

MEDIA CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF INTERNAL SECURITY INFORMATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ESTONIAN- AND RUSSIAN- SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a research project carried out between 2022 and 2023, providing a comprehensive analysis of the reception and interpretation of the messages of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, with a particular focus on the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities.¹ By examining the media sources preferred by respondents from these communities for accessing news and information related to internal security and police messages, this research contributes to understanding media consumption preferences and their implications for internal security awareness and public engagement. The findings can inform future efforts to improve information dissemination strategies for both locals and migrants, promoting a more inclusive and practical approach to internal security communication in Estonia.

ABBREVIATIONS

ET – Estonian-speaking respondents

RU – Russian-speaking respondents

¹ The findings of the research project have been published in Laanemaa et al., 2023.

INTRODUCTION

The media are crucial in shaping public opinion and disseminating information, particularly in internal security and police messages. Media consumption patterns are influenced by various patterns, including language, culture and individual preferences. The research underpinning this paper explores the media sources preferred by respondents from Estonia's two largest communities, the Estonian- and Russian-speaking populations, specifically for accessing news and informational content related to internal security and police communications.

A survey carried out as part of the research project between late 2022 and early 2023 gathered data from Estonian- and Russian-speaking respondents. It aimed to capture their media consumption habits concerning news and informational content on internal security and police messages. Information was collected on preferred media sources, frequency of media use and level of trust in various media. Analysis of this survey data will enable the identification of dominant media sources within each community and help explore potential differences between the two groups.

The results of this research will contribute to the understanding of the media landscape regarding news and information on internal security and police messages in Estonia. By identifying the preferred media sources of respondents from different communities, this study offers valuable insights into their information exposure, allowing for an assessment of the diversity of the media environment. Given Estonia's large influx of immigrants from Ukraine in 2022, many of whom engage with Russian-speaking media, this topic holds utmost importance for future discussions and will form the basis for further studies.

1. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative content analysis with quantitative data collection through a self-administered questionnaire. The methodological framework drew on established works in the field, including Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and

Denscombe (2010). This paper focuses specifically on the survey questionnaire section on media consumption habits, excluding data from the other sections (further details on the complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 – Part D: Questions about information channels).

To achieve a diverse and representative sample, a non-probability convenience sampling method (Kumar et al., 2011) was used, as access to Estonian state email lists was limited. The sample comprised 630 email addresses, including those of colleagues, friends, acquaintances from both Estonian and Russian language groups, and individuals with personal email addresses. Bilingual respondents could choose their preferred language for the questionnaire. A participation rate of 32.2% was achieved, with 203 respondents completing the survey (167 in Estonian and 36 in Russian). It is worth noting that both language groups had a higher proportion of female respondents, accounting for 67% among Estonian respondents and 72% among Russian respondents. Age distribution revealed similar patterns across language groups. The Estonian (ET) group displayed a relatively even distribution between the 25–44 and 45–64 age brackets, whereas the Russian (RU) group showed a slightly higher proportion in the 45–64 age bracket (47%) compared to 25–44 (36%).

Educational attainment within the sample revealed that the majority in both groups held higher education degrees (51% for ET and 53% for RU). The RU group had a higher proportion of respondents with vocational education (22%) compared to those with secondary education (14%). In contrast, the ET group exhibited a more balanced distribution between these two categories (both at 19%).²

Qualitative content analysis was used to examine the data collected through the questionnaire responses and comments. A thematic coding scheme emerged during this process, resulting in the following categories: *public media channels*, *private media channels*, *social media channels*, *official state channels*, *other channels* and *circle of acquaintances*. The analysis aimed to identify similarities and differences in media consumption habits related to internal security information between the Estonian and Russian language groups.

² This background information on the respondents was collected in Part A of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

2. THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical and conceptual core is the assumption that relations between the media and society usually have not only a political dimension but also a normative and socio-cultural aspect. The media support national or social consensus and tend to present problems as solvable within the current rules of a given society and culture (McQuail, 2010). Therefore, the role of the media is not only to act as a carrier of information or a reflection of political trends but also as a means of shaping the socio-cultural and normative landscape.

Through the selection and framing of news stories, the media influence which issues are considered essential and how audiences perceive them. This agenda-setting function gives the media considerable power in shaping public discourse and determining political and social priorities.

