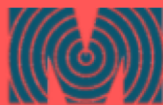


DIGITAL NEWS REPORT CANADA

2019 DATA : AN OVERVIEW



CENTRE D'ÉTUDES SUR LES MÉDIAS



REUTERS INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY OF JOURNALISM

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About the Digital News Report

The Digital News Report (DNR) is an international survey led by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University. It was conducted in 38 countries in 2019 and focuses on practices and perceptions of news by consumers, with a special interest in digital issues. The Canadian component of the survey is supervised by the Centre d'études sur les médias (CEM).

www.digitalnewsreport.org

Methodology

The DNR is produced through an online questionnaire administered by the survey firm YouGov. In Canada, it was distributed to a random sample of 2,055 participants registered with the firm. The questionnaire begins with a filter question that excludes respondents who did not consume news in the month preceding the survey. The Canadian data was collected from January 17 to February 18. The francophone subsample was completed on February 27, 2019, and involved 1,001 respondents. The results are weighted to be representative of Canada's adult population. It should be noted that such a survey is likely to underrepresent those segments of the Canadian population without access to the Internet: typically, such people are older, have less education and have low incomes. In 2019, new quotas were established to mitigate the underrepresentation of people with lower levels of education. This factor should be taken into account when the findings are compared with those of previous years.



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Canada 

Québec 

Key facts

- ⇒ The share of surveyed Canadians who trust "most news, most of the time" shifted from 58% to 52% since 2018. Despite this slight decline, Canada still compares favourably to most of the 38 countries participating in the DNR.
- ⇒ 70% of Canadian respondents say they carried out various actions out of concern about the accuracy of news in the year preceding the survey. These behaviors include checking several news sources to see whether a story is portrayed in a similar way (39%) and starting to rely on more reputable sources (30%).
- ⇒ Canadians have a rather positive opinion of the job done by the news media in the country. 60% of respondents believe the news media "help [them] understand the news" whereas 70% agree they "keep [them] up to date about what's going on". However, Canadians have mixed feelings toward the tone used in news media and the relevance of the subjects they cover.
- ⇒ A total of 44% of the Canadians surveyed use mainly online media to access news, whereas 56% favor offline media, such as television, radio or print. Social media is the main source of news for 19% of all Canadian adults, a share that increases to 38% among those under 35, and 49% among those aged 18 to 24.
- ⇒ Only 9% of respondents stated that they paid for online news (e.g., digital subscription or one-off payment for an article or app) in the last year, the same proportion as the previous study. If they had to choose only one online paid subscription service for the next year, 40% would prefer an online video streaming service such as Netflix. A subscription to online news would be the first choice for 9% of Canadians, and 4% among adults under 35.
- ⇒ 58% of respondents admitted to actively try to avoid news occasionally, sometimes, or often. 28% agreed being "worn out by the amount of news there is these days".

1. Canadians and their relationship with the media

1.1 Trust

In 2019, slightly more than half (52%) of the Canadians questioned said they trust “most news, most of the time” (Figure 1). As shown in Figure 2 and 3 below, this value is identical among francophones and anglophones. The share of Canadians who trust the media is down from 2018 (58%). The 2019 level is closer to the 2017 result (49%) and, to a lesser extent, the 2016 result (55%). Francophones and people under 35 years of age contributed substantially to this decline in trust: the proportion of respondents who trust “most news, most of the time” fell by 12 percentage points among francophones and 11 percentage points among young adults.

Even so, Canada’s results compare favourably with those of all DNR participants (42%). For example, Canadians clearly differ from the respondents in France (24%) and the United States (32%), who are far more distrustful of news.

Figure 1. Canadian respondents who trust different types of news, 2016 to 2019, as a percentage.¹

