



Trust in the Media: Exploring Consumer Sentiment and Behavior

March 2025

A Generation of Skeptics

- **Millennials (59%) and Gen Z (65%) usually or always question the accuracy of a news story more** than Gen X (51%) and Boomers (55%), reflecting a generational shift toward skepticism.
- **Republicans (40%) are more likely to question** the accuracy of news than Democrats (32%), Independents (26%), and the apolitical (2%).

More Than Words: Reputation and Source Credibility Drive Overall Trust

- **Reputation of the media outlet (39%)** is the most important factor that influences whether people trust a news story, followed by wide coverage of a news story (24%) and transparency about reporting ethics and fact-checking (16%). Only 3% of respondents said academic sources were the most important factor for trust.

Do Your Homework: Boomers Lead in Verifying News

- While **30% of all respondents verify news they find questionable with additional sources**, Boomers (39%) are the most likely to seek supplemental sources. This is followed by Millennials (25%) and Gen X (22%).
- In stark contrast, only 13% of **Gen Z** fact-checks, the least likely generation to check additional sources. When Gen Z *does* choose to verify a story with outside information, they favor social media as their source. This is also a trend also seen among Millennials (20%) and Gen X (23%). Boomers are the least likely out of any generation to favor social media as a source (12%).

Views vs. News: Boomers Block and Gen Z Scrolls

- **35% of all respondents are likely to stop reading or even block a news outlet** whose political and/or social views don't align with their own.
- **Boomers (36%)** are the most likely to block a news outlet, while **Gen Z (15%)** is the least likely. Gen X (27%) and Millennials (27%) think equally about blocking a news outlet.
- **31% of all respondents block social media influencers** who don't align with their views; Boomers (44%) are the most likely, whereas Gen Z (11%) is the least likely to block. Gen X and Millennials share similar sentiments, with 22% of each group indicating a high likelihood of blocking social media influencers.

Local Stories: Universal Appeal

- **Local news (38%)** is the most shared type of news across social media or with family and friends, followed by political news (27%).
- **Boomers (34%) and Gen X (28%)** share local news the most, followed by **Millennials (24%) and Gen Z (15%)**.

Traditional TV News Anchors Still Hold the Spotlight

- **Evening TV news anchors (53%) are trusted more** than print journalists (27%) or social media influencers (21%).
- **Older generations trust TV anchors the most**, with Boomers (36%) leading, followed by Gen X (29%), Millennials (23%) and Gen Z (11%).
- Out of all the generations, **Gen X are more likely to trust social media influencers** (31%), followed by Millennials (30%), Gen Z (25%) and Boomers (14%).
- **Republicans (26%) trust social media influencers more** than Democrats (16%) or Independents (19%).

Methodology:

- This was an online survey of 1,036 US adults conducted from March 1-11, 2025