Informational texts and messages posted on media platforms by public authorities (including law enforcement agencies) can inform citizens about potential threats and security risks. Clear, linguistically targeted and timely messages during emergencies can direct citizens towards appropriate actions. Such messages can influence public perception of security threats and crisis situations. However, media and cultural studies view the perception of a textual message, whether informational or otherwise, as a dynamic process of meaning production. Every text is a form of representation, and its inherent ambiguity allows for multiple interpretations. This active process of meaning-making is heavily influenced by the reader's background, experiences and social position. As Stuart Hall's well-known *encoding/decoding model* (first published in 1973) suggests, media producers encode messages with intended meanings, but audiences *decode* them based on their own cultural frameworks (Hall, 2005). This highlights the possibility of multiple interpretations arising from a single text. Furthermore, the rise of new media technologies, as explored by Henry Jenkins in *Convergence Culture* (2006), has fundamentally transformed how audiences consume and produce meaning. Audiences are no longer passive recipients of information but active participants in shaping and sharing cultural content. This participatory nature further emphasises the dynamic and collaborative nature of meaning-making.

Another important aspect for this study is the audience that media resources target and compete to attract (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Alasuutari, 1999; McQuail, 2010). To understand media consumption patterns from the consumer's perspective, it is essential to consider what influences an individual's choices and preferences as well as behavioural patterns towards certain media. From the perspective of media resources, this problem involves identifying the content, mode of presentation and situational factors that can attract and retain the audience's attention (McQuail, 2010, p. 420). As McQuail points out, audiences are not simply passive consumers of media content but rather complex entities that are shaped by and, in turn, shape the media landscape. Audience composition reflects the social context in which they exist, with shared cultural interests, understandings and information needs fostering a sense of community. This shared context also creates a demand for specific types of media content. Moreover, media consumption patterns are not driven by content alone. They are closely linked to broader social structures. Factors such as time availability, lifestyle choices and daily routines have a significant impact on how individuals engage with media. For example, a busy professional may prioritise podcasts for on-the-go listening, while someone with more leisure time may devote more time to in-depth articles or documentaries. Audiences and media offerings thus exist in a dynamic interplay. Social contexts shape audiences and their needs, which media providers respond to by tailoring content, while media consumption patterns are simultaneously influenced by broader societal structures such as time use and daily routines. (ibid, p. 332).

Media dependency theory, developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1989), looks at the relationship between audiences, their needs and the media they use to fulfil those needs. The key idea is that people become dependent on media when these media become essential for fulfilling specific needs. Discussing dependencies between audience and media, researchers suggest that a reciprocal dependency relationship exists between audiences and media. This stems from the goal-oriented nature of individuals: people rely on media resources to achieve certain objectives. These resources, controlled by mass media, become essential for achieving those goals, thus fostering dependency (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 309). DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach identify several factors that influence the degree of media dependency. First, the availability of alternative media sources plays a crucial role. If a particular media outlet

remains the primary source for fulfilling a particular need, dependence on that outlet increases. Second, perceived usefulness is another key factor. People are more likely to be dependent on media that they believe effectively address their needs. Finally, social instability also influences media dependency. During times of social upheaval or crisis, individuals tend to rely more heavily on the media for information and direction, thus increasing their dependence. The trend identified by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, which highlighted an increasing dependence on media across various domains, such as the military, education, familial structures, religious institutions, as well as scientific and healthcare fields, persists nowadays. At the same time, as the researchers point out, the media system is becoming more complex and therefore must evolve to cultivate new relationships that are increasingly critical to its viability and sustainability. (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 325).

The issue of audience media preferences is also addressed by the *uses and gratifications theory*. In essence, this approach explores the motivations behind people's active media consumption (Blumler, 1985; McQuail et al., 2010). It positions media as a readily accessible resource that audiences, the consumers, can use to satisfy specific needs, which may include social relationships, psychological well-being or simply a desire for knowledge or relaxation. Ultimately, audiences make media choices to gratify these diverse motivations, fostering social connections, relieving stress or broadening their worldview. While media dependency theory focuses on why people choose particular media and what needs they seek to fulfil, it also explores the depth of this relationship. According to the uses and gratifications theory, individuals are not simply passive consumers of media (Blumler, 1985). Instead, they actively choose media channels and content based on their preferred ways of receiving information (in the context of this paper, specifically, information on internal security).

