

## DIGITAL NEWS REPORT

# Gender & Diversity in Ireland 2016-2021 & Internationally 2021



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## Gender, Diversity and News Consumption in Ireland: A Closer Look

The BAI Strategy Statement 2021 – 2023, includes two diversity-focused strategic objectives. The first is to facilitate a mix of voices, opinions and sources of news and current affairs in audio and audiovisual media which enhances democratic debate and active citizenship in Ireland. The second is to foster a media landscape that is representative of, and accessible to, the diversity of Irish society.

Through its funding for the production of the annual Digital News Report Ireland, the BAI has ensured that trends in online news consumption and attitudes to news are being tracked and benchmarked in the largest such international study. This research, coordinated by the Reuters Institute in Oxford, examines a range of indicators including main sources of news, trust in these sources, engagement, and payment models. Trends in these areas are further examined from a range of perspectives including socio-economic status, geographical location, political affiliation, and gender. This data has been collected annually since 2016 and as such it represents a significant resource for researchers, practitioners and regulators. In support of its strong commitment to diversity, in 2021, the BAI commissioned an additional analysis of the Reuters data with a focus on gender and diversity. This examined the gendered aspects of interest and participation in news, as well as perception of gender in the news. In addition, where possible the analysis also examined these areas in relation to socio-economic class categories and this provides insights into this additional area of interest for the Authority.

The findings from this project have been collated into this factsheet and are being published in order to stimulate further debate around news consumption and different aspects of diversity such as gender and socio-economic class. This document supports the existing analysis in the Reuters Digital News Reports for Ireland and provides additional insights on how gender impacts engagement with news and news systems in Ireland.

The factsheet aims to create awareness amongst news providers and users about how news and current affairs are consumed differently by men and women, and by different social classes. The information contained here offers scope for news providers to tailor their news offerings to widen appeal and interest.

Through this work, the BAI continues to deliver on its commitment to promoting a more diverse Irish media landscape.

### Methodology

The annual Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford is the largest ongoing study of news consumption trends in the world. Research is conducted by YouGov using an online questionnaire. Sample sizes in each country are assembled using nationally representative quotas for age, gender, region and education. The data is also weighted to targets based on census/industry-accepted data. In 2021, the global report, covered 46 countries, the total sample size was 80,155 adults and the total sample size for Ireland was 2,031.

### Acknowledgements

The BAI would like to thank the following for their contributions and assistance: Assistant Professor Dr Dawn Wheatley DCU, Research Assistant Nollaig O'Connor DCU and Dr Eileen Culloty Deputy Director Institute for Future Media, Democracy & Society (FuJo) at DCU.



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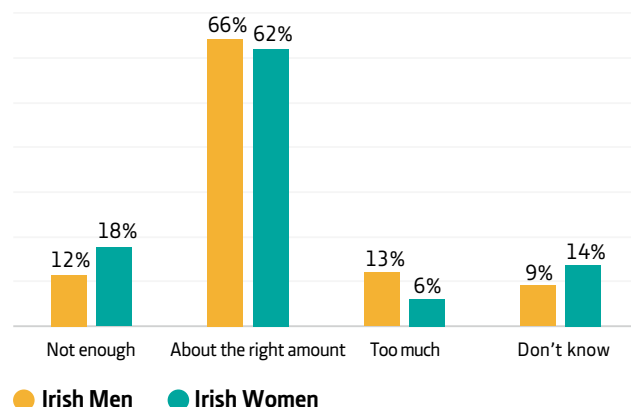


# Perception of News Coverage



## Perception of Gender

Thinking about news, how do you perceive coverage of people of your Gender?

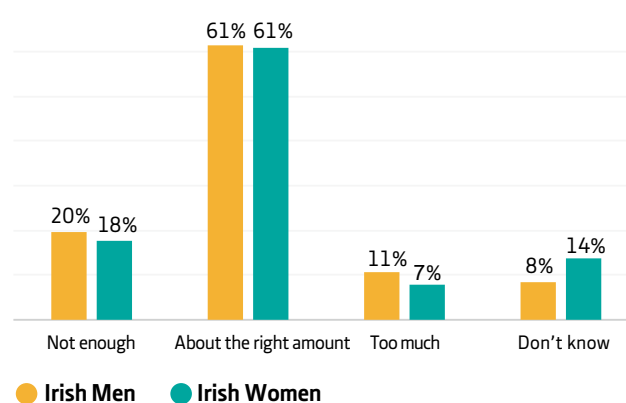


- Generally, Irish men (66%) and Irish women (62%) think there is 'about the right amount' of news coverage of their gender.
- However, more Irish men (13%) believe there is 'too much' coverage of their gender in news coverage, compared to Irish women (6%).
- More Irish women (18%) felt there was 'not enough' news coverage compared to Irish men (12%).



## Perception of Social/Economic Class

Thinking about news, how do you perceive coverage of people of your Social and Economic Class?



- Both Irish men and Irish women (61%) think there is 'about the right amount' of news coverage of their social/economic class.
- Higher levels of Irish men think there is 'not enough' (20%) as well as 'too much' (11%) news coverage of their social/economic class than Irish women.

