

Shopping in a narrow field: Cross-media news repertoires in New Zealand

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Abstract:

This article reports on the New Zealand case study within a larger project investigating cross-media news repertoires within (and across) national audiences. Six key news media repertoires emerged in this case study; *heavy news consumers*; *hybrid browsers*; *digital browsers*; *ambivalent networkers*; *mainstream multiplatformers*; and *casual and connected*). Despite a range of news media outlets available within New Zealand, particularly across digital platforms, participants consistently noted a relatively narrow social, cultural and political discursive field for news content in the country. Within this context, the news repertoires identified within this case study highlighted the high value placed by news consumers on national daily newspapers (print and online), and the continued salience of television and radio news broadcasting for some audience segments. But findings also offered a snapshot of the ways these are being supplemented or replaced, for some audience segments, by digital news outlets (even as these also generated dissatisfaction from many participants).

Keywords: news repertoires, New Zealand, Q-methodology, news consumption, cross-cultural

Introduction

This article reports on the New Zealand case study within a larger project investigating patterns of news repertoires (Schrøder 2015) within (and across) national audiences, at a time of broadening forms of distribution of news content across a variety of media

platforms. The overall project involved 12 countries and used a Q-sort methodology (Kobbernagel & Schrøder, 2016) to analyze and examine cross-media news consumption among audiences. A standardized research design was used to generate a 'snapshot' of cross-media news repertoires within each country, and to also to allow for the *comparison* of news repertoires across national media ecosystems. An underlying research aim was also to investigate correlations between patterns of news consumption and participation in (national) cultural and political life (See the Introduction chapter to this Special issue by Nossek, Adoni, Perusko and Schrøder for more details).

A country of 4.6 million, New Zealand's population comprises several ethnic/migrant communities within a primarily bicultural structure of Māori (indigenous people) and Pākehā (British European settlers). Biculturalism as a formal partnership in New Zealand was established after the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, a foundational document underscoring the centrality of Māori to New Zealand cultural discourse. The demographic composition of New Zealand, which was originally occupied by the indigenous Māori people, first became a homeland for Pākehā, and later other migrant communities, including Chinese and Indian migrants who started coming to New Zealand in the mid to late nineteenth century for work opportunities. Culturally, New Zealand incorporates a legacy of British and European historical ties (particularly for Pākehā), mixed with the strong influence of American popular culture (cinema, music, television) since the Second World War, and within urban centers the significant presence of Pacific Island, Asian and Indian subcontinent peoples. Māori and English are the official languages, and while Māori language is spoken by a minority of the population it is also a significant feature of some media outlets (most notably the Māori Television Service (MTS) and localized radio stations).

New Zealand's media systems were initially designed to follow the public service model of ownership, with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) used as an exemplar of the organizational values and social-political objectives of this model. From the mid-1980s, successive neo-liberal governments gradually eroded most aspects of the public service model, and New Zealand has a now almost completely commercialized mediascape. Having few regulations against foreign ownership, most media outlets in New Zealand are owned by overseas interests (Myllylahti, 2014), while the remnants of public service broadcasting lie with relatively marginalized state-funding bodies such as New Zealand On Air and Te Mangai Paho. Despite the range of news media outlets available within the country, a combination of factors, such as the prominence of foreign ownership, the concentration of ownership in a comparatively small number of corporate interests, and the overwhelmingly commercial orientation of all 'traditional' mass media outlets, have established a relatively narrow social, cultural and political discursive field for New Zealand news media (see Hope, 2015).

As with other countries in the project, New Zealand's television, radio, newspapers and magazines have a long history of contributing to the spectrum news and information available to the country's residents. The more recent history has been one of a gradual broadening of news media outlets, characterized by a familiar diversification of audiences

away from adherence to just analogue news outlets such as terrestrial broadcast television, radio and newspaper publication (Brunton, 2014). Mainly operating through commercial broadcasting, New Zealand's Television consists of eight main free-to-air channels: TVOne, TV2, TV3, FOUR, two channels for Maori Television, C4, and Prime. TVOne and TV2, originally developed under a public service system, are now operated by the State Owned Company, Television New Zealand, with a largely commercial remit (returning an annual dividend to the government). TVOne continues to attract the largest viewing of any single channel. State-funded Maori Television Service (MTS), launched in June 2004, broadcasts Maori and bilingual programming, and is regularly referred to as New Zealand's only remaining non-commercial public broadcaster. MTS attracts between 50-70% non-Maori viewers, reaching an estimated 1.5 million New Zealanders every month. Other key channels include Prime TV, previously owned by Prime Networks Australia and then purchased by Sky Network in 2005. Many more channels are available via Freeview (free-to-air digital) or Sky (a subscription-based satellite TV service which until recently provided a market monopoly service of 100+ channels of terrestrial, satellite digital, radio and audio channels, as well as on-demand services). In response to the shift to more digital-based media consumption, TVNZ launched the TVNZ OnDemand service in 2006, making broadcast content available online for the public.

