

ICC622: CAPSTONE
SECTION ONE: PART ONE
VISION POSTER

ASHLEIGH HOLLOWELL | SEPTEMBER 2023

Vision Statement:

At FactFuse, our vision is to empower the next generation, Gen Z, with a digital space where truth prevails. We envision a world where information is not just readily accessible but is also transparent, credible, and independently verified.

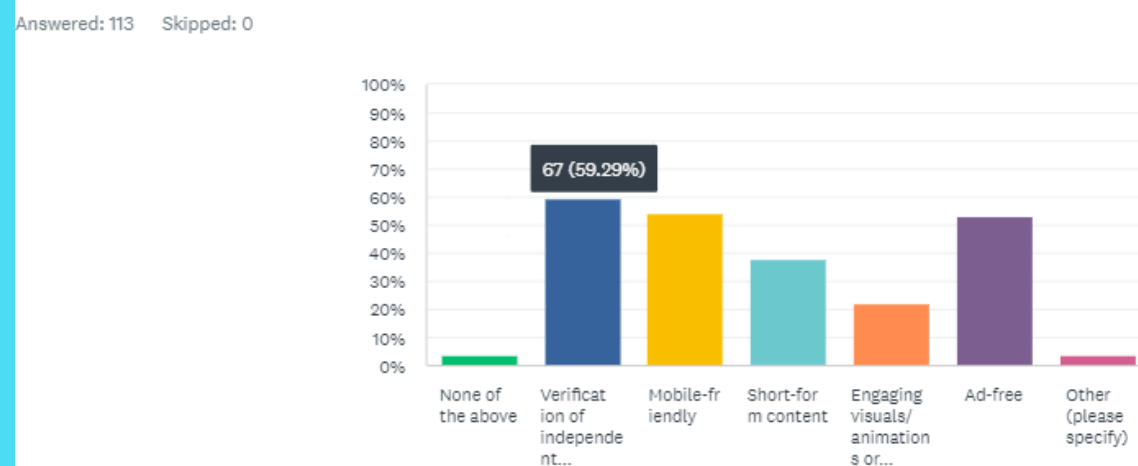
Our commitment is to foster a community where young minds can engage, explore, and share news content that has been rigorously fact-checked, offering them a platform where the power of verified information guides conversations and decisions. We aspire to be the trusted bridge between the digital realm and responsible journalism, enabling Gen Z to shape a better, more informed future.

The Problem:

In a world increasingly inundated with disinformation, fake news, and sensationalism, the need for a dedicated social media platform catering to Gen Z's hunger for independently verified, trusted news content has never been more critical. As Gen Z matures into voting eligibility and takes their place in the workforce, they are faced with unique challenges and responsibilities that demand a more reliable and informed foundation.

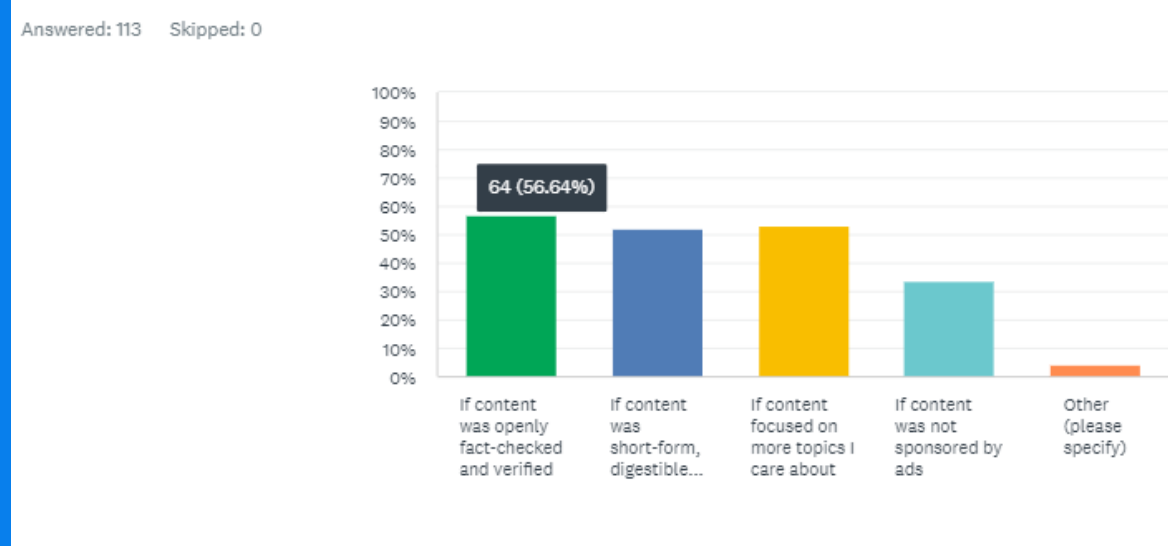
Gen Z does want to engage with news, but they have a hard time knowing when and how to trust it.

