



The News Fairness and Balance Report

What Canadian News Consumers Think About Fairness and Balance in News

Final Report

Prepared for  CBC English Services

by  Ipsos Reid

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Table of Contents

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Objectives | 6 |
| Method | 6 |
| Setting Some Context – General Attitudes Toward News and Defining Fairness and Balance | 10 |
| General Attitudes Toward News | 10 |
| Select Attitudes Toward News by Demographics | 16 |
| Defining Fairness and Balance | 18 |
| Fairness and Balance on Stories of the Day | 21 |
| Perceptions of News Organizations in Being Fair and Balanced | 23 |
| Overall | 23 |
| Select Organizations by Demographics | 24 |
| Ideology | 25 |
| Organizations By Platform | 26 |
| Platform by Demographics | 28 |
| Organizations by Type of News by Platform | 30 |
| Conclusions and Commentary | 36 |



Executive Summary

Introduction

- Ipsos Reid was commissioned by the CBC English Services to design and execute survey research to provide the corporation with a comprehensive understanding of:
 - What Canadian news consumers (Anglophone) mean by “fair” and “balanced” news coverage, and
 - The degree to which Canadian news consumers (Anglophone) feel these principles are being delivered through CBC English News service delivery platforms (TV, Radio and web) and properties (CBC News main network, CBC News Network, CBC Radio One and CBC.ca), as well as through the competition (CTV News, CTV News Channel, Global News), and across content-types (local, national, international and business news).
- The Ipsos Reid research is one part of a larger CBC study on the issues of fairness and balance in the news. The other part, conducted by Erin Research, involves an extensive content analysis of sampled news coverage across platforms and news types over a 25-week period (beginning October 26, 2009 and ending May 2, 2010). The results for that part of the broader study are reported under separate cover.

Method

- Interviewing was conducted online via the Ipsos iSay pre-recruited online panel over a six week period from April 6th to May 17th, 2010.
- An important consideration for this research was to collect data relevant to understanding certain ethno-cultural (visible minority, Aboriginal Peoples), socio-economic, geographic and demographic subgroups. Therefore sampling for this research was designed among three separate population groups, resulting in the following:



- Core Sample: n=2555 representative Anglo Canada,
- Aboriginal Peoples Oversample: n=206 oversample of self-identified Aboriginal/First Nations (including Native, Metis, Inuit, etc.),
- Visible Minority Oversample: n =646 self-identified, representative to primary visible minority communities residing in Anglo Canada.

- In order to qualify for the survey, respondents must have reported that they have watched/listened/accessed/read news or current affairs/information or programming at least once a month through at least one platform – TV, radio, online, newspaper, or wireless/mobile device.

- The questionnaire was reviewed by Erin Research and the Balance and Fairness Expert Panel (see separate report by Erin Research).

- Any reference to “Canadians” in the reporting implies adult residents in English speaking Canada. No French interviewing was conducted.

- There are two further key elements in the design of the survey that are relevant to the interpretation of the results:
 - First, respondents were never presented with any formal definition of what fairness and balance means. Rather, before asking respondents to evaluate any organizations or types of news, they were asked to define what balance and fairness meant to them. Further probing on the issues, for example rating how various organizations performed on fairness and balance, was tailored as much as possible to the individual definitions that respondents themselves had provided.

 - Second, when asked to evaluate news organizations or types of news, the questions were tailored to adhere to respondents’ own perceptions of whether they thought fairness and balance were the same thing or thought that fairness and balance were different. Consequently, respondents who said that they perceived

fairness and balance to be the same thing were asked to evaluate X, Y, Z in the context of fairness and balance combined. Respondents who said that they perceived fairness and balance to be different things were asked to evaluate X, Y, Z separately in the context of fairness and in the context of balance. For this reporting, these various contexts were rolled-up into an overall measure of fairness and balance.

- This report presents descriptive information about opinions regarding news content and provides context for assessing fairness and balance. However, the final determination as to whether the results are “good” or “bad” lies with the reader.

Select Key Observations

- Canadian news consumers are regularly accessing different platforms and news organizations for their news. For example, almost four-in-ten news consumers say that they are using three or more platforms daily for news (from among TV, radio, online, newspapers, mobile).
- Canadian news consumers are not convinced that news organizations can be completely fair and balanced. While two-thirds of news consumers do agree that they can, only about one-quarter is convinced of this (“strongly agree”).
- Fairness and balance in news are not the same thing to many Canadians. Two-thirds of Canadian news consumers say that they perceive the two to be different:
 - The concepts of accuracy, unbiased, truthful, factual, honesty, multiple points of view and impartiality have the highest association (aided) with the concept of fairness, while
 - Multiple points of view, range of subjects and opinions and regional representation emerge with the highest association with the concept of balance.

- The differences make intuitive sense and in the minds of news consumers relate back to the basic equation that balance equals what a news organization covers and fairness equals how it covers it.
- .
- There is little differentiation across the main Canadian news organizations in terms of their performance delivering against fairness and balance overall, and by platform and by types of news specifically.
- News consumers give consistently positive ratings to the news organizations they use, platforms they access and types of news they consume in terms of performance delivering against fairness and balance. While there are some relative differences in ratings, positive scores (good/very good/excellent) tend to come in around the 75%-80% level or higher in the contexts examined.
- It is noteworthy that throughout the survey results, the awareness, attitudes and opinions of Canadians on fairness and balance are not differentiated in any absolute sense based on demographic characteristics, region or even among the special subgroups of Visible Minority and Aboriginal Peoples news consumers:
 - Granted there are relative differences in opinions on some of the measures. For example, younger news consumers tend to be more cynical than average about news media overall (e.g., less likely to believe media can be fair or balanced, less likely to believe that journalism is critical in society). Aboriginal Peoples respondents rate “reflecting First Nations people appropriately” higher than average in terms of the factors they perceive as contributing to journalistic integrity.

- Nevertheless, for the most part news consumers from all walks of life and segments of society tend to share generally common perceptions and assessments of issues related to fairness and balance in the news they consume. In other words, they are more common based on the fact that they are news consumers than different based on their socio-demographic, ethno-cultural or regional characteristics.

- A key consideration in assessing any implications from the data is recognizing the historically consistent tendency of Canadians to often report somewhat more cynical opinions on certain things at one level, but also report generally positive personal experiences on those same things at another. In healthcare, for example, Canadians have consistently reported many concerns about the quality of the healthcare system, but then report generally positive personal experiences when they have used the healthcare system.

- This tendency may also be at work in Canadian news consumers' assessments of fairness and balance in the news. A significant majority of news consumers rate their experiences on fairness and balance in the news they consume in a generally positive light, even though some of their general attitudes toward fairness and balance in the media might suggest otherwise.



Introduction

Objectives

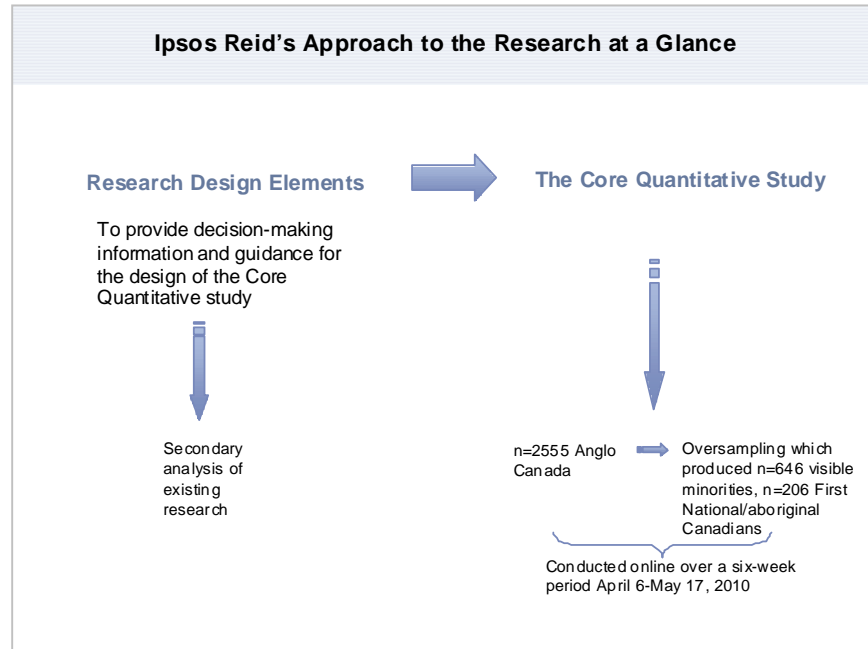
Ipsos Reid was commissioned by the CBC English Services to design and execute survey research to provide the corporation with a comprehensive understanding of:

- What Canadian news consumers (Anglophone) mean by “fair” and “balanced” news coverage, and
- The degree to which Canadian news consumers (Anglophone) feel these principles are being delivered through CBC English News service delivery platforms (TV, Radio and web) and properties (CBC News main network, CBC News Network, CBC Radio 1 and CBC.ca), as well as through the competition (CTV News, CTV News Channel, Global News), and across content-types (local, national, international and business news).

The Ipsos Reid research is one part of a larger CBC study on the issues of fairness and balance in the news. The other part, conducted by Erin Research, involves an extensive content analysis of sampled news coverage across platforms and news types over a 25-week period (beginning October 26, 2009 and ending May 2, 2010, but excluding a two-week period from December 21, 2009 to January 3, 2010). The results for that part of the broader study are reported under separate cover.

Method

Interviewing was conducted online via the Ipsos iSay pre-recruited online panel. The Ipsos iSay online panel provides an extensive collection of more than 250,000 Canadians from across the country and from all demographic groups, providing the means to pull a representative sample and oversampling of specific demographic groups.



Interviewing for this research took place over a six week period from April 6th to May 17th, 2010.

An important consideration for this research was to collect data relevant to understanding certain ethno-cultural (visible minority, Aboriginal/First Nations), socio-economic, geographic and demographic subgroups. Therefore sampling for this research was designed among three separate population groups, including:

- Core Sample: Representative Anglo Canada sample
- Aboriginal Peoples Oversample: Oversample of Aboriginal/First Nations (including Native, Metis, Inuit, etc.)
- Visible Minority Oversample: Representative to primary visible minority communities residing in Anglo Canada.

Core Sample (n=2555) -- In order to ensure that the results of the research are fully representative of the population of Anglo Canada, a sampling matrix was applied to ensure the proper proportions for major demographic/sampling groups were attained. The sample matrix applied minimum quotas according to age, region, gender, education, and household

income proportions provided by Statistics Canada for Anglo Canada. In addition the data was weighted according to age, region, and gender proportions for Anglo Canada according to the latest Statistics Canada Census data. An unweighted probability sample of this size would yield results accurate to within +/-2 percentage points, 95% of the time.

Visible Minority Oversample (n=646) -- In order to ensure that the results of the visible minority oversample are representative to the population of those who self-describe as a visible minority, quotas were set according to the primary visible minority groups according to the latest Statistics Canada data. An unweighted probability sample of this size would yield results accurate to within +/-3.9 percentage points, 95% of the time.

Aboriginal Peoples Oversample (n=206) -- A minimum quota was set for those who self-describe as Aboriginal/First Nations Canadians. An unweighted probability sample of this size would yield results accurate to within +/-7.1 percentage points, 95% of the time.

All potential respondents were screened to ensure that they did not work for any of the following organizations -- an advertising company, a public relations company, a market research company, the media (including TV, radio, newspaper, Internet), or a cable or satellite provider.

In order to qualify for the survey, respondents must have reported that they have watched/listened/accessed/read news or current affairs/information or programming at least once a month through at least one platform – TV, radio, online, newspaper, or wireless/mobile device.

The questionnaire was reviewed by Erin Research and the Balance and Fairness Expert Panel (see separate report by Erin Research).

Any reference to “Canadians” in the reporting implies adult residents in English speaking Canada. No French interviewing was conducted.

