CANADA PULSE INSIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Divided Over Facts, Canadians Still Trust Journalists to Get It Right

Three-quarters (75%) say Canadians often disagree about basic facts and eight in ten (79%) think the world is getting worse, yet eight in ten trust national (81%) and local (81%) news organizations to provide accurate information

Toronto, Canada, October 27, 2026 – A new national poll by Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation (CJF), released for Media Literacy Week, finds Canadians placing their trust in journalism at a time when most see the country divided over basic facts and the world getting worse: three-quarters (75%) say people in Canada often disagree not only about opinions but about the basic facts of an issue, and eight in ten (79%) think the world as a whole is getting worse.

Against that backdrop, eight in ten Canadians trust Canadian national news organizations (81%) and local news organizations (81%) to provide accurate information about important public issues. Trust runs higher, not lower, among those who see division and decline: 82% of those who say Canadians often disagree about basic facts trust national news organizations, compared with 76% of those who say this happens not very often or never, and 83% of those who think the world is getting worse do so, compared with 78% of those who say it is getting better or staying the same.

Accuracy is also what Canadians most want from journalism: seven in ten (72%) rank reporting facts accurately among its three most important roles, half (50%) rank it first, and three-quarters (76%) of those who rank it say Canadian news media do it well.

Other key findings include:

- Three-quarters (74%) of Canadians are confident they can tell accurate information from false, but only three in ten (30%) are confident the average Canadian can.
- One in four trust social-media creators (24%) or AI tools (26%) to provide accurate information, and nearly nine in ten (88%) want it disclosed when AI helps produce a news story.
- Three-quarters (76%) actively check a questionable claim, most often by seeing whether other reputable outlets are reporting it.
- Fewer than half (44%) of those who rank holding the powerful to account among journalism's top roles say the media do that well.
- The average Canadian draws on 3.7 news sources a day.

Breaking Out the Study Results

Three-quarters (75%) of Canadians say people in Canada often disagree about basic facts, not just opinions; eight in ten (79%) think the world is getting worse

Three-quarters (75%) of Canadians feel that people in Canada often disagree not only about opinions or values but about the basic facts of an issue — 24% very often and 51% somewhat often. About one in seven (15%) say this happens not very often or never, and 10% are not sure.

Those most likely to say Canadians often disagree about basic facts are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (79%); by region, Alberta (82%) leads, followed by British Columbia and Atlantic Canada (80% each), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (75%), Ontario (74%) and Québec (68%).

Based on the news and information they see and hear, Canadians are gloomiest about the world: eight in ten (79%) say the world as a whole is getting worse and 5% better.

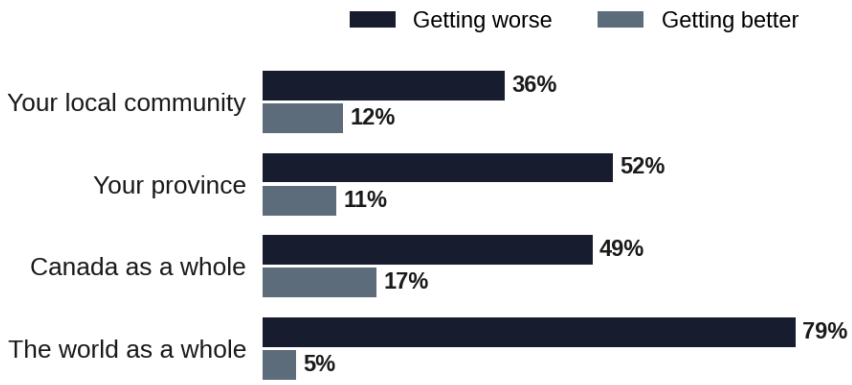
A slim majority (52%) say their province is getting worse and almost half (49%) say Canada as a whole is, against 17% who say Canada is getting better.

The outlook is brightest closest to home: 36% say their local community is getting worse, 12% better and almost half (47%) staying about the same; person by person, 25% see their community doing better than Canada and 17% worse.

