



SITUATION REPORT

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

Introduction

Welcome to the sixth 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:

- ◆ **The US Election was closely followed and discussed in Canada** — Canadians paid close attention to the US election, frequently posting about it in September and October. Discussion focused on Harris' and Trump's stances on foreign policy and immigration, with generally highly negative views on Trump's policies and campaign. Positive content was less common, with all candidate discussion topics being more negative on average.
- ◆ **Canadians think the Trump presidency will be terrible for Canada** — 45% of Canadians believe a Trump presidency will be 'Terrible' for Canada, with only 4% thinking it will be 'Great'. While two-thirds of Canadians would have preferred Harris, Conservative partisans were equally split between preferring a Trump or a Harris presidency.
- ◆ **Huge spike in Canadians attributing foreign influence to India** — Canadian public concern for Indian foreign influence jumped 14% (30% to 44% this month). This follows the [RCMP statement on India sponsored violent criminal activity](#) that Trudeau spoke about during [his testimony at the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference](#). For the 71% of Canadians who have heard about this event, 56% think that India is trying to influence Canadian politics and elections through covert, deceptive and sometimes threatening means.
- ◆ **Widespread awareness of calls for Trudeau to step down** — Amidst the end of the supply-and-confidence agreement between the federal NDP-Liberal parties, the stability of our current government is top of mind. 81% of Canadians have heard about a group of Liberal MPs calling for Trudeau to resign as Party Leader. This follows monthly trends that indicate growing online discussion in Canada around the internal instability of the Liberal Party amidst a looming election and their low polling numbers.

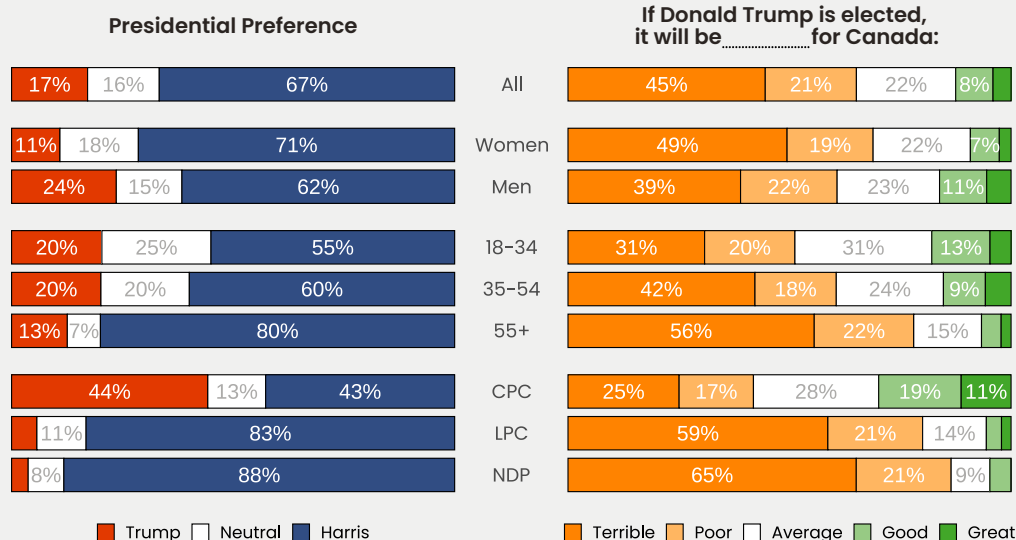
Ecosystem Snapshot

Eh or Nay? Canadians Weigh in on the US Election

In the wake of the U.S. presidential election on November 5, 2024 and the return of Donald Trump as President-elect, Canadian interest in American politics has been understandably high. This month, we looked at Canadian opinion towards the election and the anticipated impact that American politics would have upon our country. Specifically, we assessed who Canadians preferred to win the election? What are the anticipated impacts of the new president on Canada? And how did people feel about these candidates?

