

# Consumer Perceptions of News Media - UK - September 2010

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## What is this report about?

This report examines the ways in which people consume news and the types of news they are interested in, as well as providing specific information on perceptions of different media brands, identifying their strengths and their weaknesses. It compares them within the sector in which they operate and across the entire news media landscape, in order to identify 'best in class' brands. Finally, the report examines attitudes towards news media in order to identify the likely future direction of news consumption.

This is the first time Mintel has reported on this subject, although its reports Attitudes to Paid-for vs Free Media – UK, April 2010 and The Impact of the Recession on Media Usage – UK, January 2010 may also provide useful additional information.

## What have we found out?

- TV is the most popular medium for accessing news, with more than three-quarters of adults claiming to use it regularly. The internet is the second most popular source, with around two-thirds using it to access news, while just under half use national newspapers.
- Consumers are most interested in national news and local/regional news. However, there are some notable demographic variations, with men more likely than women to be interested in international news, politics/current affairs, business and sport and women showing greater interest than men in local/regional and entertainment news.
- TV is seen as the best way to stay up-to-date with the latest news but newspapers still have an important role to play in providing depth and analysis behind the headlines. With the plethora of news sources now that internet penetration is so widespread, one problem is that of saturation, with many consumers agreeing that there are so many sources nowadays, they don't know which ones to trust.
- In TV news, the BBC is associated with solid, conventional attributes such as authoritative, reliable, traditional, accurate and responsible. However, rival Sky is perhaps viewed as more 'cutting edge' with words such as up-to-the-minute and innovative featuring in the top five.
- The BBC also dominates the radio news space, led by its Radio 4 and Radio 2 stations, which are viewed as authoritative, reliable, responsible, accurate and traditional, while the word most associated with Radio 1's news coverage is entertaining. By contrast, perceptions of the news coverage of commercial radio stations are quite poor, with people most likely to see them as lightweight and too commercial – but entertaining.
- The Times emerges as having by far the most positive perceptions among consumers, reflecting its long-established status. It is seen as authoritative, traditional, reliable and responsible. In contrast, top tabloid The Sun is viewed as sensationalist, biased and lightweight... but entertaining.

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