Radio broadcasting in New Zealand has become multiplatform in nature, offering news content in form of podcasts, online news in text and audio form (a good example is The Radio New Zealand site¹). Commercial radio networks include The Radio Network, with 118 stations and seven national 'brands', including Classic Hits, Newstalk ZB, Hauraki, ZM, Radio Sport. Wholly-owned subsidiary of Australian Radio Network (ARN) is owned in turn by APN News & Media and Clear Channel Communications in USA. The spectrum of local radio consists of 140 stations (in 2013) including key stations MediaWorks, Radio Pacific, More FM, Mai FM network, The Edge, Rock FM, The Breeze, Radio Live, and Kiwi FM.

Print news readership has shown a slow but steady decline over the last decade, paralleled by apparent shifts of some readers to accessing online versions of daily newspaper as part of a significant broadening of online news sources (Smith et al, 2016). There are 26 daily newspapers throughout the country, all morning editions. *New Zealand Herald* has the largest metro circulation (480,000 in 2015), and *Waikato Times* has the largest provincial circulation (87,000). Newspaper still constitute a significant source of everyday news; 1.3 million New Zealanders (38% of the population) continue to read a daily newspaper, and more than 61% of people aged 15+ read at least one newspaper each week (Nielsen Media Readership Survey, 2015).

The broader New Zealand news environment in which audiences find their news has (after substantial government investment and policy initiatives) undergone dramatic changes as more New Zealand residents have gained access to broadband Internet. Approximately 92% of New Zealanders use the internet, with 83% broadband connected through the four leading telecommunication providers in New Zealand: Telecom (formerly state-owned), TelstraClear (subsidiary of Australia Telstra), and Vodafone (UK owned), and 2 Degrees (US, UK and NZ-owned). The use of social media in New Zealand varies among people with a monthly average during 2016 of 81.4% users of Facebook, 9.17% Pinterest, 2.77% Twitter, and 1.07% YouTube (StatCounter GlobalStats²). **The**

World Internet Project in New Zealand surveys (conducted 2007 – 2015) demonstrate the significance of the internet as a source of information most notably with a steady increase among those aged 65 and over (Smith, et al, 2016). The 2015 survey (see Crothers et al, 2016) also found certain groups in New Zealand are more engaged with the internet, particularly “those who are younger, more urban, have a higher household income, and are New Zealand European or Asian” (Media Release 14 Dec 2016). It is evident that the New Zealand media environment has been characterized by a familiar and widespread adoption of digital technologies for the production, distribution and consumption of news.

Method

The New Zealand case study was undertaken using an approach closely following the standardized research design adopted by the 12-country project as a whole; an integrated mixed method (Schrøder, 2012) combining in-depth qualitative interviews and analysis with guiding Q-analysis. This method was chosen as it has proven to be useful to explore the complex and multifaceted field of news consumption (e. g. Schrøder & Kobbarnagel, 2010; Schrøder, 2015), and provided a promising framework for cross-cultural comparison across a number of national contexts.

Thirty-six participants were recruited through professional and personal networks, supplemented by other recruitment methods (e.g. appeal for participants at a city-wide meeting of senior citizens). For practical reasons, all participants were from the major city Hamilton and surrounding areas, but apart from the geographical homogeneity it broadly adheres demographically to the cohort specified by the project (see Appendix 1). Although the sample of participants is not intended to be representative, Hamilton (and the Waikato region it dominates) is a useful microcosm of the broader New Zealand population. This city has the same mixture of news outlets as similar locations in the country, and because of overall patterns of media ownership (outlined above) much of the media content within ‘local’ markets tends to be replicated nationally, which in turn is dominated by stories sourced from foreign news services.

Each participant was engaged in a semi-structured interview for an average of ninety minutes, drawing initially upon a topic listing which prompted discussion of everyday media use, the variety of media outlets used at home and at work, those outlets used individually and collectively, and those which were regarded by participants as having the most (and least) value as sources of news. The second half of each session focused on a Q-sort task, using a standardized set of types of news media (see Appendix 2), which participants placed in a Q-sort frame. Participants were encouraged to talk in think-aloud mode through their selection of where each individual ‘card’ (each type of news outlet) might be placed depending whether it ‘does play a role in my life’ or ‘does not play a role in my life’. Figure 1 shows a completed sort by one participant (NZ8), demonstrating the Q-sort frame and the 36 cards used.

