



SITUATION REPORT

Technical briefing on the state of the information ecosystem, November 2024 • www.cdmrn.ca

Introduction

Welcome to the November edition of the Canadian Information Ecosystem Situation Reports! Each month, we report on the state of the information ecosystem in the

previous month as it relates to politics, media, and the broader state of democracy. Our goal is to enhance collective understanding of the stable and dynamic dimensions of the Canadian information

ecosystem (CIE), articulate its vulnerabilities, and characterize current and emerging information threats. [Our method](#) combines digital trace data (social media analysis of Canadian individuals

and organizations that are politically influential across TikTok, X/Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Telegram), opinion tracking (a monthly survey of the Canadian population), and media monitoring.

Key findings:

- ♦ **Canada post strike, tied for the most talked about story of the year** — Since November 15th 2024, Canada Post workers have been on strike, shutting down national operations, impacting deliveries ahead of a busy holiday season. Nearly every Canadian is familiar with the strike (95%), which is tied with the attempted assassination of Trump in July. This level of awareness is likely linked to extensive media coverage and many online commentators using the strike as an opportunity to critique both labour unions and Canada Post, combined with the critical dependency on Canada Post during the holiday season.
- ♦ **Canadians place little trust in celebrity and well-known political influencer endorsements** — Celebrities and online influencers have massive social media reach and public recognition levels.

However, Canadians generally do not trust their opinions on Canadian politics and disapprove of celebrities making political endorsements (especially non-Canadians like Elon Musk, Joe Rogan, and Taylor Swift). Only 5% of Canadians believe that their political opinions are influenced by celebrity endorsements, but vastly overestimate how celebrity endorsements matter for their fellow citizens with 50% believing that celebrity endorsements can sway other Canadians' opinions.

- ♦ **Concern about US foreign influence jumps 7%** — Prior to the US presidential election, Canadians strongly believed a Trump presidency would be [bad for Canada](#). This fear has manifested with Trump threatening a 25% tariff on all Canadian products causing a political scramble and a massive online conversation where Canadians largely criticized the president-elect. This negative sentiment may have spilled over into concern about foreign influence where we observe a dramatic

7% increase in concern about US influence in Canadian politics and elections, with concern about the US now higher than concern about India.

- ♦ **Persistent misinformation in the Canadian information ecosystem** — Public concern over misinformation decreased by 5% since October; however, online links to misinformation by politically influential accounts increased by 5%. This is evident in ongoing climate mis- and disinformation narratives amidst United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) debates with many online posts denying the anthropogenic realities of climate change while likening climate policies to authoritarian government measures. [Recent research](#) highlights adversarial narratives connecting public health crises to climate and energy policies in the Canadian information ecosystem.

Ecosystem Snapshot

X Marks the Vote: How Influencers Shape Canadian Politics

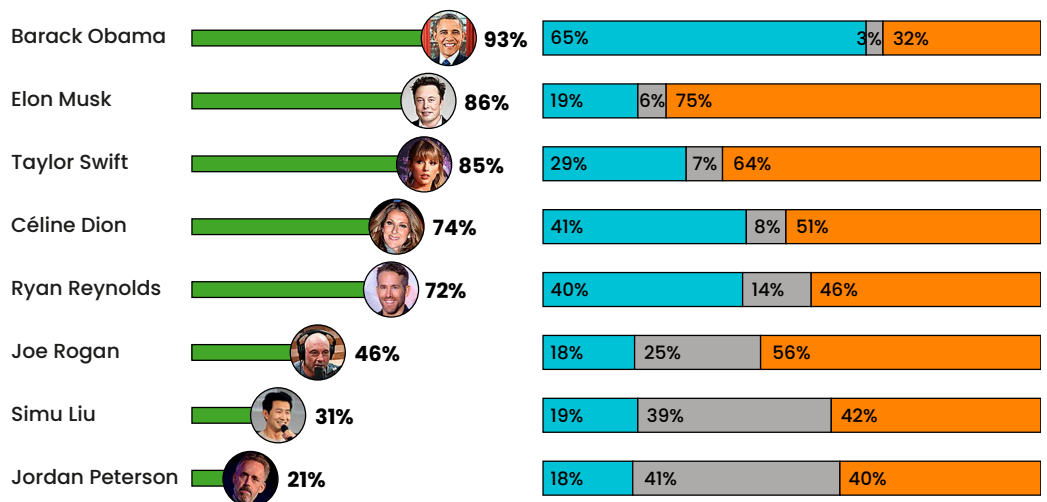
In the 2024 U.S. election, Joe Rogan, Taylor Swift and Elon Musk made headlines for their endorsements. Similarly, Barack Obama's endorsements of Justin Trudeau in the 2019 and 2021 Canadian campaigns were significant moments during the election. But how do Canadians view such endorsements? Do they matter to our political decisions?

