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Trump, Clinton Voters Divided in Their Main Source for Election News

Fox News was the main source for 40% of Trump voters

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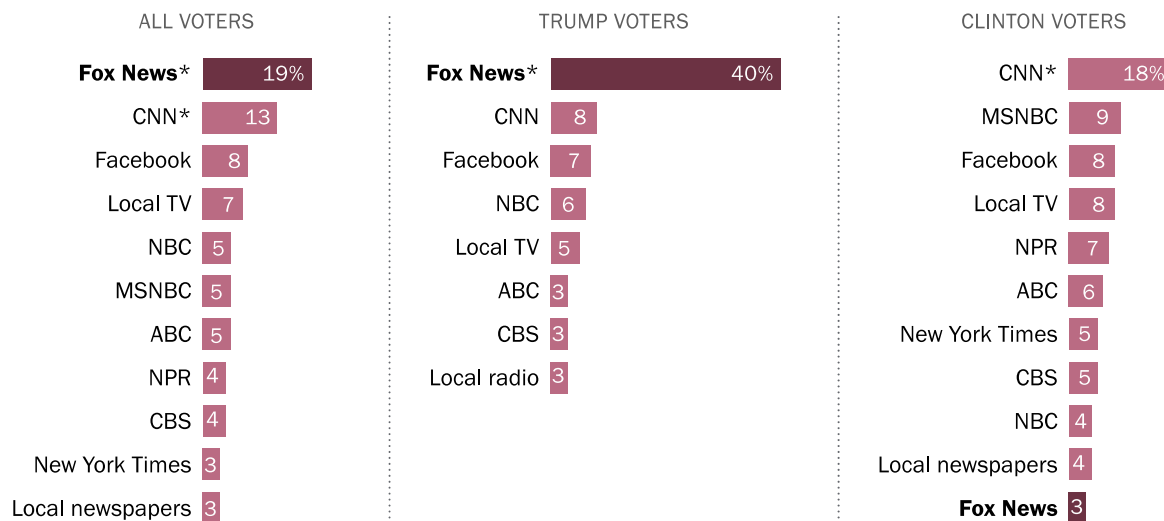
Trump, Clinton Voters Divided in Their Main Source for Election News

Fox News was the main source for 40% of Trump voters

In the coming days, Americans will follow a single event across a variety of media channels: the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States. If the public's media habits during the campaign are any indicator, it is likely that Trump and Hillary Clinton voters will be learning about the inauguration from very different media outlets. According to a new Pew Research Center survey, Americans who say they voted for Trump in the general election relied heavily on Fox News as their main source of election news leading up to the 2016 election, whereas Clinton voters named an array of different sources, with no one source named by more than one-in-five of her supporters. The survey was conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016, among 4,183 adults who are members of Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel.

Fox News dominated as main campaign news source for Trump voters; no single source as pronounced among Clinton voters

% of voters who named ____ as their "main source" for news about the 2016 campaign



* Among this group of voters, this source was named at significantly higher rates than the source below it. Significance of any other relationships provided upon request.

Note: Sources shown are only those that were named by at least 3% of each group. Results are based on responses to open-ended questions; respondents could write in any source they chose.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec.12, 2016.

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When voters were asked to write in their “main source” for election news, four-in-ten Trump voters named Fox News.¹ The next most-common main source among Trump voters, CNN, was named by only 8% of his voters.

Clinton voters, however, did not coalesce around any one source. CNN was named more than any other, but at 18% had nowhere near the dominance that Fox News had among Trump voters. Instead, the choices of Clinton voters were more spread out. MSNBC, Facebook, local television news, NPR, ABC, The New York Times and CBS were all named by between 5% and 9% of her voters.

What’s more, though Fox News tops the list of sources among Trump voters, only 3% of Clinton voters named it as their main source. And while MSNBC was named by 9% of Clinton voters, only 1% of Trump’s voters relied most on that network. The New York Times and NPR were also much more commonly named by Clinton voters than Trump voters.

These findings are consistent with past research revealing that those on the right and left have [significantly different media diets](#), with Fox News in particular standing out among conservatives.

But some sources are about equally likely to be named by voters on both sides. This included two of the broadcast news networks (NBC and CBS) and Facebook, even though the social media site is not an organization that produces its own news. Nearly one-in-ten of both Trump (7%) and Clinton (8%) voters said Facebook was where they got most of their news about the campaign – though it is likely that the specific news outlets that filled their Facebook feeds [differed substantially](#). Overall, 8% of voters named Facebook as their main source for election news, outpaced only by Fox News (19% of voters) and CNN (13%).