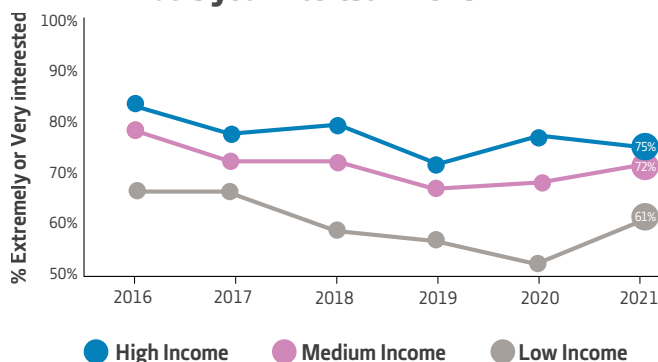


# Interest in News



## 'Extremely' or 'very interested' in News – based on income

What is your interest in news?



- In Ireland, between 2016 & 2021, we can see that more high income earners are 'extremely' or 'very interested' in news than low income earners.
- In 2018, in Ireland, there was a 20% difference between high income earners (79%) and low income earners (59%). This gap widened again in 2020, with a 25% difference.
- In 2021, the gap closed slightly, with a 14% difference between high income and low income earners 'extremely' or 'very' interested in news.

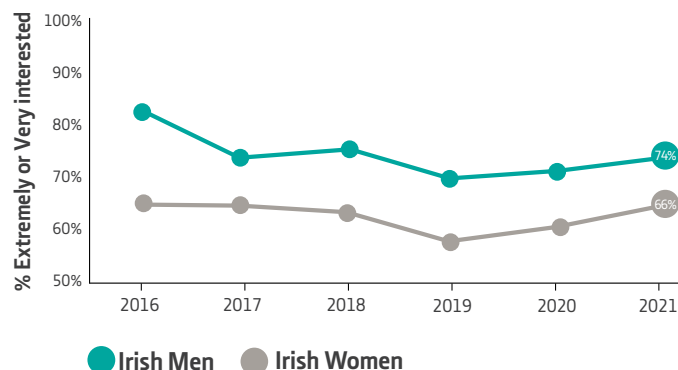
# Interest in News

- The biggest disparity between Irish men and Irish women's net interest in news occurred in 2016 with more men (82%) saying they were 'extremely' or 'very interested' in news than women (66%) - a difference of 16%.
- In 2019, there was another noticeable gap between Irish men and Irish women in terms of high interest in news, with 12% more men saying they were 'extremely' or 'very interested' in news than women.
- Since 2020, the gap in interest in news between Irish men and Irish women is closing and is now 8% (2021).



## 'Extremely' or 'Very interested' in News – based on gender

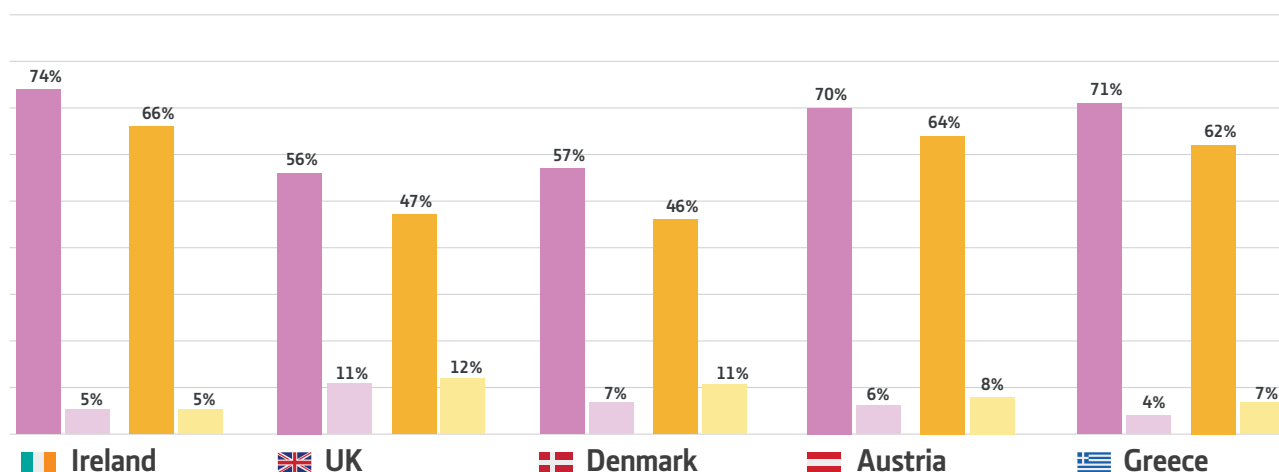
What is your interest in news?



## International Comparison 2021 - Interest levels in News for Men & Women

What is your interest in news?

- Ireland has higher levels of 'extremely' or 'very interested' in news compared to countries of a similar size e.g. Denmark, Austria, and compared to neighbours in the UK.
- Irish women had the lowest levels of 'not very' or 'not at all' interested in news.
- The UK has the highest levels of 'not very' or 'not at all' interested in news for both men and women.