Compared with five years ago, one-third (32%) of Canadians say there is less news coverage of their local community, including 5% who say there is no real coverage anymore; 12% see more, and 48% about the same.

Those most likely to see less local coverage are Canadians aged 55 and over (37%); by region, highest in British Columbia (37%), Alberta and Atlantic Canada (35% each) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (33%).

Q. Based on the news and information you see and hear, do you think things are generally getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same in each of the following? Percent getting worse and getting better.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

Eight in ten (81%) Canadians trust Canadian national and local news organizations; one in four trust social-media creators (24%) or AI tools (26%)

Asked how much they trust each of nine sources to provide accurate information about important public issues, eight in ten (81%) Canadians trust Canadian national news organizations and journalists a great deal or somewhat (33% a great deal), and the same proportion (81%) trust local news organizations and journalists in their area.

Experts and academics (78%), international news agencies (74%) and friends and family (73%) follow, then governments and public institutions (65%). Fewer than four in ten trust elected politicians (37%), and about one in four trust AI tools and chatbots (26%) or social-media creators and influencers (24%).

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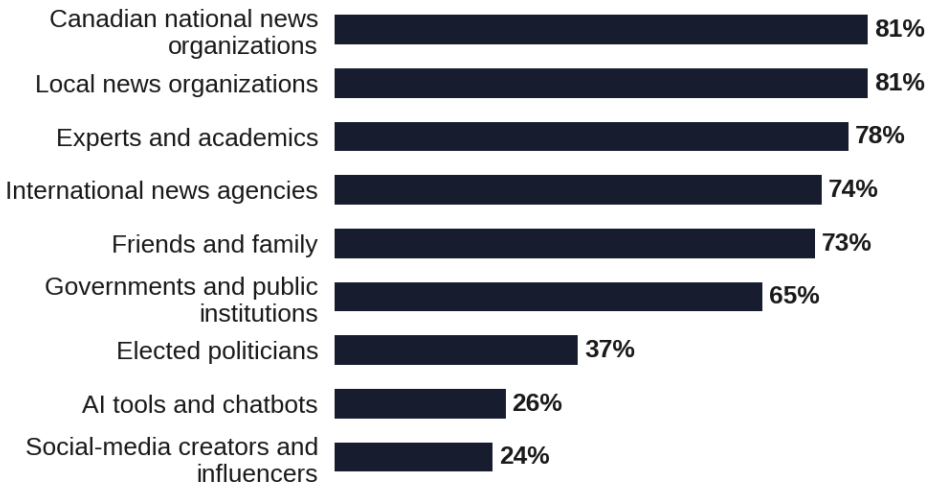
Those most likely to trust Canadian national news organizations are Canadians aged 55 and over (88%); by region, Québec and Atlantic Canada (87% each) lead, followed by British Columbia (82%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (81%), Ontario (80%) and Alberta (69%).

Taken together, nearly nine in ten (87%) Canadians trust national or local news organizations, and one in ten (11%) trust neither; the average Canadian trusts 5.4 of the nine sources.

Trust runs higher, not lower, among Canadians who see division and decline. Among those who say people in Canada often disagree about basic facts, 82% trust national news organizations and 82% local ones, compared with 76% and 75% of those who say this happens not very often or never. Among those who think the world is getting worse, 83% trust both, compared with 78% and 77% of those who say it is getting better or staying the same.

Distrust runs the other way: seven in ten (72%) do not trust social-media creators and influencers very much or at all, 67% say the same of AI tools and chatbots and 60% of elected politicians, against 17% for national news organizations and 17% for local ones. Those most likely to trust neither national nor local news organizations are Canadians aged 35 to 54 (15%); by region, highest in Alberta (18%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (13%) and Ontario (12%).

Q. How much, if at all, do you trust each of the following to provide accurate information about important public issues? Percent trusting a great deal or somewhat.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

Seven in ten (72%) rank accurate reporting among journalism's most important roles, and three-quarters (76%) of them say the media do it well; fewer than half (44%) say the same of holding the powerful to account

Asked to rank the three most important roles for journalists and news organizations today, seven in ten (72%) Canadians put reporting facts accurately in their top three, and half (50%) rank it first.

