Abstract

This research revisits source credibility based upon the popular PESO (Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned) source classification. More specific, this study examines source credibility and channel effectiveness in terms of moving consumers along the communication lifecycle model based upon their exposure to information embedded in paid (traditional advertising and native advertising), earned (traditional news story), shared (independent blogger) and owned (company blog) media. One thousand, five hundred respondents recruited from a consumer panel participated in this 2 (level of involvement) x 5 (source) experimental design study. When respondents were asked to self-report on their levels of trust with various sources, they indicated the highest level of trust with consumer reviews and earned media and the lowest level of trust with native advertising. The experimental design study yielded no major differences among the sources for the communication lifecycle variables. Native advertising was viewed as less credible than traditional advertising in the experimental design. There were no differences in perceived credibility based upon exposure to traditional advertising versus a news story, confirming prior academic research. Suggestions are offered for public relations practitioners on selecting sources for messaging to drive behavior.
Introduction

Contemporary conventional wisdom indicates that publicity—earned media—has greater credibility than a paid advertisement. Consider the following excerpts from a 2014 Forbes article: “Advertising is paid media, public relations is earned media. This means you convince reporters or editors to write a positive story...It appears in the editorial section... rather than the ‘paid media’ section where advertising messages appear. So your story has more credibility because it was independently verified by a trusted third party, rather than purchased.” The Forbes story quotes Michael Levine, publicist and author of Guerilla PR, as saying “depending on how you measure and monitor an article it is between 10 times and 100 times more valuable than an advertisement. The idea is the believability of an article versus an advertisement.” Steve Cody (2012) a contributor to Inc Magazine writes, “Countless studies report that, next to word-of-mouth advice from friends and family, editorial commentary (usually generated by your friendly, behind-the- scenes PR practitioner) carries far more weight than advertising.”

In addition to this professional commentary, a 2014 Nielsen Study titled “The Role of Content in the Consumer-Decision Making Process” suggested that expert content provided by third-party articles and blogs elicits more consumer trust than branded content and user reviews. Nielsen’s study conducted with 900 consumers indicates that expert content is more effective in terms of increasing consumers’ familiarity, affinity, and purchase intent in comparison to branded content and user reviews.

Public relations academic research does not support the claim that publicity outperforms traditional advertising in terms of engendering greater credibility (Hallahan, 2009a; Howes & Sallot, 2013; Jo, 2004; Stacks & Michaelson, 2009; Vercic, Verčič, & Laco, 2008). Most of this research, however, has limited its examination to a comparison between earned media stories and traditional advertising only. Given today’s evolving media landscape, public relations practitioners now use an assortment of sources—Independent bloggers, company owned material, earned media, paid advertising, and native advertising—to message and to promote their brands and clients (Wright & Hinson, 2014). Moreover, consumers are increasingly consulting a number of sources to help them make product purchase decisions (Nielsen, 2014). This study revisits source credibility based upon the popular PESO—Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned—source classification. More specifically, this study examines source credibility and effectiveness in terms of moving consumers along the communication lifecycle model (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011) based upon their exposure to information embedded in paid (traditional advertising and native advertising), earned (traditional news story), shared (independent blogger) and owned (company blog) media.

Literature Review

In today’s world, media is everywhere. An expanding array of social media networks and digital channels, the transformation of traditional media and the infiltration of channel-savvy advertising throughout, means that consumers are searching for information in a new way. They are choosing their channels and news feeds to meet their personal preferences. Rather than relying on one or two news sources, consumers use a wide variety of both traditional and online sources depending on what kind of information they are seeking (Miller, Raine, Purcell,
Michelle, & Rosenstielt, 2012). Facebook is the social media news powerhouse with 30% of US adults getting news there (Holcomb, Gottfried, & Mietchell, 2013), yet those same consumers still get news from a variety of other sources including radio, print and broadcast (Media Insight Project, 2014). When consumers make purchase decisions, blogs are the third most influential digital resource behind the “owned” retail and brand websites (Technorati Media, 2013). Advertising is integrated into all these channels further diversifying the composition of the consumer’s media ecosystem.

To better understand the credibility and effectiveness of the channels in this media ecosystem and how they impact the product purchase decision process of consumers, three streams of research are reviewed next: blog credibility, native advertising credibility, and advertising versus public relations.

Blog Credibility

By definition, blogs are the posting of “one’s own ideas, opinions, Internet links (including those for other blogs), and so on about things on one’s own website, which is called a "web log"” (Smudde, 2005, p. 34). Public relations practitioners consider blogs to be central to their strategic communication planning and execution (Wright & Hinson, 2014). Some public relations practitioners enlist the support of their employees or leaders to write their own blogs to represent their organizations. Other public relations practitioners actively pitch their ideas to influential bloggers, in the hopes that they will write positively about a company’s product or services.

Interviews conducted with public relations practitioners indicated that practitioners actively work with bloggers to secure favorable product reviews, earn publicity, increase brand awareness, amplify message reach and build credibility (Smith, 2011). In the words of one respondent who was interviewed, “Clients all want their marketing-speak reprinted in someone else’s tone because that person gives them authenticity,” (Smith, p. 6).

Because people will typically only read a blogger that they find credible (Kaye & Johnson, 2011), a fair amount of academic research has examined blog credibility. Blogs are typically viewed as credible sources of information (Hayes & Carr, 2015), and some blog users have rated blogs as more credible than traditional media, although blog users also find traditional media to be credible (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). Blog users particularly assign high marks to blogs for the depth of information provided (Johnson & Kaye).

Credibility of a blog can be assessed in multiple ways, including by level of author, message, site sponsor and the medium (Flanagan & Metzger, 2007). McLuhan’s (1964) famous phrase that the medium is the message implies that academic focus should be placed on the effects of the medium, and not the message (Cosenza, Solomon, & Kwon, 2015). Recent public relations research has found that valence of the message (whether the organization is described positively or negatively) affects perceived credibility of the blog (Kim, Kiousis, & Molleda, 2015). However, other research indicates that of all the factors—author, message, site sponsor, and medium—the author of the blog is most important to people’s perception of credibility (Cosenza et al). Credibility of the individual blogger has been shown to predict relational trust in
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the blog itself (Sung-Un & Joon Soo, 2009) and brand attitudes and purchase intention (Hayes & Carr, 2015). Finally, blog credibility can vary depending on type of blog. For example, corporate blogs are not viewed as credible sources of information (Johnson & Kaye, in press), due to their commercial intent.

