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Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll: Most Adults Believe Misinformation Increases Extreme Political Views and Hate Crimes

Ninety-one percent say misinformation is a problem, and majorities report taking steps to avoid spreading misinformation.

CHICAGO, October 13, 2022 – About three-quarters of adults say misinformation increases hate crimes (77%) and extreme political views (73%), and about half believe it increases political engagement (54%) and decreases trust in government (50%).

These are among the results of a new study from the [Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago](#) and [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) released today ahead of the [2022 Pearson Global Forum](#). The Forum on October 14th will bring together researchers and policymakers to address these issues and develop strategies to prevent and resolve international conflicts.

Ninety-one percent say misinformation is a problem, including 74% who believe it is a major problem. Nearly three quarters of adults are at least somewhat concerned they have been exposed to misinformation, but less than half are equally concerned they've spread misinformation, even unintentionally.

The latest findings show the public's worries about misinformation have not significantly changed in the past year¹.

“The public continues to see misinformation as a significant problem that is impacting them personally,” said Sheila Kohanteb, Forum Executive Director at the Pearson Institute for Study and Resolution of Global Conflict. “Many are also worried about the impact on democracy including the ways misinformation fuel hate crimes and extreme political beliefs.”

Majorities report taking steps to avoid consuming or spreading misinformation. Eighty-one percent report checking multiple sources at least some of the time, 79% report checking the sources of news content, 76% decide not to share news content on social media, and 63% report using fact checking websites and tools.

¹ The Pearson Institute/AP-NORC 2021 poll found 95% were worried about misinformation, 46% were at least somewhat concerned they had spread misinformation, and 77% were at least somewhat concerned they had been exposed to misinformation. https://apnorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/misinformation_Formatted_v2-002.pdf

“There is a consensus among people, regardless of their partisanship, age, or race and ethnicity, that misinformation is a problem,” said David Sterrett, a senior research scientist with The AP-NORC Center. “People are taking action to combat the spread of misinformation, but many are still quite concerned that they’re being exposed to it.”

About the Study

This study was funded by the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago and conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from the Pearson Institute, at Harris Public Policy, and The AP-NORC Center collaborated on all aspects of the study. Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 9 and September 12, 2022, with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,003 completed the survey. Interviews were conducted in English. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

A full description of the study methodology for the survey can be found at the end of the report on www.apnorc.org

About the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world’s population sees AP journalism every day. www.ap.org
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. In its 10 years, The AP-NORC Center has conducted more than 250 studies exploring the critical issues facing the public, covering topics like health care, the economy, COVID-19, trust in media, and more.

Learn more at www.apnorc.org.

About the Pearson Institute

The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago promotes the ongoing discussion, understanding and resolution of global conflicts, and contributes to the advancement of a global society more at peace. Established through a grant from The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation, and led by Institute Director James Robinson, co-author of *Why Nations Fail* and *The Narrow Corridor*, the Institute achieves this by employing an analytically rigorous, data-driven approach and global perspective to understanding violent conflict. It is global in its scope, activities and footprint. Attracting students and scholars from around the world, its faculty is in the field studying conflicts – and approaches to conflict resolution – in Nigeria, Colombia and Afghanistan, to name just a few.

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