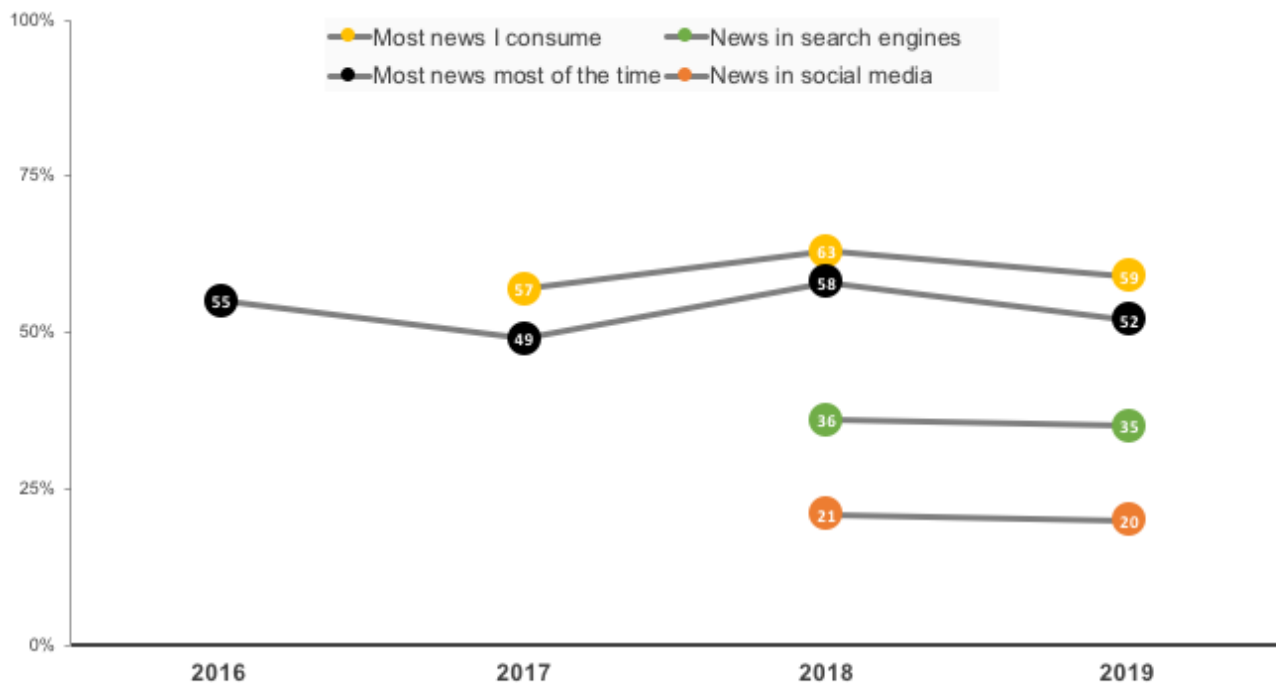
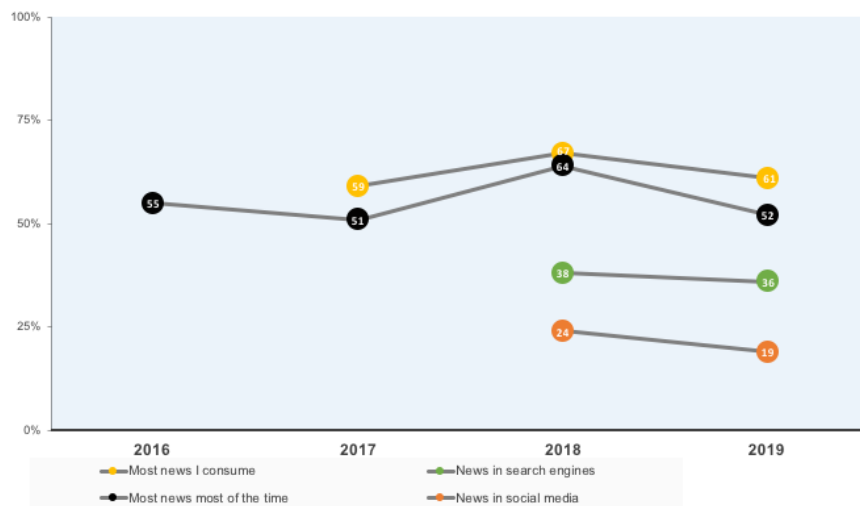
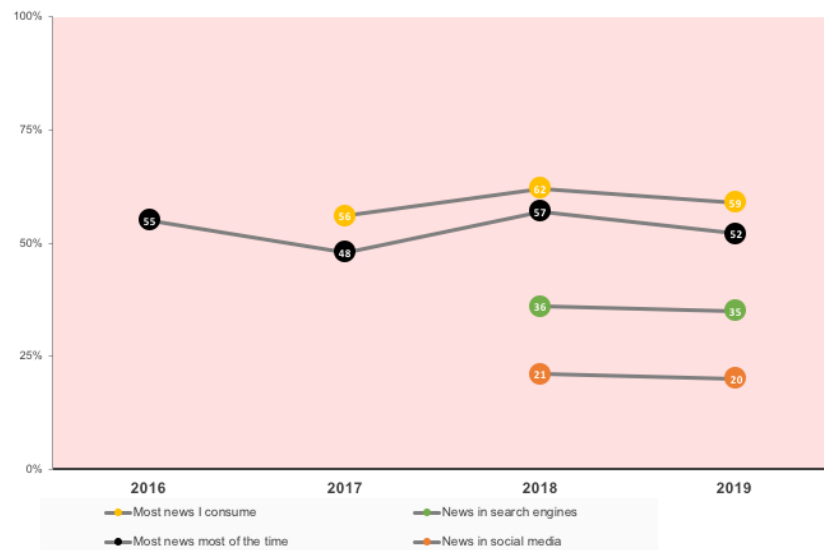


Figure 2 and 3. Anglophones respondents (in red) and francophones (in blue) who trust different types of news, 2016 to 2019, as a percentage.



As for news found through social media sites and search engines, 20% and 35% of Canadian respondents, respectively, say they trust it. Canadians are therefore more distrustful of these sources than of news in general. More broadly, 61% of the respondents said they were “concerned about what is real and what is fake on the Internet” – a figure down one percentage point from last year. Figure 1 also shows that, from one year to the next, respondents are systematically more likely to trust news they choose to consume rather than news in general.

This trend is consistent with the fact that a majority of Canadians exercise caution when accessing news. Indeed, the majority of the respondents take precautions to ensure the truthfulness of the information they consult or share on a daily basis, with 70% of the Canadians surveyed — and 76% of those under age 35 — saying they adopted at least one of the six precautions in Figure 4 in the year before the survey.

Figure 4. Share of Canadian respondents and respondents in all participating countries (in grey) who report having carried out various actions out of concern about the truthfulness of news in the year preceding the survey, in percentage.²

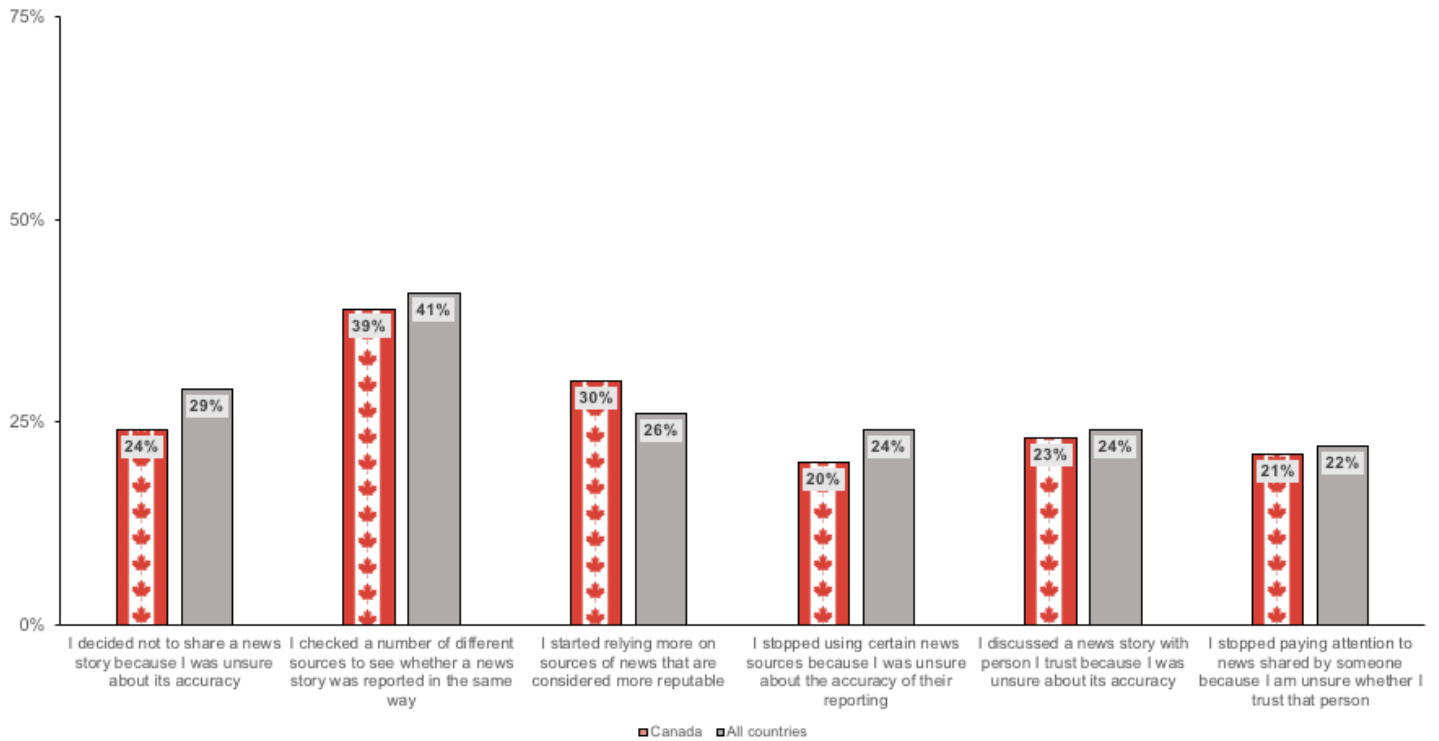
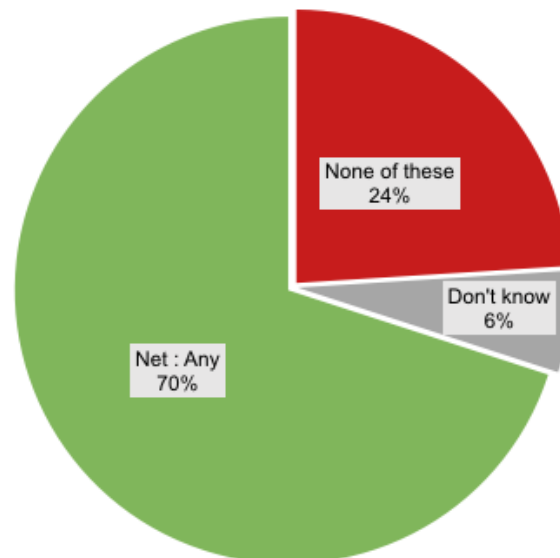


