

RESEARCH REPORT:

How Participants View the Psychedelic Landscape

RESEARCH SYNTHESIS:

What we learned about influencers in the psychedelics field and how they view the importance of news and community.

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A note from the team

Since launching in 2020, Lucid News has made a commitment to serving the emerging psychedelics ecosystem with quality journalism as part of a broader mission to support the informed and discerning mainstreaming of psychedelics into society.

Our team listens closely to a wide range of people who are part of the psychedelics ecosystem, including our writers, sources for our articles, and leaders from industry, research, art, activism and religious practice. This provides us with a unique perspective on the breadth of the field and how it is developing.

This report is intended to be a window into the people who comprise the engaged center of the psychedelics ecosystem. How do they view this moment? What do they think about media coverage of the psychedelics realm? How do they relate to psychedelic community?

This is the first time, to our knowledge, that an analysis of this kind has been undertaken. Other reports to date have focused on narrow slices of the field. Lucid News was conceived to serve the full breadth of the psychedelic movement, informed by an understanding that the mainstreaming of psychedelics, if this effort is successful, will likely unfold in unpredictable ways across many paths. The movement will not be limited to a medicalization path, or a decriminalization path, or a religious path, or any other narrowly defined route to general acceptance. Rather, it will encompass all of these and more. For that reason, it is important to keep an eye on the full picture.

The research discussed in this report is also informing the next phase of development for Lucid News. Over the coming year, we will be adding new programs inspired by this process that are tailored to address the changing needs of the psychedelic ecosystem.

What We Discovered

In the fall of 2022, we dedicated significant hours to conducting twenty-five interviews with Lucid News readers who are representative of the psychedelics field at large. These people included community organizers, veteran organizers, therapists, investors, lawyers,

researchers, psychiatrists, ceremony leaders, and owners of clinics offering psychedelic-assisted therapies.

In addition, we hosted an online survey that received 385 responses.

From this research, we arrived at major takeaways in three areas.

Subject Insights:

- Most consider a psychedelic experience among the most significant of their lives.
- More than half prefer to use psychedelics in a ceremonial setting.
- Nearly three quarters either have already or intend to enter the psychedelic field professionally.

Media Insights:

- Wide agreement that informed, balanced, psychedelic-specific journalism is necessary to support the growth of the field.
- Most feel the absence of a single hub for trusted in-depth information about psychedelics.
- Wide interest in all aspects of the psychedelic field, and not only the good news.

Community Insights:

- Most consider community engagement to be vitally important for the optimal embrace of psychedelics.
- Over two thirds consider themselves to be part of a psychedelic community.
- Three quarters of respondents are psychedelic influencers in their social circles who others come to for information and guidance.

We found a strong commitment among respondents to their own psychedelic practice. They also had a general sense of optimism about

psychedelics entering the mainstream, tempered by an awareness that there are significant challenges to overcome.

Questions we set out to answer

What is your relationship to psychedelics?

- Do you feel psychedelics should only be taken in a medical context?
- What is the context in which you have taken psychedelics? (party, concert, social event, religious ceremony, healing, medical/psychological)
- How do you feel about the legalization and medicalization efforts?
- Have you been personally affected by psychedelics?
- Are you currently involved in a psychedelic-related business? If so, how? Or do you want to be?

How do you feel regarding media coverage about psychedelics?

- Are you interested in psychedelic news? What kind? From who?
- Do you think we need an independent and objective psychedelic journalism site? Why yes or no?
- Are there areas of interest within psychedelics that you want to keep abreast of? (business, policy, research, spiritual practice, art and culture, health)
- Are you concerned that psychedelics are overhyped by the media?
- What makes you trust the sources you read?

What are your thoughts about psychedelic community?

- Are you currently part of a group that engages with psychedelics? If so, what kind of group?

- Do you feel that psychedelic communities will play an important role in the future of a healthy psychedelic ecosystem. If so, how would you like to participate?
 - Do you want to find more people who are interested in psychedelics?
 - Do you consider yourself someone capable of providing guidance or expertise to others interested in psychedelics?
 - Where do you suggest people go when they are looking for information or guidance?
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Who are they?

The people we spoke with represent a broad spectrum of the psychedelics field. Most are Lucid News readers. They are involved with psychedelics from a variety of perspectives through their own personal use, as professionals in the emerging field, and as participants in various forms of psychedelic community. Twelve identify as female, thirteen as male. Most are in their thirties or forties. Six are people of color.

The online survey was taken December 16-23, 2022. It was announced through the Lucid News newsletter, advertised on the Lucid News website, and promoted through our social media. Of the 385 respondents, 55% identify as male, 42% as female, 2% as nonbinary/trans, and 1% preferred not to respond. Thirty percent have a household income of over \$100,000. The age groupings are 1% 18-24, 7% 25-34, 17% 35-44, 41% 45-64, 34% over 65.

