Milestone 1 Report: Audience Engagement

May 29, 2022

Prepared by:

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Executive Summary

The Really Connecting with Rural Audiences project, known publicly as the Media Evolution: Striving to Serve project (Media Evolution), engaged with the local audience about their level of trust with media, reasons for the distrust and suggested actions to rebuild trust

Nearly 650 residents participated in the engagement regarding rebuilding trust with media from a local perspective through a variety of formats (surveys, polls, interviews and focus groups) between February and April 2022. As well, the consultants researched societal trust in the larger society. The combined results clearly identify that degradation of trust is not just a local issue but a global one.

Only slightly more than half of the population, locally and nationally, has trust in government, business, non-government organizations, and media. Spheres of trust are increasingly becoming local which indicated that this is the logical place to establish a solid foundation for credibility, transparency, and fair reporting. The challenge of rebuilding trust could be seen as overwhelming; however, respondents shared suggestions that would start to move the needle on increasing trust with local media.

Five themes and recommended actions were identified for local media to rebuild trust.

Advocate: Media is a supportive partner with local news stakeholders – establishing a relationship built on mutual trust and respect is vital to creating credibility with the local audience.

Educate: Media works with stakeholders to develop content so it can be presented the way the local audiences can best receive it. Internal capacity development and standards are developed and communicated with the audience.

Resonate: Knowing and understanding the local audience is key to becoming a curator of local news. Thoughtfully and strategically connected stories that have community value, will resonate with, and that will have a meaningful impact on the audience.

Navigate: Engaging in social media channels allows for real time dialogue about issues that matter to the audience. Leveraging the power of social media means more than just maximizing views, but remaining wary of distortion, lack of context, and misleading editing.

Illuminate: Committing to providing real and substantive information that benefits the local audience creates an environment that is home to a durable, reliable, and vibrant media ecosystem. The media represents critical institutions for our social and strong partnerships with stakeholders to provide quality content that is transparent and ethical in its delivery is vital to ensuring these sources remain available to residents.

Background and Methodology

The Really Connecting with Rural Audiences project, known publicly as the Media Evolution: Striving to Serve project (Media Evolution), engaged with the local audience about their level of trust with media, reasons for the distrust and suggested actions to rebuild trust.

Every citizen should have access to news and stories that impact their lives and have the confidence to have trust in the organizations providing the information to be factual and unbiased.

Energeticcity.ca hired Moorsaic Strategic Services Inc. to conduct audience engagement for this project. The project was funded through a GNI Innovation Challenge grant. It was surmised before the consultation began that rural and remote audiences are often left under-served due to the cost and effort of connecting with smaller audiences.

In Phase One of the Media Evolution project, we set out to understand:

- How does media connect with the local audience in the way they want to be communicated with, with the news they need and want?
- How does local media overcome the biases against large media outlets in their small markets and build back trust with their audience?
- How does media create meaningful engagement when and where the audience wants to participate?

This has been an interesting time to be asking the questions about this subject. In rural and remote environments, the availability of local news is limited and access for both the producer and consumer of news is complicated by the vast geographic area covered, limited connectivity, and a distrust of media to deliver unbiased news.

Phase One: Initial Stakeholder Engagement (February to May)

Using surveying, focus groups and other data-driven methods the Media Evolution project facilitators have established a baseline understanding of the community's informational needs and expectations - from accountability journalism to "news-you-can-use."

The engagement included an assessment of the perception of the news offering from within the region's communities.

This engagement focused on the following three challenges:

- The challenges to building trust with the rural audience
- The news needs of the rural audience
- The delivery preferences of the rural audience

Engaging directly with rural residents through surveys and focus groups to gain insight into news needs, delivery preferences, and ultimately, what the obstacles are in creating trust in the local media as a news source.

News sources were asked how to rebuild the relationship with media, and how to media can serve as a partner to connect with the rural audiences.   Engagement was done with local government, local industry, and first responders on overcoming the current challenges with working together.

What's Next?

Phase Two: Recommendation Implementation (May to October)
Once the recommendations are made, the project will go on to Phase Two.

Implement Solutions Based on Engagement Feedback

The Media Evolution project recommendations from Phase One will begin in Phase Two. The anticipated product/messaging enhancements will be influence by

- A better understanding of the value of media services to the rural audience.
- A better understanding of delivery channels that are relevant and effective in rural areas. How the rural audience wants media stories to reflect the core values will determine how the information is delivered.
- Confirmation of baseline audience research by going back out to the communities to see "if we got it right".
- Developing combined core value, story and research into messaging that will resonate with the audience.
- Positioning service marketing using project findings to increase efficacy. For example, findings will help to determine the service's positioning and messaging, launching, and relationships to salespeople and customers.