Holding governments, corporations and other powerful people accountable (49%) and identifying and exposing false or misleading information (46%) follow, then explaining complex issues clearly (44%), presenting a range of perspectives (29%), helping people understand what they can do about issues that affect them (25%) and reflecting the concerns and experiences of local communities (16%).

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Those most likely to rank accurate reporting in their top three are Canadians aged 55 and over (80%); by region, Atlantic Canada (78%) leads, followed by British Columbia (74%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (73%), Ontario (72%), Alberta (71%) and Québec (69%).

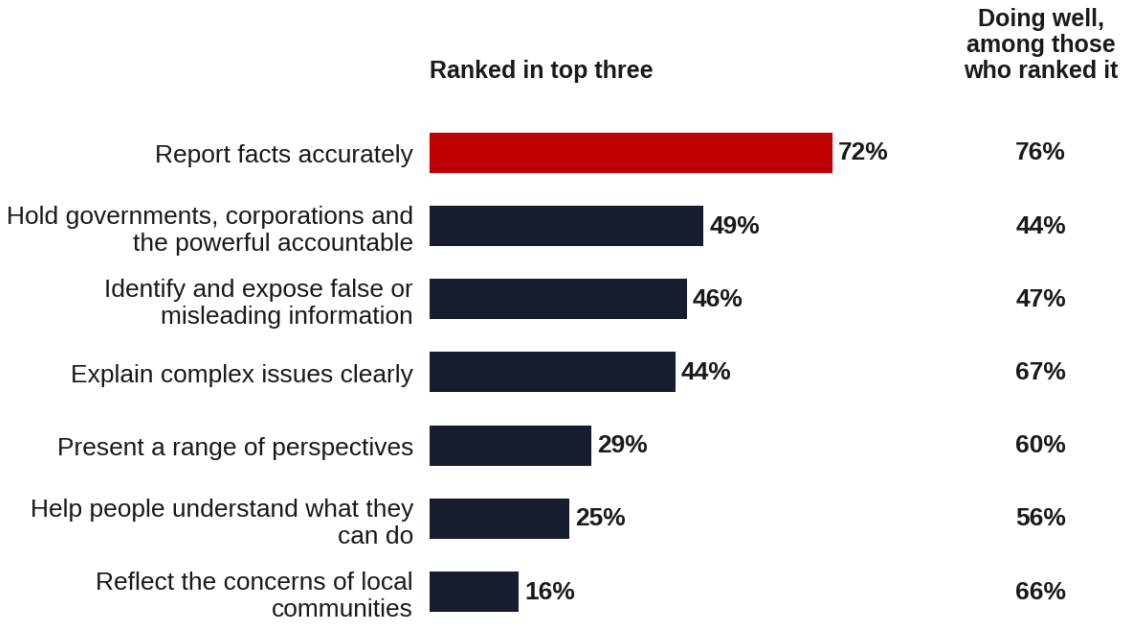
Each respondent was then asked how well Canadian news media are doing at the roles they ranked.

Three-quarters (76%) of those who prioritize reporting facts accurately say the media do it very or fairly well, as do 67% of those who prioritize explaining complex issues, 66% reflecting local communities, 60% presenting a range of perspectives and 56% helping people understand what they can do.

The verdict splits on the two watchdog roles: 47% of those who prioritize exposing false or misleading information say the media do it well and 45% not well, and on holding the powerful accountable, 51% say the media are doing not very well or not at all well against 44% who say well.

Those most likely to say the media hold the powerful to account poorly are Canadians aged 35 to 54 (58%) and women (55%); by region, highest in Alberta (61%), Atlantic Canada (55%) and Ontario (53%).

Q. Which of the following roles do you think are most important for journalists and news organizations today? Ranked top three. Percent naming each in their top three (bars); among those who did, percent saying Canadian news media are doing very or fairly well at it (column).



