6TH ANNUAL

2026 DISINFORMATION IN SOCIETY REPORT

A Survey of How 2,000 Americans Perceive Intentionally Misleading News or Information

By the Institute for Public Relations and Leger

April 2026



INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Leger

Methodology

Leger, a polling and marketing research firm, with offices across North America conducted this online survey **Feb 25, 2026 to March 13, 2026,** with a representative **sample of 2,007 Americans** over the age of 18 to explore the prevalence of disinformation in the U.S., the parties most responsible for sharing disinformation, the level of trust the American public has in different information sources, and whose job it is to combat disinformation.

This is the sixth year Leger has partnered with IPR and their annual disinformation study that examines and tracks how disinformation — defined as deliberately misleading or biased information — is spread in the U.S. with comparisons to 2025 findings. The Institute for Public Relations created this survey and first published results in 2019. This study has also been replicated in Canada with Leger in 2022.

REPORT NOTES:

- Throughout the report, 2026 findings are compared to 2025 findings based on percentage point increases and decreases.
- Percentage points has been abbreviated to pp.
- Misinformation was defined as "false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead," while disinformation was defined as "deliberately misleading or biased information.
- In July 2023, Twitter rebranded to "X."

Report written by: April Yue, Ph.D. and Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D.
Report design by: Avery Ensing

**Using 2020 U.S. Census reference variables, the U.S. data was analyzed and weighted by our statisticians according to gender, age, region, and ethnicity in order to render a representative sample of the general U.S. population.*

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Letter to the Reader

Dear Reader,

In this sixth annual disinformation study, the Institute for Public Relations and Leger surveyed more than 2,000 Americans to better understand how disinformation continues to shape society. The findings show that concern about disinformation remains high, with Americans ranking it alongside major national issues such as the economy and homelessness.

Disinformation is widely seen as a driver of division, anxiety, and disengagement. Half of Americans report feeling anxious or stressed when encountering disinformation, and many actively avoid the news because of it. Social media platforms continue to receive significant blame for spreading disinformation, with platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and X leading the list. Government entities, political actors, and news sources are also viewed as highly responsible. However, fewer Americans believe artificial intelligence will increase the spread of disinformation compared to previous years, suggesting a shift in how emerging technologies are perceived.

A persistent gap, though, remains between who Americans believe should combat disinformation and how well those groups are performing. While many institutions, including companies/brands, government, media, and political leaders, are expected to play a central role, relatively few are seen as doing so effectively.

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Letter to the Reader

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Despite deep political divides, local news remains one of the few sources trusted by both Democrats and Republicans, even though local journalism continues to decline across the United States, contributing to growing news deserts and limiting access to reliable, community-based information. This contrast highlights both the importance of local news and the need to support it.

The findings from this year's study reinforce that disinformation is not only a communications challenge, but a societal one. Americans are also calling for broader and stronger accountability. More than three-quarters believe companies and brands should take a stronger role in combatting disinformation, alongside social media platforms and government institutions.

Disinformation will not be solved by any one group alone. It will require shared responsibility, sustained effort, and a commitment to strengthening trust in our information ecosystem. Thank you for reading this report.

Sincerely,

Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR
President and CEO, Institute for Public Relations

Dave Scholz
Chief Strategy Officer, Leger

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10 Key Findings

1

Concerns about disinformation hit their highest level yet.
After declining in 2023, concern continued to climb in 2026 as 71% identified disinformation* as a major problem. Misinformation as a major problem decreased by 2 percentage points to 68%. Disinformation matched concern levels for the economy (72%) and homelessness (71%).

2

Disinformation is seen as a driver of division and a threat to rights.
76% believe disinformation increases political polarization, while 61% say it infringes on human rights. Nearly two-thirds believe disinformation undermines the election process.

3

Social media platforms continue to take the most blame.
Facebook (75%), TikTok (68%), and X (65%) are considered the most responsible social media platforms for spreading disinformation. The U.S. federal government (72%), authoritarian non-democratic governments (69%), political activist groups (69%), and journalists (68%) also rank among other top responsible sources.

4

Trust in traditional media remains highly politically polarized.
Democrats and Republicans differ widely in which sources they trust. Other than local news sources, less than half of Republicans trusted any other mainstream media source, except *Fox News* at 68% (only 24% of Democrats agree). Sources that Democrats are more likely to trust include local broadcast news (75%), *CNN* (69%), *NPR* (66%), and colleges and universities (75%).

5

Personal connections now seen as most trustworthy.
"Family," "people like me," and "friends" outrank mainstream news and other institutions as trusted sources of accurate information.

** Disinformation was defined as "deliberately misleading or biased information."*
*** Misinformation was defined as "false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead."*

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10 Key Findings (continued)

6

Americans want stronger efforts to combat disinformation.
More than three-quarters (76%) say companies and brands should take a stronger role in combatting disinformation. 78% say social media platforms should proactively remove disinformation from their platforms.

7

Disinformation fuels anxiety and news avoidance.
50% say encountering disinformation causes anxiety or stress. Over 40% avoid news altogether because of disinformation, while 50% worry about accidentally sharing disinformation.

8

Americans are confident in spotting false information.
81% feel confident in their ability to recognize disinformation, and nearly half (48%) say they "often" or "always" verify information by checking multiple sources.

9

Gaps persist between responsibility and performance.
While government, politicians, and news media are seen as most responsible for combatting disinformation, they are rated poorly in effectively combatting it.

10

Political identity strongly influences perceived blame.
Democrats place the most blame on *Fox News* (87%), Republican members of Congress (86%), President Trump (85%), and Elon Musk (83%) for spreading disinformation while Republicans blame Democratic members of Congress (81%), journalists (80%), and network TV (78%) the most for spreading disinformation.

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REPORT

U.S. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS



More than 7-in-10 Americans say disinformation is a major problem in the U.S.

Americans consider disinformation and misinformation to be among the most pressing issues in the U.S. in 2026, with disinformation ranking 3rd (71%) and misinformation as 5th (68%) out of 21 issues evaluated, ahead of illegal drug use (64%), gun violence (64%), and crime (61%).