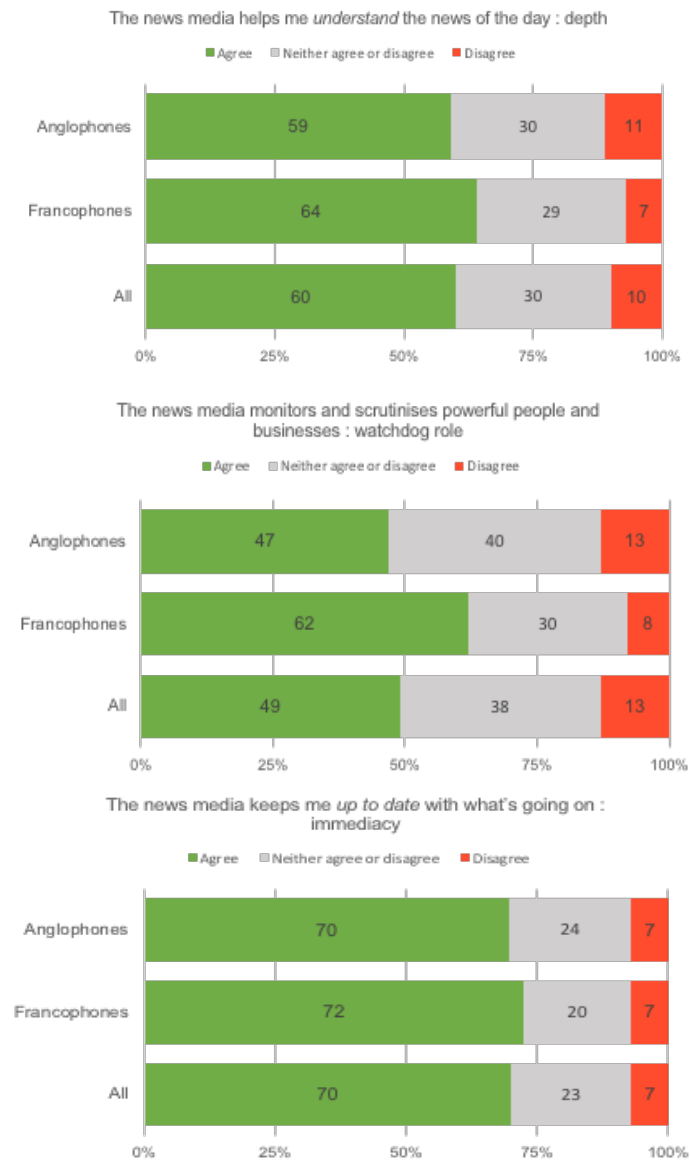
Figure 5. Breakdown of Canadian respondents based on the number of precautions in Figure 4 that they took in the year before the survey, in percentage.



