

PRCA / Opinium

Climate Crisis Misinformation: Consumer Report



Key findings

23 February 2021

OPINIUM RESEARCH

58 Great Sutton St
London, EC1V 0DG
T +44 (0)20 7566 3190
research@opinium.com



Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	OP16248
PROJECT NAME	Climate Crisis Misinformation: Consumer Report
PROJECT MANAGER NAME	Sophie Holland
PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL	sophieholland@opinium.com
SAMPLE	2000 nationally representative UK adults
FIELDWORK DATES	17/02/21 – 19/02/21

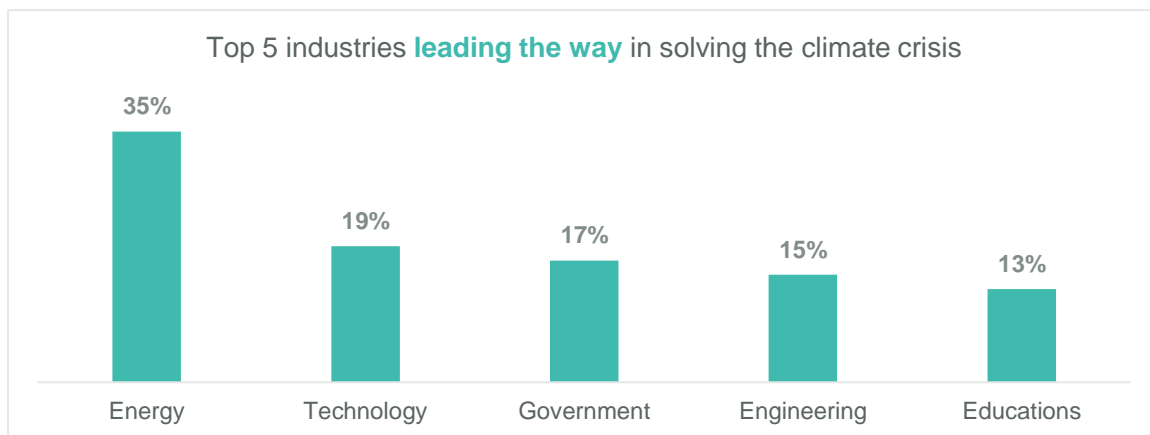
Concern about the climate crisis

Adults in the UK feel that the climate crisis is the third most important societal issue to tackle, coming in behind the Covid-19 pandemic (1st) and poverty (2nd). 15% of UK consumers think the climate crisis is the most important societal issue to tackle.

Almost half (46%) are highly concerned about the climate crisis, defined as selecting 8-10 on a 10-point scale about climate crisis concern. And a similar proportion (51%) have high levels of belief (ratings of 8-10 on a 10-point scale) that the planet faces an existential threat due to the man-made climate crisis. Though 7% of the population have low levels of belief in the man-made climate crisis (ratings of 0-3 on a 10-point scale).

Two fifths (65%) of UK adults think that we are not making progress on the climate crisis quickly enough. And three quarters (74%) feel that businesses need to take action in tackling the climate crisis.

UK adults think that the industry **leading the way** in solving the climate crisis is Energy, the top 5 are shown below:



Though it's worth noting that 36% said they didn't know which industry is leading the way in solving the climate crisis.

On the flip side, the industries that UK adults think are **doing the least** to help solve the climate crisis are:

- Fashion (24%)
- Travel and transport (20%)
- Building / construction (18%)
- Government (16%)
- Beauty and care (15%)

Again, a large proportion (34%) are unsure of which industries are doing the least to help solve the climate crisis.

There are three key sectors that UK adults feel are **critical in helping solve** the climate crisis: energy (44%), government (40%) and travel and transport (30%).

Information on the climate crisis

The most common places to hear information about the climate crisis are TV news (64%), TV documentaries (55%), newspapers (38%) and websites (34%). TV documentaries (78%) and TV News (74%) are the most trusted sources of information when it comes to the climate crisis specifically.

Three in ten (29%) hear information about the climate crisis through social media. However, social media is the least trusted source of information about the climate crisis, with 62% saying they wouldn't trust information they saw on social media about the climate crisis.

Over a third (35%) of people rarely or never double check that the information they are seeing about the climate crisis is correct.

When it comes to influential figures in discussions about the climate crisis, scientists come out as the most influential (57%), followed by government figures (43%) and climate activists (32%).

Social media and the climate crisis

Looking specifically at information shared on social media about the climate crisis, we found that almost half (48%) of social media users often/ sometimes come across news on social media about the climate crisis that they feel is not fully accurate. This rises to 59% amongst TikTok users, 58% amongst Twitter users, and 57% amongst Instagram users.

Exploring misinformation and disinformation specifically about the climate crisis, we found that 47% of social media users have come across a news story on social media about the climate crisis that was either exaggerated or made up entirely in the past month. A quarter (26%) said that they have seen a news story about the climate crisis on social media in the past month that they thought was made up at the time they saw it.

Of those who encountered exaggerated / made up news about the climate crisis in the past month on social media, 46% said it came from someone else on social media, 27% have seen this from political interest groups or activist organisations and 23% have seen it from journalists and news organisations.

The public's knowledge of the terms misinformation, disinformation and even fake news is poor. When asked to match up definitions many got these wrong:

- Only 45% correctly identified that Misinformation means:
 - False information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead
- Only 51% correctly identified that Disinformation means:
 - Deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda
- Only 54% correctly identified that fake news means:
 - False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke

About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

www.opinium.com | research@opinium.com | 0207 566 3190