

What the Public Wants from Journalism in the Age of AI: A Four Country Survey

Three-Quarters or More Value Journalism's Role; 56%+ Say "Everyday People" Can Produce It

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

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Overview

The public is encountering news in an ever expanding array of forms, channels and voices, providing them with more ways to find out about issues and events that matter to them than ever before. As CNTI heard in a series of [focus groups](#) conducted prior to this survey, people are putting a lot of work into getting themselves up to speed on that news. At the same time, many are actively [tuning news out](#), expressing a sense that it is overwhelming. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI)¹ has only added to the myriad of ways information is shared and consumed.

How does the public navigate these new ways of being informed? Where do they see journalism fitting in? And how can journalism do a better job of communicating its unique value? CNTI delved into these questions (and more) in this survey.

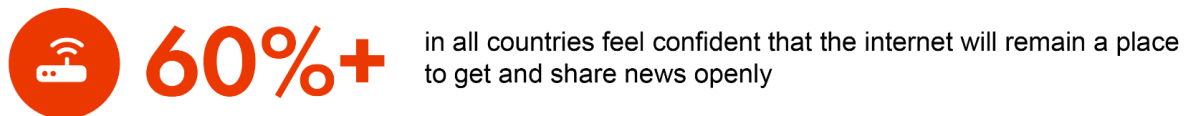
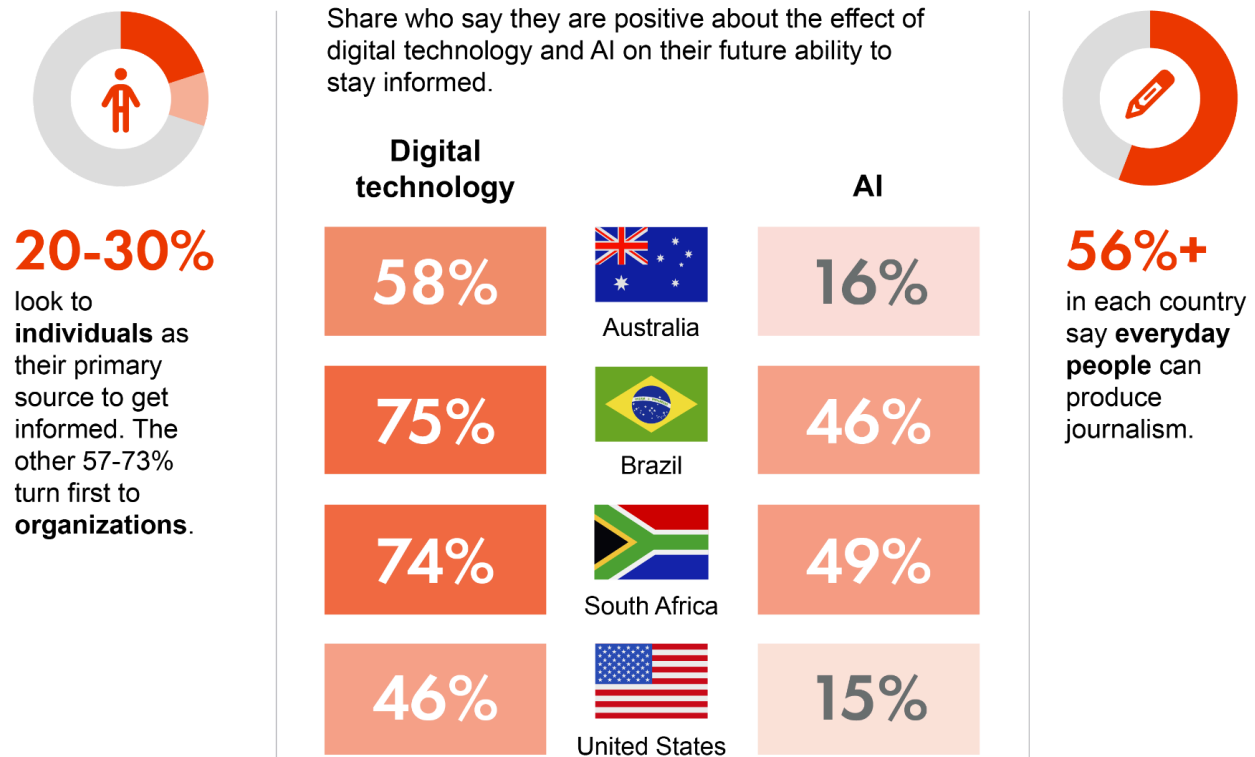
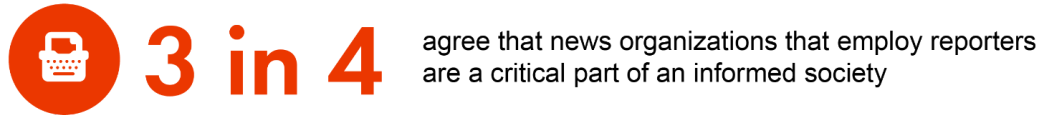
CNTI surveyed 4,037 people from four countries — Australia, Brazil, South Africa and the United States — between September 4 and October 16, 2024 to understand their perspectives on who can produce journalism, how they access the information sources they rely on and their attitudes about journalistic uses of technologies such as AI.² As with all CNTI research, this report was prepared by the research and professional staff of CNTI.

¹ Given the lack of consensus about what "Artificial Intelligence" encompasses, we use the term broadly to refer to ["sciences, theories and techniques whose purpose is to reproduce by a machine the cognitive abilities of a human being."](#) While there is no agreed-upon technical definition, it is helpful to consider examples like Large Language Models (LLM), which are "trained" on data to recognize statistical patterns and use those patterns to generate plausible text. These kinds of models typically have too many parameters to be fully transparent or explainable, even for their creators.

² Because surveys were conducted via telephone interviews in Australia, Brazil and South Africa, compared with self-administered via internet in the U.S. (i.e., different modes), and because of [known variability](#) in survey responses across countries regarding [social desirability](#) and [acquiescence](#), we primarily base comparisons on combined "somewhat" and "very" (important, challenging, etc.) responses. We also examine results by country rather than as one total.

Perceptions of journalism and use of technology

Survey of 4,037 people from four countries – Australia, Brazil, South Africa, and the United States



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024.

Key Findings

News organizations play a key role in meeting the information needs of the public alongside other valued providers, including everyday people. Even as most people say news organizations play an important role in society and still look more to organizations to get informed, a sizable minority (20-30%) look to individuals as their primary source. Furthermore, roughly half or more of the people surveyed in each country say that they believe journalists are not the only individuals capable of providing journalism and, indeed, that everyday people can do so. (Read [this section](#) of the report.)

Most people feel generally positive about their ability to keep informed, with digital technologies playing a major role — but trust is the biggest challenge: Across three of the four countries, strong majorities say digital technologies are very important for keeping informed (67-85%) and majorities feel positive about their ability to stay informed (59-67%). The United States was the outlier on both questions: A slim majority (57%) say digital technologies are very important for keeping informed, and while no feeling captured the majority of responses about their ability to stay informed, the plurality feel neutral (though they still express far more positivity than negativity). Despite this positivity, at least 70% of people in each country say “knowing who or what to trust” is at least somewhat of a challenge. (Read [this section](#) of the report.)

People are generally comfortable with journalists using technology for professional purposes, but views are more mixed about image editing and AI in the U.S. and Australia: Checking the accuracy of information, translating content and summarizing information from multiple sources are all deemed largely acceptable by a strong majority (71-93%) across the four countries. Differences emerge, however, when it comes to image editing. Brazilians and South Africans are nearly as comfortable with journalists using image editing technology (71-75%), while Americans and Australians are much less so (35-49%). Similarly, Brazilians and South Africans are more positive than negative about AI's impact on journalism: 46% or more say it will largely have a positive effect on journalists' ability to report on issues and events. On the other hand, Australians and Americans are more negative than positive: 28-41% say it will largely have a negative effect, while 15-18% say the effect will be positive. (Read [this section](#) of the report)

More than 60% in each country are generally confident that the internet will remain a place to get and share news. Outside the U.S., 58% or more in each country are also optimistic about the impact developments in digital technology will have on their ability to stay informed. (The U.S. is not far behind, at 46%.) Pluralities in Brazil and South Africa are also positive about AI's impact on their ability to stay informed, while pluralities in the U.S. and Australia are neutral. In each country, considerably more people are positive about technology in general than they are about AI in particular. (Read [this section](#) of the report)

This outlook, combined with the publics' openness to journalists using various forms of technology, presents an opportunity to producers of journalism: To make use of available technologies in ways that resonate with the public and serve their information needs, while

ensuring them that the ultimate product is one they stand by. This can, in turn, increase journalists' own capabilities in reporting, safety and, ultimately, sustainability.

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Journalism Organizations are Valued, but Not as the Sole Arbiters of Reliable News Reporting

Being informed about current issues and events is a [key piece](#) of civic and social engagement for people. As we saw in our focus groups, [people take an active role](#) in shaping how they stay informed on the issues and events of the day, making choices about which information sources to follow and cross-referencing information across multiple sources. Focus group participants also frequently described mainstream news organizations³ as playing a role in their process of getting informed, acting as a starting point for catching up on the news and/or a validator for information encountered elsewhere. Through this survey, we sought to further understand how widespread those behaviors and attitudes are across four different countries.

The public sees news organizations that employ reporters as critical for an informed society (but not as valuable to their individual information needs)

Across all four countries, strong majorities (76-81%) think that “news organizations that employ reporters are a critical part of an informed society.”

Strong majorities across countries agree that news organizations that employ reporters are a critical part of an informed society

Question: Do you think that news organizations that employ reporters are a critical part of an informed society, or are not a critical part of an informed society?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

Chart: Center for News, Technology & Innovation • Source: What the Public Wants from Journalism in the Age of AI: A Four Country Survey • Created with Datawrapper

³ In our survey questionnaire, the phrase “news organizations that employ reporters” is used as a proxy for traditional media companies and is distinct from other kinds of content producers. Throughout this report, we refer to “mainstream news organizations” or “reporter-based organizations” to specify this kind of organization.

Moreover, when asked about where they personally look for information about issues or events, the majority of respondents in each country still say organizations. But, the value of individual voices begins to emerge.

Overall, people in all four countries turn more to information coming from organizations than from individuals. Approximately three-quarters of Australians, South Africans and Americans look for information from an organization (73%, 72% and 75%, respectively) with a smaller majority (57%) of Brazilians stating the same. But sizable minorities in each country (20-30%) turn more to news from individuals. While this is still a minority, other newer yet firmly established pathways to news also fall into this range such as social media, where [25% of U.S. adults “often” got news](#) in 2024.

