

Resurgence of trust in traditional media

Scandals around fake news and increased conversations on trust have seen trust in journalism for general news and information rise by five per cent in the past year, reaching a seven-year high of 59 per cent.

According to the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer, trust in platforms such as Google and Facebook has fallen by 2 per cent to 51 per cent. This change has created an 8 per cent difference between the two - the biggest gap in seven years.

This difference is even larger in Australia. While 52 per cent of people trust journalism, only 35 per cent trust search and social platforms. The difference of 17 per cent is one of the biggest in the world, equal sixth with France and the UK.

The results mirror Galaxy research commissioned by NewsMediaWorks that showed print news media is more highly trusted for content and advertising than other mediums. Social media was the only media type studied to return a negative trust score.

According to Edelman, Germany has the largest trust gap between journalism and search and social platforms in the world at 21 per cent. While 61 per cent of people trusted journalism, only 40 for search and social platforms.

The result is likely linked to the intense scrutiny these platforms faced from the German government throughout 2017. In light of the country's general elections, which were held last September, [a bill was introduced](#) to fine platforms €50 million if they failed to remove fake news from within 24 hours of identification. The law was passed and became effective January 1, 2018.

Similar platform scrutiny has appeared around the world. In June, the [European Union fined Google a record €2.42](#) billion for anti-trust violations, finding the site's shopping service deliberately demoted competitors. In the US, Facebook, Twitter and Google were ordered to [appear before Congress](#) to answer for foreign agent interference in the 2016 elections.

Australia also started discussions about problematic platforms through the parliamentary inquiry into independent journalism, which is still ongoing.

Truth the battle of 2018

Each year the Edelman Trust Barometer designates a theme to the year ahead and 2018 has been named "The battle of truth".

While the title may sound concerning, it is an improvement upon 2017's dreary outlook of "Trust in crisis".

Across the four institutions the research examines - business, government, media and non-government organisations (NGOs) - there was no recovery in trust from 2017 to 2018. Media sits equal third for trust at 53 per cent for the informed public and 43 per cent for the general populations, on par with government.

The biggest indicator of this is the polarisation of trust, which tracks the number of countries with significant gains and losses in aggregated trust. For the first time since 2013, there has been an even split, with six countries recording gains and six seeing significant losses.

The US witnessed the biggest change, with institutional trust falling 37 per cent. NGOs and business were the two institutions most affected, seeing trust falls of almost 50 per cent.

Australia's overall trust in institutions moved minimally. Forty per cent of the general population trust institutions, compared to 42 per cent in 2017. The informed public's trust has improved by 1 per cent, from 54 per cent in 2017 to 55 percent in 2018.

Lines blur on fake news

A staggering 70 per cent of the global public are concerned about fake news

being used as a weapon, a statistic likely worsened by the blurring of the definitions of media.

When asked what was meant by the phrase “media in general”, 48 per cent of respondents to the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer identified social platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Social came in second to journalists at 89 per cent, with apps from news organisations coming in third at 41 per cent.

This blurring is making it increasingly difficult for news consumers to differentiate real news from fake news. Sixty-three per cent of the general public struggle to tell the difference between journalism and rumour or falsehood, while 59 percent believe it is harder to tell the truth between fake news and that produced by reputable news media sources.

Interested how news media is perceived and trusted in Australia? Want to know why it is the most trusted media platform among consumers? Check out NewsMediaWorks' ADTRUST Study to find out how trustworthy news media can work for you or your clients' brands. [Click here to find out more.](#)