

THE 100 MILLION PROJECT:

**How Media Habits
Relate to
Voter Participation**

A Knight Foundation Study

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About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy.

For more information, visit kf.org or follow us [@knightfdn](https://twitter.com/knightfdn) on Twitter.

Introduction

The media environment during an election year has the potential to guide citizens toward informed participation in the democratic process. It can also turn people off from voting altogether. It can enlighten or mislead the electorate—sometimes doing both at once.

In February 2020, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation released the **100 Million Project**, a landmark study that surveyed 12,000 chronic non-voters nationally and in ten swing states in order to explore the underlying challenges of electoral participation. Americans who don't vote in elections—approaching 100 million and comprising roughly 43% of eligible voters as of the last presidential election in 2016—differ from active voters along a wide range of attitudes and behaviors related to voting, elections and politics.

This new report was commissioned to explore the relationship between the self-reported media habits of these non-voters and their attitudes toward voting, the 2020 election and other forms of civic engagement. Findings are drawn from the nationally representative samples of 4,002 persistent non-voters ages 25 and older and 1,002 active registered voters from the original 100 Million Project survey.¹

This study reveals new insights into the media habits of American non-voters, and uncovers how their information diets might impact their democratic participation. This new analysis is instructive for those seeking to foster a more informed and engaged citizenry. Key findings include:

- Non-voters who are attentive to the news—the 33% who identify news rather than entertainment as the primary media they consume—are more likely to say they'll vote in the 2020 presidential election.
- Non-voters who turn to partisan-leaning news outlets, particularly conservative ones, are more likely than those who rely on centrist media outlets to say they'll cast a ballot in November.
- Social media and word of mouth via friends and family—two sources of news for many non-voters—are consistently tied to lower likelihood of voting in the future, more skeptical views about the efficacy of voting and lower community engagement overall.
- Fewer than half (46%) of younger non-voters—ages 25–29—say they actively seek out news, with a majority saying that instead they typically “bump into” news as they go about their day. In contrast, voters in the same age group are nearly 20 percentage points more likely to say they seek out their news, placing them close to on par with voters of other age groups.
- Non-voters and voters are both more likely to feel more knowledgeable about national affairs than about what's happening in their local communities. The “nationally knowledgeable” members of both groups are more likely to say they'll vote in the fall, while being less likely, by some measures, to be civically engaged in their local communities.

¹ For a full description of the sample and survey methodology, please see the original 100 Million Project report, https://knightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-100-Million-Project_KF_Report_2020.pdf.



This report details the relationships between non-voters' news engagement and their likelihood of voting, views about the process, feelings about the impact of voting and other community engagement traits. It also explores the news media diets of several key demographic groups of non-voters, highlighting central findings for these groups in the body of the report (detailed tables are available in the Appendix).

The findings offer reasons for optimism—not every non-voter is entirely disenchanted with political participation, and among those who are most sanguine, news plays a big role in their lifestyles. On the other hand, a warning: As younger adults and the generations that follow them find their place in a democratic society, the media they consume—driven by social media and their informal networks—is clearly playing a lead role in shaping their political knowledge. It is not yet clear whether or how these media diets will equip Americans on the sidelines to participate in this most critical civic duty.

1. How News Habits Connect to Views About Voting

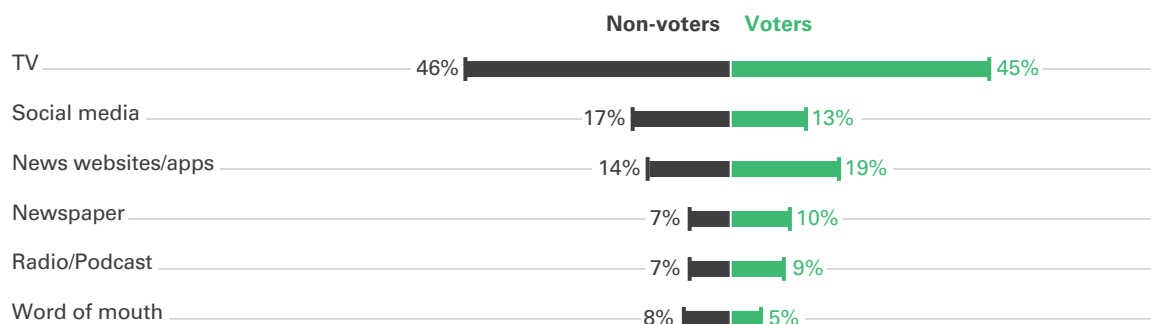
As the 100 Million Project study revealed, overall, many non-voters lack faith in the election system. Non-voters express doubts about the impact of their own votes and, in turn, lack confidence that the political system has an impact on their lives.

To the extent that attitudes about voting and the political system are in any way shaped by a person’s media diet, it is important to understand the relationship between non-voters’ news behaviors and their civic behaviors. The findings here suggest a number of relationships between particular news media diets and participation in a range of civic activities.

Non-voters were asked to think about all the ways that they access media and information in the course of a typical day. While two-thirds mentioned content such as sports and movies, 33% of non-voters identified news as their top daily source of media. This high degree of news attention, even among non-voters, is tied to positive views about the democratic process and likelihood of voting, in addition to other measures of general community engagement.

The data suggest, too, that not every news source relates to voting in the same way. Overall, TV is the most common source of news for non-voters, with social media coming in at a distant second. Newspapers—a top choice for less than 10% of non-voters—is nevertheless tied to positive views about voting. Among non-voters, those who prefer newspapers as their top source of news—whether in print or online—are most likely to be registered to vote and to say they feel informed enough to make a decision at the ballot box. When asked if they believe that election outcomes represent the will of the American people, non-voting newspaper readers resemble voters more than non-voters, with generally positive views on this measure.

What is your main news source?



Conversely, two sources of political information for many non-voters—social media and word of mouth via friends and family—are tied to lower likelihood of voting in the future, more circumspect views about the efficacy of voting and lower community engagement overall.