A quarter consider themselves "very experienced" with psychedelics, over 40% say they are "well acquainted," and 19% are "occasional visitors."

How they view the field

Participants in the psychedelics field come to it from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them different expectations. The War on Drugs made psychedelics illegal and taboo, and drove psychedelic use underground. Many who participated in psychedelic use affiliate with "outlaw" culture and its suspicion of conventional authority.

In parallel, recent scientific research has revealed the promise of psychedelic medicines and therapies to treat health conditions. A wave of researchers, therapists, healthcare activists, and drug development companies have been drawn into the field by these encouraging findings. Many of them entered the field having no personal experience with psychedelics themselves.

Is there a split in the field caused by a tension between these two different approaches? We did not find one.

Subject Insights

When asked if they thought that psychedelics should be used for purposes that are primarily "spiritual, social, for wellness, or as medicine," the interview subjects agreed unanimously on "all of the above." While each person might have a favored approach to psychedelic use, they saw these options as part of a continuum.

While 58% of survey respondents prefer to use psychedelics ceremonially (whatever that might mean to them personally), 29% do not. Eighty-six percent of survey respondents said that they consider their psychedelic experience among the most meaningful of their lives.

A full 70% either have entered the psychedelics field professionally or would like to. Of these, half are interested in becoming therapists or guides. At the same time, there is a strong concern about the potential over-medicalization of psychedelics, and a feeling that traditional indigenous practice has much to teach those who are developing the medical model.

Reflecting the changing attitudes about psychedelics, 65% said they feel comfortable talking about psychedelics with coworkers, while 22% said they do not.

We found unanimous opposition to psychedelic prohibition and broad support for some form of legalization, though most shared a belief that education and community building are necessary components of successful mainstreaming.

Media Insights

Most interview subjects believe that mainstream media is not capable of effectively covering the psychedelics field with the level of insight and granularity needed to support its successful development. They noted the complexity of psychedelics as a topic, and said that mainstream media is not equipped to address the nuances of this reporting. They said we need psychedelics-specific journalism to cut through misinformation. Over one third of survey respondents expressed concern about the amount of hype surrounding psychedelics.

Among survey respondents, over 60% expressed a strong interest in psychedelic news in the areas of science, health, policy, and spirituality. This further suggests that those involved in the psychedelics field see these areas as part of the same continuum. They also expressed an interest in international news beyond U.S.-centric coverage. They also emphasized the importance of covering "bad" news alongside positive stories, to present a realistic, informed picture of the field.

Those interviewed generally trusted news stories that come recommended from friends on social media. They also said it's important for news platforms to use reputable sources and offer balanced perspectives.

Community Insights

Nearly all of those interviewed said they felt community engagement to be of critical importance to the healthy use of psychedelics. They referred to integration circles, as well as friend groups with whom they take psychedelics. They also emphasized the importance of sharing information among peers.

Seventy percent of survey respondents describe themselves as part of a psychedelic community, and 20% said they were very motivated to meet more people in the psychedelics realm. Many expressed an interest in helping to facilitate psychedelic community where they live, and would make time for this if asked.

Seventy-four percent of survey respondents say that other people come to them for information about psychedelics ; they are the psychedelic influencers in their social circles. At the same time, 68% feel that there aren't enough reliable resources online to refer people to. They expressed the need for a central location of trustworthy information

about psychedelics that addresses those beginning to explore and are not knowledgeable about the topic.

Our Research Methods

The 25 interviews were conducted in the fall of 2022 via Zoom. Most were about 30 minutes in length. The interviews were transcribed using an AI platform, Fathom, and reviewed by the Lucid News editorial team. Comments and observations were compiled by the Project Lead, who distilled the main takeaways from the interviews.

The interview findings informed the questions asked in the online survey. The survey used Google Forms and was composed mostly of multiple choice questions intended to be completed in five minutes. One question asked for a written answer: "Have you done psychedelics enough to have both good and challenging experiences, and why do you continue to use psychedelics?" It received 367 responses, the majority of them reflective and insightful.

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About Lucid News

Lucid News provides informed, honest and balanced journalism that covers the growing integration of psychedelics into society and their broad implications for human wellness. Founded by longtime participants of psychedelic communities who bring discernment and a healthy skepticism to their work, we offer news and opinion from a wide range of perspectives to help readers navigate this pivotal moment of innovation and transformation.

Our vision: As appreciation grows for the healing potentials of psychedelics, we provide a platform for a grounded and dynamic discussion about their efficacy and impacts guided by principles of integrity, cognitive liberty, compassion, diversity, equality, and sustainability. We honor the wisdom of elders and traditional indigenous lineages and strive to incorporate this knowledge into our coverage.