



More in
Common

GRAYLING
MEDIA

TRUTH, TRUST & TRIBES IN A NEW MEDIA AGE, 2025

01 FOREWORD

Is truth losing its appeal? Welcome to Grayling Media's 2025 media trends report: Trust, Truth and Tribes in a New Media Age.

This builds on our inaugural September 2024 report: The New Media Age, to analyse our fragmented and disparate media landscape.

It raises important questions and challenges long-held beliefs.

Artificial intelligence, we found, is forging a breakdown in our shared understanding of truth. While we are increasing using it to source information, we know we can't trust what it says.

And while tightly regulated, legally accountable mainstream media used to be perceived as the most accurate bearers of information, now an astonishing 39% of Brits say that traditional media filters the news to fit their own agenda.

In partnership with More in Common, a leading think tank and research company, the report reveals new trends in how Britons seek trusted information, understand truth, and engage with the media.

Perhaps most striking is that more than half of Britons believe there is no single truth about world events, while only 35% believe in objective facts.

The report identifies a set of important trends driving the breakdown, including the use of AI and a disconnect between media sources that people trust and those they use.

This is reflected in support for leaders on the right and left of political parties, who use new media platforms to promote their alternate views - and are seen as the most human politicians.

The ways in which we consume trusted content are transforming, with powerful implications. For PR and media professionals, maintaining an understanding of both the media landscape and political dynamics is critical.

We want to help our teams and clients navigate through this and we hope this report helps to achieve this. To discuss the findings in full or explore how we can help your organisation, please get in touch.



**HEATHER BLUNDELL,
GRAYLING UK CEO**

02 KEY FINDINGS

This report set out to analyse our fragmented and disparate media landscape and understand how the British population consumes news across three key dimensions: age, politics and geography.

Here are the key findings.



Audiences are consuming a fast diet of exaggerated soundbites, TikTok factoids, and angry headlines all designed to be easily digestible and provide brief satisfaction. Appealing in the moment, but unhealthy for individuals and communities.



Alex Turner,
Joint Managing Director,
TheBusinessDesk

TRUST IN THE MEDIA

Britons tend to think that mainstream media sources are distorting, rather than honestly brokering, the truth: 40% of Britons say that traditional media sources filter the news to fit an agenda, more so than say the same of new media (36%).

Those who voted for Reform in 2024 are the only voter group who are more likely to distrust than trust journalists at organisations like the BBC. Half of Reform (50%) voters say they do not trust journalists, compared to 32% who do trust them. There is also a strong sense from supporters of some parties that the mainstream media is targeting them. For example, Reform UK voters overwhelmingly think the media is biased against them: 56% of those who voted for Reform in the General Election hold this view, compared to only 15% who think the media has no bias.

AI is fuelling a breakdown in shared understanding of truth: While Britons are increasingly using AI for information, they don't trust it. Avoiding AI-generated content is one of the public's top priorities for media use in coming years (37%) - particularly strong among older readers (55% of over-75s, compared to 32% of 18-24s).

Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn are seen as human, whereas the Prime Minister and the Chancellor are seen as robotic. By a margin of 60% to 17%, Britons think Keir Starmer is more robotic than human.

03 FRACTURED TRUST

The research reveals fundamental shifts in how Britons seek trusted information, understand truth and engage with the media.

Britons want more news they can trust.

Asked why their news habits might change in the next five years, almost half (45%) want news they can trust more than they currently do. This proportion rises amongst over 75s (59%) and under 25s (53%), showing how both ends of the age spectrum are feeling a sense of disenfranchisement.

The public are more likely to search for trusted information on social media than in newspapers.

Just over half of Britons say they use social media weekly or daily to find out information, compared to 30% who say they read a newspaper. This gap is even wider among 18-24 year olds: 68% of this age group regularly use social media to find out new information, while 53% use YouTube, and only 16% read newspapers.