To be sure, news platform preferences, as well as overall attention to news, can be reflective of a person's demographic characteristics, and especially of their age. But even controlling for age in this analysis, these relationships persist.

Non-voters who turn to news outlets with a partisan orientation, particularly ones that are right-leaning, are more likely to say they'll cast a ballot in November than those who rely on middle-of-the-road news outlets.

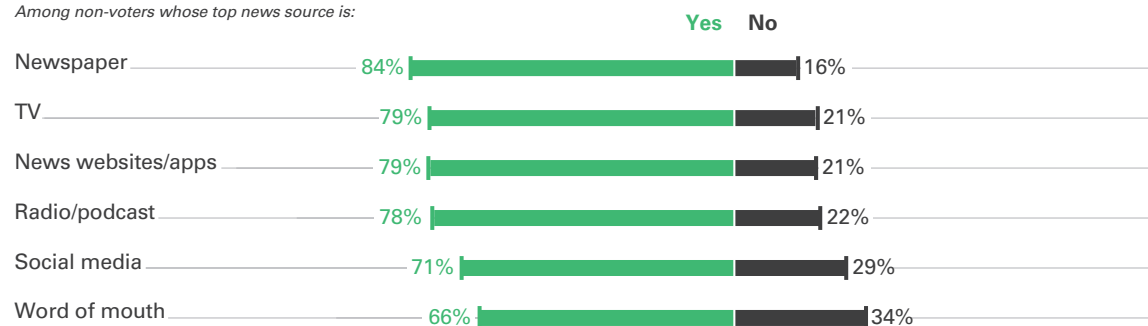
Likelihood of voting

Even though they have not voted in the past, many chronic non-voters (77%) say they are currently registered. Nearly as many (71%) say they plan to vote in the November election. The likelihood that a non-voter is both registered to vote and reports that they expect to vote in the fall is tied to their level of engagement with news. Chief among these is general news media usage overall. News-attentive non-voters—those who identify news as their top source of media—are more likely than other non-voters to be registered to vote (86% vs. 73%).

And among non-voters who read, watch or listen to the news, differences emerge depending on which news source a non-voter uses the most. While 84% of non-voting newspaper readers are registered to vote, those who rely on word of mouth for their news are among the least likely non-voters to be registered—just 66% of these non-voters are registered to vote. Those who rely chiefly on social media for news are also among the least likely to be registered, at just 71%.

Are you currently registered to vote?

Among non-voters whose top news source is:

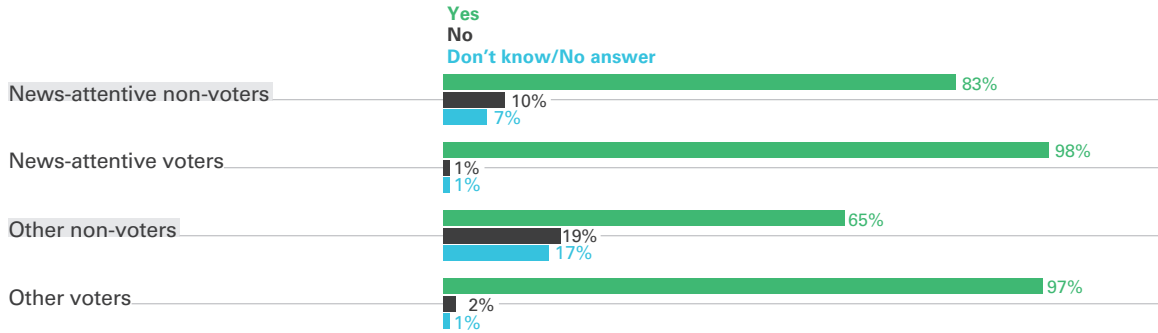


And while it is true that younger non-voters are more likely than older non-voters to rely on social media for news, these relationships hold, even when controlling for age in the analysis.

Past research on political polarization **has suggested** that left- and right-leaning Americans tend to inhabit distinctive and ideologically reinforcing media environments. Research **has also found** that these Americans tend to be more highly engaged in the political process than others. These findings may explain, at least in part, another finding: left- and right-leaning news diets are connected, at least slightly, to non-voter registration rates (see the methodological note in the Conclusion of this report on how news outlets were classified). Non-voters who follow news sources that cater to the left, such as MSNBC (80%), or to the right, such as Fox News (84%), are more likely to be registered than those who primarily follow news sources that fall somewhere in between (74%).

When asked about the November 2020 election, a majority of non-voters say they intend to participate. But, just as with registration rates, non-voters’ news media diets are tied to their self-reported likelihood of voting in the fall.

Do you plan to vote in the November 2020 election?



Indeed, the differences between non-voters—depending on their media diet—are even more pronounced. News-attentive non-voters are 18 points more likely than other non-voters to say they’ll vote in the fall. Non-voters who are newspaper readers are at least 25 points more likely than non-voters who rely on family and friends for their news to say they’ll vote. And non-voters who turn to partisan-leaning news outlets, particularly those that cater to conservative audiences, are more likely than those who rely on middle-of-the-road news outlets for their news to say they’ll cast a ballot in November.

News diet and attitudes about voting

When asked in the 100 Million Project study what has the most to do with their decision not to vote, non-voters across a range of different media diets responded generally in the same way. Dislike for the candidates on the ballot topped the list as the most frequent response, while the feeling that their vote wouldn’t make a difference came in second.

But news diet is a factor in a range of specific attitudes about the voting and election process. Take the question of how easy the voting process is perceived to be. In this case voters differ from non-voters in their views, and non-voters with different news diets differ from one another, as well. Overall, a majority of voters believe the voting process in their state is very easy, while just under half of all non-voters share that view. Among non-voters who feel that voting is difficult, or who don’t know either way, it is those who are not news-attentive in their media habits who are most likely to feel this way, at 26%.

Do you believe the voting process is difficult (or don't know either way)?



Looking at platform preference, non-voters who rely on word of mouth for their news are more than twice as likely to believe voting is difficult as those who rely on newspapers (38% vs. 14%). While 28% of non-voters who rely on social media believe voting is difficult, non-voters who turn to conservative-oriented news outlets (particularly Fox News) are slightly less likely than other non-voters to share this view.

