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News Media Attitudes in France

France stands out from other Western European countries for its broad discontent toward the news media. About a third of adults say they trust the news media, including just 4% who say they have a lot of trust

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France stands out from other Western European countries for its broad discontent toward the news media. About a third of adults say they trust the news media, including just 4% who say they have a lot of trust

France's news media habits and political dynamics stand apart from those of other Western European countries in a number of ways, according to a recent [Pew Research Center report](#).

In nationally representative surveys in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, France stands out for its broad discontent toward the news media. About three-in-ten (28%) say the news media's role is very important, which is the lowest among the eight countries surveyed. Trust in the news media is also low, with just 4% of French adults saying they have a lot of trust in the news media. Discontent is especially present among people who hold populist anti-elitist views, along with the younger and more educated.

France is also unique in the relative fragmentation of its news landscape. No more than one-in-five name the same top source for news, and there are substantial divides between those on the ideological left and right over which news outlets they use and which they trust.

Finally, as with all countries studied here, public attitudes toward the news media in France are more divided along populist anti-elitist views than along left-right ideology. However, there are larger differences in the fragmentation of main news sources along left-right ideology than along these populist views. (See Chapter 1 for more on measuring populist anti-elitist views.)

These are some findings that build on a [previously released report](#) of news media attitudes. The findings come from a Pew Research Center survey about news media use and attitudes across eight Western European countries conducted from Oct. 30 to Dec. 20, 2017.

1. Views of the news media in France

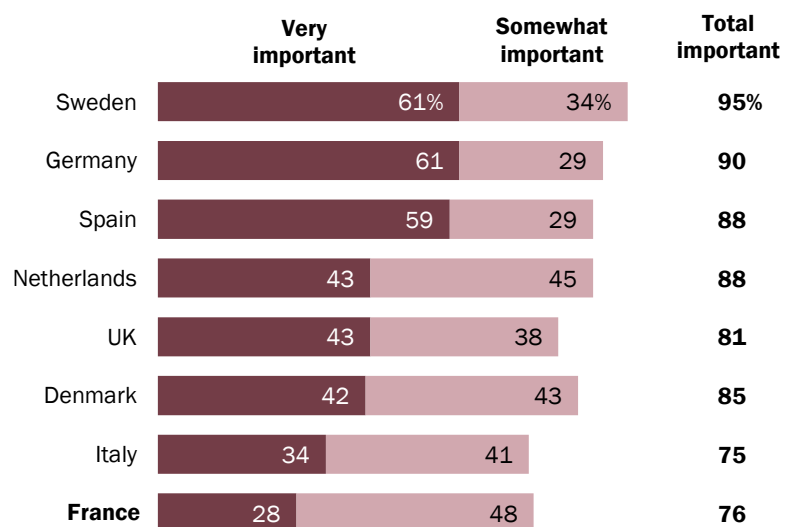
People's trust in and views about the importance of the news media vary considerably by country. In general, people in Northern European countries – for example, Sweden and Germany – are more likely than people in Southern European countries, including France, to say the news media are very important and that they trust the news media.

Across the eight European countries studied, three-quarters or more say the news media are at least somewhat important to the functioning of the country's society. But the share that says the news media's role is *very* important varies significantly.

In France, about a quarter of adults (28%) consider the news media very important to society – the lowest of the eight countries surveyed. Another 48% say the news media are somewhat important to society, for a total of 76% who say the news media are at least somewhat important.

About a quarter in France say news media are very important – the lowest of the eight countries studied

% of adults in each country who say the news media are very/somewhat important to the functioning of the country's society



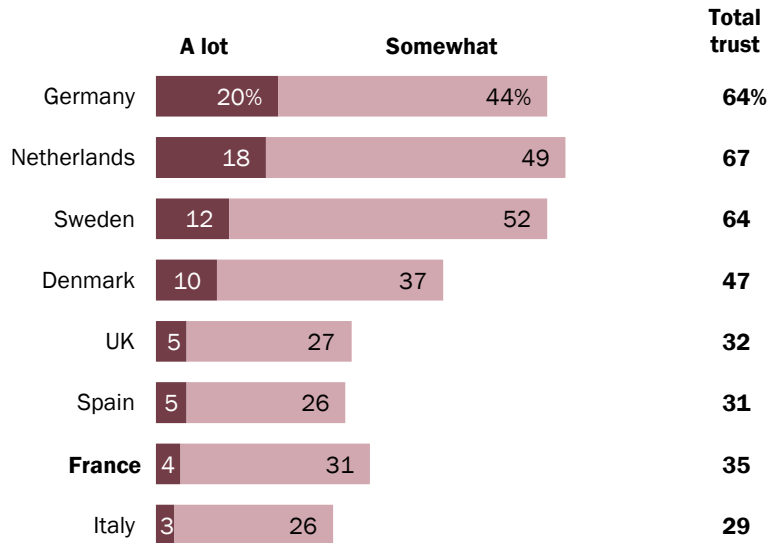
Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Trust in the news media is lower across Western Europe than people's sense of the news media's importance. France has one of the lowest levels of trust of the countries surveyed. About a third of French adults (35%) say they trust the news media at least somewhat, but only 4% say they have *a lot* of trust. This is similar to trust levels in the UK and in other Southern European countries surveyed; trust levels are substantially higher in the Northern European countries.

France is among the countries with the lowest levels of trust in the news media

% of adults in each country who trust the news media a lot/somewhat



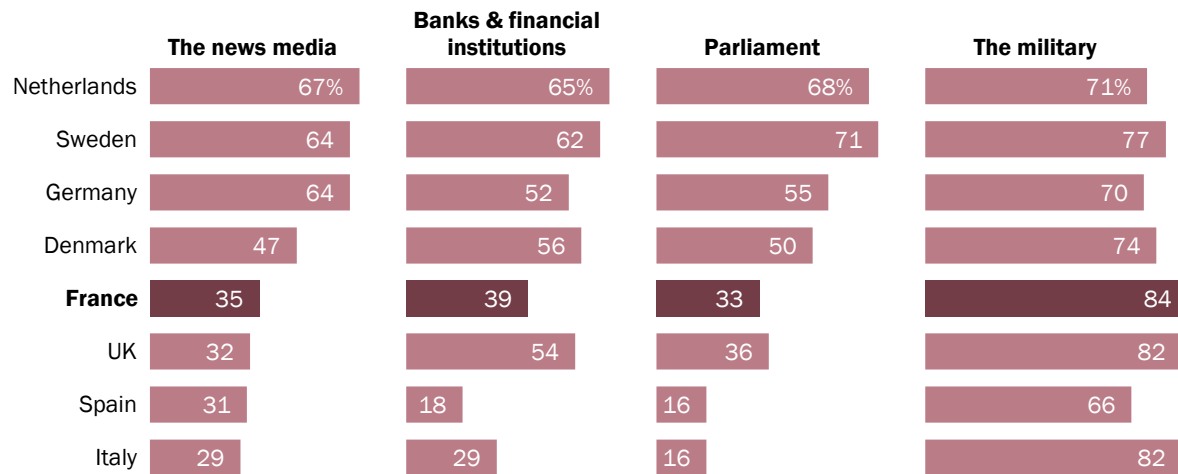
Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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French adults also express lower levels of trust than most other Western Europeans in two other institutions asked about: the national parliament and financial institutions. About four-in-ten or fewer say they trust either institution at least somewhat (33% and 39%, respectively). In contrast, a large majority (84%) say they trust the military at least somewhat.

France and other Southern European countries are less trusting of most institutions

% of adults in each country who trust each institution a lot/somewhat



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
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The French give the news media fairly high ratings on several core functions, but still at levels lower than those in Northern European countries. Among five functions asked about, French adults give the news media lowest marks for being politically neutral in their news coverage, with roughly four-in-ten (43%) saying the news media are doing a somewhat or very good job at this. Far more (73%) say the news media do a good job covering the important stories of the day.

French evaluation of news media's key functions lower than other countries studied

% of adults in each country who say the news media do a *very/somewhat good job* at ...

	Covering all important stories of the day	Investigating the actions of the govt.	Getting the facts right	Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	Being politically neutral in their news coverage
Sweden	85%	73%	70%	63%	59%
Netherlands	82	70	72	68	62
Germany	81	52	59	52	54
Italy	77	42	55	47	36
Denmark	76	69	62	60	53
France	73	51	60	47	43
Spain	71	56	55	52	45
UK	68	51	48	46	37

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
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The survey also asked respondents to assess the news media's coverage of three specific topics – the economy, crime and immigration.

About two-thirds of French adults (66%) say the news media do a somewhat or very good job covering the economy and crime, while a smaller portion (54%) say this about immigration coverage.

The French give the news media overall higher marks compared with other Southern European countries, but still lower compared with northern countries. Across all eight countries, immigration coverage received the lowest rating.

