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Significant increase in news avoidance

A survey conducted by the Reuters Institute examines people's news avoidance during the coronavirus pandemic in the UK.

The findings show that there has been a significant increase in news avoidance after an initial surge in news use around coronavirus in the UK.

[Download the report.](#)

Four main findings:

1. 59% avoiding news

22% often or always actively try to avoid the news (up from 15% in mid-April). The number grows to 59% if we include those who say they sometimes actively avoid the news (up from 49%).

2. Significant gender gap

Women (26%) are more likely to avoid news than men (18%).

3. COVID-19 is the main cause

The vast majority of those who always or often avoid news (86%) say they are trying to avoid COVID-19 news at least some of the time.

4. Avoiding the negative flood of news

Most are worried about the effect the news has on their mood (66%), feel there is too much news (33%), or feel there isn't anything they can do with the information (28%).



One in four Norwegians listen to podcasts every day

Statistics Norway has published the findings from their yearly survey of Norwegians media habits.

Some platforms are surging. Others are plummeting dramatically.

[Download the report.](#) (In Norwegian)

Four main findings:

1. One in four listens daily

Podcast-listening in Norway is continuing to increase, now reaching 25% of the adult population daily.

2. For the young and educated

The number of listeners is highest among Norwegians aged 25 to 44 years (32%) and Norwegians with higher education (37%).

3. Numbers for linear-TV are plummeting

Traditional linear-TVs are down to an all-time low, and for the first time, less than half of Norwegians (48%) are watching linear-TV daily (down from 60% in 2018). The numbers include people watching linear-TV on digital platforms.

4. The slow death of print

Now more than twice as many Norwegians read digital news (55%) than printed newspapers (27%) during an average day. And be aware: According to the Norwegian Media Authority, Norwegian media companies last year still had a whopping 70% of their revenue from print newspapers.



Each robot replaces 6.6 jobs

To what extent does automation replace human workers? A new study published in the Journal of Political Economy puts a number on the trend – but it's complicated.

[Find the study here \(\\$\).](#)

Four main findings:

1. Some positive effects

Each robot replaces 6.6 jobs locally, but the effect is 'only' 3.3 for the country as a whole due to the lower cost of goods and different benefits for other industries.

2. The first mover has an advantage

Firms that move quickly to use robots tend to add workers (+10.9%) to their payroll, while industry job losses are more concentrated in firms that make this change more slowly.

3. Manufacturing industries dominating

Four manufacturing industries account for 70% of robots: automakers (38% of robots in use), electronics (15%), the plastics and chemical industry (10%), and metals manufacturers (7%).

4. Europe leads the way

From 1993 to 2007 European firms introduced 1.6 new robots per 1,000 workers. In the US, that number is almost exactly 1.



Yes, fact-checks can reduce the spread of misinformation

Yet another study finds that Facebook is wrong when they claim that fact-checks can increase polarization among users.

But even though numerous studies have debunked this claim (originating from a pre-social media [study](#) from 2010), Facebook still won't believe it.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main trends:

1. No negative impacts

The study finds no negative consequences of labeling misinformation, and no evidence of a 'backfire'-effect.

2. Facts matters

Factual corrections have a powerful effect on factual beliefs among people. The consumption of, and trust in, fact checks are not limited to partisan and ideological lines.

3. No evidence of conservative distrust

Although conservatives and older Americans may consume misinformation at a higher rate than others, they respond to fact-checks by becoming more factually accurate, just as other demographic groups.

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In radio we trust

Video may have killed the radio star, but the trust prevails: when Europeans are to rank institutions and platforms they trust, they point to the army, the police – and the radio.

[Download the report.](#)

Four main findings:

1. Radio most trusted

Radio is the most trusted medium in Europe, scoring highest in 24 of the 33 countries surveyed. Apart from Portugal, the countries where the radio is not most trusted are located in South-Eastern Europe.

2. Regional differences

In the UK (40%), Spain (42%), North Macedonia (46%) and Greece (46%), the majority of citizens do not trust the media. Trust in media is highest in Finland (81%), Albania (81%) and the Netherlands (80%).

3. Social networks least trusted

Social networks are the least trusted media in 28 out of 33 countries surveyed. The exceptions are Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, where they trust the written press the least. Greek citizens have the least trust in TV.

4. Press freedom correlates with trust in radio and TV

The higher the level of trust in a country's radio and TV, the higher press freedom tends to be in that country. The strong correlation suggests that citizens' trust in broadcast media is closely connected with a free and independent media landscape.



Propaganda machine behind COVID 19-engagement

Nearly half of the Twitter accounts discussing 'reopening America' may be bots.

A new study from Carnegie Mellon University has analyzed more than 200 million tweets discussing the coronavirus. The evidence points to a propaganda machine – but the researchers do not know who's operating it.

[Read about the study.](#)

Four main findings:

1. A surge in bot activity

There is registered up to two times as much bot activity during the pandemic as predicted based on previous natural disasters, crises and elections. Of the top 50 influential retweeters, 82% are bots, they found. Of the top 1,000 retweeters, 62% are bots.

2. Spreading misinformation

The bots are systematically spreading misinformation and conspiracies. More than 100 types of inaccurate COVID-19 stories have been identified. Bots are also dominating conversations about ending stay-at-home orders and 'reopening America.'

3. Leads to less rational thinking

The researchers argue that spreading conspiracy theories leads to more extreme opinions, which can lead to more extreme behavior and less rational thinking. In the end, the increased polarization may cause changed voting behavior and hostility towards ethnic groups.

4. Known pattern

Even though they admit the pattern 'definitely matches the Russian and Chinese playbooks': the research team cannot point to specific entities behind the bots.