

★ SCROLL STOPPERS ★

Six ways hybrid working is changing attention

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As a company obsessed with audiences, keeping up with the latest facts and figures about media engagement is second nature for us at Storythings.

So when we dove into a Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) report earlier this year, we were surprised to discover **a seismic shift in listener behaviour.**

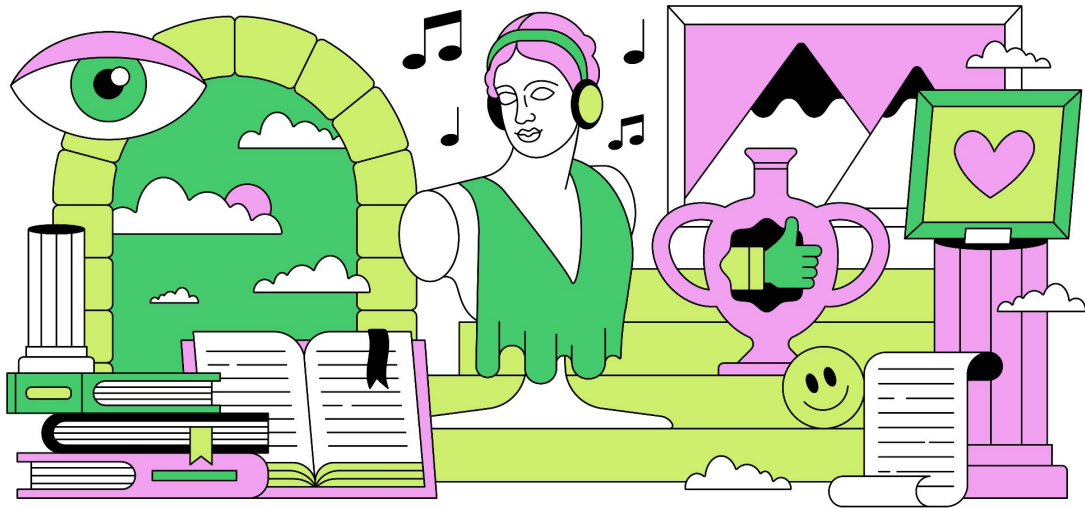
Radio's long-reigning superstar, the breakfast show—historically the most listened to show on any broadcast station—has started losing listeners to its mid-morning counterpart. And thanks to an **increase in hybrid working** and, in turn, a **decrease in commutes and early starts**, it makes sense.

We've been tracking **how attention and behaviours have changed since the early days of the pandemic.** But now, as we reach almost three years(!) since the first lockdown, it's obvious some of these habits have stuck.

The way we engage with media on a day-to-day basis has changed. And with so many of our clients' content strategies based on pre-pandemic habits, we decided it was time to deep dive into new audience behaviours—examining the ways people discover, use, and share content in **a hybrid world.**

During months of surveys, interviews, and roundtable discussions, we spoke to audiences and experts about everything from attention spans to authenticity.

The result? Six fascinating insights to help us (and you) develop up-to-date content strategies for a post-pandemic world.



Part 1 of 6

CURATE EXPECTATIONS

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1. CURATE EXPECTATIONS

The paradox of choice is a funny thing: the idea that having **too much choice** or too many options actually makes us more miserable. And with all the splendour that the content world has to offer—films, tweets, vlogs, newsletters, podcasts, Netflix originals, the list goes on—**feeling overwhelmed and overstimulated** is nothing new for modern-day audiences. A dilemma that only escalated during the pandemic.

As we navigated extended periods of lockdown, many of us not only had the **time and freedom to engage with more content**, but as the whole world moved online, we suddenly had a lot more to choose from.

Now, as our work and social lives get increasingly busier, habits like online learning, infinite scrolling, and late-night Google holes are difficult to maintain.

We've developed a self-awareness in the way we consume content and our research points to a reliance on others to help **cut through the noise**.

Without the time, will, or headspace to trudge through masses of media, audiences are actively seeking out people and platforms to curate content for them.

“We need somebody else to tell us what’s interesting. Newsletters are the new water cooler talks.”

And there's proof in the proverbial pudding. Our survey respondents explicitly called out newsletters as a go-to for curated content, alongside platforms like Mubi and Axios. Podcasts, articles, Instagram, and newsletters ranked as the four most popular types of content—all of which are frequently used for **rounding up or recommending content**, particularly from a personal point of view.

Ditching the algorithm in favour of more personalised recommendations could also be a symptom of remote or hybrid working.

“When I was working in a studio space five days a week we'd have many of these moments where we shared recommendations, it just kind of happens in the moment. And I feel like that's something that we lost when we moved to working from home.”

Whether it's a resistance to information overload or an attempt to offset the loss in face-to-face recommendations, seeking out curated content is a behaviour we're going to see a lot more of.

When asked what content qualities they are most drawn to, responses were:

- 1. Well curated**
- 2. Thought provoking**
- 3. Visually striking**

“We need somebody else to tell us what is interesting. Newsletters are the new water cooler talks.” (Interviewee)

Takeaway:

Think about how you can curate experiences for audiences. **Good curation adds context and lets people know why the thing you want them to see or hear is important.**

The range of content you include, and how you talk about it, defines your voice and personality over time. Becoming a smart filter is a brilliant way for building loyalty.