About Pew Research Center

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**Major research areas:**
- U.S. politics and policy
- Journalism and media
- Internet and technology
- Religion and public life
- Hispanic trends
- Social and demographic trends
- Global attitudes and trends
- Global migration and demography
- Science and society
- Research methodology

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MEDIA HABITS AND ATTITUDES IN A POLARIZED AGE
Few Americans express high levels of trust in info from professional news organizations and social connections

% of U.S. adults who say they have a lot or some trust in the information from ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National news organizations</th>
<th>Local news organizations</th>
<th>Friends and family</th>
<th>Social media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot of trust</td>
<td>'16: 18%</td>
<td>'16: 22%</td>
<td>'16: 14%</td>
<td>'16*: 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'17: 20%</td>
<td>'17: 25%</td>
<td>'17: 15%</td>
<td>'17: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'18: 21%</td>
<td>'18: 28%</td>
<td>'18: 13%</td>
<td>'18: 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some trust</td>
<td>'16: 59%</td>
<td>'16: 60%</td>
<td>'16: 63%</td>
<td>'16*: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'17: 52%</td>
<td>'17: 60%</td>
<td>'17: 61%</td>
<td>'17: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'18: 49%</td>
<td>'18: 55%</td>
<td>'18: 58%</td>
<td>'18: 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET</td>
<td>'16: 76%</td>
<td>'16: 82%</td>
<td>'16: 77%</td>
<td>'16*: 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'17: 72%</td>
<td>'17: 85%</td>
<td>'17: 76%</td>
<td>'17: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'18: 71%</td>
<td>'18: 82%</td>
<td>'18: 71%</td>
<td>'18: 29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 2016, trust of the information of social media was only asked of and based on web-using U.S. adults.

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018. For dates of other surveys see Methodology.

"Partisans Remain Sharply Divided in their Attitudes about the News Media"
Most Americans think their news will be accurate, but most also say news organizations cover up mistakes

% of U.S. adults who say they ...

71% ... typically go into a national news story expecting it will largely be accurate

68% ... think news organizations try to cover up their mistakes

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018. “Partisans Remain Sharply Divided in Their Attitudes About the News Media”
More Americans feel disconnected than connected to news media

% of U.S. adults who say news organizations ...

- Understand people like them: 40%
- Do not understand people like them: 58%

% of U.S. adults who say they ___ to the outlet they get most of their national news from

- Feel connected: 42%
- Do not feel particularly connected: 56%

Note: Percent who did not answer not shown.
“Partisans Remain Sharply Divided in Their Attitudes About the News Media”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Stark partisan divides remain in the American public’s views of the news media

% of U.S. adults who say ...

- Media criticism of political leaders keeps them from doing things they shouldn’t
- News organizations tend to favor one side
- Information from national news organizations is very trustworthy
- National news media do very well at keeping them informed

Note: Independents not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018. For dates of other surveys see Methodology.
“Partisans Remain Sharply Divided in their Attitudes about the News Media”
Partisan divides on news media's watchdog role are some of the largest ever measured

% of U.S. adults who think that criticism from news organizations keeps political leaders from doing things that shouldn’t be done

Note: Dotted line indicates a change in mode. Polls from 1985-2013 were conducted via phone. In 2016-2019, polls were conducted online.
Republicans and Democrats more likely to see factual and opinion news statements as factual when they favor their side

% who classified each factual statement as factual

President Barack Obama was born in the United States

Republican: 63%
Democrat: 89%
REP-DEM DIFF: -26

% who classified each opinion statement as factual

Increasing the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour is essential for the health of the U.S. economy

Republican: 17%
Democrat: 37%
REP-DEM DIFF: -20

Note: Independents not shown. Republicans and Democrats significantly differ on all statements except for “Democracy is the greatest form of government.”
“Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News”
Strong political divides in main source for election news

% of voters who named ____ as their “main source” for news about the 2016 campaign

* Among this group of voters, this source was named at significantly higher rates than the source below it. Significance of other relationships provided upon request.

Note: Sources shown are only those that were named by at least 3% of each group. Results are based on open-ended questions, respondents could write in any source they chose.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016.

“Trump, Clinton Voters Divided in Their Main Source for Election News”

September 5, 2019
And these divides matter in terms of the news Americans get
MISINFORMATION AND MADE-UP NEWS
Americans see made-up news as a bigger problem than other key issues

% of U.S. adults who say ____ is a very big problem in the country today

- Drug addiction: 70%
- Affordability of health care: 67%
- U.S. political system: 52%
- Gap between rich & poor: 51%
- Made-up news/info: 50%
- Violent crime: 49%
- Climate change: 46%
- Racism: 40%
- Illegal immigration: 38%
- Terrorism: 34%
- Sexism: 26%

"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"
Americans see made up news as detrimental to the country’s democratic system

% of U.S. adults who say made-up news and information has a big impact on ...

- 68% Americans’ confidence in government
- 54% Americans’ confidence in each other
- 51% Political leaders’ ability to get work done

Roughly three-quarters say a lot of made-up news is created about politics and elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not much/None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; elections</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment &amp; celebrities</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; medicine</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; finance</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; technology</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergencies</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Those who did not answer not shown.
"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"
Political actors blamed for creating made-up news and information, but Americans say the news media are most responsible for fixing it

% of U.S. adults who say ____ create a lot of made-up news and information

- Political leaders/staff: 57%
- Activist groups: 53%
- Journalists: 36%
- Foreign actors: 35%
- The public: 26%

% of U.S. adults who say ____ have the most responsibility in reducing the amount of made-up news and information

- The news media: 53%
- The government: 12%
- Tech companies: 9%
- None of these: 5%
- The public: 20%

"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"
Republicans about three times as likely as Democrats to blame journalists for creating made-up news and information

% of U.S. adults who say ____ create a lot of made-up news and information

Note: Statistically significant differences are in bold.
"Many Americans Say Made-Up News Is a Critical Problem That Needs To Be Fixed"
Most Americans support restricting made-up news and videos

% of U.S. adults who say ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Information</th>
<th>Steps should be taken to restrict this information</th>
<th>Freedom to access/publish this information should be protected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made-up news and information</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos/images that are altered or made up</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking information that is not checked</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual information that is one-sided</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire about an issue/event</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHERE AMERICANS GET AND TRUST SCIENCE NEWS
Most Americans rely on general news outlets for science news, but a minority say they get the facts right about science.

% of U.S. adults who say ...

- They regularly get their science news from each source type: 54%
- Each source type gets science facts right most of the time: 28%

**GENERAL NEWS SOURCES**

- News outlets that cover a range of topics: 54%

**SPECIALTY SOURCES**

- Science and technology centers or museums: 12%
- Documentaries or other science video programs: 54%
- Science magazines in print or online: 47%

Americans hold mixed evaluations of how the news media cover science and see problems in coverage stemming from a range of players, including the public itself.

Only about a quarter of social media users trust these platforms as a source of science news

Social media users who say they ___ the posts they see about science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media users</th>
<th>Mostly trust</th>
<th>Mostly distrust</th>
<th>Do not see science posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those who ___ on social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow at least one science account</th>
<th>Mostly trust</th>
<th>Mostly distrust</th>
<th>Do not see science posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow at least one science account</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't follow any science account</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!

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