



Americans' Soaring Distrust of News-Media

Description

On Wednesday, February 15th, CNN headlined “Alarming new study finds half of Americans believe news organizations intend to mislead and misinform with their reporting”, and reported that

On Wednesday, Gallup and the Knight Foundation released their annual report surveying Americans for insights into how they view the press — and the results were grim.

Only 26% of Americans hold a favorable opinion of the news media, Gallup and the Knight Foundation found — the lowest level recorded by the organizations over the last five years.

Perhaps more startling: the report found that 72% of Americans believe national newsrooms are capable of serving the public [the survey question on that was instead:

“In general, most national news organizations have the resources and opportunity to report the news accurately and fairly to the public,” and 72% of respondents agreed with that], *but that they do not believe they’re well intentioned* [and the survey question on that was actually not one but instead two sdeparate questions: “

In general, most national news organizations do not intend to mislead, misinform, or persuade the public”, to which 50% disagreed and 25% agreed; and, “In general, most national news organizations care about the best interests of their readers, viewers, and listeners”, to which 52% disagreed and 23% agreed]. *Only 23% said that they believe national newsrooms care about the best interests of their audiences.*

The actual Knight Foundation Gallup survey showed that Americans trusted commercial network news (ABC, CBS, NBC) the most, and only 17% distrusted them; trust was the second-highest in U.S. national newspapers (NYT, WashPo, WSJ), and only 30% distrusted them; third-highest trusted was public broadcast news (NPR, BBC, PBS), distrusted by only 33%; fourth-most was local newsmedia, distrusted by only 41%; and fifth-most-trusted was Cable news (CNN, Fox News, MSNBC) distrusted by 45%. All other news (the seventh-most-trusted category) was “Other” (presumably online) which was distrusted by 70%.

Consequently: whereas Americans distrust “most national news organizations,” the distrust is mainly of online news; i.e., news that can be verified or disconfirmed by searching online. Americans trust the most the types of news-media that *cannot* embed links to sources, etc. (Perhaps Americans confuse those media with “social media” such as Instagram and Facebook— which likewise are available *only* online.)

The Knight/Gallup survey found that “Sixty-one percent say the increase in information today makes it harder to be well-informed.” Furthermore: “Fifty percent say there is so much bias in the news media that it is often difficult to sort out the facts.” Of course, if the public distrusts the most the news they receive online in a form that can be checked via online searches etc., and if those news-reports predominate among “the incese in information today,” then the public will the most be gtrusting the old news forms: ABC, CBS, NBC, NYT, WashPo, and WSJ. So, the mega-corporate-supplied ‘news’-reports will be the most-trusted.

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