# 2022

# DISINFORMATION IN CANADA REPORT

This report investigates how disinformation is spread in Canada, with some comparisons to the U.S. It also explores the power and perceptions of disinformation, including its impact on trust in society, and who should be responsible for combatting it.

*December 2022*

METHODOLOGY

# Methodology

An online survey

2,003 Canadians

Completed between May 12 and May 22, 2022, using Leger's online panel. **The U.S. data included in this report comes from the Institute for Public**

**Relations 2022 Disinformation in Society Report.**

No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (i.e., a web panel in this case).
For comparative purposes, though, a probability sample of 2003 respondents would have a margin of error of ±2.2%, 19 times out of 20.

## Leger's online panel

Leger's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally and has a retention rate of 90%. Poll aggregator 338Canada.com gave Leger the highest rating among all polling firms in Canada for the accuracy of its studies. (See https://338canada.com/pollster-ratings.htm.)

## Quality control

Stringent quality assurance measures allow Leger to achieve the high-quality standards set by the company. As a result, its methods of data collection and storage outperform the norms set by WAPOR (The World Association for Public Opinion Research). These measures are applied at every stage of the project: from data collection to processing, through to analysis. We aim to answer our clients' needs with honesty, total confidentiality, and integrity.
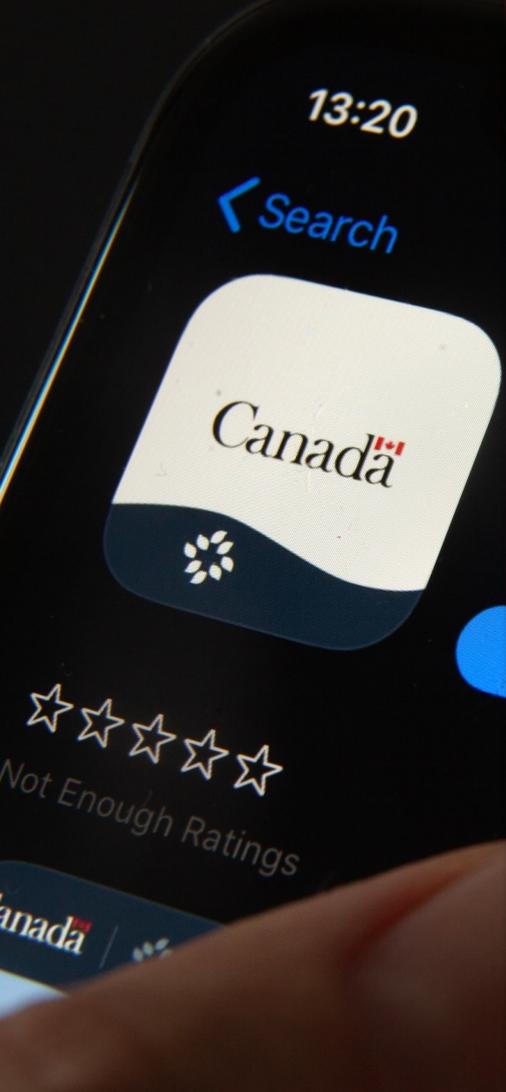
# KEY FINDINGS

# About the Study:

This report investigates how disinformation — defined as deliberately misleading or biased information — is spread in Canada and includes some comparisons to the U.S. It also explores the perceived breadth of reach and impact of disinformation on trust in society. The survey is based on the annual Institute for Public Relations (IPR) *Disinformation in Society* report conducted in the United States.

Based on the IPR study and this study, disinformation is increasingly a major problem in both countries. Therefore, understanding the power, perception, and factors that influence disinformation in Canada is important.

# Key Findings

**CANADIAN BROADCAST NEWS OUTLETS ARE WELL-TRUSTED, BUT JOURNALISTS ARE SLIGHTLY LESS SO**

- Canadian public-broadcaster *CBC* is ranked very highly by Canadians as a trusted source and one that combats disinformation well. Both *CBC News* and *CBC Radio* rank in the top-10 in both points as well, along with other broadcasters such as *CTV News* and *Global News*.
- However, journalists do not make the top-10 cut (although they're still up there, at 58%), indicating a slight disconnection of trust between media outlets and the individuals who prepare their news.

**RUSSIAN AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS ARE ONE OF THE TOP SOURCES THAT SPREAD DISINFORMATION, WHILE THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT STRUGGLES TO COMBAT IT**

- The Russian (86%) and Chinese governments (84%) are the least trusted sources and are also seen as the lead instigators of disinformation, with at least two-thirds of Canadians believing that they actively spread disinformation.
- While the Canadian government is a trusted source of news/information for nearly 3 in 5 (58%) Canadians, its ability to combat disinformation leaves many dissatisfied. Four-in-five (81%) feel the Canadian government should be very *responsible* for combatting disinformation, but only 2 in 5 (42%) feel it is *combatting* disinformation well.

# Key Findings

**PERSONAL CONNECTIONS ARE KING, BUT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE A DIFFERENT STORY**

- Personal connections such as family (75%), "people like me" (74%), and friends (71%) come out on top when it comes to trusted sources of news/information. With the social media sites where these trusted individuals may share news/information with others, trust takes a dive, with at least two-thirds of Canadians having none or not much trust in Facebook (76%), Instagram (64%), and Twitter (63%).

**WHILE INDIVIDUALS ARE SEEN TO COMBAT DISINFORMATION WELL, THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SO IS ELSEWHERE**

- While "people like me" (52%), family (49%), and friends (43%) are among the top-10 sources perceived to be successfully combatting disinformation in the media, there is a lack of public expectation to do so – with media, politicians, and journalists seen as the top sources that should assume this responsibility.
- Almost one-quarter (23%) of Canadians do not feel any personal responsibility to combat disinformation, especially younger Canadians (31% of those under 35 years of age vs. 20% of those 35+).

# Key Findings

**DISINFORMATION IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING CANADIANS' CONSUMPTION OF NEWS – PUSHING SOME TO SEEK NEWS ELSEWHERE**
- More than one-quarter (28%) avoid watching/reading/listening to the news because of disinformation, while 1 in 7 (16%) are more likely to read news from non-Canadian sources because of perceived disinformation in Canadian media.

**COVID-19 HAS TURNED INTO A DISINFORMATION MAGNET, RESULTING IN A LONGER PANDEMIC**
- Three-quarters (76%) feel there's a lot of disinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine, while two-thirds (66%) feel that disinformation will prolong the pandemic.

**DISINFORMATION IS SEEN AS A THREAT TO SEVERAL KEY ASPECTS OF CANADIAN LIFE**
- More than two-thirds believe that disinformation threatens Canadian democracy (72%), election processes (71%), and furthers the polarization of political parties (69%).

*"Disinformation is a threat to our democracy"*
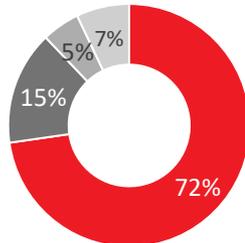
*"Disinformation undermines our election process"*

*"Disinformation increases the polarization of political parties"*

AGREE (net)

DISAGREE (net)

Neither agree nor disagree

I don't know/Refusal

72%  15%  5%  7%

71%  16%  5%  8%

69%  16%  3%  12%
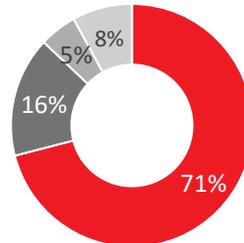
**DETAILED RESULTS**
Top Major Issues in Canada

# Top MAJOR issues in Canada

At least half of Canadians feel that the economy, quality of healthcare, the need for a living wage, hunger and poverty, health care costs, homelessness, climate change, economic inequality, the budget d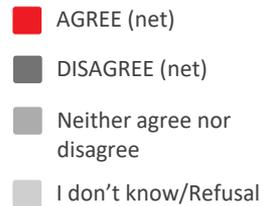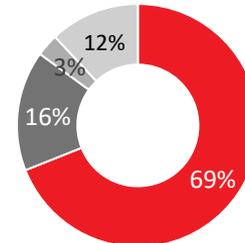eficit, illegal drug use or abuse, misinformation in the news, crime, data security, disinformation in the news, and/or infectious disease outbreaks are *major* problems in the country. The top major issue is the economy, followed by other financial fluidity concerns.

## TOP 15 MAJOR ISSUES (CANADA):

| Issue | Percentage |
|---|---|
| The economy | 69% |
| Quality of healthcare | 66% |
| Need for a living wage | 65% |
| Hunger and poverty | 63% |
| Health care costs | 63% |
| Homelessness | 63% |
| Climate change | 61% |
| Economic inequality | 58% |
| Budget deficit | 57% |
| Illegal drug use or abuse | 56% |
| Misinformation in the news | 54% |
| Crime | 54% |
| Data security | 51% |
| Disinformation in the news | 51% |
| Infectious disease outbreaks | 50% |

**Q2:** In your view, to what degree are each of the following a problem in Canada? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=1000-1003*

# Top MAJOR issues in Canada and the U.S.

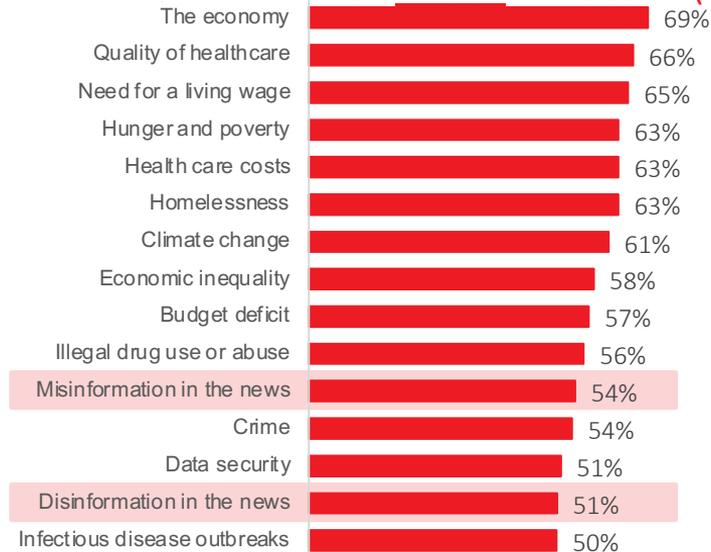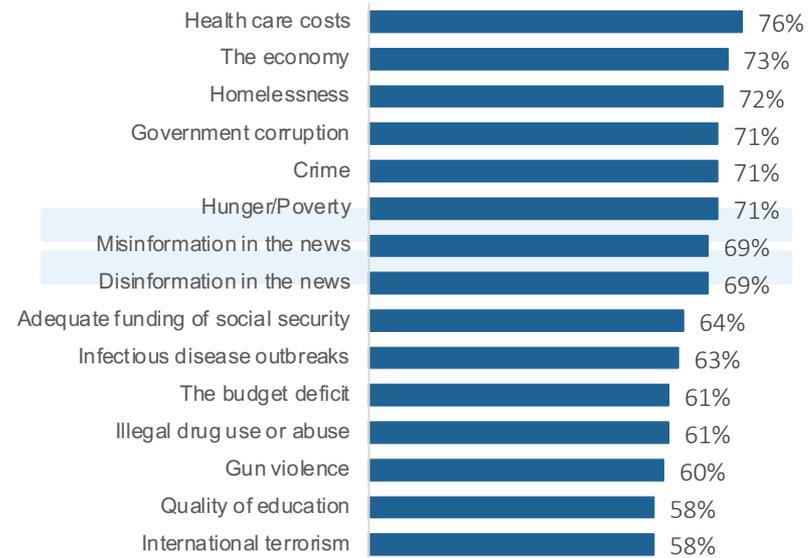**Americans also view health care costs (76%), the economy (73%), hunger and poverty (71%), and homelessness (72%) as their country's top 10 major problems, significantly higher than Canadians. Notably, misinformation and/or disinformation in the news ranks significantly higher as a major problem among Americans than Canadians, with both issues garnering the same percentages. Canadians rank misinformation as slightly more of an issue than disinformation.**

