

## Additional Submission to the Digital Platforms Inquiry

News & Media Research Centre

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### Additional submission

Since our previous submission in April, we have analysed new data collected in Jan/Feb 2018.

The *Digital News Report: Australia 2018* can be downloaded [here](#).

### Submission authors:

N&MRC Digital News Report Team

Associate Professor Sora Park, [sora.park@canberra.edu.au](mailto:sora.park@canberra.edu.au)

Associate Professor Glen Fuller, [glen.fuller@canberra.edu.au](mailto:glen.fuller@canberra.edu.au)

Assistant Professor Caroline Fisher, [caroline.fisher@canberra.edu.au](mailto:caroline.fisher@canberra.edu.au)

Research Associate Jee Young Lee, [jee.lee@canberra.edu.au](mailto:jee.lee@canberra.edu.au)

Research Associate Dan Andrew, [dan.andrew@canberra.edu.au](mailto:dan.andrew@canberra.edu.au)

## Offline and online platforms for news

In 2018, news access via online platforms (websites, apps, social media and blogs) has surpassed news access via offline platforms (TV, radio and print). This is the first year that news consumers in Australia reported using online (82%) news more than offline news (79%). In contrast to most countries in the global survey, Australia’s use of social media platforms for news have also grown in the past three years.

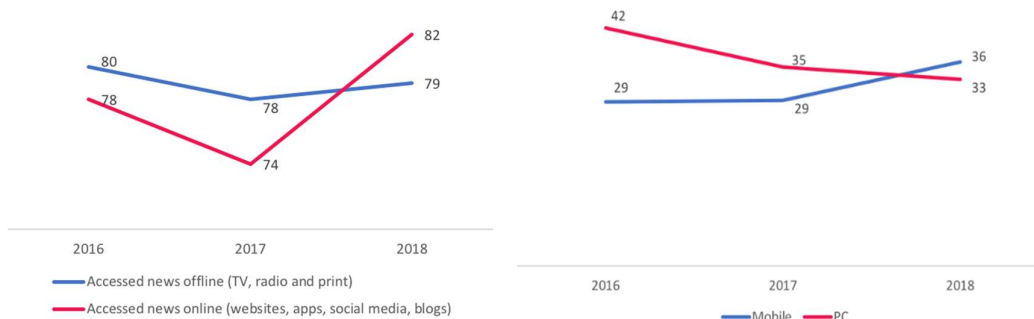
While, Facebook for news appears to have slowed in Australia over the past three years (2016 45%, 2017 39%, 2018 41%), other social media and messaging apps for news have become more popular in the past year; YouTube (15% -20%), Facebook Messenger (8% - 11%), Snapchat (2%-5%), WhatsApp (7% -10%).

Social media platforms are now the main source of news for 36 percent of young Australians aged 18-24 year-olds. 72 percent of news consumers in this age group use their phones to access online news, which is the main way they access social media.

Mobile phones are used more to access news than ever before. 2018 is the first year that mobile phones are being used more than computers to access online news. Almost 60 percent of Australians are using their smart phone to access news.

These new findings confirm the trend that we have been observing in the past few years as described in the previous submission.

FIGURE 1. GROWTH OF ONLINE AND MOBILE ACCESS TO NEWS



Survey questions: Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? (Please select all that apply)/ You’ve said you use the following devices to access news in the last week, which is your MAIN way of accessing online news?