Native Advertising Credibility

Native advertising is content designed to look similar to the editorial content where it is placed (Howe & Teufel, 2014). The premise is that the advertisement will be more effective if it looks and feels native to the platform (Benton, 2014). Public relations pundit Shel Holtz opines that native advertising offers tremendous potential to public relations practitioners. Holtz (2013) quotes Phil Johnson, who wrote in AdAge, “The concept of native advertising...is conceptually the same as placing press releases that look like independent journalism. It’s a natural fit for public-relations firms” (as cited in Holtz, 2013 p. 15).

In a convenience survey conducted with 112 public relations practitioners (Weinand, LaNicca, & Flynn, 2015), 25% of respondents indicated that they had used native advertising. Roughly 75% of respondents said they like native advertising due to the involvement of journalists who provide credibility, source expertise and the ability to create content that doesn’t look like an ad. Respondents also identified many positive attributes of using native advertising, including expanded messaging across platforms, increased targeting opportunities, greater collaboration with advertising partners and guaranteed placement. Forty-eight percent of public relations practitioners surveyed do not believe people trust native advertising.

Scant academic research has empirically investigated native advertising. Advertising research suggests that consumers find native advertising less annoying and more informative and amusing than banner ads (Tutaj & Van Reijmersdal, 2012). Consumers rate websites with native advertisements as more responsive to consumers compared to websites with banner ads (Becker-Olsen, 2003). Whether an online news site contains a banner ad or native advertisement does not impact people’s perception of credibility toward the online news site (Howe & Teufel, 2014).

Advertising Versus Public Relations

The assumption that earned media is more credible than advertising stems from journalists’ gatekeeper role (Grunig, & Grunig, 2000). When journalists choose to write about a product or service it implies that they endorse the product or service. When a journalist writes favorably about a product or an individual, the product gains public support from the third-party endorsement for the message. The endorsement from a journalist is more credible than a paid ad because the journalist is objective.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996) is a useful framework for conceptualizing the different effects based upon exposure to advertising and earned media. The ELM model posits that individuals use varying levels of effort to process information. Individuals with high motivation and ability tend to focus systematically on information. When individuals focus intently on the information at hand, they are on the central route of processing. Individuals with less motivation and ability find it sufficient to rely on
peripheral cues, such as testimonial or quotes, the media source, the quality of the message or the humor of the advertisement, among other cues. Individuals on this track are on a peripheral route of information processing.

According to the ELM, low- and high-involvement situations impact the persuasiveness of a message (Petty & Cacioppo 1996). Petty and Cacioppo define involvement as “intrinsic importance, personal meaning, and consequences” (pp. 82 – 83). In high-involvement situations, a person is likely to focus more intently on the message rather than peripheral cues, such as the expertise or attractiveness of a message source (Chaiken, 1980; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). If this argument is extended to the comparison between public relations and advertising, one might assume that a person in the market for a low-involvement product would be more inclined to process a message on a peripheral route, thereby paying more attention to cues such as the credibility of the source (i.e. an earned media story) when making judgments about likelihood to recommend or buy. Conversely, when people are in the market for a high-involvement product, they may be more likely to process information intently, thereby focusing less on the credibility of the source and more on the quality of the information.

A fair number of research studies (Cameron, 1994; Hallahan, 1999a; Jo, 2004; Howes & Sallot, 2013; Michaelson & Stacks, 2009; Supa & Dodd, 2015; Verčič, Verčič, & Laco, 2008) have tested for differences between exposure to advertising and earned media, in terms of both credibility and effectiveness, typically measured by positive attitudes, word-of-mouth and behavioral intent. Although each study has differed somewhat in its perspective and model components tested, the results have indicated that earned media is not viewed as more credible or effective than advertising.

Hallahan’s (1999a) comprehensive experimental design conducted with students examined for possible interaction effects among source (advertising versus news editorial), involvement and argument quality on the dependent variables of credibility, attitudes and purchase intent. Although news editorial was rated higher than advertising on believability, there were no substantial differences between the advertising and news editorial on the dependent variables.

Jo (2004) compared and contrasted earned media versus advertising based upon their interaction with argument quality, strong and weak. Her experimental design research found no differences in perceived credibility between the two sources. However, she did find an interaction effect between message quality and content type (advertising versus earned media). There were no differences in credibility between news editorial and advertising in conditions of strong argument quality. However, when a weak argument was present in the context of an advertisement rather than earned media story, participants rated the message more favorably. Jo explained the results by noting that in the context of a weak argument, the advertisement may serve as a peripheral cue that prompts people to process more on the cues than the message.

Verčic, Verčic and Laco (2008) tested for differences between an advertisement and a news story based not upon a consumer product, but a social advocacy issue, namely drug users and their reintegration into society. Their experimental design research found no differences in respondents’ attitude or behavioral intent based upon exposure to a news story versus
advertisement. They did find some differences, however, based upon exposure to a television versus print message, with television outperforming print in terms of engendering a stronger attitude and behavioral intent.

Michaelson and Stacks (2009) tested for differences between advertising, editorial only, and advertising plus editorial based upon an experimental design using a fictitious zip chip, a low-involvement product. They found no differences between editorial and advertising in terms of measures of awareness, information retained, intent to purchase, and product credibility. However, people reading the editorial, with or without exposure to the advertising, saw the product more closely related to their lifestyle than those reading the advertising, and this appeared to be related to higher levels of overall knowledge about the product from exposure to the editorial.

Howes and Sallot (2013) conducted an experimental design with university business students to test for differences in exposure to a customer testimonial compared to a company spokesperson in different types of business communication channels. Their research found that using a customer testimonial is viewed as more credible than a corporate spokesperson when viewed through media credibility. More specific, the presence of a customer testimonial in the presence of a business article enhanced credibility.

Supa and Dodd (2015) tested for differences between editorial and advertisements in the context of corporate social responsibility messaging. Overall, their experimental design research found that type of messaging (controversial versus traditional) was more important than source in its effects. Respondents, however, rated editorial content slightly more credible than advertising, and that editorial content was associated with greater intent to engage with positive word of mouth.

In summary, the research described casts doubt on the veracity of the claim that earned media is more credible and effective than advertising. However, with the exception of the Howes and Sallot (2013) study, this research has limited its examination to a comparison of advertising versus earned media only. This research expands our understanding of communication effectiveness and credibility by focusing on a myriad of sources—paid (traditional advertising and native advertising), earned (traditional news story), shared (an independent blogger) and owned (company blog). This study will also shed light on perceptions related to blog credibility and native advertising, a new channel of growing importance to public relations practitioners. The following research questions are thus forwarded based upon the conceptual model provided in Figure 1:

**RQ1:** What sources—paid, earned, shared and owned—do consumers consult prior to making a consumer purchase? Do these differ for low- and high-involvement products?