If a new social media platform emerged for fact-checking, sharing and distributing news content which elements would be most important for it to have?



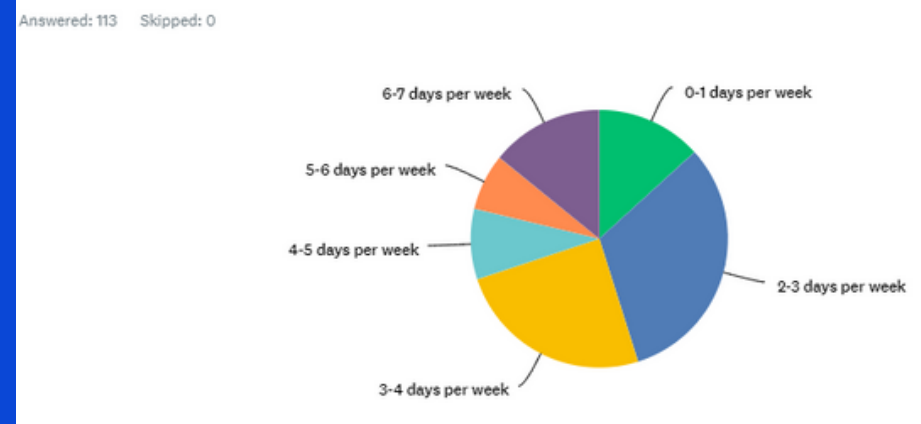
(Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)

What would lead you to consume more news? (check all that apply)



(Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)

How often do you currently consume news content in any format?

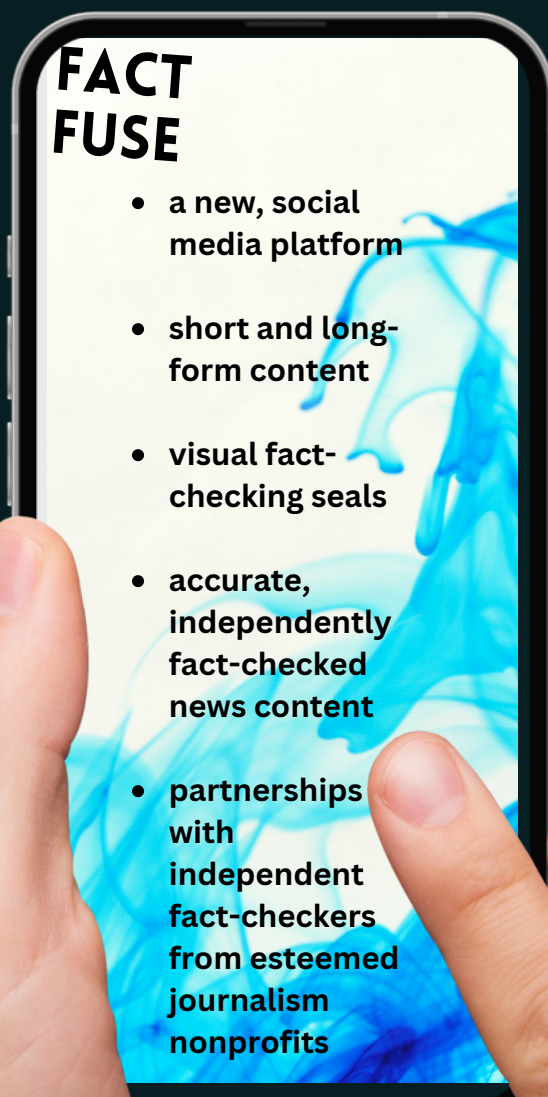


(Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)

Solution:

News and media organizations can submit existing articles, briefs, or even videos to FactFuse and within minutes it will receive a fact-check seal through a partnership with independent fact-checkers from esteemed journalism nonprofits like the Society of Professional Journalists, the Poynter Institute, the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, Pew Research Center and the Knight Foundation.

By offering a platform dedicated to verified news, Gen Z can begin to rebuild trust in media and journalism, which have been eroded by the spread of misinformation. This trust is essential for a society that relies on accurate information to function effectively.



