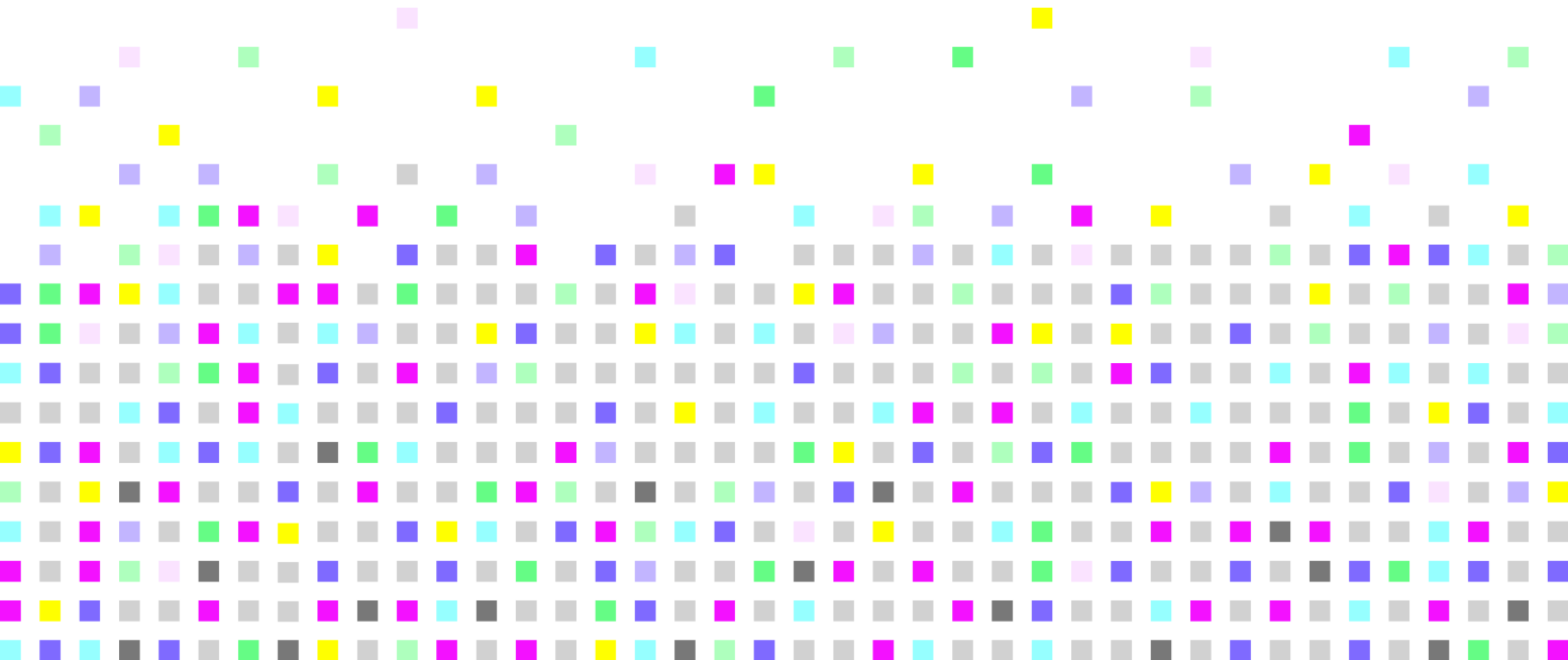




THE STATE OF CONTENT & SOCIAL STRATEGY 2016

Findings from the NewsWhip Survey of over
250 Publishing, PR and Marketing Professionals



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INTRODUCTION

2016 has unfolded as another year of upheaval and change for content and social distribution. Distribution is becoming more and more fragmented, understanding audience interests and sentiment continues to be hard to track, and media creators and storytellers are struggling to find the resources to keep up.

Video is skyrocketing as a content format. Changing algorithms, especially Facebook's news feed update, have shaken up the way producers view social channels. Publishers are pushed to the limit to understand changing audiences and gather the data they need to inform editorial decisions. Marketers and PRs struggle to find the most effective distribution channels, influencers and websites to spread their message.

There's never been more uncertainty, anxiety, excitement and opportunity in media and publishing. As 2016 rolls on, writers, PRs and marketers alike are scrambling to find where they fit into the ever-changing new world of social distribution and content consumption.

That's why we at NewsWhip conducted a survey across the entire media industry – to take a pulse on what's important to these professionals, what they view as their biggest challenges, where they see the future taking them.

In this whitepaper, we'll examine the findings from over 250 respondents across news, publishing, PR, and marketing - giving you insight into the strategies and plans for innovation of your peers, the skills they're hiring most, their budget plans and the formats and platforms to watch in the coming year.

Section 1

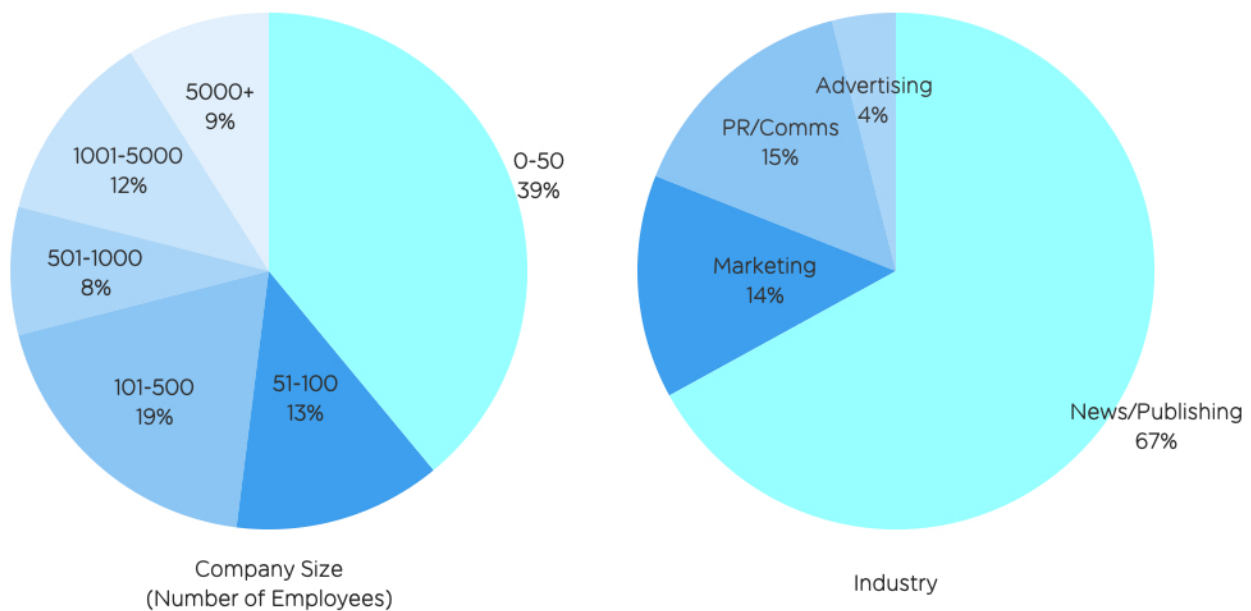
CONTENT & SOCIAL STRATEGY IN 2016

There's no question that social media platforms continue to dominate the conversation around distribution strategy. Social media first offered publishers an inside look at the interests of audiences, letting them tap into a larger dialogue. Today, social platforms largely command distribution, with many users consuming information on social first.

But just how important is social distribution to these media professionals today?

Most of our respondents identified themselves as within the news and publishing industry (67%), with an average company size of under 100 employees.

Respondent Demographics

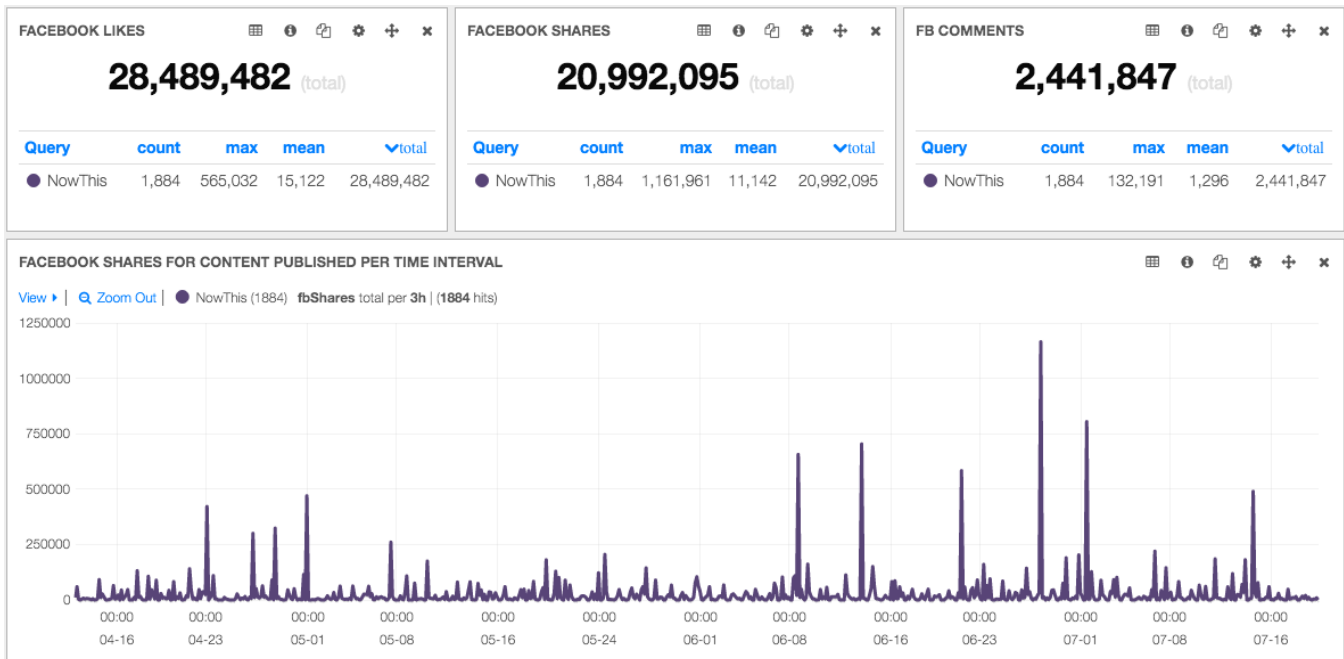


According to the data from our Content & Social Strategy survey, over half (52%) of these professionals said social distribution is “absolutely essential to their organizations,” rating it a 10 on a scale of 1 to 10 importance.