**RQ2:** How much trust do consumers have in sources to provide accurate and unbiased product information? Is there a difference between low- and high-involvement products?
RQ3: What impact do the five sources—traditional advertisement, native advertisement, earned media story, company blog and independent blog—have in terms of creating (a) awareness, (b) knowledge, (c) interest, (d) purchase intent and (e) word of mouth?

RQ4: What impact do the five sources—traditional advertisement, native advertisement, earned media story, company blog and independent blog—have on credibility?

RQ5: Is there a difference in impact on credibility for low- and high-involvement products?

Methodology

Experimental Design

This research used a 5 (source: traditional news story, independent blog, company blog, traditional advertisement and native advertisement) x 2 (involvement: high-involvement product and low-involvement product) between subjects experimental design to test for effects on awareness, interest, knowledge, purchase intent, word of mouth, and credibility.

Stimuli and Procedures

A professional communication agency created ten stimuli. All articles and advertisements appearing in the ten stimuli were identical with the exception of the presence of the traditional advertisement, native advertisement or story about either the low-involvement product or high-involvement product. Key points were taken from the news story and shortened as bullet points for inclusion in the advertisements. All product inventions, product names, company names, and blogger and journalist names were fictitious, to minimize bias.

Independent Variables

Level of Involvement

Level of involvement was conceptualized as the degree of importance and concern with the outcome regarding a product purchase decision (Mittal, 1989). This study conceptualized involvement as either low- or high-level. The fictitious product created as low-involvement was a compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb with built-in surge protector that retails for $7. The fictitious product created as a high-involvement product decision was a shatterproof, no-glare Commando smartphone with extended battery life that retails for $399.

Pretesting ensured that participants viewed the two products as low- and high-involvement. A sample of public relations practitioners and undergraduate students (n =100) viewed the traditional advertisement versions for the two products and rated them on a 7-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) composed of five questions. Participants rated the light bulb a mean score of 11.89 (SD=5.3) and the smartphone a mean score of 22.03 (SD=2.43), indicating they perceive them as significantly different in terms of involvement.

Source
Six stimuli included a four-color spread of the reputable technology page of *The New York Times (NYT)* (See Figure 2). The credentials of the *NYT* technology journalist, Ray Fleming, were listed at the top of the page: technology columnist for *The New York Times*, correspondent for CNN and MSNBC, commentator for HGTV, and author of *Technology in Your Home* and *Techie*. The six *NYT* stimuli were identical with the exception of the presence of a traditional advertisement, native advertisement or news story about either the CFL or smartphone (see Figure 3).

Two other stimuli included a professional independent blogger also named Ray Fleming (see Figure 4). Ray was described as a blogger who regularly shares news, information, and product reviews about the latest advances in personal technology products, that he can be seen on CNN and MSNBC and as a commentator on HGTV, and that he is the author of *Technology for Home* and *Techie* and a monthly column in *Wired Magazine*. These two stimuli contained a blog post about either the CFL or smartphone.

The last two stimuli included a blog produced by a fictitious company called Surge Pro, a leader in home electronics (see Figure 5). This descriptor was placed at the top of the company blog: “Welcome to Surge Pro’s Personal Tech blog about innovations in technology products, which can enhance your lifestyle. We regularly share news, information and product reviews about the latest advances in personal technology products.” The two company stimuli contained a blog post about either the CFL or smartphone.

A pretest of the experimental design was conducted with 125 public relations practitioners, students and academics. Numerous public relations practitioners and academics also evaluated the stimuli stories and advertisements for believability and accuracy. In response to this feedback, the authors made multiple revisions to the stimuli and questionnaire items.

**Sampling**

A sample of 1,500 people participated in the experimental design in September 2015. Participants who were at least 18 years old and living in the United States were recruited and reimbursed for their participation by a consumer panel company.

The experimental design included a diverse sample. Females comprised 50% (n=769) of the sample and males 50% (n = 766). The sample was varied in terms of age: 18-25 (13%, n = 193), 26-35 (21%, n = 315), 36-45 (14%, n = 218), 46-55 (15%, n = 236), 56-65 (17%, n = 261) and 66 or older (20%, n = 312). Participants were primarily Caucasian (83%, n = 1283), followed by African American (6%, n = 87), Hispanic/Latina (5%, n = 72), Asian (3%, n = 49), other (2%, n = 30) and American Indian (1%, n = 14). Participants indicated the following level of education: 1% some high school (1%, n = 15), high school (16%, n = 240), some college (22%, n = 333), associate’s degree (10%, n = 149), bachelor’s degree (25%, n = 392), some graduate work (5%, n = 76), and a graduate degree (21%, n = 330). Participants reported the following income ranges: less than $20,000 (14%, n = 216), $20,000 to $39,999 (21%, n = 316), $40,000 to $59,999 (16%, n = 252), $60,000 to $79,999 (14%, n = 221), $80,000 to $99,999 (13%, n = 195), $100,000 or higher (18%, n = 275) and prefer not to answer (4%, n = 60).
Procedure

After participants elected to participate and read the consent form, they were directed to read the material of their assigned stimuli (150 per stimulus/cell). Participants were prompted which source—NYT, independent blog, or company blog—they were about to read. Participants were instructed that they had a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of seven minutes to read every story and every advertisement in the stimulus. After reading all the material in the stimulus, participants completed a questionnaire about the overall content in the stimulus. Toward the end of the survey, participants were presented with a close-up of the advertisement, news story, blog post or native advertisement about the smartphone or CFL, which appeared in their original assigned stimuli, and asked to respond to additional questions about credibility.

Dependent variables

Awareness

Participants were directed to think back to what they had just read and to place a check in the box by any of the products they remembered reading about, whether in an advertisement or a story (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011). Eight answers were provided, of which five were correct and three were incorrect. A score was calculated based upon the percentage of statements participants answered correctly.

Knowledge

Basic facts about the featured product served as the baseline of knowledge (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011). Participants indicated level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale with five statements about the content that they had read in the stimulus. Three of the statements were correct, and two were incorrect.

Interest

Interest in the featured product (either the smartphone or CFL) was measured by a 5-point scale ranging from one (very uninterested) to five (very interested) (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011).

Purchase Intent

Three, 5-point Likert-type statements were used to assess the likelihood of participants buying the product featured if they were in the market for such a product (Lepkowska-White, Brashear, & Weinberger, 2003). Scale items were stated hypothetically. For example, one statement included, “If I were looking for this type of product my likelihood of purchasing the product in (ad/story/blog) would be high.” Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .95.

Word of Mouth
Word of mouth intention was measured through a 3-statement, 5-point Likert scale (Yang & Kang, 2009). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .92.