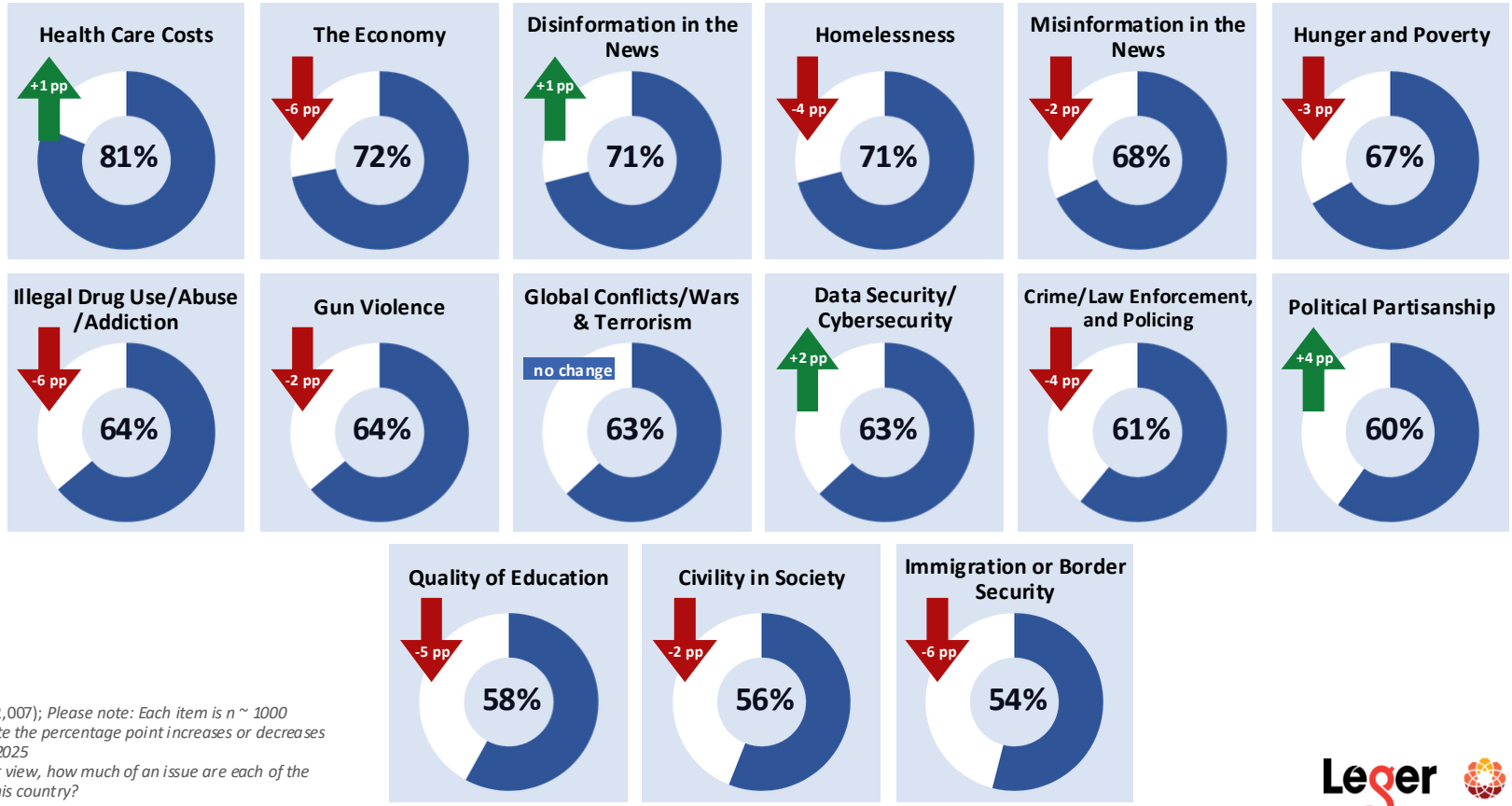
Health care costs (81%), the economy (72%), disinformation (71%), and homelessness (71%) were the top four issues identified as 'major problems' by respondents.

Both disinformation and misinformation remain at elevated concern levels in 2026, with disinformation reaching its highest peak to date. Disinformation edged up +2 pp while misinformation dipped slightly (-2 pp) from 2025.

**Misinformation was defined as "false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead."*
***Disinformation was defined as "deliberately misleading or biased information."*

Base: ALL (n=2,007); Please note: Each item is n ~ 1040
IQ: And in your view, how much of an issue are each of the following in this country?

Top 15 “Major” Issues in the U.S. in 2026



Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000*
Arrows indicate the percentage point increases or decreases compared to 2025
Q: And in your view, how much of an issue are each of the following in this country?

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IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON SOCIETY

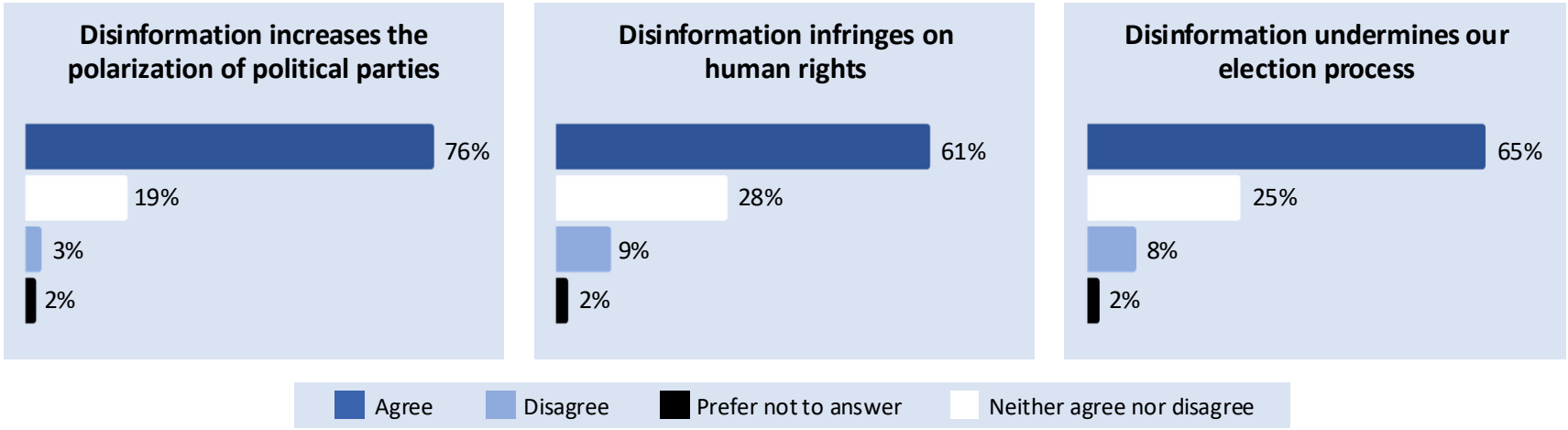


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Disinformation seen as driving political polarization, eroding human rights and influencing elections

Over three-quarters believe disinformation increases the polarization of political parties while around three-fifths believe it infringes on human rights. Further, nearly two-thirds believe that disinformation undermines our election process, with little partisan divide (Republican 64% vs. Democrats 68%).



