

SmartNews Misinformation Study Findings

October, 2024

National Data

85% of adults are concerned about attempts to mislead voters this election season.

- More than half (58%) are *extremely* concerned.
- Key differences are seen between Baby Boomers, of whom 73% are extremely concerned, compared to only 35% of Gen Z, who are extremely concerned.
- Those who identify as Democrats and Republicans (62% and 60%, respectively) are more likely to be extremely concerned than Independents (49%).
- Further, men are more likely to be extremely concerned (62%) compared to women (54%).

In the context of misinformation, half of Americans (49%) are concerned with misinformation from political candidates and their supporters.

- This is followed by concerns of misinformation spread on social media (47%), misinformation from media outlets and reporters (44%), and misinformation due to AI manipulation (38%).
- Surprisingly, only 27% are worried about misinformation from foreign governments

On average, Americans spend around 2 hours total consuming news each day.

- 67 of these minutes are spent on traditional media like TV and newspapers, and 55 minutes are spent on social media each day.

Local, traditional news methods are more trusted by Americans than social media.

- Two-thirds of Americans say they trust local newspapers (66%) and local TV (65%).
- National newspapers and network TV as news sources are highly trusted as well (63% and 62%, respectively).
 - Social media sites are the least trusted as news sources for most Americans. Only 41% trust X/Twitter, 39% Instagram, 38% Facebook, and 36% TikTok.

Local Market Data

Atlanta

- 84% of Atlantans are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 56% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are right on par with the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Atlantans spend 1 hour and 55 minutes per day consuming news, just 7 minutes less than the national average.
- Atlantans spend 72 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 43 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Atlantans trust traditional media sources (55%) than social media sources (27%).

Chicago

- 81% of Chicagoans are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 49% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Chicagoans spend 1 hour and 54 minutes per day consuming news, just 8 minutes less than the national average.
- Chicagoans spend 69 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 45 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Chicagoans trust traditional media sources (57%) than social media sources (24%).

Denver

- 82% of Denverites are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 46% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Denverites spend 1 hour and 48 minutes per day consuming news, 14 minutes less than the national average
- Denverites spend 67 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 41 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Denverites trust traditional media sources (55%) more than social media sources (16%).

Houston

- 82% of Houstonians are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season, and 54% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Houstonians spend 2 hours and 27 minutes per day consuming news, the highest amount of 10 cities sampled, and 25 minutes more than the national average.
- Houstonians spend 83 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 64 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Houstonians trust traditional media sources (58%) than social media sources (34%).

Philadelphia

- 80% of Philadelphians are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 53% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Philadelphians spend 2 hours and 3 minutes per day consuming news, right on par with the national average.
- Philadelphians spend 81 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 42 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Philadelphians trust traditional media sources (57%) than social media sources (24%).

Phoenix

- 82% of Phoenixians are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 53% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are just slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Phoenixians spend 1 hour and 35 minutes per day consuming news, 27 minutes less than the national average.
- Phoenixians spend 64 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 31 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Phoenixians trust traditional media sources (43%) than social media sources (16%).

Portland

- 81% of Portlanders are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 51% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are just below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election — 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Portlanders spend 1 hour and 46 minutes per day consuming news, 16 minutes less than the national average.
- Portlanders spend 72 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 34 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Portlanders trust traditional media sources (53%) than social media sources (15%).

Sacramento

- 76% of Sacramentoans are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 44% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are below the national data by around 10%, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election – 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Sacramentoans spend 1 hour and 41 minutes per day consuming news, 21 minutes less than the national average.
- Sacramentoans spend 61 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 40 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Sacramentoans trust traditional media sources (52%) than social media sources (21%).

San Francisco

- 78% of San Franciscans are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 42% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election – 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- San Franciscans spend 2 hours and 8 minutes per day consuming news, 6 minutes more than the national average.
- San Franciscans spend 78 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources and 50 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More San Franciscans trust traditional media sources (61%) than social media sources (22%).

Seattle

- 82% of Seattleites are concerned about attempts to mislead voters through fake news and misinformation this election season. 50% of them are *extremely* concerned.
 - These numbers are slightly below the national data, where 85% of Americans are concerned about misinformation ahead of the election – 58% of whom are *extremely* concerned.
- Seattleites spend 1 hour and 59 minutes per day consuming news, right on par with the national average.
- Seattleites spend 68 minutes consuming news on traditional media sources, and 51 minutes consuming news via social media sources.
- More Seattleites trust traditional media sources (56%) than social media sources (24%).

Methodology

- This survey aimed to gather public opinions on misinformation and news consumption across the United States and in select metropolitan areas. SmartNews surveyed adults 18+ in a national sample of 1,000 and additional localized samples of 400 each in ten metropolitan areas. The surveys were conducted online through SurveyMonkey from September 25, 2024 through October 2, 2024. The margin of error for the national sample is +/- 3 percent and for the metro area samples, the margin of error is +/- 5 percentage points.