The “main news sources” mentioned by at least 3% of each voting group stand out in another way: they consist entirely of longstanding national news brands – cable and broadcast TV, newspapers, radio – along with local media and Facebook. The digital news publishers that played prominent roles in the campaign did not appear to serve as main news sources for either Trump or Clinton voters. This notably includes Breitbart (named by 1% of voters), an early [supporter](#) of Trump’s campaign; BuzzFeed, which broke [a number of stories](#) over the course of the election (named by no voters in our sample); and The Huffington Post, which added [an editor’s note](#) calling Trump a “liar” to any articles about the Republican candidate during the election – though it has since stopped the practice (named by 1% of voters).

¹ This was what researchers refer to as an “open-ended” question – that is, respondents were able to type in the name of whichever outlet was their main source. They were not given a pre-determined list of sources.

Among Democrats, those who supported Clinton in primaries had somewhat different main sources than those who backed other candidates

The study also suggests that Democrats who backed Bernie Sanders or another Democratic candidate in the primaries prioritized, to some extent, different types of news media than those who supported Clinton – even once the general election had begun. There were fewer differences between those who did and did not support Trump in the Republican primaries.

(Note: Primary support was asked about in an earlier survey, conducted April 5-May 2, 2016; general election news sources were asked about in the current survey.)

Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters who supported Clinton in the primaries named MSNBC, local TV and Fox News at higher rates (13%, 12% and 4% respectively) than Democrats who did not support Clinton. Among Democrats who did not support Clinton during the primaries, on the other hand, 4% named Reddit – an online forum with a sizable presence of [Bernie Sanders supporters](#) and which, like Facebook, does not produce news – compared with no Democratic respondents who supported Clinton in the primaries.

These differences in media use between the primary supporters of Clinton and those of other Democratic candidates are consistent with the age profiles of both groups of supporters. On average, Clinton’s primary backers were [older](#) than Democratic voters who backed Bernie Sanders, and – on the whole – older Americans are [more likely](#) than younger Americans to turn to television and print sources as their main sources of news.

Democrats show more intraparty differences in main source for election news

% of voters who named ____ as their “main source” for news about the 2016 campaign; only sources named at different rates by supporters of winning and losing primary candidates shown

	Republicans who supported Trump in primaries	Republicans who supported other candidates in primaries
Breitbart	3%	<1%
	Democrats who supported Clinton in primaries	Democrats who supported other candidates in primaries
MSNBC	13%	6%
Local TV news	12	4
Fox News	4	1
Reddit	0	4

Note: Primary support was asked Apr. 5-May 2, 2016.

For all main sources broken down by primary support, see Appendix A.

“Republicans” includes Republican and Republican-leaning voters; “Democrats” includes Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec.12, 2016

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Among Republicans, the same sources rose to the top for both Republican voters who had supported Trump in the primaries and those who supported a different candidate. Only one source – Breitbart – differed in its usage between the two groups, and even it was not named as a main source very frequently. The 10-year-old digital news outlet was named by 3% of Republican voters who supported Trump in the primaries, but less than 1% of those who supported someone else in the primaries.

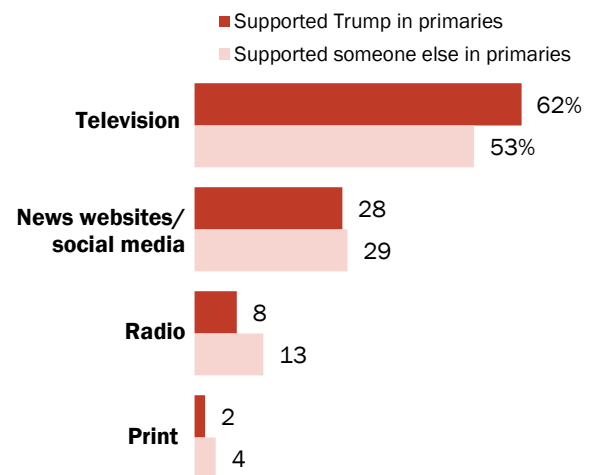
These intra-party differences were even more pronounced when it came to the *platform* through which Americans got most of their general election news. Republican voters were unified in where they got most of their news about the general election; voters who had supported Trump in the primaries and those who did not used TV, print, radio and digital sources at about the same rates.

