

# **Six in Ten (60%) Believe Federal Government Has Made it Too Difficult to Access Government Information**

*Four in Ten (40%) Believe Feds Have Struck the Right Balance between Restricting Access and Sharing Government Information*

**Public Release Date: Monday, November 21, 2011, 7:00 PM EST**



**Ipsos Reid**

*Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 research professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and on-line panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada—including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country—all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group. To learn more, visit [www.ipsos.ca](http://www.ipsos.ca)*

***For copies of other news releases, please visit  
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>***

---

© Ipsos Reid

**Washington • New York • Chicago • Minneapolis • Seattle • San Francisco  
Vancouver • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal**

## **Six in Ten (60%) Believe Federal Government Has Made it Too Difficult to Access Government Information**

*Four in Ten (40%) Believe Feds Have Struck the Right Balance between Restricting Access and Sharing Government Information*

**Toronto, ON** – A majority (60%) Canadians believe the federal government makes it too difficult to access government information, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Journalism Foundation. The national Freedom of Information Act allows any Canadian citizen or journalist to request access to federal government information, which is often deemed confidential by government, but even with this law most believe the federal government deliberately restricts information.

Six in ten (60%) believe that ‘the federal government, under the direction of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has made it deliberately and unnecessarily difficult for journalists and citizens to get information held by the government they deem to be confidential’. Men (65%) are more likely than women (54%) to believe the government makes it too difficult to access information, as are those aged 18 to 34 (68%) when compared to those aged 35 to 54 (58%) and 55+ (54%). Quebecers (69%) are most likely to agree, followed by those living in Ontario (59%), Atlantic Canada (58%), British Columbia (57%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (52%), and only a minority of Albertans (47%).

Conversely, four in ten (40%) more closely believe that ‘the federal government has struck the right balance in restricting some requests from journalists and citizens to get information

held by the government'. Women (46%) are more likely to think so than men (35%), as are older (46%) and middle-aged (42%) people compared to younger (32%) adults. A majority (53%) of Albertans believe the government has struck the right balance, while only a minority of those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (48%), British Columbia (43%), Atlantic Canada (42%), Ontario (41%), and Quebec (31%) believe so.

Reflecting on whether journalists in Canada have too much, not enough or just about the right amount of freedom to information from the federal government, half (47%) believe journalists have just the right amount of access, while four in ten (40%) believe they don't have enough freedom. Just one in ten (13%) think that journalists in Canada have too much freedom when it comes to accessing government information.

Seven in ten (71%) 'agree' (24% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'journalists should have access to government information on request even though politicians say it is not in the national interest for them to do so'. Just three in ten (29%) 'disagree' (7% strongly/23% somewhat) that they should. Furthermore, three quarters (76%) 'agree' (29% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'journalists should have access through the national Freedom of Information law to most of the details about what the government does, such as what is contained within a cabinet minister's briefing memos'. Just one quarter (24%) 'disagree' (6% strongly/18% somewhat) with this premise.

Canadians are split on whether the 'government routinely provides journalists with timely access to government files', with one half (49%) 'agreeing' (7% strongly/42% somewhat) that it does, and the other half (51%) 'disagreeing' (16% strongly/35% somewhat) that the government routinely provides this sort of access.



Ipsos Reid

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Journalism Foundation between November 18 and 21, 2011. For this survey, a national sample of 1,015 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. 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. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100 per cent response rate would have an estimated margin of error of  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. 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 contact:**

**John Wright**  
**Senior Vice President**  
**Ipsos Reid**  
**Public Affairs**  
**(416) 324-2002**

**For full tabular results, please visit our website at [www.ipsos.ca](http://www.ipsos.ca). News Releases are available at:**  
**<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>**

---

© Ipsos Reid

- 3 -

**Washington • New York • Chicago • Minneapolis • Seattle • San Francisco**  
**Vancouver • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal**