

The
Free Press

Media Literacy in Manitoba

December 2025 Probe Omnibus
Survey

PROBE Research



The Story

Manitobans express a relatively high level of trust in local, Canadian-owned news sources – and feel their communities are stronger with these outlets in place.

Eight in 10 Manitobans agree their communities function better with thriving local news outlets – and nearly as many agree local news outlets report more accurately on community issues than social media. Similarly, about two-thirds trust Canadian-owned outlets more than American ones (67%) and traditional news more than social media (66%).

There are stark demographic differences on this, however. By and large, older, urban and university educated Manitobans are more likely to express high levels of trust in local media, whereas those with less formal education, those living in rural and northern communities and younger adults tend to be less trusting of local news outlets.

There is also a sharp political divide, as federal Conservative and provincial Progressive Conservative (PC) supporters are more likely to disagree with the notion that local news outlets are inherently more trustworthy than social media.

Manitobans are not as confident about their ability to detect AI-generated or faked video content than their ability to spot fake news and media bias.

While two-thirds of Manitobans express some confidence that they can spot AI-generated content, only 18 per cent are very confident they can do so. Men, Manitobans under the age of 55 and those with children at home are more likely to feel confident spotting fake videos online.

Manitobans tend to express higher degrees of confidence their ability to identify false or misleading news (85% very or somewhat confident) and perceived biases in news coverage (83%).

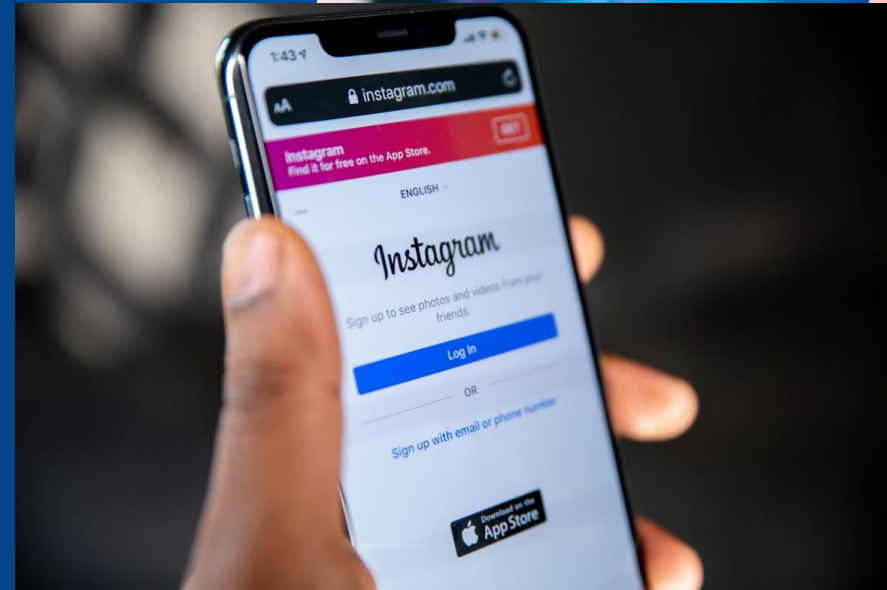
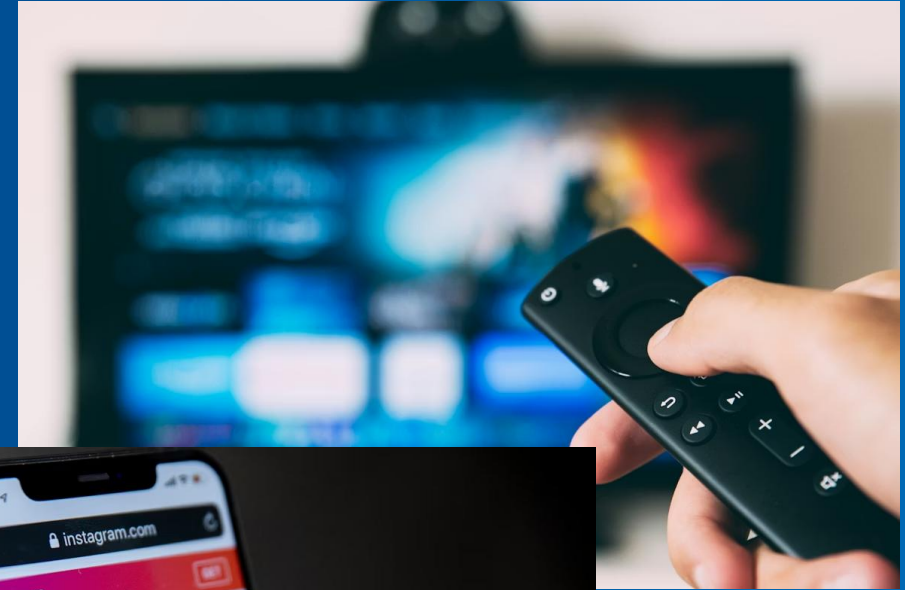
Meanwhile, more than one in 10 Manitobans (13%) agree that in the past year, they have shared content on social media that they later realized was fake. This was fairly consistent across all demographic groups.

