

Media habits

In an increasingly atomised media landscape, understanding the volume and source of each segments' news consumption helps to explain their worldview and approach to specific policy questions. Two in three Britons follow the news, though just one in five say they follow it very closely. The segments most plugged into current affairs are the Progressive Activists, Established Liberals and Traditional Conservatives.

For one segment, the Progressive Activists, politics is not just an interest but part of their identity. They are the only segment who enjoy talking about politics with their friends, with ideological alignment often a criteria for inclusion in their social circle. While some in the Incrementalist Left follow current affairs, many prefer to leave it to people who know more about it, feeling that politics is often too complicated to understand what's going on. Others find it too depressing.

I guess I was brought up with the news being on every night the news would be on. So that's just kind of what I've been used to...I think it's important personally to keep up to date with what's going on.

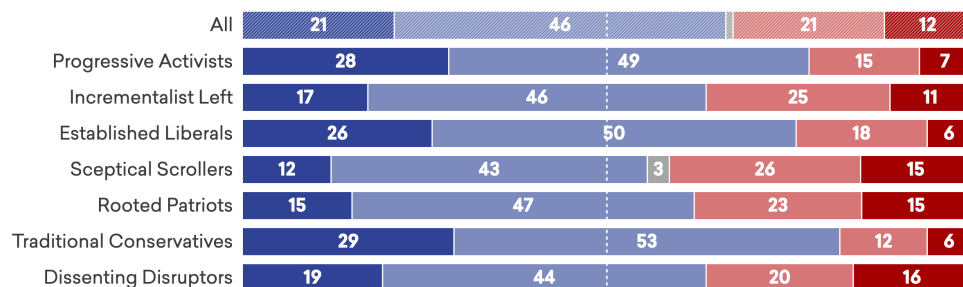
Hannah, Progressive Activist, East Dulwich

Among the third of the public who do not follow the news, two segments are overrepresented - Sceptical Scrollers and Rooted Patriots. Sceptical Scrollers see politics as someone else's problem and do not feel they have time to keep up with it. Rooted Patriots on the other hand do not see the point of paying attention to politics because politicians do not care about them and often are not up to the job anyway.

Figure 107 | News attention by segment

How much or how little would you say you follow the news?

- Very closely
- Somewhat closely
- Don't know
- Not very closely
- Not closely at all



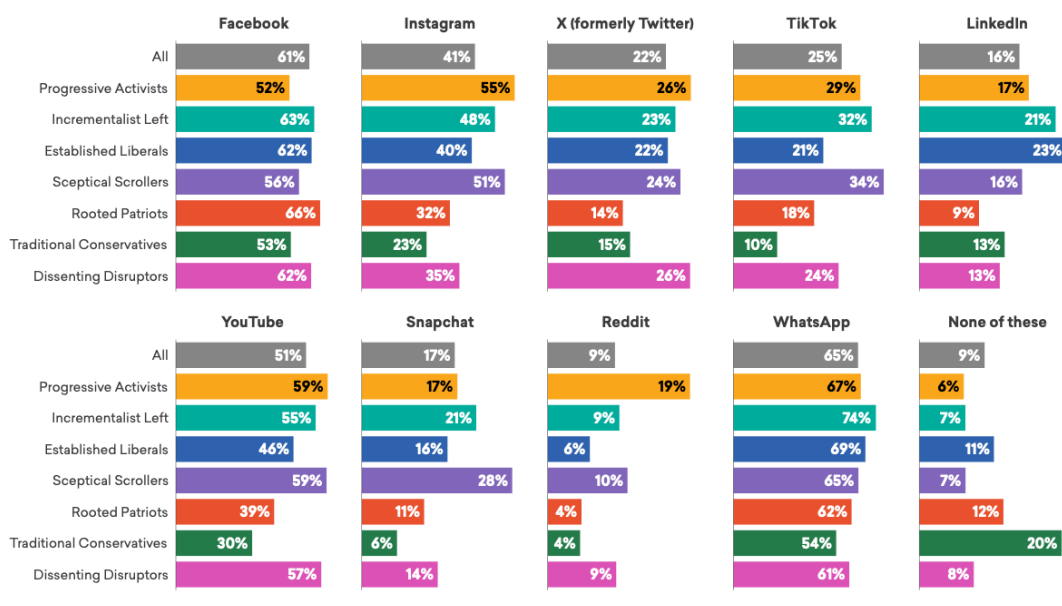
The media landscape

The form of media Britons consume tends to vary by age. Television remains the dominant medium, with eight in ten (80 per cent) of every segment watching TV most days. Traditional Conservatives and Rooted Patriots (the oldest segments) are most likely to sit down in front of the television, while Progressive Activists are the least likely.

