



4th ANNUAL DISINFORMATION IN SOCIETY REPORT

*A Survey of How 2,200 Americans Perceive
Intentionally Misleading News or Information*

By the Institute for Public Relations and Leger

October 2023





Methodology

Leger, a polling and marketing research firm, with offices across North America conducted this online survey July 21 - August 3, 2023 with a representative sample of **2,002 Americans** over the age of 18 to explore the prevalence of disinformation in the U.S., the parties most responsible for sharing disinformation, the level of trust the American public has in different information sources, and whose job it is to combat disinformation.

This is the first year Leger has partnered with IPR and their annual disinformation study that examines and tracks how disinformation — defined as deliberately misleading or biased information — is spread in the U.S. with some comparisons to prior research conducted November 2021. The Institute for Public Relations created this survey and first published results in 2019. This study has also been replicated in Canada with Leger in 2022.

Report notes:

- Percentage points has been abbreviated to pp.
- Misinformation was defined as “false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead,” while disinformation was defined as “deliberately misleading or biased information.
- In July 2023, Twitter rebranded to “X.”

**Using 2020 U.S. Census reference variables, the U.S. data was analyzed and weighted by our statisticians according to gender, age, region, and ethnicity in order to render a representative sample of the general U.S. population.*

LETTER TO THE READER



Dear Reader,

In this 4th annual disinformation study, the Institute for Public Relations and Leger surveyed 2,200 Americans about their perceptions of the impact of disinformation in society. Our results found that the American socio-political landscape has been increasingly clouded by concerns over misinformation and disinformation, with both perceived as more pressing threats than critical issues such as border security, climate change, and terrorism.

While this study finds much disagreement among Democrats and Republicans, one of the few areas they agree upon is the impact of disinformation. Our study reveals that as of 2023, a majority still views misinformation and disinformation as significant challenges, echoing the sentiments from the last survey in 2021. More alarmingly, such perceptions have seeped deep into the American psyche, casting shadows on the electoral process and eroding the foundational trust in democratic institutions. Concurrently, as confidence in social media platforms dwindles, Americans are turning toward their inner circles—family, friends, and like-minded individuals—as the most credible sources of information, indicating a potential pivot toward more insular information ecosystems. Unfortunately, though, one of the challenges is people believe themselves, people like them, and family are the most adept at discerning and combatting information.

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LETTER TO THE READER



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While Republicans and Democrats differ on the most trusted media sources for accurate news and information, sources where both parties come together is local news, both broadcast and newspapers. Unfortunately since 2005, according to [Dr. Penelope Abernathy](#), more than one-fourth of the U.S.'s local newspapers have disappeared, leaving some Americans living in vast news deserts.

Most Americans also believe key figures and institutions, including Presidents Biden and Trump, the U.S. government, U.S. Congress, and journalists should be very responsible for combatting disinformation, but a smaller percentage of respondents feel these entities are performing well in this role.

The takeaway for this 2023 study is that Americans need to come together and take the fight against disinformation seriously. We need to understand our roles in sharing disinformation and that we all must actively combat it to ensure we have a strong and fair society, especially with 2024 as a pivotal election year.

Sincerely,

Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR
President and CEO, Institute for Public Relations

Dave Scholz
Chief Strategy Officer, Leger

11 KEY FINDINGS

1

Compared to 2021, most Americans still consider misinformation* (61% vs. 69% in 2021) and disinformation (60% vs. 69% in 2021) to be major problems**, more so than border security (57%), the budget deficit (56%), climate change (55%), domestic terrorism (44%), and international (43%) terrorism. The top three issues considered to be major problems facing Americans are inflation (73%), health care costs (72%), and crime (71%). Gun violence concerns jumped 8 percentage points (pp) from 60% in 2021 to 68% in 2023.

2

Misinformation and disinformation continues to adversely affect the trust Americans put in the election process, as well as in society as a whole. Most Americans believe disinformation undermines our election process (75%), is a threat to our democracy (74%), increases the polarization of political parties (73%), and infringes on human rights (61%). Additionally, more than half (55%) said artificial intelligence platforms will create more disinformation in society. While the proportion of respondents who feel anxious or stressed when encountering disinformation slightly decreased (47% vs. 52% in 2021), more Americans disagree that concerns about disinformation are exaggerated (up 5 pp from 2021).

3

Americans continue to view family, friends, and like-minded people as the most trustworthy sources for accurate news or information and the least likely to spread disinformation. 3-in-4 respondents (75%) said they had at least “some” trust in their family as a source for accurate news and information, closely followed by ‘people like me’ (72%) and friends (69%). Few consider family (14%), friends (14%), or ‘people like me’ (13%) to be “very” responsible for spreading disinformation. Trust across all social media platforms declined from 2021 to 2023.

*Misinformation was defined as “false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead.”

**Disinformation was defined as “deliberately misleading or biased information.”

11 KEY FINDINGS

4

Trust in both Republican and Democratic leaders has declined since 2021 among members of each party with the largest gap between the perceived trustworthiness of the current U.S. President and the former President. 19% of Republicans said they had at least “some trust” in President Biden (+7 pp since 2021) vs. 73% of Democrats (-8 pp since 2021). Conversely, 15% of Democrats had at least “some trust” in former President Trump (+2 pp since 2021), compared to 73% of Republicans (-8 pp since 2021).

5

Local news sources help bridge the trust gap of sources between Democrats and Republicans.

As expected, Democrats rated sources considered more liberal to be more trustworthy than Republicans and Republicans rated sources considered more conservative to be more trustworthy than Democrats. Democrats were also more likely to trust journalists overall. Nevertheless, they do agree on local news sources as being one of the most trustworthy sources for accurate news and information. Unfortunately since 2005, according to [Dr. Penelope Abernathy](#), more than one-fourth of the U.S.’s local newspapers have disappeared, leaving some Americans living in vast news deserts.