**Credibility**

Credibility of the sources was measured based upon a credibility scale developed by Meyer (1988) and used by others (Jo, 2004). Respondents were asked to complete a 7-point semantic differential scale that included the following items: Not believable/believable; Not accurate/accurate; Not trustworthy/trustworthy; Not biased/ biased; Not complete/complete. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .76.

**Other Variables Measured**

A series of ordinal-level questions were also asked to determine which sources people most frequently use for new product information for both low- and high-involvement decisions. Finally, participants were asked to indicate how much trust they have in paid, earned, shared and owned media to provide fair and unbiased information.

**Findings**

The first research question investigated what sources do consumers consult prior to making a consumer purchase, and whether they differ for low- and high-involvement products. As indicated by Table 1, when making a routine product decision for an item such as a light bulb or hair dryer, consumers most frequently consult online product reviews written by other consumers, as indicated by the fact that 16% of participants said that they consult online sources “all the time.” Consumers spend roughly the same amount of time consulting traditional advertising and news stories. Native advertising and blogs by independent bloggers are consulted the least often, with close to 45% of participants saying they “never” use native advertising and 42% saying they “never” consult independent bloggers for routine product purchase decisions. When making an important product purchase decision, such as a smartphone or computer, participants indicated that they consult all sources more frequently compared to routine product purchase decisions (see Table 1). However, other than this difference, the results of the important product purchase decisions mirror those of the routine product purchase decisions. In particular, consumers spend the most time consulting online product reviews written by other consumers, followed by viewing information on a company website, newsletter or blog. Forty-three percent of respondents said they never consult a native advertisement for an important product decision. Participants appear to spend roughly the same amount of time consulting advertisements and news stories for important product purchase decisions.

Research question two examined how much trust consumers have in sources to provide accurate and unbiased product information, and whether there was a difference in trust in sources between low- and high-involvement products. As indicated by Table 2, for a routine product purchase decision, an online product review written by another consumer was rated the most trustworthy ($M = 3.20; SD = .64$), followed by a story in a newspaper or magazine written by a staff reporter ($M = 3.07; SD = .60$). A native advertisement was rated the lowest ($M = 2.91; SD = .78$) followed by advertisements ($M = 2.93; SD = .73$). However, other than these minor
differences, Table 2 suggests that there were not that many differences in levels of trust for the various sources.

When preparing to make an important product purchase decision, the amount of trust decreased slightly for every source when comparing the results of trust between routine and important product decisions (see Table 2). Online product reviews were rated the highest ($M = 3.03; SD = .78$), followed by the story in a newspaper or magazine written by a staff reporter ($M = 2.86; SD = .74$). Native advertisements were rated as the least trustworthy ($M = 2.50; SD = .90$).

Research question three examined what impact the five sources—traditional advertisement, native advertisement, earned media story, company blog and independent blog—have in terms of creating (a) awareness, (b) knowledge, (c) interest, (d) purchase intent and (e) word of mouth.

There were minimal differences in awareness based upon source. There was only a statistically significant difference between the news story and advertisement for the CFL ($t (305) = 1.60, p = .05$) For the CLF, respondents exposed to the traditional news story reported greater awareness ($M = 7$) compared to the traditional advertisement ($M = 6.13$).

When measuring knowledge about the CFL based upon the five statements, results indicated that there was only a statistically significant difference based upon one statement ($F (4, 760) = 2.81, p = .025$). A post hoc Tukey test indicated that knowledge levels were slightly lower only for native advertising ($M = 3.52; SD = .93$) compared to traditional advertising ($M = 3.82; SD = 3.82; .90$). There was also one statistically significant difference in one statement for the smartphone ($F (4, 765) = 2.61, p = .035$). A post hoc Tukey test showed that knowledge levels were slightly lower for the corporate blog compared to independent blog.

Interest in both CFL and smartphone was moderate regardless of source, with scores ranging from a low of 3.04 (smartphone company blog) to a high of 3.57 (CFL traditional ad). There were no statistically significant differences in product interest based upon exposure to source for either the CFL ($F (4, 760) = 1.67, p = .154$) or the smartphone ($F = (4, 765) = .518, p = .723$).

Product purchase intent scores hovered around a mean score of 10 (scale ranged from 3 to 15) for all sources for both the CFL and smartphone, suggesting that participants had moderate interest in both products. There were no statistically significant differences in purchase intent based upon source for either the CFL ($F (4, 760) = 1.49, p = .20$) or smartphone ($F = (4, 765) = 1.00, p = .406$).

Word of mouth intention scores also settled around mean scores of 10 (scale ranged from 3-15), indicative that participants are likely to recommend both the CFL and smartphone to friends and family and say positive things. There were no statistically significant differences in purchase intent based upon source for either the CFL ($F (4, 760) = 1.74, p = .138$) or smartphone ($F = (4, 765) = .838, p = .501$).
Research question four examined the impact of the five sources on perceived credibility. Descriptive and inferential results for the credibility scale and individual items for both the CFL and smartphone are provided in Table 3. As indicated by the descriptive statistics, the mean scores for all sources were relatively the same. For the CFL, there was a statistically significant difference for the credibility scale \((F(4, 760) = 3.80, p = .005)\) and the individual items that measured believability \((F(4, 760) = 2.96, p = .02)\), trustworthiness \((F(4, 760) = 3.17, p = .013)\) and accuracy \((F(4, 760) = 3.75, p = .005)\) Post hoc Tukey tests indicated that the differences were between traditional advertising and native advertising. Traditional advertising was rated more believable and trustworthy. Interestingly, native advertising was rated as more accurate that traditional advertising.

There were no differences for credibility based upon exposure to source for the smartphone \((F(4, 765) = 1.777; p = .132)\). For one of the credibility items, trustworthiness, there was a statistically significant difference \((F(4, 765) = 3.05, p = .017)\). Post hoc Tukey tests indicated that an independent blog post \((M = 5.68, SD = 1.26)\) was rated more trustworthy than a company blog or website \((M = 5.16; SD = 1.47)\).

Research question five asked if there are differences in credibility for low- and high-involvement products. An independent t-Test indicated that there was no difference in credibility for low- and high-involvement products \((t(1533) = .106, p = .915)\) nor was there an interaction effect between product type and source on perceived credibility \((F(765, 770) = .105, p = .746)\).

**Discussion**

This study provides insight into how often people consult sources to make product purchase decisions and the trust that they have in those sources in terms of providing accurate and unbiased information. This research also contributes to our understanding of how news stories compare to company generated blogs, independent blogs, traditional advertising and native advertising on measures of communication lifestyle effectiveness dimensions, credibility perceptions and behavioral intentions.