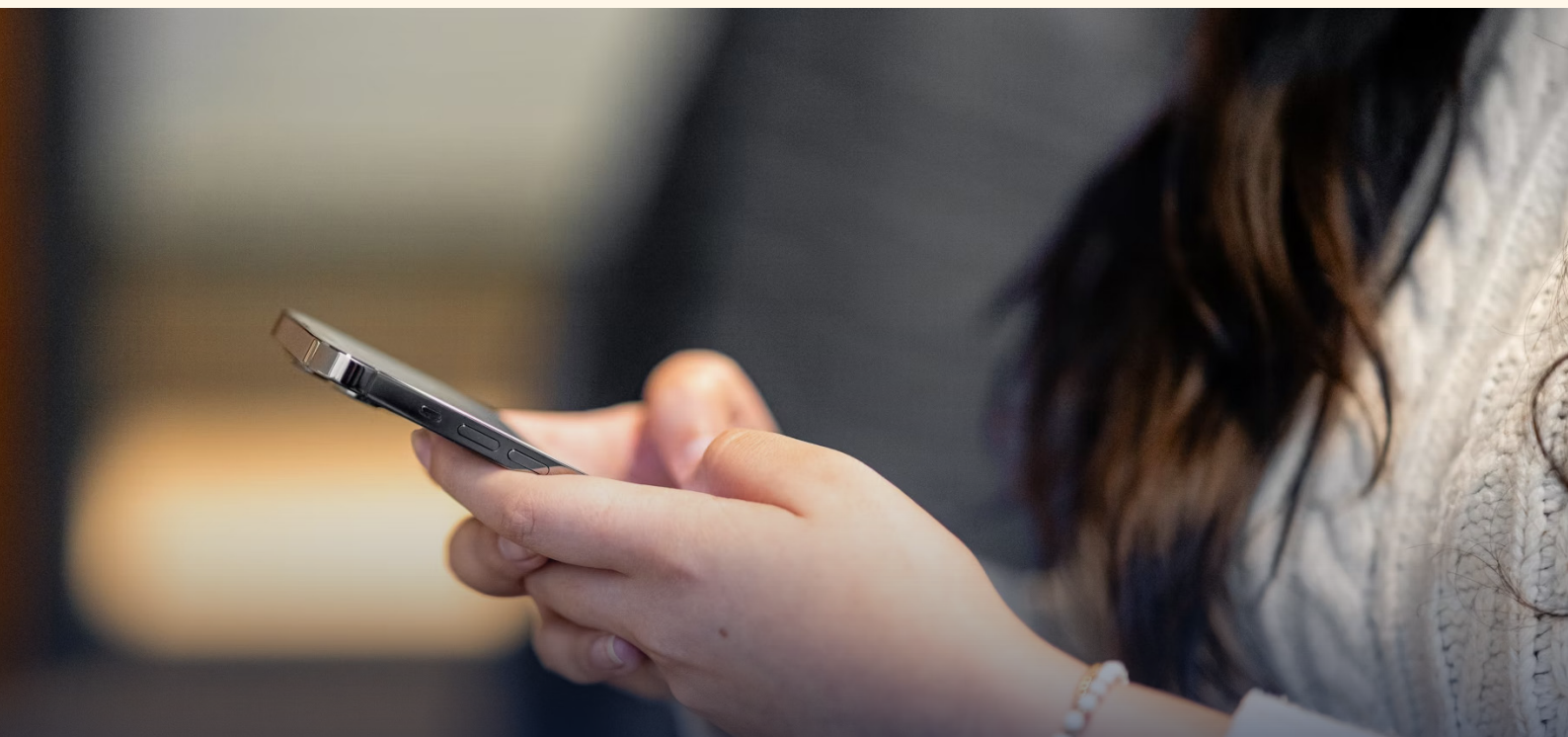
Britons lack trust in every type of media source, across both large mainstream organisations and new information sources.

Asked to what extent they trust or distrust news sources, the most trusted sources are local radio stations (44%) and the least trusted are YouTube creators who talk about politics or current affairs (16%). This reflects a widespread fragmentation of trust in the media, further heightened when broken down by age groups.

