A New Understanding: What Makes People Trust and Rely on News

Conducted by the Media Insight Project
An initiative of the American Press Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

Interviews: 2/18-3/6/2016
2,014 adults
Margin of error: +/- 2.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level among all adults

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.

Q1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Most people can be trusted	41
Can't be too careful in dealing with people	58
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q2. I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

	A great deal of confidence	Only some confidence	Hardly any confidence at all	DK/ REF
Military	48	45	6	1
Scientific community	35	53	10	2
Supreme Court	26	59	14	1
Organized religion	20	56	24	1
Banks and financial institutions	17	59	24	*
The press	6	52	41	*
Congress	4	46	50	*

N=2,014

Q3. We would now like to ask you about how you use technology.

Do you use the Internet or email for any purpose, or not?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	90
No	10
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q4. Next, do you own a cellphone, or not?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	95
No	5
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

If yes in Q4

Q5. Do you own a cellphone that connects to the Internet, or does your phone only receive calls and text messages?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Cellphone connects to the internet	81
Cellphone only receives calls and text messages	19
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*1,906*

Q6. Do you own or use a tablet, such as an iPad or GalaxyTab, or not?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	55
No	44
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q7. Do you ever get news alerts sent to you by text, email, or app notifications, or not?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	55
No	45
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q8. We're interested in your sources of news and information. By source, we mean the organization which gathered the information and did the news reporting, such as national or local TV news programs, newspapers, radio shows or websites.

You may trust some sources of news more than others. Thinking about the sources you consider trustworthy, how important is each of the following factors?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

	Extremely/ Very impt. NET	Extremely impt.	Very impt.	Somewhat impt.	Not very/not at all impt. NET	Not very impt.	Not at all impt.	DK/ REF
Accuracy: It gets the facts right	**85**	57	29	**11**	**3**	2	2	*
Completeness: It provides all the important news and information	**77**	33	44	**18**	**4**	2	2	*
Transparency: It explains the way it gathers and reports news and information	**68**	29	40	**25**	**6**	4	3	*
Balanced and Fair: I get a lot of different views from the reporting	**66**	26	41	**25**	**7**	5	3	*
Presentation: Its broadcast, print publication, website or app have a high quality and professional appearance	**48**	12	36	**40**	**12**	8	3	*

N=2,014

Q9. How often do you watch, read, or hear news? Again, by news, we mean any kind of news, including sports, traffic, weather, stocks, politics, lifestyle, or any other kind of news, by any means. Do you generally watch, read, or hear news …?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Several times a day	59
Once a day	20
Several times a week	10
Weekly	5
Less often	4
Never	1
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q10. How important is it to you personally to keep up with news and information?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Extremely/Very important NET	**60**
Extremely important	18
Very important	42
Somewhat important	**32**
Not very/Not at all important NET	**8**
Not very important	5
Not at all important	3
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

Q11. Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right. In general,

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
I actively seek out news and information	65
I mostly bump into news and information as I do other things or hear about it from others	34
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

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Q12. Here are some different devices or technology that you might or might not use to get news and information. Did you use each device or technology to get news and information in the last week, or did you not? How about..?

	Yes	No	DK/ REF
A television (N=2,014)	83	17	*
If yes to Q6 A tablet, such as an iPad or GalaxyTab (N=1,114)	64	35	1
If yes to Q3 A desktop or laptop computer (N=1,803)	74	26	*
A radio (N=2,014)	62	37	1
Paper versions of print publications such as newspapers or magazines (N=2,014)	48	51	1
If yes to Q5 A cellphone (N=1,519)	82	18	*
An E-reader, such as a Kindle or Sony Reader (N=2,014)	8	90	2

Q13. Do you currently use a PAID service or subscription that includes access to…?