There are two further key elements in the design of the survey that are relevant to the interpretation of the results.

First, respondents were never presented with any formal definition of what fairness and balance means. Rather, before asking respondents to evaluate any organizations or types of news, they were asked to define what balance and fairness meant to them. Further probing on the issues, for example rating how various organizations performed on fairness and balance, was tailored as much as possible to the individual definitions that respondents themselves had provided.

Second, when asked to evaluate news organizations or types of news, the questions were tailored to adhere to respondents' own perceptions of whether they thought fairness and balance were the same thing or thought that fairness and balance were different. Consequently, respondents who said that they perceived fairness and balance to be the same thing were asked to evaluate X, Y, Z in the context of fairness and balance combined. Respondents who said that they perceived fairness and balance to be different things were asked to evaluate X, Y, Z separately in the context of fairness and in the context of balance. For this reporting, these various contexts were rolled-up into an overall measure of fairness and balance.

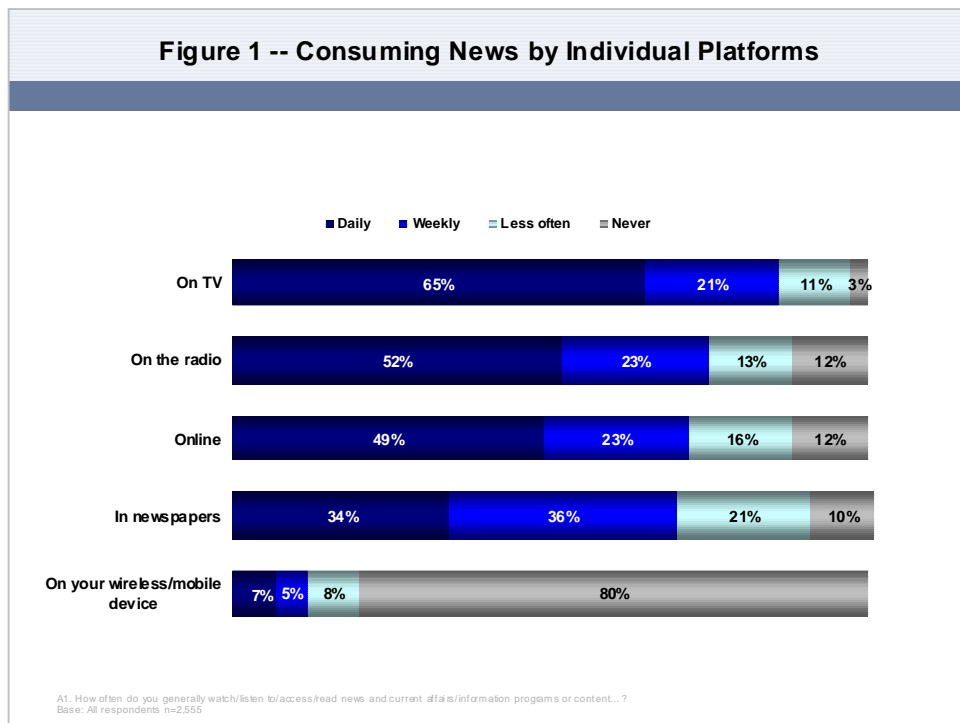
This report presents descriptive information about news content and provides context for assessing fairness and balance. However, the final determination as to whether the results are "good" or "bad" lies with the reader.

Setting Some Context – General Attitudes Toward News and Defining Fairness and Balance

General Attitudes Toward News

Canadians have historically been known as engaged consumers of news. There is rarely anyone in any recent research who indicates that they don't consume news of some type and on some platform on at least a weekly basis.

Furthermore, this study shows that Canadian news consumers are accessing various platforms for their news. Television remains the most regularly used source, however others like radio and online are not that far behind.



Perhaps more insightful, however, is the degree to which Canadian news consumers are relying on multiple platform sources for their news. A full 74% of Canadian news consumers indicate that they are using at least three of the five sources for news on a weekly basis, including almost half (45%) who are using four of the five or all five. Furthermore one-third of news consumers say that they are consuming news on at least three of five sources on a daily basis, including just over one-in-every-ten who say they are using four of the five or all

five. While men, older news consumers, the better educated and self-identified visible minorities tend to report higher than average use of multiple platforms for their news, a significant proportion of news consumers from all walks of life and regions are using multiple platforms for their news.

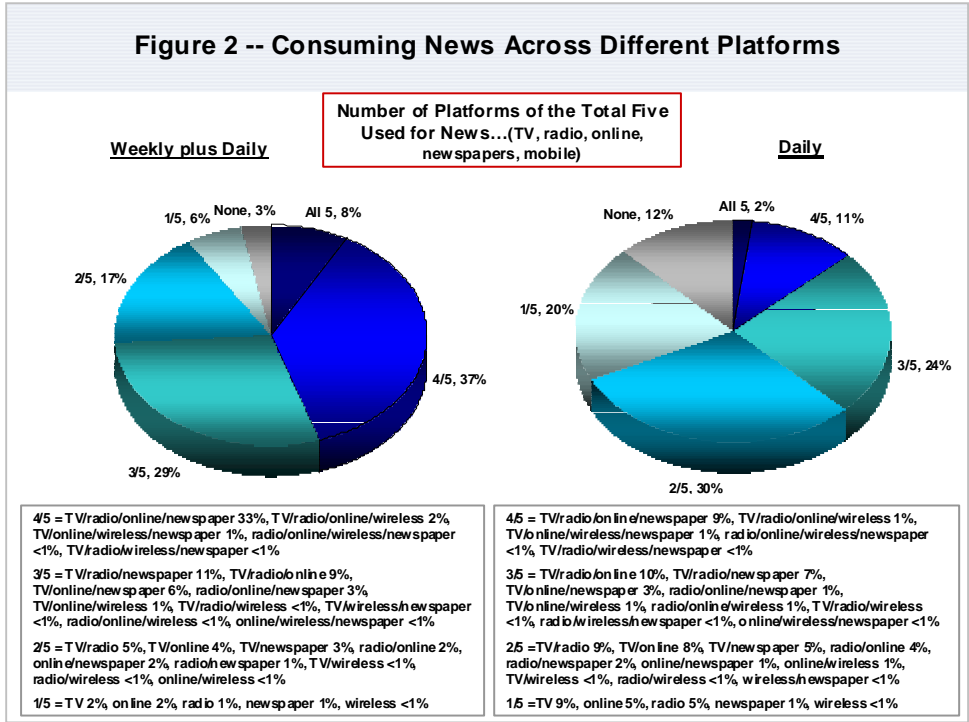


Table 1 – Consuming News Across Different Platforms by Demographics, Region and Special Group

| | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|--------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni. + |
| Use 3, 4 or all 5 Platforms Weekly | 74% | 79% | 71% | 67% | 74% | 77% | 81% | 73% | 74% | 78% |
| Use 3, 4 or all 5 Platforms Daily | 37% | 40% | 34% | 31% | 34% | 38% | 52% | 38% | 36% | 42% |

| | All | Region | | | | | Special Group | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-----------|------|------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man/Sask. | Ont. | Que. | All. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| Use 3, 4 or all 5 Platforms Weekly | 74% | 72% | 71% | 73% | 76% | 74% | 76% | 75% | 81% |
| Use 3, 4 or all 5 Platforms Daily | 37% | 32% | 32% | 41% | 38% | 42% | 41% | 38% | 48% |

Higher than average (green box) Lower than average (pink box)

Within this context of using multiple platforms for news, there has been ample consumer research conducted over the past several years in Canada, the US and abroad to conclude that media credibility generally, and issues associated with fairness and balance specifically, have been identified as areas of increasing challenge for news organizations. For example, studies conducted by the Canadian Media Research Consortium¹ have revealed that:

- There was a significant decline between 2003 and 2008 in the percentage of Canadians believing that “news organizations get their facts straight.”
- There was a marginal decline between 2003 and 2008 in the proportion of Canadians believing that news reporting is “often fair and balanced,” settling at only about one-third believing this in 2008.
- Just over half of Canadians in 2008 thought that “maintaining fairness and balance in news” was becoming a bigger problem over the past several years.

Furthermore, CBC’s own research has demonstrated that:

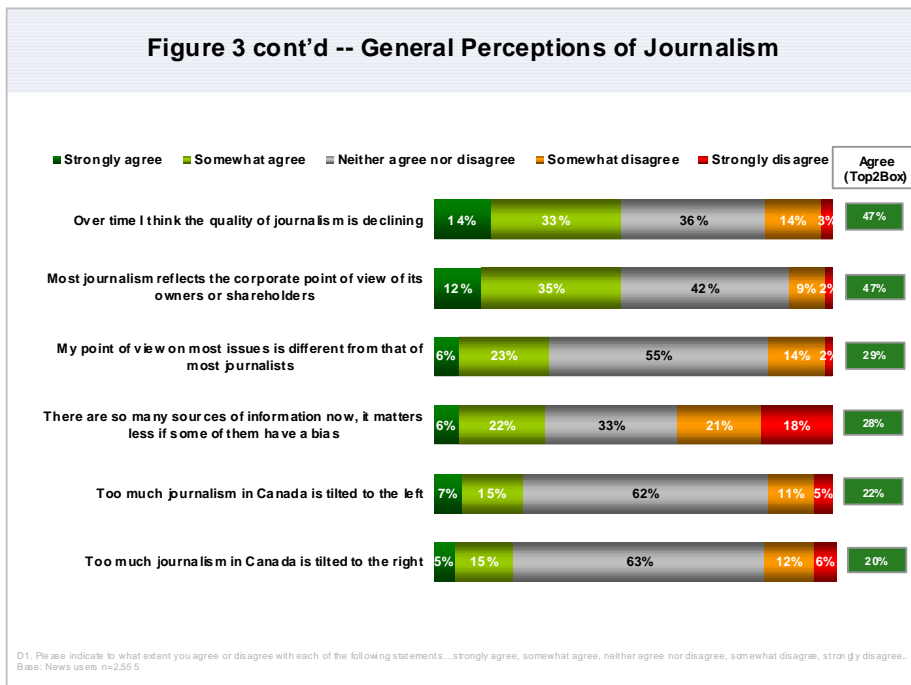
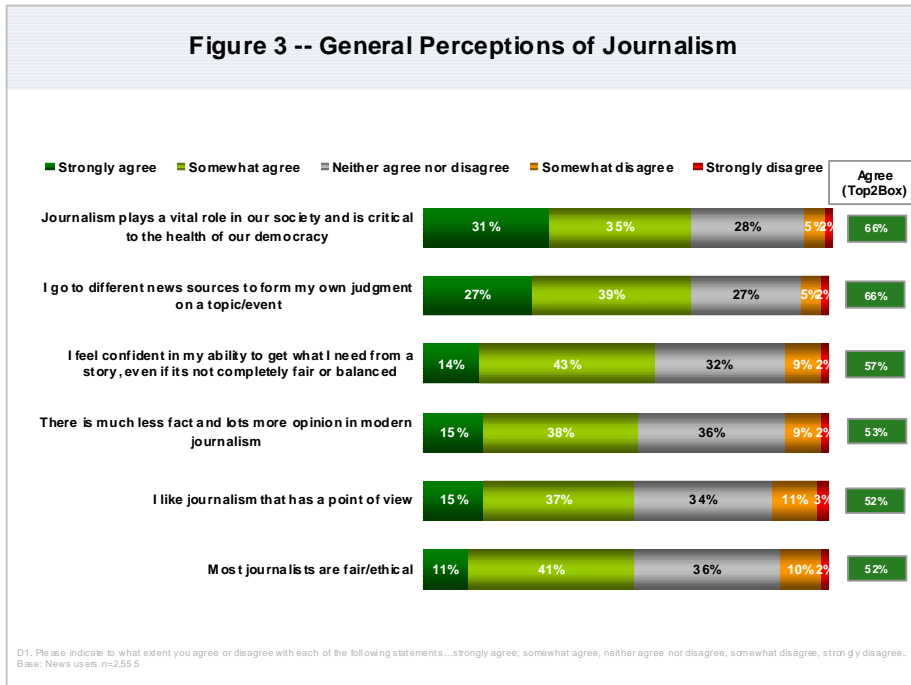
- The concepts of fairness and balance are among the most important “key drivers” of Canadian news consumers’ perceptions of the quality of news and perceptions of news organizations.
- There was some indication that Canadian news consumers had “soft” positive perceptions of the performance of Canadian news organizations in delivering against fairness and balance, but with little differentiation across different providers.