The Story (continued)

Not surprisingly, there is a major difference between how younger Manitobans and older citizens consume news and information.

Manitobans use a wide range of media channels to get news and information, with the most commonly used being local broadcasters (45% of Manitobans get news from them at least once a day, followed by social media (44% daily), other online news websites (42%) and video on social media (41%).

As expected, younger adults aged 18-34 are most likely to be heavy users of social media videos (55%) and written posts (53%) for news, whereas those over the age of 55 are far more likely to turn to local broadcasters (65%), other online news sites (56%), local radio (43%) and local newspapers (39%).



Methodology

Probe Research surveyed a random and representative sample of 1,000 Manitoba adults between November 25 and December 10, 2025.

Respondents were contacted using four different methods. The sample includes 370 Manitobans randomly recruited via live-agent operator, 166 randomly recruited via text message/SMS, 238 randomly recruited via Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and 226 members of Probe Research's online panel. All respondents completed the survey using an online platform.

With a sample of 1,000, one can say with 95 per cent certainty that the results are within ± 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been surveyed. The margin of error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Probe reached out to Manitobans through modified random digit dialing, including both landline and wireless numbers. This ensured all Manitoba adults had an equal opportunity to participate in this survey.

The sample has been weighted slightly by age, gender, region and educational attainment so it properly reflects the province's population, based on Census data. Probe used SPSS software to conduct all statistical analysis.

About the Probe Research Omnibus

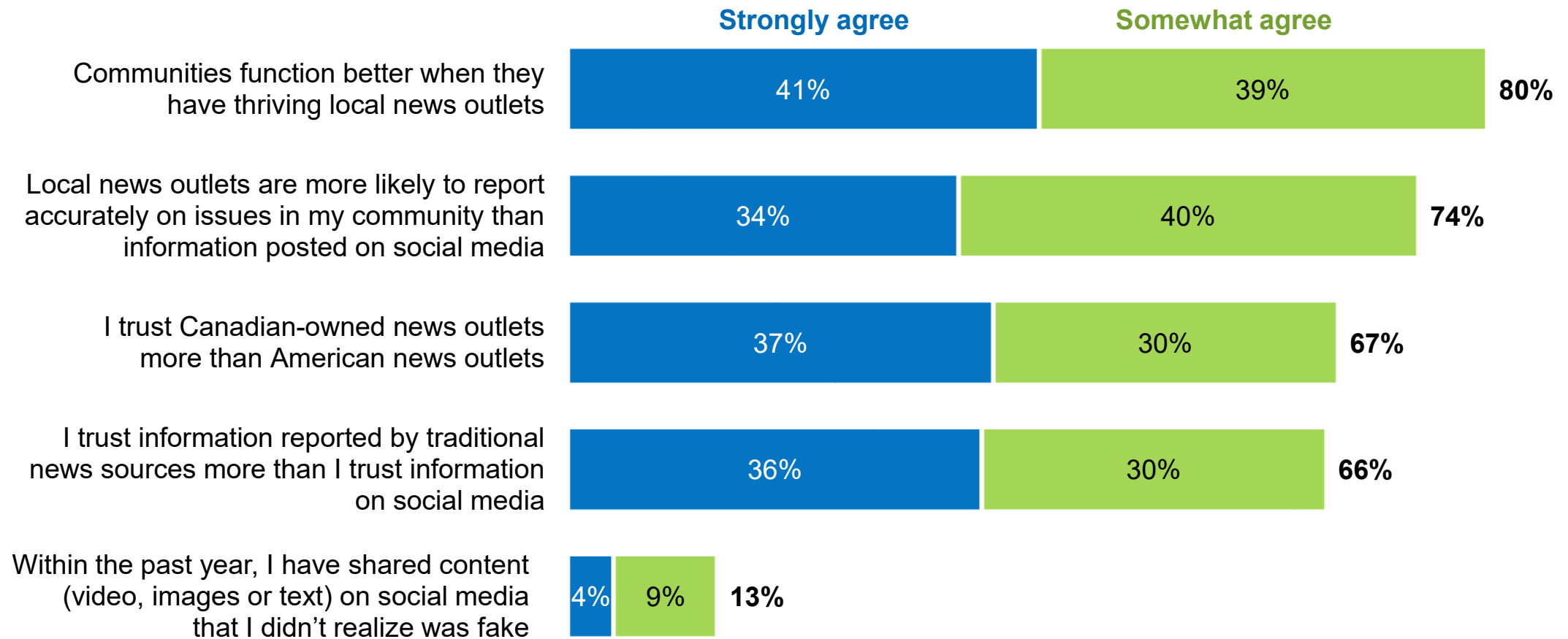
For nearly 30 years, Probe Research has conducted quarterly omnibus surveys of random and representative samples of Manitoba adults. These surveys have provided strategic and proprietary insights to hundreds of public, private and not-for-profit clients on many different social, cultural and public policy topics. The Probe Research Omnibus Survey is the province's largest and most trusted general population survey

