



Student Publications Report

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WATERLOO UNDERGRADUATE
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STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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Definitions

At the beginning of the survey, we provided respondents with definitions of two different types of news content: (1) **Hard News which includes** breaking news, serious, timely, and urgent topics that are based on facts such as politics, business, and world events; and (2) **Soft News** which includes lifestyle and entertainment topics such as sports, and popular culture. These terms will also be used throughout the report to distinguish between different types of news.

Key Takeaways

- A large majority of students prefer online media, such as podcasts, blogs and online newspapers, to receive hard news content from
- In terms of soft news, most students prefer to receive this content from social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit.
- Broadcast news such as radio and television, and print media are the least preferred formats for hard, soft, and campus news.
- Social media and online media are consumed most frequently by students at multiple times per day and a few times per week respectively while print media was consumed least frequently at a few times per year
- Regarding University of Waterloo campus news, most students stay up to date via email updates and campus social media accounts
- When asked about topic preferences for Imprint, many students prefer to read about campus news, local issues, and Canadian issues. Students are able to read about most news topics through their own preferred sources whereas University of Waterloo issues are not widely covered therefore Imprint can be unique in its ability to provide campus news to students.
- Students are interested in reading about news that directly impacts them and their learning. For example, campus events, clubs, and other campus activities are all areas of interest expressed by students.

Introduction

The University of Waterloo (UW) student run newspaper, Imprint, is in the process of re-imagining how it operates under the newly created Student Publications department within the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA). In order to deliver engaging and accessible content, Imprint is interested in learning media and news consumption trends both within the industry at large as well as the UW student community in particular. To do so, this project used four different methods: literature review, environmental scan, website analysis, and student survey, intended to help Imprint in the process of re-imagining Student Publications. The literature review provides insight into previous research that discusses the change in media trends, specifically newspapers. Similarly, the environmental scan compares current student run newspapers from universities across Canada to give Imprint a broader understanding of how competitors operate. The website analysis provides data that is intended to help Imprint improve its user experience through Imprint.ca and generate more user traffic. The last method includes the student survey which focuses on UW students' media preferences and their relationship with Imprint.

Literature Review

In their article exploring digital distribution of newspaper content, Thurman and Fletcher (2019) explain that audience behavior has profound effects on media as people often change their hobbies, jobs, and other interests which can, in turn, affect what they enjoy consuming. As such, newspapers have been negatively affected by changes in audience behavior as consumers now direct their attention to online sources of media rather than reading a physical copy of the paper (Thurman & Fletcher, 2019). Thurman and Fletcher (2019) also discuss a drop in newspaper consumption based on two factors. One being the huge expansion in media choice over the past 16 years, meaning that with an increase in choice of media, readers can reduce their time spent with a certain type of media such as a newspaper and put more time into social media consumption. The second factor is the difference in print and online news consumption whereby newspaper websites have displaced print newspapers; however, online consumption of news has resulted in less time spent reading as users are often browsing or "snacking and scanning" content rather than taking time to read. As a result, those who consume printed papers tend to spend more time actually reading the content, as opposed to those who view the paper in online formats (Thurman & Fletcher, 2019).

Age in particular is a driving factor in newspaper usage and research specifically shows that younger generations are reading the newspaper less frequently compared to older generations (Thurman & Fletcher, 2019). For example, readers aged 18-24 during the turn of the 21st century have now significantly decreased their time spent reading the newspaper. However, Thurman and Fletcher (2019) note that younger readers have had an even greater fall in newspaper consumption since consumption habits are acquired early in adulthood and are more evident during middle age. Audiences tend to adhere to familiar practices, therefore those who were middle aged or older during the turn of the 21st century are more likely to read newspapers. Younger generations are still exposed to newspapers and newspaper brands as many have an online presence, however, time spent with newspapers online continues to decrease (Thurman & Fletcher, 2019). Another term for this would be what Ji (2019) calls "displacement" between different types of media, specifically old versus new; in this case, the "old" form of print newspaper being displaced by the "new" form of online newspaper. However, displacement is not always a matter of replacing one form of media with another, but rather a diversification of media consumption as a result of expansion of media choice (as mentioned previously by

Thurman and Fletcher, 2019). It is also important to note that while consumption changes throughout different generations, publication practices such as distribution strategies, content, and restrictions such as paywalls often have major effects on the public and its readership (Thurman & Fletcher, 2019). Thus, it is not only the behaviour of consumers that needs to be considered when it comes to media, but also how accessible this media is to them.

In the context of Imprint, this means that it is important to keep up with the changing media industry, as well as with the ever-changing interests of its student-based readership. As demonstrated in the following sections of this report, our survey results demonstrate similar results to that of Thurman and Fletcher (2019) in that UW students indicated that they are less inclined to read newspapers as they prefer to access news through an online source or social media. There is an opportunity for Imprint to produce a variety of unique content that aligns with the diverse interests of today's students.

Environmental Scan

In addition to media trends as discussed broadly in the literature, it is important to examine media trends specifically at post-secondary institutions. We conducted an environmental scan focused on 22 post-secondary institutions across Canada that have a student run newspaper or publication (see Appendix B for a full list of post-secondary institutions included). Many of these institutions also had a secondary publication such as a podcast or radio show which often mirrored topics discussed in the newspaper itself. Some examples include:

1. **Wilfrid Laurier – Radio Laurier**
2. **University of Ottawa – The Fulcrum Radio Show, Balado de La Rontonde**
3. **Queen's University – The Scramble**
4. **Ryerson University – The Ear-opener**

The reviewed publications had similar top news sections which included: News, Lifestyle, Arts, Sports, Opinion, Feature, Campus, and Community. Some sections had different content depending on the institution. For example, the Arts and Culture section in various newspapers differed in terms of the subsections that were included. For example:

1. **University of Ottawa – Movies You Should Have Seen, This Week in FULC Music**
2. **McGill – Pop Rhetoric, Album Reviews, Gaming**
3. **Western – Profile (articles are specifically written about a person, or place i.e., food truck profiles, Western TikTok star Megha)**

Content such as horoscopes, comics and campus guides, specifically for first year students, were also included by some institutions. Other unique features specifically when viewing the website for the publications included side bar content with links to Spotify playlists, podcasts, previous articles, quizzes, daily polls and social media accounts. For example, Western had a section in their side bar dedicated to promoting events in the London area with a direct link to Budweiser Gardens website. Another section that stood out was an "Our Team" or "Staff" page with pictures, names, and positions of the publications team along with an "About" section describing the newspaper in more detail.

In terms of frequency, most newspapers appear to post content online either on a daily, weekly, or bi-weekly schedule with the most common frequency being weekly. Print publications also vary from weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly, however, several institutions including Western, Carleton, and McGill have stopped printing newspapers due to COVID-19.

Imprint follows similar practices as many of the post-secondary student run newspapers in Canada including its content and frequency. It is important that Imprint explores other areas such as adding an about section and a team/staff page. Imprint can also explore the option of adding a section that is unique to UW students with a primary focus on the UW community as discussed in more detail in the survey analysis.

Website Analysis

As can be seen from the literature review and the environmental scan, online forms of media with diverse content are becoming important to engage with. Thus, it is important to understand more about the analytics behind Imprint's current online presence, uwimprint.ca. The data presented below can help Imprint improve its website and develop a strategy to attract users. The data included in the website analysis is drawn from January 1st 2018 to March 14th 2022 with the purpose of analyzing Imprints readership and website performance. The data focuses on time spent on page, mobile vs desktop usage, readership characteristics, user pathway to website, and Imprint content.

Time Spent on Page

The average time spent for one session on Imprints website is 40 seconds. The most time spent during one session was 14 minutes and 24 seconds on February 23, 2020. However, after March 2020, the average session duration has declined with the majority of time spent on the website being well under a minute. The data also indicated that during the fall and winter months the duration of time spent on a page was longer than spring and summer.

Mobile vs Desktop Usage

The most common devices used to access Imprint's website are mobile ones (E.g., cell phones) with slightly over 50% of total users accessing the Imprint website through a mobile phone. More specifically, iPhone and Samsung generated the highest numbers of mobile users. Desktops, including laptops, generated about 46.82% of users while tablets such as iPads generated the lowest number of users at 3.03%.

