



*competition commission*  
*south africa*

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**MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS MARKET INQUIRY:  
CONSUMER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND  
SURVEY**

*Survey Instrument*

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## 1. Introduction

This document provides the proposed Survey Questionnaire for the Consumer Survey to be conducted as part of the evidence gathering process for the Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry (“the Inquiry”) for the Competition Commission South Africa (“CCSA”), in whole referred to as “the Project.”

## 2. Survey Questionnaire

The following table provides an overview of the proposed questions to be included in the survey. As part of the introduction to the survey, a definition of news will be provided to facilitate a common understanding amongst participants. The definition of news to be included will be as follows:

**“For the purposes of this Survey, ‘news’ or ‘news content’ refers to information that raises awareness and informs you about recent events and developments. This includes updates on current affairs, politics, the economy, the weather, sports, cultural events, and other significant happenings in your local area, community, South Africa and around the world.”**

In addition to the overall definition of news, definitions of “search platforms”, “social media platforms” and “personalised feeds” will be provided, as follows:

1. “Search” relates to how one consumes news on search engines such as Google Search and Bing.
2. “Social media platforms” relates to how one consumes news media on social media platforms such as Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, etc.
3. “Personalised feeds” refers to how one consumes news on personalised feeds that are displayed in general search-like formats and include Microsoft Start and Google Discover (the feed that appears when swiping right on an Android phone).

| #                   | Question  | Response Options   |
|---------------------|---|--|
| <b>Introduction</b> |   |  |
| 1                   | Which of the following types of platforms do you currently use <b>the most</b> to find and view/listen to news?   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Search engines (e.g. Google search, Bing) <b>[Go to Q4]</b></li> <li>2. Social Media (e.g. YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok) <b>[Go to Q4]</b></li> <li>3. Personalised Feeds (e.g. Google Discover, Google News, Microsoft Start) <b>[Go to Q4]</b></li> <li>4. None of the above <b>[Go to Q2]</b></li> </ol>  |
| 2                   | <b>[If 'None of the above' to Q1]</b><br>What are your reasons for not viewing/listening to news through the above-mentioned platforms? Select all that apply             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I do not access news at all. <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> <li>2. I go directly to the websites of news media (e.g. News24) for my news <b>[Go to Q3]</b></li> <li>3. I prefer to watch/read/listen to news using traditional platforms (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper) <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> <li>4. Mobile data costs are too expensive <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> <li>5. I do not have the devices required to access news online (e.g. a cell phone or laptop) <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> <li>6. News on online platforms is not available in my preferred language</li> <li>7. I do not trust the news provided through online platforms <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> <li>8. Other (please specify) <b>[Go to Q18]</b></li> </ol> |
| 3                   | If you indicated that you prefer to access news directly through the websites of news media outlets, why do you prefer to access news through these websites?             | Open-ended <b>[Go to Q18]</b>  |
| 4                   | Please select the <b>main [for search/ personalised feeds] / the top 3 platforms [for social media]</b> that you use to find and view/listen to news from the list below: | <p><b>[If respondent selected "Search engines" in Q1]</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Google search</li> <li>2. Bing</li> <li>3. Yahoo search engine</li> </ol> <p><b>[If respondent selected "social media" in Q1]</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. YouTube</li> <li>2. Facebook</li> <li>3. WhatsApp</li> <li>4. Instagram</li> <li>5. X (formerly Twitter)</li> </ol>  |

| #  | Question   | Response Options   |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | 6. Tik Tok<br>7. LinkedIn<br>8. Threads<br>9. Pinterest<br>[If respondent selected “personalised feeds” in Q1]<br>1. Google Discover (e.g. swiping right on Android phone for Google’s feed)<br>2. Google News<br>3. Microsoft Start   |
| 5  | Please provide your <b>top 3</b> reasons for accessing news on [Search/Social Media/Personalised Feeds]:   | 1. They are easy to access and convenient<br>2. I can access news stories when I have time.<br>3. I can access breaking news stories<br>4. They provide affordable access to news stories<br>5. I can browse news content for free (it is “data-free”)<br>6. They recommend news relevant to my interests<br>7. They offer news relevant to my community<br>8. They offer news in my preferred language (other than English)<br>9. I can trust news distributed on the platform<br>10. They provide a variety of news content<br>11. I can confirm information/ news stories that I saw elsewhere online<br>12. I am attracted to the platforms by trending stories that pop-up in my notifications/on the home page<br>13. Other (please specify) |
| <b>The User Journey and Consumption Habits</b> |  |  |
| 6  | How frequently do you access news on [Search/Social Media/Personalised Feeds] on an <b>active</b> basis?<br><br>By <b>active basis</b> we mean actively searching for news, for example, typing in “news today” or a news related query in the search bar. | 1. Seldomly (less than once a week)<br>2. Weekly (once or twice a week)<br>3. Multiple times per week (3 to 6 times a week)<br>4. Daily (once or twice a day)<br>5. Multiple times per day (3 to 5 times a day)  |

