

Radio is the most trustworthy news source: study

Also, while most Canadians are concerned about "fake news," few agree on what "fake news" actually is.

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In the era of fake news, alternative facts and occasional accusations of media bias, it seems Canadians are still consuming more news than they used to. But how they consume it, and their attitudes toward it, are changing.

That's according to a joint study by Vividata and Kantar, which dove into where Canadians are getting their news, how often they access it and how they feel about it.

This marks the first time Vividata has partnered with Kantar and the first time it has delved into the subject of trust in news. The study saw 2,000 respondents from Vividata's database, who were issued a 15-minute survey in April. The results and analysis were released Oct. 3.

The good news is, the majority of Canadian adults – 69% – report having a strong interest in news.

The level of interest correlates with age; 54% of millennial respondents say they have a strong interest in news, and that total increases with each age group. The most interested group is the 65 and older demographic, of which 77% report a strong interest in news. In each group, fewer than 10% of respondents report little to no interest.

In terms of where they get their news, respondents use an average of three different types of media to access stories (from print magazines, newspapers, digital, TV and radio). When it comes to print dailies, users look to an average of five different sources, which indicates a strong appetite for news among national newspaper brands.

One quarter of respondents say they consumed news from more sources in 2018 than they did in 2017. This trend is greater among the 18 to 24 crowd (31% say they've increased their variety of sources).

Just under half (48%) say they check news several times a day, and an additional 37% check news at least once per day. Eighty-four percent of audiences are interested in news about their city or region, while 76% are interested in international news and 66% are interested in Canadian political news. Less

popular is news about sports (37%), education (34%), entertainment and celebrities (33%) and arts and culture (30%).

Digital and television are the most popular ways to consume news, with 70% of respondents saying they prefer to access news from “any digital platform” as well as TV. Digital ranks higher with the 18 to 34 crowd (75%) while TV ranks highest with those 55 and up (78%). Newspapers (print and digital) are consumed by 36% of the general population. Only 30% of millennials get their news from newspapers, whereas 35% of those 35 to 54 and 43% of those 55 and older do.

The amount of people accessing digital news via smartphone (64%) is almost equal to those accessing on a desktop or laptop (68%).

As for sources they trust, 65% of respondents say they trust websites for national newspapers the most, whereas digital-first news outlets (such as BuzzFeed and HuffPost) have a rating of only 32%. Social media comes in at 19%.

Most respondents also tend to trust “traditional” media more than digital media, with radio reporting the highest trust (82%). The total remains high for TV news programs (75%), 24-hour news channels (73%) and print dailies (70%). Local newspapers rank slightly lower at 66%.

Additionally, 73% of respondents feel that print dailies provide the most in-depth coverage. Radio comes in second at 69%. Digital-first news sites come in at 30%, and social media at 16%.

Although the overwhelming majority of respondents – 91% – are concerned about “fake news,” many have different ideas of what fake news is.

Just over half (56%) define fake news as “a story that has been deliberately fabricated by a mainstream news organization.” Additionally, 39% believe “fake news” is a story “put out by someone pretending to be a news organization”; 38% believe it is a “a story that is factually incorrect (possibly by mistake)”; and 37% believe it is a story where the presentation is biased. Just over one-quarter of respondents (27%) describe fake news as a story they “disagree with,” and 10% consider “fake news” to be satire or parody news (such as The Beaverton and The Onion).

Most respondents (79%) say they take steps to verify the accuracy of news. Despite steps taken by Facebook and Google to help better identify “fake” news (such as Facebook adding tags and labels to links to news stories), only 6% say they’ve noticed the efforts made by these sites.