Men: ● 'Extremely' or 'Very' Interested in the News

Women: ● 'Extremely' or 'Very' Interested in the News

● 'Not very' or 'Not at all' Interested in the News

● 'Not very' or 'Not at all' Interested in the News



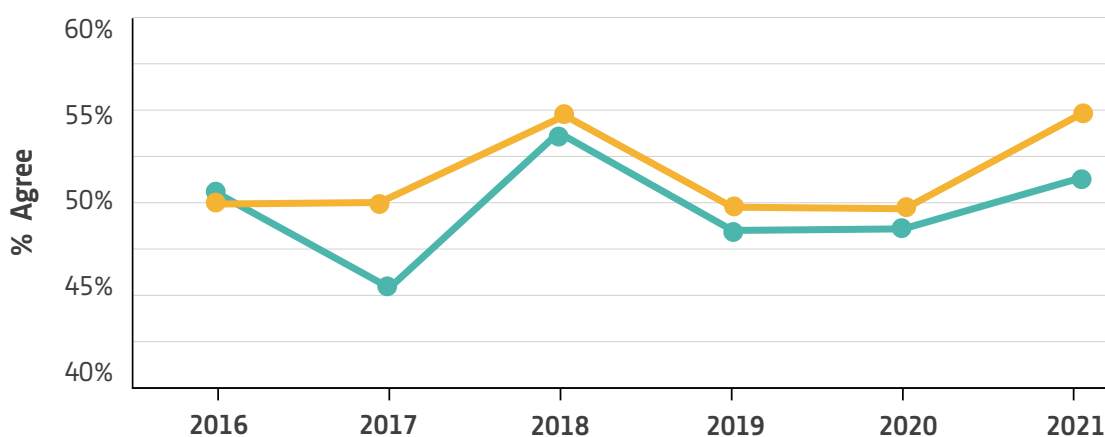
# Trust in News



**'I think you can trust news most of the time'**

**Strongly Agree/Tend to Agree**

● Irish Women ● Irish Men



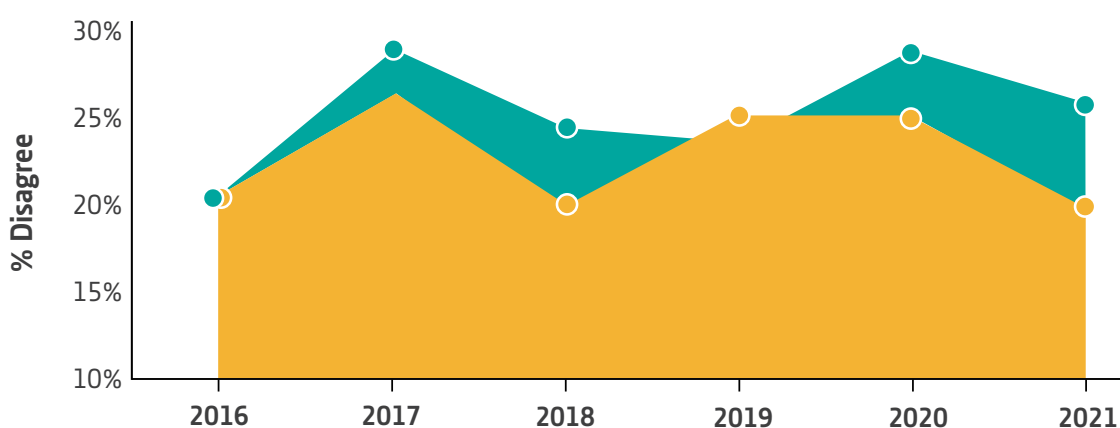
- Trust in news, generally between Irish men and Irish women is quite similar and has been high throughout the years.
- Trust in news dipped among both Irish men and Irish women in 2019, following a previous drop among Irish men in 2017, but climbed back in 2021.



**'I think you can trust news most of the time'**

**Strongly Disagree/Tend to Disagree**

● Irish Men ● Irish Women



- More Irish men than Irish women strongly/tend to disagree that they can trust the news most of the time - the only time that changed was in 2019, when more women than men disagreed that they could trust the news most of the time.