There is a growing disconnect between media sources that people use and media sources that people trust.

Whilst radio news has been in decline in terms of listenership, people trust it more than any other news source. In contrast, more people expect to listen to podcasts, watch YouTube or turn to local Facebook groups for local news in the coming years, despite these being among the least trusted sources of truth.

Yet people say they trust traditional media more than social media. Our findings suggest that trust might not be the most important factor in how people decide where they get their news, and that legacy media is struggling to compete on other factors such as accessibility, entertainment, and relevance.



04 THE TRUTH MATRIX

This fragmentation of the media landscape is in part due to an increase in people seeking out their own variation of truth in very different places, particularly from prominent figures who share their viewpoint.



The majority of Britons think there is no single truth about the events in the world.

56% of Britons believe there are multiple equally valid versions of truth, while only 35% believe there's such a thing as objective facts. This in part helps explain the declining appeal of a single "broadcaster voice" and the continued shift towards individuals who share a similar worldview.



The truth crisis is not just a young peoples' problem - across society people are seeking to find their "own truth."

For example, those aged 75+ are considerably more likely than any other age group to say that there are multiple different versions of what can be true, and more than half of them (53%) say that most of the time you can't believe what you see in the news.



The prevalence and complexity of misinformation has driven a deeper fragmentation of the truth.

Britons tend to overestimate their ability to distinguish between real and fake online. A third (33%) of Britons say that they always verify information with other sources before posting news content on social media. Only 11% of Britons believe that their friends and family do the same.



Britons tend to think that mainstream media sources are distorting, rather than honestly brokering, the truth:

39% of Britons say that traditional media sources filter the news to fit an agenda, more so than say the same of new media (36%).



This disconnect between Britons' own confidence in their fact-checking ability, and their perception of others' ability to do so, is significant.

People who are more confident in their ability to spot fake news are often the most likely to believe certain conspiracies. For example, those who describe themselves as 'very confident' in their ability to distinguish between real and fake information online are more than twice as likely as the wider public to believe that there 'are secret groups controlling world events'.



In my view, people took the truth for granted for many years and now the truth has become a luxury item. If you care about the truth, you'll have to pay for it. And in a sense, I think that the future of the media will involve recalibrating around people who realise something fundamental about the world will be lost if we don't coalesce resources around the ideals that matter.



Sam McAlister,
Former Newsnight Producer,
Author and Academic

SPOTLIGHT: AI AND THE FUTURE OF MEDIA

AI is fuelling a breakdown in shared understanding of truth: While Britons are increasingly using AI for information, they don't trust it. Avoiding AI-generated content is one of the public's top priorities for media use in coming years (37%) - particularly among older readers (55% of over-75s, compared to 32% of 18-24s).

AI is threatening to overtake newspapers as a source of information with younger generations. Gen Z is already more than twice as likely to use AI tools to find out information (48%) than to use a newspaper (22%).

Across the country, the number of people using AI every day to find information is now roughly the same as the number of people using newspapers every day for information (11% vs 12%).

What's more, this gap looks set to grow: Half of Gen Z Britons expect to use AI more in coming years, compared to only 26% who expect to use it less. In contrast, only 8% of Britons 60+ say that they expect to use AI more, while 52% expect to use it less in future years.



Journalism has lived through many technological revolutions, from Tandy laptops and Telex machines to digital SLRs and mobile phones. But the core component has always been the journalists using them.

Now just as the internet upended traditional publishing models and revolutionised global communications, AI is about to do it all over again with search and SEO. There is no doubt it will become a transformative technology. But it should only ever be used as a powerful production tool.

AI can't knock on doors, go to council meetings and cover court cases. It can't console victims, fight for justice or hold power to account. The Sun newsroom is now deluged with generic AI press releases, written from a single prompt and churned out under fake profiles by robots.

It just reminds us everyday what our readers really value. Original journalism about real people. And it doesn't matter what format it comes in.



