

# How do you get your news now?



I grew up with the big three: Jennings, Brokaw and Rather. Their voices narrated the news of my life—the wall coming down, the Gulf War, September 11. They were the authoritative voice who explained it all to me. CNN crept into my news flow in the early nineties, but mainly, these were the individuals I turned to during the critical news moments.

Specifically, for me, Brokaw. He was “my guy.” As a teenager I became so enthralled in the world of journalism that I ended up majoring in broadcast journalism and minoring in print. That might explain why the recent changes in how we get our news has been thrilling for me to watch.

Some might call me a journalism nerd; though not necessary after they’ve read something I’ve written.

In the past, the conduits of news were limited mostly to news anchors, the newspapers or news radio. There was no interaction between the news givers and the news receivers except for the hastily written—sometimes by hand—“letter to the editor.” (My first internship was reading letters to the editor. I wonder if they still print those in the paper, that would be quaint.) It was a one-way street and we put our trust in the folks who drove the news; we had few choices.

But now, in the new age of journalism, who should we trust and turn to for our news? Is trust even a quality in news we’re looking for anymore?

Last night as the news broke about Osama Bin Laden I realized as I flipped through the channels on TV that I didn’t recognize most of the faces reporting the news. Then of all things, the newscasters were quoting Twitter feeds, blogs and Facebook updates of people even further off my radar. That

struck me as ridiculous: "Boise65 just Tweeted 'God bless our troops now bring them home.'" I found myself bouncing around trying to get news and discovered half of it totally worthless.

I truly believe in the power of social media and I'm excited about the changes in journalism over the past five years, but in times of critical news I still feel a little lost in the sea of information. It's almost like a montage of news now that we piece together ourselves through our TVs, phones and computers. (Honestly I don't read the physical newspaper anymore. I can't imagine what news would be in it today I don't already have from my online sources.)

I like the freedom and immediacy of the new media, but I miss the authority, reassurance and more in-depth reporting that came with the big three anchors, olden-times news reporting. It's at once easier to get information now, yet harder to discriminate what is factual, relevant and free of hype and hysteria. Again, it's a montage of news and it seems we are now our own editors. I like it, but it's a big change and with every "big news" event I'm reminded how far we've come in such a short time.

Tom Brokaw called this new media direction the "Tom Payne environment," likening it another time when there was a shift in news disbursement, way, way back in 1776 (i.e: before cell phones):

*"I'm a big believer in what I call the Tom Payne environment. I love the idea that we've expanded the street corner (where news pamphlets were sold), but I also say ...you've (the news reader) got a role in this. You've got to be more vigilant and you've got to work harder for where you get information and then develop a litmus test of its worthiness."*

Something to think about as we sift through the news today and I admit, it felt good to get some perspective from Brokaw one

last time.

You might like to read these other things I've written that loosely follow this subject\*

[Another Reason To Hop On Twitter](#)

[Has Facebook Replaced the High School Reunion?](#)

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