Phase Three - Stakeholder Engagement Follow Up (October – November)
Using surveying, focus groups and other data-driven methods, the Media Evolution project facilitators will go back to the community to confirm whether the product and messaging changes that have been made have shifted their information needs, expectations, and perceptions – from accountability of journalists and reporters to "news-you-can-use".

Phase Four: Project Reporting (December)
The Media Evolution project will disclose, in the delivery of a final report, what has been learned and evaluate how it might impact the approach going forward.

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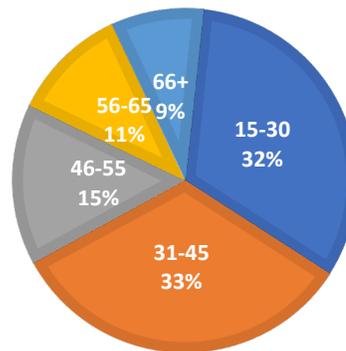
Engagement Findings

Survey Results

In general, the responses were thoughtful, reflecting the desire for the local audience to support local media and build reciprocal, trusting relationships.

416 respondents from across the Peace Region completed the survey, open from March 31 to April 30. The average time to complete the survey was 17 minutes and included 41 questions inquiring about trust, credibility, objectivity, improvement suggestions and technology. The age profile of the respondents mirrored the demographic profile of the Peace region, however, female respondents accounted for 65% of the survey responses.

RESPONDENTS: AGE BREAKDOWN

- 66+ 9%
- 15-30 16%
- 56-65 15%
- 46-55 23%
- 31-45 37%
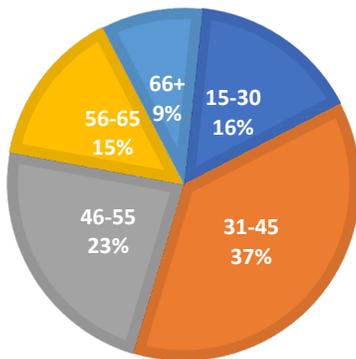
FORT ST JOHN: AGE BREAKDOWN

- 66+ 9%
- 56-65 11%
- 46-55 15%
- 15-30 32%
- 31-45 33%

The top source for news was Facebook (89%) with regional / national TV and online newspapers following at 59% and 51% respectively. Respondents indicated they received approximately 38% of their news from local sources.

Overall, main-stream media sources have made 65% of the local audience less trusting of media. 83% indicated that coverage of recent world events has led to a decrease in their trust in media. Over 40% indicated they had little confidence in main-stream media. Interestingly, over 80% indicated they were trusting less than half the time of news seen on social media.

> "National media comes from top level reporters whose expertise is journalism. They go right to the source to gather their information and that makes my level of trust greater."

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69% of the respondent's identified that local media had been reporting on local news that is important to them, and that it reflected their community.

"Local media has done a lot of our community, and our region as a whole. There are times it feels less like genuine: reporting the issues, successes, celebrations of our community, and more for personal profit - but with that said, it doesn't go unnoticed how much effort all of our local media sources put into informing the community"

"No local media=no local content"

"It's important to hear news from a local perspective and now how it affects us locally."

Local media was rated by the respondents to be the same as regional, national, and international media when it comes to national and world happenings. However, when it comes to local content, 81% believe that local media provides truthful and un-biased information. 41% of respondents replied that they need fact-based reporting that is trustworthy, impartial, verifiable, accurate, and relevant to maintain trust in local media.

We live in a complex world - the reporting framework and timelines creates an environment where explanation gets cut due to time constraints. Respondents indicated that experts explaining issues increases the credibility by 62% and transparency by 57%. Locals explaining issues increased credibility by 59% and transparency by 49%. 34% of respondents replied that it is important to look to those that are local to increase accuracy, understand local issues, for relevancy, local perspective, local knowledge, and to explain issues in language that local people can relate to.

71% indicated over half of the time their trust levels are influenced by their personal viewpoint. They are more likely to trust a local information source because they can fact-check it themselves (76%).

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> "I believe that a responsible citizen should always listen to what is in the media - local, regional, national, international - and then, based on knowledge, life experience, and research, consider all sides of a story to form their own opinion."

When asked about their thoughts on the statement, "News organizations are more concerned with supporting an ideology or political position than informing the public", 39% agreed with this statement, while 32% did not agree with this statement and felt that it depended on the media outlet.

75% do not believe that all media sources are equal in credibility. Regional / National TV, local news, and print newspapers were seen to be the most credible forms of media.

Topping the factors affecting their credibility were inconsistent coverage (56%), underlying factors (59%) and unbalance coverage (68%). In determining credibility, the 75% of respondents indicated they do their own fact checking (43% relying on google searches for fact-checking), 67% compare stories to other news sources, and 39% rely on their past experience with the new source.