1.2 Is the news media doing a good job?

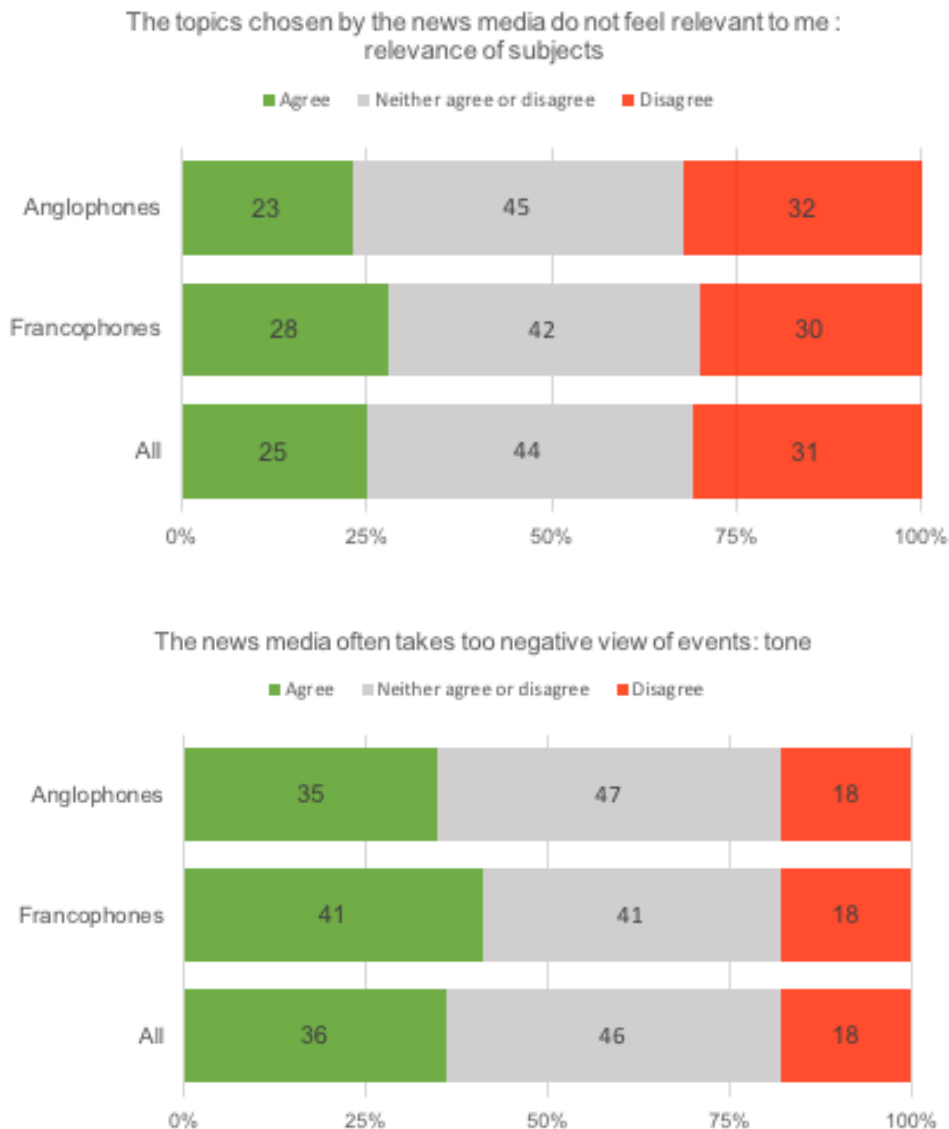
Canadians have a rather positive opinion of the job done by the news media in their country, especially for breaking news and depth of the coverage. With 60% of respondents who think that the news media “helps them understand the news”, Canadians — and to an even greater extent francophone respondents (64%) — have the highest score in this respect of all the countries taking part in the survey. When asked to assess the effectiveness of the media’s watchdog function, francophones have a more positive assessment (62% agree with the statement) than anglophones (49%). Finally, 70% of the respondents said that the news media allowed them to “keep up to date about what’s going on”.

Figure 6, 7 and 8. Breakdown of respondents according to their degree of agreement with statements about whether the media is doing a good job.



That being said, Canadians are not as positive towards the tone of the news media and the relevance of the topics covered. Indeed, 36% of the respondents think the media is too negative, while 25% find that the topics covered are not relevant to them. Concerning these two aspects of the media's work, francophones are more critical than anglophones (Figure 9 and 10). Young adults are less likely to be satisfied as regards all the criteria under consideration. The proportion of respondents under 35 years of age who find that "the news media often takes too negative a view of events" is 42%. Moreover, 28% of them think that "the topics chosen by the news media do not feel relevant to me" versus 23% of those over the age of 35.

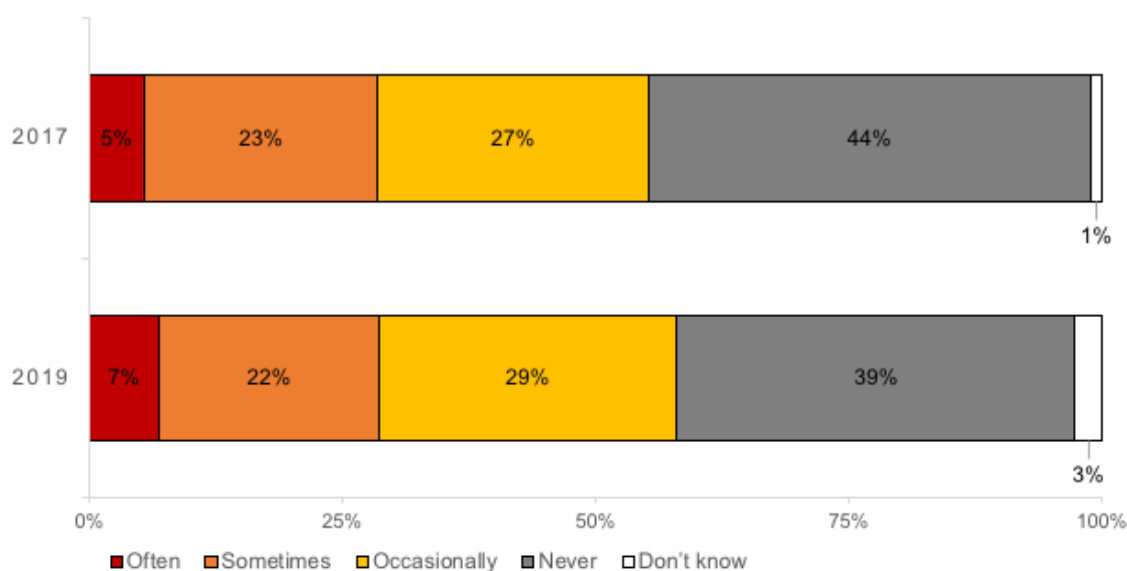
Figure 9 and 10. Breakdown of respondents according to their degree of agreement with statements about the quality of the media's work.³



1.3 Tendency to avoid news and feeling of news overload

More than half of the respondents in both language groups admit that they actively avoid news at least “occasionally”; 56% of the francophones and 59% of the anglophones express this view. The proportion of Canadians who avoid news slightly increased by 3% from 2017, going from 55% to 58% (Figure 11). This upward trend is noticeable in most of the countries that took part in the survey. More than a quarter of the Canadian respondents (28%) — and especially young adults (32%) — say they are “worn out by the amount of news there is these days”.⁴

Figure 11. Breakdown of Canadian respondents according to their news-avoidance frequency for 2017 and 2019.⁵



