

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

Canadians and the Media

Report



1.0 Study Highlights

- The Canadian media does not provide unbiased information, say Canadians.

Question: *Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements... ?
... Canadian media always present unbiased information about current events.*

n=1500	AGREE	DISAGREE	Don't know
Canada	35%	61%	4%

- Too much sensationalism in the news according to Canadians.

Question: *Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements... ?
... Canadian media focus too much on sensationalism when presenting the news.*

n=1500	AGREE	DISAGREE	Don't know/Refusal
Canada	62%	34%	5%

- According to Canadians, journalists do not have to follow the views of media owners.

Question: *Do you think that journalists working in media outlets owned by private or public companies are COMPLETELY FREE, SOMEWHAT FREE, NOT VERY FREE or NOT FREE AT ALL to provide unbiased information without having to follow the views of the media owners?*

n=1500	Completely free	Somewhat free	Not very free	Not free at all	Don't know/Refusal
Canada	4%	53%	24%	13%	6%

- Television is the most credible media.

Question: *Out of the following media, which one do you think is the most credible? Is it...?*

n=1500	... the written press	...television	...the radio	...the Internet	All	None	Don't know/Refusal
Canada	30%	40%	13%	9%	2%	4%	2%

- Almost half of Canadians feel that the information provided today is superior to that provided ten years ago.

2. Results

2.1 The Canadian Media Does Not Provide Unbiased Information, Say Canadians

According to 61% of Canadians, the media does not always present unbiased information about current events while 35% feel that they do.

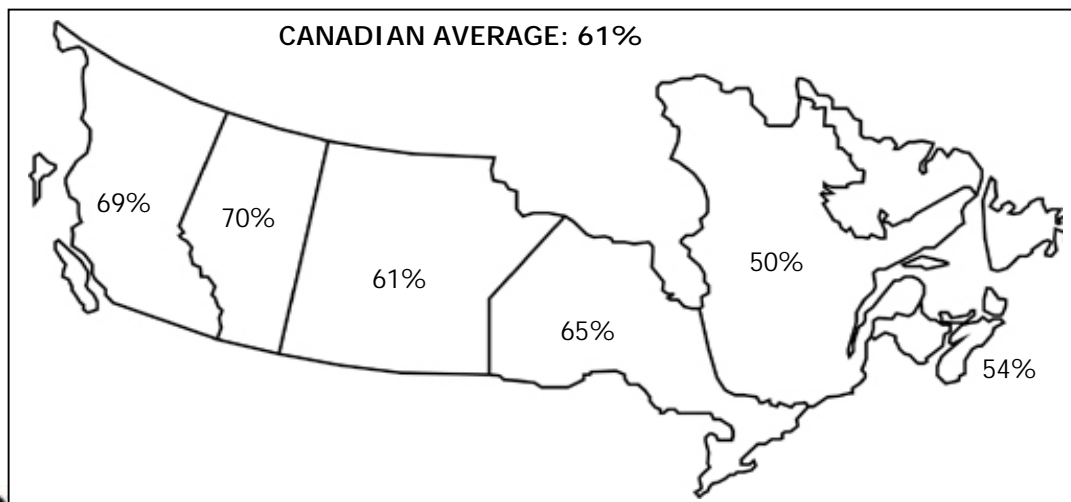
63% of women, 67% of Anglophones, 68% of those in the upper income brackets, 67% of professionals and 71% of university graduates do not believe that the information provided in the Canadian media is always objective. Conversely, 37% of men, 40% of those 25-34 years old, 45% of Francophones, 48% of Quebeckers, 42% of those whose household income is inferior to \$40,000, 42% of manual workers and 41% of Canadians with lower levels of education, believe that the Canadian media always present objective information.

It was observed that 73% of those for whom the radio is the most credible media are less likely to believe the information presented in the media is objective while 44% of those who find television most credible are more likely to feel that the information is unbiased. Finally, 81% of Canadians who think that the quality of the information was superior ten years ago feel that the information provided lacks objectivity.

Question: *Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements... ?*
 ... Canadian media always present unbiased information about current events.

n=1500	AGREE	DISAGREE	Don't know
Atlantic provinces	39%	54%	7%
Quebec	48%	50%	2%
Ontario	30%	65%	5%
Prairies	35%	61%	4%
Alberta	27%	70%	3%
British Columbia	27%	69%	4%
Canada	35%	61%	4%

Proportion of Canadians who do not believe that the information provided by the media is always objective



2.2 Too Much Sensationalism in the News According to Canadians

62% of Canadians agree that Canadian media are too sensationalist in the way they handle the news while 34% do not share this view.