When asked, respondents shared their thoughts on desirable journalistic values. 51% identified that being obsessed with facts, focused on objectivity and fairness, and steer clear of opinions and bias was important. Over 50% indicated they believe journalist are being misleading most of the time, with 48% indicating that the deception is intentional.

27% were unsure or did not think that the concerns of those who felt media is misleading the public could be addressed. 15% were unsure if media could reach this segment of the audience or if they should be worry about it.

> "Nationally I think that the reporting is based on money and political influence. Locally I think the reporters overall try to report the facts as they are but can sometimes be effected by personal feelings and biases."

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> "I know that there is more competition for viewers, the larger the viewing area, so my concern would be that news companies might be more likely to sensationalize things to get more viewers"

> "News should not reflect anyone's viewpoint. News should report what is, not what it might be."

> "Social media and the internet has changed the way the world receives its information. It opens the door to allow anyone to find ANYTHING to support their way of thinking."

When asked what types of stories they would like to see more of, 89% responded timely stories impacting their lives with 70% identifying local profile pieces would be desirable.

New suggestions on methods of news delivery were limited, however, 30% indicated they would be more likely to read local news if they could access it through an app with notifications.

Online Comments

Respondents covered the full spectrum regarding the decision to turn off comments on select news stories posted to social media. Some were in favour of this decision, while others were vehemently opposed and felt their free speech was being censored by moderators.

> "The comments are an absolute disgrace. There is a social contract at play here and if people want to consume local news they need to understand that their criticisms have boundaries."

> "I think the comments should be left on every Facebook share of the story instead of censoring the public"

> "The decision to turn off comments on many (stories) is fully supported to protect the mental health of those in the media world."

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Other Suggestions / Comments

"Local media doesn't need to hit home runs... just keep doing a solid day-to-day job."

"This community is very polarized in opinions. Media's job is not to appeal to opinions but to report verified facts. You will not win over everyone in a community like this, however sticking to facts will continue to provide credibility."

"Local media doesn't need to hit home runs... just keep doing a solid day-to-day job."

"I have been increasingly impressed with our local news. Over the past 15 years of living in the peace our local news sources have continued to grow and adapt."

"Spelling & grammar mistakes are a huge NO!"

"Don't publish until you know the facts"

"When writing articles on contentious topics, do your homework! Don't just quote "some small university study", also go to industry leaders in our community and find out firsthand from these experts about the topic, what its effects are, local and otherwise."

"Go back to the age of good ol' fashioned reporting, people talking to people in person, getting the story from those involved. Go see what amazing things our community is doing. Help bring the light back to the news."

"No clickbait, make sure your headlines match what the story is instead of creating outrage."

Polling Findings- 214 respondents across 6 polls

The weekly polls occurred in March and April, provided the team with some understanding of the local social media audience's sentiments.

The results of the poll were shared the week following. Sharing the results of the poll was an important aspect to creating transparency between the local media and its audience leading up to the survey. It was shared at www.energeticcity.ca/evolution as well as through the subscriber mailing list.

Week 1 Poll Results –Local Media Provides Accurate Information

85 responses were received, and respondents gave a weighted average rating of 5.0 out of 10 when asked does the local media provide you with accurate information. 19% provided a rating of 1, while over 42% provided a rating of 6 or higher.

Week 2 Poll Results –Most Trusted News Source

48 responses were received with the following results:

Local Media	31.25%
Regional / National Media	31.25%
Social Media Networks	37.50%

Week 3 Poll Results – Method of Access

28 responses were received with the following results:

Radio	3.57%
Online via desktop	17.86%
Online via mobile device	28.57%
Print Newspaper	3.57%
Local gatherings / coffee shops	3.57%
Social Media	14.29%
All of the Above	28.57%

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Week 4 Poll Results – Percentage of News from Online Sources

21 responses were received with the following results:

0-25%	14.29%
26-50%	14.29%
51-75%	14.29%
76-100%	57.14%

Week 5 Poll Results – Type of Stories

23 responses were received with the following results:

Timely news stories impacting my life – road conditions, accidents, community development affecting me, etc.	26.08%
Local profile pieces highlight local events, people, and places	8.70%
Industry and business news	0%
All the above	65.22%

Week 6 Poll Results - Local Media Coverage, Trust and Understanding of Needs

9 responses were received with the following results:

On a scale of 1 to 10, do you feel you have access to news and stories that impact your life?

Answers ranged from 1 to 10 with an average response of 6.7

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you trust that local media provides factual and unbiased information?

Answers ranged from 1 to 10 with an average score of 6.0

On a scale of 1 to 10, does local media understand your news needs?

Answers ranged from 1 to 10 with an average score of 5.3

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Interviews

54 interview requests were made to local media, local government, community groups, corporate and indigenous stakeholders identified by the proponent.

6 interviews were conducted

Tell us about your relationship with local media.