**TABLE 1. NEWS AGGREGATORS FOR NEWS**

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Google News</b>	10.2%	11.3%	15.9%
<b>Apple News</b>	4.1%	8.8%	13.7%
<b>Google Play Newsstand</b>	3.4%	5.9%	10.9%
<b>Telstra Media</b>	3.7%	5.8%	8.5%
<b>Twitter Moments</b>	2.7%	5.4%	-
<b>Reddit</b>	3.4%	5.0%	7.9%
<b>Snapchat Discover</b>	1.9%	4.8%	7.9%
<b>Flipboard</b>	4.4%	4.3%	6.7%
<b>Upday</b>	-	3.9%	5.2%
<b>SmartNews</b>	2.1%	3.8%	-

**TABLE 2. DEVICE FOR ACCESSING NEWS**

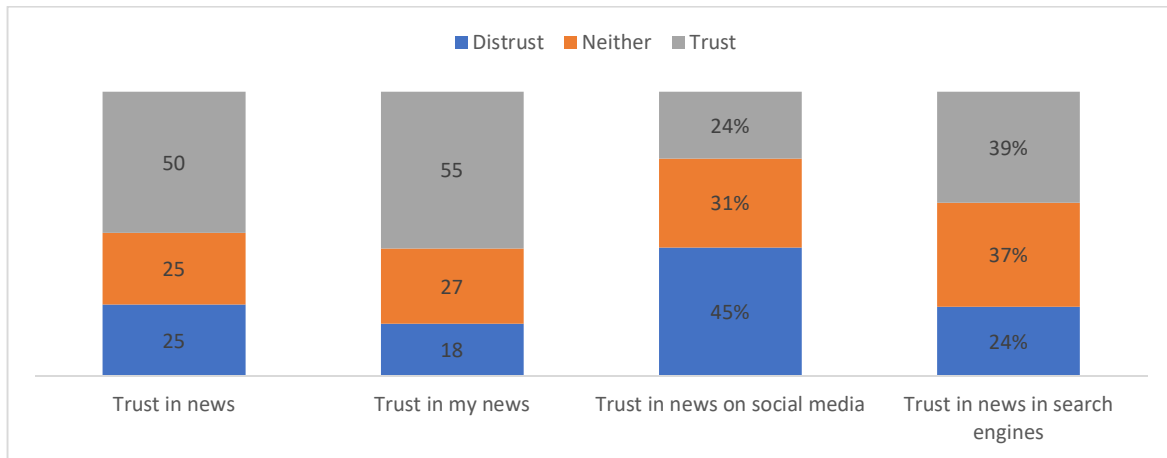
<b>DEVICE</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Smartphone made by Apple</b>	24.5%	23.9%	29.5%
<b>Smartphone by another manufacturer</b>	28.1%	26.9%	31.3%
<b>Other internet connected phone</b>	1.3%	1.9%	2.5%
<b>Laptop or desktop computer</b>	59.9%	53.2%	55.3%
<b>Tablet Computer made by Apple</b>	18.7%	17.3%	23.4%
<b>Other tablet computer</b>	8.3%	8.3%	7.8%
<b>Ebook reader</b>	0.9%	2.7%	4.7%
<b>Connected TV (a TV that connects to internet via set top box, games console, other box such as Apple TV etc.)</b>	4.8%	5.4%	8.0%
<b>Smart TV (TV that connects to the internet directly without the need for any other box)</b>	5.6%	8.0%	12.2%
<b>Smart watch or wristband that connects to the internet</b>	0.6%	2.0%	1.7%
<b>Voice activated connected speaker (e.g. Amazon Echo, Google Home)</b>	-	0.9%	1.5%

*Survey question: Which, if any, of the following devices have you used to access news in the last week? Please select all that apply*

### Trust in news

Trust in news and trust in the news consumers access have risen in 2018 (Figure 2). This year, we asked consumers if they trusted news they found on social media or search engines. The trust level was significantly lower with only 24% saying they trusted news found on social media and 39% trusting news in search engines.

