PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

Americans report high levels of concern about data privacy and security

More than half support for new rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do

Washington, DC, March 16, 2021 – Americans report high levels of concern about data privacy and security, according to a new Ipsos survey. More than half would support new laws and rules limiting what technology companies can do.

However, while there is bipartisan support for limiting the role of technology companies more broadly, Americans show a more mixed response if efforts to restrict technology companies were to be sponsored by either President Joe Biden or former President Donald Trump. This reveals the extent to which partisan opinion is reactive to stances taken by leaders of their own or the opposing party.

This survey also investigated how often partisans encounter stories and posts online about around the more divisive issues of the day, such as narratives claiming that COVID-19 vaccinations are harmful, among other topics.

Americans tend to report seeing the same types of posts and stories at about equal numbers on a weekly cadence, regardless of their partisan affiliation. This suggests that while the tenor of algorithm-driven social media and news echo chambers might differ across partisan lines, the content tends to be similar.

However, Republicans are significantly more likely to report seeing stories and posts that America is under attack by illegal immigration on an at least weekly basis.

Detailed Findings

1. Americans report high levels about data privacy and data security, ahead of issues like the coronavirus pandemic, disinformation, political partisanship, and election fraud.
   - Concerns about data privacy and security, while high across the board, are most prevalent among Republicans (87% say they are very/somewhat concerned), followed by Democrats (83% say they are very/somewhat concerned) and Independents (76% say they are very/somewhat concerned).
   - While Americans are closely aligned around data privacy and data security, concern about other issues falls more unevenly across partisan lines. The greatest discrepancy in concern is evident around election fraud (79% of Republicans say they are concerned about election fraud compared to 31% of Democrats).
2. Americans demonstrate high levels of favorability towards laws and rules, ahead of technology companies, regulations, the federal government, the news media and social media companies.
   - There is bipartisan favorability for laws and rules, but favorability becomes significantly more mixed around other areas – notably around the news media, the federal government, and regulations.
   - While 74% of Republicans are favorable towards rules and laws, just 49% are favorable towards regulations.

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- Americans have a very low opinion of social media companies, at just 36% favorability overall. On this point, partisan opinion is split with 24% of Republicans favorable towards social media companies compared to 51% of Democrats.
3. While more than half of Americans (57%) support the concept of new rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do, opinion grows divided when political figures enter into the equation.
   - If the rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do were to be proposed by former President Donald Trump, Republicans grow more supportive of the concept while Democrats oppose it.
   - The reverse is true if the rules and laws were to be proposed by President Joe Biden.
4. When it comes to social media echo chambers, the survey suggests that Americans are at least seeing posts and stories around the same general topics at a similar cadence, with one notable exception. Half of Republicans (50%) report seeing posts and stories about the dangers of illegal immigration on an at least weekly basis, compared to 32% of Democrats.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:

Annotated Questionnaire:

1. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following topics?
   Data privacy and data security:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total concerned	*83%*	*87%*	*83%*	*76%*
Very concerned	45%	51%	43%	42%
Somewhat concerned	37%	37%	40%	34%
Not very concerned	11%	9%	12%	11%
Not at all concerned	3%	2%	3%	5%
Don't know	4%	1%	3%	8%

1. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following topics?
   Coronavirus or COVID-19:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total concerned	*75%*	*65%*	*88%*	*70%*
Very concerned	46%	30%	62%	43%
Somewhat concerned	30%	35%	26%	27%
Not very concerned	13%	18%	8%	15%
Not at all concerned	9%	16%	2%	9%
Don't know	3%	1%	2%	7%

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1. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following topics?
   Disinformation, conspiracy theories, and fake news:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total concerned	*74%*	*79%*	*74%*	*65%*
Very concerned	43%	47%	45%	37%
Somewhat concerned	30%	32%	30%	29%
Not very concerned	14%	13%	13%	15%
Not at all concerned	8%	7%	9%	8%
Don't know	5%	1%	4%	11%

1. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following topics?

   Political partisanship or bias:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total concerned	*71%*	*80%*	*72%*	*58%*
Very concerned	41%	49%	37%	34%
Somewhat concerned	31%	31%	35%	24%
Not very concerned	14%	11%	16%	14%
Not at all concerned	7%	4%	5%	12%
Don't know	9%	5%	7%	16%

1. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following topics?
   Election fraud:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total concerned	*52%*	*79%*	*31%*	*46%*
Very concerned	30%	55%	13%	23%
Somewhat concerned	21%	24%	18%	23%
Not very concerned	22%	14%	29%	20%
Not at all concerned	21%	5%	37%	21%
Don't know	5%	2%	4%	13%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

   Laws and rules:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	*72%*	*74%*	*80%*	*57%*
Very favorable	17%	18%	19%	13%
Somewhat favorable	29%	30%	34%	21%
Lean favorable	26%	26%	28%	24%

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Lean unfavorable	12%	11%	11%	14%
Somewhat unfavorable	5%	6%	2%	6%
Very unfavorable	4%	4%	2%	6%
Don't know	8%	5%	5%	18%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

Technology companies:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	*60%*	*50%*	*73%*	*53%*
Very favorable	10%	8%	14%	7%
Somewhat favorable	21%	15%	29%	17%
Lean favorable	28%	26%	29%	29%
Lean unfavorable	14%	14%	14%	15%
Somewhat unfavorable	8%	13%	5%	6%
Very unfavorable	8%	15%	2%	7%
Don't know	10%	8%	6%	18%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