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago. Base: all respondents for the ranking; those who ranked each role for the performance column.

Three-quarters (74%) of Canadians are confident they can tell accurate information from false, but only three in ten (30%) say the same of the average Canadian

Asked how confident they are that they can tell the difference between information that is accurate and information that is false or misleading, three-quarters (74%) of Canadians say they are confident, including 12% who are very confident; 23% are not confident.

Asked the same question about the average Canadian, confidence falls to 30%, and two-thirds (66%) are not confident that the average Canadian can tell the two apart. Person by person, a majority (56%) of those who answered both questions are more confident in their own judgment than in the average Canadian's, and 4% less.

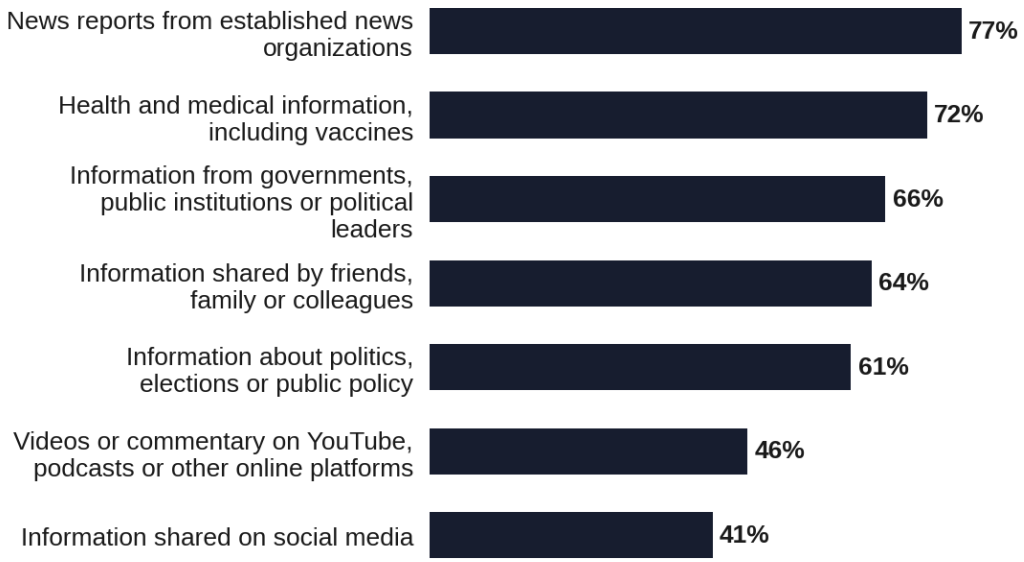
Those most likely to be confident in their own ability are men (79%) and Canadians aged 18 to 34 (78%); by region, Alberta (77%) leads, followed by Ontario (76%), British Columbia and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (75% each), Atlantic Canada (74%) and Québec (69%).

Confidence depends on where the information comes from. Three-quarters (77%) of Canadians are confident they can tell accurate from false in news reports from established news organizations, 72% in health and medical information, 66% in information from governments, public institutions or political leaders, 64% in what friends, family or colleagues share and 61% in information about politics, elections or public policy.

Confidence is lowest for videos or commentary on YouTube, podcasts and other online platforms (46%) and for information shared on social media (41%), where a majority (54%) are not confident.

Those most likely to be confident about information on social media are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (63%) and Canadians aged 35 to 54 (46%); by region, highest in Atlantic Canada (47%), British Columbia and Alberta (45% each) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (44%).

Q. How confident are you that you can tell the difference between accurate information and false or misleading information in each of the following? Percent very or somewhat confident.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

Three-quarters (76%) of Canadians actively check a questionable claim, most often by seeing whether other reputable outlets are reporting it (23%)

Asked what they usually do first when a news story or claim seems surprising, important or questionable, three-quarters (76%) of Canadians name an active check: 23% see whether other reputable news sources are reporting the same information, 21% search online for more, 12% look

for the original source, document, data or evidence, 11% check an official source such as a government, public institution or expert organization, 5% use a fact-checking website or service and 4% ask an AI chatbot.