The number one source of information for both routine and important product decisions consumers is online product reviews written by other consumers. Consumers consult native advertising the least often for routine and important product purchase decisions. This finding is not surprising given that native advertising is so new, and that native advertising content often features a human interest story, and not product information. As is also to be expected, this research indicates that people spend more time consulting a myriad of sources when making an important product purchase decision. Independent bloggers and news stories written by a journalist are not consulted as frequently as online consumer reviews, company blogs, and advertisements.

In terms of the amount of trust in sources, consumers have the greatest amount of trust in online product reviews. This finding coincides with the 2015 Edelman Trust Barometer research that shows that a person’s family and friends are the most trusted. Among the five sources, a news story written by reporter was rated the second most trustworthy. This descriptive survey finding contradicts the findings of the experimental design portion of the project that found there were no significant differences in credibility among the sources. Yet, the fact that when asked,
participants reported a higher level of trust in the media compared to advertising coincides with the survey research of Hallahan (1999b). Hallahan found that university students rated news as more trustworthy, believable and accurate in comparison to advertising. Hallahan explained the contradiction in findings of extant experimental research and his survey research by hypothesizing that people may be “more positively predisposed to processing information in the form of news compared to advertising. Stated another way, audiences might be less negatively predisposed toward news than advertising” (p. 345). Hallahan explains that in certain situations, that predisposition may give the edge in credibility to news media. Hallahan’s explanation is certainly one possibility for the confounding results.

Consumers’ level of trust in sources is greater for a low-involvement product compared to the high-involvement product, thereby supporting persuasion theory and research (Chaiken, 1980; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). This finding indicates that when people are making an important product decision, they are more likely to focus intently on the message and less on peripheral cues such as the source.

Native advertising was rated lower than traditional advertising on measures of credibility for the CFL, the low-involvement product. Although the difference in credibility was relatively small and that there were no differences in credibility among traditional advertising and native advertising for the smartphone, these findings nonetheless suggest that public relations practitioners may want to carefully consider placing product messaging in native advertisements. Future research will also want to more thoroughly explore people’s perceptions of and acceptance of native advertising.

The results that an earned media story is neither more effective nor credible when compared to traditional advertising coincides with past research (Cameron, 1994; Jo, 2004; Hallahan, 2009; Jo, 2004; Vercic, Vercic & Laco, 2008). Indeed, this study is among the ninth empirical research study to cast doubt on the supposed superiority of public relations to paid advertising. Perhaps more importantly, this research extends our understanding of how public relations compares to independent blogs, company-generated material and native advertising. While it may be evident that public relations is not more effective than the other sources in in terms of engendering credibility and a call to action, it is important to note that it operates on an equal footing. Not only is public relations as effective and credible as the sources, it’s typically more cost-effective.

As indicated by the descriptive statistical results of this project, consumers are consulting a number of sources for product information. The results of the experimental design indicate that all sources in the PESO model are an important part of the communication lifecycle process in terms of engendering awareness, knowledge, interest, product intent and word of mouth and should be included in communications planning. Given the changes in the media landscape, the lines between sources are blurring. People may not even readily process from where they are receiving information. As long as there is value in the information presented, people likely care less about the source and more about the quality of the message and/or information that they need to solve their problem. Perhaps public relations practitioners should focus less on source placement and more on providing messages and quality information that provides value to target audiences.
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Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Source, Level of Involvement, Communication Lifecycle and Credibility
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Figure 2 New York Times Stimulus

Samsung's New Smartwatch Lets You Make Calls from Your Wrist

By RAM FELDING

Samsung has added a new wrist-worn watch called Gear S2 to its line-up of wristworn wearables and its range of mobile phones. Samsung's Gear S2 is a wristwatch that comes with a built-in SIM card, allowing it to make calls and send messages. It also has a heart rate monitor, a pedometer, and a GPS tracker. The device is water-resistant up to 50 meters, making it ideal for swimmers and other water enthusiasts. The Gear S2 is compatible with both Android and iOS devices. It is available in black and silver colors.

A Television Designed for the Outdoors

By RAM FELDING

Outdoor spaces typically are not conducive to TV watching, but a new TV designed for outdoor use is changing that. The "Smart Outdoor TV" developed by LG is a 4K UHD TV that can be used outdoors. It has a special weather-resistant design, allowing it to withstand rain, wind, and extreme temperatures. The TV is also equipped with a power-saving feature, which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast to match the outdoor environment. It is expected to be available in the market by the end of the year.

The Smartphone and CFL traditional ads rotated into this space

Smartphone native ad, CFL news story and CFL native ad rotated into this space

Powerbeats2

The ideal headphones for those on the go. Black or white, the beats you love. Just plug it in, pair it with your smartphone, and your music will play wirelessly.

The Smartphone and CFL traditional ads rotated into this space
Figure 3 News Stories, Native Advertisements, and Traditional Advertisements

### Smartphone News Story

**Shatterproof, No-Glare Commando Smartphone with Extended Battery Life**

By RAY FLEMING

The buzz being generated by newly released smartphones has manufacturers pulling out all the stops to prove they have what it takes to hang with the big boys. But even flashy newcomers haven’t been able to solve the most common smartphone problems as reported in a February 2015 Word Magazine reader survey.

The number one problem identified in the study is battery life. Internet connections, apps and status bar messages keep smartphone owners’ batteries drained and users frustrated. Problem number two is a cracked or scratched screen. While smashed smartphones can often continue to function, readers felt that manufacturers should have addressed this common issue by now. Readers felt the same about the third most common problem cited—screen glare from sun or lights. Non-glare screen protectors can be purchased and installed separately, but they can result in air bubbles or hinder touch screen performance.

One newcomer, Commando, is the first smartphone designed to improve on some of the key weaknesses. Commando’s extended battery life, more than two hours longer than any handset currently available, its shatter and scratch resistant touch screen made of synthetic sapphire, one of the hardest minerals on earth and its non-glare face, allowing for easy reading in any lighting environment are serious advantages. The trade-off is a somewhat heavier, thicker device, with a higher price tag.

Commando’s features are highly refined to really appeal at supporting America’s love affair with the automobile — and solve the common issues of battery life, shattered screens and glare in sunlight. Price starts at $399.

### CFL News Story

**Built-In Surge Protector Prevents CFL Failure**

By RAY FLEMING

The incandescent light bulb has been around since the late 1900s, but the technology’s dominance isdimming. Due to a law passed by Congress in 2007, tungsten-halogen 40- and 60-watt incandescent light bulbs, representing more than 80 percent of the consumer lighting market, can no longer be manufactured in the U.S. Until the supplies run out, the old bulbs will be available on store shelves, but consumers are already moving to the new technologies, such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) that use one-fifth to one-third the electric power and last eight to fifteen times longer.

Switching-one bulb can save more than five times its purchase price in electricity costs over the bulb’s lifetime. Not all the reviews are glowing.