Majority of French adults give the news media high marks on coverage of several important topics

% of adults in each country who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering each topic

	Economy	Crime	Immigration
Sweden	83%	74%	67%
Netherlands	83	82	65
Denmark	80	79	64
Germany	79	54	49
France	66	66	54
UK	65	70	44
Spain	61	65	52
Italy	57	70	52

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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How political identities tie into news media attitudes

In most of the countries surveyed, people who hold populist anti-elitist views are less likely than those who don't hold these views to value and trust the news media. And the differences between these groups are larger than when comparing people on the left and right of the ideological spectrum.

Measuring populist anti-elitist views

Academic studies of populism consistently identify a few key ideas as underlying the concept: The people's will is the main source of government legitimacy; "the people" and "the elite" are two homogenous and antagonistic groups; and "the people" are good, while "the elite" are corrupt (Stanley, 2011; Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Schulz et al., 2017).

The populism measure used throughout this report is based on combining respondents' answers to two questions: 1) "Ordinary people would do a better job/do no better solving the country's problems than elected officials," and 2) "Most elected officials care/don't care what people like me think." Both measures are meant to capture the core ideas that the government should reflect the will of "the people" and that "elites" are an antagonistic group that is out of touch with the demands of "the people." The second measure is a traditional question asked regularly over time on political surveys to measure efficacy and dissatisfaction with government responsiveness. This measure, or ones that are similar, are used by scholars studying populism to capture attitudes about an antagonistic relationship between elites and the people (Stanley, 2011; Spruyt et al., 2016; Schulz et al., 2017).

Those who answered that elected officials don't care about people like them *and* who said ordinary people would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials were considered to hold **populist anti-elitist views**. People who say the reverse – that elected officials care and that ordinary people would do no better – are considered to **not hold populist anti-elitist views**. Everyone else, including people who refuse to answer one or both questions, is considered to hold **mixed views**. In France, 40% of adults hold these populist anti-elitist views, 16% do not hold these views, and the remaining 44% hold mixed views.

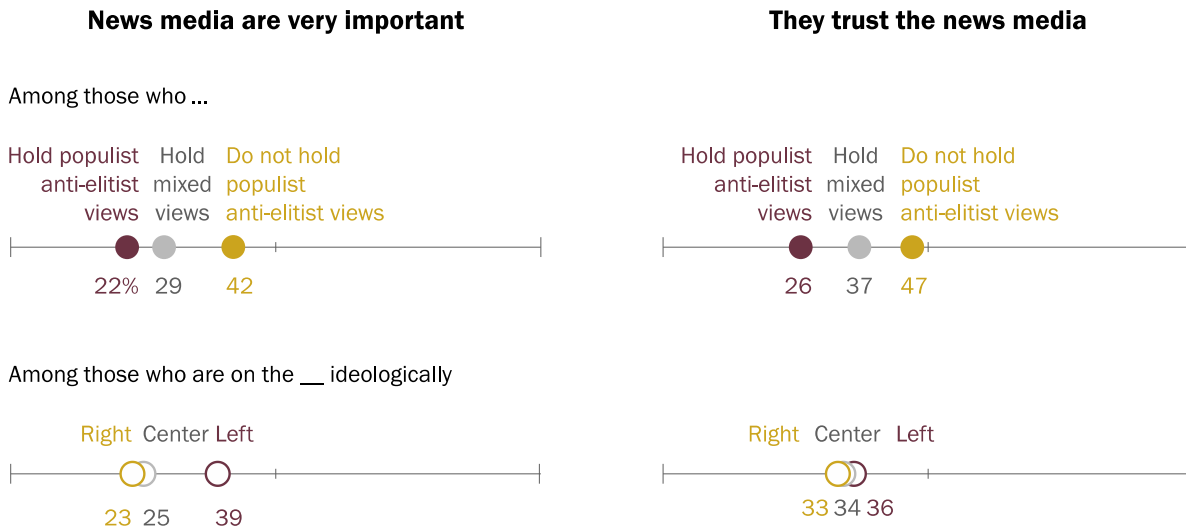
For more information on this measure, see the [Methodology](#) and [References](#) of the report "[In Western Europe, Public Attitudes Toward News Media More Divided by Populist Views Than Left-Right Ideology](#)," which uses the same measure, though phrased as "populist views."

In France, 22% of people with populist anti-elitist views say the news media are very important to society, compared with 42% of those without these views. Regarding trust, 26% of people with these views say they trust the news media at least somewhat, compared with 47% of those without these views.

The sense of media importance in France is also divided by left-right ideology; 39% of those on the left say the news media are very important, compared with 23% of those on the right. There are no differences, however, in trust in the news media between people on the left and right.

In France, trust in the news media differs more by populist anti-elitist views than left-right ideology

% of French adults who say ...



Note: Respondents are classified as holding populist anti-elitist views if they answered: “Most elected officials don’t care what people like me think” and “Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country’s problems than elected officials.” This does not cover all components of populism but focuses on a few key ideas that academic studies of populism consistently identify as underlying the concept – that government should reflect the will of “the people” and that “elites” are an antagonistic group that is out of touch with the demands of “the people.”

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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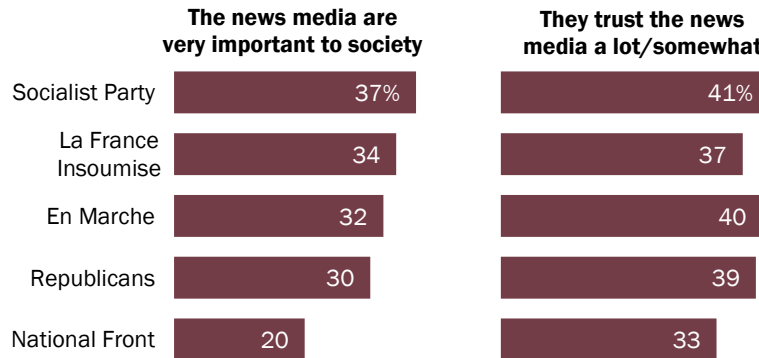
There are differences in news media trust based on political party support, but not nearly at the levels seen around populist anti-elitist views.

French adults with a favorable view of the National Front, for example, stand out as the least likely to trust the news media. Among them, a third say they trust the news media at least somewhat, while about four-in-ten who favor one of the other four parties studied say the same.

Similarly, two-in-ten adults with a favorable view of the National Front say the news media are very important to society, compared with three-in-ten or more of those who have favorable views of other parties.

French adults who view National Front favorably are less likely overall to value and trust the news media

Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who say ...



Note: Only some parties are shown because the report focuses on traditional parties that have led government over the past 25 years and on populist parties.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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People who hold populist anti-elitist views are less likely to give high ratings on five core functions of the news media. For example, there is a 26-percentage-point difference between those with these populist anti-elitist views and those without on whether the news media are doing a good job at investigating the actions of the government, and a 22-point gap on whether news organizations are politically neutral in how they present the news.

Similarly, those who hold populist anti-elitist views tend to be less satisfied with the news media's coverage of three topics – by about 20 percentage points or more for each. The largest gap is in the state of the economy: 58% of those who hold populist anti-elitist views say the news media do a somewhat or very good job in its coverage, versus 84% of those who don't hold these views.

Ratings of news media performance differ by populist anti-elitist views in France

Among French adults who ____, % who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

	Hold populist anti-elitist views	Hold mixed views	Do not hold populist anti-elitist views	DO NOT HOLD- HOLD POPULIST VIEWS DIFF
Investigating the actions of the government	41%	53%	67%	+26
Being politically neutral in their news coverage	36	43	58	+22
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	41	49	58	+17
Covering all important stories of the day	66	75	81	+15
Getting the facts right	57	61	67	+10

Among French adults who ____, % who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

	Hold populist anti-elitist views	Hold mixed views	Do not hold populist anti-elitist views	DO NOT HOLD- HOLD POPULIST VIEWS DIFF
The economy	58	67	84	+26
Immigration	46	55	68	+22
Crime	59	68	80	+21

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**. Respondents are classified as holding populist anti-elitist views if they answered: "Most elected officials don't care what people like me think" and "Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials." This does not cover all components of populism but focuses on a few key ideas that academic studies of populism consistently identify as underlying the concept – that government should reflect the will of "the people" and that "elites" are an antagonistic group that is out of touch with the demands of "the people."

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
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Left-right differences also emerge on these questions, though the differences are not as pronounced as those based along populist anti-elitist views. Overall, French adults on the right are more likely than those on the left to be satisfied with the news media’s performance. For instance, 77% of those on the right say the news media do a somewhat or very good job covering all important stories of the day, while 65% of adults on the left say the same.

Similarly, those on the right are more likely to say the news media do a somewhat or very good job covering immigration and crime – by 9 points and 7 points, respectively. Coverage of the economy, on the other hand, is not significantly divided by left-right ideology.

