



Coimisiún  
na Meán

20  
/  
26

# Digital News Report Ireland

## Tuarascáil ar Nuacht Dhigiteach na hÉireann



Institiúid DCU um Meáin Todhchaí,  
Daonlathas agus Sochaí  
DCU Institute of Future Media,  
Democracy and Society





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# Coimisiún na Meán

Coimisiún na Meán is Ireland's agency for developing a thriving, diverse, creative, safe and trusted media landscape.

Coimisiún na Meán carries out a range of activities to support Ireland's media sector and to help develop content for Irish audiences that reflects and shapes Irish society. This is achieved through the development of high-quality, accessible and inclusive content through our Sound and Vision Scheme, our Sectoral Learning and Development Programme, our Sponsorship Scheme and our new Journalism Schemes.

Coimisiún na Meán funds Ireland's participation in the Digital News Report survey, undertaken by the Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford, and commissions Dublin City University to produce an Irish report. This is our twelfth year supporting the Digital News Report Ireland, reflecting our commitment to evidence-based policy making and to supporting a media landscape that the public can trust.

Is é Coimisiún na Meán gníomhaireacht na hÉireann chun tírdhreach meán rathúil, éagsúil, cruthaitheach, sábháilte agus iontaofa a fhorbairt.

Déanann Coimisiún na Meán raon gníomhaíochtaí chun tacú le hearnáil meán na hÉireann agus chun cabhrú le hábhar a fhorbairt do lucht féachana na hÉireann a léiríonn agus a mhúnláíonn sochaí na hÉireann. Baintear é seo amach trí ábhar ardchaighdeáin, inrochtana agus cuimsitheach a fhorbairt trínár Scéim Fuaimne agus Físe, ár gClár Foghlama agus Forbartha Earnála, ár Scéim Urraíochta agus ár Scéimeanna Iriseoireachta nua.

Maoiníonn Coimisiún na Meán rannpháirtíocht na hÉireann sa suirbhé Tuairisce Nuachta Digiteacha, a dhéanann Institiúid Reuters in Ollscoil Oxford, agus coimisiúnaíonn sé Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath chun tuarascáil Éireannach a tháirgeadh. Is é seo ar ndara bliain déag ag tacú leis an Tuarascáil ar Nuacht Dhigiteach in Éirinn, rud a léiríonn ár dtiomantas do dhéanamh beartas atá bunaithe ar fhianaise agus do thacú le tírdhreach meán a bhfuil muinín ag an bpobal as.



## Institiúid DCU um Meán Todhchaí, Daonlathas agus Sochaí

DCU Institute of Future Media,  
Democracy and Society

The DCU Institute of Future Media, Democracy and Society (FuJo) is a multidisciplinary research centre focused on the digital transformation of media, democracy, and society.

FuJo investigates how to counter digital challenges, including disinformation and digital hate; how to enhance public participation through democratic innovations; and how to secure the sustainability of high-quality journalism.

The Institute brings the experience and reach of DCU's top-rated School of Communications and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences together with researchers from the DCU arms of the SFI research centres, the Insight Centre for Data Analytics and the ADAPT Centre for Content Creation, along with the Institute of Ethics and the Centre for Cloud Computing.

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Is ionad taighde ildisciplíneach é Institiúid Meán, Daonlathas agus Sochaí na Todhchaí Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath (FuJo) atá dírithe ar chlaohlú digiteach na meán, an daonlathais agus na sochaí.

Imscrúdaíonn FuJo conas dul i ngleic le dúshlán dhigiteacha, lena n-áirítear dífhaisnéis agus fuath digiteach; conas rannpháirtíocht an phobail a fheabhsú trí nuálaíochtaí daonlathacha; agus conas inbhuanaitheacht na hiriseoireachta ar ardchaighdeán a chinntiú.

Tugann an Institiúid taithí agus raon feidhme Scoil na Cumarsáide agus Dhámh na nDaonnachtaí agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta is airde rátáil de chuid OCBÁC in éineacht le taighdeoirí ó réimsí OCBÁC de na hionaid taighde SFI, an Lárionad Insight um Anailísíocht Sonraí agus an Lárionad ADAPT um Chruthú Ábhar, chomh maith leis an Institiúid Eitice agus an Lárionad um Néalríomhaireacht.



The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ) is dedicated to exploring the future of journalism worldwide through debate, engagement, and research.

The RISJ believe in the value of independent journalism, the power of news, and the importance of an informed public. They are committed to the timeless journalistic aspiration of seeking truth and reporting it, as well as the ongoing work of remaking the profession and the organisations that enable it. Its focus is on journalism, the media industry, and the public that they serve.

By connecting practice and research, by facilitating global exchange, and by driving conversations around the future of news, the RISJ works to ensure that journalists, editors, and media executives face the opportunities and challenges of a changing media environment from a position of strength. Its goal is to help them build better and more sustainable journalism for tomorrow.

Tá Institiúid Reuters um Staidéar ar Iriseoireacht (RISJ) tiomanta do thodhchaí na hiriseoireachta ar fud an domhain a fhiosrú trí dhíospóireacht, rannpháirtíocht agus taighde.

Creideann an RISJ i luach na hiriseoireachta neamhspleách, i gcumhacht na nuachta, agus sa tábhacht a bhaineann le pobal eolach. Tá siad tiomanta don mhian iriseoireachta gan teorainn an fhírinne a lorg agus í a thuairisciú, chomh maith leis an obair leanúnach chun an ghairm a athdhéanamh agus na heagraíochtaí a chuireann ar a cumas í. Tá sé dírithe ar iriseoireacht, ar thionscal na meán, agus ar an bpobal ar a bhfreastalaíonn siad.

Trí chleachtas agus taighde a nascadh, trí mhalartú domhanda a éascú, agus trí chomhráite a bhrú chun cinn maidir le todhchaí na nuachta, oibríonn an RISJ lena chinntiú go dtugann iriseoirí, eagarthóirí agus feidhmeannaigh meán aghaidh ar na deiseanna agus na dúshláin a bhaineann le timpeallacht meán atá ag athrú ó sheasamh láidir. Is é an sprioc atá aige ná cabhrú leo iriseoireacht níos fearr agus níos inbhuanaithe a chruthú don lá amárach.

# Coimisiún na Meán Foreword

The 2026 Reuters Institute Digital News Report once again provides important evidence on how people in Ireland engage with news and information and how these habits are evolving in a rapidly changing media environment. Coimisiún na Meán is proud to support this valuable research, a clear demonstration of our commitment to a media landscape that supports democracy, underpins civic discourse and reduces the impact of disinformation.

This year, the findings offer a fascinating insight into the dynamics at play in a complex, fragmented news media ecosystem. While trust in established Irish news organisations remains strong, overall trust in news has declined and the number of those avoiding the news has grown. The report also highlights significant changes in how news is produced, distributed and discovered, with striking generational differences.

Most people trust the news they personally consume, but there is greater scepticism about the news media environment overall. Many are concerned about what is real and what is fake online. News creators/influencers are also generally viewed as less impartial and trustworthy than traditional news brands and outlets. This decline in trust does not appear to reflect a collapse in confidence in professional journalism itself but rather increasing public unease about the wider information environment in which news is encountered – particularly through social media, search engines and emerging AI-driven tools. Public service media emerges as an important anchor in this environment. Perceptions of public service media are more positive in Ireland than in many other countries, cited for providing universal access, trustworthy news and high-quality journalism.

While the declines in trust and engagement certainly warrant our attention and underscore the importance of our work to support journalism and the wider media landscape, we are reassured by the level of trust in our main media brands and the support shown for public service media in this country. Moreover, while we have seen declines in both trust and engagement with news, Ireland performs well when compared to the European average, the UK and the US. These are all signs of a relatively healthy media system, but one that needs to be nurtured.

This year's findings underline the need for ongoing attention to the sustainability of the sector, media literacy, and the evolving role of platforms and technologies in shaping the news media environment. In this context, Coimisiún na Meán continues to advance policy and funding interventions to support a thriving media landscape and a resilient journalism sector. We are investing in high-quality public interest journalism through our News Reporting, Local Democracy Reporting and Courts Reporting Schemes, while working to counter disinformation by empowering people through our media literacy initiatives. We are also developing our Public Service Media Framework, designed to ensure that as media consumption becomes increasingly fragmented and personalised, public service media can continue to deliver democratic, cultural and societal value.

The Digital News Report remains a source of robust, internationally comparable data that supports evidence-based policymaking and deepens our understanding of the role news plays in Irish society. On behalf of Coimisiún na Meán, I want to thank the DCU Institute of Future Media, Democracy and Society (FuJo) and the report's authors for their continued collaboration and rigorous analysis. Understanding how and where people encounter news, and how trust is built or eroded across different contexts, is essential to ensuring that Irish audiences can continue to access reliable, diverse and high-quality news and information.

**Rónán Ó Domhnaill**  
*Media Development Commissioner*

# Réamhrá Choimisiún na Meán

I dTuarascáil Institiúid Reuters ar an Nuacht Dhigiteach 2026, soláthraítear fianaise thábhachtach arís eile ar conas a idirghníomhaíonn daoine in Éirinn leis an nuacht agus le faisnéis agus conas atá na nósanna sin ag teacht chun cinn i dtimpeallacht na meán atá ag athrú go mear. Tá Coimisiún na Meán bródúil as tacú leis an taighde luachmhar sin, léiriú soiléir ar ár dtiomantas do thimpeallacht na meán a thacaíonn leis an daonlathas, a chuireann bonn faoi dhíospóireacht shibhialta agus a laghdaíonn tionchar na bréagaisnéise.

I mbliana, tugtar léargas suimiúil leis na torthaí ar an dinimic atá in éiceachóras meán nuachta casta, ilroinnte. Cé go bhfuil muinín láidir fós in eagraíochtaí nuachta seanbhunaithe na hÉireann, tá laghdú tagtha ar an muinín ar an iomlán as nuacht agus tá méadú tagtha ar líon na ndaoine a sheachnaíonn an nuacht. Leagtar béim sa tuarascáil freisin ar athruithe suntasacha ar an dóigh a ndéantar nuacht a sholáthar, a dháileadh agus a fháil amach, agus difríochtaí suntasacha le feiceáil idir na glúnta.

Tá muinín ag formhór na ndaoine as an nuacht a éistean siad leis go pearsanta, ach tá níos mó sceipteachais ann faoin timpeallacht nuachta sna meáin chumarsáide i gcoitinne. Tá inní ar go leor daoine faoi cad atá fíor agus cad atá bréagach ar líne. Go ginearálta, meastar nach bhfuil cruthaitheoirí/tionchairí nuachta chomh claonta nach chomh hiontaofa le brandaí agus foinsí nuachta traidisiúnta. Ní cosúil go léiríonn an laghdú sin ar muinín an laghdú ar an muinín san iriseoireacht ghairmiúil féin ach ina ionad sin go léiríonn sé méadú ar mhíshuaimhneas an phobail faoin timpeallacht faisnéise níos leithne ina bhfaightear nuacht – go háirithe trí na meáin shóisialta, innill chuardaigh agus uirlisí IS-chuidithe atá teacht chun cinn. Tagann na meáin seirbhíse poiblí chun cinn mar thaca tábhachtach sa timpeallacht seo. Tá deartha níos dearfaí in Éirinn maidir leis na meáin chumarsáide seirbhíse poiblí ná mar atá in go leor tíortha eile, agus luaitear go soláthraíonn siad rochtain uilíoch, nuacht iontaofa agus iriseoireacht ardchaighdeán.

Cé gur gá ár n-aird a thabhairt ar an laghdú ar muinín agus ar idirghníomhaíocht agus go gcuirtear béim leis ar thábhacht ár gcuid oibre maidir le tacú leis an iriseoireacht agus le tírdhreach na meán níos leithne, cuirtear ar ár suaimhneas muid a bhuí leis an muinín atá inár bpríomhbhrandaí meán agus an tacaíocht a léirítear do na meáin seirbhíse poiblí sa tír seo. Anuas air sin, cé gur tháinig laghdú ar muinín agus ar idirghníomhaíocht leis an nuacht araon, feidhmíonn Éire go maith i gcomparáid leis an meán Eorpach, leis an Ríocht Aontaithe agus le Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá. Comharthaí atá iontu sin go léir de chóras meán atá measartha folláin, ach ceann nach mór dúinn a chothú.

Le torthaí na bliana seo, leagtar béim ar an ngá aird leanúnach a thabhairt ar inbhuanaitheacht na hearnála, ar litearthacht sna meáin, agus ar ról na n-ardán agus na dteicneolaíochtaí atá ag athrú maidir le tionchar a imirt ar thimpeallacht na meán nuachta. Sa chomhthéacs sin, leanann Coimisiún na Meán le beartas a chur chun cinn agus idirghabhálacha a mhaoiniú chun tacú le tírdhreach meán rathúil agus earnáil iriseoireachta athléimneach. Táimid ag infheistiú in iriseoireacht ardchaighdeán a bhaineann le leas an phobail tríd ár Scéimeanna le haghaidh Tuairiscíú na Nuachta, Tuairiscíú ar an Daonlathas Áitiúil agus Tuairiscíú ar na Cúirteanna, agus muid ag obair chun dul i ngleic le bréagaisnéis trí chumhacht a thabhairt do dhaoine tríd ár dtionscnaimh litearthachta sna meáin. Tá ár gCreat Meán Seirbhíse Poiblí a fhorbairt againn freisin, ceart atá deartha lena chinntiú, agus úsáid na meán ag éirí níos ilroinnte agus níos pearsantaithe i gcónaí, gur féidir leis na meáin seirbhíse poiblí leanúint le luach daonlathach, cultúrtha agus sochaíoch a bhaint amach.

Tá an Tuarascáil ar Nuacht Digiteach ina foinse sonraí láidre, inchomparáide go hidirnáisiúnta fós, a thacaíonn le déanamh beartas atá bunaithe ar fhianaise agus a neartaíonn ár dtuiscint ar an ról atá ag an nuacht i sochaí na hÉireann. Thar ceann Choimisiún na Meán, ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le hInstitiúid OCBÁC um Meáin Todhchaí, Daonlathas agus Sochaí (FuJo) agus le húdair na tuarascála as a gcomhoibriú leanúnach agus as a ndian-anailís. Tá sé ríthábhachtach go dtuigfeadh an dóigh agus an áit a dtagann daoine ar nuacht, agus ar an dóigh a gcothaítear nó a laghdaítear muinín i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla, lena chinntiú gur féidir le lucht féachana/éisteachta na hÉireann leanúint le rochtain a fháil ar nuacht agus faisnéis iontaofa, éagsúil agus ardchaighdeán.

**Rónán Ó Domhnaill**  
*Coimisinéir Forbartha na Meán*

# DCU FuJo Foreword

Welcome to the twelfth annual Digital News Report Ireland, part of the world's largest ongoing comparative study of digital news consumption. Produced in collaboration with the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, this report provides a detailed examination of how Irish audiences engage with news in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing media environment.

This is the second year of our revised report format, which we have continued to develop and expand. In this edition, we place greater emphasis on analytical essays that explore key themes in depth and situate the Irish data within wider national and international contexts. With twelve years of Irish data now available, we are able to offer deeper reflections on long-term trends, including the evolution of news avoidance during an era marked by geopolitical crisis, changing patterns of trust, the growing role of influencers in the news ecosystem, and the emergence of artificial intelligence alongside social media as a new source of concern.

The report also examines the complex question of trust and what it looks like in an Irish context, as well as shifting patterns of news discovery, attitudes towards public service media, and news creators. Alongside these thematic essays, we continue to track core indicators such as interest in news, trust, platform use, and changing audience behaviour.

