

Where is the Influence: Murdoch or Google?

YouGovStone polled 1416 members of the YouGovStone panel of influential people between 26th October and 2nd November. YouGov also conducted a parallel survey of the general public, using a national representative sample from the YouGov panel.

Who is more influential, and who will be in the future?

68% of our YGS panellists thought that Rupert Murdoch and his companies were more influential than Google at present, with 20% thinking Google wielded more influence. However, most thought Google had a more positive influence on people's lives and, if they had to choose between the two, would prefer Google to be the more influential.

Looking ahead 10 years, 68% expected Google and its companies to be the more influential, with only 13% expecting Rupert Murdoch (or his successor) and their companies to stay on top. These views were largely echoed by the general public.

Aggregation vs content

We asked about the recent criticism of Google's effect upon journalism by the Wall Street Journal's Robert Thomson. 76% of influentials agreed with Thomson's premise that Google was hurting online journalism by encouraging promiscuity, and passing on content without bearing the costs of producing it. However, there was also agreement with Google's rebuttal that they were driving huge amounts of traffic towards online media sites who in turn were able to monetise it.

Asked about whether aggregators or content providers would wield the most influence in the future, our panellists were divided. 46% of influentials thought content providers would be more influential, 42% the aggregators. An interesting contrast with their expectation that Google would be more influential than Murdoch in the future.

Broadcast, online and print brands

The broadcast media is seen as the most influential and respected area of the media today by both our influentials and the general public. Asked about how influential individual media brands are though, it is clear this is largely on the basis of the terrestrial channels and especially the BBC. Sky is seen as very or fairly influential by only 57% of influentials, meaning that within the Murdoch stable the

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Times, Sunday Times and Sun are seen as influential by far more people.

The Google search engine itself is seen as influential by 73% of influentials and 62% of the general public. Online sites like Twitter, Youtube and MySpace were seen as influential by relatively few respondents.

As well as the internet brands not being seen as particularly influential, there was also comparatively little awareness of the brands and companies Rupert Murdoch and Google controlled. Naturally, the overwhelming majority of our influentials were aware that Rupert Murdoch controlled Sky and the News International stable of Newspapers. However, only 23% identified MySpace as a Murdoch controlled company.

Google's acquisitions were even less well known. Virtually everyone knew they owned the eponymous search engine, but less than half (43%) correctly stated that they owned YouTube and only 22% said they owned the blogging platform Blogger.com. This was not much higher than the 16% who thought Google owned Facebook (in fact privately owned by its founder Mark Zuckerberg, various venture capitalists and Microsoft) and 15% who thought it owned MySpace (a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp).

Amongst the general public, there was even lower awareness – small majorities knew that Rupert Murdoch owned the Sun and Sky television, but only a quarter knew he owned the Times and hardly anyone was aware that MySpace was a Murdoch company. Similarly, only a quarter of the public knew Youtube was owned by Google.

PLEASE NOTE, YOUNGOVSTONE IS A PREDECESSOR OF YOUNGOV'S REPUTATION DEPARTMENT. YouGov now regularly surveys MPs, business leaders and other groups of high level decision makers in the UK and internationally. If your organisation needs to know what these individuals think, please contact Oliver Rowe, Director of Reputation Research on +44 (0)207 012 6032 or email oliver.rowe@yougov.com