A further 9% turn first to other people — asking someone they trust (6%) or reading social-media comments (3%) — and 11% usually accept the information if it comes from a source they trust (7%) or do not check it further (4%).

Age and gender make little difference; by region, British Columbia and Ontario (77% each) lead, followed by Alberta and Atlantic Canada (76% each), Québec (75%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (71%).

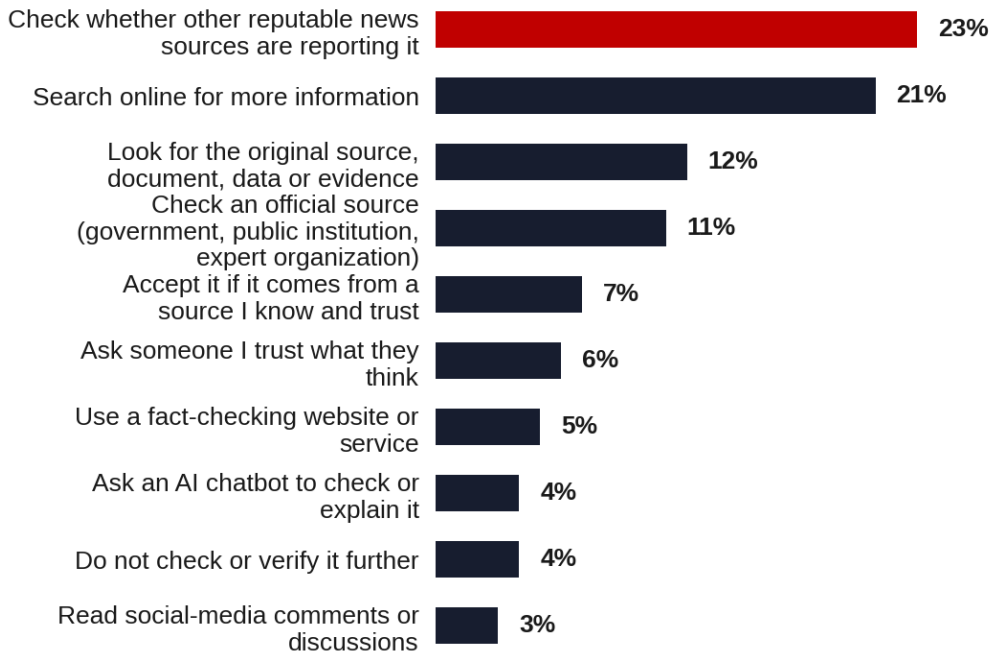
Over time, the toolkit is wider: eight in ten (85%) Canadians sometimes use at least one active check, and the average Canadian uses 2.3 of the nine methods asked about.

Checking other reputable sources (46%) and searching online (45%) lead, followed by looking for the original source (35%) and checking an official source (34%).

One in five (19%) sometimes ask someone they trust, 15% use a fact-checking service, 13% read social-media comments and one in ten (11%) ask an AI chatbot; 7% do not usually check news stories or claims further.

Those most likely to check with an AI chatbot are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (19%) and men (13%); by region, highest in Québec (13%) and British Columbia (12%).

Q. When you come across a news story or claim that seems surprising, important, or questionable, which of the following best describes what you usually do first? Percent selecting each.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

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Nearly nine in ten (88%) Canadians want it disclosed when AI helps produce a news story; nearly two-thirds (65%) worry that algorithms shape what they believe

If a news organization used AI to help produce a news story, nearly nine in ten (88%) Canadians say it is important that this is clearly disclosed, and for two-thirds (67%) it is very important.

Those most likely to want AI use disclosed are Canadians aged 55 and over (91%); by region, British Columbia (92%) leads, followed by Atlantic Canada (89%), Ontario (88%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (87%), and Alberta and Québec (86% each).