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS, with coding/analysis of open-ended responses completed with the MQO A.I. Hub platform. This is a Canadian-hosted platform that uses OpenAI's technology through a Zero Data Retention workflow, which means that data entered into the platform are never stored on data servers nor used to train AI models. All coding was tested and verified with experienced human coders.

The survey was designed by Probe Research in close consultation with the Free Press.

Eight in 10 Manitobans agree their communities function better with thriving local news outlets

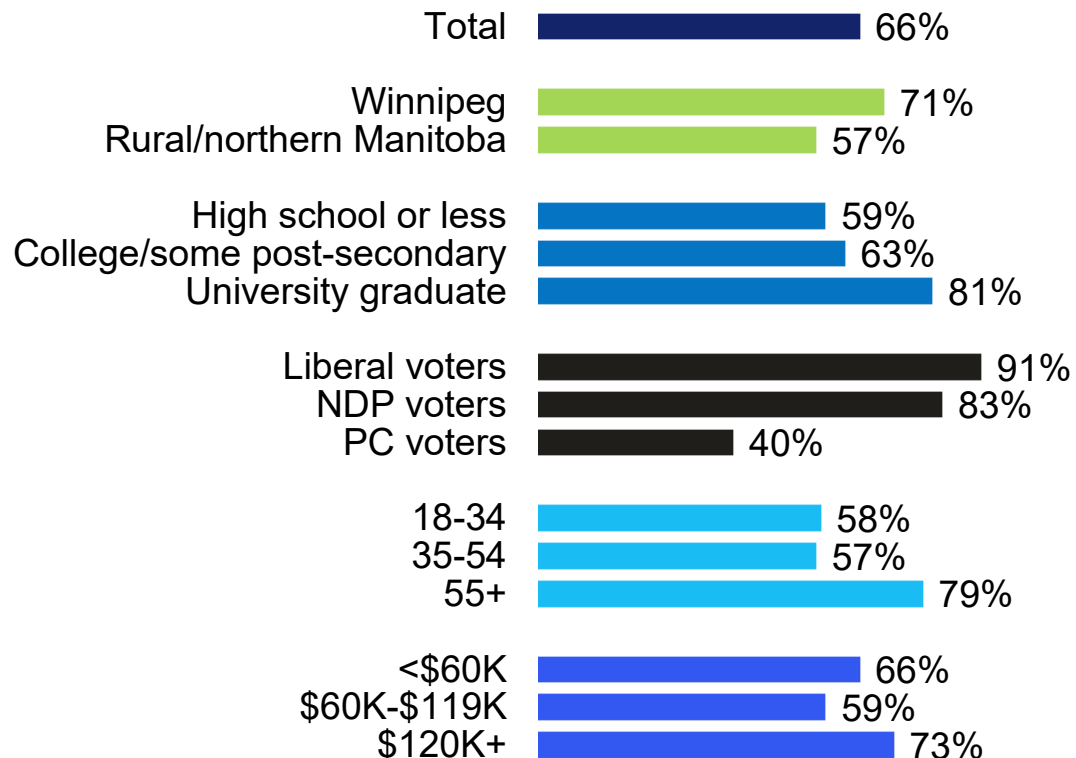


3. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Base: All Manitoba respondents, N=1,000)

