

The Media Insight Project



Newspaper



Television



Podcast



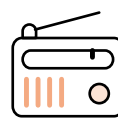
Influencer



Magazine



Newsletter



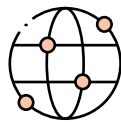
Radio



Social Media



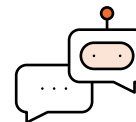
Streaming



Blog/Web



Live/Events



Chatbot/AI

The Evolving News Landscape: Comparing Media Habits and Trust Between Teens and Adults

April 2026

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT:

Fernando Agudelo at agudelo-fernando@norc.org.

<https://apnorc.org/topics/media-insight-project/>

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INTRODUCTION

The news industry has an imperative to understand how news habits differ by generation. In an increasingly fractured media ecosystem, age is a major factor in determining people's news and information needs and priorities, the ways they access news, and who they trust to provide it. This understanding of news engagement by generation is essential for news leaders to develop innovative strategies to reach news consumers across age, including new opportunities to collaborate with influencers, independent creators, and local news and information providers.

A new in-depth study by the Media Insight Project, which surveyed both adults and teens as young as 13 years old, provides a deep look into how news engagement does and does not vary by generation. The research reveals that people of all generations now get news and information from “influencers” or “independent creators.” Indeed, more than half of all American teenagers and adults (57%) now report getting news and information from influencers at least sometimes. And, unlike with traditional media, levels of trust in this emerging sector are similar across political ideologies. This sector is particularly powerful with younger Americans. Fully 81% of those ages 13-17 report getting news and information from influencers. Taken together, the signals in the study suggest this sector is poised to only grow in importance, use, and effect on the information ecosystem of the nation.

Even at this relatively early stage in the evolution of the influencer/creator ecosystem, most American teenagers and adults say they trust influencers or independent creators to verify facts, be transparent, or offer different viewpoints at least somewhat well. Interestingly, this trust does not vary significantly between different age groups.

At the same time, the public has different priorities for influencers or creators than it does for other news sources. When determining which creators to get news or information from, many people feel it's important that influencers are transparent about sponsored content and their mission. People say they care less about how many followers a creator has or whether people they know, digitally or personally, also follow that influencer.

And there are important findings about consumer revenue. In all, nearly 7 out of 10 American teenagers and adults pay for some kind of news product or service, 56% directly and another 23% through another person's subscription or membership. The percentage is higher for older Americans. Yet even among the cohort least likely to pay, those ages 18-34, 54% pay for something, though it is more likely to be a video or TV source than a podcast, radio, or newspaper.

The Evolving News Landscape: Comparing Media Habits and Trust Between Teens and Adults

is the latest study from the Media Insight Project, a collaboration of The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications and the Local News Network at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism. This study features a combined sample 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older and 1,009 respondents ages 13-17, both nationally representative.

The new survey's large nationally representative sample provides a unique opportunity for a detailed analysis of America's most diverse generations. This report from the study will examine the news behaviors and views of five distinct age groups: 13- to 17-year-olds, 18- to 34-year-olds, 35- to 49-year-olds, 50- to 64-year-olds, and adults 65 and older. The sample allows us to explore how new-related habits and views vary across different age groups.

In general, teens continue to rely most heavily on social media, while older adults remain deeply connected to television and print-based news. Younger people are less likely to use or pay for several types of traditional news products, despite high levels of daily engagement with news content. For all that, nearly half of teens and adults still watch TV news in some form every day.

Local news continues to occupy an essential role in the media landscape, though it is one of the most threatened sectors of journalism. It is increasingly unclear what business model will be able to sustain journalism in smaller markets. Yet local news is generally more trusted. It is also one of the most complex or varied parts of the media ecosystem. Most Americans say they receive local information from local news outlets, community organizations, or word-of-mouth networks. Teens, however, are more likely than adults to encounter local news through local creators or influencers, signaling a generational shift in how communities stay informed.

While confidence in news sources remains relatively low on average, the public differentiates sharply among sources of information. Local news emerges as the most trusted overall, though local and national news outlets score similarly on several metrics, including when it comes to being perceived to be best at helping people understand the world around them, verify facts, or treating different sides fairly. Local news is considered better than national news at giving people useful information.

Only a quarter of the teens and adults say that influencers or independent creators are better than other sources of news (local outlets, national outlets, or AI) at treating all sides fairly, helping people understand the world around them, or getting facts right. Local and national news are not far ahead, with 3 in 10 saying that these two sources are best at treating all sides fairly, helping people understand the world around them, or getting the facts right – an important data point as the news industry thinks about how to leverage and work with this growing segment of information providers.

The study also reveals substantial skepticism about the utility and veracity of AI, at least for now. AI chatbots lag behind all other sources regarding public trust, with only 1 in 10 feeling they are more trustworthy than other news sources. However, some distrust of AI could be fueled by low use, with two-thirds of all teens and adults never using AI for news and information at all.

These findings are part of a new study, *The Evolving News Landscape: Comparing Media Habits and Trust Between Teens and Adults*, which examines news engagement with a greater level of detail than before, studying teens as young as 13, and asking not just about where and how people get news but also discovering how those habits vary by the topics people are learning about.

The report is the latest study from the Media Insight Project. The Media Insight Poll is a collaboration of The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications and the Local News Network at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism. This new report draws on a nationally representative survey of teens ages 13-17 and adults 18 and older, providing one of the most comprehensive, generationally comparative looks at how Americans navigate an increasingly complex news, information, and media ecosystem. With more than 2,000 interviews, the study offers rare insight into how media habits, values, expectations, and trust differ across five distinct age groups: ages 13-17, 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65 and older.

COMPARISONS ACROSS GENERATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Most American teenagers and adults follow a variety of news and information topics. Out of a list of 14 topic areas – from “hard news” to entertainment – American teens and adults on average follow four regularly, though fully one out of five say they do not follow any particular topics consistently.

Different age groups also tend to follow different topics. Interest in hard news – such as politics, social issues, and business – continues to rise with age. Lifestyle and entertainment remain central to the information diets of both teens and older adults. The findings also highlight meaningful differences in the extent to which people pay for, donate to, or use news products – driven not only by age, but also by the frequencies with which people follow certain categories of news. Avid hard news consumers are more likely than moderate or low hard news consumers to personally pay for or donate to several of the products surveyed.

Many news perceptions vary by age or news consumption habits: older adults and avid hard news consumers show stronger confidence in traditional outlets. Those who pay for news express notably higher trust in both local and national sources' abilities to verify information and help audiences understand complex issues. Teens demonstrate relatively balanced confidence across traditional and alternative sources compared with older adults. Younger audiences do not reject traditional journalism outright, but they do not grant it automatic authority. Unlike older adults, who show stronger, categorical confidence in local and national outlets, teens and young adults distribute trust more evenly across traditional news and independent creators.

As the Media Insight Project and others have seen before, among adults, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to trust and regularly use local news sources, reflecting stronger confidence in traditional, community-based journalism. This difference may stem from broader partisan divides in attitudes toward legacy media and perceptions of journalistic credibility. However, these partisan distinctions do not extend to influencers: Democrats and Republicans are likely to follow influencers and to trust the information they share at similar levels.

The study also reveals significant stress and fatigue in Americans' relationship with news. While most feel capable of finding relevant content and identifying trustworthy information, the emotional toll they feel in doing so is considerable. Very few Americans say news gives them a hopeful view of the world; and a substantial portion report feeling overwhelmed or finding news too stressful.

In response, teens and adults are actively managing their exposure – not by rejecting news wholesale, but by avoiding specific topics or contexts. Celebrity news, political content, and news encountered on social media or during personal conversations are the most commonly avoided, and these avoidance patterns differ by age. American teenagers and adults assign responsibility for misinformation primarily to politicians and social media actors rather than news organizations, with local news receiving the least blame – a pattern that may help explain why trust in local journalism remains comparatively resilient even as media fatigue grows.

Together, these findings offer a rich portrait of a media environment that is rapidly diversifying but still grounded in longstanding behaviors and expectations. They underscore both the challenges and opportunities ahead for news organizations, community information providers, and creators alike as they navigate an increasingly crowded, fragmented, and generationally stratified media world.

AMONG THE STUDY FINDINGS:

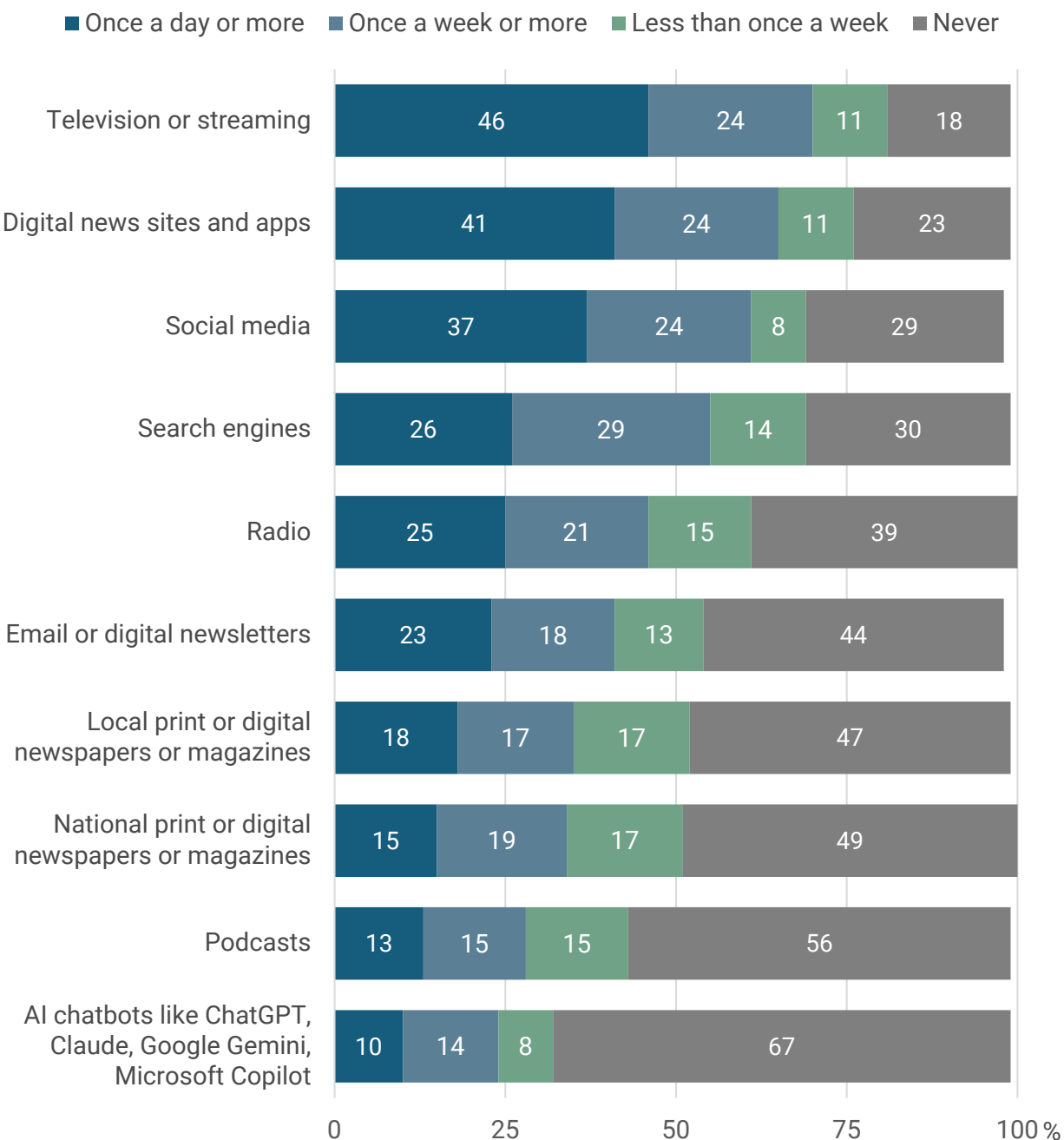
- **The media diets of teens and adults differ sharply, with social media dominating teen news use while older adults rely heavily on television and newspapers.** Teens ages 13-17 are the only age group in which most (57%) get news from social media at least daily, whereas adults 65 and older overwhelmingly turn to TV (74%).
- **Hard news engagement grows with age, while teens are more likely to be heavy lifestyle news consumers.** Only 12% of teens qualify as “avid hard news consumers” — people who follow news related to politics, social issues, the economy, environment, or crime. The number is almost three times higher, 35%, for adults 65 and older. At the same time, teens ages 13-17 (48%) — more than any other age group — follow many lifestyle topics closely, reflecting distinct generational priorities.
- **Local news remains widely used and positively viewed, yet the pathways to it vary substantially by age.** Adults 65 and older are more likely than some younger age groups to rely on local news outlets such as TV, radio, or newspapers, while teens ages 13-17 are more likely than older adults over 65 to get local news from local influencers or independent creators (48% vs. 23%). Despite these differences, adults and teens across all ages tend to view local news outlets as effective at covering important issues and verifying facts.
- **Influencers or independent creators have become a major, cross-generational information source — especially for national news, pop culture, or wellness.** A majority of teens and adults, fully 57%, receive at least some news from influencers or independent creators, with teens (81%) engaging most frequently.
- When it comes to building trust in the creator community, those who get news from influencers or independent creators say transparency — particularly around sponsored content and the mission of the account — is more important to them than how many followers a creator has. Fifty percent feel that transparency around sponsored content is very important compared with only 10% who say the same about follower count.
- **Concerns about misinformation and media reliability shape how people evaluate both traditional and influencer-based sources.** While many teens and adults say influencers or independent creators do at least somewhat well at transparency (66%), trust is far from absolute.
- **Confidence in news sources is low across the board, with fewer than half of teens and adults expressing a great deal of confidence in any source type, though local news ranks highest.** Local news is viewed as most trustworthy, followed by national news, independent creators, and AI chatbots. Each source type has distinct perceived strengths: local news ranks highest for providing useful information (41%), while independent creators are seen by roughly one in four as best at treating all sides fairly.
- **Teens and adults hold politicians and social media companies primarily responsible for misinformation.** A majority blame politicians (66%) for spreading misinformation, while local news receives the least blame (35%).
- **Despite feeling capable of navigating news, few say it gives them a hopeful view of the world.** Most report avoiding news about specific topics, especially celebrity news (71%) or political content (62% avoid news stories about Donald Trump; 57% news about national politics), with older adults managing exposure more actively than younger people.

SECTION I: THE NEWS CONSUMPTION HABITS OF TEENS AND ADULTS

AMERICAN TEENS AND ADULTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE, USE A VARIETY OF MEDIA, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL MEDIA, DIGITAL-ONLY SOURCES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO GET NEWS ON A RANGE OF TOPICS.

Many teens and adults get news at least once a day from television or streaming services (46%), digital news sites (41%), or social media (37%). About a quarter of the public gets news at similar rates from search engines or the radio. Print or digital newspapers are a less common news source for teens and adults, with about half never getting news from either of these sources. Podcasts or AI chatbots are even less common, with roughly half never using podcasts as a news source and two-thirds never using AI as a news source.

Nearly half of teens and adults get news from television at least once a day.