	Yes	No	DK/ REF
A newspaper ONLY in print	20	80	*
A newspaper ONLY online or through its app	11	89	*
A newspaper BOTH in print and online or through its app	16	83	*
A cable television subscription	64	36	-
A magazine ONLY in print	24	76	*
A magazine ONLY online or through its app	6	94	*
A magazine BOTH in print and online or through its app	11	89	*
Another type of PAID service or subscription	15	85	-

N=2,014

Q14. **Here are some common news and information topics. Which of these news topics do you follow most often or closely? Please select two from the list below.**

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
National politics or government	22
Traffic and weather	12
Crime and public safety	8
Sports	7
Local politics or government	7
Science and technology	6
Healthcare and medical information	6
My particular town or neighborhood	5
Social issues like abortion, race, and gay rights	4
Foreign or international news	4
Business and the economy	4
The environment and natural disasters	3
Schools and education	3
My hobbies	3
Lifestyle topics such as food, beauty, exercise, or parenting	3
Entertainment and celebrities	3
Art and culture	1
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	-

N=   *3,313*

Q15. Where do you most often get your news on [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14]? Please select up to three from the list below.

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
A local TV station, its website, app, or news alerts	53
A national TV network, its website, app, or news alerts	40
A radio station, local or national, its web, app, or news alerts	30
Social media	29
A local newspaper, its website, app, or news alerts	23
Search engine or online aggregators such as Google News	16
A media organization that focuses on one topic (such as the Weather Channel, ESPN, the Food Network, or TMZ), its website, app, or news alerts	15
From a general-interest online-only publisher such as Buzzfeed, Yahoo! News, or Huffington Post, its app, or news alerts	11
A magazine, its website, app, or news alerts	10
A national or international newspaper, its website, app, or news alerts	9
From a blog	2
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*3,937*

Q16. If you had to pick just one specific [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q15], [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q15], or [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q15] that you rely on most for news on [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14], what is the name of the source?

[Open-ended answers coded to match the applicable categories used in Q15. Responses that were incomprehensible or did not clearly fall into one category were coded as "Other". Reported proportions are among those who provided a valid response.]

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
A national TV network, its website, app, or news alerts	34
A local TV station, its website, app, or news alerts	26
A radio station, local or national, its web, app, or news alerts	11
From a general-interest online-only publisher such as Buzzfeed, Yahoo! News, or Huffington Post, its app, or news alerts	7
A media organization that focuses on one topic (such as the Weather Channel, ESPN, the Food Network, or TMZ), its website, app, or news alerts	6
Other	5
A local newspaper, its website, app, or news alerts	5
A magazine, its website, app, or news alerts	3
A national or international newspaper, its website, app, or news alerts	3
From a blog	1
N=	*3,706*

Q17. Next we have several questions about [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16], the source you use most often for [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14].

How often would you say you get news and information on [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14] from [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16]?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Several times/Once a day NET	**67**
Several times a day	37
Once a day	30
Several times a week	**17**
Weekly/Less often NET	**17**
Weekly	10
Less often	7
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*3,711*

Q18. Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right. Generally, when I get news and information about [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14] from [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16]:

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
I actively seek out news and information	69
I mostly bump into news and information as I do other things or hear about it from others	30
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*3,711*

Q19. In which of the following ways do you interact with [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16], do you …?

	Yes	No	N/A	DK/ REF
Use its app	28	60	11	2
Subscribe to its newsletter, text, or email alerts	17	72	10	2
Follow it on social media	33	58	8	2
Regularly share its content with others	44	48	6	2
Pay for it	23	65	10	2

N=3,711

Q20. Think about why you rely on [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16] for the coverage of [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14]. How important is each of the following for you?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