Sizable minorities look for information from individuals, rather than organizations

Question: When looking to get informed about issues and events, which do you look for more – information from a certain organization or from a certain individual?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

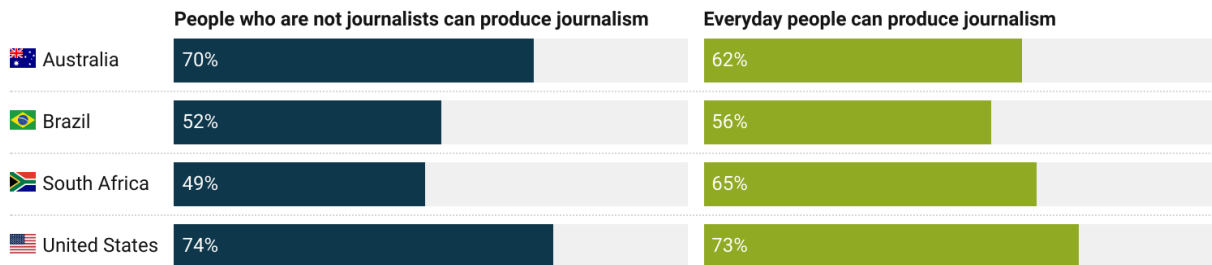
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When it comes to getting their news from individuals, people are not limiting themselves to professional journalists. Strong majorities in both the U.S. (74%) and Australia (70%) say that “people who are not journalists” can produce journalism. That sentiment is a bit more muted in Brazil and South Africa, with about half agreeing (52% and 49%, respectively). Similarly, majorities in all four countries (56-73%) agree that “everyday people” can produce journalism, with strong majorities in the U.S. (73%) and South Africa (65%).

These findings reinforce sentiments that emerged in the focus groups, where many participants described a [preference](#) for more accessible, directly communicated information: from individual journalists on social media, “snippets” of longer media products shared online and word of mouth in their real-world communities. While news organizations may be seen as providing foundational information, new formats and voices are shaping how participants are accessing that information.

Roughly half or more in all countries say that "people who are not journalists" and "everyday people" can produce journalism

Respondents were asked if they agree with the following statements at different points in the survey.



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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This broader sense of who can produce journalism has also been embraced by many journalists themselves. CNTI's [international survey of journalists](#) found that about half of journalists in the Global South (including Brazil and South Africa) say that people who are not journalists can produce journalism, as do strong majorities in the Global North (including Australia and the U.S.).

Indeed, looking across both surveys, professional journalists and the public agree that journalism can be produced by a wide range of people, including “everyday people.” This broader acceptance of journalism producers with a much decreased “gatekeeper” role, coupled with widespread public appreciation for reporter-based news, raises further questions: What do people mean when they talk about journalism? What makes it “critical for an informed society?” What enables such a broad range of people to produce journalism and how much of it is a part of people’s news consumption? The answers have high stakes, as private and public actors seek to draw lines around which individuals and organizations are given priority in contexts as far ranging as [media funding](#) mechanisms, [information integrity](#) and allotted press credentials.

The public expects honesty in producers of journalism

When asked to consider the top traits they associate with people who produce journalism, most people offer positive attributes, emphasizing mission-driven qualities like honesty and truthfulness. There are some, though, who express more negative sentiments.

Our preliminary analysis found that people across countries expect several common traits from producers of journalism: **honesty or truthfulness** was the trait mentioned by the most people in Australia, Brazil and the U.S., and the second most mentioned in South Africa,

where **informing** people was most important. Informing people was also second most mentioned in Brazil.

The collective focus on honesty and truthfulness across each of the four countries highlights people's expectation that producers of journalism serve as honest arbiters of information. Examples of the types of responses for the concepts of honesty, truthfulness and informing are provided below:

- "I suppose honesty. Being true to what is actually happening. Not misleading or disinformation." (Australia)
- "Preparation, honesty, sincerity, not making things up." (Brazil)
- "I think it's about finding the truth and telling the story." (South Africa)
- "Steadfast quest for truth." (United States)

Integrity, reliance on **facts** and **impartiality or lack of bias** are also among the top five traits in Australia, Brazil and the United States, further highlighting the desire for accurate information.

- "Factual, in depth and engaging." (Australia)
- "Honesty, intelligence, informed and unbiased." (Australia)
- "Be impartial about news, especially politics." (Brazil)
- "Presentation of the facts without bias." (United States)

South Africans' main qualities for producers of journalism also include **education** and **investigation** — further highlighting that South Africans may consider journalism a specialized profession to a greater degree than other countries.

- "Professionalism. A degree in journalism." (South Africa)
- "Someone qualified or has a degree or going to school." (South Africa)

On the other hand, smaller numbers of people across all four countries say that producers of journalism **display bias**. Preliminary analysis suggests they occur more in Australia and the United States. These responses suggest dissatisfaction with the sources of information available.

- "They are generally trying to manipulate you; it's very seldom you get an unbiased story." (Australia)
- "They are often biased and don't present the whole picture." (United States)

CNTI's [earlier focus groups](#), conducted as part of the Defining News Initiative, found similar sentiments.

A follow-up report will include a more detailed analysis of the open-ended responses to examine similarities and differences in the qualities expressed by people in each of the four countries.

In Working to Keep Informed, Knowing Who to Trust is the Greatest Challenge Asked About

As CNTI discussed in the findings of the focus groups, keeping informed about the issues and events one cares about is hard work today. With so many options to choose from, people have to make choices constantly — to a degree that, as much research has shown, often leaves people overwhelmed. CNTI dug into how people make these choices, what helps them and where the hurdles are.

All in all, people feel pretty good about their own capacity to keep informed. Majorities everywhere except the U.S. feel positive about their ability to keep informed; in the U.S. that falls to 40% while about half feel neutral. When asked about four potential challenges they might face, knowing who or what to trust ranks highest across all four countries. That challenge conflicts with their greatest priorities: getting news quickly, seeing different sources, being able to go more or less in depth and getting news from professional journalists.

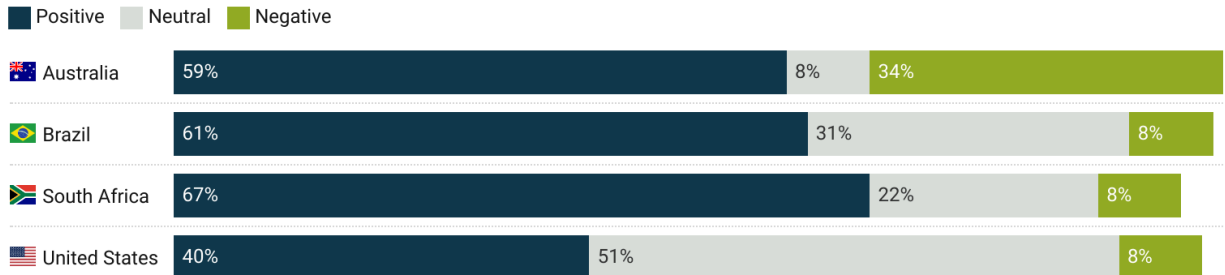
It is worth considering these findings alongside the [2024 Digital News Report](#), which found that across 47 countries, people's top three concerns in deciding which outlets to trust are whether they are transparent about how the news is made, have high journalistic standards and “represent people like me fairly” — with strikingly little variation by age, gender or political orientation.

People feel good about their ability to stay informed — except in the U.S.

In three of the four countries, a majority of people generally feel positive about their ability to keep informed. That falls to 40% in the U.S. where the plurality (51%) say they feel neutral. Still, Americans are about five times as likely to be positive than negative. Australians stand out for a different reason. Even as a majority (59%) feel positive, about a third (34%) feel negative, far more than in any other country, where that sentiment is expressed by just 8%.

The majority of respondents feel positive about their ability to keep informed; U.S. respondents were an outlier, with the plurality neutral

Question: All in all, how do you feel about your ability to keep informed about issues and events, mostly positive, neutral or negative?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

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People also seem to be consuming a fair amount of journalism. About half of Americans (52%) and South Africans (50%) report reading, watching or listening to five or more pieces of journalism a week, as do about two-thirds of Brazilians (64%) and three-quarters of Australians (75%). This is a fairly subjective question (what constitutes “a piece” or “journalism” is up to the respondent), but it is interesting to see the high levels of consumption most people report. Future research efforts could use the same measures to compare this assessment about journalism with other kinds of information or content.

Among the challenges to staying informed, knowing who to trust ranks highest across the board

Among four potential challenges to getting and staying informed, “knowing who or what to trust” ranks first. More than three-quarters of people in Australia (79%), Brazil (90%) and the U.S. (80%) say this is at least somewhat of a challenge, and nearly as many people in South Africa (71%) say the same. Brazilians are more likely to see this as a big challenge than others.

Slightly smaller majorities in all four countries also say that the “availability of high-quality reporting” is at least somewhat of a challenge.

Half or more (53-70%) in all four countries also see “choosing among all the sources” as at least somewhat of a challenge. Pluralities in both Brazil (39%) and South Africa (32%) see this as a big challenge, while many fewer Australians (13%) and Americans (19%) do.

These three challenges all highlight the difficulty of staying informed in a high-choice environment, mirroring insights from earlier focus groups, in which participants described easy access to abundant information but challenges in deciding [how to focus their attention](#) on the deluge of news and information available to them. They often described referencing

multiple sources on a single topic in order to verify information, add depth or seek out additional perspectives. For many in our focus groups, the challenge was less about having enough choice and more about how to integrate diverse — and sometimes contradictory — sources into their media habits and their understanding of issues and events.

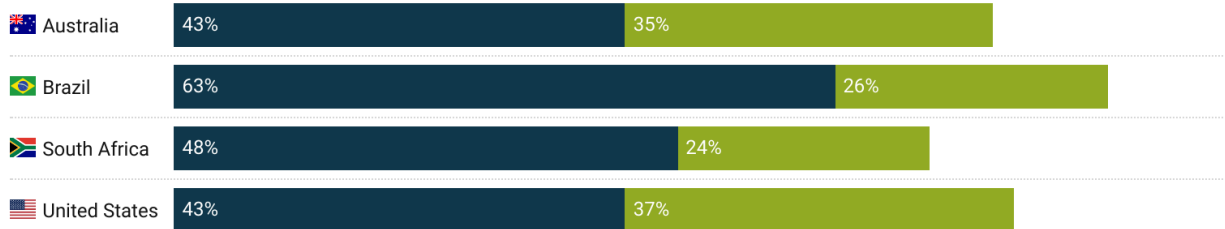
On the other hand, there are much bigger differences in technological barriers to staying informed. Pluralities in Brazil (41%) and South Africa (35%) say “having technology that works” is a big challenge — two to three times as many people as in Australia (16%) and the U.S. (13%). In fact, a strong majority in Brazil (68%) and a smaller majority in South Africa (56%) say that technology is at least somewhat of a challenge, while close to four-in-ten Australians (39%) and Americans (37%) agree.