We surveyed 1450 Canadians in a nationally representative survey to assess their familiarity with and trust of some of the most influential

Figure 1 Influencers and Canadian Public Opinion

Recognition

Can name from photo



■ High trust ■ Don't know ■ Low trust

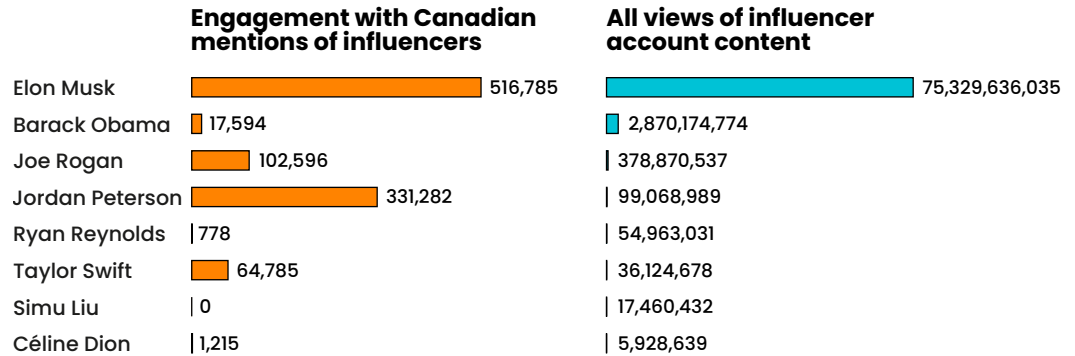
N=1450 Canadian respondents, survey fielded between Nov 28 and Dec 3, 2024

celebrities in the US and Canada's information ecosystem. **Figure 1** shows that, among eight major figures shown, Barack Obama is the most recognized (93% of respondents), closely followed by Elon Musk (87%) and Taylor Swift (86%). When it comes to trust in their opinions on Canadian politics, this figure also shows that Obama has the largest proportion of Canadians that give high trust (65%), whereas Musk has the largest share of Canadians that give him low trust (75%). Notably, only 5% of Canadians report that celebrity endorsements influence their own political opinions, but 50% believe that such endorsements sway others.

To dig further, we assessed the extent Canadians approve or disapprove of political endorsements by these celebrities. Our survey found that generally twice the number of Canadians' disapprove of celebrity endorsements versus approve (36% disapproval vs 15% approval). This gap grows larger when the endorsement comes from non-Canadian figures (53% disapproval vs 8% approval).

Our survey findings show the broader skepticism of American cultural influence on Canadian politics despite the overwhelming

Figure 2 Influencers and Online Reach



Based on posts on X between Oct 31 and Nov 25, 2024

visibility of U.S. figures on platforms like X. For example, as shown in **Figure 2**, X (formerly Twitter) data shows that Elon Musk commands unparalleled reach, with billions of views – surpassing any other figure included in our survey 25 times over. Prominent influencers like Joe Rogan and Jordan Peterson also command a lot of attention in Canadian politics (measured in engagement with Canadian influencer and politician

content that tags, retweets, or replies to them on X).

Our findings this month reveal a tension in the way we engage with and trust celebrity influencers. While Canadians lean towards disapproving of political endorsements by celebrities, these figures like Obama, Musk, and Swift remain some of the most recognized and influential voices in the Canadian information ecosystem.

Their visibility, varying trust levels, and perceived impact on others shows a meaningful way celebrity endorsements shape public opinion. Despite Canadians' skepticism towards celebrities wading into politics, it is likely the messenger still matters—even if the message itself is unwelcome.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Data for this report includes social media 483,310 posts from 3,085 distinct entities across four social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube) with a total of 5,200 unique and active social handles for the period of October 31st to November 25th, 2024 and survey responses from 1450 Canadian adults conducted from November 28th to December 3rd using a commercial survey panel provider. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/-2.57, 19 times out of 20. Engagement totals

include engagement from Canadian and international audiences, which cannot be distinguished from each other. Unlike previous versions, this report does not include data from Facebook due to Meta's decision to shut down Crowdtangle, a research tool we used to collect post data from the platform.

For a link to our detailed methodology [click here](#). To sign up for our month situation reports, [click here](#)

Please provide any comments you have on these reports to info@cdmrn.ca.



To sign up for our monthly situation reports, [click here](#), or scan the QR code above.

ABOUT THE CDMRN

The Canadian Digital Media Research Network (CDMRN) is a pioneering initiative committed to fortifying and fostering resilience within Canada's unique information ecosystem. Our mission is to understand the dynamics of

information production, dissemination, and consumption across digital media with the goal of empowering Canadians to navigate the complexities of the modern digital age.



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The work of the Canadian Digital Media Research Network is funded in part by the Government of Canada.