Do Your Own Research: The 2021 Capitol Riots

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Introduction of Content Initiative

Content Mission Statement

Do Your Own Research: The 2021 Capitol Riots is a repository of information where young, politically engaged voters can compare and contrast primary and diverse, secondary accounts to make their own conclusions about what happened on January 6th, 2021 in the U.S. Capitol grounds. We aim to support primarily young, politically engaged, and conservative or Republican adults' sensemaking of the 2021 Capitol riots while accommodating liberal or Democratic adults' activist-driven research of the event. As described below, this demographic includes primarily politically polarized voters aged 18–25 who believe political outcomes have significant effects on the world.

Seminal accounts of technology and misinformation attribute political polarization, in part, to the design of social media algorithms and interfaces (e.g., Pariser). While the disciplines responsible for these designs require increased criticality (Ko et al.), misinformation and its accompanying problems, such as political polarization, are multifaceted issues requiring holistic solutions (Calo et al.; O'Connor & Weatherall). American educational theorist John Dewey, for example, observed that the role of formal education is to reproduce competencies essential to social life — especially those not ordinarily reproduced and refined in everyday life (Dewey). Phenomena emerging from networked communications and social media, such as misinformation or political polarization, require new competencies not produced in everyday life, suggesting a need for formal education.

However, the ways in which people construct knowledge, form beliefs, and express ideologies are learned and culturally rooted (Gottleib; Philip et al.), preventing plain dissemination of nominally correct knowledge. Similarly, simply transmitting canonical knowledge would neglect the development of epistemic thinking and agency — newly identified competencies believed to be essential to scientific and democratic practice (Miller et al.; Barzilai & Chinn; Chinn et al.). There is therefore a clear need for learning designs which facilitate epistemic thinking while accommodating learners' existing ways of knowing. This project explores what such a design might look like beyond the classroom and within the scope of online, interactive media.

Core Platform

Our core platform is an interactive, vertically-oriented timeline documenting the events of the 2021 U.S. Capitol attacks. Informed by our analysis of survey response data, we present only the key facts of the events with minimal interpretation and additionally annotate these events with links to rich media and primary sources documenting the

event. In future work, this timeline would be implemented as a stand-alone website responsive to desktop and mobile screen sizes and interfaces.

Where We Started

We began this content initiative aiming to create an interactive timeline and map describing the 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, including President Donald Trump and his colleagues' scheme to submit a fraudulent set of electors to defraud the election certification process. This plan was inspired by recent social and information science work describing the effects of technology and social media on our information-seeking behaviors, news consumption, and political affiliations (cf. O'Connor & Weatherall; Young; Pariser; DiResta; Tripodi). We hoped that timeline- and map-based media would enable users to construct their own meanings of January 6th, aligning with accounts of conservatives' meaning-making of political media (cf. Tripodi). We additionally hoped that, when properly scaffolded, the platform would be suitable for learners and educational practitioners' development of epistemic thinking (cf. Miller et al.; Barzilai & Chinn).

However, we lacked a framework or theory to guide our design, which structure the problem space and design process (Nelson & Ko). Our audience research and message testing have provided this framework, revealed discrepancies in our original design, and identified opportunities for future work. For example, our research has informed us to abandon the map component of our content, shown that audience members deploy a variety of strategies to engage with political media, and identified language that best accommodates audience members' diverging views on January 6th. Future work includes further iteration on our prototype, user studies with primarily conservative or Republican audience members, and measuring changes in beliefs or metacognitive thinking.

Audience Research

Secondary Research Findings

To better understand audience demographics and their interactions with political media, we surveyed primarily reports published by Pew Research Center within the last five years. We identified key facts about demographics of interest and three thematic findings relating to audience members' political beliefs, media use, and knowledge.

Demographic Findings

When beginning our survey, we envisioned three audience groups: politically polarized, high-interest users who actively attend to political events and media; politically active

and concerned citizens who believe political events matter and require attention; and young, politically engaged adults who participate in informal political discourse. While our survey did not illuminate each audience group equally, our findings show these audiences exist and may be targets for our content initiative.

Politically Polarized, High-Interest Users

In a 2021 report, the Pew Research Center identified that the most politically engaged individuals reside in one of two politically polarized groups: *Faith and Flag Conservatives* and *Progressive Left*. Members of the former group constitute approximately 13% of registered voters in the U.S. Members of this demographic are predominately White, skew male, are typically over 50 years old, have not completed a college education, and report middle-income earnings. Their political affiliation is overwhelmingly Republican.

In contrast, members of *Progressive Left* constitute approximately 7% of registered voters. Like members of *Faith and Flag Conservatives*, members of this demographic are predominately White and report middle-income earnings. However, they are typically below 50 years old, have completed a college education, and overwhelmingly identify as Democratic (Pew Research Center).

Both *Faith and Flag Conservatives* and *Progressive Left* members exhibit higher levels of political engagement compared to other, moderate groups. This high engagement typically manifests as voting, expressing support for political campaigns or candidates, making donations, and attending political rallies (Blazina). This demographic therefore represents an important target group for our intervention, as they represent users who are most motivated to research political events or communicate with others about them.

Politically Active and Concerned Citizens

In a 2024 report, the Pew Research Center identified that Americans who are not necessarily polarized continue to express concern about the outcomes of elections. For example, 71% of surveyed voters believed that the outcome of the 2024 presidential election genuinely mattered, with nearly identical proportions of Biden supporters (79%) and Trump supporters (78%) sharing this view. However, this belief is strongest among older voters: only 51% of voters aged 18–29 believed the election outcome truly matters; 86% of voters aged 65 and older express the same sentiment.

Beyond elections, 54% of Americans expressed significant concern that individual rights and protections may vary depending on state residence (Pew Research Center). The voters characterized by these statistics report an important user base, as these voters are likely highly motivated to research political events when they are relevant to election outcomes or individual rights. We anticipate our documentation of the 2021 Capitol riots will appeal to this base.

Young, Politically Engaged Adults

Generation Z adults (ages 18–25) represent a significantly online, politically active group of interest to our project. They generally participate in online activism at higher rates than older Americans. Additionally, while their offline activism resembles that of older generations, they exceed other age groups in volunteering for causes and attending in-person rallies or demonstrations. However, they contact elected officials at lower rates than older generations (PRRI).

Across different political affiliations, members of Generation Z engage in politics at different rates. For example, 40% of Democratic-leaning young adults volunteer for causes while only 26% of independents and 23% of Republicans do. Similarly, 20% of young adult Democrats attend rallies or demonstrations while only 17% of independents and 8% Republicans do. However, Democrat and Republican young adults follow social media profiles of those with different viewpoints at nearly identical rates, suggesting similarity in openness to alternative viewpoints (PRRI).

Thematic Findings

Our survey revealed three themes among American voters and consumers of political media. First, most Americans have worryingly low trust in mainstream sources of political media and news. While this distrust is greater among conservatives and Republicans, liberal and Democrats continue to distrust mainstream sources of media. Second, most Americans increasingly rely on social media to attain political media and news and are within some form of an epistemic bubble (Nguyen). Finally, Americans' views on the events of January 6th differ across party lines, reflecting reports of media fragmentation and political polarization.

Low Trust in Mainstream Sources of Political Media, Within Partisan Divides

Across the political spectrum, Americans demonstrate significant skepticism toward news media and varying processes to assess them. Approximately half of Americans report heavily weighing the publishing organization when evaluating a story's credibility, carefully considering a story's cited sources, and paying close attention to sourcing details (Gramlich). This skepticism is more pronounced among Republicans, with one-third disagreeing that local news reports information accurately (Pew Research Center), suggesting broader distrust among conservative circles. Additionally, Republicans and younger adults tend to place similar levels of trust in social media and national news organizations, though less than half of Republicans express any trust in national news outlets (Eddy).

While partisan differences exist, both Democrats and Republicans report greater distrust than trust in political news from social media platforms (Mitchell). This reflects broader

concerns in information integrity, as 70% of U.S. adults report exposure to inaccurate election news and approximately half express difficulty in distinguishing true information from false information. However, Republicans are more likely to report these experiences than Democrats (Jurkowitz).

These statistics complement Americans' apparent recognition of bias in their preferred news sources. For example, approximately two-thirds of Americans report that their most-used source of political news presents information that favors particular view points, approximately half have observed their preferred sources sharing unverified information, and over one-third have noticed misinformation from these same sources. Trump supporters more frequently report observing these practices among their preferred sources. This has resulted in broad distrust in political news media, as 80% of U.S. adults believe that different news sources present different sets of facts (Shearer).

Reliance on Social Media for News, Within Bubbles

While Americans increasingly rely on digital platforms for political information, their pattern of use varies across demographics, patterns, and political affiliation. Regarding demographics, digital immersion is greater among young Americans, with two-thirds of adults aged 18–29 reporting being online "almost constantly" compared to just one-quarter of the general population (Gelles-Watnick). This division extends to news consumption, with only 57% of Americans accessing news through smartphones, computers, or tablets, primarily via dedicated websites, apps, social media, and search engines. Among younger adults, the preferred social media platforms for news include Snapchat, TikTok, Reddit, Instagram, and Twitter (St. Aubin & Liedke).

There are additionally strong divisions in sources of political information by party affiliation: roughly one-fifth of Democrats and Republicans obtain political news primarily from sources aligned with their political leanings. These information bubbles correlate with ideological identities and reveal distinct media preferences: Democrats prefer CNN, NPR, and The New York Times while Republicans overwhelmingly prefer Fox News. Similarly, while only 6% of Americans regularly access news through alternative platforms — like BitChute, Gab, Getter, Parler, Rumble, Telegram, and Truth Social — approximately two-thirds of this population identify as Republican and being motivated by seeking information on current events (Stocking et al.).

Finally, young adults engage in political news differently than other demographics. For example, one-third of adults under 30 now get news from social media influencers across many platforms (St. Aubin & Liedke). This trend cuts across political divides, with 21% of all U.S. adults regularly obtaining news through social media influencers, including nearly identical proportions from both Republican and Democratic audiences. Similarly, YouTube has become a significant source of news for 25% of Americans; most

consider it an important information channel, and this trend collapses typical divisions between established and independent media creators (Stocking et al.).

Views on January 6th Differ, Reflecting Political Fragmentation and Polarization

Audience members' views on the events of January 6th, 2021, differed significantly across partisan lines. For example, Republicans generally place less importance on prosecuting individuals involved in the events compared to Democrats and tend to believe that those prosecuted face excessive punishments relative to their actions. Similarly, Republicans are more likely to believe that the events and their aftermath have received excessive amounts of attention, suggesting they may reject characterizations of the events as an insurrection or event of similar importance (Pew Research Center).

Audience members' are similarly divided on President Donald Trump's role in the events. Republicans predominantly believed his conduct during the events was appropriate and opposed his subsequent impeachment, and these sentiments are amplified among Republicans who contest the results of the 2020 presidential election (Pew Research Center). Similarly, 30% of U.S. adults believe Trump holds no responsibility for the Capitol storming (Malloy & Schwartz), and 25% of U.S. adults believe the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) orchestrated the Capitol events (Jackman et al.). Beliefs that Trump has some responsibility for the events has declined, descending from 52% to 43% across 2021 and 2022 (Jones).

Finally, the legitimacy of the 2020 election, from which the Capitol attacks were fomented, remains contested among audience members. Almost one quarter of U.S. adults question former President Joe Biden's victory in the election, and approximately 60% of Republicans express this view. In contrast, only a narrow majority of Americans believe the events of January 6th — including the protestors' actions, Trump's speech, and members of Congress' objections to certifying the electoral votes — threatened democratic processes. Over 80% of Republicans plainly reject Trump's responsibility for the attack (Weiner et al.).

Discussion

Our secondary research identified three audience groups and three characterizations of these audience groups' use, perception, and thinking of political media and events. The existence of politically polarized, high-interest users, politically active and concerned citizens, and young, politically engaged adults suggests our content initiative may be received well by some user groups. Additionally, audience members' low trust in mainstream sources of political media, reliance on social media, and fragmented views on the events of January 6th suggest our content initiative is timely and well-positioned to address gaps left by mainstream sources of media. However, our findings show little insight into how audience members seek out, evaluate, and verify political media.

Additionally, extant characterizations of audience members' views of the events of January 6th are deficit-focused, failing to describe exactly what members think and describing primarily what they get wrong. To address these gaps, we conducted a survey among members of our target audience, as described below.

Primary Research

We conducted a 16-item survey with optional demographic questions to understand how prospective website visitors interact with political media and understand the events of January 6th, 2021. Respondents reported using multiple strategies to evaluate and verify political media and strong preferences for timelines and primary sources when learning about political events. Additionally, most respondents characterized the events of January 6th, 2021, as either a riot or insurrection perpetuated by extremists. They expressed significant interest in the events' causal factors, participants' motivations, and subsequent legal proceedings. However, respondents were divided on whether factual information should be presented with or without analysis and interpretation.

These findings have informed four key decisions about our content initiative. We have decided to prioritize key facts with minimal interpretation, present facts through an interactive timeline, focus on content addressing participants' interests, and use terminology aligning with participants' understandings of events. We discuss our findings and analysis in greater detail in Discussion. Survey questions and responses can be found in Appendix A.

Methods

We previously reviewed secondary literature describing the social media habits, news consumption, political beliefs, and demographics of politically engaged adults in the United States. Based on this review, we designed a 16-item survey to identify the information-seeking behaviors, political attitudes, and understandings of January 6th of politically engaged adults. We did not pilot our survey.

To distribute our survey, the second author contacted several Middle Tennessee State University faculty and student organizations related to civic engagement. Of those who agreed to share the survey with their members, approximately 333 people viewed the survey. The initial response rate for this first round of distribution was approximately 3.9%. The second round of distribution, which yielded 19 responses, was given to a large but unknown number of people.

To analyze our qualitative data, the first author created a codebook from an initial sample of 13 responses. The second author then applied the codebook to the remaining 19 responses, resulting in 32 coded responses. The two authors then met to review the applied codes and resolve disagreements. Agreement measures were not collected, as

codes are interpreted as tallies of interpretative claims about data rather than the data itself (Hammer and Berland).

Demographics Results

Age

This question had 31 responses as this section was optional and answered on a voluntary basis. The vast majority of respondents answered 18–24 years old. Some respondents stated they were 25–34 years old, and one respondent answered that they were 35–44 years old.

Gender

This question had 30 responses as this section was optional and answered on a voluntary basis. The majority of respondents placed themselves on the gender binary, with slightly over half of respondents identifying as female and one-third identifying as male — including transgender respondents. There were also some respondents that identified as non-binary or third gender. One respondent preferred not to report their gender.

Political Affiliation

This question had 30 responses as this section was optional and answered on a voluntary basis. The majority of respondents answered that their political affiliation was Democrat. Many identified as Independent, some as purely Independent, and others as Independent with a Democratic or Republican lean. A few respondents identified as Leftist. Only a few respondents identified as Republican or preferred to not report their affiliation. Some respondents wrote their own affiliations, including: Left-Anarchist, Libertarian, and non-political.

How would you describe your political views?

The majority of respondents described themselves as either Liberal or Very Liberal. Many respondents described themselves as a kind of Moderate, with most answering Moderate leaning Conservative, and a few answering fully Moderate or Moderate leaning Liberal. One respondent preferred not to report their political views. Some respondents wrote their own descriptions, including: Leftist, Very Leftist, and Far-Left.

Aggregate Results

Media Preferences and Information-Seeking Behaviors

When you want to learn about a complex political event, how helpful is it for you to learn through...

In this question, we asked participants to rate various media on a five-point scale from "very unhelpful" to "most helpful" for learning about a complex political event. We found that respondents identified a timeline of happenings to be the most helpful, with original documents or transcripts, expert commentary or analysis, and first-person accounts trailing slightly behind. However, less than 13% of respondents answered that they found any one of the media neutral or slightly unhelpful. This suggests respondents would find most of the media helpful for learning about complex political events.

When researching an important political topic, how important is it for you to...

In this question, we asked respondents to rate activities for researching a political topic on a five-point scale from "not at all important" to "extremely important." While the majority of categories were found to be important to respondents, we found that they value viewing original source documents or footage the most. Viewing the physical location or setting where events took place received mixed responses: nearly half of respondents answered that they found it very to extremely important while nearly one-third found it not at all to only slightly important.

Knowledge and Interest in January 6th, 2021 Events

What word or phrase best describes the January 6th events?

We found that respondents held an overall negative sentiment regarding the J6 events with "insurrection" being chosen by the majority of respondents, followed by the term "riot." Options with less negative sentiment, such as "protest," "tragedy," or "protest turned riot," were chosen by only a few respondents. The description "revolution" was chosen by no one.

What aspects of the January 6th events are you most interested in understanding better?

The majority of respondents answered that they are most interested in better understanding who or what contributed to the events, who was involved and their motives, and the legal proceedings that followed. While these are the top answers, it is important to note that a better understanding of the timeline of events was the only option that was answered with less than half of respondents at 44%.

Learning Preferences and Time Commitments

In the last 7 days, how much time did you spend exploring information about political events?

A plurality of respondents answered 30−60 minutes or 1–2 hours. Many other respondents answered less than 15 minutes and more than 2 hours in multiple sessions. Some respondents reported 15–30 minutes.

If you were to explore information about January 6th, how much time would you be willing to spend?

The majority of respondents answered that they would be willing to spend 15–30 minutes exploring information about January 6th. A little more than a quarter of respondents answered that they would be willing to spend 30−60 minutes. However, the combined numbers of respondents that answered 1–2 hours or more than 2 hours in multiple sessions make up nearly one-third of responses. Only one respondent selected less than 15 minutes.

What features would be most valuable in a learning resource about January 6th?

The majority of respondents said that a chronological timeline of events and original video footage and documents would be the most valuable. A large number of respondents answered that an ability to compare different accounts of the same events, profiles of key individuals involved, and inclusion of legal and constitutional contexts would be valuable. Many respondents reported they would find a search function to find specific information valuable. A minority said that an interactive map of the Capitol showing where the events occurred would be valuable. One respondent wrote their own answer, reporting that a "video source with a measured narrator, rather than reading (due to reading struggles)" would be valuable.

What presentation approach would you prefer for information about January 6th?

Most respondents answered that they would prefer an analytical approach explaining significance and implications (34%) or a just-the-facts approach with minimal interpretation (25%). However, around one-third of respondents answered that they would prefer either a legal or constitutional focus on relevant laws and procedures (19%) or a historical context comparing January 6th to similar/past events (16). Only 6% of respondents said they would prefer a balanced presentation of multiple perspectives.

Information Sharing and Discussion

Do you discuss political events like January 6th with friends or family?