## TOP 15 MAJOR PROBLEMS (CANADA):

| Issue | % |
|---|---|
| The economy | 69% |
| Quality of healthcare | 66% |
| Need for a living wage | 65% |
| Hunger and poverty | 63% |
| Health care costs | 63% |
| Homelessness | 63% |
| Climate change | 61% |
| Economic inequality | 58% |
| Budget deficit | 57% |
| Illegal drug use or abuse | 56% |
| Misinformation in the news | 54% |
| Crime | 54% |
| Data security | 51% |
| Disinformation in the news | 51% |
| Infectious disease outbreaks | 50% |

## TOP 15 MAJOR PROBLEMS (U.S.):

| Issue | % |
|---|---|
| Health care costs | 76% |
| The economy | 73% |
| Homelessness | 72% |
| Government corruption | 71% |
| Crime | 71% |
| Hunger/Poverty | 71% |
| Misinformation in the news | 69% |
| Disinformation in the news | 69% |
| Adequate funding of social security | 64% |
| Infectious disease outbreaks | 63% |
| The budget deficit | 61% |
| Illegal drug use or abuse | 61% |
| Gun violence | 60% |
| Quality of education | 58% |
| International terrorism | 58% |

**Q2:** In your view, to what degree are each of the following a problem in [Canada/U.S.]? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200). *Please note: Each variable is n=1000-1003*

# Four-in-five Canadians feel that misinformation and disinformation are problems in Canada

More than three-quarters (78%) of Canadians feel that "news or information that misrepresents reality or is false" is a problem in the country. Those who use social media are much more likely than those who don't to believe it's a problem (79% vs. 68%), as are New Democrats compared to those from other parties (84% vs. 78%). **Notably, Americans are much more likely than Canadians to believe that misinformation and disinformation are a problem in their country (87%).**

## *"Is news or information that misrepresents reality or is false a problem in Canada?"*



| Yes, definitely | Yes, to some extent | No, not really | No, definitely not | Don't know / No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30% | 48% | 12% | 1% | 9% |

**Q9:** Is news or information that misrepresents reality or is false a problem in Canada? Base: ALL (n=2003).
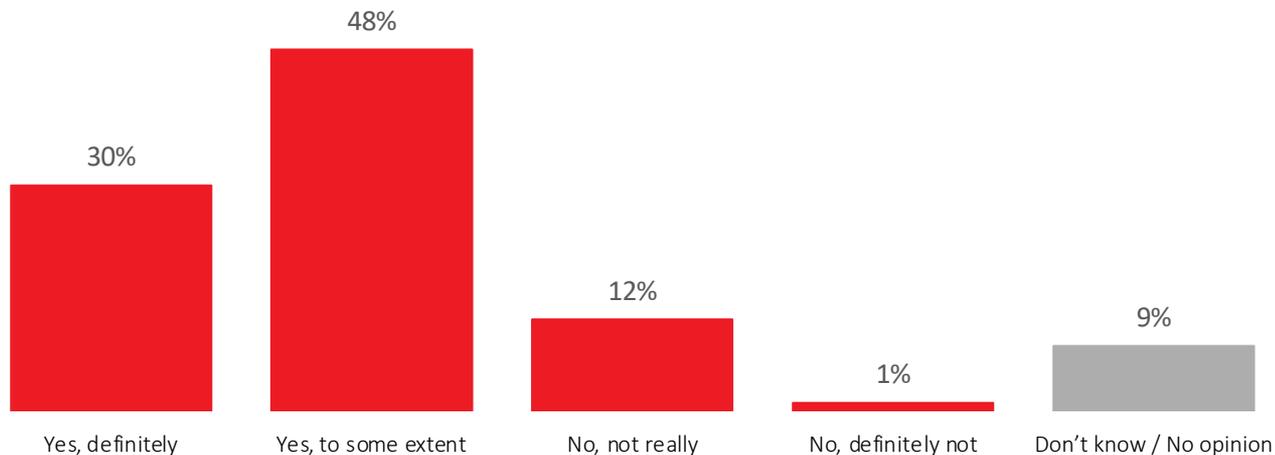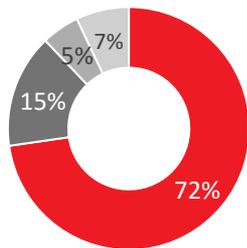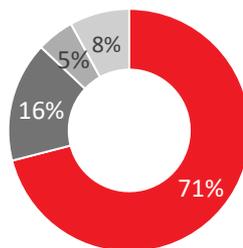
**DETAILED RESULTS**

Impact of Disinformation in Canada

# More than two-thirds of Canadians believe that disinformation threatens Canadian democracy, undermines election processes, and polarizes political parties
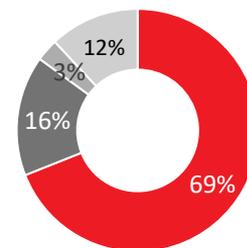
*"Disinformation is a threat to our democracy"*

*"Disinformation undermines our election process"*

*"Disinformation increases the polarization of political parties"*

*"Disinformation infringes on human rights"*
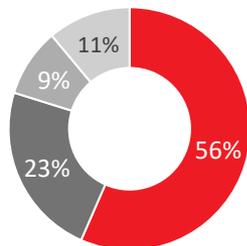
*"Encountering disinformation makes me feel anxious or stressed"*

*"Concerns about disinformation in society are exaggerated"*

Legend:
- AGREE (net)
- DISAGREE (net)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- I don't know/Refusal

Chart 1: 72%, 15%, 5%, 7%
Chart 2: 71%, 16%, 5%, 8%
Chart 3: 69%, 16%, 3%, 12%
Chart 4: 56%, 23%, 9%, 11%
Chart 5: 40%, 30%, 25%, 5%
Chart 6: 19%, 21%, 53%, 7%

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (n=2003).
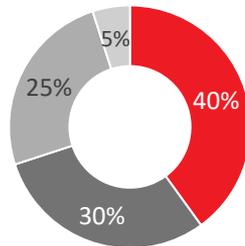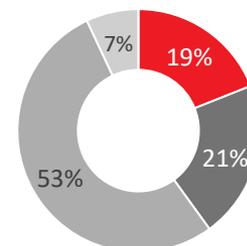
# Concern about the impact of disinformation on various aspects of politics is high in Canada and the U.S.

**Americans are much more likely than Canadians to agree that disinformation infringes on human rights (63% vs. 56%), and they feel more stressed/anxious when encountering it (52% vs. 40%). Additionally, more Americans believe that concerns about disinformation in society are exaggerated (25% vs. 19%).** Both countries have a high level of concern about disinformation threatening their democracy, undermining their election process, and polarizing their political parties.

| % Agree… | Canadians | Americans |
|---|---|---|
| "Disinformation is a threat to our democracy" | 72% | 75% |
| "Disinformation undermines election process" | 71% | 73% |
| "Disinformation increases the polarization of political parties" | 69% | 71% |
| "Disinformation infringes on human rights" | 56% | 63% |
| "Encountering disinformation makes me feel anxious or stressed" | 40% | 52% |
| "Concerns about disinformation in society are exaggerated" | 19% | 25% |

*Significantly higher*

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).

# Three-quarters of Canadians feel that there's a lot of disinformation about COVID-19

Liberals (83%) and New Democrats (82%) are more likely than Conservatives (59%) to believe that wearing a mask prevents the spread of COVID-19 -- while Conservatives (30%) are more likely than Liberals and New Democrats (13% each) to believe that wearing a mask does not.

*"Much disinformation exists about the COVID-19 vaccination"*
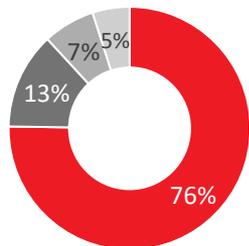
5%, 7%, 13%, 76%

*"Wearing a mask prevents the spread of COVID-19"*

3%, 16%, 14%, 68%

*"Disinformation will prolong the COVID-19 pandemic"*

7%, 11%, 16%, 66%
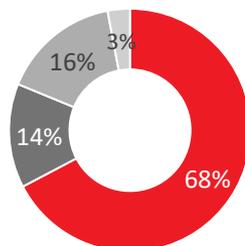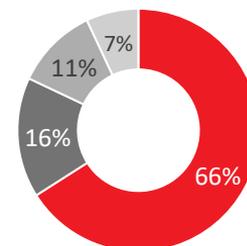
*"Wearing a mask does not prevent the spread of COVID-19"*

3%, 22%, 13%, 62%

*"COVID-19 is over"*

3%, 14%, 15%, 68%

- AGREE (net)
- DISAGREE (net)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- I don't know/Refusal

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (n=2003).
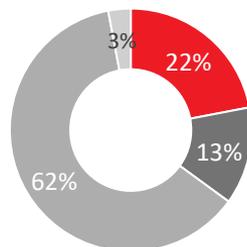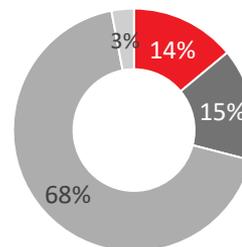
# Americans are more concerned about the impact that disinformation has on the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic than Canadians

**Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Americans, compared to two-thirds (66%) of Canadians, agree that disinformation will prolong the pandemic.***

*"Disinformation will prolong the COVID-19 pandemic"*

**Canadians**

**Americans**

7%
11%
16%
66%

6%
14%
7%
72%

- AGREE (net)
- DISAGREE (net)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- I don't know/Refusal
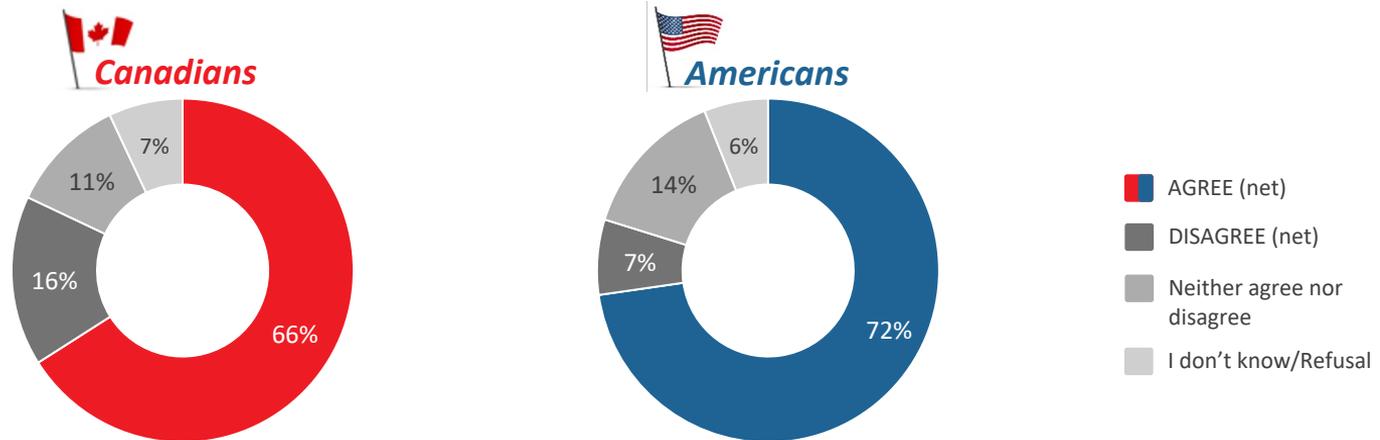
*Note: The Canadian survey was conducted between May 12 and May 22, 2022, whereas the American survey was conducted November 10 and 14, 2021.

