



Visual
Media
Association

Industry Insight # 8

NEW ZEALAND

Consumers are looking beyond the screen



Digital fatigue, online distrust and email overwhelm are reshaping how New Zealand consumers respond to communications.

New Zealanders are living in a highly digital communications environment. Email, social media, websites, apps and mobile messaging are now part of everyday life for advertising, bills, service updates and important information.

However, the latest data shows consumers are not simply accepting more digital communication as better communication. Many are actively managing screen time, questioning online information and looking for ways to reduce clutter and stress.



61%

of New Zealand consumers are taking steps to ensure technology does not negatively impact their mental wellbeing.

Digital fatigue is a clear theme in the New Zealand findings:



Digital fatigue is changing consumer behaviour



54%

actively manage their technology usage to prevent it from overwhelming daily life.

42%

worry that the influx of information online is affecting their ability to concentrate.

The findings suggest consumers are becoming more conscious of the impact of constant screen use. In this environment, communications that feel calmer, more considered and less intrusive have a clear role to play.

37%

say they are turning more to "old school" physical books, printed magazines or newspapers rather than online alternatives.

35%

want to cut down the time they spend on their phone however do not know how.

78% of New Zealand consumers feel digital communications are more susceptible to scams or fraud than physical mail.

Digital distrust is under pressure



Trust and security concerns are also shaping how consumers respond to communication channels:

75%

often question the accuracy of information they find online.

70%

are concerned about the security of personal information when it is stored or shared online.

47%

prefer to receive sensitive documents via physical mail due to concerns about online security.

47%

are wary of companies that communicate solely through digital channels.



For government, financial services, utilities, insurance and other essential service providers, this points to a continuing role for communication channels that build confidence and reassurance.

Email overwhelm is real

49%

of New Zealand consumers wish there were fewer emails in their inbox each day.

Email remains widely used, however the research shows it is also under increasing pressure:

43%

say their inbox often feels overwhelming due to the sheer volume of messages.

38%

spend too much time sorting through promotional emails and spam.

39%

sometimes miss important information because of too much clutter.

36%

find it difficult to keep track of important communications when they are all delivered via email.

This creates a challenge for marketers and service providers. Email may be fast and low-cost, however it is increasingly competing with clutter, stress and consumer fatigue.



53%

of New Zealand consumers are trying to reduce screen time and do not want to spend too long looking at advertising and promotions in their inbox.

Online clutter is driving more selective attention

The wider online communications findings reinforce the pressure on digital channels:

49% often delete emails without reading to stop them piling up.

51% spend a lot of time unsubscribing from companies to avoid receiving more emails.

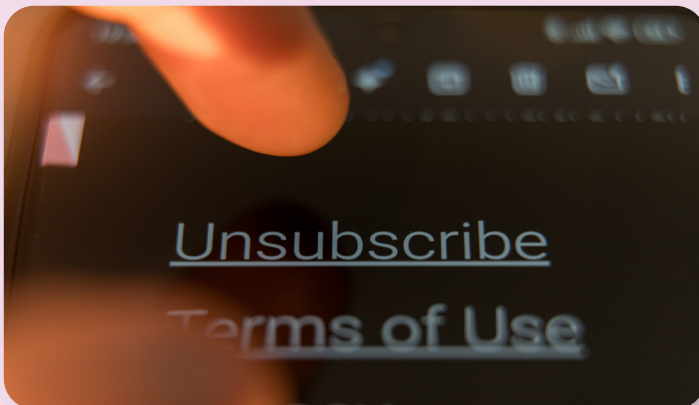
50% say there are so many scams online they find it hard to know who to trust, so they delete messages even if they could be legitimate.

41% say they concentrate more on promotional material when it is printed and in their hand rather than online.

Consumers want balance, not one channel only

Digital communication is embedded in everyday life, however the research shows New Zealand consumers are becoming more selective about the digital messages they engage with.

Email, apps and online channels will remain important, however they are increasingly challenged by overload, scams, clutter and screen fatigue. The opportunity for industry is not print versus digital. It is using the right channel for the right message, especially where trust, attention and action matter.



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for June, 2026.



Visual Media Association

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Operating for over 141 years, the VMA is a registered organisation with direct signatory to the nine (9) Awards across our industry and membership. VMA offers an end-to-end industry association solution that is relevant in all that it undertakes: advocating the relevance of the established media – print – that we all belong to; developing global partnerships and translating to regional requirements; awarding excellence; investing in products; and arming our industry with sales tools, sustainability collateral, industrial relations representation and more.

The VMA is the largest print industry body, committed to building a stronger united leadership to deliver the goals of our members. United we lead strong advocacy, government advisory, skills and training programs, protection, and promotion of our industry channels and more to ensure our members' businesses operate within a future-proofed strategy for success.

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Sources:

VMA Market Leadership Supporting Data, 2025-26.