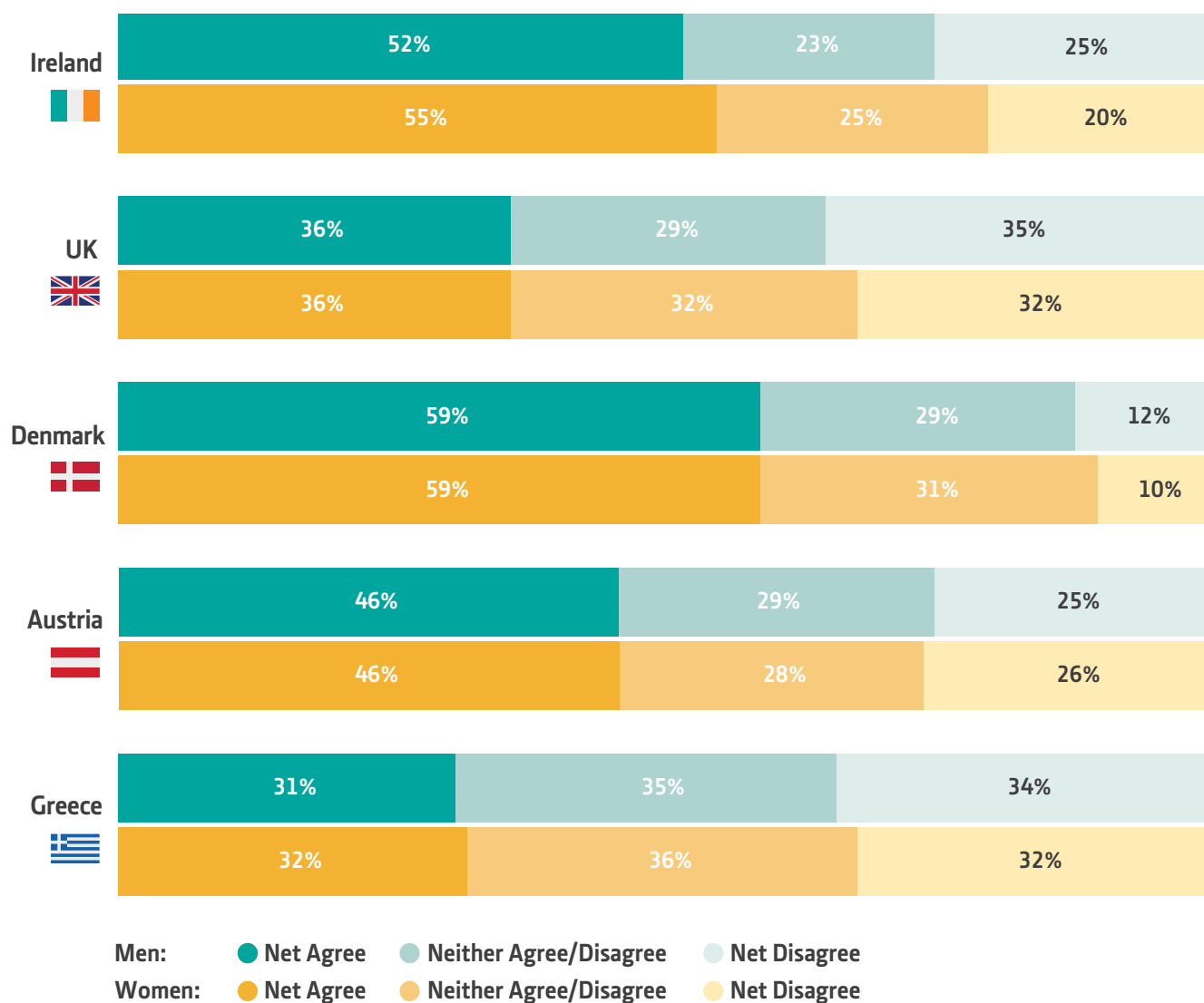


# Trust in News



## International Comparison Women and Men and Trust in News

'I think I can trust news most of the time'



- The biggest difference between trust for men and women in Ireland is the 5% difference between those who 'strongly or tend to disagree' that they can trust most of the news most of the time. This is the widest margin in terms of gender, compared to the UK, Denmark, Austria and Greece.
- Slightly more women (55%) than men (52%) in Ireland 'strongly or tend to agree' that they can trust most of the news most of the time.
- Compared to women in Austria, the UK & Greece, Irish women have higher levels of trust in news most of the time (55%), but Danish women have the highest trust in news at 59%.



