

News Push Notifications Research Study

Findings and Recommendations

By: Dave Bartkowiak | dbartkow@kent.edu
Revised: April 24, 2016

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Summary

The purpose of this document is to share findings from push notifications research and recommendations based on such findings.

Research Question

What compels a person to receive app notifications from a news service?

More specific research questions:

- What compels a person to receive app notifications from a *local* news service?
- How often do users opt out of news app notifications? Why do they opt out?
- Why do users choose to enter the news app upon receiving a notification?
- What kind of content are users seeking to receive from an app notification?

Research Methods Conducted

- Interviews (Three)
- Diary Studies (Three)

Target Audience

Summary:







The target audience is comprised of people who find value in news app push notifications and use them on a daily basis. Ideally, these are people who use more than one app for news push notifications.

Profile:

A member of the target audience should, ideally, meet the following criteria:

- Speaks and reads English fluently
- Frequently uses smartphone and/or tablet device
- Actively consumes news, whether it's national and/or local
- Receives push notifications from at least one news app

Meet the Participants

Interview Participants	Diary Study Participants
 <p>Carl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 57 • Occupation: Business owner • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app 	 <p>Mark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 25 • Occupation: Public Relations • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app
 <p>Mary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 58 • Occupation: Pre-school teacher • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone and tablet to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app 	 <p>Larry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 27 • Occupation: Waiter • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app
 <p>Lynn (<i>participated in both</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 28 • Occupation: Middle school teacher • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app 	 <p>Lynn (<i>participated in both</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 28 • Occupation: Middle school teacher • Lives in Detroit news market • Uses iPhone to receive news app alerts • Uses ClickOnDetroit news app

Findings

How data was analyzed:

The data from diary studies was compiled into spreadsheets based on a participant's responses to the supplied worksheet (view in appendix). Interviews were transcribed (view in appendix) and summarized, from which codes were drawn. Codes were placed into a spreadsheet (view in appendix) to help organize the data. This allowed for key data to be pinpointed.

Key Findings From Diary Studies:

- Users find strong value in news app push notifications
- Users likely won't enter app upon receiving a push notification
- Users want international news push notifications
- Users want national news push notifications
- Users want political news push notifications
- Users want sports news push notifications
- Users want local news push notifications

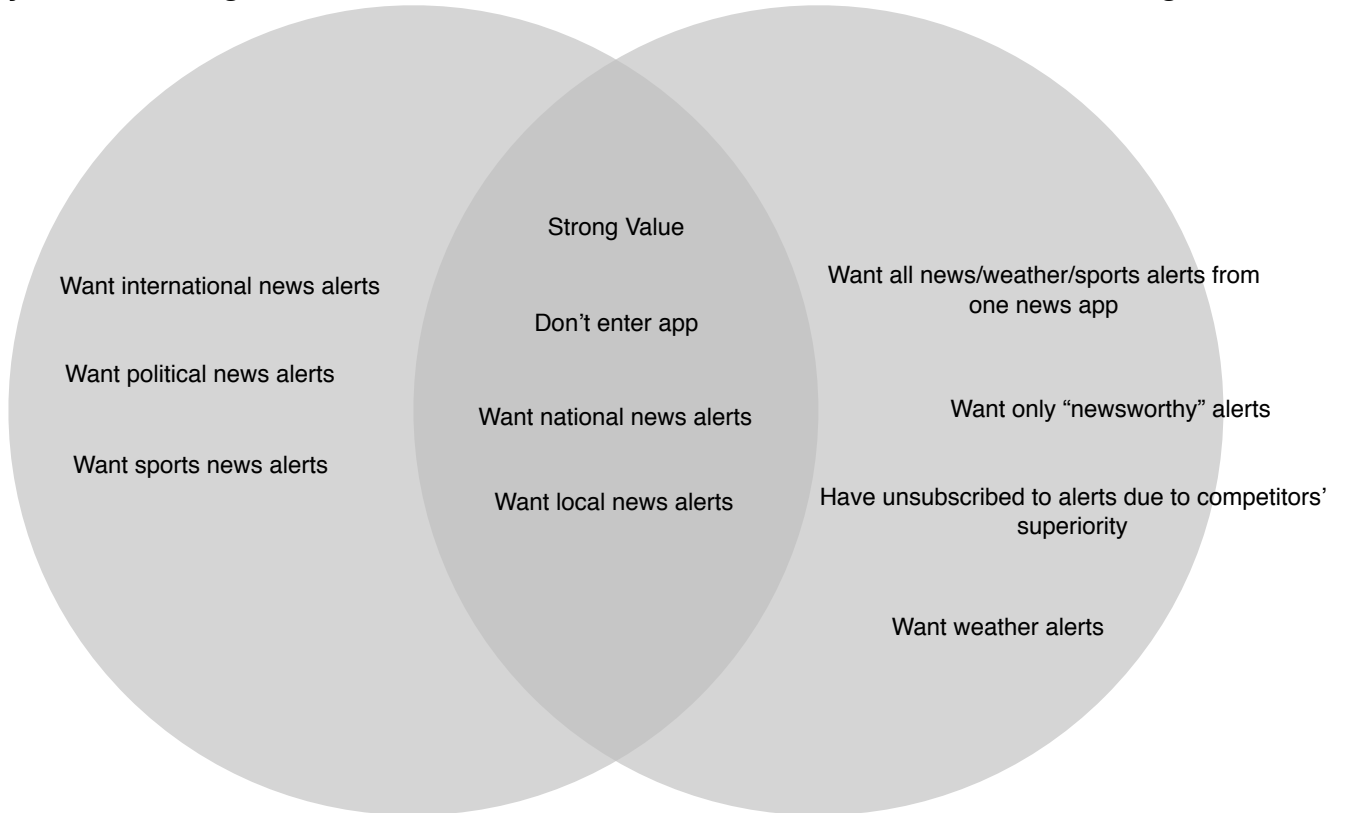
Key Findings From Interviews:

