



Press Release

Perception are Not Reality: Things are NOT as Bad as they Seem

Ipsos' Perils of Perception Survey Highlights How Wrong Canadians, Global Citizens are about Key Issues Facing their Country and World

Toronto, Ontario, December 6, 2017 — A new Ipsos poll has uncovered that online Canadians are not immune to misinformation, and that both Canadians and those living in other countries around the world don't have a solid understanding of some key issues facing businesses and policymakers.

On many subjects Canadians don't have a clue about what the reality is. However, in many cases, Canadians' misperceptions are not as acute as those in other countries.

These widespread misperceptions come at a time when governments are pursuing more open policy-development processes and bringing citizens to the table to help inform policies and programs. The misinformation or inaccurate perceptions that citizens bring to the table could pose a challenge to governments who are trying to balance the will of the people with sound, information-driven policy decisions.

Some of the key **global** patterns are:

- Only 7% of people think the **murder rate** is lower in their country than it was in 2000 – but it is significantly down in most countries surveyed, and, across the countries overall, it's down 29%.
- Only 19% think **deaths from terrorist attacks** are lower since 9/11 than they were in the 15 years previous – when they are actually significantly down across most of these countries, and overall they are around half the level they were.
- **Teen pregnancy** is overestimated across the world, often by a staggering amount. Overall, the average guess is that 20% of teenage girls give birth each year when the reality is 2%. And some countries guess that around half of teenage girls give birth each year, when the highest actual figure in any country is 6.7%
- Six in ten people across the countries are unsure or believe that there is a link between some **vaccines and autism** in healthy children, despite the claim being widely discredited – only 42% think it is false.
- Russia is seen as the **booziest nation** in the world, when they actually only rank 7th. Very few correctly pick out Belgium as the highest alcohol drinking nation in the study.
- But the USA is correctly seen as having the **sweetest tooth**, a clear winner, picked well ahead of any other country.
- People generally overestimate how connected by technology we are, with the average guess across the countries that 75% have a **Facebook account** when only 46% actually do.

In **Canada** specifically, we get some things very wrong:

- 36% of Canadians believe there have been more **terrorist deaths** in the 15 years since 9/11 than before, while only 13% believe the number of terrorist-related deaths in Canada has declined in the 15 years since 9/11. In reality, there were

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348 terrorist-related deaths in Canada in the 15 years prior to 9/11, and only 8 in the years since – meaning the number has dropped significantly.

- Canadians believe that 19% of **teenage girls between 15 and 19 give birth** each year in Canada. In reality, it's 0.9%.
- Canadians believe that 30% of **adults aged 29-79 in Canada have diabetes**. In reality, only 7% do.
- One quarter (26%) of Canadians believe that **Canada ranks among the top-three alcohol consuming nations** among the 38 studied. We're not as boozy as we think, as Canada only ranks 16th with an average annual consumption of 8.1 litres of pure alcohol per capita per year. Belgians consume 12.6 litres per capita per year, or 55% more than we do.
- While Canadians believe 61% of us would **describe our health as being good**, in reality 89% do.
- Canadians believe 81% of the population **own a smartphone**, when the actual proportion is 70%.
- Canadians believe that 77% of us **have a Facebook account**, when in fact 56% do.
- Canadians believe that a majority (56%) of us **believe in heaven**, but only 40% do.
- Canadians believe that 48% of us **believe in hell**, when only 28% do.
- Canadians are reasonably accurate in their estimate that 59% of us **believe in God**, as 55% say they do.

Looking across the seven key questions where we get people to estimate factual realities, there are clear patterns in which some countries have a more accurate view of the facts than others. To capture this, we've calculated the Ipsos "Misperceptions Index", as shown in the table below.

- **South Africa** receives the dubious honour of being the most inaccurate in their perceptions on these issues, with Brazil, the Philippines, Peru and India also high up the list.
- **Sweden** is the most accurate, followed by Norway, with Denmark in third place.
- **Canada** is the 7th most accurate country, outscoring 16th-place **USA**.

Ranking		
1	South Africa	Least accurate
2	Brazil	
3	Philippines	
4	Peru	
5	India	
6	Indonesia	
7	Colombia	
8	Mexico	
9	Turkey	
10	Saudi Arabia	
11	Argentina	
12	Italy	
13	Chile	
14	Japan	
15	Malaysia	
16	France	
17	South Korea	
18	Hungary	
19	New Zealand	

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20	Netherlands	
21	Hong Kong	
22	Poland	
23	USA	
24	Russia	
25	Germany	
26	Australia	
27	China	
28	Singapore	
29	Israel	
30	Great Britain	
31	Belgium	
32	Canada	
33	Serbia	
34	Montenegro	
35	Spain	
36	Denmark	
37	Norway	
38	Sweden	Most accurate

The survey also asked respondents to reflect on how confident they were in the accuracy of their answers. On the most confident end, 38% of those in India say they were confident in all of their answers; on the other hand, those in Norway expressed the least degree of confidence, with just 2% saying they had confidence in all their answers. Despite their confidence, those in India gave the 5th least-accurate responses. Despite their modesty, those in Norway gave the 2nd most-accurate answers.

In Canada, 14% expressed confidence in their answers, placing us roughly in the middle of the pack. But given our relatively strong placing on the index, Canadians may be more accurate than they give themselves credit for.

In the United States, 22% expressed confidence in their answers, but their relative position on the index suggests the confidence of some might be misplaced.

These are the findings of the Ipsos Perils of Perception Survey 2017. 29,133 interviews were conducted between 28th September – 19th October 2017. The survey is conducted in 38 countries around the world, via the Ipsos Online Panel system in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the USA. The following countries used either online or face-to-face methodologies: Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway and Serbia. Approximately 1000 individuals aged 16-64 or 18-64 were surveyed in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Approximately 2000 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Germany. Approximately 900 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Netherlands. Approximately 500 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Hungary, India, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey. The “actual” data for each question is taken from a variety of verified sources. A full list of

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sources/links to the actual data can be found at <http://perils.ipsos.com/> Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population. The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval, with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please visit <http://perils.ipsos.com/> or contact:

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