There are several ways of gauging how connected people feel to their political system—whether they feel they can have an impact on it, or whether the system has an impact on them. Overall, the 100 Million Project found that voters are more likely than non-voters to believe the results of an election represent the will of the people. But that looks different when factoring in news habits. News-attentive non-voters are about as likely as voters overall to believe the results of an election represent the will of the people, and are more likely than other non-voters to hold this view. Correspondingly, newspaper readers share this view at similar rates to voters, and at higher rates than other non-voters. Among voters, people with a conservative news diet are more likely than other non-voters to believe elections represent the will of the people. But among non-voters, those differences disappear.

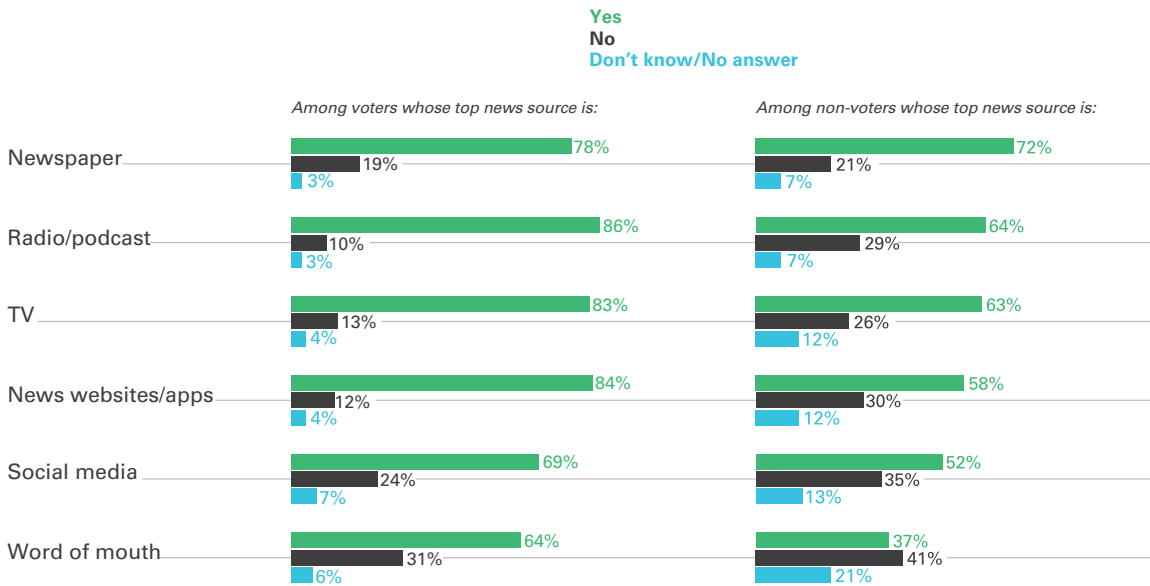
Are you confident the results of an election represent the will of the people?

	Right-leaning media diet (non-voters)	Right-leaning media diet (voters)	Left-leaning media diet (non-voters)	Left-leaning media diet (voters)	Mid-range media diet (non-voters)	Mid-range media diet (voters)
Very confident	24%	40%	18%	22%	19%	14%
Somewhat confident	37%	37%	35%	40%	41%	44%
Not very confident	20%	17%	25%	27%	24%	32%
Not confident at all	11%	6%	12%	10%	9%	6%
Don't know/ No answer	9%	0%	10%	2%	7%	4%

The 100 Million Project survey asked non-voters and voters to rate, on a scale of 0–10 (with 10 representing “extreme impact”), the degree to which the decisions made by the president and other elected government officials impact their lives. Once again, non-voters were less sanguine than voters on this measure overall. But news-attentive non-voters are more likely than other non-voters to view these decisions as having an “extreme impact” on their lives. At 28%, they match news-attentive voters on this measure (also 28%). Radio and podcast listeners are among the most likely to hold this view (27%), while those who rely on family and friends for their news were least likely (17%).

A **number of studies** have linked healthy democratic outcomes with access to civic information, including news and journalism. Access to and engagement with news has been shown to lead to higher voter turnout, among other positive civic outcomes. When asked in this survey whether they typically feel they have enough information about candidates and issues to decide who to vote for, just 59% of non-voters answered “yes” compared to 80% of voters. While news-attentive non-voters are more likely to feel informed (73%), they still do not reach the level of the voting population on this measure. Non-voters who turn to newspapers for their news are most likely to feel informed about upcoming elections (72%), placing them nearly 20 points above those who prefer social media, and are nearly twice as likely to feel informed as those who rely on word of mouth.

Do you feel you have enough information to decide who to vote for?