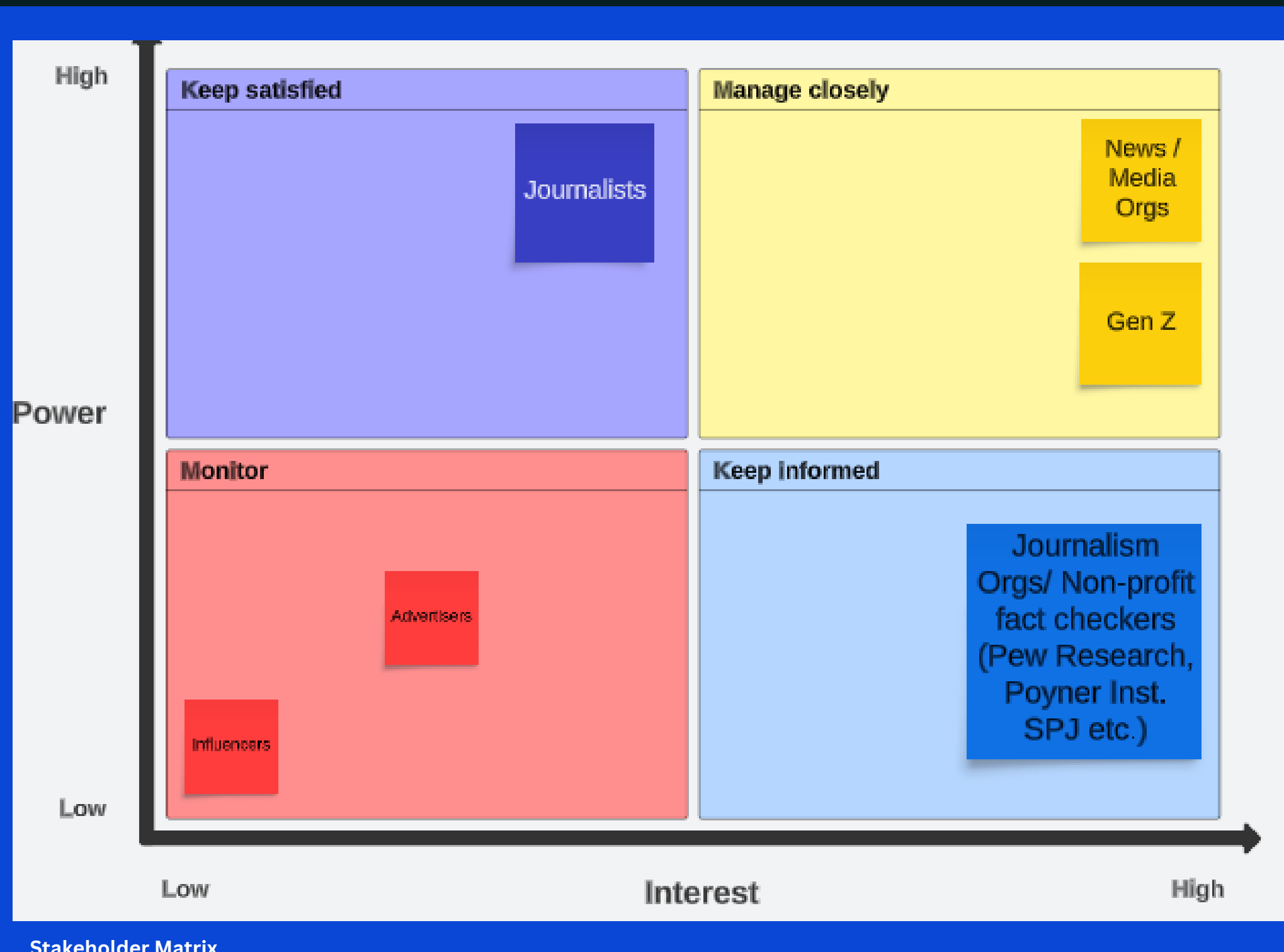
Quick Facts:

- GenZ teens & GenZ adults both view news content exclusively on their phones & are migrating away from traditional news formats (Holmes, Victoria, Peck Gretchen A. 2023)
- Teens in the Gen Z cohort (14–19) consume more news than their Gen Z adult counterparts (20–25) (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)
- Gen Z would consume more news if... it was openly fact-checked and verifiable (56.4%) if it was short-form content (52.2%), and if it was focused on topics they care about (53%). (Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)
- 59% of Gen Z said the most important part of a new social platform featuring news content would be for it to have verified independent fact-checking (Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)

Gen Z has a spending power of \$143 billion. (Davis, 2020)

Opportunity exists within the big media companies, not in beating them. Giving them a tool to better engage with GenZ and build trust is much more likely to work than creating a new media company/platform to cut through the noise and rise to the top.

Stakeholders:



Stakeholder Matrix

News Orgs: Without the buy-in from news orgs there won't be content to submit - they are the primary audience to engage for overall mission - degree of interest and power is high

Gen Z: Key users and audience, without their buy-in the platform fails to deliver on its core promise to engage Gen Z. Degree of power and interest for these stakeholders is high

Journalism Orgs/ Non-profit fact-checkers: Without the buy-in and partnerships with orgs like Poynter Institute, SPJ, etc. the platform will not have independent fact-checking, a core feature. They need to be informed and have a high degree of interest and lower degree of power as independent fact-checkers, but are influential to Fact Fuse's overall mission & and process.