6

Social media, politicians of the opposing party and political activist groups, along with the Chinese and Russian governments are the top offenders believed to be responsible for spreading disinformation to the public. Facebook (73%), Tik Tok (65%), and X* (62%) are the top three social media platforms seen as being at least “somewhat” responsible for spreading disinformation. While around 3-in-4 members of either political party believe the senators and representatives of the opposing party were at least ‘somewhat’ responsible for spreading disinformation, around 2-in-5 respondents say their own party’s members are responsible for spreading disinformation (43% of Democrats and 45% of Republicans). In terms of the presidency, 58% of Republicans (-8 pp) consider President Joe Biden to be “very responsible” for spreading disinformation, compared to 70% of Democrats (+2 pp) who say former President Donald Trump is “very responsible” for spreading disinformation.

* formerly called Twitter

11 KEY FINDINGS

7

Most Americans continue to say federal agencies including the U.S. government and President Biden are most responsible for combatting disinformation, along with cable news. The U.S. government (62%) is seen by the largest proportion to be “very responsible” for combatting disinformation, followed by President Biden (60%), federal agencies (58%), and cable news (58%). The rest of the top 15 list primarily comprised other governmental entities, news organizations, and politicians.

8

While most Americans feel some sources are doing at least “somewhat well” in combatting disinformation, those seen as being most responsible are falling severely short on execution. 60% said President Biden should be “very responsible” for combatting disinformation, but only 15% said he was doing so “very well.” Similarly, 52% continue to find former President Donald Trump to be “very responsible” for combatting disinformation, but only 16% said he was combatting it “very well.” Additional gaps were found with entities who scored the highest in responsibility for combatting disinformation, including the U.S. government (62% vs. 12%), Congress (58% vs. 8%), and journalists (58% vs. 12%).

9

The number of Americans who say they fact check information or news using secondary sources remains steady. In 2023, 39% said they “often” or “always” check other sources to check whether the information or news they are reading is accurate. 73% “sometimes” go to other sources, while 20% (+1 pp since 2021) “rarely” or “never” check alternative sources.

11 KEY FINDINGS

10

Americans remain confident in their ability to recognize disinformation. Nearly 4-in-5 Americans (78%) feel at least “somewhat” confident in their ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false, while 18% remain “not very confident.”

11

Disinformation shakes the confidence of some Americans in U.S. sources. 40% said they avoid watching or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation. Additionally, 31% said they are more likely to read sources outside the U.S. because of the amount of disinformation in the U.S and over half (55%) said they believe AI platforms and programs will create more disinformation in society.



U.S. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS



6-in-10 Americans say misinformation and disinformation are major problems in the U.S.

While Americans consider misinformation and disinformation** to be somewhat less of an issue in the U.S. than they were in 2021, respondents ranked misleading information as a major problem more often than discrimination, climate change, and domestic or international terrorism.*

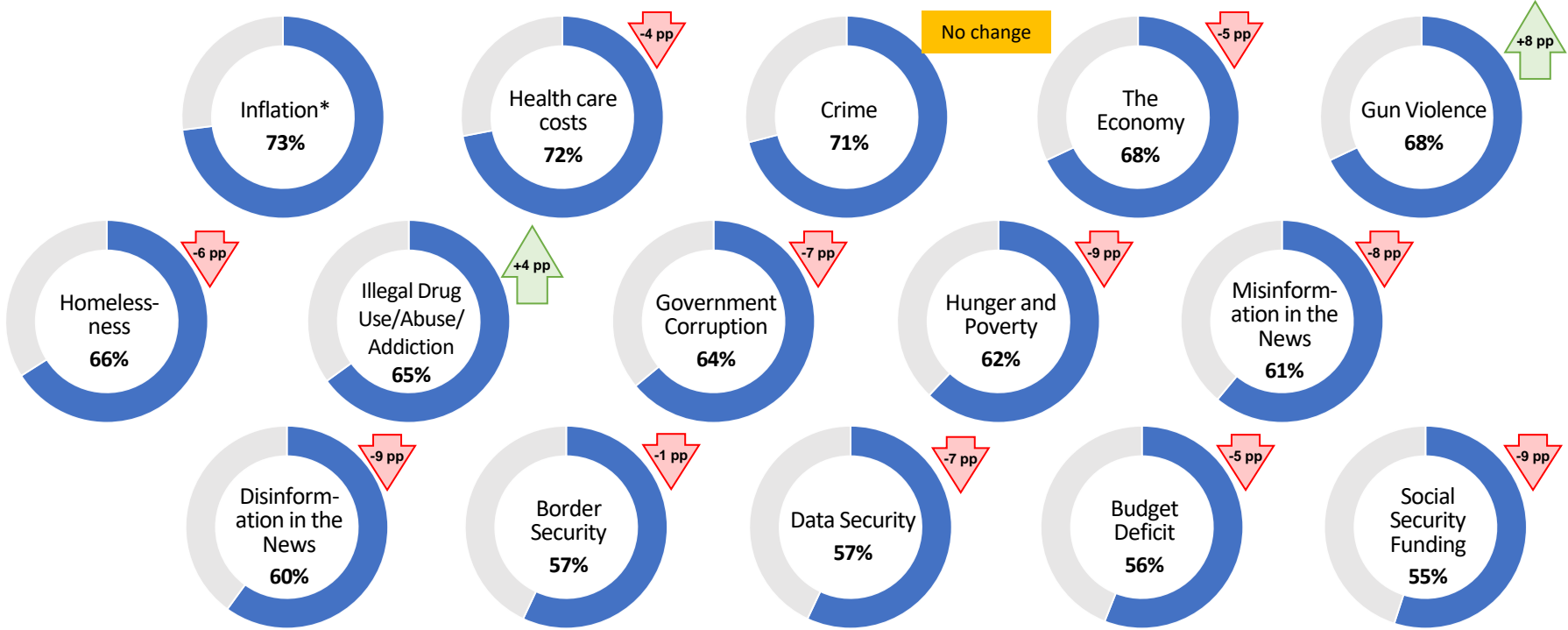
Respondents evaluated the severity of 36 issues facing Americans. Inflation (73%), health care costs (72%), crime (71%), the economy (68%), and gun violence (68%) were the top five issues that were identified as “major problems” by respondents.