French adults on the right rate the news media performance more positively than those on the left

% of French adults in each ideological group who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

	Left	Center	Right	RIGHT-LEFT DIFF
Covering all important stories of the day	65%	76%	77%	+12
Being politically neutral in their news coverage	38	44	47	+9
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	43	48	52	+9
Investigating the actions of the government	48	54	53	+5
Getting the facts right	59	61	60	+1

% of French adults in each ideological group who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

Immigration	46	56	55	+9
Crime	63	69	70	+7
The economy	62	68	68	+6

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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When it comes to party support, those who have a favorable view of either of the two populist parties, the National Front and La France Insoumise, generally give lower ratings of news media performance than those who have favorable views of other parties. For instance, at least half of those in favor of the Socialist Party (54%), Republicans (52%) and En Marche (52%) say the news media do a somewhat or very good job being politically neutral in their coverage, while about four-in-ten adults with a favorable view of La France Insoumise (41%) and the National Front (39%) say the same.

Divides between French adults with favorable views of populist and of nonpopulist parties in job evaluation of the news media

Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

	Republicans	Socialist Party	En Marche	National Front	La France Insoumise
Covering all important stories of the day	82%	77%	82%	73%	73%
Getting the facts right	67	70	65	63	66
Investigating the actions of the government	59	61	63	46	52
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	58	55	58	50	46
Being politically neutral in their news coverage	52	54	52	39	41

Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

The economy	75	75	78	61	65
Crime	73	73	73	70	69
Immigration	63	60	61	58	53

Note: Only some parties are shown because the report focuses on traditional parties that have led government over the past 25 years and on populist parties.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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Differences in news media attitudes by social media news use

Heavy social media news consumers – those who get news on social media at least daily – are generally more negative toward the news media’s performance than those who get news on social media less often or those who do not use social media for news.

For each of the three topic areas asked about, coverage ratings are 8 percentage points lower among these heavy social media news consumers than among those who do not use social media as often or ever for news. And when it comes to the five core functions, those who often get news on social media again give lower marks on two measures – being politically neutral in their news coverage and investigating the actions of the government.

Despite more negative views of the news media’s performance, those who often get news on social media are more likely to value the news media. Eight-in-ten heavy social media news consumers say the news media’s role is somewhat or very important, compared with 74% of those who get social media news less often or never.

Heavy social media news consumers are more negative toward the news media's performance in France

Among French adults who get news on social media at each rate, % who ...

	At least daily	Less often or never	AT LEAST DAILY-LESS OFTEN DIFF
Think the news media are very/somewhat important to society	80%	74%	+6
Trust the news media a lot/somewhat	33	35	-2

Among French adults who get news on social media at each rate, % who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

Being politically neutral in their news coverage	35	46	-11
Investigating the actions of the government	46	53	-7
Getting the facts right	56	62	-6
Covering all important stories of the day	70	74	-4
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	45	48	-3

Among French adults who get news on social media at each rate, % who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

The economy	61	69	-8
Crime	61	69	-8
Immigration	48	56	-8

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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Differences in news media attitudes by age and education

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to think the news media are important to society, but they also give them lower ratings on performance measures. For instance, 77% of adults ages 50 and older say the news media do a somewhat or very good job of covering all important stories of the day, while 66% of adults ages 18 to 29 say the same. The largest gap between the youngest and oldest groups is in whether the news media are politically neutral in their news coverage – a 16-percentage-point difference. Additionally, younger adults are less likely to give good ratings to news organizations’ coverage of two of the three topics asked: crime and immigration (by 20 points and 18 points, respectively).

In France, younger adults give the news media lower ratings on performance measures than older adults

Among French adults in each age group, % who ...

	Ages 18-29	30-49	50+	YOUNGEST- OLDEST DIFF
Think the news media are very important to society	37%	30%	24%	+13
Trust the news media a lot/somewhat	37	34	34	+3

Among French adults in each age group, % who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

Being politically neutral in their news coverage	32	40	48	-16
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	39	44	52	-13
Covering all important stories of the day	66	69	77	-11
Getting the facts right	57	55	65	-8
Investigating the actions of the government	48	47	54	-6

Among French adults in each age group, % who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

Crime	53	64	73	-20
Immigration	41	51	59	-18
The economy	66	61	71	-5

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
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There is a similar narrative when looking at differences by education. Overall, French adults with high levels of education are more likely than those with lower levels to say the news media are important to society, but less likely to think news organizations are doing a good job.

Roughly eight-in-ten adults with more than a secondary education (82%) say the news media are very or somewhat important to the functioning of society, compared with about three-quarters of adults with a secondary education or less (73%). The more educated, however, are less likely to say the news media are doing a very or somewhat good job in four out of the five core functions, and they are similarly less approving of the news coverage of two topics – crime and immigration.¹

More educated adults more likely than those with lower levels to say news media are important, less likely to be satisfied with news organizations' performance

% of French adults at each education level who ...

	Secondary or less	More than secondary	MORE-LESS EDUCATION DIFF
Think the news media are very/somewhat important to society	73%	82%	+9
Trust the news media a lot/somewhat	34	35	+1

% of French adults at each education level who say the news media are doing a very/somewhat good job at ...

Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	51	37	-14
Getting the facts right	64	52	-12
Being politically neutral in their news coverage	46	35	-11
Covering all important stories of the day	75	66	-9
Investigating the actions of the government	52	48	-4

% of French adults at each education level who say the news media do a very/somewhat good job covering ...

Crime	70	57	-13
Immigration	56	45	-11
The economy	66	67	+1

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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¹ For more demographic breakdowns, see [Appendix A](#).

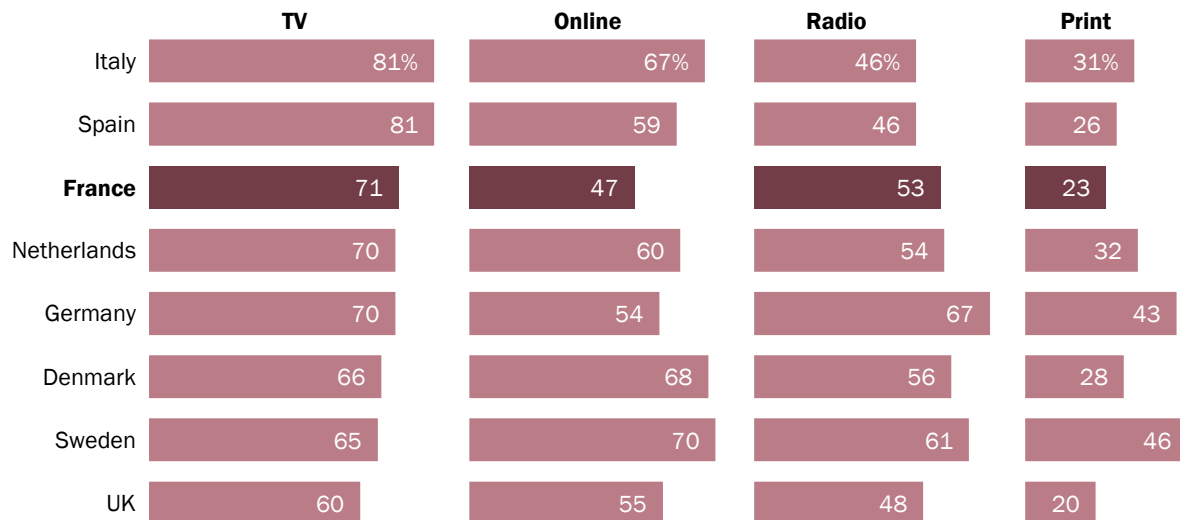
2. Platforms used for news

Among four platforms asked about – TV, radio, online and print – TV is often the most popular for news: Six-in-ten adults or more in each country studied (including as many as 81%) get news there at least daily.

France similarly has a large portion of adults (71%) who get news daily from TV. Radio is the second most popular news platform used daily (53%). Online news use is comparatively low in France: About half (47%) get news daily from online sources, compared with about six-in-ten or more in most other Western European countries. Print media is the least popular platform, with about a quarter of French adults (23%) reading print news sources daily.

TV ranks first for getting news daily in France

% of adults in each country who get news at least daily from ...