Readership Characteristics

In the time period mentioned above, there have been 285,390 users who have accessed Imprint's website. Users typically access about 1.37 pages during their session. In addition, bounce rate shows us the percentage of visitors who enter the site and then leave without viewing other pages. The average bounce rate is 84.80%. Since March 2020 the average bounce rate has increased, typically displaying rates in the 80s and low 90s. Prior to March 2020 the bounce rate had more flexibility as it ranged from 60%-90%.

User Pathway to Website

Users access Imprint through a combination of a source and medium. The source is a place where users are before seeing Imprints content such as a search engine (Google). The top sources where Imprint website traffic comes from includes Google, Direct (user directly types Imprint URL into their browser or clicks on Imprint through bookmarks), Facebook, Google news, Reddit, and Instagram. The medium is how users arrive at Imprint. The top mediums include organic search, Direct, and referral. Google paired with an organic search generated the highest amount of traffic with 142,327 users accessing Imprint this way. Direct source and no medium generated the second highest amount of traffic with a total of 83,485 users. Facebook and Google News had similar amounts of user traffic with 16,462 and 15,199. Both sources have referrals as their medium indicating that Facebook and Google News refers to Imprint most likely through URL. UW Imprint, Reddit, and Instagram had less traffic generating a total of 3,371 users with referral as the medium.

Imprint Content

Imprint has generated 471,912 page views meaning an instance of a page being loaded in a browser. Essentially page views are the number of hits or views a web page receives. The top page views for Imprint articles include the following:

- 10 bird courses according to UW students: 14,438
- The real reasons why international students pay higher tuition fees: 10,812
- Waterloo region stuck in Step 1: 8,068
- University community mourns second suicide victim in less than a week: 7,729
- Where to get the best takeout in Waterloo: 7,127
- Everything you need to know about Stage 3 in KW: 7,014
- Boston Pizza employees in KW speak out: 5,688
- Major changes to OSAP in 2019-2020: 5,387
- Why do Waterloo student residences suck?: 5,347
- Changes to OSAP for 2020-2021: What's new and how student groups are reacting: 5,336

Overall, the website analysis demonstrates the common behaviours of users on the Imprint website. If online media truly is the preference of UW students, then there is an opportunity here to create a more engaging website that keeps readers interested and visiting multiple pages. It is also clear that students are interested in articles related to the University of Waterloo and articles that directly affect students themselves. This topic is further discussed in the Campus News section of the survey results, where most students are interested in reading about campus and local issues.

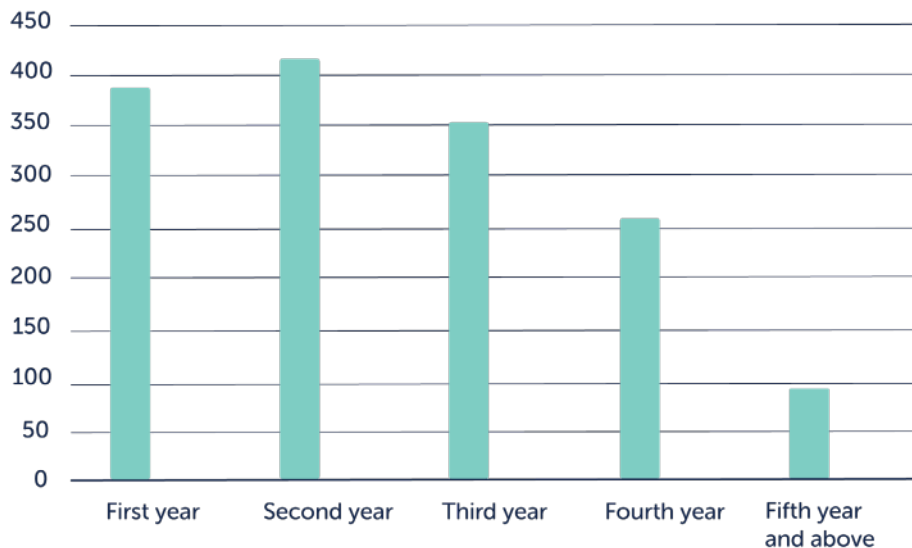
Survey Overview

The final and most significant method used in this report is the Student Publications Survey which asked UW students about their media format and content preferences. In addition, the last component of the survey focused on student involvement with Imprint in an attempt to gauge student interest in contributing to Imprint in various capacities. This survey was available for UW students to complete from March 15th 2022 until March 25th 2022 at 11:59pm. During this two-week period, the survey was distributed across both the WUSA and Imprint social media platforms and through an email sent out to all undergraduate students on March 15th. The survey generated a total of 1793 responses and after removing 272 incomplete responses during the data cleaning procedure, a total of 1521 was used in the analysis. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Demographics

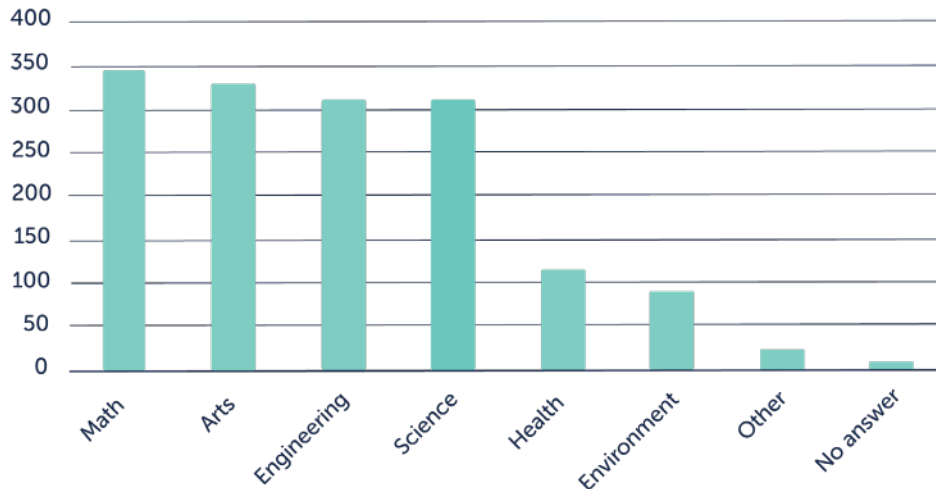
At the beginning of the survey, students were asked three questions regarding their status at the University of Waterloo to provide context as to the make-up of responses to the survey. The responses showed a similar proportion of students in first, second, and third year at 25.80%, 27.53%, and 23.34% of total responses, respectively, while 17.29% of students indicated they were in fourth year and 6.05% indicated they were in fifth year or above (Figure 1). In comparison, 21.36% of undergraduate students enrolled in the Winter 2022 term are in first year, 26.35% are in second year, 23.31% are in third year, 26.28% are in fourth year, and 0.35% are in fifth year.¹ The remaining undergraduate students are in non-degree programs. Thus, fourth year students were slightly overrepresented while fifth year students were slightly underrepresented in our survey.

Figure 1: What year of study are you in?



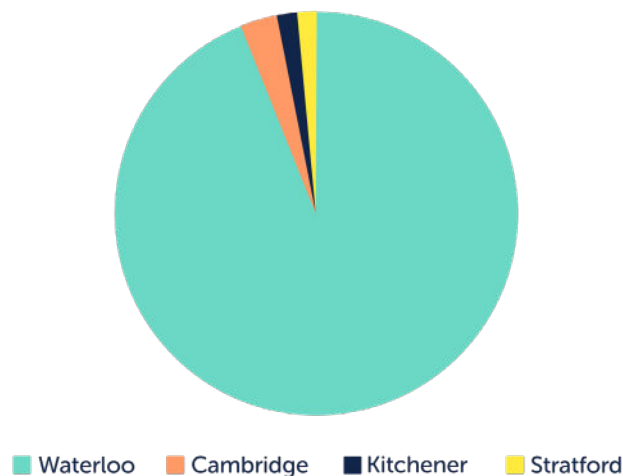
In terms of faculty, the responses to the survey showed a similar proportion of students in Arts, Science, Engineering, and Math at 21.56%, 20.12%, 20.25%, and 22.49% respectively. In addition, 7.50% of students indicated they were in Health, 5.85% of students indicated they were in Environment and 1.58% selected "Other" (Figure 2). The remaining students did not answer this question. In comparison, 22.20% of students enrolled in the Winter 2022 term are in Math, 20.24% are in Arts, 23.56% are in Engineering, 17.01% are in Science, 8.04% are in Health, and 6.37% are in Environment.

Figure 2: What faculty are you in?