Both misinformation (61%) and disinformation (60%) saw decreases in the number of people who said these were major problems compared to 2021 as the percentages returned to 2020 levels. Misinformation decreased 8 pp (from 69% in 2021), and disinformation fell 9 pp (from 69% in 2021.) However, most Americans still find them to be major issues.

**Misinformation was defined as “false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead.”*

***Disinformation was defined as “deliberately misleading or biased information.”*

Top 15 “Major” Issues in the US in 2023



* Issue added in 2023

**PP means "percentagepoint". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2021. No arrow indicates not tracked against in 2021.

REPORT

IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON SOCIETY



Nearly three-quarters of Americans say disinformation threatens democracy and undermines election processes

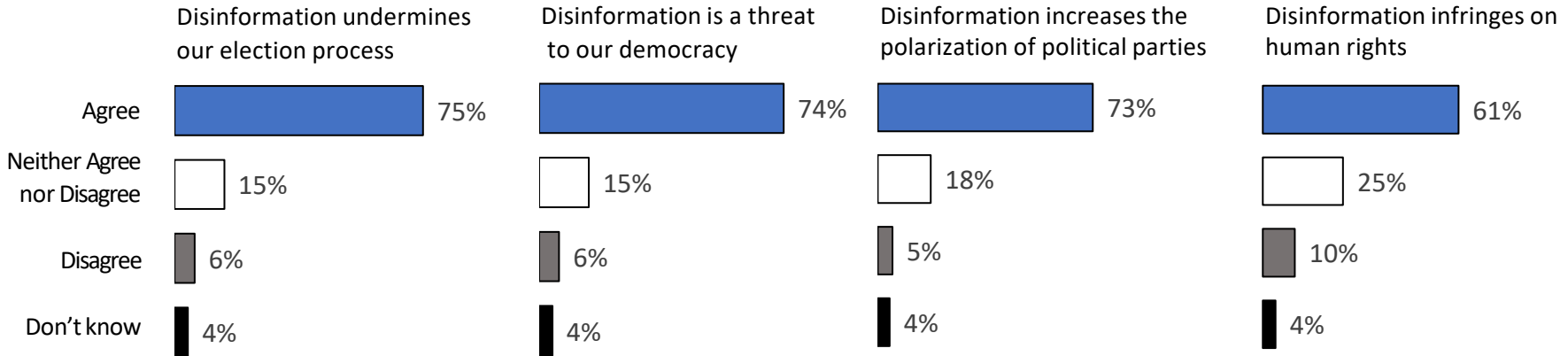
Disinformation remains a complicated issue for Americans, but most agree, regardless of political affiliation, that it has a negative impact on society.

- 75% say disinformation undermines the election process (-1 pp from 2021)
- 74% feel disinformation is a threat to democracy (-1 pp)
- 73% believe disinformation increases the polarization of political parties (+2 pp)
- 55% say artificial intelligence platforms and programs will create more disinformation in society*

53% of Americans continue to disagree that concerns about disinformation are exaggerated (+5 pp from 2021). However, feelings of anxiousness when encountering disinformation trend lower as less than half (47% compared to 52% in 2021) said encountering disinformation makes them feel anxious or stressed.

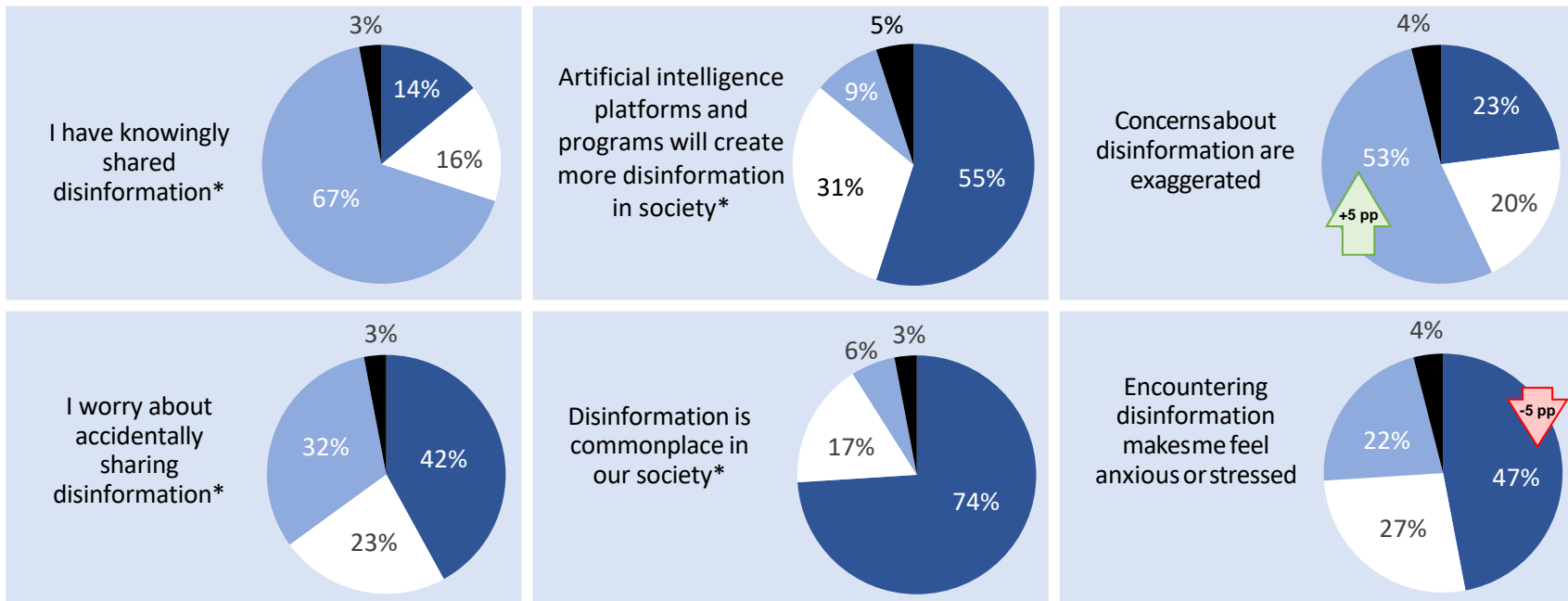
Most agree that disinformation increases polarization and causes other societal issues

