



Media Relations Update

May 12, 2020

As the world faces a changing political, economic, and social landscape, ALZA Strategies is committed to keeping you in the loop on how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting public affairs. We hope you remain healthy and safe during these trying times.

Fake News: The Partisan Politics of News Media Trust

As COVID-19 information swamps news reports, consumer opinions about the risks associated with the Coronavirus often fall upon partisan lines, as noted in last week's ALZA update. One of the findings we discussed was that people who consume conservative news and social media are more likely to believe that the threat of COVID-19 has been exaggerated for political advantage against the Trump administration. However, a [recent Pew Research Center study](#) shows that Democrats and Republicans **have both increased trust in news coverage about COVID-19 compared to a couple of weeks ago**.

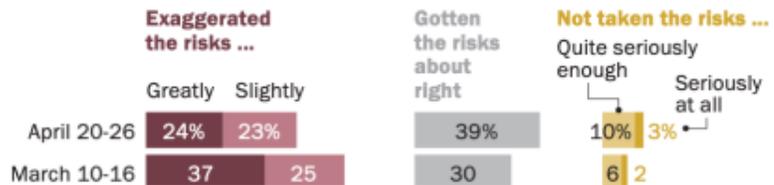
It's worthy of note that in the timespan between the two surveys (March 10-16 to April 20-26) massive changes took place in the U.S. social and political landscape: stay-at-home orders went into effect, shutdowns ensued, and COVID-19 cases spiked from 1,500 to over one million nationwide. These factors likely altered people's beliefs about the severity of the virus and the characterization of its impacts.

Despite noteworthy upticks in trust among all adults, **Democrats are still far more likely to trust mainstream media coverage of COVID-19 than Republicans**. In fact, while the percentage of Republicans who reported that the media exaggerated risks of COVID-19 decreased by almost 10 points, the percentage of Republicans who think that the media did "very well" covering COVID-19 news decreased by 10 points.

The study offers some explanation of Republican's dissatisfaction with news media, suggesting that President Trump's criticisms of the media and journalists are likely responsible - at least in part - for Republican's lack of trust in news coverage about the pandemic.

Share of Americans saying media have exaggerated the risks of COVID-19 declined from March to April

% of U.S. adults who say the news media have ___ about the coronavirus outbreak

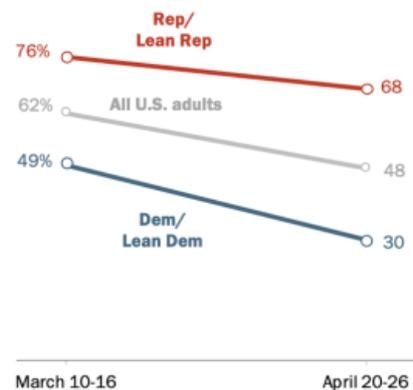


Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2020.

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More change in Democrats' views on whether media exaggerated risks of COVID-19 than among Republicans

% of U.S. adults who say the news media have greatly or slightly exaggerated the risks about the coronavirus outbreak



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2020.

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Roger Salazar, President
(916) 284-1255 | rsalazar@alzamedia.com

Hilary McLean, Partner
(916)203-7274 | hilary@alzamedia.com