Social distribution has become the new way for publishers to disseminate information, with many readers going to social platforms first to consume news. According to a [2015 Pew Research Study](#), over 40 percent of US adults get their news from Facebook.

News organizations and agencies alike have entire teams dedicated to executing successful social distribution, with 59 percent of all respondents saying they have social strategy teams of between 2 and 10 employees. Plus, 66 percent said they plan to grow these teams in the next year.

Social-first publishing has become more than just a trend – completely social-first organizations are popping up and gaining traction everywhere. NowThis News, a video publishing platform using social-only distribution, has [grown 10x in the past year](#), overtaking many traditional outlets in followers and audience engagement.



The NowThis Facebook Page's rising engagement from April 2016 to July 2016, according to NewsWhip Analytics.

But big news brands understand the distribution marketplace is changing, and are taking the measures necessary to expand into new markets. CNN is on the cutting edge of the industry pivot towards social-first consumption, frequently pioneering new ways to reach millennial audiences while maintaining already loyal readerbases.

For CNN, social plays a big part in making sure we're reaching our audiences where they are - on Facebook, in messaging apps, in Snapchat, on Twitter and more. Our big longterm aim with social distribution is to create a CNN news habit for every generation on every platform.



Samantha Barry, Head of Social Media & Senior Director of Strategy, CNN

It's clear that organizations are taking notice and rising to the occasion of the new social distribution marketplace. But how exactly do they use the information social teams glean to inform their production and generate measurable results and revenue?

1.1. Social Media as a Content Planning Tool

Before the rise of social media, publishers and media professionals were largely left in the dark when it came to audience interests and sentiment. That dynamic has been turned on its head. In many instances, audiences dictate the importance of certain issues, with outlets striving to detect what's about to become big on social.

But while organizations are increasingly using social to tap into audience interests and publish successful content around it, many publishers say social is mainly a supplement to aid editorial decisions.

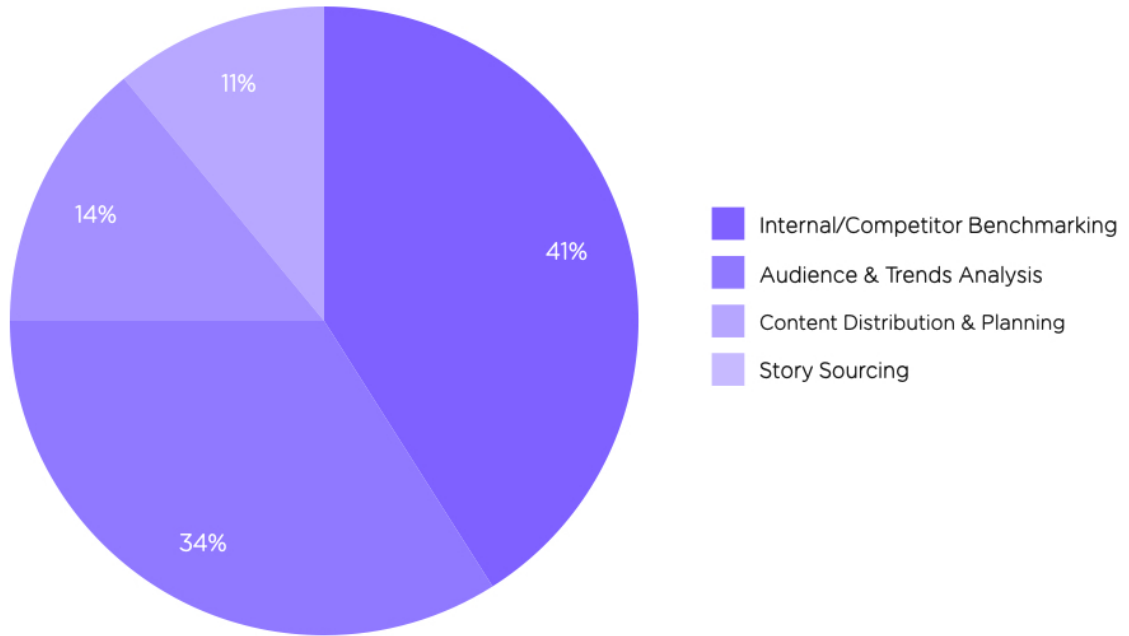
“Content for social still mostly evolves from content created for web and print publications – however, that is changing as we learn what works best for us on different social channels.” - Michaela Drapes, Director of Digital Content and Development, New York City Ballet

The uses of social are diverse and widespread across media and marketing.

Publishers, brands and agencies alike use the data gleaned from social platforms to benchmark internally, against competitors, and across their entire market. KPIs and key metrics are no longer traffic stats or pageviews - they're Facebook shares, Instagram comments, retweets.

According to our survey findings, the number one way media professionals use social media is to do internal analysis and benchmark against competitors. They do this benchmarking by looking at social stats, measuring how much engagement they're collecting now in comparison to past content, and by looking at how much engagement they're gaining versus competitors.

Top Uses of Social Media for Content Production



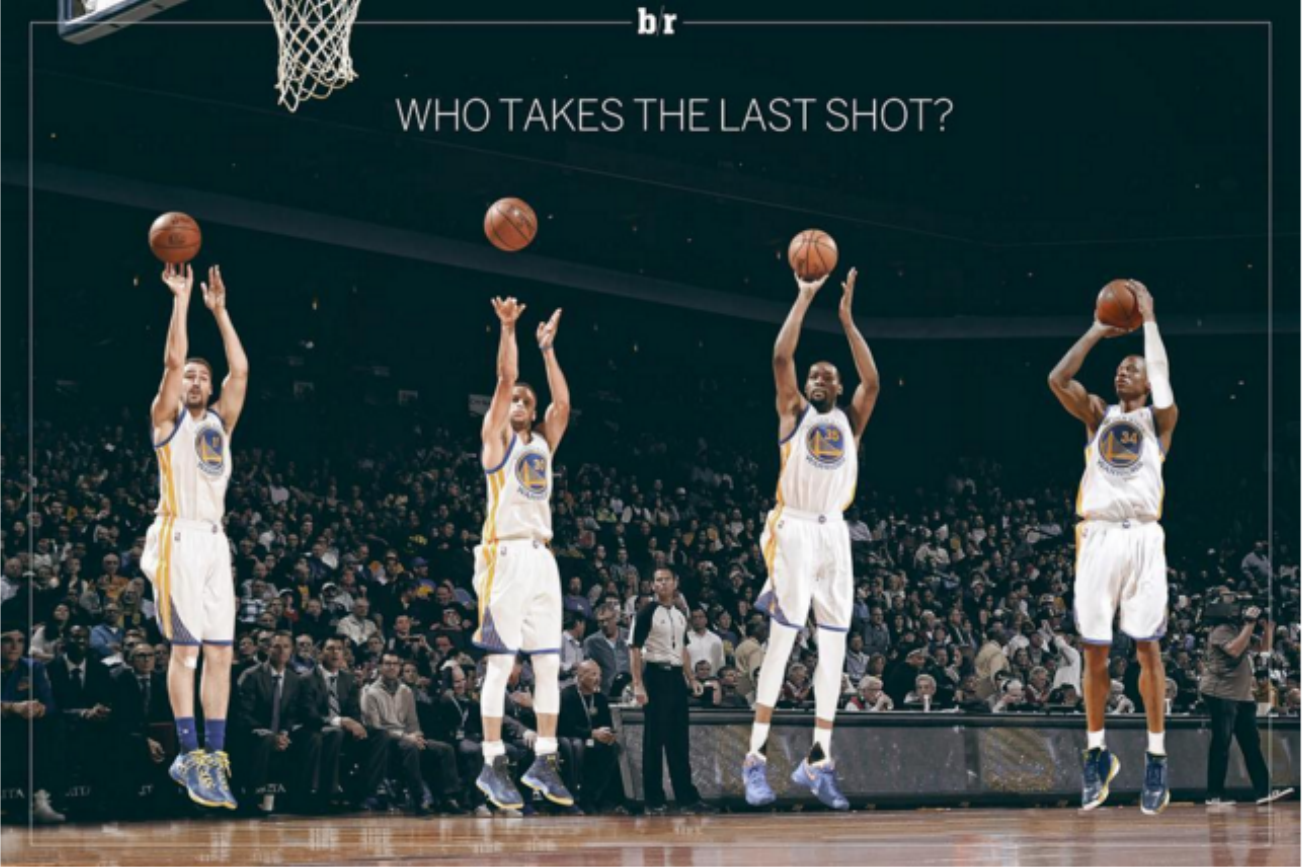
Each month the key metrics we track are reviewed in the context of a more detailed content analysis as part of our editorial process. However, we are not “overly guided” by the numbers. We also benchmark ourselves against our peers and consider best practice and the possible impact of changes to social media platforms.