2. Media consumption by Canadians

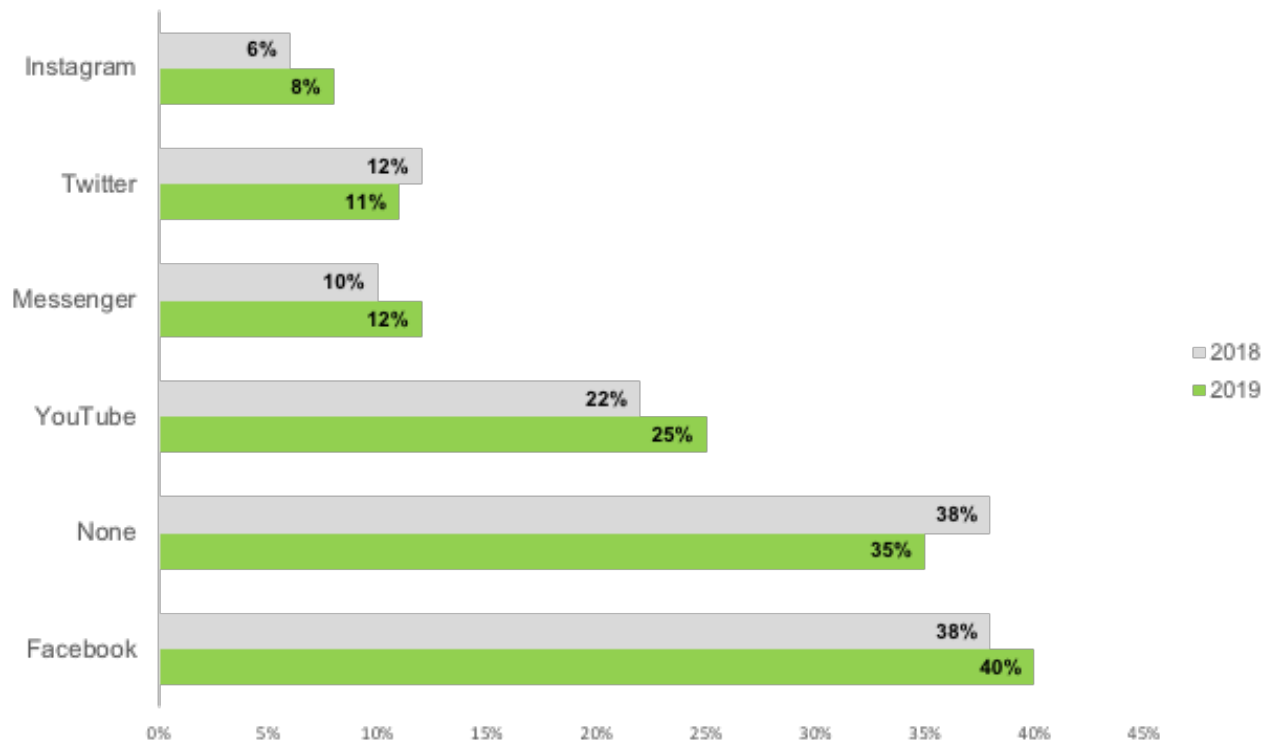
2.1 Accessing news online

Of the respondents who accessed news in the week preceding the survey, (n = 1979), 44% said they use mainly online media to access news, whereas 56% said they used offline media, such as television, radio or print. The share of Canadians who prefer to access news online is down by one percentage point from 2018. Social media are the most popular online sources, with 19% of the respondents identifying them as their main source of information. This proportion is 38% among those under 35 years of age and 49% for those aged 18 to 24. The websites and apps of television and radio companies follow with 12% of the respondents using them in the preceding week. Finally, a smaller number of the Canadians surveyed (8%) use websites and apps of newspapers as their main source of news.⁶

More generally, many respondents (63%) say they used social media to *find, read, watch, share or discuss news* in the week before the survey.⁷ The most popular social media for these purposes are Facebook, with 40% of the Canadians surveyed, YouTube

(25%), Messenger (12%), Twitter (11%) and Instagram (8%). As shown in Figure 12, with the exception of Twitter, the most popular social media all experienced a slight increase in this type of use versus 2018 levels.

Figure 12. Percentage share of respondents who use social media to find, read, watch, share or discuss news, 2018 and 2019.

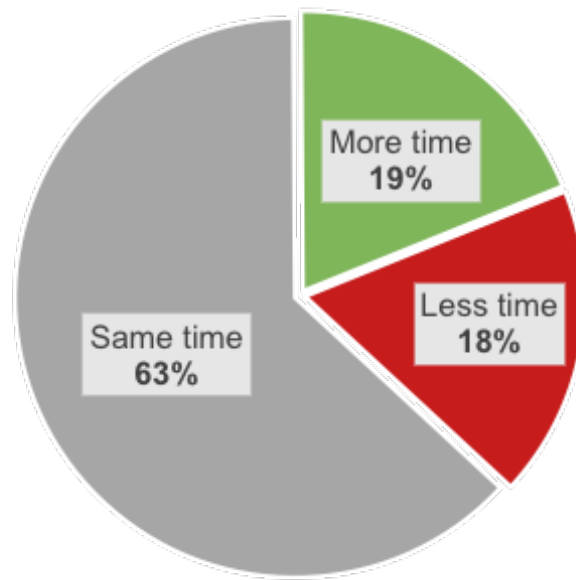


2.2 Facebook and WhatsApp

As we saw in the previous section, many Canadians still use Facebook to find, read, watch, share or discuss news. In particular, half of francophones (50%) report this type of use, versus 37% of anglophones. In addition, as shown in Figure 13, for all uses combined, Canadian users of Facebook are slightly more likely to report that they spent more time (19%) on the platform than less (18%) over the past 12 months. These proportions are 23% and 20%, respectively, for those aged 18 to 34, which contrasts sharply with the global trend. Indeed, the young adults surveyed in the 38 countries taking part in the survey were much more likely to report having spent less time on Facebook in the past year than more time: a net difference of 15 percentage points. For other platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, the opposite trend applies.⁸

Moreover, very few Canadians are interested in WhatsApp messaging. Only 4% of the Canadians said they used it for news-related activities versus 19% for respondents from all countries.

Figure 13. Breakdown of Canadian users of Facebook according to time they report having spent on the platform in the past year.



2.3 Podcasts: Which, where and why?⁹

A total of 29% of the Canadians surveyed — 24% of the francophones and 31% of the anglophones — listened to a podcast in the previous month. This practice is significantly more common among men (34%) than women (24%). Podcasts are much more popular among young adults, with 46% of the 18-to-34 category having listened to one in the previous month.

The most popular podcasts are those dealing with specialized topics, such as science and technology, business or health, with 12% of the respondents saying they consumed such podcasts in the previous month. Podcasts on politics or international relations and lifestyle podcasts dealing with general topics (such as food, fashion, arts and travel) attracted 10% of the Canadians.