Question: How often, if at all, do you get news and information from each of the following?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



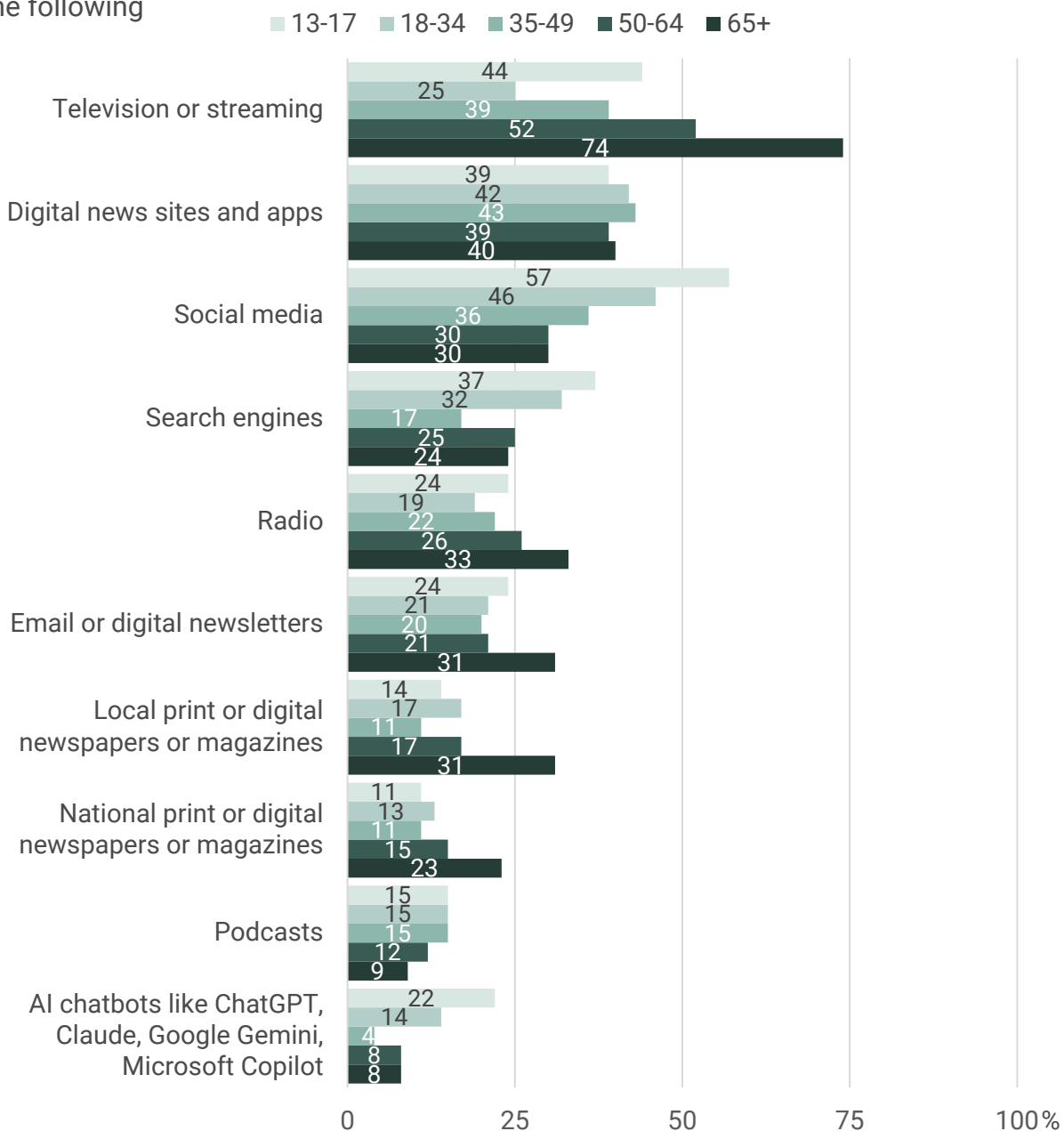
News consumption habits vary greatly by age. Americans ages 13-17 are more likely than any other age group to get news from social media, with over half (57%) relying on social media for news at least daily. Teens ages 13-17 are also more likely than adults 35 and older to use search engines at least daily for news (37% vs. 17% of 35- to 49-year-olds, 25% of 50- to 64-year-olds, and 24% of those 65 and older).

Adults who are 65 and older have different news consumption habits. A majority of adults age 65 and older get news from television or streaming at least daily (74%), more than any other age group. Adults age 65 and older are also more likely than younger adults or teens to get news at least daily from both local (31%) or national (23%) print or digital newspapers or magazines. Americans ages 13 and older get news at similar rates from sources like digital news sites, email or newsletters, or AI chatbots.

Among all adults ages 18 and older, some slight partisan differences emerge in their news consumption habits. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to use local (25% vs. 15%) or national (21% vs. 12%) print or digital newspapers, as well as digital news sites (50% vs. 39%) for news at least daily. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to use radio at least daily (31% vs. 17%).

Older adults are more likely to get news from television while 13- to 17-year-olds are more likely to get news from social media.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who get news at least daily from each of the following



Question: How often, if at all, do you get news and information from each of the following?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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Teens and adults follow a variety of news and information topics. Out of the 14 news, information, and lifestyle topics asked about, teens and adults on average follow four topics regularly. Twenty percent of teenagers and adults don't follow any topics at all. Some age groups are more tuned out than others, with middle-aged adults being the least likely to follow news topics regularly. Adults 18-34 (26%) and 35-49 (29%) are more likely than teens 13-17 (13%) or adults 65 and older (8%) to not follow any news topics. Adults 50-64 fall in the middle with 18% who don't follow any topics regularly.

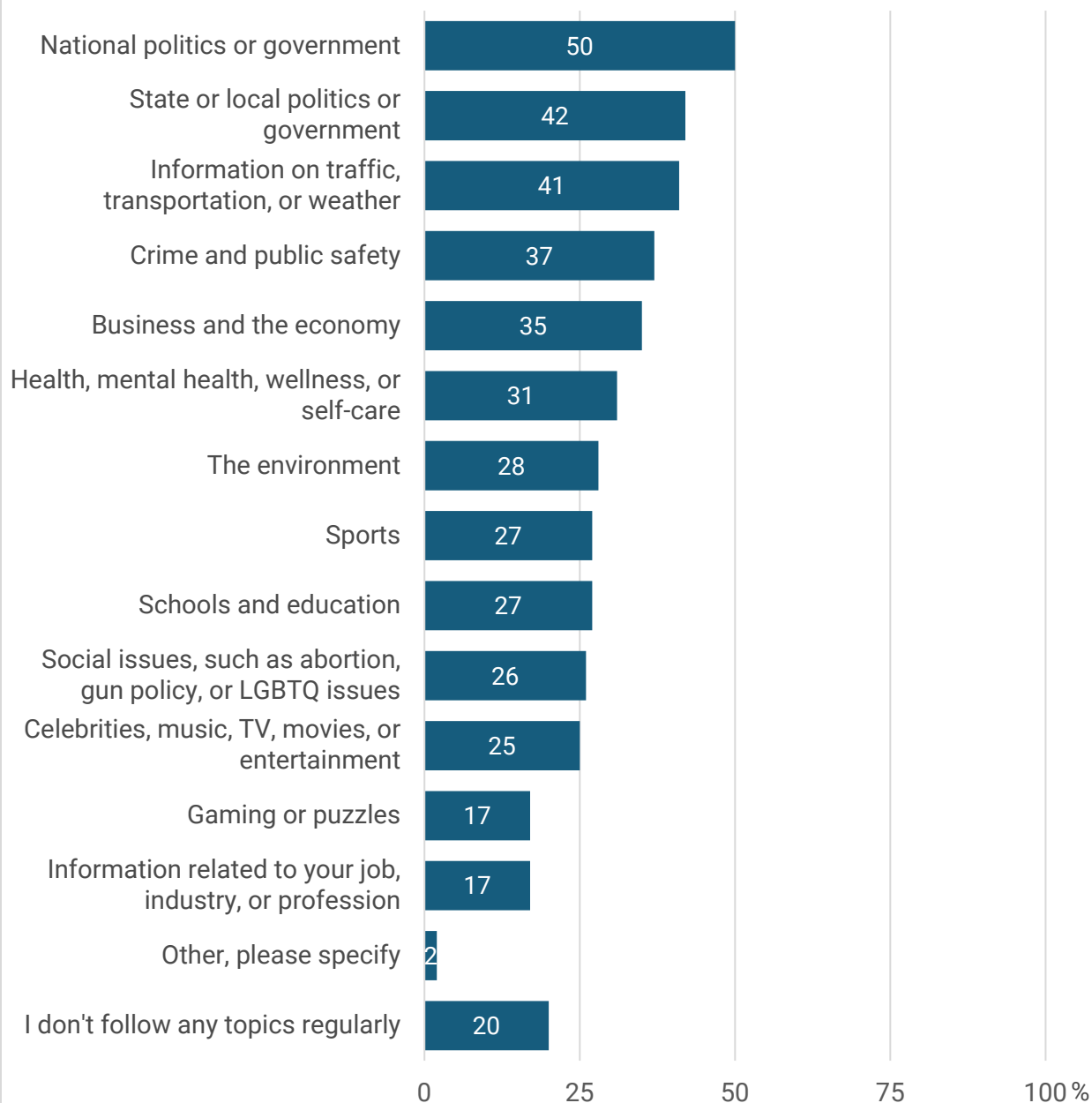
National politics and government is the most popular news topic, followed regularly by half of all Americans 13 and older. State and local politics, information about traffic and the weather, and crime and public safety are the next most common, with 4 in 10 Americans following these topics regularly. A third follows news about business or mental health or wellness.

Older adults are more likely to follow politics than younger adults. Adults ages 50-64 (60%) and adults ages 65 and older (65%) are more likely to follow national politics than younger adults or teens (41% of 35- to 49-year-olds, 40% of 18- to 34-year-olds, and 35% of 13- to 17-year-olds). For local politics, the pattern is similar, with adults ages 65 and older (60%) and adults ages 50-64 (49%) being more likely to follow national politics than all younger Americans (32% of 35- to 49-year-olds, 34% of 18- to 34-year-olds, and 23% of 13- to 17-year-olds).

Teenagers and young adults tend to follow fewer topics regularly than older adults. However, when it comes to news about sports, teens and adults ages 65 and older follow the topic at a similar rate (37% vs. 42%). Both groups are more likely than adults ages 18-34 (14%) or adults ages 35-49 (21%) to follow news about sports regularly.

National politics or government is the most followed news topic.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: Here are some news and information topics. Which of these topics, if any, do you follow regularly? *Please select all that apply.*

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



RESPONDENTS CAN BE CLASSIFIED BASED ON HOW MANY TOPICS THEY FOLLOW BY THE THREE BROAD TOPIC CATEGORIES.

To explore the news topics that interest American teenagers and adults, this study classifies them into avid, moderate, and low consumer groups for each of the three main types of news: hard news, lifestyle news, and practical news.

- Hard news topics include national politics, state or local politics, social issues, schools and education, business and the economy, the environment, or crime and safety.
- Lifestyle news topics include celebrity and entertainment news, sports, gaming, and health, wellness, or self-care.
- Practical news topics include information about traffic, transportation, weather, or information about their job or industry.

Teenagers and adults are sorted into each of these three consumer groups depending on whether they fall in the lowest, middle, or highest tercile of the total number of hard, lifestyle, and practical news topics they follow.

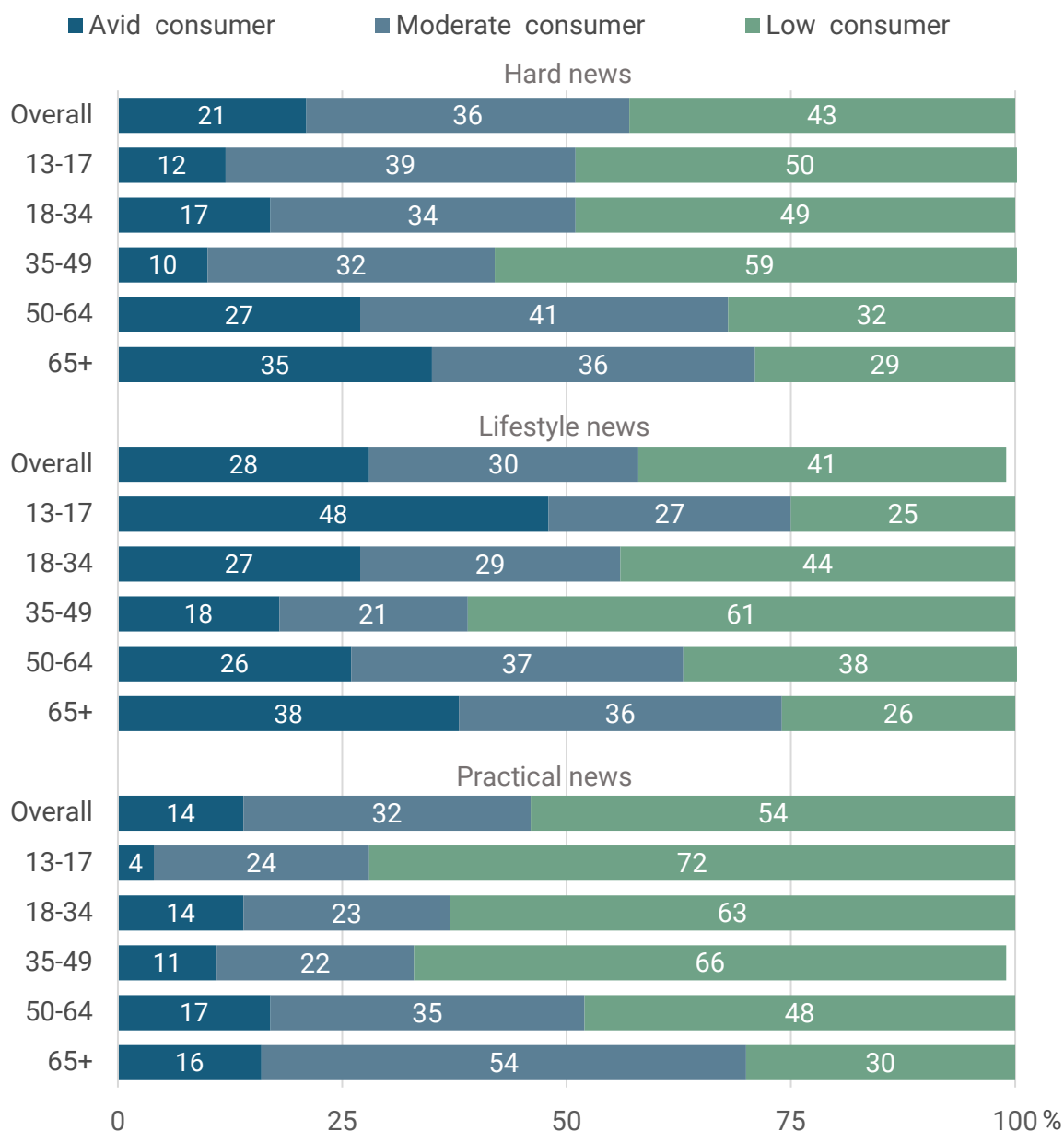
Avid consumers of hard news are more likely to be older, with 35% of adults ages 65 and older and 27% of adults ages 50-64 following hard news topics most frequently. Only 12% of teens are avid hard news consumers.

Unlike hard news topics, 48% of teens ages 13-17 are most likely of all age groups to be an avid lifestyle-news consumer. Adults 65 and older are the next most likely to follow lifestyle news a lot, with 38% being avid lifestyle-news consumers. A quarter of adults ages 18-34 and 50-64 are avid lifestyle news consumers.

All adults are avid practical news consumers at about similar rates. Teens are the least likely of any age group to be an avid practical news consumer with only 4% following this topic a lot.

Teens are more likely to follow lifestyle news while older adults are more likely to follow hard news.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: Here are some news and information topics. Which of these topics, if any, do you follow regularly? *Please select all that apply.*

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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Many teens and adults pay or donate to a range of media and information services they use regularly – including both news sources and other types of media, ranging from traditional outlets to television and streaming services.

Overall, about 7 in 10 Americans say they themselves pay or donate or someone else pays or donates to at least one of the products or services they use regularly to get news, information, or other media content. Fifty-seven percent personally pay for or donate to these products or services, and 23% use services paid for by someone else. Twelve percent both pay for their own services and share a subscription with someone else.

When it comes to using any paid products at all, regardless of who pays, 18- to 34-year-olds (54%) are the least likely to be using these services. About 7 in 10 teens and adults ages 35-64 use at least one paid product. Eighty-one percent of those 65 and older use a paid product.

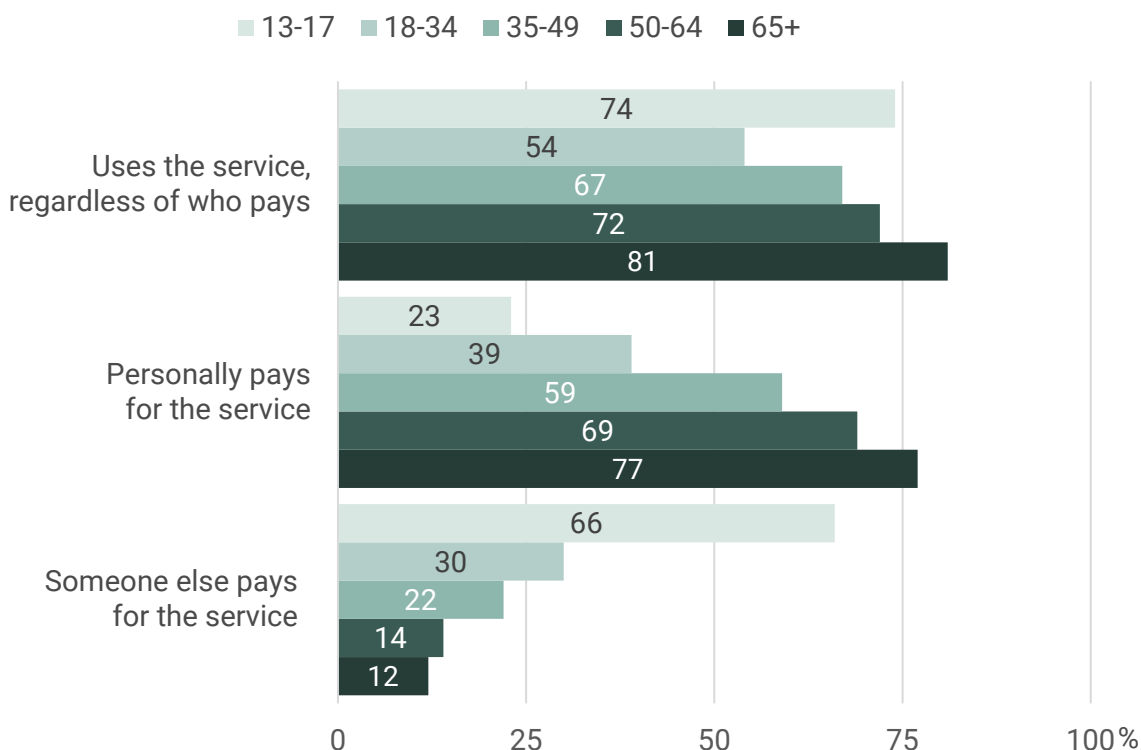
Fifty-eight percent of teens and adults personally pay for or donate to television or streaming services while about a quarter personally pay for or donate to AI chatbots. National or local print or digital newspapers or magazines, as well as public radio, podcasts, or newsletters are the next most commonly paid service, with about 2 in 10 personally paying for or donating to these products.