As always, our aim is to provide a valuable resource for journalists, editors, policymakers, educators, researchers, and all those invested in the future of media in Ireland. We are grateful to our sponsors at Coimisiún na Meán, our partners at the Reuters Institute and YouGov, and the wider research community whose work and support contribute to this report. For more information and previous reports, visit: [www.fujomedia.eu](http://www.fujomedia.eu)

**Prof. Jane Suiter**  
Director, DCU FuJo Institute  
June 2026

# Réamhrá OCBÁC FuJo

Fáilte go dtí an dara tuarascáil bhliantúil déag ar Nuacht Dhigiteach in Éirinn, cuid den staidéar comparáideach leanúnach is mó ar domhan ar úsáid na nuachta digití. Léirithe i gcomhar le Institiúid Reuters um Staidéar ar Iriseoireacht in Ollscoil Oxford, soláthraítear leis an tuarascáil seo scrúdú mionsonraithe ar an dóigh a n-idirghníomhaíonn lucht féachana/éisteachta na hÉireann le nuacht i dtimpeallacht meán atá ag éirí níos casta i gcónaí agus atá ag athrú go mear.

Seo an dara bliain dár bhformáid athbhreithnithe tuarascála, agus táimid ag leanúint lena forbairt agus lena leathnú. San eagrán seo, cuirimid béim níos mó ar aistí anailíseacha ina mionscrúdaítear príomhthéamaí agus lena suitear sonraí Éireannacha i gcomhthéacsanna náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta níos leithne. Agus dhá bhliain déag de shonraí Éireannacha ar fáil anois, is féidir linn machnamh níos doimhne a chur ar fáil maidir le treochtaí fadtéarmacha, lena n-áirítear teacht chun cinn ar sheachaint na nuachta le linn ré ina bhfuil géarchéim gheopholaitiúil, patrúin muiníne atá ag athrú, ról tionchairí atá ag méadú san éiceachóras nuachta, agus teacht chun cinn na hintleachta saorga taobh leis na meáin shóisialta mar fhoinsé nua imní.

Scrúdaítear leis an tuarascáil freisin ceist chasta na muiníne agus a cuma i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann, chomh maith le patrúin athraitheacha na fionnachtana nuachta agus dearcthaí i leith na meán seirbhíse poiblí agus cruthaitheoirí nuachta. In éineacht leis na haistí téamacha sin, leanaimid le súil a choinneáil ar phríomhthéascairí spéise sa nuacht, muinín, úsáid as ardáin agus iompar an lucht féachana/éisteacha a bhíonn ag athrú.

Mar is gnáth, is é ár n-aidhm acmhainn luachmhar a chur ar fáil d'iriseoirí, d'eagarthóirí, do lucht déanta beartas, d'oideoirí, do thaighdeoirí, agus dóibh siúd go léir atá infheistithe i dtodhchaí na meán in Éirinn. Táimid buíoch dár n-urraitheoirí ag Coimisiún na Meán, ár gcomhpháirtithe ag Institiúid Reuters agus YouGov, agus an pobal taighde níos leithne a gcuireann a gcuid oibre agus tacaíochta leis an tuarascáil seo. Le haghaidh tuilleadh faisnéise agus tuarascálacha roimhe seo, tabhair cuairt ar: [www.fujomedia.eu](http://www.fujomedia.eu)

**Ollamh. Jane Suiter**  
Stiúrthóir, Institiúid OCBÁC FuJo  
Meitheamh 2026



# Authorship and Research Acknowledgements

Dan Lloyd, a PhD candidate at Dublin City University's School of Communications, researches the Attention Economy, focusing on information dissemination structures and digital metrics that shape news organisations in today's digital ecosystem. Before academia, he was an editor at the BBC, The Irish Times and The Times and The Sunday Times (London).

Professor Jane Suiter is the Director at the DCU Institute for Media, Democracy and Society (FuJo). Her current research is focused on the information environment and, in particular, the social, political and communicative aspects of citizen participation and deliberation. Jane began her career at the FT Group and then moved to AP Dow Jones before working as economics editor at the Irish Times and as a current affairs presenter at TV3.

Dr Eileen Culloty is Deputy Director at the DCU Institute for Media, Democracy and Society (FuJo) and an Associate Professor in the DCU School of Communications, where she is chair of the BA in Communication Studies. She coordinates the Ireland EDMO Hub of the European Digital Media Observatory and is the co-chair of Media Literacy Ireland.

Dr Callum Craig is a postdoctoral researcher on the ReMeD: Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age project. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Trinity College Dublin. His research focused on the use of collective victimhood narratives by political elites in the US and Northern Ireland, using computational social science methods. Previously, in collaboration with Ulster University, he has acted as a statistics consultant for analysing the cost and efficiency of forensic evidence use by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Dr Eirini Psychari has held a post-doctoral researcher position on the ReMeD: Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age project. She holds a PhD from Dublin City University. Her research explored the role of human-centred design for audience engagement in legacy newspapers and the implications for journalism. She has worked as a journalist for over a decade in Greece, covering international news with a focus on European and US politics and elections, the economy, the refugee crisis, terrorist attacks, and society.

# Údarachas agus Aitheantas Taighde

Déanann Dan Lloyd, iarrthóir PhD ag Scoil Chumarsáide Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath, taighde ar an nGeilleagar Airde, ag díriú ar struchtúir scaipthe faisnéise agus méadracht dhigiteach a mhúnláionn eagraíochtaí nuachta in éiceachóras digiteach an lae inniu. Roimh an saol acadúil, bhí sé ina eagarthóir ag an BBC, The Irish Times agus The Times agus Sunday Times (Londain).

Tá an tOllamh Jane Suiter ina Stiúrthóir ar Institiúid OCBÁC um Meáin, Daonlathas agus na Sochaí (FuJo) Tá a cuid taighde reatha dírithe ar an timpeallacht faisnéise agus, go háirithe, ar na gnéithe sóisialta, polaitiúla agus cumarsáideacha de rannpháirtíocht agus machnamh na saoránach. Thosaigh Jane a gairm bheatha ag an FT Group agus ansin bhog sí go AP Dow Jones sular oibrigh sí mar eagarthóir eacnamaíoch ag an Irish Times agus mar láithreoir cúrsaí reatha ag TV3.

Tá an Dr Eileen Culloty ina Leas-Stiúrthóir ar Institiúid Meán, Daonlathas agus Sochaí Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath (FuJo) agus ina hOllamh Comhlach i Scoil na Cumarsáide OCBÁC, áit a bhfuil sí ina cathaoirleach ar an BA sa Staidéar Cumarsáide. Comhordaíonn sí Mol EDMO na hÉireann de chuid na Faireachlainne Eorpaí um na Meáin Dhigiteacha agus is í comhchathaoirleach Litearthacht na Meán Éireann í.

Is taighdeoir iardhochtúireachta é an Dr Callum Craig ar an ReMeD: Tionscadal Meán Athléimneach don Daonlathas san Aois Dhigiteach. Tá PhD aige sa Eolaíocht Pholaitiúil ó Choláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath. Dhírigh a chuid taighde ar úsáid scéalta comhchoiteanna íospartach ó bhodaigh mhóra na polaitíochta sna Stáit Aontaithe agus i dTuaisceart Éireann, ag baint úsáid as modhanna ríomhaireachtúla eolaíochta sóisialta. Roimhe seo, i gcomhar le hOllscoil Uladh, ghníomhaigh sé mar chomhairleoir staidrimh chun anailís a dhéanamh ar costas agus éifeachtúlacht úsáid na fianaise fóiréinsí ag Seirbhís Póilíneachta Thuaisceart Éireann.

Bhí post taighdeoir iardhochtúireachta ag an Dr Eirini Psychari ar an ReMeD: Tionscadal Meán Athléimneach don Daonlathas san Aois Dhigiteach. Tá PhD aici ó Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath. Rinneadh iniúchadh ina gcuid taighde ar ról an deartha dhaonlárnaigh maidir le hidirghníomhaíocht an lucht féachana/éisteacha i nuachtáin oidhreacht agus na himpleachtaí don iriseoireacht. D'oibrigh sí mar iriseoir sa Ghréig le breis agus deich mbliana, agus chládaigh sí nuacht idirnáisiúnta a chuir fócas ar pholaitíocht agus thoghcháin na hEorpa agus na Stáit Aontaithe, ar an ngeilleagar, ar ghéarchéim na ndéanaithe, ar ionsaithe sceimhlitheoireachta, agus ar an tsochaí.

# Executive Summary

By Dan Lloyd, Prof. Jane Suiter, Dr Eileen Culloty,  
Dr Callum Craig and Dr Eirini Psychari

The Digital News Report Ireland 2026 examines how Irish audiences participate with news across five themes: overall news engagement, trust, public service media, news discovery and creators and influencers.

Trust is one of the defining stories of this year's report. Overall trust in news has fallen sharply, with Ireland recording the second largest drop across all 48 markets, after the Philippines. Yet trust in Irish news brands themselves has held steady, with RTÉ News remaining among the most trusted outlets in the country.

On public service media, Irish audiences are notably more positive than their counterparts elsewhere, particularly in the UK. Whether that goodwill reflects genuine satisfaction or is a legacy of RTÉ's long dominance of the broadcast landscape is an open question this report explores.

News discovery is an increasingly urgent issue. Social media referrals to news publishers continue to decline, and Google's rollout of AI-powered search adds further uncertainty to how audiences find journalism online. Algorithmic and incidental discovery are now central, and contested, features of the Irish news environment. At the same time, AI chatbots are emerging as a news source in their own right, used by 7% of respondents overall and 14% of 18-24 year-olds, a trend that is only likely to grow.

Against that backdrop, creators and influencers face no such discovery problem. Ireland's influencer and creator economy is growing, but the picture is more complicated for those focused on news. This report looks at how news creators compare with established brands, including how both compare when it comes to video.

Finally, with avoidance at a record high, overall news engagement has dipped, suggesting audiences may be reaching a saturation point. Even so, most news brands are holding their audiences, and some are even growing them.

## Highlights from the data:

- News avoidance is the highest it's ever been in Ireland at 47%. Those who say they never avoid news have gone down 6pp, from 28% in 2025, to 22% in 2026.
- Overall, 7% use AI chatbots for news. That figure doubles to 14% among 18–24 year-olds.
- Television (31%) and online news sources, excluding social media (31%), are the most popular main sources of news in Ireland.
- There has been an increase in survey participants accessing certain news brands online, including Dublin Live (+6pp), Irish Times (+4pp), The Journal (+3pp) and BBC News (+3pp).
- News subscriptions match the high of 22% reached in 2024. No market worldwide has seen a higher increase in subscriptions than 2pp this year.
- After the rise in trust in news last year (51%) and during the Covid pandemic (53%), it has fallen sharply this year (42%). However, in comparison, Ireland is still ahead of the UK (31%), the US (26%), and the European average (36%).
- Trust in Irish news brands remains relatively stable. RTÉ News and local or regional radio both stand at 71%, while local and regional newspapers and The Irish Times are at 69%.
- Among younger people, trust is lower than among older groups. Thirty-three per cent of 18-24 year olds trust most news most of the time, compared with 52% among those aged 65+.
- When considering news sources, 51% say they can trust the news they consume. Forty-two per cent trust 'most news', 31% trust news from search engines, 16% trust news from social media, and 14% trust news from AI chatbots.
- Concern about what is real and fake online is already high in Ireland, and in 2026 it rises further from 68% in 2025 to 71%.

- Public service media is viewed more positively in Ireland (42%) than in the US (39%) and the UK (30%).
- Public service media is perceived positively by under-35s and over-65s, with approximately half of the younger cohort attributing a positive impact to public service media.
- Middle-aged demographics are the most uncertain about the value of the public service media. 35-44 year olds are the only group where neutral perceptions (39%) outweigh positive ones (36%).
- Since 2015, use of RTÉ TV news as a weekly source of news has declined dramatically (-14pp) while use of RTÉ News Online has increased (+6pp).
- Among those who attribute a positive impact to public service media, the most cited reasons were universal access (61%), trustworthy news (51%), and high-quality journalism (47%).
- Smartphone access remains the dominant route to news consumption in Ireland, with 76% using smartphones for news within the past week.
- Seventy-three per cent of Smart TV users under the age of 35 access the news using video apps on their Smart TV.
- The use of social media as the main method to discover news has increased by 3pp since 2025.
- Seventy per cent of under-35s rely on algorithmic news recommendations as their primary means of news discovery through social media feeds, news aggregators, and keyword searches.
- This year, Facebook overtook news websites or apps as the leading source of news videos, climbing to 27% (+5pp), with video viewing on news websites or apps declining to 23% (-5pp).
- Live video and videos over 20 minutes long have the lowest engagement levels across YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.
- Only 14% of those who have consumed news from news creators over the last week rely entirely on news creators for their news needs.
- Content from news creators and influencers is considered less impartial (-23%), less trustworthy (-20%), less knowledgeable (-10%), and less authentic (-9%) compared to news brands.

### Throughout this report, you will find articles on the following topics:

- Engagement with news in Ireland, by Dan Lloyd, FuJo & DCU
- Ireland trusts its newsrooms, just not the news, by Prof Jane Suiter, FuJo & DCU
- The enduring relevance of public service media, by Dr Eileen Culloty, FuJo & DCU
- Irish news discovery: devices, algorithms, and shifting patterns of engagement, by Dr Callum Craig, FuJo & DCU
- Opportunities for journalism in a creator-saturated online environment by Dr Eirini Psychari, FuJo & DCU

# Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin

*Le Dan Lloyd, an tOllamh Jane Suiter, an Dr Eileen Culloty,  
an Dr Callum Craig agus an Dr Eirini Psychari*

Sa Tuarascáil ar Nuachta Digiteach in Éirinn 2026, déantar scrúdú ar an dóigh a n-idirghníomhaíocht lucht féachana/éisteachta na hÉireann leis an nuacht thar chúig théama: idirghníomhaíocht fhoriomlán leis an nuacht, muinín, na meáin seirbhíse poiblí, fionnachtain nuachta agus cruthaitheoirí agus tionchairí.

Tá muinín ar cheann de na scéalta cinniúnacha i dtuarascáil na bliana seo. Tá an mhuinín sa nuacht tite go géar ar an iomlán, agus an dara titim ba mhó i measc na 48 margadh á thairgeadh ag Éirinn, i ndiaidh na nOileán Filipíneach. Fós féin tá muinín i mbrandaí nuachta na hÉireann féin fós seasmhach, agus Nuacht RTÉ i measc na bhfoinsí is iontaofa sa tír.

Ar na meáin seirbhíse poiblí, tá lucht féachana/éisteachta na hÉireann i bhfad níos dearfaí ná a gcomhghleacaithe in áiteanna eile, go háirithe sa Ríocht Aontaithe. Ceist oscailte a scrúdaítear sa tuarascáil seo is ea an léiríonn an dea-thoil sin fíorshástacht nó an oidhreacht í de bharr smacht fada RTÉ ar an tírdhreach craolacháin.

Is ceist atá ag éirí níos práinní i gcónaí i fionnachtain nuachta. Tá atreoruithe na meán sóisialta chuig foilsitheoirí nuachta ag laghdú i gcónaí, agus le rolladh amach Google ar chuardach atá cumhachtaithe ag IS, cuirtear tuilleadh éiginnteachta faoi con a thagann lucht féachana/éisteachta ar iriseoireacht ar líne. Tá fionnachtana algartamacha agus teagmhasacha ina gnéithe lárnacha, a bhfuil amhras fúthu, de thimpeallacht nuachta na hÉireann iad anois. Ag an am céanna, tá botaí comhrá IS ag teacht chun cinn mar fhoinsé nuachta ina gceart féin, agus tá siad á n-úsáid ag 7% de na freagróirí ar an iomlán agus 14% de dhaoine 18-24 bliain d'aois, treocht a mhéadóidh gan dabht.