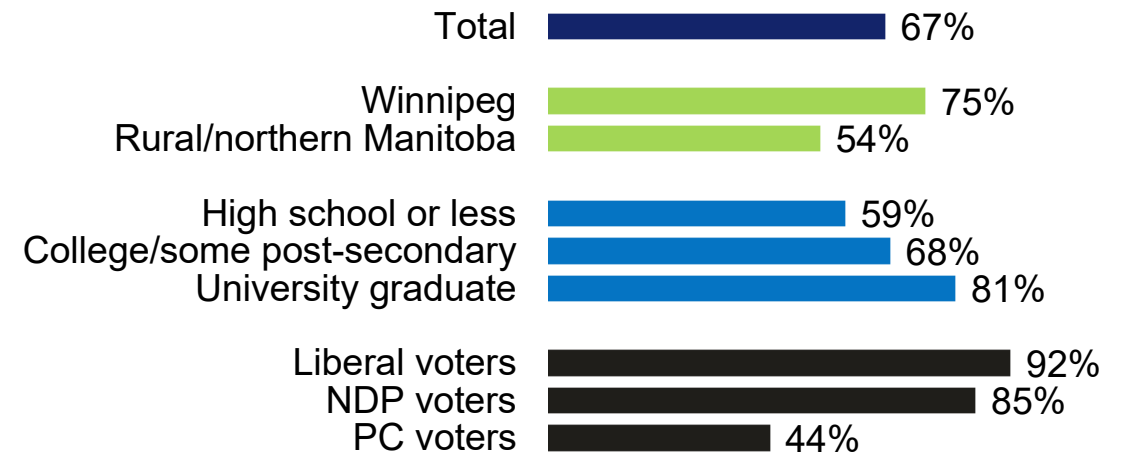
Winnipeggers, older adults and university graduates are most trusting of traditional news sources