Two in 10 are using someone else's paid streaming services. Only about 1 in 10 Americans are sharing subscriptions for products like local newspapers, national newspapers, public radio, digital news sites, podcasts, newsletters, or AI services.

What products people pay for or donate to vary depending on how closely someone follows hard news topics regularly. Those who are categorized as avid hard news consumers are more likely than moderate or low hard news consumers to personally pay for or donate to local newspapers (31%), national newspapers (30%), digital news sites (27%), or digital emails or newsletters (27%).

Older adults are more likely to be personally paying for services while teens are more likely to be using services that someone else pays for.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: Please select any of the following types of paid products or services that you have regularly used in the past year.

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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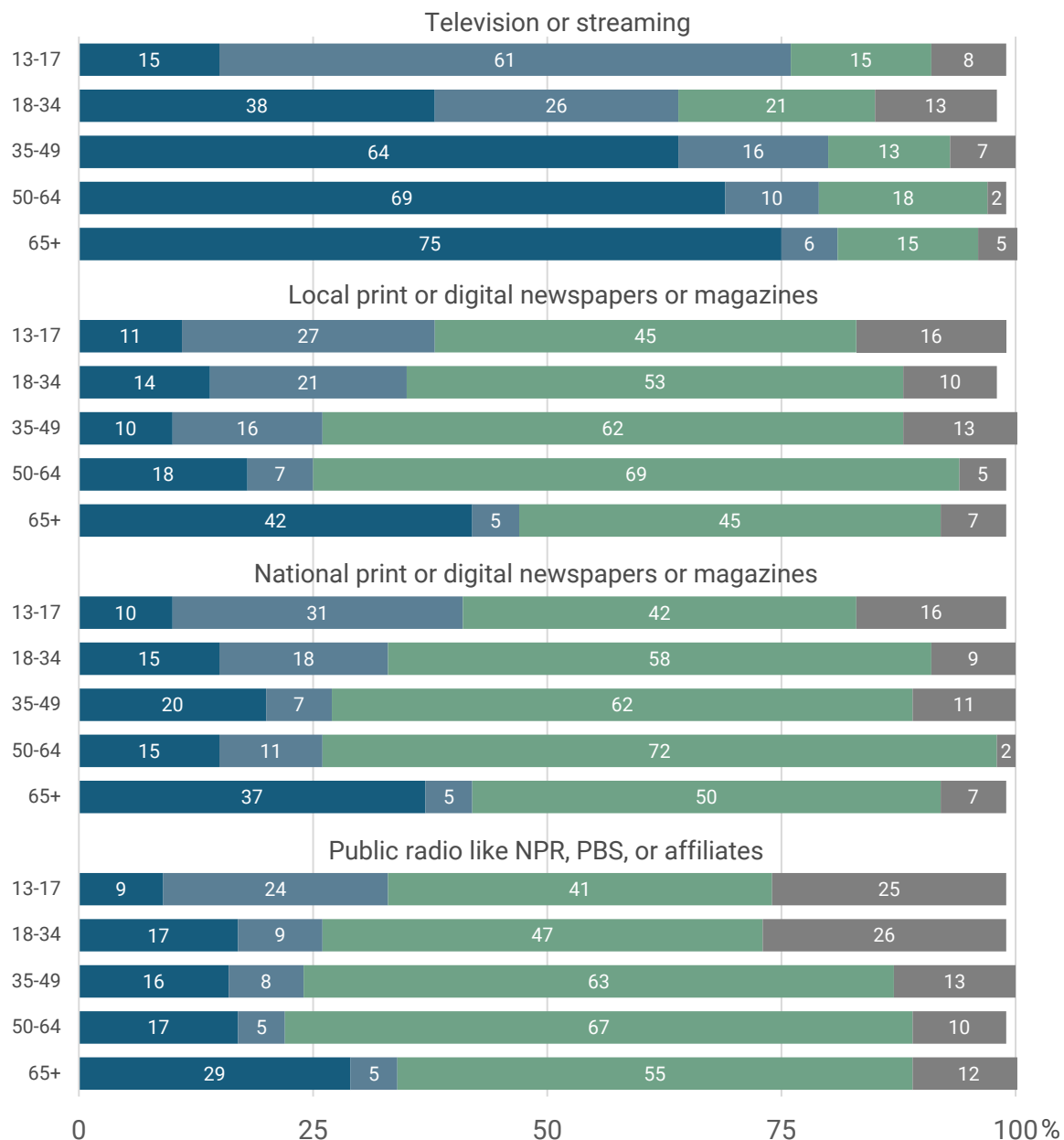
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Adults are more likely to be personally paying for services while teens 13-17 are more likely to be using paid products that someone else pays for. Adults 65 or older are more likely than any other age group to be personally paying for or donating to products like local newspapers, national newspapers, or digital news sites or apps. Unsurprisingly, few teens 13-17, less than 2 in 10, are personally paying for or donating to any products or services. However, teens 13-17 are more likely than any other age group to be using streaming services or listening to podcasts that someone else is paying for or donating to.

Older adults are more likely to pay for television, newspapers, magazines, or radio.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older

■ I paid or donated ■ Someone else paid or donated ■ No one paid or donated ■ Not sure



Question: Please select any of the following types of paid products or services that you have regularly used in the past year.

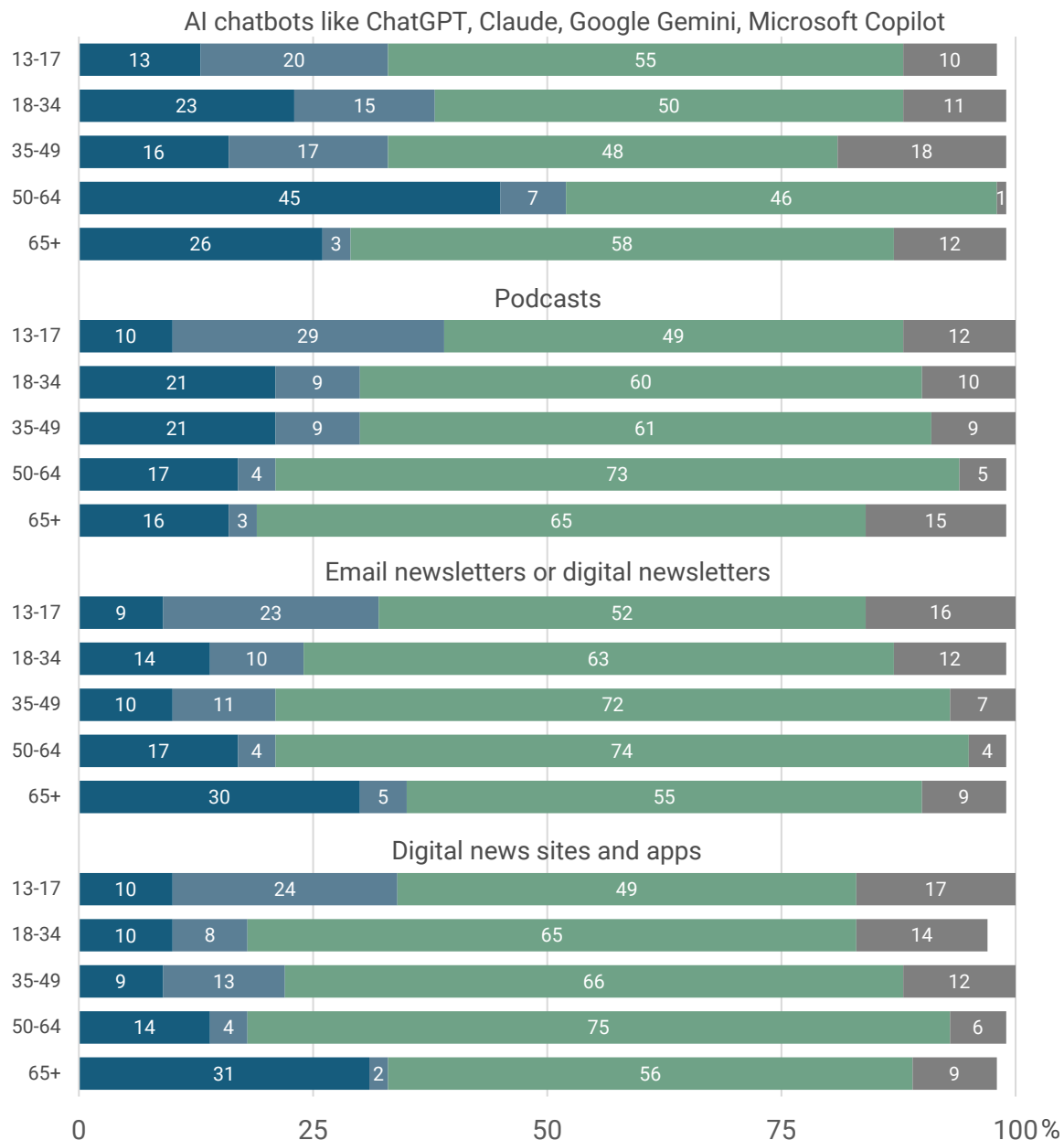
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Older adults are more likely to pay for television, newspapers, magazines, or radio (continuation of graph above).

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older

■ I paid or donated ■ Someone else paid or donated ■ No one paid or donated ■ Not sure



Question: Please select any of the following types of paid products or services that you have regularly used in the past year.

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



SECTION II: LOCAL NEWS

AMERICAN TEENS AND ADULTS HOLD MORE POSITIVE VIEWS OF LOCAL NEWS AND GET IT FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES.

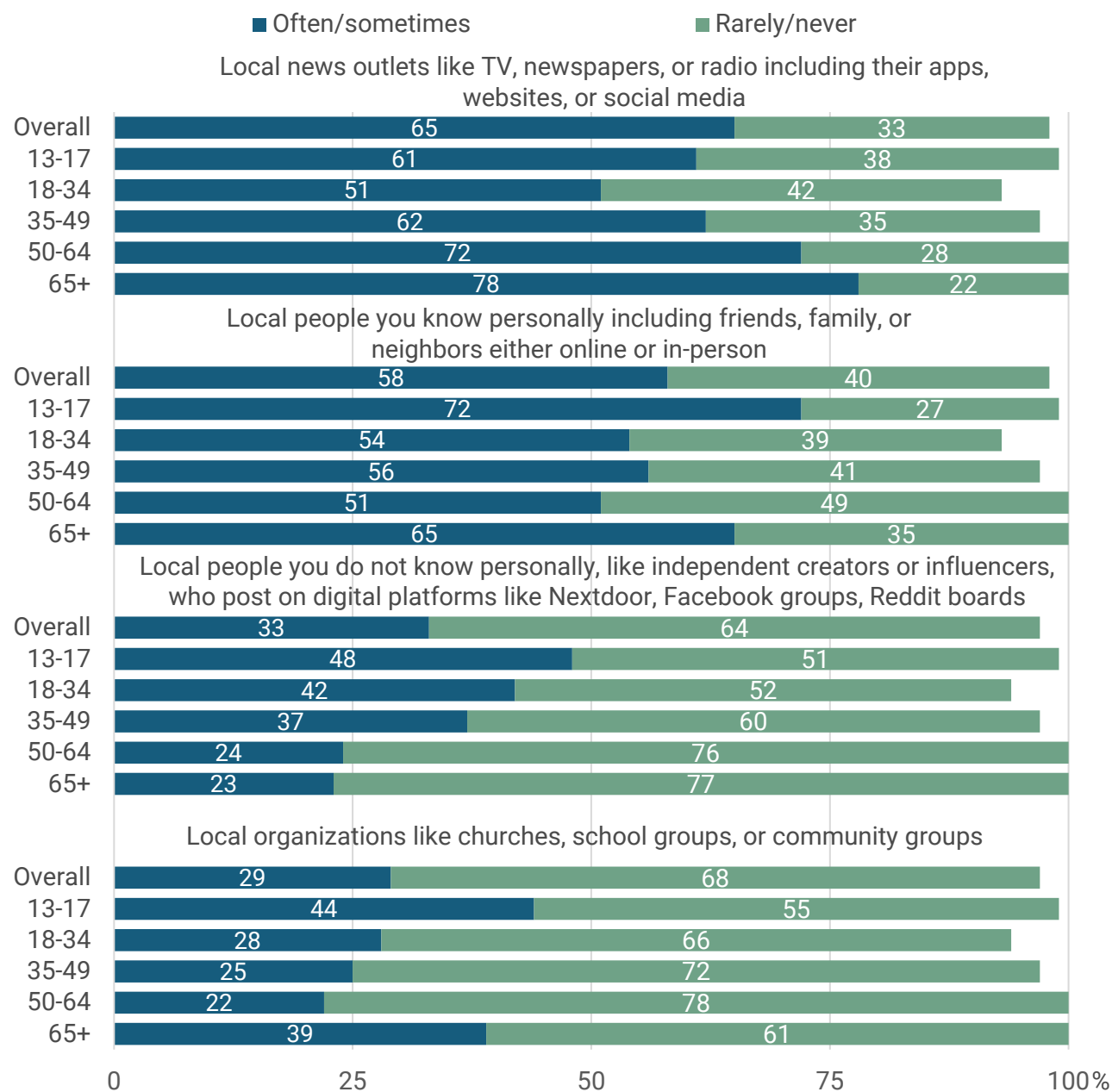
Local news sources like local news outlets, local community organizations (churches, school groups), and local independent influencers or creators are widely used. About 3 in 4 Americans – teenagers and adults alike – say they get local news information from any of these three sources often or sometimes. Adults ages 65 and older (88%) are the most likely to get local news from any of these sources at least sometimes compared with 78% of those 50-64, 71% of those 35-49, 68% of those 18-34, and 79% of those 13-17. Democrats (77%) and Republicans (78%) rely on local news from at least one of these sources often or sometimes at nearly identical rates.

Local news outlets including television, newspapers, or radio are most commonly turned to by Americans ages 13 and older to get their local news sometimes or often. Word of mouth between family, friends, and neighbors (either online or in-person) is another important source. American teenagers and adults use sources like local independent creators or local community groups less often.

Adults over 65 are more likely than those ages 49 and younger to use local news outlets like television or radio. Alternatively, those 13-17 are more likely than older adults to get local news from local influencers or creators, indicating that reliance on local news influencers decreases with age.