CFL bulbs are 4-5 times more expensive than traditional incandescent bulbs, but the price has been dropping. Given that lighting your home accounts for about one-quarter of your electric bill, the energy savings outweigh the higher cost over time. Initial complaints about CFL slow starts to full brightness and incompatibility with dimmers have been addressed and the light quality is now more like that generated by incandescent bulbs. One persistent problem in CFL failure, with bulbs burning out too soon or even, amazingly, exploding. This is due to power surges, a frequent but often unnoticed occurrence in your home’s electricity flow.

A CFL bulb is now available with a built-in surge protector that will eliminate this annoying problem and protect your investment in energy efficient lighting. The cost is about $7. So, now there is no excuse for avoiding the transition from incandescent bulbs.

### Smartphone Native Ad

**Shatterproof, No-Glare Commando Smartphone with Extended Battery Life**

The buzz being generated by newly released smartphones has manufacturers pulling out all the stops to prove they have what it takes to hang with the big boys. But even flashy newcomers haven’t been able to solve the most common smartphone problems as reported in a February 2015 Word Magazine reader survey.

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Commando’s features are highly refined to really appeal at supporting America’s love affair with the automobile — and solve the common issues of battery life, shattered screens and glare in sunlight. Price starts at $399.

### CFL Native Ad

**Built-In Surge Protector Prevents CFL Failure**

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A CFL bulb is now available with a built-in surge protector that will eliminate this annoying problem and protect your investment in energy efficient lighting. The cost is about $7. So, now there is no excuse for avoiding the transition from incandescent bulbs.

### Smartphone Traditional Ad

**Commando Smartphone Solves Problems**

Extended Battery Life

- Shatter-proof
- No-Glare

Features:
- Extended battery life, more than two hours longer than any smartphone currently available.
- Shatter and scratch resistant touch screen made of synthetic sapphire, one of the hardest minerals on earth.
- Anti-glare face for easy reading in sunlight — incorporates anti-reflective technology that fits your needs and views.
- Car Tracker built-in features dedicated to supporting your vehicle with parking, maintenance and communications.

Starting at $399

### CFL Traditional Ad

**Improved CFL with Power Surge Protection**

Save an electricity with efficient, long-lasting, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) — new with built-in surge protector is prevent bulb failure.

Also features:
- Dimmer compatibility
- Instant to glowing
- Incompatible with light quality

Cost is only $7

Available everywhere: lighting is cold
How Changing Media Formats

Samsung's New Smartwatch Lets You Make Calls from Your Wrist

Samsung has added a new entry to its growing catalog of smartwatches with the release of its Gear S. Unlike previous smartwatches, however, this one comes with a 3G data connection, which means it doesn't have to be tied to your smartphone at all times. That's a big deal for smartwatches.

Sporting a curved 2-inch display that wraps around your wrist, the Gear S looks more comfortable to wear — and more stylish — than Samsung's rectangular watches. Still with a larger display size than its predecessor, the Gear S is slightly thicker and taller than other Samsung smartwatches, which are already fairly thick and tall.

The big innovation here, though, is that you'll be able to use the Gear S independently. With a built-in GPS and cellular connection, you can send and receive calls from the watch. If you don't want to use the watch's 3G connection, you can pair it with your smartphone via Bluetooth or jump on an available WiFi connection.

The Gear S also includes a turn-by-turn pedestrian navigation, new updates, a heart-rate monitor, and Nike+ running app integration. Samsung hasn't announced pricing for the Gear S yet, but the company did say it will begin selling the watch soon.

A Television Designed for the Outdoors

Contrary to popular belief, outdoor TV's are not a bad idea. From Adidas and Body Glove to Sony, many of these TV's are designed to work outside. And, while they don't perform as well as indoor units, they are still good enough for even those who camp on a weekly basis.

The Outdoor TV's we tested were all made of moisture-resistant parts, primarily from Adidas and Body Glove, and assembled in the United States. The television is encased in a weather-resistant plastic case with four multipurpose feet to cool the heat in hot weather. The case is ventilated with fans through a port on the back but not such that it provides a barrier to spiders, which like to nest in warm, protected places.

The SunShine screen has a matte finish that is less reflective than that of an indoor set, and the LCD screen is 20 percent brighter than the standard screen. An owner of the set said she thought the picture was excellent, though she watched most of it in the evenings, eager at nightfall, she said, the TV's brightness did not attract many bugs, although it did attract neighbors. That was the last she said, because they brought their own wine.

The Leash Camera Strap

Kodak's new Leash Camera Strap, as known everyone knows by now, is a website where inventors present their innovations to the public in hope of raising enough money to move forward with production. Sometimes only great new products are born. Sometimes they flop.

The Leash is in the first category. It's exactly the sort of thing Kodak may have used to get more people looking at Kodak's new products.

In this case, it's the camera strap.

A single-frame reflex takes beautiful photos, but you pay the price in weight, bulk and awkwardness. The Leash ($49) is designed to help.

The first thing it does is store the lightweight camera strap — usually a 20-minute procedure involving cradles and reading glasses. Instead, the Leash's tiny black plastic anchor to your camera's case shortens.

Then there's the nylon strap itself, which also allows you and your friends to quickly and easily hold your camera. To do this, you just place it on the strap's loop and slide it under the camera. You will pull it tight against the strap. The tension helps keep it in place.

Figure 4 Independent Blog Stimulus

The post being generated by newly-released smart phones has manufacturers pulling out all the stops to prove that they know what it takes to hang with the big boys. Cate in public newsmagazine Commando is the first smartphone designed to improve on some of the key weaknesses of competitors. Three serious advantages any user will appreciate: its extended battery life, more than two hours longer than any other currently available's shorter and scratch-resistant touch screen made of synthetic sapphire, one of the hardest minerals on earth and its megapixel cameras, allowing for easy reading in any lighting environment.

The Commando performs all the standard tasks you would expect on a smartphone, but it is optimized to support specific environments - or when you're behind the wheel - really well. The Commando's built-in Car Tracker feature lets a parking spot, remembers where your car is parked and reminds you when the meter has run out, all using GPS and its AutoApp log references, alerts you to prices and locations of nearby gas stations when the low fuel light shows and manages your license plates, allowing for easy reading in any lighting environment.

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Polaroid develops a new Instant Camera

Polaroid's latest move to move the field of instant photography (and Polaroid itself) is the Z2300 instant digital camera.

Gauged by rating on Amazon, the $160 camera seems provide enough. The Z2300 is essentially a digital camera with a printer built in. You take photos, which it stores for you to see on the three-inch LCD screen on the camera's back. When you have a shot you like, you can make a 3-by-3-inch print. Price: paper costs $15 for a 36-pack (that's 50 cents per shot), available online and in camera stores, as is the camera itself.

