PUBLIC DATA

Trust in the news, *by the numbers.*

Two of the largest surveys on trust in the news, from Gallup and the Reuters Institute, show trust close to record lows, with a small rise in 2026. Here is what they found, and what it changes for anyone who wants to be covered.

33%

of Americans trust the mass media a great deal or a fair amount, up from a record low of 28% in 2025 (Gallup, September 2026)

68–72%

said the same in the 1970s, according to Gallup

25%

of Americans trust most news most of the time (Reuters Institute, 2026)

37%

trust news overall across 48 markets worldwide (Reuters Institute, 2026)

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Trust in the news: what the latest surveys show

KEY FINDINGS

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Short answer: Trust in the news is low. In September 2026, 33% of Americans said they trust newspapers, TV and radio a great deal or a fair amount, up from 28% a year earlier, the lowest Gallup has measured.[1] In 2026, 25% of Americans and 37% of people across 48 markets said they trust most news most of the time.[2] Coverage still works, but readers now judge each article on its own: who wrote it, where it ran and what backs it up.

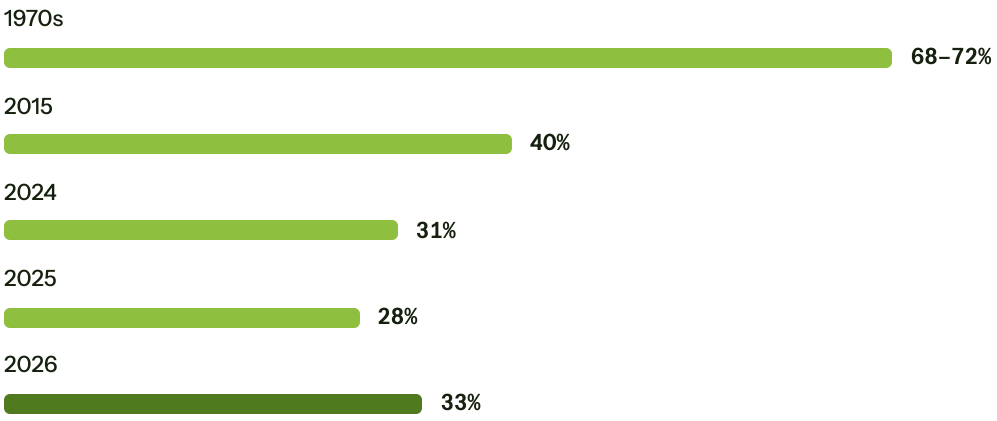
Close to a record low in the US

Gallup has asked Americans about their trust in the mass media since the 1970s. In its September 2026 survey, 33% said they have a great deal or a fair amount of trust, up from 28% in 2025, the lowest it has measured, and 31% in 2024. In the 1970s, between 68% and 72% said they did. A third (33%) now say they have no trust at all, and another third (33%) say not very much.[1]

Most of the 2026 rise came from Republicans: 22% trust the media, up from 8% in 2025. Democrats stayed at about half (50%), and independents are at 31%.[1]

Americans who trust the mass media

A great deal or a fair amount of trust in newspapers, TV and radio



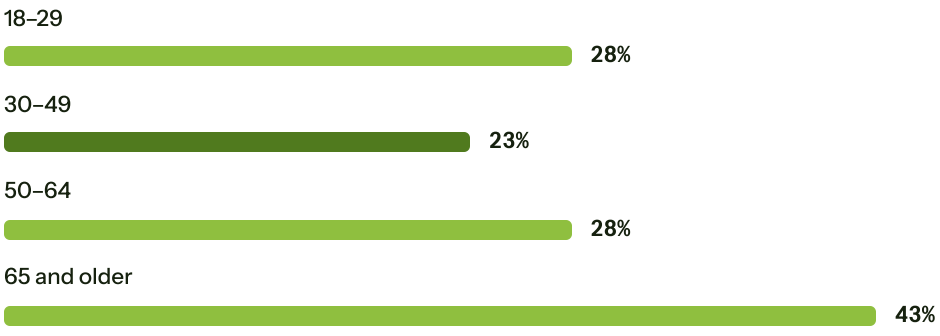
Source: Gallup (survey of 1,000 US adults, September 1–17, 2026; 2015 from Gallup's 2025 release). The 1970s bar shows the middle of Gallup's 68–72% range.