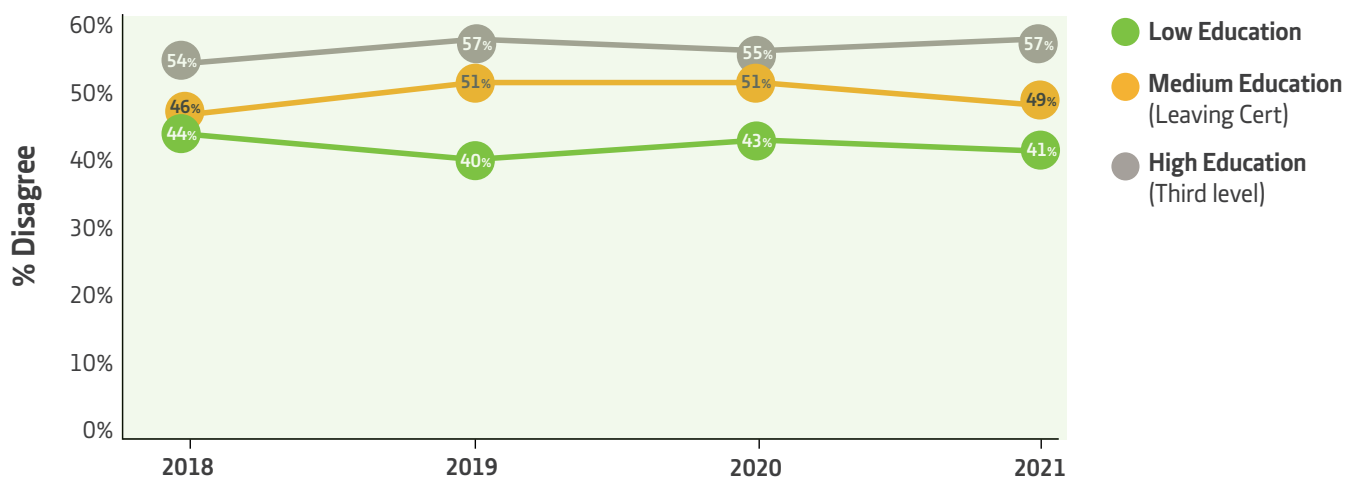
# Social Media and Trust



## Educational Diversity

**'I can trust news on social media most of the time'**

Strongly Disagree/Tend to Disagree



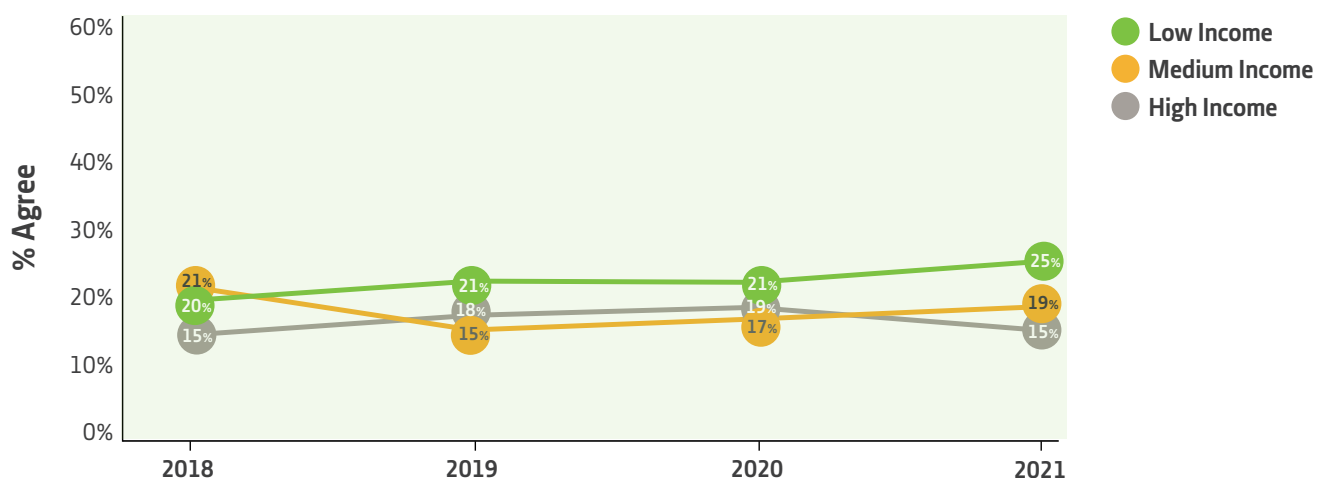
- Irish people with high and medium education have less trust for news on social media than those Irish people with low education (those who did not finish secondary school).



## Economic Diversity

**'I can trust news on social media most of the time'**

Strongly Agree/Tend to Agree



- Trust in news on social media has fluctuated across all income levels in Ireland since 2018: both medium and high income earners have seen some dips, while there has been a general upward trend in trust among low income earners.
- Low income earners in Ireland seem to have higher trust in news on social media (5% increase since 2018) than medium/high income earners.
- Overall in Ireland, those who are less well educated, and from the lower income category, are more likely to be trusting of news material they see on social media. Those who are higher educated and from higher income appear to be more sceptical.

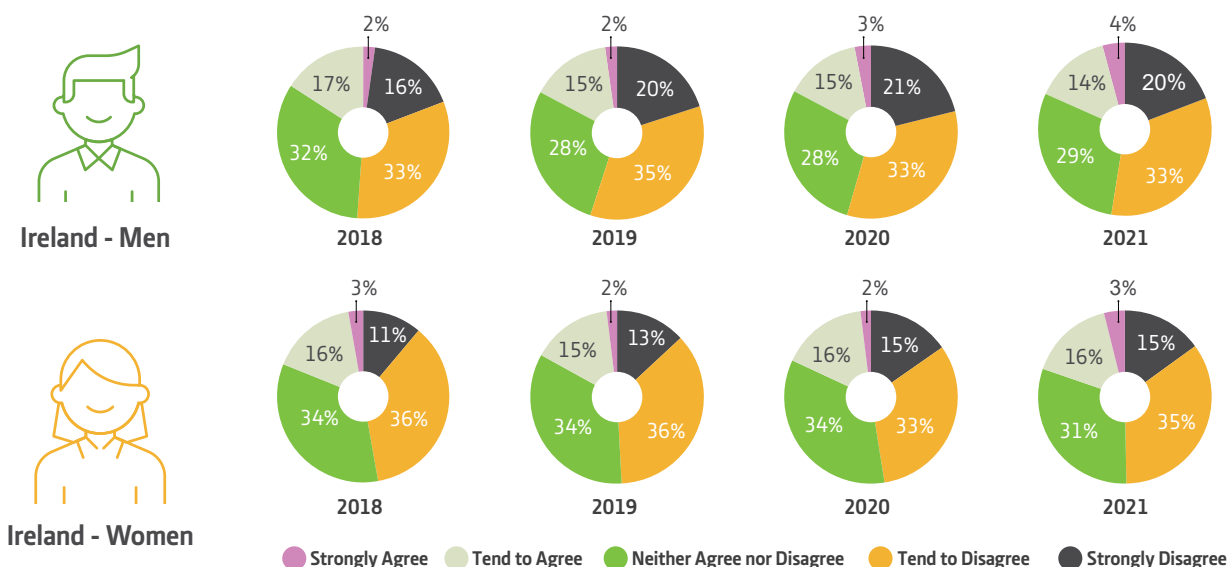


# Social Media and Trust



## Gender Breakdown

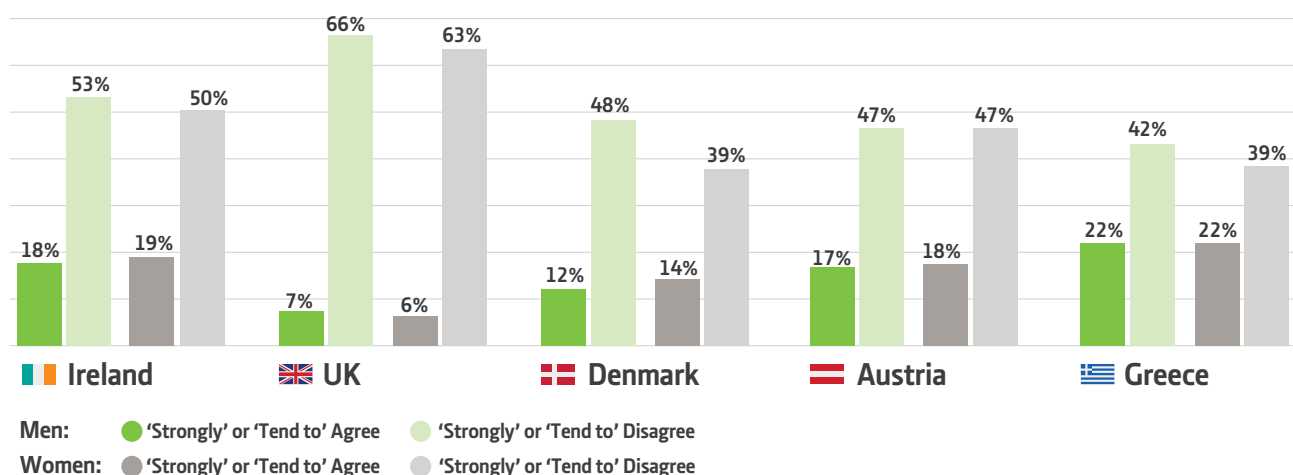
'I think I can trust news on social media most of the time'