The card set used in the project incorporated the full range of media within New Zealand (outside of the occasional mention of niche outlets such as radio podcasts).

represent the most prominent news media repertoires across our participants, which we have labelled as:

- R1 – *heavy news consumers*
- R2 – *dissatisfied hybrid browsers*
- R3 – *digital browsers*
- R4 – *ambivalent networkers*
- R5 – *mainstream multiplatformers*
- R6 – *casual and connected*

Table 1 summarizes the key findings for these 6 repertoires. The first two repertoires (R1, R2) are the strongest in terms of the number of participants that exhibited these patterns and the relative clarity of analysis which was possible into each repertoire. The last four (R3-R6) were exhibited by comparatively fewer numbers of participants and should perhaps be approached with more caution. These six factors cover 72% of participants, which means that out of the 36 participants, 10 did not clearly fit within any of the 6 repertoires (we will return to these participants in our conclusion). What follows is a more detailed overview of the key distinguishing characteristics of each of these repertoires, illustrated with representative extracts from participant interviews.

Repertoire 1 (R1) – *heavy news consumers*

The eight participants who demonstrated this repertoire were a diverse group, but tended to be older (mostly 35 years old and up), and more likely to be highly educated. They tend to have comparatively heavy consumption patterns compared to other participants, and these are clearly weighted toward sources they consider ‘quality’; a traditional focus on mass media, radio, newspapers, and TV news with more sporadic interest in digital platforms. Many participants articulated frustration with the overall quality of mass media news sources, and the broadly commercial ethos which governs the production of news within New Zealand mass media, as in this extract.

I know that the whole funding model for news and the idea of the relationship with the audience changed a lot in my lifetime, so the idea of objectivity isn’t such a feature anymore and entertainment is more dominant, but I still prefer to engage with those media that pay stronger lip service at least to those values. (NZ2, female, 35-60 years old, more than 15 yrs education)

There were echoes of similar sentiments expressed from participants in Repertoire 2 and elsewhere in the group of 36 participants, but not as strongly as in this repertoire. The most committed and ‘loyal’ preferences within this grouping center on established public service outlets, such as public service radio. Daily newspapers remain a clear touchstone for this

group of participants, perceived as the default for quality journalism, even if the means of engaging and consuming these are changing. Although TV news is listed

Table 1: News media repertoires, preferences and characteristics

News repertoire	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Characteristics	Heavy news consumers	Dissatisfied hybrid browsers	Digital browsers	Ambivalent networkers	Mainstream multiplatformers	Casual and connected
	Local (bi-)weekly/monthly news publications; Radio news on public service radio channel; National news magazines or weekly quality newspaper; National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; TV current affairs; serious	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Radio news on public service radio channel; News from 'the news media' distributed online; Facebook; News via news aggregators or portals	National, regional or international news online; Local/regional daily newspaper online; Facebook; Radio news on commercial radio channel; Professional and party-political magazines	Facebook; TV news and/or current affairs from foreign or International; International news providers' online news; News from born-online news media; Local/regional daily newspaper online	Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel; Radio current affairs as part of a general radio channel; National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Facebook; News via news aggregators or portals	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Radio news on public service radio channel; News from 'the news media' distributed online; Facebook; News via news aggregators or portals
Least important news media	Regional/local TV bulletin; News from born-online news media; Light current affairs TV; Twitter	Professional/party-political magazines; National daily quality newspaper; Radio news on general radio; National news magazines / weekly newspaper; News through email/SMS	Public service TV news bulletin; Foreign TV news; Regional TV news; Light current affairs TV; 24hr news/current affairs	Radio current affairs on general radio; Radio news on general radio; News online (not from traditional media); News via news aggregators or portals; Light TV current affairs	International news provider's online news; Blogs; News online (not from traditional media); Radio news on public service channel; Professional party-political magazines	Professional/party-political magazines; National daily quality newspaper; Radio news on general radio; National news magazines/ weekly newspaper; News through email/SMS
Likelihood to pay for news	Average-Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Technological preference	Traditional	Mixed	Digital	Digital	Mixed	Digital
Mode of news use	Lean-back	Lean-back	Lean-back	Lean-back	Lean-forward	Lean-forward
Participants in the repertoire	8	6	3	4	2	3
Demographics	35+ yrs, highly educated	Under 60 yrs, lower educated	Mostly female, highly educated	Mostly male, 18-34yrs lower education,	Female, under 15yrs education	35+ yrs, up to 15yrs education

in their top 5 media outlets, this tended to reflect their recognition of the amount of time that they watched (or simply had a TV set on in the room) rather than because they placed a high value on this as a source of quality news:

I definitely don't feel that if I missed the [TV] news I missed anything important. I remember growing up and there was always the newspaper so I was always looking up the news, watching the news at 6:00 o'clock. And when I went to the university I was 17, we had no TV in the flat and I realized that I didn't need it. I think that right now if I miss the [TV] news it's nothing. (NZ6, male, 61+ yrs old, up to 15 yrs education)

Online news sources are certainly used within this group, but there are contrasting attitudes here. Many noted that their consumption habits change when they move to digital sources, in that desktop, laptop and mobile platforms meant they tended to adopt a less focused form of engagement. Partly this is a matter of the scale of information online, and partly this is to do with the nature of digital devices themselves fostering different relationships to the content. Their relative lack of interest in online news sources derives from a variety of factors; lower levels of digital skills, and the high premium they attach to traditional news sources paired (for some) with assumptions of a lack of quality they associate with online news. Within this overall pattern, however, there are more nuanced attitudes, as some participants in this group reported daily online news consumption, but with a clear preference toward online variants of reputable newspapers rather than, for example, social media.

Interestingly (as in the quotes above) there is a strong sense of nostalgia within this group of participants, particularly for periods earlier in their lives when they have had higher levels of news consumption. In general, these tend to be news consumers who fondly reference patterns of news consumption from an era dominated by mass media news outlets. When questioned on her choice of platform, NZ18 commented: "I would put my foot in both camps at the moment. I mean it's quite nice to keep watching TV because it's something you can discuss with the family whereas if you are doing it online it tends to be solitary" (NZ18, female, 61+ yrs old, up to 15 yrs education).

Repertoire 2 (R2) – *dissatisfied hybrid browsers*

Exhibited by six of our participants, these participants are comparatively younger (half in the 18-34 yrs age range), and have a lower educational background. This group's news consumption consists of a mixture of traditional mass media such as television, radio and newspapers (but are moving away from print), and limited digital sources on selected platforms. It is important to note that three participants within this group do not have direct access to a TV, only shared or indirect access, and one has minimal experience and use of social media. These participants also reported a range of ways in which they used digital

platforms, with many discussing both comparatively high levels of online activity but paired with quick and selective browsing through content.

These consumers are 'hybrid' in the sense they rely on a limited set of media outlets which they move between in a fluid and flexible way. They commonly recognize the benefit of moving into an era of new (digital) forms of news distribution, as one of them noted:

I think the biggest shift in the last 20 years or so is that as a consumer I get to choose exactly what I want to read or hear about. On TV I cannot really choose, someone else chooses for me, so now I can do that. (NZ11, female, 18-34 yrs old, more than 15 yrs education)

Being self-confessed 'news junkies', these participants tend to define news as occupying a significant part of their lives, but are often frustrated with the overall quality of sources they are able to access. Although only some expressed a deep and continuing interest in political stories, most stated a frustration with the poverty of local political culture, and the relative failure of (national) news media to help foster lively social and political debate.

Furthermore, R2 share a general dissatisfaction with many of their news sources, for a variety of reasons, and they move back and forth between preferences for specific media forms. For these participants, online sources make up the gap between television news broadcasts. To some extent Facebook has become the default access point for media use generally but always within a broader range of media use that includes news outlets in other formats. They retain a recognition of the partial and selective nature of this material, and a suspicion of its quality as news:

I'll read something on Facebook and think "I bet it's not true" so I check the news and if I see it on Stuff [aggregated daily newspapers] or TV One News I take that as credible or believable, maybe 99% true, but if I just see it on Facebook I'm like 'I don't believe that'. (NZ24, female, 35-60 yrs old, up to 12 yrs education)

Despite being frequent users of Facebook they could not necessarily be characterized as highly 'active' participants, either in terms of online postings or in the sense of being politically engaged.

A number of participants in this group (for this project) are immigrants, stating a preference for accessing international news sources and a frustration with quality sources of local (New Zealand-based) news outlets, as with this American immigrant:.

I used to actively go to the websites and read the news website pretty thoroughly especially *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the BBC news [...] Well, in New Zealand I am an ethnic minority. I look occasionally on

Stuff or *The Herald* [online] but I don't see news-worthy things. (NZ11, female, 18-34 yrs old, more than 15 yrs education)

Repertoire 3 (R3) - digital browsers

Obviously a younger demographic (2 of the 3 members of this group in the 18-34 age range) and higher educated (1 in 9-12 years of education, 2 in 13+ years), these participants have moved completely away from print newspapers and TV (some of this group have no regular physical access to a television). Daily news browsing within online sources is their most typical practice, with a preference especially for online newspapers and Facebook. Time and cost are key constraints for this group, sitting in front of a television waiting to be delivered scheduled news is less attractive, and they tend not to be able to or willing to pay for a regular newspaper subscription.