	Extremely/ Very impt. NET	Extremely impt.	Very impt.	Somewhat impt.	Not very/not at all impt. NET	Not very impt.	Not at all impt.	DK/ REF
It gets the facts right	**80**	35	45	**16**	**3**	1	2	1
It always has the latest news and information	**76**	26	51	**19**	**4**	2	2	1
It's concise and gets to the point	**72**	22	50	**22**	**4**	3	2	1
It presents expert sources and data	**70**	22	48	**23**	**6**	4	2	*
It is easy to find news and information you're looking for	**70**	19	51	**25**	**5**	3	2	1
The reporting is in-depth	**67**	21	47	**26**	**6**	4	2	*
It presents news and information in a way you can talk about it	**63**	17	46	**28**	**8**	5	3	1
It covers *all* the day's events	**61**	16	44	**27**	**12**	7	4	1
You know and trust its journalists	**60**	17	43	**29**	**10**	6	4	1
It provides diverse points of view	**58**	16	42	**31**	**11**	7	4	1
It explains the way it gathers and reports news and information	**55**	16	39	**31**	**13**	9	4	*
It's a source you've always used	**51**	14	38	**33**	**15**	10	5	1
You can multitask or use it when you're doing something else like household chores	**42**	12	30	**33**	**24**	14	10	1
It makes it entertaining	**38**	9	29	**36**	**25**	17	8	1
You see your community and people like you in the reporting	**36**	9	27	**33**	**30**	19	12	1

11

It shares your point of view	32	9	23	38	29	20	9	1

N=3,711

Q21. Do you ever get news and information on [Q14] from [Q16] in a digital format, such as a website, app, or email?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	46
No	54
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*3,711*

If yes in Q21

Q22. Thinking about when you get news from [SOURCE IDENTIFIED IN Q16] on [TOPIC IDENTIFIED IN Q14] in a digital format, how important is each of the following for you?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

	Extremely/ Very impt. NET	Extremely impt.	Very impt.	Somewhat impt.	Not very/not at all impt. NET	Not very impt.	Not at all impt.	DK/ REF
The ads do not interfere without getting news and information	63	31	32	18	12	6	6	7
The site or app loads fast	63	25	39	21	8	3	5	8
It works well on my mobile phone	60	27	33	17	16	6	10	7
It uses visuals such as photos, videos, lists, or charts	51	17	35	28	13	8	5	9
The news and information include hyperlinks to get more information	46	13	33	32	15	9	5	8
It allows people to comment on news and information	30	9	22	27	37	21	16	6

N=1,704

Q23. These days many people get their news and information from social media. Do you ever get any news from social media?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	51
No	48
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*2,014*

If no in Q23, skip to Q27

Q24. Which of the following do you use most frequently to get news and information? Please select up to two from the list below.

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Facebook	87
Youtube	21
Twitter	18
Instagram	13
LinkedIn	5
Reddit	3
Snapchat	3
Vine	*
Yik Yak	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	3
N=	*1,022*

Q25. In general, how much do you trust the news and information you see on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IDENTIFIED IN Q24]?

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
LinkedIn (N=52)	23	4	19	30	19	17	2	28
Reddit (N=39)	22	2	20	44	20	19	1	14
Twitter (N=179)	18	4	15	43	17	16	*	22
Instagram (N=109)	17	5	13	38	22	21	1	22
Youtube (N=226)	16	4	13	49	17	16	*	18
Snapchat (N=25)	14	12	2	36	33	33	-	17
Facebook (N=895)	12	3	9	48	20	17	3	20

Q26a. How much do the following factors affect your trust in a piece of news and information you see on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IDENTIFIED IN Q24]?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

FACEBOOK

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people have liked, shared, or commented on it	**16**	4	13	**34**	**50**	25	25	*
Whether or not I know and trust the person who posted	**48**	18	30	**35**	**17**	10	8	-
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	**66**	33	32	**25**	**9**	6	4	-

N=895

YOUTUBE

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people have liked, viewed, or commented on it	**19**	6	14	**37**	**43**	23	20	*
Whether or not I know and trust the person who posted it	**44**	22	22	**34**	**20**	13	8	1
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	**57**	30	27	**33**	**9**	5	4	1

N=226

TWITTER

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people I know have liked, retweeted, or commented on it	**21**	1	20	**34**	**44**	23	21	*
Whether or not I know and trust the person who tweeted it	**49**	23	26	**33**	**18**	11	8	*
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	**62**	35	27	**24**	**15**	12	3	*