The prints are snapshots-quality, tear-resistant, and adhesive (if you can peel off the adhesive paper backing). They also appear to be low-quality. The hand-held photos I took were a tad blurry. The shutter speed must be slow; even shots in full sunlight were soft unless I steadied the camera on a wall or used a tripod. The prints were a bit washed out, but cool in an "Instagram web of low-fB" way.

With a 3-inch display, it's 1.5 by 1.5 inches, it's not quite pocket-size, nor is it lightweight. The controls are pretty easy to figure out, but there is a lot of them spread around the camera, some on the back, some on the side. It's not elegant.

At the same time you may be wondering why the camera would appeal to Tintin's coffee shop, one woman was too busy taking with it. "This would be so much fun to use with my grandchildren!" she said. I suspect it would also be good for scrapbookers, and the sticky-back photos might make fun party favors.

Tagg Pet Tracker

GPS is already in our cars and phones — why not on pet collars? The Tagg Pet Tracker ($199) plus $8 a month after three-month supply is yours for $279. The company's tag line: "The tracker should not be on spiked, veiled or metal collars." That means you, Brutus next door.

Now you can track Petty's whereabouts, if the animal loses the tag (or any other "garbage" that you create), like the 1.8-acre tag sends you a text message. And you can use the pettracker.com website to find your pet again on a map using your phone or computer.

Unlike most pet trackers, this one is useful even when your animal remains on the property. It also acts like one of those PetSafe motion sensors, generating daily or weekly reports on how much exercise your animal is getting. Might be handy if you're not around to witness its sedentary during the day.

The design is clear and attractive—water-resistant, meaning that swimming or bathing doesn't hurt it. When the battery runs low, the transmitter sends you a text to let you know. You then reap the thing yourself onto its base charger, charge it and keep it about a month.

You can add another pet for another $1 a month, and there's no commitment; you can start or stop service whenever you like. You can pay for the service for a year.
How Changing Media Formats

Figure 5 Company Blog Stimulus

Built-In Surge Protector Prevents CFL Failure

The inaudible light bulb has been around since the late 1800s, but the technology has been improving. Due to a law passed by Congress in 2007, manufacturers are required by 2012 to increase the efficiency of incandescent light bulbs, meaning more than 90 percent of the consumer lighting market, can no longer be manufactured in the US. The lights are not yet available on store shelves, but manufacturers are already taking orders from consumers, such as compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs), that cut electricity use by 65 percent. Since the new CFLs are more efficient, their efficiency over time will be about 60 percent better than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Polaroid Develops a New Instant Camera

Polaroid is moving to revive the field of instant photography (and Polaroid itself) with the Z2300 instant digital camera.

Tag Pet Tracker

CFLs are already in our cars and phones — why not on our pets? The Tag Pet Tracker ($100 plus $8 a month after the first three months) snaps onto your pet’s collar or cat’s existing collar.

The Leash Camera Strap

KiwiTracker, as almost everyone knows by now, is a website where inventors present their brainstorms as crowd-sourced images of raising enough money to move forward with production. Sometimes truly great new products and ideas. Sometimes they fizzle.

A Television Designed for the Outdoors

Outdoor scenes typically suffer — or benefit — from the lack of sunlight. Sunlight TVs are designed to withstand these conditions.

Television sets do not normally do well in extreme heat, cold or the typical moisture, but Sunlight TVs are adapted from the industrial displays the company builds for use in places like ballpark concession stands.

The company said the sets were made of moisture-resistant parts, primarily in Asia, and tested in real life in the United States. The television set is a two-piece, weather-resistant plastic case with four multiplexed fins to cool the module in heat, and has a non-glare screen that is optimized for low light. It also provides a barrier to spiders, which eschew it for warmer, protected places.

The Sunlight screen has a matte finish that is less reflective than that of an indoor set, and the LCD screen is 20 percent brighter than the standard screen.

An owner of the set said the picture was excellent, though he watched mostly in the evening. Even at twilight, she said the TV’s brightness did not attract many bugs, although it did attract neighbors.

That was fine, she said, because they brought their own wine.

Samsung’s New Smartwatch Lets You Make Calls from Your Wrist

Samsung has added a new entry to its growing catalog of smartwatches with the debut of its Gear 3. The watch, like previous wearables, however, this one packs in its own 3G data connection which means it doesn’t have to be tied to your smartphone at all times. That’s a big deal for smartwatchers.

Sporting a curved 3-inch display that wraps around your wrist, the Gear 3 looks more comfortable to wear — and more stylish — than Samsung’s rectangular watches. Still, with a larger display case than its competitors, the Gear S is fairly bulky. The Gear S is thicker and taller than other Samsung smartwatches, which are already fairly thick and tall.

The big innovation here, though, is that you’ll be able to use the Gear S independently of your smartphone. It can now reply to notifications from its social networks and other apps via the watch’s SIM card or its own cellular keyboard.

What’s more, you can make and receive calls from the watch; if you don’t want to use the watch’s 3G connection, you can pair it with your smartphone via Bluetooth or jump on an available Wi-Fi connection.

The Gear S also includes turn-by-turn pedestrian navigation, sleep tracking, a heart-rate monitor, and Nike+ Running app integration.

Samsung hasn’t announced pricing for the Gear S yet, but the company did say it will begin selling the watch soon.

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In this case, it’s the camera strap.

A single lens reflex takes beautiful photos, but you pay the price in weight, bulk and accessories. The Leash ($45) is designed to help.

The first thing it does is protect you from the nightmare of dropping a camera strap — usually a 20-minute procedure involving crocheted needles and readjusting glasses. Instead, you know the Leash’s tiny black plastic anchors to your camera’s strap loops.

Then there’s the nylon strap itself, which hooks onto these anchors quickly and simply holds 280 pounds. It starts out as a regular neck strap, but it can expand to twice its original length when you want to see it as a sling strap where the camera hangs at your hip instead of your sternum.