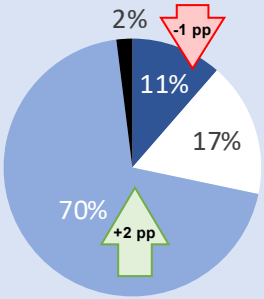
Base: ALL (n=2,007)

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
NOTE: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

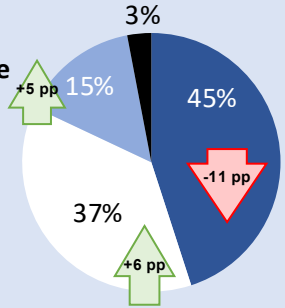
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Belief that disinformation negatively impacts society remains high as more worry about accidentally sharing disinformation

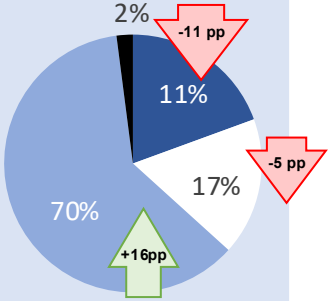
I have knowingly shared disinformation



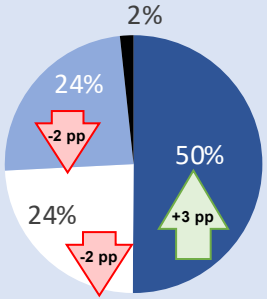
Artificial intelligence platforms and programs will create more disinformation in society



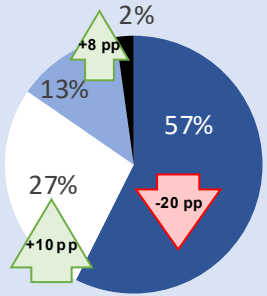
Concerns about disinformation are exaggerated



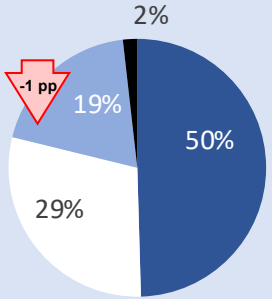
I worry about accidentally sharing disinformation



Disinformation is commonplace in our society



Encountering disinformation makes me feel anxious or stressed



**Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%. **PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2025. No arrow indicates not tracked or parity vs. 2025.*

Agree
Disagree
Prefer not to answer
Neither agree nor disagree

Base: ALL (n=2,007)

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

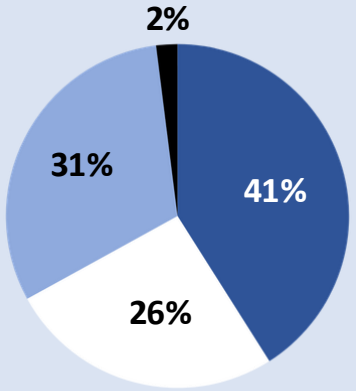
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Half of Americans say disinformation makes them anxious or stressed

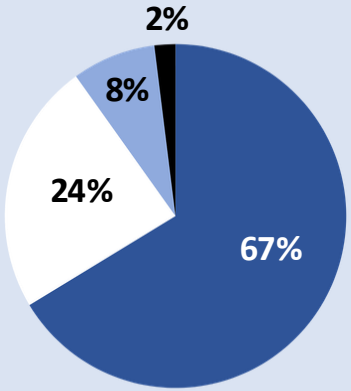
Over 40% of Americans agree that they "avoid watching or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation" (unchanged from 2025). 50% said that “encountering disinformation makes me feel anxious or stressed” (unchanged from 2025).

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements*:

I avoid watching, reading, or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation



I feel upset when someone I know, such as a friend, family, or coworker, shares disinformation



Agree | Disagree | Prefer not to answer | Neither agree nor disagree

Base: ALL (n=2,007)

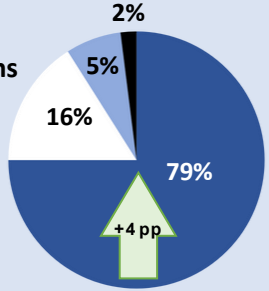
Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.*

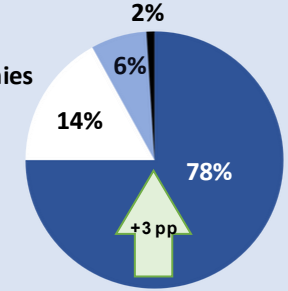
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Americans increasingly want the government, social media platforms, and brands to combat disinformation

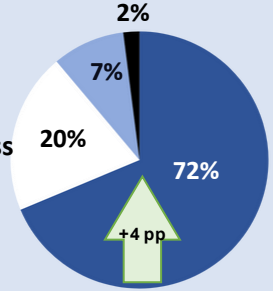
Social media platforms should add warning labels to posts that contain disinformation



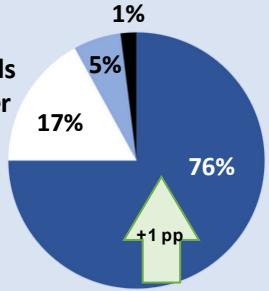
Social media companies should proactively remove disinformation from their platforms



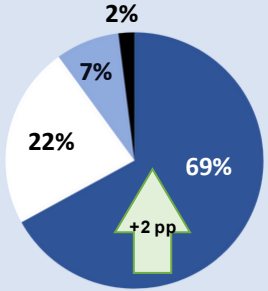
The government should implement regulations to address disinformation



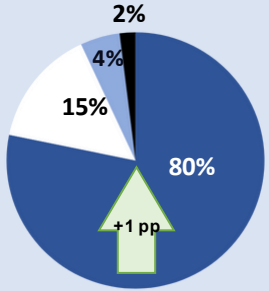
Companies and brands should take a stronger role in combatting disinformation



Individuals or organizations that spread disinformation should face legal or financial penalties



Schools should teach students how to recognize and critically evaluate disinformation



*Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%. **PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2025.