Alex Goss,
News Editor, The Sun

SPOTLIGHT: POLITICAL TRIBES

Our research then explored how political parties approach the media, forge the media narrative and how Britons respond to politicians in the media.

Here are the most compelling insights.



Reform voters are uniquely distrustful of mainstream media.

Half distrust journalists at organisations like the BBC (vs 32% who trust them), with 56% believing media is biased against them (compared to 15% of the general population). In contrast, Liberal Democrat voters are twice as likely to trust (53%) as to distrust (26%) mainstream journalists and 43% of Labour voters plan to consume more BBC content.



Reform UK supporters are also more likely than every other voter group to place a premium on trust. More than half (53%) say that their news habits will change because they'll want news they can trust more than they do now.



News disengagement correlates with populist support.

Among those paying little or no attention to political news, Reform's vote share rises 6 points to 37% (vs 31% generally). The Green Party also gains 2 points among the news-disengaged.

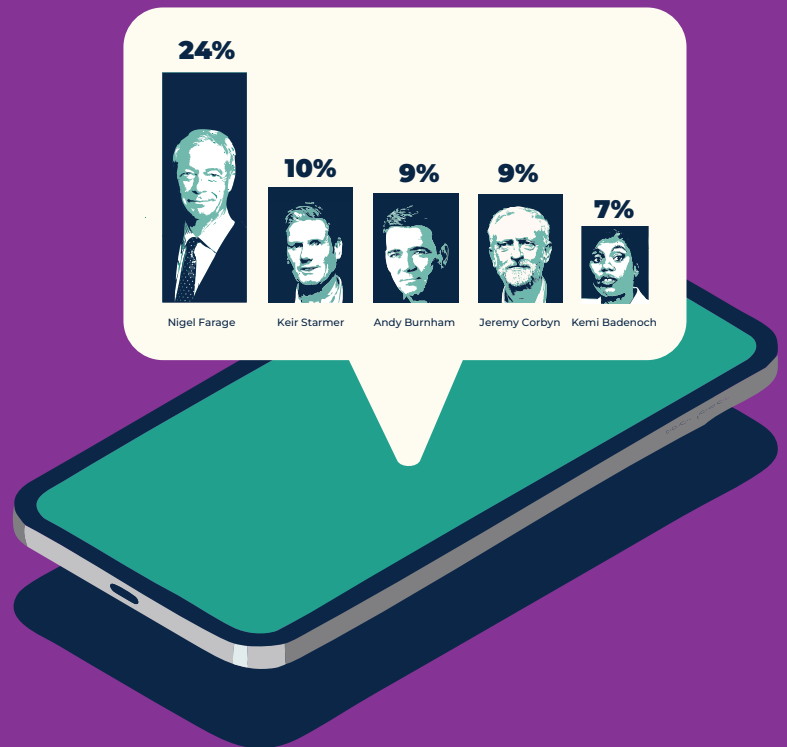


Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn are seen as human, whereas the PM and the Chancellor are seen as robotic.

By a margin of 60% to 17%, Britons think Keir Starmer is more robotic than human.