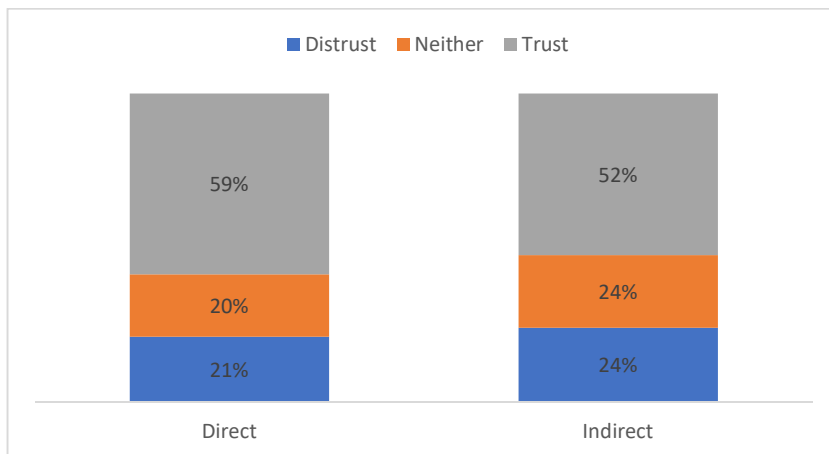
FIGURE 2. NEWS TRUST (2018)



*Survey question: Thinking about news in general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I think I can trust most news most of the time; I think I can trust most of the news I consume most of the time; I think I can trust news on social media most of the time; I think I can trust news on search engines most of the time*

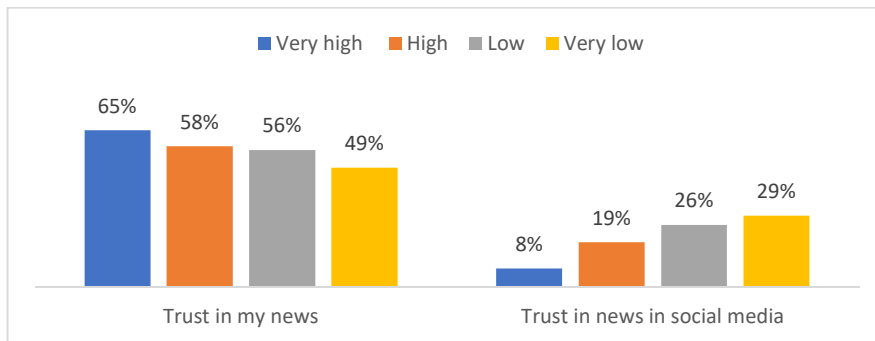
Those who directly access brands have higher trust in general as well as higher trust in the news they consume (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. TRUST BY METHOD OF ACCESSING NEWS



News literacy was found to be a strong predictor of trust in news (Figure 4). In the 2018 survey news literacy was measured by asking the participants a range of questions about the news environment. Those with lower news literacy are more likely to have higher trust in news on social media and lower trust in news generally. This suggests that those with lower news literacy are less discerning when it comes to news on social media than those with higher news literacy.