100% of respondents reported that their relationships with the media was constructive, collaborative, responsive, and easy to interact with for the most part. A few respondents noted that felt there was less interaction since the pandemic. One respondent handled media with care because there is concern that they are not considerate enough to handle the information provided appropriately.

Tell us why local media is important to your organization / business.

100% of the respondents replied that local media is very important, super important, and critical.

> "The local media is the frontlines of day-to-day life news"

> "It is very important to get our information out to the public. That they report on stories that need to be told."

How do you feel that local media coverage reflects the diversity of the community?

60% of respondents felt that coverage is diverse, however they did note that during the last two years, the pandemic was polarizing and media seemed to pick up on the controversial and topical stories as they related to Covid.

> "I believe it's important because media represents the community and is the vehicle to provide context, answers, and important information to its audience."

> "Currently there is so much more that could be talked about locally. There are so few local stories compared to the news wire stories. There is a lot of "business" and local interest stories that could and should be covered."

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Do you feel you have good access to local media to share your news with the community?

100% of the respondents said yes, they had good access

They noted that it is important to have established relationships and to know who are accessible and responsive.

Have you received good coverage of your organization in the past?

80% of the respondents felt that they had received good coverage, and that it was consistent, accurate, reliable, factual.

Have you received misleading or inaccurate coverage of your organization in the past?

25% of the respondents felt that some coverage in the past was sensationalized, heavily biased, misquoted, and inaccurate. They also felt that the story sometimes was not reflective of the conversation.

Was a story you felt was important not covered in local media?

80% of the respondents felt that some stories should have been covered, but also noted by most of the respondents that bear some of the responsibility to get stories to media as they cannot be everywhere or know everything that is happening.

What are the challenges with working with local media to get your information out to the community?

90% of the respondents reported some challenges but understood that the media has limited resources in being all the places to get all the stories and that the newsrooms have been stretched thinner and thinner.

Typically, reporters call if they have questions or require clarity on a certain topic, which was appreciated.

"The move to online reporting further exacerbates the brevity of information."

"Less interaction, they (Media) no longer come to council meetings."

"Turnover with staff and rebuilding relationships"

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How impactful would the loss of local media be to your organization?

100% of respondents responded that loss of local media would be huge, impactful, significant, and catastrophic.

What could local media do to improve their relationship with you?

80% of respondents said some improvements could be made.

"Local media have been very respectful and professional in the interactions I've had with them. "

"Nothing. It's a good relationship that requires effort on both sides. We all have our part in dissemination of information."

"Reach out more, come to meetings to report on community initiatives and council decisions."

"Allocate some more resources to doing more research about the organization. Take the time to understand the stories, challenges, and concerns. Reporters should make a point to connect through phone, email, and in-person."

"Be more diligent in their hiring, establish a culture that is more accountable on the ground, old-school, honest, hardworking journalists."

Do you have any other comments you would like to share with regards to local media?

"Potential for podcast series on stories that could use a more in-depth look. Also, providing local context to the national / prov stories that are shared, i.e. why this is important to you"

"The peoples need for instant reporting is tough on the media. Long-term staffing creates trust. Staffing issues and attracting long term employees are an issue every sector faces in the North."

"Citizens also bear responsibility in paying attention to the world around them and make the effort to engage and pay attention."

"There are opportunities to broaden their scope. Ensuring the more global stories are covered that demonstrate the connection to the local community is important."

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Focus Groups

47 people indicated at the end of the survey that they would be interested in participating in a 1-hour focus group to provide more feedback.

Four focus groups were organised; two on-line and two in person opportunities. Participation was very low, with 3 people attended the focus group meetings, but this allowed for robust dialogue.

Talk about story sourcing. Is it important to you, the reader, that the source of the information is identified and opposing views are presented?

"Stories need to acknowledge that there are other opinions, however those opinions do not necessarily need to be in the same article. A follow up article may show the opposing views"

"Journalism is a craft- they need to determine how to tell the story and not make it cumbersome to read with balanced information."

"Opposing views do not always have to be presented"

"The journalist responsibility is to impart what is true- not to base the story on what may be true, what may be false or what may be the opposite view."

How can local media present stories to you in a format that is digestible?

"Media has a responsibility to report, citizens have the responsibility to use their discernment."