## International Comparison 2021

'I think I can trust news on social media most of the time'

Strongly Agree/Tend to Agree



- Ireland and Austria have similar levels of trust in news on social media.
- Denmark is most undecided for whether they can trust news on social media.
- Most people 'tend to disagree' that they can trust news on social media in Ireland, but levels of trust appear to have increased in Ireland compared to 2020.
- High percentage of both men and women in the UK disagree that they can trust news most of the time on social media.
- Very low percentage of people "strongly agree" that news on social media was trustworthy most of the time.



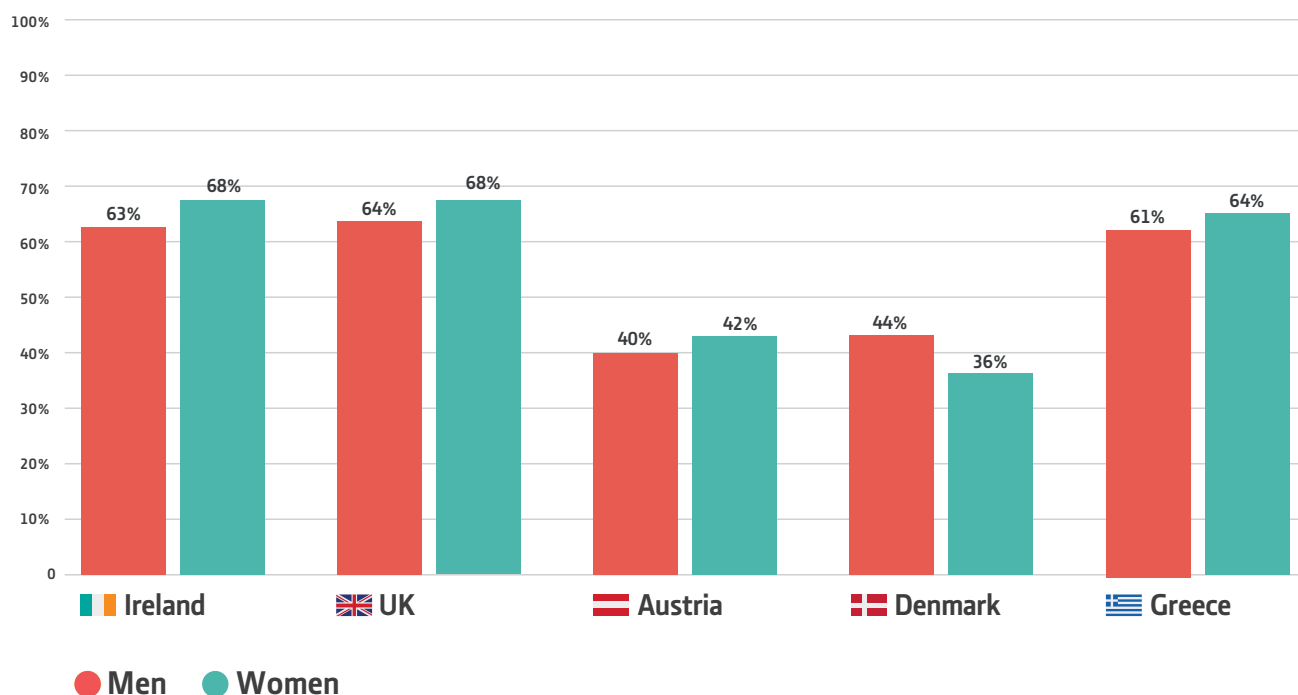
# Concern for Fake News & Disinformation



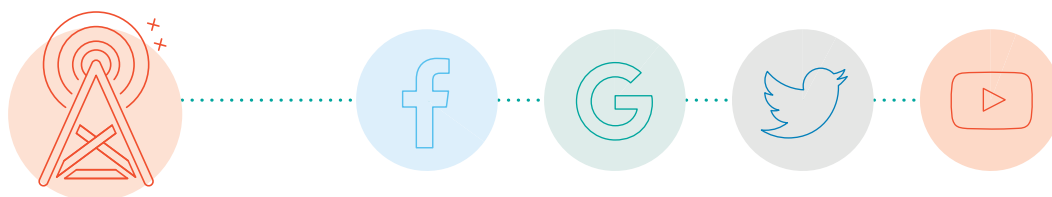
## International Comparison 2021

'Thinking about online news, I am concerned about what is real and what is fake on the Internet'

Strongly Agree/Tend to Agree



- Ireland and the UK have the highest levels of concern for what is real and what is fake on the Internet.
- More than two-thirds of women (and almost as many men) in Ireland have concerns around the accuracy of the content they're seeing online.
- Greek, Irish and UK men and women are similarly concerned about fake news content online, while the central European Austrian and Danish audiences are less concerned about fake news on the Internet.
- This concern around the credibility of news content - when asked explicitly about what is "real" or "fake" is perhaps unsurprising considering the results on the previous page showing 18-19% of Irish people say they can trust news on social media most of the time.