So what do Canadian news consumers say in the current survey about the news they are consuming at a general level?

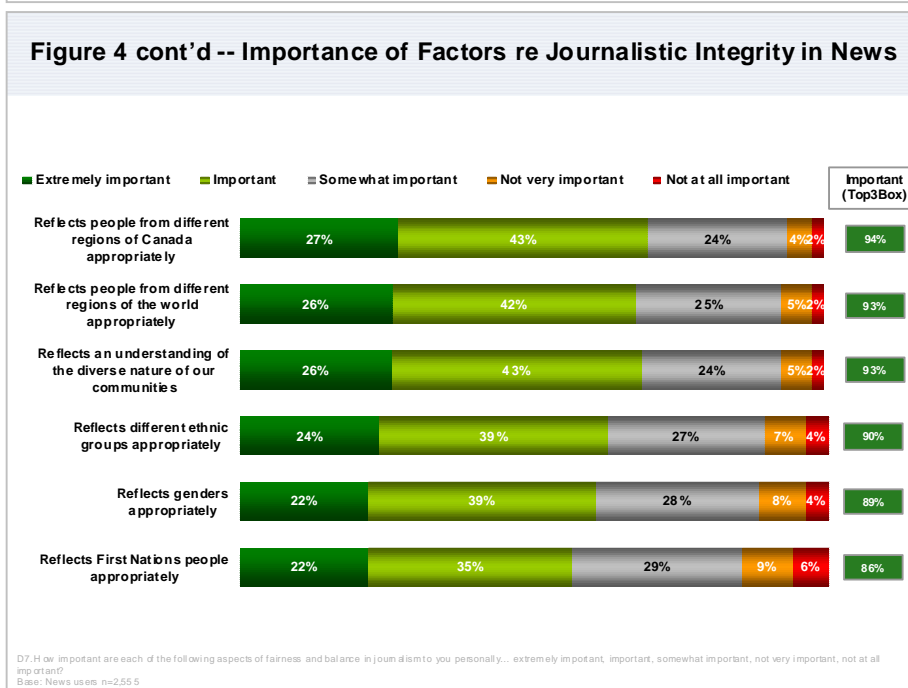
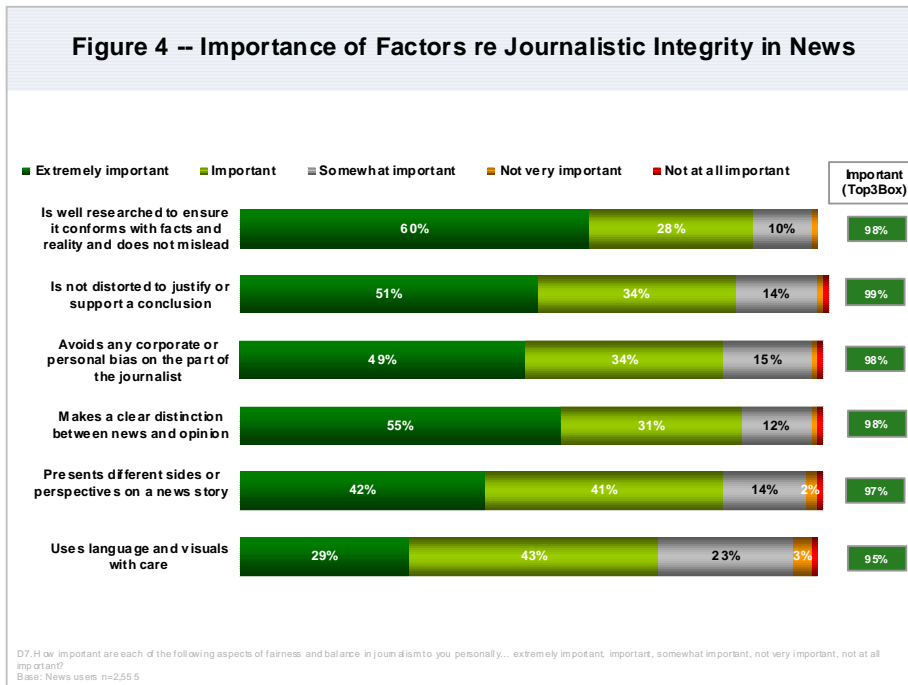
A majority of Canadian news consumers believe that journalism plays a vital role in society and is a key element to the health of our democracy, although this opinion is not “strongly” held (only 31% “strongly agree”). Furthermore, a similar proportion indicates that they go to different news sources to form their opinions. However, Canadian news consumers are split on several other key items including their assessments of whether journalists are fair/ethical

¹ The Credibility Gap: Canadians and Their News Media, Canadian Media Research Consortium, May 2008

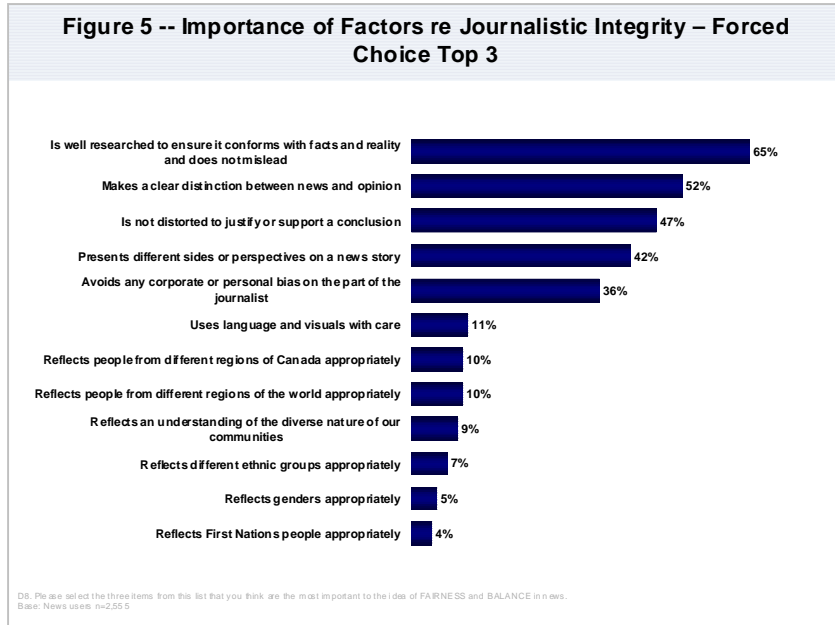
and whether or not the quality of journalism has been declining over time. Additionally, while only a minority opinion at this point, a notable proportion of Canadian news consumers believe that too much journalism is currently tilted to the left or the right, and that bias matters less now since there are so many news sources.



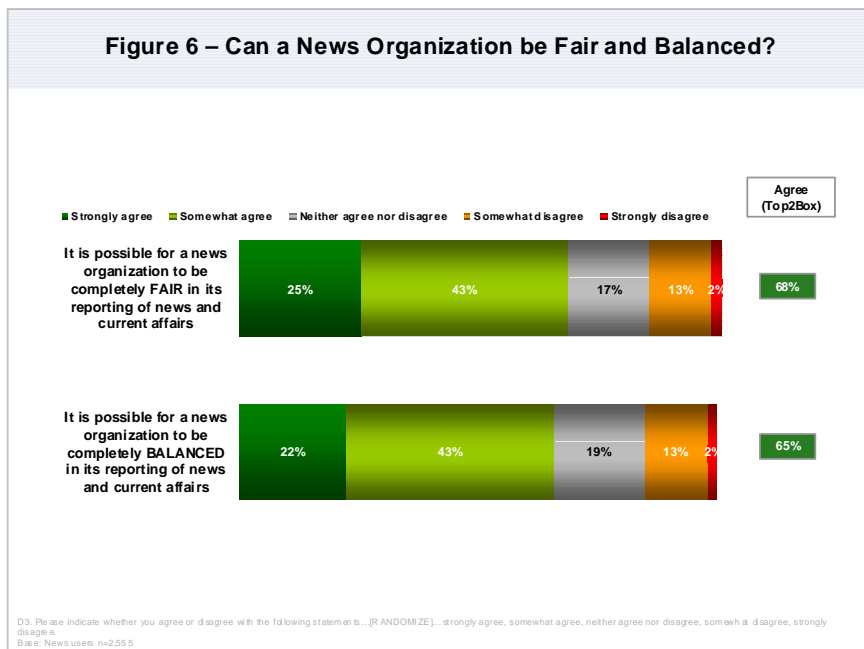
Canadian news consumers set a high bar in terms of what they perceive as contributing to integrity in the news they consume. A large majority say that news needs to be well researched, not distorted to justify or support a conclusion, avoid any corporate or personal bias, make a clear distinction between news and opinion, present different sides or perspectives on a news story, and use language and visuals with care. While a bit less important overall, Canadian news consumers also place importance on reflecting the variety of subgroups that exist in society.



However, when forced to choose the three items that they think are the most important, it is clear that the items relating to broader concepts and principles are paramount over the more specific items relating to representing various subgroups.



Within this general opinion environment, Canadian news consumers are not convinced that it is possible for a news organization to be completely fair or completely balanced in its reporting of news and current affairs. Granted, two-thirds of news consumers agree to some degree that this is possible. However, only one-quarter are convinced of this (“strongly agree”).



Select Attitudes Toward News by Demographics

Canadian news consumers share many of the same attitudes toward news regardless of demographics and region. However, there are some relative differences in opinions worth noting. For example, younger news consumers are less likely than average to believe that news organizations can be fair or balanced and that journalism is critical in society. Men, those who are a bit older and the better educated are more likely than average to believe the quality of journalism is declining.

Table 2a – Select Attitudes Toward Journalism by Demographics

| % Agree (Strongly+ Somewhat) | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|---|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|--------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni. + |
| Use different sources, form own opinion | 66% | 68% | 65% | 57% | 70% | 72% | 71% | 58% | 71% | 74% |
| Journalism critical in society | 66% | 66% | 66% | 56% | 67% | 70% | 79% | 58% | 69% | 75% |
| Quality of journalism declining | 47% | 52% | 43% | 45% | 47% | 51% | 44% | 42% | 49% | 53% |
| Like journalism with point of view | 52% | 50% | 54% | 44% | 51% | 57% | 60% | 55% | 51% | 45% |
| Journalism reflects view owners | 47% | 50% | 44% | 45% | 46% | 48% | 48% | 43% | 48% | 51% |
| Journalists fair/ethical | 52% | 50% | 54% | 42% | 54% | 54% | 66% | 52% | 52% | 52% |
| News orgs. can be fair | 68% | 68% | 67% | 59% | 68% | 74% | 74% | 67% | 68% | 68% |
| News orgs. can be balanced | 65% | 65% | 66% | 57% | 67% | 71% | 71% | 65% | 66% | 65% |

Higher than average (green) Lower than average (pink)

Table 2b -- Select Attitudes Toward Journalism by Region and Special Group

| % Agree (Strongly+ Somewhat) | All | Region | | | | | | Special Group | |
|---|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| Use different sources, form own opinion | 66% | 70% | 63% | 65% | 66% | 67% | 68% | 71% | 70% |
| Journalism critical in society | 66% | 71% | 66% | 62% | 66% | 61% | 66% | 72% | 75% |
| Quality of journalism declining | 47% | 50% | 47% | 46% | 47% | 40% | 46% | 46% | 46% |
| Like journalism with point of view | 52% | 55% | 48% | 50% | 52% | 54% | 53% | 53% | 55% |
| Journalism reflects view owners | 47% | 47% | 46% | 47% | 47% | 46% | 43% | 52% | 53% |
| Journalists fair/ethical | 52% | 51% | 52% | 47% | 52% | 50% | 59% | 49% | 55% |
| News orgs. can be fair | 68% | 67% | 68% | 70% | 68% | 67% | 68% | 64% | 68% |
| News orgs. can be balanced | 65% | 65% | 65% | 67% | 65% | 61% | 67% | 68% | 66% |

Higher than average (green) Lower than average (pink)

Similarly, Canadian news consumers identify generally the same factors that they believe are most important for journalistic integrity regardless of demographics and region. However, once again there are some relative differences in opinions worth noting. For example, younger news consumers tend to place higher than average importance on issues associated with reflecting different groups. Aboriginal Peoples news consumers place a higher than average importance on reflecting “First Nations people appropriately.”

