



VAB - INSIGHTS REPORT - 2019

America's Newest Pastime

The Rise Of News & Politics As 'Sport'



The Rise Of News & Politics As 'Sport'

The World Series. The Super Bowl. The NBA Finals. The Stanley Cup. The Presidential Election Debates. The Comey Testimony. State of the Union Address. The Kavanaugh Confirmation Hearings. Today, politically-charged news events are some of the most watched programming in the country, rivalling even the most popular live sporting events.

How popular has news & politics become? Did you know that just as many Americans watched the 2016 Presidential Election debates as they did the Super Bowl, and aggregated time spent watching the debates was 81% higher? And this year, the current primary debates are already delivering an unprecedented number of viewers early in the 2020 election cycle.

There's no debate that news & politics have transformed into a new 'sport' fueled by endless breaking stories and a 24-hour news cycle. Just like traditional sports, continuous news coverage ignites passion among viewers – they tweet, post, share, watch and gather together to debate current events just like they would the 'big game.' Some even badge themselves with politically-affiliated merchandise much like they do with their favorite sports teams.

Whether people are watching at home, getting updates on the go, or viewing out-of-home with friends or family, multiscreen TV is the clear preference as the #1 most trusted source for news and is nearly ubiquitous among adults amidst skyrocketing news consumption over the past few years.

Most importantly, advertisers have taken note of the increased viewership and 'sport-like' interest and passion exhibited by TV news viewers and are taking action as national TV spending in the news genre has increased 30% over the last three years.

A large crowd of people is shown from behind, seated in what appears to be a stadium or arena. The lighting is dim, with a strong blue hue. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text. The text reads: "The 'Sport' Of News: A Passion On Par With The Big Leagues".

The 'Sport' Of News: A Passion On Par With The Big Leagues

In today's highly charged political climate, Presidential Election debates have become one of America's largest spectator events with a unique audience that rivaled the Super Bowl during the last cycle.

Furthermore, aggregated time spent viewing the 2016 election debates was **81% higher** than the Super Bowl.

Tale of the Tape



Super Bowl 50 (2016)



'15 - '16 Presidential Election Debates*

Unique Viewers	112.74 Million	112.72 Million
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Average Minutes Viewed Per Viewer	142 Minutes	257 Minutes
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Total Hours Viewed	266 MM Hours	482 MM Hours
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Source: Super Bowl 50: VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Live, A18+, 2/7/2016. *Presidential Election Debates: VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live, A18+, 8/1/2015 - 11/1/2016, reflects cumulative unduplicated unique reach & time spent over 21 Primary & General Election debates across 32 network airings during this time period. MM = million

And Now The Current Primary Debates Are Already Delivering An Unprecedented Number Of Viewers Early In The 2020 Election Cycle Amid Predictions Of Record Voter Turnout

Interest is extremely high and people are passionate about staying informed on where the candidates stand on today's issues

FORTUNE Jul 17, 2019
Record Voter Turnout Predicted for 2020 Election

CNN Jun 27, 2019
More than 15 million viewers tuned into the first Democratic debate of the 2020 race

Los Angeles Times Jun 28, 2019
Record-setting 18.1 million watch Round 2 of the Democratic debates

Note: Super Bowl LIII (2019) cume A18+ audience was 106.4 MM per VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report.

From A Broader Perspective, Politically-Charged News Events Have Also Become Major Televised Spectacles In Their Own Right And Are On Par With Big Sporting Events

REUTERS Jun 9, 2017

About 19.5 million U.S. viewers watched
Comey testify about Trump

2017 NBA Finals: Golden State vs. Cleveland
P2+ Avg Audience (000): 19,343



June 9, 2017

VARIETY Sep 28, 2018

**Kavanaugh-Ford Hearing
Draws Over 20 Million Viewers
Total**

Falcons-Saints NFL Thanksgiving
P2+ Avg Audience (000): 20,721



Nov 22, 2018

MarketWatch Feb 6, 2019

Trump's State of the Union drew bigger
TV audience than last year (41.1MM)*

CFP National Championship:
Clemson Tigers vs. Alabama Crimson Tide
P2+ Avg Audience (000): 22,817



Jan 7, 2019

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER Feb 28, 2019

**Michael Cohen Hearing Draws 16
Million Viewers**

Rose Bowl: Washington vs. Ohio State
P2+ Avg Audience (000): 15,326



Jan 1, 2019

THE WRAP Jul 9, 2019

Donald Trump's 4th of July Speech Draws 4.6
Million Viewers to Fox News

2019 MLB Home Run Derby
P2+ Avg Audience (000): 4,887



July 8, 2019

Source: Sports Programming Audience - VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower, Total Day, Live, P2+. Reflects ad-supported cable TV / broadcast TV, live originals/premieres only, January - December 31, 2017, 2018 & 2019. Both news and sporting events exclude digital audiences through MVPD / network TV apps. *State of the Union Address audience reflects Live P2+ cume unduplicated unique reach across 6 network airings (CNN, NBC, CBS, MSNBC, Fox Business Network & Fox News Channel).

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These Politically-Charged News Events Create Enormous Conversation, Both Offline And Online, And Gain Heavy Traction On Social Media Just Like Live Sports

'A Week On Twitter During A Major News Event'

Example: Judge Brett Kavanaugh Confirmation Hearings

Monday

Related Trending Topics

Friday

9/24/18 - Ashley Kavanaugh interviewed on Fox News' *The Story with Martha MacCallum*



Related Trending Topic on 9/24:
 • Ashley Kavanaugh (#9)

9/26/18 - President Trump calls allegations against Kavanaugh false at his press conference



Related Trending Topics on 9/26:
 • #TrumpPressConference (#1)
 • George Washington (#4)
 • #TrumpPresser (#8)

9/27/18 - Judge Brett Kavanaugh's Senate Judiciary Committee Confirmation Hearings



Related Trending Topics on 9/27:
 • Lindsey Graham (#1)
 • #KavanaughHearing (#2)
 • #KavanaughFord (#5)
 • #KavanaughConfirmationHearings (#6)
 • Durbin (#7)
 • Merrick Garland (#8)
 • Kamala Harris (#9)
 • Judge Kavanaugh (#10)

9/28/18 - Senate Judiciary Committee votes on Judge Kavanaugh



Related Trending Topics on 9/28:
 • #KavanaughVote (#2)

(#) = highest trending rank achieved on the night

...and with over **25 million views**, the 13-minute long 'Kavanaugh Hearing' sketch featuring Matt Damon on 9/29 became the **most watched** *Saturday Night Live* clip on YouTube of the '18-'19 season

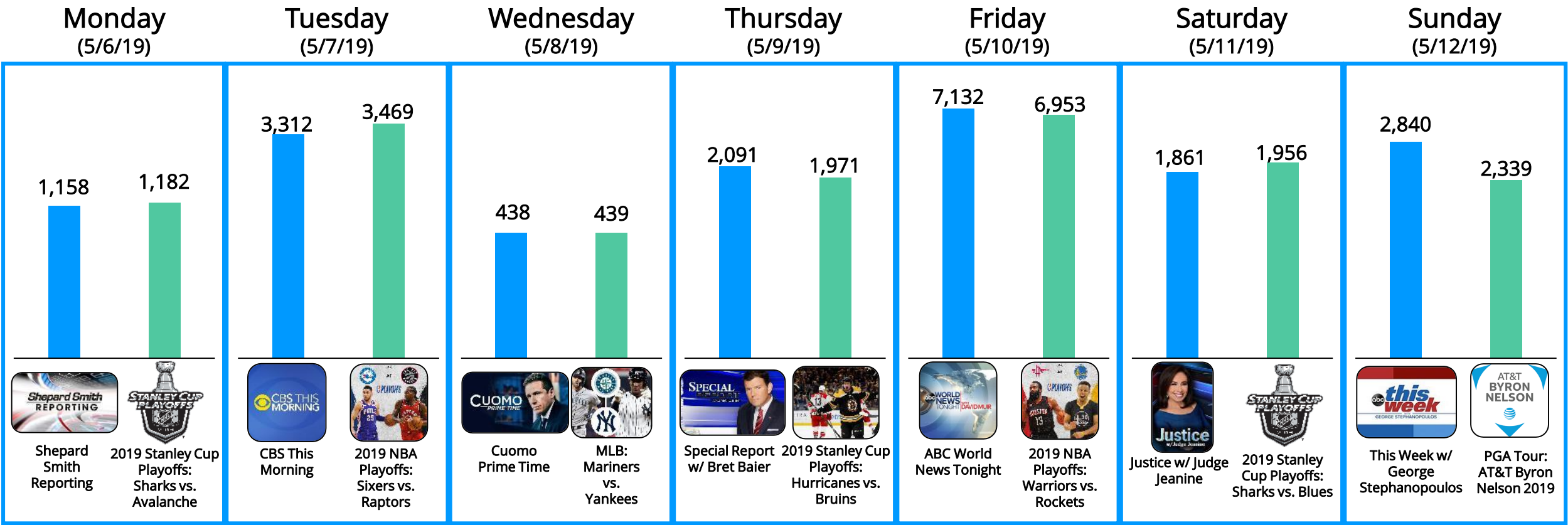


Source: VAB custom analysis of Top 10 trending Twitter Topics each night (8:30p, 9:30p, 10:30p, 11:30p) during 4-week time period (9/24/2018 – 10/21/2018). Results include both "direct" and "related" TV topics. Excerpted from #TVisSocial #FallSeason #Ep4: How 'Live' TV Drives Continuous Online Conversations. Download the full guide to learn more: <https://thevab.com/insight/tvissocial-fall-season>. YouTube view total as of 9/5/19. This information is exclusively provided to VAB members and qualified marketers. Further distribution is prohibited.