Among Democrats, however, the differences were stark. Over half of Democratic voters who had supported Clinton in the primaries (56%) got most of their general election news from television. But this falls to 37% among Democrats who had supported someone else in the primaries. Instead, these Democrats were more likely to say they got most of their general election news from either news websites or social networking sites (48%, compared with 28% of Clinton-supporting Democrats) – though again, age played some role here.

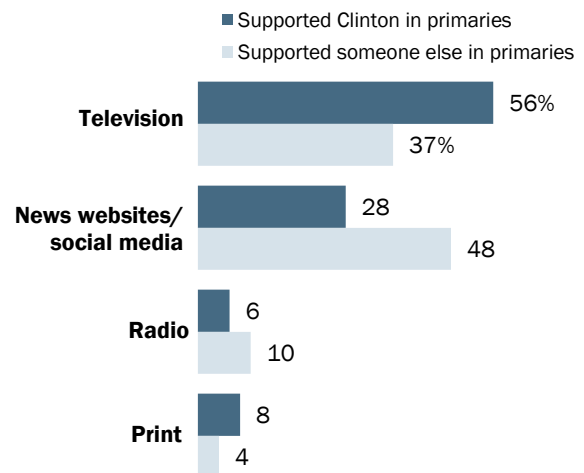
Overall, the data also show the dominance of

Greater differences within Democrats than Republicans in main platform used for election news

% of Republican and Republican-leaning voters who got most of their election news from ...



% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters who got most of their election news from ...



Note: Primary support was asked April 5-May 2, 2016.

Not all differences are statistically significant. Look to report to highlight significant differences.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec.12, 2016.

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TV as a main source for campaign news. A majority (54%) of voters said they got most of their campaign news from television. This mirrors findings from early 2016, when Americans were most likely to name cable TV as [the most helpful source for learning about the election](#). Television is also Americans' [most common source](#) for news more generally.

Sharp divides between Clinton, Trump voters in regular use of some news websites

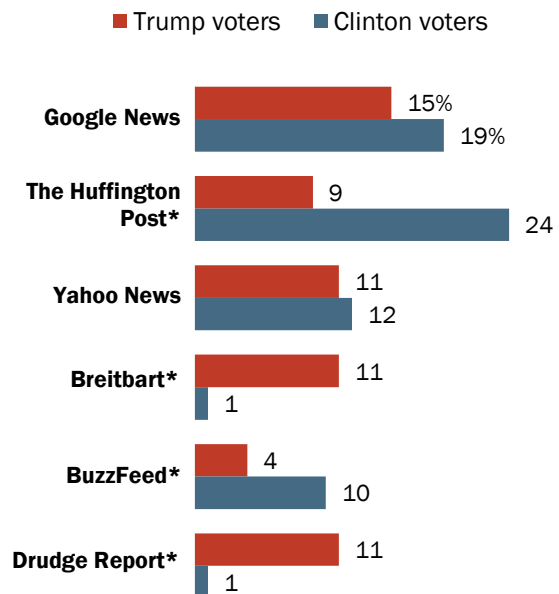
While no digital-native news publisher stood out on the list of voters' *main* source of news for the 2016 election, it's clear that some did turn to these sites as part of their overall news diet.

In addition to asking respondents about their "main source" of campaign news, the survey also asked respondents to look at a list of news outlets and identify any that they used "regularly" for news about the campaign. Included on this list were six digital news websites – a mixture of aggregators and original news publishers – whose audiences are situated at different points along the ideological spectrum, according to [past research](#).² Across these sites – Google News, Yahoo News, The Huffington Post, Breitbart, BuzzFeed and Drudge Report – Americans indicated modest levels of use. About one-in-five voters overall regularly got election news from Google News (18%) or The Huffington Post (17%), while 12% did so from Yahoo News. Less than one-in-ten regularly used BuzzFeed (7%), Breitbart (6%) or Drudge Report (6%) for election news.

However, some of these sources were more prominent among one candidate's supporters than the other. The Huffington Post was used regularly for election news by nearly a quarter (24%) of Clinton voters, but only about one-in-ten (9%) of Trump voters. BuzzFeed also showed higher usage among Clinton (10%) than Trump

Though not common main election news sources, some Clinton and Trump voters regularly relied on digital-native outlets

% of voters who **regularly** got news about the 2016 campaign from ...



