

More Indians turning to AI for news, influencers pull in followers: report

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Influencers on social media platforms and generative AI are “supercharging a fragmented alternative media environment” for news consumption, the 2025 edition of the Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism said.

The report is based on an annual survey of 1 lakh news consumers in 48 countries, including India. Among respondents who “avoid the news” some of, or all, the time, English-speaking Indians with Internet access – which the report warns may not be representative of the entire population – rank fourth, with 50% of respondents in the country counting themselves in the group.

Influencers, in particu-



In India, more people prefer to watch the news rather than read it. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

lar, have gained a sizeable audience, even particularly in news.

Losing traction

Broadcasting, print media and news websites are seeing engagement fall, the report found, as the share of news consumed through social media platforms

such as YouTube and online aggregators expands, the report said.

“In the Philippines, Thailand, Kenya, and India, more people now say they prefer to watch the news rather than read it, further encouraging the shift to personality-led news creators,” the report said. Globally, trust in news as assessed by the report stayed at the same level as it was last year – 40%.

“YouTube content in India has been exploding in recent years with a host of successful talk shows that are both critical of and supportive of the Narendra Modi government,” the report said.

Young people are less likely to consume news from publishers’ websites, with around 41% of respondents aged between 18 and

34 saying that they consider social media and sites such as YouTube as their main source of news.

Misinformation risk

“Messaging apps such as WhatsApp are mostly considered less of a [mis- and disinformation] threat” by respondents, the report said. “One notable exception is India, the messaging app’s largest market, where fake news have in the past incited mob violence (and deaths). Just over one in ten (11%) think that people they know (including friends and family) also play a role in spreading misinformation,” the report said.

AI “comfort levels” among Indian respondents stood at 44%, with nearly a fifth of users saying they used chatbots to get the news weekly.