

Modern News  
Consumption and  
**the Rise of Visual  
Storytelling**



News consumption is constantly changing as people explore new platforms and change their preferences for how they digest media. Over the past two decades, the news and entertainment industries have had to address the shift away from **print media to digital platforms.**

**According to Editor & Publisher and the Pew Research Center, U.S. daily newspapers' total estimated weekday circulation was 55.8 million in 2000 but dropped to 24.2 million by 2020.<sup>1</sup>**

**But what is filling this gap?**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/newspapers/>

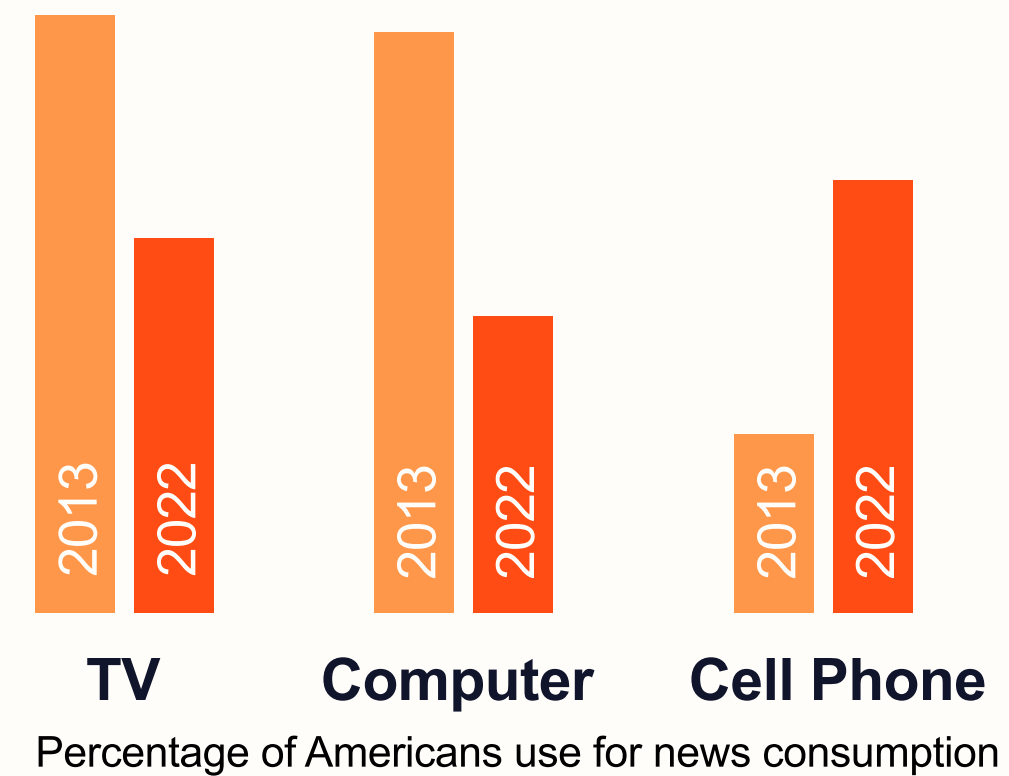




# The Rise of Visual Storytelling

The 2022 Reuters Institute Digital News Report found younger generations were more likely to prefer digital and social media platforms for news and had less loyalty to news brands compared to older generations.<sup>2</sup>

The report found the percentage of Americans using TV for news declined from 72% in 2013 to 48% in 2022, and the use of a computer for news declined from 71% to 41% in the same time period. Cell phone use for news, however, rose from 28% to 56% in the last nine years.



The report also found people consume less text-based social media, such as Facebook, preferring more visually-focused platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. **People aged 18 to 24 are engaging with TikTok five times more over a three year period—from 3% in 2020 to 15% in 2022.**

<sup>2</sup> [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital\\_News-Report\\_2022.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital_News-Report_2022.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital\\_News-Report\\_2022.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital_News-Report_2022.pdf)





# How can news brands respond to these shifts in consumer preferences?

Reuters recommends they match popular types of multimedia content with the tone of the news stories.

What do these platforms have that text-based media lacks? According to qualitative interviews, younger audiences prefer the informal, diverse, entertaining, and personalized news experience on social channels compared to TV.<sup>4</sup>

**Now more than ever, young people expect curated media and content, which is why they rely on social media feeds for their news.** While they may prefer visual forms of storytelling, they still like a variety of media in their news (from still imagery to text to video), and still trust traditional news media for more serious topics.