Majorities in all four countries describe trust, high-quality reporting and choosing among sources as at least somewhat of a challenge

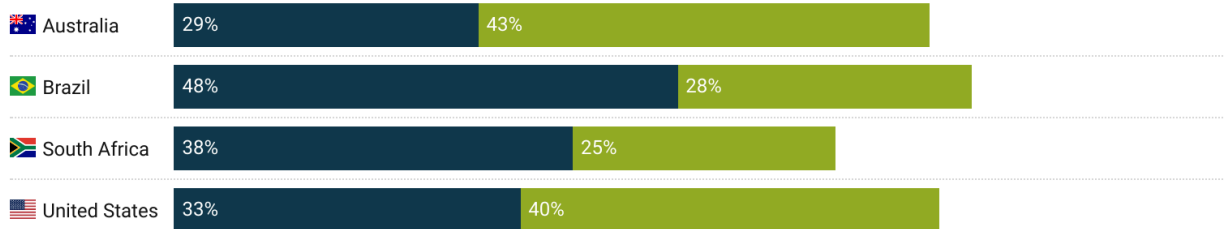
Question: How big of a challenge is each of the following in your ability to stay informed?

■ A big challenge ■ Somewhat of a challenge

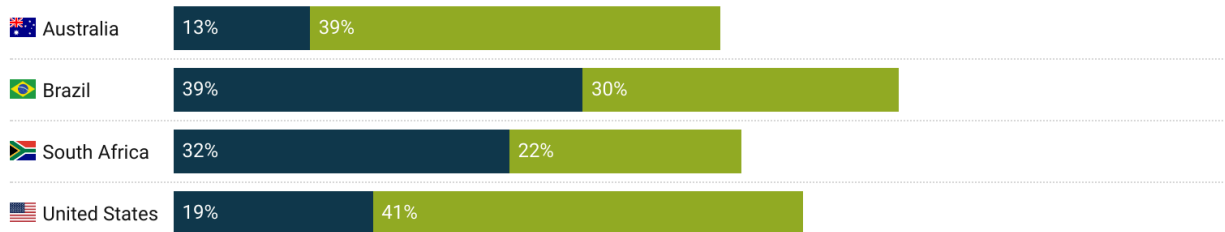
Knowing who or what to **trust**



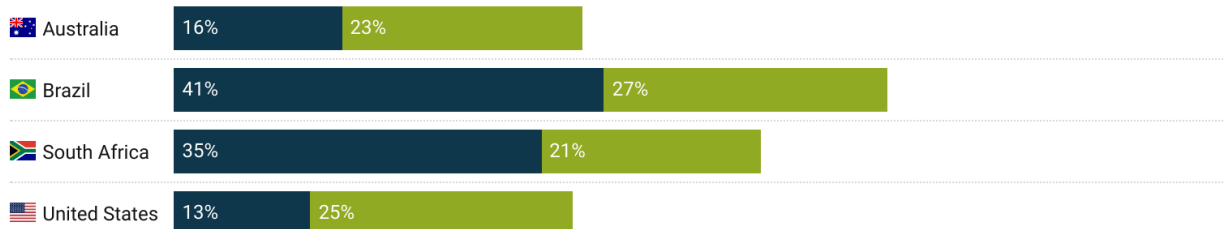
Availability of **high-quality reporting**



Choosing among all the **sources**



Having **technology that works**



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not much of a challenge, Not at all a challenge, Refused/NA responses not shown.

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People across all four countries share many priorities in getting informed but differ when it comes to social aspects of news

When presented with six to choose from, people are consistent across all four countries in how they prioritize factors in getting informed. Of those six factors, getting the news quickly, seeing news from many different sources, going more or less in-depth on a story and getting news from professional journalists are viewed as at least somewhat important by sizable majorities in every country (73-91%). Notably, each of these four factors is very important to strong majorities of South Africans (66-79%) and majorities of Brazilians (63-65%) — often twice the percentage of Australians and Americans (31-45%).

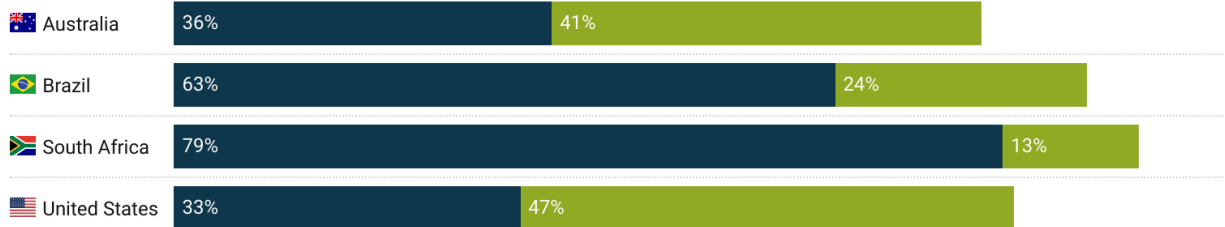
The shared priorities reinforce the results of CNTI's [focus group conversations](#), in which participants across countries described timeliness as one of the most important qualities of news (especially compared with journalism). Providing relevant information quickly is a primary responsibility of news. And many people actively take control of the information they consume in response to the challenges: they curate their feeds, use social platforms to search for new information and cross-reference between multiple sources.

Several factors for getting informed are at least somewhat important in every country

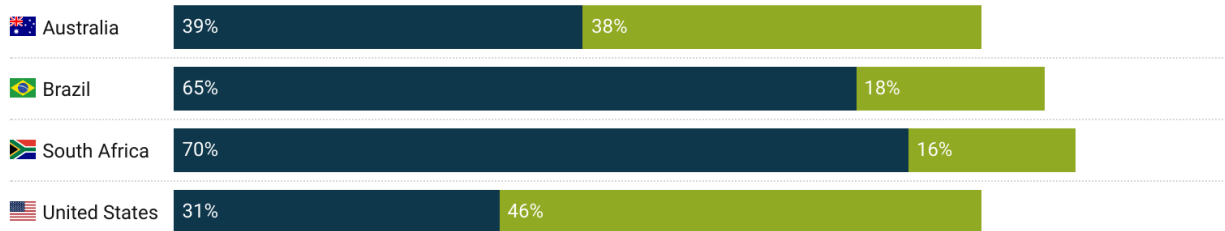
Question: How important is each of these in how you choose to get informed?

Very important Somewhat important

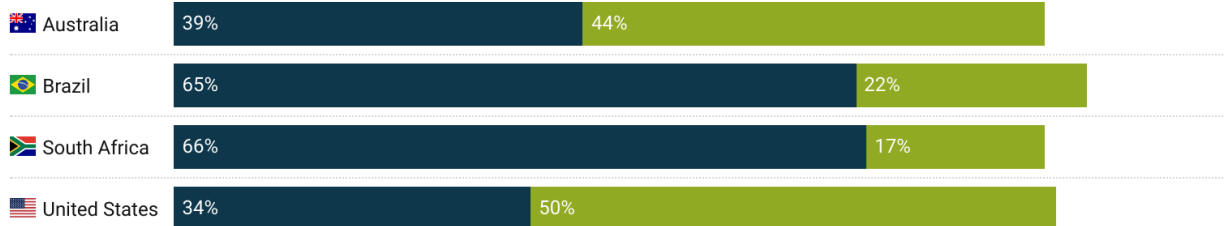
Getting the news quickly



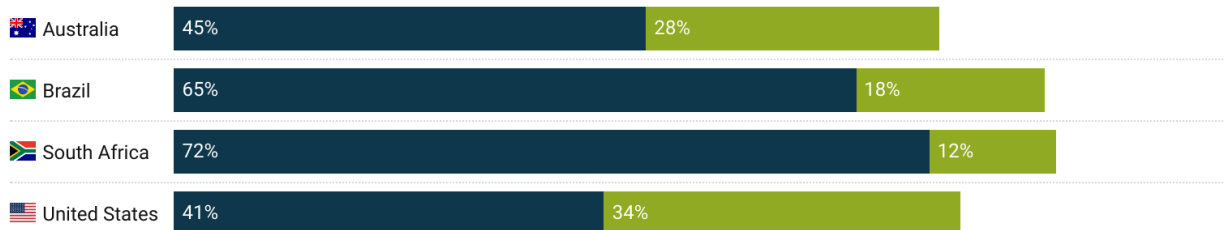
Seeing news from many different sources



Being able to go more or less in-depth on a story



Getting the news from professional journalists



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not so important, Not at all important and Refused/NA responses not shown.

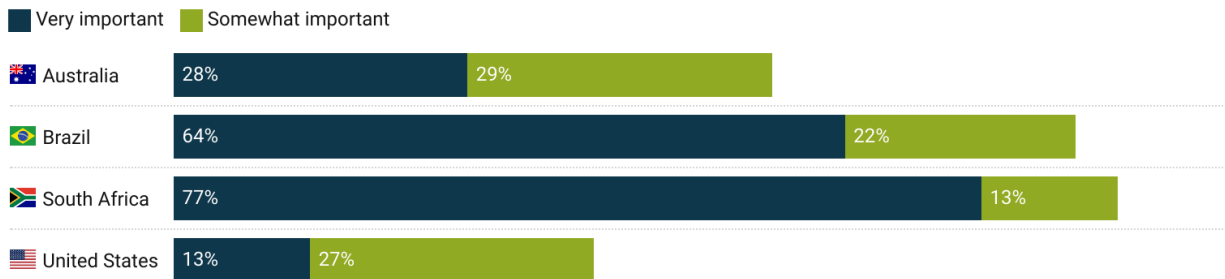
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Larger differences arise between countries about the importance of being able to engage with others and feeling a personal connection to the source of news. South Africans and Brazilians report being able to engage with others as very important more than twice as

often (77% and 64% respectively) as Australians (28%) and Americans (13%). A sizable minority of Americans (40%) do find engaging with others at least somewhat important, as do a majority (57%) of Australians. In the U.S. in particular, it is interesting to consider these findings alongside increasing reports of [loneliness and social disconnection](#) and extreme political polarization, which [many Americans blame on the news media](#).

Majorities everywhere except the U.S. say being able to engage with others is at least somewhat important

Question: How important is **being able to engage with others** in how you choose to get informed?



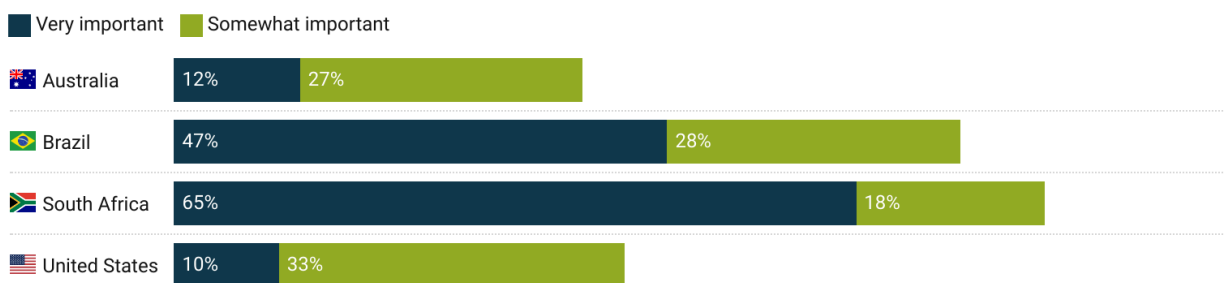
Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not so important, Not at all important and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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A similar pattern holds for feeling a personal connection to the source of news.⁴ Many more Brazilians and South Africans said this factor was important than Australians or Americans.

