



Measuring the Impact of the Trust Project

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The last few years have been a challenging period for news publishers and audiences. The rise of social media and the subsequent explosion in content sources has made it harder than ever for audiences to determine the validity of a news source. As one of the largest multi-media news publishers in the UK, we want our readers to make informed decisions about whether a news story is credible, quality journalism they can trust. With over 70 news websites and a monthly reach of over 40m adults in the UK, Reach Plc was proud to be one of the launch partners of the Trust Project.

Given the importance of the project, we conducted research to measure the impact of the Trust Indicators on perceptions of our biggest online property - [The Mirror](#) (which reaches an average of 23m UK adults every month¹). The research was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 Pre-wave: Two weeks before launch of the Trust Indicators

A quantitative survey measuring attitudes towards the Mirror brand and its competitors to determine a base line;

Phase 2 Post-wave: Two weeks after launch of the Trust indicators

The same survey plus an additional section (asked at the end) to gauge awareness of the Trust Indicators and perceptions of the Mirror’s involvement.

Methodology and sample

Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys were conducted using an online quantitative methodology. The sample was recruited via a third party panel provider, and respondents did not know they were answering a survey on behalf of Reach Plc. All respondents had visited Mirror.co.uk at least twice within the last two weeks.

We surveyed 1,055 respondents in total – 520 in the pre-wave and 535 in the post wave. Both samples were matched on key demographic criteria such as gender, age and social grade so that any differences in perception towards the Mirror at the post-wave could be attributed to the Trust Indicators. Both samples were weighted to the profile of Mirror.co.uk readers.

| | Phase 1: Pre-wave | Phase 2: Post-wave |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | n=520 | n=535 |
| Male | 41% | 41% |
| Female | 59% | 59% |
| 16-34 | 39% | 39% |
| 35-54 | 40% | 40% |
| 55+ | 21% | 21% |
| ABC1 | 51% | 51% |
| C2DE | 49% | 49% |

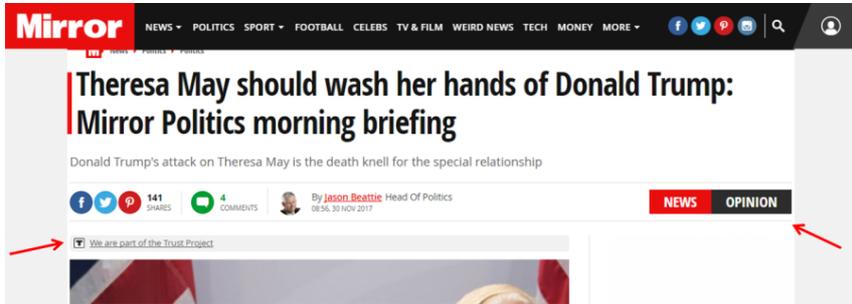
¹ ComScore Jan 2018-March 2018 3 month average



The pre-wave fieldwork: 23rd – 29th October 2017
 Post-wave fieldwork: 1st – 5th December 2017