**The COVID-19 pandemic was a driver for more visual-based news.** The shift to quarantine prompted companies across all industries to innovate how they communicate to increasingly remote audiences, to capture their attention and convey important information.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital\\_News-Report\\_2022.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital_News-Report_2022.pdf)

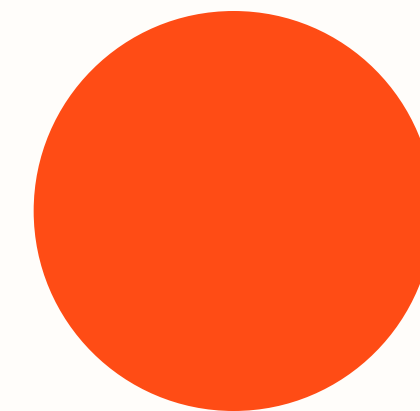
<sup>5</sup> <https://piktochart.com/blog/how-visual-storytelling-is-shaping-the-next-decade/>





# A Deeper Dive into Gen Z Media Consumption

Storyful's proprietary research examined news & media consumption habits on r/Genz to understand how the demographic interacted with their preferred platform for stories and information.



## Consumption Habits:

Consumption of media has shifted from traditional channels to social media platforms, where Gen Z spends most of its time. **25% of mentions touched on the role of social media in news consumption, highlighting fast access to news content.**

## Platforms:

Some Gen Z commenters thought their demographic was over-reliant on Reddit for news (versus Twitter, which was seen as a more Millennial platform). Here, concerns were raised over how social platforms index on engagement and could potentially lead users to more distressing content and bad news.

## Vehicles of Consumption:

**18% of r/GenZ media-related mentions focused on the use of smartphones and social media-enabled news.** This reliance is changing the way this group receives information and how information spreads.



# Why is Visual Storytelling Effective?



## People's brains consume visuals faster than text

Visuals are processed **60,000 times** faster than text by the human brain, and 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual.<sup>7</sup>

## People's attention spans continue to decline

A Microsoft study found the average human attention span fell from 12 seconds in 2000 to **eight seconds** today - less than a goldfish's!<sup>8</sup>

## Posts with images are more engaging

Facebook posts with images see **2.3 times more** engagement than those without, and articles with a photo every 75-100 words received twice as many social media shares.<sup>9</sup>

## People increasingly prefer video for consuming information

Mobile video consumption **increased 17 fold since 2012**, showing the shift in preference for visual storytelling through video.<sup>10</sup>

## Visual storytelling strengthens breaking news stories

People want to see photos and videos of events in **real-time** as they unfold.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.visualstorytell.com/blog/what-is-visual-storytelling>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.t-sciences.com/news/humans-process-visual-data-better>

<sup>8</sup> <https://time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://buzzsumo.com/blog/how-to-massively-boost-your-blog-traffic-with-these-5-awesome-image-stats/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.mediapost.com/uploads/CiscoForecast.pdf>



# Tips for Effective Visual Storytelling



## Show Don't Tell

Let multimedia lead the story if it can convey information better than words could.<sup>11</sup>



## Don't Forget Your Audience

Craft your story from your audience's point of view- why should they care?



## Teach Your Audience Something New

Whether this is about a breaking news story or a deep dive into a topic, make sure your audience gets value out of your storytelling.



## Use Data

Using infographics or research builds authority to your storytelling and helps contextualize your information.