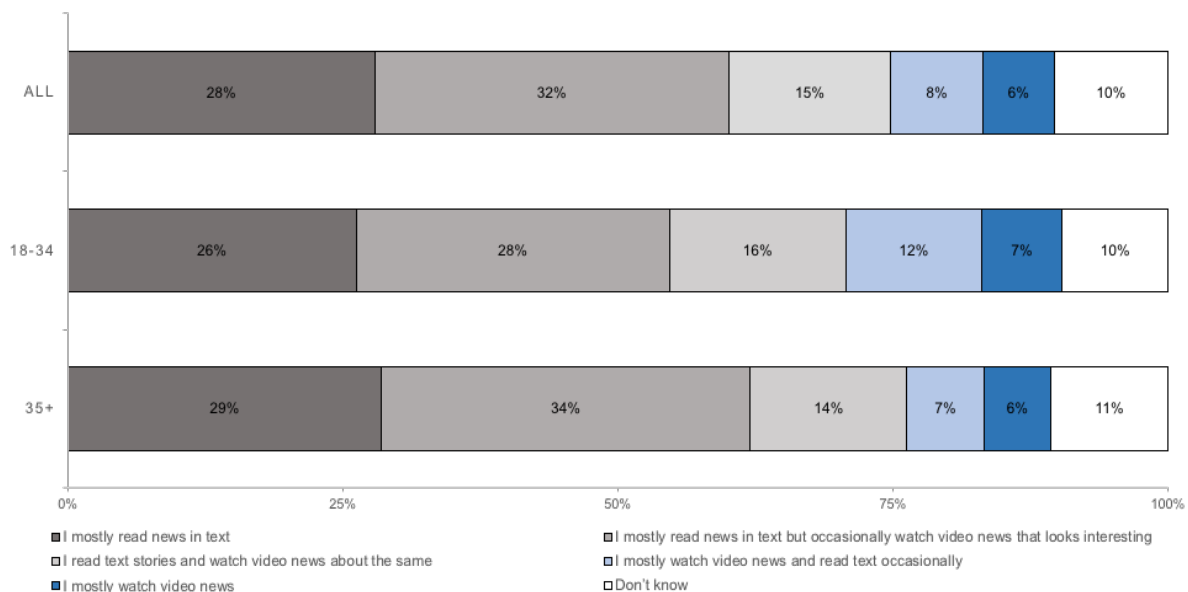
The majority of the people who listen to podcasts (64%) do so at home as they go about their daily activities (getting ready, doing housework, etc.). Listening at home is less popular among the 18-to-34 group (55%), who are more likely to listen to podcasts outside the home, such as while running errands or going for a walk (22% versus 13% for those 35 and over). A number of the respondents of all ages (21%) take advantage of their commute by public or private transport to listen to podcasts.

Lastly, as for the reasons why the public listens to podcasts, half of the people who do so (50%) said they wanted to learn something. Among the other reasons frequently cited are the desire to keep up to date about topics of interest (45%) and to be entertained (39%). Those 18 to 34 years old are more likely than the older respondents to listen to podcasts as a change from music (+9 percentage points) or simply to fill empty time (+8 percentage points).

2.4 Browsing: More people read news in text than watch video news¹⁰

Text is always more popular than video when it comes to accessing news online. In fact, 28% of the Canadians surveyed say they read news almost exclusively in text form, and 32% of the respondents mostly read news but occasionally watch video news. Francophones are slightly more likely (34%) than anglophones (28%) to access news mostly in written form. Only 6% of both French- and English-speaking respondents say they mostly watch videos to access news online. Even so, that figure corresponds to an increase of 2 percentage points since 2018. Consumption of news mostly in video form is marginal (7%), even among young respondents, but this age group is significantly more likely to “mostly watch video news and read text occasionally” (12% versus 7% for those 35 and over).

Figure 14. Breakdown of all Canadian respondents, aged 18 to 34, and 35 and over, according to their preferences for text or video to access online news.



2.5 Smartphones becoming more popular for news¹¹

Of the Canadian respondents who used an electronic device to access news in the previous week, 43% identify the computer as their primary means of accessing online news, whereas 35% prefer smartphones. Since 2016, we have seen the smartphone's share for this type of use increase gradually at the expense of the computer. Finally, 12% of the respondents said they accessed news mainly on a tablet in 2019, a proportion that has been relatively stable over the past three years (Figure 15). Among francophones, especially francophones aged 55 and over, the tablet is more popular, with 17% and 25% of the respondents, respectively, identifying it as their main source of online news.

N.B. Owing to a problem in the administration of the survey, the Canadian data for 2018 are likely to overestimate the proportion of respondents who get news mainly with a computer.

Figure 15. Percentage share of respondents who used an electronic device to access news in the previous week, according to their main way of accessing news from 2016 to 2019.

