



ENGAGING NEWS PROJECT

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STUDY FINDS MOBILE NOTIFICATONS CAN HELP NEWS ORGANIZATIONS BETTER ENGAGE AUDIENCES

An Engaging News Project study exploring the benefits of mobile notifications found that people who receive mobile notifications more frequently visit the corresponding news applications.

For the study, the Engaging News Project conducted a two-wave experiment with 420 participants who were asked to download, at random, the CNN, BuzzFeed News, or E! News app. Participants were also asked, again at random, either to allow or not allow notifications. About two weeks later, we re-contacted study participants and asked them to tell us more about their experience with the app and notifications. This project was funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Twenty-seven percent of those asked to install the app with notifications used it daily or more often, compared to 12 percent of those asked to install the app without notifications. Plus, more than 56 percent of respondents who received notifications said that they went to the news organization's website to learn more about a notification they had received.

"There have been a lot of questions surrounding news organizations' use of mobile notifications, and I think our findings show that there are benefits to news sites that use them," said Dr. Talia Stroud, director of the Engaging News Project. "Our results also show that more research is needed to better understand best practices for sending notifications."

Other findings from the study include:

- Notifications significantly increased knowledge in some instances. Participants in only one of the experimental conditions – those assigned to receive CNN notifications – were more knowledgeable about the notification content. Future research should explore why notifications increased learning in one condition and not others.
- Older respondents expressed greater intentions to keep news notifications installed on their phones than younger respondents.
- When asked what they liked most about notifications, many mentioned the relevant content and useful information. When asked what they liked least, people often mentioned the frequency of notifications and the untailed content.

"With people increasingly getting their news from smartphones, news organizations need to tap into this mobile-first mindset and meet audiences where they are. This report provides a starting point to do just that—offering lessons for journalists looking to better connect with audiences and understand their preferences," said Luz Gomez, Knight Foundation director for learning and impact.

The Engaging News Project provides research-based techniques for engaging online audiences in commercially viable and democratically beneficial ways. Learn more at engagingnewsproject.org

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more visit, www.knightfoundation.org