Building on the uses and gratifications theory, the expected variations in media consumption patterns between ET and RU participants likely stem from two key factors: 1) their differing strategies for seeking gratification from media (i.e. how they use media to meet their needs) and 2) the influence of their cultural backgrounds. Language preferences, broader cultural elements and the dominant communication channels within each community are all likely to significantly shape these patterns.

Furthermore, many previous studies conducted by media scholars in Estonia (e.g. Vihalemm & Kõuts, 2004; Vihalemm, 2006; Vihalemm et al., 2012) have highlighted the influence of cultural factors on communication dynamics and information sharing habits. In this context, the preference for Russian-language media exhibited by RU respondents can be attributed to both linguistic comfort and cultural affinity.

Drawing on the concept of media dependency, as discussed earlier, we can expect variations in how people rely on media for security information. Individuals from different regions and cultural backgrounds are likely to use different media channels to meet their security information needs. This aligns with current research findings that show distinct media consumption patterns between ET and RU participants regarding their reliance on public, private and social media platforms for security information.

According to McQuail (2010), several factors influence how people choose and consume media, helping us to understand the relationship between media and individuals. These factors can be divided into two main groups: those on the audience side and those on the media side.

Audience-side factors

1. *Personal attributes*: age, gender, family life, education, income, lifestyle and personality differences.
2. *Social background*: social class, education, religion, culture and family environment.
3. *Media-related needs*: personal benefits such as companionship, distraction and information.
4. *Personal tastes and preferences* for certain genres, formats or specific content items.
5. *Media habits*: leisure time and access to media at various times.

6. *Awareness*: more engaged media users actively plan their media consumption.
7. *Context of use*: the available choices and the amount and type of information possessed also play a part in audience formation.
8. *Chance* often plays a part in media exposure, reducing the predictability of choice or audience composition.

Media-side factors

- A. *The media system*: people's preferences and choices are shaped by the kinds of media available, how widespread they are, and the specific features of different media outlets.
- B. *Structure of media provision*: the general types of media content available in a society, which influence people's long-term expectations about the media.
- C. *Available content options*: the types of media content that are available to people at different times and places.
- D. *Media publicity*: the way the media promote themselves and their products through advertising and marketing.
- E. *Timing and presentation*: the timing, scheduling, placement, content, and design of media messages, which are all used to compete for audiences³.

According to McQuail, all these factors can, to a greater or lesser extent, influence media choices and determine media consumption patterns.

When discussing the contextual framework of this research, it is important to note that several key dimensions influence information reception by the audience. These dimensions include the emotional delivery

³ These lists are adapted from McQuail's (2010, pp. 358–359) explanation of audience- and media-side factors influencing audience behaviour.

of messages, the changing media landscape and potential gender differences in media consumption patterns.

Police messages have traditionally been associated with warnings and risk communication, often delivered in a serious or cautionary tone. However, a recent study by Rutt et al. (2022) presents significant findings that may help to adapt the process of communication between police and other law enforcement agencies and the public as the intended recipients of information in the media space. Their research suggests that adults across a range of age groups place a surprisingly high value on health-related information provided by individuals who display neutral or positive emotions, while information delivered with negative emotions is considered significantly less important. This observed preference for neutrality over negativity in interpersonal communication is noteworthy. However, the same trend does not apply to textual sources. When presented with written health information, participants of all ages showed a preference for positive over both neutral and negative framing. The abovementioned study indicates that individuals do not necessarily prefer to receive information from an emotional source (i.e. happy or angry); instead, they tend to favour neutral information sources and avoid negative ones.

These findings highlight the nuanced nature of information reception in the context of police messaging and informational texts. While negativity might be expected to increase attention and compliance, it may have the opposite effect for personal health information. Further research could explore how law enforcement agencies might use this knowledge to optimise the effectiveness of their essential communication strategies.

The advent of new online and social media platforms has transformed the way news is consumed. Unlike in the past, when individuals had to choose from a limited number of traditional media outlets, today's media landscape allows for a more diverse range of platforms for accessing news. People can now choose, for example, to follow every news event closely or avoid coverage of societal and political events entirely, with access to both online and offline media platforms (Geers, 2020, p. 335).

Studies show that news consumption patterns vary by education level. People with lower levels of education are more likely to ignore news

sources altogether (Geers, 2020). Notably, a recent study (*ibid.*) indicates that people with lower levels of education are more likely to ignore news sources altogether suggests that those with higher education levels are more likely to be “news minimalists”, consuming less news content overall than to those with lower levels of education, who are more likely to engage with online news sources.