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).

**DETAILED RESULTS**

Trust in Sources in Canada

# Families and "people like me" are most <u>trusted</u> sources

Canadians place their trust in personal connections the most -- with family, people like them, and friends landing in the top four most trusted sources. "A lot" of trust was harder to come by, with top sources mainly garnering "some" trust. Media sources were notably abundant within the top 10, taking up half of the spots.

*TOP 10 <u>**TRUSTED***</u> SOURCES*
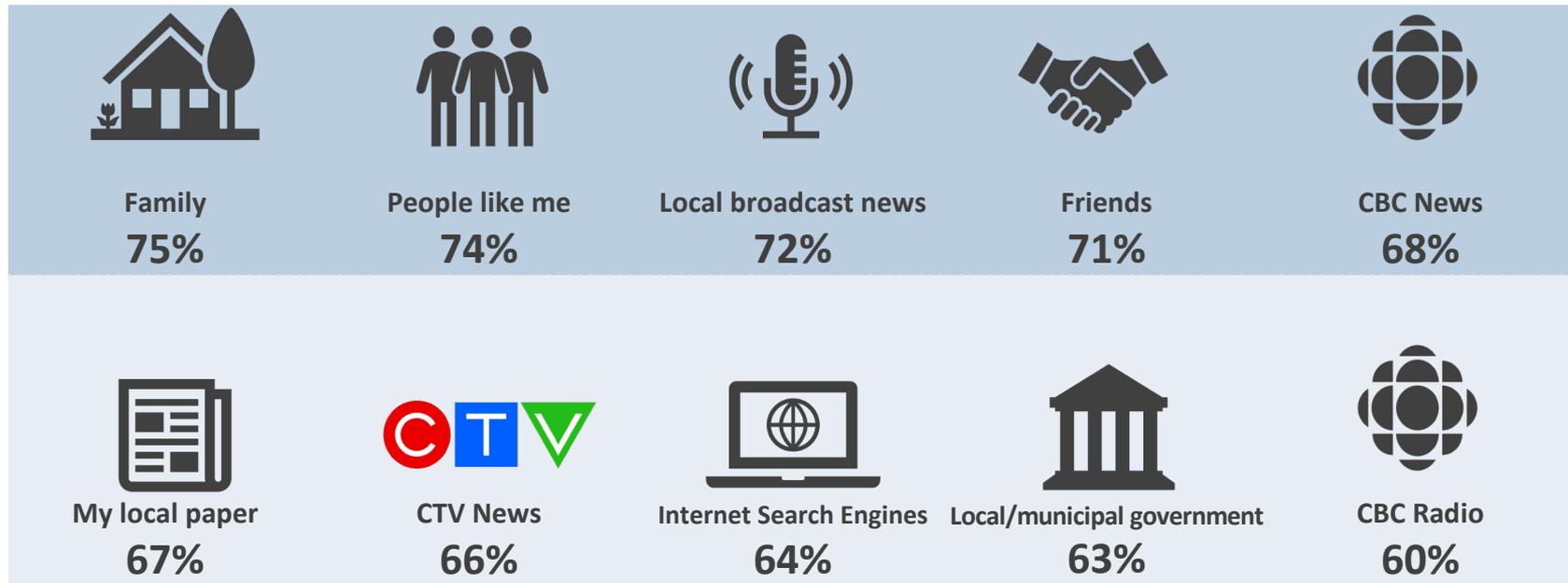
| Family | People like me | Local broadcast news | Friends | CBC News |
|--------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------|
| **75%** | **74%** | **72%** | **71%** | **68%** |

| My local paper | CTV News | Internet Search Engines | Local/municipal government | CBC Radio |
|----------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| **67%** | **66%** | **64%** | **63%** | **60%** |

**Q1:** Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information? Base: ALL (n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*

*\*TRUSTS*
*[a lot + some]*

# Canadians are more trusting of local sources than Americans

Both countries agree on seven of the top 10 trusted sources. **Americans place a lot of trust in people (family, friends, and people like me), whereas Canadians are significantly more likely to trust local sources (local broadcast news, newspapers, and government). While both trust the internet, Americans (72%) trust search engines more than Canadians (64%).**

| **Top seven trusted sources (based on Canada's top-10)** | 🇨🇦 *Canadians* | 🇺🇸 *Americans* |
|---|---|---|
| Family | **75%** | **79%** |
| People like me | **74%** | **73%** |
| Local broadcast news | **72%** | **64%** |
| Friends | **71%** | **74%** |
| Local newspapers | **67%** | **63%** |
| Internet search engines | **64%** | **72%** |
| Local government | **63%** | **54%** |

**Q1:** Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 **Please note: Three of the top-10 sources listed by Canadians were not shown in the American survey.*

*Significantly higher*

# Trusted sources: Canadian Political Parties

**Liberal**

Compared to *all other parties*, Liberals are significantly <u>more likely</u> to trust…
- Justin Trudeau
- Canadian government
- *The Globe and Mail*
- *CNN*
- journalists

**Top trusted source:**
- **Local broadcast news (84%)**

**Conservative**

Compared to *all other parties*, Conservatives are significantly <u>more likely</u> to trust…
- *The Sun*
- *Rebel News*
- family
- *Fox News*
- *Breitbart*

**Top trusted source:**
- **Family (84%)**

**NDP**

Compared to *all other parties*, New Democrats are significantly <u>more likely</u> to trust…
- local/municipal government
- *The Toronto Star*
- internet search engines
- *CTV News*
- colleges and universities

**Top trusted source:**
- **Local/Municipal government (86%)**

**green PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top trusted source**\*\*:
- **local paper (92%)**

**Top trusted source**\*\*:
- ***CBC Radio* (100%)**

**PPC PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top trusted source**\*\*:
- **family (93%)**

**Q1:** Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information? Base: ALL (n=2003).
*\*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 . \*\*NOTE: Small bases here. Interpret with caution.*

# Certain foreign governments and social media platforms are <u>least trusted</u> sources

The top two least-trusted sources are the Russian government and the Chinese government, with more than 4 in 5 Canadians not trusting these. Social media platforms create a strong lack of trust among Canadians, with Facebook (76%), TikTok (73%), and Snapchat (71%) landing themselves in the top 10 of distrusted sources. Politics also has a part to play here, with both politicians (70%) and political activist groups (69%) being mentioned.

*TOP 10 **LEAST-TRUSTED*** SOURCES*

| Russian government 86% | Chinese government 84% | Celebrities 77% | Facebook 76% | TikTok 73% |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Snapchat** 71% | **Marketers and advertisers** 71% | **Politicians** 70% | **Political activist groups** 69% | **Fox News** 65% |

*\*DOES NOT TRUST [Not much + not at all]*

# Canadians are more likely to be distrustful of several social media platforms than Americans

**Canadians are significantly more distrustful than Americans when it comes to certain sources, such as foreign governments like Russia (86% vs. 73%) and China (84% vs. 74%), as well as social media platforms like Facebook (76% vs 55%), TikTok (73% vs. 58%), and Snapchat (71% vs. 51%). Notably, lack of trust of politicians is similar between the two countries.**

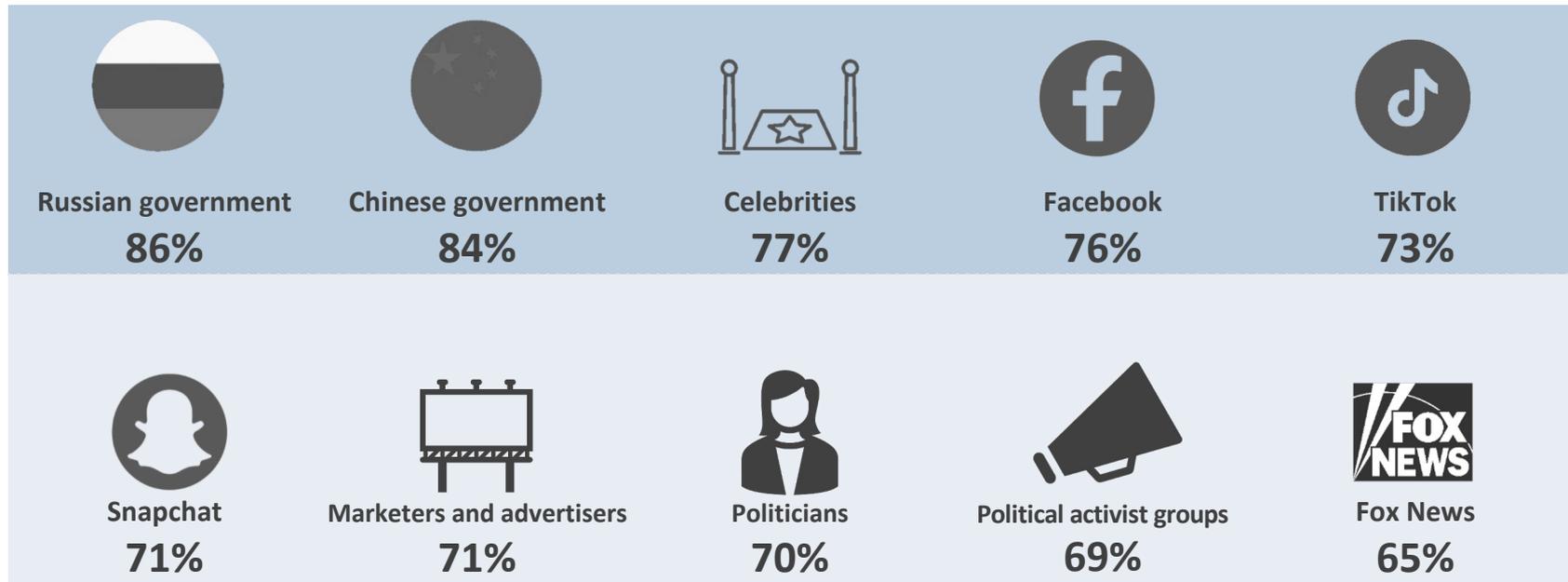| Top 10 least-trusted sources (based on Canada's top-10) | Canadians | Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Russian government** | 86% | 73% |
| Chinese government** | 84% | 74% |
| Celebrities | 77% | 63% |
| Facebook** | 76% | 55% |
| TikTok | 73% | 58% |
| Snapchat | 71% | 51% |
| Marketers and advertisers | 71% | 59% |
| Politicians | 70% | 68% |
| Political activist groups | 69% | 56% |
| Fox News | 65% | 50% |

**Q1:** Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 **Made the top-five in both countries*

Significantly higher

**DETAILED RESULTS**
Spreading and Combatting Disinformation

# Distrusted sources are most responsible for spreading disinformation to the public

Facebook, the Russian government, political activist groups, politicians, and the Chinese government were reported by at least two-thirds of Canadians to be at least "somewhat responsible" for spreading disinformation. Internet search engines and some social media platforms were three of the top 10 main entities responsible for this spread, with Facebook being the main perceived culprit.

