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**NATIONAL ANGUS REID GROUP/  
CANADIAN CORPORATE NEWS STUDY**

**CANADIANS AND THE NEWS MEDIA**

**66% SAY THE MEDIA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENSATIONALIZING  
SCANDALS**

**35% HAVE BOYCOTTED CERTAIN MEDIA**

**61% Want to See More on Health**

**9% Use the Internet a Great Deal as a News Source -- 16% of 18 to 34 Year  
Olds**

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Canadian  
Corporate  
News



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Public Release Date: Thursday, March 12, 1998

This Canada-wide poll was conducted by telephone between January 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 adult Canadians.

The data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's age composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within the various sub-groupings of the survey population.

*Please note that for the purposes of this study, only respondents who indicated being 'extremely' or 'very' interested in the news (in response to the first question) completed the entire survey. Thus, the actual survey sample size is 1,176, with an associated margin of error of  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points. Throughout this document, respondents are referred to as "Canadians" for ease of understanding, though in reality, they are "Canadians who are extremely or very interested in following the news".*

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**66% SAY THE MEDIA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENSATIONALIZING SCANDALS**

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On the heels of scandals such as the White House sex scandal, the death of Princess Diana and the rise of the paparazzi, two thirds (66%) of Canadians say that the media is responsible for sensationalizing this type of news story. Furthermore, more than one third (35%) have actually boycotted certain media because of the way they have reported on scandals such as these.

On which issues would Canadians like to see more coverage? Six in ten (61%) want to see more news coverage of health issues. The environment (57%) and technology (54%) are similarly under-reported, with a majority wanting to see more news coverage than they currently receive. One in five (19%) want to see *less* coverage of politics and government.

More than three-quarters of Canadians report being 'extremely' (18%) or 'very' (59%) interested in following the issues and events in the news. And, while television remains the number one used source of news information (60% use television 'a great deal'), a significant 9 percent of Canadians – and 16 percent of 18 to 34 year olds -- are using the Internet 'a great deal' to follow the news.

These are some of the findings of an Angus Reid Group poll commissioned by Canadian Corporate News. The poll was conducted by telephone between January 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, one can say with 95% certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled.

## THE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

### ***66% Say the Media is Responsible for Sensationalism***

Two thirds (66%) of Canadians say that the media is responsible for sensationalizing scandals. Furthermore, more than one third (35%) have actually boycotted certain media because of the

way they have reported on stories such as those involving Princess Diana and U.S. President, Bill Clinton. Along the same lines, almost two thirds (65%) feel reporters delve too deeply into the personal lives of public figures, and one in two (49%) say the thing they dislike about following stories like the President Clinton scandal is not *what* the media report, but *how* they cover the story. Only one in six (16%) watch and read a lot about scandals involving celebrities like OJ Simpson or the one involving President Clinton.

However, in spite of all this, the public is prepared to accept partial responsibility when it comes to sensationalism in the media. More than half (55%) believe the public is responsible for the sensationalism of big scandals, because while they might complain about coverage, they are still buying newspapers and watching television.

### **61% Want to See More Coverage on Health Issues**

Three in five (61%) respondents would like to see more news coverage on the issue of health. The environment and technology are similarly popular, with a majority wanting to see more (57% environment, 54% technology) news coverage than they are currently seeing. About three in ten would like to see more coverage on women's issues (33%), personal finance (32%), and stories about ethnic communities in their community or the country (28%).

Respondents are less likely to crave more coverage of business stories (24%), arts and entertainment (19%), and politics and government (17%) – at least three in five are content with the current amount of news coverage each of these issues is receiving.

- Most likely to desire more health coverage are part-time workers (73%), women (68%), the least affluent respondent group (67%), Albertans (65%), and those aged 18 to 34 (64%). Men (54%), university graduates (56%), and middle income households (56%) are least likely to want to see more health coverage in the news.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 (63%), and part-time workers (65%) are most likely to desire more coverage on the environment, while residents of Atlantic Canada (47%) and respondents aged 55 and older (50%) are *least* likely to want to see more coverage.
- Men (64%), those aged 18 to 34 (63%), and Albertans are most likely to express a desire to see more news coverage on technology issues. Least likely to want more coverage are respondents aged 55 and older (37%), women (43%), part-time workers (46%), and those with an incomplete high school education (42%).
- Women (44%), part-time workers (42%), respondents aged 18 to 34 (38%), and Quebecers (36%) are most likely to want to see more on women's issues. Men (21%), the self-employed (22%), those with an annual household income of more than \$60K (27%), and respondents aged 55 and older (27%) are least likely to want more coverage.

One in six men (17%) would actually prefer less coverage of women's issues than they are currently seeing.