Social media use is also high across all but the oldest segments, with four in five of Progressive Activists, the Incrementalist Left and Sceptical Scrollers using social media most days - particularly Instagram and TikTok. Sceptical Scrollers are the most likely to post on Snapchat, while the Incrementalist Left enjoy Pinterest. The Progressive Activists, along with the Dissenting Disruptors, are more often found on X (Twitter).

Figure 108 | Social media use by segment

Which of the following social media platforms, if any, do you use most days?



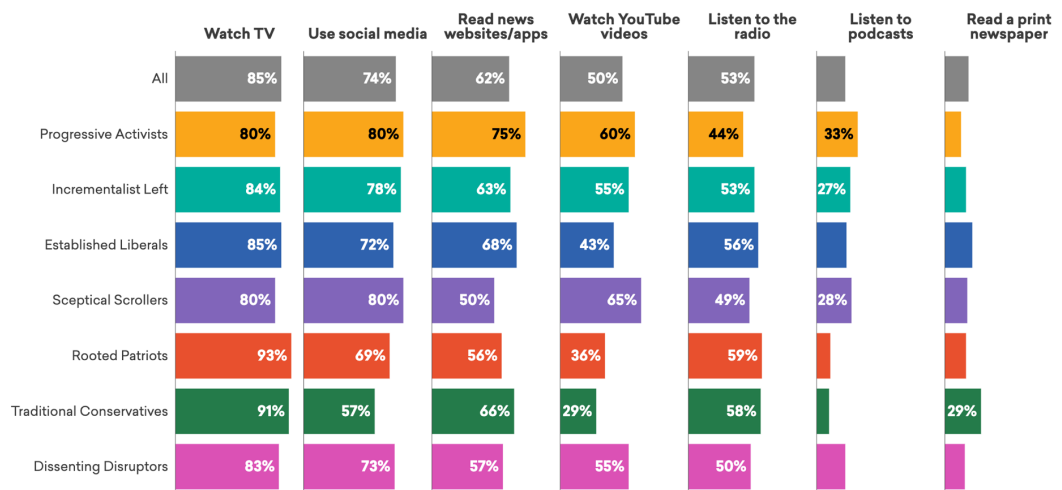
More in Common • April 2025

Podcast listeners tend to fall into the Incrementalist Left or Progressive Activist segments. These segments also watch YouTube videos, along with the Sceptical Scrollers and Dissenting Disruptors. Sceptical Scrollers are the most likely to play video games.

Traditional Conservatives have more conventional media habits. Most listen to the radio most days, as do many Rooted Patriots. Many Traditional Conservatives also read a print newspaper, along with Established Liberals, though most of the latter get their news from media websites or apps.

Figure 109 | Forms of media engagement by segment

Which of the following, if any, do you do most days?



More in Common • April 2025

Media outlets

When they tune into the news on their platform of choice, the segments hear very different voices. Progressive Activists are three times as likely as the general public to get their news from the Guardian and also follow the BBC, Channel 4 or the Independent. The Incrementalist Left are most likely to watch the BBC for news, though some also watch Sky and read the Guardian. The BBC is also most popular with Established Liberals, when they are not reading broadsheets like the Times or Financial Times. Rooted Patriots on the other hand favour ITV, or local news outlets, which are also popular with Traditional Conservatives. Traditional Conservatives get their national news from the Daily Mail or GB News, much like the Dissenting Disruptors. While Sceptical Scrollers tend not to engage with traditional news outlets, they sometimes pick up freesheets like the Metro.

The segment breakdown of the viewerships of the main news broadcasters is as follows:

BBC News' viewership broadly reflects the segment breakdown of the country at large. However Dissenting Disruptors are under-represented in their viewership as are Sceptical Scrollers, with the Incrementalist Left being over-represented.

GB News have a significant over-representation of Dissenting Disruptors watching their news. Half of GB News viewers are Dissenting Disruptors.

Channel 4 News has a significant over-representation of Progressive Activists tuning in and significantly fewer Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives.

