

## 78% of Nigerians still trust the media

LAGOS, Nigeria - The first Edelman Trust Barometer for Nigeria shows that 78% of Nigerians still trust the media, despite the rise in 'fake' news. The study predominantly measures trust in media, business and government.



Release of Edelman Trust Barometer in Nigeria.

The [2018 Edelman Trust Barometer](#) was conducted for Nigeria by Edelman Intelligence to test the level of trust among Nigerians in the four mainstream institutions of government, business, media and non-governmental organisations.

This contrasts, however, with the global trend whereby trust in the media is on decline especially due to the rise of fake news and post-truths occasioned by the growing social trend of citizen journalism and the influence of social media as an alternative but 'unregulated' source of information.

According to the global data from the report, media is now the least trusted institution; distrusted in 22 of 28 of countries.

Edelman Trust Barometer is the annual global trust and credibility survey conducted by Edelman Intelligence, the independent research arm of the Edelman – the world's largest PR firm with presence in 65 countries across the globe. The survey measures trust in the four mainstream institutions of society, like government, business, media and non-governmental organisations.

Since 2001, Edelman has been measuring trust in the four critical institutions in 27 countries, but this year is the first time

Nigeria has been included in the survey.

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These were some of the highlights of the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer unveiled in Lagos, on Thursday 31, May 2018 at Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos. The presentation of the report in Nigeria by Edelman was organised by Chain Reactions Nigeria, Edelman's Exclusive Nigerian affiliate and preferred West African partner. The theme was, *The Battle for Truth*.

Further breakdown of the report for Nigeria indicated that Nigerians also trust NGOs, assigning an 81% score to the sector; while their trust for business is 62% and 60% for government; while 72% of Nigerians generally voted that “trust matters in everything”.

Comparative analysis of the report with African countries such as South Africa, Egypt and Ghana, amongst others, also showed Nigeria finishing third highest in trust for the media and NGOs respectively; fourth highest in trust for business, and seventh highest in trust for government.

## Declines in trust

Speaking at the presentation of the global data from the report, Edelman South Africa managing director, Jordan Rittenberry, expressed concern that the overall global assessment of the four mainstream institutions showed declines in trust about business and non-governmental organisations in 14 of the 28 countries sampled, and therefore called on key decision makers in the respective organisations to be deliberate in building their trust asset through increased investment.

“Over time trends have shown there is low trust in business and non-governmental organisations, so it is important that people in these institutions pay more attention to how the citizens trust them,” he stated.

Rittenberry added that, “media is now least trusted institution” as a result of the menace of fake news, which he noted has moved from being just a phenomenon to a key factor in shaping perception.

“People define media as both content and platforms, so nearly seven in 10 worry about false information or fake news being used as a weapon,” he declared.



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Chain Reactions Nigeria managing director and chief strategist, Israel Jaiye Opayemi, said the inclusion of Nigeria in the annual survey for the first time in the 18-year-old history of Edelman Trust Barometer was in fulfillment of the company's promise last year to ensure Nigeria was in focus among the nations sampled annually by Edelman.

“Trust sits at the heart of social capital. For those who were here last year, we made a promise that Nigeria would be included in the 2018 deck of the Edelman Trust Barometer.”

Speaking on the Nigerian data from the survey which showed that government was the least trusted of the four institutions of the Nigerian society, Opayemi cautioned that, rather than condemnation, government requires help from communications professionals to help redesign the architecture of government communications in Nigeria.

“Let us therefore help those in government articulate the job descriptions, skill sets and requirements for the office of strategic communications in all government houses at the federal and state levels. Such offices must be presided over by professionals in strategic communications who will work with journalists, policy analysts, digital analysts, and infographics specialists, amongst others.

“That office is not just about putting the President and the Governors in the news; it is about asymmetric communications. The structure being used to run government communications in most government houses is not only dysfunctional but also outdated,” Opayemi stated.

He therefore advocated engagement of communications professionals by key occupiers of government positions like the president and governors, in order to overcome the challenges around trust and credibility assets of government.

## **Social capital**

Opayemi said trust in NGOs was indicative of the fact that people acknowledge social interventions and humanitarian services rendered by non-governmental organisations in Nigeria, especially during some of the major disasters the country has witnessed.

He however cautioned, that businesses and governments are already sitting in what he called, “the cusp of the neutral zone” and so must urgently improve on their trust asset so they do not slide into what he called “negative zone”.

“From what we have seen in the survey, Nigerians place a high premium on trust. It is therefore important for the business leaders to ensure that the company is trusted; that it communicates regularly with clients and customers, and their products and services are of high quality. They must also communicate regularly with employees and the CEOs must champion the effort,” he stressed.

Dignitaries at the presentation ceremony cut across the four mainstream institutions of the Nigerian society such as government, business, media and non-governmental organisations as well as the Nigerian marketing communications sector.

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