Agree
Disagree
Prefer not to answer
Neither agree nor disagree

Base: ALL (n=2,007)

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

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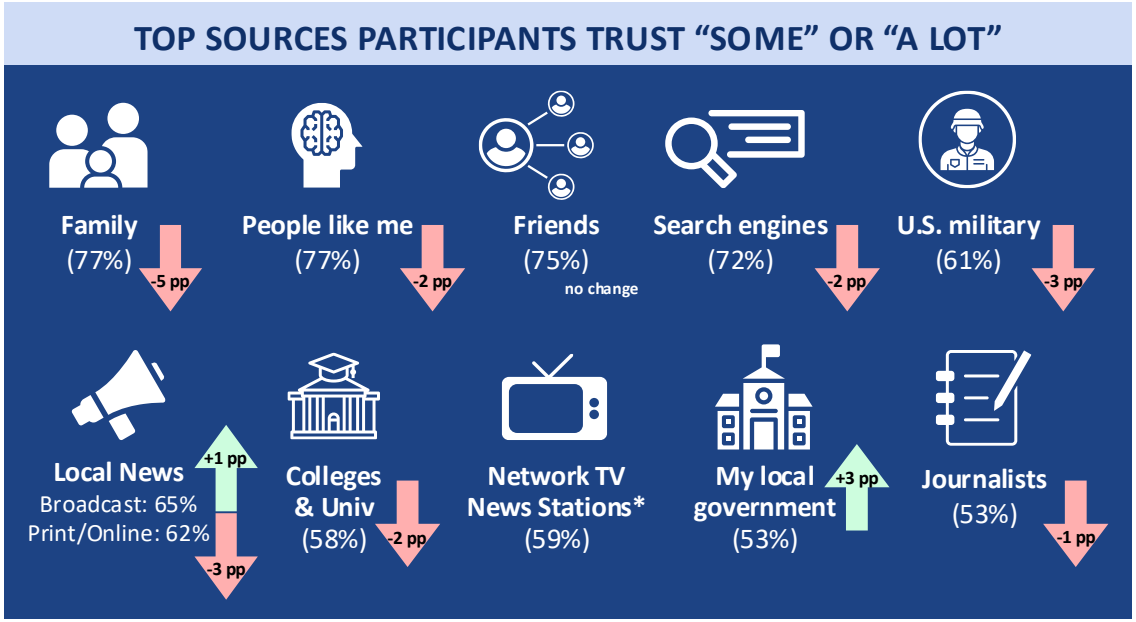
MOST RELIABLE SOURCES FOR ACCURATE NEWS AND INFO



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Personal/Informal Sources Continue to be Most Trustworthy



Note: PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2025.
No arrow indicates not tracked or parity vs. 2025.
** Network TV News added in 2026 to include the previously independently analyzed ABC, NBC, and CBS*

Personal/informal sources continue to be the most trusted sources for news and information. Sources that many Americans consider the least ("not at all") trustworthy include authoritarian non-democratic governments, such as the Russian and Chinese governments (59%, +3 pp in 2025). Trust in the current administration declined from last year, with 49% (+8 pp) rating President Donald Trump as "not at all" trustworthy and 42% (+5 pp) saying the same of Vice President JD Vance.

Trust in colleges and universities stands at 58% in 2026. Democrats remain more likely to trust these institutions (75%) than Republicans (46%).

Local news continued to be the most trustworthy media source. Among all social media platforms, YouTube had the highest level of trust with 51% of Americans saying they trust it at least "some," followed by LinkedIn (37%), Reddit (33%), and Facebook (31%).

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000*

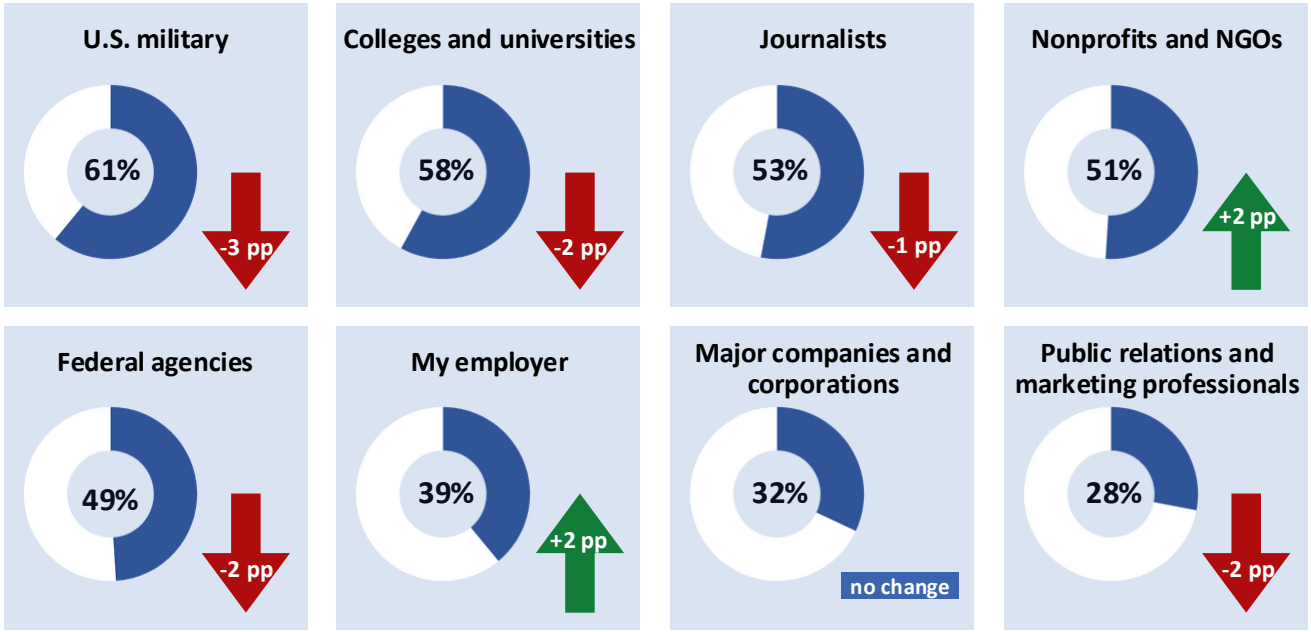
Q: Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information?

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Trust in institutions continues to decline, with few exceptions

Trust in several major institutions declined in 2026. The U.S. military (61%, -3 pp), colleges and universities (58%, -2 pp), journalists (53%, -1 pp), and federal agencies (49%, -2 pp) all saw decreases in the percentage of Americans expressing at least "some" trust. Public relations and marketing professionals also declined to 28% (-2 pp), while trust in major companies remained unchanged (32%).