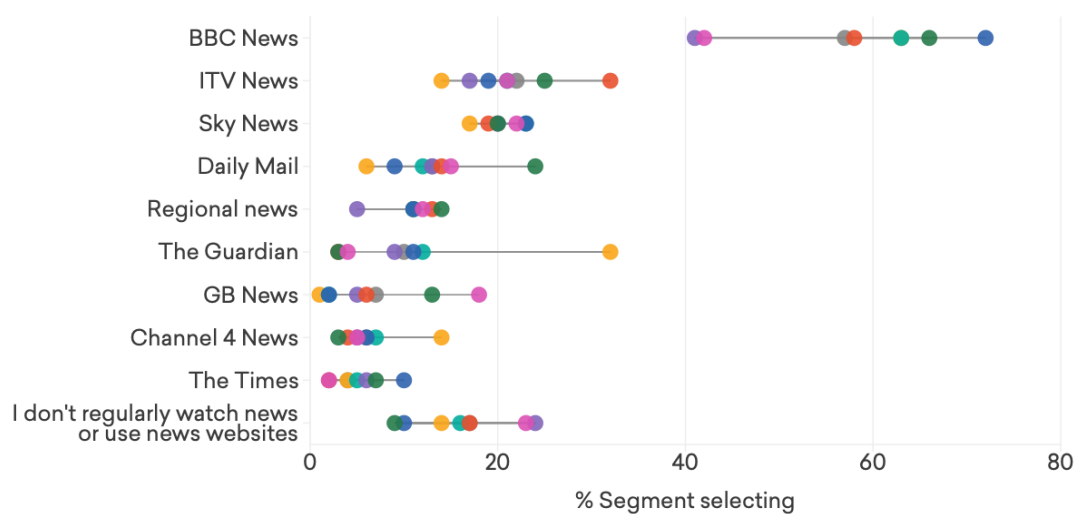
ITV News is most watched by Rooted Patriots, and Traditional Conservatives. Progressive Activists and Sceptical Scrollers are underrepresented in the ITV viewership.

Sky News is most watched by the Incrementalist Left and Established Liberals, while Progressive Activists are least likely to tune into Sky.

Figure 110 | News audiences by segment

Which news channels or websites do you use most frequently?

● All ● Progressive Activists ● Incrementalist Left ● Established Liberals ● Sceptical Scrollers
● Rooted Patriots ● Traditional Conservatives ● Dissenting Disruptors



More in Common • April 2025

Trust in mainstream versus independent media

Variations in outlet consumption can, in part, be explained by the extent to which the segments trust traditional media outlets. While the Incrementalist Left and Established Liberals have high trust in news channels which are seen to promote impartiality such as the BBC and Sky, fewer than half of Rooted Patriots and Dissenting Disruptors trust these institutions. This is driven by a sense that these outlets are not impartial but instead have an establishment bias.

This distrust extends to all mainstream media, not just those whose perceived ideological lean they disapprove of - with a majority within five of the seven segments believing you cannot usually trust what you see or hear in the news. Dissenting Disruptors are the only segment more likely to trust news about an international conflict from an independent observer on social media more than the output of a large media organisation.

I think it's good, you need to read a few different kinds of publications to get a view because you've got some newspapers that are biased to Labour and some that are

biased to Conservative. I saw the BBC is meant to be impartial, but you can get some stuff going around on there. So I think you just need to read around more articles, different channels, certainly different programmes on the telly to get a more balanced view.

Simon, Sceptical Scroller, Manchester

I definitely agree with the BBC covering stuff up because that's now been proven. The government - they probably are lying to us. What they're lying to us about though we don't know until the truth comes out.

Jane, Dissenting Disruptor, Wolverhampton

Segment profiles – media consumption

Progressive Activists - Follow the news closely out of interest and duty through traditional, new and social media. They actively seek out news from sources including the Guardian, BBC and podcasts such as The News Agents or The Rest is Politics.

Incrementalist Left - Keep up with news through mainstream sources but switch off when it gets depressing. They place high trust in established outlets such as the BBC and Sky News.

Established Liberals - Closely follow current affairs through mainstream sources, especially the BBC and broadsheets such as the Times and Telegraph.

Sceptical Scrollers - Largely disengaged from news, preferring entertainment content and viewing most media outlets as having manipulative agendas, but some following of YouTube personalities and TikTok/Instagram influencers.

Rooted Patriots - Do not follow news closely and generally distrust mainstream media, preferring local outlets when they do engage. This segment has low trust in traditional media institutions, feeling that you generally cannot trust what you see or hear in the news.

Dissenting Disruptors - Distrustful of the media, they prefer independent sources on social media and new outlets such as GB News.

Traditional Conservatives - Follow news closely through traditional channels such as print newspapers and radio, preferring right-leaning channels.