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
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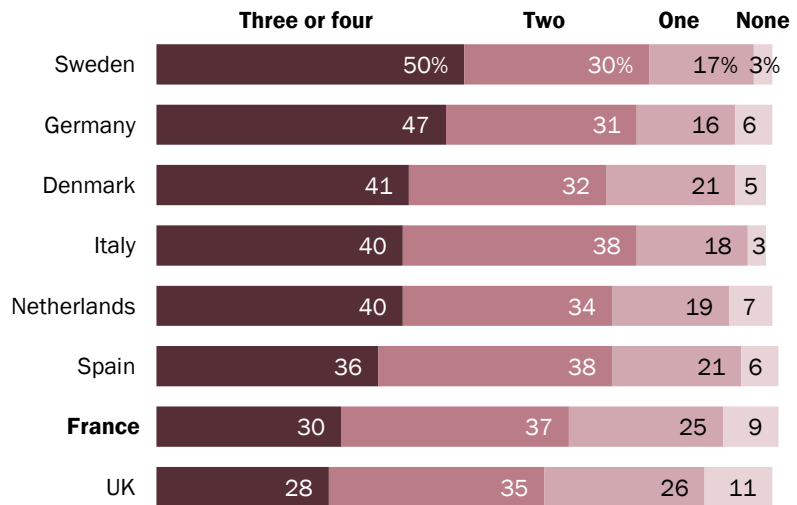
While TV is most popular, many Western Europeans use multiple platforms every day to get news. In the eight countries surveyed, majorities use at least two of the four platforms daily. And in some countries, about half get news this frequently on three or four.

French adults are less likely than adults in most other countries surveyed to regularly use multiple platforms for news. While a majority of French adults get news daily from at least two platforms (67%), three-in-ten regularly use three or four platforms, which is lower than most of the other countries surveyed.

A quarter of French adults get news daily from just one platform. This group of single-platform news consumers is primarily made up of people who get news at least daily from TV (52%), while some use online sources (25%) and the radio (21%) and very few get news only from print sources.

Fewer French adults turn to multiple platforms daily, compared with most other European adults

% of adults in each country who get news at least daily from ___ of the four platforms



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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News platforms used by age, education and income

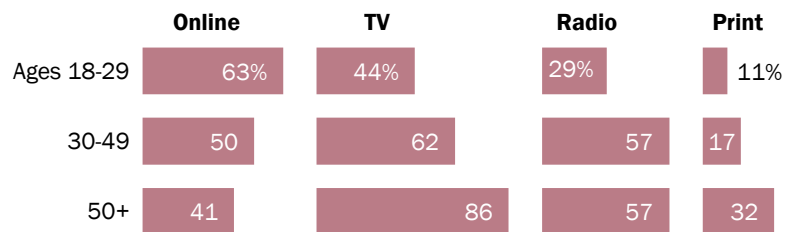
Overall, younger adults in France are more likely to get their news online than from other legacy platforms like TV, newspapers or radio. In contrast, older adults are more likely to get their news through non-digital platforms.

Around six-in-ten of those ages 18 to 29 (63%) get news from online sources every day, compared with 41% of those ages 50 and older. On the other hand, nearly nine-in-ten adults ages 50 and older (86%) get news from TV at least daily, compared with less than half (44%) of those ages 18 to 29.

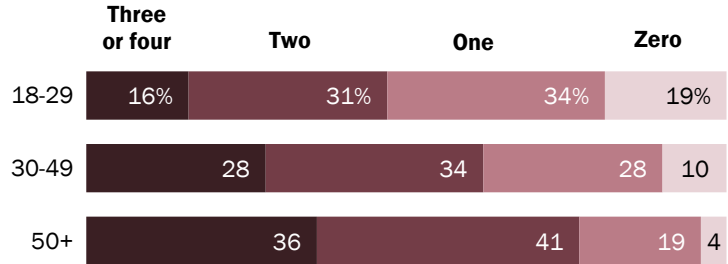
Older adults are also more likely than younger adults to get news daily from more platforms. About a third of those 50 and older (36%) get news at least daily from three or four platforms, compared with 28% of adults ages 30 to 49 and 16% of adults ages 18 to 29.

Older French adults are more likely than younger adults to get news from non-digital sources

% of French adults in each age group who get news at least daily from ...



% of French adults in each age group who get news at least daily from ___ of the four platforms



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

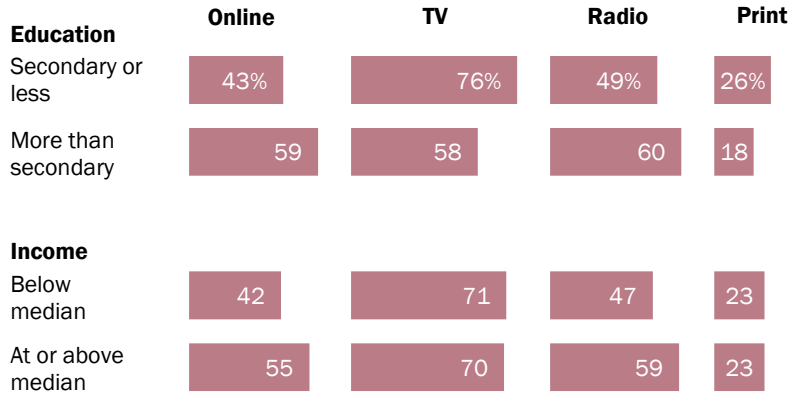
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Differences also emerge based on education and income. Among those with a secondary education or less, the most common source for news is TV, with 76% getting news there at least daily. In contrast, those with more than a secondary education are about equally likely to get news from TV (58%), the radio (60%) and online sources (59%). Those with a secondary education or less are also more likely than those with high education levels to get news from print sources (26% and 18%, respectively).

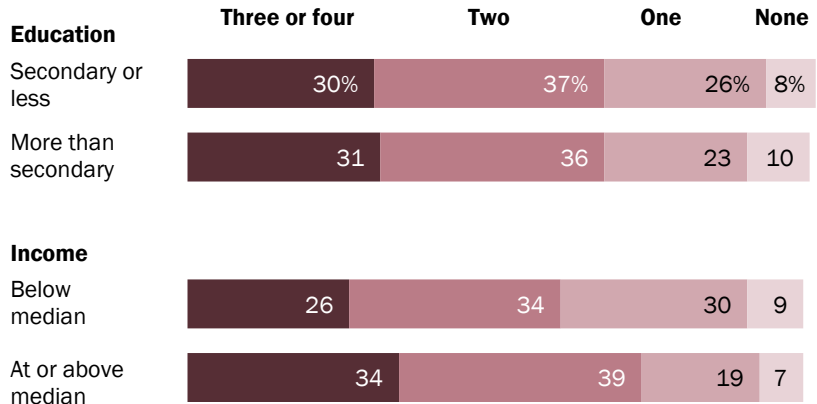
When looking at differences by income, French adults with an income at or above the median are about as likely as those with a below-median income to get news daily from TV and print sources. Higher-earning adults, however, are more likely to get news daily from the radio or online sources. As a result, about a third of adults earning a higher income (34%) get news at least daily from three or four platforms, compared with about a quarter of those with an income below the median (26%).

Platforms used regularly for news differ by education and income level in France

% of French adults at each education and income level who get news at least daily from ...



% of French adults at each education and income level who get news at least daily from ___ of the four platforms



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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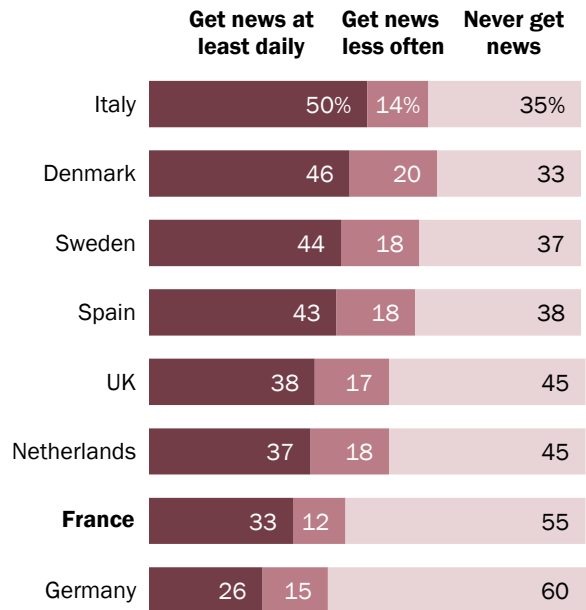
3. The role of social media in news

Within the online space, many Western Europeans get news through social media. Facebook is by far the most commonly used social media site for news.

Compared with other Western European countries, getting news from social media is less common in France. Fewer than half of French adults (45%) get news from social media sites, while 55% never get news there.

A third of French adults get news daily from social media

% of adults in each country who ___ from social media



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

"News Media Attitudes in France"

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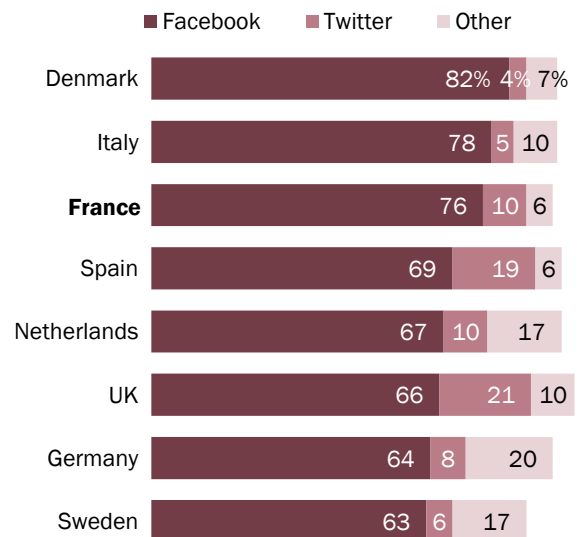
Facebook is the most common social network used for news across Western Europe, including in France. About three-quarters of social media news consumers in France (76%) cite Facebook as the social network they get news from most often.