The majority of respondents answered that they occasionally discuss political events like January 6th with friends and family. While an equal amount of respondents (28%) answered that they frequently or rarely discuss politics with friends or family. There was only one respondent who answered that they never discuss political events like January 6th with friends or family.

If you find valuable information about political events, how likely are you to share it with others?

Half of respondents said they would be somewhat likely to share political information that they found valuable with others. Slightly over one–third of respondents said they would be very likely to share that information. While less than a quarter of respondents said they would be somewhat unlikely to share information with others.

What methods would you most likely use to share information about political events?

Almost all respondents reported they would be most likely to share information about political events during an in–person conversation. Most respondents reported they would most likely share information over the phone — such as through a text message or phone call. A smaller but comparable number of respondents reported they would most likely use social media or share a link. A minority of respondents said they do not typically share information about political events.

What types of content are you most likely to share with others?

News articles and video clips are what most respondents answered that they would be most likely to share with others. Many respondents also said they would be likely to share expert analysis, original documents, and personal commentary with others. Infographics or visual summaries were the least answered option.

Open-Ended Results

Here, we describe our qualitative findings for participants' responses to the open–ended questions on our survey. We present our findings for each question individually and in the order in which they were presented on the survey. For each question, we identify one or more themes among participants' responses and present quotes that illustrate those themes. We have aimed to include enough original data to allow readers to analyze it themselves, following Hammer and Berland. Many of participants' responses had

multiple themes; our use of one quote to illustrate one theme does not mean it does not represent other themes.

How do users verify information about political events?

We identified three strategies among participants' reported methods of verifying information about political events: consulting multiple, potentially disagreeing sources; consulting singular, primary sources; and consulting specific, trusted sources. Participants' reported methods were often accompanied with stated intents to synthesize their own conclusions.

Consulting Multiple, Potentially Disagreeing Sources

Overwhelmingly, participants reported typically consulting multiple, potentially disagreeing sources when verifying information about political events. Participants often reported comparing and contrasting conflicting sources to induct a true, personal account of the event. For example, P7 and P8 reported consulting conflicting in-person and online sources:

> P7: *With my peers, news, and people who share different opinions [than] me so I can find every point of data.*

> P8: *I check multiple news sites often with conflicting agendas.*

Similarly, numerous participants reported synthesizing their own accounts across data:

> P9: *View multiple sources and come to my own conclusion.*

> P17: *Comparing multiple sources and finding the commonalities.*

> P21: *I typically look at several different sources to gather as much information about what happened as possible.*

> P26: *I try to look at multiple reputable sources and compare and contrast what each side is saying.*

Consulting Singular, Primary Sources

Some participants reported typically consulting a few primary sources when verifying information about political events. These reports were often accompanied by references to comparing and contrasting primary sources with secondary sources, seeking unbiased accounts, and constructing one's own conclusion. For example, P13 reported conducting their own analyses of primary sources to reach their own conclusions:

> P13: *Through research, trying to find original sources, especially videos of the incident to make my own interpretation. Or listening to an expert or someone I trust [to] break it down.*

Similarly, P1 described identifying primary sources, emphasizing those with direct involvement in political events:

> P1: *I look for a primary source (i.e. Executive Orders[,] [I] read what the [W]hite [H]ouse posted[.] [F]or the genocide in Palestine, [I] look for footage and testimonials from people living there, etc[.])*

P2 explicitly claimed they compared and contrasted secondary and primary sources of data:

> P2: *Compare and contrast multiple news sources against original documents or other media regarding said events.*

Consulting Specific, Trusted Sources

Some participants reported consulting specific sources perceived to be trustworthy, reliable, or unbiased when verifying information about political events. For example, P32 reported that they analyze many apparently unbiased news sources to synthesize a cohesive account of an event:

> P32: *I look for politically unbiased news sources, such as the [Associated Press], Politico, [The] New York Times* (they have more of a left lean), ABC [News], etc. I look for these sources to agree on what exactly happened.*

We additionally found that participants' preferences for specific, trusted sources cut across media. For example, P12 and P20 report consulting video, text, and friends:

> P12: *Watching news like the Today Show and PBS [N]ews [H]our or reading articles from NPR or the magazine "The Week."*

> P20: *Heather Cox Richardson blogs and measuring information across different news sources — something I do not enjoy but will do sometimes. I also talk to trusted friends.*

How do users determine the trustworthiness of a source when evaluating information about political events?

We identified three strategies participants use to determine the trustworthiness of source when evaluating information about political events: inducting the source's reliability or biases; assessing the source's alignment with other sources; and consulting only primary sources to ensure validity. A few participants appeared to reject the premise of the question, asserting that the trustworthiness of a source could not be effectively established.

Inducting Reliability or Bias

Participants reported assessing the trustworthiness of a source by inducting whether it was reliable or biased through a few key markers: the historical reliability of the source;

its sources of funding; its political leanings; its potential motivations; its use of biased or neutral language; and its rating on websites reporting the "bias" of sources. For example, participants reported examining sources' history of reporting, funding, language, motives, and political leanings:

> P6: *History of accurate reporting and believability of claims.*
>
> P8: *I look at who funds them and what language they use during the analysis of an event.*
>
> P9: *Think about a person's motives and view their sources.*
>
> P29: *The first thing I do is research the political leanings of the source. If it is extreme one way or the other, I tend to discount it.*

Many participants additionally alluded to performing close readings of the source to assess its bias. For example, participants reported identifying the prevalence of facts or absence of biases in their sources:

> P13: *Trying to make sure they are free of bias and give factual evidence without any agenda setting or narratives.*
>
> P18: *I read the headlines to see how biased the phrasing is and look at multiple sources. I also look at what other types of things that source reports on.*
>
> P13: *Trying to make sure they are free of bias and give factual evidence without any agenda setting or narratives.*
>
> P20: *I look for measured, objective, factual information rather than something emotional or fear mongering. I also try to remain aware of news biases.*

Finally, some participants deferred to the reported bias of a source from media bias sites:

> P26: *The type of source, look the source up on multiple media bias sites, look for where the source gets its funding, look at photos and videos, and see if they match what the source is reporting.*
>
> P32: *I look for websites which give news sources a political bias rating, look for sources which use expert opinions (political analysts, constitutional experts, etc.), and look at the source's historical accuracy in prior events.*

The above quotes illustrate participants' preference for heuristics when evaluating the trustworthiness of a source. Among these heuristics are the identifying of particular "red-flags" — such as questionable funding or extreme political leanings — and the prevalence of facts over interpretations or "emotions."

Assessing Alignment with Other Sources

Participants reported assessing the trustworthiness of a source by assessing whether its information aligned with other sources'. For example, P21 and P25 explicitly reference the act of cross-referencing a source with others:

> P21: *I look at the source posting it (news vs social media post, for example) and I cross reference with other sources if possible.*

> P25: *Cross-refercing [sic] with other sources.*

Similarly, P11 and P22 report comparing a source's information with that of other sources or those with alternative agendas:

> P22: *Whether it agrees with other sources with different political agendas.*

> P11: *I am usually looking for sources with good authority and comparing their information to what I have already seen/researched. I am also looking for relativity and currency.*

Consulting Only Primary Sources

Few participants sidestepped the task of assessing a source's trustworthiness by prioritizing or consulting only primary sources. For example, P1 relied on the apparent validity of rich, primary media when evaluating trustworthiness:

> P1: *It depends on the context, but where a picture says 1000 words, a video is 30 pictures a second (live footage says a lot about a situation).*

The remaining participants who reported turning towards primary sources expressed that this behavior was context-dependent. For example, P16 reported that while they consulted primary sources in some cases, they more often relied on tacit heuristics:

> P16: *If I'm being very diligent, I'll look up other sources and the original document/footage to compare, contrast, and come to my own opinion. Honestly though, I don't do that as often as maybe I should, and a lot of the time it's just a vibe check.*

Assuming Distrust

Few participants expressed that sources should generally not be trusted. For example, P2 asserted that it is impossible to validate a source and a preference for trusting no sources:

> P2: *Nothing is fully trustworthy. All sources [are] worthy of doubt and in the current day and age with the rise of AI [artificial intelligence] and disinformation there's no way to truly validate a source of information. These days I feel it's safer to believe nothing at all.*

The remaining participants who expressed distrust additionally expressed strategies seen above. For example, P7 and P10 express distrust while reporting that they construct their own conclusions and compare multiple sources, respectively:

> P7: *It's truthfully hard to tell as every source has its biases and I go off what I believe is right.*

> P10: *I don't trust any source until I've did [sic] my research and seen multiple sources to compare.*

How do users describe the events of January 6th, 2021?

We identified four interpretations of the events of January 6th, 2021, among participants' responses: events which were incited or allowed by Donald Trump; a storming of the U.S. Capitol by extremists; an attempt to overthrow or disrupt the U.S. government; and a protest or riot against the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Like previously identified themes, these interpretations were not mutually exclusive from one another. Interpretations often overlapped with and were accompanied by others.

Incited or Allowed by Donald Trump

Overwhelmingly, participants described the events of January 6th, 2021, as an event that was either incited or passively allowed by Donald Trump. For example, P3, P8, and P31 described the events as being fueled by Trump through social media during the day or other vectors across his presidency:

> P3: *The events that happened on January 6th were criminal and violent. President Trump fueled an angry mob of his supporters at the Capitol because he could not handle the loss of that election and so, innocent people were hurt.*

> P8: *A bunch of people were upset about Biden winning the election so they stormed the US Capitol building. Trump also posted on twitter which fueled the fire.*

> P31: *A horrific challenge to our very democracy. January 6th was the culmination of four years of antagonizing leadership which influenced an entire political body to violence.*

Similarly, P14 and P22 described the events as being incited by President Trump:

> P14: *Trump incites an attempted coup at the White House in to try [sic] and overturn the election results, and many individuals got injured as a result.*

> P22: *Trump incited an insurrection against the US government where his followers stormed the Capital [sic]. His followers threatened to hang Pence, attacked security guards, and threatened to harm US Senators.*

Other participants described the events as being tacitly allowed or condoned by President Trump:

> P20: *On January 6th, rioters stormed the capitol building and attempted a coup. Trump allowed for the events to occur for many hours and seems to have enjoyed it. It put many people's safety in danger and desecrated our capitol building.*

> P29: *Trump supporters rioted and broke into the Capitol building, terrorizing and physically harming those inside. They caused destruction to federal property and at least one person was killed. It was horrific and Trump did nothing to stop it despite being aware of what was happening.*

Extremists' Storming of the United States Capitol

Participants described the events of January 6th, 2021, as a storming of the U.S. Capitol by a group of Trump-supporting, right-wing extremists. For example, many participants described the attendees of the event as "radical", "extremist", "far-right", or "incredibly right-wing":

> P6: *A group of extremist right wingers, prompted by Donald Trump, rioted at the capital [sic]. Later they were released on all charges.*

> P9: *Mainly far right learning Republicans stormed the U.S. Capitol, leaving many injured and five dead.*

> P12: *A large group of radical Trump supporters coordinated an event to express their support for overturning the results of the 2020 election by breaking into the White House.*

> P17: *On January 6th, radical conservatives and other members collaborated to storm the capital building after President Trump's speech. This event involved a lot of confusion and was not handled properly. So, many people have made large speculations about it, attempting to implicate President Trump.*

> P21: *The Jan. 6 events were a series of events that resulted in several incredibly right-wing Americans storming and breaking into the capitol.*

Other participants simply categorized attendees as right-wing or Republican supporters of Trump but continued to describe the events as a storming of the U.S. Capitol. For example, P15 and P16 describe the events as Trump supporters storming the U.S. Capitol building:

> P15: *A group of right-wing Trump supporters stormed the capital building [sic] in response to the loss of Trump in the 2020 election.*

> P16: *As I understand it, on January 6th, 2021, Republican supporters of Donald Trump sieged and stormed the U.S. capitol in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election and broadly to show devotion to Trump.*

Attempted Overthrow or Disruption of the United States Government

Some participants described the events of January 6th, 2021, as an attempted overthrow or disruption of the U.S. government. For example, P24, P26, and P28 described the events as an attempt to delay the certification of the 2020 U.S. Electoral College votes:

> P24: *On Jan 6, 2021, in an effort to help Donald Trump, members of the alt-right tried to delay the outcome of the election by storming the US Capitol. It did not work.*

> P26: *On Jan 6th, followers of Trump violently stormed the capitol in an attempt to prevent the counting of votes that would confirm Biden as the next president.*

> P28: *The event at the Capitol on Jan 6th was a group of MAGA supporters who went to prevent Biden's inauguration from proceding [sic]. A lot of what I know of the effects was from clips of it online and in the news in which rioters damaged property and injured a police officer.*

Alternatively, many participants described the events as an attempted insurrection, coup d'état, or overthrow of the U.S. government. For example, P18 and P19 describe the events as an attempted overthrow or insurrection:

> P18: *Far-right extremists stormed the US Capitol in an attempt to overthrow America's democracy and killed multiple people as a result.*

> P19: *An insurrection against the fundamental institutions of American democracy tacitly condoned, encouraged, and certainly not denounced by the sitting President.*

Protest or Riot Against the 2020 United States Election Results

Some participants described the events of January 6th, 2021, as a protest or riot against the 2020 U.S. election results in favor of Donald Trump. For example, P14 and P12 described the events as a protest against the results of the 2020 U.S. Presidential election:

> P4: *People illegally entered government buildings in protest of the election results.*

> P12: *From my understanding, Trump supporters forced their way into the capitol during a protest after his defeat in the presidential election.*

Other participants described the events as a riot against the results of the election. For example, P8 and P27 describe attendees of the events as rioters:

> P8: *A group of extremist right wingers, prompted by Donald Trump, rioted at the capital [sic]. Later they were released on all charges.*

> P27: *The United States Capitol was breached by rioters protesting the election of President Biden. Many of these rioters were fans of and possibly spurred to riot by President Trump.*

What specific questions do users have about the events of January 6th, 2021?

We identified three broad questions participants had about the events of January 6th, 2021. Participants inquired into why officials responded to the event as they did, the legal and constitutional implications of the events, and what the motives or causes of the participants and events were. Within these themes, participants varied in precisely what they were asking.

Why did officials respond the way they did?

Participants inquired into the causes and nature of officials' responses to the events of January 6th, 2021. We found particular emphasis on police officers' or security forces' response to the event. For example, P2 and P19 question the preparedness of police officers for the events:

> P2: *Why was the response to this event so weak when the criticism of it was so strong?*

> P19: *Why was the security response so lackluster?*

Similarly, P12 and P32 question whether relevant officials had prior knowledge of the events and, if so, why they appeared to be unprepared for the events:

> P12: *Did security officials have any inkling that this event might happen? What signs were there before the insurrection that it would take place? Did Trump have prior knowledge of the event? [...]*

> P32: *From what I understand, this event was premeditated; why weren't the police and security guards ready for the potential of a violent movement?*

What were and are the legal and constitutional implications?

Participants inquired into the legal and constitutional implications of the events of January 6th, 2021, that immediately followed, as well as any implications that persist today. Many of participants' questions related to the pardons issued to individuals charged following the events. For example, P4 and P20 question the constitutional implications of the pardons:

> P4: *What are the constitutional implications of President Trump pardoning participants of Jan. 6th now that he is president again?*

> P20: *Why have the people who were found to be accountable pardoned? How is that constitutional?*

Other participants questioned the general legal implications of the events. For example, P12 questions what laws attendees may have broken during the event:

P12: *[...] What specific laws were broken by the individuals involved and what legal action against law-breaking individuals has been taken after the fact?*

P5 and P25's questions relate to the legal proceedings that developed after the events:

P5: *How did the legal process for January 6th today develop?*

P25: *Why didn't President Trump face legal consequences for encouraging an insurrection?*

What motivated or caused it?

Some participants inquired into what caused the events of January 6th, 2021 at two levels: the motivations of attendees or potential coordinators of the event, and the causal factors of the events as participants described them. For example, P6 and P11 question the planning, purpose, and motivations for the events:

P6: *I have questions about the planning of events, prior knowledge of officials, and legal implications of rioters being left off.*

P11: *What was the purpose and motivations for this event[?]*

Similarly, P13 questions why the events occurred:

P13: *Why did it happen? Why were people that riled up? etc.*

What final thoughts did users have about our project or January 6th, 2021?

Nearly two-thirds of participants did not express final thoughts about the project or the events of January 6th, 2021, or expressed thoughts determined to be irrelevant to the project or events. The responses of the remaining third of participants varied significantly in theme and topic. For example, two participants insisted that the project be honest:

P10: *Just be honest and unbiased.*

P22: *We need to share the truth and not cover up the facts to support our political agenda.*

Alternatively, a couple of participants insisted on an analysis of the legal implications of the events of January 6th, 2021:

P28: *Many people have forgotten it, and I think an emphasis on the lack of results following the actions pursued is very valuable. Most people can tell you about the insurrection, but how many would have an answer when you ask them what happened with the legal case following? How many would know what was involved or even that it was dismissed?*

P29: *I think it's important to include information about the individuals who were ultimately charged, what their crimes were, the typical sentence for those crimes, what they actually served, and whether they were pardoned after the fact. Trump's attitude about the incident and those involved is at the crux of the issue.*

Finally, one participant expressed that the project's efforts would be futile:

P2: *I do not want to be defeatist, but I feel that there is nothing that can be done or said to change what has happened nor the consequences that will come from it. In our current age, even the most straightforward evidence or analysis will be ignored by those who disagree, and disproportionately boosted by those who agree. The Information Age ended 10 years ago.*

Discussion

Our survey revealed strong preferences for content format, information sources, and content areas. Additionally, the survey highlighted several strategies for validating and evaluating sources of political information. These findings have informed four specific decisions about our content initiative.

First, we will primarily present key facts with minimal interpretation about the events of January 6th, 2021. Our findings highlight that participants expressed strong preferences for primary sources and just-the-facts approaches to commentary. Additionally, participants reported using multiple strategies and heuristics to evaluate the trustworthiness of sources and the validity of their information. This suggests that presenting interpretations of January 6th would violate visitors' preferences and risk running afoul of their validation strategies and heuristics.

Second, we will present these key facts on an interactive timeline. While we had intended to present resources about January 6th through a platform combining an interactive timeline and map, participants expressed a strong preference for timelines and primary sources and a weak preference for maps. Our findings also show strong preferences for knowledge of key participants and scaffolds for comparing multiple sources of information. A timeline format wherein events are annotated with facts, sources, and profiles of key actors would effectively support these preferences.

Third, we will emphasize events and resources relating to: potential instigators, motives, and causes; security forces' response and behavior; and legal and constitutional proceedings of the events. Our analysis of participants' responses to open-ended questions highlight strong preferences for these content areas. Participants' response to close-ended questions also evidence interest in these content areas.