It's Not Just Big News Events That Capture America's Attention – News Programming Rivals That Of Popular Sporting Events During Any Day Of The Week

Example: A Week In May

Program P18+ Average Audience (000): News vs. Sports Programming



Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live+SD, A18+. Reflects broadcast TV / national cable TV; based on days in week of May 6th, 2019. Analysis examined programs within the following genres: News, News Documentary & Political vs. Sports Events. Programming – Monday: *Shepard Smith Reporting* (Fox News Channel) vs. *2019 Stanley Cup Semi Playoffs: Sharks vs. Avalanche* (NBCSN); Tuesday: *CBS This Morning* (CBS) vs. *2019 NBA Playoffs: Philadelphia 76ers vs. Toronto Raptors* (TNT); Wednesday: *Cuomo Prime Time* (CNN) vs. *MLB Weekday: Seattle Mariners vs. New York Yankees* (ESPN); Thursday: *Special Report With Bret Baier* (Fox News Channel) vs. *2019 Stanley Cup Semi Playoffs – Carolina Hurricanes Vs. Boston Bruins* (NBCSN); Friday: *ABC World News Tonight* (ABC) vs. *2019 NBA Playoffs: Golden State Warriors vs. Houston Rockets* (ESPN); Saturday: *Justice with Judge Jeanine* (Fox News) vs. *2019 Stanley Cup Semi Playoffs: Sharks vs. Blues* (NBC); Sunday: *This Week with George Stephanopoulos* (ABC) vs. *AT&T Byron Nelson 2019 PGA Tour* (CBS).

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Millions Of Fans Also Connect With Their Favorite Politically-Charged Talk & Debate News Programs On Social Media, More So Than They Do With Sports Commentary Shows

TV News Programming



9.7MM Followers



4.2MM Followers



2.8MM Followers



1.3MM Followers



607.6K Followers



596K Followers

Sports Programming



1.4MM Followers



1.2MM Followers



323.5K Followers



278.4K Followers



54.8K Followers



37.1K Followers

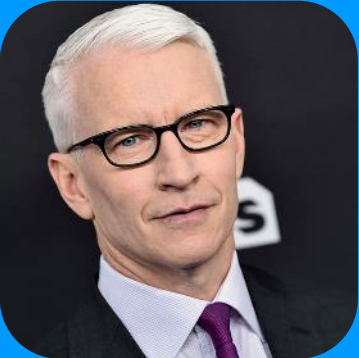
Followers as of 8/29/2019

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This Connection Extends To News Personalities Who Have Social Media Followings That Are Equivalent To, Or Greater Than, Some Of The World's Most Popular Athletes

TV News Personalities

Anderson Cooper



10MM Followers

Rachel Maddow



9.7MM Followers

Sean Hannity



4.2MM Followers

Laura Ingraham



2.8MM Followers

Lawrence O'Donnell



2.6MM Followers

Chris Cuomo



1.4MM Followers

Professional Athletes

Conor McGregor



7.7MM Followers

Tiger Woods



6.5MM Followers

Alex Morgan



4MM Followers

Mike Trout



2.6MM Followers

Danica Patrick



1.8MM Followers

Julian Edelman



1.3MM Followers

Followers as of 8/29/2019

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Beyond digital connections, TV news has evolved into a social activity just like sports.

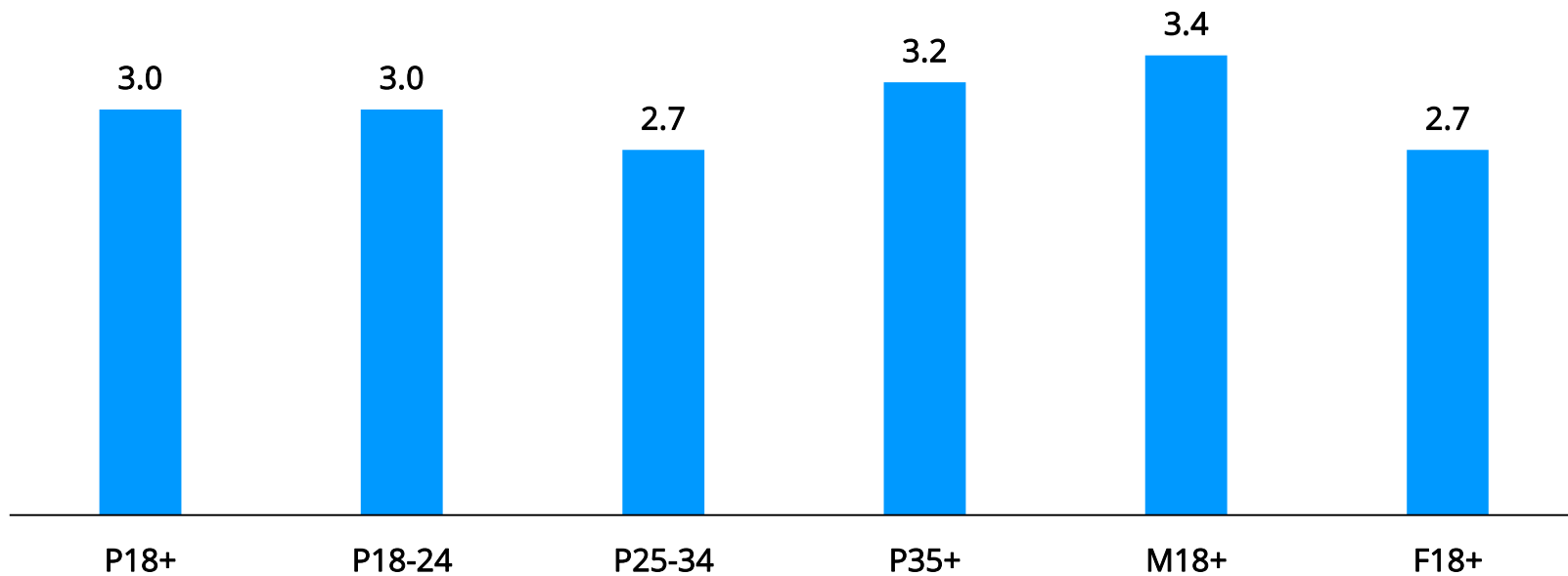
When people watch it out-of-home, they're typically viewing with a tight circle of family or friends.

Socializing around televised news events appeals most to upscale, educated, younger professionals.

Fast Fact
The average OOH News viewer is 38 years old, makes \$73K a year & has a college/graduate degree (48%)

Those Who Watch the News Out-of-Home Prefer to Do So With Family (60%), Friends (51%) & Colleagues (25%)

Including Yourself, How Many People Were With You Last Time You Viewed News Programming In A Location Outside Of Your Own Home?