Facebook is followed distantly by Twitter, which is cited by one-in-ten social media news consumers in France as the social media site they use most often for news.

In a separate question that asked individuals to volunteer the outlet they use as their main source for news, 4% of French adults name Facebook as that source, speaking further to its prominence.

Facebook is the top social media site for news in Western Europe, including France

% of social media news consumers in each country who use each social media site most often for news



Note: "Other" includes social media sites mentioned by 5% or less of respondents. Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

"News Media Attitudes in France"

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About half or more social media news consumers in each of the eight countries surveyed say they are familiar with the sources they see on social media. Still, sizable minorities say they typically do not pay attention to the sources of news they encounter there.

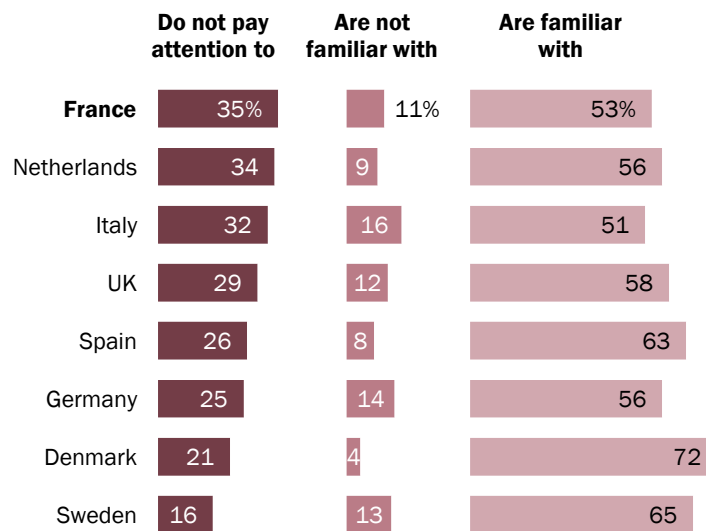
Among the countries surveyed, France has the highest share of social media news consumers – 35% – who say they do not pay attention to the sources of news they see on social media. About half (53%) say they are familiar with the news sources they find on these sites, and only 11% say they are unfamiliar with them.

Looking deeper into these responses, the frequency of social media news use connects to the likelihood of recognizing familiar sources. Those who get news from social media at least daily are more likely than those who get news from these sites less often to be familiar with the news sources they see there.

This is true in all eight countries, with differences in France among the largest. More than half of daily social media news consumers in France (58%) say they are familiar with the news sources they encounter there, compared with 38% of less frequent consumers.

About a third of French adults who get news on social media don't pay attention to the sources of news there

% of social media news consumers in each country who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...



Note: "Don't know" responses not shown. Question asked: "In general, does most of the news you see on social media come from news sources you are familiar with, sources you are not familiar with, or do you not pay attention to the sources?"

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

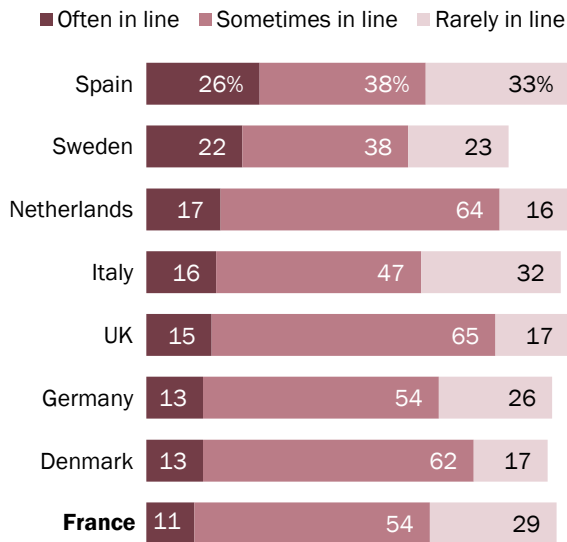
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Most people are exposed to a variety of political views on social media. Across all eight nations surveyed, solid majorities of social media news consumers say the news they see on social media is rarely or only sometimes in line with their own political views. France is among the highest, at 83%. Conversely, about one-in-ten social media news consumers in France (11%) say the news they see on these sites is often in line with their political views.

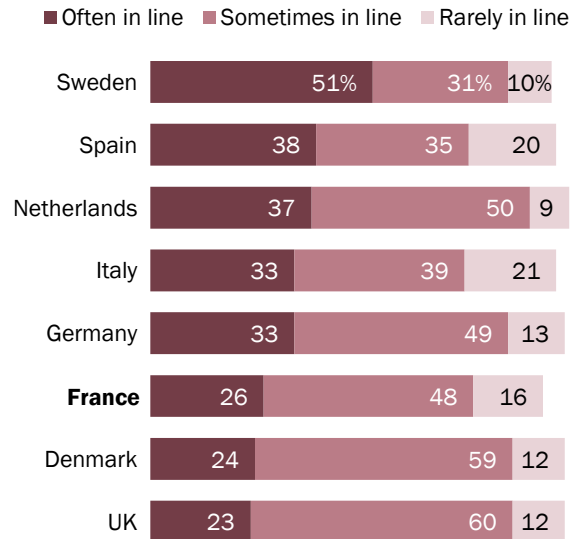
The “echo chamber” effect is more common when it comes to personal discussions about the news: About a quarter of French adults (26%) say the views they hear in personal discussions are often in line with their own.

News on social media less likely to reflect one’s own political views than news in conversations with friends

Social media
 % of social media news consumers in each country who say that the news they see on social media is ___ with their own political views



Personal discussion
 % of adults in each country who say that when talking about the news with friends, they find that their friends’ views are ___ with their own political views



Note: Those who don’t discuss news with friends and “Don’t know” responses are not shown.
 Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
 “News Media Attitudes in France”

Social media news habits by age and education

Younger people tend to be more avid social media news consumers than their elders. This is especially the case in France. Roughly seven-in-ten 18- to 29-year-olds (69%) get news from social media every day, while 38% of those ages 30 to 49 and an even smaller portion of those 50 and older (17%) do the same – a 52-percentage-point gap between the youngest and oldest age groups.

Younger social media news consumers are also more likely to be familiar with the news sources they see on these sites. Six-in-ten adults ages 18 to 29 who get news from social media say that most of the news they encounter there comes from sources with which they are familiar, compared with 43% of those 50 and older. On the other hand, older social media news consumers are more likely to say that they do not pay attention to these news sources. Among social media news consumers ages 50 and older, 44% say they do not pay attention to news sources on these sites, while about a quarter of social media news consumers ages 18 to 29 (28%) say the same.

In France, younger adults are more likely to get news from social media

Among French adults in each age group, % who get news from social media ...

	Ages 18-29	30-49	50+
At least daily	69%	38%	17%
Less often	14	17	9
Never	16	46	73

Among French social media news consumers in each age group, % who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...

Are familiar with	60	54	43
Are not familiar with	12	10	11
Do not pay attention to	28	34	44

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

"News Media Attitudes in France"

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The frequency of and attitudes around social media news use also differ by education. Among French adults with more than a secondary education, 44% get news at least daily from social media, compared with 29% of adults with a secondary education or less.

Among social media news consumers, those with higher levels of education are more likely than those with lower levels of education to say that most of the social media news they encounter comes from sources that are familiar to them (64% and 46%, respectively). In contrast, those with lower education levels are more likely to say they do not pay attention to the news sources on social media (42%) than those with more education (24%).

French adults with higher education are more likely to use social media for news

Among French adults at each education level, % who get news from social media ...

	Secondary education or less	More than secondary education
At least daily	29%	44%
Less often	12	14
Never	59	43

Among French social media news consumers at each education level, % who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...

Are familiar with	46	64
Are not familiar with	11	10
Do not pay attention to	42	24

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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4. Main sources used for news in France

When asked which news source people turn to most frequently, those most commonly mentioned are TF1 (16%), BFM (15%) and France Télévisions/France TV (15%). No other outlet was named by more than 6% of the public.

The French tend to be more fragmented in their main news sources than publics in other parts of Western Europe. Fewer than two-in-ten French adults name the same main news source, while at least three-in-ten adults in five of the eight countries surveyed share the same main source. For example, 48% in the UK name BBC, 39% in Sweden name Sveriges Television/Radio (SVT/Radio) and 37% in the Netherlands name Nederlandse Publieke Omroep (NPO) as their main source for news.