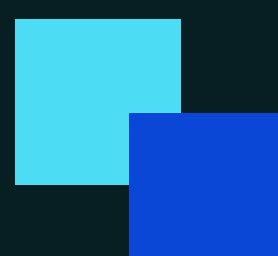
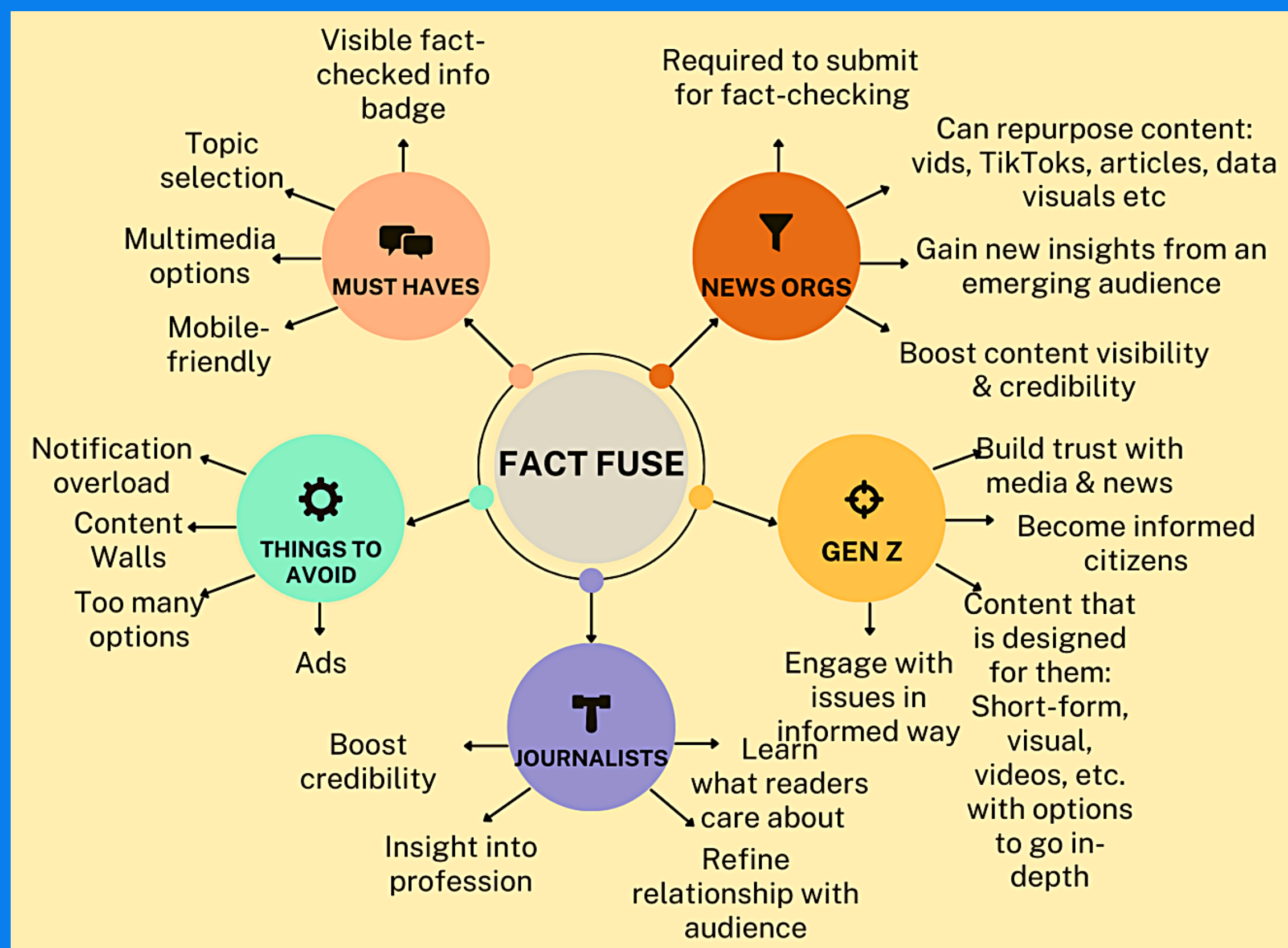
Journalists: It is important to keep this group of stakeholders satisfied because they make the news. Without their buy-in, news orgs could pull the plug and not want to be involved anymore if their journalists do not agree with it. Therefore, have a high degree of power, but a lower degree of day-to-day interest or individual interaction since orgs submit content on their behalf.

Advertisers/Social Media Influencers: While FactFuse aims to keep the platform ad-free as is the preference of Gen Z audience, it will still be important to monitor any opportunities related to advertising if it is necessary to keep the process funded in the future. Having ads is not a preference of Gen Z, but not a deal-breaker either according to the independent, survey I conducted.

Guiding Principles:

- Repair and rebuild lost trust Gen Z may have in media growing up in the age of fake news/disinformation
- Provide news organizations the benefit of gaining back trust from audience and buy-in from emerging audience (GenZ) that represents \$143B in spending money.
- Independently support efficient fact-checking of all content submissions from the news orgs that participate on this platform via partnerships with trusted industry orgs.
- Keep the interface and content packaged in a simple, mobile-focused way.
- Provide Gen Z with news content they care about in formats they are likely to pay attention to and engage with.
- Provide Gen Z with an easy-to-use platform that gives visibility into facts from news stories that have been overtly verified or debunked.
- Serve as an independent way to restore trust and integrity in journalism in a digital-age.