* Significant difference between Trump voters and Clinton voters who regularly use the source.

Note: For significant differences within groups of voters, see Appendix A.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016.

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² While each of these sites were selected for study based on their audience's ideological composition and high web traffic, they do not constitute by any means an exhaustive list of digital news outlets, but rather offer one window into the role these kinds of outlets play in an election cycle.

voters (4%). Conversely, both Breitbart and Drudge Report reached 11% of Trump voters but a mere 1% of Clinton supporters.

In terms of primary support, a greater divide is again evident among Democrats than Republicans. Among the six digital-native sources asked about, Republicans only differ in their reliance on Breitbart: 16% of Republican and Republican-leaning voters who supported Trump in the primaries used Breitbart regularly for campaign news, compared with 8% of Republican voters who supported someone else in the primaries. But for Democratic voters, four of the six sites were more likely to be used by voters who didn't support Clinton in the primary than those who did: The Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Google News, and even Breitbart (though only 3% of Democrats who supported another candidate in the primaries regularly got news from this site).

Appendix A: Supplementary tables

Main source by primary support

% of voters who named ____ as their “main source” for news about the 2016 campaign

Republicans who supported Trump in primaries		Republicans who supported other candidate in primaries		Democrats who supported Clinton in primaries		Democrats who supported other candidate in primaries	
	%		%		%		%
Fox News*	44	Fox News*	40	CNN	16	CNN*	18
Facebook	8	Facebook	6	MSNBC	13	Facebook	11
CNN	7	CNN	5	Local TV*	12	NPR	9
NBC	5	Local radio	4	Facebook	7	MSNBC	6
Local TV	4	Local TV	4	CBS	6	ABC	6
ABC	3	NBC	4	NPR	6	CBS	6
CBS	3	Local newspapers	3	NBC	6	The New York Times	5
Google	3	CBS	3	ABC	6	Local TV	4
Breitbart	3	NPR	3	The New York Times	5	Reddit	4
				Local newspapers	5	Local newspapers	3
				Fox News	4		

* Among this group of voters, this source was named at significantly higher rates than the source below it. Significance of any other relationships provided upon request.

Note: Primary support was asked April 5-May 2, 2016. “Republicans” includes Republican and Republican-leaning voters; “Democrats” includes Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters. Sources shown are only those that were named by at least 3% of each group. Results are based on responses to open-ended questions; respondents could write in any source they chose.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec.12, 2016.

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Significant differences within voter groups for regularly using digital-native publishers for campaign news

% of voters who **regularly** got news about the 2016 campaign from ...

All voters		Trump voters		Clinton voters	
	%		%		%
Google News	18	Google News	15	The Huffington Post	24
The Huffington Post*	17	Yahoo News	11	Google News*	19
Yahoo News*	12	Breitbart	11	Yahoo News	12
BuzzFeed	7	Drudge Report	11	BuzzFeed*	10
Breitbart	6	The Huffington Post*	9	Breitbart	1
Drudge Report	6	BuzzFeed	4	Drudge Report	1

* Among this group of voters, this source was named at significantly higher rates than the source below it. Significance of any other relationships provided upon request.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec.12, 2016.

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Methodology

Data in this report are drawn from a wave of the American Trends Panel (ATP), conducted from Nov. 29 to Dec. 12, 2016, among 4,183 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,183 respondents is plus or minus 2.7% percentage points. The American Trends Panel, created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Abt SRBI.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from two large, national landline and cellphone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted from Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.³ The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Survey on Government, conducted from Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.⁴

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the July-December 2015 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2016. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the 2015 Pew Survey on Government. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes.

³ When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

⁴ Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after Feb. 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

The frequency of internet use benchmark is an estimate of daily internet use projected to 2016 from the 2013 Current Population Survey Computer and Internet Use Supplement. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	4,183	2.7 percentage points
Voters	3,605	2.9 percentage points
Trump voters	1,452	4.6 percentage points
Clinton voters	1,800	4.2 percentage points
Republican and Republican-leaning voters who supported Trump in the primaries	577	7.3 percentage points
Republican and Republican-leaning voters who supported another candidate in the primaries	857	6.0 percentage points
Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters who supported Clinton in the primaries	965	5.7 percentage points
Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters who supported another candidate in the primaries	755	6.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The November 2016 wave had a response rate of 79% (4,183 responses among 5,280 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.6 %.⁵

⁵ Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

The question about the main source used for election news was a two-part question. Respondents were first asked on which platform they got most of their election news. They were then presented with an open-ended question that asked them to specify the specific source (outlet, program, print source, station, website, app, social networking site) on that platform that they turned to most often for news about the 2016 presidential election.