Top main news sources among the French

% of French adults who name each outlet as their main news source

TF1	16%
BFM	15
France TV	15
Le Monde	6
Radio France	6
Facebook	4
M6	3
Google	3

Note: Only sources named by 3% of adults or more are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news sources.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Main news source by political identity

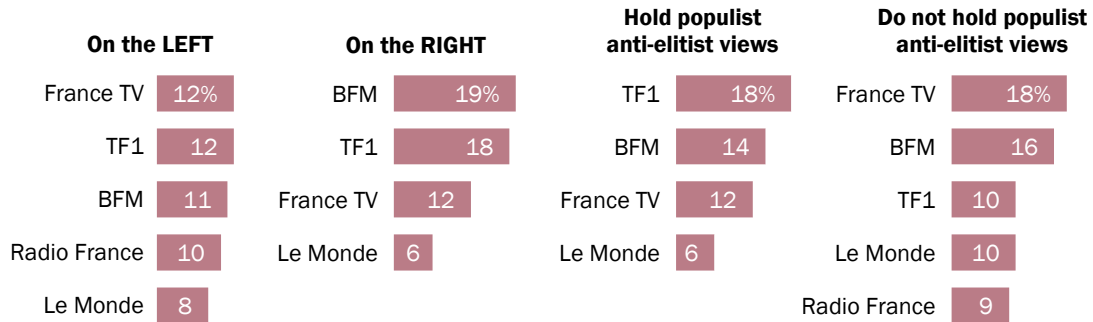
The source turned to most for news differs between French adults who are on the ideological left and the right. Among those on the right, BFM and TF1 are the most cited main news sources, while people on the left most often name TF1 and France TV. Overall, French adults on the left are somewhat more fragmented in their main news source, collectively naming a greater variety of sources than those on the right. Among adults on the right, BFM and TF1 are named by 19% and 18%, respectively, while the two most cited sources by those on the left only garner 12% each.

Main news source preference is also divided by populist anti-elitist views. Among people who hold these populist views, TF1 is the most cited main news source (18%), while people without these views most often name France TV (18%).²

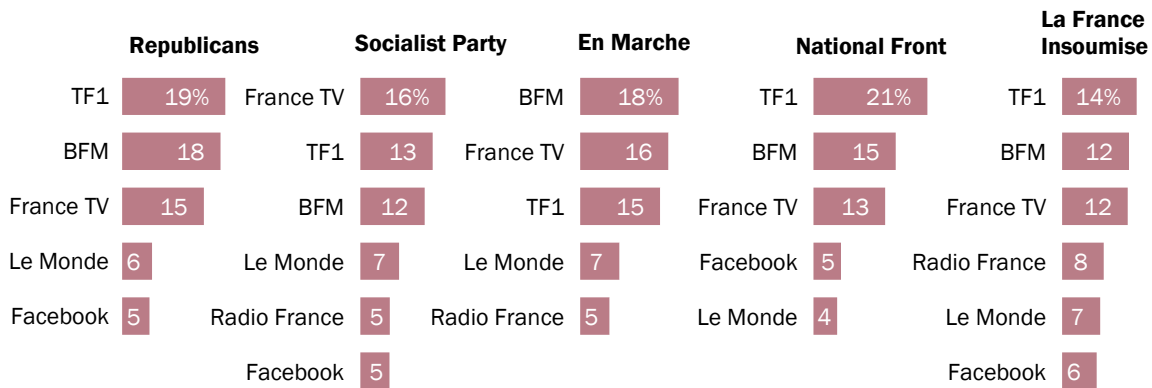
² Similar differences emerge along party support, which can be found in Appendix A, along with data on other demographic groups.

In France, main news source varies by political identities

% of French adults who name each outlet as their main news source



Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who name each outlet as their main news source



Note: Only sources named by 5% of adults or more in each group are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news sources. Respondents are classified as holding populist anti-elitist views if they answered: "Most elected officials don't care what people like me think" and "Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials." This does not cover all components of populism but focuses on a few key ideas that academic studies of populism consistently identify as underlying the concept – that government should reflect the will of "the people" and that "elites" are an antagonistic group that is out of touch with the demands of "the people." Only some parties are shown because the report focuses on traditional parties that have led government over the past 25 years and on populist parties. Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Main news source by age and education

There are also differences in the main news source cited by adults in each age group. Among those ages 18 to 29, Le Monde is the most commonly cited source, while those ages 30 to 49 most often name BFM. Among those 50 and older, France TV – the country’s public media – is the most cited.

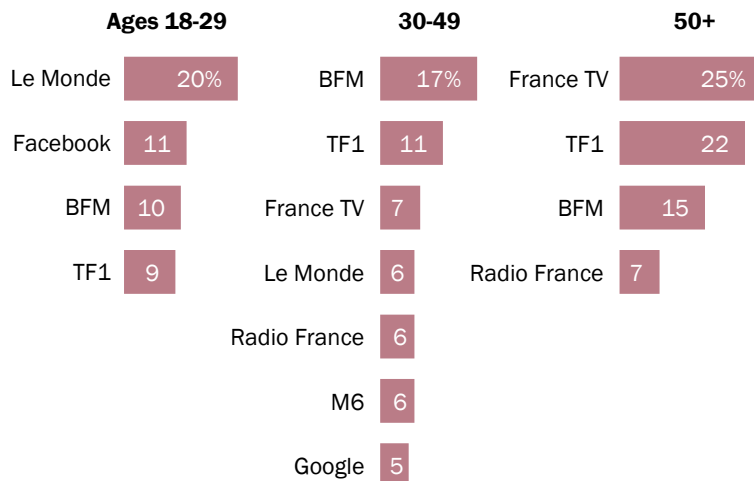
Overall, France TV is cited as a main news source by older adults more than the young. While a quarter of those in the oldest age group say they turn to France TV most frequently, only 7% of adults ages 30 to 49 and 3% of those 18 to 29 say the same.

Additionally, younger adults are slightly more fragmented than older adults in their main news source. While nearly half of adults ages 50 and older (47%) name one of the top two main news sources (France TV and TF1), a smaller portion of adults ages 18 to 29 (31%) and 30 to 49 (28%) concentrate around their top two main news sources.

Furthermore, adults ages 30 to 49 name a larger mix of main news sources, as seven are mentioned by 5% or more in this age group.

Different mix of main news sources cited by French adults in each age group

% of French adults in each age group who name each outlet as their main news source



Note: Only sources named by 5% of adults or more in each group are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news sources.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

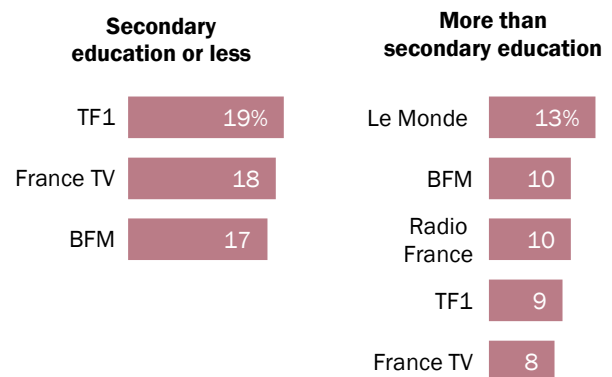
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Main news sources also vary by education levels. Those with more than a secondary education collectively name a larger mix of main news sources than those with a secondary education or less.

Among those with high education levels, Le Monde is at the top, cited by 13%, along with four other outlets that were named by 5% or more in this group. In contrast, those with lower education levels are more concentrated, collectively citing only three outlets above the 5% threshold. At the top is TF1, mentioned by 19% of adults with a secondary education or less, followed closely by France TV (18%) and BFM (17%).

French adults with more education tend to name a larger mix of main news sources

% of French adults at each education level who name each outlet as their main news source



Note: Only sources named by 5% of adults or more in each group are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news sources.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

"News Media Attitudes in France"

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5. Where users place outlets' ideologies

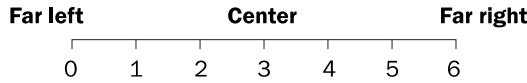
Another way to examine attitudes across news media outlets is to look at the relationship between the ideological profile of an outlet's audience and where people think it falls on a left-right ideological scale. To do this, the study asked respondents who have heard of the outlets where they think each falls on the left-right ideological scale used in this study, where 0 represents the far left and 6 represents the far right.

Across the eight countries surveyed, people who get news from an outlet tend to think it is closer to their own left-right ideological position. In France, news users on either the right or left tend to place three outlets closer to their own ideology: the public television channel France 2, the 24-hour TV news channel BFM and the newspaper Le Monde. Right-aligned and left-aligned news users, however, generally agree on the ideological placement of the TV channel TF1.³

³ Le Figaro, Libération, L'Express and Mediapart are not included in this analysis, because they did not have a large enough sample of left or right users to analyze.

Ideological placement of news outlets in France

Users of each outlet were asked to place the outlet on a left-right scale



% of users on the left and right who place the outlet at position ...