### TOP 10 **RESPONSIBLE*** FOR SPREADING DISINFORMATION:
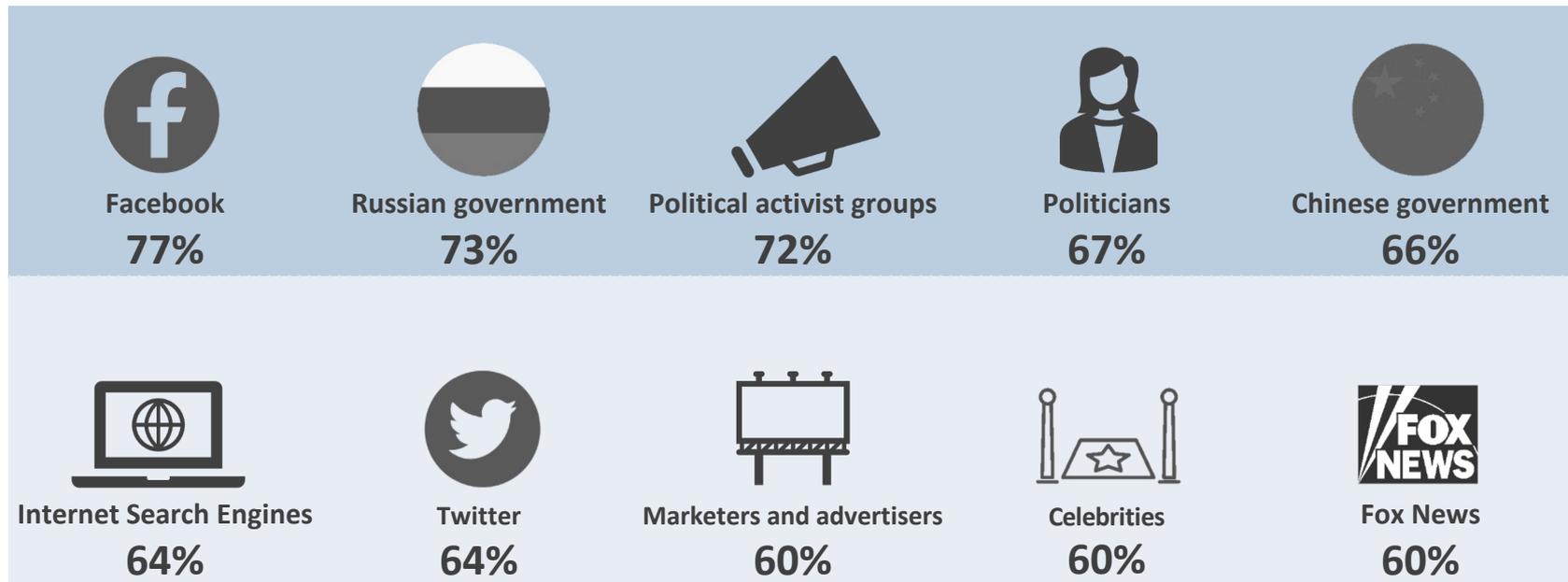
| Facebook | Russian government | Political activist groups | Politicians | Chinese government |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 77% | 73% | 72% | 67% | 66% |

| Internet Search Engines | Twitter | Marketers and advertisers | Celebrities | Fox News |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 64% | 64% | 60% | 60% | 60% |

**Q3:** To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading **disinformation** to the public? Base: ALL (n=2003).
*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*

*RESPONSIBLE
[Very + somewhat]*

# Americans are much more likely than Canadians to feel that politicians are responsible for spreading disinformation

**Of each country's top 10, both agree on eight sources as being most responsible for spreading disinformation, with Internet search engines and Twitter being the two sources that crack the top-10 list for Canadians, but not Americans. While Americans (63%) blame the Russian government less than Canadians (73%), they are more negative about their politicians' involvement with disinformation (77% vs. 67%). Both countries feel relatively the same about celebrities, the Chinese government, marketers/advertisers, and *Fox News*' level of responsibility for spreading disinformation.**

| Top 10 sources spreading disinformation (based on Canada's top-10) | 🇨🇦 *Canadians* | 🇺🇸 *Americans* |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | **77%** | **72%** |
| Russian government | **73%** | **63%** |
| Political activist groups | **72%** | **66%** |
| Politicians | **67%** | **77%** |
| Chinese government | **66%** | **64%** |
| Internet search engines | **64%** | **59%** |
| Twitter | **64%** | **60%** |
| Marketers and advertisers | **60%** | **61%** |
| Celebrities | **60%** | **63%** |
| Fox News | **60%** | **61%** |

**Q3:** To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading **disinformation** to the public? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200)
*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502.*

*Significantly higher*

# Spreading disinformation: Canadian Political Parties

**Liberal**

Compared to *all other parties*, Liberals are significantly <u>more likely</u> to say that disinformation is spread by…
- Family
- Russian government
- People like me
- Friends

**Top source of disinformation :**
- **Russian government (85%)**

**Conservative**

Compared to *all other parties*, Conservatives are significantly <u>more likely</u> to say that disinformation is spread by…
- Canadian government
- Federal agencies
- Justin Trudeau
- *CBC News*
- *CTV News*

**Top source of disinformation:**
- **Facebook (79%)**

**NDP**

Compared to *all other parties*, New Democrats are significantly <u>more likely</u> to say that disinformation is spread by…
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Snapchat

**Top source of disinformation:**
- **Political activist groups (80%)**

**Green Party of Canada**

**Top source of disinformation**:**
- **Politicians (83%)**

**Bloc**

**Top source of disinformation**:**
- **Facebook (87%)**

**PPC — People's Party of Canada**

**Top source of disinformation**:**
- ***CBS News* (100%)**
- **Federal agencies (100%)**

**Q3:** To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading **disinformation** to the public? Base: ALL (n=2003).
*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 **NOTE: Small bases here. Interpret with caution.*

# Journalists and government entities should be responsible for combatting disinformation

Journalists (83%) were seen as the top entity that should be at least "somewhat responsible" for combatting disinformation in the media, with two-thirds of Canadians feeling that journalists should be "very" responsible (62%). Journalists and the provincial government are placed before Justin Trudeau in terms of responsibility.

*TOP 10 SOURCES THAT SHOULD BE AT LEAST "SOMEWHAT RESPONSIBLE" FOR **COMBATTING** DISINFORMATION*

| Journalists | My provincial government | Justin Trudeau | Politicians | Canadian government |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 83% | 83% | 82% | 82% | 81% |

| CTV News | Local broadcast news | CBC News | Local/municipal government | Federal agencies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 79% |

**Q5:** How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*
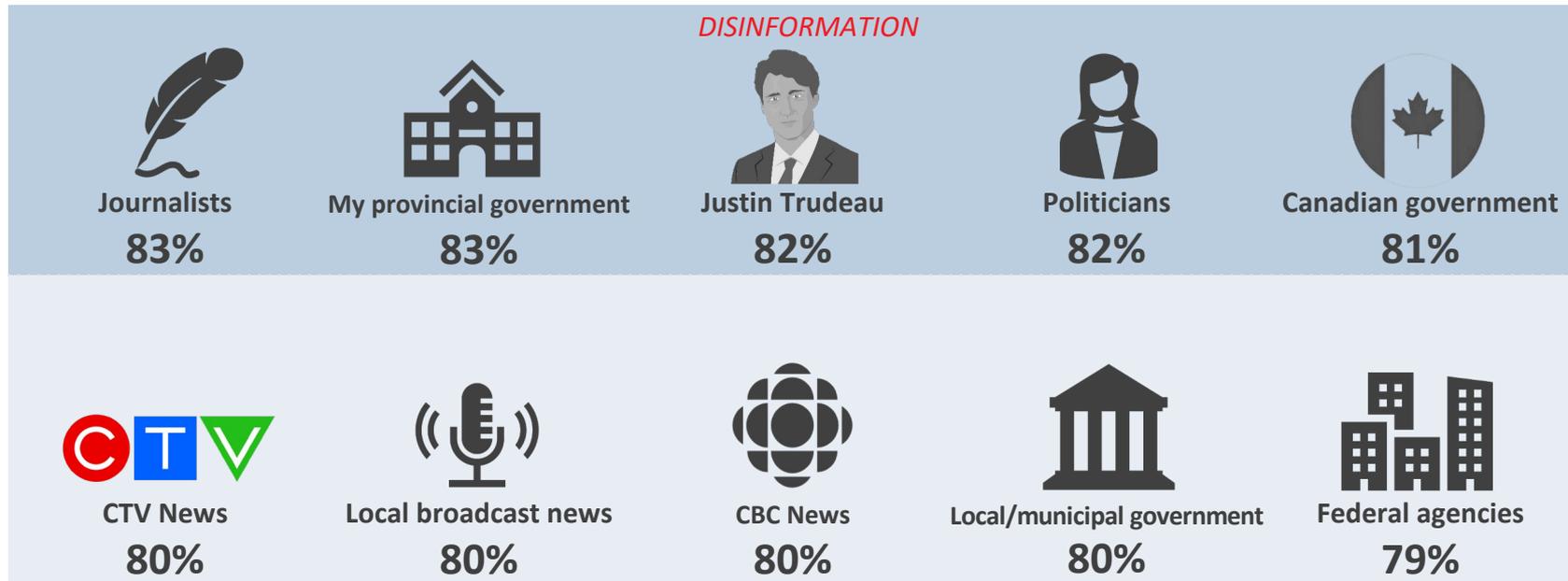
*SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBATTING*
*[Very + somewhat]*

# Canadians and Americans are aligned when it comes to which sources should be responsible for combatting disinformation

**There is virtually no difference between who Americans and Canadians think should be responsible for combatting disinformation. Both feel journalists, their national leaders, the government, and federal agencies are some of the top culpable sources.**

| Top five sources that should be responsible (based on Canada's top-10) | 🇨🇦 Canadians | 🇺🇸 Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Journalists | 83% | 80% |
| President/Prime Minister | 82% | 80% |
| Federal agencies | 79% | 78% |
| National government | 81% | 82% |
| Local broadcast news | 80% | 80% |

**Q5:** How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 **Please note: Five of the top-10 sources listed by Canadians were not shown in the American survey.*

*Significantly higher*

# Should combat disinformation: Canadian Political Parties

**Liberal**

Compared to *all other parties*, Liberals are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation should be combatted by...
- TikTok
- People <u>not</u> like them
- Business CEOs
- Celebrities
- Reddit

