Going Viral: News Sharing and Shared News in Social Media

# Details

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## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Content-related issues
* Other

## Sample

3,400 people aged 16 to 85 years, living in Sweden, received the survey. The response rate was 53 per cent.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

Through the advent of social media, news achieves a life of its own online. The media organisations partly lose control over the diffusion process, and simultaneously individuals gain power over the process, and become opinion leaders for others. This study focuses on news sharers and news shared (or rather, interacted), and has three RQ:s: 1) What characterizes the people who share news in social media, 2) Have the characteristics of interacted news changed over time? and 3) Are there differences between news content interacted by ordinary people and news highlighted by media organisations? Two different studies have been conducted: A representative survey and a quantitative content analysis.The main results are that the opinion leaders differ from the majority by being younger, with a greater political interest, single and more digital in their general lifestyle, both concerning news consumption and other aspects. The content analysis shows that the most interacted news on social media follow the traditional news values rather well, with a few exceptions. Most apparent is that interacted news is more positive over time and compared to print front-page news. Accidents and crime dominate print front-pages, while politics is more prominent in interacted news.

# Outcome

"[D]igital opinion leaders...have more time, since they live alone to a larger extent. They are also more interested in social issues.... In addition, they are younger and more digitally aware than others, in all respects.... [T]he character of the most interacted news in social media [did not change] very much from 2014 to 2015.... The printed main story was much more negative in both form and topic [compared to most interacted news in social media].... [T]raditional news value criteria seem to be as valid in the most interacted news in social media as it is in the traditional media." (Authors, 144-145)