TF1

66% of adults use this outlet at least once a week

PLACEMENT BY:

	0-2	3	4-6
Users on the left	13%	20	59
Users on the right	7%	17	67

Left users and right users are NOT different in their placement of this outlet

BFM

60% of adults use this outlet at least once a week

	0-2	3	4-6
Users on the left	17%	33	41
Users on the right	8%	33	47

Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

France 2

65% of adults use this outlet at least once a week

	0-2	3	4-6
Users on the left	22%	41	33
Users on the right	19%	26	45

Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

Le Monde

28% of adults use this outlet at least once a week

	0-2	3	4-6
Users on the left	31%	41	25
Users on the right	13%	25	51

Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

Note: Some outlets are not included because their audience sample sizes are too small to analyze. Left and right users' outlet placements are considered different if the percentage of left and right users that place the outlet on the left (from 0 to 2), on the right (from 4 to 6), or both are significantly different. The survey asked respondents a series of questions about eight specific outlets in their country, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. Therefore, the outlets listed here may differ from the main news source outlets analyzed. For example, in France, the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

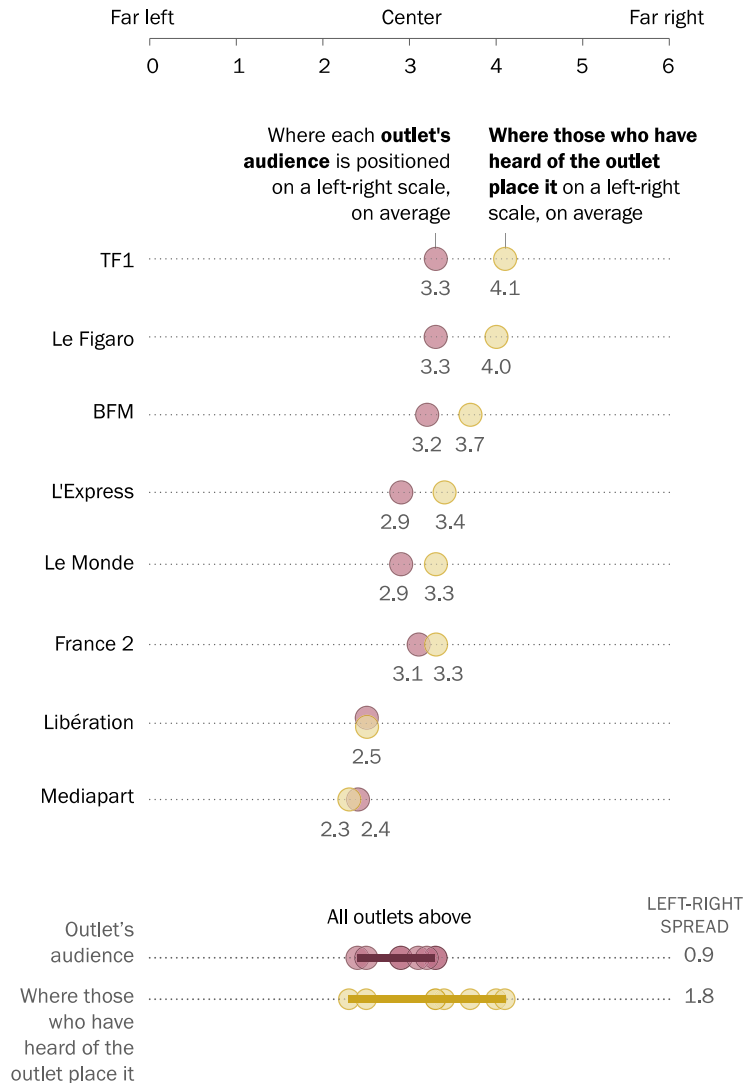
Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

In general, where the public places an outlet tends to differ from where the average audience actually sits ideologically. For each of the news outlets asked about in the survey, the average audience (based on self-reported usage) tends to fall near the ideological center. People who have heard of the outlet, however, tend to place the outlet either farther to the left or farther to the right than the actual ideological position of the outlet's audience.

France is no exception; for most outlets, while their news audiences are near the ideological center, people who have heard of the outlets tend to think they lean slightly more to the right. TF1, for example, has an audience that sits at about the middle of the left-right spectrum (3.3 on the 0-to-6 scale), but when asked to place the outlet on the same left-right scale, people who have heard of it place the outlet farther to the right (at 4.1).

People tend to think outlets in France are more partisan than their average audiences' ideologies

Mean placement of each outlet's audience on a 0-to-6 left-right scale compared with where those who have heard of the outlet place it on that same scale



Note: An outlet's audience is defined as respondents who say they get news regularly from that outlet. The survey asked respondents a series of questions about eight specific outlets in their country, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. Therefore, the outlets listed here may differ from the main news source outlets analyzed. For example, in France, the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions. Left-right spread is the difference between the outlet farthest to the left and the outlet farthest to the right.

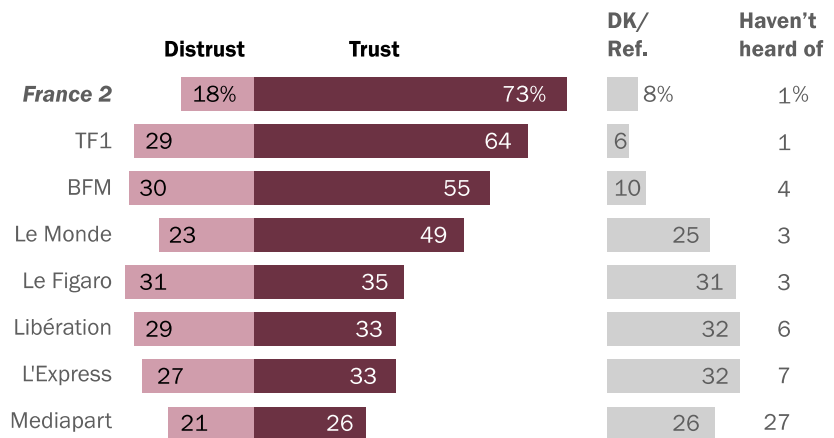
Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

6. Trust in specific news outlets in France

In seven of the eight countries surveyed, the public news organization is the most trusted news outlet asked about in each country. This is the case in France, where a large majority of French adults (73%) say they trust the public broadcaster France 2.

In France, the public displays high levels of trust in their public news organization

% of French adults who generally trust or distrust each news outlet



Note: People who said they had not heard of an outlet or refused to respond to the question about whether they get news from an outlet are grouped under "Haven't heard of" here. Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. The survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions. Public broadcaster is in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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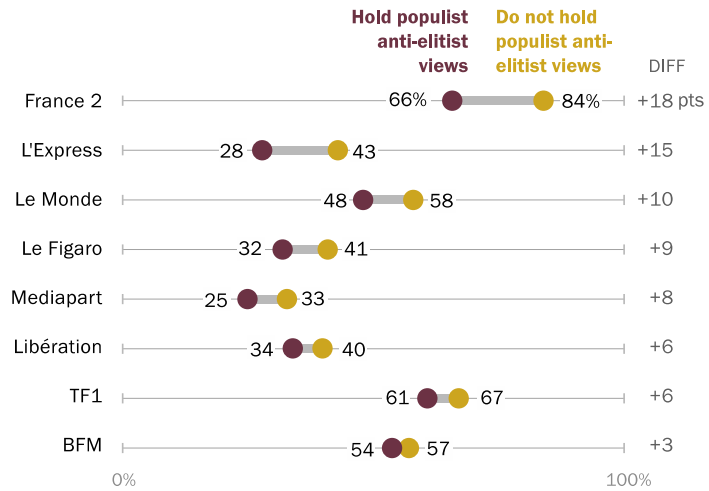
Some variations in trust in specific outlets, based on political identities

As with trust in the news media generally, trust in specific outlets varies by populist leanings, with those who hold populist anti-elitist views expressing lower levels of trust than those who don't.

In France, those with populist anti-elitist views are 18 percentage points less likely than those without these views to say they trust the public news organization France 2. Trust is also divided along the left-right ideological spectrum – those who place themselves on the left of the 0-to-6 ideological scale are 25 points less likely than people on the right to trust the private news broadcaster TF1.