In addition, students were asked which University of Waterloo campus they primarily attended classes on. Figure 3 demonstrates that 93.16% of students said they attend the Waterloo campus while 2.96% attend Cambridge, 1.51% attend Stratford, and 1.71% attend Kitchener. The remaining students did not answer this question. Given that students from the Waterloo campus made up the large majority of responses, it can be assumed that any mention of campus throughout this report refers to the Waterloo campus in particular unless otherwise specified.

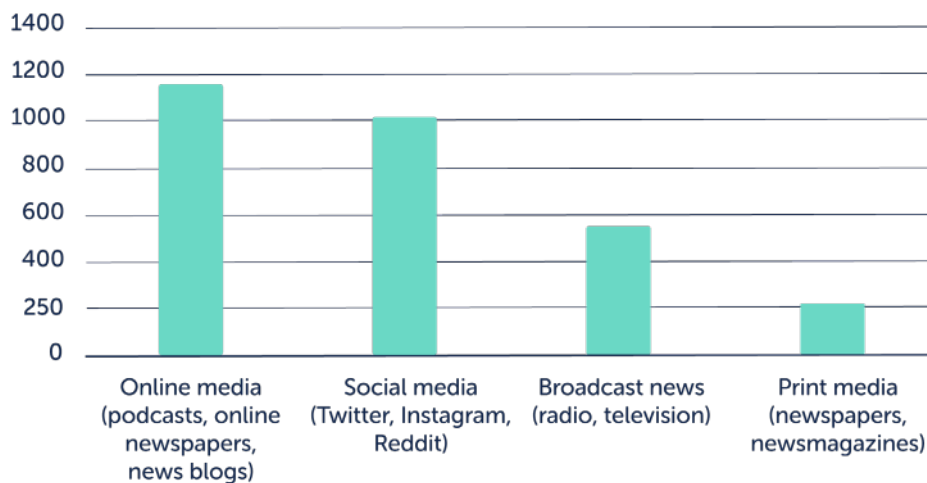
Figure 3: Which University of Waterloo campus do you primarily attend classes on?



Types of Media Consumption

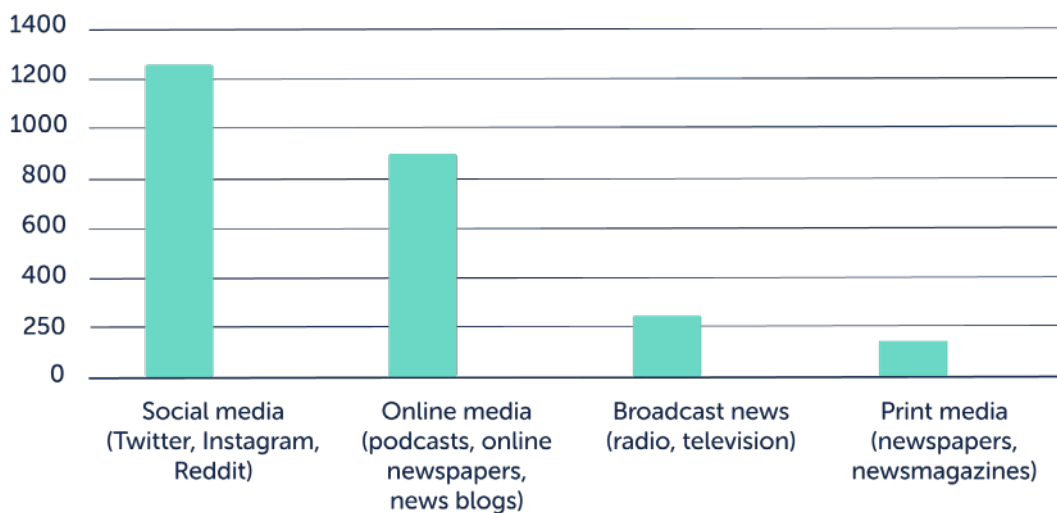
Students were asked which format they prefer to get their hard news content from in a select all that apply format, meaning they were able to choose more than one option. The option that received the highest percentage of responses was online media with 75.54% of students selecting this option. Following this, 66.54% of students selected social media, 35.90% selected broadcast news, and 14.20% selected print media (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Which format do you prefer to get your hard news content from?



Similarly, students were asked which format they prefer to get their soft news content from. Social media received the highest percentage of responses with 83.43% of students selecting this option. Following this, 59.76% of students selected online media, 16.44% selected broadcast news, and 9.53% selected print media (Figure 5).

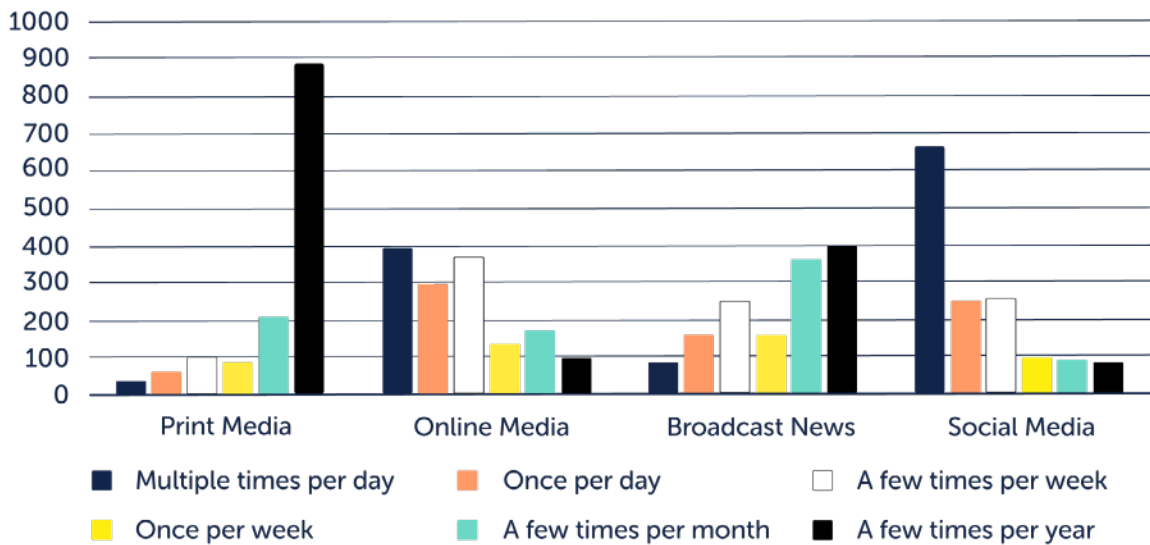
Figure 5: Which format do you prefer to get your soft news content from?



These results demonstrate that most students prefer to view their soft news content through social media. On the other hand, online media is the preferred format for hard news with broadcast and print media having a slight increase as well compared to soft news.

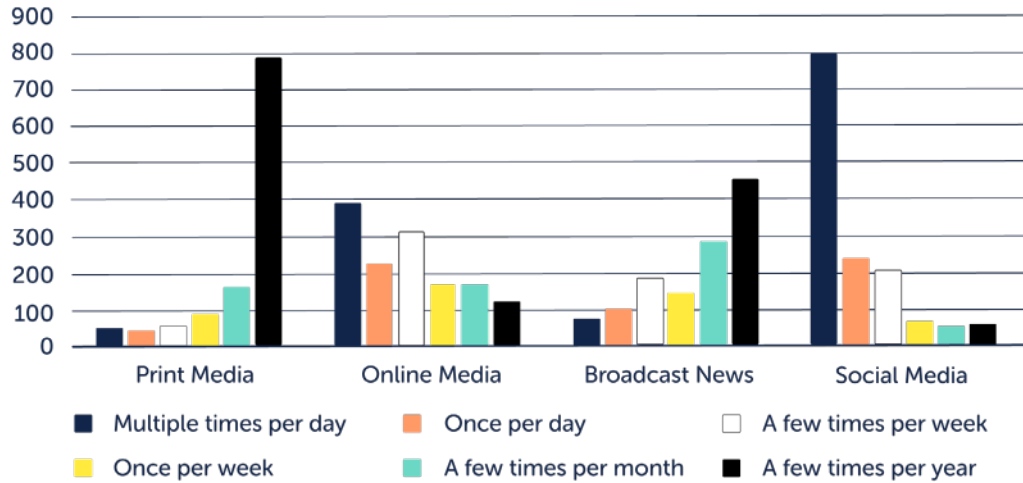
We then asked students how often they consume hard news in a variety of formats. This allowed for a more detailed analysis into the frequency of consumption for each format. As Figure 6 demonstrates, social media had the highest frequency of use, with 45.54% of students using this media source multiple times per day. In addition, 26.75% of students indicated that they consume hard news through online media multiple times per day. In terms of formats that students used least frequently, print media had the highest percentage of students (64%) state that they consumed hard news through printed media only a few times per year.