What constitutes 'news' for this grouping is comparatively elastic not easily definable (for example, many participants referenced *Jon Stewart and the Daily Show* or Russell Brand's *Trews* YouTube channel). Despite having 'Professional and party-political magazines' as a key news media outlet, members of Repertoire 3 nonetheless seem not to be active in political engagement (e.g. through NGOs) and are just 'curious' about 'interesting' news.

If there was extra money available, at least some of this group would favor high quality, specialized print publications. One participant said:

Yeah if I had the money, there are particular magazines that I like their articles like *Mind Food* [a monthly magazine] which contains quite good articles. In terms of print media I think it's a waste for me to get a subscription of the *NZ Herald*. There are other types of magazines that I would subscribe to, like there is one for veganism and one for animal welfare. (NZ16, female, 18-34 yrs old, more than 15 yrs education)

Repertoire 3 participants articulate a mixture of faith in traditional news services (now migrated online), together with a reliance on Facebook as a filtering mechanism for broader sources of information. One participant said: "Well I don't think that Facebook itself is a source, it's more like someone else, like I would consider someone else the source because they are sending the news and Facebook is just the mechanism by which they send that if that makes any sense." (NZ16, female, 18-34 yrs old, more than 15 yrs education) For this group, the default is social media, although this doesn't include Twitter (this is a platform which appears to be marginalized within New Zealand, so even this tech-comfortable group are not using this regularly). This group expressed a similar preference to R2's in terms of their comfort with checking news on multiple devices or feeling at ease with different devices; however, R3 adherents are more aware of the affordances and properties of their devices and adapted their browsing for different situations.

Repertoire 4 (R4) – *ambivalent networkers*

Participants exhibiting Repertoire 4 were more likely to be male and in the 18-34 yrs age range (3 of the 4 members), and to have a lower education. Their preferred means of access to news content is embedded within digital platforms with Facebook at the center. However these participants are still using television, if only in a more supplementary way. While some retain a lingering sense that traditional news media are often ‘better quality’ most will access these only indirectly as they are distributed in ways (e.g. scheduled broadcast) that are no longer suitable for their lifestyles. In this sense this repertoire is the flip side to Repertoire 5, which is centered on TV while using digital devices for supplementary sources. Outside of this general pattern, however, it should be noted that some people in this grouping do not have regular physical access to a TV themselves (a strong feature also of Repertoire 3). With Facebook, however, it appears to be used in a comparatively ‘passive’ way by these participants; here news is something which is pushed to them through various personal networks and subscriptions which have been acquired in one way or another.

Repertoire 4’s sense of ambivalence in their news media consumption derives in part from this tendency to rely on others in their networks - friends they care about or like-minded people – as key sources for their news. While Facebook is a dominant or key means of hearing about news, these participants characterized the platform as offering only subjective, compromised, or partial information that is generated within and filtered by personal networks.

Their daily news habits are governed in part by price and convenience; they favor outlets that are not seen as costing anything and suit their approach toward news in general. For instance, newspapers tended to be dismissed by this grouping, and their habitual forms of gaining news no longer include newspapers:

No, the internet is just convenient, it’s easy enough, it’s all there. Newspapers are, most of it is boring, unlike the internet where [to] pick and choose is easier, so no I don’t think that if I had more money I would subscribe to the *Herald* or anything like that. The internet is just easier. (NZ1, male, 18-34 yrs old, more than 15 yrs education)

Repertoire 5 (R5) – *mainstream multiplatformers*

Both members of this group were female, and had under 15 yrs of education. These *mainstream multiplatformers* have developed routinized news consumption and for this reason they appear as avid news consumers. Their news media consumption is very radio and television centered, supplemented with online outlets especially a newspaper online that they trust. Mixing TV and radio background consumption with a more active use of (a small set of) digital tools, this repertoire is in some sense the flip side of Repertoire 4. Participants tend to have the television and radio set on in the background as a key part of their daily media rituals, at the beginning and end of the day. R5 adherents value specific TV

news channels and programs within their daily/weekly consumption, but they still tended to view televised news as needing corrective or supplementary sources. They tend to have a mobile device (iPad or other tablet) which is always present and typically in use when the TV is on:

Just if there was something big that has happened and I want to know more information about, cause when I hear on TV like often they don't give all the details or the details that you get on one channel is different than what you hear on the other channel, so what's happening, then I go online just to try find out what the truth of the matter is. (NZ14, female, 18-34 yrs old, up to 12 yrs education)

These participants use their tablet at home and while they are exhibiting digital skills they are also clearly not early adopters of these technologies, nor appear to be highly adept in using their devices beyond accessing a selective set of trusted outlets that have become their routine or default access point for consuming news. Participants using this repertoire also rely on their personal networks on Facebook to find out stories in relation to the news that have picked up from their favorite news resources such as TV. For them, the tablet is also a multipurpose device which offers a variety of other forms of entertainment (the 'digital' here is notably also characterized as an easy space to get lost in, as a potential time waster).

These participants share a relative lack of interest in newspapers, but they still buy newspapers from the supermarket to read it "if the weather is not good or I have nothing else to do" (NZ36, female, 35-60 yrs old, up to 15 yrs education). This lack of interest in newspapers means they have moved away (or are moving away) from print consumption in part because they consider journalistic standards are slipping and view print news as simply a dated repetition of news available online.

Repertoire 6 (R6) – *casual and connected*

The three members of this grouping were from an older demographic (2 in the 61+ yrs category) and in the middle category of education (up to 15 yrs). This group's online news sources primarily constitute a mixture of regional, national and international online providers, as part of casual browsing practices. Repertoire 6 is similar to Repertoire 4, for instance, in being heavily weighted toward online sources but interestingly is distinct from other news media repertoires in *not* getting online news filtered through social media (as appears to be more common in other repertoires). These participants tend to view news as something which is useful to know as general knowledge, but are inclined to focus on specialized forms of knowledge which are useful for their jobs rather than to be highly engaged politically. These participants are perhaps the most sophisticated in terms of their understanding and use of digital technologies, but do not appear to be highly motivated to consume news as a regular daily ritual; news is something to be drawn upon when and if

needed. These participants dismiss TV news as having little value beyond a source of news footage.

NZ30 concludes:

Probably the main thing is that I don't emotionally seek news. It's not that I don't like it, it's just I don't desire it much apart from the ones I told you about so I search for them. (NZ30, male, 35-60 yrs old, up to 15 yrs education)

Another typical comment is NZ26's "when I'm waiting for somebody I'll go to check the news, at least I'll go and read the titles of what's happening and if I have extra time I'll read more" (NZ26, female, 61+ yrs old, up to 15 yrs education).

Very comfortable in mobile web-based environments, these participants' news media consumptions are comfortable in drawing upon and making personalized recommendations of what to watch and/or how to access through a variety of means. Their news consumption, however, remains more intermittent and crucially is just a feature of daily routine that surfaces when there is time or if it fits the situation. In other words, their encounters with news tend to be more 'accidental', and prompted in part digitally (through Facebook posts), and in part informally through word of mouth recommendations from family, friends, and work colleagues. These are consumers highly conscious of the time spent on news browsing: "[...] life is short so you choose how to portion your time" (NZ27, male, 61+ yrs old, up to 15 yrs education). Their use of digital media can also be more eclectic than those reported for other participants. For example, one participant noted a preference for podcasting because listening to these fit easily into the number of hours that he spends driving each week (NZ30, male, 35-60 yrs old, up to 15 yrs education).

Discussion

Overall, participants expressed a general dissatisfaction with or ambivalence with traditional (mass media) news sources such as television news bulletins, radio news bulletins, and some daily newspapers. For some participants (*R1-heavy news consumers*) this derived from an awareness of the increasingly commercial orientation of mainstream media, and a consequent focus on entertainment agendas shaping the content and presentation of news. Of these 'traditional' news media forms, daily and weekly newspapers and public service radio were more consistently valued as a news outlet than others. The corollary of this is that not all participants who placed a comparatively high value on newspapers either subscribed or accessed this content in print form. (We will come back to this below)

Some participants also compared the diversity and overall quality of New Zealand news media negatively with foreign media, either in direct comparison with online sources they could access, or noted changes to their news consumption habits from earlier periods in their lives, and some since arriving in New Zealand as immigrants (the latter more typical of *R2-dissatisfied hybrid browsers*). Television in particular was viewed as disposable, in part for its comparative lack of consistent quality and in part for more general lifestyle

changes (a notable point here is that many participants no longer have direct, regular access to television sets, in contrast to more ubiquitous access to some kind of networked digital device).

