

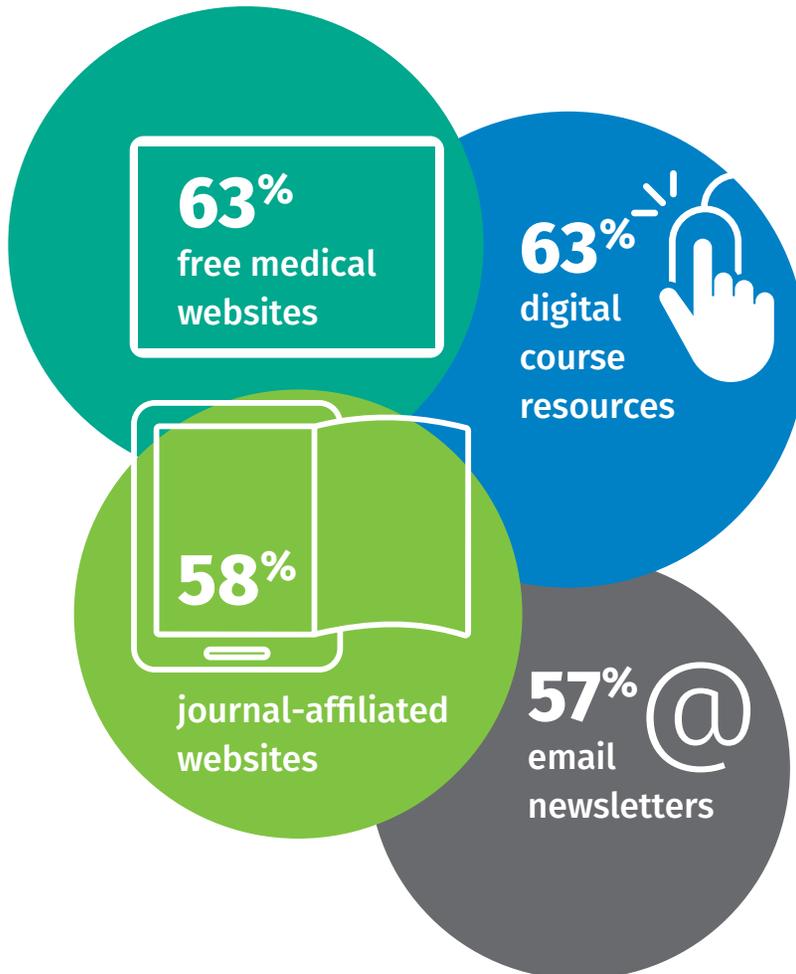


DATA INSIGHTS

# *Evolving Trends in Content Consumption by Healthcare Professionals*

*Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) utilize a wide range of content sources to aid them in their jobs and professional growth. What's changed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic are the contexts, media, devices, and frequency with which they access those resources. Content strategists must take a more holistic approach to engagement to best benefit from these new opportunities.*

### *Most-Trusted Resources for the Latest Research and Information*



This study explores the content consumption habits of HCPs, featuring data-driven insights from two Wolters Kluwer surveys<sup>1</sup> of HCPs—one conducted in Q4 2019, the other in May 2020 at the height of the first wave of COVID-19. The insights provide actionable recommendations for how marketers can improve their strategic plans to engage with HCPs as the clinical landscape evolves.

The context in which HCPs access content continues to evolve, driven by new digital capabilities and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the global healthcare system. Understanding how and why HCPs search for and consume professional content is essential to effectively engaging them.

HCPs cite such resources as free medical websites (63%), digital course resources (61%), journal-affiliated websites (58%), and email newsletters (57%) as trusted means to keep up with the latest research and information when compared to 2019. This growth coincides with a decrease in HCPs' reliance on conversations with colleagues and mentors, which edged slightly down from 59% in 2019 to 54% in 2020.

Traditional resources like print journals and institutional libraries endure among modern HCPs. However, they are increasingly supplementing those habits with new digital resources, each of which has its own purpose, function, and context as part of their daily routines.