Figure 6: How often do you consume hard news in following formats?



Similarly, Figure 7 below demonstrates the frequency of consumption for soft news and shows that social media had the highest percentage of students (55%) indicate that they used this format multiple times per day. While social media was the format that most students used multiple times a day for both hard and soft news, a larger percentage of students used it for soft news compared to hard news. Again, similar to hard news, online media was the second most frequently used format for soft news with 28% of students indicating they used it multiple times per day.

Figure 7: How often do you consume soft news in the following formats?



At first glance from both graphs, we can see social media is consumed the most frequently while print media is consumed the least. However, looking at the data, print media is consumed slightly more for hard news at a frequency of a few times per week with an increase of 2.96% and a few times per month with an increase of 3.02% compared to soft news. Broadcast news showed similar difference for hard news consumption with the frequency of a few times per month increasing by 4.86% and a few times per week increasing by 4.28%. Although these formats slightly increase for hard news consumption, social media and online media are still the most frequently used multiple times per day.

Students were asked to share their thoughts on their news and media consumption with the hopes that this would give students the opportunity to explain any barriers or reasons as to why they do or do not consume a certain format or type of news. Several students mentioned that they avoid the news as it is often negative and affects their mental health. Another reason students tend to avoid news is because many news sources have inherent bias and it is difficult to find unbiased news. This also led many students to comment about the credibility of the news. Some students suggested that credible news sources are often the ones that started out as print papers such as The Globe and Mail and The New York Times, while others view multiple sources to ensure the content is accurate. Students continued to discuss the credibility of news as mainstream news outlets can be untrustworthy due to censorship of opinions that do not fall within societal norms and the increase of fake news and other propaganda. In addition, there were different opinions on social media as it relates to news content. Several students commented that social media is their preferred news source with one student stating, "I mostly consume through social media since this is most accessible on both my phone and laptop." Students also avoid certain news outlets that have pay walls or require subscriptions. YouTube, Reddit, Twitter, and word of mouth were other common ways to get news for some students. YouTube is an easy and accessible platform to use as lots of popular radio and TV channels can be found there such as CBC and BBC along with popular news creators such as Philip DeFranco. Overall, students are skeptical of what news sources are credible and prefer sources that are free including well known global newspapers, and various social media sites.

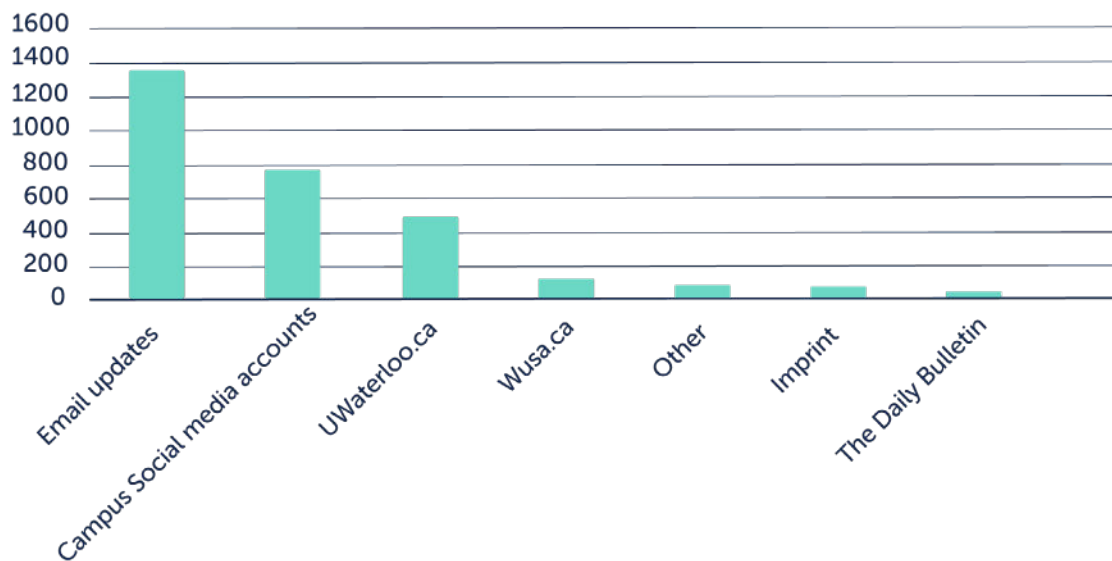
Campus News

Content

While the previous section provided insight into the news and media consumption patterns of students in general, this section highlights student interest and engagement with The University of Waterloo's campus newspaper Imprint in particular.

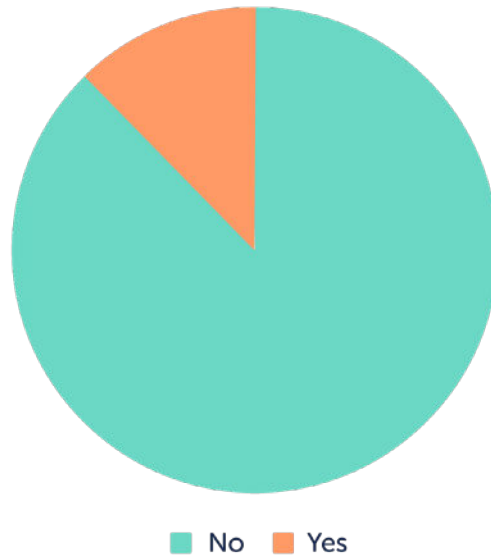
Students were first asked how they stay up to date on University of Waterloo news in a select all that apply format; 88.30% of responses indicated they stay up to date through email updates, 49.84% through following campus social media accounts and 31.76% through Uwaterloo.ca. A smaller proportion of students keep up with campus news through wusa.ca, The Daily Bulletin, and Imprint at 8.35%, 2.70%, and 4.80% respectively. Moreover, 5.65% of respondents selected "other" indicating they stay up to date on campus news through other sources such as Reddit, specifically the r/uwaterloo subreddit, word of mouth through friends and co-workers, mathNEWS, Discord, and Facebook (Figure 8). Reddit was also listed as a preferred source in the previous section as students shared this social media platform as another source for both hard and soft news consumption.

Figure 8: How do you stay up to date on University of Waterloo Campus news?



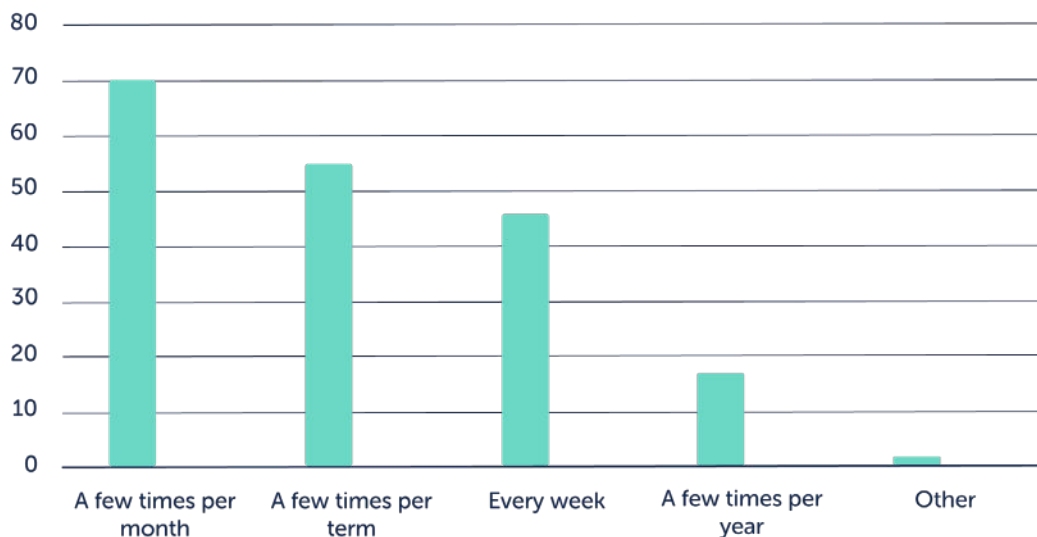
In addition, when students were asked explicitly if they read Imprint, 12.64% of respondents indicated "yes" while 87.36% said "no" (Figure 9). We analyzed this question further by looking at the percentage of students who indicated that they did read Imprint for each year of study. For first year students, 10.34% indicated that they read Imprint, while 13.94% of students in second year did, 14.37% of students in third year did, 10.38% of students in fourth year did, and 16.48% of students in fifth year did.