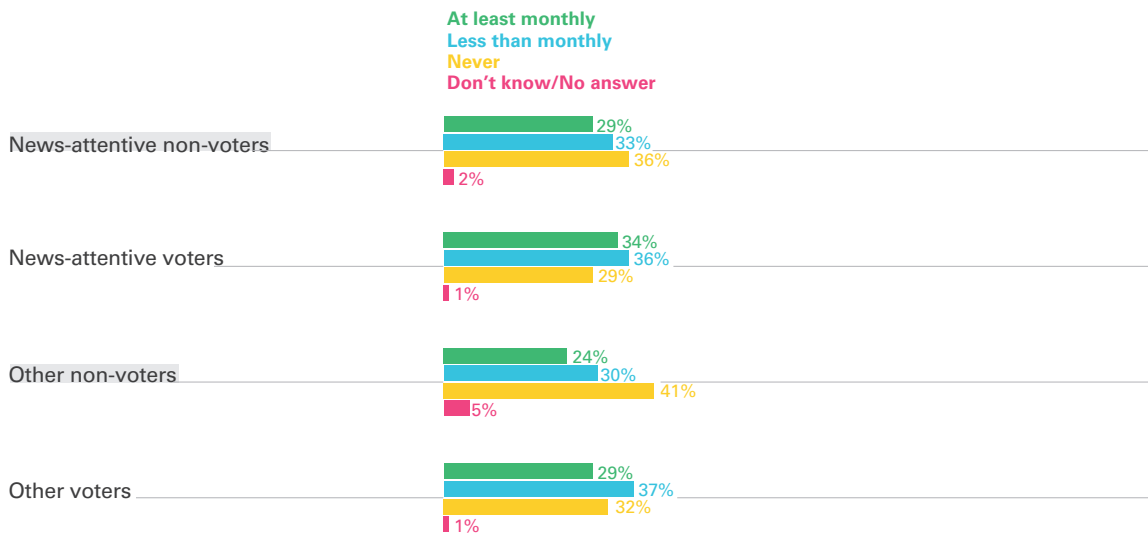
Community engagement

Past research **has shown** a relationship between news interest and civic engagement—a broader set of activities that includes voting, but also other practices such as volunteering, activism and membership in community groups.

Even among non-voters, who are generally less civically engaged than voters, differences emerge between the news-attentive and those who prefer other types of media, such as movies, sports or gaming. News-attentive non-voters are slightly more likely than other non-voters to say they volunteer at least monthly with a community organization. Similarly, news-attentive voters are slightly more likely than other voters to volunteer.

Voters and non-voters were also asked whether in the previous year they'd worked with others to solve a community problem. Here, once again, news-attentive non-voters were slightly more likely than other non-voters to have done so. (Among voters, no differences emerged between these groups.)

How frequently do you volunteer with an organization in your community?



Clearer differences in community engagement emerged, however, depending on the news media preferences of different groups of non-voters. Non-voters who turn most often to newspapers (in print or online) and radio or podcasts for their news are more likely than other non-voters to volunteer in their communities. Nearly four in ten non-voting newspaper readers say they do so monthly, compared to just 24% of other non-voters. When it comes to radio and podcast listeners, the breakdown looked similar. Non-voters who say their top news source is family and friends are the least likely to volunteer regularly, at just 16%. (Among voters, the differences between radio/podcast listeners, newspaper readers and the rest of the voting population were either minimal or disappeared.)

How frequently do you volunteer with an organization in your community?

<i>Among those whose top news source is:</i>	At least monthly	Less than monthly	Never	Don't know/No answer
Radio/podcast (non-voters)	38%	32%	28%	3%
Radio/podcast (voters)	31%	47%	21%	2%
Newspaper (non-voters)	38%	30%	30%	3%
Newspaper (voters)	37%	33%	30%	0%
News websites/apps (non-voters)	25%	37%	36%	2%
News websites/apps (voters)	25%	30%	41%	4%
Social media (non-voters)	24%	32%	41%	3%
Social media (voters)	26%	40%	31%	3%
TV (non-voters)	24%	29%	43%	4%
TV (voters)	35%	32%	33%	1%
Word of mouth (non-voters)	16%	27%	48%	9%
Word of mouth (voters)	14%	44%	39%	3%

Similarly, radio/podcast listeners and newspaper readers are more likely than other groups to have worked with others to solve a community problem in the past year. While these media stand out in the non-voter population, once again, their relationship to community problem-solving is more muted among voters.

2. Demographic Profiles of Non-Voting Media Users

The relationship between news diet and attitudes about voting and civic engagement is clear, and it is present not just among voters, but also among different demographic profiles of chronic non-voters.

A deeper look at the various demographic sub-groups within the broader non-voter population reveals that news media diets differ in key respects, but are similar across age, racial and ethnic identity, partisan affiliation, and educational attainment. Differences in news diet are most striking among age groups. Younger non-voters are more likely than other groups, including voters, to turn to social media for their news. They are also less likely to be active news consumers overall.

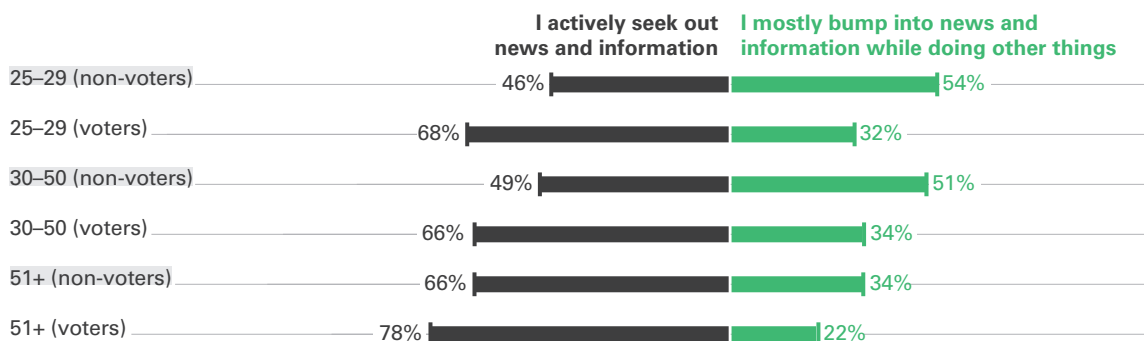
Demographic profiles: Age groups

Age is one demographic category where notable differences emerge, both within non-voters and between non-voters and voters. This may be tied to the combination of media preferences and civic engagement attributes that play themselves out, sometimes dramatically, between younger and older individuals.

Across the voting and non-voting population, younger adults (ages 25–29) are much less likely than older adults to identify news as their top daily source of media, referred to in this report as the “news-attentive.” Just 20% of non-voters ages 25–29 fall into this category.

Age is a factor in news engagement among non-voters in a way that doesn’t appear among the voting population. Fewer than half (46%) of younger non-voters ages 25–29 say they actively seek out news, with a majority saying they typically “bump into” news instead. In contrast, younger voters are nearly 20 points more likely to say they seek out their news, placing them close to on par with voters of other ages.

**Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right:
“In general, I actively seek out news and information” OR “I mostly bump into news and information while doing other things or I hear about it from others”**



Younger non-voters are more likely than other non-voters to turn to social media for their news. More than a third (35%) do so, compared to just 14% among other non-voters. While social media is somewhat more popular with younger adults for news, among voters news websites and apps are the most common source of news for voters ages 25–29, at 32%—nearly twice as much as other voters use this source. Newspaper use, while tied to higher rates of civic engagement and more positive views about voting and the electoral system, has nevertheless become a favored source of news for only small portions of Americans of any age group.

What is your main news source?

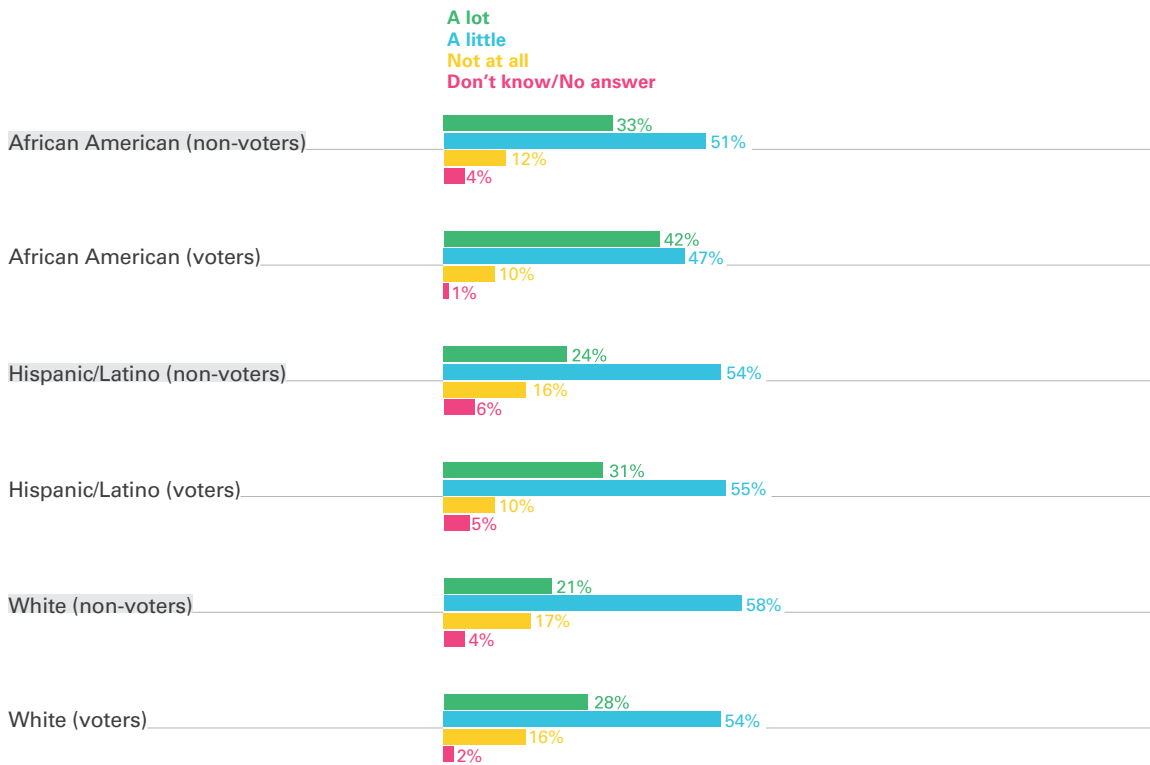
	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
Social media	35%	24%	22%	21%	6%	4%
TV	25%	20%	37%	34%	63%	59%
News websites/ apps	17%	32%	16%	22%	12%	14%
Radio/ podcast	9%	7%	9%	10%	6%	8%
Word of mouth	7%	10%	10%	5%	6%	4%
Newspaper	7%	7%	6%	8%	9%	12%

While no age group among voters or non-voters has particularly high trust in the news media, younger non-voters are slightly less trusting than most, with just 19% saying they have a lot of trust in the information provided by the news media.

Demographic profiles: Race and ethnicity

Differences in media diet across racial and ethnic groups—between and among voters and non-voters—are relatively muted. Across the groups analyzed—African American, Hispanic/Latino, and white people—voters tend to be more trusting of news media than non-voters. TV is a top source of news for all racial and ethnic groups, non-voters and voters alike. And when it comes to the ideological orientation of the news sources these Americans turn to, majorities of all racial and ethnic groups turn to outlets that fall in between the left and right ends of the spectrum.

Do you trust the news media?



One area where differences emerge relates to trust in the news media. Here, African American non-voters are more likely than other groups, especially white Americans, to have a lot of trust in the information they get from the media.

Demographic profiles: Partisanship

News diets differ somewhat along partisan lines between voters and non-voters, however, the gaps are greater on the Democratic side than the Republican side. Both non-voters and voters who identify as Republican appear similar when it comes to their news diets. Both groups are roughly similar in their likelihood to be news-attentive (indicating that news is their primary media consumption of choice). Both groups tend to prefer TV as their news platform of choice, have low levels of trust in the news media, and are much more likely to turn to conservative news sources over liberal or more middle-of-the-road sources.

Do you trust the news media?

	A lot	A little	Not at all	Don't know/No answer
Democrat (non-voters)	36%	54%	9%	2%
Democrat (voters)	47%	46%	6%	2%
Republican (non-voters)	18%	58%	22%	2%
Republican (voters)	15%	56%	26%	3%
Independent (non-voters)	18%	60%	17%	5%
Independent (voters)	21%	62%	15%	3%
Don't know/No answer (non-voters)	13%	49%	21%	17%
Don't know/No answer (voters)	25%	50%	17%	8%
Other (non-voters)	10%	57%	29%	5%
Other (voters)	0%	57%	43%	0%

On the other side of the aisle, though, Democratic non-voters and voters differ from each other in more ways than Republicans do. Democratic voters (48%) are more likely than Democratic non-voters (36%) to be news-attentive. They're also more likely to describe themselves as a news "seeker" rather than someone who just "bumps into" news. Finally, they are also more likely than Democratic non-voters to have a lot of trust in the news media.