INSTITUTIONS EARNING "SOME" TRUST FROM AMERICANS

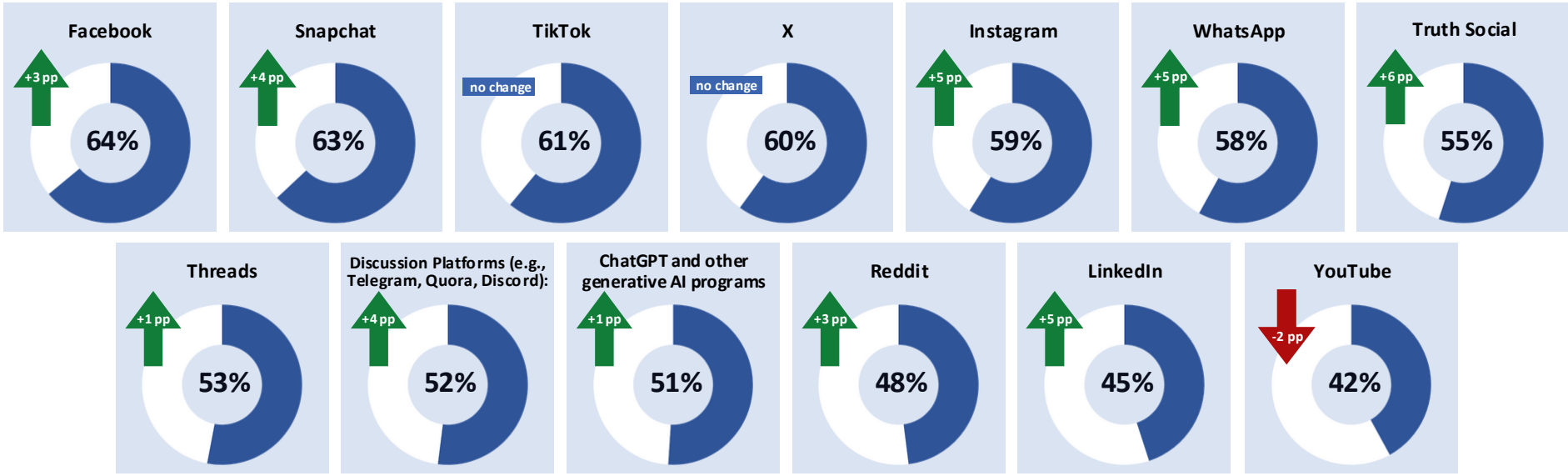


*Note: **PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2025.

Most online and social platforms saw increases in those who do NOT trust them

Nearly all saw increases in the level of distrust, except for YouTube (42%). Nearly all platforms, except Reddit, LinkedIn, and YouTube, had more than 50% of Americans say they do not trust them. Distrust in ChatGPT ticked up slightly, with 28% saying they "do not trust it at all" (+4 pp in 2025). Those saying they have "a lot" of trust in the generative AI platform remained unchanged at 10%.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS THAT AMERICANS DO NOT TRUST:

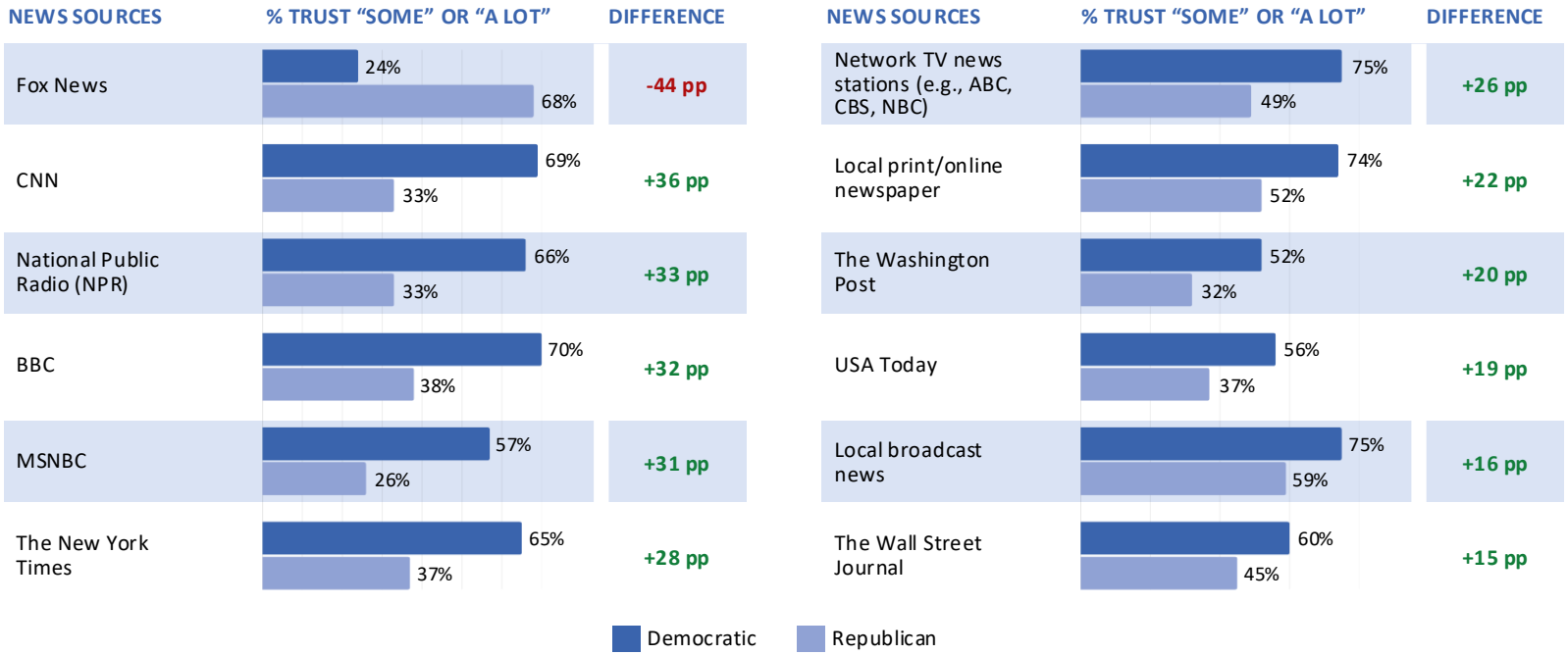


*Note: Do not trust = percent of those who trust "not much" and "not at all"

*Note: **PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2025.

Trustworthiness in mainstream media continues to be significantly divided among Democrats and Republicans

Democrats continue to consider mainstream media sources as more trustworthy, with Republicans placing greater trust in conservative sources. Republican trust in *Fox News* stands at 68%, while Democratic trust in the conversative outlet remains at 24%, the largest gap between the two political parties of 44 percentage points.



Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000*

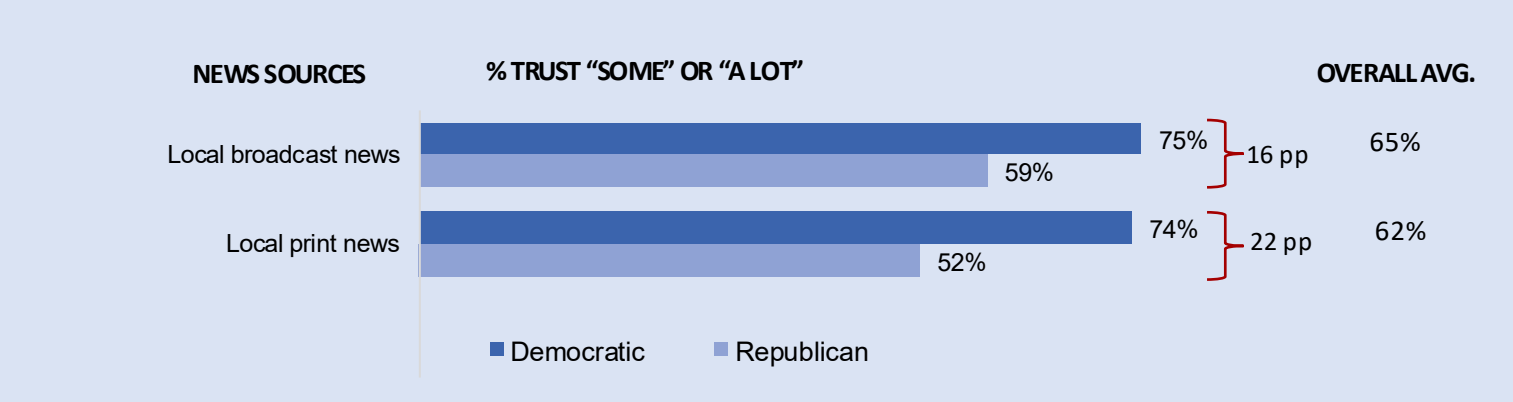
Q: Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information?

Sources Ranked By Trust Among Total Population

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Local news sources continue to narrow the trust gap between Democrats and Republicans, exhibiting a smaller divide than other media outlets

Nearly three-quarters of Democrats say they have at least "some" trust in local broadcast news, while 59% of Republicans agree as well.



Trust in the U.S. government among Republicans increased significantly in 2026, with 60% having at least "some" trust, compared to 44% in 2025 (+16 pp).

On the other hand, trust in the *U.S.* government by Democrats decreased from 40% in 2025 to 32% in 2026 (-8 pp). Democrats saw no change in trust in their *local* government in 2026 (62%), while Republicans saw a modest increase (53%, +7 pp).

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000*

Q: Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information?

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TOP SOURCES RESPONSIBLE FOR DISINFORMATION



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Facebook tops the list of sources blamed for disinformation, with government, journalists, and social media platforms all drawing significant blame

Truth Social saw the largest increase in perceived responsibility for spreading disinformation (+10 pp, 59%). 85% of Democrats (+2 pp) consider President Donald Trump to be at least "somewhat responsible" for spreading disinformation, compared to 45% of Republicans (+1 pp). Republicans most blame Democratic members of Congress (81%), journalists (80%), and network TV news stations (78%), while Democrats extend blame to Republican members of Congress (85%), Vice President JD Vance (81%), and Elon Musk (83%). Republicans were more than twice as likely than Democrats to consider journalists "very responsible" for spreading disinformation (47% vs. 17%, respectively).

TOP 20 SOURCES RESPONSIBLE FOR SPREADING DISINFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

INFORMATION SOURCE	*% Change Since 2025 (pp change)*	INFORMATION SOURCE	*% Change Since 2025 (pp change)*
Facebook	75% (+2 pp)	X (previously Twitter)	65% (-2 pp)
U.S. federal government	72% (0 pp)	Network TV News Stations*	64%
Authoritarian non-democratic governments	69% (-2 pp)	Instagram	64% (+1 pp)
Political activist groups	69% (-2 pp)	Public relations and marketing professionals	64% (+2 pp)
Journalists	68% (+1 pp)	Discussion platforms (e.g., Telegram, Discord)	63% (+5 pp)
TikTok	68% (+1 pp)	Elon Musk	60% (-2 pp)
Fox News	67% (+1 pp)	Democratic members of Congress	60% (-1 pp)
Major companies and corporations	66% (+2 pp)	Federal agencies	59% (+2 pp)
President Donald Trump	66% (+2 pp)	Truth Social	59%* (+10 pp)
Republican members of Congress	66% (0 pp)	Vice President JD Vance	58% (+5 pp)

% SAYING THIS SOURCE IS AT LEAST "SOMEWHAT" RESPONSIBLE FOR SPREADING DISINFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

** Note: Network TV News added in 2026 to include the previously independently analyzed ABC, NBC, and CBS*

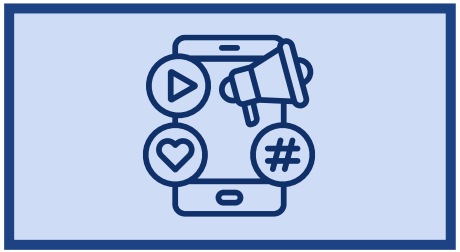
Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n~ 500*
Q: To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading disinformation to the public?

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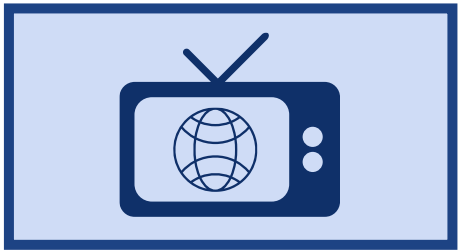
Government and political groups highly at fault for spreading disinformation



Government and political groups continue to take significant blame for spreading disinformation, including the U.S. federal government (72%), political activist groups (69%), and authoritarian non-democratic governments (69%).



Social media platforms also continue to take much of the blame as Facebook (75%), TikTok (68%), and X (65%) rank as the top 3 social platforms that are at least "somewhat" responsible for spreading disinformation.



News sources were often seen as "somewhat" responsible for spreading disinformation, with journalists (68%), *Fox News* (67%), and network TV news stations (64%) cited most frequently.

Personal networks remain the least responsible for spreading disinformation

Most Americans continue to view their own personal connections as being the least to blame for the spread of disinformation. Only 1-in-10 said that family (10%), people like me (10%), friends (9%), and their employer (6%) were "very responsible" for spreading disinformation.