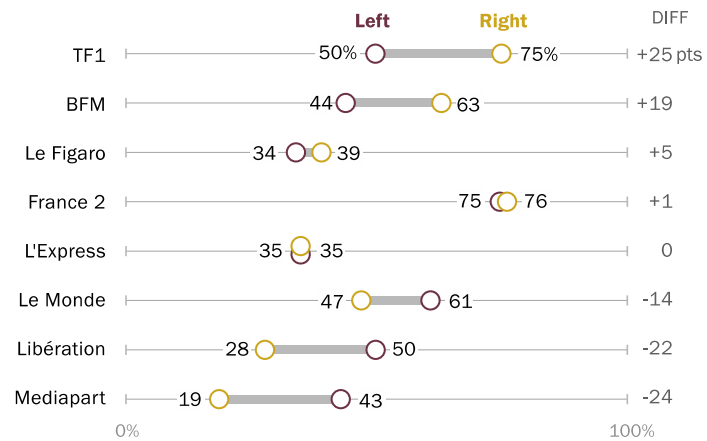
In France, those with populist anti-elitist views tend to trust news outlets less than those without such views

Among French adults who ____, % who generally trust each news outlet



Trust is also divided along the left-right spectrum

% of French adults in each ideological group who generally trust each news outlet



Note: Respondents are classified as holding populist anti-elitist views if they answered: “Most elected officials don’t care what people like me think” and “Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country’s problems than elected officials.” This does not cover all components of populism but focuses on a few key ideas that academic studies of populism consistently identify as underlying the concept – that government should reflect the will of “the people” and that “elites” are an antagonistic group that is out of touch with the demands of “the people.” Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. The survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. “News Media Attitudes in France”

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Differences along party support are in line with differences based on ideology. Those who view parties on the right favorably have higher levels of trust in TF1 and BFM. French adults who favor parties on the left are especially trusting of Le Monde and Libération.

Trust in specific news outlets also varies based on political party favorability. Among the eight outlets asked, France 2 garners the widest support, with 73% or more of those who favor each party saying they trust the outlet. In contrast, Libération, a daily newspaper in France, is trusted at far lower rates, with no more than 45% of those with a favorable view of any party saying they trust this outlet.

Differences also emerge between parties, the largest occurring between the two populist parties: 45% of those with a favorable view of La France Insoumise say they trust Libération, compared with 27% of people with a favorable view of the National Front – an 18-point difference.

France 2 garners widest support among those who are favorable of each party

Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who generally trust each news outlet

	Republicans	Socialist Party	En Marche	National Front	La France Insoumise
France 2	77%	80%	82%	73%	73%
TF1	77	64	70	75	61
BFM	62	56	61	63	52
Le Monde	53	58	59	42	56
Le Figaro	47	41	43	37	38
L'Express	40	39	41	33	36
Libération	32	44	39	27	45
Mediapart	17	28	30	14	36

Note: Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. The survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions. Only some parties are shown because the report focuses on traditional parties that have led government over the past 25 years and on populist parties.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Trust in news media outlets by age and education

While trust in the overall news media is quite low among all age groups in France, this is not necessarily the case when it comes to trust in certain outlets. Among the eight outlets asked about in France, both France 2 and TF1 stand out as having high levels of trust across all ages, with 59% or more of adults in each age group saying they trust these outlets.

When it comes to trust in other outlets, however, the differences between age groups are notable. For example, those ages 18 to 29

are more likely than those ages 50 and older to trust each of the four print news outlets asked about – Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération and L’Express – and these gaps in trust are quite substantial. Younger adults are at least 14 percentage points more trusting of each of these sources than those 50 and older. In the case of Le Monde, there is a 35-point gap in trust; about three-quarters of those under 30 (73%) trust the outlet, compared with roughly four-in-ten of those 50 and older (38%).

Younger adults more likely than older adults to trust each of the four print outlets asked about in France

% of French adults in each age group who generally trust each news outlet

	Ages 18-29	30-49	50+	YOUNGEST- OLDEST DIFF
Le Monde	73%	55%	38%	+35
Le Figaro	53	38	28	+25
Libération	46	39	26	+20
L’Express	43	35	29	+14
Mediapart	30	29	22	+8
France 2	71	70	76	- 5
TF1	62	59	68	- 6
BFM	49	57	56	- 7

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**. Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. The survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. “News Media Attitudes in France”

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Trust levels in specific news media outlets also differ across education levels. Those with high levels of education are more likely than those with lower education levels to trust each of the four print news outlets included in the survey. And among the four, Le Monde stands out for having the largest gap, with those having a higher level of education being 31 percentage points more trusting of the outlet than those with less education.

In France, those with more education tend to trust print news outlets more than those with lower levels

% of French adults at each education level who generally trust each news outlet

	Secondary education or less	More than secondary education	MORE-LESS EDUCATION DIFF
Le Monde	40%	71%	+31
Mediapart	19	42	+23
Libération	27	49	+22
L'Express	27	47	+20
Le Figaro	30	47	+17
France 2	73	75	+2
BFM	57	50	-7
TF1	68	55	-13

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**. Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. The survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Of the three television outlets asked about – France 2, TF1 and BFM – both TF1 and BFM are trusted at higher rates among those with lower levels of education than those with higher levels. France 2, on the other hand, is trusted by majorities in both education groups.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at: [pewresearch.org/journalism](https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism) and [pewresearch.org/global](https://www.pewresearch.org/global).

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Methodology

About Pew Research Center's fall 2017 survey

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of SSRS and GfK. The results are based on national samples. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are [available here](#).

[General information on international survey research](#)

Appendix: Detailed tables

Views of the news media by income

% of French adults at each income level who ...

	Below median	At or above median
Think the news media are very important to society	28%	29%
Trust the news media a lot/somewhat	36	31

*% of French adults at each income level who say the news media are doing a
very/somewhat good job at ...*

Covering all important stories of the day	74	71
Getting the facts right	65	54
Investigating the actions of the government	52	49
Providing coverage independent of corporate influence	50	43
Being politically neutral in their news coverage	46	40

*% of French adults at each income level who say the news media do a
very/somewhat good job covering ...*

Crime	69	65
The economy	65	67
Immigration	55	50

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
"News Media Attitudes in France"

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News intake by education and income

% of French adults at each education and income level who get news at least daily from ___ platforms

	Education		Income	
	Secondary or less	More than secondary	Below median	At or above median
Zero	8%	10%	9%	7%
One	26	23	30	19
Two	37	36	34	39
Three	24	25	21	27
All four	6	6	5	7

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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News platforms used daily by education and income

% of French adults at each education and income level who get news at least daily from ...

	Education		Income	
	Secondary or less	More than secondary	Below median	At or above median
TV	76%	58%	71%	70%
Radio	49	60	47	59
Online	43	59	42	55
Print	26	18	23	23

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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Social media news habits by education and income

% of French adults at each education and income level who get news from social media ...

	Education		Income	
	Secondary or less	More than secondary	Below median	At or above median
At least daily	29%	44%	31%	36%
Less often	12	14	13	12
Never	59	43	57	51

Among French social media news consumers at each education and income level, % who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...

Are familiar with	46	64	49	57
Are not familiar with	11	10	11	10
Do not pay attention to	42	24	38	32

Among French social media news consumers at each education and income level, % who say that the news they see on social media is ___ with their own political views

Often in line	7	16	10	11
Sometimes in line	49	61	49	59
Rarely in line	35	19	34	24

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
"News Media Attitudes in France"

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Social media news habits by ideology

% of French adults in each ideological group who get news from social media ...

	Left	Center	Right
At least daily	42%	29%	30%
Less often	13	13	12
Never	45	58	58

Among French social media news consumers in each ideological group, % who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...

Are familiar with	53	52	54
Are not familiar with	11	12	9
Do not pay attention to	35	35	36

Among French social media news consumers in each ideological group, % who say that the news they see on social media is ____ with their own political views

Often in line	16	10	8
Sometimes in line	52	57	57
Rarely in line	26	28	30

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.
"News Media Attitudes in France"

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Social media news habits by political party favorability

Among French adults who have a favorable view of each party, % who get news from social media ...

	Republicans	Socialist Party	En Marche	National Front	La France Insoumise
At least daily	33%	38%	32%	34%	45%
Less often	13	15	12	14	12
Never	54	47	56	52	43

Among social media news consumers who have a favorable view of each party, % who use each site most often for news

Facebook	78	76	75	89	79
Twitter	10	11	13	3	9
Other	7	9	6	6	7

Among social media news consumers who have a favorable view of each party, % who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news sources they ...

Are familiar with	51	50	53	55	56
Are not familiar with	11	13	10	7	10
Do not pay attention to	37	34	35	38	34

Among social media news consumers who have a favorable view of each party, % who say that the news they see on social media is ___ with their own political views

Often in line	11	13	10	13	11
Sometimes in line	52	56	61	45	58
Rarely in line	33	28	26	38	28

Note: Only some parties are shown because the report focuses on traditional parties that have led government over the past 25 years and on populist parties.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

"News Media Attitudes in France"

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Main news source by education and income

% of French adults at each education and income level who name each outlet as their main news source

	Education		Income	
	Secondary or less	More than secondary	Below median	At or above median
TF1	19%	9%	19%	13%
France TV	18	8	18	13
BFM	17	10	15	14
Radio France	4	10	5	7
Le Monde	3	13	5	8

Note: Only sources named by 5% of adults or more in any group are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news sources.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017. "News Media Attitudes in France"

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