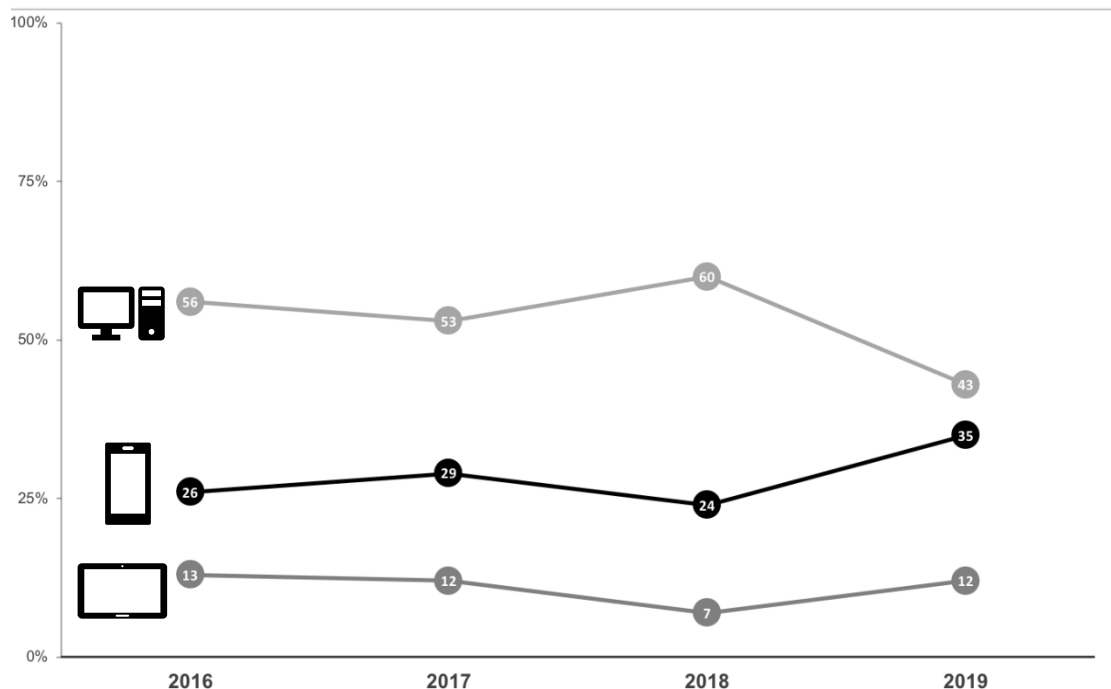
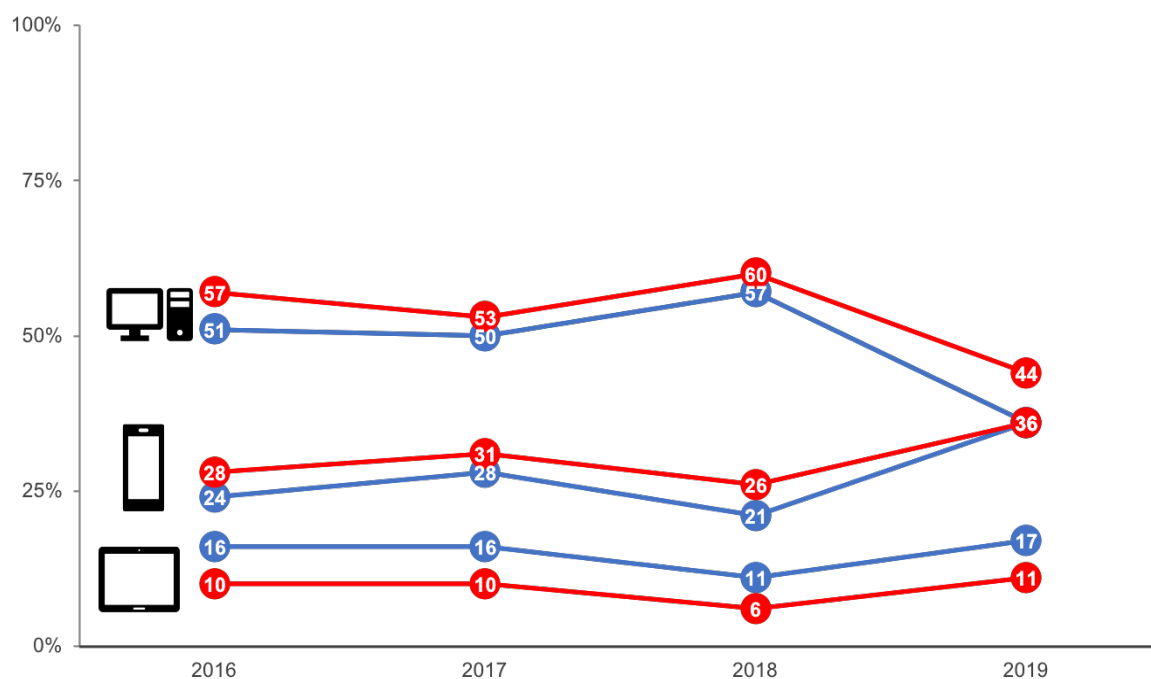


Figure 16. Percentage share of francophones (blue) and anglophones (red) who used an electronic device to consult news in the previous week according to their main way of accessing news from 2016 to 2019.

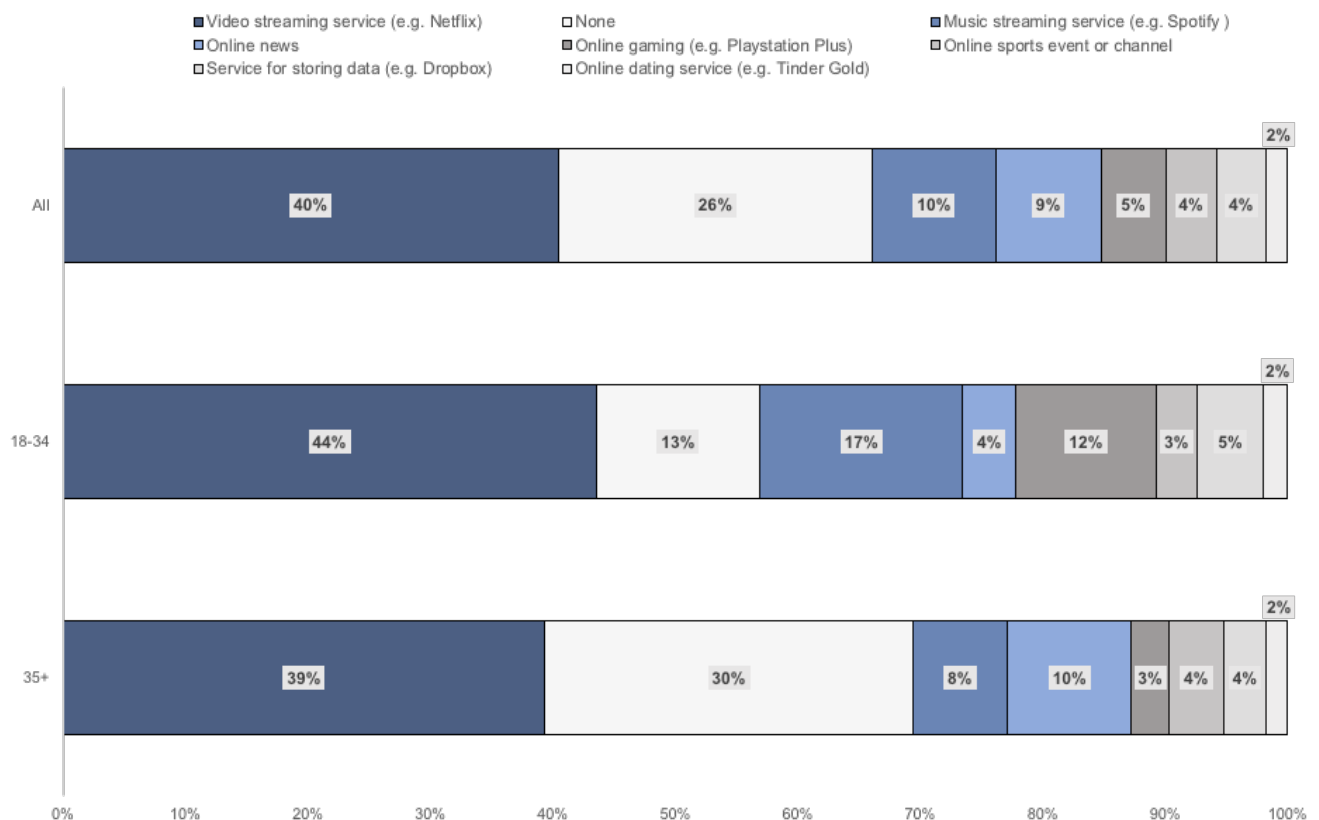


2.6 Paying for Online News¹²

In the 2019 survey, 9% of the respondents said they had paid for online news (e.g., digital subscription or one-off payment for an article or app) or had accessed paid news sites in the year before the survey. Men are twice as likely as women to have paid for online news (12% versus 6%). Only 1% of the respondents said they had made a donation to a digital news service during the same period.