Brazilians and South Africans care much more about feeling a personal connection to news sources than Americans or Australians

Question: How important is **feeling a personal connection to the source of news** in how you choose to get informed?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not so important, Not at all important and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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⁴ Surprisingly, people who say personal connection is very important are no more likely to prefer news from individuals than people who say it is less important.

Among those who say there is a difference between journalism and news, journalism contains more opinion — but also more depth

When asked whether journalism is distinct from news, we see alignment between the same groups of countries: strong majorities (65%) in both the U.S. and Australia say there is a difference, while people in Brazil (54%) and South Africa (40%) are less certain.

Strong majorities in the U.S. and Australia say there is a difference between journalism and news

Question: Thinking about news and journalism, do you see journalism as something that is different from news, or not?

■ Yes, journalism and news are different



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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In an open-ended follow-up question for those who see a difference, there was tension between two overarching themes across all four countries:⁵

1. If news is simply what happened, respondents say, journalism is more detailed, in-depth or investigative.
2. At the same time, many people say that journalism adds a layer of opinion or bias.

These responses share an understanding of journalism as something that brings in analysis and context to make sense of what is happening, but differ in whether they find that lens valuable or not. As one Australian respondent wrote, “For me news is factual whereas journalism is providing context and analysis and accurate reporting of the facts.” For this person, journalism adds value to facts. The contrasting view is epitomized by a respondent from Brazil, who said, “Actually, journalism isn't reporting the news anymore, it's broadcasting the news biased by the interests of the company they work for.” This response also suggests that journalism has not always been this way; instead, journalism once reported the news but no longer does so.

In [our earlier focus groups](#), we observed that participants most often defined journalism by its positive qualities. Where focus group participants discussed bias or opinion in journalism, they often saw these traits as evidence of a flawed product, rather than an intrinsic quality of

⁵ Part 2 of this report will include a detailed analysis of these responses.

journalism. Sometimes they even considered biased or opinionated journalism to be “fake news,” even when the facts were not incorrect. This tension — in which the public values and desires in-depth, investigative or well-researched information, but is skeptical of analysis that carries even a whiff of opinion or bias — is a critical one for newsrooms to consider in an era of declining trust and relevance.

Technology Is Important to the Public, and They Are OK with Most Journalistic Uses — Except for American and Australian Views on Image Editing and AI

In a growing number of countries today, most people consume their news online in a wide array of formats including podcasts, videos and messages on social networking and microblogging platforms. [One 2024 study](#) found that about one-in-three adults (across 47 countries) use YouTube for news weekly, and another one-in-five use WhatsApp.

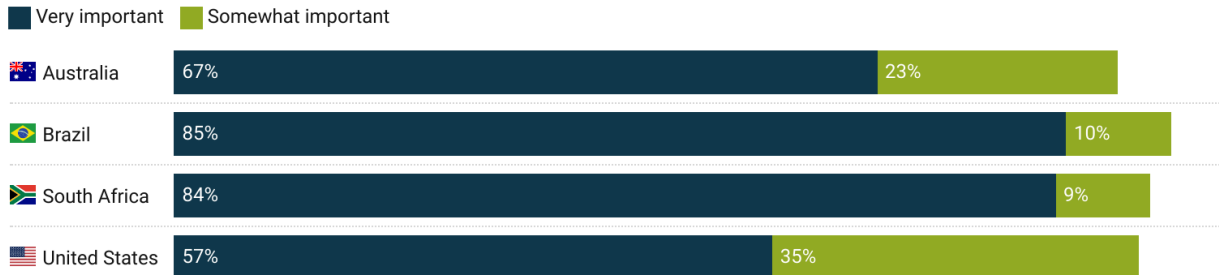
Indeed, in the four countries CNTI surveyed, most people recognize technology as an essential tool for keeping informed and are generally positive about many ways technology aids their access to and consumption of news. They are also generally OK with journalists using technology to help them do their work — with greater caution expressed over uses of AI and image editing in the U.S. and Australia. In both countries, roughly half or more say they are uncomfortable with technology-based image editing in journalism — and more people feel negatively than positively about AI's impact on journalists' ability to report.

Digital technologies help people stay informed

Overall, people across all four countries describe digital technology as important for keeping them informed about issues and events. More than 80% of Brazilians and South Africans describe digital technology as very important, as do approximately 70% of Australians and approximately 60% of Americans. At least 90% in each country describe technologies as at least somewhat important.

In all countries, almost all say that digital technology is at least somewhat important for keeping informed

Question: How important is digital technology — such as computers, smartphones, apps, platforms and other tools — to your ability to keep informed about issues and events?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not so important, Not at all important and Refused/NA responses not shown.

Chart: Center for News, Technology & Innovation • Source: What the Public Wants from Journalism in the Age of AI: A Four Country Survey • Created with Datawrapper

As we discuss in a [separate chapter](#), Brazilians and South Africans report more technological challenges in keeping informed and perhaps, as such, find greater value in the ways technology can help, compared with the U.S. and Australia. These findings are also consistent with a separate [2025 study](#) that found Brazilians and South Africans are more optimistic about technology in general than people in Australia or the U.S. and report more openness to using new technologies. Majorities of people in each of the four countries [connect regularly](#) to the internet.

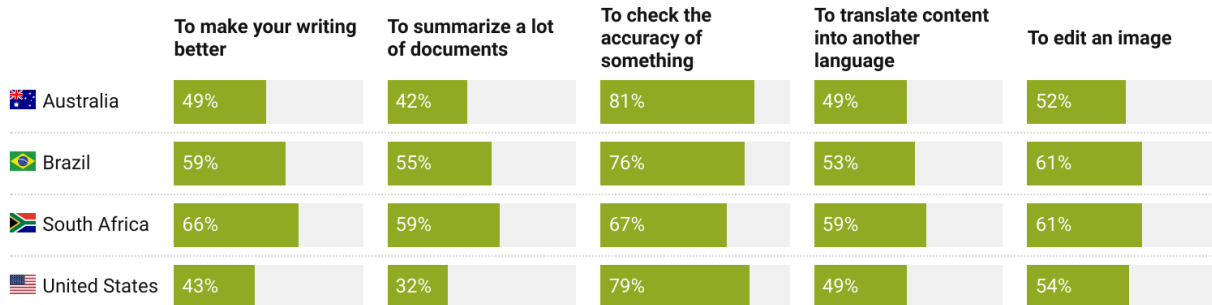
People use technology in many ways, including image editing; they are generally comfortable with similar uses by journalists — with some exceptions in the U.S. and Australia

Large swaths of the public across all four countries use technology for content-related tasks in their personal lives. Checking the accuracy of something is by far the most common use of technology in Australia (81%), Brazil (76%) and the United States (79%). In South Africa, using technology “to check the accuracy of something” is equally as common as using technology “to make their writing better” (67% and 66%, respectively).

Roughly half or more across all four countries also report using technology for translation and for image editing in the past year. Majorities of Brazilians and South Africans also report using technology “to make their writing better” and “to summarize a lot of documents,” while fewer Americans and Australians report these uses.

Across all countries, strong majorities of respondents have used technology "to check the accuracy of something"

Question: In the past year, have you used technology [...]



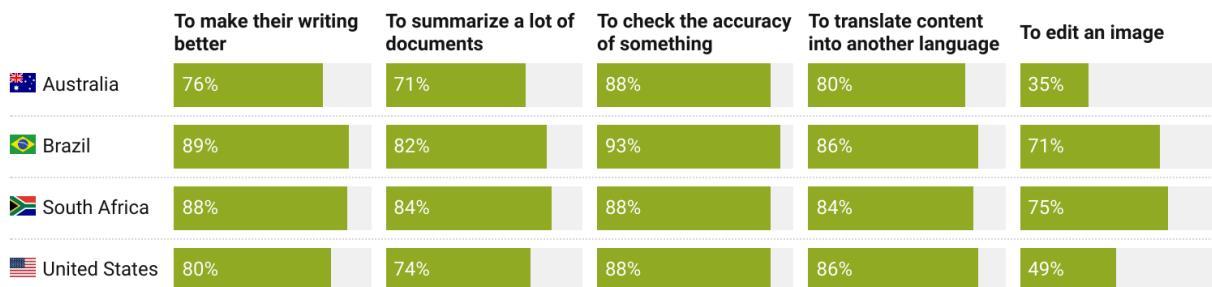
Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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On the whole, people are generally positive about journalists' ability to use technology for professional purposes. They are particularly supportive of using technology to provide accurate content in an accessible way. Across all four countries surveyed, strong majorities are OK with journalists using technology to (1) check grammar and spelling, (2) summarize a lot of documents, (3) check the accuracy of something and (4) translate content into another language.

Broad acceptance of journalists using technology, but Americans and Australians are less OK with image editing

Question: Are you mostly OK with a journalist using technology [...]



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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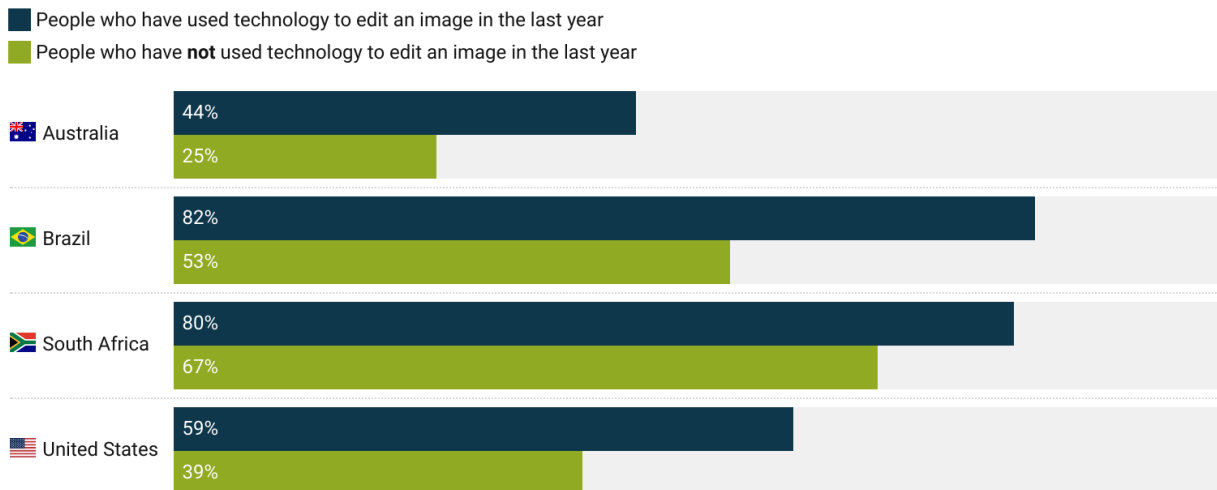
Americans and Australians are far less comfortable with journalists' use of technology to edit images and use of AI in the news production process. While about three-quarters of Brazilians (71%) and South Africans (75%) are comfortable with journalists using technology to

edit an image, half or less feel the same way in Australia (35%) or the U.S. (49%). Instead, 61% of Australians and 48% of Americans say they are mostly against it. And image editing is the least acceptable use of technology in all four countries. These findings are consistent with the [2024 Digital News Report](#), which found that “behind the scenes” uses of AI were most acceptable, while creating content — specifically photographs — was least acceptable. The low levels of acceptance among Australians may also reflect [highly publicized examples](#) of news organizations using AI to alter real images that our [focus group](#) participants spoke directly about.