Sa chomhthéacs sin, ní bheidh a leithéid d'fhadhb fionnachtana roimh chruthaitheoirí ná roimh thionchairí. Tá geilleagar tionchairí agus cruthaitheoirí na hÉireann ag fás, ach tá an léargas níos casta dóibh siúd a dhíríonn ar an nuacht. Breathnaítear sa tuarascáil seo ar an gcomparáid idir cruthaitheoirí nuachta agus brandaí seanbhunaithe, lena n-áirítear an chomparáid eatarthu i ndáil le físeáin.

Ar deireadh, agus seachaint ag an leibhéal is airde riamh, tá idirghníomhaíocht leis an nuacht ar an iomlán laghdaithe, rud a thugann le fios go bhféadfadh sé go bhfuil lucht féachana/éisteachta ag pointe sáithiúcháin. Mar sin féin, tá formhór na mbrandaí nuachta ag coinneáil a lucht féachana/éisteachta, agus tá cuid acu fiú ag méadú an lucht féachana/éisteachta.

## Buaicphointí ó na sonraí:

- Tá seachaint na nuachta ar an leibhéal is airde riamh in Éirinn ag 47%. Tá laghdú 6% tagtha ar líon na ndaoine a deir nach seachnaíonn siad an nuacht choíche, ó 28% in 2025 go 22% in 2026.
- Tríd is tríd, úsáideann 7% acu botaí comhrá chun nuacht a fháil. Méadaíonn an figiúr sin faoi dhó go 14% i measc daoine idir 18 agus 24 bliain d'aois.
- Is iad an teilifíseán (31%) agus foinsí nuachta ar líne, gan na meáin shóisialta san áireamh (31%), na príomhfhoinsí nuachta is mó tóir in Éirinn.
- Tá méadú tagtha ar líon na rannpháirtithe i suirbhéanna a úsáideann brandaí nuachta áirithe ar líne, lena n-áirítear Dublin Live (+6pc), Irish Times (+4pc), The Journal (+3pc) agus BBC News (+3pc).
- Tá líon na síntiús nuachta ag teacht leis an mbaiclíon 22% a baineadh amach in 2024. Níor chonaic aon mhargadh ar fud an domhain méadú níos airde ar shíntiúis ná 2pc i mbliana.
- I ndiaidh an mhéadaithe ar an muinín sa nuacht anuraidh (51%) agus le linn phaindéim Covid (53%), tháinig titim ghéar air i mbliana (42%). Mar sin féin, i gcomparáid leis sin, tá Éire fós chun tosaigh ar an Ríocht Aontaithe (31%), SAM (26%), agus an meán Eorpach (36%).
- Tá muinín i mbrandaí nuachta na hÉireann fós measartha cobhsaí. Tá Nuacht RTÉ agus raidió áitiúil nó réigiúnach araon ag 71%, agus tá nuachtáin áitiúla agus réigiúnacha agus The Irish Times ag 69%.
- I measc daoine óga, tá an mhuinín níos ísle ná mar atá i measc grúpaí níos sine. Tá muinín ag tríocha a trí faoin gcéad de dhaoine idir 18 agus 24 bliain d'aois sa chuid is mó den nuacht an chuid is mó den am, i gcomparáid le 52% i measc na ndaoine atá 65 bliain d'aois nó níos sine.

- Agus foinsí nuachta á mbreithniú acu, deir 51% gur féidir leo muinín a bheith acu as an nuacht a fhaigheann siad. Tá muinín ag 42% as ‘an chuid is mó den nuacht’, tá muinín ag 31% as nuacht ó innill chuardaigh, tá muinín ag 16% as nuacht ó na meáin shóisialta, agus tá muinín ag 14% as nuacht ó bhotaí comhrá IS.
- Baineann imní mhór cheana féin in Éirinn le cad atá fíor agus cad atá bréagach ar líne, agus ardaíonn sé tuilleadh in 2026 ó 68% in 2025 go 71% in 2026.
- Tá dearcadh níos dearfaí ar na meáin chumarsáide seirbhíse poiblí in Éirinn (42%) ná mar atá sna Stáit Aontaithe (39%) agus sa Ríocht Aontaithe (30%).
- Tá dearcadh dearfach ag daoine faoi 35 bliain d’aois agus os cionn 65 bliain d’aois faoi na meáin seirbhíse poiblí, agus chuir thart ar leath den chohórt níos óige tionchar dearfach i leith na meán seirbhíse poiblí.
- Is iad déimeagrafaic na meánaoise is mó nach bhfuil cinnte faoi luach na meán seirbhíse poiblí. Is iad daoine idir 35 agus 44 bliain d’aois an t-aon ghrúpa ina bhfuil níos mó tuairimí neodracha (39%) ná tuairimí dearfacha (36%) acu.
- Ó 2015 i leith, tá laghdú suntasach tagtha ar úsáid nuacht teilifíse RTÉ mar fhoinse nuachta sheachtainiúil (-14pc) agus tá méadú tagtha ar úsáid Nuacht Ar Líne RTÉ (+6pc).
- I measc na ndaoine a chuireann tionchar dearfach i leith na meán seirbhíse poiblí, na cúiseanna ba mhó a luadh ná rochtain uilíoch (61%), nuacht iontaoifa (51%), agus iriseoireacht ardchaighdeán (47%).
- Is é rochtain ar fhóin chliste an bealach is mó chun an nuacht a fháil in Éirinn fós, agus 76% duine ag baint úsáid as fóin chliste don nuacht le seachtain anois.
- Faigheann 73% d’úsáideoirí Teilifíseáin Chliste faoi bhun 35 bliain d’aois rochtain ar an nuacht trí úsáid a bhaint as aipeanna físe ar a dTeilifíseáin Chliste.
- Tá méadú 3pc tagtha ar úsáid as na meáin shóisialta mar an phríomh-mhodh chun nuacht a fháil ó bhí 2025 ann.
- Braitheann seachtó faoin gcéad de dhaoine faoi 35 bliain d’aois ar mholtaí nuachta algartamacha mar a bpríomh-mhodh chun nuacht a fháil trí fhothaí meán sóisialta, comhbhailitheoirí nuachta agus cuardaigh eochairfhocal.
- I mbliana, sháraigh Facebook suíomhanna gréasáin nó aipeanna nuachta mar phríomhfhoinsé físeán nuachta, ag méadú go 27% (+5pc), agus tháinig laghdú ar dhaoine a bheith ag féachaint ar fhíseáin ar shuíomhanna gréasáin nó ar aipeanna nuachta go 23% (-5pc).
- Is iad físeáin bheo agus físeáin atá níos faide ná 20 nóiméad a mbaineann na leibhéil rannpháirtíochta is ísle leo ar YouTube, TikTok agus Instagram.
- Níl ach 14% de na daoine a fuair nuacht ó chruthaitheoirí nuachta le seachtain anuas ag brath go hiomlán ar chruthaitheoirí nuachta dá riachtanais nuachta.
- Meastar nach bhfuil ábhar ó chruthaitheoirí nuachta agus ó thionchairí chomh claonta (-23%), nach bhfuil sé chomh hiontaoifa (-20%), nach bhfuil sé chomh heolasach (-10%), agus nach bhfuil sé chomh barántúil (-9%) i gcomparáid le brandaí nuachta.

### Ar fud na tuarascála seo, gheobhaidh tú ailt ar na hábhair seo a leanas:

- Rannpháirtíocht le nuacht in Éirinn, le Dan Lloyd, FuJo & OCBÁC
- Ireland trusts its newsrooms, just not the news, leis an Ollamh Jane Suiter, FuJo & OCBÁC
- The enduring relevance of public service media, leis an Dr Eileen Culloty, FuJo & OCBÁC
- Irish news discovery: devices, algorithms, and shifting patterns of engagement, leis an Dr Callum Craig, FuJo & DCU
- Opportunities for journalism in a creator-saturated online environment leis an Dr Eirini Psychari, FuJo & OCBÁC





01

# Engagement with news in Ireland

*By Dan Lloyd*

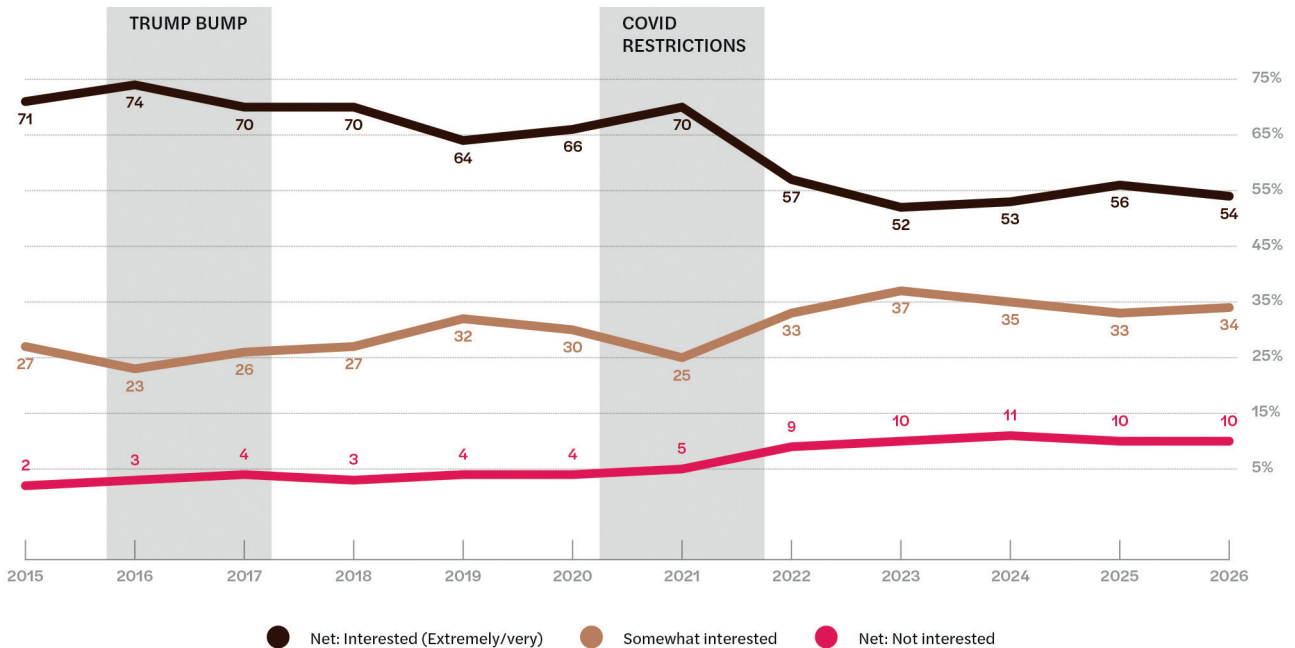
In 2026, news avoidance has increased as a non-stop news agenda has done little to stem the Irish public's gradual detachment from news. But even in an increasingly fragmented news environment, Ireland's biggest news brands continue to maintain or increase audiences.

Between publishing the Digital News Report Ireland 2025 and gathering data for this year's report, it's been a busy time for the news industry. Ongoing conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine occupied much of the international news agenda, as well as a new American Pope at the Vatican. Often, the media themselves are the story due to growing attacks on press freedom. In the US, the Trump presidency has increased efforts to silence the press by restricting briefing access, removing government news funding and engaging in aggressive litigation. At home, news outlets documented a chaotic presidential campaign, extreme weather, and continued economic uncertainty, exemplified by rises in property prices and the cost of living.

The fieldwork for this year's survey was conducted during January and February, when the news was occupied with endless tariff announcements, tensions over Greenland, and Storm Chandra. Previous Digital News Reports have found that an intense news agenda does not necessarily translate to a heightened public interest in news. In this report, we see similarities with these previous trends and some concerning signs for the news industry.

Figure 1.1

### Interest in news (2015-2026)



Q1c: How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news? Base: All n=1501-2053

## News avoidance rises

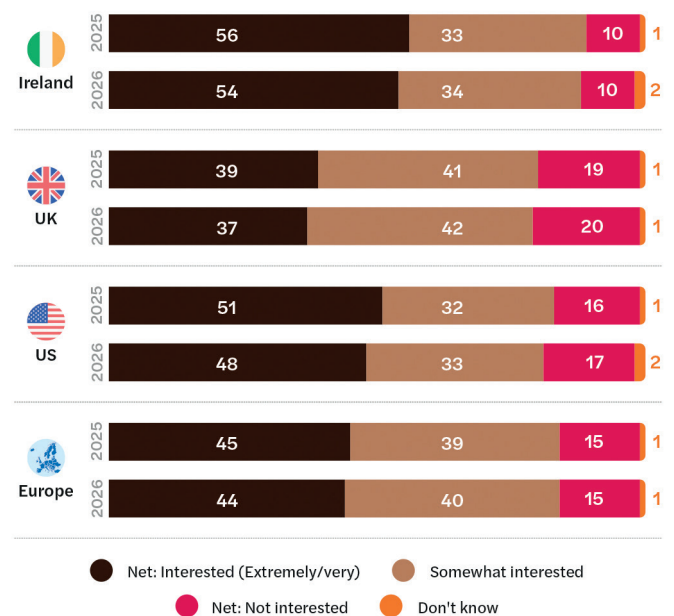
A core question in the annual news report is, ‘How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news?’ Fifty-four per cent of respondents said that they are extremely or very interested in news. The 2016 and 2017 peaks in news interest (at 74% and 70% respectively) were a result of what is now referred to as the ‘Trump Bump,’ as the property tycoon and television celebrity sought to become the US President. There was another bump in 2021 during the COVID pandemic, but the 70% interest in news reported that year dropped to 57% in 2022, and has not returned to the 70% mark since. A combination of increasingly polarised politics, a negative news agenda, and increasing use of social media has contributed to the drop in interest over the last decade, the sharpest of which has been seen in younger audiences.<sup>1</sup> Overall, this is a global trend that points to a malaise with news as a whole.

Yet, Irish people are much more engaged with news when compared to other countries. In the UK, only 37% are extremely or very interested in news; by the same measure, the European average is 44%, while further afield in the US, that number stands at 48%.

However, while comparatively, the story in Ireland is more positive, the growth in those actively avoiding news is concerning. At 47% (+6pp), news avoidance is the highest it has been in Ireland. Furthermore, those who said they never avoid news have dropped 6pp, suggesting the demand for news has reached a saturation point and more people are actively avoiding it.

Figure 1.2

### Interest in news - International comparison (2025-2026)

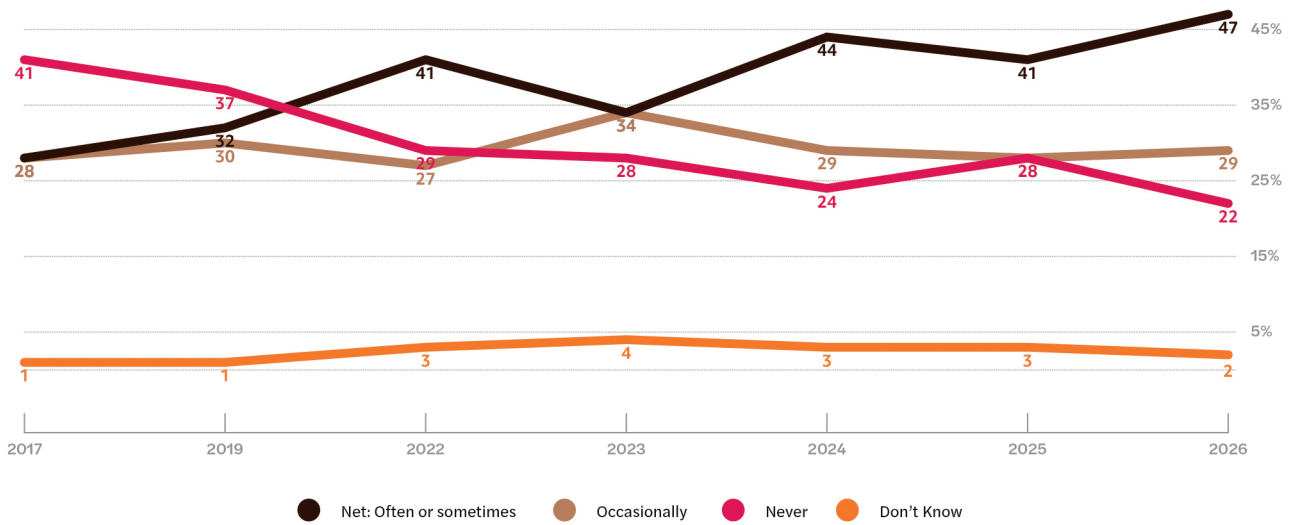


Q1c: How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news? Base: All n=2053-50776

<sup>1</sup> <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/people-are-turning-away-news-heres-why-it-may-be-happening>

Figure 1.3

### News avoidance (2017-2026)



Q1di\_2017. Do you find yourself actively trying to avoid news these days? Base: All n=1501-2053

### Sources of news and AI use

This year’s data shows an unprecedented fragmentation of news sources, driven by emerging formats. Meanwhile, traditional news sources are reaching fewer people. Television remains the most-used traditional format at 56%, followed by radio at 35% and newspapers at 20%, but all three have declined sharply since 2015. Newspapers have fallen furthest (-30pp), followed by television (-20pp), with radio proving the most resilient (-15pp). Audio’s role has been further strengthened by the rise of podcasts as a weekly news source (12%), and legacy outlets are well-represented in the format, with news podcasts from Mediahuis, The Irish Times, and RTÉ regularly appearing among Ireland’s most popular shows.

