

Consumers, Fake News and Media Trustworthiness | Simmons Research

By Simmons Research

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The news media has taken a very public beating from the White House over the last year and a half. Since he was sworn in, the President has called out a variety of news organizations as biased, failing, fake or worse from his very active Twitter account with his most common targets being CNN (56 times), the New York Times (39 times), the Washington Post (37 times), NBC (30 times), and ABC (20 times). Simmons Research conducted a survey of American adults in order to learn how much Americans at large trust the media, and we are pleased to present the results in this first Simmons News Media Trust Index. We asked respondents to let us know how trustworthy or untrustworthy they found 38 of the largest and most well-known news sources commonly available in the US. News sources included represented a wide variety of mediums, including print, online, radio, and television with many of them operating across platforms.

Based on our study, it is clear that news media is in crisis overall. The average percentage of respondents who rated news sources as trustworthy or very trustworthy was just 40.1% - not a ringing endorsement for journalism in general. Topping the list across all news sources, and the only newspaper in the top five, was the Wall Street Journal with 57.7% of Americans trusting them. The major television network news organizations also fared quite well in our survey, taking the second (ABC 55.9%), third (CBS 55.4%), and sixth (NBC 54.1%) most trusted positions.

Among cable news, the most trusted network in the US was ironically not American. BBC News was trusted by 55.2% of Americans and was the fourth most trusted news source. CNN, which touts itself as the “most trusted name in news,” trailed the list at number 14 with the trust of 46.1% of Americans. Among cable news organizations, CNN was fourth behind BBC News, MSNBC (47.4%), and Bloomberg (46.3%). Fox News followed in 17th place in our survey, with just 44.7% of Americans trusting them.

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