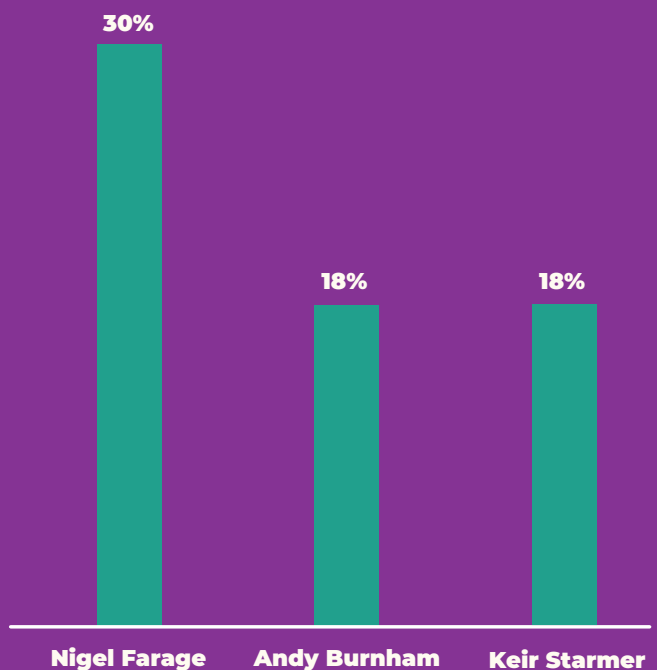


Britons think Nigel Farage is the best social media political communicator.

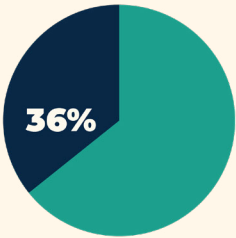


Age divide: Support is particularly strong with Gen-Z

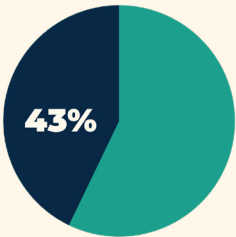
 18 - 28 years old



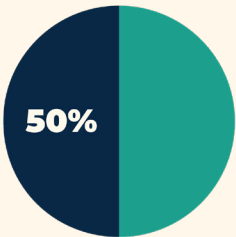
Party Differences



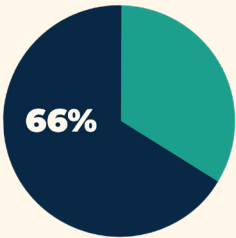
Conservative
(Newspaper readership)



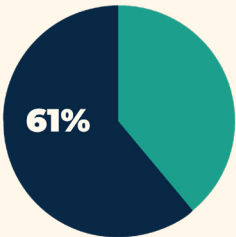
Labour
(Plan to use BBC more)



Reform UK
(Distrust BBC journalists)



Green
(Believe in multiple truths)



Liberal Democrat
(Trust BBC journalists)



We are witnessing a media revolution that will mark the eventual decline of legacy media. It's not to say legacy news titles don't have a function. A lot of UK news begins with the newspapers. But the reality is that most people now get their political news from new media sources, and distribution means are no longer mediated by legacy media.

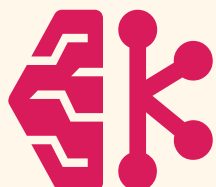
The political journalism model must evolve to reflect this reality, and this is our focus at Guido Fawkes with new in-depth video, podcast and social led storytelling that is transparent, free and non-partisan - to blow up the establishment conspiracy of silence and hidden sources in Westminster and the legacy media.



Lord Kempself,
CEO & Publisher,
Guido Fawkes

05 CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

Our research highlighted several key trends which challenge commonly held perceptions about the media in 2025.



While Britons may often choose convenient information sources like AI chatbots and social media, they still turn to established, mainstream news sources to find the ultimate truth on things. If anything, people expect to be turning to traditional media more in the future, not less. While half of Gen Z Britons expect to use AI more in future, the public as a whole say they expect to use television news (34%) and news websites (32%) more in the future - higher than the proportion for any other source.



While YouTube ranks among one of the most widely used social media platforms, its content creators are one of the least trusted sources of information. Over seven in ten Britons (72%) say that they use YouTube at least 'from time to time' - higher than Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram. However, only 16% of Britons trust YouTube creators who talk about current affairs, while 49% distrust them. In contrast, 40% trust journalists working for large news organisations, and 44% trust national radio stations.



Similarly, despite the exponential podcast growth of the past few years, podcasters are widely mistrusted - albeit with a striking age split: 44% of Britons distrust podcast creators. The one notable exception is millennials, who are narrowly more likely to trust (29%) than distrust (28%) podcasters.