Alastair Tibbitt, Senior Online Journalist, STV

Respondents also said nearly just as important as benchmarking is using social to engage with and understand audiences. With social, publishers can actually join in on the conversation and take understanding of reader interests one step further – by giving their organization personality and actively engaging with loyal fans right within the medium.

b/r bleacherreport • 1 week ago + Follow



WHO TAKES THE LAST SHOT?

If Ray Allen joins the Warriors: Down by 3, who takes it?

102.3k likes 12.7k comments

Instagram

The Bleacher Report frequently encourages fans to interact on Instagram.



Social media has given organizations a way to bring personality to their brands, and go beyond the traditional news cycle. Rather than concentrating solely on referrals and pushing users back to sites, platforms like Instagram and Snapchat offer publishers a way to build engaged fans and communities outside their website.

Social, in this way, creates the opportunity to tap into something emotional with audiences – deeper than surface interest in entertainment and news.

The secret for niche publishers is creating a deeply-rooted sense of community anchored by a set of commonly shared values and beliefs. Notice I didn't say 'content silos' or 'news topics.' So for me, it's about narrowcasting in emotionally relevant ways that bind your digital tribe together.



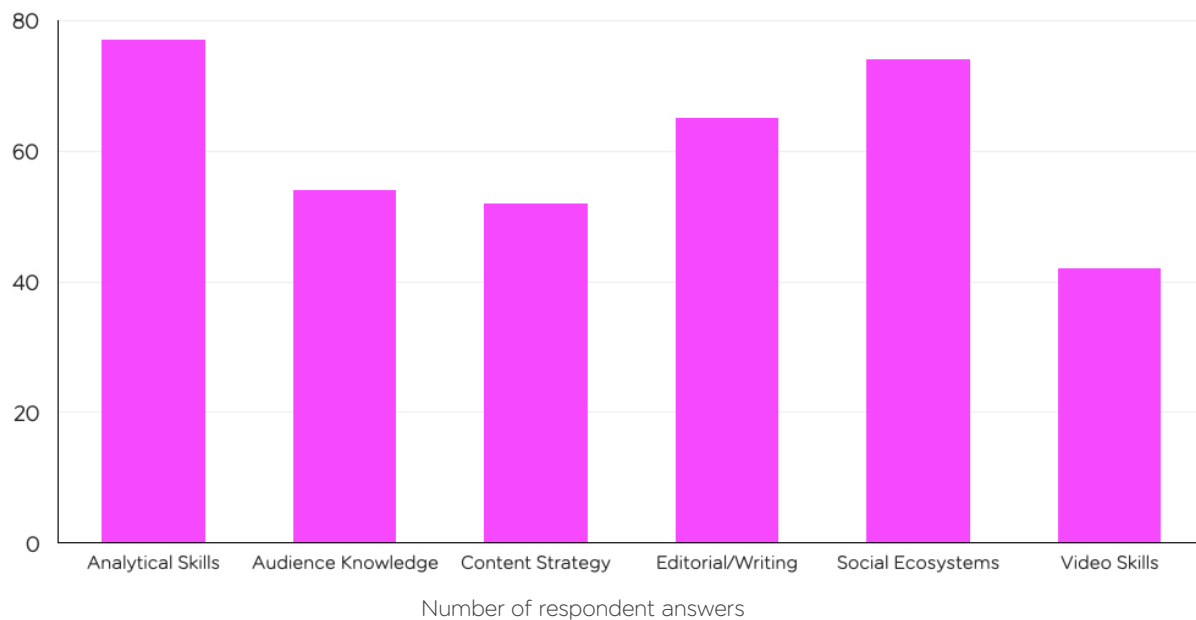
Wynton Hall, Managing Editor and Social Media Director, Breitbart News

1.2. Most Important Skills for Social Strategy Success

With plans to grow content and social strategy teams, we asked the respondents to our survey what they view as the most valuable skills for social success, and which will become more important in the future.

At the top of the list of most important skills for social success was experience with analytics and data, followed by a deep understanding of social ecosystems and how they work.

Most Valuable Skills for Content Distribution



As we'll discuss later in this whitepaper, more and more media professionals are using analytics tools to harness the ocean of social data available on the Internet. The ability to turn data from these tools into actionable insights came out as the most important skill for social success.

Almost equally important as analytical skills was extensive knowledge of social ecosystems – the right platforms for different types of content, how to cater to algorithms.

Also, unsurprisingly, was knowledge of the target audience and their interests. As publishers and media organizations become more integrated in a largely social-first distribution marketplace, the ability to detect what readers want to consume on social will only become more valuable.

Understanding who you're targeting is fundamental to the success of any social media campaign. Without level setting with your key consumers, knowing who they are, what they like, or what they do, companies are at risk of wasting time, money and resources on messages that may not resonate (or even reach) their customers.



Jessica Schram, Junior Project Manager, Edelman

General sentiment has been that too large of an emphasis on what's trending with audiences on social will diminish the importance of good editorial judgment. But the respondents to our survey challenged that, saying that one of the top skills for social success is editorial and copywriting expertise.

Audiences are acutely aware of clickbait – when they click content from media organizations, they expect to see quality, and react accordingly when they don't. This emphasis on editorial skills going into the next year shows media professionals aren't compromising - social signals are being used for guidance, not blindly setting direction.

As for most desired skill to hire? It's all about video. According to our survey data, video skills and expertise are seen as the most important for the future. It's not hard to see why with the boom of Facebook Live and Video, and over 91 percent of respondents saying video will become more important to strategy in the next year. We'll discuss trends and challenges around video later on in this whitepaper.



Section 2

DISTRIBUTION TACTICS

As stated above, though the concentration on social and the data it provides is growing, the emphasis on quality content production is equally important. With unlimited users able to push content to social platforms, trusted content from news organizations and brands needs to be more distinguished than ever.

Professionals understand that high-level organic content, produced in-line with audience interests and the most important current events, is what's required in today's market. According to our survey data, 46 percent of all respondents felt content strategy is of 10 out of 10 importance when it comes to enabling social distribution. Effective social distribution cannot happen without good content strategy.

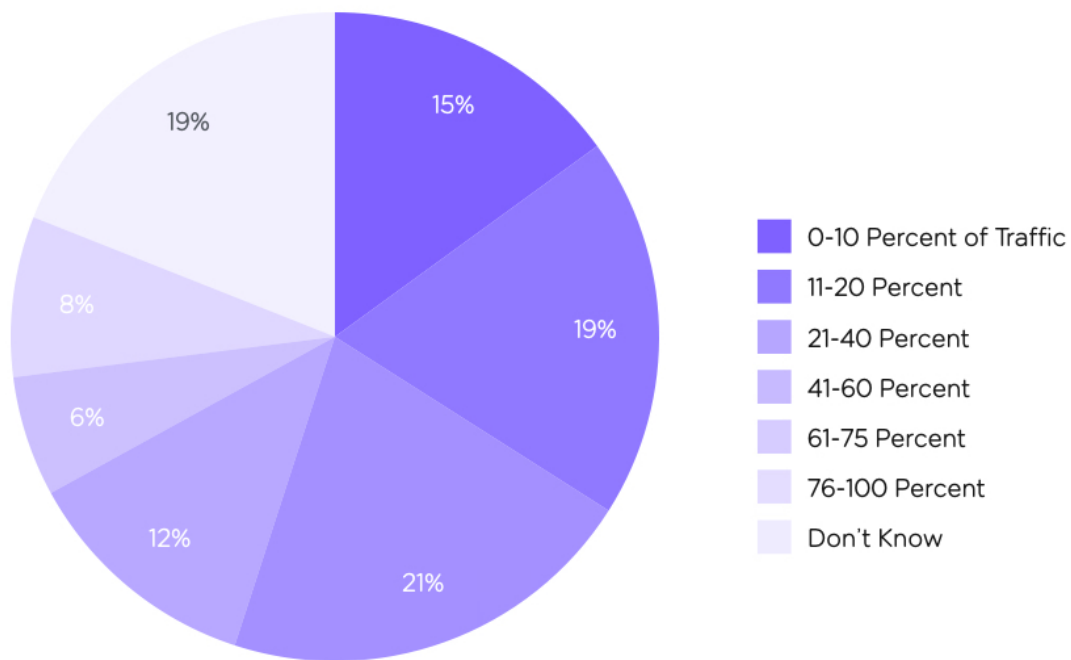
Most respondents (about 53%) say 75 percent of their time is spent on content planning and production, with the other quarter of their time and resources devoted to distribution tactics.

Still, the concentration on distribution and where to best place and push content is constantly in question. So we asked respondents how they distribute on platforms, how different platforms drive traffic for them, and the role of paid media in distribution.