- Most likely to want more coverage of personal finance issues are the most affluent respondent group (38%), those aged 35 to 54 (37%), full-time workers (37%), and residents of Quebec (36%). Men (35%) are slightly more likely to desire more coverage than women (28%). Respondents aged 18 to 34 (20%) are the group most likely to say they would prefer less coverage.
- Only Atlantic Canadians (38%) and part-time workers (36%) stand out as being more likely than others to want more news coverage on ethnic communities. Albertans, on the other hand, are least likely to want more coverage (18%) and, in fact, are most likely to want less coverage (18%).
- Most likely to want to see more coverage for business stories are the self-employed (38%), men (33%), residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%), those aged 35 to 54 (29%), and upper-income households (29%). Women (15%), Atlantic Canadians (18%), part-time workers (19%), and the least affluent (18%) are less likely to want more coverage.
- With regard to arts and entertainment, part-time workers (26%), residents of Quebec (22%) and women (22%) are most likely to want more coverage. Respondents with less than a high school education are much more likely than all other respondent groups to want to see less coverage (31%).
- When it comes to politics and government, there is no significant variation in the proportions that want to see with more or the same amount of coverage. However, residents of British Columbia (25%) or Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%), and those with less than a high school education (28%) are significantly more likely than others to state a preference for less coverage.

### ***“The Message is the Medium”: 60% Use Television ‘a Great Deal’ to Follow the News***

Of the six media tested, television clearly stands out as the medium most often used to follow the news. Three in five (60%) use television ‘a great deal’ – another three in ten (29%) use television ‘a fair amount’, bringing total usage to about nine in ten.

Just under half (46%) report reading a major daily newspaper ‘a great deal’. Slightly less popular news sources are radio (37% use ‘a great deal’) and weekly community newspapers (29%). Magazines (15%) are much less likely to be used ‘a great deal’ as news sources.

- Across the board, total television usage hovers around ninety percent. The only significant variation is that residents of Quebec are significantly more likely than all other respondent groups to report using television ‘a great deal’ (71%).

- Most likely to read a major daily newspaper are university graduates (79%), those with a household income of more than \$60K (77% -- 57% say 'a great deal'), and residents of Alberta (76%) or Quebec (74%). Least likely to read a daily newspaper are those with a partial (60%) or complete high school (61%) education, and residents of British Columbia (60%) or Saskatchewan/Manitoba (60%).
- The biggest fans of radio news are Atlantic Canadians (78%), full-time workers (77%), those aged 18 to 34 (76%) and women (74%) – all of whom are significantly more likely to tune in to radio news than they are to read a daily newspaper. Least likely to listen to the news on the radio are those aged 55 and older (66% -- they prefer the newspaper or television) and the least affluent respondent group (63% -- television fans).
- Most likely to read the news in a weekly, community newspaper are residents of British Columbia (66%), respondents aged 55 and older (60%), part-time workers (58%), the self-employed (58%), and women (59%). Least likely are men (49%), university graduates (45%), those aged 18 to 34 (44%), and residents of Alberta (46%) or the Atlantic provinces (48%).
- Most likely to use magazines as a news source are the self-employed (52%), Albertans (51%), university graduates (52%), and those with a household income of more than \$60K (49%). Least likely are part-time workers (36%), those with a partial (37%) or complete (38%) high school education, those with a household income of less than \$30K (38%), and Ontarians (40%).

### ***9% Use the Internet a Great Deal as a News Source -- 16% of 18 to 34 Year Olds***

One in ten respondents report using the Internet 'a great deal' as a news source. Those who go on-line for the news are most likely to be looking for information on international news or world events (30%), or business/financial items (25%). Others look for sports items (16%), or articles about the arts and entertainment (13%). Slightly less frequently sought information is current events (10%), government/politics (10%), technology (9%), national news (8%), or just general information/news (8%).

Most likely to follow news stories on the Internet are younger respondents (31% of those aged 18 to 34), those with a household income of more than \$60K (30%), university graduates (25%), full-time workers (24%), and men (25%). Regionally, residents of Ontario (22%) are slightly more likely than others to use the Internet. Least likely to surf the Net for news items are part-time workers (11%), residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (10%), those with an incomplete high school education (6%), and respondents aged 55 and older (4%).

### ***77% are 'Extremely' or 'Very' Interested in Following the News***

More than three-quarters of Canadians report being ‘extremely’ (18%) or ‘very’ (59%) interested in following the issues and events in the news. One in five (19%) say they are ‘not very interested’, and only three percent are ‘not at all interested’.

The following variations in interest levels are noted:

- Residents of British Columbia (83%) and Alberta (85%) indicate a significantly higher level of interest in following the news than do residents of Quebec (72%) or Atlantic Canada (73%). Saskatchewan/Manitoba (76%) and Ontario (77%) are on par with the national level, but Ontarians are the most likely to report being *extremely* interested (21%) in following the news.
- Interest in the news increases with respondent age – ranging from 69 percent among 18 to 34 year olds, to 84 percent among those aged 55 and older. However, most likely to report being *extremely* interested in following the news are respondents between the ages of 35 and 54 (22%).
- Men (79%) report a higher level of interest than women (75%).
- Interest in the news increases with respondent education level and household income. Those with an incomplete high school education (63%) or an annual household income of less than \$30K (69%) are significantly less interested in following the news than university graduates (89%) or more affluent households (83% among those with a household income of at least \$60K). Likelihood of being *extremely* interested in the news is consistent with this pattern.
- Self-employed Canadians (84%) are more interested than average, whereas those who are employed on a part-time basis are less interested than average (69%).

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