

detonated a nuclear weapon.)

But details do matter, and so does a judicious attitude, Gusterson says. Reporters should identify U.S. government officials who make accusations about Pyongyang, diversify their pool of Korea specialists, occasionally dial the 011 international access code instead of turning exclusively to District of Columbia analysts, and separate news about nuclear developments from opinion about Kim Jong Il's personal peculiarities. More objective reporting would yield better national debate and sounder foreign policy regarding one of the world's gravest areas of concern.

## PRESS &amp; MEDIA

## News Virgins

**THE SOURCE:** "Young People Flee From the News, Whatever the Source" by Thomas E. Patterson, in *Television Quarterly*, Winter 2008.

A GENERATION AGO, AS THE Watergate scandal threatened President Richard Nixon, knots of readers stood outside the entrance of *The Washington Post* each night waiting to buy the next day's news-

paper, which would go on sale at 10:15 P.M. Many of these eager consumers were teenagers and twentysomethings who were as interested in public affairs as they were in the new Stones album.

That was a time when more than half of all adults under 30 were regular readers of a daily newspaper, and most of them also watched the evening news. Today, only one in 12 young adults reads printed news. Twice as many watch news on television—one in six. One young person in eight checks out Internet news.

So how does this generation get the news? Much of it doesn't.

Roughly a fourth of all younger Americans pay no attention to news from any source, writes Thomas E. Patterson, of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

A large national survey found that only a fifth of younger respondents could accurately dredge up a factual element about the top story of the day. And though some proponents of new media say that young Americans merely get their news fix through a "different distribution system" such as *The Daily Show*, the

survey uncovered only a tiny number of such individuals.

The decline in exposure to news is part of an overall cultural shift. Two or three decades ago, news had a near monopoly on dinner-hour television, Patterson says. Watching TV while preparing—or eating—dinner meant watching news. But television's ability to force-feed news ended with the rise of cable, which offered alternatives, even at six o'clock. Fewer parents watched news, and even if they did, their children were usually in another room watching something else. The development of "news habits" in children and teenagers slowed dramatically.

The Internet has even less ability to build new audiences for news. Users gravitate to the sites they like, and news is about as popular with many of them as spinach. Even if they call up the news, they spend less time reading it than in the past, and are less likely to do so as a matter of habit. New media, Patterson says, reinforce interests rather than create new ones.

## HISTORY

## Currying Maximum Favor

**THE SOURCE:** "France Under the Nazi Boot" by Filippo Occhino, Kim Oosterlinck, and Eugene N. White, in *The Journal of Economic History*, March 2008.

IT TOOK DECADES FOR HISTORIANS to shatter the political fable that the French fought back fierce-

ly against their German occupiers during World War II. Now, researchers have debunked the economic myth that the Nazis were solely responsible for the pervasive hunger and deprivation in occupied France during the period. In

fact, the French government voluntarily turned over far more money and manpower to the Hitler regime than the terms of the armistice required.

In 1941, French leaders, expecting Britain to surrender quickly, maneuvered to curry favor with Germany to boost French standing in a new Europe dominated by Adolf Hitler, write economists Filippo Occhino and Eugene N. White of Rutgers and Kim Oosterlinck of