

Methodology:

Results are based on an online study conducted from April 16 to April 18, 2021, among 845 adult social media users in Canada. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in Canada. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Have any of the following happened to you while using social media in the past year?

You found links to stories on current affairs that were obviously false (sometimes referred to as “Fake News”) – 39% (-2)

You found racist content or comments on your social media feed – 27% (-2)

You posted something on social media that you deleted after thinking it over twice – 27% (+6)

You reported a social media user for offensive content or comments – 23% (+2)

You found content or comments offensive to people with disabilities on your social media feed – 20% (=)

You found homophobic content or comments on your social media feed – 19% (-2)

None of these – 35% (+1)

Fake News and Racism Prevalent in Canada's Social Media Feeds

More than one-in-four users say they posted something on social media that they deleted after thinking it over twice.

Vancouver, BC [April 23, 2021] – The past two years have not brought a significant change in the amount of offensive content Canadians encounter on their social media feeds, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of social media users, 27% of Canadian respondents say they found racist content or comments on their feed in the past year, down two points since a similar Research Co. poll [conducted in September 2019](#).

Slightly smaller proportions of Canadian social media users found content or comments offensive to people with disabilities (20%, =) or homophobic content (19%, -2) on their feed over the past 12 months.

“Only 17% of Canadian social media users aged 55 and over say they were exposed to racist content in the past year,” says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. “The problem is more prevalent among those aged 35-to-54 (24%) and those aged 18-to-34 (39%).”

More than a quarter of Canadian social media users (27%, +6) say they posted something on social media over the past year that they deleted after thinking it over twice—including 30% of women and 38% of British Columbians.

While 23% of Canadian social media users reported someone for offensive content or comments, the proportion rises to 34% among those aged 18-to34.

Almost two-in-five Canadians (39%) say they found links to stories on current affairs that were obviously false (sometimes referred to as “Fake News”) on their feed in the past 12 months.

Social media users in Ontario are more likely to report being exposed to “Fake News” (47%) than their counterparts in British Columbia (39%), Atlantic Canada (36%), Alberta (33%), Quebec (also 33%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (32%).

Seven-in-ten Canadian social media users (71%, +1) claim it is difficult to discern which accounts are real and which ones are fake, including 78% of those aged 55 and over.

Majorities of Canadian social media users are also in favour of banning “anonymous” accounts to only allow people to



comment and post if they use their real name and likeness (69%, +1) and bringing an end to “creeping” by always allowing users to see who has viewed their profiles, photos and posts (65%, +5).

Three-in-five social media users (60%, -3) think politicians who have a social media account should not be able to block users from engaging with them.

Support for the notion of politicians not blocking social media users is highest in British Columbia (62%), followed by Alberta (61%), Ontario (also 61%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (60%), Atlantic Canada (also 60%) and Quebec (56%).

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About Research Co.

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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