Demographic profiles: Education

Highly educated voters and non-voters alike share some similar characteristics when it comes to their news diets, and differ in other ways, too. Voters with a college or graduate degree, at 50%, are more likely than highly educated non-voters (37%) to be news-attentive, saying news is their primary choice of media. Likewise, they are more likely to describe themselves as news "seekers"—a finding that appears among less-educated voters and non-voters.

What is your main news source?

	Radio/ podcast	Newspaper	TV	News websites/ apps	Social media	Word of mouth
High school education or less (non-voters)	7%	7%	51%	17%	10%	9%
High school education or less (voters)	6%	7%	54%	14%	10%	9%
Some college or technical school (non-voters)	5%	6%	47%	19%	15%	7%
Some college or technical school (voters)	9%	8%	49%	14%	15%	5%
College graduate or higher (non-voters)	9%	9%	42%	15%	18%	7%
College graduate or higher (voters)	12%	9%	41%	12%	24%	3%
Don't know/ No answer (non-voters)	12%	5%	50%	14%	10%	10%
Don't know/ No answer (voters)	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%

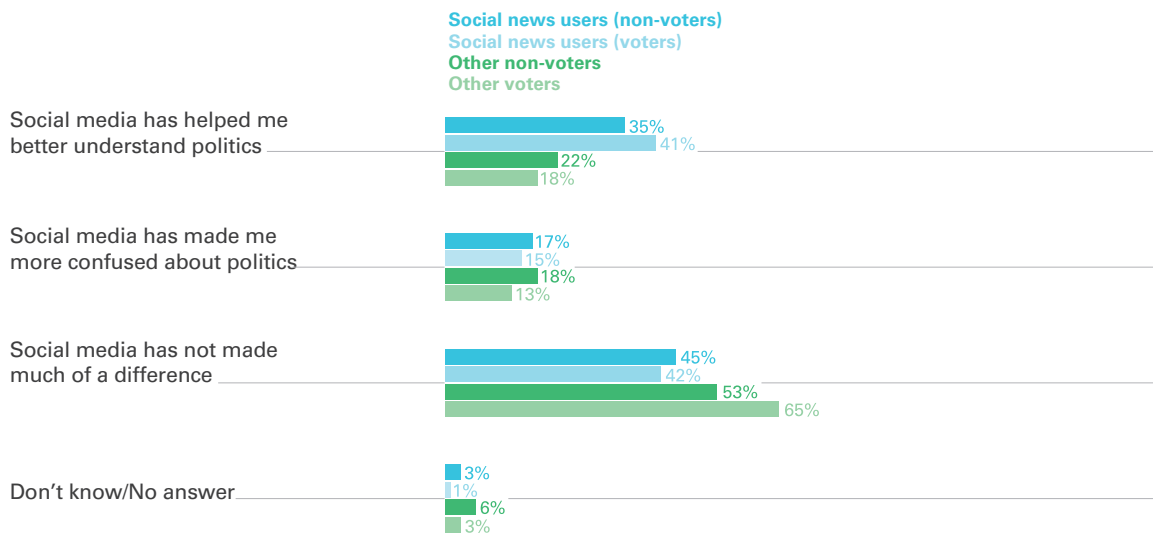
But when it comes to specific news sources, non-voters look a lot like voters, regardless of their education level. About half of each group identify TV as their preferred news platform. Few in each group say the same of radio/podcasts or newspapers. While social media is a top source for small shares across education levels, it is the most highly educated groups that tend to be slightly more likely to prefer these platforms.

In addition, few differences appear among education levels on the subject of trust in media or preference for ideological news sources.

3. The Social Media News Experience Among Non-Voters

Non-voters whose top source of news is social media (“social news users”) differ from other non-voters and voters overall on a number of fronts, particularly their relative disengagement with the political process, as well as their younger age. But the way they engage with news itself—particularly on their platform of choice—suggests a combination of passivity and credulity that doesn’t appear among other groups.

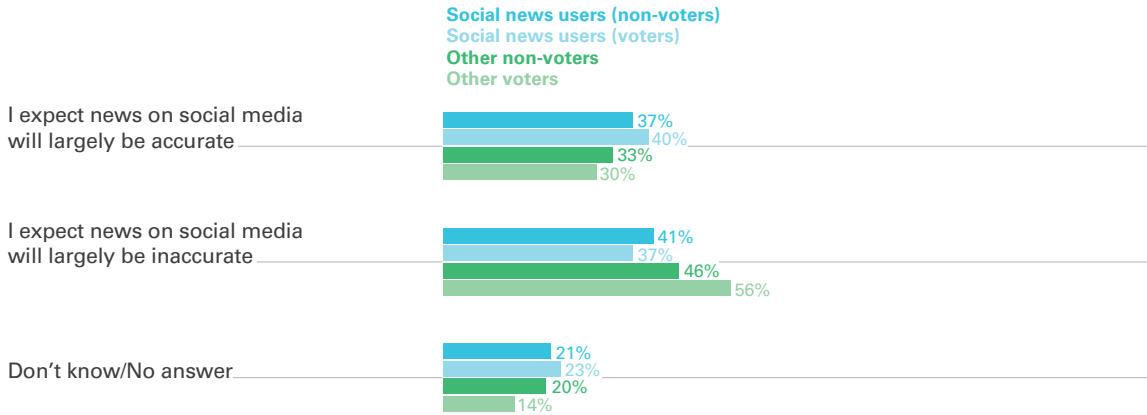
Would you say social media has helped you better understand politics, made you more confused about politics or not made much of a difference?



Non-voting social news users have mixed views overall about how useful these platforms are in serving their political information needs. When asked whether social media has helped them better understand politics or made them more confused, the most frequent response was that it made no difference at all (45% of non-voting social news users). Still, more of these non-voters (35%) than other non-voters (22%) felt served by social media in this way. Among voters, the reverse holds true, with social news users slightly less likely than other voters to find these platforms to be helpful.