Descriptive Value Web



SECTION ONE: PART TWO

AUDIENCE PROFILE

Audience Profile:

Audience Acronym Canvas

Acronym	Keywords	Question	Answer
A	Analysis	Who is the audience?	News Organization Marketing Teams
U	Understanding	What is their knowledge on the topic?	The have an awareness of Gen Z to an extent, but are likely not thinking about them in overall strategic plans at this point.
D	Demographics	What is their education, bakground etc?	The audience will likely have a college degree, be male and white like a majority of news staff teams in the U.S.
I	Interest	Why are they viewing your proposal?	They know there is widespread distrust in media and don't know how to engage the next generation of news audience or earn their trust.
E	Environment	Where will it take place?	The proposal is a marketing package and platform demonstration from FactFuse.
N	Needs	What are the audience's needs associated with your proposal?	They need to build back trust, earn more credibility as a news organization, grow audience, and engage an up and coming market that will have \$143B in spending power.
C	Customization	What specific needs do you need to address for the audience?	They need to see the value in the solution, ease of process/capabilities, and understand why it would be an attractive format for Gen Z to engage with while building credibility too.
E	Expectations	What does the audience expect to learn from your proposal?	They want to understand how to build back credibility in the era of disinformation, fake news etc. and engage the next generation of leaders/workforce entrants and voters (Gen Z).

The Proposal:

- **Who:** Presenting to News Organization Marketing Teams
- **What:** A marketing proposal deck with benefits for them and a demo of the platform.
- **Where:** In-person presentation to marketing team & news org leadership team
- **Why:** Convincing them to join a pilot testing before the roll-out
- **How:** Convincing them why it is important and a leading move to make first in the industry



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SECTION ONE: **PART THREE**
INNOVATION
PRESENTATION

The \$143 Billion Audience News is Neglecting



FactFuse - Sept. 2023
Presented by: Ashleigh Hollowell, FactFuse CEO



Journalism is constantly evolving...



Eras Map of Journalism and Media Distribution Tools and Events (since the '80s)

Title	Time Period	Events	Overview	Attributes
Cable News Era	1983-1996	Launch of CNN in 1980 and its further growth throughout this period marked the rise of 24-hour cable news.	This era saw the emergence of round-the-clock news coverage, transforming the way information was disseminated. Cable news channels became vital sources for immediate news, breaking away from the traditional nightly news broadcasts.	Increased immediacy and constant coverage of news, rise in influence of television as a news medium, and the growth of punditry and opinion-based journalism.
Internet News Era	1997-2005	The advent of the internet and the consequent growth of online news portals.	This era marked the migration of news to the online space, with traditional print and broadcast outlets setting up websites to disseminate news. It led to the advent of online-only news portals and blogs that changed the dynamics of journalism.	Democratization of news, rise of citizen journalism, speedier dissemination of news, and the start of the decline in print media.
Social Media and User-Generated Content Era	2006-2014	The rise of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and the increasing use of these platforms for news dissemination.	This era marked the increasing influence of social media in shaping public discourse and the rise of user-generated content in news reporting. It blurred the lines between journalists and audience as anyone could break news and share information.	Greater interactivity, rise of viral news, personalized news feeds, and the proliferation of fake news and misinformation.
Mobile and On-Demand News Era	2015-2022	The proliferation of smartphones and mobile apps for news, the rise of personalized news feeds, and on-demand news.	This era is marked by the dominance of mobile devices for accessing news, leading to the rise of mobile-first strategies by news organizations. It is characterized by a shift towards personalized, on-demand news that is accessible anywhere, anytime.	On-demand news consumption, the prevalence of video content, further decline of print media, rise of artificial intelligence and automated news, and the fight against fake news.
Generative AI	2023-?	Rise of tools like ChatGPT, DALL-E2 for text and image generation.	Unclear what the future holds.... harder to spot fake news? but more autonomy for creating?	TBD...

We are here

Behaviors of Gen Z that may reshape the news industry

01

Gen Z teens & Gen Z adults both view news content exclusively on their phones & are migrating away from traditional news formats (Holmes, Victoria, Peck Gretchen A. 2023)

02

Teens in the Gen Z cohort (14–19) consume more news than their Gen Z adult counterparts (20–25) (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)

03

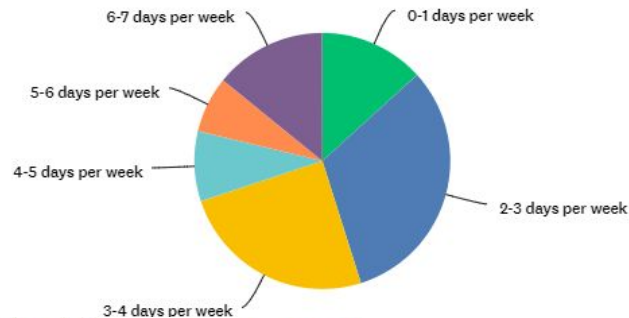
Gen Z has shorter attention spans than past generations and prefers shorter content “bites” that are visually attractive (Bilonozhko, N., & Syzenko, A. 2020)