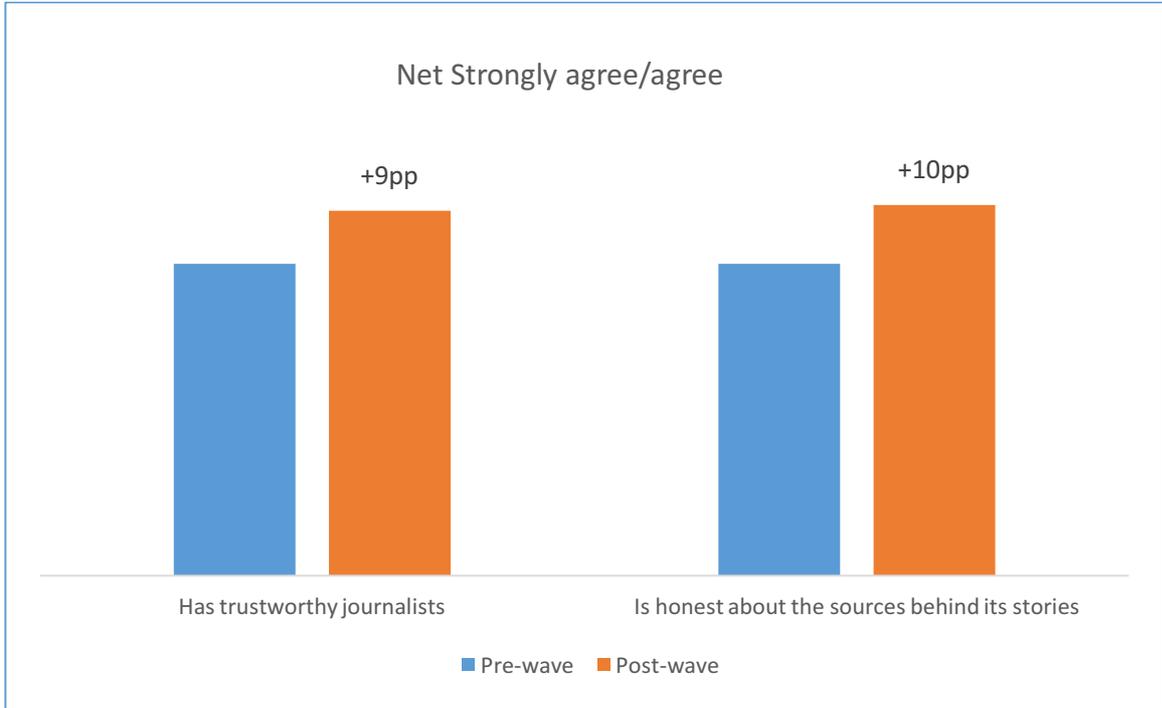
Finding 1: Good awareness levels

To avoid biasing response, questions specifically related to the Trust Project were asked at the end of the post-wave survey. Even though the indicators had only been live for a few weeks, there were encouraging signs in terms of awareness. When given a short synopsis of the project, almost a quarter (23%) of respondents were aware of the Mirror’s involvement. This figure increased to 33% when prompted with some examples of the Trust Indicators.

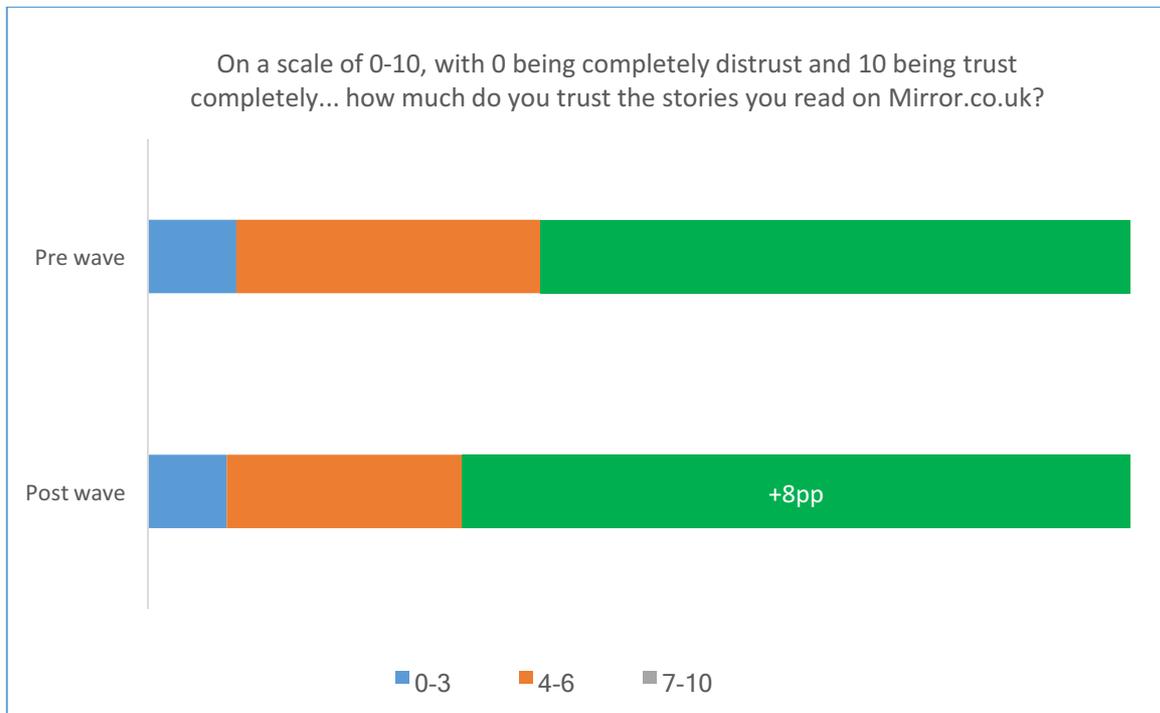


Finding 2: A significant increase in trust

Even though The Mirror is already highly trusted by its readers, the Trust Indicators significantly improved readers’ perception of the Mirror across a number of trust related metrics:



More importantly, overall trust in the Mirror also saw a **significant** uplift at the post stage (net 7-10 agreement on a 0-10 scale):



Those who were aware of the Mirror's participation in the project scored significantly higher across all metrics.