Non-voting social news users are also slightly more likely than other groups to trust in the accuracy of what they see on these platforms. While not a majority, 37% say they expect the news stories they see on social media are largely accurate.

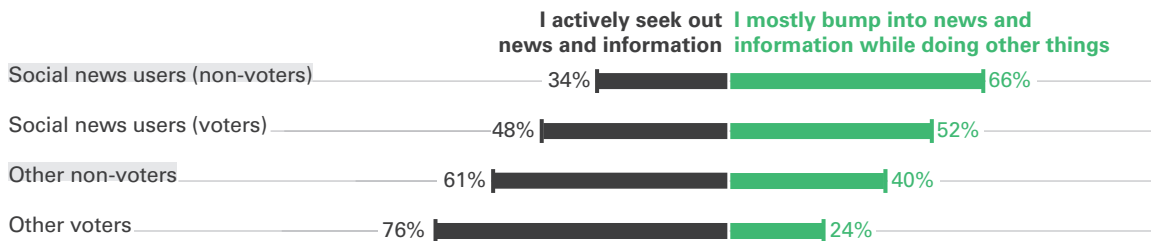
Which of the following statements best describes what you expect from news stories on social media?: “I expect news on social media will largely be accurate” OR “I expect news on social media will largely be inaccurate”



Non-voting social news users are more likely than other non-voters to frequently see political news on these platforms. Nearly half (46%) say they encounter political news at least twice a day. That’s nearly twice the rate of other non-voters (24%), many of whom use social media to some extent, though generally spend their time with other media. Among voters, an even greater share of social news users come across political news at least twice a day (57%).

Even though non-voting social news users claim they see a fair amount of political news on these platforms, their general approach to news tends to be somewhat passive. When asked whether they actively seek out news and information, or instead bump into it, non-voting social news users overwhelming were more likely than other non-voters to describe their experience as the latter. Fully 66% of non-voting social news users say they bump into news, compared to just 40% of other non-voters. The only other group of non-voters to self-characterize in this way were those who primarily get news from family and friends. Of these, 86% say they tend to bump into news and information.

Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right: “In general, I actively seek out news and information” OR “I mostly bump into news and information as I do other things or hear about it from others”



Among voters who get most of their news on social media, about half say they seek out news and information, while the other half say they bump into news. This suggests that non-voting social news users are somewhat more passive than voting social news users in their news engagement habits.

These findings echo [past research](#) that has found that social media users typically use these platforms for a variety of purposes, but not always for actively seeking out news.

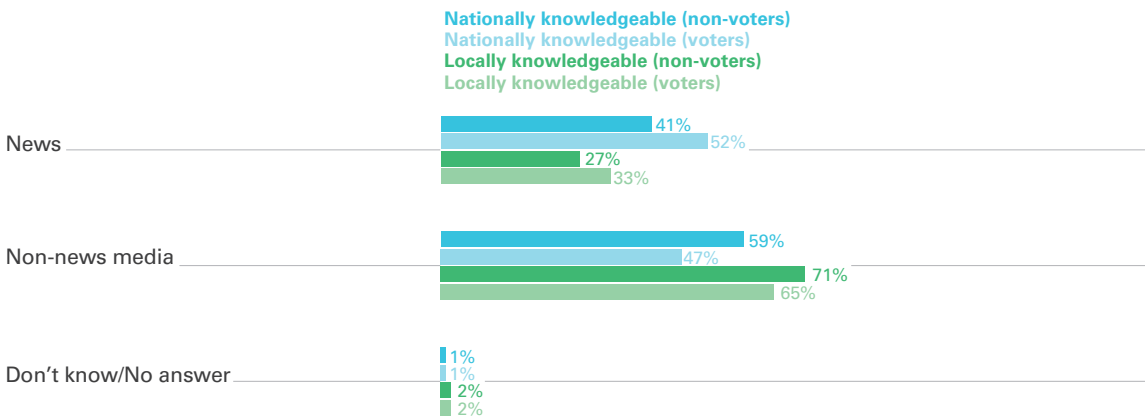
4. Community Connections and National Affairs

Federal decision-making that happens in Washington seems to dominate the interests and attention of the American people, even as important decisions are made at the community level by locally elected officials.

Overall, both non-voters and voters are more likely to feel knowledgeable about important issues facing the United States at large than about important issues facing their local communities.

These “nationally knowledgeable” and “locally knowledgeable” Americans—both voters and non-voters—differ in important ways. Locally knowledgeable and nationally knowledgeable non-voters differ in how much news they consume. When asked which types of content they consume the most in a typical day, nationally knowledgeable non-voters were more likely to indicate that news was their primary media content (41%) than locally knowledgeable non-voters (27%). This difference is apparent among locally knowledgeable and nationally knowledgeable voters as well.

Which of the following types of content would you say you consume the most?



Perhaps not surprisingly, nationally knowledgeable non-voters are also more likely than locally knowledgeable non-voters to feel they have enough information to make a decision in the November 2020 elections (71% vs. 58%). A similar gap appears among voters.

On some measures, locally knowledgeable non-voters are more likely to be civically engaged than nationally knowledgeable non-voters. But on other measures, the reverse is true.

One-third of locally knowledgeable non-voters indicated that they have collaborated with others to solve a problem affecting their local community or neighborhood in the last 12 months. In contrast, 27% of nationally knowledgeable non-voters indicated that they had worked with others

to solve a community problem. A similar pattern can be found among these groups of non-voters when looking at volunteering.

And yet, when it comes to non-voters' intentions to vote in the November 2020 election, it is the nationally knowledgeable who are more likely to say they will, at 80%, compared to 71% among locally knowledgeable non-voters.

Conclusion

It can be easy to overstate the role of the news media in shaping civic outcomes. In reality, a range of forces shape citizens' likelihood to participate in a democracy. And yet media—whether delivered through political reporting, broadcasting candidate messages, or amplifying social conversations about politics—can do more than inform people and equip them to vote. It can also produce deleterious content that can depress otherwise positive civic outcomes. Social platforms, cable news networks, newspapers and public broadcasters alike ought to consider their roles in fostering or, as the case may be, depressing particularly the next generation of diverse, digitally connected, and all-too-disengaged Americans.

