

As Americans Cope with COVID-19,

New Research Finds a Renewed Focus on Local News and Businesses

Women, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans are least likely to have Positive Perception of Federal Response

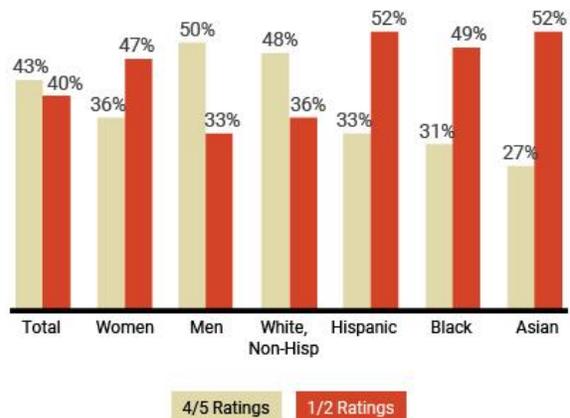
New Rochelle, NY, April 1, 2020—A new study just out of the field from [Horowitz Research](#) on consumer sentiment during the COVID-19 crisis underscores the truth of the adage “all politics are local,” revealing how the crisis has turned America’s attention locally in more ways than one.

Americans Have Better Perceptions of State/Local Than Federal Government’s Handling of The Crisis

- Six in 10 (59%) Americans have a positive perception of how their local/state governments have handled the crisis to date, compared to 44% who feel positively about the federal government’s handling. Americans are also more likely to have positive perceptions of their state/local governments’ preparedness for the crisis.
- When it comes to President Trump’s leadership during the crisis, almost as many Americans have negative perceptions (40%) as have positive ones (43%). The data reveal a clear gender and racial/ethnic gap in perceptions of Trump in this crisis: Women, as well as Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans are the least likely to have positive perceptions (ranging from 27-36%), and about half of Americans in each of those groups have a negative perception (ranging from 47-52%) of Trump’s leadership in the face of this global pandemic.

Perceptions of President Trump’s Leadership Throughout COVID-19 Situation

Ratings on a 5-Point “Very Negative Perception” to “Very Positive Perception”
Base: U.S. Adults 18+



Americans Throw Support Behind Local Businesses

With many of America’s Main Streets already on life support because of increased competition from big-box stores and online retailers like Amazon, the prospect of even more local retailers, restaurants, and services permanently closing shop because they can’t weather the COVID-19 storm is a major concern for Americans.

- Almost nine in 10 (86%) feel that COVID-19 is going to have an impact on local businesses—and just as many say COVID-19 will have an impact on the U.S. and global economies.

- One in four Americans say they already have made an effort to support local businesses and over half say they are likely to do so to make sure those businesses stay afloat, which translates to 78% of Americans willing to invest in local community businesses to help them survive the economic impact of the pandemic.

Local Media Matters More Than Ever

Not surprisingly, Americans surveyed say they have increased their consumption of news across a range platforms and sources.

- Local news outlets are experiencing some of the largest gains, driven by the need for reliable, updated, local reporting on the COVID-19 situation.
- 58% of Americans report consuming more local news than before, including 38% of Americans who were not news viewers before the crisis. This is true even of younger (18-34) Americans, 53% of whom report increasing their local news viewership since the crisis began.
- Local public radio and local/regional newspapers are enjoying spikes in consumption, with 29% of Americans saying they are consuming more of each respective outlet—higher among younger (18-34 and 35-49) than older (50+) Americans, who were already core audiences for those news media before the crisis.

Internet Providers Enjoy Halo Effect of Actions to Support Local Communities

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, home internet access has become more essential than ever. As such, 23% of home internet subscribers have or are considering upgrading their internet services.

While broadband access in the U.S. may seem ubiquitous, the digital divide persists: Only 56% of lower income (<\$30K) households have home internet, according to [Pew](#). In response to the coronavirus crisis, many internet providers in the U.S.—Comcast, Charter, Cox, AT&T, Verizon Fios and others—have enacted plans to help lower income households get connected for free or low-cost, among other responses to the crisis suggested by the FCC. As a result, about four in 10 Americans in the respective footprints of Comcast, Charter, and Cox Communications have a positive perception of how the internet companies are supporting the local community in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

“As this unprecedented crisis upends life for Americans, it has underscored the importance of local community resources. Local businesses, local media, local telecommunications providers, and proactive local leadership are critical lifelines,” notes Adriana Waterston, SVP of Insights and Strategy for Horowitz Research. “Hopefully, this pandemic will remind Americans why it is important to invest in local community development, to support local businesses, and to take local politics seriously.”

About the Bi-Weekly Tracking Study

This study will be fielded every two weeks, subject to client interest. The first five clients can submit two custom questions (included in the cost of the study). Additional questions may be purchased. The next wave will begin fielding Wednesday, April 8. The deadline to submit custom questions for the next wave is Friday, April 3. Oversamples among your customers and/or in your service footprint can be easily and cost-effectively fielded.

Beyond the key findings detailed above, additional topic areas include:

- Perceptions of how COVID-19 is impacting or will impact local, national, and international economies;
- Changes in household internet and TV needs;
- Changes in viewing behaviors, including viewership of news, streaming, watching live TV, and over-the-air;
- Sources of COVID-19 information considered most trustworthy;
- Perceived reliability and satisfaction with home internet services;
- Intentions to add/upgrade/downgrade/cancel TV services, including cable/satellite, streaming services, and antennas.

Methodology: 1,000 online surveys among U.S. 18+, balanced to match the U.S. adult population.

Deliverables: Topline findings delivered in PowerPoint format and full crosstab data by key demos (age, gender, race/ethnicity, urban/suburban/rural, income, and political ideology).

CONTACT

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