2.1. Social Distribution by Platform

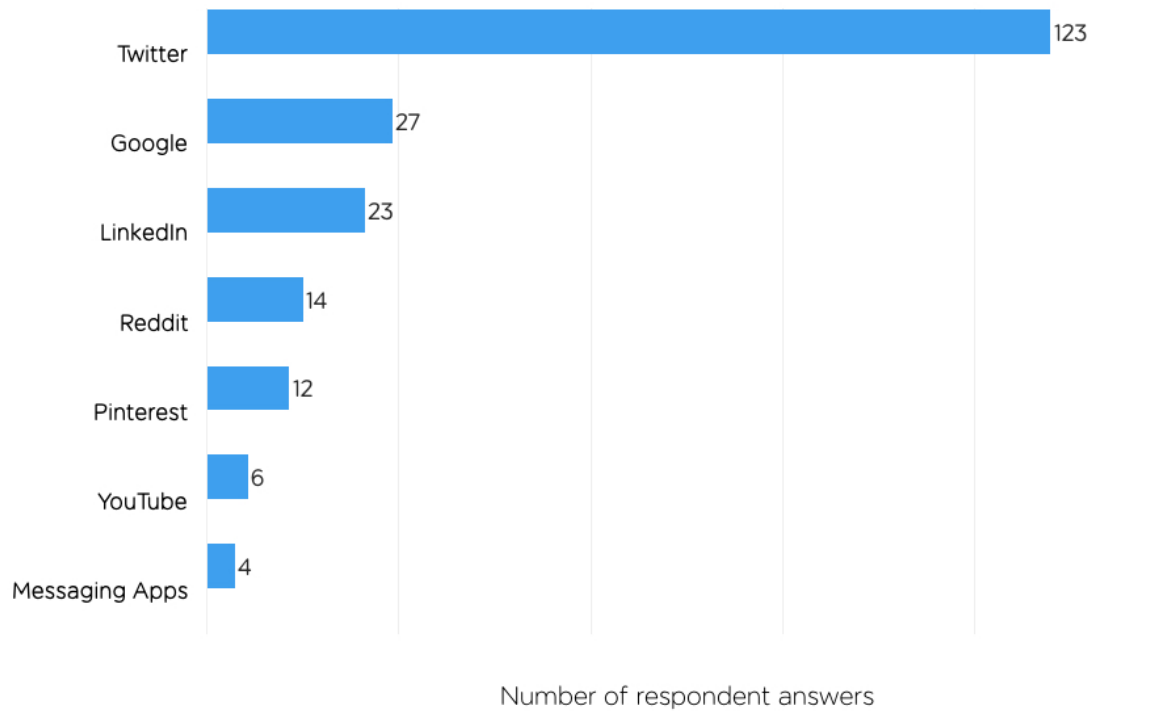
It's no surprise that Facebook is the social platform that drives the most traffic for publishers, brands and agencies. The biggest segment of survey respondents said that Facebook drives between 20 to 40 percent of their monthly traffic.

Monthly Traffic Driven by Facebook



In comparison, the largest portion of respondents said all other social platforms combined only drive between 0 and 10 percent of monthly traffic. So while the majority said Twitter drives the most traffic for them after Facebook, it still doesn't drive a very significant amount of monthly visitors for most of these organizations.

Platforms that Drive the Most Traffic OTHER than Facebook



Twitter is seen as a great way for publishers to disseminate bite-sized bits of important news, but it might not be driving the traffic back to dedicated sites that organizations would expect.

With all the formats Facebook offers, it's easy to see how the platform fosters more traffic. The amount of actions users can take to engage with Facebook's content formats are diverse - and spark more sharing and virality amongst communities.

That's not to say that other platforms aren't valuable - Instagram can prove extremely useful for content that inspires likes and comments with aesthetically pleasing photos, while Reddit serves to open conversations between big brands and fans.

However, from our view it's still "Facebook and the seven dwarves," when it comes to the importance of social platforms.

2.2 Paid Media vs. Organic Content

Distributing content for successful ROI requires a balance between paid media and quality organic content. Though respondents agree that organic content is the bread and butter of any social strategy, well over half (58%) said it is also important to boost social distribution with paid media spend.

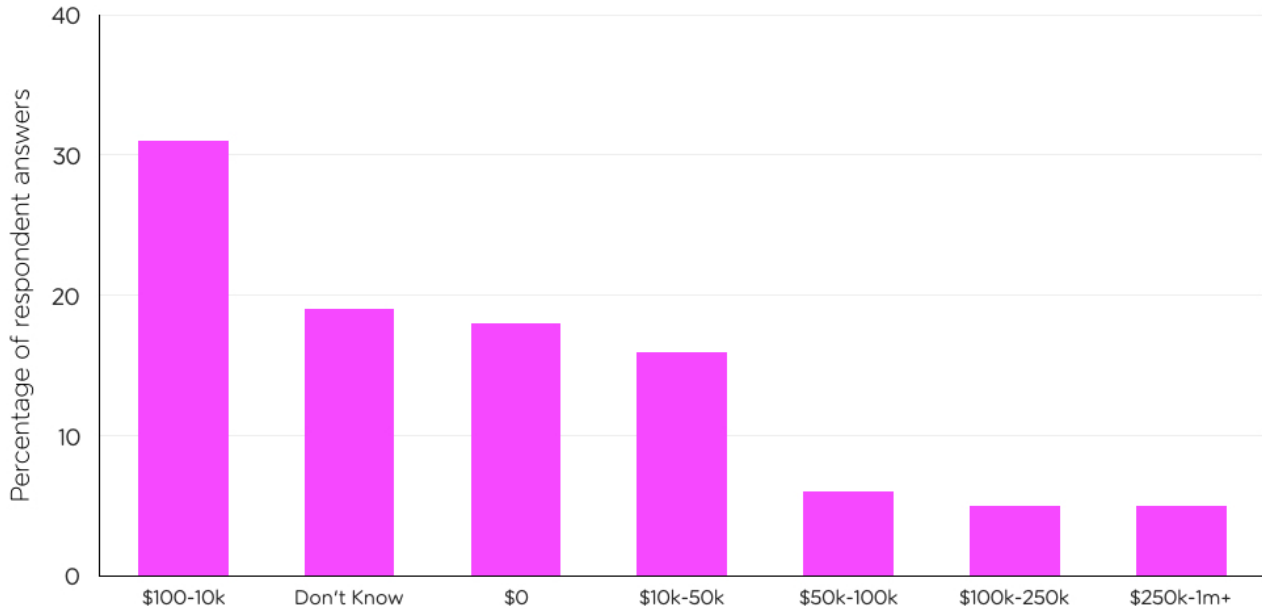
Paid is important because it helps fuel organic. The secret is how you are optimizing organic and using paid to boost what is working.



Marian Thomas, President, RocketSauce Digital

62 percent of respondents said their organizations invest in paid media, with most organizations (31%) spending between \$100 and \$10,000 per year on paid media boost. The low range of spending on paid media can probably be attributed to the small average organization size of survey respondents.

Amount Teams Spend on Paid Media Per Year



NEWSWHIP

82%

of respondents said focusing strategy on organic media is more important than paid media

Though the importance of paid for targeting certain audiences and super-charging your best content is clear, organic is still where the most effort should be focused – 82 percent of survey respondents agreed that it is more important to focus strategy on organic media.

Organic content is what builds the trust and credibility of brands, and guarantees your audience an engaging experience with your content on social platforms. According to survey responses, successful paid strategy is only possible if built on top of a strong foundation of well-strategized organic content.

Section 3

MEASURING ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS ON SOCIAL

Our survey data shows that successful social distribution is mission critical to media creators in 2016. But with constantly changing algorithms and social metrics, how do publishers, brands and marketers measure and benchmark success on social?

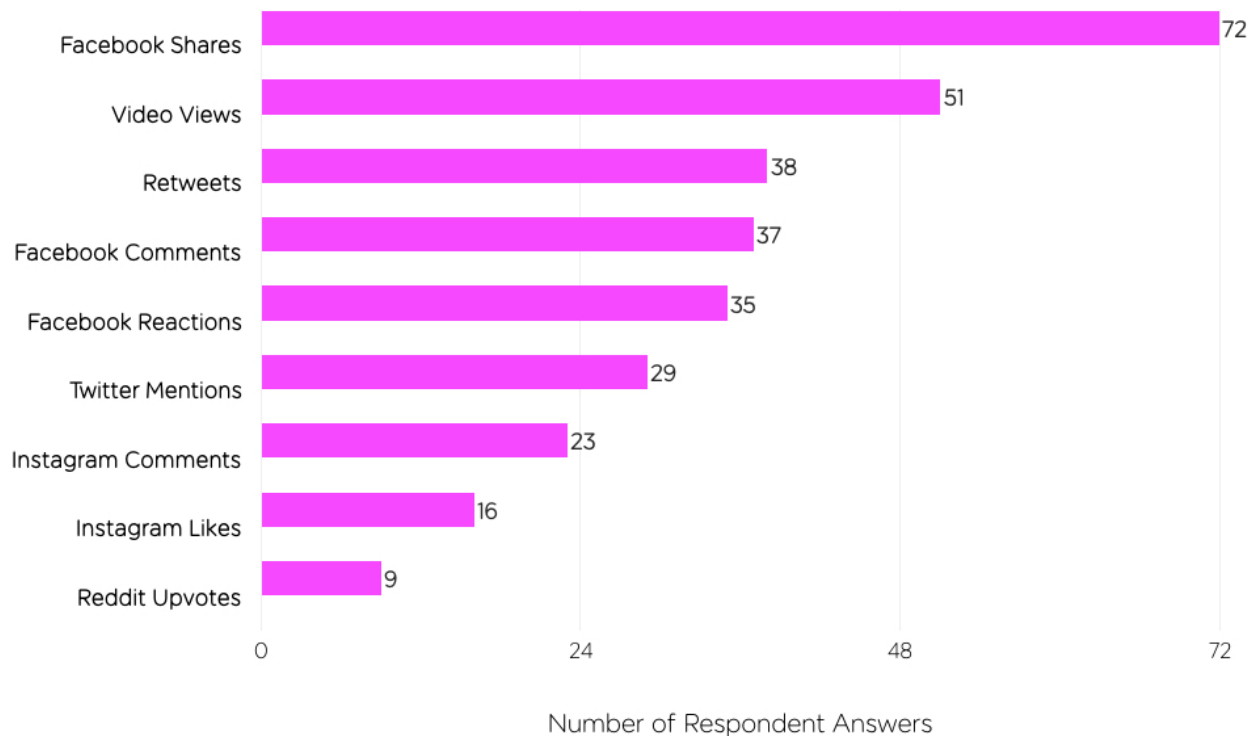
Successful content strategy is no longer benchmarked by a certain amount of unique views – audiences actually need to engage with and re-distribute content. Previously, the techniques for measuring success on-site were clear and defined, after many years of best practices evolved.