Gen Z's Current News Experience : Primary Research

(Hollowell, SurveyMonkey 2023)

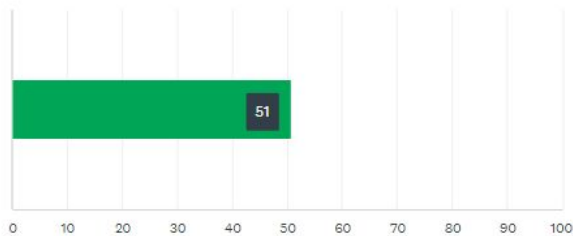
How often do you currently consume news content in any format?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



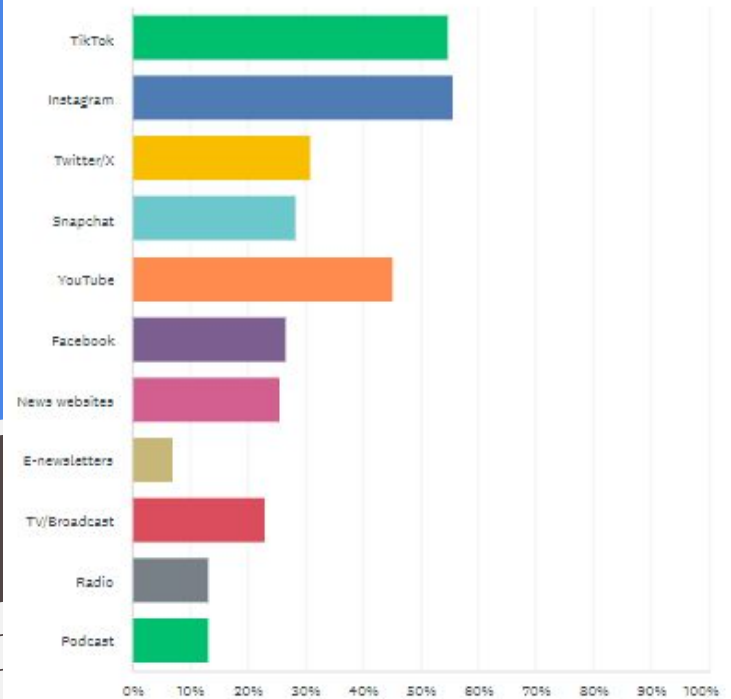
How much do you trust the news sources you read/watch/ listen to?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



How do you currently consume news the most?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



Gen Z and News

Secondary Research

- “News organizations should do more to involve and engage younger audiences in news processes, especially on interactive platforms like social media sites, news websites, and digital aggregators. Building loyalty with this cohort now is likely to have a positive impact in the future.” (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)
- “Social media platforms should engage Gen Z news consumers in their ongoing fact-checking efforts. Young people are already highly engaged on these sites and a majority of Gen Zs consider ‘fake news’ to be a big problem, signaling they may be motivated to get involved.” (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)
- “Investments in solutions journalism and purpose-driven reporting can pay off with the younger generation, as many are deeply concerned about issues like climate change, racial injustice, and health care.” (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)
- “GenZ teens differ from GenZ adults in some ways but both view news content exclusively on their phones, not as much on TV, tend to consult multiple sources and : It’s fair to say that they are interested in news; it’s just that they're moving away from traditional formats, and that shift has been going on for a long time, and across the board.” (Holmes, Victoria, Peck Gretchen A. 2023)



But... news orgs aren't engaging them and don't have their specific content preferences in their plans even though they're the next up-and-coming market for news and information & repairing trust in journalism.



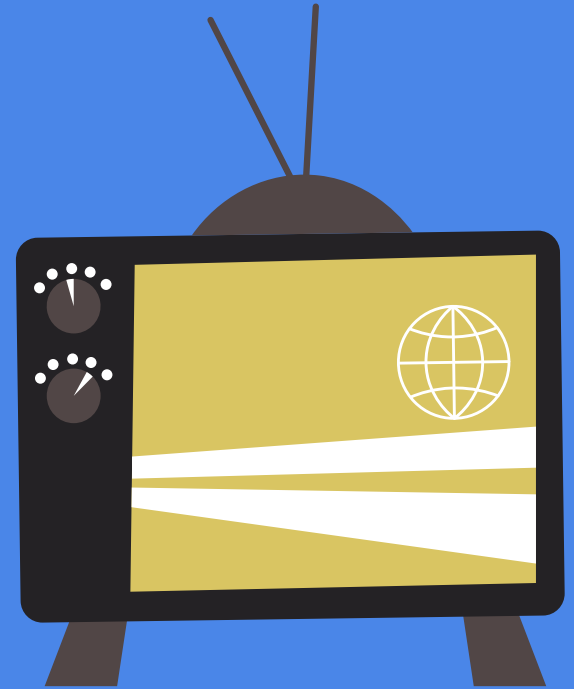
“Maybe what we need to get Gen Z to trust news is fact-checking in the open, maybe fact-checkers will become needed again.” (Interview w/ Sharon Goldman, Senior Reporter, VentureBeat July 2023)