Consistent with wider trends in technology adoption, younger audiences are the group most likely to use AI for news. A recent survey by the Pew Research Centre in the US found that approximately one in five teenagers aged 13-17 use AI chatbots for news.<sup>2</sup> The youngest cohort in the Digital News Report is aged 18-24. Fourteen per cent of that group, and under-35s in general, have used AI chatbots over the last week as a source of news, compared with only 5% of over-35s.

If we look in more depth at under-35s and over-35s news sources, there are consistent themes. Older audiences are more inclined to use traditional sources of news, such as television (61%), radio (41%), and printed news (22%). Younger audiences get the majority of their news from social media (60%), and are listening to podcasts (17%) and using AI chatbots (14%) more than older news users.

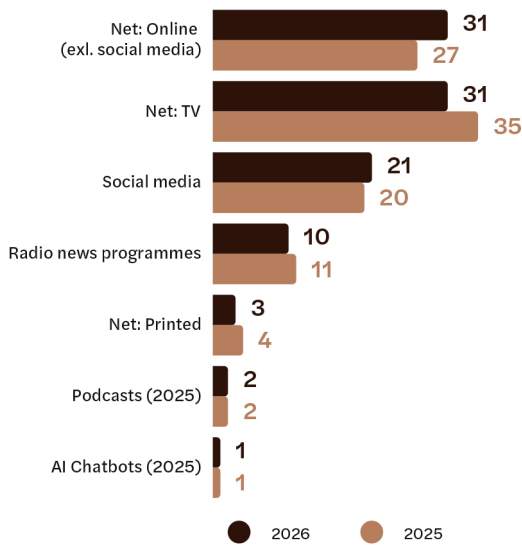
### 7% use AI chatbots for news

Significantly, 7% use AI chatbots for news weekly. However, there is clear ambiguity in the survey choice, ‘AI chatbot’. Audiences may not consider AI-generated news summaries on search engines as a ‘chatbot’, suggesting engagement with AI-generated news may be much higher. Comparatively, the use of AI for news in Ireland is lower than that of active users in Asia (11%), Latin America (10%) and Southern and Eastern Europe (9% and 8%). But at 7%, use in Ireland is higher than in the UK (4%) and the US (6%).

2 <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2026/02/24/how-sources,teens-use-and-view-ai/>

Figure 1.4

### Main source of news (2025-2026)



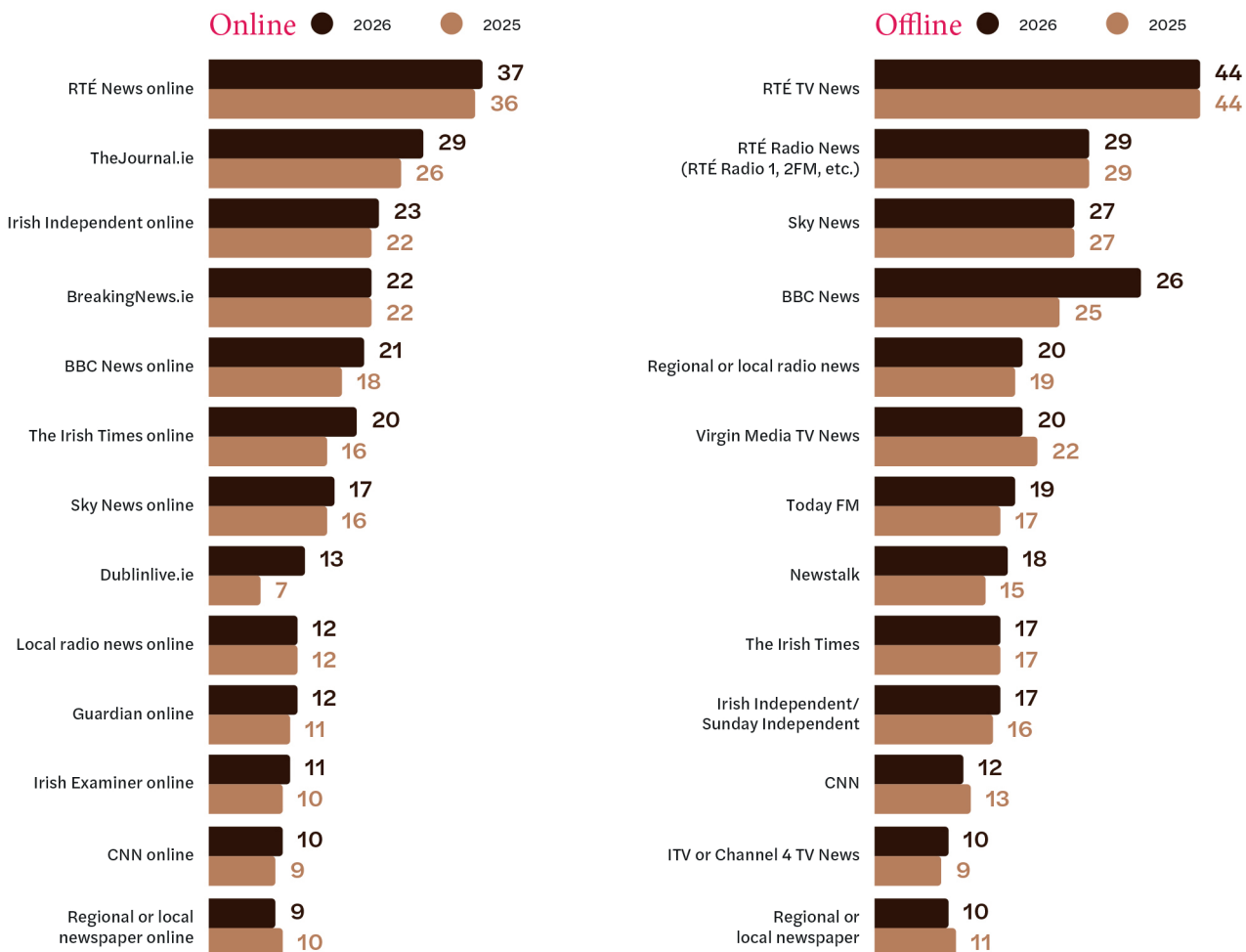
When asked about their main source of news over the last week, the outlook slightly changes. This year, the majority use television (31%) and online news sources, excluding social media (31%). We've seen a rise in accessing news online (+4pp), yet it's still short of the 33% in 2024. Newer news sources, podcasts (2%) and AI chatbots (1%) are far less likely to be cited as a main source of news, suggesting these formats are still operating as a supplement to, rather than a replacement of, traditional news.

The popularity of television, radio, and print news brands remains steady this year. The most used offline brands, RTÉ TV News and RTÉ Radio News, stay at 44% and 29%, respectively. Online, there are increases for Dublin Live (+6pp), The Irish Times (+4pp), The Journal (+3pp), and BBC News (+3pp). Generally, the main online news outlets have maintained or gained readership compared to 2025. This stability is notable given that news avoidance in Ireland has increased this year. Audiences appear to be disengaging from news as a whole rather than from specific Irish brands.

Q4. You say you've used these sources of news in the last week, which would you say is your MAIN source of news? Base All: 1965

Figure 1.5

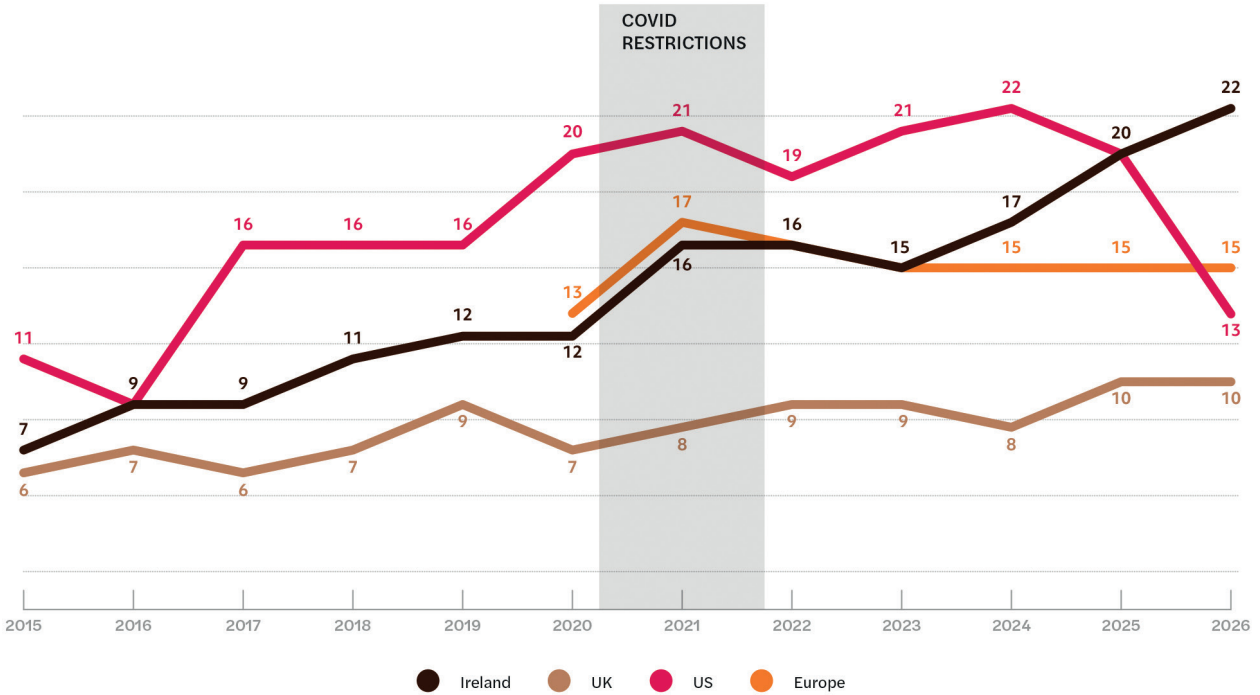
### Brands accessed online and offline (2025-2026)



Q5A/B. Which of the following brands have you used to access news offline/online in the last week (via TV, radio, print, and other traditional media)? Please select all that apply. Base: All n=2000-2053

Figure 1.6

Paying for news – International comparison

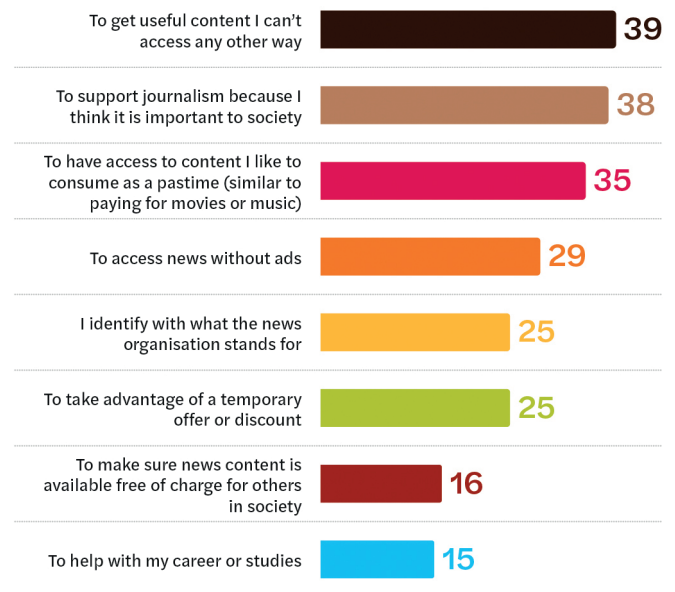


Q7a: Have you paid for ONLINE news content, or accessed a paid for ONLINE news service in the last year? (This could be a digital subscription, combined digital/print subscription, a donation, or one off payment for an article or app or e-edition). Base: All n=2053-50776 (2026)

Another testament to brand loyalty is the consistency in news subscriptions, matching the 22% in 2024. When compared to other countries, the subscription numbers in Ireland are even more encouraging. Results from Norway, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, and Portugal all document a decrease in subscriptions. The most extreme example, the US, has dropped 7pp. Data on print and digital subscriptions suggest that political controversies at titles such as The Washington Post and Los Angeles Times have contributed to this fall.<sup>3</sup> In the UK, the number of news subscribers remained at 10%, while the European average is 15%. The 2026 survey did not ask which outlets respondents pay for. Nevertheless, in last year’s report, the most paid-for titles were the Irish Independent (36%), The Irish Times (33%), and The New York Times (22%).

Figure 1.7

Reasons for paying for online news



Q7\_2026\_motivation1. You said that you have paid for access to online news in the last year... Which of the following, if any, describes why you pay for online news? Please select all that apply. Base All: n=397

3 <https://pressgazette.co.uk/north-america/us-newspaper-circulations-2025-washington-post-print-declines-21-in-a-year/>

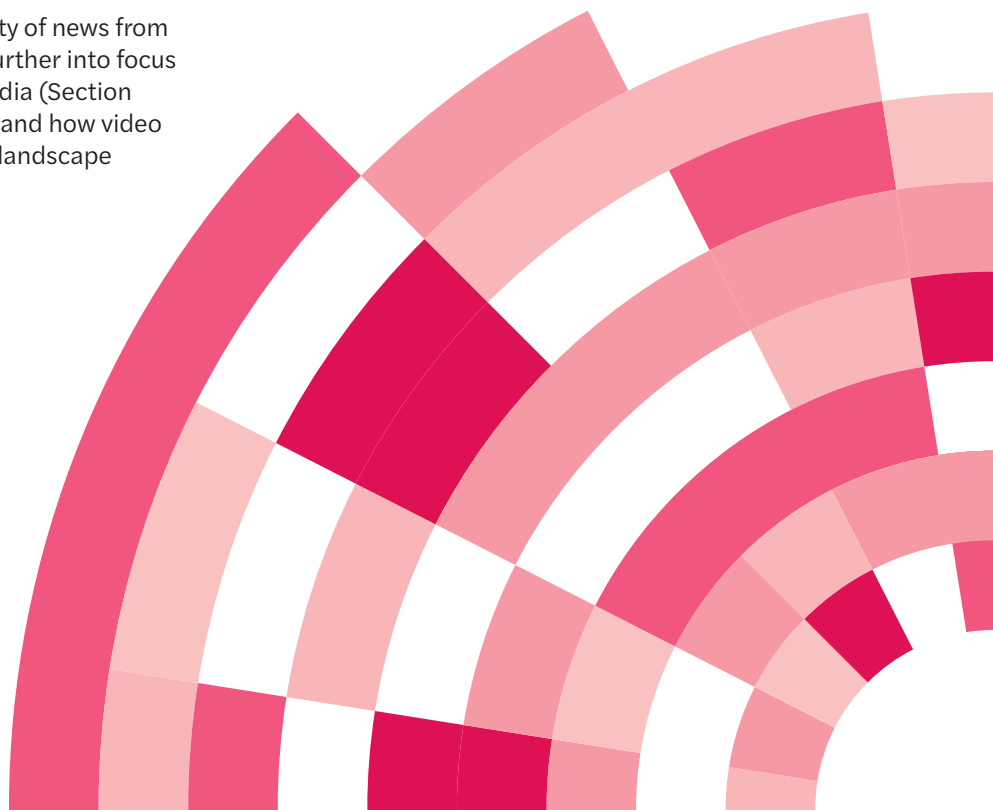
This year's report offers deeper insight into the profile of subscriptions. When asked 'What type of news organisations or individuals have you paid money to?', the most popular answer in Ireland, and in most countries, was traditional news organisation subscriptions (62%). This was followed by digital-only news organisations (23%); individual journalists, commentators or news creators (21%); news aggregators such as Apple News (21%); and specialist or niche news services such as business or technology news (17%). The percentage of those paying for individual journalists, commentators or news creators (21%) aligns more with the higher percentages found in the US (22%) than the UK (8%). However, due to the structure of the question, there is uncertainty around whether these payments are for podcasts or digital news sources.

