


Ukrainians trust Telegram and YouTube more than traditional media

Findings from a sociological survey



Between April 1 and 13, 2025, the sociological group Rating, commissioned by the NGO Lviv Media Forum and International Media Support, carried out a nationwide survey among Ukrainians aged 18 and over (excluding occupied territories). Using face-to-face structured interviews, the survey measured public sentiment, media habits, and levels of trust in different sources. The sample included 2,000 respondents, representative by age, gender, and settlement type, with a margin of error of no more than $\pm 2.2\%$. The study was conducted for internal use and will not be published in full. Still, the findings on media consumption point to a serious challenge for Ukraine's professional media: the risk of losing public trust — a threat potentially as critical as financial hardship. Questions on fact-checking, combined with an assessment of vulnerability to disinformation, also revealed a widespread but misplaced confidence among many Ukrainians in their ability to tell truth from fake news.

NEWS CONSUMPTION: TELEGRAM AND YOUTUBE ARE THE MOST POPULAR SOURCES

Telegram has become the main channel for Ukrainians to follow current events.

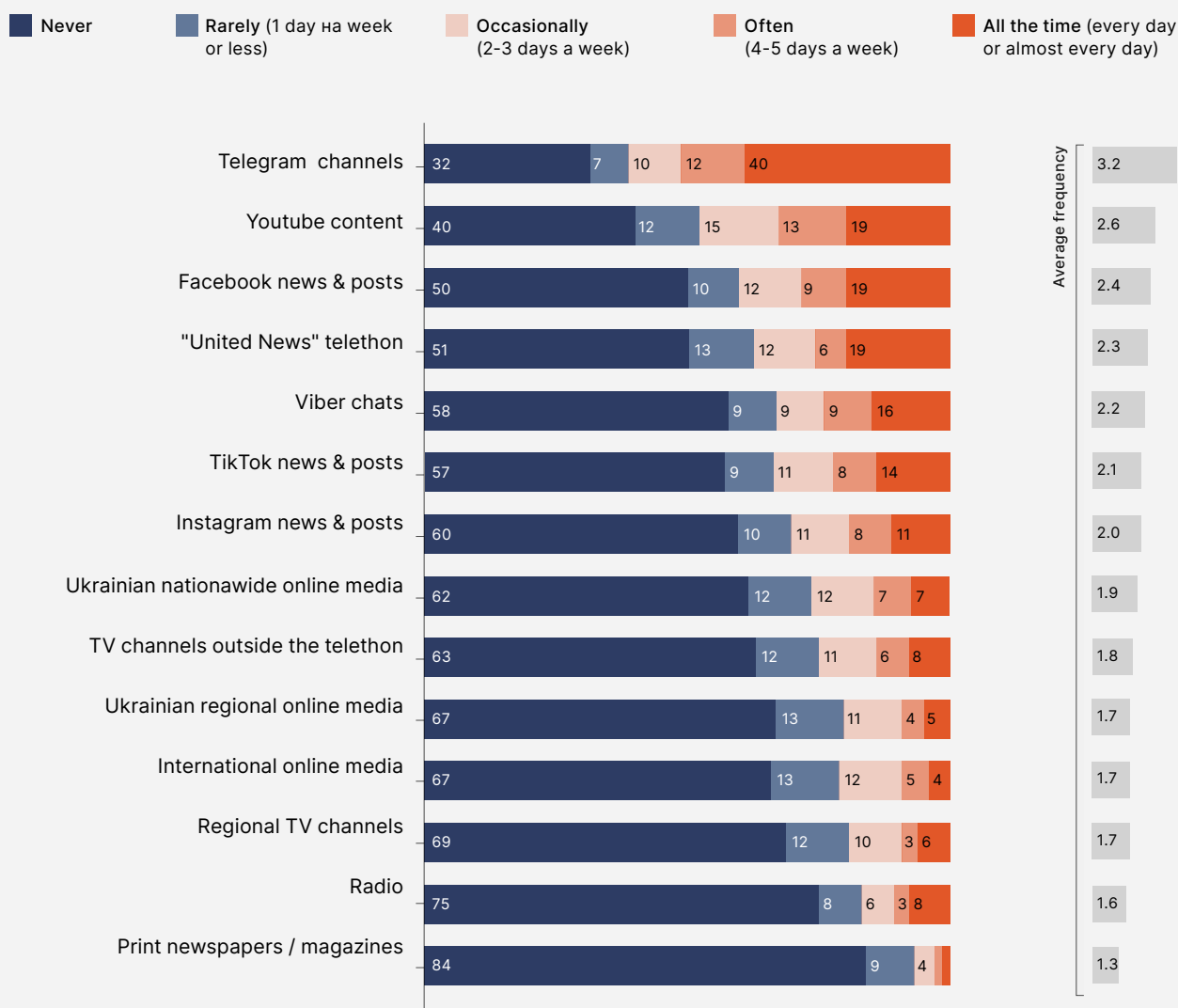
Forty percent of respondents said they read Telegram channels regularly, while another 12% do so frequently (4–5 days a week). This trend first took shape in 2022, and earlier media consumption studies conducted annually by *Internews* and *USAID* confirmed [Telegram's steady growth in popularity](#).