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has forever altered the way in which HCPs access new information, whether it be the latest medical research or clinical guidelines.”*

*Desktop and laptop computers are most preferred devices for ...*

<b>85%</b>	accessing course materials
<b>85%</b>	getting CE/CME credits
<b>80%</b>	accessing journal articles and/or abstracts
<b>53%</b>	reading newsletters

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever altered the way in which HCPs access new information, whether it be the latest medical research or clinical guidelines. “Publishers must adjust their strategies for engaging healthcare practitioners to meet their need for quickly accessible, trusted content. With the onset of COVID, we have focused on reimagining the delivery of this content to best meet the new world in which clinicians find themselves,” said Vikram Savkar, Vice President and General Manager, Medicine Segment, Health Learning, Research & Practice, Wolters Kluwer.

These changes are being implemented based on the following key findings:

2019	2020	
	<b>86%</b>	continue to use journals or journal articles for their work and/or studies
<b>56%</b>	<b>62%</b>	spent three or more hours per workday accessing digital resources
<b>40%</b>	<b>46%</b>	read journal content on a mobile device
<b>20%</b>	<b>31%</b>	are looking for a new job

## HCPs' Access Points to Information are Diversifying



**69%** look up drug information on a smartphone

**60%** make medical calculations on a smartphone

**55%** look up diagnoses on a smartphone

Several factors impact HCPs' content consumption habits, specifically time management, convenience, and the availability of a myriad of print and digital resources. The quality with which certain media channels (e.g., print, email, and digital) and devices (e.g., in-book, desktops, and mobile devices) lend themselves to certain types of content also impacts their usage.

"We've consistently found that a majority – 65% – of readers consume our journal content online, which was true before the pandemic began and it continues today," states Savkar. "While print is still an essential knowledge source for healthcare professionals, digital is a focus that continues to grow as technology is further embedded in healthcare."

**In 2020, 62% of HCPs spent three or more hours per workday accessing digital resources** such as email, websites, and apps—up from 56% in 2019. In this regard, HCPs are spending more time on mobile and desktops during workdays.

**Perhaps the most notable change between late 2019 and mid-2020 is HCPs' use of mobile.** More than one-quarter of HCPs (29%) spend three to six hours or more using their smartphones to access these types of digital resources in 2020—a 4% increase from 2019. Nearly half (45%) spend one to two hours using their smartphones each workday as well.

## HCP content consumption behaviors have adapted to the COVID-impacted workplace

### Print formats remain essential

Print remains a relevant medium for HCPs looking to access specific types of professional information, although they often use desktops and mobile devices to access the same types of content. In 2020, the majority of HCPs (57%) continue to use print resources to read professional content or studies from textbooks; 58% also use desktops, roughly equivalent to the previous year.

### Desktop/laptop computers are the preferred platform

In 2020, most HCPs continue to prefer desktop and laptop computers when accessing journal articles and/or abstracts (80%), reading newsletters (53%), and accessing course materials (85%)—at similar rates when compared to 2019 data.

