

TRUST NO-ONE

Trust in our institutions is under threat?

H1	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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There is little good news for most institutions in the [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer](#). Surveying 37,000 of the general population as well as the 'informed public' across 27 countries, the report shows that business is the only institution seen as competent AND ethical.

Trust in leaders has declined over several years of the survey - whether government leaders, religious leaders or CEOs. People still trust in scientists and tend towards trusting locally in what they know. 57% of respondents said that "government leaders are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations"; and 56% said the same about business leaders.

People's views of different information sources is also worrying with all forms of media seeing a significant drop in trust since the previous report.

Interestingly, there is an opportunity for business leaders to step into the trust gap. 68% felt that CEOs should step in when government does not fix societal problems and 65% felt that CEOs should hold themselves accountable to the public as well as the Board and shareholders.

In the UK, [the British Attitude Survey](#) has measured a significant decline in those who say they trust the government 'most of the time or just about always' - down from 40% in 1986 to just 15% in 2019. About 34% profess to 'almost never' trust the government. More recently, the handling of the pandemic has seen opinions change in the UK. Trust in government rose in the first 3 months of Covid-19 by 24% but has slipped back to January 2021 by 15%.

Several surveys have shown that [trust tends to be lower in those with lower incomes and levels of education](#).

X-MARKS THE SPOT

Maintaining interest in elections will require innovation

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The number of young people voting in General and local elections has been declining [for some time](#) but has picked up since 2015. Many young people want to participate, care about what happens in the political arena, and plan to participate. [But they find doing so too difficult to actually follow through on their good intentions](#).

According to research carried out by Webroots Democracy, a UK campaigning organisation, [the introduction of an online voting option in the UK could yield the following benefits](#):

-  Boost turnout in a General Election by up to 9 million, increasing it to 79%.
-  Boost the young voter turnout in a General Election by up to 1.8 million, increasing total turnout to 70%.
-  Reduce the cost per vote by a third and provide long-term savings of £12.8 million.

In the US, [a group of tech leaders suggested new ways to encourage voting](#), including creating politicians' scorecards; enabling voting from a mobile device; using blockchain to restore trust and build efficiency; improving security of the voting process; a traceable voting system to link people with devices and simplified on-line registration.

[Meanwhile moves to lower the voting age in the UK continue](#). Votes at 16 and 17 came into force on in June last year, as part of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020. The 2021 Senedd elections will be the first in which 16 and 17 year olds and legally resident foreign nationals are allowed to vote in Wales, in a major expansion of the franchise. Around 65,000 16 and 17 year olds are expected to benefit. 16 and 17 year olds can already vote in Scotland for all non-Westminster elections.

FURTHER READING