YouTube comes second, with 32% using it often or regularly, followed by Facebook (28%), the joint national telethon *United News* (25%), and Viber chats (25%).

Regular reading of print media is now rare: only 3% of respondents said they read newspapers or magazines regularly, another 4% do so occasionally, and 9% — rarely.

At the same time, 84% said they never use newspapers or magazines as a source of information. Similarly, 75% never turn to radio, 69% to regional TV channels, 67% to Ukrainian regional online media, and 66% to international online outlets.

HOW OFTEN IN THE PAST MONTH HAVE YOU RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS IN UKRAINE FROM THE FOLLOWING MEDIA SOURCES?



Telegram channels are used more actively by residents of Kyiv, regional centers, and the eastern part of Ukraine. They are also more popular among younger people (18–29 years old), respondents with higher education, and those with relatively higher incomes.

TikTok is a common news source for residents of western and central Ukraine, younger audiences, people with lower incomes, and respondents with lower levels of education.

Instagram is more often used as a news source by younger people, wealthier respondents, and those with higher education.

Facebook tends to be chosen more frequently by residents of rural areas and people in the middle-age group (30–59 years old).

YouTube videos are watched more often by residents of regional centers, as well as by wealthier and more educated respondents.

The joint telethon *United News* has a stable audience among residents of western and central Ukraine, rural communities, people with lower education levels, less affluent citizens, and older respondents. This group also tends to prefer traditional television — both national channels outside the telethon and regional broadcasters.

Online media — including national, regional, and international outlets — are more often used by wealthier and better-educated respondents as either an alternative or an additional source of information.