More than half get local news from traditional news outlets or local people in their community.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How often do you get local news and information from each of the following types of sources?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17

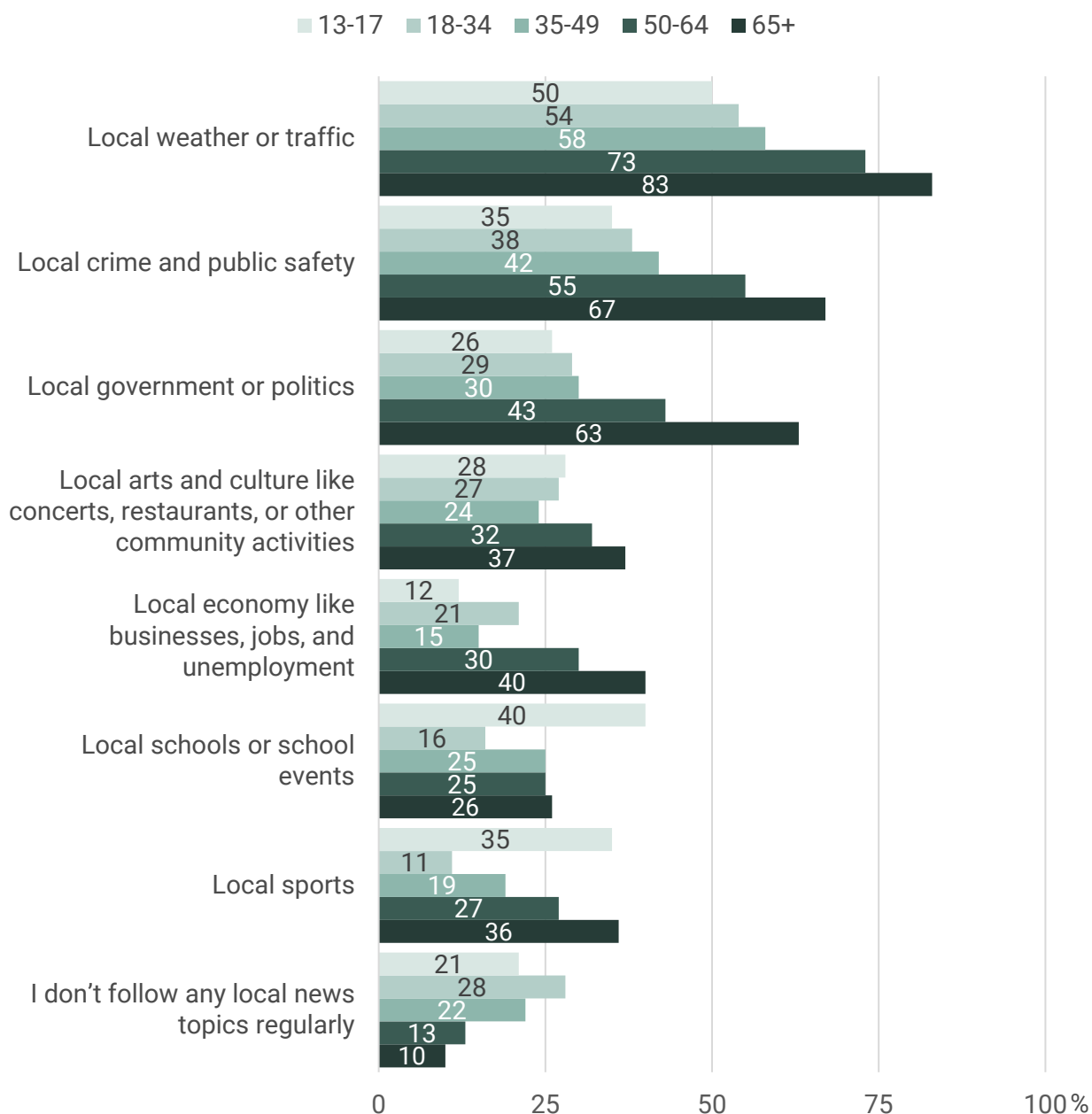


Of the local news topics asked about, local weather or traffic is the most followed topic, with 65% of Americans ages 13 and older following regularly. About half of the public (49%) follow crime and public safety regularly, and 39% do the same with local government or politics. Nineteen percent don't follow any local news topic regularly.

Among these three popular local news topics, adults 65 and older were more likely than all other age groups to follow these topics regularly. Teens 13-17 most commonly follow local weather and information about local school events. These findings suggest that topics like weather, school events, sports, and crime act as a potential gateway for introducing younger consumers to local news more broadly, perhaps even establishing the groundwork for teens to become regular consumers into adulthood.

Older adults are more likely than 13- to 17-year-olds and younger adults to follow several local news topics.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who follow each topic regularly



Question: Here are some local news and information topics. Which of these topics, if any, do you follow regularly? *Please select all that apply.*

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



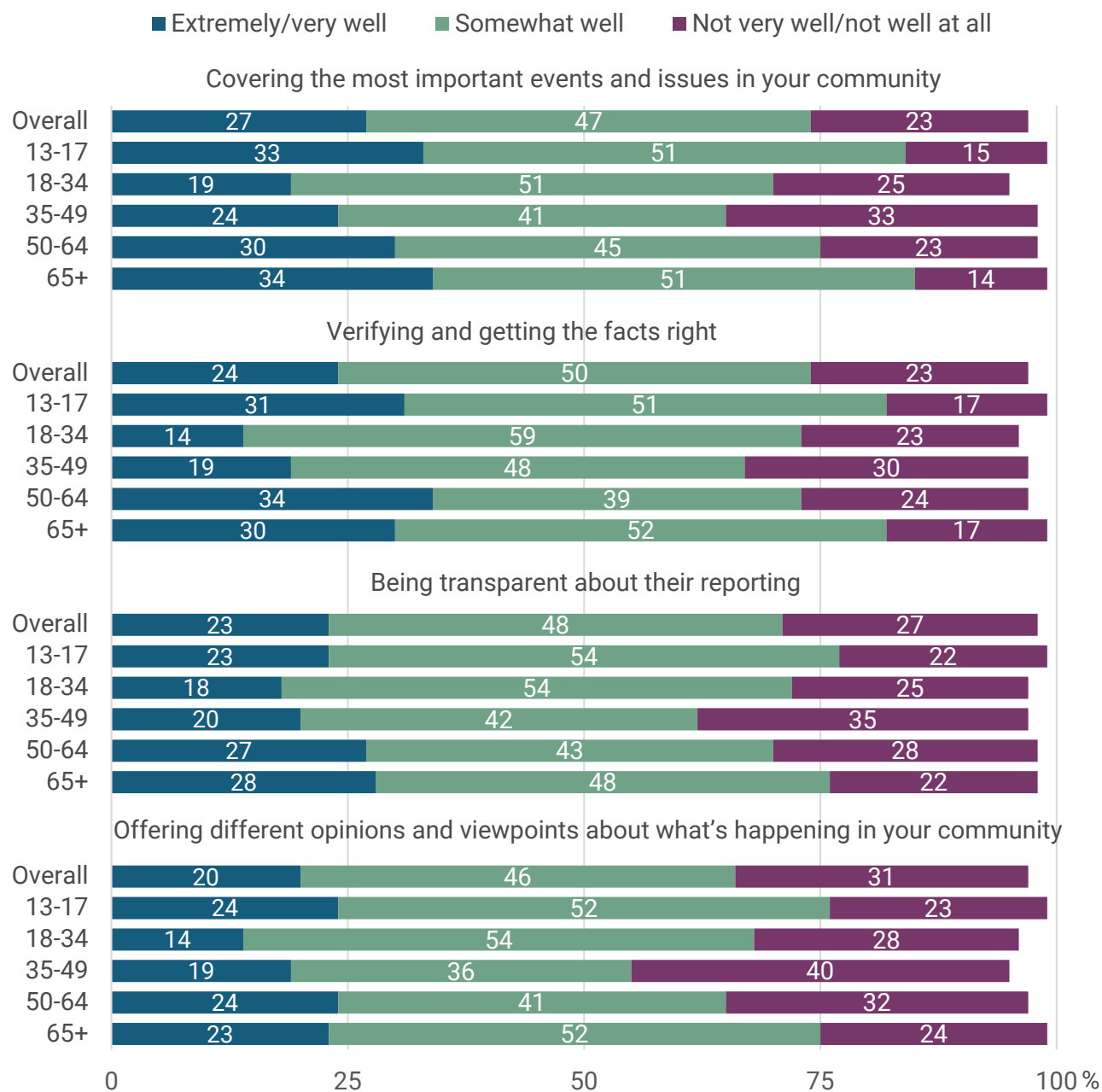
Local news organizations are seen in a mostly positive light. Most teens and adults say local news organizations are doing at least somewhat well at verifying and getting facts right, covering the most important events and issues, being transparent, and offering different opinions and viewpoints, with about a quarter saying they are doing extremely or very well at all of these things.

When it comes to covering the issues that are most important to the community, 13- to 17-year-olds and adults over age 65 have the most faith in local news outlets. Adults ages 18-49 are less confident, with only 2 in 10 thinking that local news does this extremely or very well compared with about a third of teens and older adults. Similarly, 13- to 17-year-olds and adults ages 50 and older are more likely to think that local news does at least very well at getting facts correct. Again, adults ages 18-49 show more hesitancy. All age groups feel similarly about local news outlets' ability to be transparent and offer different opinions about community events.

Among adults, Democrats have more faith than Republicans in local news' ability to do all of the following: get the facts correct (34% vs. 20%), cover the most important issues (36% vs. 24%), be transparent (32% vs. 19%), and offer a wide range of viewpoints (25% vs. 18%).

A quarter say local news does extremely or very well at covering the most important issues, getting the facts right, and being transparent.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How well do you think local news organizations are doing each of the following?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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SECTION III: INFLUENCERS AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

INFLUENCERS OR INDEPENDENT CREATORS HAVE RISEN AS POPULAR SOURCES OF NEWS AND INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNGER AUDIENCES. AMERICANS AGES 13 AND OLDER TURN TO THESE SOURCES FOR A VARIETY OF TOPICS AND REASONS.

Overall, a majority of Americans – teenagers and adults alike – say they get news information at least sometimes from independent creators or influencers.¹ When asked how often they get local news, national news, pop culture or entertainment news, or health and wellness news from influencers, 57% of teens and adults said they get news about at least one of these topics often or sometimes.

Though a majority of the public rely on influencers or independent creators for news at least sometimes, engagement varies by age. Unsurprisingly, 13- to 17-year-olds are the most likely of any age group to engage with influencers for news content at least sometimes (81%) followed by young adults ages 18-34 (63%) and adults ages 35-49 (58%). About half of all adults 50 and older get news from influencers often or sometimes.

About 4 in 10 American teens and adults get news from influencers about national news (44%), pop culture, entertainment, and sports (41%), health and wellness (38%), and local news (35%).

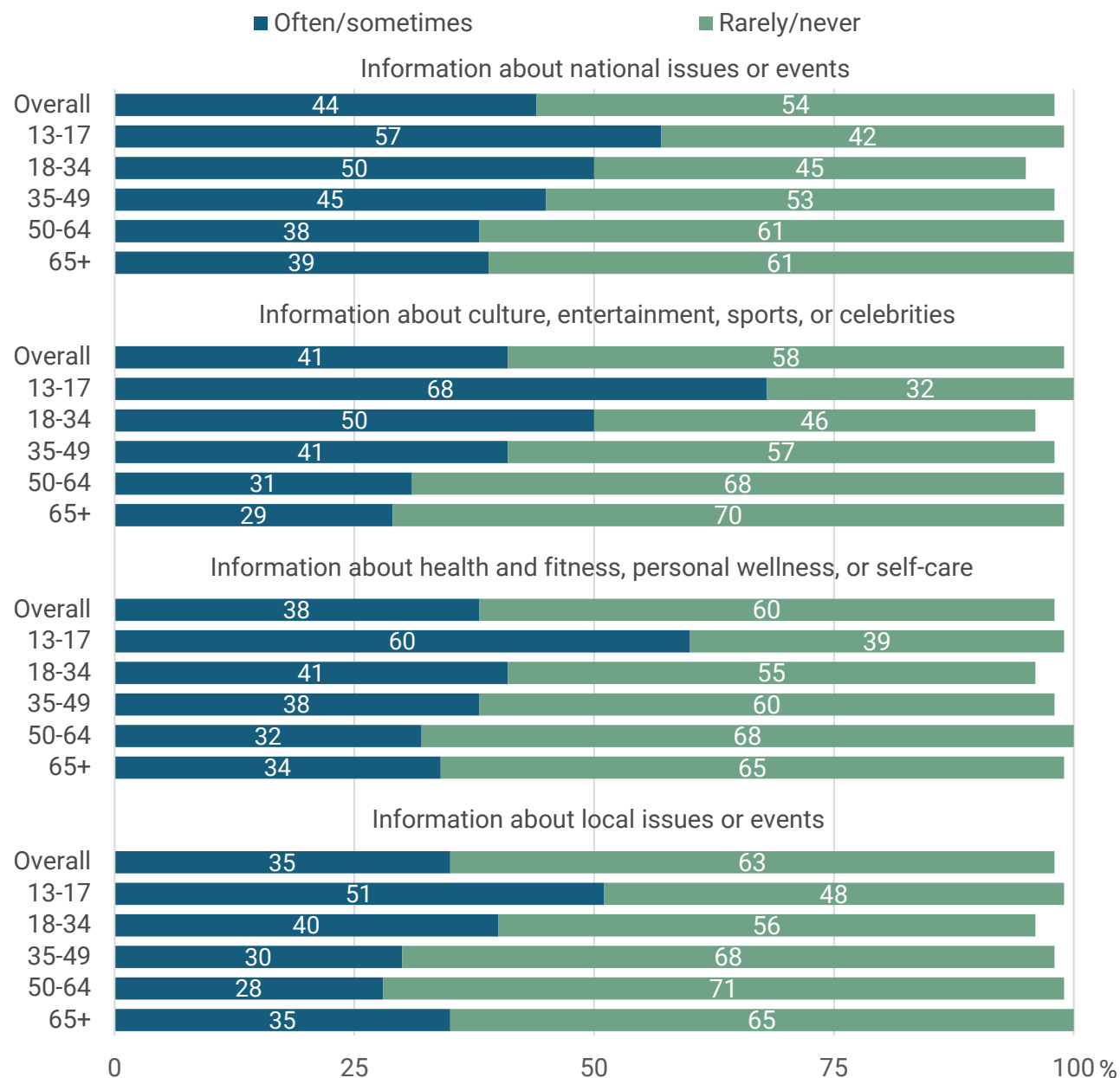
Teens ages 13-17 are more likely than all other age groups to get news from influencers or independent creators about pop culture or health and wellness at least sometimes. They're also more likely than all adults ages 35 and older to learn about national events and issues from influencers.

Democrats (57%) and Republicans (58%) are just as likely to get news from influencers at least often. They also follow the four news topics asked about (local news, national news, pop culture or entertainment news, and health or wellness news) at equal rates.

¹ This survey defines independent creators or influencers as people who respondents may or may not know personally who share opinions, commentaries, or updates about current events, social issues, wellness, fashion, gaming, politics, health, entertainment, or lifestyle. They may or may not be professional journalists.

A majority of teens rely on influencers or independent creators to get news about national issues, entertainment and culture, and health and wellness.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How often, if at all, do you get each of the following from independent creators or influencers?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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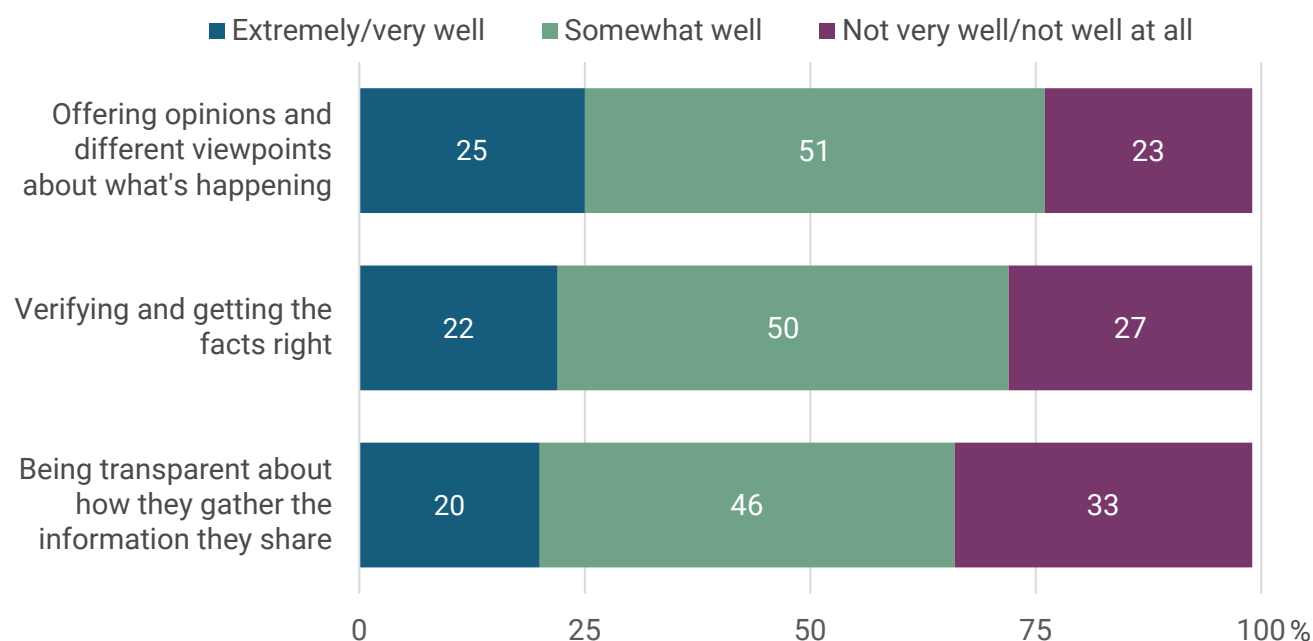


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Independent creators or influencers are viewed similarly to local news sources in terms of how well they are verifying and getting the facts right, being transparent about how they gather information, or offering opinions and different viewpoints about what is happening. A majority think influencers do all these things at least somewhat well, and about 2 in 10 say they do them very or extremely well. Americans ages 13 and older trust independent creators or influencers to verify facts, be transparent, and offer different viewpoints about equally well. Democrats and Republicans also trust influencers to do these well at similar rates.

