

Sample of one

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Background

One of the skills of media planning is to be able to put yourself in other people's shoes, to be able to devise and implement a strategy targeting people who are not like you, because you've used data to generate insights about them, what they do and how they consume media. Yet lately we've been hearing lots of discussion about 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers' where people, media planners included, are increasingly only exposed to people just like them.

This can very easily lead to an assumption in planning that everyone consumes media in just the same way as you. And while sometimes it is good to rely on your gut instinct, we are increasingly in danger of relying on a sample of one - ourselves! Or even worse, actually, on a sample of people just like us.

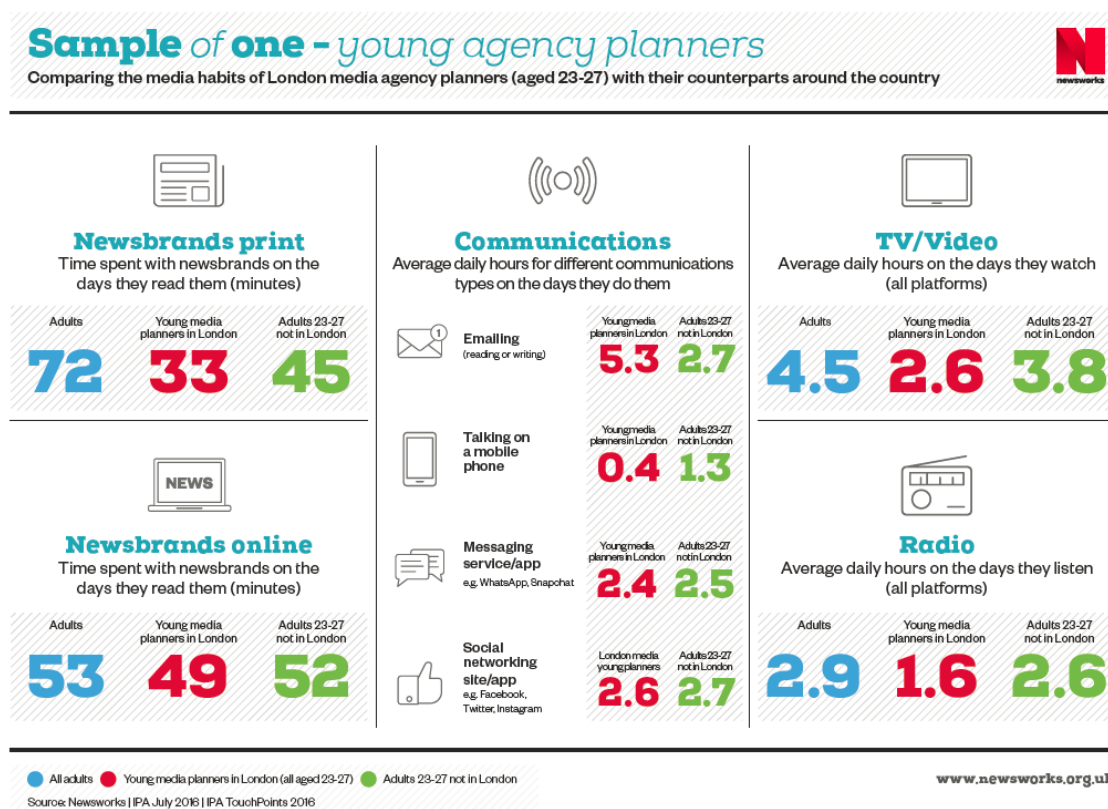
Methodology

With this in mind, Newsworks embarked on an experiment, supported by the IPA and RealityMine. We asked 25 young media agency planners - mainly 23 to 27 year olds, plus four agency leaders, to take part. We wanted to challenge both groups, those making the day to day planning decisions and those at the top of media agencies, not to rely on their own experiences when making those decisions.

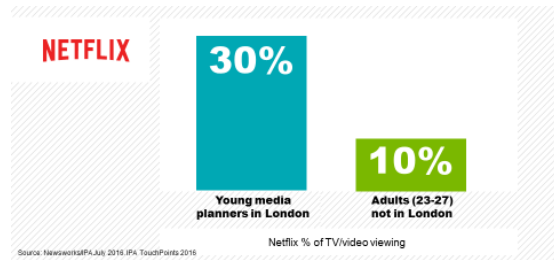
So for a week in early July 2016, they kept a TouchPoints diary (including having the passive app on their smartphones), filling in their movements for every half hour, where they were, who they were with, what they were doing and importantly, what media content they were consuming, on which platform. Additionally they tracked their moods.

We then used the main TouchPoints survey data to compare their media consumption with their counterparts around the country (23-27 year olds outside London for the young planners and 40-55 year olds outside London for the media agency leaders).

Results – Young planners



The TouchPoints 2016 data shows that young people (23-27) outside of London do watch a bit less TV/video content than all adults (3.8 hours vs 4.5 hours). When it comes to the millennial cohort in our experiment, we found that our young planners watched over an hour less of TV/video content a day than the same age group in the rest of the UK, watching just two and a half hours each day. Conversely they watched three times more Netflix, with the subscription service accounting for almost a third of their TV/video time, compared to 10% for their counterparts.