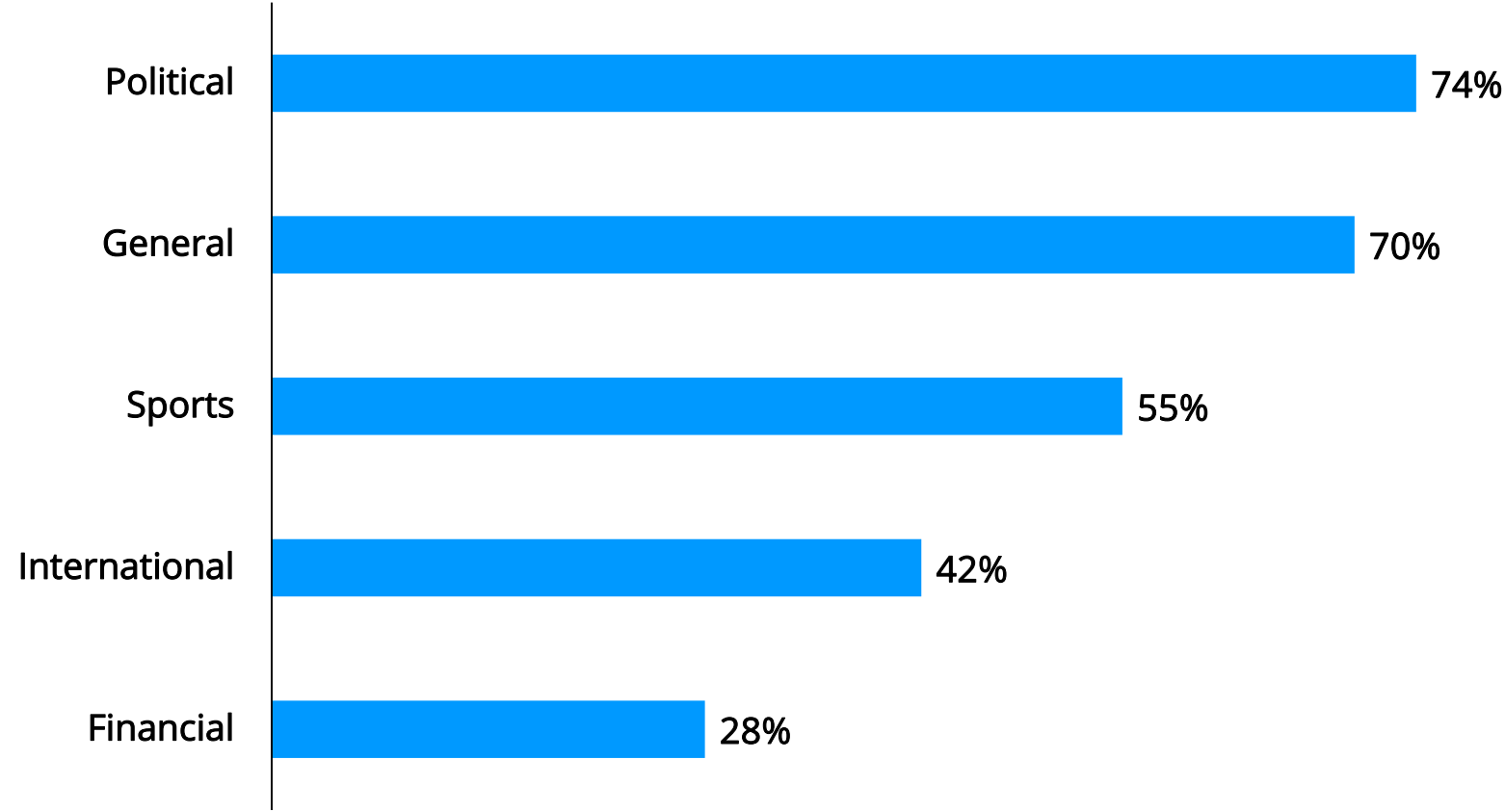
Source: Nielsen, *Affluent & Educated: A New Age for Out-of-Home News Viewing On Linear TV During Election Time*, Nielsen's Out-of-Home News Survey, 11/9-11/13 General Population. Education based on College Graduate or Graduate Degree Only; Base: all respondents 18+

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Political News In Particular Is Getting People Out Of The House Where They Can Connect With Their Community On Current Issues

Types of Cable News Programming Viewed Out-Of-Home

% of Respondents*



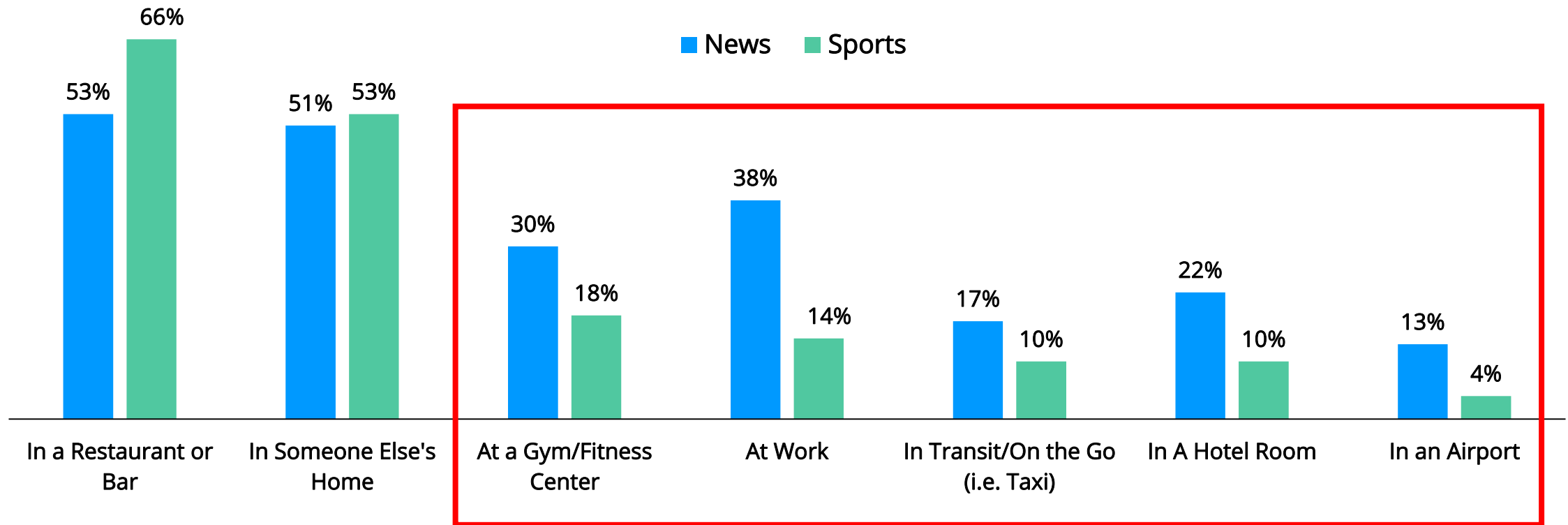
Source: Nielsen, *Affluent & Educated: A New Age for Out-of-Home News Viewing On Linear TV During Election Time*, Nielsen's Out-of-Home News Survey, 11/9-11/13 General Population. Base: Respondents who watched cable news in the past week. *Respondents can choose multiple options.

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Just Like Sports, People Will Watch News Events At Restaurants, Bars Or Someone's Home And Get Quick Updates At Work, On The Go or When Traveling So They're Always 'In The Know'

Where Do You View Programming Out-of-Home?
% of A18+



Source: News - Nielsen, *Affluent & Educated: A New Age for Out-of-Home News Viewing On Linear TV During Election Time*, Nielsen's Out-of-Home News Survey, 11/9-11/13 General Population. Base: all respondents 18+, *Where Did You View News Programming OOH in the Past Week?* Sports - VAB analysis of Nielsen Fall Sports, *Game On: Driving Brand Engagement and Co-Viewing On Linear TV With Out-Of-Home Audiences*, 2019. Reflects multiple responses chosen from respondents in Nielsen's Out-of-Home Fall Sports Location Survey, General Population (10/29-10/31). Base = All respondents 18+. Respondents can select multiple locations.

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Although Politics Used To Be Off-Limits, Bars Are Now Embracing Televised News Events With Viewing Parties And Drinking Games

npr Jun 8, 2017
Scenes From #ComeyDay, As Bars Hold Watch Parties For Hearing On Trump And Russia

THE HILL Feb 26, 2019
DC bars to open early, offer specials for Cohen testimony

FORTUNE Jun 26, 2019
Democratic Debate Watch Parties—And Drinking Games—Are a Thing

amNEWYORK Jul 29, 2019
NYC bars hosting Democratic presidential debate parties



And When Attending TV Watch Parties, Some Take Their Fanaticism A Step Further By Badging Themselves With Politically-Affiliated Merchandise Much Like They Would Do With Their Favorite Sports Teams

GLAMOUR

Midterms Merch Is Big Business. But Will It Have an Impact at the Polls?



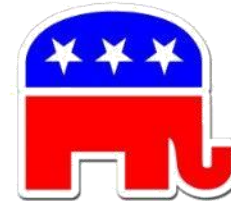
The 2020 merchandise primary has begun — and it could be key to Democratic presidential candidates' small-dollar fundraising



The New York Times

Beto O'Rourke in Candle Wax. Ted Cruz in Acrylic. Meet the Crafters Who Love Politics.

Some Americans show their candidate preference at the ballot box. Others use Etsy.



PYMNTS.com

Can Merchandise Make A Presidential Campaign?



This sense of 'team pride' extends to their favorite TV news networks & personalities as well...