In another configuration, you can clip one anchor to your belt, turning the Leash into a handy improvised strap. Pull it tight against the strap tension helps keep it steady.
Table 1

Sources Consulted for Product Purchase Decisions

When preparing to make a routine product purchase decision, such as a light bulb or hair dryer, how often do you use following sources for product information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>25% of the time (%)</th>
<th>Half of the time (%)</th>
<th>75% of the time (%)</th>
<th>All of the time (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story written by a journalist</td>
<td>38.2 (586)</td>
<td>24.8 (380)</td>
<td>18.4 (283)</td>
<td>10.5 (161)</td>
<td>8.1 (125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog post from an independent blogger</td>
<td>42.3 (650)</td>
<td>20.5 (314)</td>
<td>17.9 (274)</td>
<td>12.4 (191)</td>
<td>6.9 (106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company website, newsletter, blog or catalog</td>
<td>30.3 (465)</td>
<td>24.6 (377)</td>
<td>22.2 (341)</td>
<td>14.0 (215)</td>
<td>8.9 (137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online product reviews by other consumers</td>
<td>16.9 (259)</td>
<td>19.2 (295)</td>
<td>23.4 (359)</td>
<td>24.6 (377)</td>
<td>16.0 (245)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>31.3 (480)</td>
<td>25.9 (398)</td>
<td>22.0 (337)</td>
<td>12.3 (189)</td>
<td>8.5 (131)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native advertisement</td>
<td>44.6 (684)</td>
<td>18.1 (278)</td>
<td>17.7 (272)</td>
<td>11.6 (178)</td>
<td>8.0 (123)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When preparing to make an important product purchase decision, such as a smartphone or laptop computer, how often you use following sources for product information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>25% of the time (%)</th>
<th>Half of the time (%)</th>
<th>75% of the time (%)</th>
<th>All of the time (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story written by a journalist</td>
<td>33.6 (515)</td>
<td>28.5 (437)</td>
<td>17.7 (272)</td>
<td>10.9 (167)</td>
<td>9.4 (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog post from an independent blogger</td>
<td>38.6 (593)</td>
<td>22.1 (339)</td>
<td>18.8 (288)</td>
<td>12.2 (187)</td>
<td>8.3 (128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company website, newsletter, blog or catalog</td>
<td>23.5 (360)</td>
<td>26.3 (403)</td>
<td>22.5 (346)</td>
<td>15.6 (240)</td>
<td>12.1 (186)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online product reviews written by other consumers</td>
<td>13.3 (204)</td>
<td>17.5 (268)</td>
<td>25.0 (384)</td>
<td>24.5 (376)</td>
<td>19.7 (303)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>30.6 (469)</td>
<td>26.4 (406)</td>
<td>21.5 (330)</td>
<td>12.6 (193)</td>
<td>8.9 (137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native advertisement</td>
<td>42.9 (659)</td>
<td>19.2 (295)</td>
<td>17.6 (270)</td>
<td>11.7 (179)</td>
<td>8.6 (132)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Trust in Sources for Product Information*

When preparing to make a routine product purchase decision, such as a light bulb or hair dryer, how much do you trust the following sources to provide accurate and unbiased information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Trust Completely % (N)</th>
<th>Trust Somewhat % (N)</th>
<th>Distrust Somewhat % (N)</th>
<th>Distrust Completely % (N)</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story written by a journalist</td>
<td>16.9 (260)</td>
<td>63.4 (973)</td>
<td>14.9 (229)</td>
<td>4.8 (73)</td>
<td>3.07 (.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog post from independent blogger</td>
<td>15.4 (236)</td>
<td>51.8 (795)</td>
<td>25.6 (393)</td>
<td>7.2 (111)</td>
<td>2.97 (.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company website, newsletter, blog or catalog</td>
<td>18.3 (281)</td>
<td>50.0 (767)</td>
<td>26.3 (403)</td>
<td>5.5 (84)</td>
<td>2.98 (.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online product reviews written by consumers</td>
<td>28.3 (434)</td>
<td>55.2 (848)</td>
<td>12.4 (191)</td>
<td>4.0 (62)</td>
<td>3.20 (.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>15.0 (231)</td>
<td>45.8 (703)</td>
<td>30.4 (467)</td>
<td>8.7 (134)</td>
<td>2.93 (.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native advertisement</td>
<td>12.8 (197)</td>
<td>37.9 (581)</td>
<td>35.5 (545)</td>
<td>13.8 (212)</td>
<td>2.91 (.78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When preparing to make an important product purchase decision, such as a smartphone or computer, how much do you trust the following sources to provide accurate and unbiased information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Trust Completely % (N)</th>
<th>Trust Somewhat % (N)</th>
<th>Distrust Somewhat % (N)</th>
<th>Distrust Completely % (N)</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story written by a journalist</td>
<td>15.4 (236)</td>
<td>61.0 (937)</td>
<td>17.5 (268)</td>
<td>6.1 (94)</td>
<td>2.86 (.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog post from an independent blogger</td>
<td>14.6 (224)</td>
<td>53.2 (817)</td>
<td>24.0 (368)</td>
<td>8.2 (126)</td>
<td>2.74 (.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company website, newsletter, blog or catalog</td>
<td>18.4 (282)</td>
<td>48.9 (750)</td>
<td>25.4 (390)</td>
<td>7.4 (113)</td>
<td>2.78 (.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online product reviews by other consumers</td>
<td>26.6 (409)</td>
<td>55.2 (848)</td>
<td>12.9 (198)</td>
<td>5.2 (80)</td>
<td>3.03 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>13.0 (199)</td>
<td>48.5 (744)</td>
<td>29.6 (455)</td>
<td>8.9 (137)</td>
<td>2.65 (.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native advertisement</td>
<td>12.8 (196)</td>
<td>39.4 (605)</td>
<td>32.8 (503)</td>
<td>15.0 (231)</td>
<td>2.50 (.90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Perceived Credibility of Source*

Credibility Based Upon CLF Stimulus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>News Story</th>
<th>Company Blog</th>
<th>Independent Blog</th>
<th>Native Ad</th>
<th>Traditional Ad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believability *</td>
<td>5.66 (1.30)</td>
<td>5.64 (1.23)</td>
<td>5.62 (1.23)</td>
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<td>5.24 (1.5)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5.44 (1.3)</td>
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<td>5.73 (1.30)</td>
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<td>5.51 (1.3)</td>
<td>5.44 (1.26)</td>
<td>5.78 (1.16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-bias</td>
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<td>4.17 (1.8)</td>
<td>4.55 (1.8)</td>
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<td>4.45 (1.8)</td>
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<td>5.3 (1.31)</td>
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<td>26 (5.33)</td>
<td>26.36 (5.39)</td>
<td>25.41 (5.51)</td>
<td>27.71 (5.09)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at .05 level

Credibility Based upon Smartphone Stimulus

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<th>Scale</th>
<th>News Story</th>
<th>Company Blog</th>
<th>Independent Blog</th>
<th>Native Ad</th>
<th>Traditional Ad</th>
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<td>5.49 (1.40)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>5.47 (1.27)</td>
<td>5.75 (1.14)</td>
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<td>27.31 (4.8)</td>
<td>26.33 (5.67)</td>
<td>25.97 (5.66)</td>
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</table>

* Statistically significant at .05 level