People’s attitudes about journalists’ use of image editing technology also seem to be driven by their *personal* experiences. In every country, people who have used technology to edit images themselves are more likely to support journalists doing so than people who have not — with a roughly twenty percentage point difference or more.

People who have used technology to edit an image are more OK with journalists doing the same

Question: Are you mostly OK with a journalist using technology to edit an image?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. No and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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Strong regional differences in attitudes about AI

We then asked two different questions specifically about AI. As there’s [no clear consensus](#) on what constitutes “AI” and the term encompasses [many different forms of automation](#), we first asked about specific uses of technology (without mentioning whether AI might or might not be involved) and then asked a broader question about AI’s impact on journalism.

We asked whether people “think AI will have a mostly positive, negative or neutral impact on journalists’ ability to report on issues and events,” and find a similarly clear split between

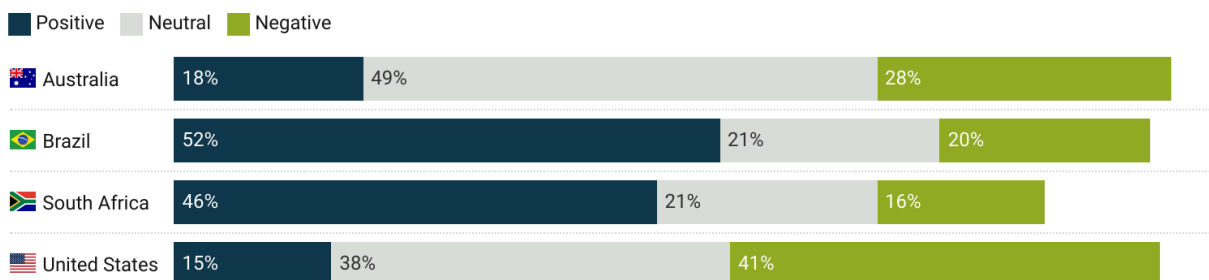
countries. Brazilians and South Africans mainly express a sense of optimism, with 52% and 46% saying it will mostly have a positive impact. Americans and Australians on the other hand are more negative than positive. Just 15% of Americans and 18% of Australians think it will have a positive impact while 41% and 28% respectively say the impact will mostly be negative. It is also worth noting that large swaths in each of these countries express a neutral sense, 38% and 49% respectively.

This regional difference is mirrored among journalists CNTI surveyed separately. CNTI's [global study of journalists](#) found that 16% of journalists in the Global North, which includes the U.S. and Australia, felt positively about the impact of AI on enabling an informed public. Meanwhile, about half (48%) of journalists in the Global South felt positively.

It is worth considering various factors that could be at play in these differences. One [recent study](#) found a correlation between trust in AI and self-reported understanding of the technology, both of which were higher in emerging countries (including South Africa and Brazil) than high-income ones (including the U.S. and Australia).⁶ Another consideration is what people base their knowledge upon. In a recent [CNTI conference](#) on communicating to the public about AI in journalism, participants talked about the potential impacts of media coverage on public attitudes.

Brazil and South Africa are generally more positive about the impact AI will have on journalists' ability to report

Question: Overall, do you think AI will have a mostly positive, neutral, or negative impact on journalists' ability to report about issues and events?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

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Considerations around AI in journalism

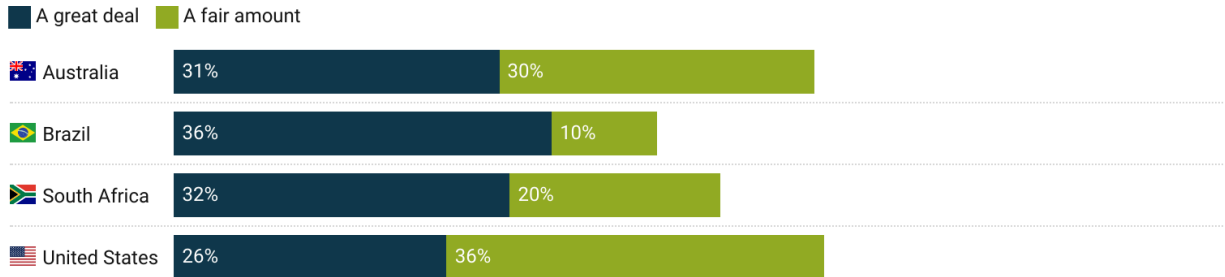
Another way to assess people's views about AI in journalism is to ask whether it matters to them if AI is used in the reporting process. Between roughly a quarter and a third in each country feel it matters a great deal. When we look at who says it matters at least a fair

⁶ We use the terminology selected by the reports we cite; in this case, "emerging countries" and "the Global South" largely refer to the same countries, as do "high-income countries" and "the Global North."

amount, we see more differences between countries with higher responses from the U.S. (62%) and Australia (61%) than Brazil (46%) or South Africa (52%) — again showing a similar divide.

Majorities in U.S. and Australia care whether AI was used in the reporting process; somewhat fewer in Brazil and South Africa

Question: In the news and journalism you usually read, watch or listen to, how much does it matter to you whether AI was used in the reporting process?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not much, Not at all and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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Following the focus group discussions in which participants distinguished between specific AI use cases — [weighing a number of factors including](#) the source of the data, the quality of the models and the level of human oversight — we asked here about the importance of five different factors.

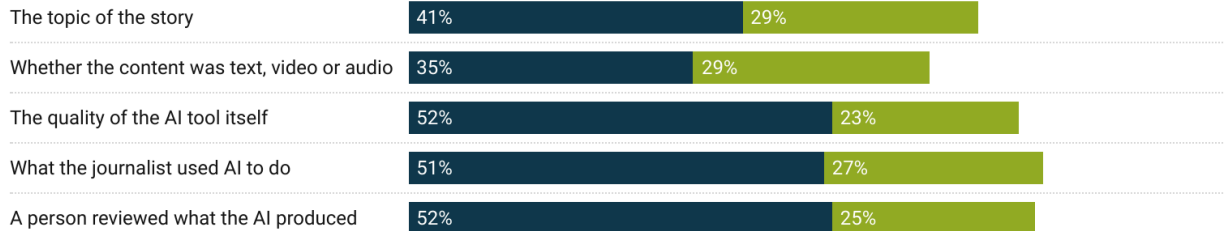
A majority of people in all four countries surveyed say that each factor is at least somewhat important when deciding if a journalist's use of AI is OK. But while South Africans and Brazilians give roughly equal consideration to all five factors, Americans and Australians see two factors (the story topic and format) as less important than the other three (tool quality, what it is used for and human review).

Majorities in all countries use multiple factors to decide if journalists' use of AI is OK

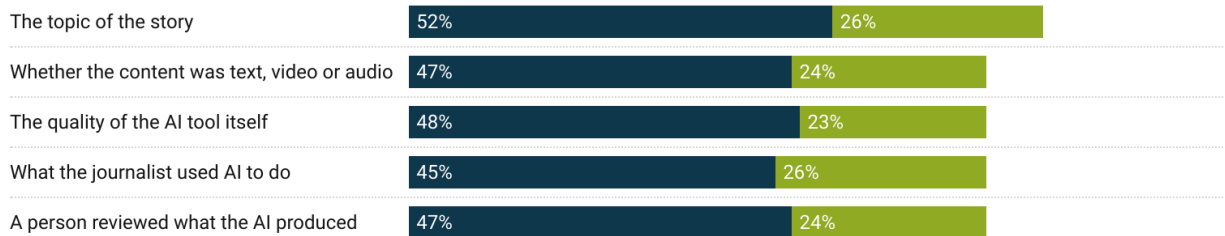
Question: How much of a factor is each of these in deciding if a journalist's use of AI is OK?

■ A big factor ■ Somewhat of a factor

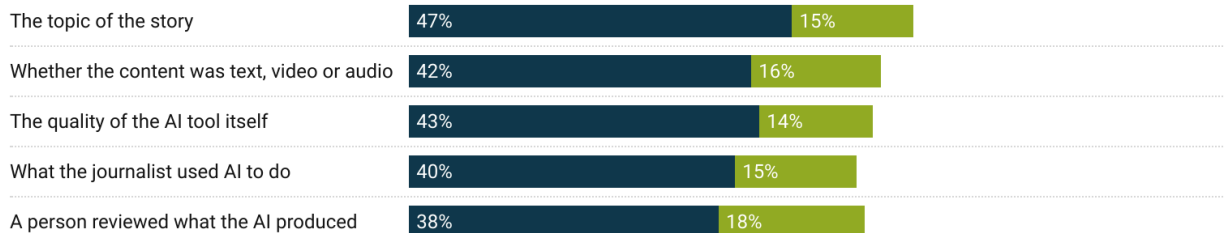
Australia



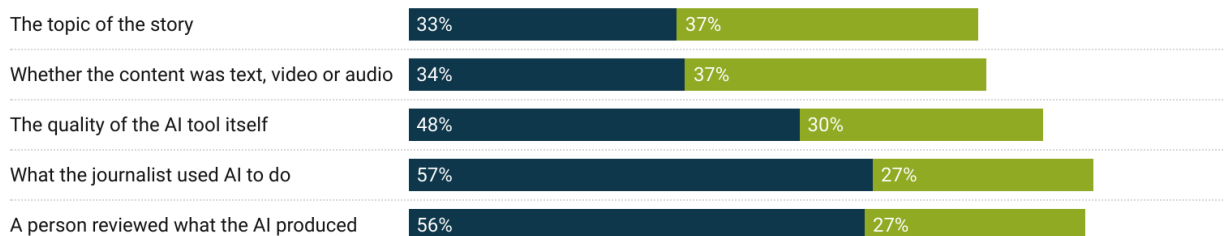
Brazil



South Africa



United States



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not much of a factor, Not a factor and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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The three factors prioritized across all four countries — tool quality, what it is used for and human review — all speak broadly to ways one can evaluate an AI model's accuracy. This point also came up consistently in [the focus group discussions](#) — especially in terms of what

people said they need to be able to rely on journalists for. Focus group participants made the point that if journalists are going to be using an AI model, audiences needed to know that the journalist could vouch for its quality and accuracy.