Fourth, we will intentionally restrict the language used to describe the events of January 6th, 2021.We will describe the events of January 6th as a riot perpetuated by conservative

or Republican extremists. Our results foreground prospective visitors' reliance on heuristics to assess bias in political media, and responses from right-leaning participants suggest a preference for terms like "riot" and "extremists." This suggests use of terms like insurrection or direct accusations of Donald Trump's involvement would dissuade right-leaning visitors from engaging with our site, which represent our primary target audience. However, this decision introduces significant difficulties in accurately representing the motivations of the rioters and Donald Trump's actions. Our content testing will illuminate how we should address these difficulties.

Limitations

We recognize key limitations in our work. First, we distributed our survey primarily to college students. As a result, survey responses overrepresent young, left-leaning adults who readily describe the events of January 6th, 2021, as an insurrection enabled by Donald Trump. Second, we have comparatively little insight into how older or right-leaning adults interact with political media and understand the events of January 6th. We have attempted to account for this by focusing on the few right-leaning responses we have obtained in our analysis. Finally, our responses fundamentally describe only what respondents report when asked about their interactions with political media and understandings of January 6th. We still lack insight into what prospective visitors, especially right-leaning visitors, actually do or think when interacting with political media or media about January 6th.

Personas

Based on our secondary research and survey analysis, we constructed two personas representing distinct members of our target audiences. Our first persona, Laruen, is a left-leaning, politically active and engaged student, representing members of our audience learning about the Capitol riots to ground further activism or education. Our second persona, Brady, is a right-leaning, politically-interested student that is skeptical of news media but open to learning about political events like January 6th. By attending to Lauren and Brady's wants and needs in our designs, we hope to create a platform accommodating all members of our target audience.

LAUREN JONES

AGE	22
LOCATION	Atlanta, Georgia
COLLEGE MAJOR	Marketing
JOB	Current Student/part-time sales associate
MARITAL STATUS	Unmarried

Bio

Lauren is a politically active and engaged student. She enjoys exploring and embracing the world around her. Lauren believes in being socially conscious, so she participates in conscious consumerism and stays up-to-date with both her local and national news. However, she sometimes dives too deep and experiences informational overload. Lauren also tries to help her social circle become more engaged with news and politics, and help them determine what sources are trustworthy.

Quotes

- "More information needs to be shared in a way that the general public can understand. A lot of political issues are buried because they are shared in a way that is too complex for general understanding."

Technology

Devices
- Tablet
- E-reader
- Smartphone

Uses
- Social media
- Mobile apps
- Video games

Motivations

Goals
- Consultant career
- Travel around the world
- Start a garden

Fears and challenges
- Media bias
- Misinformation
- Information overload

Values
- Reviewing source documents
- Analytical explanation of complex political topics
- Reviewing multiple trusted sources

Politics

Political Affiliation
- Liberal Democrat

Behaviors
- Regularly engages with news through social media and trusted news outlets
- Occasionally attends political events
- Participates in "conscious consumerism"

News Gathering Habits:
- Trusted national news outlets
- Social media
- Local news

BRADY MILLER

AGE	21
LOCATION	Jackson, Florida
COLLEGE MAJOR	Business Administration
JOB	Current Student/part-time movie attendant
MARITAL STATUS	Single

Bio

When he isn't doing schoolwork or at his part-time job at the local movie theatre, Brady Miller enjoys playing video games with his friends. He does not consider himself politically active, but he is interested in politics. He is open to conversations with everyone as long as it stays civil. He tries to stay updated with news as needed, but he does not trust major news outlets to report the truth, as bias is everywhere. So he mostly relies on his own judgement and his social circle.

Quotes

- "Just be honest and unbiased"
- "It's truthfully hard to tell [truth] as every source has its biases and I go off what I believe is right."
- "[When reviewing news I] look at their credentials and observe any bias language"

Technology

Devices
- Laptop
- PC
- Smartphone

Uses
- Video games
- Mobile apps
- Social media

Motivations

Goals
- Work in upper management
- Have a family
- Visit the best beaches around the world

Fears and challenges
- Distrusts major news outlets
- Uninterested in reading lengthy reports
- Media bias and false reporting

Values
- Just-the-facts type of presentation
- Comparing and contrasting various political perspectives
- Unbiased sources

Politics

Political Affiliation
- Moderate, with a lean towards Conservatism

Behaviors
- Open to respectful political conversations with opposing sides
- Listens to the Joe Rogan Experience
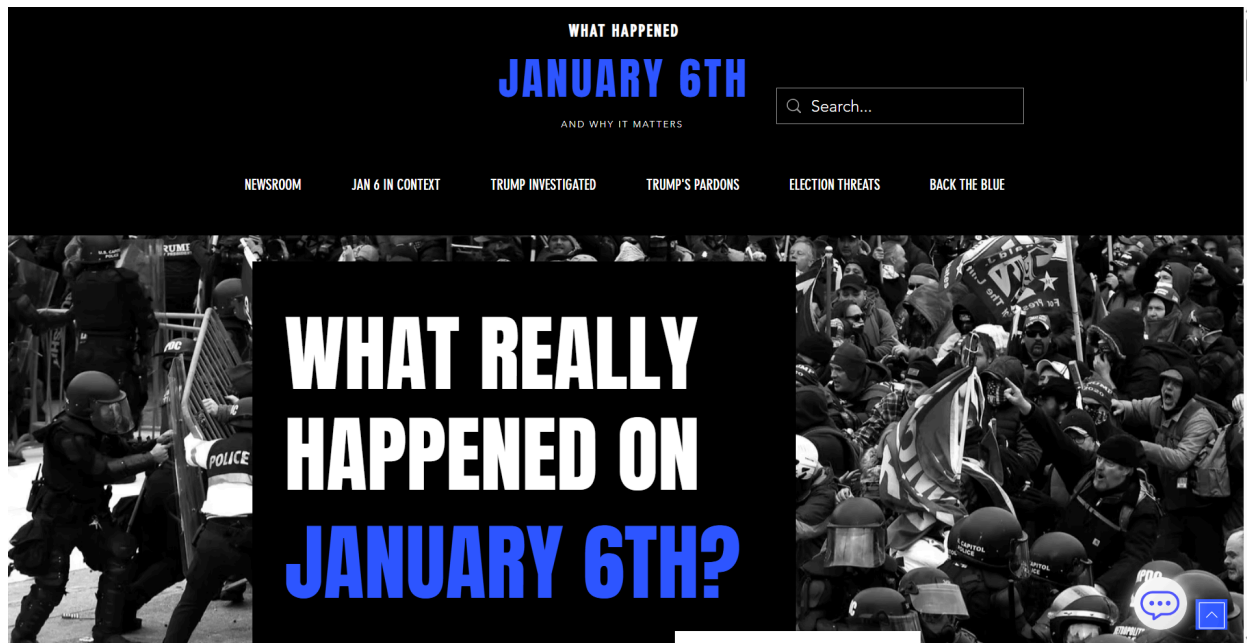- Dislikes when political conversations become emotional

News Gathering Habits:
- Social media
- Social circle
- Occasional news articles

Content Research

Competitor Analysis

What Happened January 6th; and Why It Matters

[What Happened January 6th](#) is a website dedicated to the U.S. Capitol Attack of January 6th, 2021 (J6). The topics of the website encompass J6 by listing sections on the events that led up to J6, the attack on the capitol itself, the investigations that followed, and ongoing updates into J6-related news. There are also more focused sections on election tampering allegations, the presence and role of the far-right extremist groups that were a part of J6, and law enforcement.

The contents of this website are primarily text, pictures, and hyperlinks to internal pages and outside sources. Embedded videos from the website's YouTube channel are also present but less prominently featured.

SAVING OUR COUNTRY

Americans agree—we can not let something as unpatriotic as the January 6th riots ever happen again in our country. Violent protests solve nothing, especially when they are against the center of our nation's capital. As we push to preserve election integrity across the United States, we must protect the processes that have guided our nation for so long and made us the shining city on a hill we are today. We must hold those who would raise a torch to our democracy accountable.

Search the Evidence for Yourself

A massive amount of J6 research is at your fingertips. Search the site by topic/keyword to get your question answered.

🔍 Search...

WHAT HAPPENED JANUARY 6TH ©2022
JANUARY 6 NEWS IS A REGISTERED 501(c)(3).
CONTACT
PRIVACY POLICY

The dark investigative tone is immediately clear when opening the website with its black background, high contrast, bold lettering, and evocative imagery. The website also uses more provocative words and phrases to elicit feelings of injustice, such as "get the truth" and "saving our country."

The audience for this website seems to be American adults and middle-aged adults who are comfortable using digital technology, are very motivated to learn about J6, and value patriotism, government systems, and law enforcement. While there is a navigation of key points at the top of the page, the website contains a bulk of information that requires both skill and motivation to navigate. The values of their target audience are inferred through the color scheme of the website — which is evocative of the "Blue Lives Matter" movement — the choice of topics to highlight in the navigation, and the phrasing throughout the website.

National Security Archive
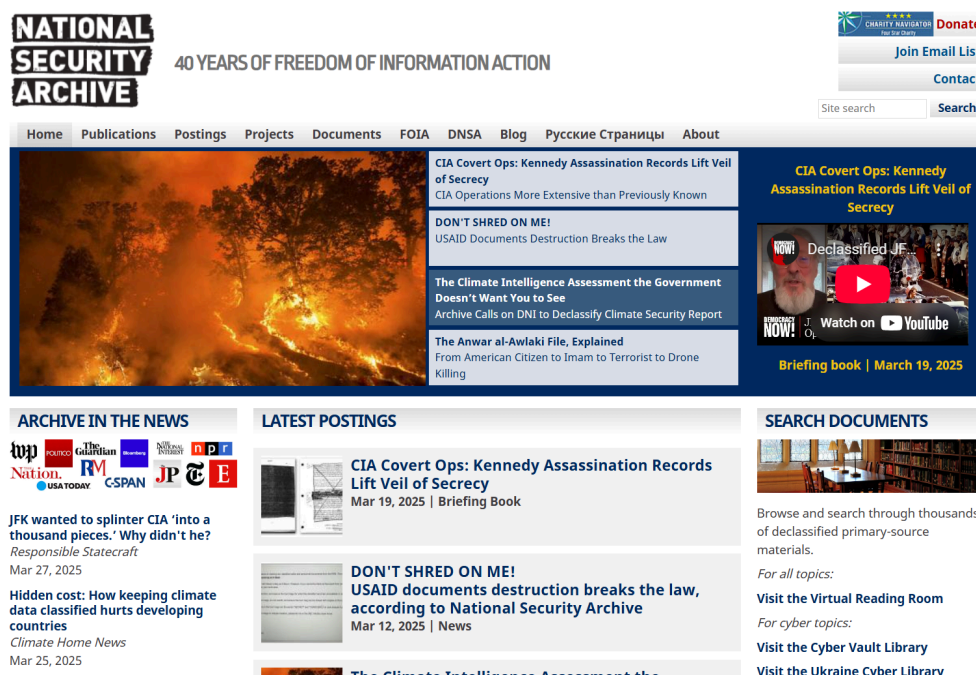
[National Security Archive](#) is a non-governmental website that functions as a digital research and archival resource of declassified U.S. Government documents obtained by using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and declassification requests. The topics of this website all relate to the U.S. government and military actions, from significant historical moments like the guidance and sanctioning of the CIA's activities during the Cold War to recent political issues such as the Trump Administration removing climate information from government websites.

The content of this website is primarily text and images, hyperlinks, and some embedded YouTube videos. Because this website is a digital archive, it contains a wealth of information, including documents, articles, publications, links to organizations and their projects, and a blog for breaking news.

Archive Calls on DNI to Declassify 2008 Report on Security Implications of Climate Change
2008 Assessment Could Fill Critical Gaps in Most Recent 2021 Intelligence Estimate
"There's no secret stuff in here... Just good analysts working with publicly available information and applying good methodological tradecraft"

IN THE NEWS

Hidden cost: How keeping climate data classified hurts developing countries
Climate Home News
Mar 25, 2025

USAID keeping reports secret out of fear of Trump retaliation
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Mar 9, 2025

Inside the CIA's Decades-Long Climate "Spy" Campaign
3 Quarks Daily

Washington, D.C., February 28, 2025 - For 17 years, the U.S. Intelligence Community has refused to declassify one of its first investigations into climate change as a national security threat. In 2008, a panel of intelligence officers on the National Intelligence Council (NIC) produced its first climate-focused National Intelligence Assessment (NIA) examining the "National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030." The full text of the report remains classified as "Confidential," the lowest level of national security secrecy, even though its findings may offer critical insights into how climate change will affect U.S. national security in years to come.

Today, as part of a public call for the director of national intelligence to declassify the 2008 National Intelligence Assessment, the National Security Archive is posting three related intelligence products—one each from the George W. Bush administration, the first Trump administration, and the Biden administration—detailing the intelligence community's increasingly dire warnings about the security threats posed by climate change and that call into question the basis for the IC's continued withholding of the 2008 report. The 2008 assessment may ultimately serve as a crucial reference for how climate-related risks have evolved over time and how intelligence agencies assessed those risks more than a decade ago.

Declassifying the 2008 assessment would fill a critical gap in the public's understanding how the intelligence community has historically evaluated the risk of climate change and fulfill the people's right to know about critical decisions affecting their lives. In 2022, the National Security Archive filed a Freedom of Information Act request for the assessment and in December 2024 submitted an official letter calling for the report's declassification to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence but has not received a response to either of these requests. It is long past time to declassify this important assessment of the threats posed by climate change.

*****

For decades, the intelligence community has monitored climatic effects on the

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Edited by Rachel Santarsiero

For more information, contact:
202-994-7000
or **nsarchiv@gwu.edu**

Subjects: **Energy and the Environment**
Intelligence and Espionage
Project: **Climate Change Transparency Project**
Intelligence

Dr. Thomas Fingar, current Shorenstein APARC Fellow at Stanford University,

The homepage of the website is reminiscent of a blog, database, and news outlet. The phrasing of the website reflects this combination of news and database with their posts having more "clickbait" style titles such as "The Climate Intelligence Assessment the Government Doesn't Want You to See," followed by content that is more professional and cited like what one would find in an academic database.

Based on the contents of the website and their own *About* page, their target audience seems to be researchers interested in the U.S. Government and military actions and policies. Navigating through the pages requires some skill, which indicates prior knowledge or a desire to dig deep into research. The website's *About* page also states that the archive's development came from "journalists and scholars to check rising government secrecy."

The New York Times

[The New York Times](#) website shows how one of the longest-running U.S. news outlets has adapted and stayed relevant in the information age. Continuing its newspaper legacy, the NY Times covers classic topics like U.S. and world news, business, lifestyle, and sports. Using digital affordances, its featured topics are able to be live on the front page. Current topics on the front page include U.S. tariffs and the Trump Administration.

The content of the website is mainly text and images, and they also make use of dynamic graphics to catch the reader's eye. Because the news outlet started as a newspaper, articles are the primary type of content, but there are also informational videos and storytelling animations.

As mentioned, the homepage keeps the classic newspaper look which includes professional but effective headlines. The phrasing of the headlines is intriguing without being clickbait; for example, "How Major Car Brands Are Affected by Trump's Tariffs" is an informative yet enticing headline. The website also uses a clever persuasive tactic of including reading time approximations for each article.

The target audience of the NY Times seems to be adults over 18 years old with at least a high school education who value staying informed on various subjects. Though the articles on the website do not require a high level of formal education, some more complex topics take a higher-than-standard reading level to comprehend. The variety of topics also implies that their target audience wants to stay relevant about a wide range of topics, from "fluffier" popular culture topics to hard-hitting governmental issues.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- **Secondary research**: We understand voters possess significant distrust in political media, primarily discover political media on social media platforms, yet visit a selected number of agreeable political media sources. We additionally understand many voters have preexisting beliefs about the events of January 6th. This research will inform the design of our content.

- **Web development experience**: We understand how a website is built, hosted, made available to the broader, online public. We additionally know how to build a website and what resources to consult as the complexity of our website increases.

- **High political knowledge**: Informally, we understand there exist a diversity of perspectives about January 6th and the many kinds of evidence used to support these perspectives. We additionally have specific content knowledge about the events of January 6th, ranging from the assembly on the U.S. Capitol grounds to the communications between President Trump and members of Congress.

Weaknesses

- **Backend expertise**: We have limited expertise in launching and maintaining a website serving a variety of content to users. This may be detrimental if content is not consistently delivered quickly, we experience issues with server uptime, or if features of the website are necessarily complex to maintain.

- **UX expertise**: We have limited expertise in designing a website responsive to users' diversity of devices (e.g., phones, tablets, desktops, and variation of screen sizes across these platforms). This may be detrimental if voters are not sufficiently motivated to "look past" issues related to responsiveness.

- **Outreach potential**: We have little ability to advertise the website; we must rely on word-of-mouth and search engine optimization to popularize the site as a resource.

  - **SEO expertise**: We have little experience in optimizing a website for search engine optimization, particularly when in competition with national news networks or established media-of-one figures.

  - **Networking expertise**: We have little experience in taking advantage of social media discourse and network effects to popularize the website through word of mouth.

- **Insight into information behaviors**: We have limited insight into conservative voters′ information-seeking behaviors, as most secondary literature documents these behaviors from a deficit perspective.

Opportunities

- **Appearance of nonpartisanship**: Existing resources about January 6th have either an established, perceived reputation of being partisan or clearly evidence their partisanship, dissuading voters who most need the relevant information.

- **Organization of primary resources**: Existing resources fail to provide voters with all relevant primary sources regarding the events of January 6th, dissuading voters who prioritize close readings of source texts when generating their opinions.

- **Diversity of representations**: Existing resources fail to represent the events of January 6th in a variety of forms. By creating and compiling a variety of primary and secondary videos, articles, and interactive graphics, we provide voters with multiple representations with which to reason about and interpret the events of January 6th.

- **Alignment with accounts of conservatives′ information-seeking behaviors**: While we are limited in our understanding of conservatives′ information-seeking behaviors, we believe organizing our website around primary resources will align with some sociological accounts of conservatives′ reading practices, such as scriptural inference. This may support adoption among conservative groups.

Threats

- **Established trust and initial distrust**: While we are attempting to present ourselves as a measured, nonpartisan resource, we are nonetheless competing against voters′ existing distrust in political media and trust in agreeable media sources, and users are likely to be skeptical of our claims of being nonpartisan.

- **Gap in knowledge**: While we are attempting to make information about January 6th more accessible, we remain limited by individuals′ abilities to process information, which are determined by lifestyle, prior education, and other socioeconomic factors.

- **Monetization**: While many resources exist for hosting websites without cost, the nature of our content may require the use of dedicated delivery network services, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) mitigation, and related, costly services.

