

PRESS RELEASE

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Finns' trust and interest in news one of the highest in the world

Finns' trust in the news is still stable and one of the highest in the world. In Finland, 75% of the adult population trust the news they follow themselves, and the number of people who trust most of the news remained at 69% for the third year in a row, according to the Digital News Report 2024 survey conducted by the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute.

"In Finland, the turning point in trust came at a time of an exceptional need for information, the COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly, there was huge demand for the public to receive relevant and as verified information as possible about the state of the world and the country. Before the pandemic was over, Russia began its full-scale war, which once again brought people to the media," says **Kalle Silfverberg**, senior editor-in-chief at Finland's largest Swedish-language newspaper Hufvudstadsbladet, regarding the strong trust found in the report on Finland.

In addition to trust, the number of people interested in the news in Finland is higher than in most other countries in the comparison. In several countries, interest in news has weakened in recent years. In Finland, it dropped slightly in 2019, and since then about two thirds of Finnish respondents have been very or extremely interested in news.

According to the survey, 26 per cent of Finns avoid the news at least sometimes. The share increased from that of last year by up to five percentage points. Six per cent of respondents say they avoid the news often, 20 per cent sometimes, 28 per cent occasionally and 42 per cent never. Avoidance is more common than average among women, young people and people with low income.

However, avoiding the news does not typically seem to be due to a lack of interest, as almost half of those who are extremely or very interested in the news say they avoid the news at least occasionally and a fifth at least sometimes.

"Instead of a lack of interest, those who avoid the news may feel that the amount of news is too excessive or the topics are too distressing, for example," explains **Esa Reunanen**, researcher at the University of Tampere, who was responsible for the Finnish report. This is supported by the results of the survey, according to which two-thirds of Finnish respondents who avoid the news at least sometimes find the amount of news exhausting. "The 2023 survey, on the other hand, showed that the most avoided news topics were the war in Ukraine, health news such as COVID-related stories, and climate change and environmental news, which supports the assumption that distressing and repetitive news topics are reasons for avoidance," Reunanen continues.

For the first time ever, the survey examined the public's perception of the use of AI in news production. According to the results, the public wants journalists to remain responsible for the content of the news instead of AI. Half of the Finnish respondents find it at least somewhat uncomfortable to use news that is mainly generated by artificial intelligence, while only about a quarter of the respondents find it uncomfortable to use news that is generated with the help of artificial intelligence, but mainly by a journalist. Young men, highly educated people, people with high income and people who have read or heard a lot about AI take a more positive view than average on news generated by AI.

The research results of the Finnish report have been commented on this year by the author, journalist and doctoral researcher **Koko Hubara**, Iltalehti's senior editor-in-chief **Perttu Kauppinen**, Helsingin Sanomat's head of journalistic development **Esa Mäkinen**, entrepreneur, journalist and sustainability influencer **Noora Shingler** and Hufvudstadsbladet's senior editor-in-chief Kalle Silfverberg.

The Reuters Institute Digital News Report compares the use of news in 47 countries. The information is based on a questionnaire with approximately 2,000 respondents from each participating country. The survey is conducted annually, and Finland has been included since 2014. The report is funded by the Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland. This year's survey was conducted in January–February as an online survey by the research institute YouGov.

More information

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