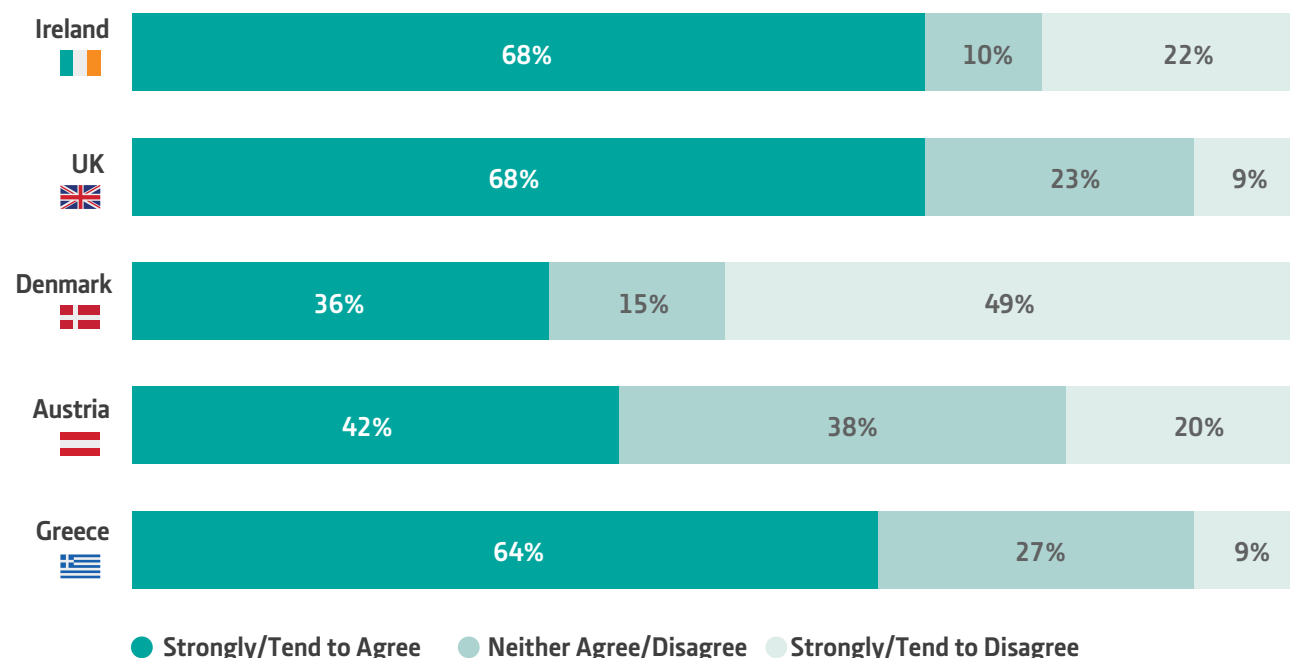


# Concern for Fake News & Disinformation



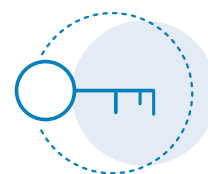
## International Comparison 2021 - Women

'Thinking about online news, I am concerned about what is real and what is fake on the internet'



- Danish women are most confident in the news they consume online, with almost half (49%) saying they are not concerned about fake news, more than double the Irish women's response.

- Irish women have the strongest opinions either way, with only 10% saying they neither agree/disagree.



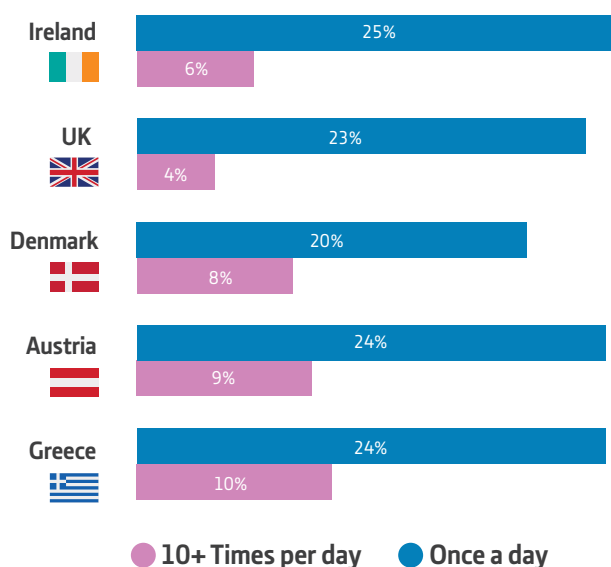
## Accessing News



## Women and Frequency of Access to the News 2021

'How often to you access the news?'