Researchers grouped these open-ended responses together by brand; for instance “NY Times,” “NYT” and “nytimes.com” would all be counted as indicating that The New York Times was the respondent’s main source. Additionally, local news sources were grouped together by platform into “local newspapers,” “local TV” and “local radio.”

Finally, respondents were asked to look at a list of digital-only news outlets and identify any that they used “regularly” for news about the 2016 election. We began with the list of outlets asked about in [our 2014 media polarization study](#) (read more about how those sources were selected [here](#)) and selected six digital-native news sites, representing a mixture of aggregators and original news publishers and whose audiences are situated at different points along the ideological spectrum according to [past research](#).

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Topline questionnaire

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL WAVE 23
TOPLINE
NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 12, 2016
TOTAL N=4,183⁶**

ASK ALL:

Q.19 Thinking specifically about the 2016 presidential campaign, did you get most of your news about this topic... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

Nov 29-Dec 12

2016

53	On television
21	On news websites or apps
13	Through social networking sites (such as Facebook or Twitter)
8	On the radio
4	In print
1	Refused/No answer

ASK IF TELEVISION IS MAIN SOURCE (Q19=1):

Q.19a Which television outlet or program did you turn to most often for news about the 2016 presidential campaign? Please list the name of the outlet or program in the box below.

[OPEN-END RESPONSES RECODED]

ASK IF PRINT IS MAIN SOURCE (Q19=2):

Q.19b Which print source did you turn to most often for news about the 2016 presidential campaign? Please list the complete name of the print source. If a newspaper, also include the city where it is from in the box below.

[OPEN-END RESPONSES RECODED]

ASK IF RADIO IS MAIN SOURCE (Q19=3)⁷:

Q.19c Which radio program or station did you turn to most often for news about the 2016 presidential campaign? Please list the name of the program or the letters of the station in the box below. Please DO NOT just list the station number.

[OPEN-END RESPONSES RECODED]

ASK IF WEBSITES OR APPS ARE MAIN SOURCE (Q19=4):

Q.19d Which website or app did you turn to most often for news about the 2016 presidential campaign? Please list the name of the website or app in the box below.

[OPEN-END RESPONSES RECODED]

ASK IF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ARE MAIN SOURCE (Q19=5):

Q.19e Which social networking site did you turn to most often for news about the 2016 presidential campaign? Please list the name of the social networking site in the box below.

⁶ The Wave 23 survey was administered exclusively in web mode. The survey included N=186 previous mail mode panelists that were converted to web and were provided an internet-enabled tablet if necessary.

⁷ Respondents who received this question were asked a follow-up question, which classified the station or station of the program they used for a main source as an "NPR station," "talk radio station," "local news and traffic station," or "other." These responses were better used to classify their response, and are reflected in the results below.

[OPEN-END RESPONSES RECODED]**ALL SOURCES MENTIONED**

Nov 29-Dec 12

2016⁸

16	Fox News
13	CNN
11	Facebook
7	Local TV
4	CBS
4	ABC
4	NBC
4	NPR
4	MSNBC
2	The New York Times
2	Local newspapers
2	Google
2	Local radio
2	Univision
1	Yahoo
1	YouTube
1	Twitter
1	BBC
1	The Washington Post
1	Reddit
1	Drudge Report
1	MSN
1	Telemundo
1	PBS
7	Refused

⁸ Respondents were asked to provide their main source. If respondents volunteered more than one source, Pew Research accepted up to three. Sources shown are those that were named by at least 1% of respondents.

ASK ALL:**NEWSSOURCE**

Leading up to the presidential election on November 8, which of the following sources did you regularly get news from about the presidential campaigns and candidates? This includes any way that you got the source. *[Check all that apply]*
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

	<u>Selected</u>	<u>Not selected /No Answer</u>
Google News Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	19	81
Huffington Post Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	14	86
Yahoo Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	12	88
BuzzFeed Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	7	93
Breitbart Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	5	95
Drudge Report Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	5	95

**RESPONDENTS WERE ALSO ASKED ABOUT A RANGE OF TV, RADIO AND PRINT SOURCES,
WHICH ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**