**Top source that <u>should</u> combat disinformation:**
- **Justin Trudeau (94%)**

**Conservative**

Compared to *all other parties*, Conservatives are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation should be combatted by...
- Major companies/corporations
- Local broadcast news
- Internet search engines
- Colleges and universities
- CNN

**Top source that <u>should</u> combat disinformation:**
- **Provincial government (88%)**

**NDP**

Compared to *all other parties*, New Democrats are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation should be combatted by...
- Instagram
- Internet search engines
- People like me
- Yahoo! News/Breitbart
- Snapchat

**Top source that <u>should</u> combat disinformation:**
- **Journalists (91%)**

**green PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top source <u>should</u> combat disinformation**\*\*:
- **Local paper (97%)**

**Bloc**

**Top source <u>should</u> combat disinformation**\*\*:
- **Journalists (96%)**

**PPC PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top source <u>should</u> combat disinformation**\*\*:
- **Federal agencies (97%)**

**Q5:** How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003).
*\*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 . \*\*NOTE: Small bases here. Interpret with caution.*

# Does well to combat disinformation in the media

About half of the respondents say that "people like me," *CBC News*, family, their local newspaper, and *CBC Radio* do well when it comes to combatting disinformation in the media. **Americans are similarly likely to feel that "people like me" (58%), local newspapers (48%), and journalists (41%) are combatting disinformation at least "somewhat well," but are significantly more likely to say that internet search engines are doing well (42%) compared to Canadians (25%).** Conservatives in Canada were much less likely than other political parties to say that journalists combat information well (27% vs. 42%) or the Canadian government (28% vs. 49%). Notably, almost all top-10 trusted sources for accurate news/information are in this top-10 list as well, with *Global News* and colleges/universities being the only entities not to be among the top-10 trusted sources.

*TOP 10 SOURCES WHO DO AT LEAST "SOMEWHAT" WELL IN* **COMBATTING**

*DISINFORMATION*

| People like me | CBC News | Family | My local paper | CBC Radio |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **52%** | **51%** | **49%** | **48%** | **47%** |

| CTV News | Local broadcast news | Friends | Global News | Colleges/universities |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **44%** | **43%** | **43%** | **41%** | **41%** |

**Q4:** How well do each of the following combat **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*

*COMBATS WELL*
*[Very + somewhat]*

# Americans are more likely than Canadians to believe that their peers are combatting disinformation well

**Americans (58%) are more likely than Canadians (52%) to feel that "people like me" and the local broadcast news (51% of Americans vs. 43% of Canadians) are combatting disinformation at least "somewhat well."**

| Top four sources that do at least somewhat well at combatting disinformation (based on Canada's top-10) | 🇨🇦 Canadians | 🇺🇸 Americans |
|---|---|---|
| People like me | 52% | 58% |
| Local newspaper | 48% | 48% |
| Local broadcast news | 43% | 51% |
| Colleges/universities | 41% | 38% |

**Q4:** How well do each of the following combat **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).
*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 . **Please note: Six of the top-10 sources listed by Canadians were not shown in the American survey.*

*Significantly higher*

# Combats disinformation: Canadian Political Parties

**Liberal**

Compared to *all other parties*, Liberals are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation is being combatted by…
- Justin Trudeau
- *Global News*
- Federal agencies
- *CNN*
- Canadian government/*The Globe and Mail*

**Top source combatting disinformation:**
- *CBC News/Radio* **(65%)**

**Conservative**

Compared to *all other parties*, Conservatives are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation is being combatted by…
- Facebook
- *Rebel News*
- YouTube
- *Fox News*
- *Breitbart*

**Top source combatting disinformation:**
- **People like me (56%)**

**NDP**

Compared to *all other parties*, New Democrats are significantly <u>more likely</u> to believe that disinformation is being combatted by…
- Local broadcast news
- *Politico*
- Political activist groups
- Canadian government
- *CBC News*/UK government/*Buzzfeed*

**Top source combatting disinformation:**
- **CBC News (59%)**

**green PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top source combatting disinformation**\*\*:
- *CBC News* **(73%)**

**Top source combatting disinformation**\*\*:
- *CBC News* **(71%)**

**PPC PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA**

**Top source combatting disinformation**\*\*:
- **Family (61%)**

**Q4:** How well do each of the following combat **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003).
*\*Please note: Each variable is n=500-502 . \*\*NOTE: Small bases here. Interpret with caution.*
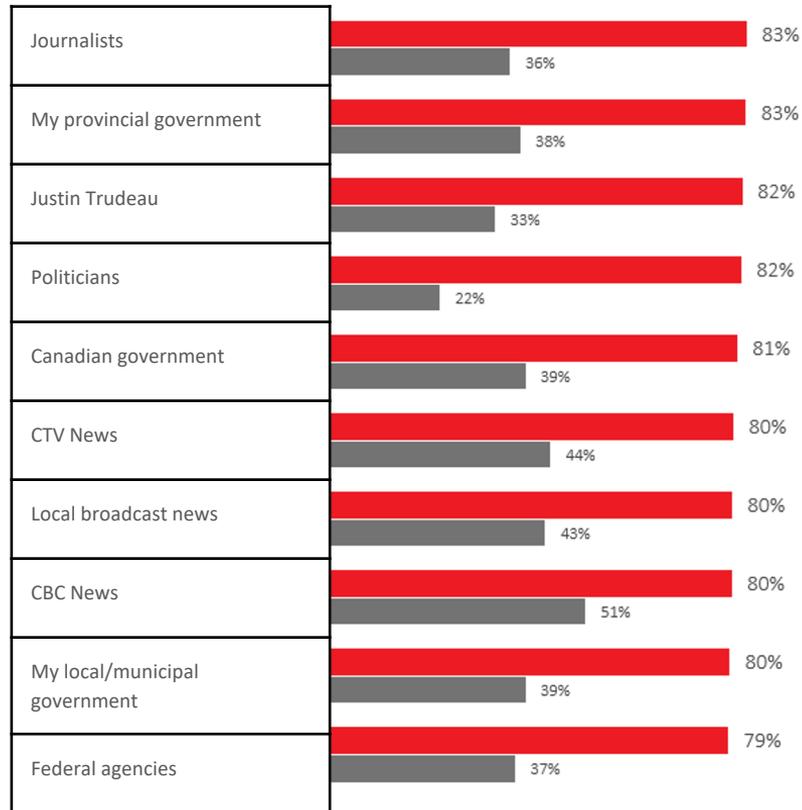
## Should be responsible for combatting disinformation in the media

## vs.

## Does well to combat disinformation in the media

The expected responsibility of each to combat disinformation in the media far outweighs the actual performance. Every entity has a significantly higher perceived sense of responsibility by the Canadian public than its perceived behavior, **a stark gap that is also seen in the U.S. findings**.

**TOP-10: SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBATTING DISINFORMATION IN THE MEDIA**

| | Should be responsible | Combats well |
|---|---|---|
| Journalists | 83% | 36% |
| My provincial government | 83% | 38% |
| Justin Trudeau | 82% | 33% |
| Politicians | 82% | 22% |
| Canadian government | 81% | 39% |
| CTV News | 80% | 44% |
| Local broadcast news | 80% | 43% |
| CBC News | 80% | 51% |
| My local/municipal government | 80% | 39% |
| Federal agencies | 79% | 37% |

**SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBATTING** [Very + somewhat]

**COMBATS WELL** [Very + somewhat]

**Q5:** How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*
**Q4:** How well do each of the following combat **disinformation** in the media? Base: ALL (n=2003). *Please note: Each variable is n=500-502*
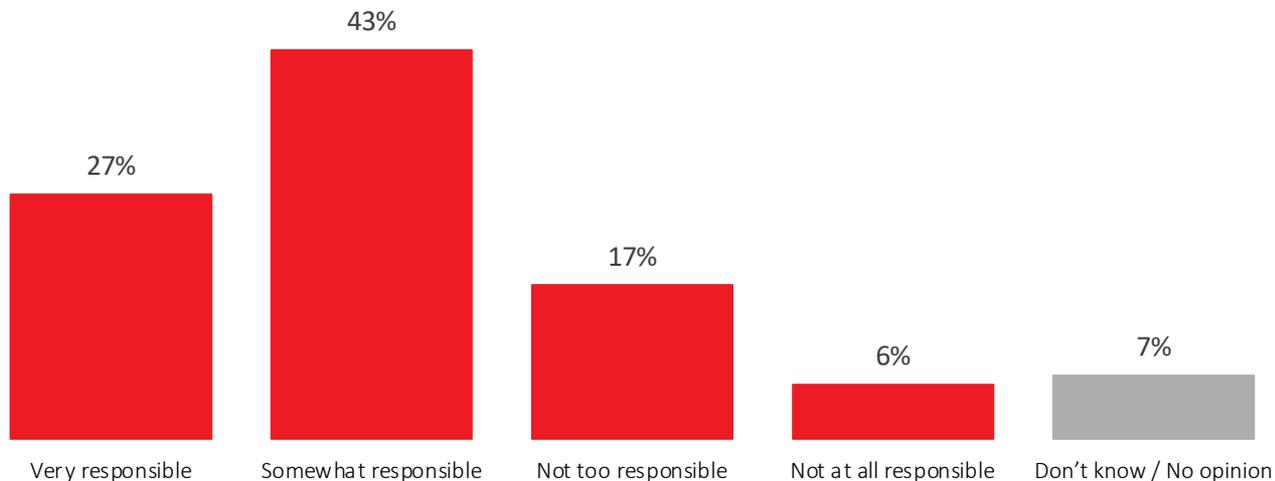
**DETAILED RESULTS**

Personal views on disinformation

# One-quarter of Canadians *do not* feel that they have a personal responsibility to combat disinformation

Almost one-quarter (23%) of Canadians *do not* feel any personal responsibility to combat disinformation, especially younger Canadians (31% of those under 35 years of age vs. 20% of those 35+). Those confident in their ability to recognize disinformation are much more likely than those who are not confident to say that they feel personally responsible for combatting it (75% vs. 58%, respectively).

*Personal responsibility in combatting disinformation*

27% — Very responsible
43% — Somewhat responsible
17% — Not too responsible
6% — Not at all responsible
7% — Don't know / No opinion

**Q5.1:** To what degree do you feel you have a personal responsibility to combat disinformation? Base: ALL (n=2003).

# Compared to all other parties, Liberals were more likely to say that they have a personal responsibility to combat disinformation in the media

While the gap is significant, it's not huge, with 77% of Liberals agreeing that they have a responsibility compared to 72% of those from other parties.