“I know a lot of pubs talk about wanting to reach younger audiences, but no one asks them how or puts that in their strategic plans.” (Interview w/ Jonathan Schwartz, Senior Reporter, MarketWatch, July 2023)

“I think as an editor, it is good to talk about the concept of trust. It is something we talk about as a team all the time and I work with Gen Z writers. Trust is shifting and social media made that harder on us in journalism.” (Interview w/ Dan Muse, Managing Editor SDXCentral July 2023)

Why it matters

- Gen Z (anyone born between 1997-2012) are becoming adults, eligible to work, vote and participate meaningfully in the economy.
- Gen Z has a spending power of \$143 billion. (Davis, 2020)
- Gen Z cares about staying informed about the following topics: healthcare, higher ed, finance/economy, environment/climate change, racial equity, civic engagement (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021)
- “Roughly 8 in 10 (78%) Gen Z teens get news or current events daily from at least one source, compared with 69% of Gen Z adults and 84% of consumers across all generations.” (Auxier & Arbanas, 2022)



Synergy & Benefits

Gen Z wants to be informed, is continuing to age further into adulthood and participation in the economy, workforce and voting system, but has a lot of distrust in news currently.

It is in Gen Z's benefit to engage with a new platform focused on news that is presented with their preferences and behaviors in mind while transparently viewing fact-checked content and building trust in news media organizations.

News organizations historically aim to evolve with changing technologies and generations to remain relevant as an industry that's purpose is to inform.

It is in news company's benefit to join a platform that requires transparent fact-checking from trusted organizations and then packages content in a way that is visual and Gen Z friendly. Independent and open/visible fact checking on the platform will also raise the profile of the news company positively.



Gen Z would trust the news more if...

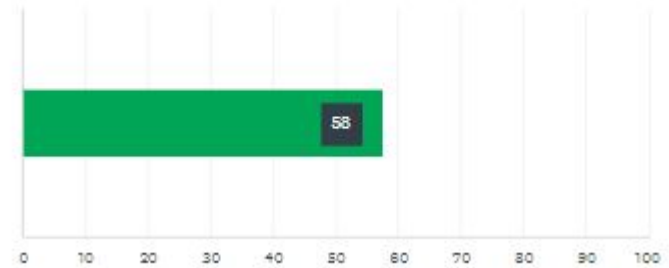
What would lead you to consume more news? (check all that apply)

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
If content was openly fact-checked and verified	56.64%	64
If content was short-form, digestible and visual	52.21%	59
If content focused on more topics I care about	53.10%	60
If content was not sponsored by ads	33.63%	38
Other (please specify)	4.42%	5

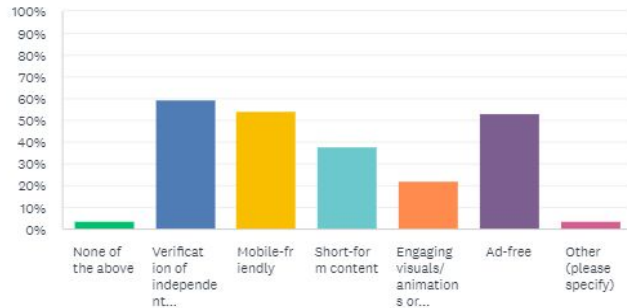
How much would you trust news if you knew submitted articles to a platform were independently fact-checked?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 2



If a new social media platform emerged for fact-checking, sharing and distributing news content which elements would be most important for it to have?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	3.54%	4
Verification of independent fact-checking	59.29%	67
Mobile-friendly	53.98%	61
Short-form content	38.05%	43
Engaging visuals/ animations or video	22.12%	25
Ad-free	53.10%	60
Other (please specify)	3.54%	4
Total Respondents: 113		

Solution

Opportunity exists within the big media companies, not in beating them. Giving them a tool to better engage with Gen Z and build trust is much more likely to work than creating a new media company/platform to cut through the noise and rise to the top.

By offering a platform dedicated to verified news, Gen Z can begin to rebuild trust in media and journalism, which have been eroded by the spread of misinformation. This trust is essential for a society that relies on accurate information to function effectively.

Truthful

Verifiable





Hi, Ashleigh

Welcome to your independent news feed!

50% 25° 90%

Search...