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n~ 500*
Q: To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading disinformation to the public?

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COMBATTING THE SPREAD OF DISINFORMATION

Who is responsible?

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Governmental bodies, the President, the Vice President, and news sources are the top sources cited as being responsible for combatting disinformation

Over half of Americans identified 22 entities as "very responsible" for combatting disinformation. President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance (69%, +2 pp since 2025) were identified by the highest proportion of respondents, followed by the U.S. government (68%, -1 pp), and U.S. legislative bodies (67%, +5 pp). A second-tier of sources clustered at 66%, including U.S. judicial bodies, network TV news, and federal agencies, with journalists (63%) and cable news (62%) close behind.

TOP 20 SOURCES CONSIDERED "VERY RESPONSIBLE" FOR COMBATTING DISINFORMATION

INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2025 (pp change)	INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2025 (pp change)
President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance	69% (+2 pp)	Fact-checking websites	57% (-2 pp)
U.S. Government (local, federal, state)	68% (-1 pp)	Right-leaning news/social media accounts	56% (+5 pp)
U.S. Legislative Bodies (e.g., House, Senate)	67% (+5 pp)	Left-leaning news/social media accounts	55% (+3 pp)
Network TV News (ABC, CBS, NBC)	66% (+4 pp)	News-based podcasts (e.g., The Daily)	54% (+3 pp)
U.S. Judicial Bodies (e.g., Supreme Court)	66% (+4 pp)	Search engines (Google, Bing)	54% (+2 pp)
Federal agencies (FDA, CDC)	66% (+4 pp)	News aggregator sites (e.g., Apple News)	53% (-3 pp)
U.S.-based Newspapers	64% (+5 pp)	Radio news (NPR, Bloomberg Radio)	52% (-1 pp)
Journalists	63% (+1 pp)	Left-leaning podcasts (e.g., Pod Save America)	51% (+3 pp)
Cable News Networks (Fox News, CNN, MSNBC)	62% (0 pp)	Social media platforms	51% (+1 pp)
Local broadcast and print/online news	60% (+2 pp)	Colleges and universities	50% (0 pp)
International news sources	59% (+5 pp)	Right-leaning podcasts (e.g., Tucker Carlson show)	50% (-1 pp)

% SAYING THIS SOURCE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED "VERY RESPONSIBLE" FOR COMBATTING DISINFORMATION SPREAD

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n~ 1030*
Q: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

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COMBATTING THE SPREAD OF DISINFORMATION

How well are sources doing?

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Fact-checking sites and local news are viewed as combatting disinformation well

Source	% Combatting at Least "Somewhat Well"
Me	70%
People like me	61%
Fact-checking websites (e.g., Snopes)	55%
Local broadcast news	51%
Journalists	44%
Colleges and universities	44%
International News Sources (e.g., BBC, Al Jazeera)	43%
Local print/online newspapers	42%
Nonprofit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	41%
Radio News (e.g., NPR)	41%
Search engines (e.g., Google, Bing)	41%

% SAYING THIS GROUP/INDIVIDUAL COMBATS DISINFORMATION AT LEAST "SOMEWHAT WELL"

Americans remain confident in their ability to combat disinformation, with 70% saying they personally do so at least "somewhat well," followed by 61% who said "people like me." More than 50% of Americans feel the following groups were doing "not too well" or "not at all well" at combatting disinformation: authoritarian and non-democratic foreign governments (64%), U.S. legislative bodies (62%), social media platforms (61%), corporations and CEOs (60%), the U.S. government (59%), cable news (56%), the general public (56%), President Trump and Vice President JD Vance (55%), Federal agencies (54%), and public relations/marketing professionals (52%).

Political party affiliation continues to play an important role. Republicans (59%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (12%) to agree that President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance are doing at least "somewhat well" at combatting disinformation.

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n~ 1000*
Q: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media?

A notable disconnect remains between who Americans believe should combat disinformation and how well they are doing so

Gaps persisted across nearly all sources between who should be responsible for combating disinformation and their actual effectiveness in doing so, highlighting significant opportunities for improvement. Americans continue to believe politicians and government agencies are most responsible for combating disinformation, yet both receive low ratings for their efforts. Fact-checking websites saw the smallest gap of just 2 pp between expectations and performance. Local broadcast news was the only other source with a single-digit, percentage-point gap.

INFORMATION SOURCE	% "Very responsible" for combatting	% Combatting At Least "Somewhat Well"	Difference in Percentage Points (pp)
President Donald Trump & VP JD Vance	69%	34%	35 pp
U.S. Government (local, federal, state)	68%	30%	38 pp
U.S. Legislative Bodies	67%	26%	41 pp
U.S. Judicial Bodies	66%	40%	26 pp
Network TV News Stations (*ABC, CBS, NBC*)	66%	38%	28 pp
Federal agencies (e.g., FDA, CDC)	66%	33%	33 pp
U.S.-based Newspapers (*WSJ, NYT*)	64%	38%	26 pp
Journalists	63%	44%	19 pp
Cable News Networks (*Fox News, MSNBC, CNN*)	62%	34%	28 pp
Local broadcast news	60%	51%	9 pp
Local print/online newspapers	60%	42%	18 pp
International News Sources (*BBC, Al Jazeera*)	59%	43%	16 pp
Fact-checking websites (Snopes, PolitiFact)	57%	55%	2 pp

Base: ALL (n=2,007); *Please note: Each item is n~ 1000*
Q: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media? AND Q: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

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REPORT

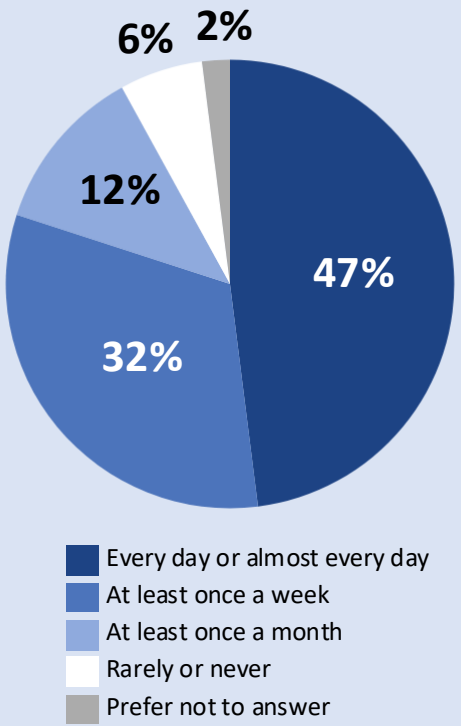
PREVALENCE OF DISINFORMATION



Nearly 5-in-10 see disinformation almost every day

Nearly 8-in-10 respondents (80%) report coming across false news or information at least once a week, with 47% saying they see false news almost every day — virtually unchanged from 2025.