*Personal responsibility in combatting disinformation*



RESPONSIBLE (*very + somewhat*)

AVERAGE ACROSS PARTIES

69%

80%*  77%  75%  73%  62%*  57%*

green  Liberal  NDP  PPC

**Q5.1:** To what degree do you feel you have a personal responsibility to combat disinformation? Base: ALL (n=2003).

*\*\*NOTE: Small bases here. Interpret with caution.*
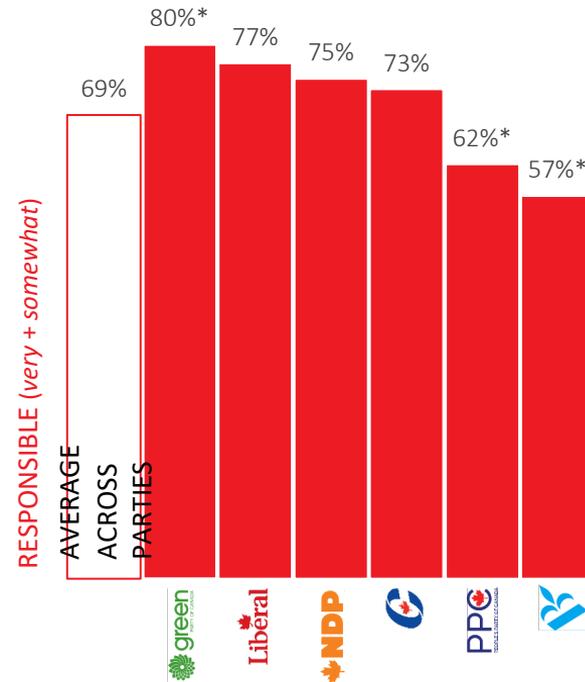
# Three-quarters of Canadians are confident in their ability to recognize mis- and disinformation
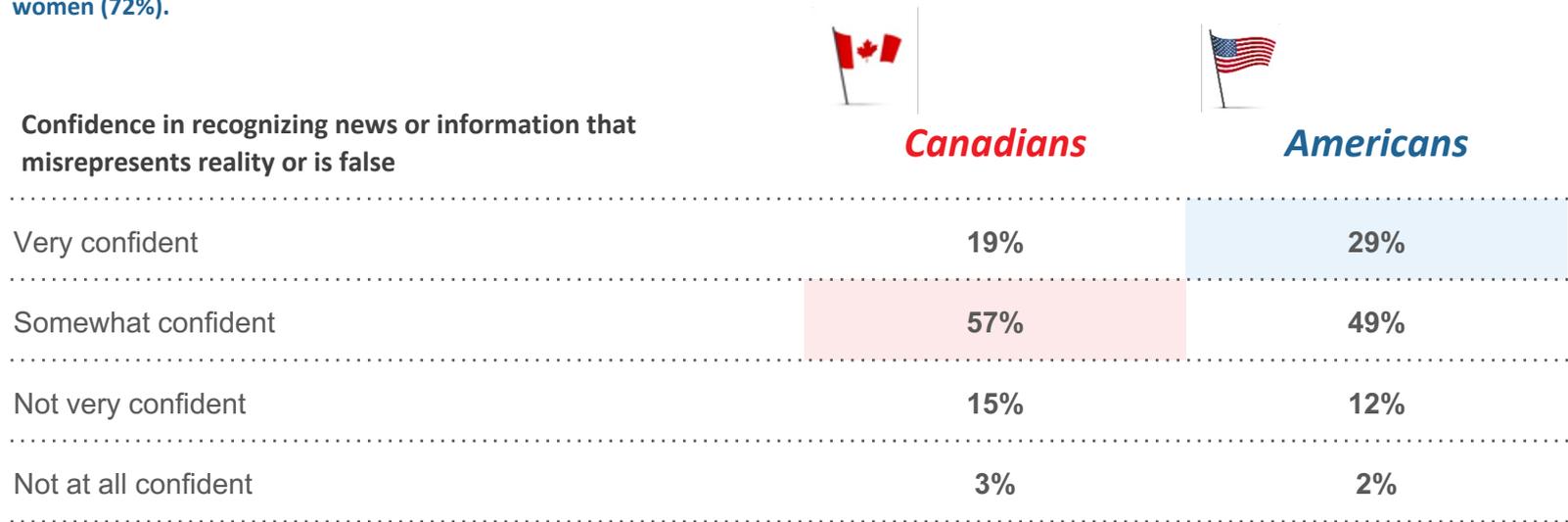
Confidence in spotting disinformation is high among Canadians **(and Americans, at 78%)**, although most said they were just "somewhat" confident. Notably, men are much more confident than women (81% vs. 72%), as are those with college/trades training and higher levels of education (79% vs. 71% of those with a high school education or less).

*Confidence in recognizing news or information that misrepresents reality or is false*



| Very confident | Somewhat confident | Not very confident | Not at all confident | Don't know / No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19% | 57% | 15% | 3% | 6% |

**Q7:** How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false? Base: ALL (n=2003).
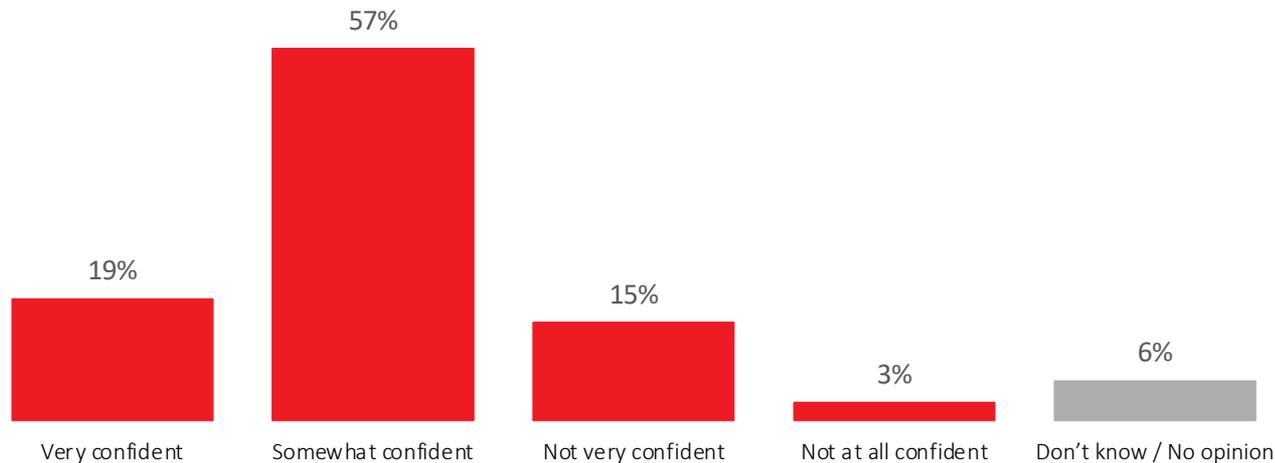
# Americans and Canadians are equal when it comes to confidence in their ability to recognize mis- and disinformation; although Americans are more likely to be "very" confident

**Overall, Americans (78%) and Canadians (76%) are at least somewhat confident in their ability to recognize disinformation when they encounter it. American men (83%) were likely to rate themselves higher than women (75%), a similar gap to Canadian men (81%) versus women (72%).**

| Confidence in recognizing news or information that misrepresents reality or is false | Canadians | Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Very confident | 19% | 29% |
| Somewhat confident | 57% | 49% |
| Not very confident | 15% | 12% |
| Not at all confident | 3% | 2% |

**Q7:** How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false?
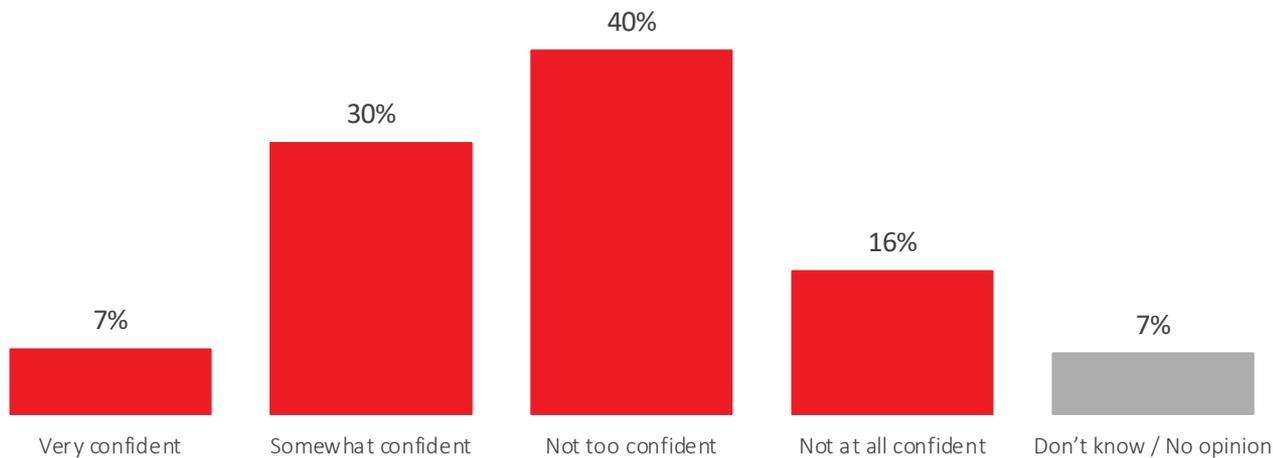Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).

*Significantly higher*

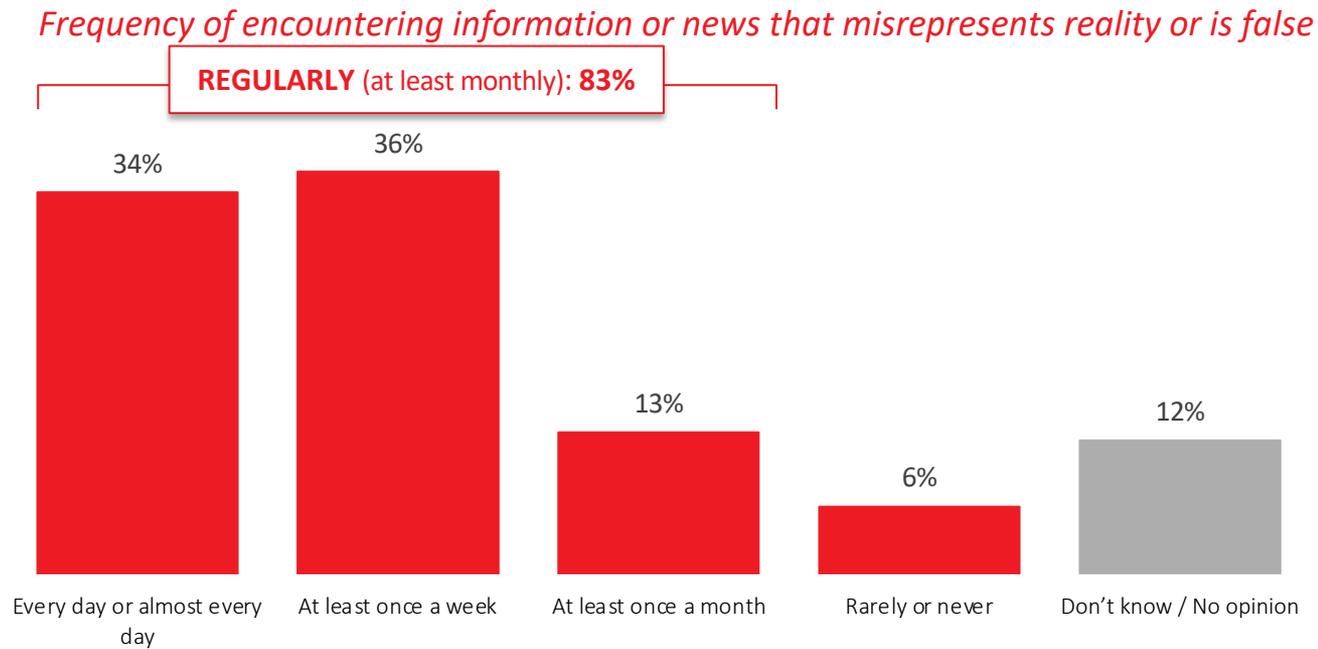# Confidence is split in how controllable disinformation is

Canadians are torn about how confident they are that disinformation can be controlled, with slightly more than half (56%) feeling "not too confident" or less. Younger Canadians are more confident than their older counterparts (45% of those under 35 years of age vs. 34% of those 35+).