A quarter feel that independent creators do extremely or very well at offering different viewpoints and getting facts right.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: Think of all the independent creators or influencers you follow. How well do you think they are...

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.

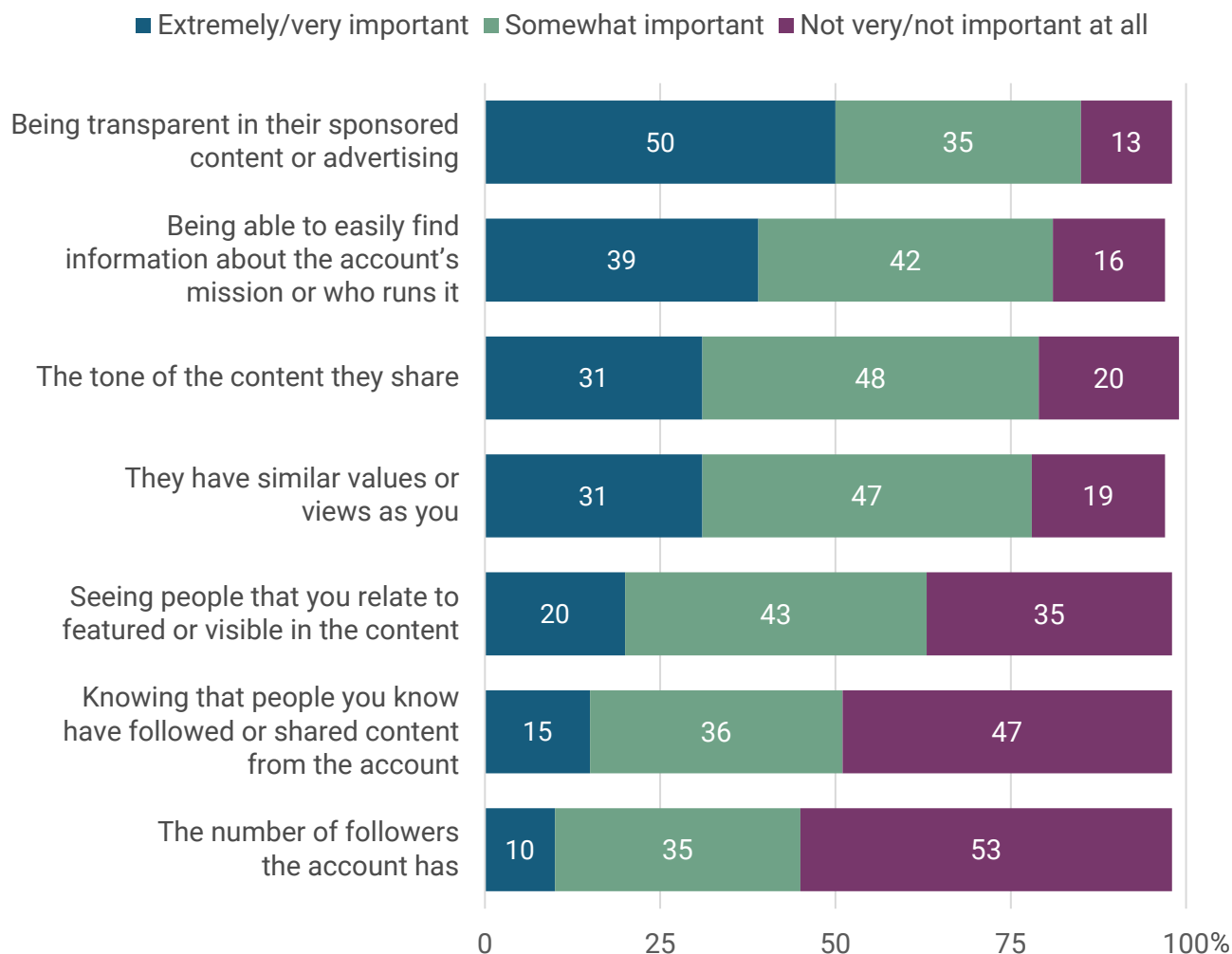


People think about a variety of criteria when they turn to influencers for news. Being transparent both about sponsored content (51%) and about the account's mission or who is behind it (39%) stand out as the two most common factors people say are extremely or very important to them. About a third say that the tone of the content that the influencers share or whether influencers have similar values to themselves are extremely or very important reasons to get news from them. Follower count is the least important factor for American teens and adults when determining which independent creators to get news from, with about half saying that follower count is not very important or not important at all.

Adults and teens across all age groups view the following factors as important or unimportant at similar rates.

Half feel that influencers being transparent about their sponsored content is extremely or very important.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: People turn to independent creators or influencers for different reasons. Thinking about the reasons you personally get news and information from them, how important is each of the following?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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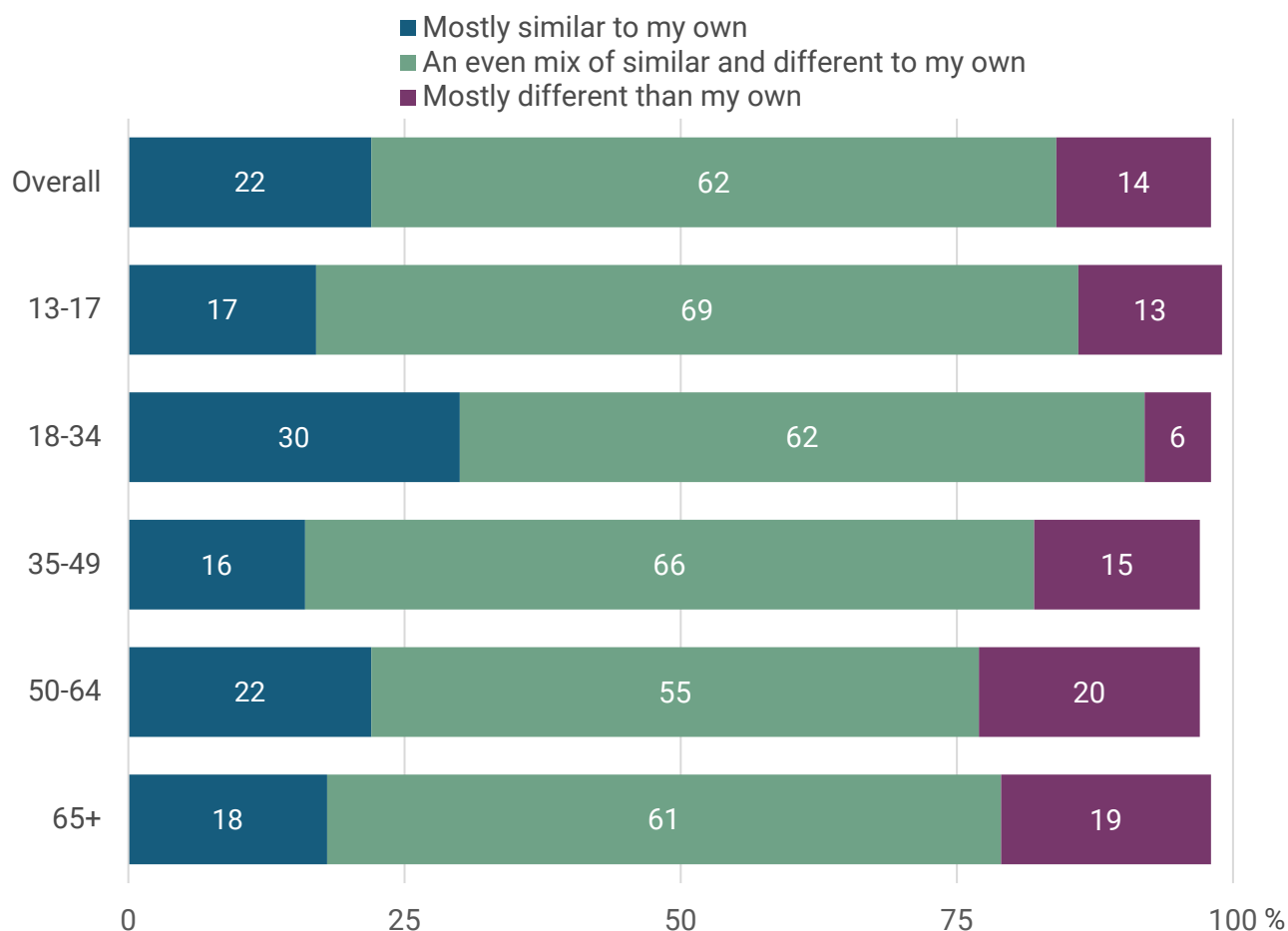
Most, 62%, say the news they see from independent creators or influencers contain an even mix of similar and different opinions and perspectives to their own, while 2 in 10 say they see views that are mostly similar to their own. Few, only 14%, are seeing content that is mostly different from their personal values or views.

Adults ages 18-34 are more likely to mostly encounter content from influencers that aligns with their views than teens, adults 35-49, or adults over 65. Adults over 50 are more likely than adults 18-34 to see content from creators that is mostly different from their own views.

Democrats and Republicans are equally likely to get news that is mostly similar, mostly different, or an even mix of similar and different to their own from influencers or creators. However, independent adults, 24%, are more likely than both Democrats and Republicans, 11% each, to feel that they mostly see opinions that are different from their own.

A majority of teens and adults are mostly seeing an even mix of content from influencers.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right. Would you say that the opinions and perspectives on news you see from independent creators or influencers are...?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



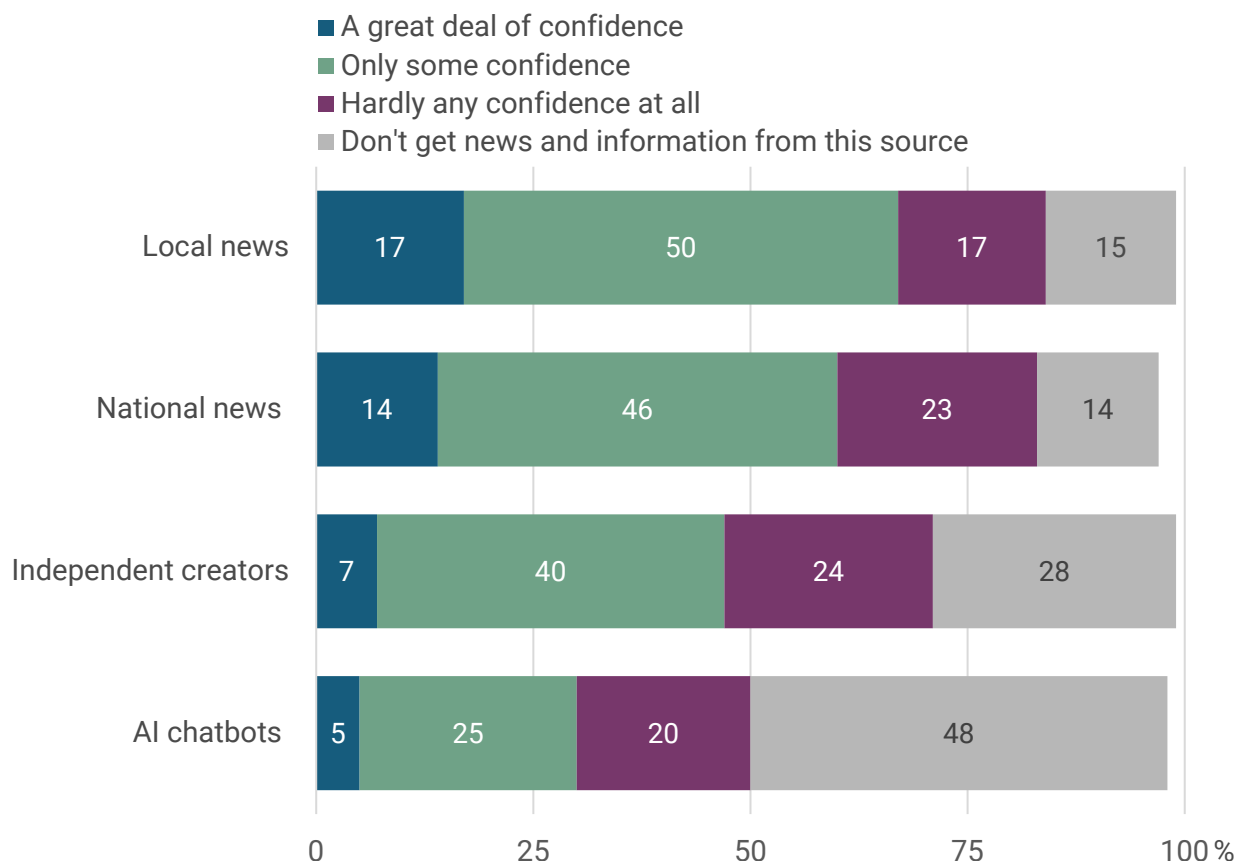
SECTION IV: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF NEWS SOURCES

WHILE AVERAGE CONFIDENCE IN NEWS SOURCES REMAINS LOW, THE PUBLIC HAS VARYING DEGREES OF TRUST ACROSS DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEWS SOURCES.

On average, few American teens or adults have a great deal of confidence in any of the four types of news sources asked about in this study. However, there is nuance in the degree of trust for each: local news is viewed as most trustworthy, followed by national news, then influencers or independent creators, with AI chatbots ranked last.

Most teens and adults place some confidence in local and national news while few do in AI chatbots.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How much confidence do you have in the news and information you get from each of the following sources? If you do not get news and information from each of these, you can say so.

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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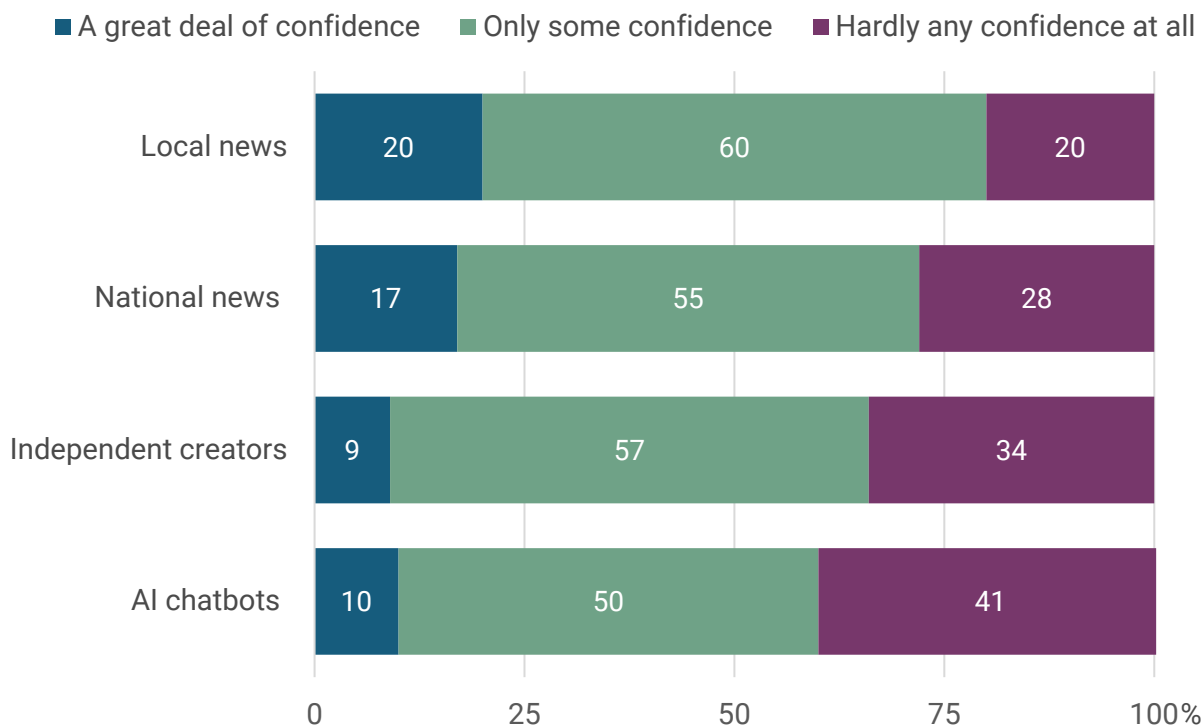


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When looking at attitudes toward each of these news sources only among Americans ages 13 and older who use each of the following sources, confidence in all four comes close together. Confidence in information from influencers and AI is similar, and both lag slightly behind traditional news outlets at the local and national level.

Among users, confidence in all four sources comes closer.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who consume the following news sources



Question: How much confidence do you have in the news and information you get from each of the following sources? If you do not get news and information from each of these, you can say so.