"Stay in the ethical lane don't swerve for increased readership"
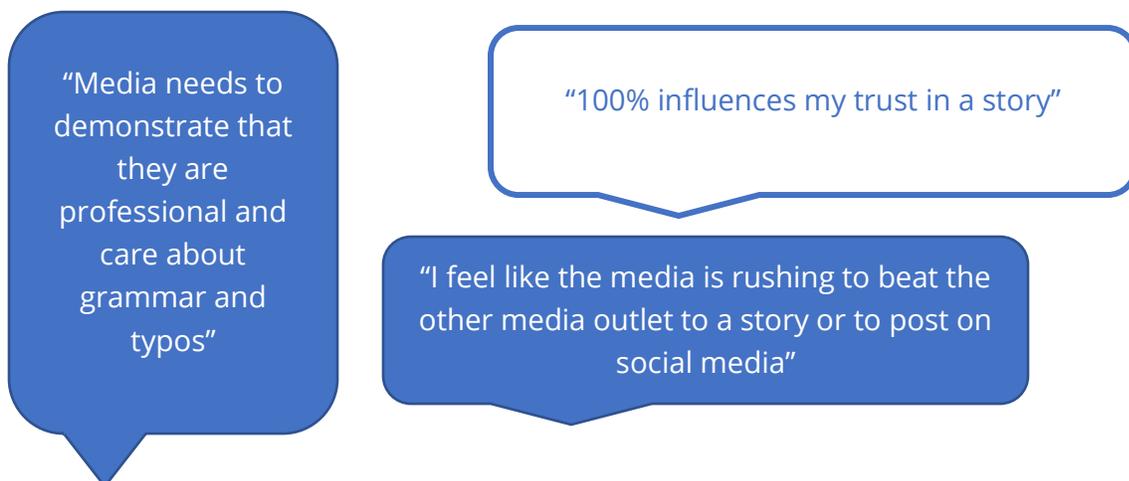
"Simple clear headlines"

"Provide regular training/ updates to media staff about researching, writing an article and how reporting works"

"In the 'right-now' era, media staff should not be pressured to get the story out if it's not complete."

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Survey feedback is divided on reader engagement through social media. Some believe comments should be freely posted, other that comments should be moderated, and others believe that the comments should be turned off on all stories. What role do you believe should be played in moderating comments by local media and the citizens / readers?

"Moderating is a big job and exhausting, they should be turned off as people are rude, malevolent, entitled, naive, stupid, uniformed and thrive on the drama."

"Post why the comments are turned off"

"Creating a speed bump instead of having comments open such as asking for a letter to the editor or a comments section on a website."

"Discourse in real time"

"Turning off comments does affect the voices of people who are on point/ on topic."

"I'd rather lose the ability to post comments than be faced with the online hate and disrespect."

Do typos and grammatical errors influence your trust in the story?

"Media needs to demonstrate that they are professional and care about grammar and typos"

"100% influences my trust in a story"

"I feel like the media is rushing to beat the other media outlet to a story or to post on social media"

Over the next 6 months, what could local media do to demonstrate their commitment to increasing trust with you the reader?

"Education op eds/ on air discussions/blog about the value of local media in the community- What has happened in other communities who do not have local media i.e. loss of history, loss of local voices, its importance"

"Ensure that posting rules are on social media and website or at top of posts about posting etiquette"

"Education op eds/ on air discussions/blog the on media reporting and its responsibilities"

"Demonstrate social licence of media to the community, through op eds or on air- What is the media organizations give back to the community"

"New reporter onboarding- new to the community journalists need an in-depth introduction to community including culture, "norms" in the community, history, industry and local government structures"

"Articles on Community Champions"

"Citizen" reporter column

"Regular & intentional articles on diversity"

"Regular education pieces about how citizens can contact media with story pitches, content, and opportunities to share community happenings"

"Ensure accountability in the who we are/ what we are about section on social media, website and on airwaves- i.e. Locally owned and operated."

"Commitment to journalism- State journalistic mandates and ethics of the media outlet to manage expectations"

"Connect the international, national, regional news stories to how it affects or could affect local and why it is important. i.e. economy, culture, jobs"

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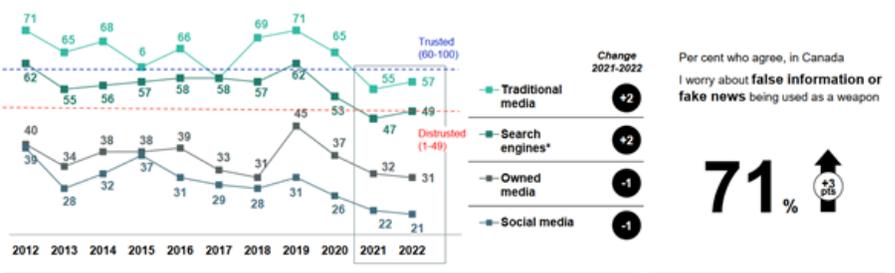
The Learnings and Recommendations

Learnings

On average, trust in the media falls in the middle of the spectrum, with strong indicators that the events of the last two years, and their coverage in the media, has had a significant impact on their trust levels.

The findings from the local engagement closely mirror the Canadian findings from the Edelman Trust Barometer[1], which is conducted annually across 28 countries. The barometer demonstrates the trust in news has fallen from a high in 2019 of 71% to 57% in 2022.