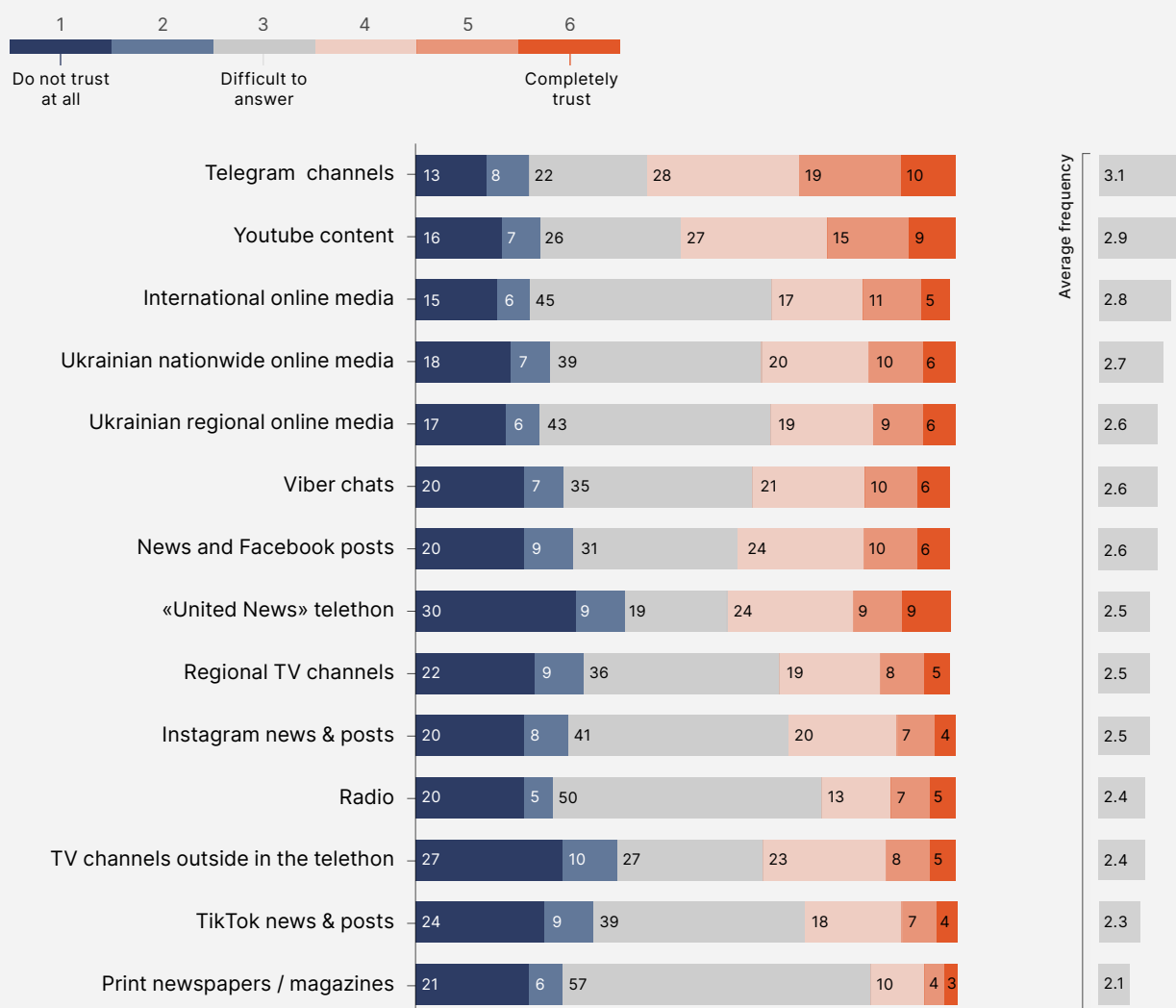
About half of respondents watch socio-political news once or several times a day. The most active consumers are residents of central and western Ukraine and Kyiv, older age groups (60+), people with higher education, as well as pensioners and people with disabilities. The least active are residents of border regions and younger audiences, particularly students.

TRUST IN MEDIA: POORER UKRAINIANS TRUST LESS, YOUNG PEOPLE TRUST TELEGRAM

Overall, respondents tend to distrust media sources. When comparing levels of trust across different platforms, Telegram channels and YouTube stand out — trusted by 29% and 24% of respondents respectively, placing them well ahead of traditional media.

For most other sources, the trust balance is negative. Slightly higher trust is expressed toward international, national, and regional online outlets, Viber chats, and news or posts on Facebook. The lowest levels of trust are recorded for newspapers and magazines, TikTok news content, non-telethon TV channels, and radio.

HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST OR DISTRUST THE FOLLOWING SOURCES OF INFORMATION?



Telegram remains one of the few sources that residents of eastern Ukraine and Kyiv trust slightly more than people in other regions, even though overall trust in media in these areas is lower.

Young people aged 18–29 prefer Telegram channels and consider them a reliable source, as do respondents with higher education and wealthier citizens, for whom Telegram is one of the main ways to get information. Instagram as a source of news and posts is trusted more by young people and wealthier respondents. These same groups also turn to Instagram most often to learn about events in Ukraine and around the world.

YouTube is considered a more authoritative source for an educated audience. Respondents with higher education use this platform more frequently and tend to trust the content more than other social groups. TikTok is trusted primarily by less-educated respondents, who choose news and posts on this app as a convenient and familiar way to access information.

Online media — including Ukrainian national, regional, and international outlets — enjoy higher levels of trust among residents of western and central Ukraine, as well as among wealthier and more educated respondents.

Television, including the joint telethon *United News*, remains a key source of information for older audiences, especially those over 60. This group tends to trust both the telethon and other TV channels, as well as regional broadcasters. The telethon also enjoys relatively higher trust among residents of western and central Ukraine and less-educated respondents.