Figure 9: Do you currently read the University of Waterloo's official student newspaper Imprint?



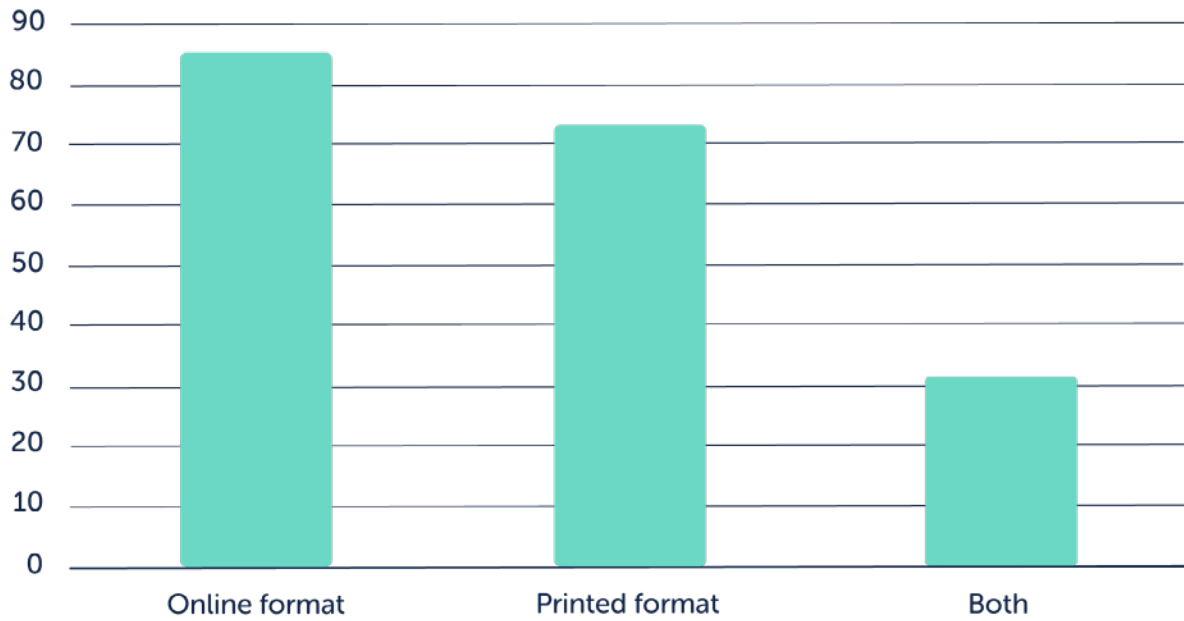
Students who indicated that they did read Imprint were asked a series of additional questions, the first one being how often they read it; 36.84% of students read imprint a few times per month while 28.94% read it a few times per term. In addition, 24.21% of students read Imprint every week, and 8.94% read it a few times per year (Figure 10). The remaining 1.07% of students selected other indicating that they only read Imprint once per year due to COVID-19 whereas before they would read it on a weekly basis.

Figure 10: How often do you read Imprint?



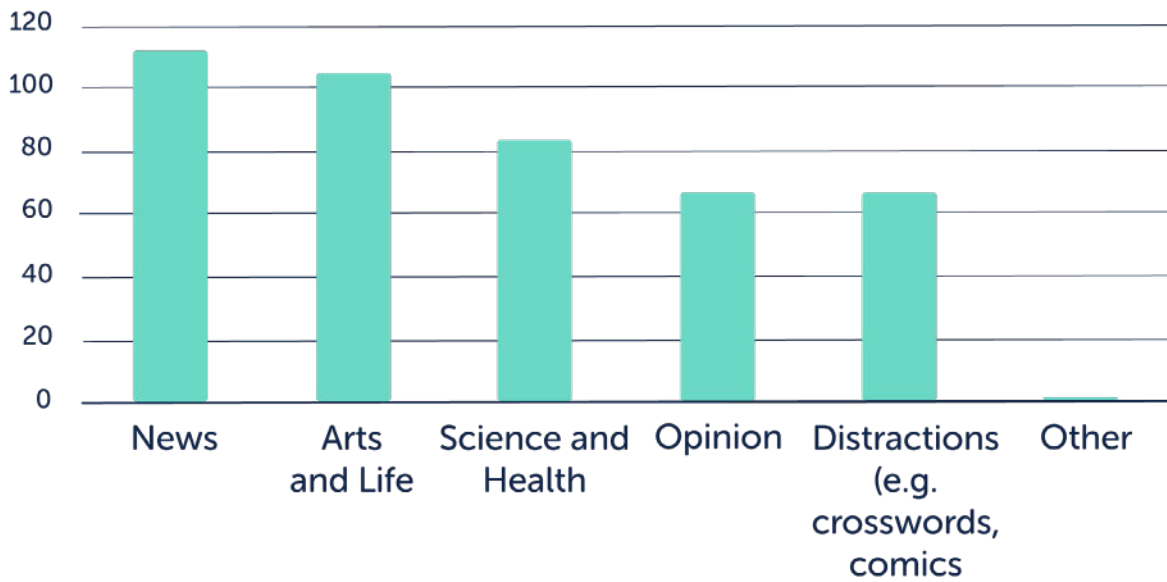
These students were then asked which Imprint format they prefer to read; 44.97% of students indicated that they prefer to read the online format while 38.62% prefer to read the printed format and 16.40% prefer to read both formats (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Which Imprint format do you prefer to read?



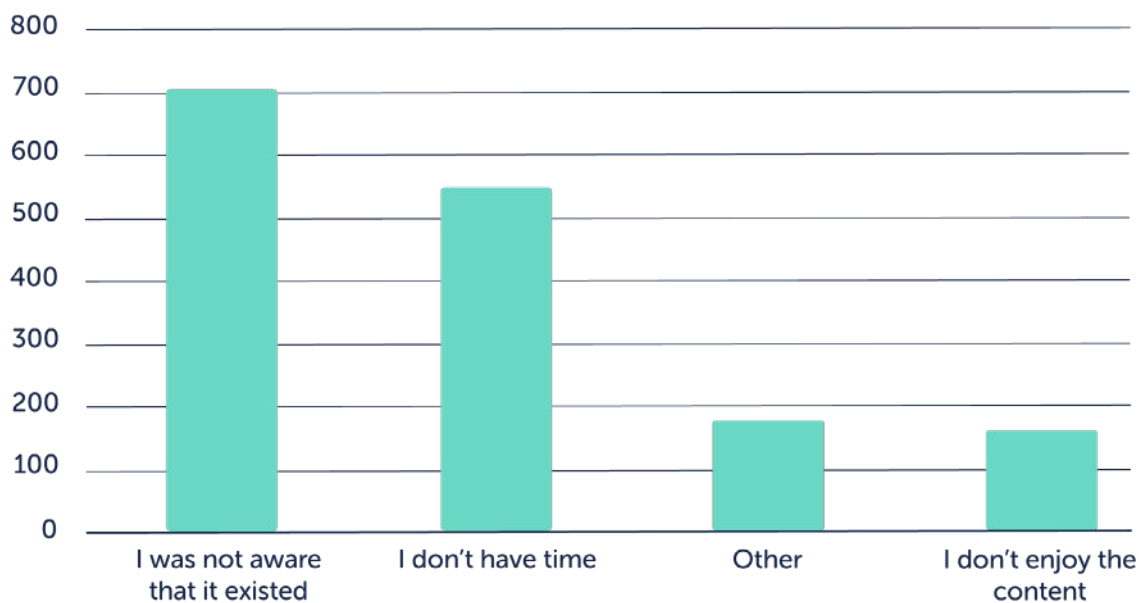
Moreover, students were asked which sections of Imprint they enjoy reading; 25.86% of students enjoy reading the News section while 24.01% enjoy reading the Arts and Life section. Science and Health, Opinion, and Distractions showed a similar proportion of responses at 19.16%, 15.47%, and 15.47% respectively (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Which sections of Imprint do you currently enjoy?



