

## Consumers' move to online news offers opportunity

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Newspaper use is down, online use is up: The data from our new survey isn't a surprise, but it does reinforce what the media and PR industries have known for a long time. And, most important, it provides an opportunity for marketers who are prepared to take advantage of it.

The second year of the media use and credibility [survey](#) conducted by Opinion Research Corporation and sponsored by ARAnet found that daily newspaper usage dropped 4.1 percent from last year's study, while online usage increased 1.9 percent.

Not exactly a shocker, but it does put a finer point on the notion that Americans are continuing to change the way we consume media. Traditional media isn't going away anytime soon, and we need to continue to reach our audiences through these powerful and broad avenues. But we also need to appreciate that we're in the middle of a media evolution as more and more consumers are going online for information, and it's becoming more important to make the case for online strategies and tactics, and to allocate our – and our clients' – resources accordingly.

It gets even more intriguing when you drill down to specific, in-demand demographics. The affluent – people who make more than \$100,000 a year – college graduates, people 18-to-34 and Hispanics all reported that they rely on and trust online sources considerably more than the general population.

So what does that mean to PR professionals? Opportunity. With their focus on telling brand stories and reputation-building, PR pros are uniquely equipped to embrace this increasingly valuable digital opportunity to reach consumers directly through online articles, blog posts, social networking outreach and video and audio. Many of these digital tools also do double-duty by lending a hand in SEO, helping your key audience find you online.

It's increasingly critical for PR pros to not only provide credible digital content, but to hone their online media relations skills, as well, especially as more and more traditional media outlets move online. It's no secret that effective marketers use social networking – blogs, Facebook, Twitter – to engage and connect with the media, as well as bloggers.

If this trend toward online news and information holds up, and we have every reason to believe it will, next year's survey will likely identify a continued shift in consumer preference. For those of us in marketing communications and reputation management, we increasingly need to meet the consumer where they're living – online.

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