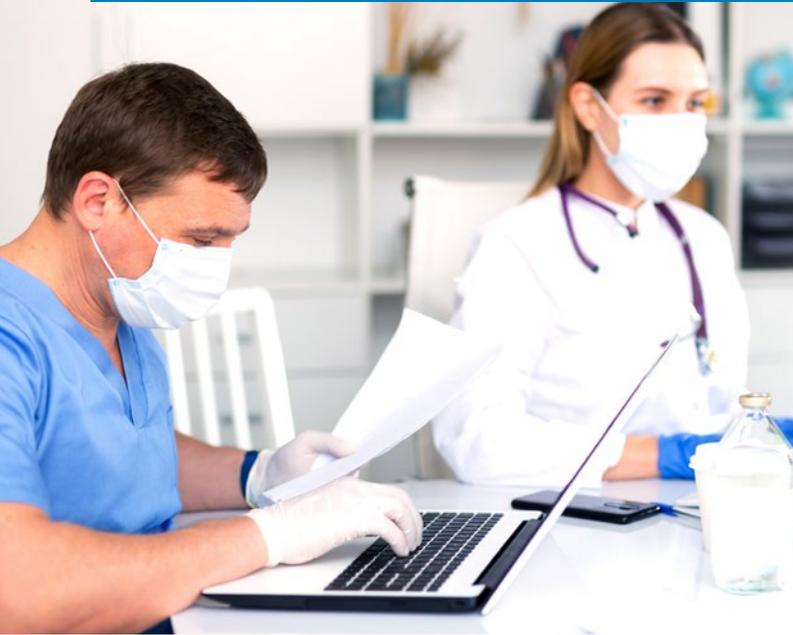
### Mobile usage grows and diversifies

Among the most notable trends, more HCPs are choosing mobile access to resources in 2020 compared to 2019. Smartphone usage has increased among HCPs when accessing nine of the eleven types of content in the study and are most popular for quick tasks.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **HCPs are increasing the frequency with which they access digital resources each day.** Prioritize engagement strategies that present unique and consistent opportunities to HCPs each time they access resources online.
- **HCPs use desktops and laptops for more robust types of content and use mobile for quicker tasks.** Adjust your content strategy to reflect these two mindsets.
- **HCPs are increasing their use of mobile to access nearly all types of content,** indicating there are future opportunities for more robust mobile content campaigns—especially as smartphone technology improves.

## HCPs Are Adapting Their Content Journeys Based on New Preferences



### Journals become multimedia assets

The methods and frequency with which HCPs access journal content are changing. For example, more HCPs used journal-affiliated websites and fewer HCPs used print journals to keep up to date on the latest research and information about their specialties or to study or teach.

Smartphones are being used more frequently as the primary way to access journal content. Aside from visiting product websites and using professional social networks, the rate of mobile use increased the most among HCPs for the purpose of reading journal articles and/or abstracts—from 40% to 46%.

Even though HCPs' journal-reading media and device preferences are shifting, they continue to value journals for their unique and robust content. 75% of HCPs who visit the web or mobile version of a journal do so to search for specific articles, while 44% do so to access full-text content—very similar rates to 2019. Specialty medical journals continue to be indispensable resources for healthcare practitioners.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Advertisers should consider adapting content across all engagement environments.**
- **HCPs may be more open to new ideas and opportunities within the context of job searching.** They are interested in “what’s out there,” even though most are happy in their roles.
- **Advertisers can engage HCPs successfully with the right search engine marketing (SEM) best practices and targeting.**
- **HCPs are highly likely to print more robust content to read later, suggesting print-friendly digital content is effective.**

## Increased job search and need for career advancement activity

Our research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has made HCPs more open to the idea of seeking new positions. Although 11% more HCPs claimed to be happy in their existing roles, there has been a spike in those looking for a new opportunity (31% in 2020 vs 20% in 2019).

