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## *Communications and media in Australia series:*

# **How we encounter misinformation**

## **Executive summary and key findings**

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# Executive summary



## Using this report

This report contains the executive summary and key findings from our *How we encounter misinformation* report, which is part of our *Media and communications in Australia* series.

An [interactive version](#) of the full report can be accessed on our website. We recommend this document is read in conjunction with the entire report as the key findings reference charts in the report. The website also has links to the methodology used, a data quality statement and a glossary of terms for the report. The data for all tables in the report can be directly exported from the interactive version.

## How we encounter misinformation

Our research shows that the majority of Australian adults encounter misinformation when using digital platforms.

In the first 6 months of 2025, 72% of adults who used a digital platform believed they had encountered some form of online misinformation. This is consistent with findings from 2024.

Facebook remained the most widely used digital platform and recorded the highest level of misinformation encounters. X users reported the second-highest rate of misinformation exposure, although this declined by 10 percentage points compared to 2024.

In 2025, Australian adults encountered a diverse range of misinformation topics. The most prevalent topics related to groups in society (e.g. ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender or race). Misinformation about conspiracy theories, health and medical topics, environmental issues, and science and technology declined from 2024.

The location of misinformation encountered by Australian adults varied by platform, reflecting differences in platform functionality and user experience. Misinformation was most likely to be encountered:

- on walls, feeds or in stories on Instagram, X and TikTok
- in advertisements on YouTube.

The research also captured information about Australian adults' experience with labels on misinformation content. Of those who encountered misinformation, 43% reported that the most recent misinformation they saw was labelled by the platform, with an increase in those marked as 'Created by artificial intelligence' compared to 2024.

In 2025, 23% of adults who saw or heard misinformation reported their most recent encounter to the relevant platform (up from 20% in 2024). Of those who knew their report's outcome, 30% (down from 52% in 2024) were notified by the platform that the content did not breach guidelines.

## About the research

This report is based on an ACMA-commissioned nationally representative tracking survey seeking to understand consumer take-up, views and attitudes around communications and media services. Information about the sample and the ACMA annual consumer survey is in the [methodology](#).

# Key findings

## 1. Platform usage

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2025

- Almost all of us used a communication or social media website/app (98%).
- Facebook remained the most widely used social media platform (78%).
- Facebook Messenger, Snapchat and X all saw decreased usage since 2024.
- Use of Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, Pinterest, Telegram and Threads increased over the previous 12 months.

## 2. Misinformation by platform

*Base:* Australian adults who used each specific platform, 6 months to June 2025

### Past 6 months

- Overall, 72% of those who had used a communication or social media website/app believed they encountered misinformation on a digital platform, unchanged from 2024.
- 64% of Facebook users encountered misinformation on the platform in both 2024 and 2025.
- 49% of X users encountered misinformation on the platform (down from 59% in 2024).
- Misinformation was encountered by lower proportions of Reddit and YouTube users. Among Reddit users, 29% came across misinformation (down from 36%) and for YouTube, 29% of users encountered it (down from 32%).

### Most recent

- Almost half (48%) of Facebook users reported their most recent encounter with misinformation was on the platform. This was followed by 26% of X users and 19% of TikTok users.
- A decreased proportion of X users reported their most recent encounter with misinformation was on the platform. (26%, down from 33% in 2024).
- 49% of X users encountered misinformation on the platform (down from 59% in 2024).

## 3. Nature of misinformation

### All platforms

*Base:* Australian adults who saw or heard misinformation, 6 months to June 2025

- Overall, since 2024, there was a smaller proportion of users who encountered misinformation across health and medical, conspiracy theories, environmental, and science and technology.
- Encounters with misinformation about certain societal groups, as well as geopolitical, financial and electoral misinformation, remained stable compared to 2024.

## **Facebook**

*Base:* Australian adults whose most recent experience of misinformation was seen or heard on Facebook

- A smaller proportion of Facebook users encountered misinformation about science and technology on the platform compared to 2024.

## **Instagram**

*Base:* Australian adults who most recent experience of misinformation was seen or heard on Instagram

- A smaller proportion of Instagram users encountered environmental misinformation on Instagram compared to 2024.

## **TikTok**

*Base:* Australian adults whose most recent experience of misinformation was seen or heard on TikTok

- There was a smaller proportion of TikTok users who encountered misinformation about conspiracy theories on TikTok compared to 2024.

## **YouTube**

*Base:* Australian adults whose most recent experience of misinformation was seen or heard on YouTube

- Since 2024, there was an increased proportion of YouTube users who encountered misinformation about certain groups in society on the platform, and a smaller proportion who encountered health and medical misinformation on YouTube.

## **X**

*Base:* Australian adults whose most recent experience of misinformation was seen or heard on X

- There was a notably higher proportion of misinformation about geopolitics and certain groups in society on X, compared to the other categories.
- There were a smaller proportion of X users who encountered electoral misinformation on the platform compared to 2024.
- Those who most recently came across misinformation when using X were more likely to encounter misinformation about certain groups in society, geopolitics and conspiracy theories than those on the other 4 platforms.

## **4. Location of misinformation**

*Base:* Australian adults who saw or heard misinformation, 6 months to June 2025

- The location of the most recent encounter with misinformation varied by platform.
- On Instagram, X and TikTok, higher proportions of users saw misinformation on their wall, feed or in their stories than on Facebook and YouTube.
- On YouTube, a higher proportion of users saw misinformation in an advertisement than those on the other 4 platforms.

## **5. Labelling of misinformation**

*Base:* Australian adults who saw or heard misinformation, 6 months to June 2025

- 43% said their most recent encounter with misinformation was labelled by the platform.
- There was an increase in posts labelled 'Created with AI' for Facebook, YouTube, X and TikTok.

## **6. Reporting of misinformation**

*Base:* Australian adults who saw or heard misinformation, 6 months to June 2025

- Almost a quarter (23%) made a report or complaint about the most recent encounter with misinformation to the platform operator.
- Across all platforms shown, the majority were unlikely to report misinformation to the platform operator.

## **7. Outcome of misinformation reported**

*Base:* Australian adults who were aware of the outcome of information they reported, 6 months to June 2025

- Three in 10 were notified by the platform that the content did not breach its guidelines, a substantial decline from 2024 (52%).
- A higher proportion said that a label was applied to content they had reported as misinformation compared to 2024.