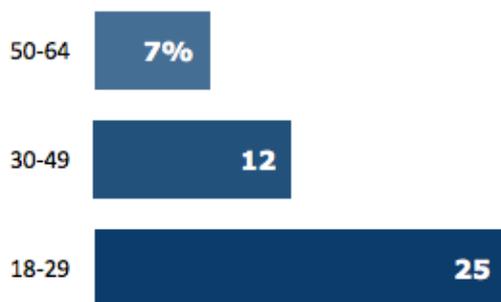
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Let's close with some happy news for digital publishers: Young people, especially non-whites, are considerably more likely to interact with ads on tablets than older readers (smartphones, with their impossible small screens and awful AdMob invaders, remain a separate challenge). Interested in text paragraphs and receptive to advertising? Maybe Millennials are easier than we thought.

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## Younger Users More Likely to Touch Ads on Tablets

*Percent of tablet news users who at least sometimes touch ads*



*N=810.*  
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