There is also some evidence of generational change in the everyday habits of news consumptions, of a shift from traditional news sources to those accessed on digital platforms, although this did not appear consistently across all repertoires (and is complicated by the fact that so many participants value online newspapers above and beyond their print sources). Digital forms of access to news were clearly embedded within the everyday of a majority of participants, but they articulated widely differing opinions on the value of specific platforms and news outlets. Among repertoires such as R1 and R2, participants were more likely to reference older periods of news consumption, occasionally to explicitly articulate a sense of loss over a slow erosion of public service ideals, but also more typically to outline a drift away from news consumption of outlets associated with rigid timeframes and schedules of delivery (such as daily newspapers and scheduled television news bulletins).

Significantly, a shift from traditional outlets to digital-based news outlets did not consistently play out as a decline in valuing news as a regular feature of everyday life. For most of the repertoires, accessing news content retains its status as an important means of gaining information of social and political currency. 'News', even if sometimes more broadly defined in some repertoires than in others, is something generally valued and integrated into everyday communicative networks (including both face-to-face and online). Within this broad generalization, there are more nuanced patterns, with some repertoires favoring forms of news that are considered worthy of circulation through social networking sites, while others treated these as simply one part of a broader range of possibilities for accessing mainstream content. A comparatively small number viewed digital platforms as opportunities for actively searching for alternative and/or more diverse points of view on current events.

As outlined above, there is need to be cautious in assuming that some of these patterns could be associated with stronger forms of deliberative and political engagement than others. The manner in which participants used each news outlet varied a great deal, and this was shaped by a variety of factors including a commitment to 'keeping informed', immediate practical and social constraints on accessing specific outlets, and more generally the skills and literacies each participant brought to their encounters with digital platforms and devices. Some participants, for example, could as easily be characterized as 'passive' digital news consumers in a similar way to stereotypes about an earlier era of mass media news consumers. Much seems to depend on the variety of motivations of individual consumers in making use of the affordances of different news outlets, derived from their overall assessment of the relative value of different forms of news content, together with the ways in which consumption might be integrated into everyday practices.

For some participants social networks have become the default platforms for determining newsworthy topics, even if these networks are not regarded as having the

same value across all repertoires. 'Networks' more generally are also clearly playing a key role in filtering mechanisms for circulating news content; some participants, for example, rely heavily on face-to-face and online networks to alert them to breaking news stories that might be of interest to them, rather than directly seek out news outlets themselves. Such practices are difficult to categorize in terms of their democratic implications, not least because participants varied in their assessment of whether or not they considered themselves 'well-informed' through such indirect, second-hand news channels.

It is apparent in our study that digital skills are highly important in retaining and expanding the capacity for access to varied and quality news content. This is not surprising in an era of declining newspaper subscriptions and the marginalization of television news as a common denominator for New Zealand news consumption. But it is notable that so few of the participants in this project reported what might be termed highly 'active' digital practices, that is those beyond 'Googling' for more information on breaking news stories, or personalizing their preferences for receiving content from online news services. Most participants in this overall group, even those with sophisticated digital skills, tended not to use these to push beyond familiar sets of news sources, to actively seek varied and contrasting perspectives on current events or the social, cultural, economic and political factors which shape news 'events' (this was a distinctive characteristic of Repertoire 6, which pairs prominent digital skills with a comparative lack of interest in daily news consumption).

There is an obvious need for more research into how the affordances of digital platforms are shaping the manner in which these platforms are (and are not) being used. Many participants, particularly those such as R3-*digital browsers*, reported forms of casual and intermittent forms of browsing which they associated with devices such as laptop, tablets and smartphones. Because of the broader infrastructural constraints on such devices in New Zealand (data rates, Wi-Fi, 3G and 4G availability) participants typically reported using larger devices at home, sometimes in concert with other news outlets such as television. For most participants 'mobile news' appears to equate to accessing a variety of outlets through a tablet close to Wi-Fi, rather than the smaller screen experience of cellphones / smartphones outside the home.

Finally, it is significant that only two participants of the 36 participating in this project were prepared to pay for online content. Our participants' insistence on continued free access trumped any sense of value they associated with traditional sources of news. Many participants appear to have drifted away from subscribed print outlets, and while they still highly valued online newspapers (regional, national and international) they were not prepared to pay for online subscription of such sources or for any other digital news source.

As noted above, 10 participants in our group of 36 did not clearly demonstrate one of the 6 identified news repertoires. An analysis of these participants reveals that they tended to be older, and were more likely to be male but did not show a clear pattern in terms of their educational background. Their preferences toward news outlets are collectively eclectic and although there are some overlaps with a number of our 6

repertoires, obviously nothing that was statistically relevant in terms of our research design. These participants might not have been adequately addressed by the broader research design of the project as a whole (as noted above, the standardized set of types of media outlets did not entirely match the New Zealand media ecosystem). Or it may be that these participants reinforce the drift toward niche consumption of news, and a fracturing of satisfied engagement with news media content, which are suggested by our broader findings.