- App push notifications serve as primary news source in daily lives (strong value)
- Users want all news/sports/weather push notifications from one app
- Users likely won't enter app upon receiving a push notification
- User want weather push notifications
- Users want national news push notifications
- Users have unsubscribed to app notifications due to competitor's superiority
- Users only want newsworthy* push notifications — nothing else
 - *newsworthy is considered to be national, weather, local, sports alerts from a news source

The next page shows a Venn diagram depicting overlaps in findings from diary studies and interviews ...

Diary studies findings

Interviews findings



Findings

Interview Summaries:



Carl

Carl is a middle-aged business owner who relies on his smartphone for local, national, international and sports news. He relies on push notifications to deliver such news to him.

“Most common (source of news) is on the phone ... I don’t watch too much news because I don’t have time,” he said.

He wants weather and traffic alerts.

“If there’s a tornado warning or something happening in the area, I am responsible for the employees in the building,” he said.

His long commute to work keeps him watching out for traffic alert.

Carl has unsubscribed to at least one news app in the past because he was annoyed.

“If it’s not newsworthy, or sports ... I turn it off.”

However, he does get personal, direct messages from Facebook and Twitter.

Carl doesn’t normally enter an app after receiving a push notification, so he is relying on the push notifications to keep him informed.

“Honestly, maybe 25 percent of the time (do I actually enter the app after getting an alert).”

“I think it is likely that if the (alert) had 2-3 sentences instead of one, it would probably give me all the information I want to know.”

Watch an interview with Carl [here](#).



Mary

Mary is a middle-aged pre-school teacher who relies on mobile devices for her news. She relies heavily on app push notifications to keep her informed.

“I use the weather app, and the (ClickOnDetroit) app. I also have the CNN app,” she said.

Mary wants weather and local news.

“I always get local weather push notifications.”

She will go into the app to read about the weather.

“Sometimes I don’t (go into the app) ... and that’s why I like the push notifications because I don’t really have to read the whole thing.”

On unsubscribing to alerts: “If it’s annoying to me, that’s it, I’m done.”

“Annoying” is anything that’s not news.

Watch an interview with Mary [here](#).



Lynn

Lynn is a 28-year-old middle school teacher who relies on her push notifications — on her iPhone — for all of her local and national news.

Lynn usually doesn't go into the app to read the story after receiving a push notification. She'll go back to read something if she remembers.

“I don’t prefer to watch the news,” she said.

However, she watches CNN student news in her classroom. Other than that, all of her news is from push alerts and mobile news apps.