Table 3a – Importance of Factors re Journalistic Integrity – Forced Choice Top 3 by Demographics

| | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|--|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni.+ |
| Is well researched to ensure it conforms with facts and reality and does not mislead | 65% | 61% | 69% | 56% | 68% | 70% | 73% | 63% | 66% | 69% |
| Makes a clear distinction between news and opinion | 52% | 52% | 52% | 49% | 53% | 53% | 55% | 51% | 53% | 52% |
| Is not distorted to justify or support a conclusion | 47% | 49% | 44% | 43% | 45% | 51% | 51% | 43% | 47% | 53% |
| Presents different sides or perspectives on a news story | 42% | 39% | 45% | 40% | 47% | 42% | 35% | 41% | 43% | 42% |
| Avoids any corporate or personal bias on the part of the journalist | 36% | 40% | 33% | 37% | 36% | 39% | 33% | 35% | 38% | 35% |
| Uses language and visuals with care | 11% | 11% | 11% | 13% | 9% | 11% | 13% | 14% | 10% | 9% |
| Reflects people from different regions of Canada appropriately | 10% | 11% | 9% | 9% | 12% | 9% | 9% | 12% | 9% | 7% |
| Reflects people from different regions of the world appropriately | 10% | 9% | 11% | 15% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 11% | 9% | 10% |
| Reflects an understanding of the diverse nature of our communities | 9% | 9% | 10% | 12% | 8% | 8% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 9% |
| Reflects different ethnic groups appropriately | 7% | 7% | 8% | 11% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 7% |
| Reflects genders appropriately | 5% | 6% | 5% | 9% | 5% | 2% | 4% | 7% | 5% | 4% |
| Reflects First Nations people appropriately | 4% | 5% | 4% | 7% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 3% |

Higher than average Lower than average

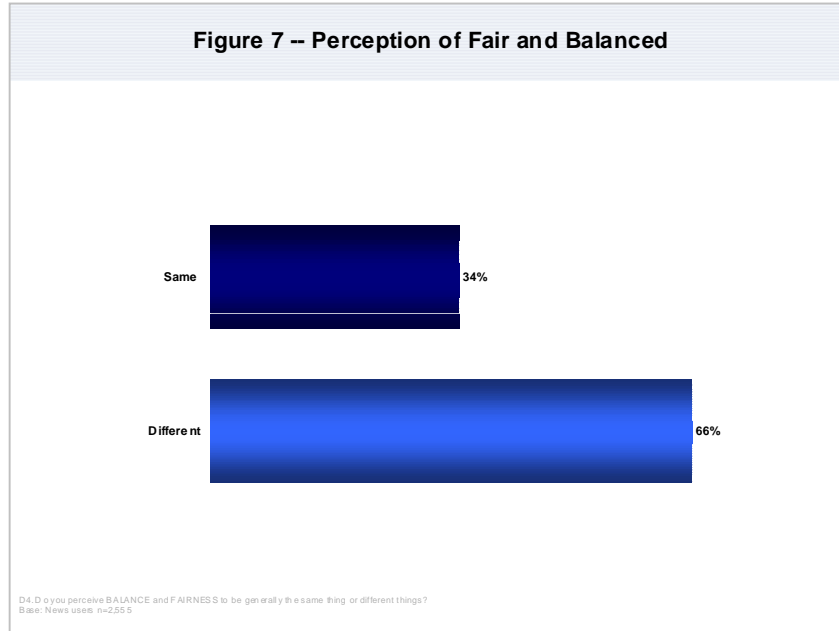
Table 3b – Importance of Factors re Journalistic Integrity – Forced Choice Top 3 by Region and Special Group

| | All | Region | | | | | | Special Group | |
|--|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| Is well researched to ensure it conforms with facts and reality and does not mislead | 65% | 66% | 67% | 65% | 65% | 58% | 66% | 61% | 63% |
| Makes a clear distinction between news and opinion | 52% | 50% | 57% | 58% | 51% | 49% | 51% | 46% | 51% |
| Is not distorted to justify or support a conclusion | 47% | 49% | 44% | 47% | 49% | 38% | 39% | 44% | 42% |
| Presents different sides or perspectives on a news story | 42% | 39% | 44% | 46% | 41% | 42% | 46% | 38% | 44% |
| Avoids any corporate or personal bias on the part of the journalist | 36% | 39% | 36% | 38% | 36% | 33% | 35% | 36% | 35% |
| Uses language and visuals with care | 11% | 8% | 10% | 7% | 13% | 20% | 11% | 11% | 11% |
| Reflects people from different regions of Canada appropriately | 10% | 11% | 10% | 7% | 9% | 10% | 14% | 8% | 8% |
| Reflects people from different regions of the world appropriately | 10% | 10% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 11% | 10% | 9% | 13% |
| Reflects an understanding of the diverse nature of our communities | 9% | 9% | 7% | 9% | 9% | 16% | 10% | 13% | 13% |
| Reflects different ethnic groups appropriately | 7% | 8% | 7% | 5% | 7% | 11% | 7% | 9% | 11% |
| Reflects genders appropriately | 5% | 5% | 4% | 6% | 5% | 9% | 8% | 5% | 5% |
| Reflects First Nations people appropriately | 4% | 7% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 20% | 4% |

Higher than average Lower than average

Defining Fairness and Balance

While people often talk about fairness and balance with respect to the media and news in the same sentence, two-thirds of Canadian news consumers say that they perceive the two concepts to be different.



Furthermore, while there are a few relative differences in opinion across types of Canadians, a solid majority in all demographic and regional groups say they perceive fairness and balance to be different.

Table 4 – Defining Fair and Balanced by Demographics, Region and Special Group

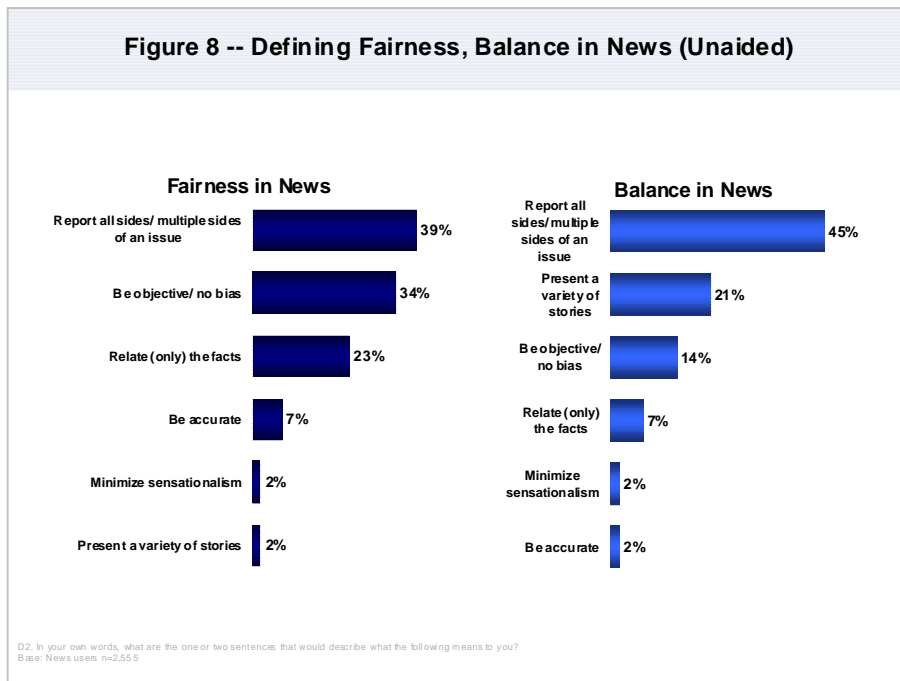
| | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni.+ |
| Fair and Balance Different | 66% | 66% | 66% | 68% | 66% | 65% | 66% | 60% | 68% | 75% |

| | All | Region | | | | | Special Group | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------------|------|------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man / Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| Fair and Balance Different | 66% | 65% | 65% | 63% | 68% | 67% | 59% | 68% | 72% |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Higher than average | Lower than average |
|---------------------|--------------------|

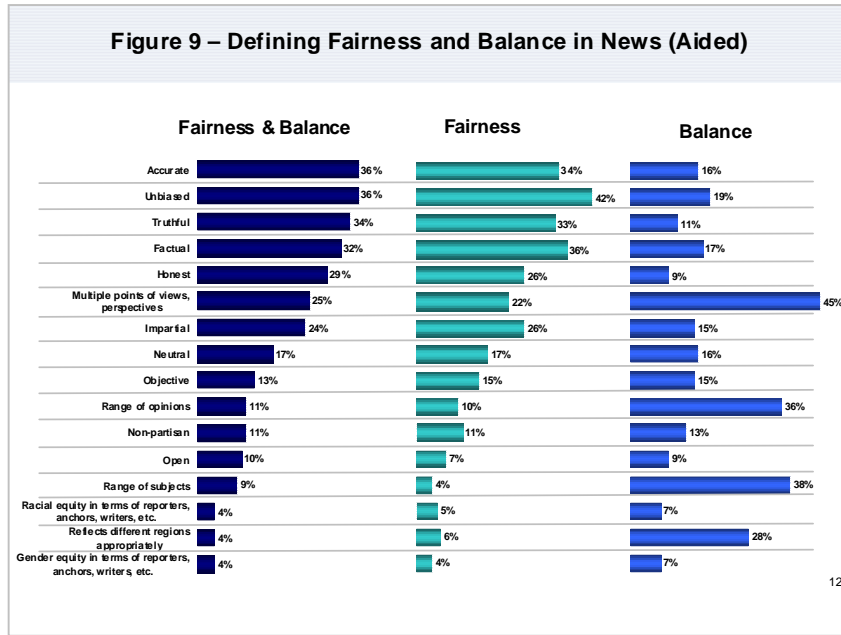
The similarities and differences in how news consumers perceive the two concepts are reflected in the results from several other drill-down questions asked in the survey.

When asked to define fairness and to define balance in their own words (unaided), Canadian news consumers perceive fairness to be reporting on/presenting all sides of a story/issue, being objective/unbiased and relating/focusing on the facts. Reporting on/presenting all sides of an issue/story is also identified as a key element defining balance, but the idea of also presenting a variety of stories enters more into the equation.

