

## 87% of Germans Approve of Social Media Regulation Law

Among internet-connected respondents in Germany, France, the UK, and the US.

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- **87% of Germany approve of NetzDG's policy**
  - **37% of Germans, 49% of Britons, 51% of Americans and 55% of French post or comment on social media sites most days.**
  - **34% of Germans, 37% of French, 40% of Britons and 44% of Americans report having read articles or news that were intentionally misleading or not truthful (fake news).**
  - **On average among the 4 countries surveyed, 17% of respondents have reported a user for abuse on social media.**
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Berlin, 3 April 2018

Dalia Research conducted a survey on public opinion of Germany's NetzDG law among Germans, French, Britons and Americans.

### **Social Media, Harassment & Fake News:**

To start, we asked respondents about their social media usage. Overall, 48% said they use social media most days, another 24% use social media a few times per week. France had the highest number of daily users (55%) while Germany had the lowest (37%). [The full results are attached in a supplementary data sheet.](#)

Among German respondents, 3% say they have received threats on social media, 14% have received sexually offensive messages on social media, 34% have read articles or news that were intentionally misleading or not truthful (fake news), and 16% have received offensive messages or comments from someone they don't know. 16% of Germans have also reported a user for abuse on social media.

Out of the four countries included in the survey, respondents from the US report receiving the most threats, offensive messages, sexually offensive messages, and fake news on social media.

### **Approval & Disapproval of Social Media Censorship**

When given a short summary of the censorship policy (as seen below), respondents showed overwhelming support: 67% of Germans said they strongly approve of the policy and 20% somewhat approve for 87% in total. 7% neither approve or disapprove, and only 5% disapprove. However, in France, the UK and the US, support for the policy is still high, but less enthusiastic. France and the UK's total approval rates are both at 82%. 69% of Americans approve of the policy too, however only 46% of Americans strongly approve, compared to 57% in France and 56% in the UK.

*"As of 2018, German law states that if social media firms like Twitter, Reddit, and Youtube do not remove hate speech, threats, fake news or other controversial content within 24 hours, they will be fined."*

### **Gender Differences**

There are also some gender differences within the results to take note of. For example, more women report receiving sexually offensive messages than men in Germany (16% v. 12%) and in the UK (15% v. 9%). However in the US, men and women reported receiving such harassment at equal levels (19% each). In France, 8.2% of women and 8.7% of men reported receiving sexually offensive messages. Overall however, men generally report receiving more threats, harassment, offensive comments and saw more fake news than women.

Additionally, men and women support the NetzDG law fairly equally in Germany. In France, the UK and the US, women support the policy at higher levels; France (87% v. 77%), UK (85% v. 79%), US (71% v. 67%).

### **Main Takeaways**

The survey shows levels of internet harassment and “fake news” is quite high. However, these results should be taken with a grain of salt. It is highly possible that due to self-selection bias, the participants in this survey are more likely to come across inflammatory online content than most. However, as a point of comparison, [YouGov](#) found that 1 in 4 British [internet] commenters admit to posting some form of malicious content online.

Additionally, respondents from different countries might have different ideas when it comes to what constitutes “offensive” language or false information. These inherent differences could contribute significantly to country level differences in the results.

The results of this survey show that there is great support for a policy like NetzDG, in theory. However, in practice, support is inevitably more complicated. Most people seem to agree with the idea of monitoring and removing fake news and harmful content, but who should be the arbitrator with the power and responsibility of classifying content as harmful or legitimate.

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### **About the survey**

This survey was conducted by Dalia Research in March 2018 on public opinion of social media censorship across Germany, France, the US, and the UK. The total sample size is n=2.021 (Germany=505, France=508, UK=500, US=508). The total sample takes into account the current population distributions with regard to age (14-65 years), gender and region/country.

In order to obtain census representative results, the data were weighted based upon Eurostat statistics. The target weighting variables were age, gender, level of education (as defined by ISCED (2011) levels 0-2, 3-4, and 5-8), and degree of urbanization (rural and urban). An iterative algorithm was used to identify the optimal combination of weighting variables based on sample composition within each country. An estimation of the overall design effect based on the distribution of weights was calculated at 1 at the global level. Calculated for a sample of this size and considering the design-effect, the margin of error would be +/-4.4% at a confidence level of 95%.

The survey questionnaire, results and infographics are attached.

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### **About Dalia Research**

Dalia Research was founded in Berlin in 2013 with a clear vision to utilize mobile technology to change the way attitudinal data is collected, analysed and presented. For more information about Dalia and its work, please visit: [www.daliaresearch.com](http://www.daliaresearch.com)

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