At the same time, the joint telethon shows the highest levels of expressed distrust, with 30% of respondents saying they do not trust it and another 9% saying they somewhat do not trust it.

Radio and print media — newspapers and magazines — are more trusted by rural residents and older audiences.

Less affluent respondents generally show lower levels of trust in all sources of information, regardless of format or origin.

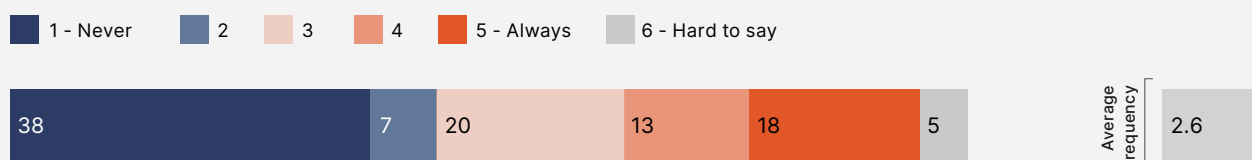
The gradual decline of trust in media in Ukraine has been ongoing for several years. According to the [Kyiv International Institute of Sociology](#), trust in Ukrainian media sharply increased in 2022 (from 29% to 51%), but fell again in 2023 to a level lower than in 2021. [In 2024](#), trust decreased slightly further (to 27%), while distrust reached a record high of 42%. However, as the data show, when focusing on trust in individual sources rather than the media as a whole, the share of positive responses is considerably lower.

FACT-CHECKING: MOST RESPONDENTS RARELY OR NEVER VERIFY INFORMATION

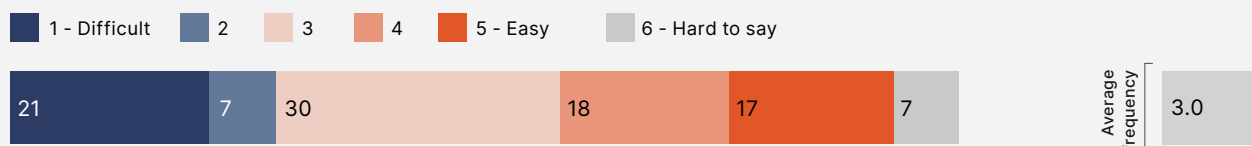
Almost 40% of respondents said they never check the accuracy of information, while 18% always do. Fact-checking is more common among residents of western Ukraine, young people (18–29 years old), respondents with higher education, as well as active military personnel and veterans. About 35% of respondents feel it is easy or somewhat easy to distinguish true information from false in the media, while 28% find it difficult or somewhat difficult. Among the same groups — except residents of western Ukraine — respondents reported that they find it easy to spot false information. This was especially reported by younger respondents (18–29), those aged 30–39, respondents with higher education, and military personnel or veterans.

FACT-CHECKING AND VERIFYING INFORMATION

How often do you check the accuracy of information from media sources?



How easy or difficult is it for you to distinguish true information from false information in the media?