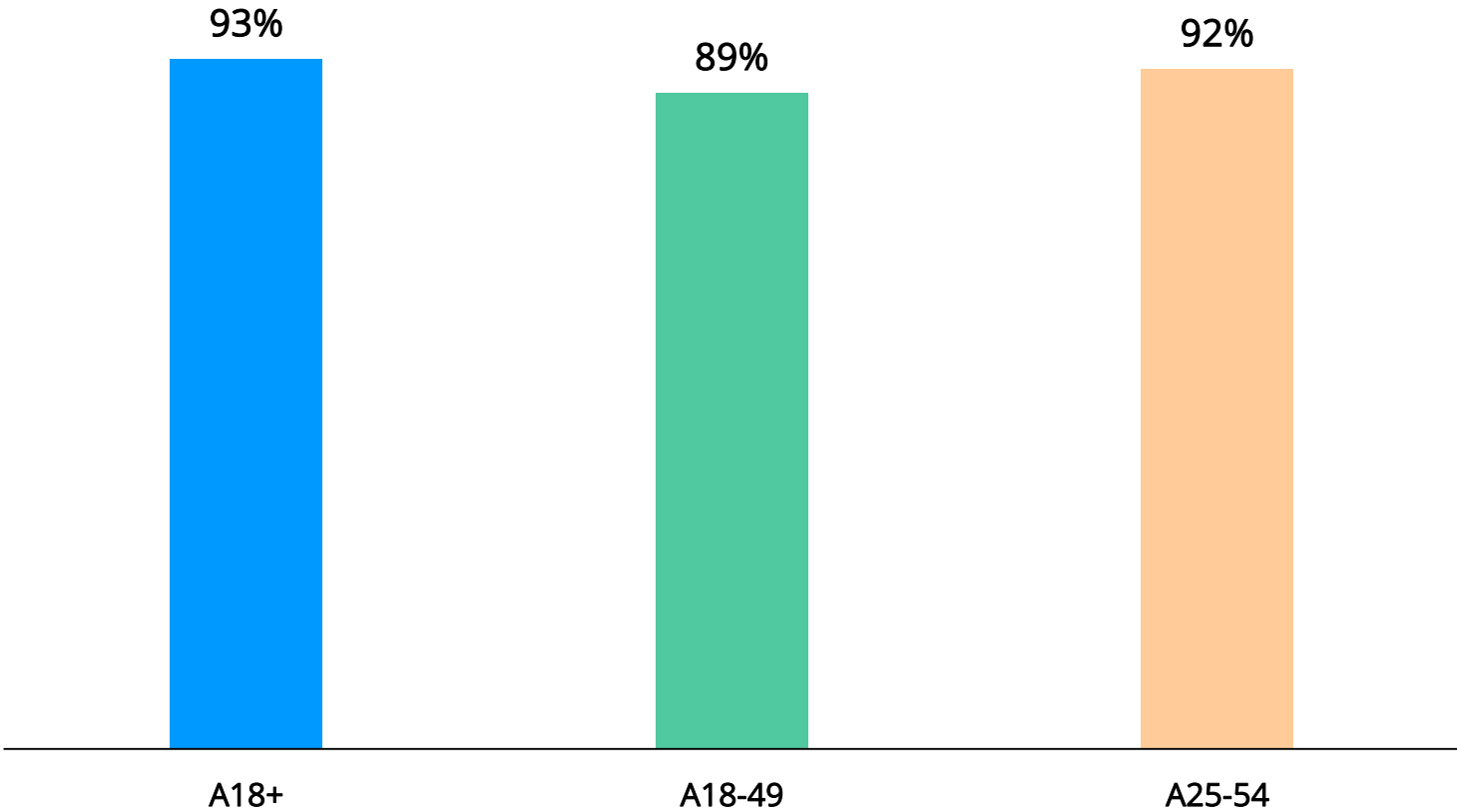
...and like a true rivalry, viewers even broadcast their feelings about supposed 'opposition' networks



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This pride and passion exists because TV is at the epicenter of skyrocketing news consumption and TV news viewing is nearly ubiquitous among American adults

CY 2018 National TV News Reach

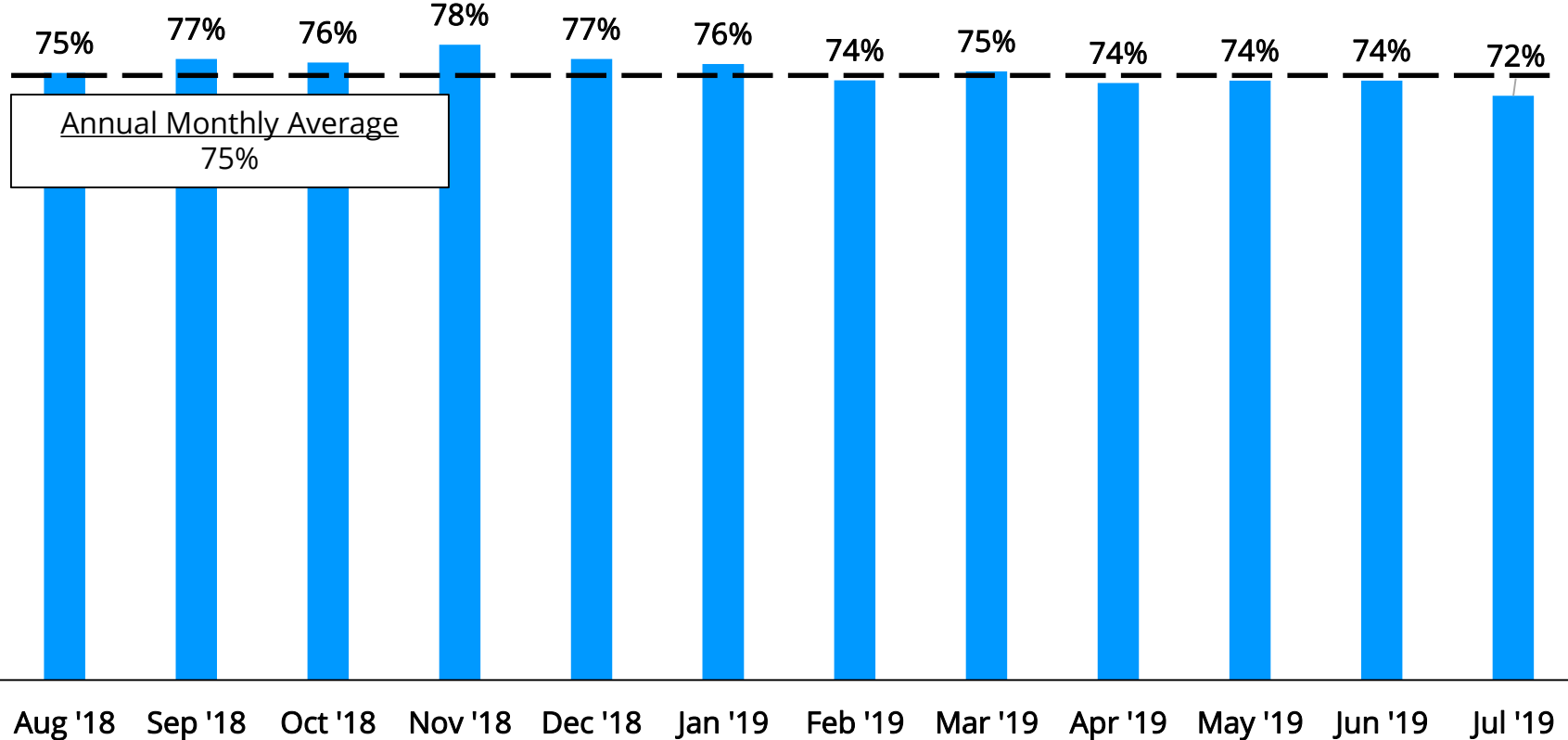


Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live+7, A18+, A18-49 & A25-54. Reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on 2018 calendar year. Includes the following genres: News, documentary news & info & Political.

