[DE] Media authorities' Info-Monitor reports on information trends and media trust in Germany

IRIS 2025-3:1/18

Christina Etteldorf
Institute of European Media Law

On 6 February 2025, the German state media authorities published the results of their Info-Monitor 2025. This report examines where and how the German population obtains information about current affairs, analyses changes in consumer behaviour, and investigates the level of trust among the population and the trustworthiness of certain information sources in relation to their political standpoint. The results of the study, which is based on surveys of the 14+ age group, show that information habits vary depending on age, level of trust in established media, region and political preferences.

The Info-Monitor replaces the representative survey previously conducted by the media authorities since 2009, known as the *Mediengewichtungsstudie* (media weighting study), and develops it further using a cross-media survey method.

In terms of general information behaviour, the study concludes that there is a high level of public interest in news. More than 90% of those surveyed (around 3,500 people in total) stated that they were interested in current affairs and obtained information from the media at least once a week. Many different information sources are used, with a clear shift towards digital media in particular. Public-service TV and radio stations, search engines and local or regional daily newspapers are the main sources. The under-30s obtain information primarily via the news bulletins of public service broadcasters and social media, while those under 65 mainly use the traditional genres of television, daily newspapers and radio. However, with the exception of public-service TV and daily newspapers, “incidental” media use outweighs deliberate access to information. Unintentional searches for information are particularly common in social media, especially among younger age groups. Older generations, on the other hand, tend to obtain information online via digital services such as online portals, news aggregators and messengers.

According to the survey, researchers play the most important role in the opinion-forming process, followed by journalist-led editorial offices, freelance journalists and family and friends, while politicians and political parties are a considerable distance behind. However, the study suggests that political standpoint also plays a role: almost all information sources – especially journalist-led editorial offices – are significantly less important for people who support a party with right-wing

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views, i.e. the *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany – AfD), than for those who lean towards the *Christlich Demokratische Union* (Christian Democratic Union – CDU), *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany – SPD) or *Bündnis 90/Die Grüne* (Alliance 90/Green Party). Just over half of respondents feel that their information needs are adequately met by the established media, while one in three think that topics relevant to them are insufficiently covered.

A quarter of respondents sometimes deliberately avoid the news, mostly due to the large amount of negative content, but also partly due to a lack of trust in the content or the media that provide it. Trust in the media was also one of the focal points of the Info Monitor. The majority of those surveyed (60%) trust established media such as broadcasters and daily newspapers and describe them as fast, comprehensible, factual, trustworthy and realistic. Trust in the media is particularly strong among the under-30s and people with a high level of formal education. In contrast, around a third see the established media as economically/politically controlled, while one in four consider them sensationalist and divisive. The study identifies various patterns in terms of the relationship between the media and respondents' political attitudes, satisfaction with democracy and views on different information sources. On the basis of these and other evaluations of trust in the media, it categorises people as convinced (22%), critical (45%), sceptical (26%) or dismissive (7%). Those in the "convinced" category trust established media strongly and rate them almost exclusively positively. Those who are "critical" value established media but question them in a more differentiated way, the "sceptical" trust them less and are increasingly turning to alternative sources of information, while the "dismissive" rate established media almost exclusively negatively and have little trust in them. "Convinced" and critical" respondents are also more satisfied with democracy, while those in the "sceptical" and "dismissive" categories are significantly more likely to hold sceptical or negative attitudes towards the political system.

Info-Monitor 2025

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