Canadians are increasingly becoming concerned that they are being misled by journalists, business leaders and government leaders.

TRUST IN SOCIAL HITS NEW LOW
Per cent trust in each source for general news and information, in Canada

GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA SEEN AS DIVISIVE
Per cent who say, in Canada

Nearly half of Canadians believe government and media are dividing forces in society, while business and non-government organizations are seen to be more unifying.

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[1] Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 – Country Report Trust in Canada
https://www.edelman.ca/sites/g/files/aatuss376/files/trust-barometer/2022%20Canadian%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer.pdf

Circles of trust are becoming more local with considerable decreases in trust for outsiders and only moderate trust increases for neighbours and coworkers.

Ultimately, people are not willing to trust until they have seen evidence they can believe. According to the Ipsos Public Affairs – Trust in News[2] report from June 2021, respondents are still looking for a mix of news sources, 44% of news is coming from local sources, 34% from national news sources and the balance of 22% from international sources.

CIRCLES OF TRUST BECOME MORE LOCAL

Per cent who say each has increased or decreased during the pandemic, in Canada

▼ LESS TRUST FOR OUTSIDERS

My trust in...	Net change	increased	decreased
people from other countries	-18	9	27
people who live in other states, provinces, or regions	-13	11	24

▲ CLOSER BONDS WITH NEIGHBORS AND COWORKERS

How close I feel...	Net change	increased	decreased
to my coworkers	+2	20	18
to my neighbors	+2	18	16

2022 Edelman Trust Barometer. PAN_MRE_LSS. For each of the following, please indicate whether life during the pandemic has decreased this, increased this, or has had no effect? 3-point scale; code 1, decreased; code 2, increased. General population, Canada. "To my co-workers" data is filtered to be among those who are an employee of an organization (Q43/1).   Edelman 21

According to the Edelman barometer for Canada in 2022, 59% of respondents indicated Canadians lack the ability to have constructive and civil debates on issues they disagree on. Additionally, 1 in 5 Canadians has good information hygiene[3]. This means that only 20% of Canadians regularly read the news, avoid information echo chambers, verify information, and do not amplify unvetted information. The result: an incredible amount of unvetted information circulating is leading to widespread misinformation and a continued degradation of trust in information sources.

Edelman surmises that rebuilding trust is the key to societal stability, and to restoring the ability for the four institutions (government, business, NGOs, and media) to function well and address societal challenges. Business must recognize that its societal role is here to stay. Canadians want more business leadership, not less.

Mistrust is not just a local issue; the Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 cites that trust has been eroded in Canadian society as a whole.

All of this makes the challenge of building trusting relationships between media and their audience a daunting task. Distrust may be caused by the local media or other news sources but it the place to start the rebuilt is local, where the connections to community are stronger and the audience is more likely to be able to verify the news themselves.

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[2] Trust in News – Ipsos Public Affairs, June 2021 https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/surveying-canadians-trust-media
[3] Looking Ahead: How Is Trust Shifting in 2022? – Megan Spoore, February,14, 2022 https://www.edelman.ca/trust-barometer/looking-ahead-how-trust-shifting-2022

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Recommendations

The Media Evolution Project Phase One engagement results have been summarized into the following recommendations on improvements. These recommendations are grouped into five theme areas, appreciating that some of the recommendations may overlap between theme areas.

1) Advocate: Media is a supportive partner with local news stakeholders – establishing a relationship built on mutual trust and respect is vital to creating credibility with the local audience.
   a) Regular public updates from local media ownership – e.g., column, radio call-in show, blog posts
   b) Strengthen relationships with other local media outlets
   c) Strengthen relationships with news sources in the community, i.e., community leaders, organizations, etc.

2) Educate: Media working with stakeholders on how to develop content so it can be presented the way that local residents can best receive it.
   a) Review and update Guiding Principles and Commenting Policy. Once completed, promote the best practices policies to the general public.
   b) Review and update the Employment Handbook, and onboarding guide that clearly identifies internal standards and processes.
      i) Include a local resource / expert list
   c) Develop a public-facing educational series on:
      i) How content is developed
      ii) How stories are written, the challenges faced by reporters, and how citizens can be active participants in the development and delivery of news
      iii) What a locally owned and operated media outlet is and how it's funded
      iv) How citizens can get involved with content development
      v) The power and importance of local media
   d) Increase the visibility and presence of local media in the community.

> "Train journalists to be aware of bias and it's influence on the public.