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With breaking news happening almost daily, and accompanied by 24-hour television coverage, ad-supported TV news has a '12-month season' with rather consistent reach throughout the year

Ad-Supported TV News Genre: Monthly Cume Reach A18+ - Total Day

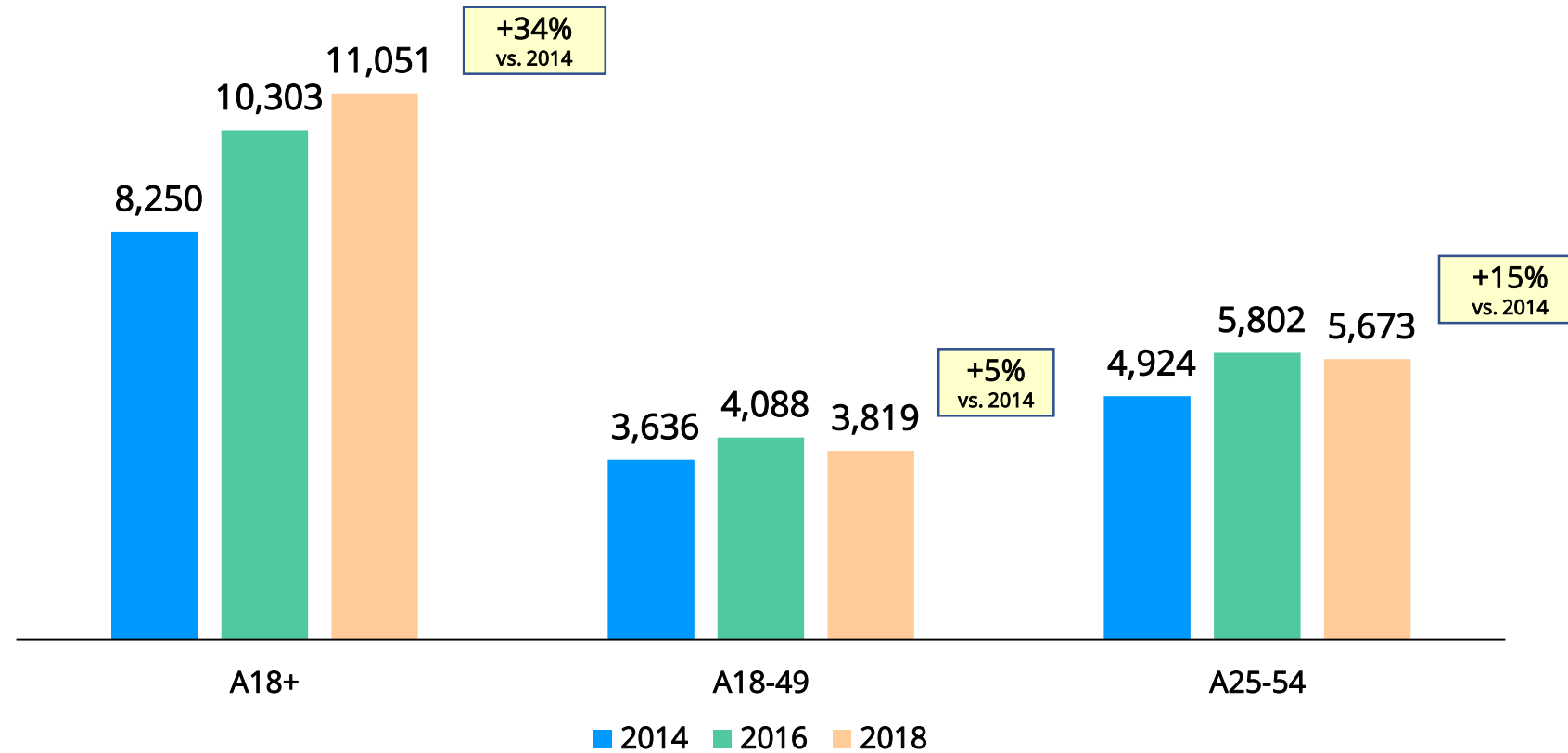


Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live+7, A18+. Reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on standard calendar months in 2018 & 2019. Includes the following genres: News, Documentary news/info & Political.

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TV news viewership experienced a significant spike across major demos during the height of the 2016 election cycle and has held steady through the end of 2018

National TV News Programming: Average Annual Minutes Viewed Per Viewer

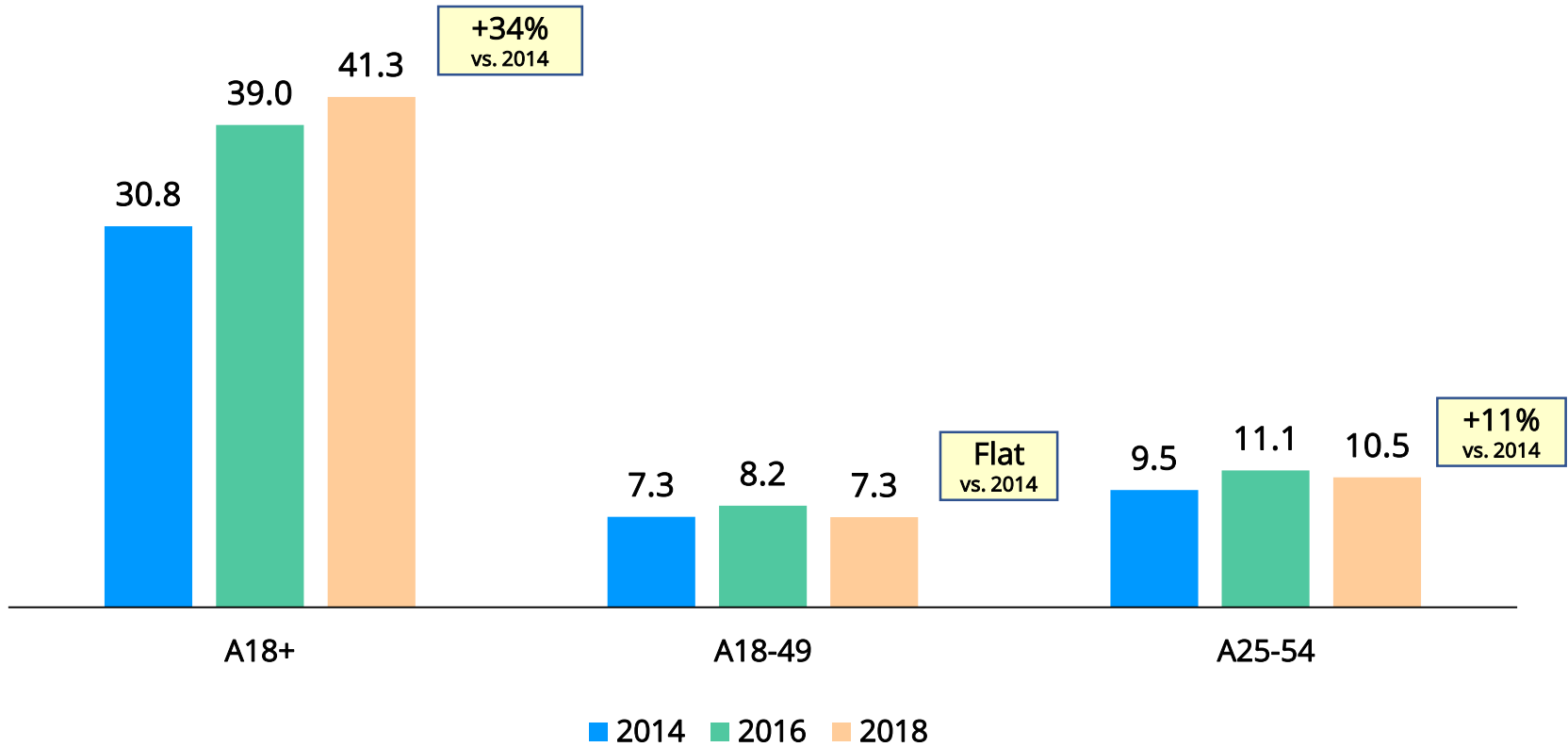


Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live+7, A18+, A18-49 & A25-54. Reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on calendar years for 2014, 2016 & 2018. Includes the following genres: News, documentary news & info & Political.