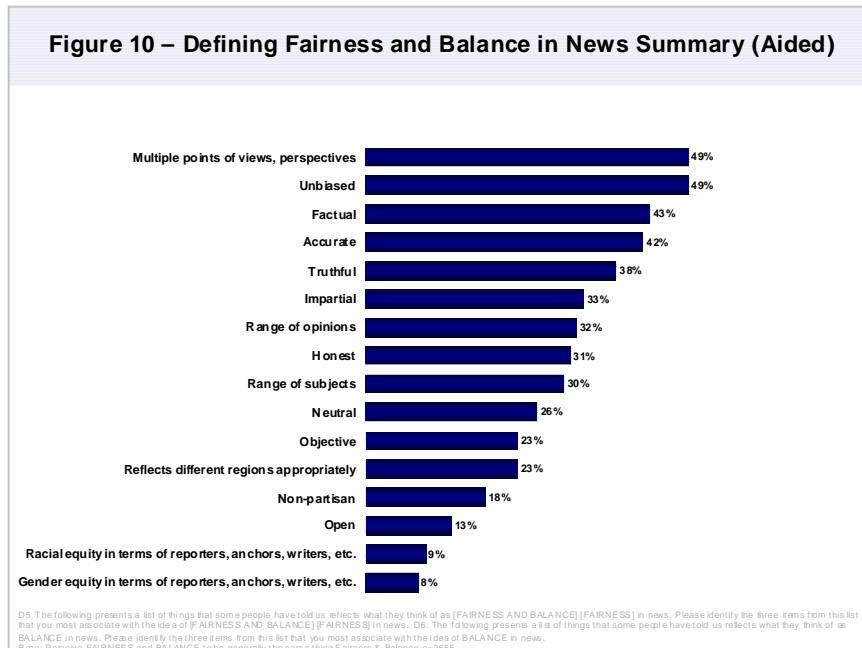


These types of nuances/differences are evident again in responses to a question that presented respondents with a series of words and asked them to rate the extent to which they associate each with fairness and balance. Those who earlier had indicated that they perceived fairness and balance to be the same were asked the question in the context of fairness and balance combined. Those who earlier had indicated they perceived fairness and balance to be different were asked the question for each term separately.

The concepts of accuracy, unbiased, truthful, factual, honesty, multiple points of view and impartiality have the highest association among those evaluating fairness and balance together, and fairness on its own. Multiple points of view, range of subjects and opinions and regional representation emerge with the highest association among those evaluating balance on its own.



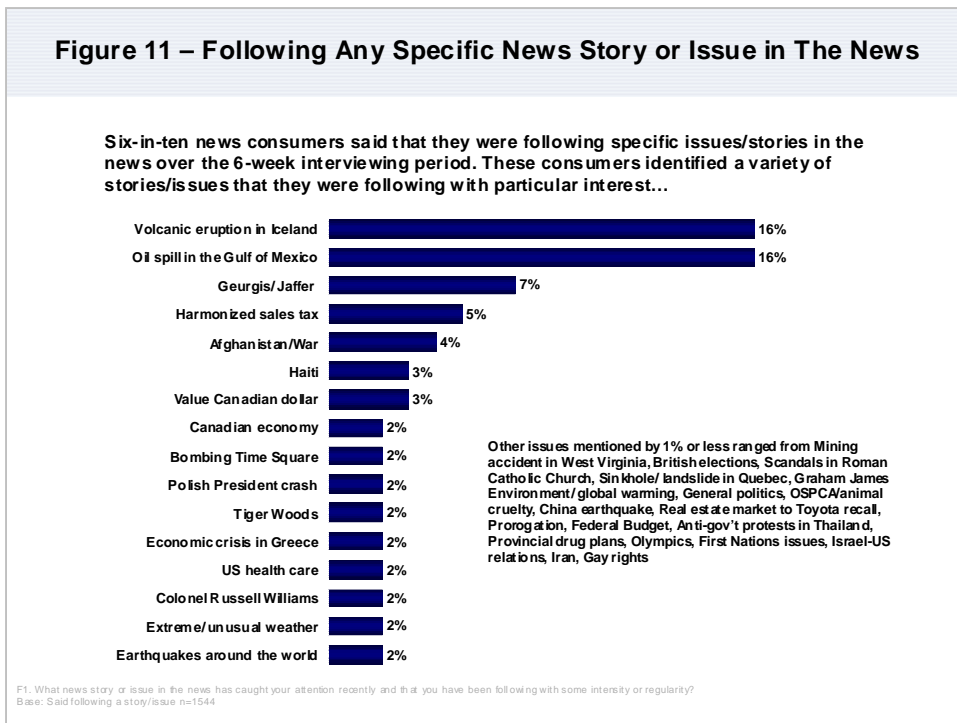
Rolling the different aided results back into an overall summary measure reveals that the four items with the highest association with fairness and balance as a whole are multiple points of view/perspectives, unbiased, factual and accurate.



Fairness and Balance on Stories of the Day

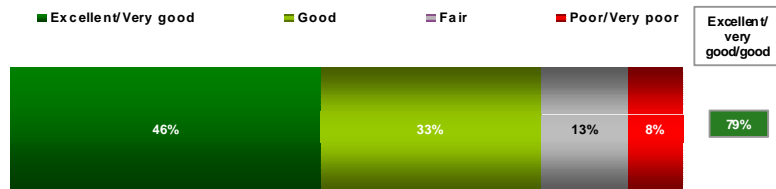
Before delving into Canadian news consumers' assessments of fairness and balance in relation to news organizations, it is important to set additional context into what they were experiencing at the time of the interviewing and how they assessed that coverage.

Six-in-ten news consumers reported that they were following a particular story or issue with special interest over the six-week interviewing period. Among these people, the Iceland volcano and the Gulf oil spill were receiving the most attention, but a variety of other issues were also on people's news radar.



For the most part, news consumers were positive in assessing how they felt news organizations were performing in providing fair and balanced coverage of the issues/stories they were following at the time.

Figure 12 – Rating the News Story or Issue Personally Following on Fair and Balanced Coverage

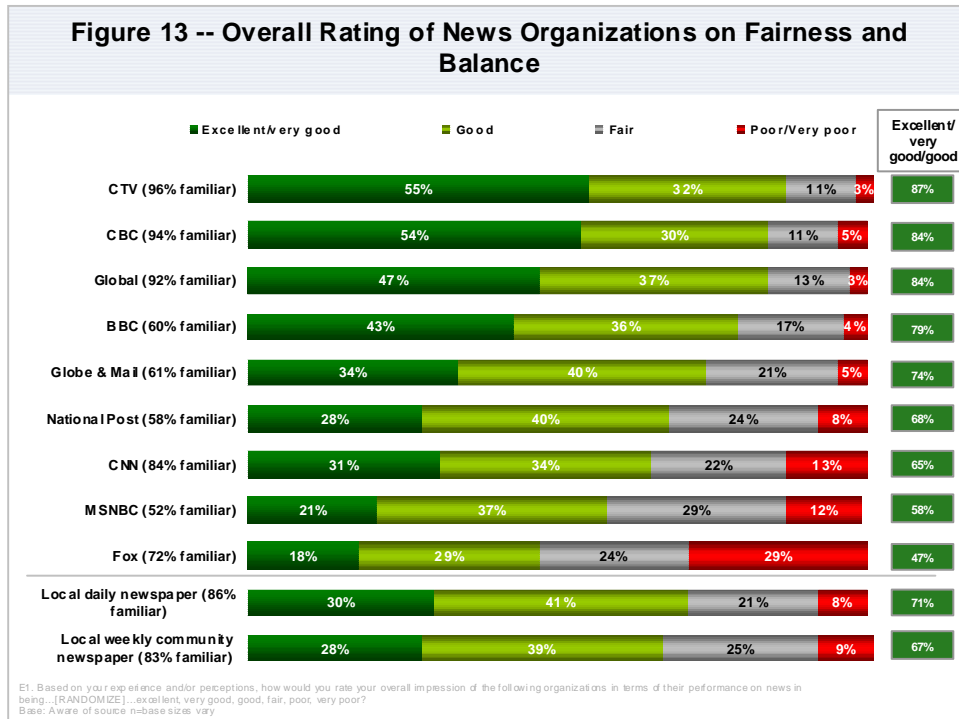


F2. How would you rate the media overall in terms of its providing fair and balanced coverage of that issue/story...excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, very poor?
Base: Mentioned news story that has caught their eye n=1,544

Perceptions of News Organizations in Being Fair and Balanced

Overall

While earlier analysis showed that many Canadian news consumers are not convinced that any news organizations can be completely fair and/or balanced, CTV, CBC and Global all receive positive performance scores (good or better) in terms of their performance in delivering against being fair and balanced in their news (those indicating that they were not familiar enough to judge a particular organization were excluded from rating that organization). The only significant difference between the three is the percentage giving decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good) where CTV and CBC lead Global. In contrast, the US-based news organizations, particularly Fox, rank at the bottom of the list.



Rating Select Organizations on Fairness and Balance Overall by Demographics

Canadians across all walks of life give generally positive ratings to the news organizations examined, specifically the Canadian-based ones, in delivering against being fair and balanced.

There are, however, some differences worth noting. For example, men, younger news consumers and the middle-better educated tend to provide somewhat lower performance ratings than do women, older and the less educated. Regionally, news consumers in Manitoba/Saskatchewan tend to give higher ratings to news organizations. Aboriginal Peoples and visible minority news consumers generally do not differ from the average in their ratings.

Table 5 – Rating Select News Organizations Overall in Being Fair and Balanced by Demographics, Region and Special Group

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|--------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni. + |
| CTV | 87% | 84% | 89% | 82% | 86% | 88% | 94% | 89% | 86% | 85% |
| CBC | 84% | 80% | 88% | 82% | 85% | 83% | 86% | 86% | 82% | 84% |
| Global | 84% | 80% | 88% | 78% | 86% | 86% | 88% | 87% | 83% | 82% |
| BBC | 79% | 76% | 82% | 73% | 80% | 81% | 87% | 77% | 79% | 83% |
| CNN | 66% | 61% | 71% | 62% | 66% | 69% | 70% | 74% | 62% | 59% |
| Fox | 47% | 42% | 51% | 44% | 49% | 49% | 45% | 61% | 41% | 32% |

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Region | | | | | Special Group | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| CTV | 87% | 83% | 85% | 89% | 88% | 87%* | 89% | 89% | 86% |
| CBC | 84% | 82% | 75% | 85% | 85% | 87%* | 90% | 88% | 87% |
| Global | 84% | 83% | 85% | 86% | 84% | 82%* | 85% | 85% | 82% |
| BBC | 79% | 77% | 78% | 76% | 79% | 80%* | 79% | 75% | 85% |
| CNN | 66% | 62% | 62% | 74% | 65% | 77%* | 70% | 67% | 66% |
| Fox | 47% | 39% | 45% | 54% | 47% | 52%* | 54% | 45% | 45% |

Higher than average

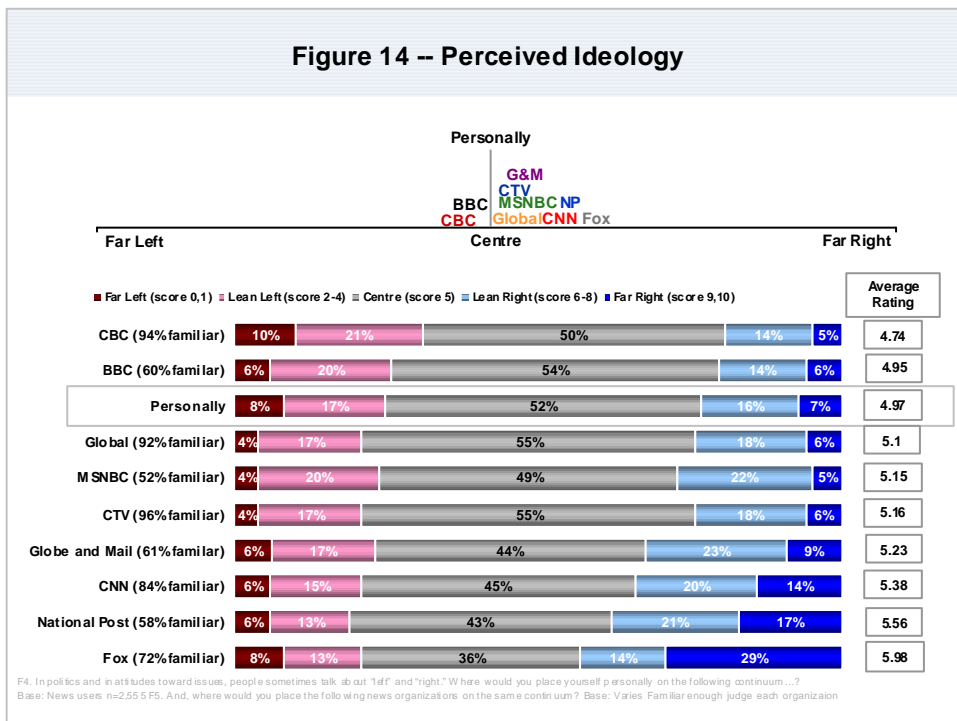
Lower than average

* Caution: Small sample/cell size; n=50-99.