3) Resonate: Knowing and understanding the local audience is key to becoming a curator of local news, through thoughtfully and strategically connected stories that the community might find valuable, that will resonate with them, and that will have a meaningful impact on them.
   a) Develop a regular polling process to gauge audience resonance.
   b) Develop a tracking system for news tips and coverage, with regular reporting
      i) Relocate to more prominent location on website and promote citizen responsibility in sharing "News Tips"

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4) Navigate: The availability of any and all information at our fingertips today, and a lack of critical thinking skills within the masses, has created distrust of the media, and between the media and its news sources. Responsibly leveraging the power of social media means more than just maximizing views, but doing so while remaining wary of distortion, lack of context, and misleading editing. Engagement in the social realm allows for real time dialogue on issues that matter to the audience.
   a) Creation of a mobile application, with notifications, that allows for offline reading of the news
   b) Creation of an online location, outside of social media, that allows for public comments on stories and news that matters to the audience, e.g., Letters to the Editor "Citizen's Corner" section of the website. This creates the space for "sober second thought" around commenting.
   c) Updating the Commenting Policy and sharing it regularly through all channels

5) Illuminate: Committing to providing real and substantive information that benefits the local audience by creating an environment that is home to a durable, reliable, and vibrant media ecosystem. The media represents critical institutions for our social and strong partnerships with stakeholders to provide quality content that is transparent and ethical in its delivery is vital to ensuring these sources remain available to residents.
   a) Through articles and on-air interviews, state, demonstrate, and reaffirm the commitment to journalistic standards and ethics of the media outlet to manage expectations
   b) Freedom of Information Policy review and promotion of the process and challenges in "getting the story right"

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Appendices

Appendix A: Digital Literature Reviews

Internal

https://energeticcity.ca/

https://www.facebook.com/EnergeticCity/

Moose FM / Energeticcity.ca Newsroom Handbook

External

https://www.edelman.ca/sites/g/files/aatuss376/files/trust-barometer/2022%20Canadian%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer.pdf

https://www.thestar.com/opinion/public_editor/2022/03/04/how-do-journalists-reach-those-suspicious-of-media-first-by-reporting-fully-and-fairly.html

https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer

https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/surveying-canadians-trust-media

https://www.pwc.com/ca/en/services/consulting/cybersecurity-privacy/digital-trust-insights.html

https://tnc.news/2022/02/10/poll-shows-trust-in-media-government-at-all-time-low/

https://www.westernstandard.news/news/survey-shows-canadians-trust-in-mainstream-media-continues-to-drop/article_f37cf5fd-57a4-57dd-857d-935242d93689.html

https://www.niemanlab.org/2017/03/this-site-is-taking-the-edge-off-rant-mode-by-making-readers-pass-a-quiz-before-commenting/

https://niemanreports.org/articles/five-tools-to-rebuild-trust-in-media/

https://www.poynter.org/the-craig-newmark-center-for-ethics-and-leadership-at-poynter/

https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/01/04/BC-FOI-Missing-COVID-19-Data/

https://twitter.com/bobkronbauer/status/1480979393803534336?s=21

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Moorsaic Strategic Services, on behalf of Energeticcity.ca and Moose FM, is exploring how to serve the community better with news and stories that are relevant and to understand better how to increase reader trust and engagement.

The goal of the Media Evolution project is to know and understand the local audience to becoming a curator of local news, through thoughtfully and strategically connected stories that the community might find valuable, that will resonate with them, and that will have a meaningful impact on them.

Survey Objectives

- What is the trust in traditional news media (such as newspapers, news magazines, TV news, and radio news) to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly.

- What is the variety of news sources accessed

- Influence of news coverage on perceived trust

- Diverse perspectives in Canadian news media

- Importance of internet connectivity and methods of receiving of receiving local news

How do you receive your news?

1. **In the last month, have you gotten news from any of the following? CHECKBOX – ALL THAT APPLY**

    Regional or National TV news, Facebook, Local TV news, print newspapers, Newspapers' websites, Online-only newspapers, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Talk radio, Blogs, Podcasts, None of these

2. **In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in traditional news media - such as newspapers, news magazines, TV and radio news?**
    A great deal   A fair amount   Not very much   None at all

3. **What percentage of the news that you consume comes from the following sources?**
    Must equal 100%
    Local news sources   Regional new sources   National news sources
    International news sources

4. **What level of trust do you place about news you see on social media?**
    All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

5. **What level of trust do you place about the news you see in print media?**
    All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

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6. **What level of trust do you place about news from on-line news sources?**
   All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know
7. **What level of trust do you place about news from TV and radio news sources?**
   All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

What is trust to you?

8. **Has the mainstream media's coverage made you more or less trusting of mainstream news media?**
   More trusting Less Trusting Don't know
9. **Why is it important to you that media look to experts to help explaining the issues that matter most?**
   Increased credibility Transparency Differing views   Other: BOX
10. **Why is it important to you that media look to those that are local to help explain the issues that matter most to the community?**
    Increased credibility Transparency Differing views   Other: BOX
11. **Why are you more likely to trust local information sources?**
    I know the people   I can check out the information   Credible information I don't trust local information sources
12. **Do you think that your trust in media is influenced by your personal viewpoints?**

    All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

13. **Tell us more about your trust level of local media:**
    BOX
14. **Tell us more about your trust level of regional and national media:**
    BOX

What is credibility?