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With a seemingly never-ending news cycle filled with almost daily breaking news stories, over 40 billion hours of national TV news are now being consumed annually by adults, a 34% increase vs. 2014

Annual Total Hours Spent With News Content (hours in billions)

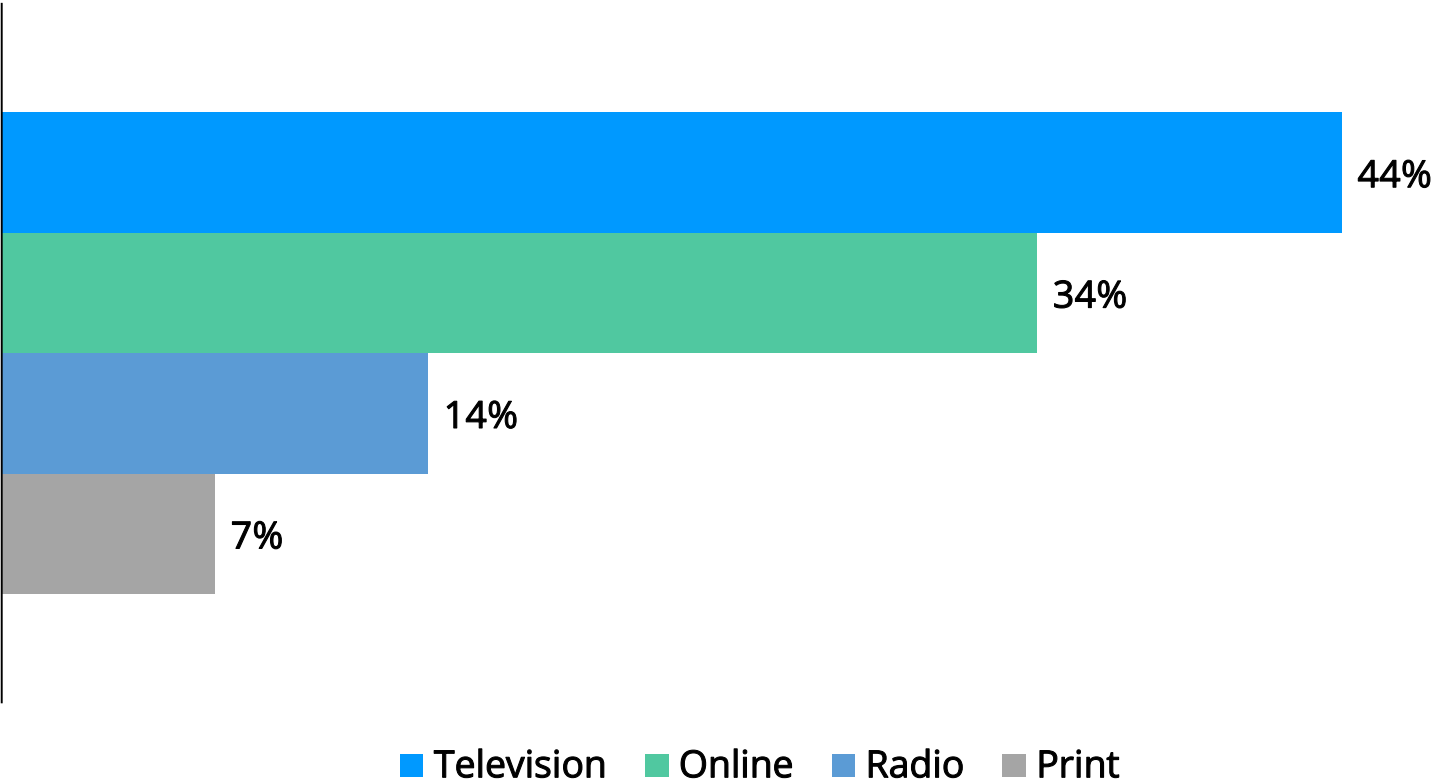


Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live+7, A18+, A18-49 & A25-54. Reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on calendar years for 2014, 2016 & 2018. Includes the following genres: News, documentary news & info & Political.

In addition to scale, TV is also a very trusted media.

More people prefer getting their news from Television than any other source.

Which of the Following Would You Say You Prefer for Getting News?
% of U.S. Adults Who Answered



Source: Pew Research Center, *Americans Still Prefer Watching to Reading the News – and Mostly Still Through Television*, survey conducted July 30 – August 12, 2018.

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The Appeal Of TV As A Trusted Source Has Become More Pronounced As Major Social Media Platforms Have Been The Subject Of Their Own Breaking News Stories

Over the last few years, top digital platforms have frequently been in the spotlight for scandals involving 'fake news' and foreign meddling

engadget Oct 17, 2018

Facebook's political ad system still allows anonymous advertising

Anonymous attack ads have targeted a candidate in Virginia.

recode Nov 6, 2018

On Election Day, the Cambridge Analytica whistleblower is blasting Facebook for still not doing enough



Dec 17, 2018

Facebook was manipulated by Russians, who used the same targeting tools that advertisers love

Forbes Jul 9, 2019

How Were Social Media Platforms So Unprepared For 'Fake News' And Foreign Influence?

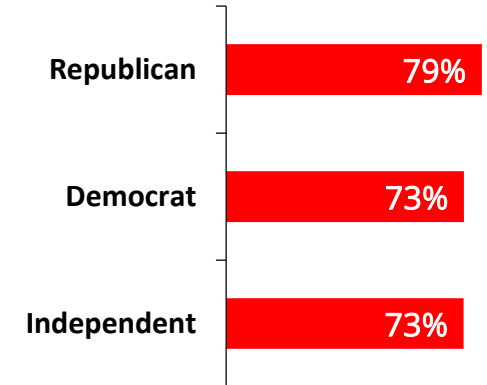
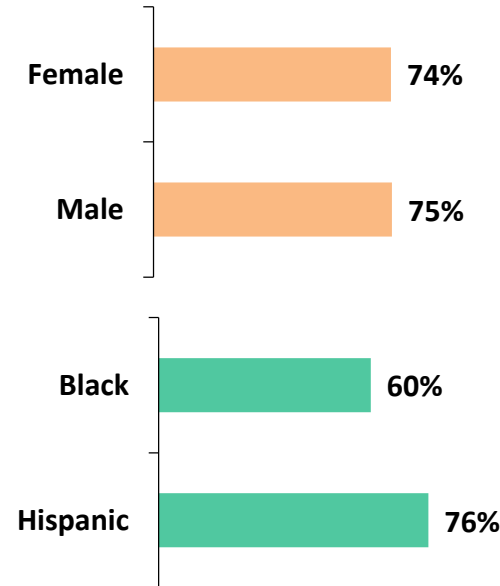
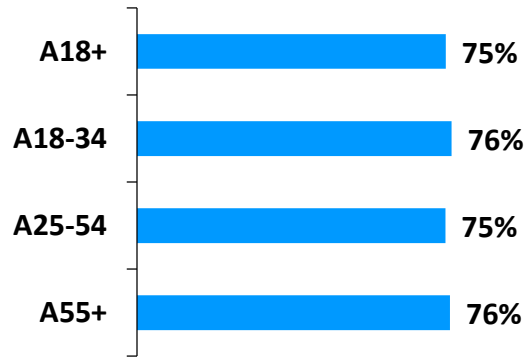
FORTUNE Jul 2, 2019

Despite Crackdown On Election Interference, Facebook Must Do More, Experts Say

Because of these highly publicized scandals, it's no surprise that a large majority of people - regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or party affiliation - are very concerned about the amount of fake news on social media platforms

"I Am Concerned By The Amount Of Fake News On Social Media"

% Who Agree



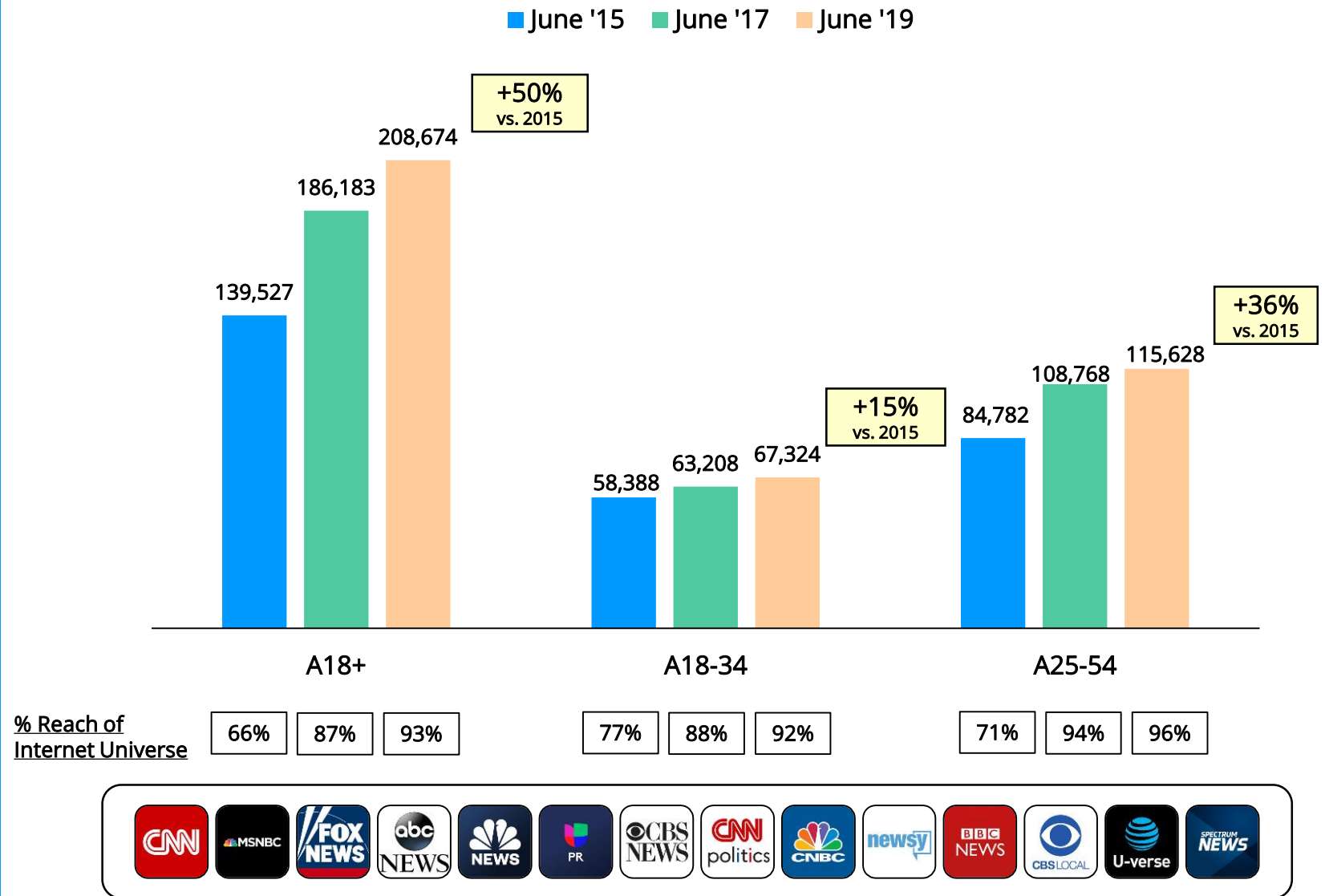
Source: VAB / Research Now Poll of Registered or Likely Voters A18+; June 2018. Q23: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I am concerned by the amount of fake news on social media. Respondents who answered Agree or Strongly Agree. Total Respondents=1,003. Download the full guide to learn more: <https://thevab.com/insight/its-matter-trust-undecided-voter>