In this context, focus group participants were particularly uncomfortable with the use of AI for image editing. We also noted that this discomfort was likely related to participants' description of photos and videos as important elements of "on the scene" reporting that gave them confidence in the quality of news content. Likely because images are perceived as critical to understanding news events, synthetic or AI-altered images were widely seen as unacceptable in news content.

Broad Optimism for the Future — Especially in Brazil and South Africa

Across the four countries surveyed, people are largely optimistic about the future of the open internet and developments in technology. They are also generally positive or neutral about the value of AI — with a greater sense in Brazil and South Africa that AI will have a positive impact while people in the U.S. and Australia see AI having a neutral impact.

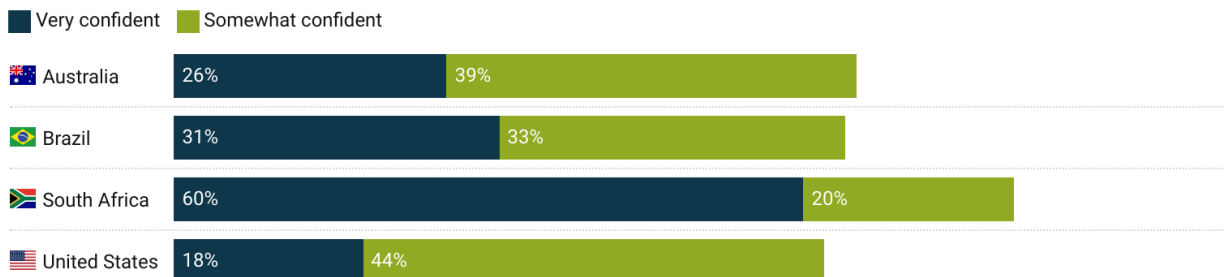
This outlook, combined with the publics' openness to journalists using various forms of technology, presents an opportunity to producers of journalism: To make use of the technologies that are available in ways that serve public needs (as the public articulates them) which include easy access and preferred formats, while communicating about technology uses in ways that address public concerns. This can, in turn, increase journalists' own capabilities in reporting, safety and ultimate sustainability.

Across countries there is optimism about the internet as well as developments in technology

Majorities in each country are at least somewhat confident the internet will be a place to get and share news openly in the future. People are most confident about the internet's role in news dissemination in South Africa where about 60% of people are very confident and another 20% are somewhat confident about the future of the internet as a place to access and share news. In the other three countries, majorities are still confident, but more cautiously so. In Australia (39%) and the U.S. (44%), pluralities are somewhat confident, while in Brazil, roughly equal numbers of people are very (31%) or somewhat confident (33%).

Australia, Brazil and the U.S. express cautious optimism about the future of an open internet for news; South Africa more confident

Question: Looking ahead, how confident are you that the internet will be a place to get and share news openly?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not so confident, Not at all confident and Refused/NA responses not shown.

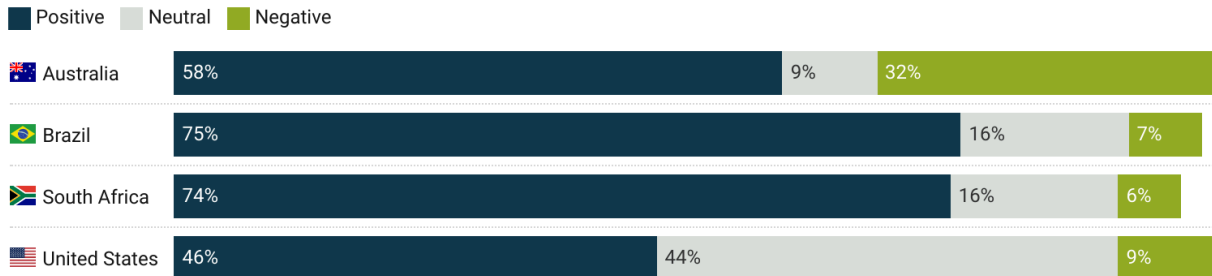
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People are also generally positive about how developments in digital technology will impact their ability to keep informed in the future. Strong majorities of Brazilians (75%) and South Africans (74%) have positive perceptions of the potential impacts of digital technology. Overall, people in Australia are the most divided about digital technology's impact on staying informed in the future. The majority (58%) are still positive — but a third of people (32%) think the impact will be negative, the highest in any country. Just 9% are neutral on the impact of technology.

The U.S. also stands out with the fewest positive responses (46%). But the number of negative responses in the U.S. is similar to those in Brazil and South Africa; instead, people in the U.S. are roughly equal parts positive and neutral.

Majorities in three countries think developments in technology will positively affect keeping informed; U.S. split between positive and neutral

Question: Overall, do you think developments in digital technology will have a positive, neutral or negative effect on your ability to keep informed about events and issues of the day?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

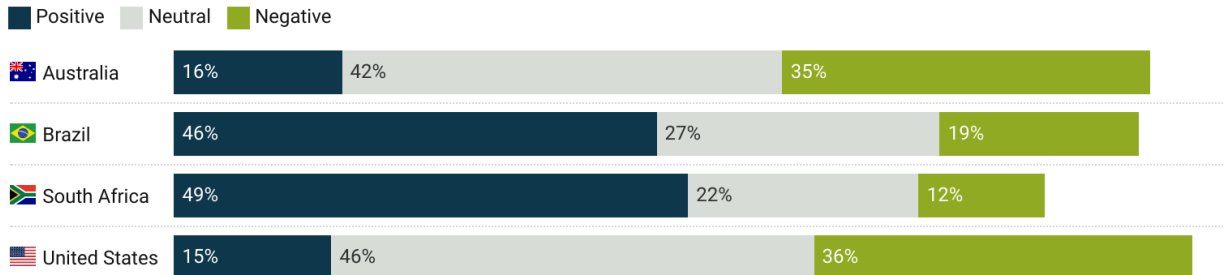
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Generally speaking, strong majorities of people in the surveyed countries think AI will either have a positive impact on their ability to keep informed or will have no effect one way or another.

However, we see strong regional differences in levels of optimism. Close to half of people in Brazil (46%) and South Africa (49%) are optimistic, and about one-in-four are neutral — 27% of responses from Brazil and 22% of responses from South Africa. The reverse is true in Australia and the U.S. where small minorities, 16% and 15% respectively, are positive about AI's impact on their ability to stay informed. Pluralities in both countries are neutral in their perspective — 42% in Australia and 46% in the U.S. Approximately a third of Australians (35%) and Americans (36%) have a negative perspective on the potential impact of AI technologies, about two to three times as many as in Brazil or South Africa.

Brazil and South Africa more positive about how AI will affect their personal ability to keep informed than Australia and U.S.

Question: Overall, do you think AI will have a mostly positive, neutral or negative impact on your ability to keep informed about issues and events?



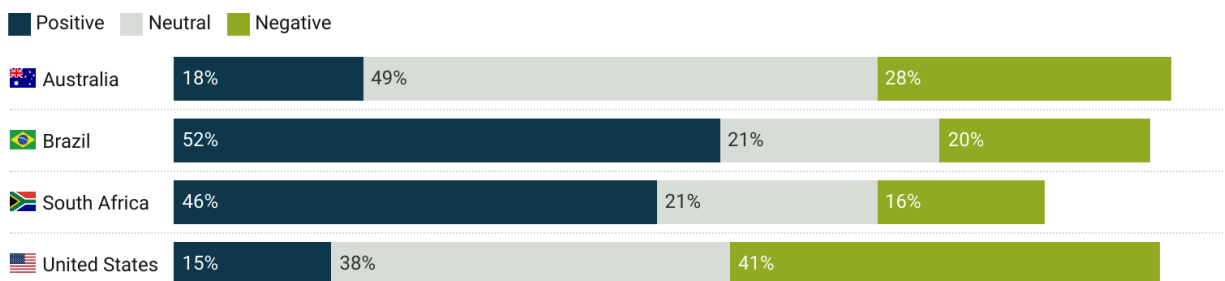
Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Don't know and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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The pattern of responses is very similar within each country when asked about the impact of AI on journalists' ability to report.

Brazil and South Africa are generally more positive about the impact AI will have on journalists' ability to report

Question: Overall, do you think AI will have a mostly positive, neutral, or negative impact on journalists' ability to report about issues and events?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

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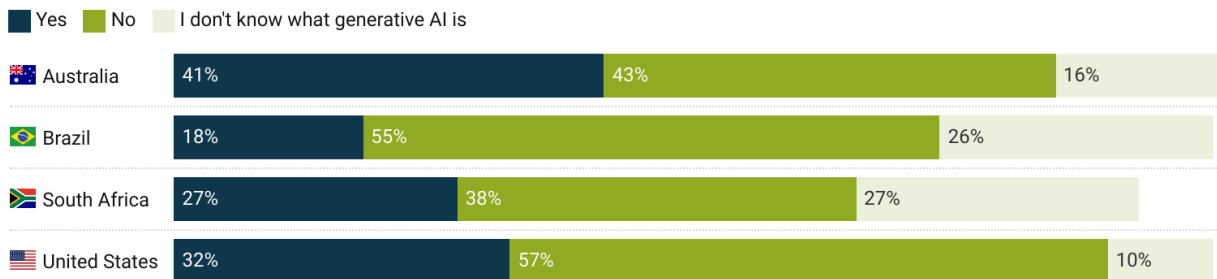
This general positivity about technology is shared by journalists, according to CNTI's [survey of journalists](#). While journalists are generally positive about the role of technology in the information ecosystem, their attitudes about AI are also more mixed. And the same regional patterns hold: journalists in the Global South, which includes Brazil and South Africa, are more positive about AI than journalists in the Global North, which includes Australia and the United States.

The countries where people are more optimistic about AI also express less personal use of generative AI

Yet, the public's greater positivity towards AI in Brazil and South Africa exists alongside relatively low familiarity: few people have tried to use generative AI (18-27%) in the last year, and sizable minorities (26-27%) do not even know what it is. More Americans (32%) and Australians (41%) have tried to use generative AI in the last year, although at least as many people (57% in the U.S., 43% in Australia) have not. Relatively few people in these two countries do not know what generative AI is.

Personal usage of generative AI varies across countries

Question: In the last year, have you tried to use generative AI?