Out of those who subscribe to online news, the main reasons for doing so are to get useful content they can't access any other way (39%), but close behind is to support journalism (38%).

### *38% subscribe to news to support journalism*

Overall, when we look at engagement with news in 2026 in Ireland, we get a mixed picture. The rise in news avoidance (+6pp) contributes to an increasingly bleak view of news over the last five years. However, there are sources of optimism when analysing engagement with news brands and news subscriptions. This points to a need and respect for Irish news media, a respect which is not evident in other countries. Being cognizant of the fragmentation of news formats will be important in the near future, especially when considering younger audiences, who, as has been the case historically, are much more likely to engage with emerging media formats.

With continued questions around the reliability of news from social media and AI, trust in news is coming further into focus (Section 2), as is the role of Public Service Media (Section 3), how news is being discovered (Section 4), and how video and news creators factor into the Irish media landscape (Section 5).



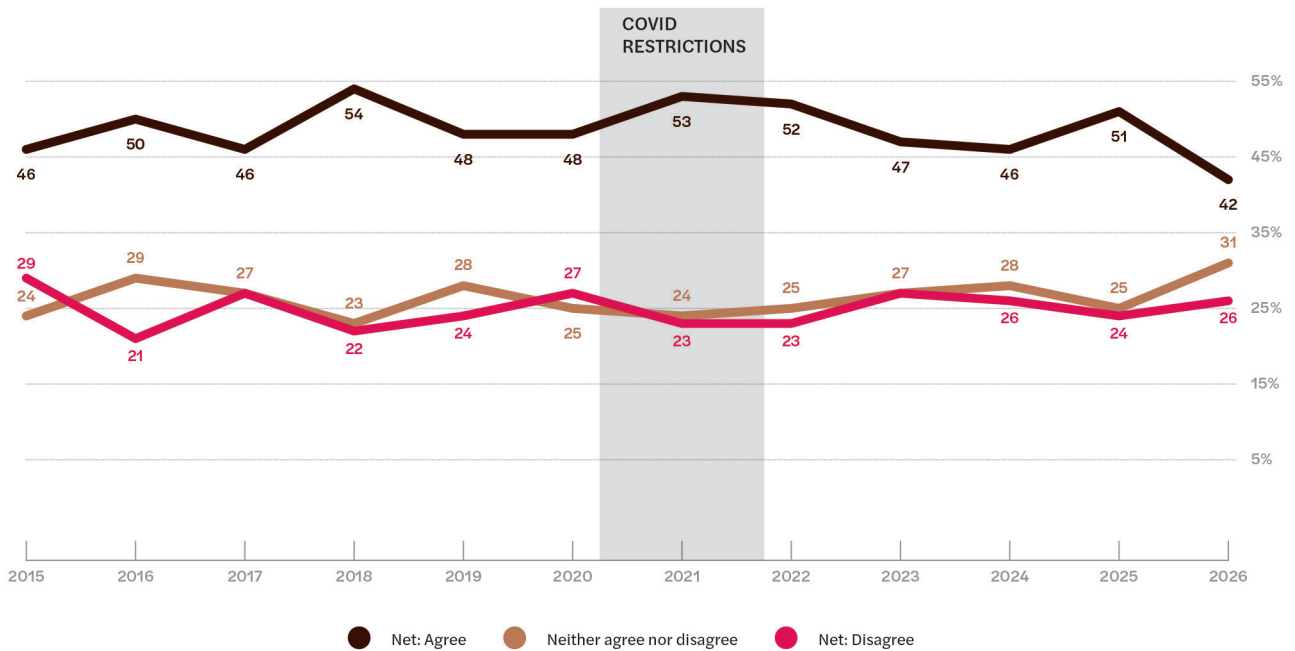
# Ireland trusts its newsrooms, just not the news

*By Jane Suiter*

Overall trust in news in Ireland is down, in line with global trends, but there are still reasons for optimism for Irish publishers. The share of people in Ireland who say they trust news most of the time falls sharply in 2026 (-9pp), dropping to 42% after sitting at higher levels for much of the previous decade, with a rise last year and during the Covid period. The decline is significant, yet it sits alongside relatively stable trust in the main Irish news brands. RTÉ News and local or regional radio both stand at 71%, while local and regional newspapers and The Irish Times are at 69%.

Figure 2.1

### Trust in news (2015-2026)



Q6\_2016: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: I think you can trust most news most of the time. Base: All n=1501-2053

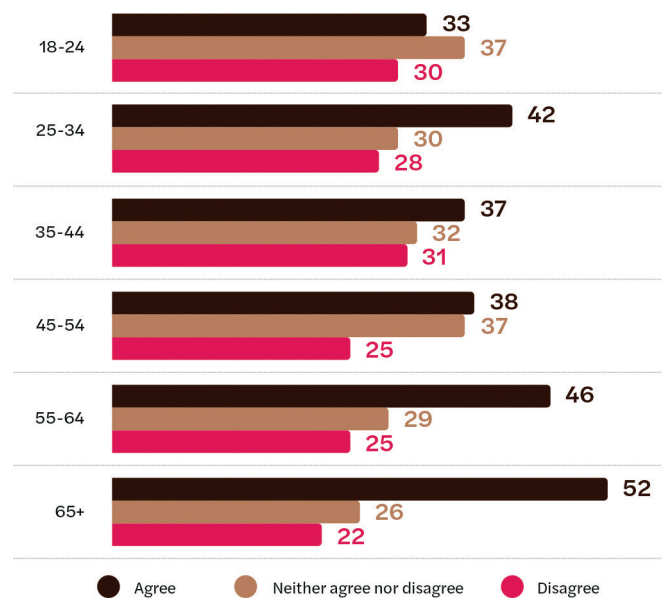
So if trust in the major brands has not collapsed, why has trust in news fallen overall so noticeably? The explanation seems to be that the decline is not primarily about the reputations of legacy Irish news organisations. It is more about the wider information environment where people now encounter news. Perhaps trust in journalistic media may be holding up better than trust in ‘news’ as a concept, which now includes a much broader and messier mix of sources, formats, and platforms.

### The trust divide

Compared with other countries, trust in news in Ireland still performs relatively well on the international comparison measure; 42% trust in most news most of the time, ahead of the UK at 31%, the US at 26%, and the European average at 36%. Nonetheless, Ireland appears to be experiencing a version of a wider trend seen across many democracies: falling confidence in the wider news environment, even where established public-service and legacy brands retain real authority.

Figure 2.2

### Trust in news (age)



Q6\_2016: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: I think you can trust most news most of the time. Base: All n=2053

Age is a major part of the picture. Trust is much lower among younger people than among older groups: it stands at 33% among 18-24s, compared with 52% among those aged 65 and over. This suggests that the decline in trust is closely connected to generational differences in how news is encountered and integrated into everyday life. Older audiences are still more tied to direct relationships with familiar, established news organisations. Younger audiences are more likely to come across news in non-journalistic environments, where journalism competes constantly with commentary, influencer content, entertainment, and algorithmically amplified content.

### The platform problem

Importantly, respondents draw a sharp distinction between the news they personally consume and the wider news environment. While 51% say they can trust the news they consume, that falls to 42% for ‘most news’, 31% for news from search engines, 16% for news from social media, and just 14% for news from AI chatbots. So it appears that many people have not lost faith in all journalism. Rather, they still trust the sources they deliberately choose, while becoming more doubtful about the wider system through which information reaches them.

*51% trust the news they consume, while 42% trust ‘most news’*

In other words, the problem is not mainly the news organisations themselves; it is declining trust in the platforms and systems through which news is encountered. For example, 71% are concerned about what is real and fake online. This points to a broader culture of uncertainty. Even if a person still trusts RTÉ or The Irish Times, they may feel much less confident about the online information environment as a whole. They may worry about manipulated material, misleading clips, decontextualised posts, false claims circulating on messaging apps, or the growing difficulty of distinguishing verified reporting from opinion or fake content. Under those conditions, it is not surprising that overall trust in ‘news’ can fall without a collapse in confidence in known brands.

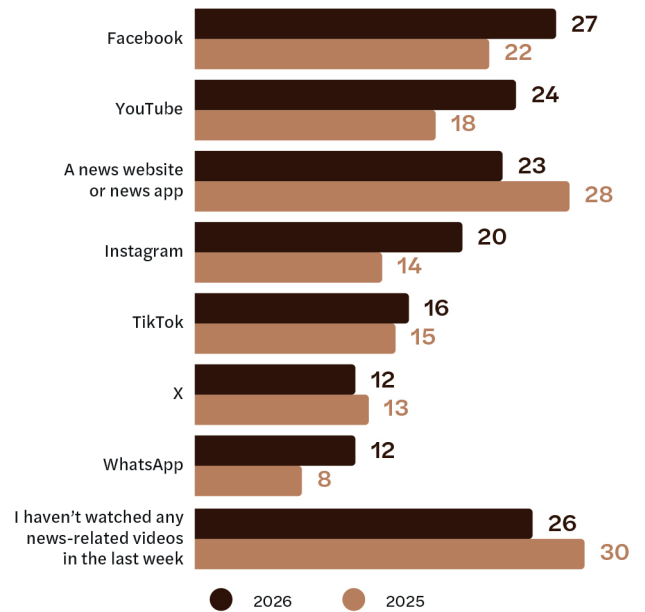
We can see how this wider uncertainty feeds into everyday news use. News-related video consumption appears to be moving away from news websites and apps and towards platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp: between 2025 and 2026 use of news websites and apps falls from 28% to 23%, while Facebook rises from 22% to 27% and YouTube from 18% to 24%. One issue here is that these platforms mix some professional reporting with personal commentary, decontextualised clips, memes, advocacy, and, importantly, emotionally laden content. A user scrolling through these spaces does not always understand

what journalism is, what opinion is, what satire is, or what is simply misleading. As news becomes more embedded in these environments, people may come to associate ‘news’ less with a trusted institution and more with a confusing stream of content.

Figure 2.3

### Watching videos online (2025-2026)

*I watched a news-related video on...*



Q11\_VIDEO\_2018a. Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? Please select all that apply. Base: All 2000-2053

### Creator vs news brand content

The impact of influencer or creator content in this space may be particularly important. A large majority of younger adults consume creator-related news content, with usage at 65% among 18-24s and 64% among 25-34s, compared with just 13% among those aged 65 and over. Just as importantly, younger users are not only following creators mainly focused on news (39%), they are also consuming creators who primarily post about other topics but sometimes talk about news (42%). That hybrid category may be especially impactful. It means that news is increasingly being encountered not as a distinct information type but as one topic among many in a soup dominated by personality, style, and platform logics. Here, the boundaries between reporting, reaction and entertainment are muddled.

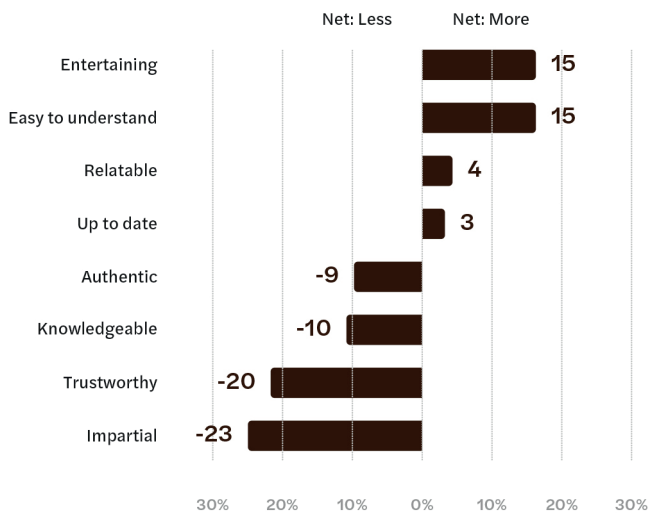
*39% of under-35s consume creator content focused on news*

Incorporating both those who do (37%) and do not consume creator news content (54%), if we compare creator content with news brand content, respondents see creators as less trustworthy, less impartial, and less knowledgeable than news brands, with net scores of -20%, -23%, and -10%, respectively. But creators are also seen as more relatable, easier to understand, more up to date, and more entertaining, especially in terms of ease of understanding and entertainment, both at +15%. That trade-off may be central to the current trust problem. People are not necessarily abandoning journalistic media because they think creators are more credible. They may be giving more of their attention to creators because creators are more accessible and engaging. But if news is increasingly encountered in formats that audiences themselves regard as less impartial or less trustworthy, that can still pull down trust in news overall.

Figure 2.4

### Creator content and news brand content comparison

Would you say that news creators/influencers are more or less of the following...



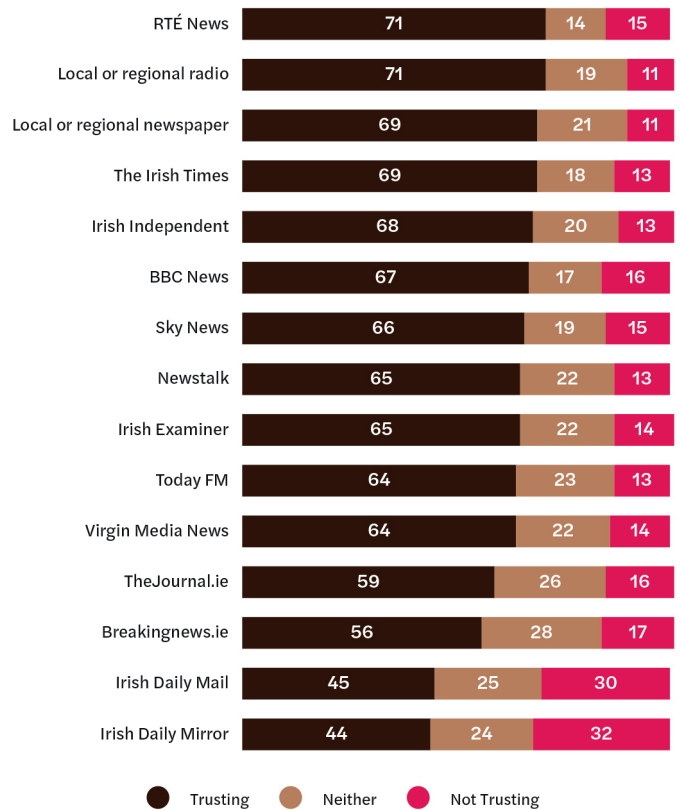
Q\_Creators4\_2026\_1. Comparing content from news creators or news influencers with traditional news brands and outlets, would you say that news creators or news influencers are more or less of the following ... Base All: 2053

## News brand trust in a turbulent environment

From this perspective, the stability of trust in major Irish news brands is quite striking. It suggests that established outlets still retain significant public trust. Public-service media, local radio, local newspapers, and major national titles continue to command trust. That is good news. But it also suggests that the main challenge for journalism is changing. The issue is no longer only whether a newsroom can build a trusted brand. It is whether that trust can survive when reporting is encountered in fragmented, platform-dominated environments that the newsroom does not control.