Traditional media is seen as more accurate and useful in helping people understand what is happening in the world. Three in five (60%) Britons say that traditional media provides a more accurate account of what's happening in the world, compared to only 22% who believe that new media does this better; similarly, by a margin of 58% to 27%, Britons think traditional media helps them understand what is happening around the world better than new media.



The exception is Gen Z who believe that new media provides a more accurate account of what's happening in the world: by a margin of 50% to 35% and holding politicians to account (56% to 25%).



Podcasts have transformed into video-first, multi-platform brands, with YouTube now the top service for UK 16–34s. Hits like *The Rest Is Politics* thrive by building communities across YouTube, TikTok, books, tours and TV; flops stay siloed in audio. Growth lies with older listeners as community drivers and younger fans seeking shareable, participatory formats. Expect quiz and competition pods, AI translation, and YouTube-first discovery to reshape the medium. Podcasts are becoming “the new glossy magazine on TV”: bingeable, visual, and community driven.



Lucie Cave,
Chief Creative Office,
Bauer Media

SPOTLIGHT: REGIONAL TRENDS

SCOTLAND

45%

trust local radio vs 41% trust national radio. Clear preference for local over national media.

41%

trust BBC vs 40% UK average. Despite SNP/independence political tensions, BBC performs well.

YORKSHIRE

70%

see Starmer as robotic

NORTH EAST

71%

say traditional media is better for global understanding & 72% say traditional media is more accurate

NORTH WEST

61%

trust national radio (vs 44% national average)

EAST OF ENGLAND

34%

Want more locally relevant news

WALES

15%

Highest online community group usage in UK at 29% (vs 20% national average)

LONDON

46%

trust journalists working for large news organisations like the BBC (vs 40% average)

