

# News Reporters Now Depend on Social Media Sources

**By Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor with Apollo Business Development. He has helped law firms nationwide attract new clients and generate new business by using strategy, business development training and individual attorney coaching. See [www.ApolloBusinessDevelopment.com](http://www.ApolloBusinessDevelopment.com). He can be reached at 630.942.0977 and Lbodine [at] LawMarketing [dot] com.

A national survey conducted by [Cision](#) and Don Bates of George Washington University found that an **overwhelming majority of reporters and editors now depend on social media sources when researching their stories**. Among the journalists surveyed:

- 89% said they turn to blogs for story research
- 65% to social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn
- 52% to microblogging services such as Twitter
- 61% use Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia.



While the results demonstrate the fast growth of social media as a well-used source of information for mainstream journalists, the survey also made it clear that reporters and editors are acutely aware of the **need to verify information they get from social media**. Eighty-four percent said social media sources were “slightly less” or “much less” reliable than traditional media, with 49% saying social media suffers from “lack of fact checking, verification and reporting standards.

**“Mainstream media have clearly hit a tipping point in their reliance on social media for their research and reporting,”** said Heidi Sullivan, Vice President of Research for Cision “However, it’s also clear that while social media is supplementing the research done by journalists, it is not replacing editors’ and reporters’ reliance on primary sources, fact-checking and other traditional best practices in journalism.”

Importance of Social Media to Journalists (% of Respondents)	
<i>Degree of Importance</i>	<i>% of Respondents</i>
Important	15%
Somewhat Important	40%

Neither Important nor Unimportant	16%
Somewhat Unimportant	16%
Unimportant	12%
<i>Source: Cision Social Media Study, October 2009</i>	

The groups placing the highest levels of importance on social media for reporting and producing stories were journalists who spend most of their professional time writing for Websites. Those at newspapers and magazines reported this less often. The difference between magazine journalists and website journalists is statistically significant.

- Journalists who spend most of their professional time writing for Websites (69%) reported this most often, and significantly more so than those at Magazines (48%)
- 89% of journalists reported using Blogs for their online research. Only Corporate websites (96%) is used by more journalists when doing online research for a story
- Approximately two-thirds reported using Social Networking sites and just over half make use of Twitter for online research. Newspaper journalists (72%) and those writing for Websites (75%) use Social Networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook for online research significantly more often than those at Magazines (58%)

For more information visit [http://us.cision.com/news\\_room/press\\_releases/2010/2010-1-20\\_gwu\\_survey.asp](http://us.cision.com/news_room/press_releases/2010/2010-1-20_gwu_survey.asp)

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Larry Bodine is a **business development advisor** who helps law firms generate revenue and get new business by:

- **Training lawyers at firm retreats.** At one-day or half-day programs, lawyers learn all the business development techniques that work, and are steered away from those that don't. A retreat is an ideal kick-off event to launch a business development initiative.
- **Coaching lawyers to develop their personal marketing plans.** Using his proprietary four-page form, lawyers will meet with Larry to create a plan to pursue clients, referral sources, cross-selling opportunities and organizations of clients. Typically, lawyers will multiply their revenues once a plan is in place.
- **Developing business development strategies.** As a result, firms can identify their most lucrative, ideal clients; develop pursuit teams to acquire them; identify target industries where they have strength; have a five-year vision for the firm; and use a series of tactics to succeed.

- **Using technology to market a practice.** Blogs, podcasts, Webinars, e-Newsletters and Web sites extend a lawyer's marketing reach, and work for a lawyer around the clock.

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