By age: the young trust least

Gallup's combined 2023 to 2025 data, published with its 2025 survey, show the lowest trust among Americans aged 30 to 49 (23%) and the highest among those 65 and older (43%). Adults under 30 and those aged 50 to 64 are both at 28%.[3]

Trust in mass media by age

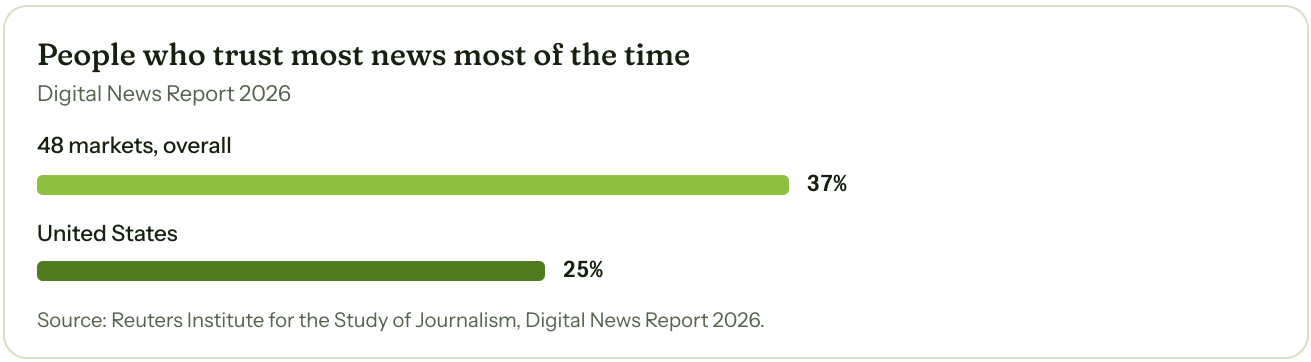
A great deal or a fair amount, 2023–2025 combined



Source: Gallup (2023–2025 surveys combined, published October 2025).

Around the world: about one in three

The Reuters Institute's Digital News Report surveys about 2,000 people in each of 48 markets, 97,520 in total. In 2026, 37% said they trust news overall, and in the United States only a quarter (25%) said they trust the news most of the time.[2]



What low trust changes for founders

- **Each article is judged on its own.** When readers distrust "the media" in general, the details that make one article credible matter more: a named author, a respected outlet, real numbers and named sources.
- **Your claims need proof.** Coverage that only repeats what you say about yourself persuades few people. Coverage that shows your results, with numbers and people who can confirm them, does.
- **Use your coverage where people already trust you.** Put articles on your website and share them with customers, investors and partners, who already know you and can judge the article in context.
- **Coverage still feeds AI answers.** Even with low trust, journalism is a large share of what AI assistants cite (see what AI assistants cite).

How we did this

Gallup's 2026 figures come from telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,000 US adults, September 1 to 17, 2026 (margin of error ±4 points). The age breakdown comes from Gallup's 2025 release (its 2023 to 2025 surveys combined). The Reuters Institute's figures come from its Digital News Report 2026 (published June 2026), an online survey of 97,520 people in 48 markets, about 2,000 per market. The two surveys ask different questions, so their numbers can't be compared directly. Updated November 2026 with Gallup's 2026 survey.

Questions

How many Americans trust the media?

33% said they have a great deal or a fair amount of trust in the mass media in September 2026, up from 28% in 2025, the lowest Gallup has recorded. 33% said they have none at all.

Is trust in news higher outside the US?

Somewhat. In the Reuters Institute's 2026 survey of 48 markets, 37% said they trust news overall, compared with 25% in the United States.

Does press coverage still matter if trust is low?

Yes, but the details matter more: a respected outlet, a named author and claims backed by facts. Articles also reach people through search, social media and AI assistants, which cite journalism often.

Sources

1. U.S. Media Trust: Edges Up From Record Low, Gallup.
   https://news.gallup.com/poll/714938/trust-news-media-edges-slightly-higher.aspx
2. Digital News Report 2026: Executive Summary, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
   https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2026/dnr-executive-summary
3. Trust in Media at New Low of 28% in U.S., Gallup.
   https://news.gallup.com/poll/695762/trust-media-new-low.aspx

How to cite this report

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