Regulations:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	*57%*	*49%*	*72%*	*44%*
Very favorable	9%	7%	12%	5%
Somewhat favorable	22%	19%	30%	14%
Lean favorable	26%	23%	30%	25%
Lean unfavorable	14%	15%	12%	17%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%	14%	4%	11%
Very unfavorable	6%	12%	2%	5%
Don't know	13%	10%	10%	22%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

The federal government:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	*45%*	*33%*	*64%*	*32%*
Very favorable	7%	3%	12%	5%
Somewhat favorable	17%	13%	24%	11%
Lean favorable	21%	17%	29%	16%

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Lean unfavorable	19%	18%	16%	22%
Somewhat unfavorable	13%	18%	8%	12%
Very unfavorable	15%	25%	6%	14%
Don't know	9%	5%	6%	20%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

The news media:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	***40%***	***21%***	***63%***	***31%***
Very favorable	6%	3%	10%	3%
Somewhat favorable	16%	8%	27%	10%
Lean favorable	18%	10%	26%	17%
Lean unfavorable	17%	15%	19%	18%
Somewhat unfavorable	12%	16%	8%	12%
Very unfavorable	24%	45%	7%	23%
Don't know	6%	3%	4%	15%

2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the following?

Social media companies:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total favorable	***36%***	***24%***	***51%***	***30%***
Very favorable	6%	3%	9%	4%
Somewhat favorable	13%	9%	19%	9%
Lean favorable	18%	12%	24%	16%
Lean unfavorable	21%	19%	23%	21%
Somewhat unfavorable	15%	18%	12%	14%
Very unfavorable	22%	35%	10%	21%
Don't know	7%	5%	4%	15%

2a. Donald Trump has said technology companies have gotten too powerful and show too much bias. He says there need to be new rules and laws put in place to limit technology companies.

Do you support or oppose new rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do?

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total support	***55%***	***76%***	***41%***	***48%***
Net support	***28%***	***61%***	***-2%***	***27%***
Strongly support	23%	38%	10%	21%

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Somewhat support	33%	38%	32%	28%
Somewhat oppose	16%	12%	22%	12%
Strongly oppose	12%	3%	22%	9%
Don't know	17%	9%	16%	30%

2b. Joe Biden has said technology companies have gotten too powerful and show too much bias. He says there need to be new rules and laws put in place to limit technology companies.

Do you support or oppose new rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do?

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total support	*60%*	*57%*	*69%*	*53%*
Net support	*41%*	*32%*	*53%*	*36%*
Strongly support	20%	21%	20%	20%
Somewhat support	40%	36%	48%	33%
Somewhat oppose	15%	18%	12%	14%
Strongly oppose	4%	7%	3%	3%
Don't know	21%	18%	16%	30%

2c. Some have said technology companies have gotten too powerful and show too much bias. He says there need to be new rules and laws put in place to limit technology companies.

Do you support or oppose new rules and laws limiting what technology companies can do?

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Total support	*57%*	*58%*	*61%*	*51%*
Net support	*35%*	*32%*	*37%*	*35%*
Strongly support	18%	22%	17%	13%
Somewhat support	39%	36%	44%	38%
Somewhat oppose	17%	16%	20%	14%
Strongly oppose	5%	9%	4%	2%
Don't know	21%	17%	15%	34%

3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories saying the COVID-19 vaccinations are harmful:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*43%*	*43%*	*42%*	*43%*
Multiple times a day	9%	8%	10%	10%
About every day	14%	15%	14%	13%
Several times a week	19%	20%	19%	20%
Several times a month	21%	21%	21%	19%

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Several times a year	8%	8%	7%	11%
Never or almost never	29%	28%	30%	27%

3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories saying America is under attack from foreign terrorists/threats:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*28%*	*30%*	*25%*	*28%*
Multiple times a day	4%	5%	3%	5%
About every day	8%	9%	7%	6%
Several times a week	16%	16%	15%	17%
Several times a month	23%	25%	25%	18%
Several times a year	27%	25%	29%	28%
Never or almost never	22%	20%	21%	26%

3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories saying America is under attack by illegal immigration:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*38%*	*50%*	*32%*	*32%*
Multiple times a day	7%	13%	4%	5%
About every day	13%	18%	10%	10%
Several times a week	18%	19%	19%	17%
Several times a month	23%	21%	25%	23%
Several times a year	18%	13%	22%	18%
Never or almost never	21%	16%	20%	27%

3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories about Black Lives Matter:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*59%*	*64%*	*59%*	*53%*
Multiple times a day	13%	16%	11%	14%
About every day	20%	22%	21%	17%
Several times a week	26%	26%	27%	22%
Several times a month	23%	19%	28%	19%
Several times a year	9%	8%	8%	13%
Never or almost never	9%	8%	5%	15%

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3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories about equity and inclusion:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*52%*	*54%*	*57%*	*43%*
Multiple times a day	10%	12%	9%	9%
About every day	19%	20%	19%	16%
Several times a week	24%	22%	29%	18%
Several times a month	22%	22%	24%	18%
Several times a year	11%	9%	10%	14%
Never or almost never	15%	15%	9%	25%

3. How often do you see stories or posts on the following topics?

Stories about climate change and the environment:

	All	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
At least weekly	*46%*	*48%*	*50%*	*39%*
Multiple times a day	6%	9%	5%	4%
About every day	16%	19%	16%	13%
Several times a week	24%	20%	29%	23%
Several times a month	25%	27%	28%	18%
Several times a year	17%	18%	15%	21%
Never or almost never	12%	8%	8%	22%

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About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between March 9-11, 2021. For this survey, a sample of 2000 adults age 18-65 from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents.

The sample was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel, partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2018 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=2000, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/- 4.0 percentage points).

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