Figure 2.5

### Trust in news brands



Q6\_2018: How trustworthy would you say news from the following brand is? Base: All who have heard of brand, n=1862-2029

For publishers, the lesson is that strong brand trust is necessary but no longer sufficient. They may need to think more about how their reporting travels on social platforms, how it is presented in video form, and how to preserve signals of verification and authority outside their own websites and apps. For policymakers and educators, there is a need for renewed attention to media literacy, especially around source evaluation, context, and the distinction between journalism and influencer-led or other non-journalistic content. For democracy more broadly, the risk is a fragmented trust landscape in which people retain confidence in 'my sources' but lose confidence in the category of news itself. That weakens the possibility of a shared informational space, even if some individual brands remain respected.

The central point, then, is not that Irish audiences have turned against their main news brands. Rather, trust is declining because news is increasingly encountered in a noisier, more mediated, and more ambiguous environment. Messaging apps, social platforms, creator content, and growing anxiety about what is real online are all likely part of the story. The paradox of Irish news in 2026 is that journalism itself may still be trusted, but it now operates within an information system that is trusted much less.

# The enduring relevance of public service media

*By Eileen Culloty*

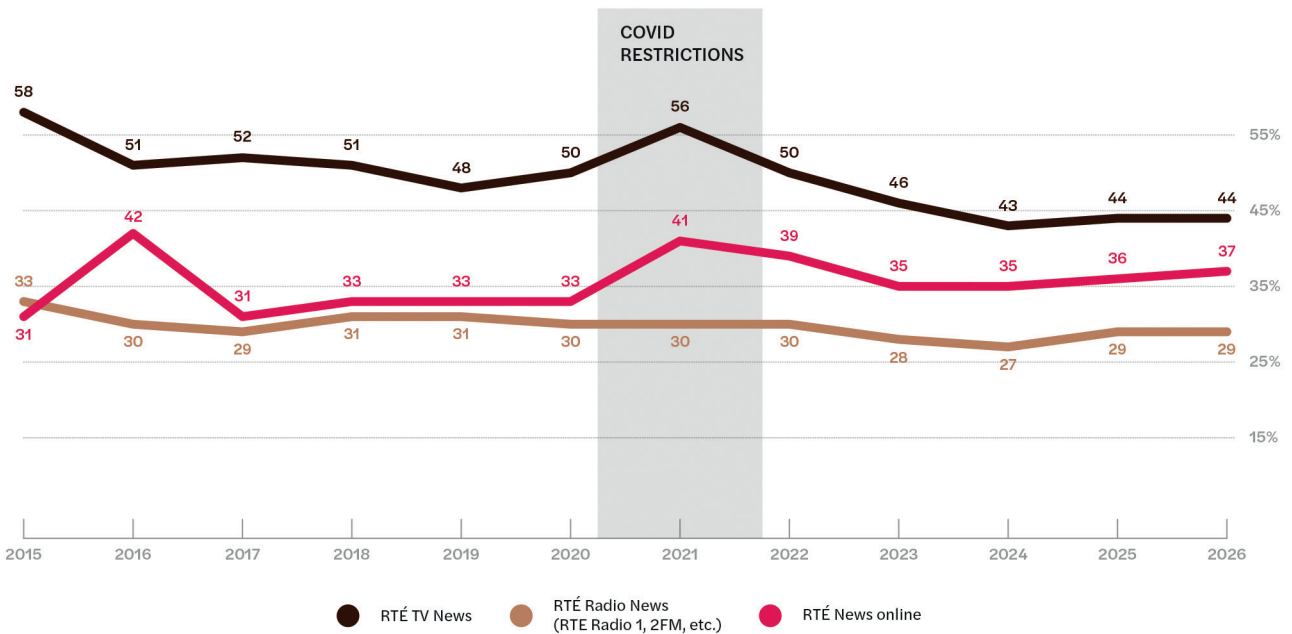
This year's Digital News Report introduced a new question on attitudes toward public service media. Specifically, participants were asked whether 'news provided by public service broadcasters has a positive or negative effect on life in your country'. Overall, public service media is viewed more positively in Ireland than in other countries. Here, 42% attribute a positive role to public service media, whereas only 30% do so in the UK.

Perhaps the most interesting result is that the under-35s have the most positive perception of public service media, with approximately half of the younger cohorts saying public service media has a positive impact. Yet, those aged between 35 and 64 are far more ambivalent.

In Ireland, public service media are primarily provided by RTÉ, with TG4 providing an Irish-language service. BBC Northern Ireland is also widely available. By any measure, RTÉ is the most extensive media organisation in the country, delivering news across TV, radio, and online. The popularity of these formats over the past eleven years tells a familiar story of digital disruption: RTÉ TV news has declined dramatically (-14pp) while RTÉ News Online has increased (+6pp), but not at a rate that replaces the decline in audiences for traditional formats.

Figure 3.1

## Public service media formats accessed in the last week (2015-2026)



Q5a. Which of the following brands have you used to access news offline/online in the last week? Base: All n=1501-2053

As noted elsewhere in this report, young adults are far more likely to consume news online and, more specifically, via social media. In contrast, older adults are more likely to rely on traditional formats. A 2019 review of Digital News Report data for eight European countries (excluding Ireland) concluded that ‘public service news audiences both offline and online are heavily skewed towards older people’.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting, then, to see that many young adults are positive about the role of public service media in Ireland.

One explanation is that public service media have succeeded in pursuing a digital strategy that reaches people online. There is some evidence for this in the past decade of Digital News Report data in which RTÉ News is consistently cited as Ireland’s most trusted and most accessed news source, both online and offline (see Section 2). Another explanation is about societal values. Research suggests that many people value the existence of public service media regardless of whether they consume it themselves. This is an important argument for the future relevance of public service media, and it is worth considering the wider context before looking at the Irish data in more detail.

## An uncertain future for public service media

It is a pertinent time to try to understand public perceptions of public service media. In many countries, public service media are mired in controversies about their impartiality, funding, and governance. These have been perennial issues since the emergence of public service broadcasting more than a century ago. Current debates, however, have a sharper edge as the rationale for the existence of public service media needs to be remade in an age of on-demand streaming and infinite-scroll platforms.

Public service media represent one of the most innovative and successful experiments in media history. People still argue about whether its origins are best understood as patrician control over broadcasting technologies or as the harnessing of those technologies in the public interest. There is truth in both arguments. In any case, public service media came to dominate the media landscapes in countries where they were afforded adequate funding and relative independence.

<sup>4</sup> Schulz, Anne, David A. L. Levy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. Old, Educated, and Politically Diverse: Measuring the Reach of Public Service News. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.60625/RISJ-5KZQ-Z093>.

## TV as a weekly source of news has declined 20% since 2015

That domination, however, was not simply about public service media’s unique remit to provide universal access or its standards of journalism. In large part, their dominance was explained by the overall popularity of broadcasting - first radio and then television - and the scarcity of competitors. For example, RTÉ did not have to contend with rivals for most of its existence. Commercial radio was outlawed until 1989, and there was no commercial television until 1998.

The old arguments about opening up broadcast markets to competition seem quaint when one considers the ascent of web and digital technologies. Audio-visual content that once required expensive equipment and studios can now be delivered on modest budgets. We no longer live in an age of media scarcity. Instead, public service media must vie for the

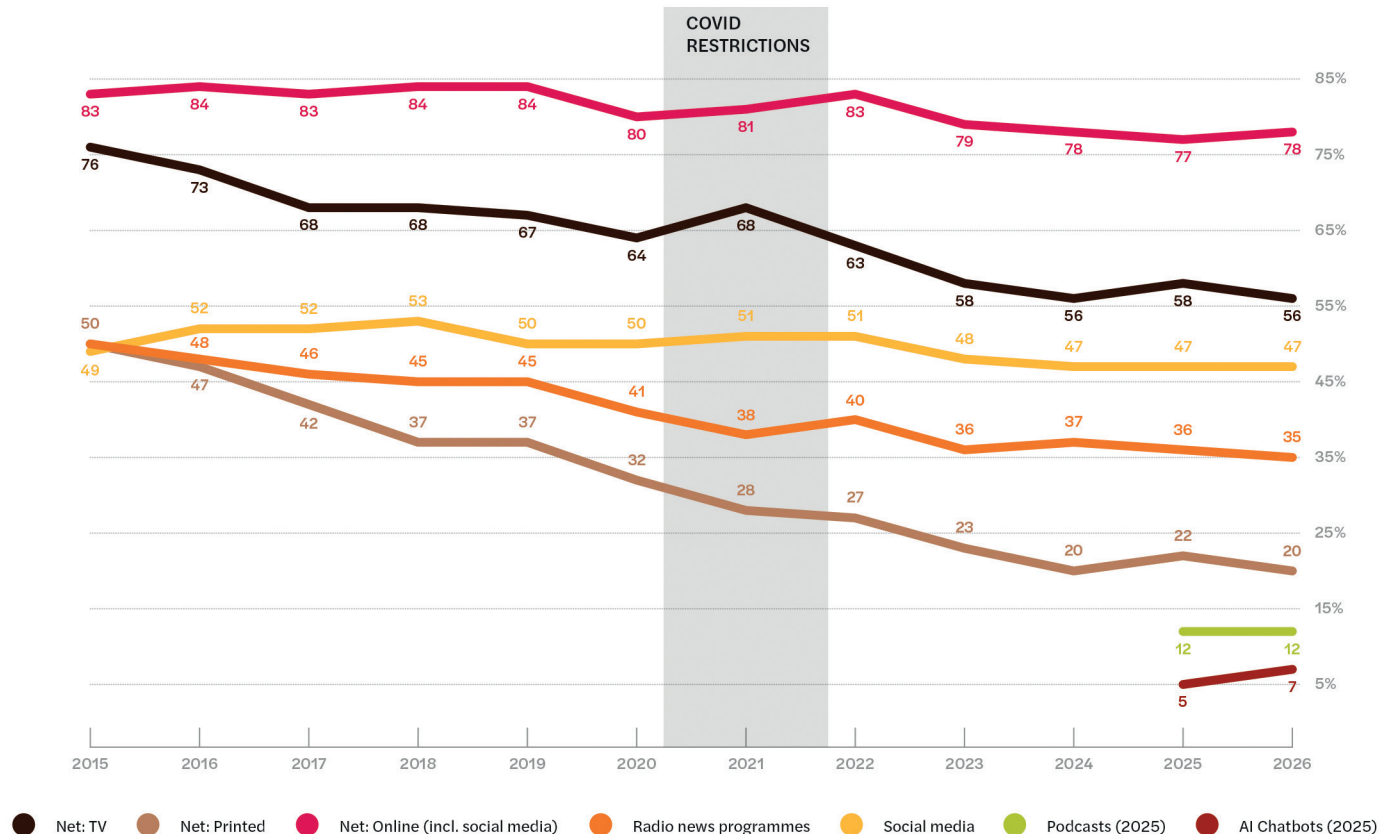
public’s attention with everything else, including platforms that are primed to hijack our attention.

As a source of news, it is not surprising that broadcasting formats have been superseded by online. In Ireland, TV as a source of news declined from 76% in 2015 to 56% in 2026. In the same period, radio declined from 50% to 35%. Meanwhile, 78% say they access news via online sources. It is in this online world that public service media need to position themselves.

Public service media have the advantage of already being well established, which may explain why RTÉ News is consistently the most accessed news source, online and offline. The question then is whether public service media can use their advantage to steer a path into an uncertain digital future. Ultimately, public support will determine whether public service media survives in the long-term.

Figure 3.2

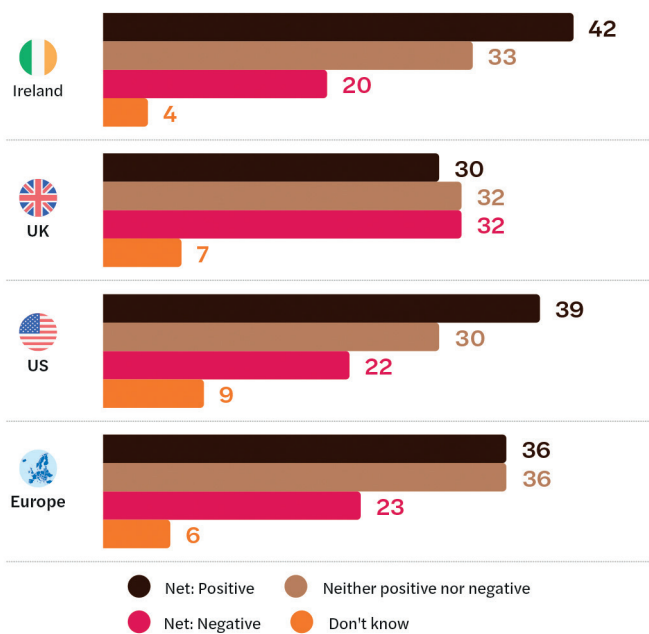
Sources of news (2015-2026)



Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? Base: All ranges from 1501–2053 each year.

Figure 3.3

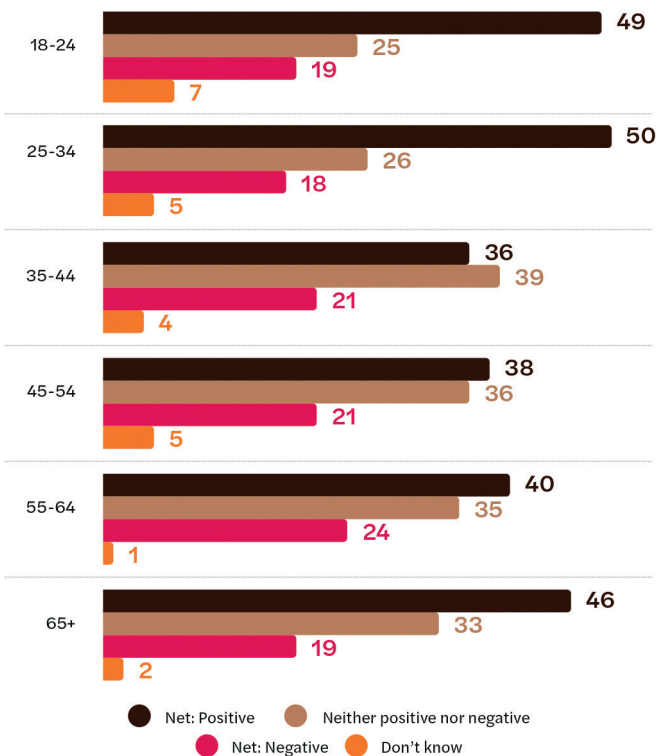
### Attitudes towards public service media



Q\_PSM\_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. BBC) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? Base: All n=2053 (Ireland)

Figure 3.4

### Attitudes towards public service media (age)



Q\_PSM\_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. BBC) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? Base: All n=2053

## Positivity and ambivalence in public perceptions

RTÉ can take some solace from the fact that perceptions of public service media are more positive in Ireland than in many other countries. Some 42% of respondents perceive public service media to have a positive effect on life in Ireland. This is notably higher than in the UK (30%), the US (39%), and the European average (36%). Only 20% of Irish respondents answered negatively, while about a third had a neutral assessment.

Among those who attribute a positive impact to public service media, the most cited reasons were universal access (61%), trustworthy news (51%), and high-quality journalism (47%). Universal access remains a compelling argument for public service media, especially as other media try to navigate subscriptions and paywalls that necessarily target niche segments of the population. For the small minority who expressed a negative view of public service media, the primary concern was undue influence by political and other interests (66%). The perception of bias, whether real or perceived, remains a risk that public service media must continuously address.