According to research on gender specificity in mass media consumption (Thums et al., 2021), gender differences in reading competence were observed: male respondents preferred informational texts. This is explained by their tendency to seek and obtain information, which is often associated with regular reading. Women tend to engage in leisure reading for entertainment, whereas men are more likely to read for information-seeking purposes. However, no gender differences were found in adults’ reading competence regarding literary or informational texts. Furthermore, a research by Thums et al. (2021) examined whether the influence of gender on reading competence in literary texts was mediated by entertainment value. Their analysis indicated that gender does have an indirect effect on both literary and informational reading competencies, which is mediated by the preference for reading for informational purposes. The researchers conclude that the finding that reading for information holds greater significance than reading for entertainment underscores the notion that the content of reading material is not the sole factor of importance. The inclination to prioritize informational reading may be more closely linked to the everyday experiences of adults than the preference for entertainment-focused literature, particularly concerning diverse topics and experiences. Adult readers are likely to engage more deeply with the subjects presented in informational texts as opposed to those intended solely for entertainment and as a means of withdrawal from daily life. Furthermore, the preference for reading informational content is inherently connected to job-related reading activities. (Thums et al., 2021, p. 353).

3. OVERVIEW OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION IN ESTONIA

The Estonian media landscape is represented by the following major public, private and alternative periodicals and social media platforms, including the media resources mentioned in the questionnaire.

Estonian public media channels:

- *Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) news portal* (err.ee): Provides news coverage in Estonian, English and Russian on various topics, such as politics, economy, culture and sports. Known for balanced and reliable reporting.
- *ETV* (etv.err.ee): Estonia's national free-to-air television channel that offers news programmes, documentaries, cultural shows and entertainment content in Estonia.
- *ETV+* (jupiterpluss.err.ee/etvpluss): A free-to-air television channel broadcasting in Russian, catering to Estonia's Russian-speaking minority. Offers news, current affairs and entertainment programmes.
- *Pealinn*: A daily newspaper formerly published by the Tallinn City Council; its Russian-language sister publication was *Stolitsa*. Ceased publication in 2024.
- *Riigi Teataja* (riigiteataja.ee): The official website of the Republic of Estonia that publishes legislation (laws and regulations), government orders and other official announcements. The content is primarily in Estonian, with some legal acts available in translation.

Estonian private media channels:

- *Delfi* (delfi.ee): Estonia's most popular online news portal, offering breaking news, current affairs and content across various topics.
- *Postimees* (postimees.ee): A leading daily newspaper with a strong digital presence, known for its broad news coverage and regional editions.

- *Eesti Päevaleht* (epl.delfi.ee): A daily newspaper focusing on in-depth analysis and high-quality reporting, now published only online.
- *Õhtuleht* (ohtuleht.ee): A popular daily tabloid known for its focus on celebrity news, human-interest stories and sensational reporting.
- *Kroonika* (kroonika.delfi.ee): A weekly magazine focusing on celebrity gossip, entertainment and lifestyle content.
- *Eesti Ekspress* (ekspress.delfi.ee): An investigative weekly newspaper known for its critical and independent journalism.

Social media platforms:

- *Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok* are widely used platforms in Estonia, offering diverse content, news updates, discussions and entertainment.

Estonian Police and Border Guard Board's channels:

- *Official website* (politsei.ee): Provides official information on police activities, crime prevention tips and contact details.
- *Facebook and Instagram*: Social media pages sharing news updates, safety warnings and insights into police work, and reflecting the institution's official standpoint.

Differences in media preferences between Estonian- and Russian-speakers were already evident in the first decade after the restoration of Estonia's independence (Vihalemm & Kõuts, 2004). Surveys on media preferences conducted over the years have consistently shown that Estonian and Russian speakers in Estonia have different media consumption habits. Similarly, different media repertoires are observed across different age groups and between urban and rural residents, including preferences for local newspapers, TV channels and specific TV programmes (Vihalemm et al., 2012).

Various studies on the media consumption patterns of the Estonian population over the past decade reveal certain changes, especially

among the Russian-speaking population. Over the years, the primary information channel for the Estonian-speaking population has been Estonian Television (Saar Poll, 2014; Public Opinion, 2022–2023), followed by Estonian news portals. In contrast, preferences among the Russian-speaking population have changed significantly, according to public opinion surveys commissioned by the Government Office. While Russian-speaking audiences previously relied mostly on Russian television channels, such as PBK and RTR (Saar Poll, 2014, p. 7), by 2022, after the suspension of several such channels in Estonia, a third of this group began consuming less media and nearly half switched to Estonian online news portals (Public Opinion, 2022).

