CANADA PULSE INSIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Independent news impactful, but not replacing traditional journalism

TORONTO, May 13, 2026 – A new national survey commissioned by **the Canadian Journalism Foundation** (CJF) finds that independent news creators have become a significant part of how Canadians get their news, particularly online, but are largely layered onto existing habits rather than replacing traditional journalism.

Conducted by **Canada Pulse Insights** with a representative sample of 1,549 Canadian adults, the study shows that nearly one in three Canadians (31 per cent) now consume news from at least one independent news creator – including video, blogs, newsletters and podcasts – yet most continue to rely heavily on television, radio, newspaper brands and mainstream digital news sources.

Independent creators: real but bounded reach

The survey defines "independent news creators" as individuals or small teams producing news or current-affairs content outside traditional media organizations, including on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, podcasts and email newsletters. Canadians who report using one or more of these sources form the study's "31-per-cent cohort."

Key-reach findings include:

- Thirty-one per cent of Canadian adults say they get news from at least one independent news creator channel tested in the survey.
- On a typical day, 20 per cent of Canadians use independent creators on social media for news, compared with nine per cent who use independent blogs and eight per cent who use independent newsletters and daily news podcasts.
- Across the full population, television news remains the single most common daily source at 52 per cent, followed by general social media for news (37 per cent), radio (32 per cent), news websites or apps from traditional outlets (31 per cent) and daily newspapers (24 per cent).

A distinct, highly engaged 31-per cent cohort

The 31 per cent of Canadians who consume news from independent creators are demographically and behaviourally distinctive:

- They are younger (42 per cent are 18–34, compared with 28 per cent of all Canadians) and more likely to be male (59 per cent versus 49 per cent in the general population).
- They are slightly more likely to have some university education and somewhat more likely to fall in middle-income brackets but broadly mirror the country on education and income overall.
- They are much more likely to describe themselves as "hyper" news consumers – 30 per cent versus 19 per cent among Canadians overall – and less likely to be

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casual or non-news consumers (five per cent non-news versus 10 per cent nationally).

Their daily behaviour confirms that creators sit on top of an already rich news diet:

- Among independent-creator users, 64 per cent get news from independent creators on social media each day, 54 per cent use general social media for news, 47 per cent watch TV news, 37 per cent use news websites or apps from traditional outlets, 31 per cent listen to radio news, 24 per cent use traditional email newsletters, and 23 per cent use traditional daily news podcasts.

Supplement more than substitute – but substitution is real

The study also asked Canadians whether independent creators mostly **supplement** or mostly **replace** traditional news.

- Overall, 36 per cent say independent creators mostly supplement traditional news, 31 per cent say they do a bit of both, and only 10 per cent say they mostly replace traditional media.
- Within the 31 per cent cohort, substitution is higher but still not dominant: 42 per cent say creators mostly supplement, 34 per cent say they are a bit of both, and 20 per cent say creators mostly replace traditional news.

The report notes that the truly "hard-core" segment – those who both lean on creators as a replacement and pay them represents only an estimated four-to-six per cent of Canadian adults.

Strong perceived authenticity – and demand for standards

Canadians who use independent creators hold distinctly positive views of them, while still wanting them held to the same standards as traditional media.

Among independent-creator users:

- Three out of four (75 per cent) agree that independent creators are becoming more important in Canada's news landscape, versus 53 per cent of Canadians overall.
- 70 per cent agree they represent the future of news and journalism, versus 47 per cent overall.
- 66 per cent say creators are more authentic than traditional media, compared with 39 per cent of all Canadians.
- 65 per cent see them as less influenced by corporate or political interests (46 per cent overall), and 59 per cent say they are as trustworthy as traditional media (37 per cent overall).

At the same time:

- 72 per cent of independent-creator users – and 70 per cent of Canadians overall – agree that independent creators should be held to the same standards and regulations as traditional media.
- 57 per cent of creator users and 56 per cent of all Canadians agree that independent creators lack editorial oversight such as fact-checking and accuracy processes.

Willingness to pay and commercial implications

The survey also examined whether Canadians are prepared to support independent creators financially:

- A majority still prefer free content (58 per cent of creator users; 67 per cent of all Canadians).
- However, independent-creator users are more open to payment: 21 per cent say they would consider financially supporting an independent creator (versus 12 per cent overall), and 14 per cent say they already do (versus 6 per cent overall).
- Only 5 per cent of creator users say they already pay for traditional news subscriptions, compared with 9per cent of Canadians overall.

Respondents who use independent creators most often say they are drawn by deeper coverage (32 per cent), a more critical stance toward institutions and power (29 per cent), coverage of niche topics or communities (25 per cent), convenience while multitasking (24 per cent), more entertaining or engaging formats (24 per cent) and easier explanations of complex issues (22 per cent).

Shared concern about misinformation and AI

The study also shows high levels of concern about misinformation across both groups:

- Among independent-creator users, 80 per cent are concerned about AI-generated disinformation, 73 per cent about misinformation from independent creators, 70 per cent about bias in traditional media, 67 per cent about bias from independent creators and 61 per cent about lack of editorial oversight.
- Concern levels are similar among Canadians overall, with 75 per cent concerned about AI-generated disinformation, 69 per cent about misinformation from independent creators, 62 per cent about bias in traditional media, 66 per cent about bias from independent creators and 62 per cent about lack of editorial oversight.

Four distinct types of Canadian news consumers

The study also asked Canadians to describe their overall news habits, revealing four distinct segments that cut across both creator users and the broader public.

- **Hyper news consumers** say they "always check the news" and depend on numerous sources, ranging from newspapers, radio and talk news to news sites, aggregators and social media. They make up 19 per cent of Canadians overall, but a much larger 30 per cent of those who follow independent creators.
- **Moderate news consumers** check the news a few times a day when they need to or are interested and rely on a smaller set of sources such as newspapers, radio, news sites and social media. They are the largest segment in both groups: 45 per cent of Canadians overall and 46 per cent of independent-creator users.
- **Casual news consumers** check the news once in a while from a few regular sources and at fairly fixed times. They represent 26 per cent of Canadians overall but only 18 per cent of independent-creator users.
- **Non-news consumers** say they do not seek out or care much about the news unless something is very big or affects them directly. They account for 10 per cent of Canadians overall, but just 5 per cent among those who follow independent creators.

These patterns reinforce the study's central finding: Canadians who follow independent news creators are not tuning out from journalism – they are more likely to be hyper-engaged news consumers who build richer, more layered news diets than the population at large.

About the study

This survey was conducted with 1,549 Canadian adults as part of a **Canada Pulse Insights** national omnibus survey, fielded from April 6 to 9, 2026. A random sample of Canadian adult respondents was invited to complete the omnibus through an online panel platform managed by **SAGO**, one of the world's largest and most respected sample and panel suppliers. The data were weighted according to census benchmarks, so the sample aligns with Canada's population by age, gender, educational attainment, and region. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is ±2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies between the detailed tables and published results are due to rounding. Respondents were given the choice to answer the survey in either English or French.

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. 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.

The study defined independent news creators as individuals or small teams producing news or current-events content outside traditional media organizations, including YouTube, TikTok, podcasts and email newsletters such as Substack. The "31 per cent cohort" refers to Canadians who say they get news from one or more of these independent creator channels.

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 for journalism in the digital era.

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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