- **Reputation**: Our position as a resource for skeptical voters is precariously supported by our ability to present ourselves as a nonpartisan resource and other media influencers' content about our website. Unfortunately, it takes only one round of poor coverage to label our website as "partisan" in the eyes of our desired audience.

Message Testing

We conducted a focus group with three participants from our target audience to evaluate our initial prototype. We infer from participants' discussion that our prototype successfully gave the impression of presenting a minimal, just–the–facts approach to the Capitol riots, supported users' information–seeking behaviors and the possibility of scriptural inference, and provided a firm foundation on which to cover the entirety of the event. We discuss our findings in greater detail in Discussion.

Methods

To evaluate the design of our initial prototype, we conducted a focus group with three politically–engaged undergraduates enrolled in Middle Tennessee State University. We defined a politically–engaged student as one who regularly engages with political media and discusses politics with friends and family. Two of the three participants identified as left–leaning; the remaining participant identified as right–leaning.

To present our prototype, we sent each participant a link pointing to a preview of our prototype design in Figma. We then presented participants with prompts regarding the design, content, and utility of the prototype. A full transcript of the focus group can be found in [Appendix B](#).

To analyze our results, the first author wrote a report summarizing themes identified in an initial reading of the transcript. We then iterated on this report online, identifying and refining common themes collaboratively. Similar to our Survey Analysis, we do not present agreement metrics and instead aim to include enough original data to allow readers to analyze it themselves.

Results

Appreciating of Just-the-Facts, Timeline-Based Approach

Participants affirmed our decision to adopt a minimal, just–the–facts, timeline–based approach to describing the Capitol riots. For example, P2 and P3 affirm the prototype's ability to support understanding of the event:

> P2: *[...] I think it's very easy to follow. It doesn't seem a lot where it's like, "Okay, wait, hold, like, what's happening now?" I like that your longest parts are literally just with the tweets, and it's only because those tweets are that long.*

> P3: *You kind of summarized every event to just enough for everyone to understand it, but not too short, or it's like...*

Similarly, after being prompted by the first lead interviewer, P1 and P2 affirm that the prototype's just–the–facts approach gives the appearance of being unbiased:

> LI1: *[...] And then, looking at this, what kind of biases do you feel could possibly be present?*

> P1: *I don't really think there is a bias, I feel like it's just the facts.*

> P2: *I agree. [...]*

After clarifying the first lead interviewer's question, P2 continues her affirmation of the prototype's just–the–facts approach:

> P2: *[...] I think from a creator view, I don't think there's any bias. That was actually something I was going to say, it seems very neutral and just factual instead of emotional. So, I like that. Again, I think that makes it a good resource.*

However, participants' preference for the just–the–facts approach may conflict with their additional desires to see more perspectives discussed in our content. For example, P3 expresses an interest in the perspectives of members of Congress and security forces, but P1 cautions this may bias the project:

> P3: *I think it'd be the perspective of Congress and the police. Just seeing where they were at during that time would be interesting to know. Really add, I guess, more emotion behind what was happening. But I don't know if you're to stay away from that [and] stick with straight factual, so...*

> P1: *Yeah, but then I feel like if you did that, it could become a little bit more biased.*

Perception as Tool for Civil, Political Discourse

Participants viewed our prototype as a potential tool for facilitating civil, political discussions across political divides. For example, when prompted by the second lead interviewer, P2 affirmed that the prototype could facilitate political discussions across the aisle:

> LI2: *How do you see yourself using this in a conversation with someone from the opposite side of the aisle?*

P2: *Laying it out to just be like, "Would you like to look at it? Because here it all is, minute-by-minute-by-minute-by-minute." Instead of just this whole overarching theme of, "It was bad and they did this." It's like, "Well, here's really every[thing]." [...]*

Similarly, P3 stated that the prototype could assist in grounding political discussions in the apparent facts of an issue:

P3: *I think it's a great way to make a debate stay a debate and not an argument, if anything.*

LI2: *Can you speak more on that?*

P3: *Because when it comes to politics, when people try to say facts every now and then, being civil and debating it, people turn it into arguments and then it comes to name-calling. But with this, it's quite clear, you can't refute anything, and it's more like, "All right, I understand." You saw that this time that happened or at this time this happened. It's just easier to conversate about it without it going too far.*

Supporting of Learning and Information-Seeking Behaviors

The design of a timeline annotated with sources appeared to support new understandings and information-seeking behaviors. For example, after being prompted by the second lead interviewer, P2 and P3 express that the timeline surfaced details they otherwise might not have known:

P2: *No, I think it was just the time. I think it was more so the timeline and order of events themselves, that I was kind of like, "Oh, okay, didn't realize." [...] But also, Trump calling people or something, yeah, calling those senators. I don't, I guess I maybe just skipped over that part and didn't realize that he had been in contact, and so I knew all the tweets and how he had gotten up and said all that stuff, but I don't know if I knew the kind of behind-the-door things that — not like, well, bad, whatever.*

P3: *I don't think I realized how fast everything took place, because I thought this was over several hours. This was less than an hour and a half. This was my class period, all right? I was just still in history class when this was started and over. So I think that really intrigues me, because I thought this was a two- or three-hour thing.*

A significant finding is that a substantial portion of the interview was occupied by participants' exploring of news articles and videos surrounding the Capitol riots. For example, participants investigated rioters' calls for Vice President Mike Pence's death, police officers harmed during the riots, and the fatal shooting of Ashli Babbitt. When asked to reflect on this, P2 affirmed that this behavior emerged from our prototype's design:

P2: *I think it would cause someone to dig further. Because, I mean, I feel like I've looked up three things only since we've been sitting here, because it's short enough to get the message across and the event across, but then it's still kind of [enough for] someone [to] be like, "Okay, well, hold on, wait. What was this actually like? What happened here? What happened after this? Who was this?" Because, I think, also, people kind of forget who some of the players were in all of this on both sides.*

Reaffirmation of Extended Content Coverage

Participants expressed interest in expanding the timeline to cover related events, particularly the aftermath of January 6th. This aligns with our survey findings that respondents were interested in the events' causal factors, participants' motivations, and subsequent legal proceedings. For example, P3 expressed interest in a timeline covering the aftermath of the riots:

P3: *Feel like you could potentially do the aftermath in a subcategory, you can, just have a little bubble, like "the week following" or something, just what the news covered and all that.*

Similarly, P2 and P3 expressed interest in timelines discussing the pardons of key rioters:

P2: *I think if you were gonna make a follow up to this and kind of play off of this topic, you could do a timeline of the charges being [dropped], and like [Participant 3] was saying earlier, what the aftermath of it was [...]*

P3: *And if [we] want to keep following the time too, we could probably do a jump to when Trump said he was trying to pardon some of the rioters.*

P1 later reaffirmed P2 and P3's interest:

P1: *I think I'm more interested in the aftermath, like [Participant 2] said. Just what happened to the people who did go to jail and when they got out and what law enforcement did.*

Discussion

Our focus group results validate the decisions made in our survey analysis and suggest future directions for our content design. We found that participants' affirmations suggest our content aligns with our findings in our secondary research and survey analysis. However, participants' statements suggest points of focus for future iterations.

Our participants' appreciation for the minimal, just–the–facts and timeline–based approach suggests our prototype aligns with our audiences' heuristics for validating political information and assessing trustworthiness of a source. Additionally,

participants' spontaneous exploration of articles and media about the Capitol riots exemplifies our target audiences' practices of "doing your own research" when presented with political information. This behavior validates our primary decision to create a resource facilitating deep exploration of political content appealing to users' existing information behaviors. Participants' affirmation of our content as a tool to support discussion bridging political divides additionally suggests our content can support deep exploration in a non-polarized political environment, addressing the issues of polarization identified in our secondary research.

While participants affirmed our prototype, their feedback suggests several opportunities for refinement. Future iterations should more clearly signal what events can be interacted with, addressing participants' critiques of failing to identify what elements are clickable. Similarly, participants' repeated interest in the aftermath of the Capitol riots signals we should prioritize events following the riots in future work. Participants' spontaneous information-seeking behavior additionally suggests the embedding of articles or rich media may better support these behaviors.
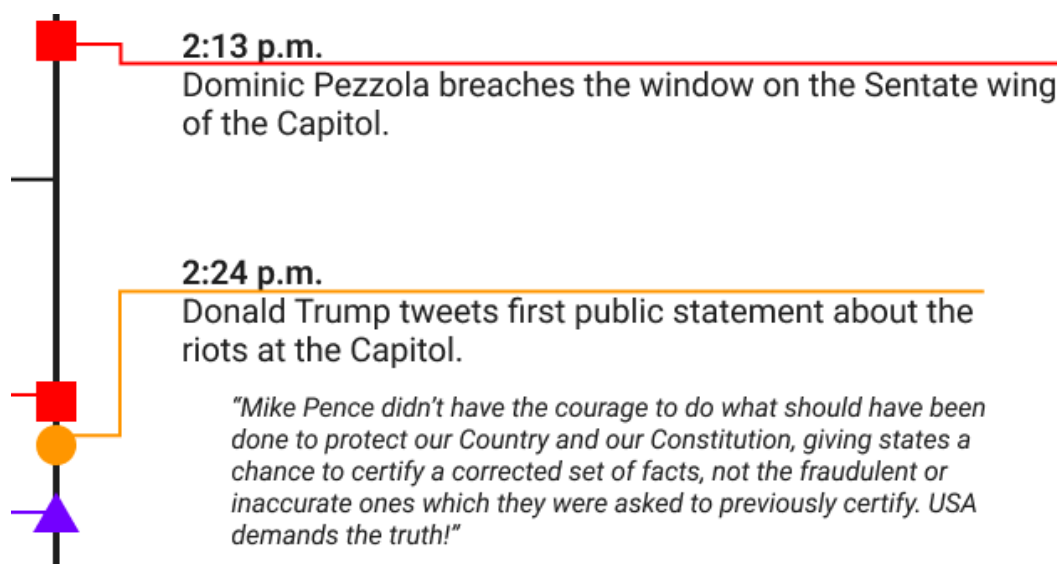
Proposed Content

Sample Content

Using Figma, we created our sample content: an interactive, vertical timeline describing 1 hour of the U.S. Capitol riots on January 6th, 2021. We refined our sample content after conducting our message testing based on participants' feedback. Here, we describe key content and decision decisions leveraging our prior research.

Emphasis on Multiple Perspectives

▲ Congress　　★ Law Enforcement　　■ Rioters　　● Trump

Our prior research has shown prospective users have strong interest in multiple perspectives of the U.S. Capitol riots, including the actions and events surrounding members of Congress, security forces, the rioters, and President Donald Trump. To address this, we highlight events surrounding Congress, law enforcement, rioters, and Trump using four event markers, each colored and shaped differently to increase accessibility. The above image depicts the four event markers as they appear in the sample content.
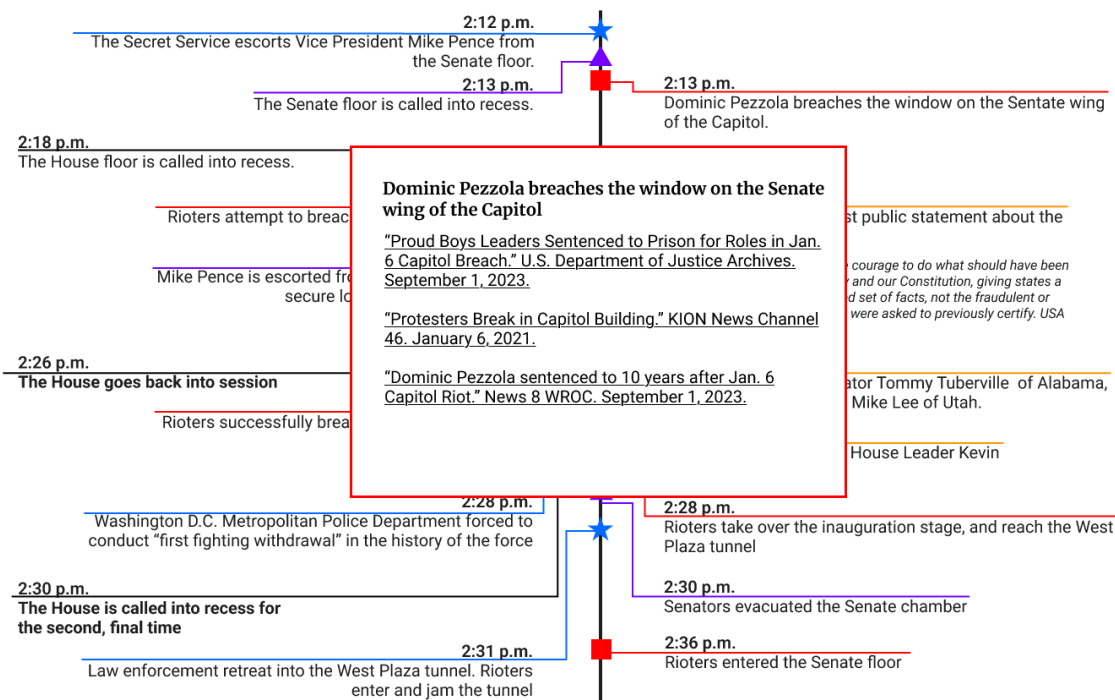
Just-the-Facts Approach

2:13 p.m.
Dominic Pezzola breaches the window on the Sentate wing of the Capitol.

2:24 p.m.
Donald Trump tweets first public statement about the riots at the Capitol.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving states a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"
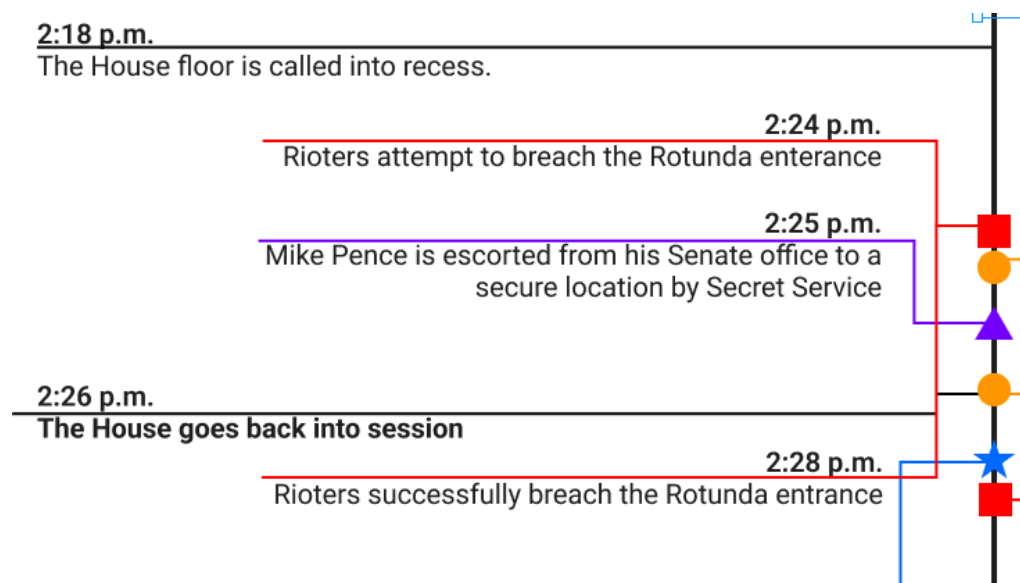
We have repeatedly shown prospective users desire a just–the–facts approach to describing political events like the U.S. Capitol riots and that they readily apply strategies and heuristics to evaluate the apparent bias of political media. Because we are interested in ensuring users are actively engaged with our content, we addressed these observations by describing events with minimal interpretation, as shown in the above image.. We note that writing these descriptions is a subjective process, and future work should construct a framework for constructing and evaluating these descriptions for avoiding perceptions of bias.

Annotation with Rich Media and Sources

In our survey analysis, we identified that prospective users repeatedly reported comparing and contrasting multiple sources of political media and expressed strong preferences for primary sources. To address these findings, we have annotated events with links to primary sources, rich media, and news stories documenting them. For example, the image below shows an annotation for the event *Dominic Pezzola breaches the window on the Senate wing of the Capitol*. The annotation contains links to government archives, video of Pezzola breaching the window, and a news story reporting his conviction. Users can surface annotations by clicking on events.

2:12 p.m.
The Secret Service escorts Vice President Mike Pence from the Senate floor.

2:13 p.m.
The Senate floor is called into recess.

2:13 p.m.
Dominic Pezzola breaches the window on the Sentate wing of the Capitol.

2:18 p.m.
The House floor is called into recess.

Rioters attempt to breac... ...st public statement about the

Dominic Pezzola breaches the window on the Senate wing of the Capitol

"Proud Boys Leaders Sentenced to Prison for Roles in Jan. 6 Capitol Breach." U.S. Department of Justice Archives. September 1, 2023.

"Protesters Break in Capitol Building." KION News Channel 46. January 6, 2021.

"Dominic Pezzola sentenced to 10 years after Jan. 6 Capitol Riot." News 8 WROC. September 1, 2023.

Mike Pence is escorted fr... ...and our Constitution, giving states a ...d set of facts, not the fraudulent or secure lo... ...were asked to previously certify. USA

2:26 p.m.
The House goes back into session

...ator Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, Mike Lee of Utah.

Rioters successfully brea...

...House Leader Kevin

2:28 p.m.
Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department forced to conduct "first fighting withdrawal" in the history of the force

2:28 p.m.
Rioters take over the inauguration stage, and reach the West Plaza tunnel

2:30 p.m.
The House is called into recess for the second, final time

2:30 p.m.
Senators evacuated the Senate chamber

2:31 p.m.
Law enforcement retreat into the West Plaza tunnel. Rioters enter and jam the tunnel

2:36 p.m.
Rioters entered the Senate floor

Referring to the Events as Riots Perpetuated by Extremists

2:18 p.m.
The House floor is called into recess.

2:24 p.m.
Rioters attempt to breach the Rotunda enterance

2:25 p.m.
Mike Pence is escorted from his Senate office to a secure location by Secret Service

2:26 p.m.
The House goes back into session

2:28 p.m.
Rioters successfully breach the Rotunda entrance

Our survey analysis additionally found that the prospective users' descriptions of the events of January 6th were best accommodated by referring to the event as *riots* perpetuated by conservative or Republican *extremists*. We implement this finding by referring to event attendants as *rioters*. For example, in the above image, we simply refer to individuals attempting to breach the Rotunda entrance of the Capitol as *rioters*. Similarly, we do not allude to the description of *insurrectionist* for Dominic Pezzola and his being convicted for seditious conspiracy.