Ideology

In addition to asking about overall impressions of news organizations on fairness and balance, another measure was used to probe any perceived ideological bent. To measure this, Canadian news consumers were first asked to define themselves on a left-right continuum, and then were asked to map where they thought various news organizations they are familiar with fit on the same continuum.

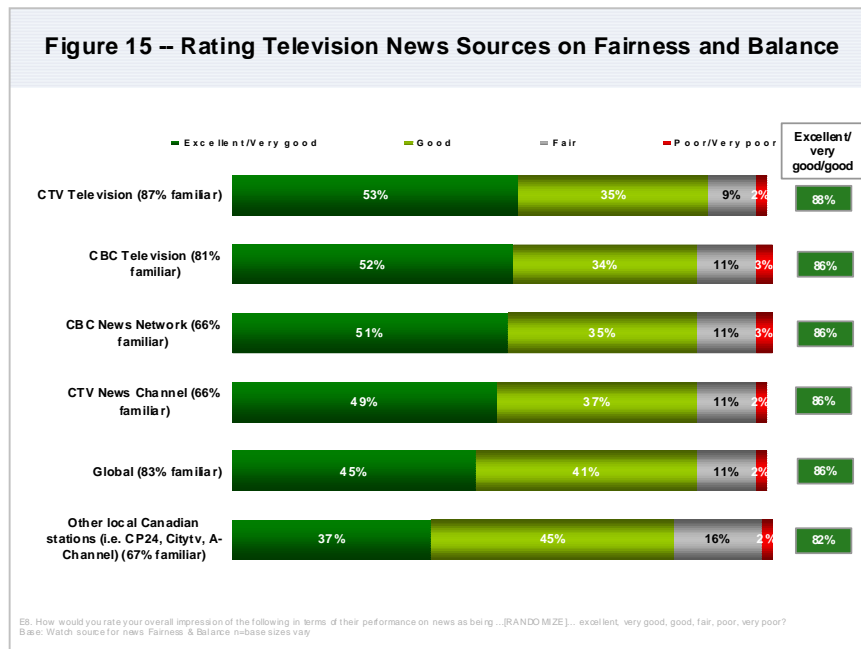
Canadian news consumers envision themselves as being essentially balanced in terms of ideology. Half rate themselves in the centre, while about one-quarter place themselves left of centre and one-quarter right of centre. In terms of news organizations, Fox and the National Post are more likely to emerge as being perceived right of centre. While not as pronounced, CBC and BBC are slightly more likely to be perceived as left of centre. Nevertheless, for all of the main Canadian news organizations (CBC, CTV, Global), the largest proportion of news consumers place each in the centre, with little significant differentiation between them.



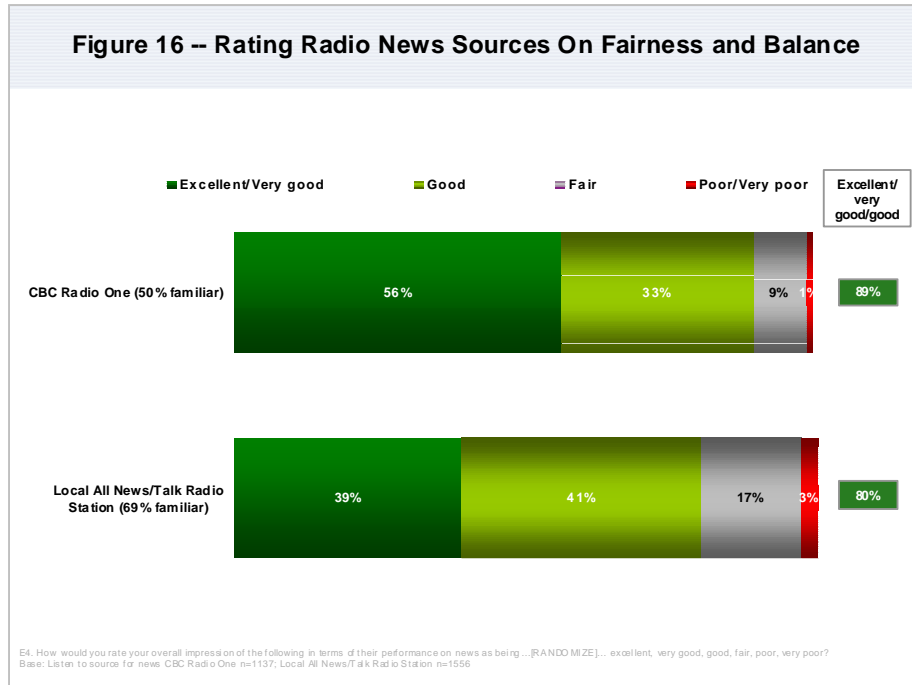
Organizations by Platform

Canadian news consumers' perceptions of fairness and balance for news organizations on the various platforms they use for news reveals very little difference in opinion. The news organizations assessed for television news, radio news, and online news all receive generally similar, positive marks in delivering against fairness and balance. Specifically:

- Television -- CTV, CBC and Global television news all receive positive performance scores (good or better) in terms of their performance in delivering against being fair and balanced in their news (among TV news consumers and those indicating that they were not familiar enough to judge a particular source were excluded from rating that organization). The only real noteworthy difference between the TV sources is the percentage giving decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good) where CTV and CBC lead the others by a small margin.

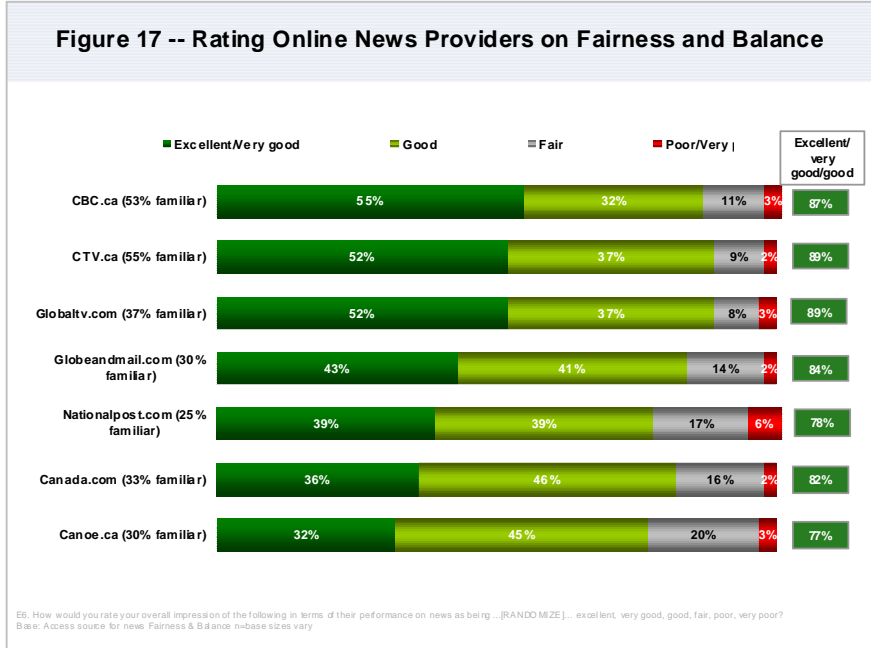


- Radio -- For radio news, CBC Radio One and Local All News/Talk both receive positive performance scores (good or better) in terms of their performance in delivering against being fair and balanced in their news (among radio news consumers and those indicating that they were not familiar enough to judge a particular source were excluded from rating that organization). However, CBC Radio One does receive higher decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good).



- Online -- For online news, there is a bit more differentiation between the sources. All receive positive performance scores (good or better) in terms of their performance in delivering against being fair and balanced in their news (among online news consumers and those indicating that they were not familiar enough to judge a particular source were excluded from rating that organization). However, CBC.ca receives somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good) than the others.

Figure 17 -- Rating Online News Providers on Fairness and Balance



Platforms by Demographics

Canadians across all walks of life give generally positive ratings to the news organizations for each platform they use in delivering against being fair and balanced.

There are, however, some differences worth noting. For example, with respect to television news, men, younger news consumers and the middle-better educated tend to provide somewhat lower performance ratings than do women, older and the less educated.

Regionally, news consumers in Manitoba/Saskatchewan tend to give higher ratings to news organizations. Aboriginal Peoples and visible minority news consumers generally do not differ from the average in their ratings.

Table 6a – Rating News Organizations on TV in Being Fair and Balanced by Demographics, Region and Special Group

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|---------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni.+ |
| CTV | 89% | 86% | 91% | 83% | 91% | 87% | 95% | 92% | 87% | 83% |
| CBC | 86% | 82% | 90% | 85% | 87% | 85% | 87% | 87% | 85% | 85% |
| CBC News Network | 86% | 83% | 89% | 83% | 88% | 87% | 86% | 87% | 85% | 87% |
| CTV News Channel | 87% | 83% | 91% | 84% | 86% | 85% | 94% | 89% | 86% | 83%* |
| Global | 86% | 83% | 89% | 83% | 87% | 85% | 91% | 89% | 85% | 82% |
| Other regional/local Canadian | 82% | 78% | 85% | 80% | 82% | 84% | 79%* | 85% | 82% | 74%* |

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Region | | | | | | Special Group | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| CTV | 89% | 83% | 91% | 92% | 90% | NA | 85%* | 84%* | 88% |
| CBC | 86% | 86% | 77% | 86% | 87% | 92%* | 87% | 87% | 89% |
| CBC News Network | 86% | 86% | 79% | 88% | 86% | 88%* | 90% | 91% | 90% |
| CTV News Channel | 87% | 78%* | 88%* | 87%* | 87% | NA | 96%* | NA | 85% |
| Global | 86% | 86% | 86% | 90%* | 85% | NA | 84%* | 78%* | 88% |
| Other regional/local Canadian | 82% | 75% | 81%* | NA | 84% | NA | N/A | 84%* | 76%* |

Higher than average

Lower than average

*Caution: Small sample/cell size; n=50-99
NA: Sample size too small to report; n=less than 50

Similarly, there are some minor differences on radio news, with Albertans tending to be a bit more critical than average and Saskatchewan/Manitoba residents less so.

Table 6b – Rating News Organizations on Radio in Being Fair and Balanced by Demographics, Region and Special Group

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni.+ |
| CBC Radio One | 89% | 85% | 91% | 85% | 90% | 88% | 90% | 89% | 87% | 90% |
| Local All News/Talk | 80% | 78% | 81% | 79% | 82% | 76% | 82% | 84% | 78% | 74% |

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Region | | | | | | Special Group | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| CBC Radio One | 89% | 85% | 76% | 93% | 90% | NA | 89% | 93% | 88% |
| Local All News/Talk | 80% | 73% | 76% | 87% | 81% | 83%* | 80% | 78% | 81% |

Higher than average

Lower than average

*Caution: Small sample/cell size; n=50-99
NA: Sample size too small to report; n=less than 50

With respect to online, ratings are fairly consistent across the various subgroups, with only minor variations on some online organizations used.