### *Universal access is considered the most positive attribute of public service media*

Young adults have the most positive views of public service media, followed by older adults. Approximately half of under-35s perceive a positive impact, while 46% of those over 65 share this view. Across most age groups, about one-fifth have a negative view of public service media, rising to around a quarter of 55-64s.

The middle-aged demographics are the most uncertain about the value of the public service media. The 35-44 age group is the only cohort where neutral perceptions outweigh positive ones. Among 45-54-year-olds, neutral perceptions are on par with positive ones. In many respects, this ambivalence is more concerning than the portion of negative perceptions.

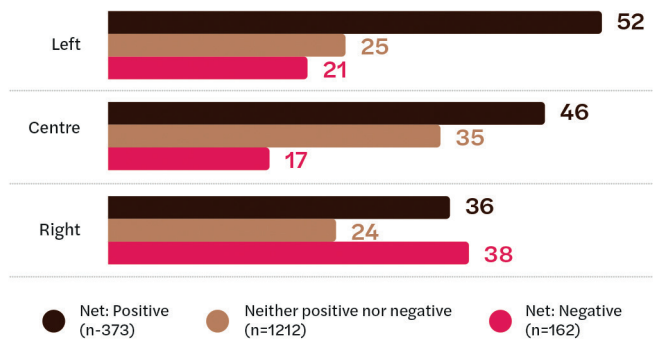
## The danger of politicisation

It is well known that left-leaning people are more likely to support public service media, while right-leaning people are more sceptical about the value of public funding. In some countries, these broad tendencies have turned into hostility. Politicisation along a left-right divide is a major risk for the future of public service media, as it needs to draw support from, and represent, the wide spectrum of the public.

In Ireland, the vast majority of respondents are in the centre. While 46% of them have a positive view of public service media, 35% are ambivalent. Again, this neutral position needs attention if public service media are to harness the public support for continued funding. Positive perceptions are highest amongst those who identify as left-leaning, but a quarter are ambivalent and around a fifth are negative. Among the smaller group of right-leaning respondents, negative attitudes outweigh positive ones.

Figure 3.5

### Attitudes towards public service media (political leaning)

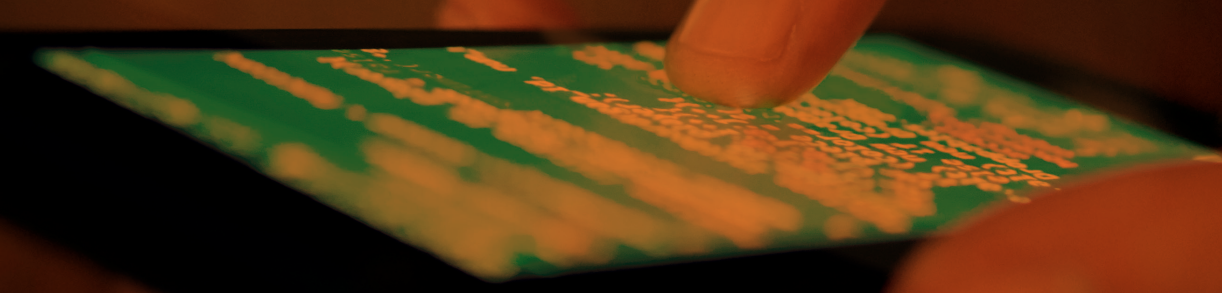



Q\_PSM\_Attitude. Overall, do you think that news provided by public service broadcasters (e.g. BBC) has a positive or negative effect on life in your country? Base: All n=1747. Left n=373, Centre n=1212, Right n=162.

For those who care about the future of public service media, there is hope and concern in these results. One takeaway might be that public service media need to do a better job of making the societal argument for their existence. They cannot afford to have large cohorts of people unsure whether public service media have a positive or negative effect on Irish life.



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# News discovery: devices, algorithms, and shifting patterns of engagement

*By Callum Craig*

The influence of platforms and algorithms over the public's access to information remains highly relevant in 2026. Despite a souring of public opinion towards social media platforms, incidental and algorithmic news discovery is an increasingly central component of the Irish news environment.

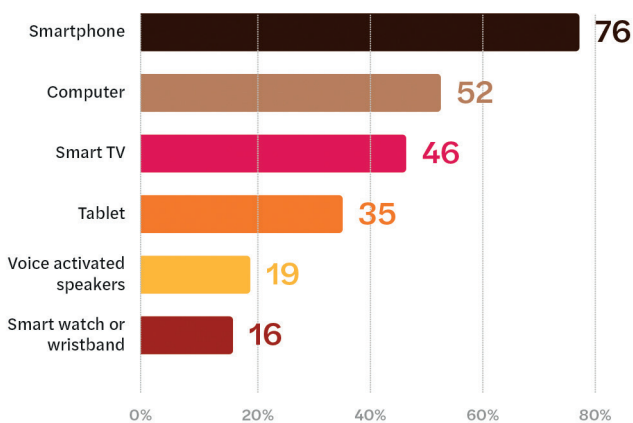
## Devices used to access news

Irish audiences are heavy users of online news, which they most commonly access through smartphones, with 76% reporting that they had used this device for news within the last week.

While smartwatches remain the least common device for accessing news, the 16% of the sample who report doing so represents a notable share and one that is likely to grow as these devices become more widely adopted. Although we lack detailed data on how users engage with news on smartwatches, it is likely that they function primarily as an extension of smartphones, with which they are typically linked. This suggests that users may be incidentally exposed to news through mirrored notifications, or, perhaps to a lesser extent, that they may intentionally access news via apps and browsers in a manner similar to smartphone or tablet use.

Figure 4.1

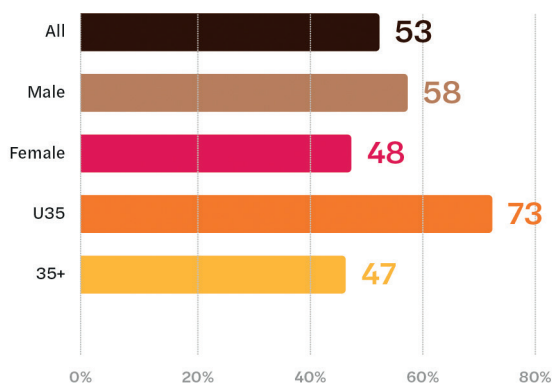
### Devices used to access news



Q8B\_2023\_V2. Devices used to access news in the last week. Base: All n=2053

Figure 4.2

### Video apps used to access news on smart TVs



Q\_SmartTV1. Earlier in the survey you said you have used a smart TV that connects to the internet to access news in the last week... Did you use video apps (e.g. YouTube) to access news on your smart TV? Base: All n= 949

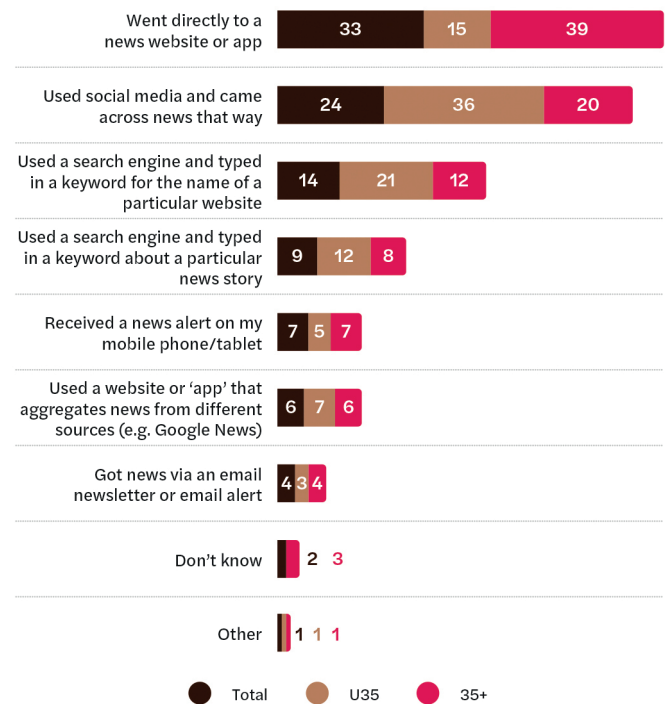
In contrast, smart TVs are used much more frequently for news, with 46% reporting access within the last week. This figure is comparable to the 56% who report accessing TV news overall, indicating that most TV news users have adopted smart TVs. This is unsurprising, as the majority of televisions sold in the past decade include smart functionalities, even if users are not always aware of or actively using these features. However, a substantial proportion of users are accessing news via video apps on their televisions. This is particularly pronounced among younger users, with 73% of under-35s and 47% of those aged 35 and over reporting that they had used a video app on their smart TV within the last week. This further underscores the growing importance of platforms such as YouTube and the diverse ways in which users engage with smart TVs for news.

## News discovery

Despite the ever-growing public scepticism of social media platforms and the companies which operate them, we observe a 3pp increase in users mainly discovering news through social media (38%). Another significant change is the use of websites or apps that aggregate news from 12% in 2025 to 16%. But overall, trends in user behaviour have largely remained consistent across the previous five years.

Figure 4.3

### Main way discovered news stories (age)

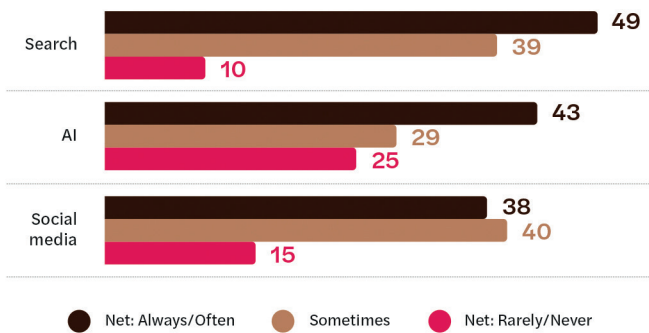


Q10a. Which of these was the MAIN way in which you came across news in the last week? Base All: n=1859

There remains a clear generational divide in how users discover news. Seventy per cent of under-35s report using algorithmic news recommendations as a means of news discovery through social media feeds, news aggregators, and keyword searches. In comparison, only 53% of those over 35 report this. Despite concerns over algorithmic bias in industry, academia, and civil society, users are increasingly dependent upon these tools for news discovery.<sup>5</sup> One example of this is that 32% of Irish users have encountered news through search engines in the last week. As algorithmic curation and personalisation of news becomes increasingly sophisticated and central to user news repertoires, fears about user data privacy and fragmentation of the news ecosystem remain relevant.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 4.4

### Clickthrough to original sources



Q\_Click. How often do you clickthrough to original sources from... Base All: 2028 (Search engine weekly users 918; AI chatbot weekly users 151; Social or video network weekly users 959)

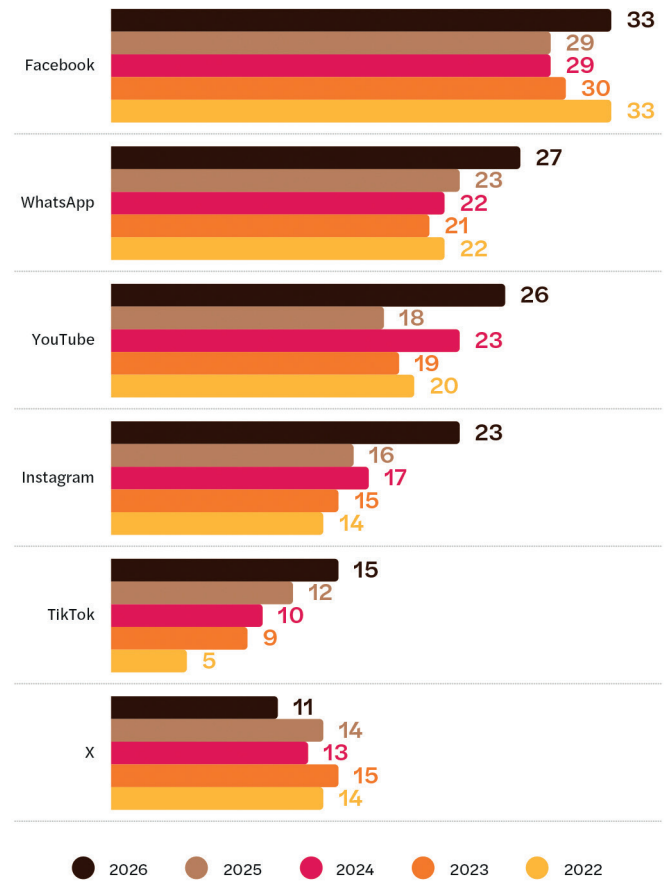
Clickthrough measures how often someone will click on a news story and access news beyond the headline. Items encountered through search convert the largest number of users, with 49% reporting that they frequently click through to the original source, versus 38% on social media. This is likely partly driven by the higher intentionality of search. But the information overload of social media feeds and platform designs increasingly disincentivise, and obscure means to clickthrough to the original sources are also likely to play a part. For those using AI, two extremes appear, with 43% of users frequently and 25% never clicking through. However, this sample is significantly smaller than the search and social media user samples, with only 151 respondents. Additionally, across countries, we generally observe that this small group of AI users represents a very highly engaged subgroup of news users. For this reason, we should not assume that AI is especially effective or ineffective at converting searches into clicks in the Irish context.

## Which platforms do users discover news on?

As previously discussed, we generally observe a rise in the reliance on social media platforms for news discovery. Meta’s offerings and YouTube have both seen a sharp rise since 2025. YouTube’s use for news has increased by 8pp, Instagram’s by 7pp, and Facebook’s by 4pp. We also see a rise in the adoption of TikTok for news (+3pp).

Figure 4.5

### Social media platforms for news (2022-2026)



Q12B. Which, if any, of the following have you used for finding, reading, watching, sharing or discussing news in the last week? Please select all that apply. Base All: n=1002

<sup>5</sup> Cafferky, Rosa, (2025) 'A Digital Divide: The Algorithm as a Breeding Ground for Hate'. Available at: <https://stand.ie/stand-newsroom/digital-divide-algorithm-breeding-ground-hate>; EDMO 'Be Online Smart', 2025. Available at: <https://edmo.eu/beonlinesmart/english/>  
<sup>6</sup> Zuiderveen Borgesius, Frederik J. (2016). Should we worry about filter bubbles? Internet Policy Review, [online] 5(1). Available at: <https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/should-we-worry-about-filter-bubbles>; Van Drunen, M.Z., Helberger, N. and Bastian, M., 2019. Know your algorithm: what media organizations need to explain to their users about news personalization. International Data Privacy Law, 9(4), pp.220-235.

Since the introduction of TikTok to Western audiences, all of the listed social platforms have implemented a feature for short-form video content, which generally sees heavy user engagement. The increasing relevance of these platforms for news use likely relates to both the increase in short-form news content and a growing creator economy providing for this niche (see Section 5), as well as the relative decline in use of X for news.

## *Use of YouTube for news has increased 8pp*

In contrast to its competitors, the use of X for news has dropped 3pp since 2025. This goes quite strongly against the trend of growth across most other social media platforms. The inclusion of Grok AI and its use in generating non-consensual sexual images of women and girls has led to significant reputational harm in Ireland.<sup>7</sup> Several public institutions, some politicians, and numbers of regular users have abandoned X due to the company's handling of this.<sup>8 9</sup> The platform's hosting of deeply upsetting content and its role in generating images could have lasting impacts on its popularity in Ireland. That said, the initial exodus of advertisers and brands proved temporary, so there is precedent for the platform bouncing back from such downturns.<sup>10</sup>

For now, it seems that rival social media platforms are benefiting from negative user sentiments towards X, and it is likely that the platform will remain central to discussions of social media harms and regulations.

This year's data largely conforms with long-running trends in Irish news consumption habits. The centrality of smartphones, as well as the increasing adoption of smart TVs and smartwatches, also conforms with expected trends across countries with heavily digitised news ecosystems. Given generational and market trends, we can expect that these technologies will only increase in relevance.

