

Intent Lab Digital Satisfaction Index reveals steep decline in consumer trust in the internet

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Marketing agency Performics and Medill have measured U.S. consumer attitudes and perceptions of online marketing quarterly through the Intent Lab Digital Satisfaction Index (DSI) since Q3 2016. Over this period, the DSI has revealed a major fluctuation in trust—the consumer perception of the credibility of online information—which has pulled down overall digital satisfaction.

Macro events like the spread of [fake news](#) and misinformation online may have resulted in a sharp increase in consumer mistrust of online [information](#) over the last five quarters. In Q3 2016, prior to the U.S. Election, 47 percent of consumers said that they were "skeptical about anything they read online." By Q4 2016, 62 percent were skeptical. Since then, consumer [trust](#) has bounced back a bit, with 52 percent of respondents saying that they were skeptical of anything they read online in Q4 2017.

Furthermore, the DSI showed that consumers are placing less importance on trust in online information. In fact, trust importance declined 62 percent year-over-year from Q3 2016 to Q3 2017.

Esteban Ribero, Performics SVP of planning and insights, commented, "The fake news phenomenon has created an attitudinal adjustment for [consumers](#) due to cognitive dissonance. People are changing their expectations of the Internet to match their attitudes. We believe that misinformation online won't result in people giving up the internet; it's too much to lose. So people are just minimizing the importance of the

internet as a source of trustworthy information."

The DSI also revealed that fake news is hurting the credibility of online news vs. other news sources. Respondents rated online news as the least trustworthy channel (behind print and TV). And in Q4 2017, 31 percent of respondents said they trusted [online news](#) less vs. the prior year.

More information: For more information, see [www.performics.com/about/digit ... -satisfaction-index/](http://www.performics.com/about/digit...-satisfaction-index/)

Provided by Northwestern University

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