% agree

I trust information reported by traditional news sources more than social media



I trust Canadian-owned news outlets more than American news outlets

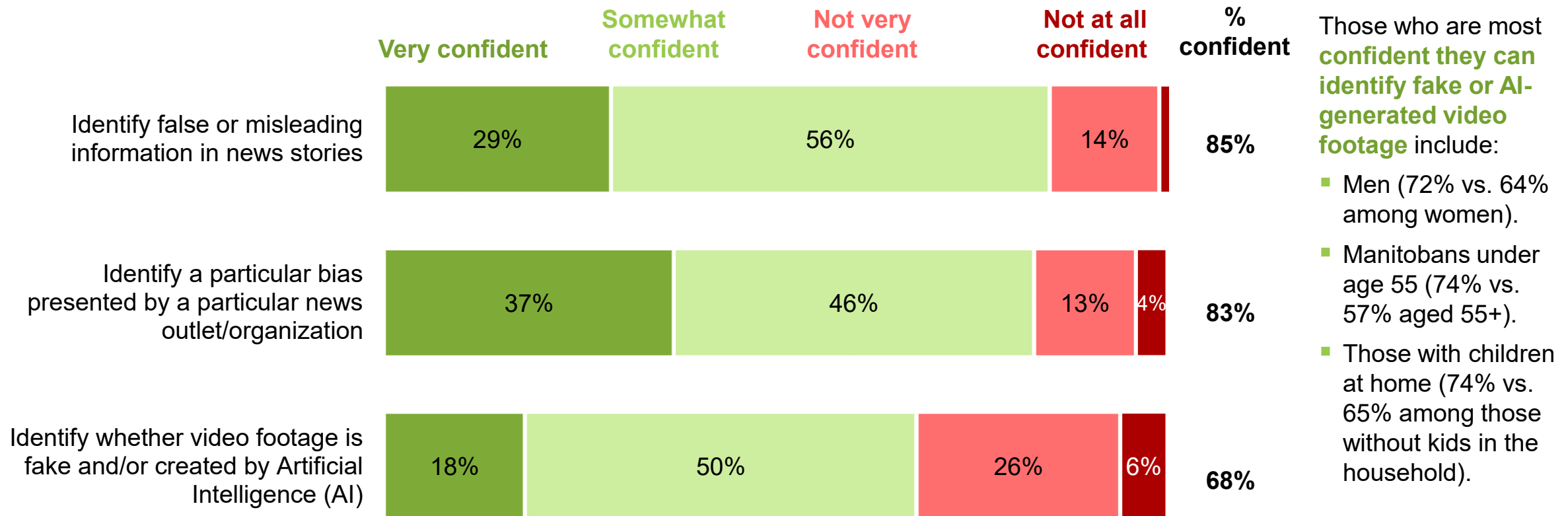


Provincial PC supporters (and federal Conservative supporters) are more likely to disagree that:

- They trust Canadian-owned news outlets more than American news outlets (50% PC and 51% Conservative disagree vs. 43% and 44% agree, respectively).
- They trust information reported by traditional news sources more than social media (40% and 36% disagree vs. 55% and 54% agree).

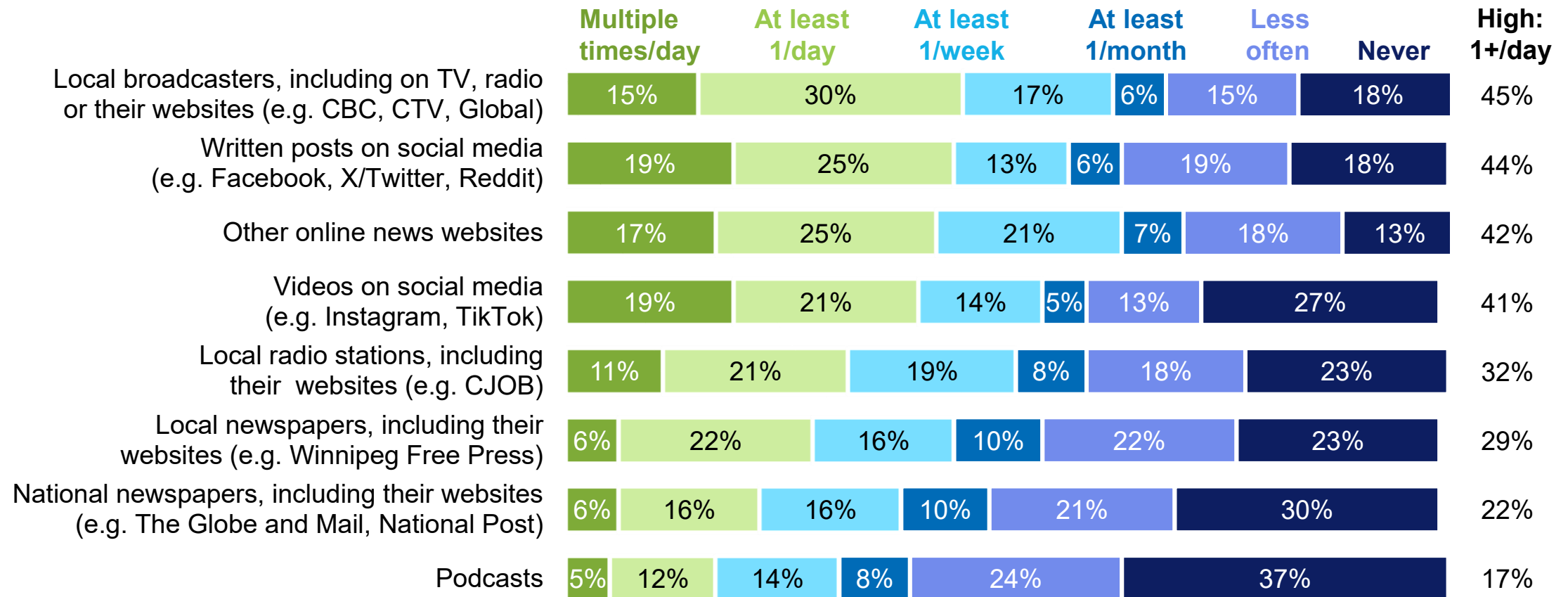
3. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Base: All Manitoba respondents, N=1,000)