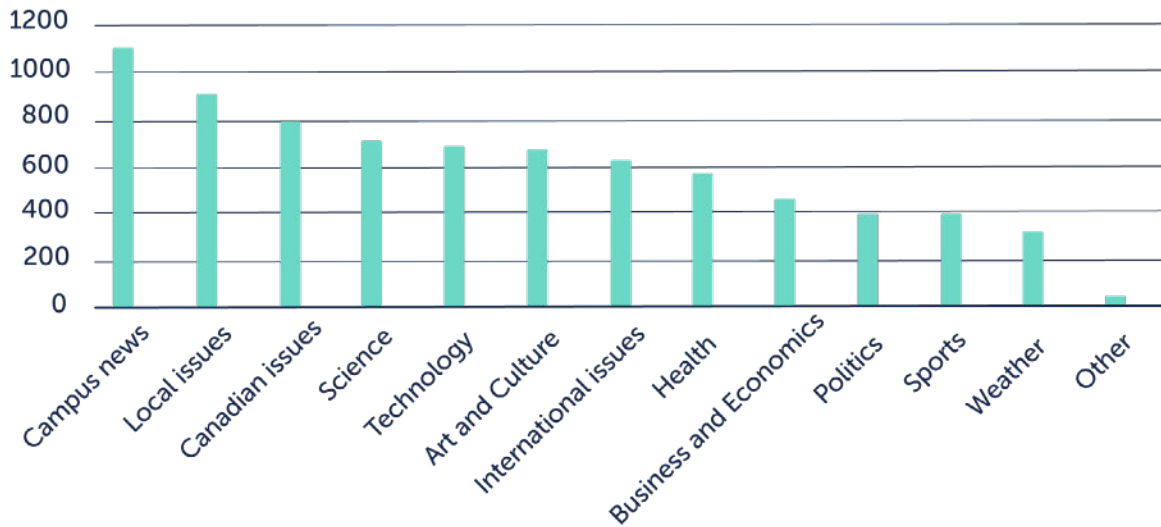
Students who indicated that they did not read Imprint, were asked in the following question to indicate why not (Figure 13). The results from this question showed that 44.31% of students were not aware that Imprint existed while 34.53% indicated they do not have time to read Imprint. 10% of students indicated they do not enjoy the content and 11% selected the other option providing different reasons why they do not read Imprint, the most common of which was that they do not know how or where to access it and that it is not easily accessible as there are very few locations to find the paper on campus. Similarly, many respondents appeared to be unaware of the online version of Imprint as some mentioned they could not read it due to campus being closed. Moreover, some students indicated they do not enjoy the content because it is biased while others are simply not interested in reading it. This question was analyzed further by looking at the breakdown by year of study specifically for the option of “I was not aware that it existed.” This analysis showed that 72.05% of first year students do not read Imprint for this reason, followed by 74.15% of second year students, 40.27% of third year students, 23.18% of fourth year students, and 13.16% of fifth year or above students. This demonstrates that students in their upper years (i.e., third, fourth and fifth year) are more aware of Imprint than students in their first and second years.

Figure 13: Why do you currently not read Imprint?



All respondents were next asked which type of news they would be interested in reading about in Imprint; 83.83% of students indicated they would like to read about campus news while 57.46% would like to read about soft news and 52.01% would like to read about hard news. We followed up by asking what specific topics students would be interested in reading about as well. Campus news is the topic most students would be interested in reading about at 71.99% (Figure 14). Local issues came in second with 59.11% of respondents selecting this option. In addition, 2.83% of students selected the other option and included answers such as sustainability, satire, environmental issues, career events and job postings.

Figure 14: Which specific topics would you be interested in reading about in Imprint



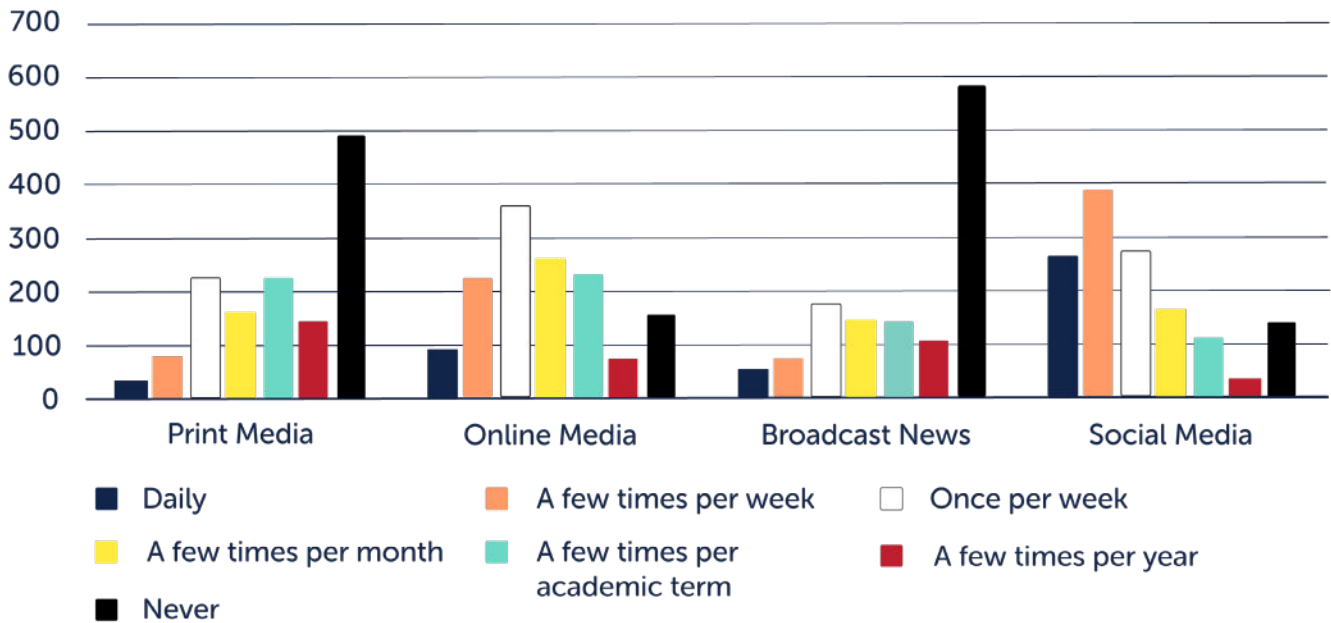
To understand topic preferences of students even further, respondents were asked to comment on what type of content they would or would not like to see from Imprint. The majority of the responses included students wanting to see more campus related news. The specific content students listed included campus closures, clubs, events, and other topics that impact UW students. In addition, students want to see Imprint focus on the topic of local issues in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. Some specific content includes housing, public transportation, local events, and lesser-known places and activities in the region that could be interesting for students to explore. Several students would not like to see political content in Imprint stating that it is biased and negative. Other responses included adding an advice column, students requesting more challenging crossword puzzles, and a variety of opinions from various writers or other sources such as students that are unbiased.

In addition, students selected which format they would be most interested in receiving Imprint content from. This question allowed participants to select more than one option with 72.98% of the responses favoring online media while 69.56% of responses selected social media. A smaller portion chose print media and broadcast news at 24.06% and 9.86% respectively. 1.31% chose the "other" option leaving different responses which include students' wanting to receive content through email updates.