15. **Do you believe that all media sources are credible?**
    Yes   No   Most of the time   Never Don't Know
16. **How do you determine credibility of your news source?**
    Fact checking   Comparison to other news sources Past experience with source
             Ask my friends
17. **What are the factors affecting media credibility?**
    If it effects me   How others react to the news   If there are underlying factors to the story

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Inconsistent coverage   Lack of coverage   Repetitive coverage   Unbalance Coverage

18. **Ranked these form of media in terms of credibility? Ranking Number 1- 11**
Regional or National TV news, Facebook, Local TV news, Print newspapers, Newspapers' websites, Online-only newspapers, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Talk radio, Blogs, Podcasts,

19. **How do you evaluate the credibility of the information being presented?**
Goggle Search   Fact check   Talked to my friends

20. **In reporting do audiences want journalists to be: CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**
Obsessed by facts   Focused on objectivity and fairness Steer clear of opinions and bias   None of the above   All of the above

21. **Have recent world events affected trust and credibility with media?**
Yes   No   Don't Know

22. **Has the pandemic contributed to an erosion of trust and credibility with media?**
Yes No   Don't know

23. **Do you think journalists are purposely trying to mislead about world issues, the pandemic and other news stories in the last two years?**
Yes   No   Most of the time   Don't Know

24. **Do you believe that journalists and reporters are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations?**
Yes   No   Most of the time   Don't Know

Is Media Objective?

25. **How is local media at being objective and non-partisan?**
All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

26. **Do you think that local media provides truthful, unbiased, reliable information?**
All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

27. **What are your thoughts on the following statement- "News organizations are more concerned with supporting an ideology or political position than informing the public"?**
BOX

How can media improve

28. **Why is local media important to you?**
BOX

29. **How do journalists reach those suspicious or distrusting of media?**
BOX

30. **How do media address concerns that journalists mislead people through falsehoods and exaggeration?**
BOX

31. **If individuals don't see their viewpoints reflected in the media coverage, how can media reach them?**
BOX

32. **Do you feel you having access to local media representatives would increase your confidence in local media?**

Yes   No   Don't know

33. **What types of local stories are you interested in seeing more of? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**

Timely news stories impacting my life – road conditions, accidents, community development affecting me, etc.
Local profile pieces highlight local events, people, and places
Industry and business news
Investigative News
Other: BOX

34. **What types of local stories are you interested in seeing less of? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**

Timely news stories impacting my life – road conditions, accidents, community development affecting me, etc.
Local profile pieces highlight local events, people, and places
Industry and business news
Investigative News
Other: BOX

Technology

35. **How is your internet connectivity?**
Access all the time   Access most of the time   Access about half the time
Rarely have access   Don't know

36. **How important is internet connectivity to your access to information?**
All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

37. **How important is internet connectivity in connecting with the larger world?**

All the time   Most of the time   About half the time   Rarely Don't know

38. Would you be more likely to read local news if you could receive it via:
Text Message
App with notifications
Email Notification
Other: BOX

Final Thoughts

39. **Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?** BOX
40. **Would you be interested in participating in a 1 hour focus group to provide more feedback?** CHECKBOX
Do you prefer: In-person Focus Group   **Online Focus Group** CHECKBOX
Please provide your email address to be contacted for this opportunity. BOX

Demographic Questions

Age 15-30   31-45   46-55   56-65   66+

Gender: Male   Female   Non-Binary   Prefer Not to Answer

Community of Primary Residence: BOX

To have your name entered in the tablet draw, please provide your contact information below. Your information will not be connected to your survey responses or shared with any outside party.

Name
Phone / Email

Appendix C: Poll Questions

On a scale of 1- 10, does local media provide you with accurate information?

What is your most trusted news source:

      a. Local media
      b. Regional / National Media
      c. Social Media Networks

How do you access local news?

      a. Radio
      b. Online – desktop
      c. Online – mobile device
      d. Newspaper / Print
      e. Local gatherings / coffee shops
      f. Social media

What percentage of the media do you access is online compared to tradition formats like radio or newspaper?

      0%-25%   26%-50%   51%-75%   76%-100%

What is most important to you from local media?

      a. Timely news stories impacting my life (road conditions / accidents, community developments affecting me, etc.)
      b. Local profile pieces (highlighting local events, people, places)
      c. Industry / Business news

On a scale of 1-10, do you feel you have access to news and stories that impact your life?

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you trust that local media provides factual and unbiased information?

On a scale of 1-10, does local media have an understanding of your news needs?

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