Most Americans believe that disinformation undermines our election process, is a threat to our democracy, and increases the polarization of political parties. This is consistent with 2021 results.



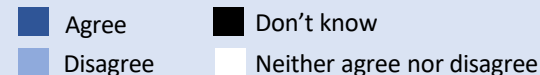
Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000
IPR2: And in your view, how much of an issue are each of the following in this country?

Most believe disinformation negatively impacts society and artificial intelligence will increase disinformation



**PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2021. No arrow indicates not tracked or parity vs. 2021.

* Added in 2023



Base: ALL (n=2002)

IPR13: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

REPORT

MOST RELIABLE SOURCES FOR ACCURATE NEWS



Like-minded people continue to be the most trusted source of information for Americans

Of the information sources that Americans say they trust “a lot,” the highest-ranking source is “people like me” (31%, +4 pp from 2021), followed by family (30%, -5 pp), *NBC News* (22%, +5 pp), *ABC News* (20%, +3 pp), and friends (19%, -3 pp).

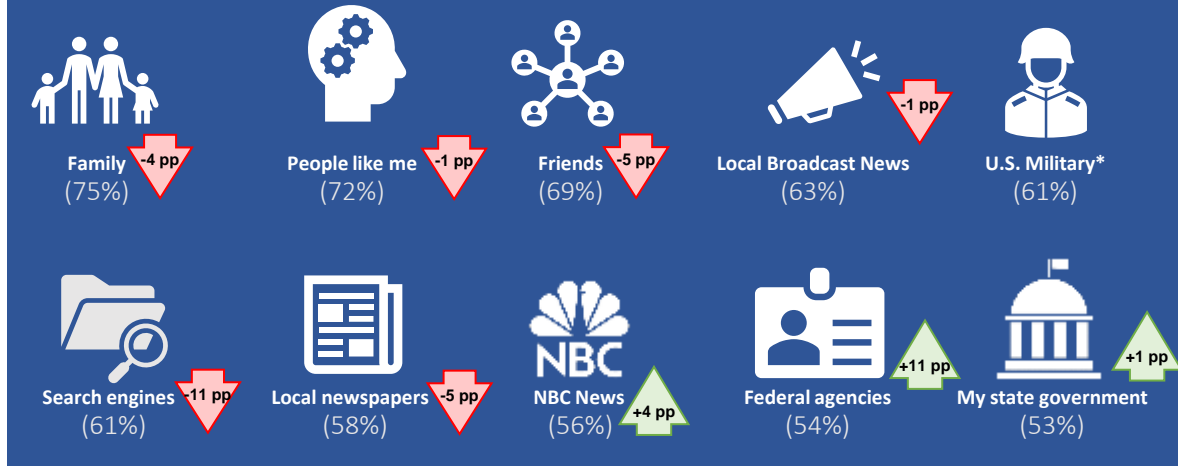
In terms of the political landscape, only 16% (-6 pp from 2021) have “a lot” of trust in President Joe Biden and 13% (-9 pp) in Vice President Kamala Harris, while only 15% (-4 pp) have “a lot” of trust in former President Donald Trump, showing an overall decline in trust in political figures.

The top sources of information that respondents do “not trust at all” include the Russian government (66%, +5 pp from 2021), the Chinese government (59%, -1 pp), TikTok (47%, +9 pp), Former President Donald Trump (44%, -1 pp), X (40%, +5 pp), and Snapchat (40%, +5 pp).

58% of respondents said they had “not much” or “not at all” trust in ChatGPT, which was added to the 2023 study. Only 5% had “a lot of trust” in the generative AI platform.

Most Trustworthy Sources: Mainstream Media > Social Media

TOP SOURCES PARTICIPANTS TRUST “SOME” OR “A LOT”



**PP means "percentage point". Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2021. No arrow indicates not tracked or parity vs. 2021.