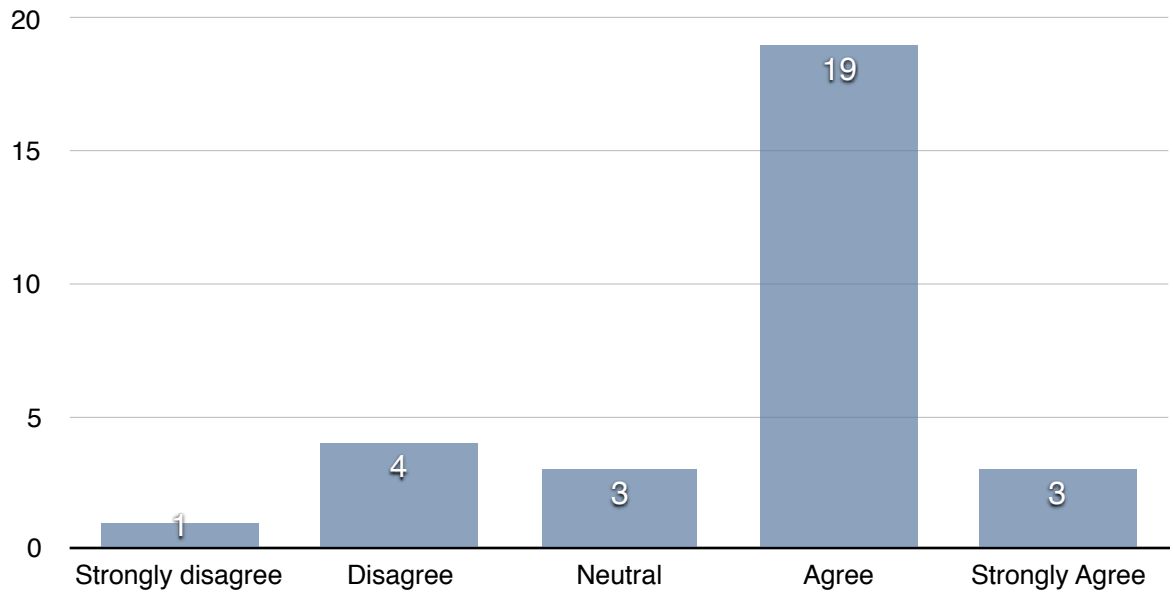
“I have seen stories on Facebook ... but most of the time if it is posted on Facebook, I have already seen it on an alert,” she said.

Watch an interview with Lynn [here](#).

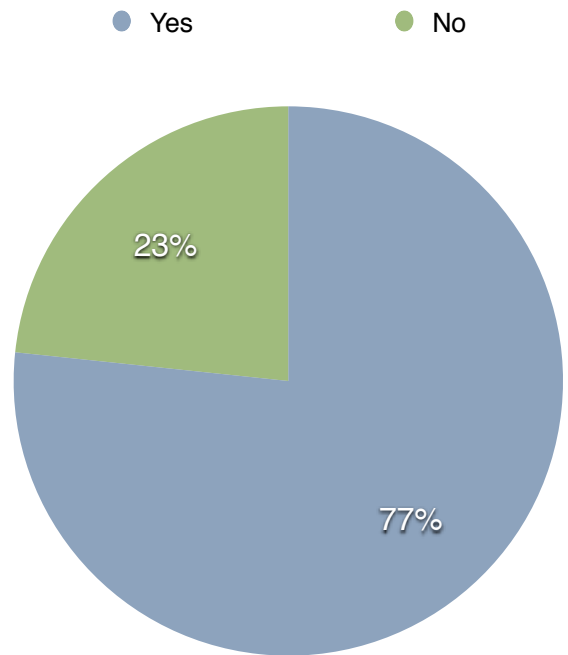
Conclusions from Findings Based on Data

- **Those who subscribe to push notifications find strong value in them**

When asked if a push notification was useful and relevant:

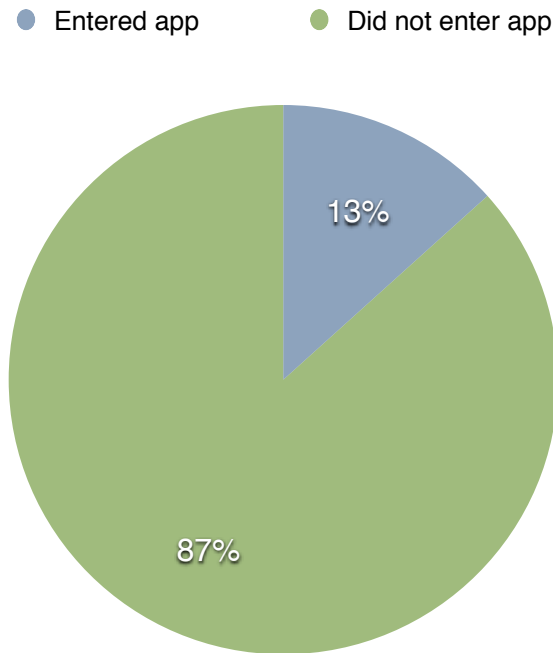


When asked if a push notification was useful:



● ***App users are unlikely to enter app upon receiving push notification***

Three diary study participants received 10 push notifications:

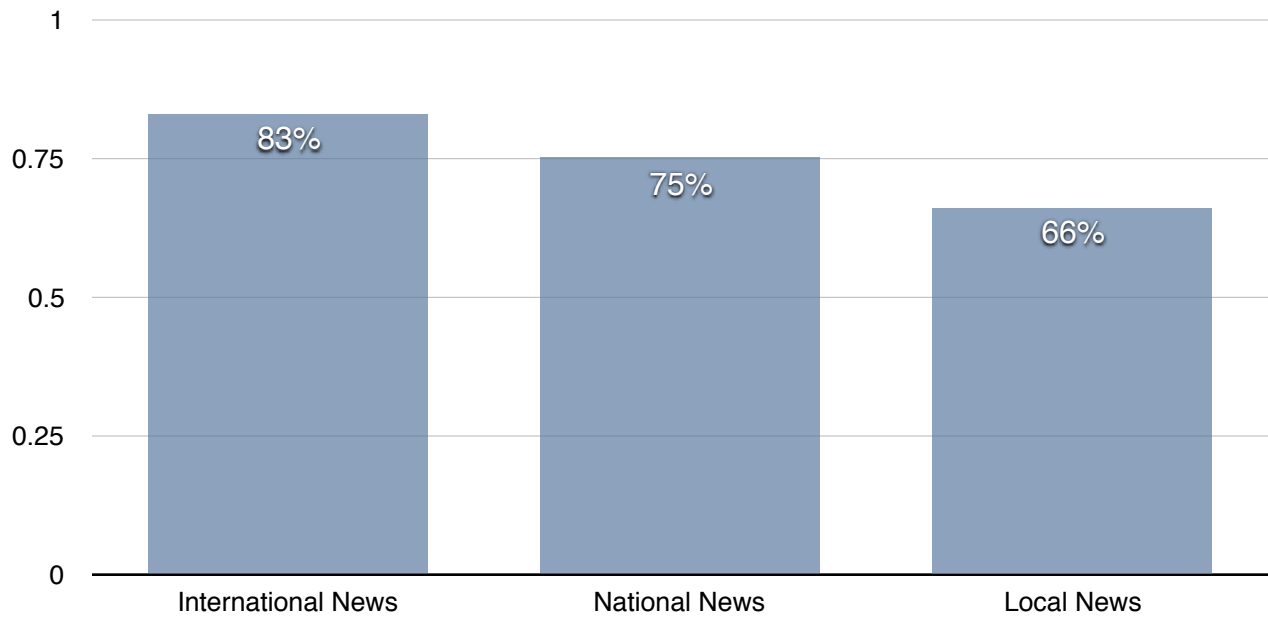


The 13 percent represents 4 instances users actually entered the app after receiving a push notification. They gave the following reasons for entering the app:

1. Wanted to know more about this
2. Wanted details on product recall
3. Wanted to see full story
4. I wanted to see the full schedule

- **Local news app push notification subscribers not only want local news push notifications, but also want national and international news push notifications**

Percent of received notifications found useful to user:



Recommendations

Based on the research conducted and the data yielded, here are three recommendations for ClickOnDetroit's push alert content strategy:

1. ClickOnDetroit app users want the app push notifications to be from the following news categories: local news, national news, international news and sports news.

Recommendation: The app should provide all of those types of alerts so users do not have to use another app for alerts he or she could receive from the ClickOnDetroit app.

2. Users of this type of app consider it his or her primary news source. Moreover, the push notification itself may be their primary news source — the user rarely enters the app upon receiving the notification, but still values the notification a lot.

Recommendation: The ClickOnDetroit app needs to offer hard-hitting, useful news in a push notification. Users won't be entering the app for the most part, so the push notification should be considered a stand-alone piece of content, and needs to be constructed with that in mind.

3. As stated, push notifications are considered a primary source of news for those who subscribe to them.

Recommendation: Send more push notifications. If the notifications meet the criteria listed above, then more of them should be sent. Subscribers want them, otherwise they would be unsubscribed already.

Appendix

Contents:

- Diary study worksheet
[Click here to view](#)
- Interview script
[Click here to view](#)
- Interviews transcripts
[Click here to view](#)
- Data spreadsheets
[Click here to view](#)