<sup>11</sup> <https://truscribe.com/7-tips-to-improve-visual-storytelling/>

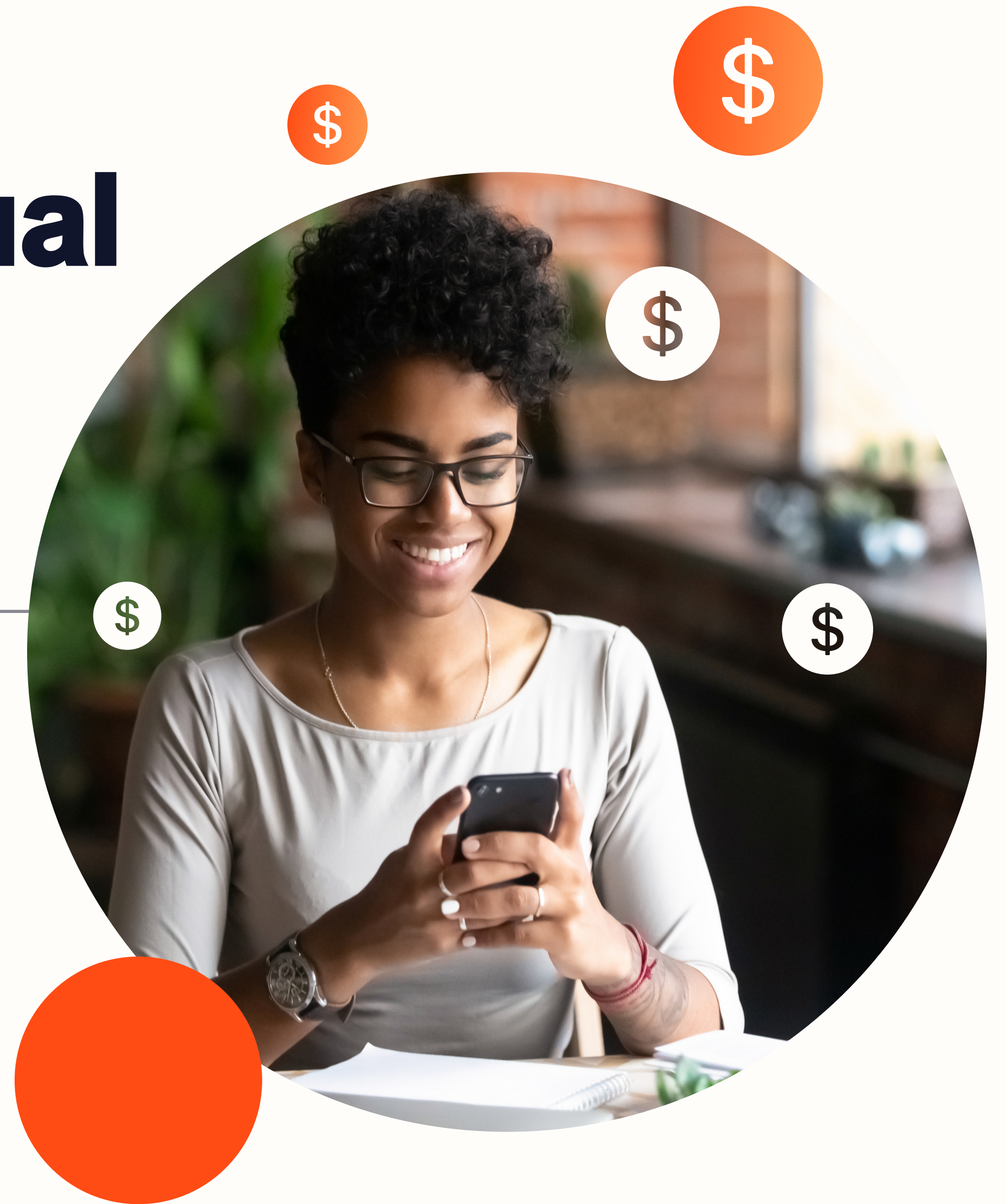




# How newsrooms can monetize or acquire visual storytelling content

With an increased need for high volumes of visual storytelling, newsrooms can struggle to produce or acquire enough video or photos to feed the constant stream of news content.