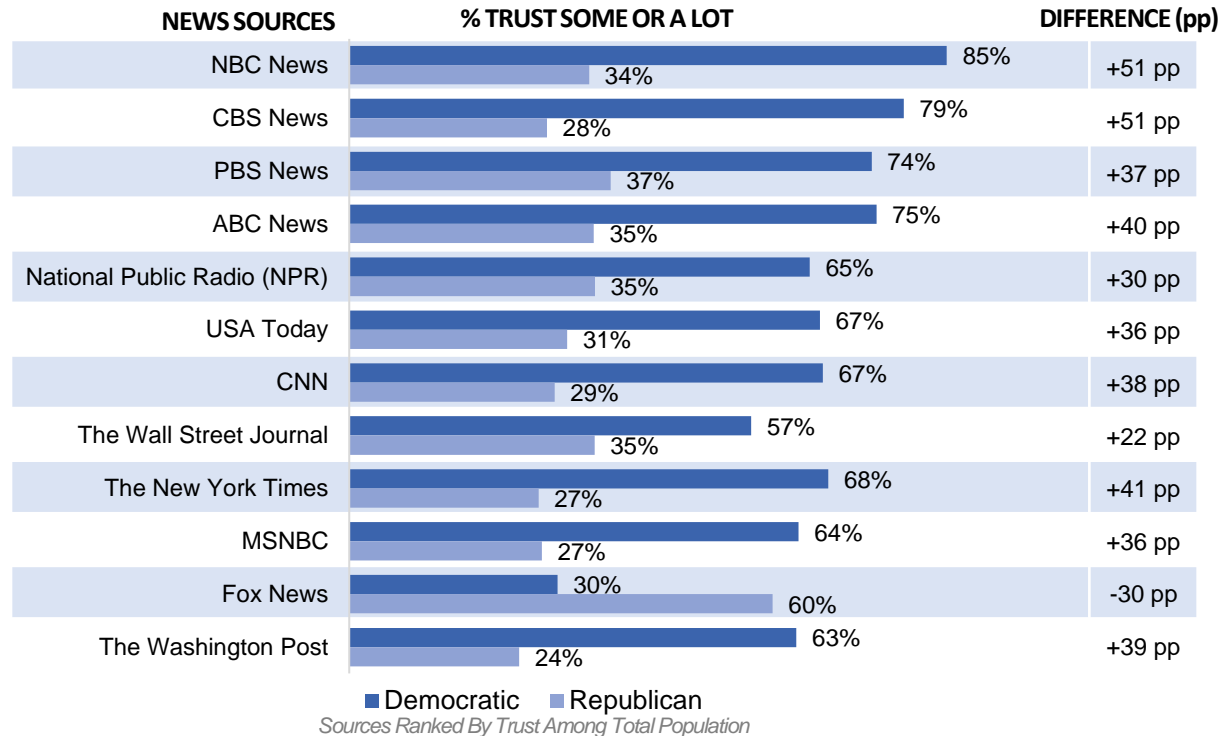
* Source added in 2023

Overall, **mainstream media sources** were considered more trustworthy than **most social media sites** for providing accurate news or information. Social media platforms that many Americans said were **“not at all” trustworthy** included TikTok (47%, +9 pp from 2021), X (40%, +5 pp), Snapchat (40%, +5pp), Facebook (37%, +4 pp), WhatsApp (36%), Instagram (34%, +6 pp), and LinkedIn (25%, +8 pp).

Trust across all social media platforms declined from 2021 to 2023. That said, 42% said they had at least “some” trust in YouTube, which remains the most trusted social media site despite realizing a 9 pp decline in trustworthiness perceptions since 2021.

Democrats and Republicans saw significant gaps in their perception of the trustworthiness of mainstream media

Not surprisingly, Democrats consider more liberal sources to be more trustworthy, while Republicans consider more conservative sources to be more trustworthy. Democrats were more likely than Republicans to trust mainstream media sources and journalists, except for *Fox News*, which was trusted by 60% of Republicans.

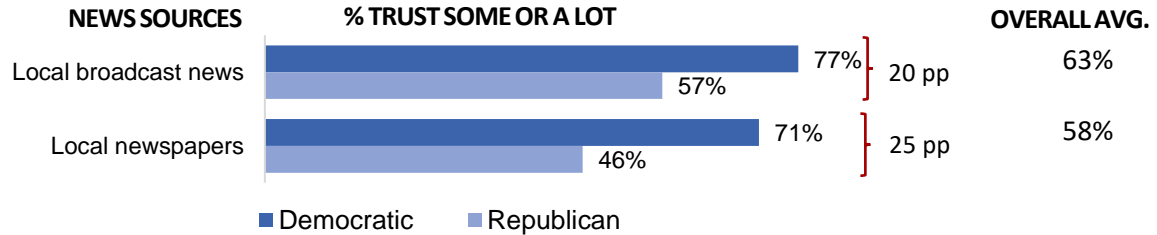


Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000

IPR1: Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information?

Local news bridges the trustworthiness gap between Democrats and Republicans with a smaller differential than other sources

Many Democrats and Republicans say they have at least “some” trust in local newspapers and local broadcast news (especially Democrats).



Sources Ranked By Trust Among Total Population

Republicans continue to trust the U.S. government about the same as in 2021 with 27% having at least “some trust,” compared to 29% in 2021. Similarly, trust that Democrats have in the U.S. government stayed about the same at 62% (+1 pp since 2021). Republicans experienced a decline in trust in their local government, 54% (-9 pp) while Democrats experienced an increase to 64% (+17 pp).

44% of Democrats had at least “some” trust in major companies/corporations, compared to 42% in 2021, continuing to increase since 2020. Similarly, 33% of Democrats had some trust in CEOs, remaining unchanged from 2021 and remaining higher than the 15% in 2020. Regarding Republicans, they saw minimal shift in their trust of these two sources (major companies: 39% in 2023 from 36% in 2021; CEOs: 26% in 2023 from 28% in 2021).

Political affiliation also determined the level of trust respondents have in colleges and universities, with Democrats (70%) determining higher education institutions were deemed more trustworthy than Republicans (37%). Overall, 38% of respondents had “some” trust in their employer with Republicans more likely to say this than Democrats (37% vs. 42% respectively).

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n ~ 1000
 IPR1: Typically, how much do you trust the following sources to provide you with accurate news or information?

TOP SOURCES RESPONSIBLE FOR DISINFORMATION



Facebook, politicians, and foreign governments are most responsible for spreading disinformation

Consistent with 2021, the sources considered most responsible for spreading disinformation are Facebook, politicians, and foreign governments.

The top five sources deemed at least “somewhat” responsible for spreading disinformation include: Facebook (73%); politicians NOT from your own party (68%); political activist groups (67%); the Chinese government (66%), and the Russian government (66%).