*Confidence in controllability of disinformation*



| Very confident | Somewhat confident | Not too confident | Not at all confident | Don't know / No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7% | 30% | 40% | 16% | 7% |

**Q5.2:** To what degree are you confident or not confident that disinformation can be controlled? Base: ALL (n=2003).
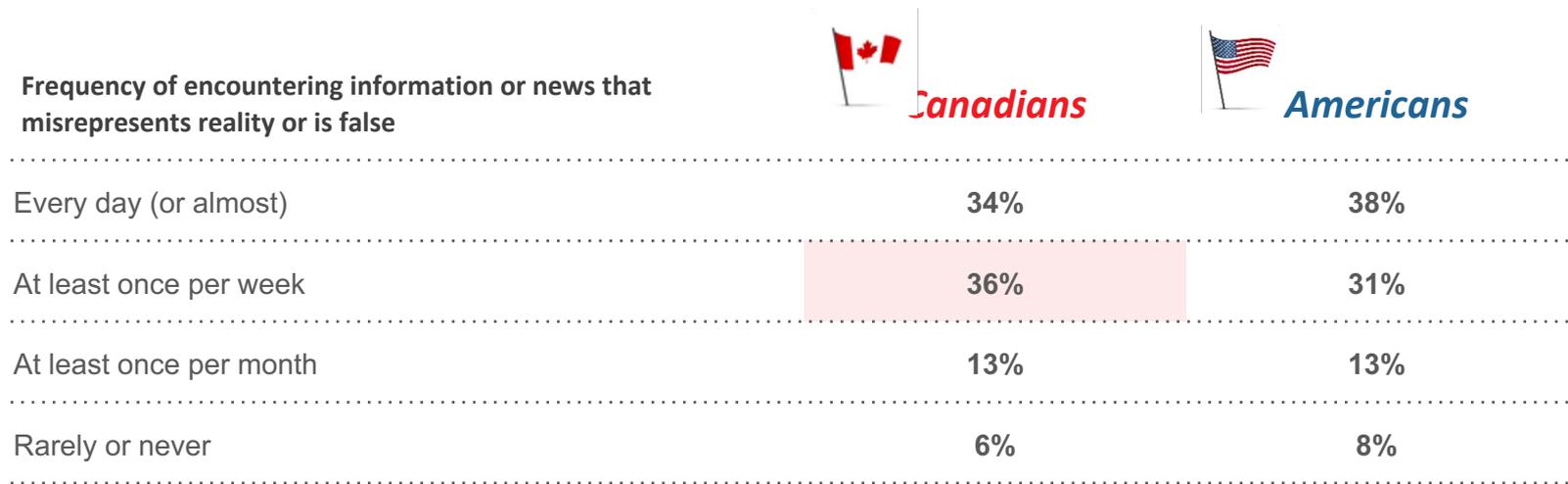
# Two-thirds of Canadians claim to come across mis- and disinformation at least once a week

Four-in-five (83%) Canadians said they come across disinformation at least monthly.

*Frequency of encountering information or news that misrepresents reality or is false*

**REGULARLY** (at least monthly): **83%**

34%
36%
13%
6%
12%

Every day or almost every day | At least once a week | At least once a month | Rarely or never | Don't know / No opinion

**Q6:** How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false? Base: ALL (n=2003).

# Americans and Canadians are equally as likely to encounter mis- and disinformation at least once a month or more often.

**Americans are more likely than Canadians to feel they come across information they believe misrepresents reality or is false daily (38%), whereas Canadians feel they are more likely to encounter it weekly (36%). Four-in-five in both countries (83% of Canadians and 82% of Americans) feel that they encounter mis- and disinformation at least once a month.**

| Frequency of encountering information or news that misrepresents reality or is false | Canadians | Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Every day (or almost) | 34% | 38% |
| At least once per week | 36% | 31% |
| At least once per month | 13% | 13% |
| Rarely or never | 6% | 8% |

**Q6:** How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false?
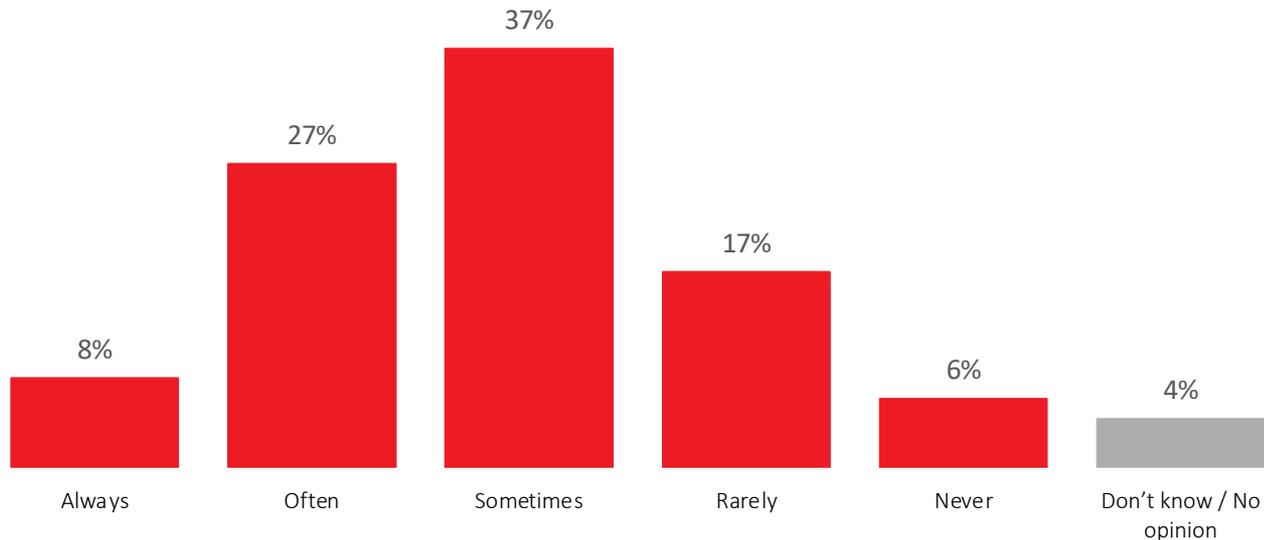Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).

*Significantly higher*

**DETAILED RESULTS**

Media Use and Habits

# Most said they visited websites or other media sources to check whether the news/info they're reading is true and accurate

While one-third (35%) claim to check other sources to verify news or information accuracy "often" or "always, a similar amount (37%) claim to do so "sometimes." Liberals are the least likely to do so regularly (32% do so "often" or "always" vs. 39% of those from other parties). Notably, those who are confident in their ability to spot disinformation are more than three times as likely than their non-confident counterparts to say that they check for truth and accuracy frequently (42% vs. 13%).
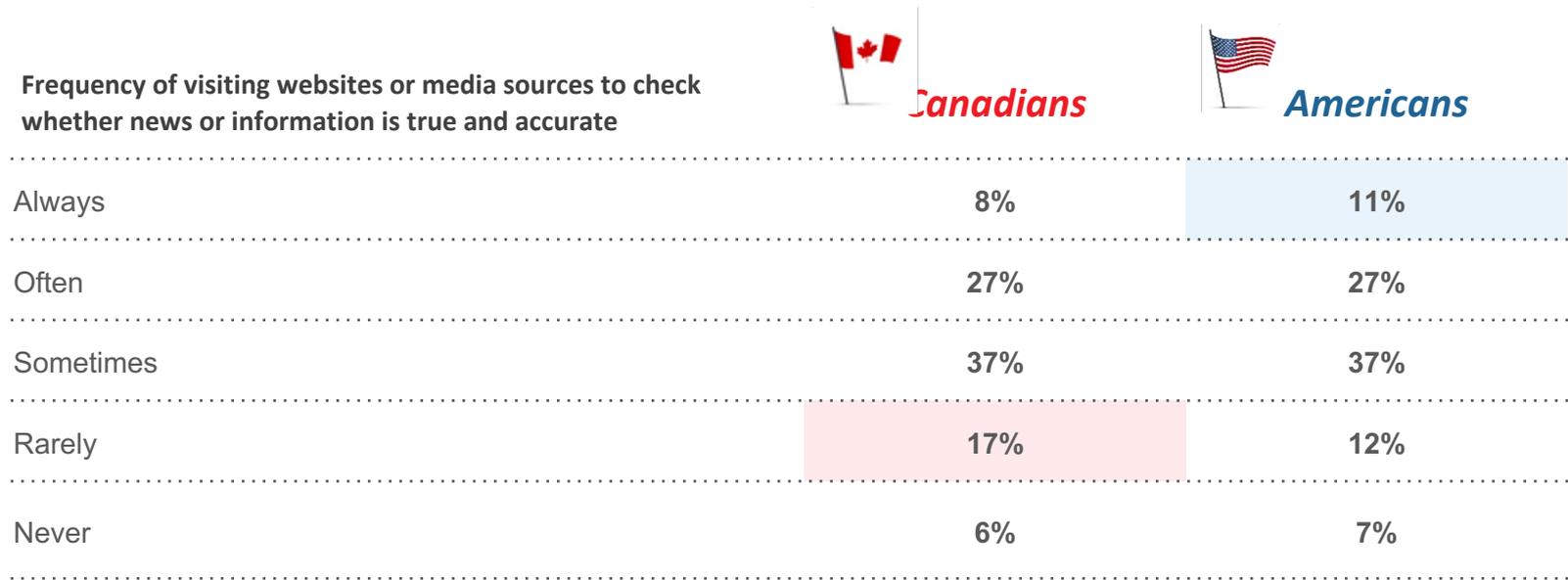
*Frequency of visiting other websites or media sources to check whether news or information is true and accurate*



| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Don't know / No opinion |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------------------|
| 8% | 27% | 37% | 17% | 6% | 4% |

**Q8:** How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate? Base: ALL (n=2003).

# Canadians are much more likely than Americans to rarely/never visit sources to check if news or information is true and accurate

**Slightly more Americans (38%) than Canadians (35%) say they check their sources of information "often" or "always" (although not significantly so). Canadians (23%) are significantly more likely to "rarely" or "never" check sources compared to Americans (19%).**

| Frequency of visiting websites or media sources to check whether news or information is true and accurate | Canadians | Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 8% | 11% |
| Often | 27% | 27% |
| Sometimes | 37% | 37% |
| Rarely | 17% | 12% |
| Never | 6% | 7% |