N=179

INSTAGRAM

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people have liked, re-posted, or commented on it	**23**	3	20	**37**	**40**	23	17	-
Whether or not I know and trust the person who posted it	**40**	11	29	**40**	**20**	12	9	-
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	**40**	17	23	**45**	**14**	7	7	-

N=109

LINKEDIN

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people have liked or commented on it	8	1	7	30	62	26	36	-
Whether or not I know and trust the person who posted it	36	17	19	36	28	22	6	-
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	59	31	28	23	18	15	3	-

N=52

REDDIT

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not a lot of people have upvoted or commented on it	29	11	18	34	37	25	13	-
Whether or not I know and trust the person who posted it	44	2	42	12	45	17	27	-
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	85	48	37	12	4	-	4	-

N=39

SNAPCHAT

	A great deal/A lot NET	A great deal	A lot	Somewhat	Very little/Not at all NET	Very little	Not at all	REF
Whether or not I know and trust the person who shared it	**32**	14	18	**50**	**18**	15	2	-
Whether or not I know and trust the original reporting source	**49**	21	28	**40**	**11**	8	3	-

N=25

Q27. Now a question on a different topic. Have you ever had an experience with a news and information source that made you trust it less for any reason, or hasn't that happened?

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Yes	38
No	61
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	1
N=	*2,014*

If no in Q27, skip to end

Q28. What is the name of the news and information source that you began to trust less?
    [Open-ended answers not coded]

Q29. What happened that made you trust that news and information source less? Please select all that apply.

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
I found it one-sided or biased	69
I found facts that were wrong	65
I found something about the content personally offensive	24
I found the advertisements annoying or deceptive	14
Other	11
I could not easily access stories	8
I started receiving emails, texts, or alerts I did not want	6
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*
N=	*788*

GENDER

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Male	48
Female	52
N=	*2,014*

EDUCATION

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
No high school diploma	12
High school graduate or equivalent	30
Some college	26
Bachelor's degree or above	32
N=	*2,014*

AGE

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
18-24	12
25-34	18
35-49	25
50-64	26
65 and older	19
N=	*2,014*

INCOME

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Under $10,000	8
$10,000 to under $20,000	11
$20,000 to under $30,000	13
$30,000 to under $40,000	9
$40,000 to under $50,000	10
$50,000 to under $75,000	17
$75,000 to under $100,000	12
$100,000 to under $150,000	13
$150,000 or more	8
N=	*2,014*

RACE/ETHNICITY

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
White	65
African American	12
Hispanic	16
Other	8
N=	*2,014*

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

	AP-NORC 2/18-3/6/2016
Democrat	45
Republican	36
Independent	16
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	3
N=	*2,014*

Media Insight Project Poll – A New Understanding: What Makes People Trust and Rely on News: Methodology

This survey was conducted by the Media Insight Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute (API) and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The survey was conducted from February 18 through March 6, 2016. The survey was funded by API. Staff from API, NORC at the University of Chicago, and AP collaborated on all aspects of the study.

The Media Insight Project also received input on the study design and suggestions for the survey from industry experts in both academia and the media during a day-long meeting in Washington D.C. on January 21, 2016.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel, which is NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, nonzero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face).

Interviews for this survey were conducted, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from the AmeriSpeak Panel, and 2,014 completed the survey — 1,603 via the web and 411 via telephone. The final stage completion rate is 40.3 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 36.9 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 94.7 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 14.1 percent.

The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 2.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey ($2 or $4 depending on their initial panel recruitment). All interviews were conducted in English by professional interviewers who were carefully trained on the specific survey for this study.

Once the sample was selected and fielded, and all the study data had been collected and made final, a poststratification process was used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under-and over- sampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, Census division, race/ethnicity, and household phone status. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over, were used for all analyses.

Details about the Media Insight Project can be found at: www.mediainsight.org.