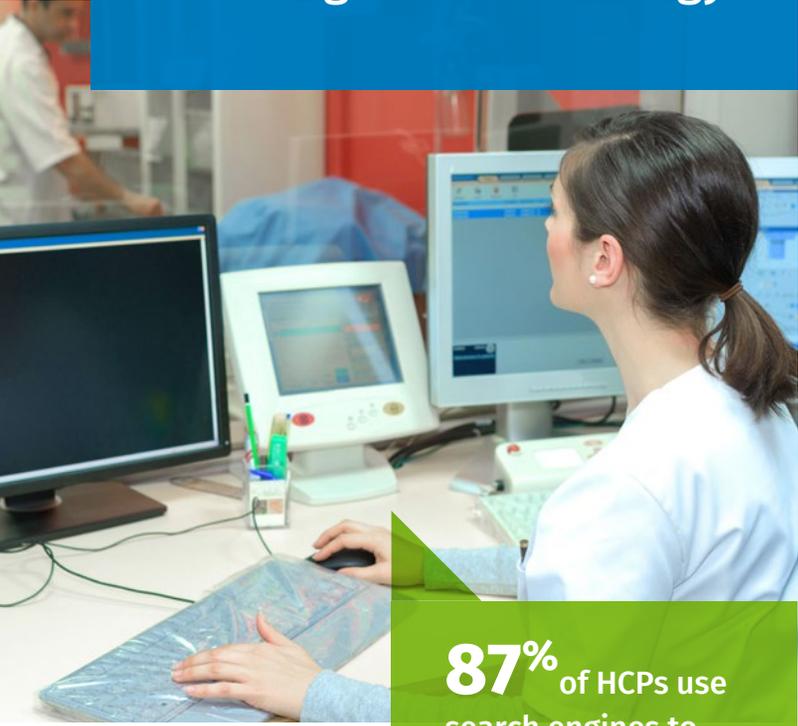
When accessing job search and career advancement resources, HCPs’ use of both desktop and laptop computers increased from 61% in 2019 to 65% in 2020, and their use of smartphones increased by 4% and 6%, respectively. This presents new opportunities for advertisers looking to engage HCPs, even if they aren’t actively seeking positions.

## Greater flexibility when seeking out information

In both 2019 and 2020, the vast majority of HCPs (87%) generally used Google or a similar search engine to find professional information of interest. Most continue to search within specific websites (63%) and public sources like PubMed (55%).

Most HCPs read content online using a desktop/laptop computer (85%) and often save or download the information as a PDF for reading later (61%). Unlike in 2019, a majority of HCPs prioritized open access or free content as an important content type in 2020.

## Tips for Building a Winning Content Strategy



**87%** of HCPs use search engines to find professional information

- 1 Build campaigns that reflect the increased daily frequency with which HCPs are accessing resources.** Prioritize engagement strategies that present unique and consistent opportunities to HCPs each time they access resources online.
- 2 Develop a long-term strategy with mobile engagement as a central pillar.** As mobile device technology improves, HCPs will find additional uses for a wider variety of research and functional purposes. Stay abreast of upcoming developments in mobile-device functionality and consider how those developments might impact the habits of HCPs.
- 3 Leverage both static and dynamic content to improve engagement across a wide variety of print and online environments.** Ensure that your message and themes are consistent in multiple environments and present a unified message.
- 4 Take advantage of HCPs' growing inclinations to search**—including browsing journals, searching for articles based on a unique subject, or using search engines to find professional information. Advertisers can engage HCPs successfully with the right search engine marketing (SEM) best practices and targeting.

## About Wolters Kluwer



Wolters Kluwer provides trusted clinical technology and evidence-based solutions that engage clinicians, patients, researchers, students and the next generation of healthcare providers. With a focus on clinical effectiveness, research and learning, safety and surveillance, and interoperability and data intelligence, our proven solutions drive effective decision-making and consistent outcomes across the continuum of care. Our leading product brands include Audio Digest®, Lippincott®, Ovid®, UpToDate® and others.

Our products and solutions support the content needs of HCPs throughout their careers. Our Lippincott portfolio provides authoritative, peer-reviewed society journal content across core medical specialties. Clinicians rely on and engage with this content to stay current on their practice, access the latest evidence-based clinical guidelines and conduct research activity.

Through our extensive global reach, we offer unique opportunities for healthcare advertisers to make data-driven decisions about their strategy, product development and marketing decisions.

[Click here to speak to an audience solutions expert today!](#)

<sup>1</sup> Wolters Kluwer conducted identical surveys of predominantly U.S. HCPs in both Q4 2019 and May 2020, during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis. HCPs in both studies represent predominantly physicians and nurses, including advanced practice and research-based professionals, with a wide variety of specializations.

In both 2019 and 2020, most respondents had been working in their fields for 10 years or longer (55% and 64% respectively) and were 46 years of age or older, but respondents represent a variety of age groups. Most respondents worked in teaching hospitals (40% and 29% respectively), office-based environments (28% and 26% respectively), or nonteaching hospitals (13% and 14% respectively).