| #  | Question  | Response Options  |
|----|---|---|
| 7  | <p>How frequently do you access news on [Search/Social Media/ Personalised Feeds] platforms on a <b>passive</b> basis?</p> <p>By <b>passive basis</b> we mean passively scrolling through a platform or feed that has been curated for the user and engaging with news content as and when it comes up.</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seldomly (less than once a week)</li> <li>2. Weekly (once or twice a week)</li> <li>3. Multiple times per week (3 to 6 times a week)</li> <li>4. Daily (once or twice a day)</li> <li>5. Multiple times per day (3 to 5 times a day)</li> </ol>   |
| 8  | <p>What impact does breaking or trending news have on how you access news? Select all that apply.</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I access my preferred platforms more regularly</li> <li>2. I stay on my preferred platforms for longer</li> <li>3. I access the platforms with the intention of consuming news, instead of accessing the platform on a spontaneous basis</li> <li>4. I access other platforms beyond my usual platforms</li> <li>5. No impact</li> <li>6. Other (please specify)</li> </ol> |
| 9  | <p>When viewing/listening to news online, how frequently do you?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Skim through headlines when scrolling on your feed/results page without fully reading the headlines</li> <li>2. Scroll through your feed/results page and read the headlines only but do not engage further on the content</li> <li>3. Scroll through your feed/results page and read the headlines and the snippet</li> <li>4. Click on a news article when you have only read the headlines (without reading the snippet)</li> <li>5. Click on a news article when you have read the headlines and the snippet?</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never</li> <li>• Seldomly</li> <li>• Occasionally</li> <li>• Frequently</li> <li>• Always</li> </ul>   |
| 10 | <p>When you decide <b>not to click</b> on an article after reading the headline/snippet, what are the reasons? Select all that apply.</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The headline/snippet provided enough information</li> <li>2. The headline/snippet did not interest me</li> <li>3. I did not trust the source</li> <li>4. The heading seemed like clickbait</li> <li>5. I do not have time to read the full article</li> </ol>   |

| #  | Question  | Response Options  |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. I often can't access the article because it has a paywall</li> <li>7. Other (please specify)</li> </ul>   |
| 11   | Which of the following statements do you agree with? Please select all that apply.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Headlines &amp; snippets provide enough information to help decide whether to read the full article</li> <li>2. Headlines &amp; snippets provide me with a time-efficient way to view news as I don't have to read the full article</li> <li>3. Headlines &amp; snippets provide me with a convenient way to view news</li> <li>4. Reading headlines &amp; snippets avoids me having to pay for news</li> <li>5. Headlines and snippets accurately reflect what the news story is about</li> <li>6. Headlines &amp; snippets spark my interest in news stories and generally make me want to read more</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Value of News Media to Online Platforms</b> |   |   |
| 12   | If news content was no longer available on the [search platforms/ personalized feed platforms / social media platforms] that you use to access news, how would this impact your usage of these platforms? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I would no longer use the platform at all</li> <li>2. I would spend much less time on the platform</li> <li>3. I would spend somewhat less time on the platform</li> <li>4. I would spend the same amount of time on the platform/there would be no impact</li> <li>5. I would spend more time on the platform</li> </ul>   |
| 13   | Which of the following statements regarding online platforms apply to you. Select all that apply.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I trust the platforms more when credible news content is available</li> <li>2. I access platforms more regularly when news is available</li> <li>3. I spend more time on the platforms than intended because I am consuming news content</li> <li>4. I spend more time on the platforms when community news (i.e. news that focuses on my neighbourhood, suburb or town) is available</li> <li>5. I spend more time on the platforms when news in local languages is available</li> <li>6. I am more likely to access a platform if news is available in local (non-English) languages</li> <li>7. I follow specific news journalists, presenters or reporters</li> <li>8. The specific news journalists, presenters or reporters keep me more engaged with the platform</li> </ul> |



| #                              | Question   | Response Options   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Mis- and Disinformation</b> |  |  |
| 14                             | To what extent do you agree that the presence of credible and trustworthy news (i.e. news from reputable news outlets/journalists) on [search/social media/personalised feed] platforms reduces the spread of false or inaccurate information?   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly disagree</li> <li>2. Disagree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> <li>5. Strongly agree</li> </ol>  |
| 15                             | Please expand on your answer above.  | Open-ended   |
| <b>Generative AI</b>           |  |  |
| 16                             | <p><b>[Definition to be included in the survey: Generative artificial intelligence ("AI") refers to a type of technology that can create new content such as images or text based on data provided, e.g. ChatGPT or Gemini, Co-pilot, Meta AI]</b></p> <p>How likely are you to use generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Gemini, , Co-pilot, Perplexity, Meta AI to access news in the future?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very unlikely</li> <li>2. Unlikely</li> <li>3. Neither likely nor unlikely</li> <li>4. Likely</li> <li>5. Very likely</li> <li>6. I am not aware of Generative AI platforms</li> </ol> |
| 17                             | Have you used generative AI platforms to ask queries related to news?  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No</li> <li>2. Yes, but only once or twice</li> <li>3. Yes, occasionally</li> <li>4. Yes, frequently</li> <li>5. I am not aware of Generative AI platforms</li> </ol>                  |
| <b>Demographics</b>            |  |  |
| 18                             | Please specify your age:   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 18-34</li> <li>2. 35-50</li> <li>3. 51+</li> </ol>   |
| 19                             | Please specify your race:  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Black</li> </ol>   |

| #  | Question  | Response Options   |
|----|---|--|
|    |   | 2. White<br>3. Indian<br>4. Coloured<br>5. Other   |
| 20 | How best would you categorise the area in which you live? | 1. Rural (e.g. farming communities, remote villages)<br>2. Peri-urban (e.g. townships on the edge of cities)<br>3. Urban (e.g. cities)             |
| 21 | What is your home language?                               | 1. English<br>2. isiZulu<br>3. isiXhosa<br>4. Afrikaans<br>5. Sepedi<br>6. Tswana<br>7. Sotho<br>8. Tsonga<br>9. Swati<br>10. Venda<br>11. Ndebele |
| 22 | What is your average <u>annual</u> income?                | 1. R0 - R54 344<br>2. R54 345 - R363 930<br>3. R363 931 - R631 120<br>4. R631 121+<br>5. Prefer not to say   |