SOUTH WEST

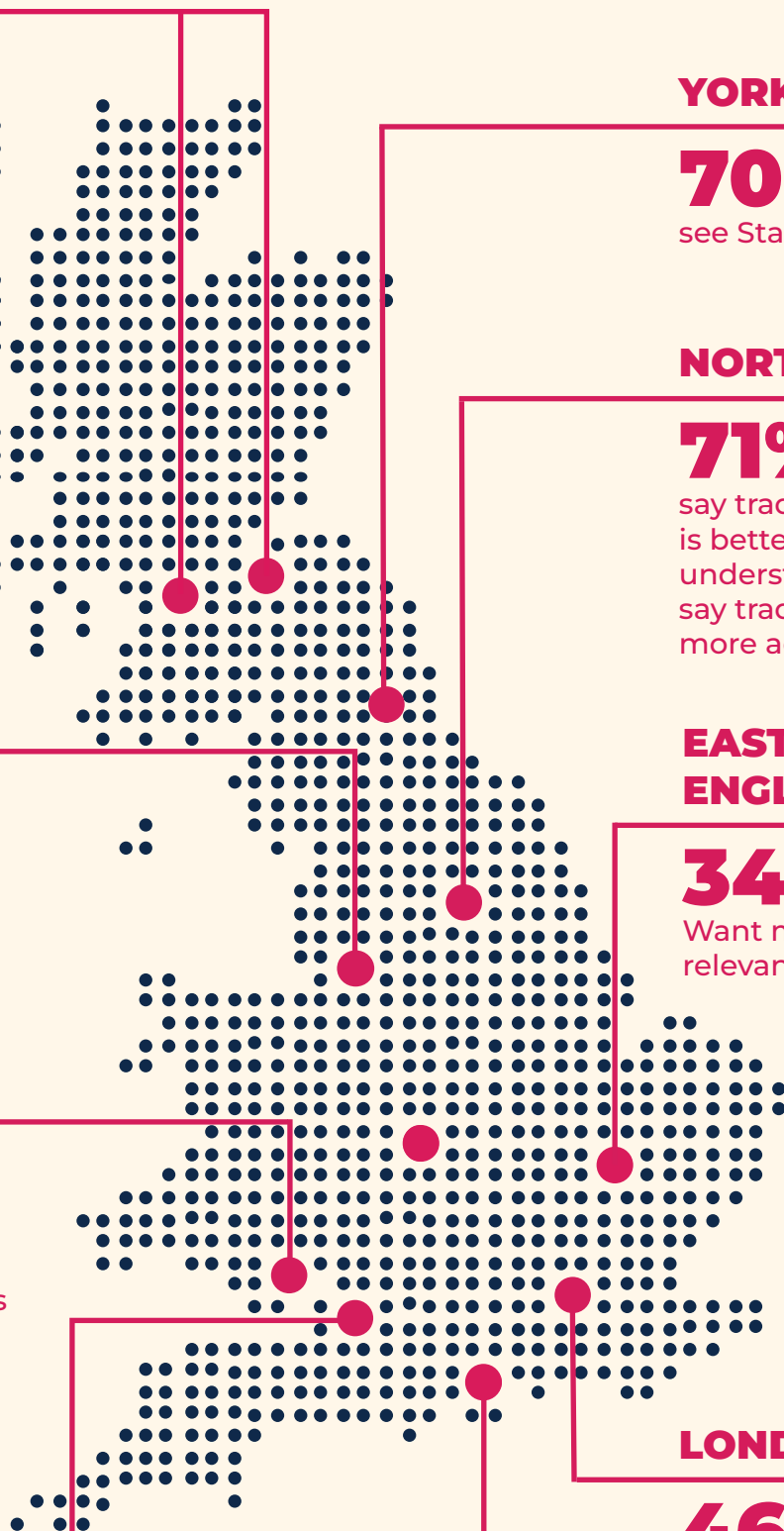
43%

trust local newspapers and news sites vs national average of 39%

SOUTH EAST

11%

trust YouTube creators, which is the lowest in the UK



06

LOOKING AHEAD

What does this all mean? We have three predictions for the year ahead and how it impacts PR and comms professionals across the industry.

TRUST



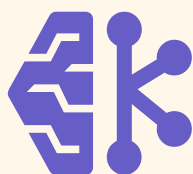
The public will continue to diversify where they turn to for news, especially at a local level where longstanding publishers face unprecedented challenges. Local influencers and new entrants are expected to gain in popularity to fill the void, whilst regional TV & radio news outlets are also set to benefit, especially commercial outlets. The demand for regional news is strong, but it needs to adapt and evolve to deliver original, digital content backed by high-quality, accurate and independent content that appeals across generations.

TRIBES



Britons' changing relationship with information is likely to continue upending politics, forcing politicians to embrace a wider range of channels and protect against misinformation and deepfakes. As new media continues to evolve at pace, the 'new media round' will become a common feature, with politicians broadening and deepening their engagement through social-led storytelling and a video-first, multi-platform approach focused on YouTube and TikTok.

TRUTH



The increased use of AI will continue to blur the lines and erode trust in mainstream media. Nearly half (47%) of 18–24-year-olds plan to increase their use of AI chatbots for news, as the age group most likely to source their news from social media. This dramatic shift will demand organisations adapt their communications to keep pace, while continuing to deliver quality-assured content for older generations.

About Grayling Media

GRAYLING MEDIA

Grayling Media is a UK-wide media relations and intelligence unit sitting at the heart of Grayling's business with experts active across all nine UK offices. The 360° service is focused on integrated media counsel, media relations, content creation, campaigns, and media training.

- **Intelligence**
helping clients get ahead
- **Storytelling**
telling our clients' stories in new and exciting ways
- **Connections**
leveraging our USP to deliver impact.

This ensures that we deliver an unmatched level of counsel, insights and media relationships, ensuring that clients are equipped to generate earned media cut-through across traditional and new media - local, national and international.

About More in Common



More in Common is a think tank and research agency working to bridge the gap between policy makers and the public and helping people in Westminster to understand those voters who feel ignored or overlooked by those in power. We are a full-service research agency offering polling and focus group research and are members of the British Polling Council. The polling in this report was conducted across Great Britain with 2,000 members of the public, September 2025.