Table 6c – Rating News Organizations Online in Being Fair and Balanced by Demographics, Region and Special Group

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Gender | | Age | | | | Education | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| | | Men | Women | 18-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | High school < | Post Sec. | Uni. + |
| CTV.ca | 89% | 84% | 93% | 86% | 93% | 86% | 91%* | 92% | 88% | 87%* |
| Globaltv.com | 89% | 84% | 92% | 87% | 90%* | 84%* | 94%* | 94% | 87% | NA |
| CBC.ca | 86% | 82% | 90% | 86% | 87% | 82% | 90% | 88% | 85% | 87% |
| Globeandmail.com | 84% | 83% | 85%* | 78%* | 86%* | 86%* | NA | NA | 86% | NA |
| Canada.com | 82% | 77% | 86% | 78%* | 86%* | 82%* | NA | 86%* | 81% | NA |
| Nationalpost.com | 77% | 73%* | 82%* | 82% | NA | NA | NA | NA | 77%* | NA |
| Cance.ca | 77% | 76% | 79% | 69%* | 79%* | 83%* | NA | 81%* | 78% | NA |

| % rate excellent, very good, good | All | Region | | | | | Special Group | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|------------|------|------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| | | BC | Alta. | Man./Sask. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. | Abor. Peoples | Visible Minority |
| CTV.ca | 89% | 83%* | 84%* | 90%* | 91% | NA | 93%* | NA | 90% |
| Globaltv.com | 89% | 94%* | 86%* | NA | 89% | NA | NA | NA | 87%* |
| CBC.ca | 86% | 86% | 77% | 86% | 87% | NA | 87% | 88% | 88% |
| Globeandmail.com | 84% | NA | NA | NA | 86% | NA | NA | NA | 83%* |
| Canada.com | 82% | 79%* | NA | NA | 79% | NA | NA | NA | 79%* |
| Nationalpost.com | 77% | NA | NA | NA | 81%* | NA | NA | NA | 79%* |
| Cance.ca | 77% | NA | NA | NA | 82% | NA | NA | NA | 63%* |

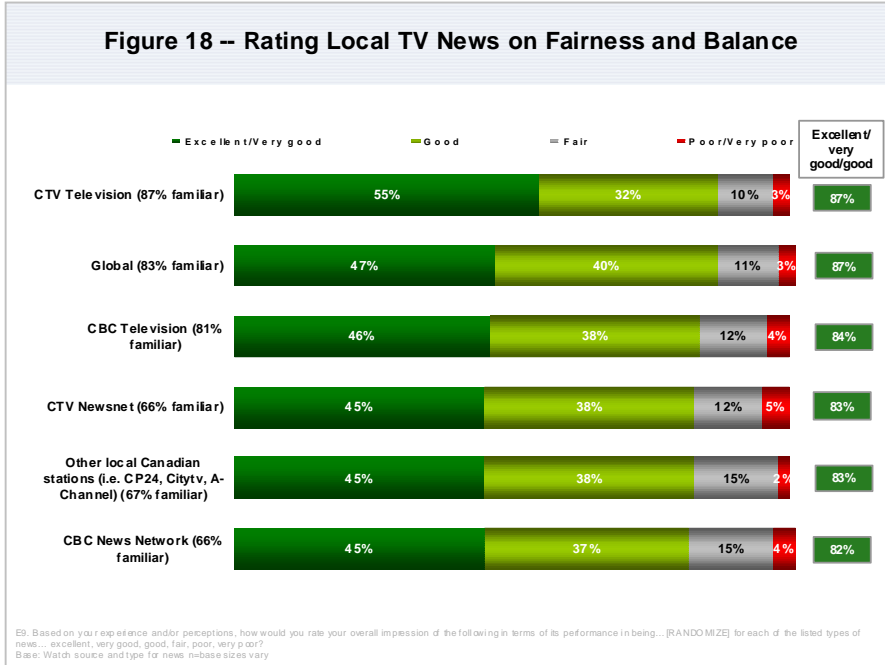
Higher than average
Lower than average
 * Caution: Small sample/cell size; n=50-99
 NA: Sample size too small to report; n=less than 50

Organizations by Type of News by Platform

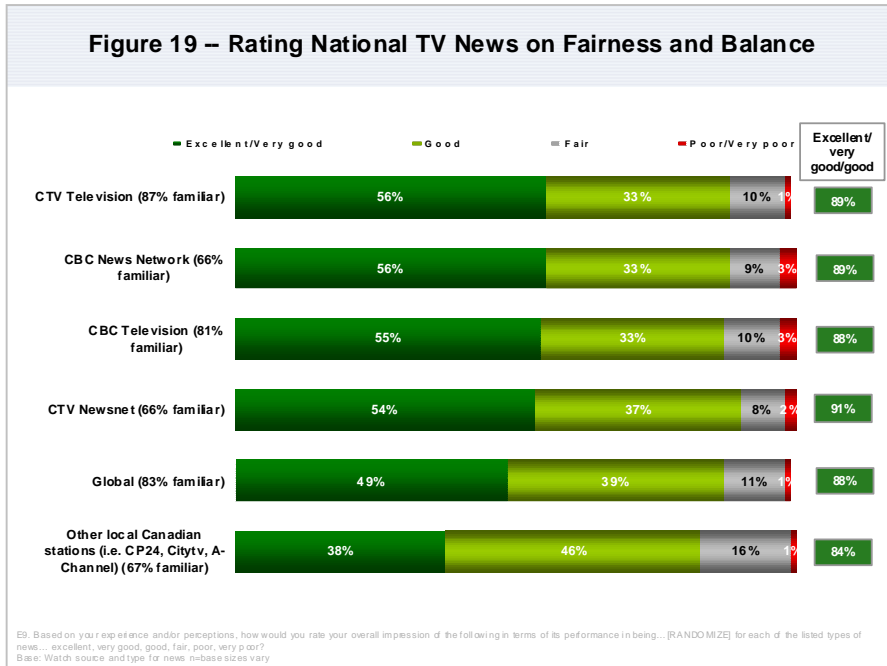
Canadian news consumers' perceptions of fairness and balance for news organizations on the various platforms they use for different types of news also show very little difference in opinion. The news organizations assessed for local, national, international and business news on each platform all receive generally similar, positive marks in delivering against fairness and balance.

On TV

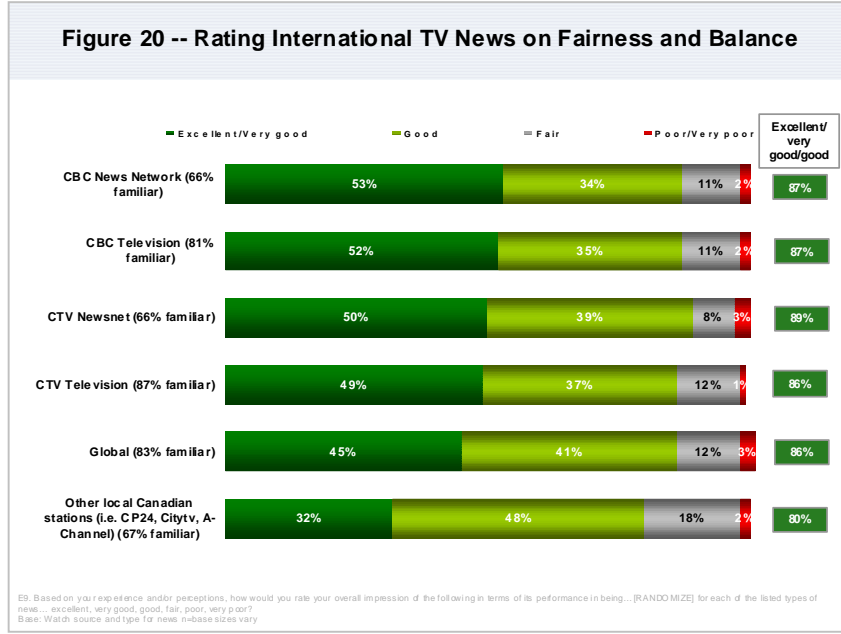
- For local news, over eight-in-ten people consuming local news on each TV source give that source a good or better rating in delivering against fairness and balance. CTV receives somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good) than the others.



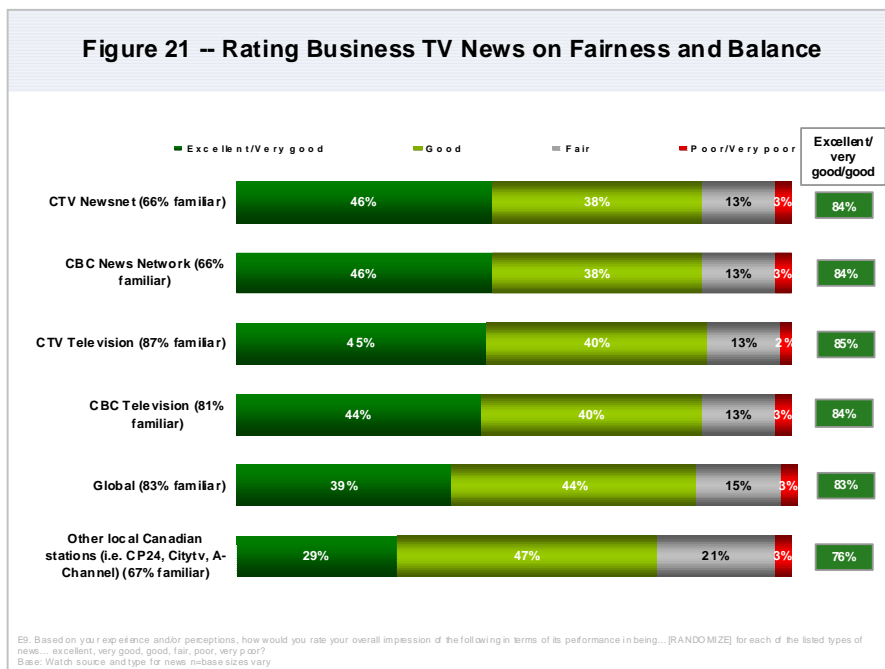
- Similarly for national news, well over eight-in-ten people consuming national news on each TV source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. CBC's and CTV's services receive somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).



- For international news, again eight-in-ten or more people consuming international news on each TV source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. CBC's services receive marginally higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).

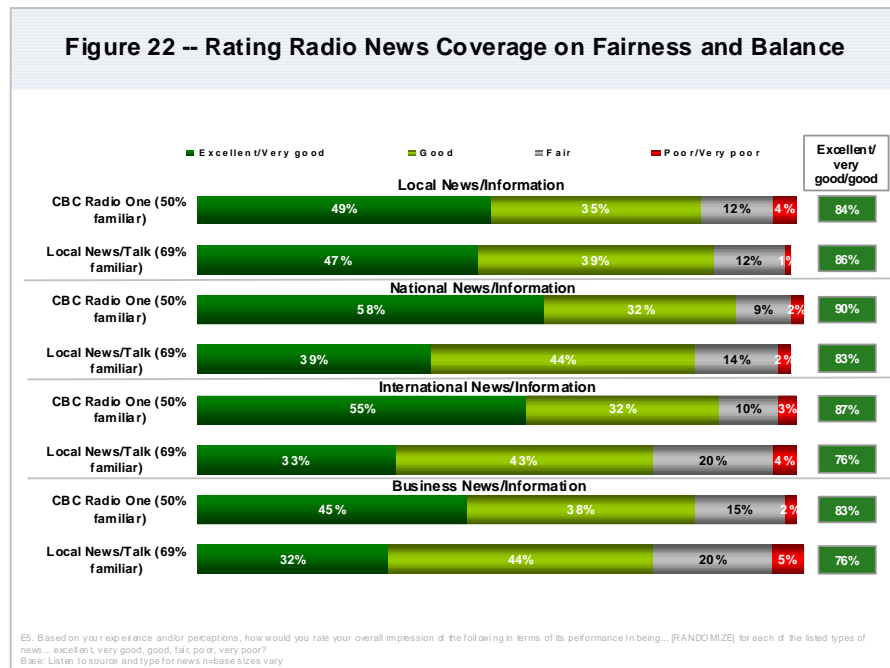


- Finally, for business news, most people consuming business news on each TV source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. CBC's and CTV's services receive somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).



