Arabian Journal of Science

ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* July, 2026

NEW CONSUMER HABITS OF DIGITAL MEDIA AUDIENCES

Sadoqat Maxsumova
Associate Professor at the International Islamic
Academy of Uzbekistan, PhD in Philology

Abstract

This article examines the research findings of international scholars regarding the evolving channels and methods of information consumption in the digital world. Furthermore, it explores the psychological and technological factors influencing the transformation of modern audience habits. By analyzing empirical eye-tracking metrics and contemporary marketing frameworks, this paper outlines how structural design strategies and multi-channel ecosystem approaches must adapt to capture the non-linear path of digital media users.

Keywords: Digital media, information consumption, audience habits, content, eye-tracking, information technologies, user experience (UX).

In today's media landscape, the criteria for optimizing digital content, enhancing User Experience (UX), and developing data-driven design strategies have fundamentally shifted. Years of empirical eye-tracking research conducted by the Nielsen Norman Group (NNG) [1] and RRD Marketing Solutions [2] provide a highly accurate blueprint of this evolving consumer environment.

Eye-tracking is an ultra-precise technology that monitors the movement of a user's gaze across a screen. The system directs infrared light toward the pupil and utilizes specialized cameras to record how that light reflects back (bounce back). This process allows researchers to study subconscious user behaviors and immediate physiological reactions.

First, this research aims to identify the core focal point of visual attention, helping media creators understand what users are looking at—and, critically, what they are ignoring. Second, it evaluates the decision-making timeframe, determining whether Call-to-Action (CTA) elements are perceived or if they fall into "blind spots." While traditional UX testing relies on self-reported user descriptions, eye-tracking reveals the objective truth of human interaction with digital interfaces.

1. Strategic Scanning Habits and Design Principles

Studies confirm that web users do not read text verbatim (word-for-word); instead, they employ strategic scanning methods to find information. Based on research by RRD Marketing Solutions, the following strategic guidelines have been established for digital content structuring:

1. The Two Stages of First Impressions: A user checks a website's credibility and source within the first 3 seconds. By the 8th second, they make the definitive decision to either stay on the page or abandon it. Consequently, the most engaging visual elements and the core message must be placed immediately on the home page above the fold.

2. The Dominance of the F-Pattern: Users naturally focus their attention heaviest on the top-left corner of a webpage, while the bottom-right portion remains largely ignored. This behavior dictates that vital information must be positioned along the "top line" of the page layout.

3. Visual Hierarchy and Color: Large scale, warm colors (such as red and orange), and high contrast automatically capture and guide human attention. Therefore, CTA buttons and primary offers should be distinguished using warm palettes and larger typography.

4. Banner Blindness: Digital users routinely ignore information blocks placed on the right-hand side of a screen, subconsciously categorizing that area as generic Facebook or Google ad blocks. To

mitigate this, critical editorial content must never be formatted to resemble advertisements, nor should it be placed within traditional ad spaces.

5. Avoiding Dense Text Blocks: Massive walls of text are entirely unread on websites; they are merely skimmed. Users frequently read only the first few words of a sentence. It is highly recommended to split text into short paragraphs (1–3 sentences) and front-load sentences with primary keywords.

6. Purposeful Imagery: Decorative or contextually irrelevant photographs distract the user. It is far more effective to utilize authentic, high-quality images that directly complement and enrich the textual narrative.

7. Gaze Direction Mapping: Human beings automatically look in the same direction as the individual depicted in a photograph. Editorial designers can leverage this trait by orienting a model's gaze directly toward the site's primary CTA button or featured content block.

8. The Supremacy of Digits: Numerical digits (e.g., "10") capture reader attention significantly faster than words representing numbers (e.g., "ten"). Important data and statistical evidence yield much higher impact when displayed as numerals.

9. Readability Standards: Text sizes smaller than 10–12 points or layouts featuring low color contrast are systematically ignored. Ensuring that font scale and background contrast strictly adhere to universal readability standards is essential.

10. Post-CTA Information Loss: Once a user locates and identifies the main interactive button, they frequently initiate their action without viewing any content placed further down the screen. Therefore, crucial secondary details must sit physically above the primary CTA button.

2. The Inverted Pyramid and Text Optimization

Research indicates that approximately 79% of web users strictly scan online material, while only 16% read content verbatim. For this reason, digital media specialists emphasize applying the "Inverted Pyramid" principle to digital writing.

Under this framework, the text leads with the most critical conclusion, while secondary details and supporting background context are systematically pushed to subsequent sections. If a user does not discover relevant data within the first few words of a paragraph, they will abandon the rest of the block.

What are the explicit requirements for successful web text? Data shows that content must be streamlined, optimized for rapid scanning, and written in a highly accessible style. Implementing these specific textual adjustments has been shown to boost overall content usability metrics by 124%.