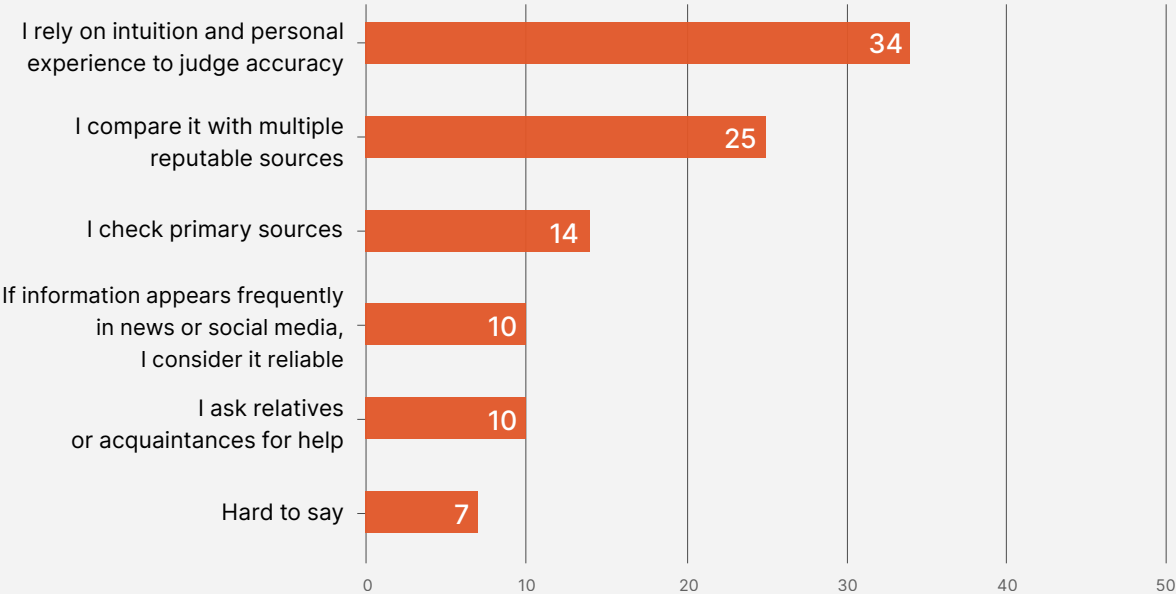
The most common **methods for verifying information** from media sources are relying on personal intuition and experience (34%) and cross-checking with multiple reputable sources (25%). Older respondents (40+), including pensioners, and people with disabilities are more likely to rely on intuition.

Comparing information across several reputable sources is more common among residents of western and central Ukraine and Kyiv, young people (18–29), respondents with higher education, as well as students and entrepreneurs. About 14% of respondents check primary sources, most often younger people (18–29) and those in middle age groups (30–49), respondents with higher education, and military personnel or veterans.

Ten percent consider information appearing in multiple news outlets and social media as a sign of its reliability. This approach is more common among residents of western and border regions, young people (18–29), less-educated respondents, and veterans or active military personnel.

About 10% of respondents turn to relatives or acquaintances for help, most often older adults (60+), less-educated respondents, pensioners, people with disabilities, homemakers, and students.

HOW DO YOU USUALLY ASSESS THE RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION FROM MEDIA SOURCES?