On Radio

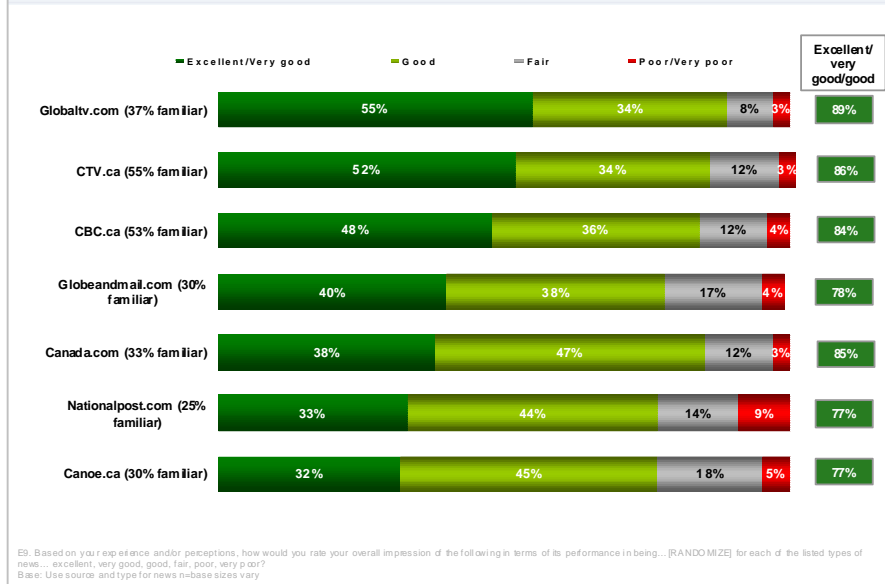
- In the case of those consuming local news on radio, CBC Radio One and Local News/Talk sources are almost identical in the overall level and intensity (excellent/very good) of positive scores each receives delivering against fairness and balance. For all of the remaining types of news, both sources receive overall positive ratings on fairness and balance, but CBC Radio One does score higher, driven by higher decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good).



Online

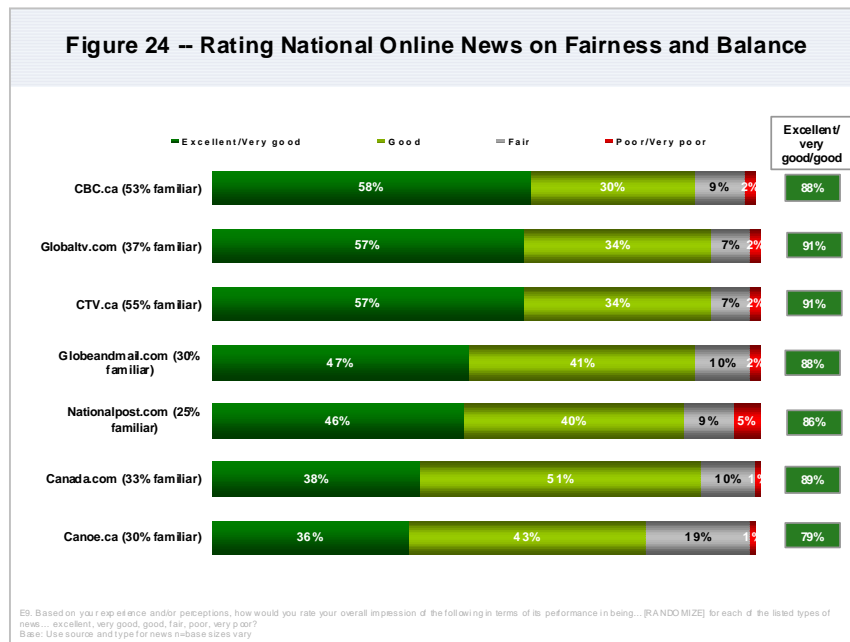
- For local news, over three-quarters of people consuming local news on each online source give that source a good or better rating in delivering against fairness and balance. Globaltv.com and CTV.ca receive somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings (excellent/very good).

Figure 23 -- Rating Local Online News on Fairness and Balance

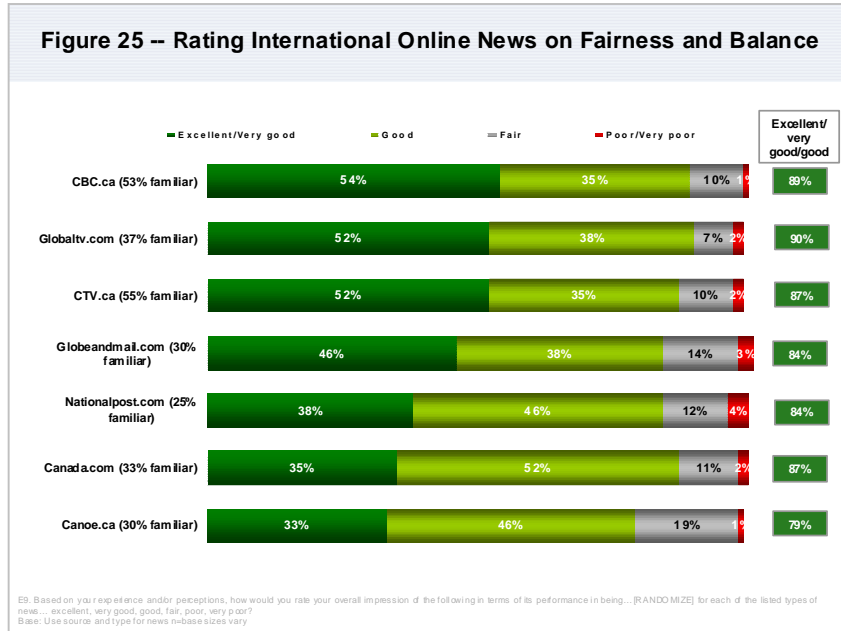


- For national news, well over eight-in-ten people consuming national news on each online source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. CBC's and CTV's services receive somewhat higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).

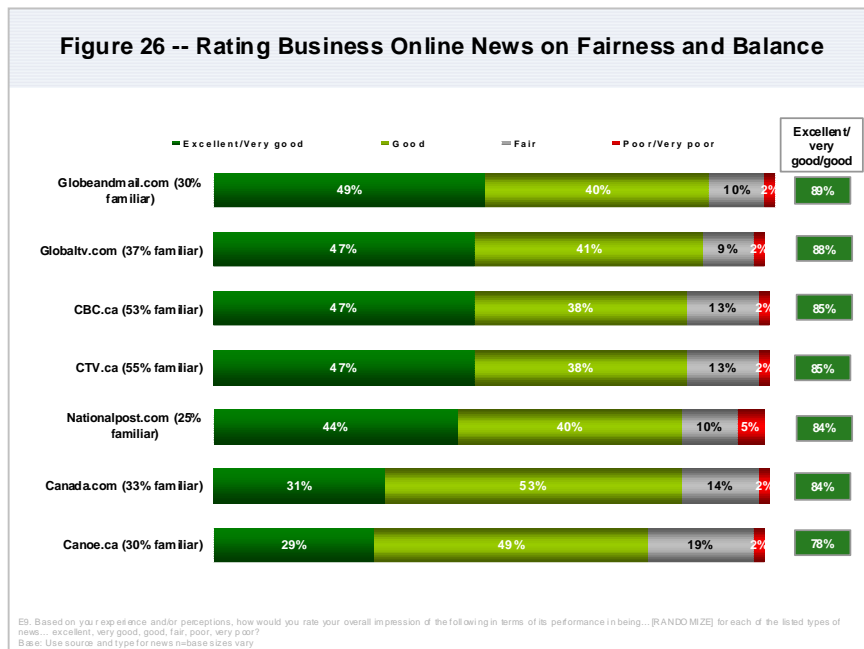
Figure 24 -- Rating National Online News on Fairness and Balance



- For international news, eight-in-ten or more people consuming international news on each online source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. CBC.ca receives marginally higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).



- Finally, for business news, most people consuming business news on each online source give that source positive ratings in delivering against fairness and balance. Globeandmail.com receives marginally higher decidedly positive ratings on this (excellent/very good).



Conclusions and Commentary

The results of this research provide a variety of insights into answering the two main objectives that were originally set out to guide the exercise, namely:

- What Canadian news consumers mean by “fair” and “balanced” news coverage, and
- The degree to which Canadian news consumers feel these principles are being delivered through CBC English News service delivery platforms (TV, Radio and web) and properties (CBC News main network, CBC News Network, CBC Radio One and CBC.ca), as well as through the competition (CTV News, CTV News Channel, Global News), and across content-types (local, national, international and business news).

So what are some of the key findings from the research, ones that can provide a foundation for any further discussion or debate on issues surrounding fairness and balance in news?:

- Canadian news consumers are regularly accessing different platforms and news organizations for their news. Within this context, there has been ample consumer research conducted over the past several years in Canada, the US and abroad to conclude that media credibility generally, and issues associated with fairness and balance specifically, have been identified as areas of increasing challenge for news organizations (e.g., studies conducted by the Canadian Media Research Consortium, CBC’s own research).
- Canadian news consumers are not convinced that news organizations can be completely fair and balanced. While two-thirds of news consumers do agree that they can, only about one-quarter is convinced of this (“strongly agree”).
- Fairness and balance in news are not the same thing to many Canadians. Two-thirds of Canadian news consumers say that they perceive the two to be different:

- The concepts of accuracy, unbiased, truthful, factual, honesty, multiple points of view and impartiality have the highest association (aided) with the concept of fairness.
 - While multiple points of view, range of subjects and opinions and regional representation emerge with the highest association with the concept of balance.
 - The differences make intuitive sense and in the minds of news consumers relate back to the basic equation that balance equals what a news organization covers and fairness equals how it covers it.
- .
- There is little differentiation across the main Canadian news organizations in terms of their performance delivering against fairness and balance overall, and by platform and by types of news specifically.
 - Furthermore, news consumers give consistently positive ratings to the news organizations they use, platforms they access and types of news they consume in terms of performance delivering against fairness and balance. While there are some relative differences in ratings, positive scores (good/very good/excellent) tend to come in around the 75%-80% level or higher in the contexts examined.
 - Throughout the survey results, the awareness, attitudes and opinions of Canadian news consumers on fairness and balance are not differentiated in any absolute sense based on demographic characteristics, region or even among the special subgroups of visible minority and Aboriginal Peoples news consumers:

- Granted there are relative differences in opinions on some of the measures. For example, younger news consumers tend to be more cynical than average about news media overall (e.g., less likely to believe media can be fair or balanced, less likely to believe that journalism is critical in society). Aboriginal Peoples respondents rate “reflecting First Nations people appropriately” higher than average in terms of the factors they perceive as contributing to journalistic integrity.
- Nevertheless, for the most part news consumers from all walks of life and segments of society tend to share generally common perceptions and assessments of issues related to fairness and balance in the news they consume. In other words, they are more common based on the fact that they are news consumers than different based on their socio-demographic, ethno-cultural or regional characteristics.
- A key consideration in assessing any implications from the data is recognizing the historically consistent tendency of Canadians to often report somewhat more cynical opinions on certain things at one level, but also report generally positive personal experiences on those same things at another. In healthcare, for example, Canadians have consistently reported many concerns about the quality of the healthcare system, but then report generally positive personal experiences when they have used the healthcare system.
- This tendency may also be at work in Canadian news consumers’ assessments of fairness and balance in the news. A significant majority of news consumers rate their experiences on fairness and balance in the news they consume in a generally positive light, even though some of their general attitudes toward fairness and balance in the media might suggest otherwise.