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



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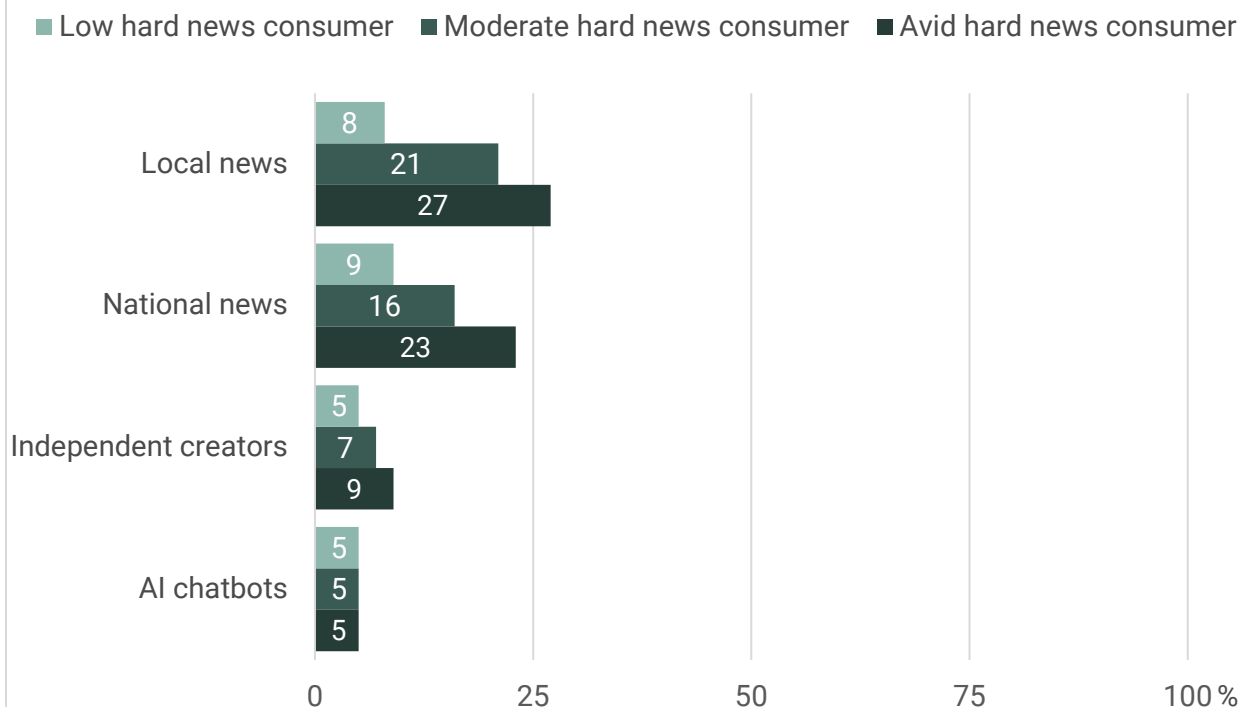
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Among consumers of hard news topics², avid hard news consumers were more likely to place a great deal of confidence in national news compared with moderate and low hard news consumers. For local news, both avid and moderate hard news consumers were more likely than low hard news consumers to have a great deal of confidence in the information they get from local sources. Avid hard news consumers are also more likely to be older. This signals that older adults' trust is likely reinforced by longstanding consumption habits while younger people's lower trust may reflect lighter and more episodic engagement. Low hard news consumers generally had less confidence across all four media types. Confidence in AI chatbots was low across all consumer types, with no discernible differences.

² Hard news topics include national politics, state or local politics, social issues, schools and education, business and the economy, the environment, and crime and safety.

Avid and moderate hard news consumers are the most confident in traditional news sources.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who have a great deal of confidence



Question: How much confidence do you have in the news and information you get from each of the following sources? If you do not get news and information from each of these, you can say so.

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.

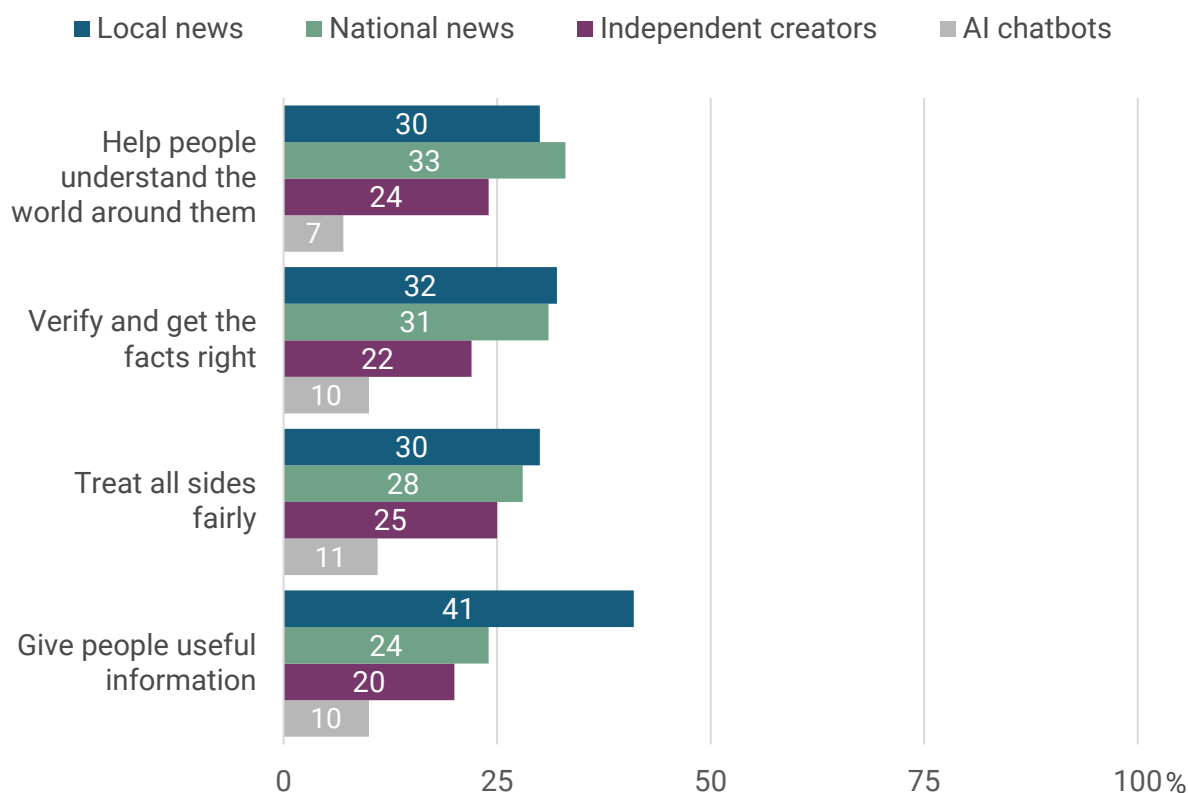


Democrats are more likely than Republicans to report confidence in local news (25% vs. 14%) and national news (22% vs. 9%). There are no significant partisan differences in confidence when it comes to AI chatbots or influencers.

Different news sources have distinct comparative advantages: certain sources are perceived to perform better than others on specific attributes measured in this survey. Local news and national news receive the highest marks for helping people understand the world around them and for verifying facts and getting information right. Local news is rated highest for providing useful information (41%), compared with national news (24%), independent creators (20%), or AI chatbots (10%). Independent creators rank closely behind traditional outlets, with roughly 1 in 4 respondents saying they are the best at treating all sides fairly, verifying and getting the facts right, and helping people understand the world around them.

Most view local news as a place where they can get useful information compared with other sources.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: If you had to choose one news source that does each of the following best, which one would you choose?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.

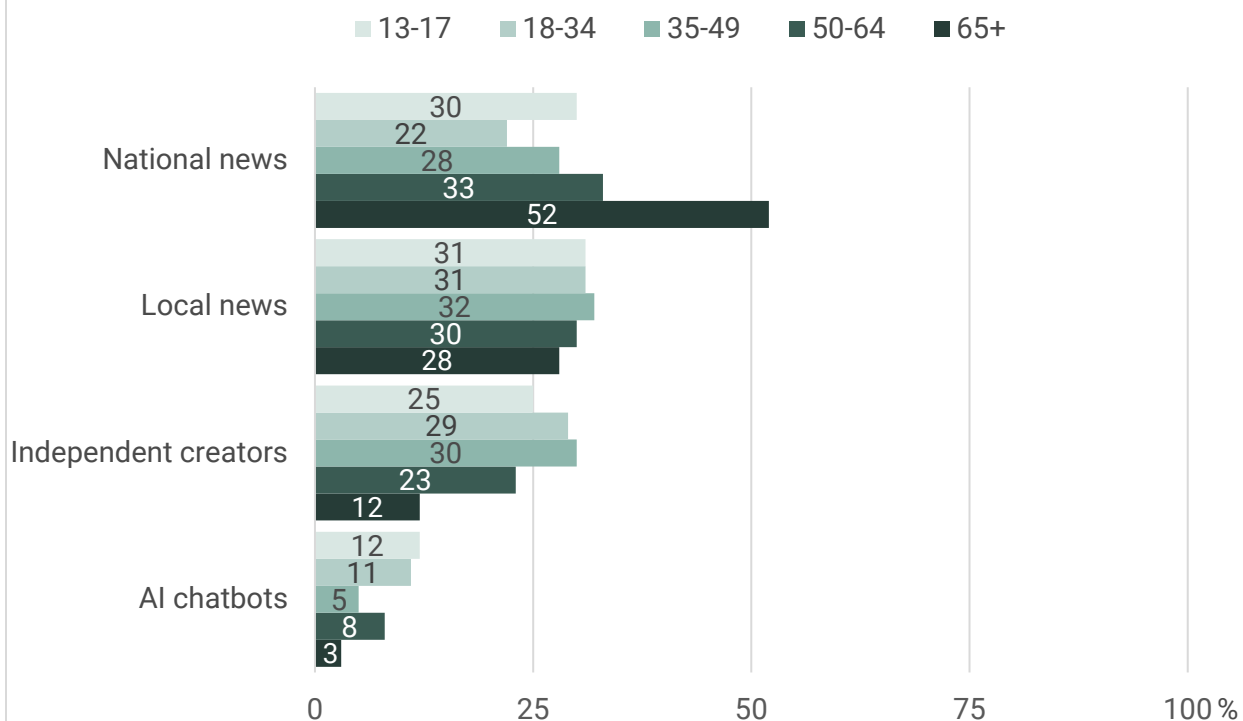


While these attitudes are generally consistent across age groups, some key differences emerge. Adults ages 65 and older are significantly more likely to rate national news as a source that helps people understand the world around them. Nearly 52% of adults ages 65 and older say this, compared with a third or less of those younger. Teens ages 13- to 17 are also somewhat more likely than adults ages 18 to 34 to rate national news as best at this (30% vs. 22%).

Additionally, 13- to 17-year-olds demonstrate relatively balanced confidence across traditional and alternative sources. They rate national news, local news, and independent creators nearly equally at helping people understand the world (30%, 31%, and 25% respectively), unlike older adults who show a stronger preference for traditional news outlets.

Teens ages 13-17 have evenly distributed trust across national news, local news, and independent creators.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who say the following news sources help people understand the world around them



Question: If you had to choose one news source that does each of the following best, which one would you choose?

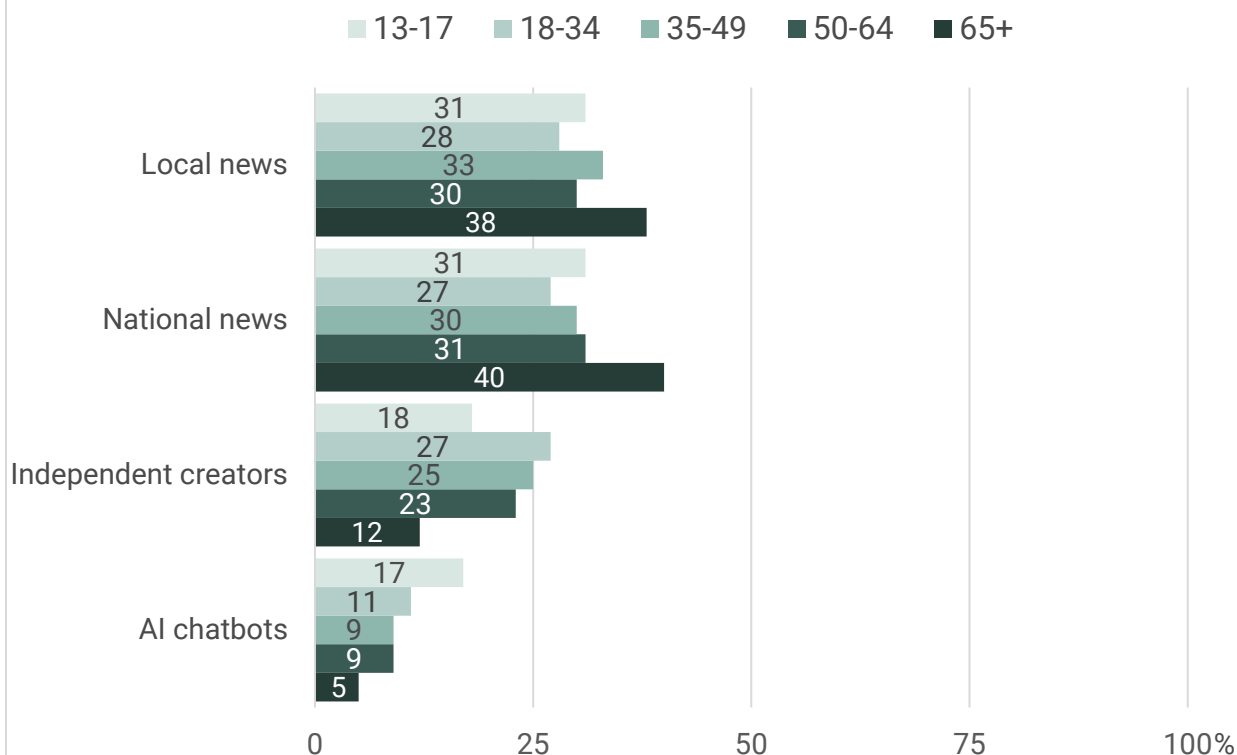
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



When assessing which news and information source is best at verifying and getting the facts right, most respondents across age groups mention local news or national news. American teenagers and adults have similar faith in the ability of local news, national news, and AI chatbots to get the facts right. When it comes to influencers, older adults are more skeptical. Teens ages 13-17 and adults ages 18-64 are more likely than those ages 65 and older to cite independent creators as best at this task.

Teens more likely to trust AI to get the facts right compared with older adults.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who say the following news sources verify and get the facts right



Question: If you had to choose one news source that does each of the following best, which one would you choose?

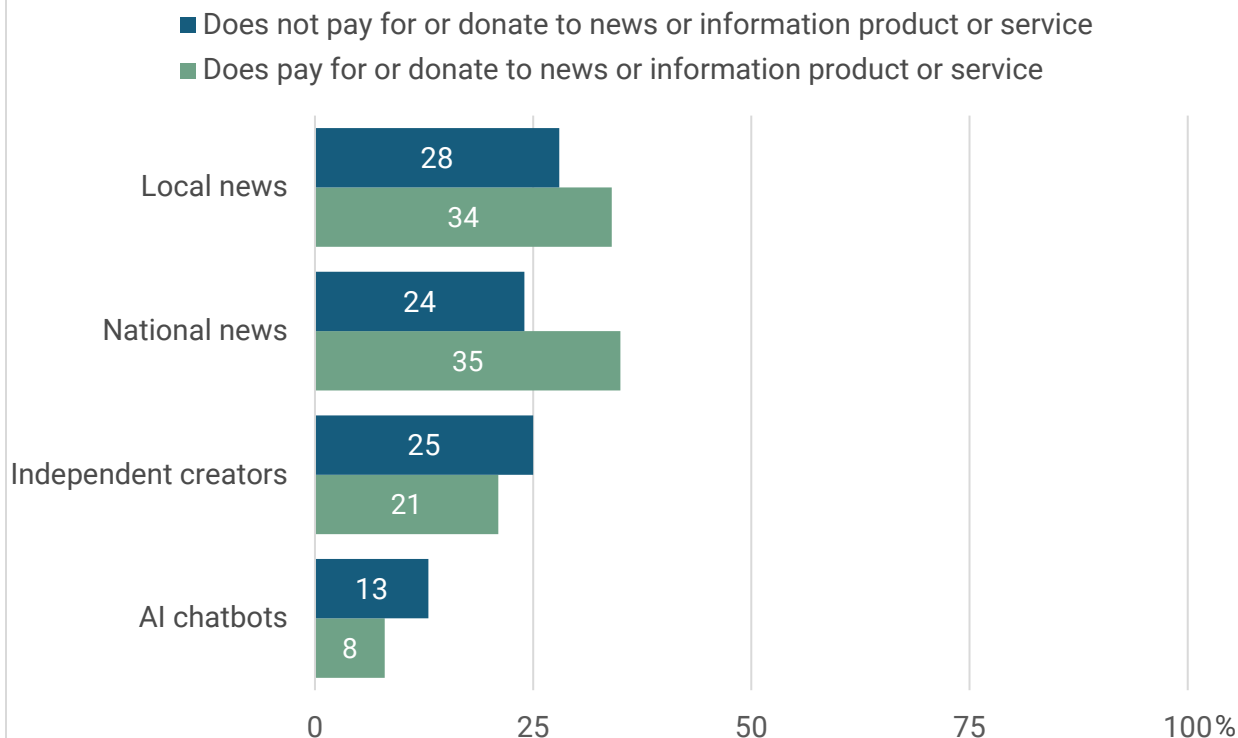
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



There is no difference between payers/donors and non-payers/non-donors in their assessment of national news, local news, or independent creators regarding their ability to get the facts right. Confidence in AI chatbots remains minimal for both groups, at 13% and 8% respectively, though payers/donors are slightly more likely to have confidence.