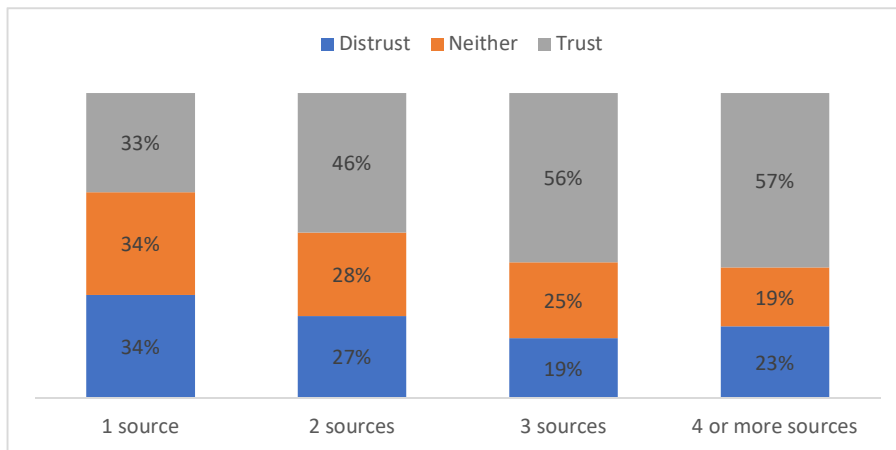
FIGURE 4. TRUST AND NEWS LITERACY



### The number of news sources

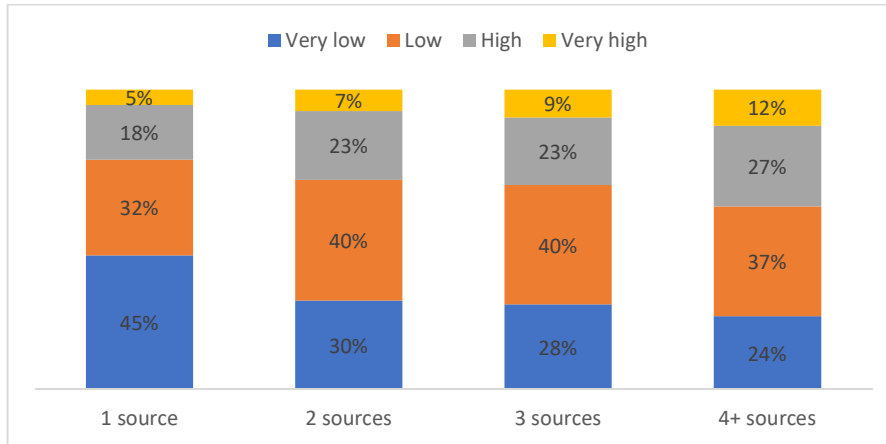
Both trust in news and news literacy are related to how many news sources consumers use. Those who access more than 4 sources tend to have higher trust in news and also have higher news literacy (Figures 5 and 6).

FIGURE 5. GENERAL TRUST IN NEWS AND THE NUMBER OF SOURCES



Survey question: Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? Please select all that apply: From the 11 options, we counted the number of sources - Television news bulletins or programmes, 24 hour news television channels, Radio news bulletins or programmes, Printed newspapers, Printed magazines, Websites/apps of newspapers, ebsites/apps of news magazines, Websites/apps of TV and Radio companies, Websites/apps of other news outlets, Social media, and Blogs.

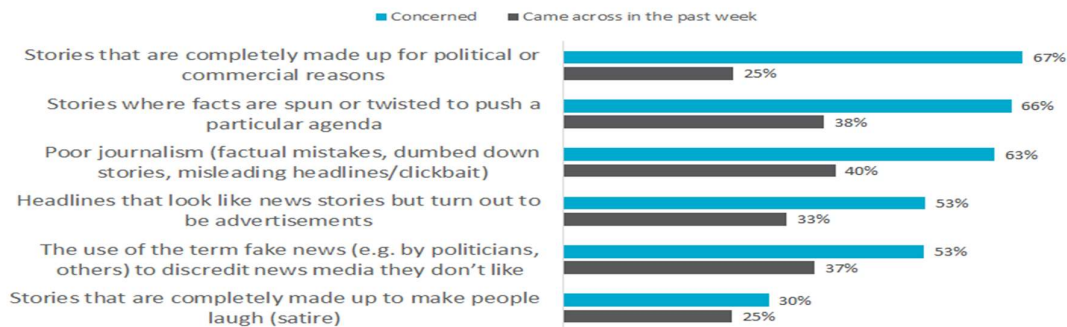
FIGURE 6. NEWS LITERACY AND NUMBER OF NEWS SOURCES



### Consumer perceptions of fake news

The discontent of Australian news consumers is evident. The majority (73%) of Australian news consumers have encountered fake news, particularly the type of fake news that are mainly results of poor journalism such as factual mistakes, dumbed down stories, misleading headlines/clickbait (Figure 7). Younger news consumers (18-24 age group) experienced poor journalism more than older age groups. This is in part due to the platforms they choose for news; mobile and social media. The majority (81%) of news consumers feels that it is the media companies' and journalists' responsibility to check and deliver facts to the public, rather than the role of platform companies or the government. News consumers heavily rely on news providers for factual and relevant information. Among news consumers 40% think that news media help them differentiate fact from fiction, whereas only 27% think that social media does a good job.