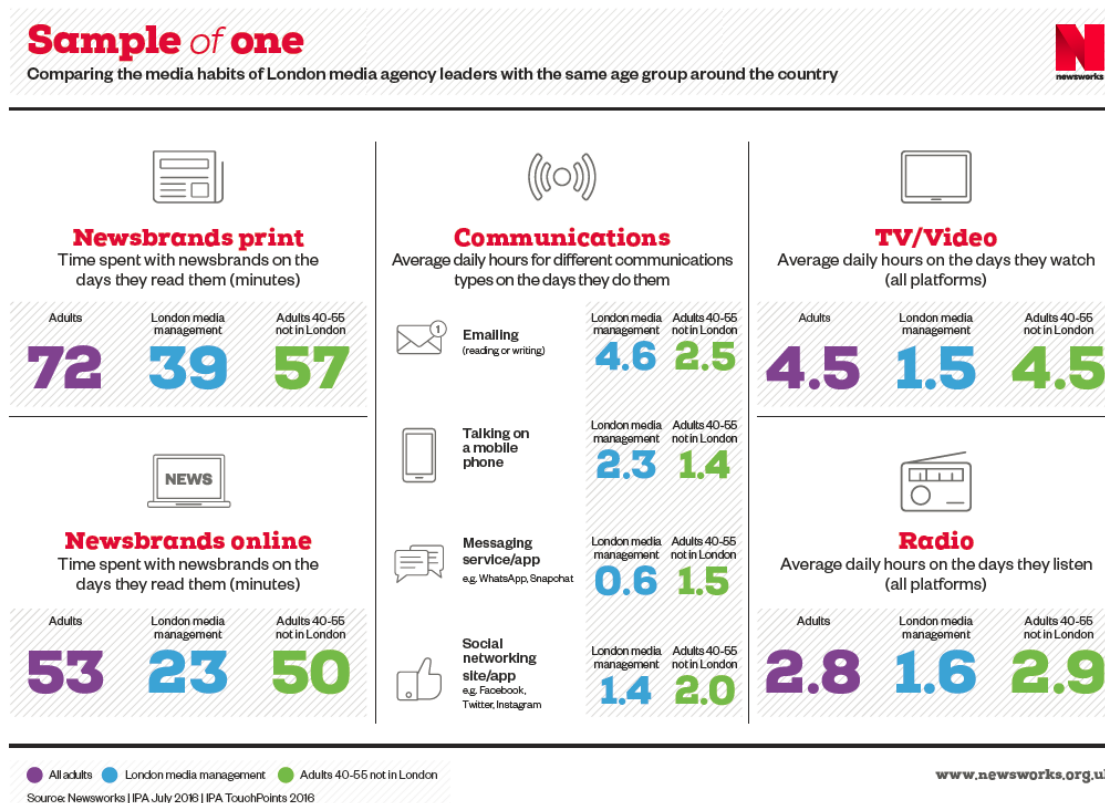
Our young planners spend a lot less time reading print newsbrands on the days they read - 33 minutes vs 45 for their counterparts around the country. They are more similar though when it comes to digital newsbrands - 49 vs 52 minutes.



Just four titles made it onto the list of newspapers they read in print: Metro, i, the Evening Standard and the Guardian. Digitally, MailOnline and the FT joined the roster. By comparison, young people in the rest of the country consume a share of 13 titles in print and 10 online. None of our planners read the Sun, which commands the largest share of reading time for young people in the UK.

When it comes to social media and messaging use, our young planners are no different to their counterparts around the country. However, they spend less time talking on a mobile phone, and twice as long emailing.

Results – Media agency leaders



A similar story played out with the agency leaders. One of the biggest differences was for TV/video content. They spent three hours less a day in front of the TV set compared to 40-55 year olds outside of London. Our sample here was small, so we didn't have any incidence of TV streaming services such as Netflix, but there was some usage of catch-up TV via their set-top boxes.

Although our London media leaders all read a newspaper either in print or online during the week, and did so most days, they spend much less time. When it came to print newsbrands they spent 39 minutes reading a printed paper vs 57 for their age group round the country.

Just five newspapers accounted for 80% of that time.



And a further four newspapers accounted for the remaining 20% of time.



They also spent a lot less time reading the digital editions of newspapers, spending just 23 minutes a day with online newsbrands vs 50 for 4-55 year olds outside London.

Like our young planners, our London media agency leaders also spend significantly more time emailing and less time talking on a mobile phone than their counterparts around the country. Conversely they spend more time messaging and less time on social media.

Conclusion

This experiment was incredibly revealing, demonstrating very clearly that the media habits of London media people are not representative of the norm. It enabled us at Newsworks to have more meaningful conversations with planners about the role of newsbrands in people's lives today. Moreover, it has served to highlight even further the importance of industry surveys like IPA's TouchPoints in understanding media consumption today.