The data on news discovery methods suggest a gradual but continuing shift towards more passive, algorithmically mediated news discovery despite public concerns about this effect on users and democracy. Younger users are especially likely to be embedded in personalised, platform-driven patterns of news exposure that shape their information environments. This could also have downstream effects due to the reduced likelihood that this style of exposure prompts deeper engagement with stories beyond headlines, with still limited data on how it could be further complicated if more of the public accepts AI tools as a means for engaging with the news.

With the notable exception of X, this year has seen a significant uptick in the use of most social media platforms for news discovery. For news brands, it is likely that translating news into short-form video content will remain lucrative and important for audience outreach, especially on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, which have widespread adoption in Irish society. It is yet to be seen if the significant downturn in X's popularity will become a trend, but regulatory efforts and social backlash against platform policies will likely ensure that its position in the Irish media landscape remains turbulent.

7 Coyne, Ellen, (2026) 'Does Grok believe it can legally generate intimate images of women in Ireland?', The Irish Times, 15 January. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2026/01/15/does-grok-believe-it-can-legally-generate-intimate-images-of-women-in-ireland/>

8 Matthews, Jane, (2026) 'Behind the scenes: how political parties have responded to the Grok scandal', TheJournal.ie, 18 January. Available at: <https://www.thejournal.ie/x-grok-irish-political-parties-6929331-Jan2026/>

9 <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/11/21/are-users-leaving-elon-musks-x-en-masse-and-where-are-they-heading>

10 <https://digiday.com/marketing/more-focused-on-advertising-than-ever-before-nearly-all-of-xs-top-100-advertisers-returned-ads-boss-claims/>

# Opportunities for journalism in a creator-saturated online environment

*By Eirini Psychari*

Ireland's wider influencer economy is booming, but is this also the case for video news creators? The picture here is more complicated and centred around three main interconnected trends that emerge from our data. The first one is that Irish news organisations retain a significant yet declining share of reach for news-related video use, with the largest social networks, especially Facebook, making a strong comeback in 2026. The second trend is that news and news-adjacent video content are heavily leaning towards short-form formats, and, along with podcasts, are more popular among younger audiences. The third trend is that although some social media platforms have overtaken traditional news organisations on the video front, trust is still largely anchored to the latter, with only a small share of respondents relying exclusively on creators to cover their information needs.

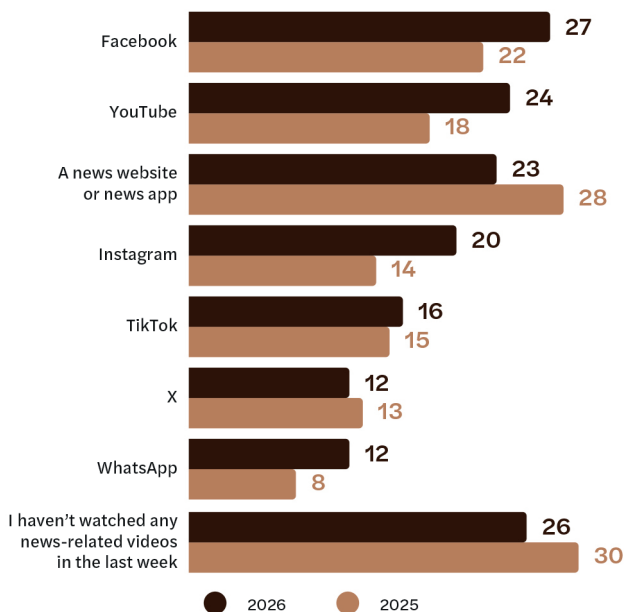
## Social media platforms leading news video use

In Ireland, Facebook emerged as the main source of news-related video consumption, reaching 27% in 2026 (+5pp), and overtaking news websites or apps (-5pp). During this period, YouTube and Instagram also saw a boost in video engagement on their platforms (+6pp each).

Figure 5.1

### News video engagement

*I watched a news-related video on...*



Q11\_VIDEO: Thinking about when you used online news-related video (a short clip, a live stream, or a full episode) over the last week, which of the following did you do? Please select all that apply. Base: All n=2000-2053.

While nearly all platforms seem to be gaining traction in engaging news video audiences, social media companies have been doubling down on video to attract and retain users in a highly competitive landscape.<sup>11</sup> Last year, Meta announced that all Facebook videos would be classified as Reels, removing all length and format restrictions to simplify video publishing and increase content supply.<sup>12</sup> More recently, both Facebook and X deepened their efforts to incentivise more original content on their platforms by offering new monetisation and revenue options for creators.<sup>13 14</sup>

Such moves reflect social media companies' intensifying battle in the video space for younger audiences' attention, while news organisations struggle to keep pace. Indeed, our data confirm that social media's surge in this area was accompanied by a significant decline in the share of audiences accessing news videos directly through news websites and apps, from 28% in 2025 to 23% in 2026.

## 27% watch news-related videos on Facebook

However, as discussed in previous sections, it is not all doom and gloom for the Irish news media industry that continues to show remarkable resilience despite broader challenges and pullbacks. News organisations have retained a considerable share in news-related video consumption and, at the same time, seen consistency in the number of people paying for subscriptions (see Section 1). The existence of a relatively engaged, invested, and trusting audience, especially compared to other European countries, presents an opportunity for established news organisations to experiment with video formats and multi-platform storytelling.

To be sure, with most traffic taking place outside news websites and increased competition from non-journalistic content creators, the return on investment of such ventures is uncertain. Previous Digital News Report data have also indicated a preference for text-based news formats among Irish audiences, which, alongside the deprioritisation of news on social media platforms, can help explain the 26% who reported that they had not watched any news-related videos in the preceding week.

Yet, online video formats can be leveraged by news organisations to engage younger cohorts and respond to growing uncertainty among Irish audiences about the credibility of information circulating online (see Section 2). In light of the recent proliferation of AI-generated mis- and disinformation during the US–Israel–Iran conflict, as well as reports that some social media companies allow borderline harmful content to slip into users' feeds to drive engagement, the value of trustworthy news on platforms has become more salient.<sup>15 16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.niemanlab.org/2024/06/is-the-news-industry-ready-for-another-pivot-to-video/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/all-new-facebook-videos-be-classified-reels-soon-meta-says-2025-06-17>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c895wwp3kqlo>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/x-boosts-incentives-for-original-content-creators/817271/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg8wvz427vo>

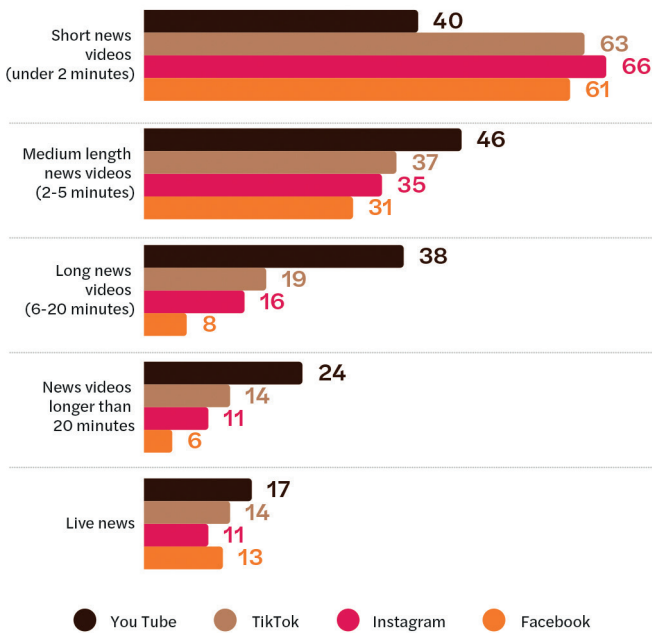
<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqj9kgxqjwjo>

## Creator news videos are short-form and youth-orientated

The industry-wide push for more news-related content online is driven by the growing dominance of personality-led, short-form video on social media platforms. Among those who had watched a news-related video online in our survey, short-form content under two minutes accounted for the overwhelming majority of engagement across most platforms (66% on Instagram, 63% on TikTok, and 61% on Facebook). Not surprisingly, YouTube was the only exception, with medium-length videos (2–5 minutes) being the most commonly watched (46%). Notably, short-form news videos were the second most popular on YouTube at 40%, perhaps reflecting the success of the platform’s Shorts feature, rolled out in Ireland in 2021.<sup>17</sup> Our results indicate that social media platforms saw limited use for both live news and long-form news videos (between 6-20 minutes and longer than 20 minutes).

Figure 5.2

### Duration of videos watched



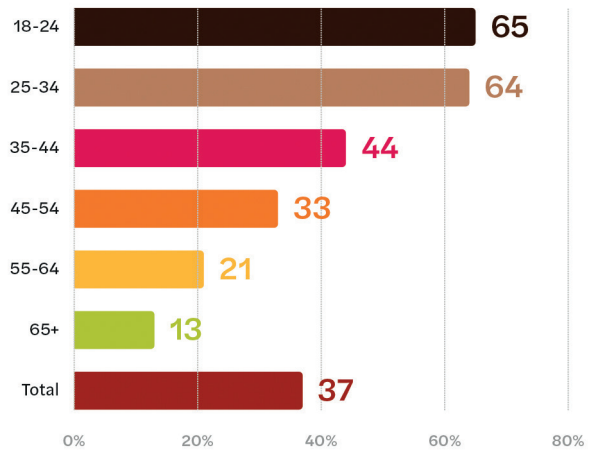
Q11\_video: You say you access news videos on [...] Which of the following have you accessed in the last week? Please select all that apply. Base: All n=331-433

It is noteworthy that while Facebook’s prominent role in short-form video consumption is once again manifest in our survey results, some publishers have been moving away from the platform due to limited referral traffic and monetisation opportunities<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, news organisations now prioritise investment in youth-dominated, video-first platforms, more specifically YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, where audiences are more likely to engage with creator-led news content.<sup>8</sup> In our survey, consumption of news from creators, whether on social media and video platforms, web portals such as

Substack, or podcasts, was considerably higher among younger age groups: 65% of participants aged 18–24 said they had consumed creator news content, followed closely by those aged 25–34 (64%), with the percentage declining progressively with age.

Figure 5.3

### Consumed creator content (age)



Q\_Creators1\_2026. In the last week, have you consumed news from any of the following? This could be on social and video networks (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), web portal (e.g. Substack), or podcast, etc. Please select all that apply. Net: Any. Base All: n=2053

Age-related patterns were also apparent in the type of news creators preferred: 39% of participants under-35 reported having consumed content from creators or influencers who mainly focused on news, compared with just 18% among those aged 35 and over. Similarly, 42% of under-35s and 16% of over-35s said that they had engaged with content from creators and influencers who ‘sometimes talk about the news’. At the same time, 64% of the older age group, and 25% of the younger, said that they had not consumed any relevant creator content in the previous week.

*64% of over-35s have not consumed any news or news-adjacent content from creators or influencers in the previous week*

It should be noted, however, that news creators often include influencers who engage in opinion-led commentary, rather than producing original journalistic work or being involved in investigative reporting. More specifically, recent research from the Reuters Institute points to a rather complex picture in the news creators’ landscape, which may include individuals who cover news and news commentary, as well as news-adjacent creators who focus on entertainment or lifestyle content but occasionally discuss news and engage

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2021/0712/1234676-youtube-shorts-launches-in-ireland-to-rival-tiktok/>  
<sup>18</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2026>

in political debate.<sup>19</sup> Such players, who occupy the space of journalism's periphery in an already loosely defined and precarious field,<sup>20</sup> are occasionally brought in by news organisations to share their content across platforms, perhaps at the expense of permanent employment for professional journalists.

Additionally, as traditional news outlets focus their efforts on reaching and engaging audiences on social media and video platforms, they increasingly encourage their journalists to build their personal brands online to attract greater attention to their coverage.<sup>21</sup> Prominent Irish journalists with a strong social media presence include, among others, Conor Pope from The Irish Times, Zara King and Gavan Reilly from Virgin Media News, as well as successful podcasters such as Joe Molloy (Indo Sport), who contribute to a vibrant and fairly popular (12%) podcast environment tied to the Irish storytelling culture.

## Creators make news more entertaining and relatable, but trust rests with news brands

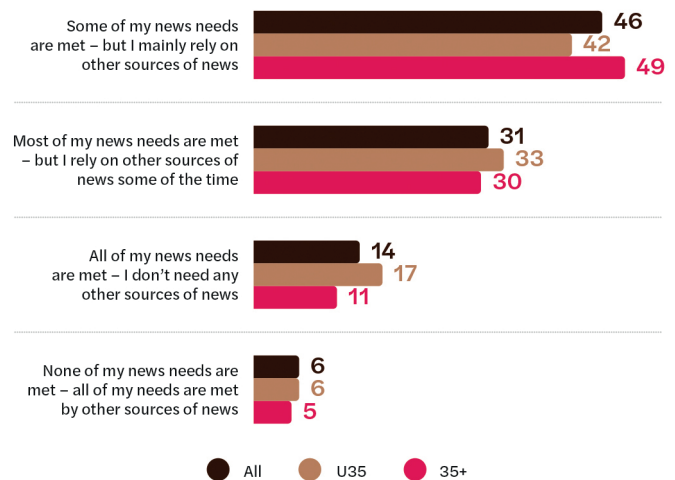
The third trend emerging from our data reveals a paradox. While news video creators and influencers rarely lose sleep over news organisations' endeavours on social media, they are only partially trusted to address audiences' information needs. In fact, our survey shows that, among those who had consumed content from one or more creators or influencers who focused on news over the previous week, only a small minority (14%) said that these sources fully met their news needs. In contrast, almost half of the respondents (46%) reported that they mainly relied on other sources, with creators and influencers only meeting some of their news needs.

News creators and influencers are rarely seen as a credible substitute for traditional journalism. In Ireland, where most people trust established news organisations (see Section 2), and many are willing to pay for news and support journalism (see Section 1), net scores suggest that content from news creators and influencers is generally considered as less impartial (-23%), less trustworthy (-20%), less knowledgeable (-10%), and less authentic (-9%) than that produced by news brands.

It is clear that the competitive advantage of news creators and influencers is not in trust or normative journalistic standards, but in simplicity, accessibility, personal connection and entertainment appeal. Our respondents said that news creators' and influencers' content is more up to date (3%), relatable (4%), easy to understand (15%), and entertaining (15%) than content coming from news brands.

Figure 5.4

### Information needs met by creators (age)



Q\_Creators3\_2026. You said that you have consumed news from one or more creators or influencers who mainly focus on news in the last week. How much of your information needs are met by these creators or influencers? Base All: 473

## News creators and influencers win in simplicity, accessibility, personal connection, and entertainment appeal

This finding comes as no surprise, as independent news creators, influencers, and podcasters often portray themselves as operating outside the structural constraints of news organisations, where traditional journalistic values such as objectivity count for little.<sup>22</sup>

While the audiences of some of these actors are usually hard to reach for news organisations, this is not a lost cause. With traditional journalism still valued and the trust deficit often affecting news creators and influencers, the opportunity for news organisations lies in tapping into their institutional knowledge and expertise to produce original content, investigative reporting, and fact-based accounts of the world that others find difficult to replicate or challenge.

<sup>19</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news-creators-influencers/2025/mapping-news-creators-and-influencers-social-and-video-networks>

<sup>20</sup> Hanusch, F., & Löhmann, K. (2023). Dimensions of Peripherality in Journalism: A Typology for Studying New Actors in the Journalistic Field. *Digital Journalism*, 11(7), 1292–1310. <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2148549>

<sup>21</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2026>

<sup>22</sup> Hurcombe, E. (2025). Conceptualising the “Newsfluencer”: Intersecting Trajectories in Online Content Creation and Platformised Journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 13(9), 1523–1534. <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/21670811.2024.2397088>