Comparative Evaluation of Web Text Styles

Poor Web Text	Optimized Web Text
"Our highly innovative museum presents the world's most astonishing exhibits, which are guaranteed to leave you entirely spellbound."	"The museum features over 100 unique exhibits. Operating Hours: 09:00 – 18:00"

- Analysis of Poor Web Text: The first example relies on high-flown, bombastic language ("innovative," "astonishing," "guaranteed to leave you spellbound") that offers no concrete data. Web users encounter hundreds of unsubstantiated "best" or "innovative" marketing claims daily; the human brain automatically dismisses unproven adjectives. Furthermore, the text focuses purely on self-praise ("Our..."), failing to communicate what the visitor actually gains. Such phrasing fails to capture audience attention, and even if read, yields a low conversion rate for real-world visits.

- Analysis of Optimized Web Text: The second example leverages empirical precision. The figure "over 100" uses digits, which inherently boosts editorial credibility and stops the user's wandering eye. Providing explicit operational hours immediately resolves the user's primary pragmatic question ("When can I visit?"). Because web text is scanned rather than read, the necessary data points (quantity and time) are successfully processed within fractions of a second.

3. Beyond the Linear Funnel: The Consumer Journey Network

A milestone study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) [3], which redefines legacy marketing perspectives, explains that the traditional linear "marketing funnel" is increasingly ineffective for retaining modern digital consumers. It has been replaced by the dynamic "Customer Journey Network" model.

Legacy Linear Funnel: [Awareness] ——> [Consideration] ——> [Conversion]

BCG Network Ecosystem: Social Media <——> Peer Reviews <——> Live Site <——> Retail Space

The traditional model mapped the buyer's path as a straightforward, sequential line. However, BCG's research demonstrates that contemporary consumers do not advance through rigid, chronological stages. A user may discover information on a social network, visit a physical storefront, and subsequently return to digital platforms for further research.

Furthermore, peer recommendations and short-form video content now influence purchasing decisions far faster than conventional display advertising. Through algorithmic curation across digital platforms, consumers encounter products and news organically even when they are not actively searching for them. They read community reviews, cross-reference pricing across multiple applications simultaneously, and operate across diverse channels at once. The ultimate conversion depends directly on how frictionless (such as one-click execution) the transaction pathway is. Following a successful interaction, the consumer transforms into a brand ambassador, actively sharing their personal experience across their own social networks.

The BCG Paradigm Shift: Companies must abandon the legacy mindset of "pushing the customer down a linear funnel" and pivot to a new guiding philosophy: "building a frictionless ecosystem around the consumer."

4. Strategic Recommendations for National Media Frameworks

Viewed through this lens, contemporary news outlets can no longer operate merely as passive "information distributors"; they must transform into active nodes within the subscriber's personal digital ecosystem. Applying these core BCG principles, we can outline several strategic recommendations for modernizing national media platforms, such as Ishonch.uz:

Implement Dynamic Routing: Legacy newspaper websites typically rely on a rigid architecture: Homepage → Article → Passive Reading. BCG principles require that a user should experience seamless entry from any external touchpoint (messaging apps, social channels, or print). If a subscriber transfers to a website article via Telegram, they rarely linger if confronted by massive, uniform blocks of text. Integrating a dynamic routing system—such as embedding a concise video summary or an expert opinion call-out block directly inside a social issue article—will successfully anchor reader attention.

Embrace Liquid Media Formats: People rarely search for news manually; instead, predictive algorithms recommend content directly to them. Operating on the principle of "Liquid Media," editorial teams should generate multiple formats of a single journalistic asset tailored to specific platforms. A single investigative piece should yield an analytical text for the primary website, a 60-second vertical video for social platforms, and clean infographic cards for Instagram. This network

approach routes users back to the publisher's central digital ecosystem regardless of their initial media channel.

Optimize Technical Infrastructure: Digital news editions must be perfectly responsive and optimized for mobile devices. If a mobile page takes longer than 3 seconds to load, or if intrusive ad banners obstruct the text, the user will abandon the content before interacting with it. Ensuring rapid, frictionless access to information is non-negotiable.

Cultivate Digital Communities (Feedback Loops): A widespread issue across many regional news sites is the absence of continuous, interactive communication. Audiences may read an engaging article but will quickly forget the source platform if there are no retention mechanics. Digital publications must build dedicated reader communities around their brand. This is achieved by revitalizing comment sections under articles, offering user-generated content options (citizen journalism sub-platforms), and providing personalized daily newsletters matched to specific reader interests via individual user profiles. Only by establishing these interactive structures can a modern publication secure a stable, loyal, and recurring target audience.

References

1. Nielsen Norman Group Official Portal. URL: https://www.nngroup.com/about/
2. RRD Marketing Solutions Service Insights. URL: https://www.rrd.com/services/marketing
3. Boston Consulting Group. (2025). Move Beyond the Linear Funnel. BCG Publications. URL: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2025/move-beyond-the-linear-funnel