Even though 20% of the respondents who did not pay for online news stated in the 2018 survey that they were considering doing so in the coming year, the proportion of respondents who actually purchased content was unchanged in 2019 at 9%. If they had to choose only one online paid subscription service for the next year, 40% of the respondents would prefer an online video streaming service such as Netflix, and 10% would prioritize a music streaming service such as Spotify, rather than a subscription to online news (9%). Canadians aged 18 to 34 are even less likely (4%) than the others to want a news subscription if they can have only one paid service in the coming year.

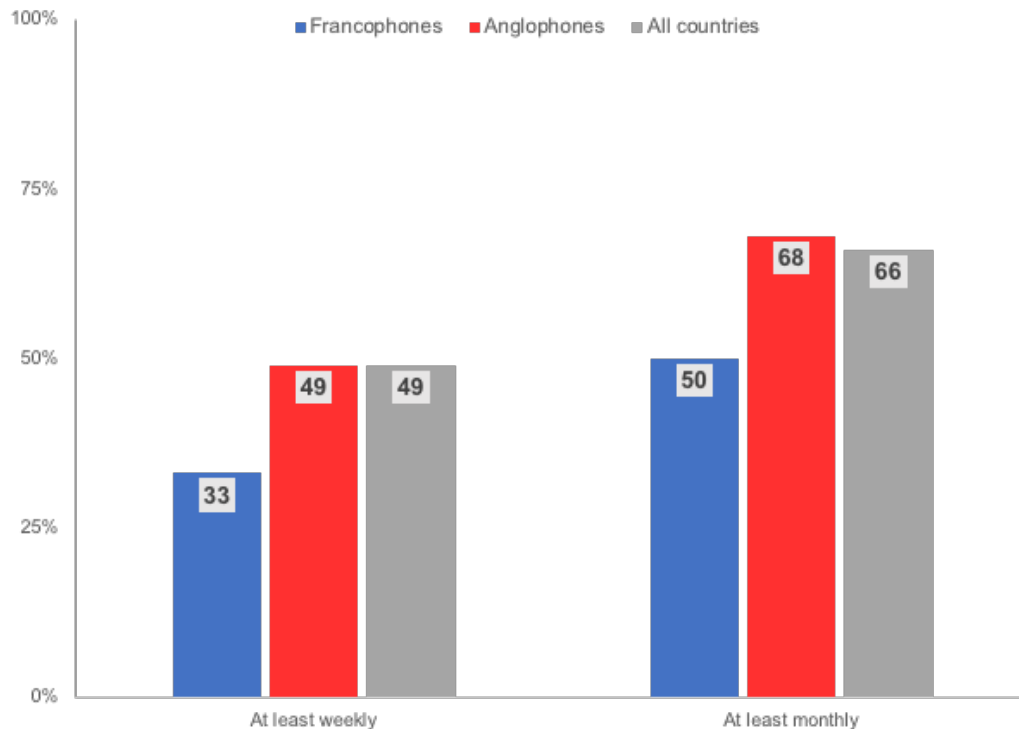
Figure 17. Percentage share of respondents who would choose various online paid subscription services if they could have only one in the coming year (first choice)¹³



2.6.1 Encountering paywalls¹⁴

A total of 45% of the Canadians surveyed said that at least once a week they “click on a link, expecting to read an article, and find [themselves] asked to pay for a subscription instead” and 64% say they encounter this situation at least once a month. Anglophones are much more likely than francophones to say that they encounter paywalls at least once a week (+16 percentage points) and at least once a month (+18 percentage points).

Figure 18. Percentage share of anglophones, francophones, and all DNR respondents who say they encounter a paywall at least weekly or at least monthly.



1 Q6_2016_1 et Q6_2016_6. We are now going to ask you about trust in the news. First we will ask you about how much you trust the news as a whole within your country. Then we will ask you about how much you trust the news that you choose to consume. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - I think you can trust most news most of the time. - I think I can trust most of the news I consume most of the time

Q6_2018_2 et Q6_2018_3. It is now possible to get online news in many different ways, including from search engines and social media sites. >With this in mind, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. - I think I can trust news in social media most of the time With this in mind, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. - I think I can trust news in social media most of the time

2 Q_LIT_2019. Have you done any of the following in the last year ? Please select all that apply.

3 Q15_2019_1. We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - The news media monitors and scrutinises powerful people and businesses: watchdog role - The topics chosen by the news media do not feel relevant to me: relevance of subjects - The news media often takes too negative view of events : tone - The news media keeps me **up to date** with what's going on: immediacy - The news media helps me **understand** the news of the day: depth

4 Q1e_2019. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement. “I am worn out by the amount of news there is these days.”

5 Q1di_2017. Do you find yourself actively trying to avoid news these days?

6 Q4. You say you've used these sources of news in the last week , which would you say is your MAIN source of news? Base : those who used news sources last week (n=1979)

7 Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing or discussing news in the last week ? Please select all that apply.

8 Q12C_2019_1. You say you use the following social networks for any purpose, in the last 12 months, has the amount of time you spend using them changed? - Facebook

9 Q11F_2018. A podcast is an episodic series of digital audio files, which you can download, subscribe or listen to. >Which of the following types of podcast have you listened to in the last month ? Please select all that apply.

Q11F_podcast_location. In what circumstances do you tend to consume podcasts regularly? Please select all that apply. Base : ceux qui ont écouté un podcast dans le dernier mois.

Q11F_podcast_reason. Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you listen to podcasts? Please select all that apply.

10 OPTQ11D : In thinking about your online news habits, which of the following statements applies best to you? Please select one.

11 UK8b6_5. You've said you use the following devices to access news in the last week, which is your MAIN way of accessing online news? Base: Those who use any devices for news

12 Q7a. Have you paid for ONLINE news content, or accessed a paid for ONLINE news service in the last year ? (This could be a digital subscription, combined digital/print subscription or one off payment for an article or app or e-edition)

13 Q_VALUE_2019_A. If you could only have one for the next 12 months, which one of the following would you choose?

14 Q7_SUBS3. How often do you click on a link, expecting to read an article, and find yourself asked to pay for a subscription instead? Base : all.