People who pay for or donate to news and information sources more likely to say local and national news get the facts right.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who say the following news sources verify and get the facts right



Question: If you had to choose one news source that does each of the following best, which one would you choose?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Teens and adults who pay for or donate to news and information services are more likely to view national news as helping people understand the world around them (38% vs. 22% of non-payers/non-donors) and local news as treating all sides fairly (33% vs. 22%).

SECTION V: MEDIA FATIGUE, TRUST, MISINFORMATION, AND PARTISANSHIP

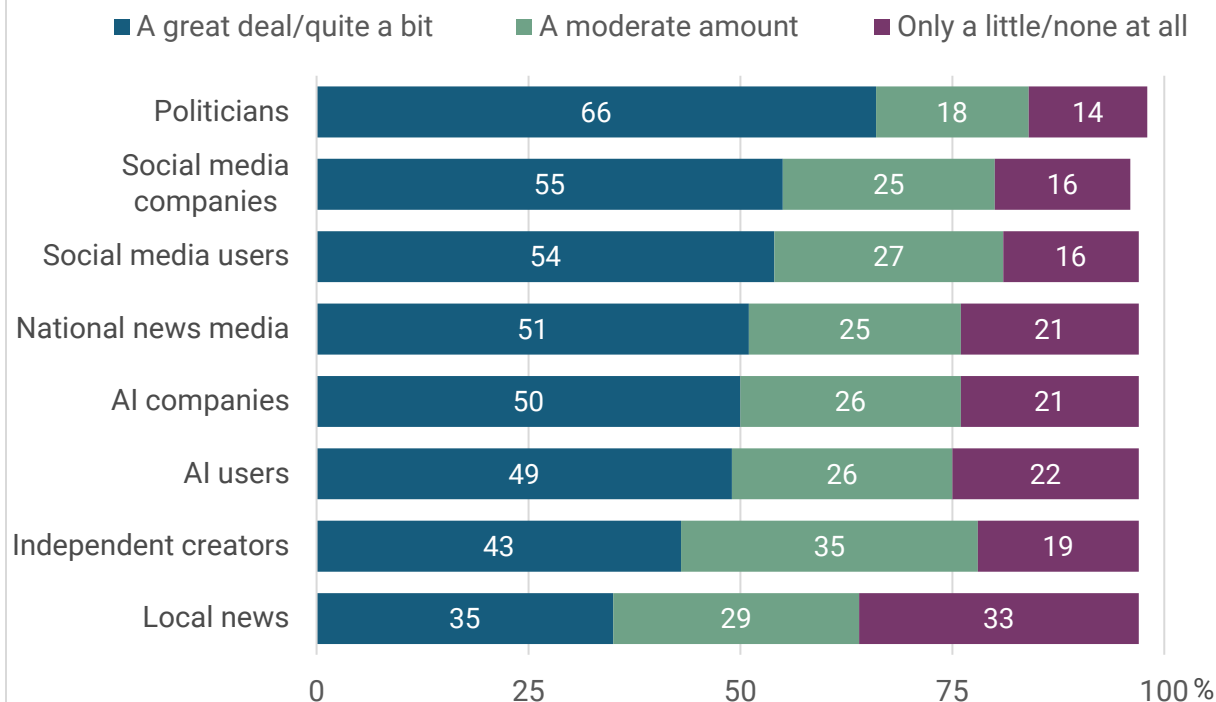
AMERICAN TEENS AND ADULTS HOLD POLITICIANS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION WHILE LARGELY EXEMPTING LOCAL NEWS.

The public assigns primary responsibility for misinformation to political and social media actors rather than news organizations. Two-thirds of American teens and adults (66%) say politicians bear a great deal or quite a bit of responsibility for spreading misinformation, followed by social media companies (55%) and social media users (54%). Local news (35%) and influencers (43%) receive the least blame from the public. AI users and companies, as well as national news, fall in the middle. This pattern suggests the public views misinformation as largely originating from political discourse and social media ecosystems rather than traditional local journalism.

Avid (81%) and moderate (75%) hard news consumers are more likely to blame politicians than low hard news consumers (51%). Avid and moderate hard news consumers are also more likely to assign blame across all categories except local and national news, where blame remains consistently low (around one-third) across all consumption levels.

The public largely places misinformation at the fault of politicians, social media companies, and social media users.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How much responsibility do you think each of the following has for the spread of misinformation about events and important issues?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



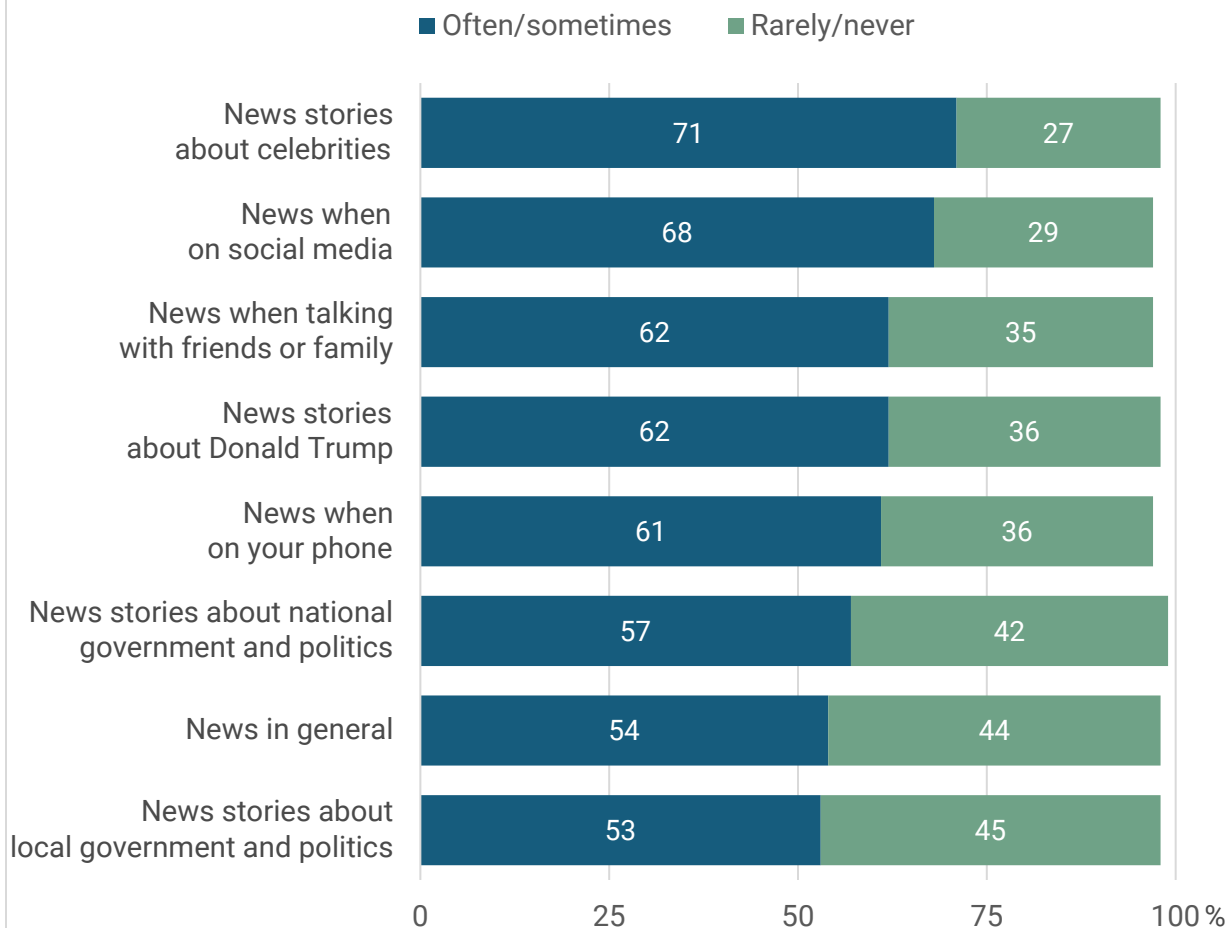
Partisan differences emerge in views of responsibility for misinformation, with Democrats more likely than Republicans to assign responsibility to politicians (75% vs 65%), social media companies (64% vs. 53%), AI companies (58% vs. 47%), AI users (56% vs. 46%), and independent creators or influencers (53% vs. 43%).

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL OF NEWS CONSUMPTION DRIVES WIDESPREAD AVOIDANCE BEHAVIORS AND EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH DIGITAL BOUNDARIES.

Americans ages 13 and older actively avoid certain types of news content, with celebrity news driving the most disengagement. Seven in 10 teens and adults say they often or sometimes actively try to avoid news stories about celebrities and news when on social media. Roughly 3 in 5 avoid news about Trump, national politics, news consumed via phone, and news when talking with friends or family. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they avoid news about Trump (68% vs. 50%). About half say they actively try to avoid news in general, indicating that avoidance is often topic- or context-specific rather than a blanket rejection of news.

A majority of teens and adults actively avoids news in their personal social time as well as news about celebrities or the president.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How often do you find yourself actively trying to avoid...

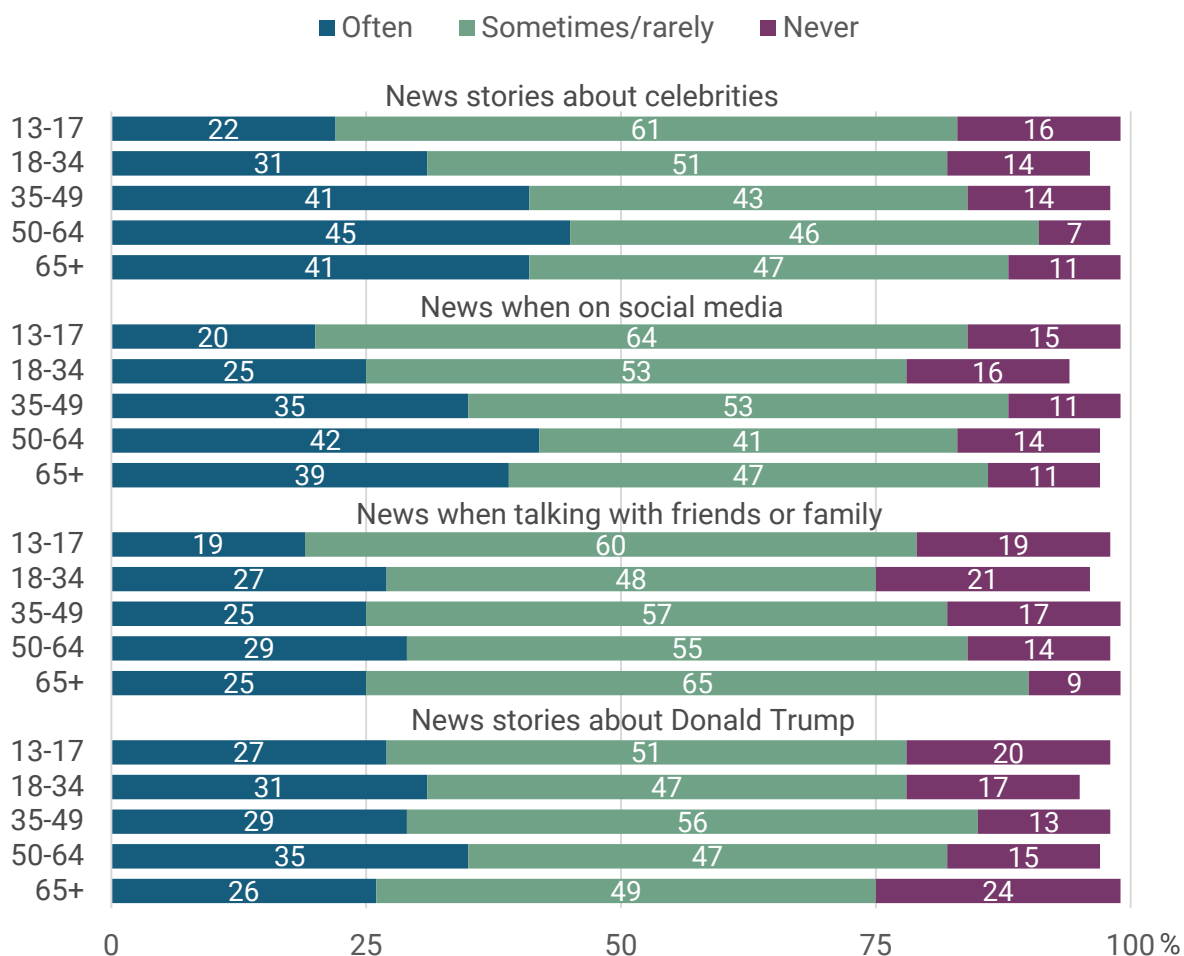
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Adults ages 50-64 (42%) and those who are 65 or older (39%) are more likely than teens (20%) to often avoid news on social media.

Older adults are more likely than teens and younger adults to avoid news on social media.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How often do you find yourself actively trying to avoid...

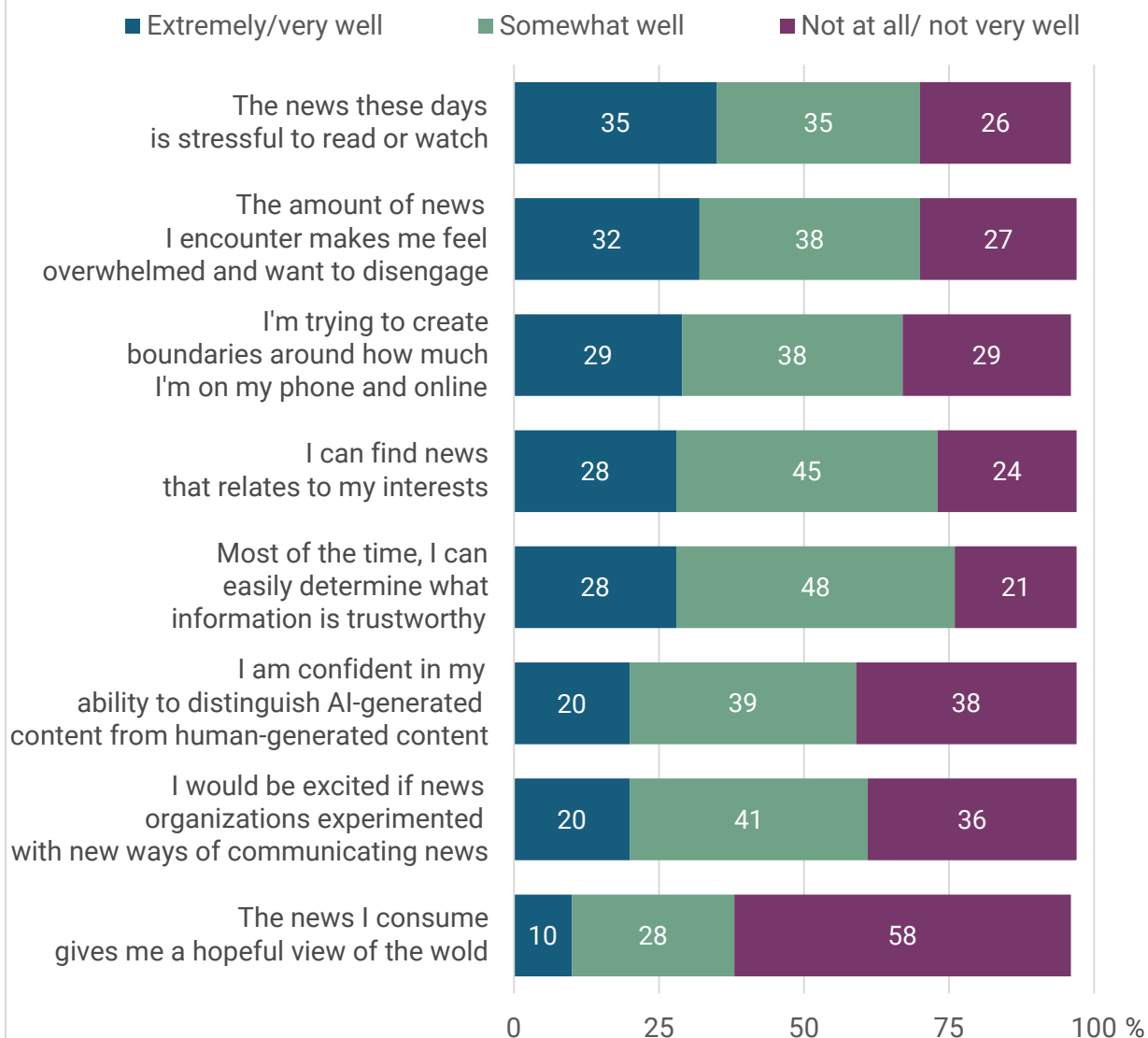
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Respondents were asked how well various statements describe their feelings about the news and media landscape. While 28% feel they can navigate news – both in finding relevant content and in determining trustworthiness – many express serious concerns about news’ emotional impact. About a third say news makes them feel overwhelmed or they find it too stressful. Most strikingly, only 1 in 10 say news gives them a hopeful view of the world. In response, 29% are trying to create boundaries around their phone and online time, suggesting widespread efforts to manage news-related stress.

