

# Five Top Media Trends for 2018



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If there's one thing we've all learned over the last few years, it's that we live in a media-centric world. Love it or hate it or don't believe it, whether traditional media or social media, the media affects us all, and it is helpful to understand the trends affecting the media.

For nearly two decades, we've compiled an annual list of trends based on a wide-ranging review of the media world and interactions with media influencers. Here are our five top media trends.

1. **The news cycle will continue to speed up.** If you didn't understand before how it was a curse, we certainly live in interesting times. The news cycle has gotten faster – with news alerts popping on our phones several times an hour. News that would have been significant a few years ago quickly gets pushed aside, and no one wants to be miss the latest shocker. Regardless of political views, people are finding this exhausting. Even late-night comedians are complaining.
2. **People will be more anxious and angry.** The constant barrage of news, along with the need to comment or read others' comments, is turning this into the Age of Anxiety and Anger. Another cause: screen addiction and

the expectation of needing to be connected 24/7 to our online communities – so you never have to feel alone – but it actually leaves most of us feeling more empty, worried and angry than before, even if factoring out politics. We anticipate more coverage on stress, anxiety, mental health and ways to de-stress, which includes taking a break from your device – aka a technology cleanse or digital detox – which is healthy and a good idea but may be impossible.

3. **2018 will be tough for traditional and online media.** News consumption has increased, but not enough of us want to *pay* for the news. Great reporting takes effort and lots of resources but sharing news on social media doesn't help pay for reporting. So traditional and even online media need to develop new advertising and subscription-based business models. Another thing that will affect the media landscape: if either or both of the AT&T-Time Warner and Sinclair Broadcasting-Tribune Media deals get approved.
4. **Fake news won't fade in 2018.** If we can't even agree on a definition of fake news, it will be impossible for Facebook, Google and Twitter to design algorithms and for Congress to enact regulations to stop fake news. (What's sad: It's still easier and more lucrative to generate totally fake news than it is to produce real, fact-based news.)
5. **Cord cutters won't save money or money.** At some point, cord cutters may realize they're not really saving money they still need to pay for internet access while also paying for a slew of must-have streaming services. Worse, accessing all those different streaming services on your TV (remember those?) is still more clunky and time-consuming than using a cable box to find the movie or TV show you want.

Unfortunately, these trends are likely to continue unchanged into the future. But, as we're all impacted by the media, it's

important to understand how they – and we – are being affected.

*About the Author: Norman Birnbach is the president of Birnbach Communications, [www.birnbach.com](http://www.birnbach.com), a Boston-based PR and social media agency that has been issuing annual predictions for nearly two decades. His blog, [PR BackTalk](#), provides insights and attitude about PR, journalism and traditional and social media.*