Sources people believe are most responsible for spreading disinformation is heavily influenced by political party. Many Democrats claim Republican senators and representatives were at least “somewhat” responsible for spreading disinformation (79%), while many Republicans said the same of Democratic senators and representatives (77%). When considering their party, just under half of respondents say their own party’s politicians are at least “somewhat” responsible for spreading disinformation (43% of Democrats and 45% of Republicans).

Americans are increasingly holding politicians, social media, and companies responsible for spreading disinformation

58% of Republicans (-8 pp) consider President Joe Biden to be “very responsible” for spreading disinformation, compared to 18% of Democrats (-2 pp). 22% percent of Republicans (+5 pp since 2021) consider former President Donald Trump to be “very responsible” for spreading disinformation, compared to a much higher 70% of Democrats (+2 pp).

TOP 20 SOURCES VERY RESPONSIBLE FOR SPREADING DISINFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2021 (pp change)	INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2021 (pp change)
Facebook	73% (+1 pp)	U.S. federal government	62% (-5 pp)
Politicians NOT from your political party	68%	X or Twitter	62% (+2)
Political activist groups	67% (+1)	Public relations professionals	61% (+3)
Chinese government	66% (+2)	Major companies/corporations	61% (+4)
Russian government	66% (+3)	Former President Donald Trump	60% (+1)
Journalists*	65% (+1)	Search engines (e.g., Google, Bing)	58% (-1)
TikTok	65%	Democratic members (U.S. House/Senate)	58%
Fox News	65% (+4)	Instagram	58%
Marketers and advertisers	64% (+3)	YouTube	57%
Republican members (U.S. House/Senate)	62% (+2)	My state government	56% (-1)
% SAYING THIS SOURCE IS AT LEAST “SOMEWHAT” RESPONSIBLE FOR SPREADING DISINFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC			

*Republicans were over two times more likely than Democrats to consider journalists “very responsible” for spreading disinformation (36% vs. 15%, respectively).

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 525

IPR3: To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading disinformation to the public?

Social media platforms are most culpable media for spreading disinformation



Social Media platforms took a lot of the blame for responsibility, with Facebook (73%), TikTok (65%) and X (62%) being the top 3 social platforms deemed at least “somewhat” responsible for spreading disinformation.



When considering big business, marketers and advertisers (64%), public relations professionals (61%), and major companies/corporations (61%) were the top 3 sources considered at least ‘somewhat’ culpable for spreading disinformation.



At least half of the respondents said the following news sources are at least “somewhat responsible” for spreading disinformation: journalists (65%); Fox News (TV) (65%); CNN News (55%); NBC News (52%); MSNBC (52%); and CBS News (50%).

Personal networks are the least responsible for spreading disinformation

The majority of respondents consider their own personal connections as being some of the least culpable sources for spreading disinformation. Only 14% said their family, 14% said friends, and 11% blamed their employer for being “very responsible” for spreading disinformation,.

Only a few Americans said “people like me” (13%) and “people NOT like me” (15%) are “very responsible” for spreading disinformation.

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 525

IPR3: To what extent do you believe each of the following are responsible for spreading disinformation to the public?

REPORT

***COMBATTING THE SPREAD
OF DISINFORMATION –
Who is responsible?***



Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 1030

IPR4: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media?

IPR5: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

Both Democrats and Republicans believe President Joe Biden and the federal government are most responsible for combatting disinformation

Despite differences in trust levels for these sources, differences among Democratic and Republican political parties were not significant regarding responsibility attributed. A similar level (~80%) of Democrats and Republicans feel that President Joe Biden should be at least ‘somewhat’ responsible for combatting disinformation.

When comparing responsibility levels to Republicans, Democrats tend to attribute more responsibility to the following sources to combat disinformation: U.S. government (88%, +7 pp higher than Republicans), Congress (85%, +7 pp), The Supreme Court (85%, +9 pp), and federal agencies (86%, +6 pp).

News sources were often noted as being very responsible for combatting disinformation

16 groups and individuals were identified by over half of Americans to be the sources that should be “very responsible” for combatting disinformation. The U.S. government (62%, -4 pp since 2021) was deemed by the highest proportion of respondents to be “very responsible”, followed closely behind by President Biden (60%, -7 pp), federal agencies (58%, -2 pp), and cable news (58%, -2 pp).

TOP 20 SOURCES CONSIDERED VERY RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBATTING DISINFORMATION

INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2021 (pp change)	INFORMATION SOURCE	% Change Since 2021 (pp change)
U.S. Government	62% (-4 pp)	The Supreme Court	56% (-2 pp)
President Joe Biden	60% (-7)	Local broadcast news	55% (+1)
Federal agencies	58% (-2)	Fact-checking websites (e.g., Snopes)	55% (+1)
Cable News (Fox News, MSNBC, CNN)	58% (-2)	Radio News (e.g., NPR)	54% (-)
Newspapers (e.g., WSJ, NYT)	58% (-1)	Local newspapers	52% (-4)
Journalists	58% (-)	Former President Donald Trump	52% (-3)
Congress	58% (-5)	Conservative websites/social media	51% (+4)
Network TV News Stations (e.g., ABC, CBS)	56% (-5)	Search engines (e.g., Google, Bing)	50% (+1)
% SAYING THIS SOURCE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED VERY RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBATTING DISINFORMATION SPREAD			

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 1030

IPR4: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media?

IPR5: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

REPORT

**COMBATTING THE SPREAD
OF DISINFORMATION – How
well are sources doing?**



“People like me,” local broadcast news, and fact-checking websites were rated the best for trying to combat disinformation

65% of Americans feel that they themselves are doing at least “somewhat well” in combatting disinformation as it appears in the media. For the third wave in a row, “people like me” continues to be one of the top sources seen as doing well at combatting disinformation in the media (60%, up from 58% in 2021). Local broadcast news (48%, -3 pp), fact checking websites such as *Snopes* and *PolitiFact* (48%, +1 pp), and local newspapers (46%, -2 pp) are also considered to be doing well.