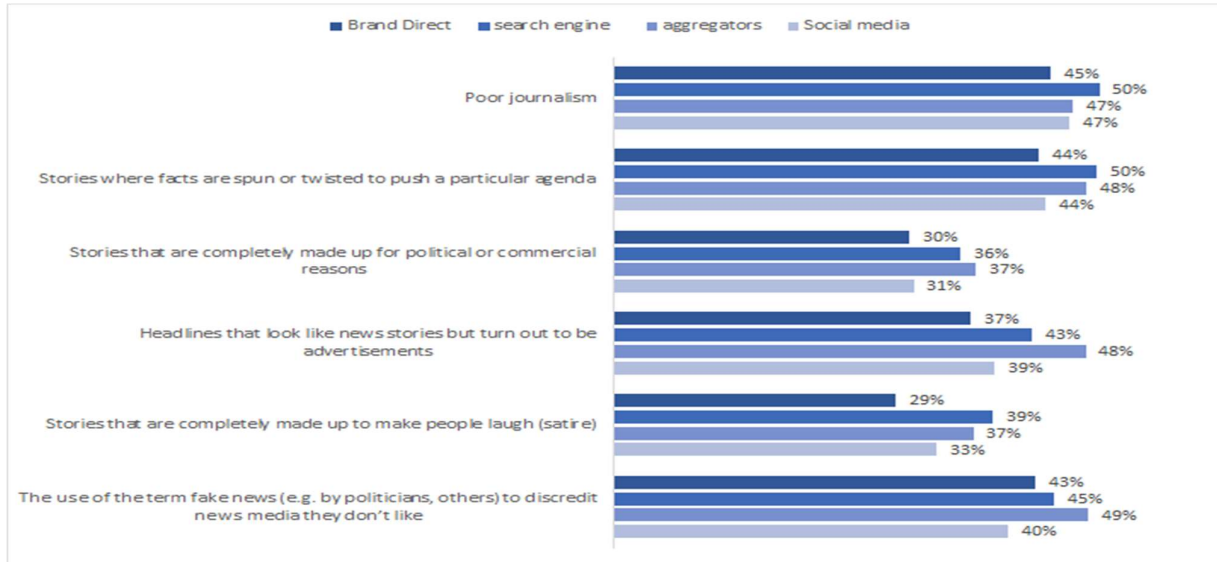
FIGURE 7. FAKE NEWS EXPERIENCE AND CONCERNS (2018)



Survey questions: [Came across in the past week] Which of the following have you personally come across in the past week? [Concerned] To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the following? Included those who answered 'very concerned' and 'extremely concerned'.

More importantly, the ways in which people get access to online news affect the amount of fake news that consumers encounter. Those who go directly to news brands websites or apps tend to experience fake news less than those who use search engines, aggregators or social media (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. EXPERIENCE OF FAKE NEWS BY PATHWAYS TO ONLINE NEWS (2018)



Not only the method of accessing online news but the news consumers' level of news literacy affected the exposure to and concerns about fake news. Those with higher news literacy tend to encounter more fake news and are more concerned about them. News literacy allows news consumers to recognise fake news and enable them to be aware of the negative impacts (Figures 9 and 10).

FIGURE 9. EXPERIENCE OF FAKE NEWS BY LEVEL OF NEWS LITERACY (2018)