People are flocking to trusted online news sources in the wake of 'fake news' scandals on social media platforms.

The reach of TV-branded digital news platforms on mobile has increased 50% in the last four years and is now nearly ubiquitous...

...Over 9 out of 10 Adults 18-34 access TV-branded news online.

TV-Branded Digital News Platforms' Mobile Unique Visitors (000)



Sampling of Streaming Mobile Apps

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Source: VAB analysis of Comscore Audience Duplication, multiplatform (web and mobile), June 2019, P18+, P18-34 & P25-54 (Desktop P2+; Mobile P18+), Unduplicated unique visitors based on a custom created News TV Branded Website subcategory which includes digital platforms such as ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, MSNBC, CNN, BBC & Bloomberg news properties. % Reach of Internet Universe based on VAB analysis of 'Total Internet' unique visitors, Comscore MediaMetrix, multiplatform media trend data.

When It Comes Specifically To The Political Category, The Majority Of The Top 5 Digital Platforms For Adults 18+ Throughout The Year Are TV Brands

Top 5 Politics Digital Platform Rank By Total Minutes Viewed (P18+)



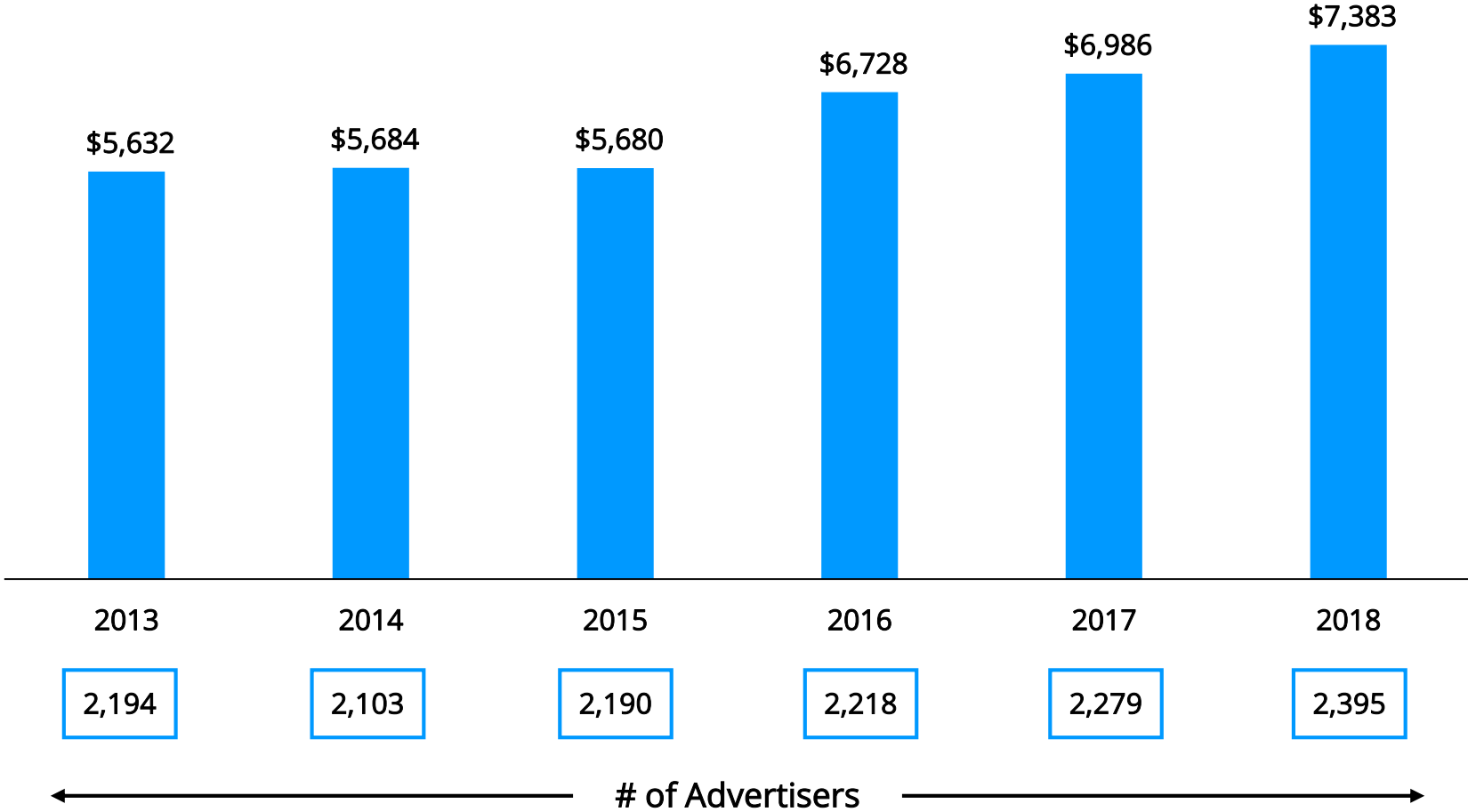
Source: VAB analysis of Comscore MediaMetrix, multiplatform media trend data, January-December 2018; politics category, P18+

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With so many viewers reliant on, and engaged with, TV news as their #1 trusted source for information, advertisers have taken notice...

...And because of that, annual TV spending in the news genre has increased 30% since 2015 with more brands advertising each year.

National TV News Advertising Spend: 5-Year Trend (millions)



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Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen Ad Intel data, reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on calendar years. Includes the following genres: News, News-general, documentary news, & info & political. # of advertisers based on Parent Company.



Key Takeaways

The never-ending action of news & politics has created a passion and interest level that's on par with traditional sports

In fact, just as many adults collectively watched the 2016 Presidential Election debates as they did Super Bowl 50, and aggregated time spent viewing the debates was 81% higher than the Super Bowl