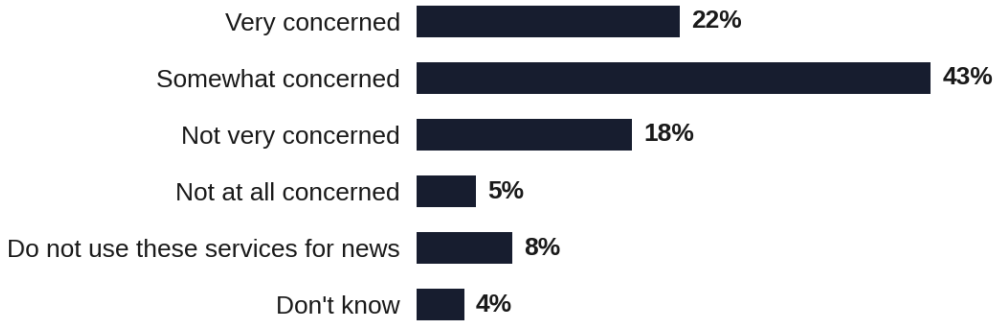
Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Canadians are concerned that the algorithms used by social-media platforms, search engines and online video services may influence what they believe about politics and current events (22% very concerned); 23% are not concerned, and 8% do not use these services for news. Among those who do, concern rises to 71%.

Asked who chooses the news and information they see online, four in ten (43%) Canadians say they mostly choose it themselves, 19% that online platforms and their algorithms mostly choose, and 24% that the two influence what they see about equally — so four in ten (43%) say algorithms play a role; 10% do not get news or information online.

Four in ten (42%) Canadians have used an AI chatbot or assistant such as ChatGPT, Gemini or Copilot to get, summarize or check news about current events — 7% regularly, 20% occasionally and 14% only once or twice — while 57% never have.

Those most likely to have used an AI chatbot for news are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (65%) and men (44%); by region, highest in British Columbia and Ontario (44% each) and Québec (43%).

Q. How concerned, if at all, are you that algorithms used by social-media platforms, search engines, and online video services may influence what you believe about politics and current events? Percent selecting each.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

Half (50%) of Canadians get news from TV on a typical day and four in ten (42%) from social media; one-third (33%) pay for news

On a typical day, the average Canadian draws on 3.7 sources: half (50%) of Canadians get news from TV news programs, followed by social media (42%), the news websites or apps of TV or newspaper organizations (37%), friends, family or colleagues (35%), search engines (32%), radio news (32%) and daily newspapers (30%). One in five (18%) get news from independent news creators or influencers and 8% from AI chatbots or AI search summaries.

Eight in ten (79%) Canadians use at least one traditional source and seven in ten (71%) at least one social or digital source: 26% rely on traditional sources alone, 53% mix the two and 18% use social or digital sources only.

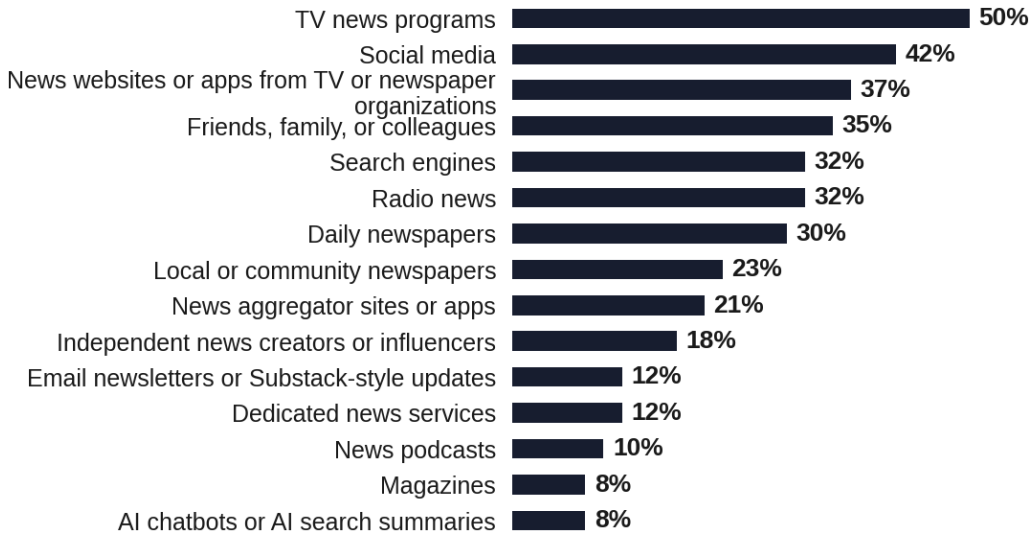
Those most likely to get news from social media are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (67%) and women (48%); by region, Ontario and Atlantic Canada (45% each) lead, followed by Alberta (44%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%), British Columbia (42%) and Québec (37%).