Frequency

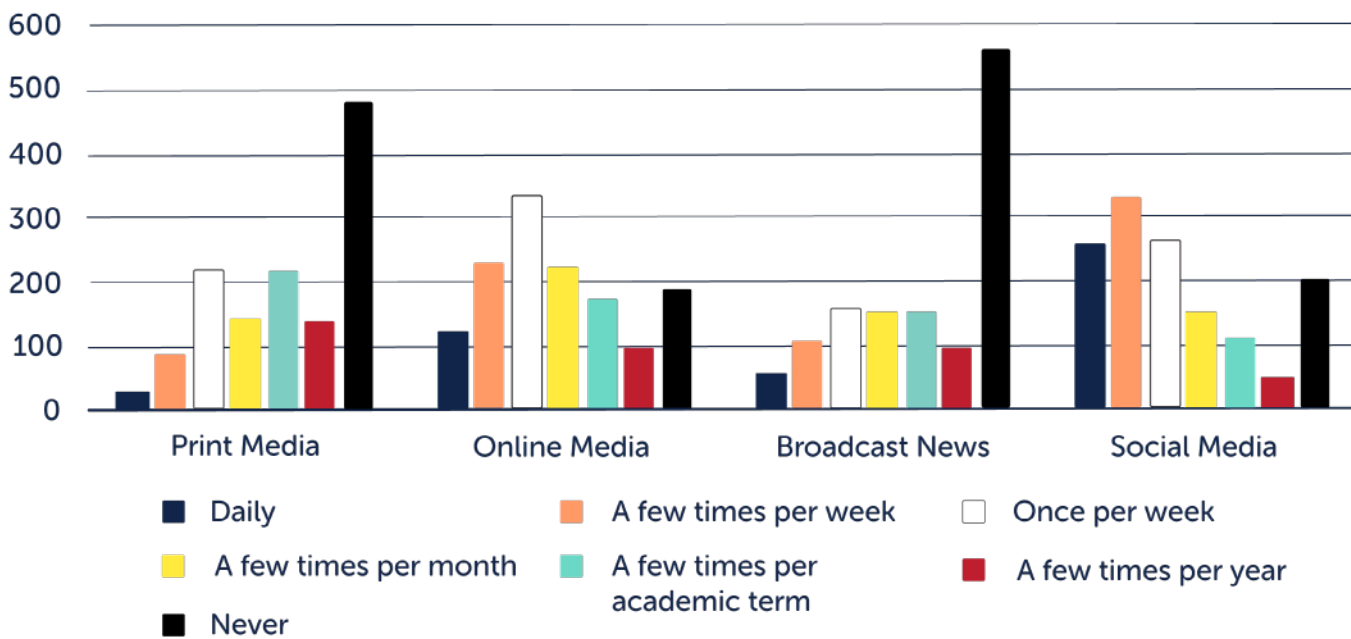
Similar to the previous questions regarding general media consumption, students were asked how often they would like to receive various types of news from Imprint in different formats. As indicated in Figure 15 below, students prefer to receive soft news content in an online media format once per week (22.22%). In addition, 24.19% of student wanted to see soft news content on social media a few times per week (24.19%). It is also clear from viewing Figure 15 that a largest proportion of students never want to see soft news content in print or broadcast format.

Figure 15: How often would you like to receive soft news content from Imprint in the following formats?



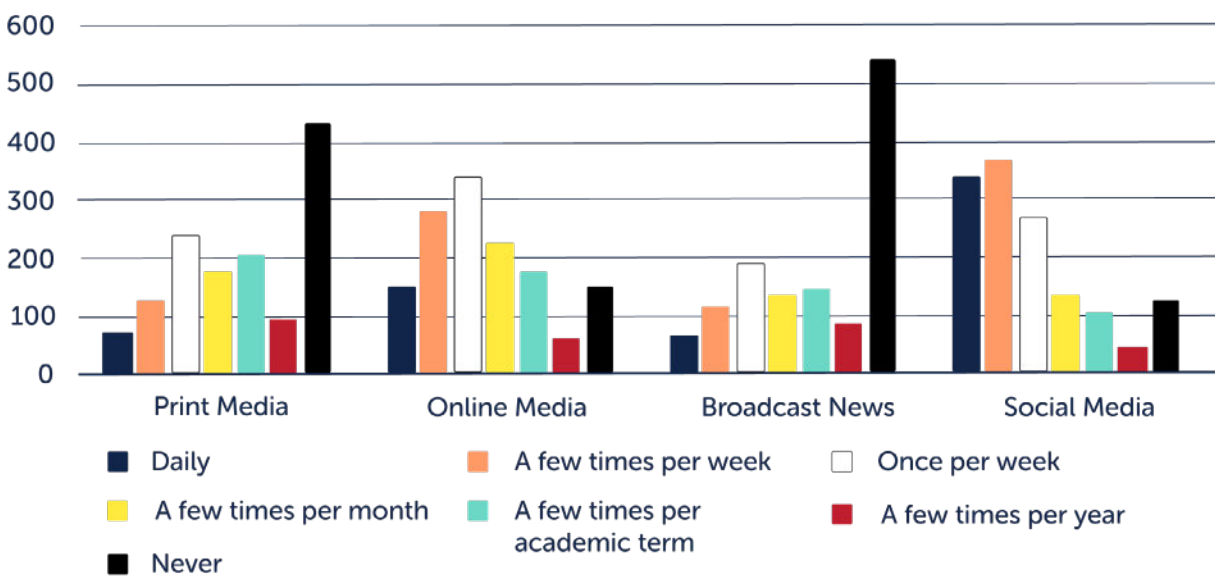
Similarly, it is clear from Figure 16 that most students also are not interested in receiving hard news content through print media and broadcast media. However, students continue to be interested in receiving news content in the form of social media with 21.56% of students wanting to receive it few times per week and 22.02% wanting to receive it once per week for online media.

Figure 16: How often would you like to receive hard news content from Imprint in the following formats?



For campus news, students were interested in receiving content through social media most frequently with 22.22% of responses selecting daily and 24.19% selecting a few times per week. However, the graph does indicate a general increase in receiving campus news through print media once per week and a few times per month compared to hard and soft news. More specifically there is a 1.18% increase for a frequency of once per week and a 1.25% increase for a frequency of a few times per month. This increase in wanting to receive campus news in print media can correlate to Figure 14 with 83.83% of student wanting to read about campus news in Imprint and thus being more inclined to selecting print media as a format.

Figure 17: How often would you like to receive campus new content in the followinf formats?

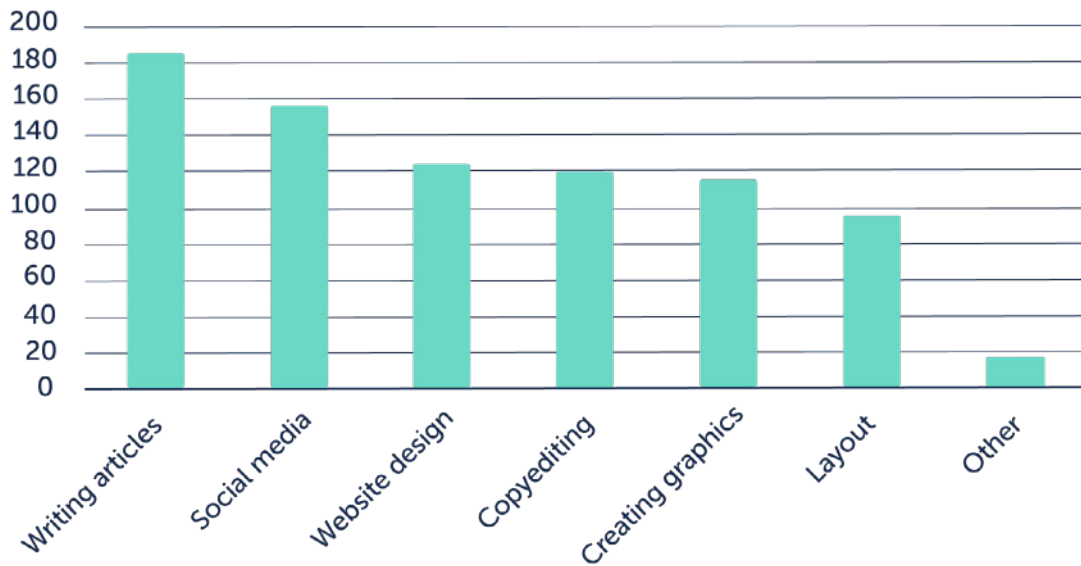


Overall, Figures 15, 16, and 17 demonstrate that social media and online media are the two formats students would like to receive news content from. The most popular frequency for social media is a few times per week with an average of 23.78% of students selecting this option. Similarly, an average of 22.61% of students would like to receive online media at a frequency of once per week.

Student Involvement with Imprint

Imprint recognizes the importance of having student voices and opinions heard as well as providing students with the opportunity to get practical experience in communications and journalism. Therefore, it was important for this to be included in the survey as well. We asked students if they would like to be involved in contributing to the creation of Imprint and 23.87% of students selected yes. Those students who selected yes were then asked which areas they would be interested in contributing to; 22.77% of students would be interested in contributing to writing articles while 19.03% are interested in social media, 15.22% are interested in website design, 14.23% of students are interested in creating graphics and 14.72% are interested in copy editing. Some students selected the "other" option and wrote that they would be interested in contributing to photography, distractions, and logistics.

Figure 18: Which areas would you be interested in contributing to?