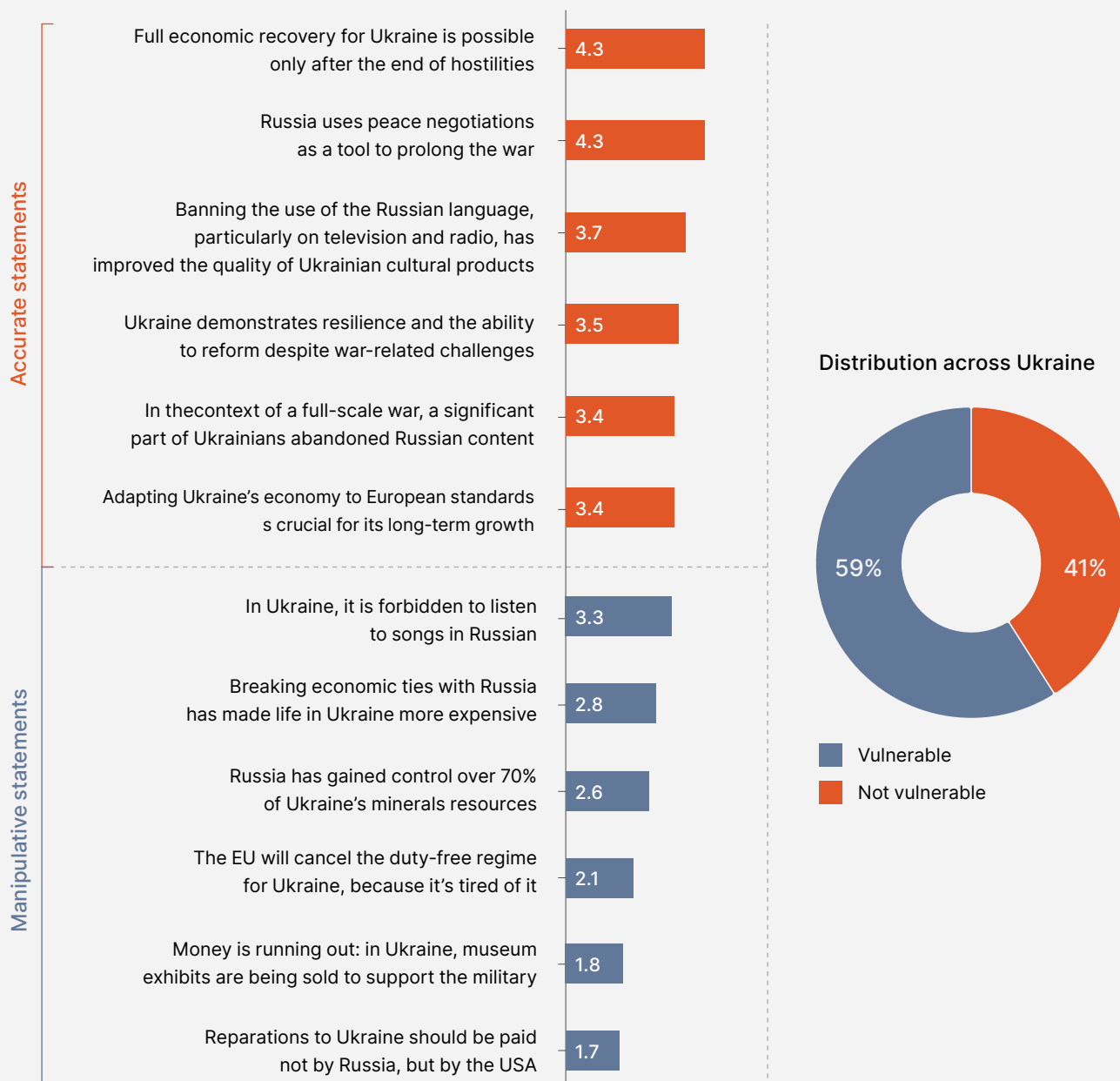


VULNERABILITY TO DISINFORMATION: 59% ARE VULNERABLE

One of the study's goals was to identify audiences vulnerable to disinformation narratives. To do this and build a profile of this group, we developed 12 statements based on discourses and narratives commonly found in Ukrainian media, covering various topics such as politics and international relations, economics, and culture. For each topic, the tool included four statements: two disinformation statements and two accurate statements (16 statements in total). Respondents were asked to rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant "completely manipulated" and 5 meant "accurate information."

The results were used to create categories of vulnerability to disinformation. These categories were based on a new variable calculated as the average rating of the statements' accuracy on the 1–5 scale, where 1 meant "completely manipulated" and 5 meant "accurate information." Respondents whose average ratings leaned toward disinformation were classified as "vulnerable," making up 59% of the sample. Those whose responses were mostly closer to accurate ratings were classified as "not vulnerable," representing 41% of respondents.

VULNERABILITY TO DISINFORMATION BASED ON ASSESSMENT OF ACCURATE AND MANIPULATIVE STATEMENTS



Respondents who are vulnerable to disinformation are more often Russian-speaking or bilingual, live in border or frontline regions, and belong to less affluent and less educated groups. In terms of gender and age, this group is diverse.

Vulnerable respondents are significantly less supportive of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, as well as less supportive of the current government. Around half of respondents in this group believe that restoring friendly relations with Russians after the war will be impossible; however, on this measure, they still lag behind the non-vulnerable group.

Vulnerable respondents are less likely to follow socio-political news and show lower levels of trust in media. At the same time, **they rate their own ability to distinguish true information from false just as highly as non-vulnerable respondents.** When assessing the reliability of information, they rely slightly more on personal experience and intuition and less on comparing information across multiple sources. Other methods of evaluating media reliability are used just as frequently among them as among the non-vulnerable.

During times of war and major geopolitical shifts, Ukrainians' relationship with the media and information space remains unstable. Heightened vulnerability to information influences, including foreign sources, poses a threat to national security. This makes it crucial to continuously monitor and study trends in media consumption and media literacy. Unfortunately, large annual studies that tracked these trends in Ukraine up to 2025 are now at risk due to the end of USAID grant support. The research team at the Lviv Media Forum stresses that such studies are essential, and supporting them also helps promote the development, growth, and effective recovery of Ukrainian media and society.

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