

Methodology

Facebook user survey

The analysis in this report is based on a nationally representative survey conducted from Sept. 4 to Oct. 1, 2018, among a sample of 963 U.S. adults ages 18 years and older who have a Facebook account. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

The survey was conducted by the GfK Custom Research, LLC in English and Spanish using KnowledgePanel, its nationally representative online research panel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability sampling methods and include those with internet access and those who did not have internet access at the time of their recruitment (KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it, and if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel). A combination of random-digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling (ABS) methodologies have been used to recruit panel members (in 2009 KnowledgePanel switched its sampling methodology for recruiting members from RDD to ABS).

KnowledgePanel continually recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition as people leave the panel. All active members of the GfK panel with an active Facebook account were eligible for inclusion in this study. In all, 1,419 panelists were invited to take part in the survey. All sampled members received an initial email to notify them of the survey and provided a link to the survey questionnaire. Additional follow-up reminders were sent to those who had not responded as needed. In total, 1,040 people completed the survey. Of those, 963 cases were determined to be valid and included in the final analyses. The other 77 cases were excluded due to evidence of speeding through the survey or because the respondent was not able to log in to Facebook or find the right page.

To complete the survey, respondents were asked to log in to their Facebook account and navigate to the page containing their Facebook ad categories. The survey then asked them to answer a series of questions about the contents of that page. All findings in this study are based on these self-reported results – the Center did not gain access to users' Facebook accounts or collect any additional data (whether passively or otherwise) about users' Facebook accounts beyond what was self-reported in the survey.

The process for finding the [page](#) of categories that Facebook has developed about a given user may differ depending on the device being used to access Facebook.

Respondents completing the survey on a **laptop or desktop computer** we instructed to follow these steps:

1. *Log on to your Facebook.com account.*
2. *On upper right side of the screen click on the upside-down black triangle. You will get a dropdown menu. Click on “Settings” near the bottom of the menu.*
3. *On the “General Account Settings” page, click on “ads” on the lower part of the left column.*
4. *This should put you on a page called “Your ad preferences.” Click on the tab of this page called “Your information.”*
5. *You will see two choices right under “Your information,” one that says “About you” and one that says “Your categories.” Click on “Your categories.”*
6. *Once you select “your categories,” you should see one of two options:*
 - a. *A list of boxes with information about your hometown, birthday, interests, etc. You might need to select “see more” see all the categories on your list*
 - b. *A message that says if you do not have any “behaviors” listed. (This will likely appear if you have previously changed your privacy settings to prevent Facebook from collecting certain information.)*

Respondents completing the survey on a **mobile device** were instructed to follow these steps:

1. *Open the Facebook app and sign in or open a web browser and navigate to Facebook.com and log in.*
2. *Near the top or bottom of your screen (depending on your device), you will see three horizontal lines. Click those lines.*
3. *On the next screen, scroll down and select “settings.”*
4. *On the next screen, scroll down and select “ad preferences.”*
5. *On the next screen, select the option that reads “your information.”*
6. *Select the option that reads “Review and Manage your Categories.”*
7. *You should see a screen with one of two options:*
 - a. *A list of boxes with information about your hometown, birthday, interests, etc. You might need to select “see more” to see all the categories on your list.*
 - b. *A message that says if you do not have any “behaviors” listed. (This will likely appear if you have previously changed your privacy settings to prevent Facebook from collecting certain information.)*

The final sample of 963 adults was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, race, Hispanic origin, education, region, household income, home ownership status and

metropolitan area to the parameters of the Census Bureau's March 2018 Current Population Survey (CPS) Supplement Data. This weight is multiplied by an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for differences in the probability of selection of various segments of GfK's sample and by a panel weight that adjusts for any biases due to nonresponse and noncoverage at the panel recruitment stage (using all of the parameters described above).

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting at each of these stages.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

American Trends Panel survey

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cellphone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by GfK.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted May 29-June 11, 2018, among 4,594 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,594 respondents is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from several large, national landline and cellphone RDD surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.¹ The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government, conducted Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.² The third group of panelists was recruited from

¹ When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

² Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after Feb. 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

a survey conducted April 25 to June 4, 2017. Of the 5,012 adults interviewed in the survey or pretest, 3,905 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 1,628 agreed to participate.³

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. decennial census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the July-December 2016 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2017. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2015 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the 2017 ATP Panel Refresh Survey. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the ATP is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey. All subgroup sample sizes reflect only individuals who saw categories listed on their ad preference page:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	963	3.4 percentage points
1 to 9 categories	255	6.5 percentage points
10 to 20 categories	261	6.5 percentage points
21 or more categories	322	5.8 percentage points
Somewhat or very accurate categories	568	4.4 percentage points
Not very or not at all accurate categories	264	6.4 percentage points
Use Facebook several times a day	476	4.8 percentage points

³ White, non-Hispanic college graduates were subsampled at a rate of 50%.

About once a day	221	7.0 percentage points
Less often	152	8.3 percentage points
Account is less than 5 years old	168	7.9 percentage points
5 to 10 years	501	4.7 percentage points
More than 10 years	176	7.8 percentage points
Adjusted privacy settings in the past year	513	4.6 percentage points
Did not adjust privacy settings in the past year	334	5.7 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The May 2018 wave had a response rate of 84% (4,594 responses among 5,486 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.4%.⁴

Pew Research Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center, 2019

⁴ Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

Topline questionnaire: Facebook user survey

2018 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FACEBOOK USER SURVEY – GfK KNOWLEDGE PANEL

FINAL TOPLINE

SEPT. 4 – OCT. 1, 2018

TOTAL N=963

FaceB1 Do you have an active Facebook account?

Based on all Facebook users [N=963]

%	100	Yes
	0	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

SNSFR About how often do you use or visit Facebook?

Based on all Facebook users [N=963]

%	56	Several times a day
	25	About once a day
	19	Less often
	<1	Refused

FaceB2 About how long have you had a Facebook account?

Based on all Facebook users [N=963]

%	2	1 year or less
	19	More than 1 year, but less than 5 years
	59	5 to 10 years
	19	More than 10 years
	1	Refused

FB5_A In the past year, have you done any of the following things?

Based on all Facebook users [N=963]

	Yes	No	Refused
Adjusted your Facebook privacy settings	61	38	<1

COLLECT1 When you look at the Facebook page of "Your categories," please check what you see:

Based on all Facebook users [N=963]

%	88	A list of boxes with categories
	11	A message that says you have no behaviors
	1	Refused

COLLECT3 How many categories are listed for you?

Based on Facebook users who are assigned categories (COLLECT1=1) [N=850]

%	30	Less than 10 categories
	31	10 to 20 categories
	38	21 or more categories
	1	Refused

COLLECT4 Prior to taking this survey, did you know this list of categories existed on Facebook?

Based on Facebook users who are assigned categories (COLLECT1=1) [N=850]

%	14	Yes
	84	No
	2	Refused

COLLECT5 Looking at ALL the categories Facebook has listed for you on this page of your supposed interests, how accurately do you feel this list actually represents you and your interests?

Based on Facebook users who are assigned categories (COLLECT1=1) [N=850]

%	15	Very accurately
	52	Somewhat accurately
	25	Not very accurately
	6	Not accurately at all
	2	Refused
	67	NET accurate
	31	NET Not accurate

COLLECT6 How comfortable are you with Facebook creating this list of categories about you?

Based on Facebook users who are assigned categories (COLLECT1=1) [N=850]

%	6	Very comfortable
	36	Somewhat comfortable
	41	Not very comfortable
	17	Not comfortable at all
	1	Refused
	41	NET comfortable
	58	NET not comfortable