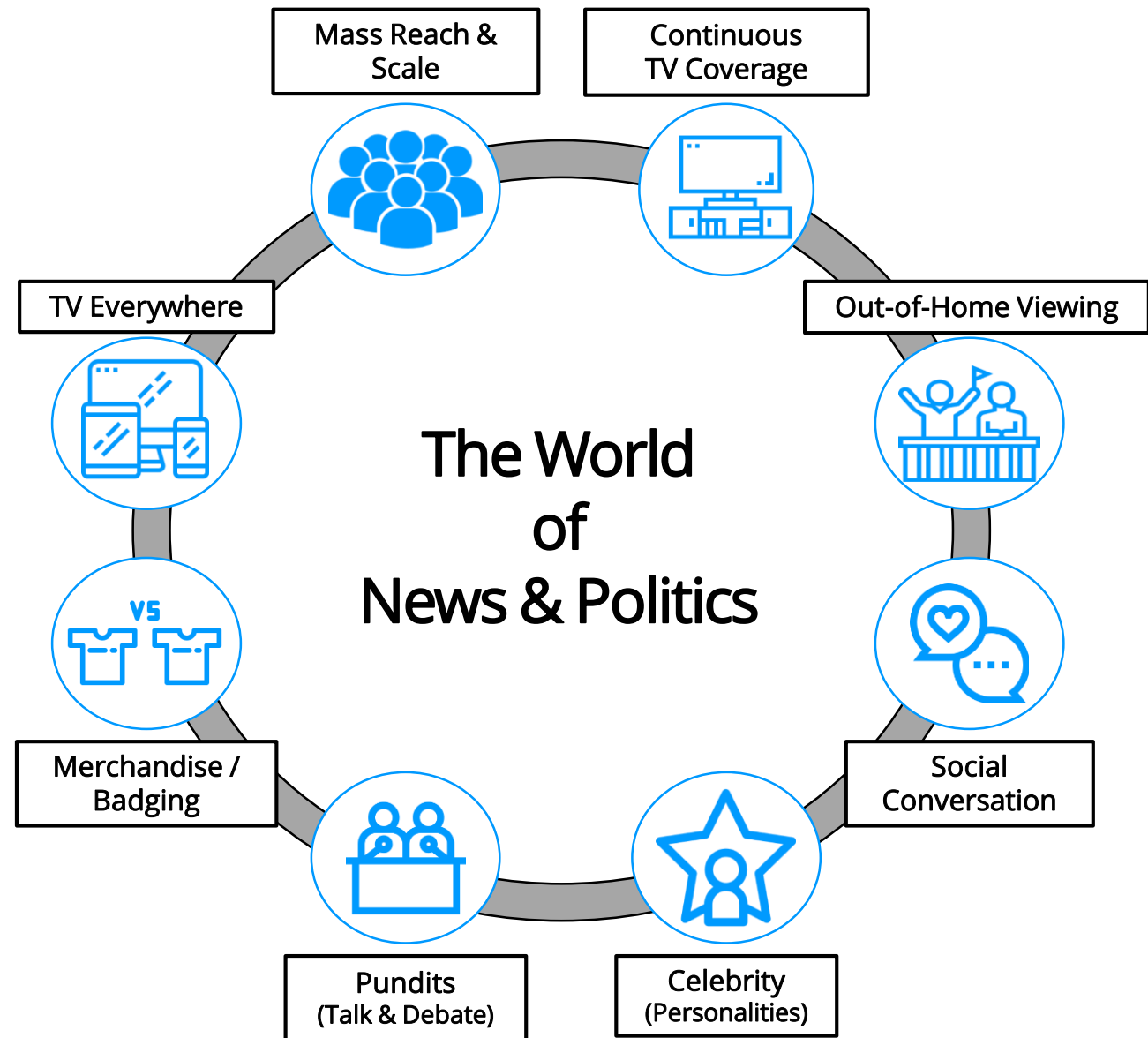
Furthermore, politically-charged news events ignite a similar passion as live sports: people talk about both incessantly online and they gather with others to watch and debate the news just like they would do with the 'big game'

As the #1 trusted source for news, multiscreen TV is the people's preference and now over 40 billion hours of national TV news are being consumed by adults annually, a 34% increase since 2014

Advertisers have taken notice of the passion and mass interest by the news & politics viewer and are taking action – national TV spending in the news genre has increased 30% over the last three years



In Summary, The Characteristics Of Sports & Sports Fandom Are Now Universal Within The World Of News & Politics



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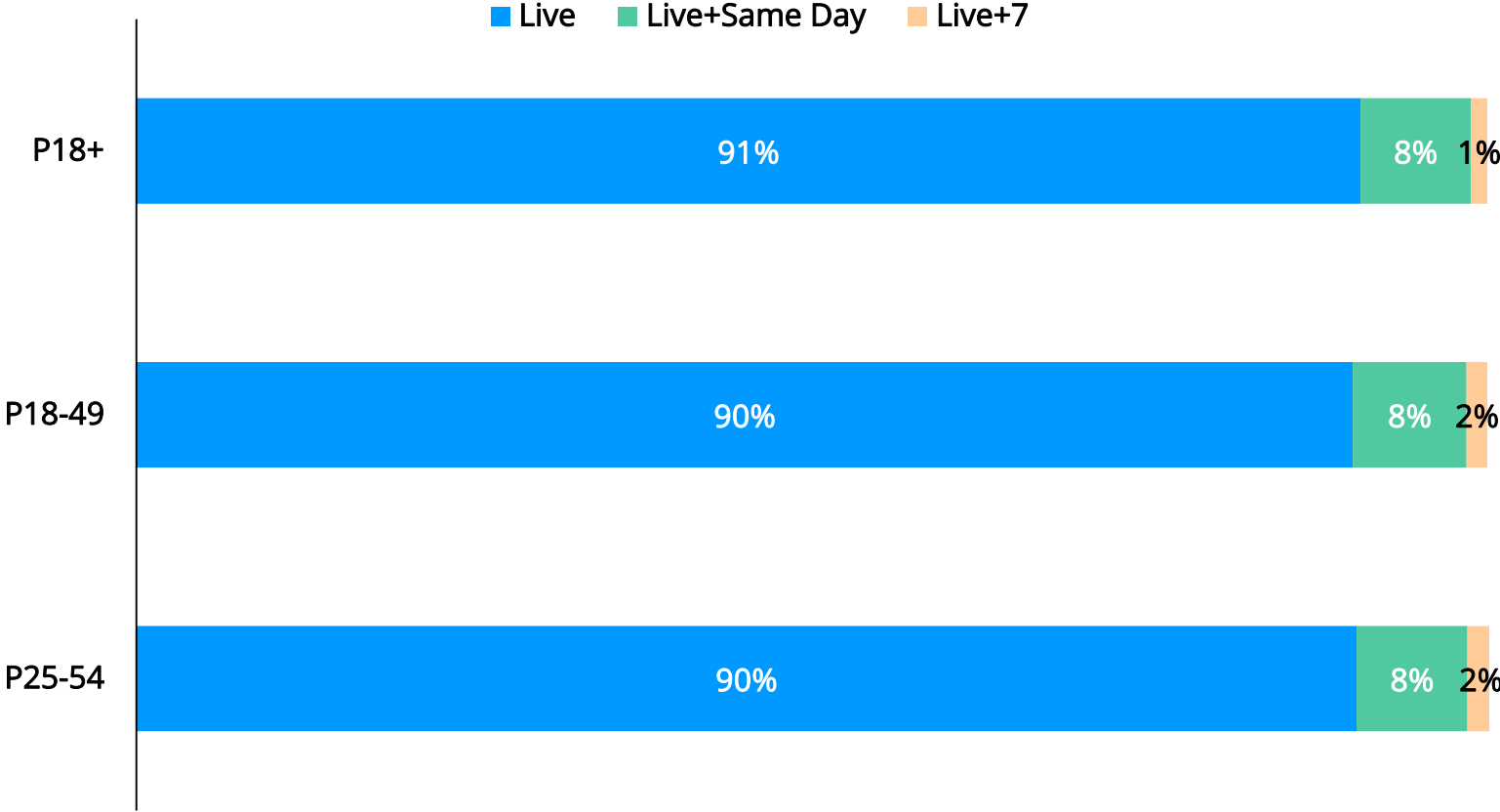


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With the nature of the news cycle and the never-ending streak of breaking news, it's no surprise that almost all TV news viewership is done either live or very slightly time-shifted

Total Annual Time Spent: Viewership By Stream % of Total Viewing Hours, CY 2018



Source: VAB Analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, Live vs. Live+7, A18+, A18-34 & A25-54. Reflects national cable TV, Spanish language cable TV, broadcast TV, Spanish language broadcast TV; based on 2018 calendar year. Includes the following genres: News, documentary news, & info & Political.

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Several Of The Top 5 Digital Platforms For Adults 18-34 Within The Political Category Are TV Brands

Top 5 Politics Digital Platform Rank By Total Minutes Viewed (P18-34)



Several Of The Top 5 Digital Platforms For Adults 25-54 Within The Political Category Are TV Brands

Top 5 Politics Digital Platform Rank By Total Minutes Viewed (P25-54)



Several Of The Top 5 Digital Platforms For Adults 18-34 Within The News & Information Category Are TV Brands

Top 5 News/Information Digital Platform Rank By Total Minutes Viewed (P18-34)



Source: VAB analysis of Comscore MediaMetrix, multiplatform media trend data, January-December 2018; News/information category, P18-34.

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Several Of The Top 5 Digital Platforms For Adults 25-54 Within The News & Information Category Are TV Brands

Top 5 News/Information Digital Platform Rank By Total Minutes Viewed (P25-54)