Our New Zealand case study reveals a news audience clearly in transition; still attached to traditional news sources (newspaper, public service radio), which help to define the nature, value and broader currency of 'news', this national audience (apart from a minority) appears to be largely transitioning what might be characterized as 'passive' news consumption habits across to digital platforms, which many regard with ambivalence and suspicion. The implications of such patterns for deliberative political activity remain uncertain and demand further detailed qualitative and longitudinal research.

Acknowledgements:

The authors wish to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Professor Charles Davis, Ryerson University, for his undertaking of the factor analysis of Q-sort data gathered for this case study.

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Appendix 1:

Sample description and demographics of the 36 New Zealand informants

Informant	gender	education	age	geography
NZ1	male	more than 15 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ2	female	more than 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ3	male	more than 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ4	female	more than 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ5	female	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ6	male	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ	male	more than 15 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ8	male	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ9	female	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ10	female	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ11	female	more than 15 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ12	female	more than 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ13	male	more than 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ14	female	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ15	female	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city

NZ16	female	more than 15 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ17	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ18	female	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ19	female	more than 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ20	male	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ21	male	up to 12 yrs	61+	major city
NZ22	male	up to 12 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ23	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ24	female	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ25	male	up to 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ26	female	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ27	male	up to 15 yrs	61+	major city
NZ28	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ29	male	up to 15 yrs	18-34	major city
NZ30	male	up to 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ31	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ32	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ33	male	up to 12 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ34	female	more than 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ35	female	more than 15 yrs	35-60	major city
NZ36	female	up to 15 yrs	35-60	major city

Appendix 2:

36 item Q concourse of news media types with categorization

(Italicized items are those from the standardized set which are not relevant to the New Zealand media ecosystem).

Q-card	News outlet	Platform
1. Watched national TV news bulletin on a public service channel	Broadcaster	Traditional
2. Watched national TV news bulletin on a commercial channel	Broadcaster	Traditional
3. Watched regional/local TV news bulletin	Broadcaster	Traditional
4. Watched TV current affairs, light	Broadcaster	Traditional
5. Watched TV current affairs, serious	Broadcaster	Traditional
6. Watched TV news/current affairs on national 24-hour TV news channel	Broadcaster	Traditional
7. Watched TV news and/or current affairs from international providers	Broadcaster	Traditional
8. <i>Read news on Text-TV</i>	<i>Broadcaster</i>	<i>Traditional</i>
9. Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel	Broadcaster	Traditional
10. Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel	Broadcaster	Traditional
11. Radio current affairs (general radio channel and/or 24 hour radio news)	Broadcaster	Traditional
12. National daily up-market newspaper, print	Print	Traditional

13. National daily tabloid newspaper, print	Print	Traditional
14. Free daily newspaper, print	Print	Traditional
15. National news magazines or weekly up-market newspaper, print	Print	Traditional
16. Local/regional daily newspaper, print	Print	Traditional
17. Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly newspaper, print	Print	Traditional
19. National tabloid newspaper online	Print	Digital
20. Free daily newspaper online	Print	Digital
21. National news magazines or weekly up-market newspaper, online	Print	Digital
22. Local/regional daily newspaper online	Print	Digital
23. Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly, online	Print	Digital
24. Read national broadcaster's online news	Broadcaster	Digital
25. Read local/regional broadcaster's online news	Broadcaster	Digital
26. Read international broadcaster's online news	Broadcaster	Digital
27. News on Facebook	Social media	Digital
28. News on Twitter	Social media	Digital
29. News on other social media	Social media	Digital
30. News distributed by online video sharing media	Social media	Digital
31. Blogs with news	Social media	Digital
32. News shared by email or SMS	Various	Digital
33. Professional magazines	Print	Traditional
34. News via news aggregators or personalized news services	Various	Digital
35. News from born-online news media	Various	Digital
36. National, regional or international news sites online, not provided by media	Various	Digital

Appendix 3:

Table of rotated component matrix, summarizing the significant component loadings (the participants outside of these component were cross-loaded and non-significant)

	R1 heavy news consumers	R2 dissatisfied hybrid browsers	R3 digital browsers	R4 ambivalent networkers	R5 mainstream multi-platformers	R6 casual and connected
2	.719					
6	.647					
12	.844					
15	.653					
18	.674					
20	.591					
23	.627					
34	.516					
10		.478				
11		.699				