Proposed Content Pillars

The prototype discussed above broadly covers only an hour of the events of January 6th, 2021. However, the events of January 6th were multifaceted and thoroughly documented by attendees, members of congress, and news organizations. Additionally, respondents and focus group participants named numerous topics they were either curious about or believed important to discussion of the Capitol riots. To address these points, we identified four content pillars future work should revolve around.

Security Forces' Prompt and Delayed Responses to the Rioters

As discussed in [Audience Research](#) and [Message Testing](#), numerous respondents and focus group participants inquired into security forces' responses to the Capitol riots. We have decided to incorporate this interest into future work, and we aim to cover two aspects of security forces' response. First, we hope to cover their immediate, prompt response to the riot, featuring primarily the United States Capitol Police. Second, we hope to cover officials' discussion of deploying the National Guard and various communications relating to security before, during, and after the attacks.

Congress Peoples' Evacuation and Certification of the Electoral Vote Count

In [Message Testing](#), we found displaying members of Congress' evacuation times and processes alongside rioters' invasion of the Capitol building sparked new sensemaking processes among participants. Additionally, in [Primary Research](#), we found no respondents directly mentioned the Capitol riots' impact on the electoral vote process. We believe discussing the nature, details, and importance of the electoral vote certification process and its delays, mediated by members of Congress' evacuation and caused by rioters' invasion of the Capitol, would support new sensemaking about the event and address this apparent gap in audience members' knowledge of the event.

Donald Trump and Colleagues' Attempt to Send Fraudulent Electors to Congress

In [Primary Research](#), we found no respondents mentioned Donald Trump and colleagues' attempt to defraud the electoral vote certification process by sending fraudulent sets of electors to Congress. This represents a significant deficiency in audience members' knowledge of the event. In future work, we hope to describe communications between Trump and his colleagues documenting the scheme, experts' analysis of the flawed legal theory on which the scheme was based, and its connections to the riots and Trump's communications with members of Congress during the riots.

Key Rioters' Criminal Convictions and Subsequent Pardons

As discussed in [Audience Research](#) and [Message Testing](#), numerous respondents and focus group participants inquired into the legal proceedings of the riots and President

Donald Trump's pardoning of convicted rioters. To incorporate participants' interests into future work, we aim to describe the conviction and subsequent pardoning of rioters convicted for seditious conspiracy, rioters convicted for attacking police officers, and rioters who awaited trial for similar or related charges. In implementing this, we hope to provide links to rich media and available court documents.

Future Work Timeline

Due to the nature of our project, we cannot offer a traditional content calendar. We instead offer a timeline of the potential iteration, research, and implementation of the project. The objective of this timeline is to conclude the 2025 calendar year with a complete release of the platform that is architected to be extendible for additional content pillars, new events, or — with considerable elbow grease — other political events.

- **May**: Extend Figma prototype to include multiple screens for individual events from ~2–3PM, each annotated with links to rich media, secondary analysis, primary sources, and connections to other events.
- **June**: Test the extended prototype with a newly recruited set of primarily conservative or Republican audience members within a focus group environment. Qualitatively analyze the focus groups and extract new action items from the analysis.
- **July–August**: Implement the Figma prototype as a real website with SvelteKit and other technologies, as needed. Due to the inordinate amount of work required to architect these technologies and produce art assets, no other work should be done. Our goal is to create an extendable platform affording rapid design iteration and testing.
- **September:** Create and test content documenting security forces' Prompt and delayed responses to the rioters. Testing should be done through focus groups of smaller size than previous groups.
- **October:** Create and test content documenting Congress peoples' evacuation and certification of the electoral vote count. Testing should be done through focus groups of small, minimal size to remain manageable.
- **November:** Create and test content documenting Donald Trump and colleagues' attempt to send fraudulent electors to Congress. Testing should be done through focus groups of small, minimal size to remain manageable.
- **December:** Create and test content documenting key rioters' criminal convictions and subsequent pardons. Testing should be done through focus groups of small, minimal size to remain manageable.

Conclusion

Do Your Own Research: The 2021 Capitol Riots is an online platform in which young, politically engaged adults can construct their own meanings of the January 6th attacks on the U.S. Capitol. Its timeline-based and just-the-facts approach affords conservative or Republican users' "Do Your Own Research" approach to political sensemaking and enables liberal or Democratic users to conduct activist-based research. Through our secondary research, survey analysis, and message testing, we have shown our platform has the potential to facilitate sensemaking of the January 6th attacks and spark nuanced, civil discussion about the events across political divides, addressing issues presented by our politically polarized and misinformation-filled media environment.

We hope future work includes further iterating on our prototype and identifying strategies to popularize the project as an information resource and educational platform. Specifically, we hope to expand the timeline to accommodate parallel narratives of the events of January 6th — including Congress peoples' evacuation and certification of the electoral votes, security forces prompt and delayed responses to the riots, the legal proceedings of rioters convicted and pardoned, and Donald Trump and his colleagues' attempts to send a fraudulent set of electors to Congress. This work should be conducted alongside efforts to implement the project as a website and popularize it among target audiences.

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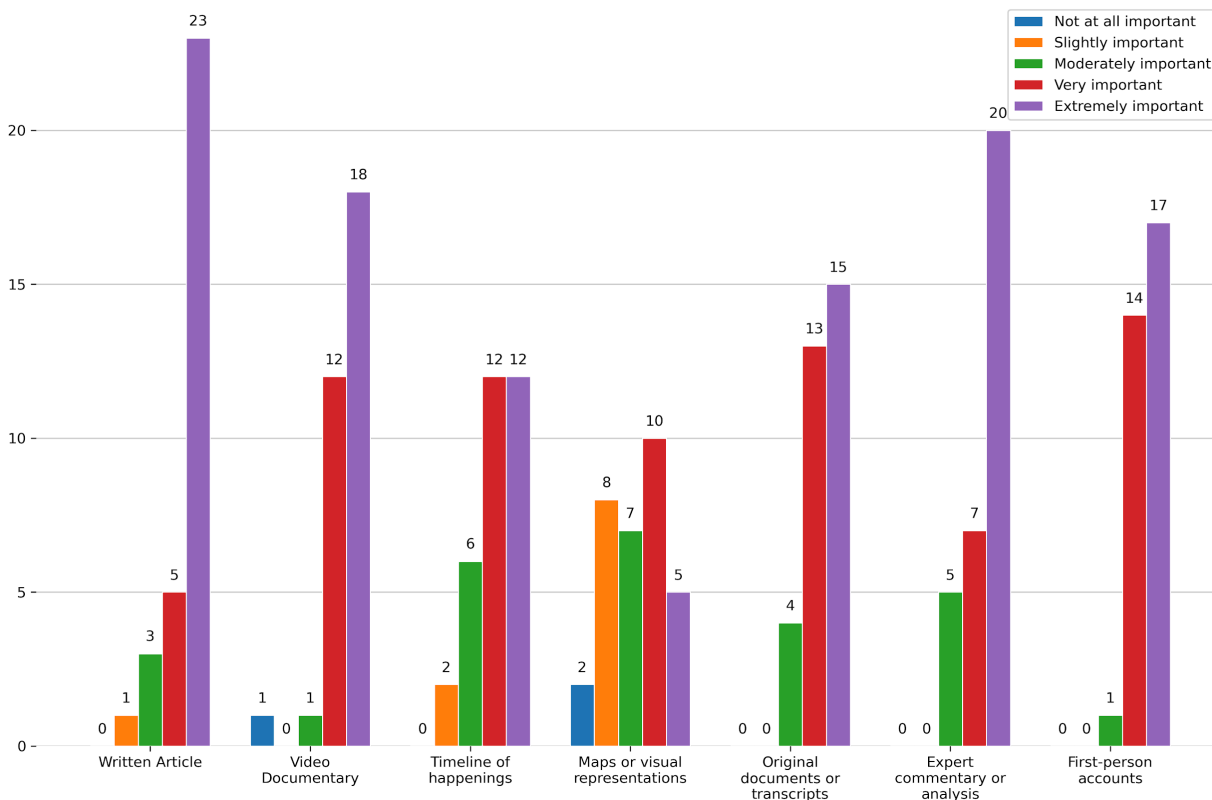
Appendix A: Survey Questions & Answers

Media Preferences and Information-Seeking Behaviors

When you want to learn about a complex political event, how helpful is it for you to learn through…
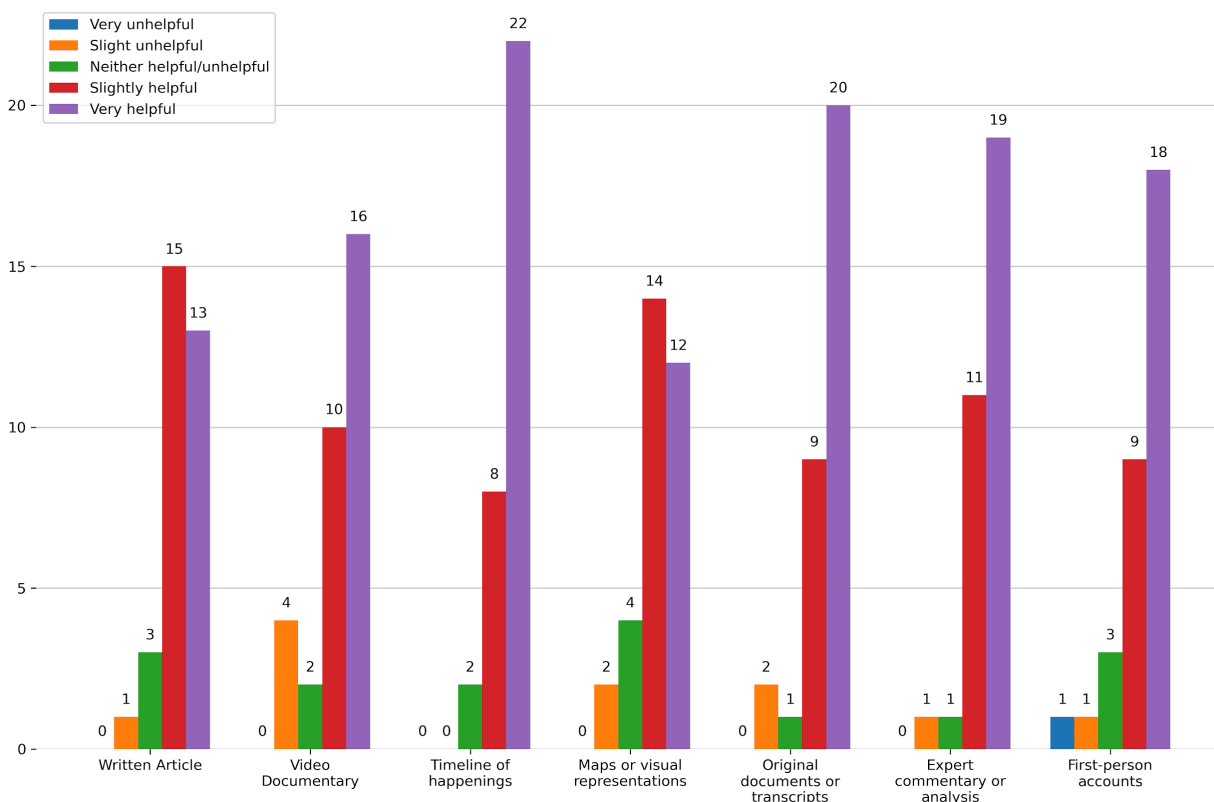
When researching an important political topic, how important is it for you to…

How do you typically verify information about political events?

Check multiple trusted sources for information. Original footage / transcripts are helpful.

I look for politically unbiased news sources, such as the AP, Politico, New York Times* (they have more of a left lean), ABC, etc. I look for these sources to agree on what exactly happened.

Watching news like the Today Show and PBS news hour or reading articles from NPR or the magazine 'The Week'

Compare and contrast multiple news sources against original documents or other media regarding said events.

I look at multiple news sources.

I read different sources about the event.

Whenever I see something political online that piques my interest I just google the topic to look at various news articles about it. Sometimes I still have questions and look more into it, or want to verify the news articles.

Unbiased reports and original documents

Using multiple, trusted sources and seeing original wording/sources.

I check multiple news sites often with conflicting agendas

Websites: X & Reddit

Reputable news sources

By viewing a multitude of trustworthy sources

a combination of comparing news and first hand sources

I try to look at multiple reputable sources and compare and contrast what each side is saying

Talking to multiple trusted sources

check multiple sources

Checking my personal favorite news sites (Washington Post and CNN)

I typically look at several different sources to gather as much information about what happened as possible

View multiple sources and come to my own conclusion

Google and major news networks.

By comparing reputable news sources such as the BBC, the Economist, the Guardian, Politico, etc.. and accounting for ideological slant/non-neutral language.

I look for a primary source (i.e. Executive Orders i read what the white house posted, for the genocide in Palestine, i look for footage and testimonials from people living there, etc)

With my peers, news, and people who share different opinions of me so I can find every point of data

Through research, trying to find original sources. especially videos of the incident to make my own interpretation. Or listening to an expert or someone I trust break it down.

Usually I learn about ongoing political events through online video (from individual creators) or news articles. If I wish to verify and/or learn more,

I'll check sources of the place I first learned about it and look up the subject myself to look at different articles/videos.

Heather Cox Richardson blogs and measuring information across different news sources- something I do not enjoy but will do sometimes. I also talk to trusted friends.

Google Feed and New York Times Articles

Check that the news anchor is generally reliable, check the history of the journalist providing info about political events to check for any bias.

By looking up news articles

Research articles, primary source account

comparing multiple sources and finding the commonalities

When evaluating information about political events, how do you determine the trustworthiness of a source?

The first thing I do is research the political leanings of the source. If it is extreme one way or the other, I tend to discount it.

I look for websites which give news sources a political bias rating, look for sources which use expert opinions (political analysts, constitutional experts, etc.), and look at the source's historical accuracy in prior events.

Googling the most reliable, unbiased sources. I personally find a source most trustworthy if they present multiple viewpoints on the story

Nothing is fully trustworthy. All sources of worthy of doubt and in the current day and age with the rise of AI and disinformation there's no way to truly validate a source of information. These days I feel it's safer to believe nothing at all.

I read the headlines to see how biased the phrasing is and look at multiple sources. I also look at what other types of things that source reports on.

I look at the sources that the source cited.

It depends on the source. For example literally yesterday at work I saw a wild article about Florida proposing eliminating a bunch of child labor restrictions and lowering the ages children can work. The language in the article was *insane*. My boss and I were like, no way. So we went to the official states government website and read the ammendments to the article. It WAS as insane as it sounded, but often times it isn't. Anyway, most news

articles nowadays have quicklinks built into it for certain words when it mentions another event that has happened. Half the time it just takes you to another news article going over the highlighted event/topic, but it's still helpful for building context.

examining biases

History of accurate reporting and believability of claims.

I look at who funds them and what language they use during their analysis of an event

I don't trust any source until I've did my research and seen multiple sources to compare.

Cross-refercing with other sources

I am usually looking for sources with good authority and comparing their information to what I have already seen/researched. I am also looking for relativity and currency,

i look to see who sponsored it

The type of source, look the source up on multiple media bias sites, look for where the source gets its funding, look at photos and videos, and see if they match what the source is reporting.

Whether it agrees with other sources with different political agendas

common understanding of source reputation/potential bias

By the objectivity in the writing

I look at the source posting it (news vs social media post, for example) and I cross reference with other sources if possible

Think about a person's motives and view their sources

If it's from a major news network and I can see where they got the information from.

Do they have on-site reporting? Is their investigative journalism thorough and well-sourced? Are they associated with an organization which may have an agenda? Do they offer opinionated interpretation or simple explanation?

It depends on the context, but where a picture says 1000 words, a video is 30 pictures a second (live footage says a lot about a situation)

It's truthfully hard to tell as every source has its biases and I go off what I believe is right.

Trying to make sure they are free of bias and give factual evidence without any agenda setting or narratives.

If I'm being very diligent, I'll look up other sources and the original document/footage to compare, contrast, and come to my own opinion. Honestly though, I don't do that as often as maybe I should, and a lot of the time it's just a vibe check.

I look for measured, objective, factual information rather than something emotional or fear mongering. I also try to remain aware of news biases.

How much information can be searched multiple times to find a source

If the article isn't full of spelling/grammatical errors, cites resources related to the topic, and the journalist's article relies on facts over their own opinion.

By determining how neutral the source seems to stay

How publication review work, what/how something is said, intent

look at their credentials and observe any bias language

Knowledge and Interest in January 6th, 2021 Events

In 1–2 sentences, describe the January 6th events.

Trump supporters rioted and broke into the Capitol building, terrorizing and physically harming those inside. They caused destruction to federal property and at least one person was killed. It was horrific and Trump did nothing to stop it despite being aware of what was happening.

Jan. 6th was an insurrection on our federal government motivated by the violent rhetoric of President Donald Trump and his false emphasis on the 2020 presidential election being rigged against him. In addition to the deaths of capitol police, The event was one of the greatest threats to our democracy and needs to be remembered as such.

A large group of radical Trump supporters coordinated an event to express their support for overturning the results of the 2020 election by breaking into the White House.

Political tensions and social unrest allowed a large group of people to be manipulated by a currently unknown power to attempt to overthrow the democratic republic structure of American government.

Far-right extremists stormed the US Capitol in an attempt to overthrow America's democracy and killed multiple people as a result.

People illegally entered government buildings in protest of the election results.

The event at the Capitol on Jan 6th was a group of MAGA supporters who went to prevent Biden's inauguration from proceding. A lot of what I know of the effects was from clips of it online and in the news in which rioters damaged property and injured a police officer.

A group of right-wing Trump supporters stormed the capital building in response to the loss of Trump in the 2020 election.

A group of extremist right wingers, prompted by Donald Trump, rioted at the capital. Later they were released on all charges.

A bunch of people were upset about Biden winning the election so they stormed the US Capitol building. Trump also posted on twitter which fueled the fire.

Attack

On January 6th, 2021, supporters of presidential candidate Donald J. Trump stormed the capitol in a claim that the election was rigged against their preferred candidate.

There was a riot that escalated to being very violent. Rioters attacked capitol officials and reporters.

Trump incites an attempted coup at the White House in to try and overturn the election results, and many individuals got injured as a result.

On Jan 6th, followers of Trump violently stormed the capitol in an attempt to prevent the counting of votes that would confirm Biden as the next president.

Trump incited an insurrection against the US government where his followers stormed the Capital. His followers threatened to hang Pence, attacked security guards, and threatened to harm US Senators.

On Jan 6, 2021, in an effort to help Donald Trump, members of the alt-right tried to delay the outcome of the election by storming the US Capitol. It did not work.

A horrific challenge to our very democracy. January 6th was the culmination of four years of antagonizing leadership which influenced an entire political body to violence.