As shown in Figure 1, prior to the election the Canadian population was very aligned in their sentiments

Figure 1 **Canadian Presidential Candidate Opinions before the US Federal Election**



towards the candidates and the outcomes of the election. We asked Canadians which candidate they would prefer to win the presidency — they overwhelmingly preferred Kamala Harris, with

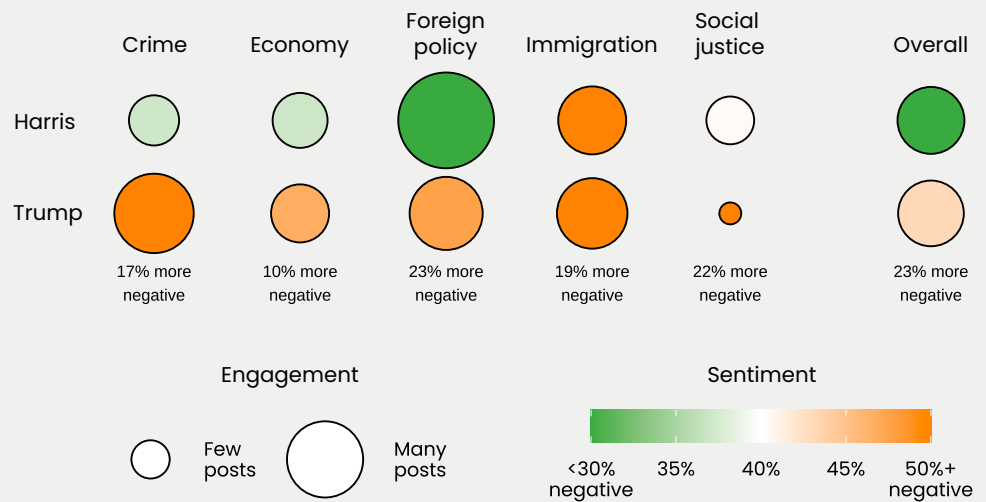
two-thirds of Canadians and four out of five individuals over the age of 55 preferring her victory. While Conservatives were tied (within a margin of error), they only slightly preferred Trump. Men were also more

than twice as likely to prefer Trump than Harris. We also asked what the impact of another Trump presidency would be for Canada. Canadians largely agreed that it would be either 'Terrible' or 'Poor' —

especially the older and left-leaning population. Although Conservatives were split on the perceived impacts, slightly more felt that Trump's impact would be negative.

The negative sentiments identified in our survey were strongly echoed in our online information ecosystem. We measured how Canadians talked about both candidates and major issues online. We identified 19,350 posts in September and October on social media from politicians, influencers and news organizations that included references to Donald Trump, Kamala Harris, Tim Walz, JD Vance or Joe Biden. Then, using sentiment and topic modeling, we looked at how Canadians posted about the Democrat and Republican nominees and whether they were positive or negative towards the candidates. Figure 2 evaluates the level of engagement with (circle size) and sentiment towards (gradients of negative) the main topics discussed by both candidates (Crime, Economy, Foreign Policy, Immigration and Social Justice). We find that, overall, posts about Donald Trump were 26% more negative in tone than those about Kamala Harris. This negativity varied, however, with economic posts about Trump comparatively only 10% more negative. With overall

Figure 2 Canadian social media engagement and sentiment by presidential candidate and topic



Based on 19,350 classified posts from Canadian entities in September and October. Sphere size scaled to the number of posts per entity-topic-sentiment combination and the gradient based on the proportion of content that is negative.

engagement in the discussion about Harris and Trump fairly equal, we see that most engagement was around the topics of foreign policy for Harris and crime, immigration and foreign

policy for Trump.

This month, we saw a clear difference in public sentiment between Canadians and Americans, with Canadians showing more

alignment with each other than with their southern neighbours. As the new U.S. presidency takes shape, we'll be monitoring closely to see how the situation evolves.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Data for this report includes social media 765,265 posts from 3,172 distinct entities across four social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube) with a total of 5,363 unique and active social handles for the period of September 27th to October 29th, 2024 and survey responses from 1487 Canadian adults conducted from October 30th to November 3rd using a commercial survey panel provider. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/-2.54%, 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](#).

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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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