Other metrics have also experienced positive shifts on the cusp of significance:

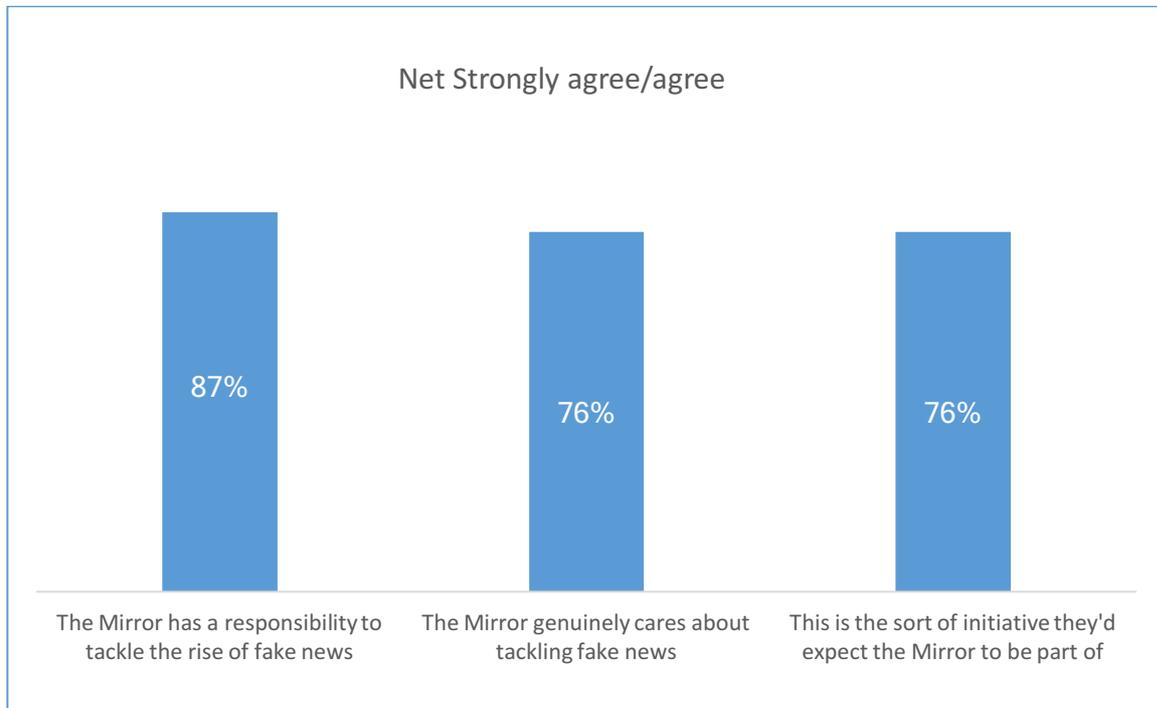
- 'Is a trustworthy source of news' +5pp pre-post
- 'It separates news from opinion' +5pp pre-post

The following measures saw no statistically significant pre-post changes:

- 'Is transparent in its reporting'
- 'Maintains high editorial standards'
- 'Is transparent in its ownership'
- 'Is transparent in its editorial mission'
- 'I know what their politics are'
- 'Provides extra background information on stories'

Finding 3: Readers expect The Mirror to take the lead against fake news

When asked about the Mirror's involvement in the project, it's clear that consumers appreciated the objectives of the project.



Finally, being part of the project helped the Mirror to stand-out in a highly-competitive news environment – 79% agree that the Mirror’s involvement ‘sets them apart from other news sites.’

Conclusion

With the research having been conducted in the early weeks after the launch of the project, the signs are very encouraging. Even though the Mirror is highly trusted by its readers, the indicators have still had a significant impact on its trustworthy credentials. These findings complement a [previous study](#) which found that Trust Indicators can significantly move the needle on increasing trust in media.