**Q8:** How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate?
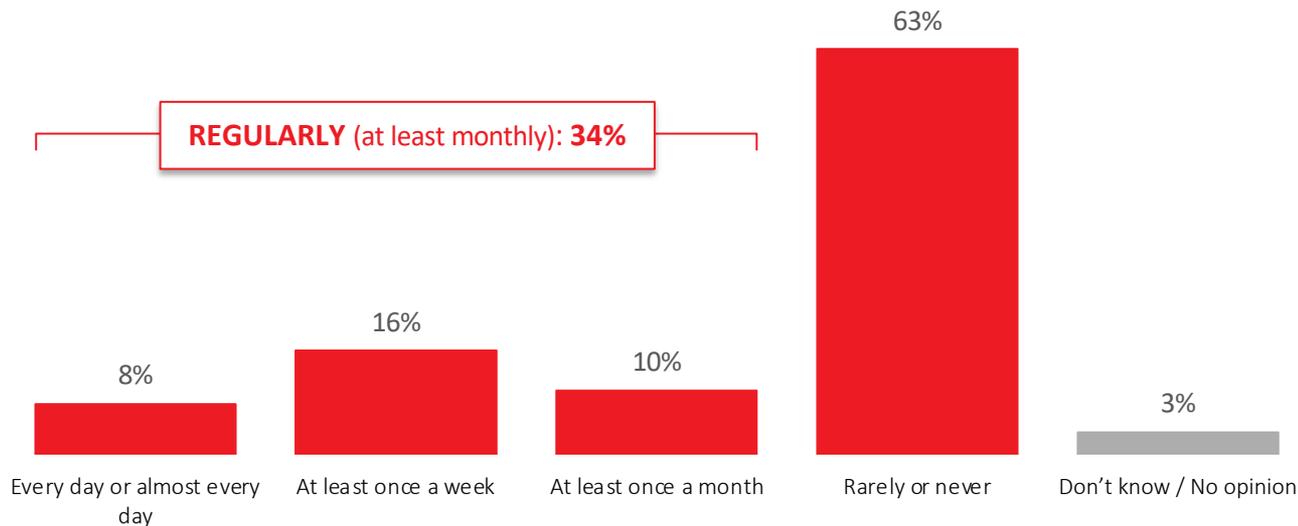Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).

*Significantly higher*

# Just one-quarter regularly share news or other public information with others on social media

Sharing information on social networks is not a habit of most Canadians, with nearly two-thirds (63%) stating they rarely or never do so.

Those who are confident in their ability to recognize disinformation are more likely to share news/information on at least a weekly basis than those who are not confident (27% vs. 15%), as are younger Canadians (28% of those under 35 years of age vs. 22% of those 35+), and men (28% of men vs. 20% of women).
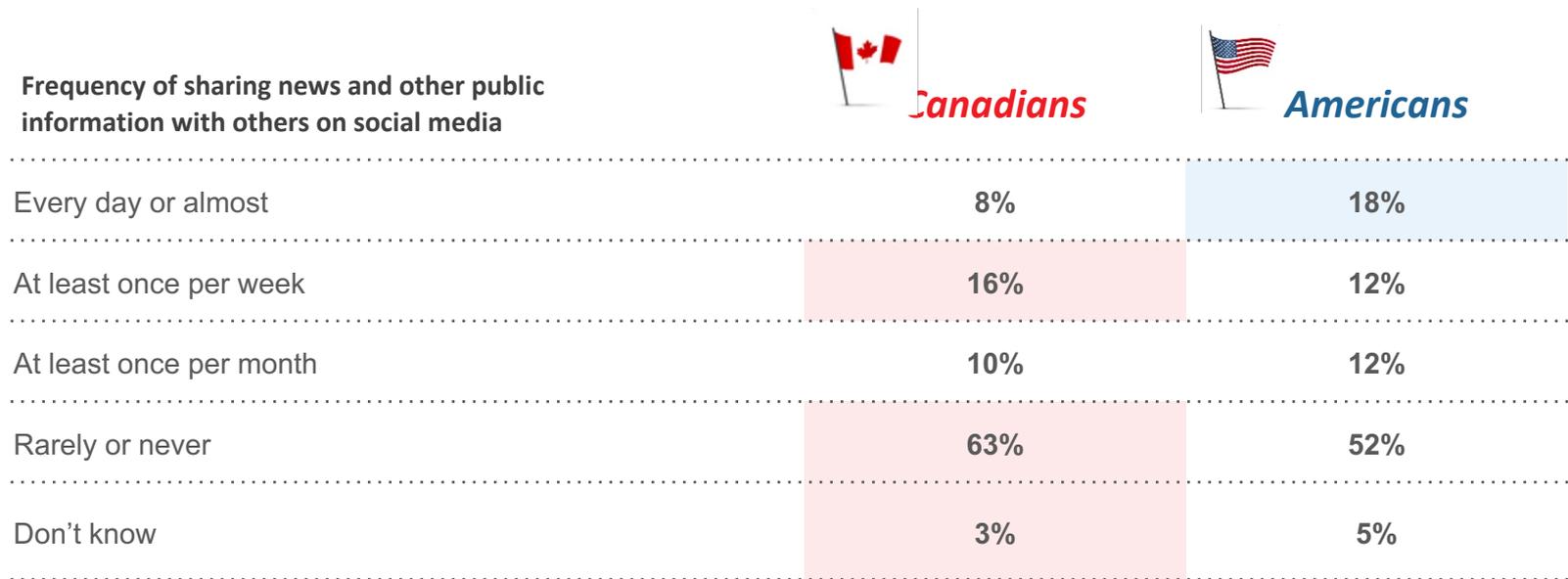
*Frequency of sharing news and other public information with others on social media*

REGULARLY (at least monthly): **34%**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8% | 16% | 10% | 63% | 3% |
| Every day or almost every day | At least once a week | At least once a month | Rarely or never | Don't know / No opinion |

**Q11:** How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks? Base: ALL (n=2003).

# Americans are much more likely to share news and other public information on social media, especially on a daily (or almost daily) basis
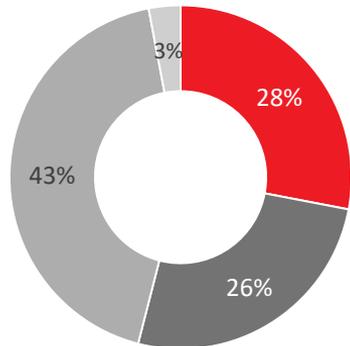
**Americans are more likely to share news and information with their social networks than Canadians. Americans (42%) report sharing at least once per month compared to Canadians at 34%. Americans (18%) also feel more comfortable sharing daily compared to Canadians (8%).**

| Frequency of sharing news and other public information with others on social media | 🇨🇦 Canadians | 🇺🇸 Americans |
|---|---|---|
| Every day or almost | 8% | 18% |
| At least once per week | 16% | 12% |
| At least once per month | 10% | 12% |
| Rarely or never | 63% | 52% |
| Don't know | 3% | 5% |

*Significantly higher*

**Q11:** How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks? Base: ALL (Canadians n=2003 | Americans n=2200).
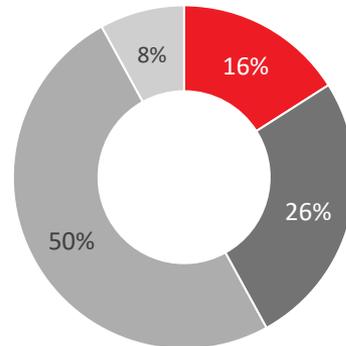
# One-quarter of Canadians avoid watching/reading/listening to the news because of the disinformation

Those in rural areas of Canada are much more likely to avoid the news because of disinformation (37%) than those in urban (24%) or suburban (27%) areas, as are younger Canadians (39% of those under 35 vs. 24% of those 35+). Those who use social media are also more likely to claim to avoid the news (29% vs. 15% of those who don't use social media). **Americans are twice as likely as Canadians to read news from sources outside their own country because of the amount of disinformation in their media (30%).**

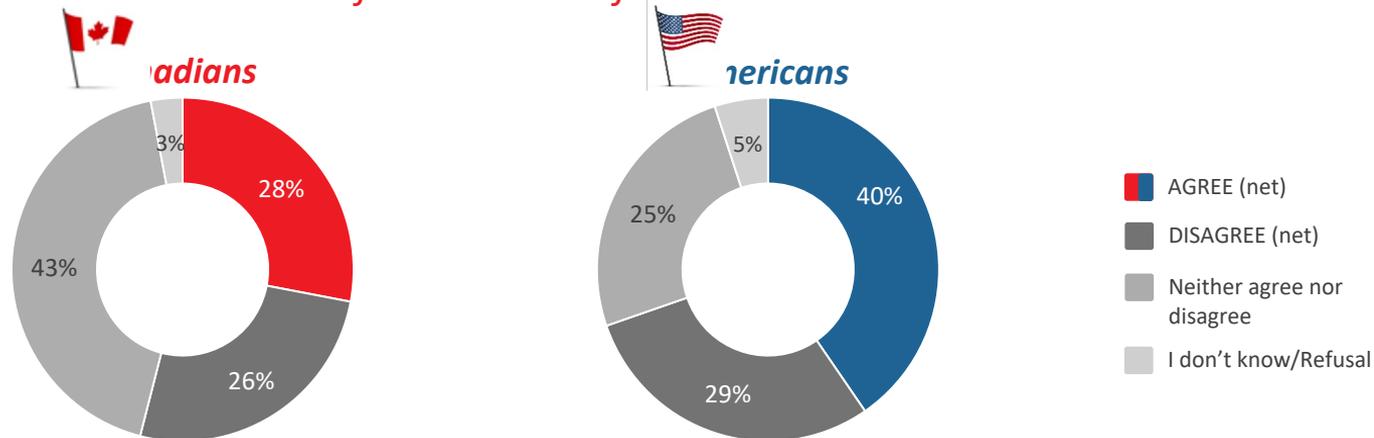*"I avoid watching, reading, or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation"*

*"I'm more likely to read news from sources outside of Canada because of the amount of disinformation in Canadian media"*

28%
26%
43%
3%

16%
26%
50%
8%

- AGREE (net)
- DISAGREE (net)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- I don't know/Refusal

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (n=2003).

*Data <5% not shown*

# Americans are more likely than Canadians to avoid the media/news because of the amount of disinformation

**Americans (40%) are more likely than Canadians (28%) to avoid the media and news because of disinformation.** Canadians are more ambivalent than Americans about media/news avoidance, as demonstrated by the large 18-point percentage gap in the answer of neither agreeing nor disagreeing (43% of Canadians vs. 25% of Americans).

*"I avoid watching, reading, or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation"*

**Canadians**

- 28%
- 26%
- 43%
- 3%

**Americans**

- 40%
- 29%
- 25%
- 5%

Legend:
- AGREE (net)
- DISAGREE (net)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- I don't know/Refusal

**Q13:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: ALL (n=2003).

*Data <5% not shown*

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Leger is the largest Canadian-owned market research and analytics company, with more than 600 employees in eight Canadian and US offices. Leger has been working with prestigious clients since 1986. Leger's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally and has a retention rate of 90%. Poll aggregator 338Canada.com gave Leger the highest rating among all polling firms in Canada for the accuracy of its studies.