We asked survey respondents about the most important social metrics, the best ways to measure engagement, and what tools are essential to their strategies.

3.1 Audience Behavior

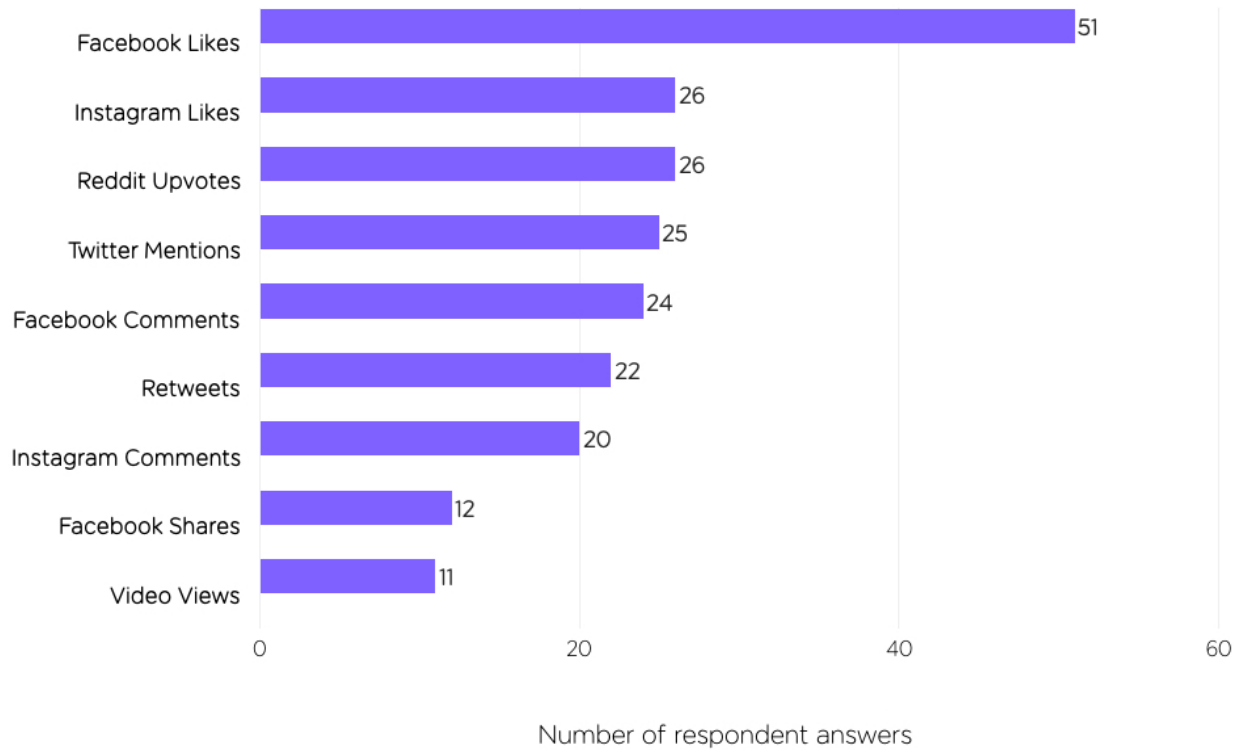
Publishers and brands alike are interested in seeing active endorsements from readers and fans – which is what makes social media such an invaluable tool for measuring success. On different platforms, especially Facebook, users have an array of ways to express how they feel about a piece of content, whether it be positive or negative.

Social Metrics Becoming More Important for Measuring Success



Not only are these metrics interesting for content creators, the likelihood of attracting different reactions (like shares) drives content strategy. As [previously discussed on our blog](#), different types of content attract different actions from users on social media. For example, [NewsWhip data showed](#) that funny, niche content (like that published by the Bleacher Report) attracts more likes, while interactive content and quizzes attract more shares.

Social Metrics Becoming Less Important for Measuring Success

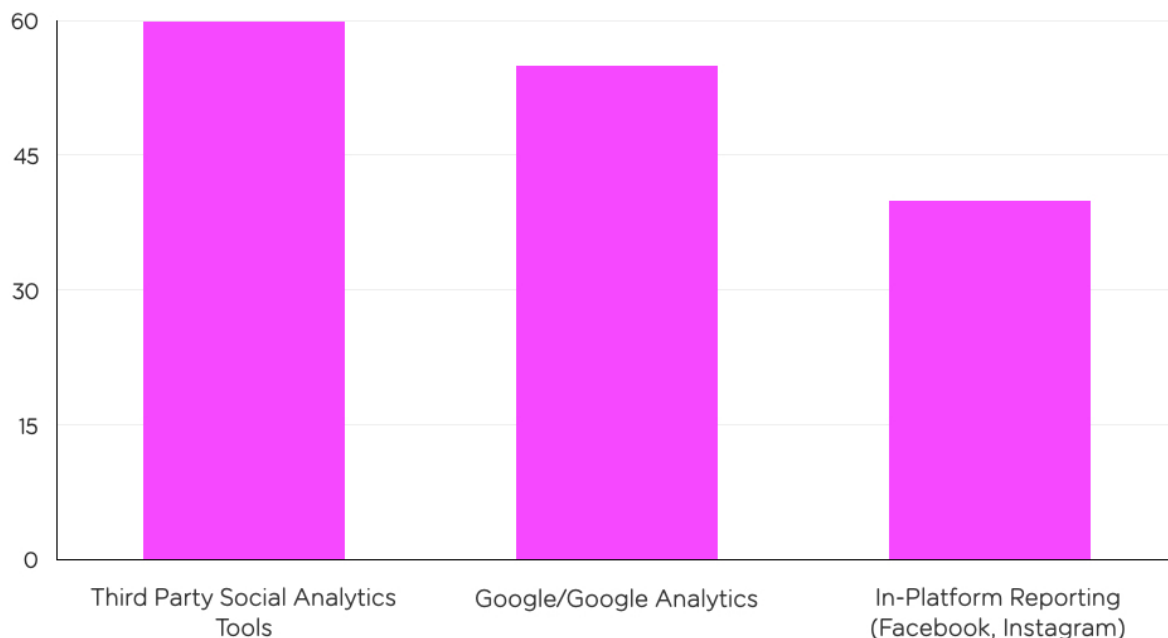


It's also not surprising that Facebook likes were seen as the metric becoming less important in the next year, with the rise of Facebook reactions and the emphasis on comments and shares as a truer indicator of audience engagement. The humble like is becoming more humble.

3.2 Social Analytics Tools

About 30 percent of respondents said they use at least one third-party social analytics tool – meaning a service that goes beyond measurement and reporting done via Google, Facebook, Twitter, and other social platforms.

Number of Respondents Using Social Analytics Tools



According to our survey data, more media creators reported using a third-party social analytics tool than the more traditional reporting services. In addition, most respondents who said they used a third-party tool reported using more than one in order to round out their data.

As the amount of digital content on the internet continues to explode and multiply, media professionals are putting even more of an emphasis on tracking granular social metrics. Organizations want to do deep-dive analysis of their own content and strategy across their entire sectors.

Previously, analytics were limited to what was offered within different social platforms. Metrics weren't meaningful indicators of audience interaction or engagement. The ability to get perfect content intelligence across all social platforms and websites was impossible.

Today, third-party tools, like NewsWhip, make this kind of reporting possible – and give diverse insight into how content objects are gaining traction with audiences, why certain stories are resonating, and how successful social strategies can be applied across industries. At NewsWhip, content is ranked by how it has performed across a wide array of social platforms and the entire web. You can see how it works by signing up for [a free trial of Spike](#).

The most commonly mentioned third-party tools amongst respondents were Chartbeat, NewsWhip, Buzzsumo, Brandwatch, ComScore and Hootsuite.