The Jan. 6 events were a series of events that resulted in several incredibly right-wing Americans storming and breaking into the capitol

Mainly far right leaning Republicans stormed the U.S. Capitol, leaving many injured and five dead.

It was a violent insurrection that attempted to disrupt a vital part of our democracy. It demonstrated the deep divides present in American politics.

An insurrection against the fundamental institutions of American democracy tacitly condoned, encouraged, and certainly not denounced by the sitting President.

While i support a population's decision to overthrow the government, i dont like what grounds those folks acted upon. There's plenty of valid reasons to hate the government, and they're more upset that their favorite candidate didn't win that election?

I think that it shouldn't have happened. However I believe people blow it out of proportion as one lady on the view " claimed it was as bad as ww2"

From my understanding, Trump supporters forced their way into the capitol during a protest after his defeat in the presidential election.

As I understand it, on January 6th, 2021, Republican supporters of Donald Trump sieged and stormed the U.S. capitol in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election and broadly to show devotion to Trump.

On January 6th, rioters stormed the capitol building and attempted a coup. Trump allowed for the events to occur for many hours and seems to have enjoyed it. It put many people's safety in danger and desecrated our capitol building.

I saw the article written by the journalist with the group chat receipts. It was very scary how enthusiastic the chat members were.

The events that happened on January 6th were criminal and violent. President Trump fueled an angry mob of his supporters at the Capitol because he could not handle the loss of that election and so, innocent people were hurt.

The United States Capitol was breached by rioters protesting the election of President Biden. Many of these rioters were fans of and possibly spurred to riot by President Trump.

Scary and polarizing.

On January 6th, radical conservatives and other members collaborated to storm the capital building after President Trump's speech. This event involved a lot of confusion and was not handled properly. So, many people have made large speculations about it, attempting to implicate President Trump.
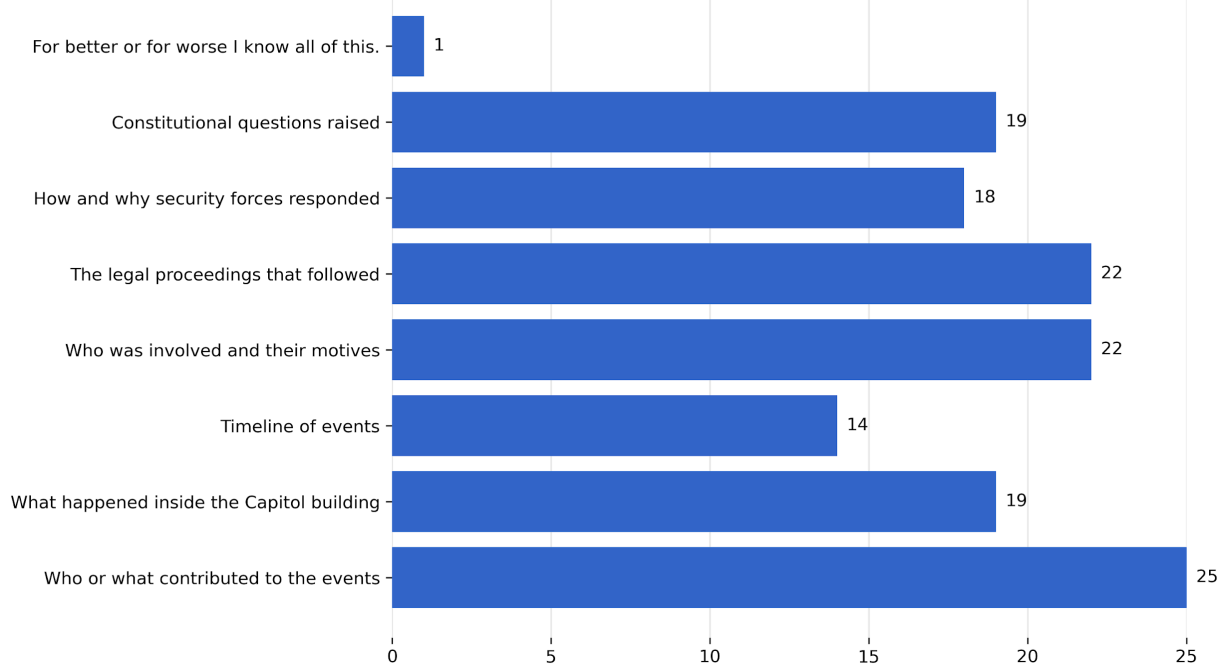
What word or phrase best describes the January 6th events?

32 responses
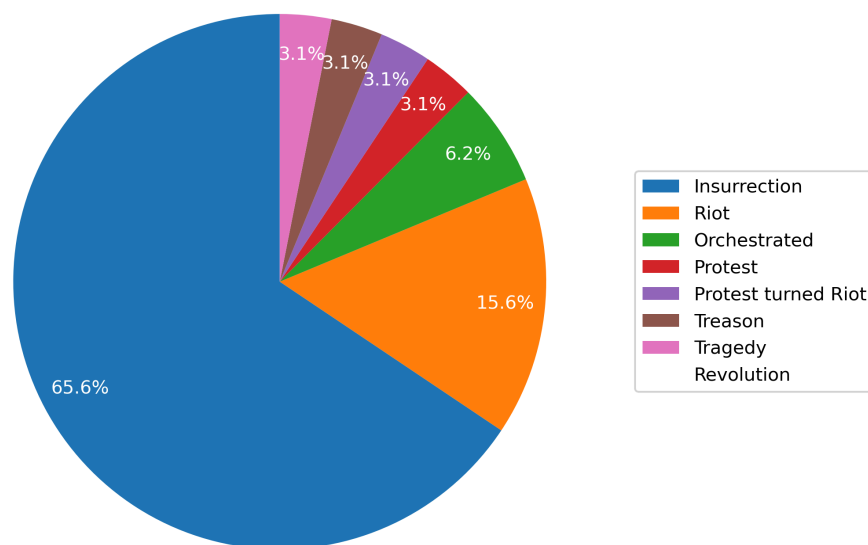
What aspects of the January 6th events are you most interested in understanding better? (**Select all that apply**)

32 responses

What specific questions about January 6th, if any, remain unanswered for you?

n/a

How long did it last and what was the specific timeline of events?

From what I understand, this event was premeditated; why weren't the police and security guards ready for the potential of a violent movement?

Did security officials have any inkling that this event might happen? What signs were there before the insurrection that it would take place? Did Trump have prior knowledge of the event? What specific laws were broken by the individuals involved and what legal action against law-breaking individuals has been taken after the fact?

Why was the response to this event so weak when the criticism of it was so strong?

What legal repercussions did those involved face?

What makes the actions of these protestors different from others?

What drugs the judge who dismissed the charges against Trump for the insurrection was on. I need whatever he had.

Who thought that was, like, a good idea? Mob mentality?

I have questions about the planning of events, prior knowledge of officals, and legal implications of rioters being let off.

Why none of the rioters got shot. I mean they literally broke into a federal building, people get shot for way less.

We should put all this effort into figuring out what really happened on 911

Why didn't President Trump face legal consequences for encouraging an insurrection?

What was the purpose and motivations for this event

Why is the constitution not being upheld

Why do some people dismiss the event as a simple protest?

What are they doing to prevent things like this from happening again?

Why weren't the rioters stopped? If every other protest in the US can be "maintained" by means of violent force (and supported when that happens), why wasn't this one held to the same standards?

N/a

I think my questions about the event itself have been answered, but I do still wish to know why and how anyone can support Donald Trump after his followers went after our lawmakers.

Why was the security response so lackluster?

How come every person pardoned for the insurrection immediately went and did something sinister and wound up back in prison, or otherwise dealt with? (I can figure out why, pattern recognition's fun, but its still wild that it happened)

Who is truly responsible for it

Why did it happen ? Why were people that riled up ? etc.

Off the top of my head, I'm unsure of the physical toll of the events (casualties and injuries), and am also unsure whether to categorize it as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful.' On one hand, the insurrection did not overturn the results of the 2020 election, but Trump was elected in 2024, so did it have any impact on that?

Why have the people who were found to be accountable pardoned? How is that constitutional?

Why attack someone and/or a group of people that has no business with the attacker?

What are the constitutional implications of President Trump pardoning participants of Jan. 6th now that he is president again?

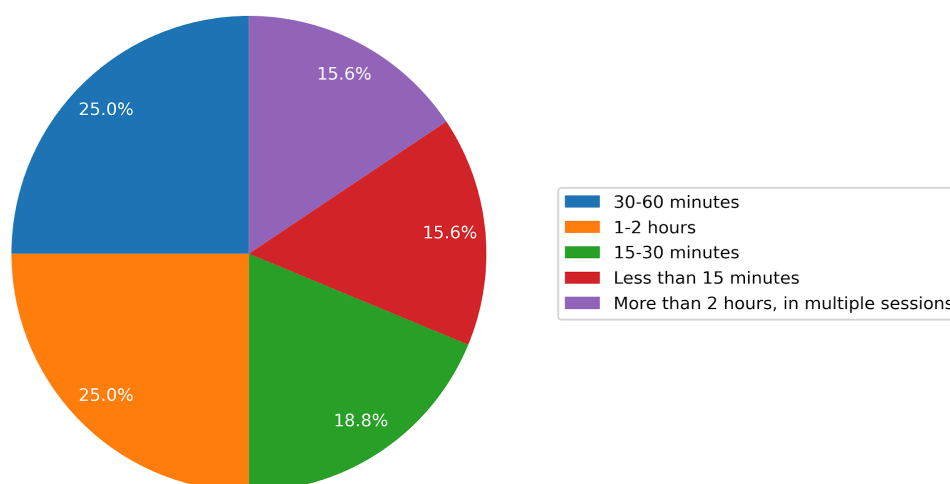What protections are in place to prevent similar events from occurring in the future.

How did the legal process for January 6th today develop?

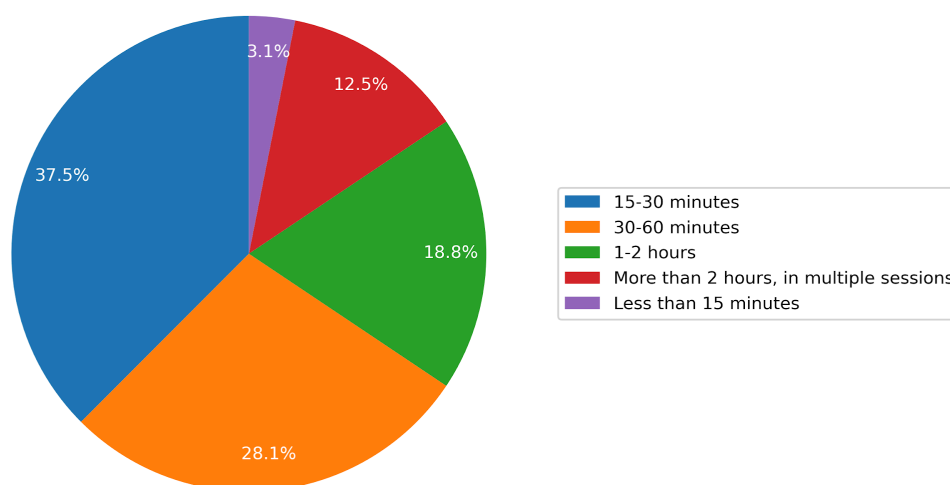## Learning Preferences and Time Commitments

In the last 7 days, how much time did you spend exploring information about political events?
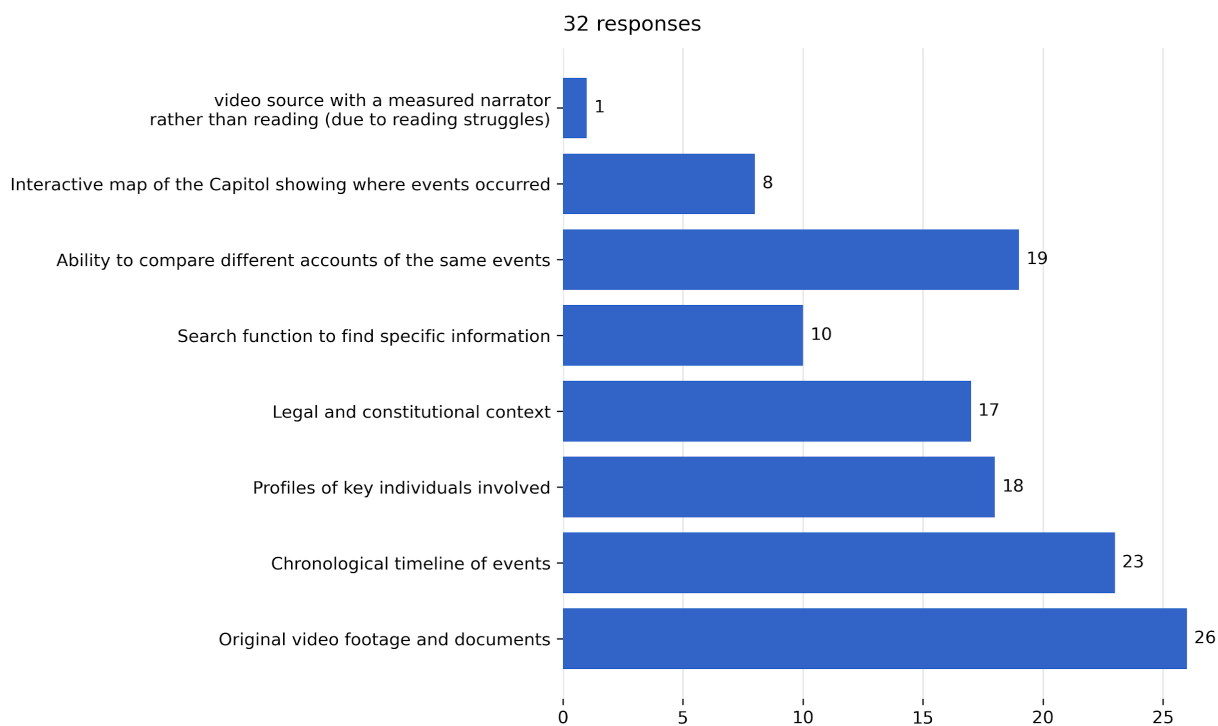
32 responses

If you were to explore information about January 6th, how much time would you be willing to spend?
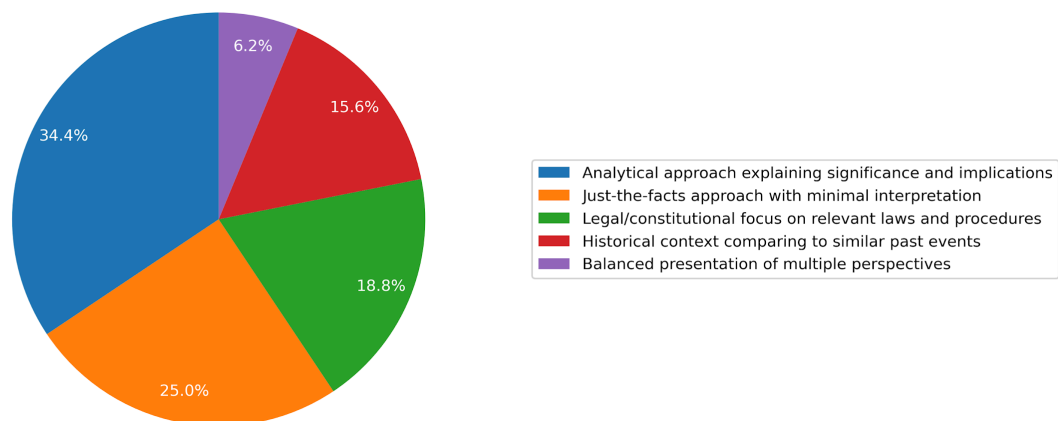
32 responses

Which of the following features would be most valuable in a learning resource about January 6th? (**Select up to 3**)

32 responses

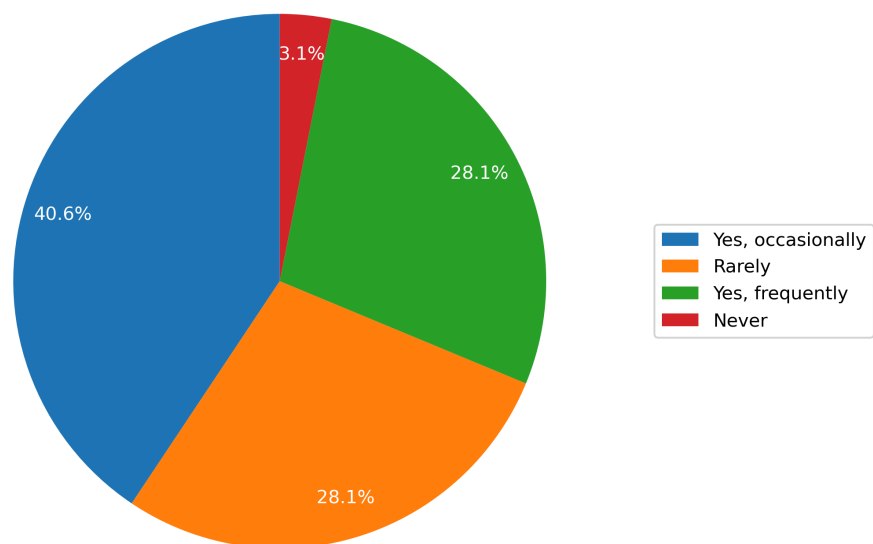Which presentation approach would you prefer for information about January 6th?