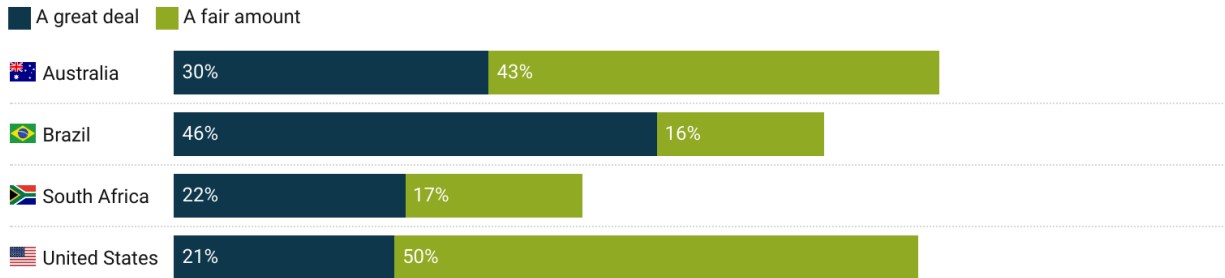
Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Refused/NA responses not shown.

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In general, the countries that have more favorable opinions about AI have also heard less about it, but Brazil bucks that trend. Almost three-quarters of Australians (73%) and Americans (71%) have heard at least a fair amount about recent developments in AI, compared with 39% of South Africans. On the other hand, 62% of Brazilians reported hearing at least a fair amount about this topic and more Brazilians than anyone else reported hearing a great deal about it.

Majorities in Australia, Brazil and the U.S. have heard at least a fair amount about recent developments in AI; South Africa has heard less

Question: How much have you heard about recent developments in artificial intelligence, or AI?



Note: Survey of AU (N = 1,000), BR (N = 1,000), ZA (N = 1,012) and U.S. (N = 1,025) adults conducted between September 4 and October 16, 2024. Not much, Not at all and Refused/NA responses not shown.

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This widespread optimism about technology and the future — coupled with strong agreement across countries that reporter-based news organizations are a critical part of an informed society — suggests a broadly shared understanding of the current information ecosystem. There is opportunity to make use of the technologies that are available in ways that respond to the public needs. This can, in turn, strengthen journalists' own capabilities in reporting, while building trust and continuing to demonstrate their value to an informed public.

Country Profiles

We see parallels across many responses between Australia and the United States on the one hand, and Brazil and South Africa on the other.

Broadly, Australian and U.S. populations are older and have more formal education than those in Brazil and South Africa. They use internet devices more and are more likely to have used generative AI in the last year. All the same, they generally report that digital technology is less important to their ability to get and stay informed, and they report lower use of technology for personal ends, as well as slightly lower approval of journalists' uses of technology.

They care more about journalists' AI use, compared with Brazilians and South Africans, and are less optimistic about the future of technology in general, especially about AI.

They also report somewhat less interest in the social aspects of information habits. They are more likely to say that news and journalism differ, but they are also less likely to say that only journalists can produce journalism.

These trends seem to parallel a larger global pattern — between the Global North and the Global South,⁷ which share demographic, economic and political similarities. In general, countries in the Global North are wealthier and wield disproportionate geopolitical power, although they are a minority at the global scale. CNTI's parallel [study of journalists](#) also found that those in the Global North were less optimistic about technology.

Here we provide a profile for each country based on the survey results.

Australia: Old-school news consumers

Australians are generally older and have higher levels of formal education compared with Brazil and South Africa. Australians report regularly keeping informed and high usage of devices connected to the internet. Of the four countries in this study, Australians report the most consumption of journalism content in a given week. Most people start with either a specific news organization or a social networking site to learn about issues and events. Australians regularly consume content on TV and via the internet. Those who use a social media platform to keep informed start most often with their main feed.

⁷ In our study of journalists, we use the [United Nations' definitions](#) with two exceptions: we consider Mexico and Turkey to belong to the Global South.

Australians say several factors are important for how they choose to get informed. The largest factor for them is getting the news quickly (77%), while they report placing the lowest importance on feeling a personal connection to the source of news (39%).

When given a choice between a specific organization or an individual to keep informed, most Australians (73%) look to organizations. A large majority also see a difference between news and journalism and say that (1) people who are not journalists can produce journalism and (2) everyday people can produce journalism. A strong majority say that consuming journalistic content from news organizations that employ reporters is at least somewhat important.

Overall, Australians report several challenges regarding their ability to stay informed. Their main challenges are with (1) knowing who or what to trust (79%) and (2) the availability of high-quality reporting (72%), while having technology that works is of much lower concern (39%). Although they believe there are challenges when it comes to staying informed, a strong majority (81%) of Australians view news organizations that employ reporters as critical for an informed society.

Strong majorities of Australians say that digital technology is very important to their ability to keep informed. Most have used technology to check the accuracy of something (81%), while about half have used it to improve their writing, translate content and edit images. Slightly fewer (42%) have used technology to summarize a lot of documents. Yet, Australians are generally supportive of journalists using technology, except for editing an image — a majority are against (61%) journalists using technology in this way.

Most report hearing at least a fair amount about developments in AI, even though personal experience with generative AI is split. Australians lean neutral (42-49%) to negative (28-35%) when considering AI's impact on (1) their ability to keep informed and (2) journalists' reporting ability.

A slim majority of Australians (61%) say it matters whether AI was used in the reporting process. They report the largest factors are (1) the quality of the AI tool, (2) what the journalist used AI to do and (3) that a person reviewed the AI content produced — each of which received near equal support.

People from Australia are moderately confident about the future of an open internet. They are positive about their current ability to keep informed, and also view developments in digital technology as positive for their ability to keep informed.

United States: Older, educated and ambivalent about technology

People in the U.S. are the oldest and have the largest share of advanced degrees. They report regularly keeping informed and using devices connected to the internet. Yet, Americans are

not the most avid consumers of journalism in a given week. Most turn to either a specific news organization or a social networking site to learn about issues and events. They regularly consume content on TV and via the internet. Those who use a social media platform to keep informed usually go to their main feed.

Only a few factors are reported as being at least somewhat important to Americans when it comes to how they get informed: (1) getting news quickly (80%), (2) seeing news from different sources (77%) and (3) going more or less in depth (84%). In the U.S., being able to engage with others is not an important aspect of getting informed, whereas this is an important factor in Brazil and South Africa.

A strong majority of Americans (75%) prioritize information from a certain organization over information from a certain individual. A majority (65%) also sees a difference between news and journalism and agree that (1) journalists are not the only producers of journalism and (2) everyday people can produce journalism. Still, consuming journalism from news organizations that employ reporters is somewhat important to them.

Americans generally report fewer challenges with technology than Brazilians and South Africans. They do voice at least some challenges with (1) knowing who or what to trust (80%) and (2) choosing among many sources (60%). A large majority of Americans (77%) view news organizations that employ reporters as a critical part of an informed society.

A majority of Americans (57%) view digital technology as very important to their ability to keep informed. The only personal use of technology that a majority engaged in is checking the accuracy of content. Roughly half or fewer Americans report having used technology for making their writing better, summarizing a lot of documents, translating content into another language or editing an image. However, even without as much self-reported use of technology in the past year, Americans are OK with journalists' use of technology with the exception of image editing; only 49% are mostly OK with it.

Americans say that they have heard at least a fair bit about developments in AI and a sizable minority of Americans (32%) have used generative AI in the past year — fewer than in Australia. People in the U.S. report a neutral (38-46%) to negative (36-41%) outlook regarding how AI is expected to impact (1) their ability to keep informed and (2) journalists' reporting ability. They are more negative about AI and journalists' reporting ability than people in the other three countries.

A majority of Americans (62%) say it matters at least somewhat whether AI was used in the reporting process. The largest factors are (1) the quality of the AI tool used, (2) what the journalist used AI for and (3) that a person reviewed AI content.

The U.S. exhibits a moderately positive outlook about the internet being a place to freely get and share news, but a plurality of Americans hold a neutral outlook regarding their current ability to keep informed — a difference compared with the positive outlooks in the other three countries studied. Americans are slightly more positive with respect to the impact of developments in digital technology — but still less positive than the other three countries.

Brazil: Digitally connected and open to the future, despite information challenges

Brazilians skew younger and have less formal education than people in Australia or the U.S. They report keeping informed about issues and events at slightly lower rates than the other three countries, but they have a moderately high usage of devices connected to the internet. Brazilians are second (behind Australia) when it comes to self-reports of journalism pieces consumed weekly. Most start with either a specific news organization or a social networking site to learn about issues and events. Of those who use social media to keep informed, the plurality (45%) begin with a specific channel.

Brazilians report that (1) getting the news quickly, (2) seeing news from different sources, (3) going more or less in depth on a story, (4) feeling a personal connection to the source of news, (5) getting news from professional journalists and (6) engaging with others are all important factors in how they choose to get informed.

And while most prefer to look for information from a certain organization (57%) rather than an individual, this number is lower than in the other three countries surveyed. Brazilians are split on whether or not journalism is viewed as different from news, with 54% seeing a difference between the two. About half report that people who are not journalists can produce journalism (52%) and slightly more agree that everyday people can produce journalism (56%).

Brazilians tend to report facing challenges with their ability to stay informed. The largest challenge is knowing who or what to trust, but reported levels of challenges are high across each item. Though they report experiencing multiple challenges, a strong majority of Brazilians (80%) consider news organizations that employ reporters critical to society.

Digital technology is important to Brazilians and majorities have used technology for (1) checking the accuracy of something, (2) editing images, (3) making their writing better and (4) summarizing a lot of documents. About half have used technology for translating content into another language. Brazilians are also largely supportive of journalists using technology — even for editing images.

Brazilians report hearing a moderate amount about recent developments in AI, though this is lower than in Australia and the U.S. Most (55%) say that they have not tried using generative AI in the last year, and about one-in-four do not know what generative AI is, yet Brazilians report being somewhat positive about AI's impact on both (1) their ability to keep informed and (2) journalists' ability to report on issues and events.

While Brazilians do not report it matters very much whether AI was used in the reporting process, they do place an emphasis on how AI was used by journalists. They say that the topic

of the story and the content format are both big factors to consider, to a larger degree than people in Australia and the U.S.

Brazilians are moderately confident the internet will be a place to get news and they are positive about both (1) their ability to keep informed and (2) that developments in digital technology will allow them to keep informed.

South Africa: Young and pro-tech in a diverse information ecosystem

South Africans skew the youngest in our four-country study and also have relatively low levels of formal education. They report keeping informed with issues and events very closely at the highest levels of any country, but also the lowest usage of devices connected to the internet — although a majority still use these devices regularly. South Africans do not report consuming as much journalism in a given week as people in Australia and Brazil. Most South Africans report starting with a news organization or social media site. Those who choose to get informed using social media sites usually go to a specific channel. Interestingly, South Africans report using radio more than any other country.