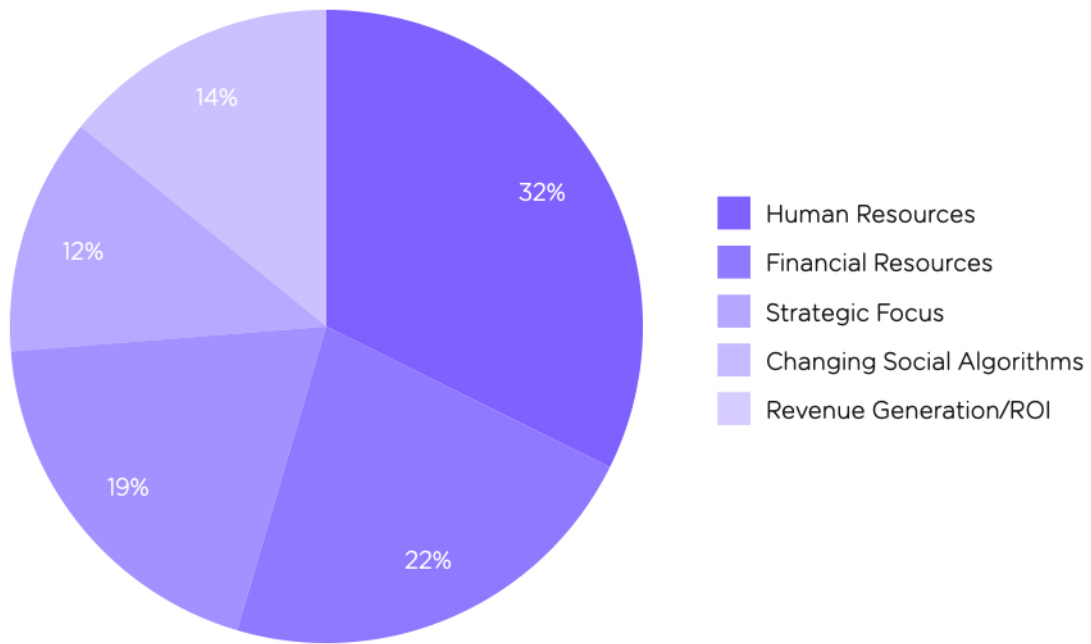
Section 4

SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION CHALLENGES

In this new media landscape, uncertainty about the future is widespread, and what will define success is unclear.

Our survey asked respondents what their biggest concerns and challenges are to social distribution success. Their answers showed that there's a lot of strain on media professionals today – there isn't enough time, budget or manpower to tackle the constantly changing social media ecosystem.

Respondents' 5 Biggest Challenges to Social Distribution



The biggest problems respondents reported facing in social distribution were a general lack of manpower and budget to fully execute the social strategy they strive for. Repeatedly, media professionals said they don't have the resources to stay above water in the social landscape, making it even more difficult to stay on top of algorithm changes and separate themselves from the herd of social publishers that exist today.

Analytics from Instagram and Snapchat are a challenge, and Facebook is also changing its algorithm.



Dan Edstrom, Development and Social Media Editor, Expressen

Facebook's algorithm doesn't take prisoners so we need to be on our game regarding engaging content.



Emily Bird, Senior Social Media Manager, HM Revenue and Customs

The general consensus is that with the social media landscape constantly changing, it's an extremely stressful yet exciting time for publishers and agencies. Though new formats and channels bring about new challenges and risks, the opportunities for the winners are clear.



Section 5

NATIVE CONTENT

As content distribution continues to evolve, and the way that consumers get their news and information is shifting more towards social-first, native content is getting bigger and bigger. Native content allows social media users to enjoy content seamlessly delivered into their social feed, intending to blend articles and videos with the posts of friends and family.

The importance of a seamless user experience is heavily emphasized by platforms like Facebook - it's clear that publishers who want to stay on top of the social game need to invest heavily in producing native content.

But the extra resources, creative, and budget that native requires is a strain on publishers and agencies of all sizes. Convincing clients to swallow the high cost of producing native content or proving the ROI of native investment is something companies are struggling to balance.

Something we've frequently [discussed on the NewsWhip blog](#) is the challenge of producing authentic native content that will stay aligned with the interests of audiences. With limited resources and manpower, finding the balance between cost and quality user experience has never been more difficult.

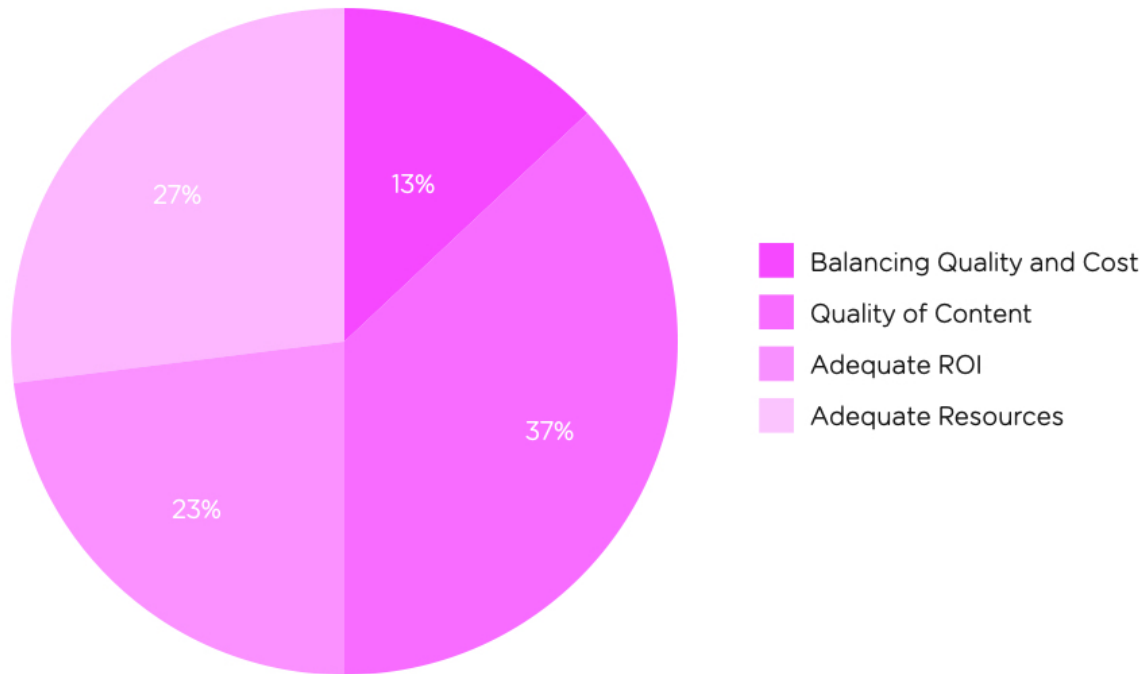
Regardless, the respondents to our survey showed overwhelmingly how big native is becoming as its popularity booms on platforms.

91 percent of respondents said that native content will become more important to their strategy in the next year, with about 34 percent of them rating it as 10 out of 10, or "absolutely essential" to their organization.

Still, the challenges publishers and brands face with native content are widespread. The respondents to our survey detailed what their biggest concerns are, and what's blocking the road to native content success.

The four biggest categories of challenges were quality of the content, balancing quality and budget, getting enough ROI, and having enough resources to execute.

Biggest Challenges to Native Content Success



Though the high cost of producing native content is frequently mentioned, more respondents felt that quality of the content and having enough resources were the two biggest challenges.

Believability appeared to be the biggest concerns for producing quality content, ensuring that brands and publishers maintain their trust and authenticity when investing in the format.

The next challenge was having enough resources to execute native content well – whether that be manpower, certain skill sets and expertise, or enough budget to cover the cost. Especially for publishers, devoting certain resources to native over traditional editorial content can be a struggle.

Publishers and agencies also said finding the right balance between high cost and quality of content is difficult.

When a publisher puts content on a social platform, there is often a revenue option (for example, Facebook puts ads into Instant Articles published by news companies), but the publisher doesn't have as much control over how that revenue is delivered, nor does the publisher have as much insight to the audience associated with it.



Paul Caluori, Global Director of Digital Services, The Associated Press

Both publishers and brands agreed that proving the ROI of native through hard metrics is difficult, and frequently blocks them from convincing superiors and clients to invest in the platform.

As native cements itself as a format that's here to stay, publishers and brands will need to find ways to balance the increased cost of native with the resources they have available. Quite a challenge for media producers and publishers, as they lose more control over distribution.

Section 6

VIDEO CONTENT

Just as native content has taken over the social publishing space, video content has become one of the most important investments for both news organizations and brands or agencies. 92 percent of respondents to our survey said that video will become more important in the next year, with 43 percent rating it as “absolutely essential” (10 out of 10) to their organizations.