32 responses

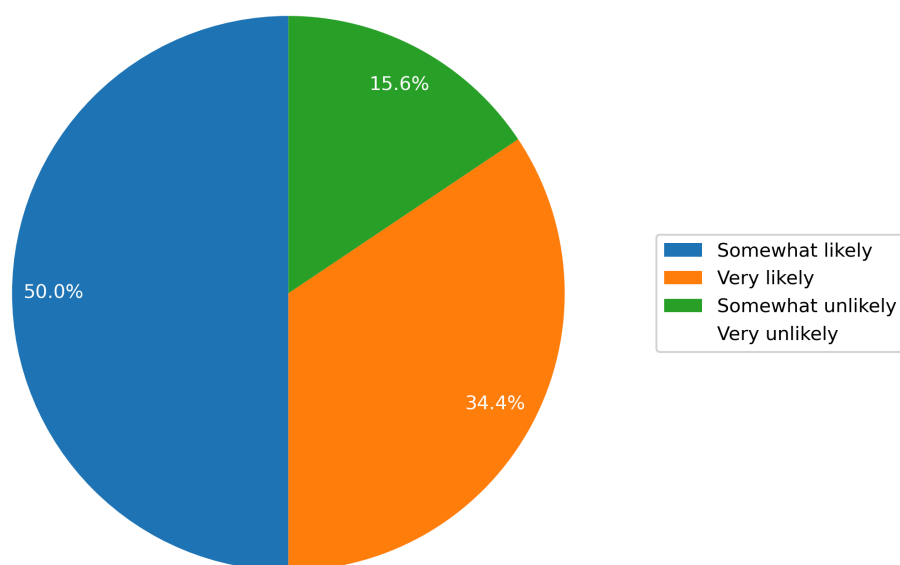
Information Sharing and Discussion

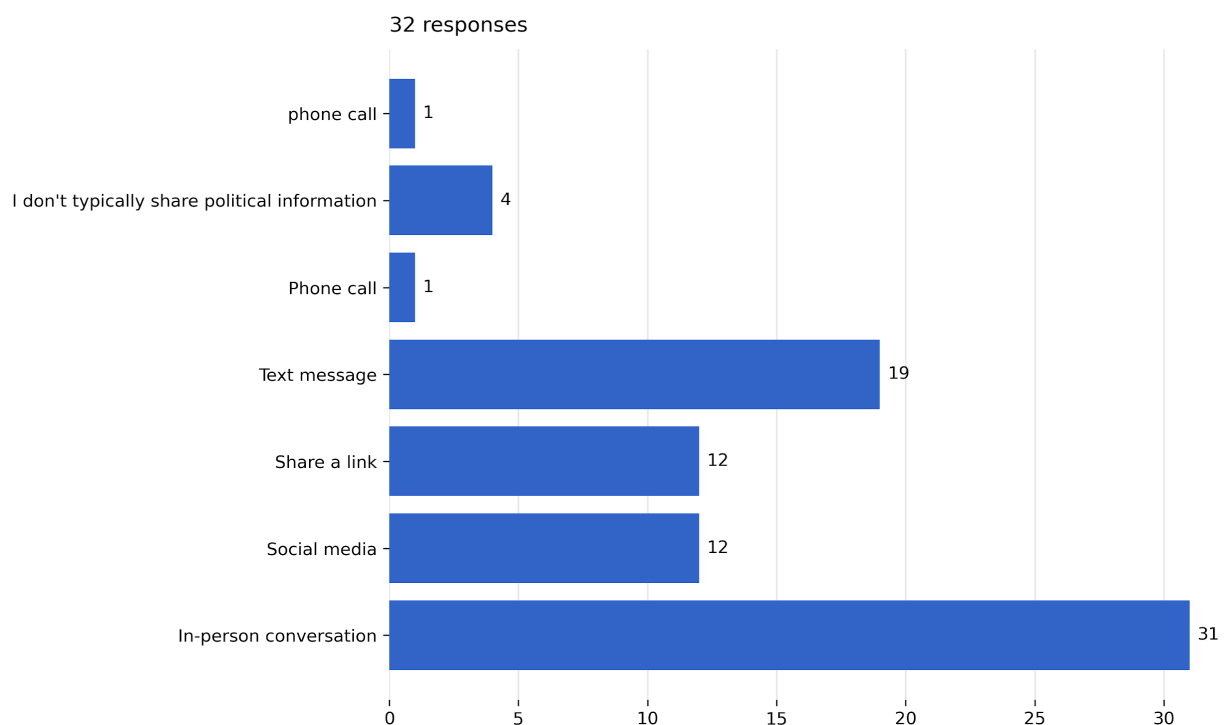Do you discuss political events like January 6th with friends or family?

32 responses

If you find valuable information about political events, how likely are you to share it with others?
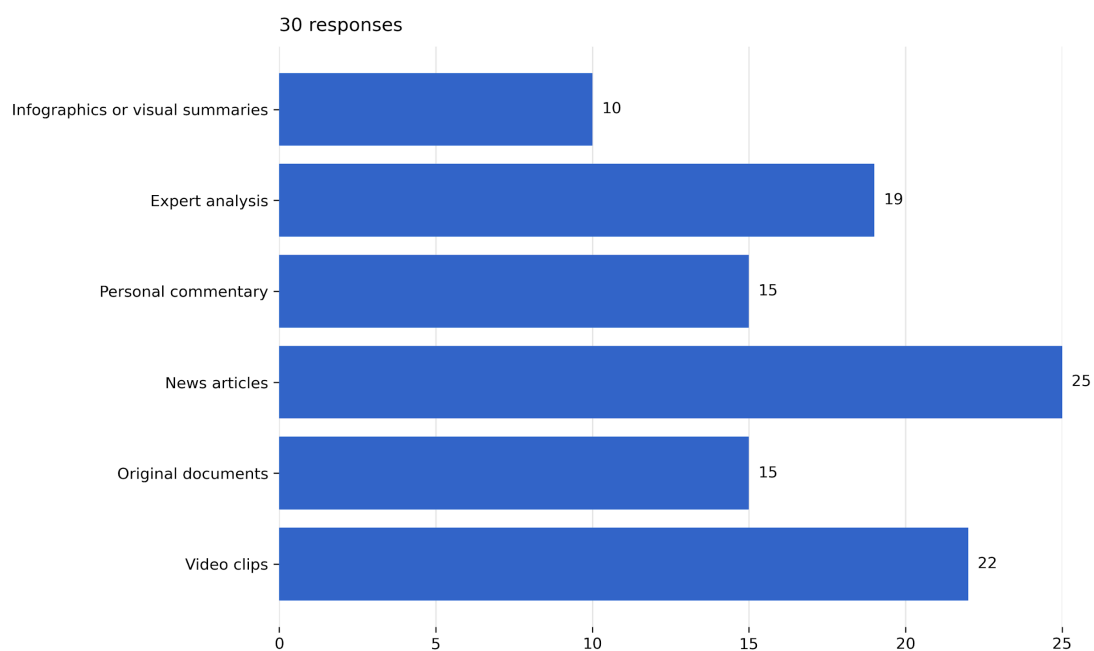
32 responses

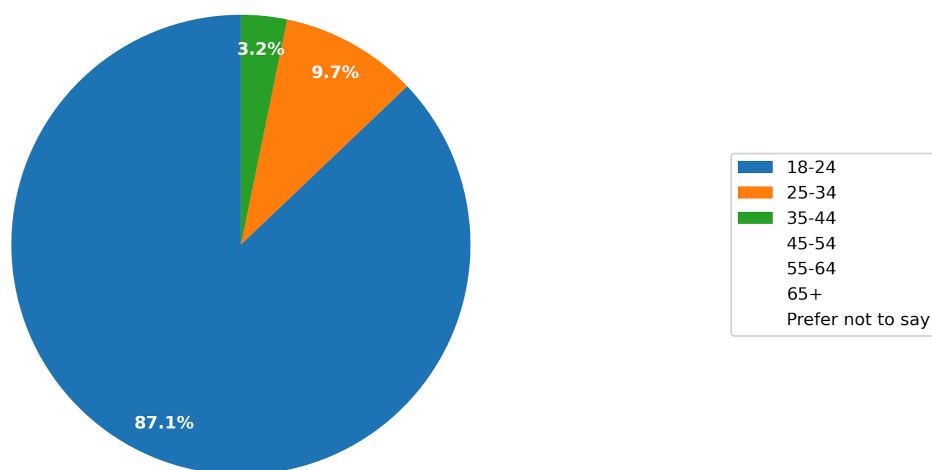Which methods would you most likely use to share information about political events? (Select all that apply)

32 responses

What types of content are you most likely to share with others? (Select all that apply)

30 responses

Demographic Information (Optional)

Age

31 responses

Legend:
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

Slices: 87.1%, 9.7%, 3.2%

Gender

30 responses

Legend:
- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/third gender
- Trans Male
- Transgender Male
- Prefer not to say

Slices: 53.3%, 26.7%, 10.0%, 3.3%, 3.3%, 3.3%
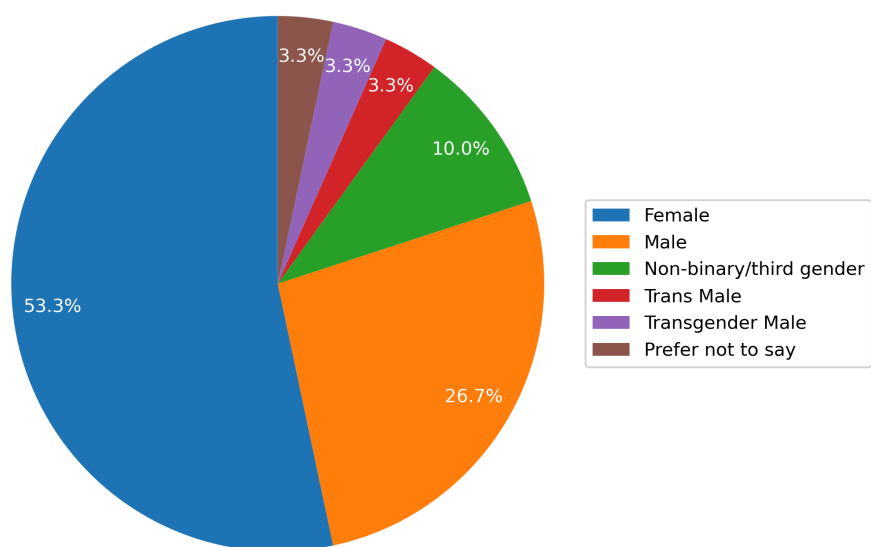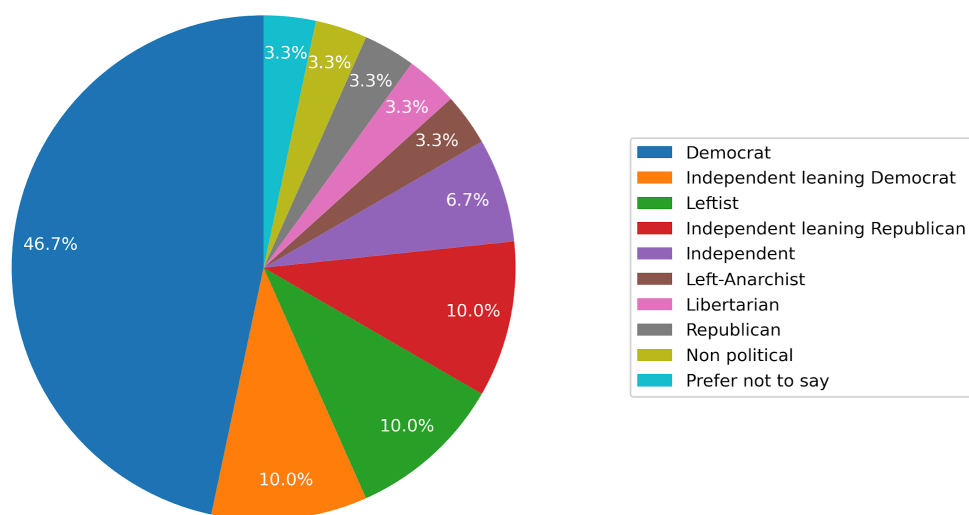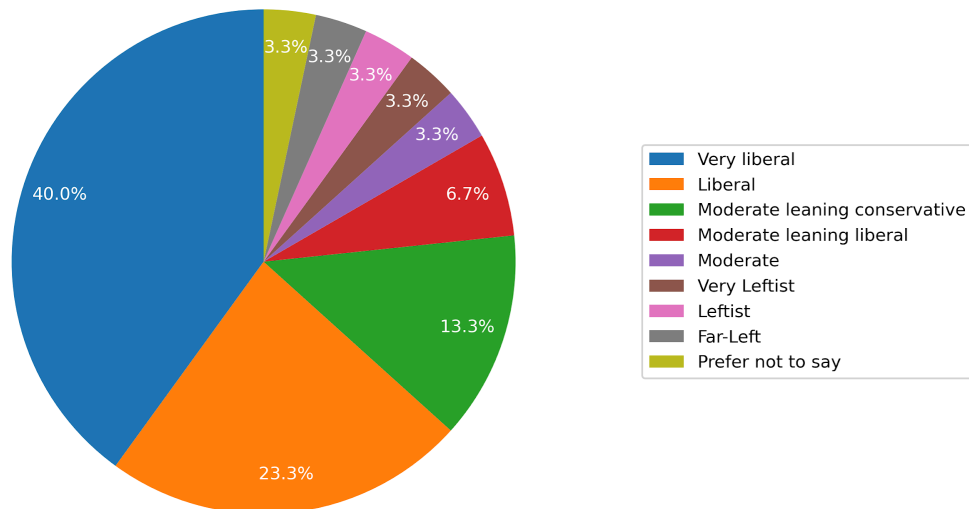
Political affiliation

30 responses

How would you describe your political views?

30 responses

Final Thoughts

Is there anything else you would like to share on how information about January 6th should be presented to be most informative and valuable?

N/A

I think it's important to include information about the individuals who were ultimately charged, what their crimes were, the typical sentence for those crimes, what they actually served, and whether they were pardoned after the fact. Trump's attitude about the incident and those involved is at the crux of the issue.

Recently, there has been a movement from the government to downplay Jan. 6th as just a normal protest. This is not only false but also threatens to undermine the importance and historical implications of Jan. 6th. Highlighting the violence and constitutional and democratic undermining is vital!

I do not want to be defeatist, but I feel that there is nothing that can be done or said to change what has happened nor the consequences that will come from it. In our current age, even the most straightforward evidence or analysis will be ignored by those who disagree, and disproportionately boosted by those who agree. The Information Age ended 10 years ago.

Many people have forgotten it, and I think an emphasis on the lack of results following the actions pursued is very valuable. Most people can tell you about the insurrection, but how many would have an answer when you ask them what happened with the legal case following? How many would know what was involved or even that it was dismissed?

It is important to remember things such as Hovland's Extremity Model when sharing this sort of information. You must remember people's pre-existing beliefs. If you say "it was an insurrection" to someone who has an extreme position in support of Trump, they will not hear you out. In the same manner, if you say, "It was a protest" to someone who is extremely anti-Trump they will also not listen.

N/a

Just be honest and unbiased

More information needs to be shared in a way that the general public can understand. A lot of political issues are buried because they are shared in a way that is too complex for general understanding.

We need to share the truth and not cover up the facts to support our political agenda

Nah

I do think comparing wit other historical events would be useful, along with showing both sides.

During the section on what features would be valuable, I think pretty much all of them would be helpful and informative! I understand that implementing everything may not be practical or feasible, though.

considering the views of the capitol police officers seems to be an important perspective, to me.

No, but I enjoyed your survey!!

Appendix B: Focus Group Transcript

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Lead Interviewer 1  00:00
Before we start all this, just, obviously, we're going to be recording it,
just audio recording. It's just for transcription purposes. The professor
straight up said, "I don't want to hear it." She's like, "I just want the
transcription." So, everything's anonymous, blah, blah, all good. Obviously,
this is just a review, and it is a prototype, a rough prototype, so we're just
wanting input from as many people as we could gather on this day. And
obviously this is just your opinion. There's no rights, no wrongs. It is a
political thing, as you guys know. So, you know, keep it civil and just focus
on the content itself rather than other people's opinions, whatever. But
obviously bounce off of each other. I'll give you guys a couple minutes to
just kind of scroll through and look over and just see what you think. It's
all right, [Participant 1], yours is, the bar should not follow, but in
viewing, it wouldn't have happened. Also for you two [Participants 2 and 3],
since you're viewing, you're able to click on things, but you can't move it,
so don't worry. Yeah, any initial thoughts, just go ahead.

Participant 2  01:30
I do like that your four colors are so different, because it doesn't make it
confusing through here to try to track who's who, and the shapes. So, solid on
that.

Participant 3  01:39
Also, the timeline is very easy to follow, so I appreciate that.

Participant 2  01:52
I like the inclusion of the tweet.

Lead Interviewer 1  02:08
And yeah, if you guys just want to go through all of it, and once you get to
the end, we can talk, or you can continue to look through it, it doesn't
matter.

Participant 2  03:19
There was one, and you can tell me if I'm just looking at this to far, at
2:28, I don't know, again, I don't know, if you, on the left side, where it
says "rioters successfully breached the rotunda entrance," I didn't know if
you wanted a red line there, with it, just because there wasn't one? I was
like, "Am I tripping?"
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Lead Interviewer 1 03:47
Mo, that's fair. That's a good eye. I missed that when I was reformatting it, because there's supposed to be a connection to the 2:24 attempt, they're attempting to breach the entrance. So, it was supposed to be connected.

Participant 2 04:00
Okay.

Lead Interviewer 1 04:02
As I said, this is a prototype.

Participant 2 04:04
No, I think it looks great, honestly. I think it's, like [Participant 3] was saying, I think it's very easy to follow. It doesn't seem a lot where it's like, "Okay, wait, hold on, like, what's happening now?" I like that your longest parts are literally just with the tweets, and it's only because those tweets are that long.

Participant 3 04:18
You kind of summarized every event to just enough for everyone understand it, but not too short, or it's like...

Lead Interviewer 1 04:25
Yeah. In your guys' opinion, do we think that there's anything else that you would want to know from this? Do you feel like there's any information missing?

Participant 3 04:34
Feel like you could potentially do the aftermath in a subcategory, you can, just have a little bubble, like "the week following" or something, just what the news covered and all that. But besides that, for the actual event, it was pretty down pat.

Participant 2 04:48
Yeah, I was about to say, I feel like you've got literally every single stuff. I mean, you have definitely things in here that I didn't realize, to the minute level, but no, I think it looks great.

Participant 1 05:00
I will say, the shapes that you can click on, they might need to be highlighted or something, because you really can't tell that there's something supposed to be there.

Lead Interviewer 1 05:11
Are you trying to find what can be clicked on?

Participant 3 05:13
Yeah, the moment it was said we were —

Participant 2 05:14
I was like, "Wait, what do I click on? I want to know!"

Lead Interviewer 1 05:22
In that case, let me think. Do you want me to tell you what can be clicked on?

Everyone 05:27
[Agrees, inaudible].

Lead Interviewer 1 05:32
You're good. So, the first one is the 2:13 Dominic Pezzola, and it's the square that's attached to it. It's supposed to be —

Participant 2 05:42
Oh, is it because my squares are already over here?

Lead Interviewer 1 05:44
It might be. Oh, yeah, it is. Because you guys are in viewing mode. I forgot you guys are in that mode. Yeah, sorry about that one. Yeah. No.

Participant 2 05:53
I was like, "I swear I'm clicking it."

Lead Interviewer 1 05:54
No, you're good. No, because I put [Participant 1]'s in presenting view, you're able to click on it. I mean, I can put you in presenting mode.

Participant 2 06:08
No, I just [inaudible].

Lead Interviewer 1 06:09
It kind of messes with the formatting, because it... Whatever.