Among the groups most tending to agree that there is too much sensationalism in the news, we find 71% of those 65 years old and over, 78% of Francophones and 73% of Quebeckers. Conversely, 40% of those 25-34 years old, 38% of Anglophones, 39% of Ontarians, 38% of those in the higher income brackets, 38% of professionals and 41% of university graduates do not believe that there is too much sensationalism in the news. 72% of people for whom radio is the most credible media and 74% of those who believe that the quality of the information is inferior to what it was ten years ago believe that there is too much sensationalism in the news today. However, 40% of those who find the written press most credible and 39% of those who find the quality of the information superior today compared to ten years ago do not agree with the idea that the media use too much sensationalism in the way they handle the news.

Question: *Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements... ?*
... Canadian media always present unbiased information about current events.

n=1500	AGREE	DISAGREE	Don't know/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	66%	30%	4%
Quebec	73%	25%	3%
Ontario	56%	39%	6%
Prairies	62%	32%	6%
Alberta	60%	37%	3%
British Columbia	57%	37%	7%
Canada	62%	34%	5%

2.3 According to Canadians, Journalists do not Have to Follow the Views of Media Owners

57% of Canadians feel that journalists working for either a private or public media outlets are free to report the news in an unbiased manner without having to following the views of the media owner while 37% hold the opposite view.

Among Canadians who believe that journalists are free to report the news in an unbiased fashion, we find 64% of those in the upper income brackets, 62% of office workers and 62% of university graduates. Among those who do not feel journalists enjoy this type of freedom, we find 47% of Francophones and 45% of Quebecers.

It was also noted that 60% of Canadians agree with the idea that journalists should report events without commenting them while 35% hold the opposite view. No significant differences were noted in the various segments of the population or from one region to the next.

Question: *Do you think that journalists working in media outlets owned by private or public companies are COMPLETELY FREE, SOMEWHAT FREE, NOT VERY FREE or NOT FREE AT ALL to provide unbiased information without having to follow the views of the media owners?*

n=1500	FREE	NOT FREE	Don't know/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	57%	39%	4%
Quebec	52%	45%	3%
Ontario	59%	33%	8%
Prairies	53%	37%	10%
Alberta	63%	33%	4%
British Columbia	59%	31%	11%
Canada	57%	36%	6%

2.4 Television is Apparently the Most Credible Media

According to 40% of the population, television is the most credible media. It is followed by the written press (30%), the radio (13%) and the Internet (9%). 2% find them all equally credible and 4% believe not of them are.

Television is the most credible media for 43% of women, 45% of those 25-34 years of age, 50% of Quebecers, 54% of those whose income is inferior to \$20,000, 45% of manual workers and 49% of those who have an elementary or secondary level of education.

The written press is preferred by 35% of men, 34% of Ontarians, 41% of those in the upper income brackets, 39% of professionals and 43% of university graduates.

In terms of the radio, 20% of those 65 years of age and over, 16% of Anglophones and 22% of Prairie residents consider it the most credible type of media.

The Internet is considered the most credible media by 14% of those 18-24 years of age and 12% of Allophones.

Question: *Out of the following media, which one do you think is the most credible? Is it...?*

n=1500	...television	...the written press	...the radio	...the Internet	All	None	Don't know/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	39%	33%	16%	7%	2%	2%	1%
Quebec	50%	30%	8%	8%	1%	3%	0%
Ontario	35%	34%	12%	9%	3%	5%	3%
Prairies	43%	22%	22%	7%	2%	2%	3%
Alberta	35%	32%	18%	6%	2%	2%	3%
British Columbia	38%	23%	16%	13%	3%	6%	1%
Canada	40%	30%	13%	9%	2%	4%	2%

2.5 Close to Half of Canadians Believe that the Information Provided Today is Superior to That of Ten Years Ago

47% of Canadians said they felt the information provided in the media today is superior to what was presented 10 years ago, while 32% find it of equal value and 18% inferior to ten years ago.

54% of those 45-54 years old feel the most positive about the improvement of information provided compared to ten years ago while 24% of those 65 years of age and over feel the most negative about such improvements.

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1500 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between April 2 and April 7, 2002. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1500 respondents is of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.