Many Americans stressed and overwhelmed by the news, with a portion actively creating distance online.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who say the following statements describe their feelings



Question: How well do the following statements describe how you feel about the news and media landscape?

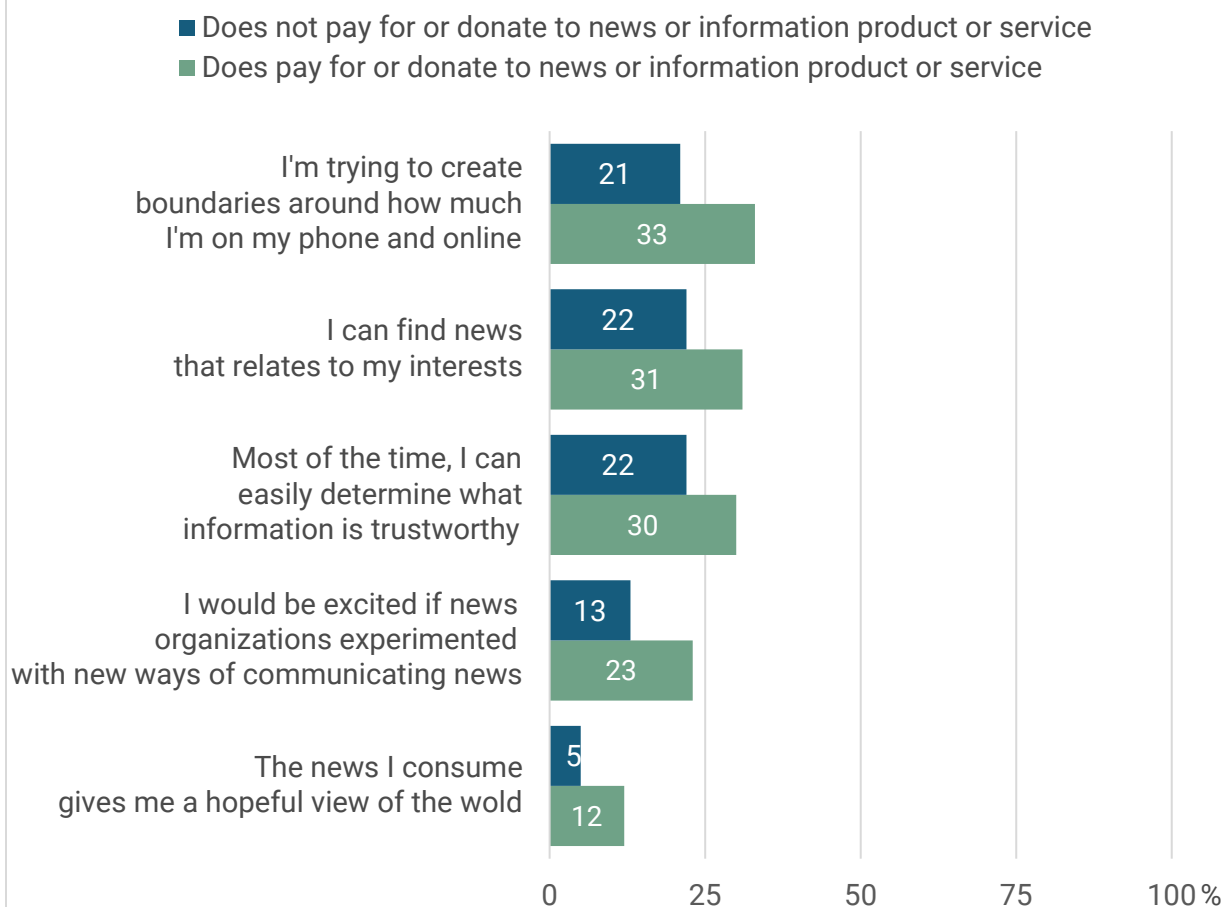
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Those who pay for or donate to media or information sources express stronger intensities across key media attitudes than non-payers/non-donors. Notably, a third of payers/donors say they are trying to create boundaries around phone and online time compared with 21% of non-payers/non-donors. Additionally, payers/donors are more likely than non-payers/non-donors to feel that the news they consume gives them a hopeful view of the world (12% vs. 5%).

People who pay for or donate to news and information sources more likely to say they are creating boundaries around being online.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older who say the following describes their feelings



Question: How well do the following statements describe how you feel about the news and media landscape?

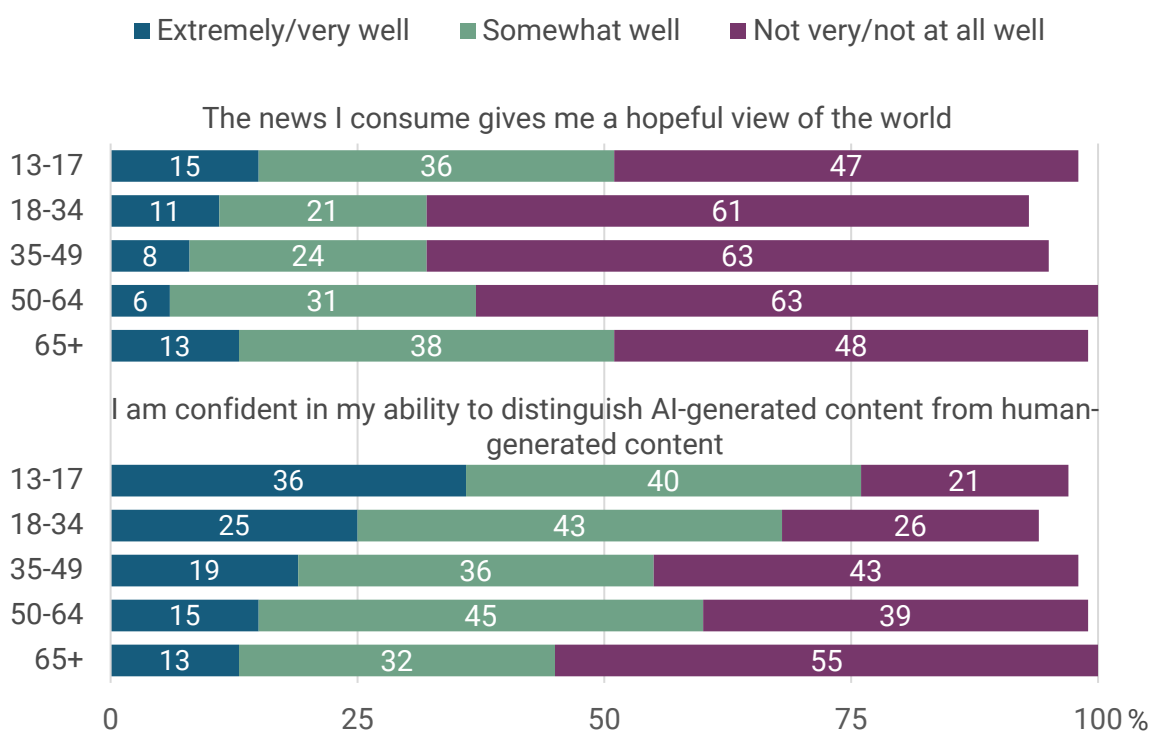
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Age significantly shapes Americans' relationship with the news, particularly regarding AI literacy and hopefulness. Teenagers 13-17 are far more confident in distinguishing AI-generated from human-generated content: 36% say they can do this extremely or very well versus just 13% of adults 65 and older. And 63% of those ages 35-64 say news does not give them a hopeful view of the world, compared with roughly half of teens 13-17 and older adults.

Teens more likely than older adults to say they are confident in their ability to distinguish AI content from human.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How well do the following statements describe how you feel about the news and media landscape?

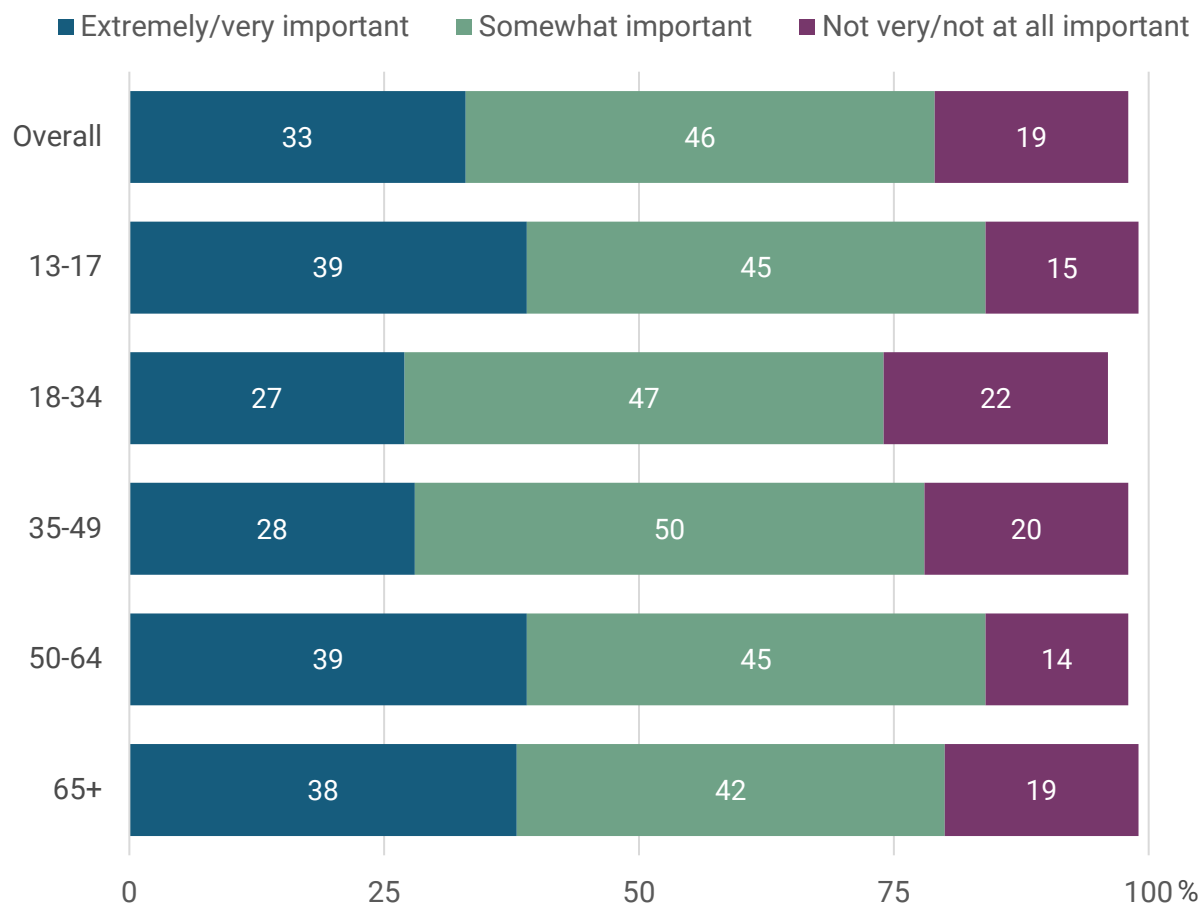
Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



Most Americans ages 13 and older consider it important to get news and information that aligns with their values or views, with nearly 80% saying it is at least somewhat important. Adults ages 50 and older show similarly high rates as teens in the intensity of this preference, with 4 in 10 viewing it as important.

A majority of the public believes it is important to get news and information that aligns with their values or views.

Percent of Americans ages 13 and older



Question: How important is it to you that the sources you use to get news and information align with your values or views?

Source: Media Insight Poll conducted February 5-8, 2026, with 1,092 respondents ages 18 and older nationwide and Media Insight Poll conducted February 2-16, 2026, with 1,009 respondents ages 13-17 nationwide.



STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by the Media Insight Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University, and the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism. The survey was funded by API, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism and the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. And staff from all partners collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using two probability sample sources. Interviews for the two surveys used in this study were conducted February 2-16, 2026, with respondents ages 13-17, and February 5-8, 2026, with respondents ages 18 and older both representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The first probability source is AmeriSpeak Teen Omnibus®, a quarterly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. teenagers ages 13 to 17. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by email and telephone via standard text message. The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. Parents or guardians provide consent for their teenager's participation.

Interviews for the teen survey were conducted between February 2-16, 2026, with respondents ages 13-17, representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were drawn from AmeriSpeak Teen, and 1,009 completed the survey. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. Panel members were invited by email or by phone via standard text message. Interviews were conducted in English on the web only. The weighted household panel response rate is 24.9 percent, and the survey completion rate is 44.4 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 8.6 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/-4.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

The second probability sample source is the AmeriSpeak® Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The National Sample Frame provides coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. The U.S. Postal Service delivery-sequence file (DSF) and National Consumer Address File have been used in a subset of years as a supplemental sample during AmeriSpeak panel recruitment for low coverage states. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for the survey of adults were conducted between February 5-8, 2026, with respondents ages 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,092 completed the survey – 1,021 via the web and 71 via telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone via standard text message. Interviews were conducted in English on the web only. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. The weighted household panel response rate is 24.9 percent, and the survey completion rate is 29 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 7.2 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/-4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 93 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse in the probability sample, as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling in probability samples resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, education, and the 2024 presidential vote for the adult sample. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of people ages 13 and older.

The overall margin of sampling error for the combined sample is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Complete questions and results are available at <https://apnorc.org/projects/the-media-insight-project/>

Details about the Media Insight Project can be found at: <https://apnorc.org/projects/the-media-insight-project/>

For more information, please email info@apnorc.org.

ABOUT THE MEDIA INSIGHT PROJECT

The Media Insight Project is a collaboration of The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and the Local News Network at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism with the objective of conducting high-quality, innovative research meant to inform the news industry and the public about various important issues facing journalism and the news business. The Media Insight Project brings together the expertise of the organizations and their respective partners and involves collaborations among key staff at the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School, the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, NORC at the University of Chicago, and The Associated Press.

<https://apnorc.org/projects/the-media-insight-project/>

ABOUT THE AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE

The American Press Institute supports local and community-based media through research, programs and products that foster healthy, responsive and resilient news organizations. API envisions an inclusive democracy and society, where communities have the news and information they need to thrive. API is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization, and its parent organization is the News/Media Alliance. <http://www.pressinstitute.org>

ABOUT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MEDILL SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA, INTEGRATED MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS

The Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University is a leading journalism school offering undergraduate and graduate programs that combine enduring journalistic values with innovation, data-driven strategies and global perspectives. Founded in 1921, Medill emphasizes real-world reporting, media entrepreneurship, and leadership in media's digital transformation. <https://www.medill.northwestern.edu/>

ABOUT PHILIP MERRILL COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

The University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism is one of the world's premier journalism schools. One of only a handful of programs in the country devoted exclusively to journalism, Merrill College emphasizes immersive, hands-on learning to prepare students for success across today's – and tomorrow's – information ecosystem. Guided by a faculty of accomplished journalists and researchers, students work on data-driven national investigations through the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, a 2025 Pulitzer Prize finalist. They report from Washington and Annapolis with Capital News Service, cover sports beyond the playing field at The Shirley Povich Center for Sports Journalism, report on issues vital to Maryland communities through the Local News Network and contribute to building innovative artificial intelligence-based tools that strengthen journalism. They also pursue international reporting opportunities across the globe.

<https://merrill.umd.edu/>

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

- The Associated Press (AP) is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world's population sees AP journalism every day. www.ap.org
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. Learn more at www.apnorc.org.