Participant 2 06:12
No, I like it. I also like your picture on the top of it. I think it's very

symbolic and representative of exactly what the crowd looked like and felt like. It's almost like you can feel the energy through the picture.

Participant 3 06:29
What are the two boxes on the side?

Participant 2 06:31
Those are the clicks.

Lead Interviewer 1 06:33
Those are further information about the little things. When looking at this, what do you think you would use this for? Like, would you use it as just for your own personal [research]? Would you use it as a resource? Would you cite it?

Participant 3 06:59
I'd say this is more resources.

Participant 2 07:01
Yeah, I'd say resources.

Lead Interviewer 1 07:01
Yeah, how would you categorize it, I suppose?

Participant 3 07:03
I guess resource. I don't feel like I'd use this on my day to day life, "Look what I just found!" Like, I see it on a news post, I'm like, "Oh, this is cool."

Participant 2 07:11
Yeah. And something like, I mean if you want to talk about and you need to come back and be like, "Okay, I don't remember exactly what happened right here [or] what the order of events was," it'd be easy to kind of just pull this back over like, "Okay, here it is, perfectly laid out." I would definitely use it.

Lead Interviewer 2 07:30
What about it makes it not suitable for day to day life?

Participant 2 07:35
Um, okay, one, I just don't know if I would use just something like this category in general, in my day to day. But I think as far as the piece itself

goes, it's almost a little too much for day to day. I feel like if I were going to use something like this in my day to day, I would want maybe just the big main events like, "Okay, when did they start? When was the first tweet? When did they break in?" Which I feel like were the timelines that we were all kind of getting there for a while in the public news. So I'd say something more like that. But...

Participant 3 08:04
For me personally, if I was in my day to day life, usually there'd be a bit more feather[?] words to, what's the word, there's descriptions of every event. So it's more in depth for everything, and it's not the one sentence thing. So that too makes it a little easier for just instant conversation.

Lead Interviewer 1 08:23
Gotcha. And then, looking at this, what kind of biases do you feel could possibly be present?

Participant 1 08:36
I don't really think there is a bias, I feel like it's just the facts.

Participant 2 08:41
I agree. Are you saying bias as if someone were to use this or bias from the people who created it?

Lead Interview 1 08:47
In any way.

Participant 2 08:47
I mean, I obviously think anytime that you get someone on the Trump side that sees anything about this, they're just gonna [think], "It's fake. That's not what actually happened. It's dramatic. It's exaggerated," [or] whatever. But, and two, I mean, then you could also have people from the opposite side be like, "Oh, there wasn't enough." And they're like, "This is too tame." I don't think it's too tame. But, I think from a creator view, I don't think that there's any bias. That was actually something I was going to say, it seems very neutral and just factual instead of emotional. So, I like that. Again, I think that makes it a good resource.

Lead Interviewer 1 08:47
When you guys are personally looking for news resources, do you look for specific information of either more neutral, more biased, or not outright bias, but just more of looking for a certain sides take?

Participant 3 09:41
I kind of do a wide view, because I know no matter what news source I get, there's going to be a bias of some sorts. I kind of take everything with grain of salt. So it's like, "Alright, this happened in his perspective," and I can have the new source [that] says the exact opposite. I'm like, "I'm gonna meet somewhere in the middle and try to just go off that."

Lead Interviewer 1 09:58
In that case, when looking at this, you said maybe looking at more in depth of [it], instead of just one sentences. Would you want to hear different points of views on, for example, if it was talking about members of Congress evacuating, would you want to hear different takes of that? Or do you feel just good of neutrally hearing, "Okay, this is cut and dry what happened." Or would you want maybe the police perspective, the Congress people's perspective?

Participant 3 10:39
I think it'd be the perspective of Congress and the police. Just seeing where they were at during that time would be interesting to know. Really add, I guess, more emotion behind what was happening. But I don't know if you're trying to stay away from that [and] stick with straight factual so...

Participant 1 10:58
Yeah, but then I feel like if you did that it could become a little bit more biased.

Participant 2 11:04
I think if you were to use this timeline within an article, then within your article would be a great place to have the opinions and kind of the bias and the points of views. I think with something like this, because, one, I do think it is very important to get these facts right, so I think when you leave emotion out of this, it makes it a lot easier for people from both sides to — even though they feel some type of way about the entire day itself — but, it's still like, you can't even try to be upset about this, because it's literally just laying out basic facts. You're not saying, "and then the angry mean writers came in." It's just like, "That's what you were, this is what you did." So, I think yes and no.

Lead Interviewer 1 11:40
Okay. Then I guess more from, since you guys are just seeing the non-clickables, and since [Participant 1] was able to see the clickables,

where would you click to look for if something could be clicked? Or what would indicate to you that you could click things?

Participant 2 12:04
I think, did you say something about making them a little bolder? Just, yeah, either bolding, making them maybe a little bit bigger, or, I don't know.

Participant 3 12:13
Just bolding the times you could click on or making the font slightly bigger would be the best way.

Lead Interviewer 1 12:22
Okay.

Participant 1 12:23
Or maybe instead of making the shapes clickable, you could do a word, like —

Participant 2 12:28
Yeah, like in [inaudible].

Lead Interviewer 1 12:29
Okay.

Participant 1 12:29
Yeah.

Lead Interviewer 1 12:34
[Lead Interviewer 2], do you have any more questions right now?

Lead Interviewer 2 12:43
How do you see yourself using this in a conversation with someone from the opposite side of the aisle?

Participant 2 12:51
Laying it out to just be like, "Would you like to look at it? Because here it all is, minute-by-minute-by-minute-by-minute." Instead of just this whole overarching theme of, "It was bad and they did this." It's like, "Well, here's really every [thing]." And, again, because it's from both sides, I think it's like, "Here's from the police to Congress, to Trump himself to the right, to everybody. Here it all is."

Participant 3 13:12

I think it's a great way to make a debate stay a debate and not an argument, if anything.

Lead Interviewer 2 13:20
Can you speak more on that?

Participant 3 13:23
Because when it comes to politics, when people try to say facts every now and then, being civil and debating it, people turn it into arguments and then it comes the name calling. But with this, it's quite clear, you can't refute anything, and it's more like, "All right, I understand." You saw that this time that happened or at this time this happened. It's just easier to conversate about it without it going too far.

Participant 2 13:53
I have a question.

Lead Interviewer 1 13:54
Yeah.

Participant 1 13:55
So, I know you guys said for this class, you have to have a calendar to keep posting and stuff like that. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Lead Interviewer 2 14:07
Yeah.

Participant 1 14:08
Okay. Is this like, you're gonna make multiple timelines?

Lead Interviewer 1 14:14
Oh, I know what you're talking about. No, the end of it would be a hypothetical of what we would make next.

Participant 1 14:27
Yeah. So, is this supposed to be like just one timeline? Are you guys going to do different timelines on different subjects?

Lead Interviewer 1 14:35
What timelines do you think could we go with this?

Participant 1 14:40

Like, is this for just news? Like, I would think news. I mean, big news events, basically. So, this one, and then I don't know.

Participant 2 14:52
I think if you were gonna make a follow up to this and kind of play off of this topic, you could do a timeline of the charges being [dropped], and like [Participant 3] was saying earlier, what the aftermath of it was, I think you [can] kind of go through there. And, I don't know, I don't think it would be able to be a minute-by-minute thing but day, month, week, whatever after and just kind of seeing all the repercussions from that.

Participant 3 15:14
And if [we] want to keep following the time too, we could probably do a jump to when Trump said he was trying to pardon some of the rioters. So you could probably just do a jump to seeing how that's currently playing out.

Participant 1 15:26
Okay, yeah.

Participant 2 15:27
I'm pretty sure one of them got shot in the car [and] after he got back up. Well, I saw the video, he definitely was not in the best mind.

Participant 3 15:38
The cop or the guy?

Participant 2 15:38
No, the guy. He got pulled over for, I think it was just a speeding ticket or something, and he started freaking out on like, "I just got pardoned and duh-duh-duh," and then went to reach back in his car, and it was like, well... I have no opinions on that. I'm just saying. I'm pretty sure this was a factual thing that happened.

Participant 3 15:39
He got pardoned and then in the next week... That is impressive.

Lead Interviewer 1 16:02
I suppose, branching off of what could possibly go next, what interests — I mean, obviously, January 6 have been talked about so much. But, what specifically, potentially interests you guys of the topic? Is it more so you are interested in the aftermath, the timeline itself, the precursors, even?

Participant 2   16:28
I think two things. Well, maybe even all three of those. I think a precursor for what made me so immediate when it happened was, like, "What are we talking about? Why are we acting like this is not a big deal?" was because of the entire Black Lives Matter movement that had happened that summer before and was going on, and the way that that was handled and treated by the public. Versus, when people were quite literally storming the Capitol of our nation, and everyone's like, "Come on, come on. We don't need to be so aggressive with them. Like, those cops shouldn't have done that to them. Come on, they were just there." I think that was very interesting, because it was like, "Oh no, no. Our country is actually very much this way and has been."

Lead Interviewer 1   16:29
Okay.

Participant 2   17:10
And then, yeah, I think the aftermath of it, and the fact that there weren't as
many repercussions as I feel like there probably could have been.

Participant 1   17:20
Yeah.

Participant 2 17:20
[Laughing] He allowed to run for president again. Sorry, because after that, that's crazy.

Lead Interviewer 1   17:30
Do you two [Participants 1 and 3] have any other thoughts of what you would be interested in with January 6? Because obviously, like you guys said, this is more of a brief overview, kind of neutral. So do you feel like there's anything that could be explored more? Could maybe even go less into?

Participant 1   17:54
I think I'm more interested in the aftermath, like [Participant 2] said. Just what happened to the people who did go to jail and when they got out and what law enforcement did.

Participant 2   18:12
Health effects that the officers had. I'm pretty sure one guy had a heart attack.

Participant 1 18:16
Yeah.

Participant 2 18:17
I think he had a heart attack and died. Because he got tased by not himself.

Lead Interviewer 1 18:32
I don't feel like I have any more questions [Lead Interviewer 2]. Do you?

Lead Interviewer 2 18:37
There might be something in the document.

Lead Interviewer 1 18:38
Hm?

Lead Interviewer 2 18:39
There might be something in the document.

Lead Interviewer 1 18:53
I don't know. We've kind of asked [all of] it, because there's a lot of, "What do you think?"

Lead Interviewer 2 19:02
[Participant 2], right? I think earlier you mentioned that there were things in the timeline that you didn't realize happened or were in relation to one another, something along those lines?

Participant 2 19:11
Um, let me try to think what I was thinking about when I said that.

Lead Interviewer 1 19:18
I forgot to say. Oh yeah, I'm dumb. Did you guys find this insightful?

Participant 2 19:20
No, I think it was just the time. I think it was more so the timeline and order of events themselves, that I was kind of like, "Oh, okay, didn't realize." Or, yeah, you can touch it [to Participant 3]. But also, Trump calling people or something, yeah, calling those Senators. I don't, I guess I maybe just skipped over that part and didn't realized that he had been in contact, and so I knew all the tweets and how he had gotten up and said all that stuff, but I don't know if I knew the kind of behind the door things that — not like, well, bad, whatever.

Participant 3 19:51
I don't think I realized how fast everything took place, because I thought this was over several hours. This was less than an hour and a half. This was my class period, all right? I was just still in history class when this was started and over. So I think that really intrigues me, because I thought this was a two or three hour thing.

Participant 1 20:13
Yeah.

Participant 3 20:13
Nah.

Participant 2 20:15
No, and I also like all of the highlights on the police officers and where they were, how they handled it, kind of how effective they were in getting in there and trying to get a handle on everything.

Participant 3 20:29
Well, apparently, at 2:44, one was effective.

Participant 2 20:36
Effective for sure.

Participant 3 20:39
Is that the guy they tased?

Participant 2 20:40
I don't know.

Lead Interviewer 1 20:43
I don't think it is? If you want to look on the side, the one that has blue outline is related to the 2:44.

Participant 3 20:58
Sicknick? Kind of a cool last name.

Participant 2 21:02
Stroked. I'm sorry, I had to look that up. Had to double check myself.

Lead Interviewer 1 21:14

Oh, and also, I guess, yeah, I didn't realize that it was, is it clickable for you guys, the little squares on the side?

Participant 2 21:21
Like, to go to the link?

Lead Interviewer 1 21:22
Yeah. If you guys want to do those, because I am not gonna lie, I thought we just wrote that out.

Everyone 21:32
[Watches or listens to NBC video of capitol police officer fatally shooting Ashli Babbitt.]

Participant 3 22:35
I think that's the 2:44.

Participant 2 22:38
Did he die?

Participant 3 22:38
I think so. Oh, no, never said.

Participant 1 22:46
It says fatal shooting, though.

Participant 3 22:47
Yeah.

Participant 2 22:56
Oh, it's a woman.

Participant 3 23:01
Oh, well.

Participant 1 23:01
Her name is Ashli.

Participant 2 23:02
Ashli, okay.

Participant 3 23:04

Oh. Man, I misread that.

Participant 2 23:06
I also misread that the whole time. Yeah, damn. Well. I mean, I'm not saying anybody deserves to die, but there are consequences to actions.

Participant 3 23:20
Feel like after hearing law enforcement say "stop" a lot of times, feel like [after] a certain point, you're kind of enticing something to happen.

Participant 2 23:27
And also when you're busting down the windows and doors in the Capitol to get to God only knows what you're trying to do.

Participant 1 23:38
Weren't they saying —

Participant 2 23:39
Because, and also not him coming in at the end and saying, "I'm asking for everyone to remain peaceful." Like, what are you talking about bro? What are you literally talking about?

Participant 3 23:46
Yeah, I like how he tweets right as Congress is being evacuated. "Hey guys, be nice."

Participant 2 23:50
Yeah.

Participant 3 23:51
"Can't be doing this."

Participant 2 23:52
Because what was the original tweet?

Participant 3 23:54
Something like Pence.

Participant 2 23:57
Oh yeah, when he was calling for the death of his own Vice President.

Participant 1 24:01

Because weren't they chanting "Hang Mike Pence"?

Participant 2 24:03
Yeah, they had a guillotine out there.

Participant 1 24:04
Yeah.

Participant 2 24:05
Literally.

Participant 3 24:06
Wait, actually?.

Participant 2 24:06
Yes.

Participant 3 24:10
See, that's equally fucked up as I am impressed that they've got a guillotine.

Participant 2 24:17
Where do you even get that from?

Participant 3 24:19
Next day shipping. IKEA? I don't know.

Participant 2 24:25
Not an guillotine. It was a noose. I don't know if that makes it any better.

Participant 3 24:33
Makes it more understandable how they got it there.

Participant 2 24:35
Yeah, now that I can understand the transportation.

Participant 3 24:40
That's just a Home Depot trip.

Lead Interviewer 1 24:41
In looking through this website, it's obviously starting fairly neutral conversation. Do you think that most people would take this as kind of bubbling up memories of, "Oh, hey, that did happen?" Because, I'm noticing

that you guys are kind of going, "Oh, didn't this happen? Didn't that happen?" So...

Participant 2 25:16
I think so. I think especially because it's been, what, almost four years now since it's happened? So I think, first, I think way too many people forgot about this. I feel like we just kind of moved past this way too quick as a country. We're like, "Okay, that happened. That was crazy. Anyways, what's going on now?" And so, I think also, especially right now, with everything that's going on in the world, it is a very useful thing for people, like, "Oh, oh, yeah, yeah, no. Things like this were still happening four years ago." So, I mean, yeah, but I think right now, they're necessary feelings that need to be brought back up, whatever side you're on. I mean, I don't know how you look at this and you don't kind of just fall on the side of facts, but ain't that the new trend.

Lead Interviewer 1 26:07
Do you think that this is an end-all-be-all kind of resource, or do you think that this can kind of start more of a, not conversation necessarily, but more in one's mind to dig further? Because, like I said, you guys seem to be kind of popping up, looking at things.

Participant 2 26:22
I think it would cause someone to dig further. Because, I mean, I feel like I've looked up three things only since we've been sitting here, because it's short enough to get the message across and the event across, but then it's still kind of [enough for] someone [to] be like, "Okay, well, hold on, wait. What was this actually like? What happened here? What happened after this? Who was this?" Because, I think also, people kind of forget who some of the players were in all of this on both sides. So, yeah, I think it's definitely a thought-provoking thing.

Lead Interviewer 1 26:51
Yeah, because, I mean, how, obviously, not to get too much into your own stances, but how, I guess, politically active would you say you are? Not necessarily in going out and doing things, but just looking into things, researching?

Participant 2 27:13
Probably an eight. I'll give myself an eight.

Participant 1 27:15

I'm gonna say a five.

Participant 3 27:18
Six. Yeah.

Participant 2 27:24
I like how you had to count for that. You have a scale in your head that determines how political you are.

Participant 3 27:30
Well I'm like, "All right, what would I consider a one?" I'm turning on NBC or something like, "Yeah, okay." Turn it on for like 30 minutes and at ten just non-stop.

Participant 2 27:40
I try not to rot my brain with it too much, but good God.

Participant 3 27:43
Yeah, so I'm like to do a little system.

Lead Interviewer 1 27:46
So then I would say for [Participant 1] and [Participant 3] then, with your guys' take on this, because you don't find yourself as in the weeds or necessarily as seeking out of information, do you feel like this is something that intrigues you, or this is something that you would potentially use?

Participant 3 28:10
I mean, I like it because it's a lot easier to understand read and, you know, if I want to look at something, I can find a it lot easier than going through The New York Times with five pages of, "All right this is just one long quote that I do not care about." And then try to find actual facts. So, I see for that I'd use it.

Participant 1 28:31
Yeah, it breaks it up into chunks that I can then go and research more about. So...

Lead Interviewer 1 28:42
I mean... Oh, I guess just since I have you guys here, obviously there's not really a clear title. What do we think? Like the top?

Participant 3 29:01

I feel like that... It's like a news article. I mean, I feel it's a pretty solid title enough. It gets straight to the point for what this is and the whole actual information is all straight to the point. I feel like it's very fitting title.

Participant 2 29:16
I don't know. I can't give you anything better. So, I'm not gonna be [inaudible]. No, I like it. Like [Participant 3] said, it's very to the point. I think if you don't have all of this in there, it can be kind of lost if you're not already aware and like thinking about what happened on January 6, if you just see January 6 timeline, you're gonna be like, "Okay, like for what?" So I like that you have all the fullness in there. Yeah.

Lead Interviewer 1 29:39
Okay, that's nice. I mean, I'm done. I'm tired. So, [Lead Interviewer 2], any closing thoughts? Any closing thoughts from our respondents?

Participant 2 29:51
No, good job. I think it looks really good. I could tell when you were working on it in the class. I was like, "Send that to me," because that looks like I could read that.