

Bored with FB news? You're not alone

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 15 Jun 2018 · A1 · —THOMSONREUTERS FOUNDATION

LONDON— Many people are switching from Facebook to closed forums like WhatsApp to discuss daily news because of worries about privacy, fake stories and toxic debates, a survey said on Thursday.



The latest Digital News Report from

the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that news consumption via Facebook is falling, particularly among the young, who prefer WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat.

“People are . . . getting a little bit bored with Facebook,” Nic Newman, lead author of the seventh annual report, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Facebook remains the most popular social network for news, with 36 percent using it in the last week. But it has lost ground to other apps, especially WhatsApp, which has tripled in popularity as a source of news in four years to 15 percent.

More comfortable

People feel more comfortable chatting on closed platforms in countries with polarized divides and where it can be dangerous to express political views openly, such as in Malaysia and Turkey, the study said.

According to respondents, they often find stories on Facebook and Twitter and post them to a WhatsApp group for discussion with a smaller set of friends.

Although much of Facebook's fall is attributable to its changed algorithms, which prioritize interactions with family and friends, trust is also a major concern.

Only 23 percent of 74,000 people polled in 37 countries said they trusted news on social media, compared to 44 percent who trusted in news overall.

Paying for online news

More people are paying for online news in some countries, reaching 30 percent in Norway, with donations also emerging as an alternative strategy, according to the study by the Reuters Institute, which is funded by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“People find that some news is worth paying for, but much of it is not,” Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, the Reuters Institute's research director, said in a statement.

“The challenge for publishers now is to ensure that the journalism they produce is truly distinct, relevant and valuable, and then effectively promoting it to convince people to donate or subscribe,” Nielsen added.

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