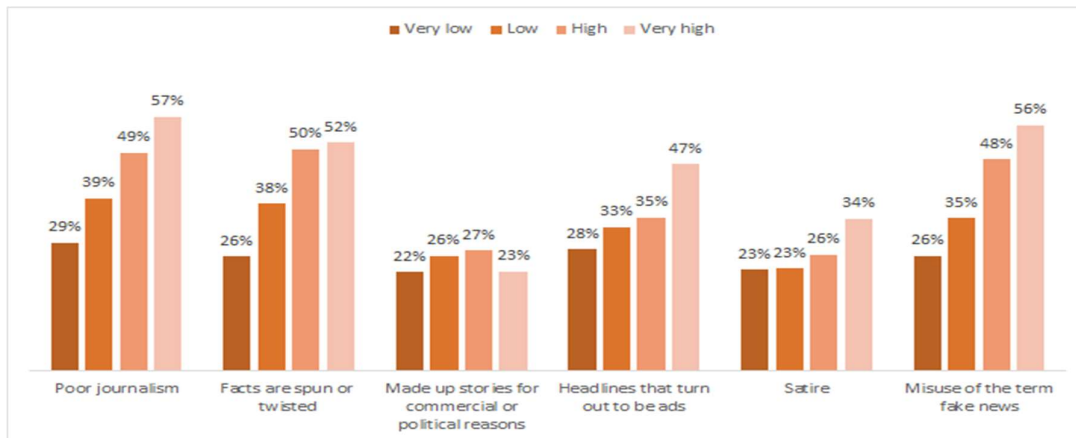
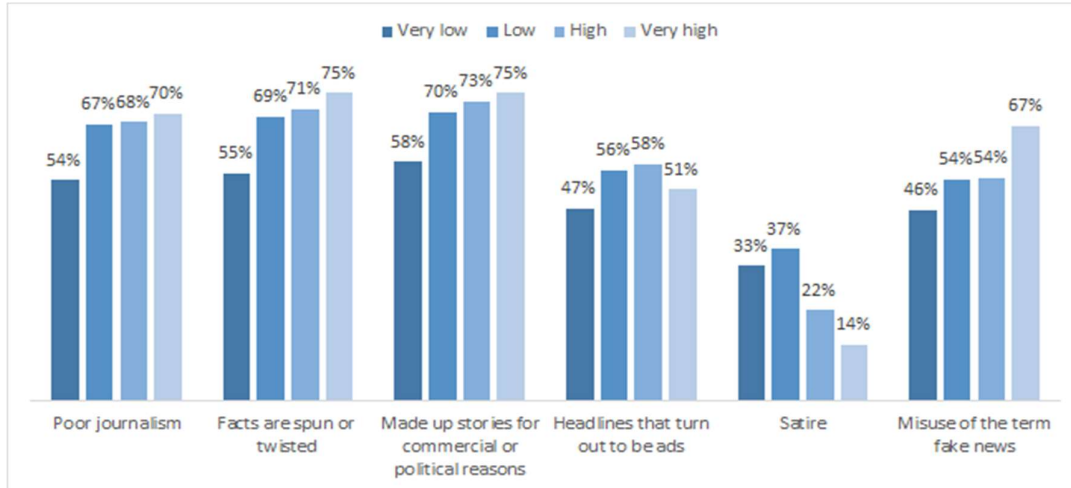


FIGURE 10. CONCERNS ABOUT FAKE NEWS BY LEVEL OF NEWS LITERACY (2018)



### Paying for news

There is an increase in the willingness to pay for online news; paid news consumers increased from 10% in 2016 to 20% in 2018. Donation has also increased to 7% in Australia. The proportion among paid news consumers that donated to a news service was 25% in 2017. This was increased to 34%.

And those who have experienced poor journalism and have concerns about it are more likely to donate to support journalism. The willingness-to-pay is related to the fact that news consumers have a demand for quality news. Those who have experienced poor quality journalism tend to access news directly from brand websites and apps directly. They are also more concerned about poor journalism (Table 3).

TABLE 3. EXPERIENCE AND CONCERNS ABOUT POOR JOURNALISM (2018)

	CONCERNED ABOUT POOR JOURNALISM		EXPERIENCED POOR JOURNALISM	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Made a donation to support a digital news service</b>	35.7%	23.4%	31.4%	35.3%
<b>Willing to donate in the future</b>	29.5%	21.3%	27.3%	26.3%
<b>Access brands directly online</b>	57.1%	52.0%	61.9%	50.7%

*Data from 2018 confirms our findings from previous years. The recommendations are in the original submission.*