Most feel able to identify false information and bias, but less confident about spotting AI-generated footage



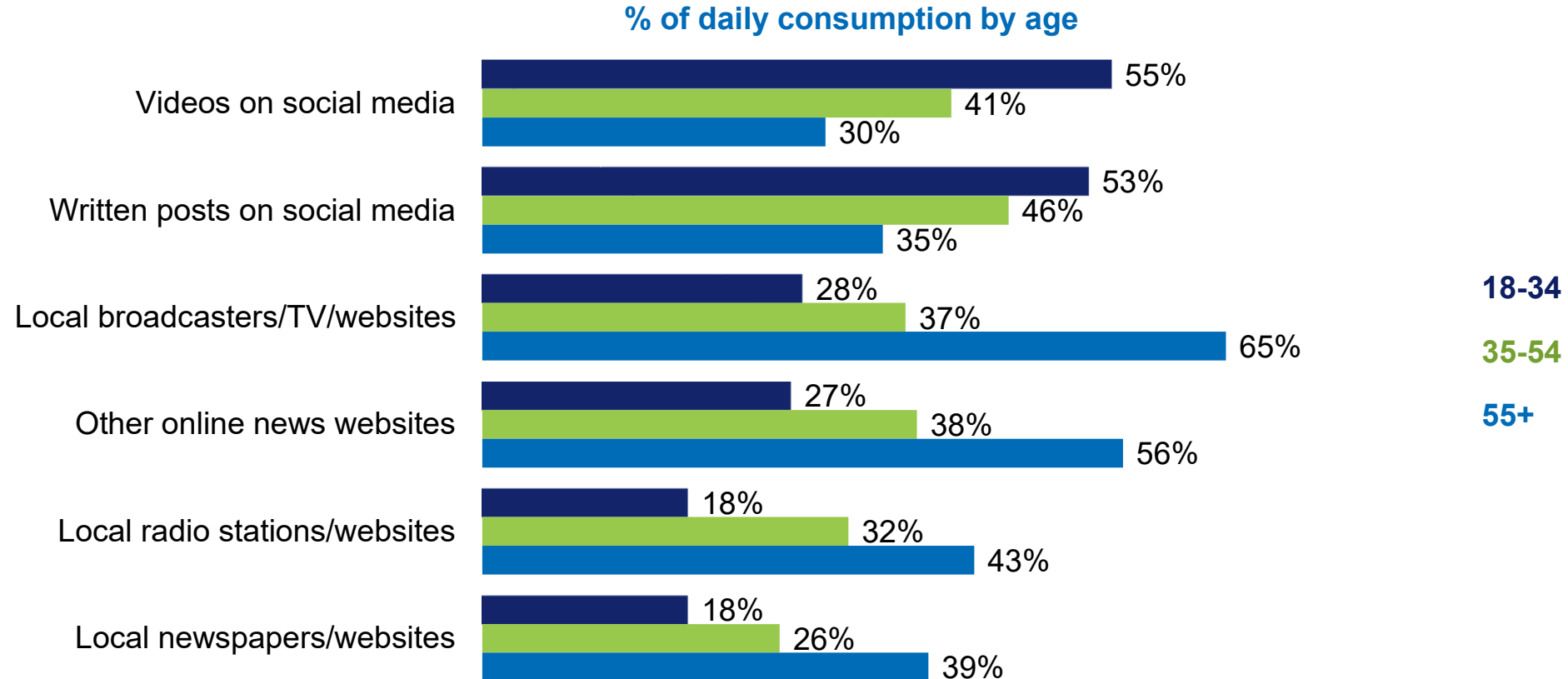
2. How confident are you in your ability to do the following? (Base: All Manitoba respondents, N=1,000)

Local broadcasters, social media tend to be the news sources Manitobans turn to most often



1. What sources of news do you listen to, read or watch most often? (Base: All respondents, N=1,000)

Younger adults are far more likely to consume social media, with older audiences turning to local media



1. What sources of news do you listen to, read or watch most often? (Base: All respondents, N=1,000)

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