For most sources, significant gaps exist between how responsible Americans believe sources are for combatting disinformation and how well they are actually combatting it.

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 1030

IPR4: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media?

IPR5: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

Local news are the top media that are combatting disinformation well

Source	% Combatting at Least Somewhat Well
Me	65%
People like me	60%
Local broadcast news	48%
Fact-checking websites (e.g., Snopes)	48%
Local newspapers	46%
Newspapers (e.g., WSJ, NYT)	43%
Radio News (e.g., NPR)	42%
The Supreme Court	42%
Journalists	41%
Network TV News Stations (e.g., ABC, CBS)	40%

% SAYING THIS GROUP/INDIVIDUAL COMBATS DISINFORMATION AT LEAST “SOMEWHAT WELL”

Respondents were confident with their own ability to combat disinformation as 65% said they do so at least “somewhat well.” More than 50% of Americans feel that the following groups/individuals were doing “not too well” or “not at all well” in combatting disinformation that appears in the media: social media sites (62%), Congress (57%), marketers and advertisers (57%), former President Donald Trump (55%), major companies/corporations (52%), U.S. government (52%), business CEOs (52%), and the general public (50%).

Political affiliation played an important role with Democrats being much more likely than Republicans to say President Joe Biden was doing at least “somewhat well” at combatting disinformation (66% vs. 20%, respectively). With a significant drop since 2021, 52% (-14 pp) of Republicans feel former President Trump was doing at least “somewhat well” at combatting disinformation compared to only 20% of Democrats.

Base: ALL (n=2002) *Please note: Each item is n~ 1030

IPR4: Rate how well each of the following try to combat disinformation that appears in the media?

IPR5: How responsible SHOULD each of the following be in combatting disinformation in the media?

Significant gaps exist between who Americans say should be responsible for combatting disinformation and how well they are combatting it

Politicians and government agencies received poor marks in terms of how well they are combatting disinformation despite respondents saying that they are most responsible for doing so. Some news organizations, especially local ones, and fact-checking organizations received higher marks. Cable news, on the other hand, did not fare as well.

INFORMATION SOURCE	% Very responsible for combatting	% Combatting At Least Somewhat Well	Difference in Percentage Points (pp)
	U.S. Government	62%	35%
President Joe Biden	60%	38%	22 pp
Federal agencies	58%	37%	21 pp
Cable News (Fox News, MSNBC, CNN)	58%	33%	25 pp
Newspapers (e.g., WSJ, NYT)	58%	43%	15 pp
Journalists	58%	41%	17 pp
Congress	58%	27%	31 pp
Network TV News Stations (e.g., ABC, CBS)	56%	40%	16 pp
The Supreme Court	56%	42%	14 pp
Local broadcast news	55%	48%	7 pp
Fact-checking websites (e.g., Snopes)	55%	48%	7 pp
Radio News (e.g., NPR)	54%	42%	12 pp
Local newspapers	52%	46%	6 pp
Former President Donald Trump	52%	33%	19 pp

REPORT

PREVALENCE OF DISINFORMATION



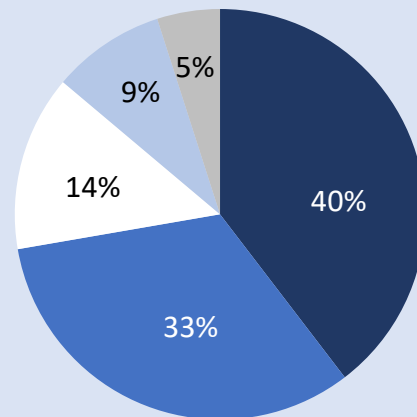
Base: ALL (n=2002)

IPR6: How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false?

4-in-10 see disinformation almost every day

Over two-thirds of respondents (72%, +3 pp) reported coming across false news or information at least once a week, with 40% of Americans (+2 pp since 2021) saying they see false news almost every day.

How often, if ever, do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is false?*



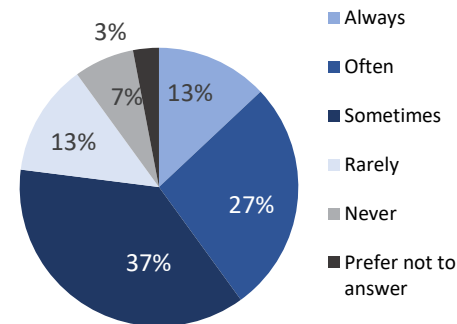
- Every day or almost every day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- Rarely or never
- Prefer not to answer

* Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

4-in-10 go to other sites to check the veracity of sources

40% said they “often” or “always” go to other websites to check whether the information they are reading is true. 37% “sometimes” go to other sources, while 20% (-1 pp since 2021) “rarely” or “never” check alternative sources.

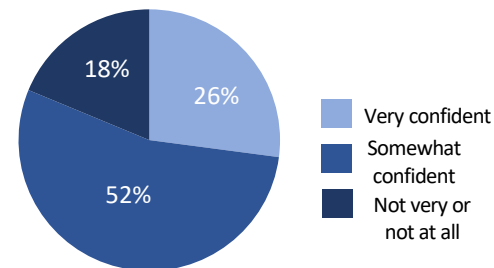
*How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate?**



Americans are confident in their ability to recognize disinformation

Americans feel confident in their ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false. Similar to 2020 and 2021, 78% Americans reported they are confident in their ability to recognize false news; 26% consider themselves “very confident,” with 52% feeling “somewhat confident.” 18% percent said they are “not very” or “not at all” confident.

*How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false?**



Base: ALL (n=2002)

IPR7: How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to recognize news or information that misrepresents reality or is false?