Conclusion

This project was carried out to support Imprint as they begin the process of re-imagining how they operate under the newly created Student Publications department within the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA). This involved the use of four different methods: A literature review, environmental scan, website analysis, and student survey. The literature review explored previous research regarding media trends and people's attitudes towards media based on their age demographic. From this we gathered a change in using specific media formats including younger generations like Gen Z being less inclined to read physical copies of the newspaper and participate in "snack and scanning" the internet for the content they are interested in. The environmental scan provided us with ongoing trends and practices that occur within student run newspapers from various Canadian universities. The results brought forth an opportunity for new content such as an about page and student related articles that are useful in determining the direction of Imprint. Similarly, collecting data from the website analysis provided us with website traffic that can be used to improve and optimize the user experience and overall services Imprint wants to provide on the website. Finally, the survey sought to explore the perspective of University of Waterloo students related to media and news consumption alongside their knowledge and interests as they relate specifically to Imprint. To fulfill this goal, we asked students about their news consumption in terms of preferred format, topics, and how often they consume news for both their own general news consumption as well as The University of Waterloo. As the report demonstrates, students consume various types of formats at different frequencies, however, online media and social media at daily and a few times per week were the most common answers. The responses towards content have shown that campus news is what most students want to read about in Imprint. Most students have other sources where they get national and international news, however there are very few that offer information directly related to The University of Waterloo. The remainder of this report outlines recommendations for the three areas most discussed including: format, frequency, and content.

Recommendations

Format

Many questions involved students' preferred format for various types of news. Based on the results, students showed that online and social media are preferred formats for reviving hard and soft news content along with campus news. Although there was some interest in print and broadcast media, it was much less compared to the other options. A large number of students stay up to date with campus news through email updates and social media posts. In addition, age is a driving factor in newspaper usage. The current undergraduate population mostly contains those from generation Z who share similar cultural experiences such as growing up with physical copies of newspapers but now living in a technologically dominant era where the same newspapers can now be found much easier online. It is recommended that Imprint focus on spreading news content through social media and online media. Posting important content on social media allows students to easily read a post without having to go to a third-party site. It is also recommended that Imprint participates in a trial run for email updates capturing important campus updates and events including links to social media and the Imprint website to generate more usage. This recommendation aligns with what format students keep up to date with for hard and soft news content as well as UW news.

Frequency

The frequency of news correlates with the format. For an online format such as the Imprint website, the majority of students would prefer content to be uploaded once per week, this already follows Imprints current schedule of publishing one issue per week. For social media, students would like to see posts being made a few times per week for soft, hard, and campus news content. In addition, there was an increase in students wanting daily posts for campus news. When analyzing student media trends, social media is the format that is being used the most, specifically at a daily rate. We recommend Imprint post daily content on their social media page that is more related to campus news, soft news, and other posts that are relevant to students.

Content

Students have a variety of topics they are interested in reading about based on the data from Figure 14. The topics that received the most responses were campus news, local issues, and Canadian issues. We assume these are the most popular topics as they can directly affect students and are often headlines for more well-known newspapers. Other topics such as science, arts & culture, and business should continue to be represented in Imprint but always with a student or campus focus. When discussing specific content, students are interested in campus life such as events, research, closures, and other content that directly impacts UW students. We recommend Imprint expand its content that revolves around UW and local news. This can be what Imprint focuses on the most through writing and promoting. We also recommend Imprint add a news section such as an advice column or a profile column similar to Western that focuses on student's achievements in the UW community. This allows for more student engagement with Imprint and can help increase readership numbers.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Introduction Questions

1. Which year of study are you in? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) First year
- b) Second year
- c) Third year
- d) Fourth year
- c) Fifth year
- d) Other

2. Which faculty are you in? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Arts
- b) Science
- c) Engineering
- d) Math
- e) Health
- f) Environment

3. Which University of Waterloo campus do you primarily attend classes on? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Waterloo
- b) Cambridge
- c) Stratford
- d) Kitchener

Types of Media Consumption:

4. Which format do you prefer to get your hard news content from? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- Print media (newspapers, news magazines)
- Online media (podcasts, online newspapers, news blogs)
- Broadcast news (radio, television)
- Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Reddit)

5. Which format do you prefer to get your soft news content from? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- Print media (newspapers, news magazines)
- Online media (podcasts, online newspapers, news blogs)
- Broadcast news (radio, television)
- Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Reddit)

6. How often do you consume hard news in the following formats? [Array with options for multiple times per day, once per day, a few times per week, once per week, a few times per month, a few times per year and N/A]

- Print media
- Online media
- Broadcast news
- Social media

7. How often do you consume soft news in the following formats?

Print media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Broadcast news

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Online media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Social media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

7. Is there anything else about your news and media consumption that you would like to share? (i.e., barriers to accessing news, types of content preferred, what you consider to be a credible news source etc.) [Long Free Text]

Campus News:

9. How do you stay up to date on University of Waterloo campus news? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- Email updates
- Uwaterloo.ca
- Wusa.ca
- Following campus social channels
- The Daily Bulletin
- Other

10. Do you currently read the University of Waterloo's official Student Newspaper, Imprint? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Yes
- b) No [Skip to Q14]

11. How often do you read Imprint? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Every week
- b) A few times per month
- c) few times per term
- d) A few times per year
- c) Other

12. Which Imprint format do you prefer to read? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Online format
- b) Printed format
- c) Both

13. Which sections of Imprint do you currently enjoy? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- a) News
- b) Arts and Life
- c) Science and Technology
- d) Sports and Health
- c) Opinion
- f) Distractions (e.g., crossword, comics)
- g) Other

14. Why do you not currently read Imprint? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- I was not aware that it existed
- I don't enjoy the content
- I don't have time
- Other

15. In general, which type of news would you be interested in reading about in Imprint? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- Hard news (E.g., breaking news, serious, timely, and urgent topics that are based on facts such as politics, business, and social issues)
- Soft News (E.g., lifestyle and entertainment topics such as sports, and popular culture)
- Campus news and updates

16. Which specific topics would you be interested in reading about in Imprint? [Multiple Choice – check all that apply]

- Arts and Culture
- Business and Economics
- Health
- Science
- Politics
- Technology
- Sports
- Weather
- Canadian issues
- International issues
- Local issues
- Campus news
- Other

17. Which format(s) would you be interested in receiving Imprint content from? [Multiple Choice – Check all that apply]

- Print media (newspapers, news magazines)
- Online media (podcasts, online newspapers, news blogs)
- Broadcast news (radio, television)
- Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Reddit)
- Other

18. How often would you like to receive soft news content from Imprint in the following formats?

Print media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Broadcast news

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Online media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Social media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Other

19. How often would you like to receive hard news content from Imprint in the following formats?

Print media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Broadcast news

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Online media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Social media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Other

20. How often would you like to receive campus news content from Imprint in the following formats?

Print media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Broadcast news

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Online media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Social media

- multiple time per day
- once per day
- a few times per week
- once per week
- a few times per month
- a few times per year
- N/A

Other

21. Do you have any suggestions for the type of content you would or would not like to see from Imprint?

Student Involvement with Imprint:

Imprint recognizes the importance of having student voices and opinions heard. Imprint provides students with the opportunity to get practical experience in communication and journalism. We want to continue to ensure Imprint is driven by UW students with relevant skills and interests such as writing, website design, creating graphics, copyediting, layout design and more.

22. Would you be interested in contributing to the creation of Imprint? [List (radio) - select one]

- a) Yes
- b) No [Skip to Q23]

23. Which areas would you be interested in contributing to? [Multiple Choice – Check all that

Writing Articles

Website design

Creating Graphics

Copyediting

Layout

Social media

Other

24. Would you be interested in being contacted to participate in a focus group to share your opinion and help envision what the future of Imprint should look like? You are under no obligation to participate if you provide your contact information.

a) Yes

b) No [Skip to end of the survey]

25. Please follow this link to an external survey to provide your contact information. You may be contacted during the second phase of this project between May 1st, 2022 and August 31st, 2022 regarding participation in a focus group. Please note: the information you provide will be exported from our survey platform immediately following the expiration of this survey and will not be connected to your responses to this survey. [Multiple Short Text]

Name:

Email:

Name:

Email:

Appendix B: Environmental Scan Institution Inclusion

Brock University

Carleton University

Dalhousie University

McEwan University

McGill University

McMaster University

Mount Royal University

Queen's University

Ryerson University

University of Alberta

University of British Columbia

University of Calgary

University of Guelph

University of Manitoba

University of New Brunswick

University of Ottawa

University of Saskatchewan

University of Toronto

University of Western Ontario

University of Windsor

Wilfrid Laurier University

York University

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