

Reader 'Trust' Levels For Newspapers-Of-Choice Shows Modest Gains

mediapost.com/publications/article/335511/reader-trust-levels-for-newspapers-of-choice-sho.html

by [Robert Passikoff](#), Op-Ed Contributor, 18 minutes ago

Most trusted newspaper brands (change vs. October 2018)

The New York Times	90% (+2)	Miami Herald	85% (new)
Wall Street Journal	90% (+2)	Dallas Morning News	84% (+1)
Washington Post	90% (+2)	New York Post	84% (NC)
Boston Globe	88% (+2)	Arizona Republic	84% (new)
Los Angeles Times	87% (+1)	Boston Herald	82% (NC)
USA Today	86% (+1)	Washington Times	82% (-3)
Chicago Tribune	86% (+2)	Baltimore Sun	80% (-1)
Mercury News	85% (+2)	Sacramento Bee	80% (NC)
Seattle Times	85% (+3)		

Source: Brand Keys. Base = 4,310 newspaper subscribers/regular readers (+3 times weekly). NC = no change.

In the second installment of our consumer research measuring “trust” among readers of their newspapers-of-choice there were slight improvements in the major rankings, but no dramatic shifts since our October 2018 benchmarks.

The New York Times, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* remain America’s top three most-trusted newspapers and each improved their levels two percentage points.

Ideology, of course, self-defines selection when it comes to subscribing to a newspaper (print or online). But there isn’t an exact method to measure partisan bias – and “objectivity” takes on a different meaning within the margins of a newspaper for its readers.

There is, however, a validated methodology to measure “trust.”

The survey identified trust levels among an even-handed spectrum of liberal, moderate, and conservative dispositions (see table, numbers in parentheses indicate differences between trust evaluations conducted six months earlier in October 2018).

For this wave of research 4,310 subscribers (paper & digital) and/or “regular newsreaders” – via digital or app, 3+ times a week – evaluated their newspaper brand-of-choice. The Brand Keys Emotional Engagement Analysis determined how much the single value of “trust” was

engendered among readers.

The category of “Media” overall was identified as the sector where “trust” contributed most (36%, +2) to consumer engagement, the analysis based on an examination of 156 categories and 1,521 brands in the Brand Keys 2019 “Customer Loyalty and Engagement Index” released in January.

“Trust” in one’s newspaper (print, digital platform, and via mobile app) accounts for 43% of newspaper brand engagement (+2% this wave). The remaining 57% is accounted for via attributes and values addressing “entertainment listings and sports,” “an ability to educate and inform via news reporting, columnists, and editorial,” and providing insights into the “economy and local events and markets.”

The contribution range identified for the single value of “trust” in the various newspapers included in this wave of research was very narrow – 81% to 90% – particularly when compared to TV news providers (64% to 89%), although about the same percentage of Americans (57%) get their news from newspapers (print and digital) as those who watch broadcast or cable TV.

Again, as a sidebar to the media study, since President Trump has labeled The New York Times as “failing,” and virtually every other news platform as “fake news,” Brand Keys measured how much “trust” newspaper readers had in the President, versus the newspaper brands themselves.

President Trump was rated an overall 23%, one percentage point lower than the initial newspaper wave, three percentage points lower than TV news viewers rated him in Wave 2, and 67% lower than *The New York Times*.

Examined by political affiliation among newspaper readers, Democrats rated Mr. Trump 6% (-3), Independents 12% (-4), and Republicans 27% (-2).