What do Canadians want from their news?

Andrew Potter, Taylor Owen, Peter Loewen, and Benjamin Allen Stevens
Motivations

• Do Canadians have significant differences in which facts they believe?
• Is this related to the media types they consume?
• How much do Canadians trust traditional media sources, compared to new ones?
Findings

• Canadians are divided on some issues by media consumption
• However, Canadians share a common set of facts about core political issues
• Canadians broadly trust traditional news organizations
• There is still skepticism about government support for media organizations
Sample

• Study was conducted online using sample provided by Qualtrics in September 2018.

• 2,245 English Canadian respondents, including English-speakers in Quebec; 452 French Quebecers.

• All results are weighted by age and gender within province, based on targets from 2016 census.

• Data were weighted using iterative proportional fitting (IPF) in STATA

• This study was commissioned by the Max Bell School of Public Policy, and executed by the Loewen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
Methods

• We asked respondents how often they visit various Canadian news websites
• We divided respondents based on two dimensions: how much online news they consume overall, and whether they consume more left-wing, more right-wing news, or consume equal amounts of both
• For volume of online news consumption, we divided respondents into the top 50% and bottom 50% of online news use for their language within our sample
• For the partisanship of their online news consumption, we compared how often they visited left-wing news sites with how often they visited right-wing news sites. These sites were:
  • English left-wing: Toronto Star, Huffington Post, National Observer
  • English right-wing: National Post, Toronto Sun, The Rebel
  • French left-wing: Le Devoir, Huffington Post Quebec
  • French right-wing: Journal de Montréal, Journal de Québec
• These two dimensions can be used to create six categories
Media dimensions, Canadian sources

**English Canadian media consumption groups**
- Low-use left: 14%
- Low-use neutral: 11%
- Low-use right: 35%
- High-use left: 22%
- High-use neutral: 5%

**French Canadian media consumption groups**
- Low-use left: 5%
- Low-use neutral: 26%
- Low-use right: 30%
- High-use left: 13%
- High-use neutral: 6%
Media dimensions, Canadian sources
## Demographics

### English Canadians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left-wing</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Right-wing</th>
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</table>
| **Low media consumption** | Average age: 49  
60% female  
29% have university degree | Average age: 51  
57% female  
20% have university degree | Average age: 50  
34% female  
24% have university degree |
| **High media consumption** | Average age: 45  
49% female  
48% have university degree | Average age: 42  
50% female  
37% have university degree | Average age: 45  
40% female  
38% have university degree |

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec  
Weighted by age group, gender, and province
## Demographics

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Left-wing</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low media consumption</strong></td>
<td>Average age: 43&lt;br&gt;88% female&lt;br&gt;21% have university degree</td>
<td>Average age: 53&lt;br&gt;66% female&lt;br&gt;15% have university degree</td>
<td>Average age: 48&lt;br&gt;50% female&lt;br&gt;15% have university degree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High media consumption</strong></td>
<td>Average age: 50&lt;br&gt;56% female&lt;br&gt;48% have university degree</td>
<td>Average age: 38&lt;br&gt;24% female&lt;br&gt;28% have university degree</td>
<td>Average age: 47&lt;br&gt;34% female&lt;br&gt;34% have university degree</td>
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</tbody>
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French-speaking Canadians within Quebec<br>Weighted by age group and gender
Ideology by media consumption group

Policy positions of English Canadian media consumption groups

1. There should be more free trade with other countries, even if it hurts some industries in Canada.
2. Canada should increase the number of immigrants it admits each year.
3. The federal government should have more powers to combat terrorism, even if it means that citizens have to give up more privacy.

Legend:
- Dark purple: Disagree
- Light purple: Neither agree nor disagree
- Pink: Agree

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec
Groups weighted by age group, gender, and province
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree.
Ideology by media consumption group

Policy positions of French Canadian media consumption groups

- There should be more free trade with other countries, even if it hurts some industries in Canada.
- Canada should increase the number of immigrants it admits each year.
- The federal government should have more powers to combat terrorism, even if it means that citizens have to give up more privacy.

