The purpose of this research is to identify barriers to accessing online news for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. Drawing from social responsibility theory, this research also seeks to understand the idea that media should provide content that allows citizens to be informed by exploring how participants believe accessibility barriers on news websites affect their ability to consume news. Looking to critical disability theory, which emphasizes seeking input from oppressed groups about their own oppression, the study used observation and semi-structured interviews with nine mid-Missouri residents who have hearing loss. Common barriers were identified, including a lack of text alternatives accompanying videos, insufficient captions, unlabeled content, auto-playing videos, background noise and issues with volume. The degree to which these barriers affected respondents depended on the severity and type of their hearing loss.

Findings suggest barriers encountered affect the ability of people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing to access news, and that they might not be fully aware of how or how much it affects them. These findings point to the idea that media should more directly consider the needs of people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing when developing news websites and web content, by seeking to understand the many ways in which hearing loss can affect website usability.