Methodological note: Classifying news outlets by ideology

To get a sense of the relationship between partisan media diets and non-voter attitudes, we classified most outlets mentioned by non-voters as either conservative, moderate or liberal by combining the classifications of two external sources: [Gallup's Classification of Americans' "News Diet" for Gallup Research](#) and Pew Research Center's [U.S. Media Polarization and the 2020 Election](#) survey. While Gallup's classification focused on the tone of the content, using two independent coding schemes to assign an ideology of liberal, moderate or conservative to each outlet, Pew's classification used audience composition to determine whether an outlet's audience was more Democratic-leaning or Republican-leaning.

Between both Gallup and Pew, we classified all major outlets mentioned by non-voters. General media sources, such as Google or YouTube, were not classified and used as part of our analysis. In cases where a non-voter mentioned an individual news program, such as the Rachel Maddow Show or the Sean Hannity Show, the program was assigned the classification of its parent company (e.g., Anderson Cooper 360 was given CNN's classification). Gallup classified 35 of 38 total outlets included in our analysis (including nine individual programs given the classification of their parent companies), while Pew classified 29 of 38 total outlets (including nine individual programs). Pew and Gallup overlapped on 26 outlets, and aside from small differences within each category, neither source had conflicting classifications for any outlet (e.g., BBC was classified by both Pew and Gallup as liberal, but was classified as slightly more liberal-leaning by Pew than Gallup).

Appendix

Which of the following types of content would you say you consume the most?

	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
News	20%	23%	25%	35%	46%	58%
Some other type of media	80%	77%	74%	64%	53%	41%
Don't know/ No answer	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is your main news source?

	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
TV	25%	20%	37%	34%	63%	59%
Social media	35%	24%	22%	21%	6%	4%
News websites/ apps	17%	32%	16%	22%	12%	14%
Newspaper	7%	7%	6%	8%	9%	12%
Radio/ podcast	9%	7%	9%	10%	6%	8%
Word of mouth	7%	10%	10%	5%	6%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is the ideological orientation of your news diet? (constructed variable)

	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
Conservative	28%	24%	25%	20%	30%	27%
Neutral	58%	64%	60%	67%	55%	56%
Liberal	14%	12%	16%	13%	15%	16%
Don't know/ No answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you trust the news media?

	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
A lot	19%	29%	22%	26%	25%	33%
A little	61%	55%	57%	60%	53%	47%
Not at all	14%	11%	15%	13%	18%	17%
Don't know/ No answer	6%	5%	6%	1%	4%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right:
 “In general, I actively seek out news and information” OR “I mostly bump
 into news and information as I do other things or hear about it from others”**

	25–29 (non-voters)	25–29 (voters)	30–50 (non-voters)	30–50 (voters)	51+ (non-voters)	51+ (voters)
Actively seeks out news and information	46%	68%	49%	66%	66%	78%
Bumps into news while doing other things	54%	32%	51%	34%	34%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which of the following types of content would you say you consume the most?

	High school education or less (non-voters)	High school education or less (voters)	Some college or technical school (non-voters)	Some college or technical school (voters)	College graduate or higher (non-voters)	College graduate or higher (voters)	Don't know/ No answer (non-voters)	Don't know/ No answer (voters)
News	31%	37%	30%	42%	37%	50%	2%	1%
Some other type of media	67%	61%	69%	57%	62%	49%	33%	33%
Don't know/ No answer	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	66%	66%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is your main news source?

	High school education or less (non-voters)	High school education or less (voters)	Some college or technical school (non-voters)	Some college or technical school (voters)	College graduate or higher (non-voters)	College graduate or higher (voters)	Don't know/ No answer (non-voters)	Don't know/ No answer (voters)
TV	51%	54%	47%	49%	42%	41%	50%	25%
Social media	10%	10%	15%	15%	18%	24%	10%	25%
News websites/ apps	17%	14%	19%	14%	15%	12%	14%	25%
Newspaper	7%	7%	6%	8%	9%	9%	5%	25%
Radio/ podcast	7%	6%	5%	9%	9%	12%	12%	0%
Word of mouth	9%	9%	7%	5%	7%	3%	10%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which of the following types of content would you say you consume the most?

	Republican (non-voters)	Republican (voters)	Democratic (non-voters)	Democratic (voters)	Independent (non-voters)	Independent (voters)	Other (non-voters)	Other (voters)	Don't know/ No answer (non-voters)	Don't know/ No answer (voters)
News	34%	42%	36%	48%	34%	47%	31%	32%	23%	46%
Some other type of media	65%	58%	64%	51%	65%	52%	68%	64%	76%	54%
Don't know/ No answer	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	5%	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is your main news source?

	Republican (non-voters)	Republican (voters)	Democratic (non-voters)	Democratic (voters)	Independent (non-voters)	Independent (voters)	Other (non-voters)	Other (voters)	Don't know/ No answer (non-voters)	Don't know/ No answer (voters)
TV	49%	48%	51%	49%	46%	45%	37%	36%	41%	49%
Social media	13%	18%	12%	18%	14%	19%	15%	23%	12%	11%
News websites/ apps	15%	11%	17%	15%	17%	13%	23%	14%	21%	20%
Newspaper	9%	9%	6%	6%	7%	9%	5%	14%	7%	9%
Radio/ podcast	8%	10%	7%	8%	7%	10%	12%	5%	6%	6%
Word of mouth	6%	5%	7%	5%	8%	5%	8%	9%	14%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Choose the statement that best describes you, even if it is not exactly right:
 “In general, I actively seek out news and information” OR “I mostly bump
 into news and information as I do other things or hear about it from others”**

	White (non-voters)	White (voters)	Hispanic/ Latino (non-voters)	Hispanic/ Latino (voters)	African American (non-voters)	African American (voters)
Actively seeks out news and information	58%	73%	52%	73%	57%	66%
Bumps into news while doing other things	43%	27%	48%	27%	43%	34%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%