+ Customize

Independent Fact-Checkers Online Now: 250



Home Feed

Custom Feed 1 (Politics)

Custom Feed 2 (Environment)

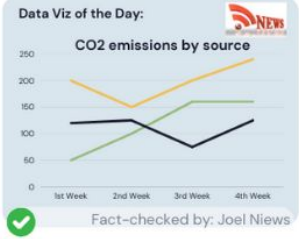
Saved Content

Watch — 2 mins

LIVE

BREAKING NEWS

Fact-checked by: Joel Niewes



Fact-checked updates from your top sources:



Good news of the day

Give yourself a break from the hard headlines

UKRAINE BOMBS RUSSIA

READ: 2 MINS

by Amy Smith

12 OF THE BIGGEST CORPORATE POLLUTERS IN THE US

READ: 3 MINS

by Ron Watch

XBC News Update 08/23

LISTEN: 4 MINS

by Amy Smith

Visual posts & Quick Reads:

Trump has been indicted for a fourth time

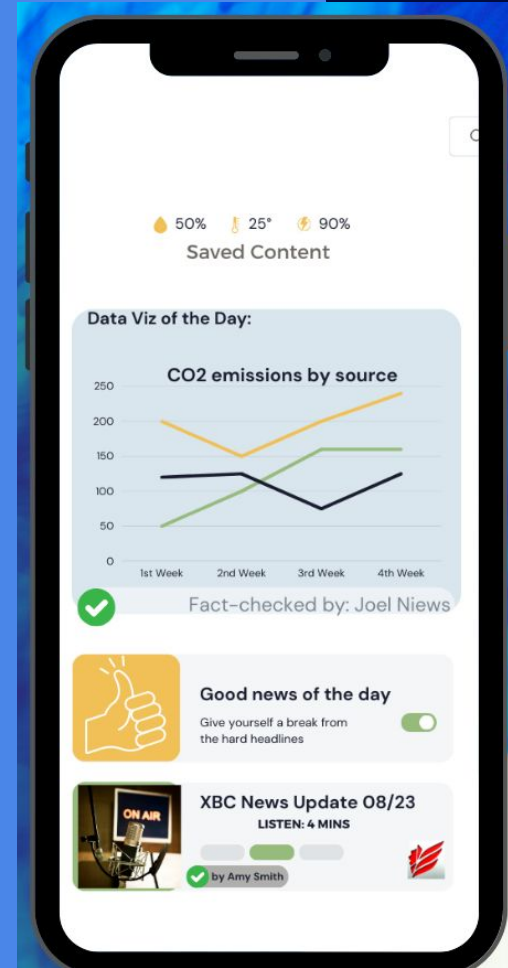
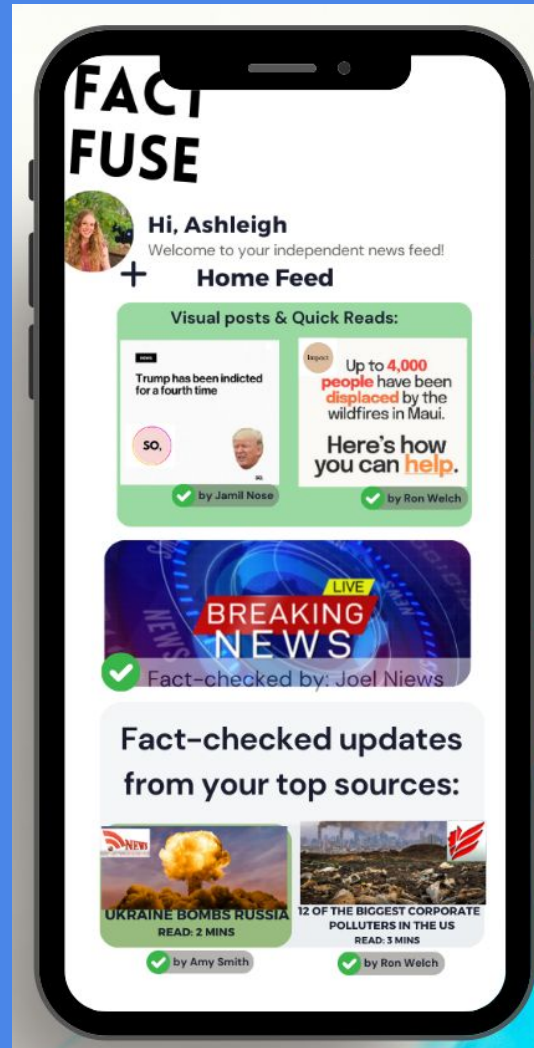
by Jamil Nase

Up to 4,000 people have been displaced by the wildfires in Maui. Here's how you can help.

by Ron Welch

How it Works

News and media organizations can submit existing short-form content, TikToks, articles, briefs, or even videos to FactFuse and within minutes it will receive a fact-check seal through a partnership with independent fact-checkers from esteemed journalism nonprofits like the Society of Professional Journalists, the Poynter Institute, the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, Pew Research Center and the Knight Foundation.



Backed-By Partnerships With...



Join our pilot testing!

Be among the first news organizations to join, build trust, credibility and gain exclusive insights into the emerging Gen Z audience of future decision makers.



Citations

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