French-speaking Canadians within Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree.
Policy positions of English Canadian media consumption groups

There should be more restrictions on abortion.

Possession of marijuana should be a criminal offence.

Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec.
Groups weighted by age group, gender, and province.
Excludes respondents who were unsure.
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree.
Ideology by media consumption group

Policy positions of French Canadian media consumption groups

- There should be more restrictions on abortion.
- Possession of marijuana should be a criminal offence

French-speaking Canadians within Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree.
Political beliefs by group

Political beliefs of English Canadian media consumption groups

Human activity is the main cause of climate change.
Free trade has reduced poverty in the developing world over the last 20 years.
Middle class incomes in Canada have increased over the last 10 years.
Compared to 50 years ago, human rights records around the world are better.

The Canadian health care system, according to rankings, is in the top ten in the world.
The average Canadian household today has more wealth than 30 years ago.
More refugees entered Canada last year than the previous year.
In the last year, the United States economy has grown faster than the Canadian economy.

The gap in wages between Canadian men and women is smaller than 20 years ago.
There is less poverty in the world today than 10 years ago.

Certainly true
Probably true
Probably untrue
Certainly untrue

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group, gender, and province
Political beliefs of French Canadian media consumption groups

- Human activity is the main cause of climate change.
- Free trade has reduced poverty in the developing world over the last 20 years.
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French-speaking Canadians within Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Evaluations of news trustworthiness among groups

English Canadian news site trust by English Canadian media consumption groups

For each of the websites below, how much do you trust the news which they provide?

- CBC News
- The Globe and Mail
- The Toronto Star
- The National Post
- The Huffington Post
- The National Observer
- The Rebel
- The Toronto Sun
- APTN News
- Maclean's

Legend:
- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very much

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group, gender, and province
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Evaluations of news trustworthiness among groups

English International news site trust by English Canadian media consumption groups

For each of the websites below, how much do you trust the news which they provide?

New York Times
Wall Street Journal
CNN
Fox News
Breitbart
BBC News
The Guardian
Vice
Vox
Buzzfeed

Not at all  Somewhat
Very much

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group, gender, and province
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Evaluations of news trustworthiness among groups

French Canadian news site trust by French Canadian media consumption groups

For each of the websites below, how much do you trust the news which they provide?

- Radio-Canada
- Huffington Post Quebec
- Journal de Montreal
- La Presse
- TVA Nouvelles
- Journal de Quebec
- Le Devoir
- Metro Montreal
- 24 Heures Montreal
- Actualite

Legend:
- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very much

French-speaking Canadians within Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Evaluations of news trustworthiness among groups

French International news site trust by French Canadian media consumption groups

For each of the websites below, how much do you trust the news which they provide?

- **Vice Quebec**
- **The New York Times**
- **The Washington Post**
- **The Wall Street Journal**
- **Le Monde**
- **Libération**
- **Le Figaro**
- **France 24**
- **L'internaute**

Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Excludes respondents who were unsure
Government media support by group

Government media support by English Canadian media consumption group

- Canadian news outlets should receive direct financial subsidies from the federal government.
- Canadian news outlets should receive more favourable tax treatment from the federal government.
- The Canadian government should levy more taxes on advertising placed on Google and Facebook and use the revenue to support Canadian news outlets.

Legend:
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree

English-speaking Canadians, including Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group, gender, and province
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree
Government media support by French Canadian media consumption group

1. Canadian news outlets should receive direct financial subsidies from the federal government.

   - **Disagree**
   - **Neither agree nor disagree**
   - **Agree**

2. Canadian news outlets should receive more favourable tax treatment from the federal government.

   - **Disagree**
   - **Neither agree nor disagree**
   - **Agree**

3. The Canadian government should levy more taxes on advertising placed on Google and Facebook and use the revenue to support Canadian news outlets.

   - **Disagree**
   - **Neither agree nor disagree**
   - **Agree**

French-speaking Canadians within Quebec
Proportions weighted by age group and gender
Strongly agree combined with Agree, Strongly disagree combined with Disagree
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