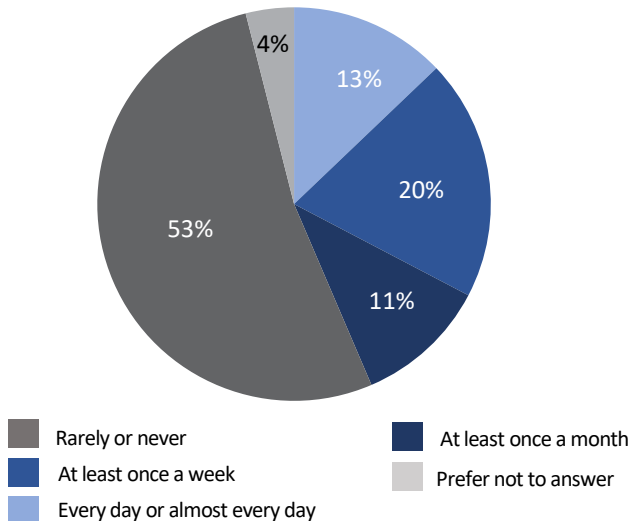
IPR8: How often, if ever, do you go to other websites or media sources to check whether the news or information you are reading is true and accurate?

* Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

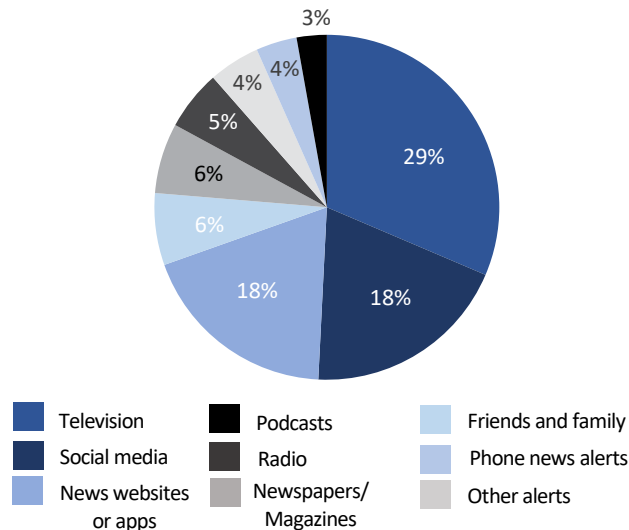
Television is primary source of news

Television (29%, -8 pp since 2021), social media (18%, +4 pp), and news websites/apps (18%, +2 pp) remain the top three sources for how respondents primarily get their news.

How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks?



In the past week, what has been your primary source of news?



One-third share on social media at least once a week

33% share news or information on their social media at least once a week. Only a few respondents recall sharing news or public information on social media networks, with over half (53%) saying they "rarely" or "never" share news on social media. Only 13% said they share news and public information "every day" or "almost every day" on their social channels.

** Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.*

Base: ALL (n=2002)

IPR10: In the past week, what has been your PRIMARY source of news?

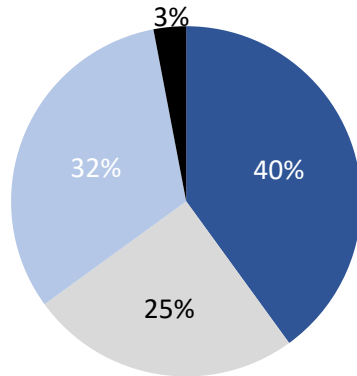
IPR11: How often, if ever, do you share news and other public information with others on your social networks?

4-in-10 Americans avoid news because of the amount of disinformation

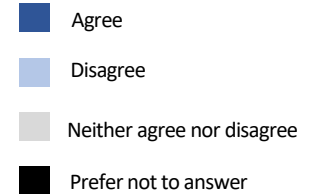
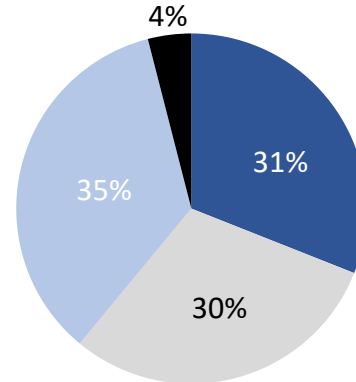
Disinformation has affected how Americans consume news. 40% say that they "avoid watching or listening to the news because of the amount of disinformation." 31% said they are more likely "to read sources outside the U.S. because of the amount of disinformation in the U.S".

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements*:

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



I'm more likely to read sources outside of the U.S. because of the amount of disinformation in the U.S. media.



* Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: ALL (n=2002)

IPR13: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

CONCLUSION

Disinformation remains an area of heightened concern for Americans, consistently ranking as a major issue alongside other societal challenges like inflation, healthcare costs, and crime. The ubiquity and perceived threat of misinformation and disinformation have significant ramifications on Americans' trust in various institutions and figures. Notably, while the majority acknowledge the detrimental impact of disinformation on the election process, democracy, political polarization, and human rights, there's an evident trust deficit in key entities that should be at the forefront of combating it. This discrepancy underscores a critical trust gap, which is further evidenced by decreased trust in both Democratic and Republican leadership since 2021. Although a sizable majority holds the U.S. government, President Biden, Congress, and journalists responsible for addressing this menace, a smaller percentage of Americans believe these entities are succeeding at combatting it.

A beacon of hope in this trust crisis seems to be local news sources, especially local broadcast news, which both Democrats and Republicans perceive as trustworthy. Yet, the decline of local newspapers also threatens this critical local information source. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Tik Tok, and X (formerly Twitter), along with politicians from opposing parties and certain foreign governments, are deemed most culpable for the spread of disinformation. Furthermore, while a significant portion of Americans actively fact-check news, there's an increasing segment that either avoids U.S. news sources altogether or seeks international sources because of disinformation. These patterns emphasize the complexity and multifaceted nature of the disinformation challenge facing American society. With artificial intelligence anticipated to further exacerbate this challenge, it becomes imperative for both governmental and non-governmental entities to intensify their efforts in restoring trust and addressing the root causes of misinformation and disinformation.

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