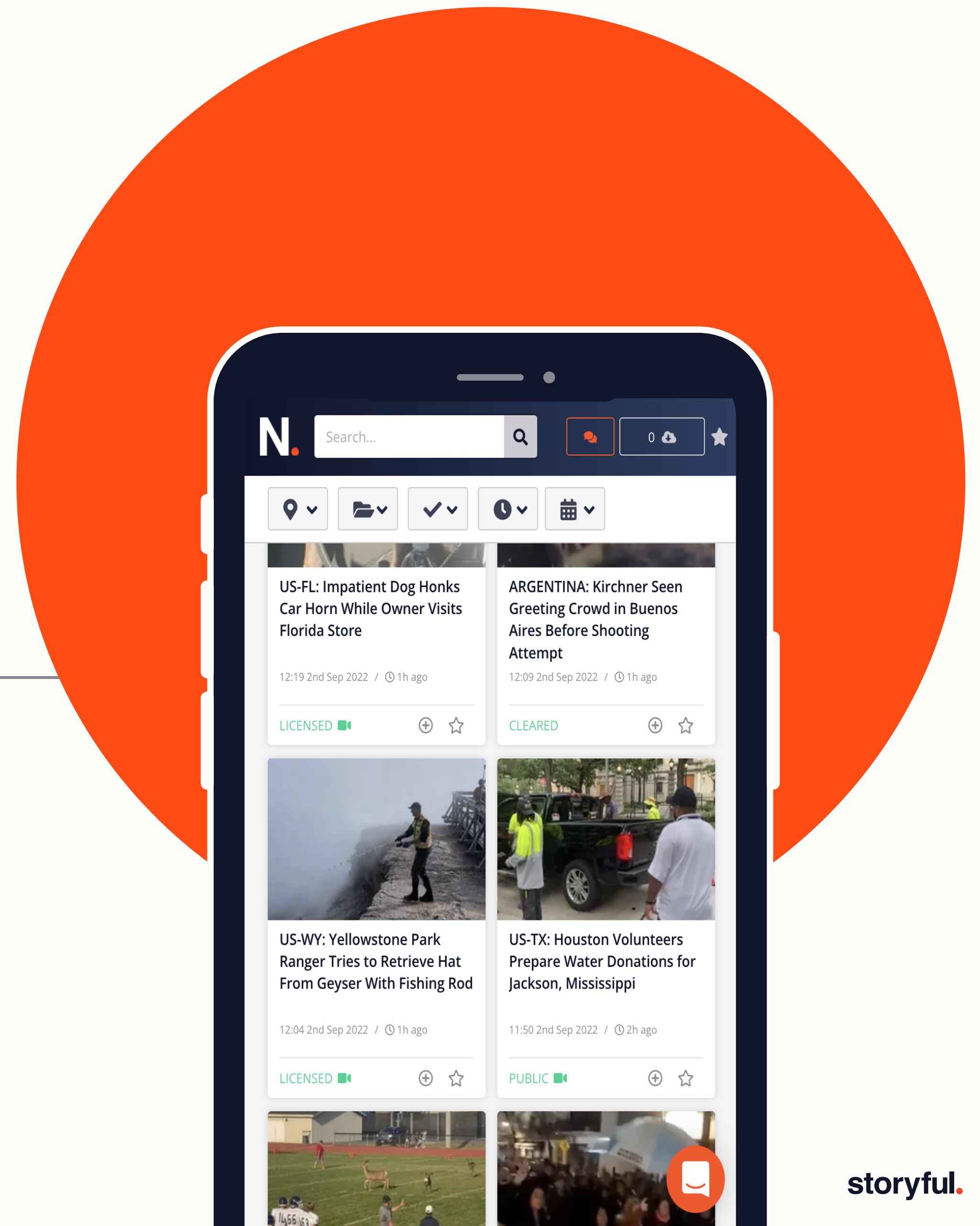
Newsrooms can partner with news agencies to gain access to a wide variety of licensed, high-quality, and ready-to-publish user-generated news footage and viral videos to use in their stories. That media can be leveraged to drive greater engagement across various channels, and reach new audiences, and drive revenue through social monetization.





# Looking to Enhance Your Storytelling and Drive Engagement? Storyful Can Help.

Newswire by Storyful acts as an extension to newsrooms looking to bridge the gap between traditional news models and video-first reporting and visual storytelling to reach new audiences and drive engagement. **Our global team of journalists verifies and licenses user-generated content across News, Lifestyle, Weather and Viral, for daily publication.**



# With Newswire, your newsroom receives:

- Access to a library of **over 200,000+ frontline videos** and social media content, uncovering hidden and pre-viral stories
- **Powerful, effective search**
- **Verification and usage rights guidance** to ensure your newsroom can publish factual, curated content that is ready-to-publish for immediate use
- Access to engaging and **breaking news content** that appeals to more consumers
- Whitelist status to protect against strikes on social platforms and allow the **monetization of content**
- A cost-effective way of telling richer **social media-powered stories** across major platforms including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat

Storyful is the most comprehensive UGC-powered digital platform powering the news cycle. **Get access to the entire offering under a single subscription**

## Have questions or want more information?

Reach out to the Storyful team and we would be happy to provide you with answers or walk you through how our content verification and acquisition services can strengthen your newsroom.

→ [Request a Consultation](#)