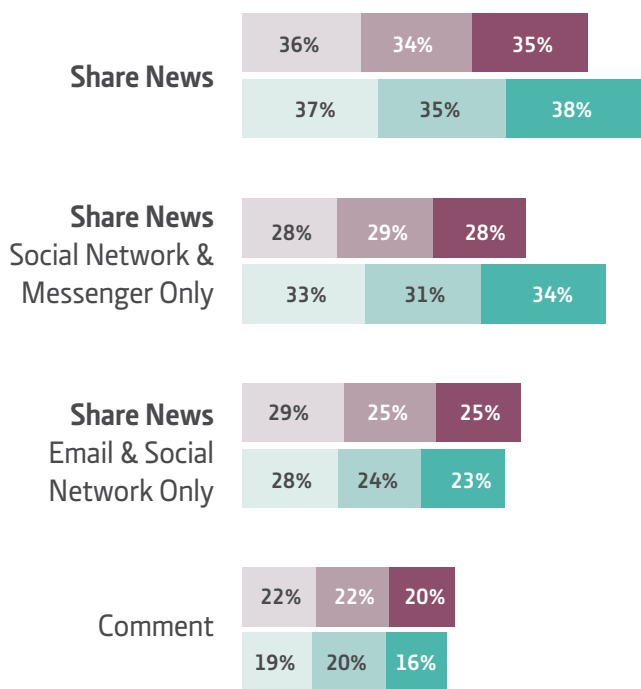
- Women in Ireland, compared to women in the UK, Denmark, Austria and Greece, have the highest level (25%) of accessing the news only 'once a day'.
- Women in Greece have highest level of accessing news '10+ times per day'.
- Women in Ireland and the UK have lowest for this 10+ times per day, frequency of access.





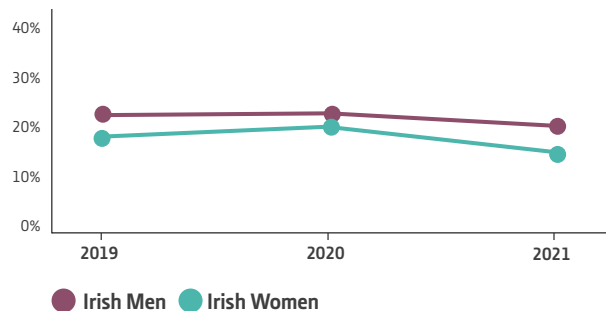
# Participation with News

## Q 'Which of the following ways do you share or participate in news coverage?'

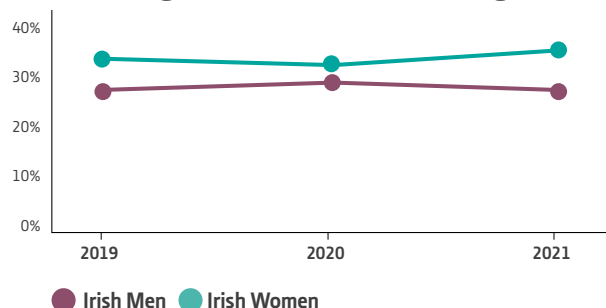


Irish Men 2019 2020 2021  
Irish Women 2019 2020 2021

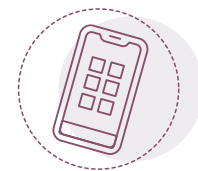
## Q Sharing & Participating with News Commenting on a News Story



## Q Sharing & Participating with News Sharing on Social Media/Messenger



- Overall in Ireland, most of the participation categories have remained relatively steady within the respective men/women categories over the past three years. There have been slight declines in email/social network sharing and commenting since 2019, which contrasts with some restored usage within the other sharing categories in 2020.
- Irish women are more likely than Irish men to share news, and it has been this way for the past three years, with the gap increasing from 1% in 2020 to 3% in 2021.
- Conversely, Irish men continue to be more likely to share their opinions and comment on stories: the 2021 gap showed a 4% difference between Irish men and Irish women's commenting practices.



# Participation with News

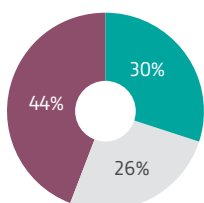


## International Comparison - Participation with News 2021

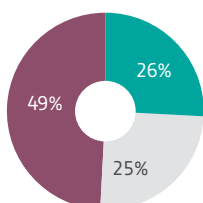
'Which of the following ways do you share or participate in news coverage?'



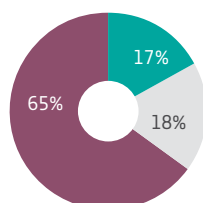
Men



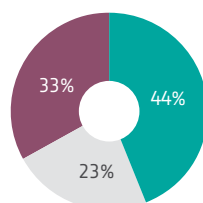
 Ireland



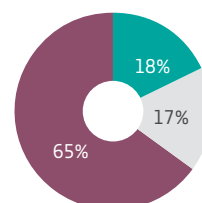
 Austria



 Denmark



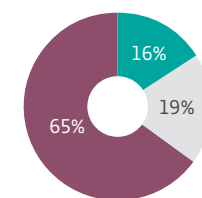
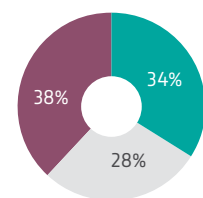
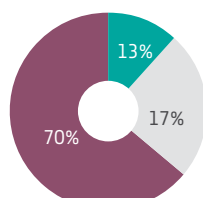
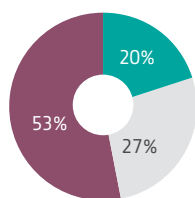
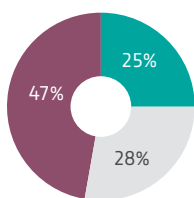
 Greece



 UK



Women



 Proactive Participation  Reactive participation  Passive

- Internationally, Ireland has high 'proactive' and 'reactive' participation rates for men and women, relative to Denmark and the UK.

- In each country, we can see women are more likely than men to be passive in their approach to online news (apart from the UK where there is no gender difference). Meanwhile, men in all five countries are more likely to engage in proactive participation with online news than women.



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