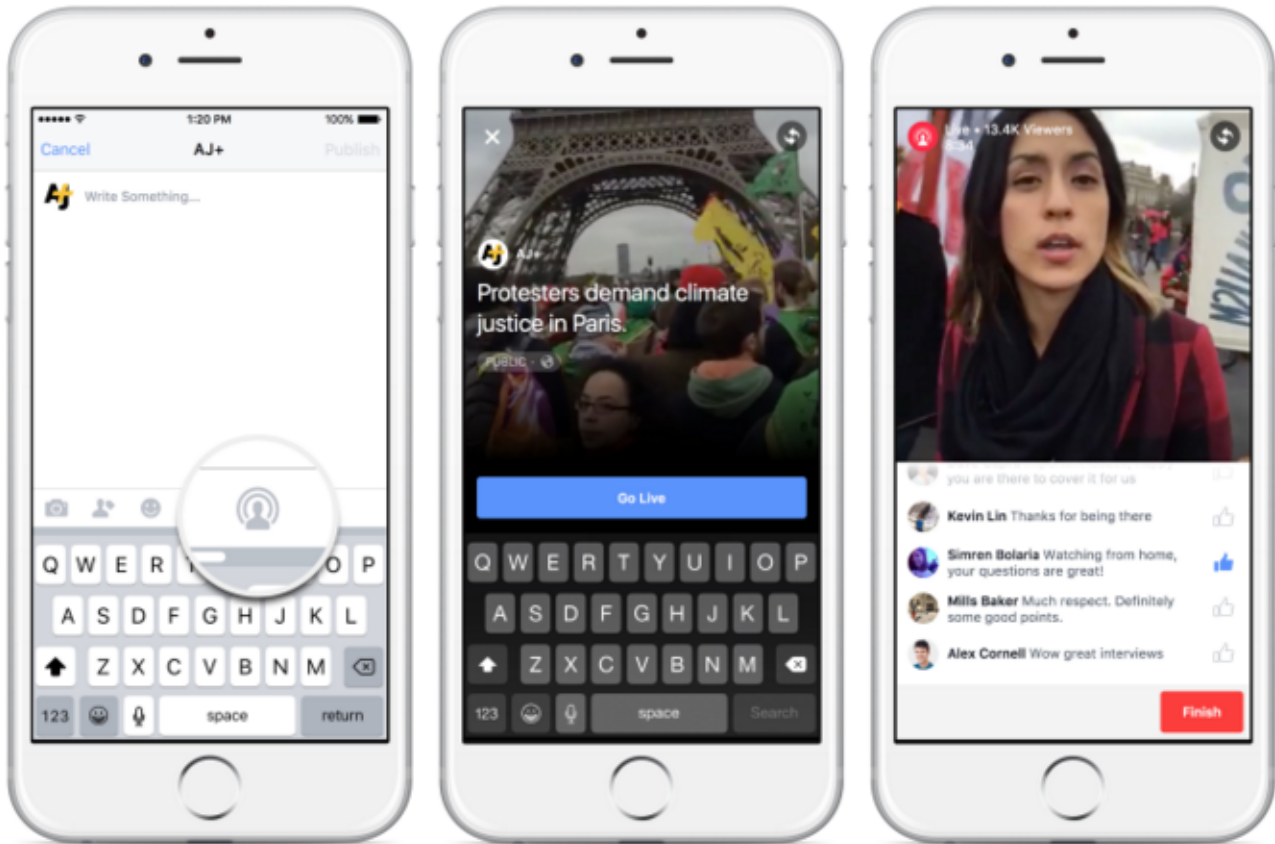
As we predicted on the NewsWhip blog earlier in 2016, video has become essential for organizations hoping to compete with the best and reach expanded viewers in the social landscape.

With the boom in smartphones and camera technology, video is becoming the lingua franca of the Internet. Video is now being used for person to person messaging as well as for news and entertainment distribution. We have the everyday challenge of creating urgent and compelling video with the future challenge of getting the intended video to the intended person at the right time.



Warren Cohen, Head of Video, New York Post

Video introduces yet another way for users to consume news and entertainment seamlessly within the social feed. Auto-play Facebook Video, quick snippets in Twitter Video, and artfully produced Instagram videos have shown big engagements for a wide array of media professionals.

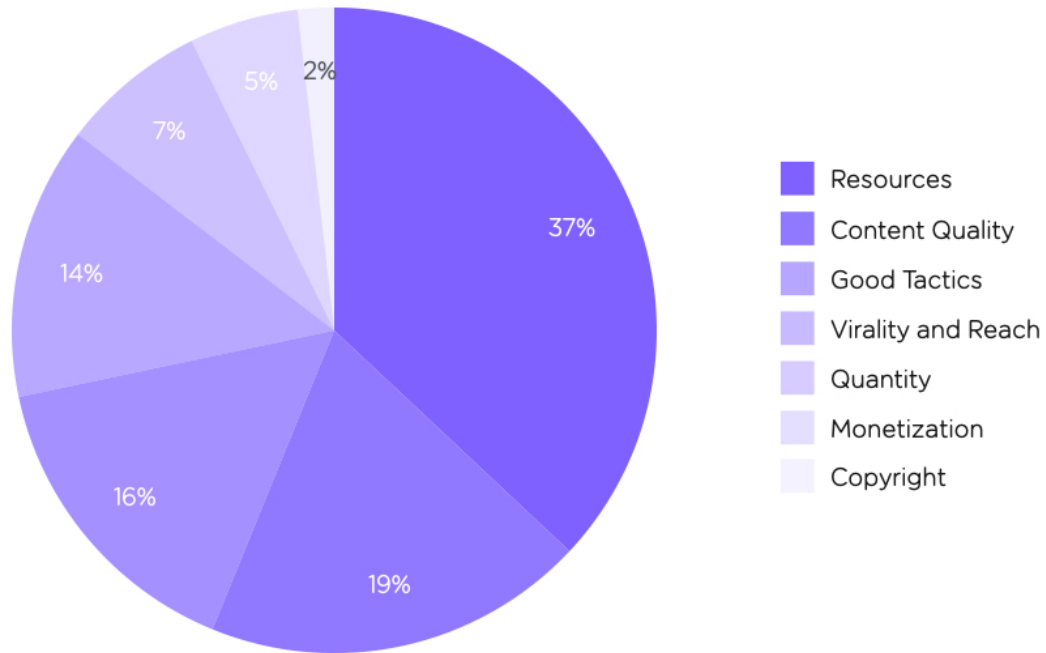


A few of the most successful Facebook Live videos from June and July 2016.

But the popular format brings plenty of challenges, just like native – the cost of production can be astronomical, and hard to justify if the ROI and revenue generation isn't clear.

We asked our respondents what they see as their biggest challenges and roadblocks to video content success. The answers were similar to the reported challenges to native and general social distribution, signaling a trend across the industry.

Most Common Video Problems for Content Creators



The struggle to balance resources and high enough quality content is common throughout the media industry, and similarly affects all content formats and types, whether they be text or video.

The top issues our respondents reported with video were having adequate resources to produce the level of video they'd like, being able to create high enough quality video, and understanding the best tactics for executing video.

When investing in a high-cost format like video, it's essential to understand exactly what steps to take to ensure big engagement. You can read about [our biggest tips for video content success](#) on our blog. Also [see how video aces at NowThis do it](#), turning story ideas into video content in an astonishing five minutes.

While our survey respondents said that having the resources they need to produce quality video was their number one concern, only 5 percent said their biggest challenge is monetization and ROI of video.



Though the cost of video is high, the value and return from quality video production is strong, and the concentration on the format doesn't seem to be fading any time soon. Social-first video moguls like NowThis have proven that at scale, raising [\\$27 million in funding](#) and generating [1 billion monthly views](#).

Traditional media outlets like Al Jazeera have pivoted with creation of brands like AJ+, which generated [2.2 billion Facebook video views in 2015](#). With new social-first brands popping up at every turn, big news conglomerates recognize they have more skin in the video game than ever.

Section 7

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

2016 has already been a year of massive change in the media and social industries. With all of these questions and challenges occupying the minds of professionals, we asked how they plan to tackle these obstacles in their strategies.

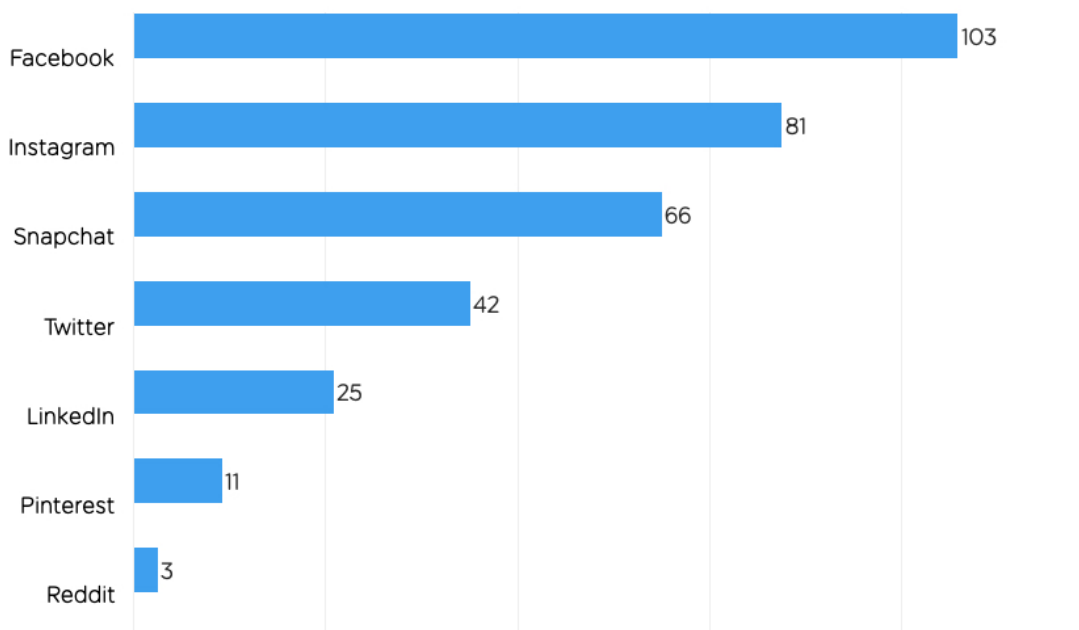
As new formats emerge and algorithms change, certain social platforms are rising in importance to certain publishers while others are fading. Social sites differ in use for certain types of publishers and brands - we've discussed on our blog how [LinkedIn is important for B2B marketers and agencies](#) while [Instagram is more useful for fashion or beauty brands](#).

Still, certain platforms will emerge as overall leaders in the next year, and our survey responses signaled some strong sentiment about the platforms to watch.

7.1 Platforms Becoming More Important

It's no surprise that Facebook came out on top as the platform becoming more important. About 45 percent of respondents said Facebook is the platform to watch and invest in, with Instagram coming in at number two with about 25 percent of answers.