South Africans report that (1) getting the news quickly, (2) seeing news from different sources, (3) going more or less in depth on a story, (4) feeling a personal connection to the source of news, (5) getting news from professional journalists and (6) engaging with others are all important factors in how they choose to get informed — similar to the perspectives in Brazil.

A strong majority of South Africans say that they look for information from a certain organization (72%) rather than from a certain individual (26%), but a majority also report not seeing a difference between news and journalism. South Africans differ from the other three countries in this regard. They are also split on whether journalists are the only producers of journalism, yet a strong majority (65%) say that everyday people can produce journalism. Consuming information from news organizations that employ reporters is very important to South Africans.

Compared with Brazil, South Africans report having less of a challenge knowing who or what to trust; their responses are comparable to those in Australia and the U.S. However, they do report having moderate challenges choosing among all the sources and big challenges with the availability of high-quality reporting. A strong majority of South Africans (76%) view news organizations that employ reporters as critical for an informed society.

South Africans say digital technologies are very important to their ability to stay informed and, compared with the other three countries surveyed, South Africans report greater use of technology to improve their writing, summarize documents and translate content. They are also widely supportive of journalists using technology, including to edit images.

Yet, South Africans report lower levels of awareness regarding recent developments in AI compared with the other three countries. Many have not used generative AI, though more (27%) have used it in the last year than in Brazil (18%). Even so, people in South Africa are positive/neutral about AI's ability to (1) keep them informed and (2) assist journalists' reporting abilities.

A majority of South Africans (60%) is very confident that the internet will be a place to get and share news openly, much more so than people anywhere else. And they are positive about their ability to keep informed as well as the role developments in digital technology will have on their ability to keep informed.

About this Study

Why we did this study

This report is part of CNTI's broader 2024 "[Defining News Initiative](#)" which examines questions surrounding this theme in policy, technological developments and the views of journalists, in addition to public perceptions. The survey data in this report measure the public's perceptions of news, journalism and technology in four countries: Australia, Brazil, South Africa and the United States. These data were collected in parallel with a [global survey of journalists](#).

CNTI was motivated by several overarching questions:

1. How does the public navigate new ways of being informed?
2. Where do they see journalism fitting in?
3. How can journalism do a better job of communicating its unique value?

Answers to these questions are central for better understanding the evolving information ecosystem. As CNTI learned in a series of [focus groups](#) last year in the same four countries, people are putting a lot of work into getting themselves up to speed on news. At the same time, many are actively [tuning news out](#), expressing a sense that it is overwhelming. This is the first in a series of CNTI reports that examines these ideas.

As with all CNTI research, this report was prepared by the research and professional staff of CNTI. This project was financially supported by CNTI's [funders](#).

How we did this

CNTI's survey questionnaire was developed internally by our research team and advisors in consultation with [Langer Research Associates](#). Focus groups were initially run in each of the four countries which informed the development of the questionnaire. In addition to references made throughout this report, themes from these focus groups may be found in a series of [essays](#) available on CNTI's [website](#).

In partnership with Langer Research Associates, the data were collected through different vendors in each country:

- **Australian** data are from an Infield International RDD CATI/cell phone sample conducted from September 4 to October 1, 2024. The total sample size was 1,000 respondents. The design effect was 1.39 and a margin of error of 3.7 points. The survey was only available in English. All interviews were conducted by telephone, and the median interview length was 18 minutes and five seconds. There were 41 interviewers used by Infield International all of whom were trained. The sample collection age categories were: 18-24, 25-34, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+.

- **Brazilian** data are from an Inteligência em Pesquisa e Consultoria (IPEC) RDD CATI/cell phone sample conducted from September 13 to October 3, 2024. The total sample size was 1,000 respondents. The design effect was 1.67 and a margin of error of 4.0 points. The survey was only available in Brazilian Portuguese. All interviews were conducted by telephone, and the median interview length was 16 minutes and 49 seconds. There were 76 interviewers all of whom were trained. The sample collection age categories were: 18-29, 30-44, 45-59 and 60+.
- **South African** data are from an Infinite Insight RDD CATI/cell phone sample conducted from September 23 to October 16, 2024. The total sample size was 1,012 respondents. The design effect was 1.48 and a margin of error of 3.7 points. The survey was available in English ($n = 811$), Zulu ($n = 138$), Sesotho ($n = 24$), Sepedi ($n = 17$), Setswana ($n = 12$) and Xhosa ($n = 10$). All interviews were conducted by telephone, and the median interview length was 19 minutes and 17 seconds. There were 47 interviewers all of whom were trained. The sample collection age categories were: 18-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65+.
- **United States** data are from Ipsos's probability-based online KnowledgePanel® and was conducted from September 12-21, 2024. A total of 1,670 panelists were initially selected and 1,053 completed the survey. A total of 28 respondents were removed during the quality control process, yielding a final sample size of 1,025 respondents. The design effect was 1.13 and a margin of error of 3.3 points. The survey was available in English ($n = 983$) and Spanish ($n = 42$). All surveys were self-administered online, and the median interview length was 10 minutes and 23 seconds. The sample collection age categories were: 18-29, 30-44, 45-59 and 60+.

Technical reports from the survey vendors are available upon request from info@innovating.news.

How we weighted survey data

Each country's data were weighted using demographic variables (i.e., age, sex, education and macroregion). While each individual country used a different age breakdown for sample collection, we opted to recode the age breakdown into the following categories: 18-29, 30-44, 45-54 and 55+. These categories were used to ensure there were at least 100 weighted respondents in each group — South Africa has a younger population, especially compared with the United States' older population.

For specific questions about the sample frames, weighting procedures and/or additional survey details, please send an email to the research team at info@innovating.news.

How we protected our data

Data collection was done by the country-specific vendors listed above. The survey included individual-level information such as age, gender, race, political ideology and macro-region. Survey data supplied to CNTI from the vendors did not include names or specific locations of respondents. Each respondent received a unique identifier.

It would be very difficult, if possible at all, to identify survey respondents because CNTI did not collect personal contact information or contact respondents directly. The survey data for this project are securely stored in an encrypted folder that is only authorized to the core research team at CNTI.

How we analyzed the data

Data were analyzed using the [R](#) statistical computing language. In addition to base R functions, several packages (libraries) were used to clean and analyze the data. These included: [googledrive](#), [pewmethods](#), [pollster](#), [survey](#) and [tidyverse](#). We recoded missing, refused and don't know responses into a catch-all category to keep the sample sizes for each country consistent across each question that did not explicitly have survey logic (i.e., questions that were asked to every respondent).

Data were analyzed using the demographic sample weights supplied by vendors and Langer Research Associates. These weights were applied to every analysis and topline in this report. Non-statistical analyses consisted of topline and crosstabs. Statistical analyses found in this report consisted of Chi-square proportion tests (see the “How we tested for statistical significance” section below).

Exploratory analyses were run to learn about the data and responses within each country. These methods consisted of both linear (ordinary least squares) and non-linear regression (logistic regression, ordered logistic regression). Upcoming reports will implement these approaches to present more information about country-specific attitudes and behaviors.

Preliminary coding of open ends

Each country's open-ended responses were analyzed separately. We were conservative in large part because of the multilingual nature of our data set. All responses from across the four countries were translated into English.

These translations may not fully reflect the nuance found in the original languages. Terms do not necessarily have exact equivalents between languages, thus we used the translations to stand for larger themes or concepts and avoided attempts to analyze for nuances of meaning against similar terms.

Responses to both the PSDEFJSM and PSJSMPRO questions were analyzed by examining the most frequent words used within each country's data to gain a general understanding of

prevalent and shared ways that respondents might conceive of the (1) differences between news and journalism and (2) traits of those who produce journalism.

We will examine the full set of open-ended responses for both the (1) defining news versus journalism and (2) traits of journalism producers items in an upcoming report.

How we addressed data quality

Data quality in the open-ended responses received attention during the analysis phase of the project. CNTI worked with Langer Research Associates and country vendors to review what interviewers recorded from respondents' open ends. Several anomalies and mistakes were found. Interviewer recordings of the open-ended responses were reviewed by the vendor and CNTI was supplied with updated data for both open-ended questions.

We also examine results by country rather than as one total, because there may be a mode effect present in the survey results. The U.S. data were collected online, whereas the other three countries' surveys were conducted through telephone, which may yield higher levels of social desirability responses in these locales. Research shows there is [known variability](#) in survey responses across countries and cultures regarding [social desirability](#) and [acquiescence](#) which may, in part, also be shaped by survey mode.

How we tested for statistical significance

We analyzed the results using Chi-squared proportion tests to assess differences in responses between two countries. We used a standard threshold of $p < 0.05$ for assessing statistical significance. Differences mentioned in the report text are statistically significant.

One question was removed from this report's analysis

PSSTART: Due to a question wording error in the United States, this question was removed from comparative analysis in this report. The United States received the question: "How do you most often follow news about issues and events?" rather than the question the other three countries received: "When you want to get informed about issues and events, what is your most common place to start?" While PSSTART was not examined in this report, it will be explored on a country-by-country basis in forthcoming reports, and data are presented in the topline.

Additional notes

1. Respondents in the three countries with telephone surveys — Australia, Brazil and South Africa — were not read a "Don't know" option for both PSJHELP1 and PSJHELP2, while this option was made explicit in the U.S. The "Don't know" and

“DK/Refused/Missing” categories were combined to decrease confusion when analyzing these two questions.

2. We also note that responses to the question PSJHELP2 in the online U.S. survey were updated after recontacting individuals who responded “Don’t know.” Responses for recontacted individuals were added back into the survey as a new question and added to the answers from those who did not reply “Don’t know.”
3. For each of the four countries, the topline data for PSJHELP2 reflect all “Don’t know” responses being grouped into the “DK/Refused/Missing” catch-all category.

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- [Scott Timcke](#) (South Africa) is a Senior Research Associate at Research ICT Africa and a Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Social Change.
- [Subramaniam \(Subbu\) Vincent](#) (United States) is Director of the Journalism and Media Ethics program at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University.

Thank you for providing CNTI with your experience and expertise.

Stay tuned for more reports using the data collected through this project.

As with all CNTI research, this report was prepared by the research and professional staff of CNTI. This report was written by CNTI's Research Team (Amy Mitchell, Celeste LeCompte, Connie Moon Sehat, Emily Wright, Jay Barchas-Lichtenstein, Nicholas Beed and Samuel Jens). The work could not have been completed without our colleagues Chelsey Barnes and Uduak Grace Thomas; our copy editor Greta Alquist; our graphic and web designers, Jonathon Berlin and Kurt Cunningham, as well as the team at [MG Strategy + Design](#); and our communications team at [Black Rock Group](#).

CNTI does not lobby for or propose specific legislation and instead is dedicated to supporting policy creation through further research and collaborative, multi-stakeholder discussions.

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