



# Factum

## In Era of Fake News, Trust in Traditional News Sources Rebounding

### But Millennials Continue to Challenge News Outlets as Majority (56%) Says Traditional News Sources are Becoming Less Relevant

**Toronto, ON, May 10, 2019** — In an era of fake news, Canadians say they're becoming increasingly able to differentiate between what is real and what is fake, and trust in traditional news media sources is beginning to rebound.

Seven in ten (72%) Canadians say that they trust (14% a great deal/58% a fair amount) and have confidence in traditional news media – such as newspapers, news magazines, TV, and radio news – when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly, which is up 7 points since 2018, and even up 3 points since the question was first asked in 2008. However, Millennials – loosely defined as those aged 18-34 – are much less trusting (60%) than Gen X'ers aged 35-54 (74%) or Boomers aged 55+ (79%).

Looking at sources of news individually, broadcast TV news (61%, +2 points since last year), print newspapers (58%, -1), news radio (54%, +3), news websites (52%, +1) and cable news (51%, unchanged) are the sources which Canadians say they trust all or most of the time. However, talk radio (42%, +2), online-only news publications (28%, -6), social media in general (14%, -3), and more specifically Facebook (11%, -3) and Twitter (10%, -2) are all less trusted, with most of the online and social-media channels declining in trust.

Despite Facebook being cited as one of the least-trusted sources for news, 47% of Canadians have gotten news from it in the past month, second only to Broadcast TV news. In fact, six in ten (59%) Millennials have used Facebook to get the news, followed by 50% of Gen X'ers and 36% of Boomers. Millennials are also by far the most likely to have sought out news on social media (in general) and Twitter, more specifically.

Despite a plethora of emerging news aggregators on the market in recent years, only 29% of Canadians prefer to use them rather than receiving their news directly from traditional news organizations (71%). However, 43% of Millennials prefer aggregators, while 57% prefer traditional sources. Gen X'ers (69%) and Boomers (82%) are still firmly on the side of traditional news sources.

#### Canadians Say They're Getting Better at Identifying Fake News

One theory which might explain the rise of trust in traditional news sources this year is that fewer Canadians (29%, down 6 points) agree (3% strongly/26% somewhat) that they have no idea how to distinguish between real news and fake news.

Similarly, while 58% of Canadians agree (10% strongly/48% somewhat) that they have falsely believed a news story was real until they found out otherwise, this proportion has dropped 7 points. Millennials (65%) are more likely to admit that they've fallen victim to fake news than Gen X'ers (59%) or Boomers (50%), which might explain their lower trust scores.

Conversely, 80% agree (18% strongly/62% somewhat) that they are confident in their ability to distinguish between legitimate and fake news, and eight in ten (82%) say it is easy (29% very/53% somewhat) for them to find news from a source they consider reliable and trustworthy. Those who trust traditional news sources are much more likely (92%) than those who don't (58%) to say it's easy.

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Sharing their strategies for identifying whether a news source is credible and trustworthy, half say they fact check the stories themselves (52%, rising to 62% among Millennials) and identify whether it's from a source whose name they recognize (50%). Others say that the source is trustworthy and credible if the news story aligns with their point of view (8%), or if a friend shared the news story with them (7%). One in ten (10%) admit they don't know what sources to trust.

It is concerning that 28% of Canadians – statistically unchanged since last year – agree (4% strongly/24% somewhat) that if they disagree with a news story, it is likely false. Those without a high-school education (37%) are most likely to hold this position, while those with a university degree are least likely (21%).

### Millennials See Traditional News as Becoming Less Relevant

The shifting preferences of Millennials could be explained by the fact that while 39% of Canadians overall agree (9% strongly/30% somewhat) that traditional news sources are becoming less relevant to them, this rises to 56% among Millennials. Relatedly, while 67% of Canadians agree (12% strongly/55% somewhat) that they regularly see news stories that matter to their community, this drops to just 59% of Millennials who see local stories that matter to them. Millennials are also far more likely (50%) than the national average (38%) to believe that Canadian news will increasingly be replaced by international news.

While the news industry can be encouraged by the fact that 72% of Canadians agree that the news industry in Canada is well-positioned to adapt to changing preferences for news consumption in Canada, there is some skepticism as only 8% strongly agree. Once again, only 63% of Millennials believe this to be case, well below Gen X'ers (72%) and Boomers (79%).

Six in ten (59%) Canadians agree (6% strongly/53% somewhat) that the news industry is introducing new ways of consuming news that is exciting and relevant to them, which rises to 69% among those who trust traditional news and drops to 35% among those who don't trust traditional news.

### Canadians Reluctant to Pay for News Content

Canadians appear reluctant to pay for news, even if it is from sources they trust. Only four in ten (41%) are willing to pay for news sources they trust, regardless of the content. Willingness to pay for local news (37%) or national news (36%) is slightly less, with international news (30%), deep-dive stories (30%), news radio (22%), and news aggregator services (21%) even further behind.

In short, the two major challenges for the news industry remain keeping younger Canadians engaged in the news in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them; and figuring out a sustainable business model that pays for it all.

### Concern over Foreign Interference in Upcoming Election

Perhaps taking their cue from south of the border and the ongoing saga of the Mueller report, six in ten (61%) Canadians agree (16% strongly/45% somewhat) that they are concerned about foreign interference in the upcoming election. Interestingly, and likely due to more exposure to these news stories originating from the US, those who trust traditional news (64%) and those with a university degree (66%), are most likely to be concerned about foreign interference in the upcoming election.



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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 3 to 6, 2019, on behalf the Radio Television Digital News Association. For this survey, a sample of 1,002 adults living in Canada was polled. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. 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.

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### About Ipsos

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