*How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false?**



Base: ALL (n=2,007)
Q: How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false?

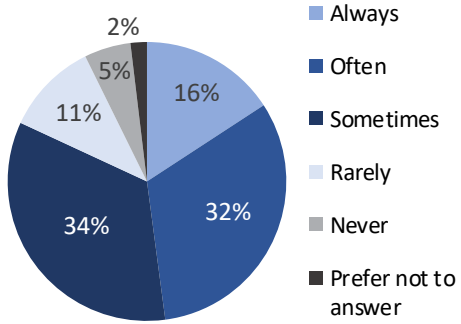
**Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.*

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Nearly half said they visit other sites to verify credibility of sources

48% reported that they "often" or "always" visit other websites to verify the accuracy of the information they read (+4 pp from 2025). 34% said they "sometimes" check other sources, while 16% "rarely" or "never" consult alternative sources.

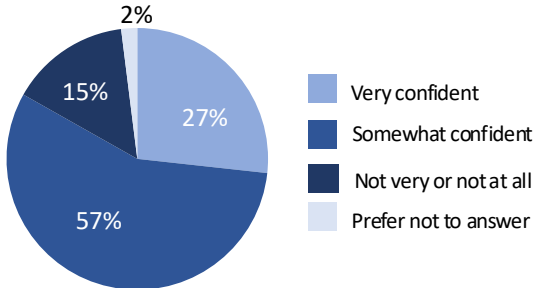
*How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate?**



Americans continue to trust in their ability in identifying disinformation

The overwhelmingly majority continue to be at least "somewhat" confident (81%) in their ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false. 81% report that they are confident in their ability to recognize false news (25% saying "very confident" and 56% saying "somewhat confident"). Fewer than 2-in-10 (18%) said they are "not very" or "not at all" confident.

*How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that mispresents reality or is false?**



Base: ALL (n=2,007)
Q: How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that mispresents reality or is false?
Q: How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate?

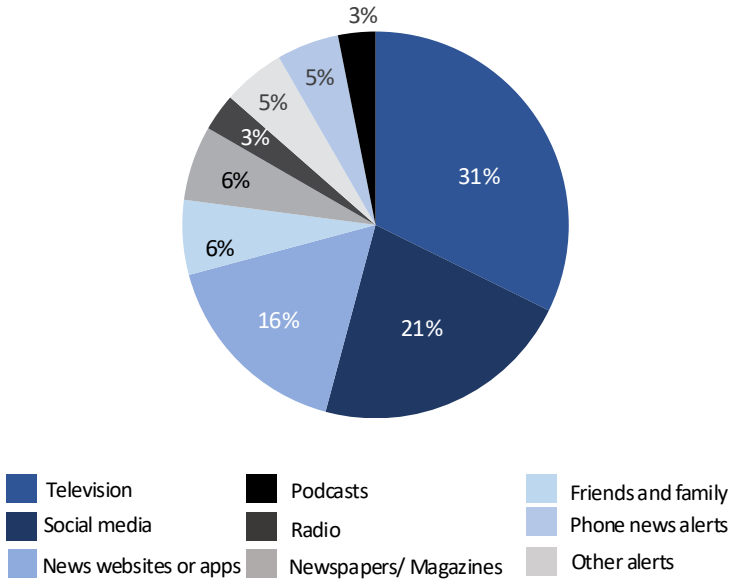
**Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.*

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Television is the top news source

The top 3 sources where Americans get their news are: television (30%, -1 pp), social media (22%, +1 pp), and news websites/apps.

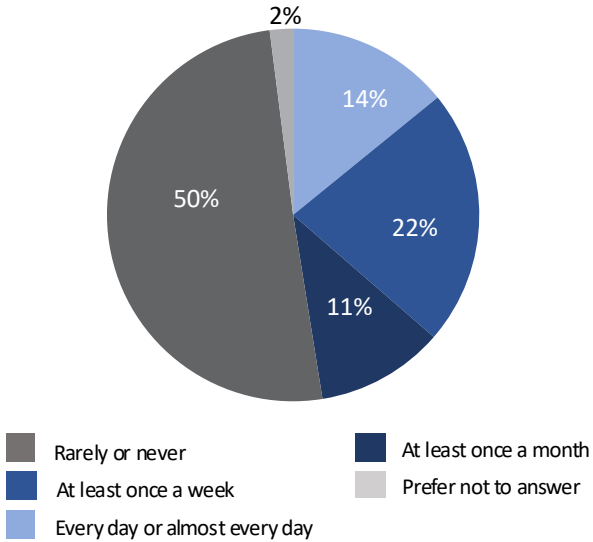
*In the past week, what has been your primary source of news?**



More than a third share on social at least once a week

36% share news or information on their social media at least once a week, virtually unchanged from 2025. Over half (51%, +1pp) claim they "rarely or never" share news on social media, with 14% saying they share "every day or almost every day."

*How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks?**



Base: ALL (n=2,007)

Q: In the past week, what has been your PRIMARY source of news? AND Q: How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks?

**Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.*

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Conclusions

Public concern over misinformation and disinformation remains at elevated levels.
Americans place these issues on par with major societal challenges such as healthcare costs, homelessness, hunger, and illegal drug use, signaling sustained urgency in public discourse. Concern has remained high since rebounding in 2025.

Disinformation is deeply connected to political polarization and public trust.
A majority of Americans see disinformation as a key driver of division and a threat to democratic institutions and rights. Views are strongly shaped by political partisanship, with each side pointing to opposing leaders and media as key sources of disinformation.

There is a clear demand for action and accountability.
Americans expect social media platforms, government, and political leaders to take meaningful steps to reduce the spread of disinformation. However, confidence in their performance remains low, highlighting a need for greater transparency and responsibility.

Trust has shifted away from institutions toward personal networks.
Americans now place more trust in family, friends, and “people like me” than in mainstream media or political figures. This shift suggests that individual and community-based solutions, such as media literacy and education, may play a critical role in reducing the spread of disinformation.

Efforts to combat disinformation are falling short of expectations.
While most institutions are seen as responsible for combatting disinformation, their perceived effectiveness at stopping the spread of disinformation is lacking. A disconnect remains between who should take the lead and who the public believes is doing it well, pointing to an urgent need for a cross-societal approach.

About the Organizations

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