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Canadians describe themselves as hyper (15%) or moderate (48%) news consumers, 28% as casual and 10% as non-news consumers.

Asked how they usually get and assess news, one-third (35%) use a mix of Canadian, local and international sources and 29% mainly rely on Canadian and local sources; 14% rely mainly on Canadian or local sources but sometimes check social media, and 12% often rely on social media but also check Canadian or local sources.

One-third (33%) of Canadians currently pay for at least one news provider, excluding a basic cable or television package; among them, a majority (57%) say their paid sources are mostly Canadian, 25% an even split and 16% mostly international. Those most likely to pay for news are Canadians aged 18 to 34 (49%) and men (36%); by region, highest in Atlantic Canada (37%) and Alberta and Ontario (35% each).

Q. On a typical day, from which of the following do you get your news? Percent selecting each.



Source: Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, September 25 – October 9, 2026 (n=2,239). Online sample and data management by Sago.

About the study

This release covers the second of two CJF polls this fall: where Canadians get their information, whom they trust, how confident they are in telling what is true, how they check, and what they want journalism to do. The first, on the issues Canadians care about nationally and locally and how well the news media cover them, was released on October 13, 2026.

This survey was conducted with 2,239 Canadian adults by Canada Pulse Insights for the Canadian Journalism Foundation, fielded from September 25 to October 9, 2026. A random sample of Canadian adult respondents was invited to complete the survey through an online panel platform

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managed by Sago, one of the world's largest and most respected sample and panel suppliers. The data were weighted according to Statistics Canada population estimates so the sample aligns with Canada's adult population by region, age within region and gender. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is ±2.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20; it is larger for subgroups. Any discrepancies between the detailed tables and published results are due to rounding. Respondents were given the choice to answer the survey in English or French (1,923 and 316 did so).

“Don’t know” answers are kept in the base of every figure. The performance questions were asked only about the roles each respondent ranked, so each role’s figures are based on those who ranked it. “Traditional sources” are television news, radio news, daily newspapers, local or community newspapers, and the websites or apps of television or newspaper organizations; “social or digital sources” are social media, news aggregators, email newsletters, news podcasts, independent news creators or influencers, AI chatbots or AI search summaries, and search engines. Where the text says one group is more likely than another, the difference is statistically significant at the 95% level. Residents of the territories were not sampled.

Both Canada Pulse Insights and Sago are accredited members of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and adhere to its Canadian Code of Market, Opinion, and Social Research and Data Analytics, which incorporates international ESOMAR standards and Canadian public opinion disclosure requirements. The resultant detailed tables and questions used for this survey are posted to the Canada Pulse Insights website as a companion part of this release.

About the Canadian Journalism Foundation

Founded in 1990, the Canadian Journalism Foundation (CJF) fosters excellence in journalism through the support and recognition of emerging and experienced journalists and their news organizations and enhances the public's understanding of the role of fact-based journalism in Canadian democracy. The CJF advances this mission through awards, fellowships, research initiatives and its J-Talks public speakers series, which convene conversations on the ongoing challenges and opportunities facing journalism.

About Canada Pulse Insights

Canada Pulse Insights is a Canadian public opinion research firm specializing in national and regional studies on public policy, media, and consumer behaviour. The firm adheres to the standards of the Canadian Research Insights Council and provides transparent reporting of methods and findings.

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