Platforms Becoming More Important in the Next Year



Facebook's domination with Instant Articles, Facebook Live and Facebook Video is sweeping the social space – publishers recognize it as the new source for news consumption while brands look to it to build brand personality and engaged communities. As stated earlier in this whitepaper, a considerable chunk of survey respondents said Facebook drives up to 40 percent of their traffic, while social platforms other than Facebook drive only about 10 percent of traffic for most organizations.

Instagram is already an essential aesthetic supplement to brands and publishers – clothing brands, travel magazines, cosmetics companies and more are supercharging their social efforts with Instagram feeds.

Snapchat (coming in at number three for platforms becoming more important) is also emerging as a top player with their hugely engaged millennial fanbase – the emphasis on figuring out how to harness the interests of the millennial generation is only growing. CNN and the Daily Mail have shown [how big news brands and can utilize Snapchat](#). As original partners of the now wildly popular “Snapchat Discover,” the two organizations have used the feature to live stream engaging editorial and user-generated content.

I see Instagram and SnapChat gaining importance. The reason: they allow for visual, emotion-laden storytelling that niche publishers can use to forge a community where readers nod in agreement and say to themselves, ‘Yes, these people get me. I want to be part of this community.’



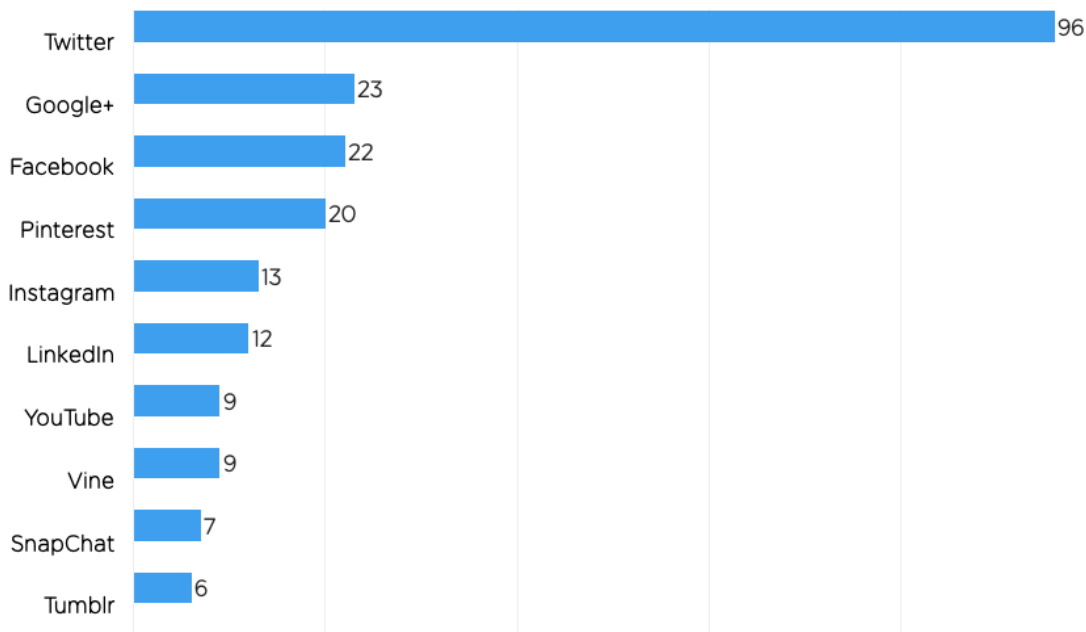
Wynton Hall, Managing Editor and Social Media Director, Breitbart News

As 2016 continues and finishes out, it will be interesting to see how use of Facebook, Instagram and other platforms changes and increases.

7.2 Platforms Becoming Less Important

Survey respondents also talked about the social platforms they see as becoming less important in the near future. Again, though there will always be variation in the way certain publishers view the different platforms, the survey revealed interesting sentiment about where to concentrate social efforts.

Platforms Becoming Less Important in the Next Year



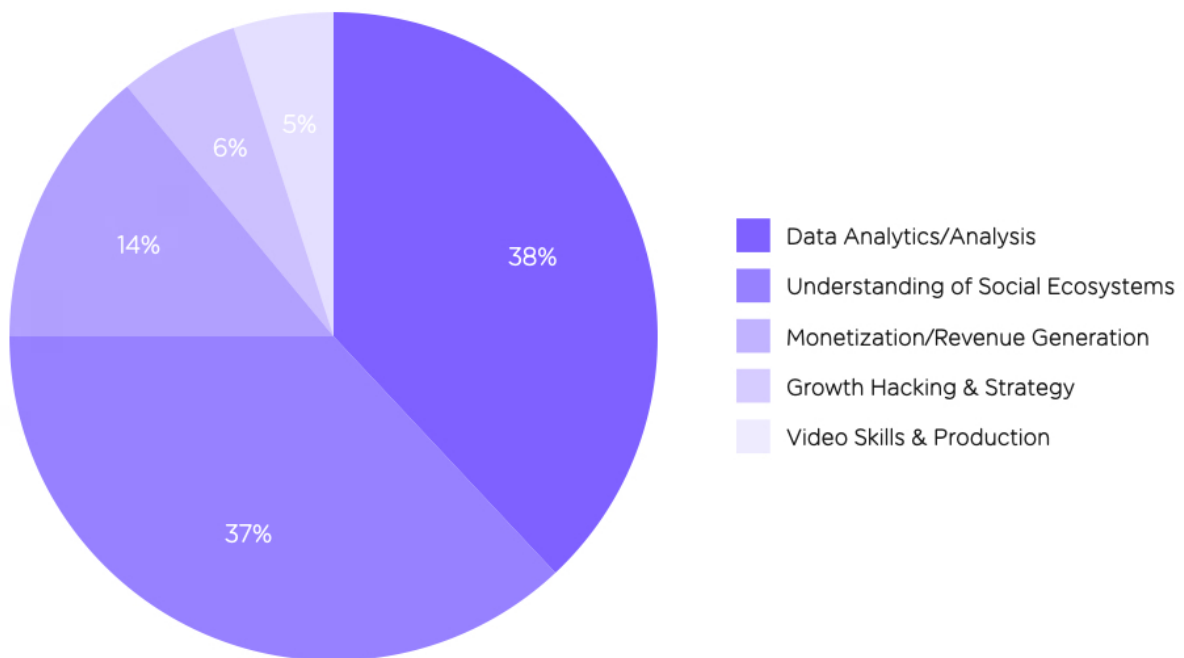
Our survey respondents (far and away) consider Twitter the social platform getting less important for publishers, agencies and brands in the future. However, this could simply mean the changing formats of Facebook and other platforms demand more strategic concentration than platforms like Twitter, whose bite-sized consumption format has stayed largely the same.

7.3 Areas for Growth – Skills and Sectors for Learning

In addition to asking what social platforms will become more and less important in the coming year, we asked the pool of 250 media professionals what they're most interested in learning about in the future, what skills they see as becoming most important, and where they hope to grow.

The answers were closely aligned with that of what is already seen as important for content and social strategy in 2016, with most respondents saying they hope to learn more about social ecosystems, analytics, and monetizing social distribution.

Biggest Target Areas for Growth & Learning in the Next Year



Understanding of social ecosystems and best practices to succeed on them, along with more advanced analytics and audience analysis, were the top two areas for growth reported by our survey.

In terms of social ecosystems, our respondents said they were concerned about capitalizing on and bypassing changes to social algorithms, and knowing how to “cross pollinate” across different social platforms to achieve effective social distribution. They also talked about hopes to improve performance on social media, increasing referrals and understanding the impact of sharing.

Analytics and deeper internal and audience analysis were also among top goals for the future - meaning having a better understanding of audience behavior on social media, understanding of what makes something viral, and having the data needed to capitalize on social trends and successful strategy.

After the top two categories of challenges were monetizing social distribution and knowing the best growth marketing strategies. As social becomes both more opaque and important, it’s clear that smaller organizations and publishers are concerned about turning social expertise into real revenue and competing with bigger players.

Again, video emerges as a pivotal part of strategy in the future, with respondents identifying it as one of the main areas they hope to build skills and learn more about.



CONCLUSION

The NewsWhip Content and Social Strategy Survey showed several strong signals about what to watch for in social distribution over the next months and year.

Organizations and media creators are struggling under the weight of expectations and challenges, with limited resources and budget, while social ecosystems get ever more complicated and diverse. It's never been more important to understand these social ecosystems, the audiences that live in them and the analytics that help direct resources most effectively.

But at the same time, the media professionals who responded to our survey showed that this is an exciting time to be in news, publishing, marketing and PR – there's never been more opportunity for innovation in video, native content and audience engagement tactics. The social analytics tools they use to capitalize on these trends are widespread. Best practices are emerging. And, there's a strong emphasis on delivering the optimum user experience and tapping into the interests of loyal communities.

Our key takeaways from this survey are the clear importance of investment in high-quality video, of producing relevant and authentic native content, and of having a much deeper understanding of social ecosystems and the audiences who live there.

As the intersection of content and social media continues to evolve, we found that media creators are looking to bolster their social strategy departments with high-level analysis, editorial and production skills. As Facebook and Instagram become more important, expert understanding of these platforms and their audiences will be essential to those entering the crowded industry too.

Overall, our survey respondents and their companies are skilling up, tooling up, hiring more resources and skills, all while increasing their investment in content and social distribution. Investment in paid media is a supporting distribution tactic too.

We'll survey the industry again next year, to see how it's grown further and evolved. Until then, good luck with spreading your message and story-telling.