The Government Office’s regular public opinion surveys (Public Opinion, 2022–2023, 2024, etc.) indicate a notable shift: in spring 2022, a third of the Russian-speaking population still followed Russian media channels and considered them relevant, but a year later, this figure had dropped to just 15%. Thanks to efforts by Estonian media houses to produce content in Russian, Estonian news portals gained popularity among the Russian-speaking population (Sojonen, 2022). Interestingly, in spring 2023, survey results indicated that social media had become the primary media source among non-Estonian speakers, closely followed by Estonian news portals. In contrast, among Estonian speakers, social media ranked only fourth, after Estonian Television, news portals and radio (Public Opinion, 2023).

Another difference between Estonian speakers and speakers of other languages concerns trust. Non-Estonian respondents appear to trust neither Estonian nor foreign media channels (e.g. BBC and CNN) as much as Estonian speakers do. At the same time, Estonian speakers are more sceptical of information gathered from social media than non-Estonian speakers are (ibid).

Various studies have also shown a shift in media consumption from traditional news outlets towards digital and mobile media. For example, the “Digital News Report 2023” (Newman et al., 2023), compiled by the Reuters Institute of the Study of Journalism, collected data on 46 countries, mapping the role of various media across generational groups. Among other findings, the report highlights that while traditional news brands remain largely trusted in Northern European countries, with a

generally strong interest in news, this interest is declining among younger audiences, who are less likely to access these sites or apps directly. Also, Facebook has gradually become less important in driving reader traffic to news websites, and the younger generations are increasingly attracted by video platforms. Similarly, users of video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat tend to show less interest in news from journalists and media companies, instead favouring content from social media influencers and celebrities, whose style they find more relatable.

These observations align with the findings of an Estonian media policy overview by Kõuts-Klemm et al. (2019), which claims that users are shifting from traditional news sources towards online platforms, where content is increasingly personalised and algorithm-driven. Greater social inclusiveness leads to more critical media use, which is accompanied by higher expectations for journalism.

By the end of the last decade, Estonians still tended to get their news from television and radio, although smart devices were gaining popularity. Most Estonian speakers considered TV, radio and the public broadcaster's website important daily news sources, with the online and paper versions of daily and weekly national newspapers also remaining popular. Among Russian speakers, 70% relied on private Estonian news portals in Russian, and the Estonian public broadcaster's Russian-language TV channel and online news portal also ranked highly among roughly half of the group (53% and 42%, respectively). However, more than half of Russian speakers also considered Russian news portals, as well as TV and radio channels, important in their news consumption. Both Estonian and Russian speakers placed high trust in communication with friends, acquaintances and colleagues as a source of information (80% and 79%, respectively).

The variety of available media channels allows for diverse combinations of sources and methods of news consumption. Among the nine news repertoires dominant among Estonian speakers two rely entirely on algorithms (e.g. Facebook) or aggregators (e.g. Reddit), with no editorial selection by journalists.

The results of a survey on the media preferences of Estonian nationals and foreign citizens during the pandemic are also noteworthy. The

“Survey on the Awareness of Foreigners Living in Estonia in Emergency Situations” (Awareness Survey, 2020), commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior in 2020, analysed the information consumption patterns of newly arrived immigrants during the pandemic crisis, focusing on two groups: those who consumed information in English and those who relied on Russian-language sources. The survey revealed significant disparities in information consumption, including preferred channels, interpretation, confidence levels and subsequent actions. Importantly, the survey found that new immigrants who used Russian media had distinct consumption patterns and tended to perceive official channels, such as government websites, as more trustworthy than traditional news outlets. However, both groups identified official government channels, such as ministry websites and embassy newsletters, as the most reliable sources. In addition, the objectivity and clarity of information presentation, often incorporating visual aids and infographics, significantly influenced perceived reliability (ibid, p. 53). Meanwhile, a weekly survey commissioned by the Estonian Government Office and conducted by the market research agency Turu-uuringute AS showed minimal differences in awareness of COVID-19 and related news between Estonian and Russian speakers. Altogether, 99% of Estonian speakers and 97% of Russian speakers reported feeling well or fairly well informed (COVID-19 Poll, 2020).

4. COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND SURVEY FINDINGS

A survey conducted as part of the 2022–2023 research project to which this paper contributes examined respondents’ preferences for using media channels to obtain information related to internal security. It aimed to determine whether participants read internal security-related texts in their everyday lives and, if so, through which media channels they accessed this information. To analyse the survey findings, the following categories were created: *public media channels*, *private media channels*, *social media channels*, *official state channels*, *other channels* and *circle of acquaintances*.

(I) PUBLIC MEDIA CHANNELS

Figure 1 shows that public media channels (e.g. ETV, the ERR news portal, ETV+ and the newspaper *Pealinn*) are frequently used, with 38% of ET respondents and 23% of RU respondents regularly reading news related to internal security from these sources. In addition, 35% of ET respondents and 42% of RU respondents occasionally (“sometimes”) read news on internal security. Regarding substantive differences between ET and RU respondents, 18% of ET respondents and 8% of RU respondents reported rarely reading news, while 7% of ET and 19% of RU respondents indicated that they do not read internal security-related news in public media channels at all.

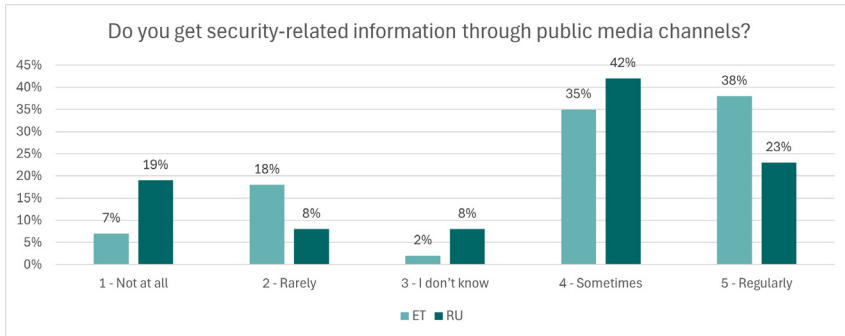


Figure 1. The consumption of information from public media channels

(II) PRIVATE MEDIA CHANNELS

Figure 2 shows that private media channels (e.g. Delfi) are frequently used, with 32% of ET respondents and 46% of RU respondents regularly reading news related to internal security from these sources. Additionally, 40% of ET respondents and 18% of RU respondents occasionally read news related to internal security from private media channels, while 21% of ET and 29% of RU respondents rarely do so. In comparison, 4% of ET and 7% of RU respondents do not read information/news related to internal security from private media channels at all.

A specific media consumption pattern can be observed, as ET and RU respondents display similar percentages in their infrequent use of private media. Specifically, 21% of ET respondents and 29% of RU respondents selected “rarely”. However, regarding the consumption of public media channels, the figures are different: 18% of ET respondents and only 8% of RU respondents selected “rarely”. This suggests that, even if infrequently, ET respondents use public media channels for internal security-related news more often than RU respondents do.

This indicates a significant difference in media consumption patterns between the ET and RU communities. RU respondents (46%) are more active consumers of private media than ET respondents (32%). Conversely, a larger percentage of ET respondents (38%) regularly consume public media channels, compared to RU respondents (23%).

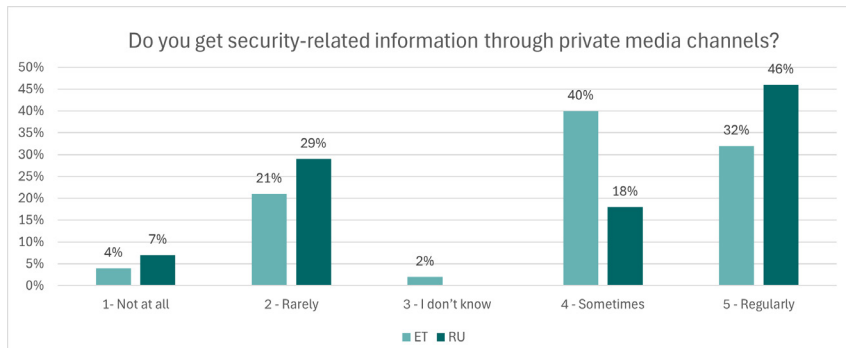


Figure 2. The consumption of information from private media channels

(III) SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Figure 3 shows that social media channels (e.g. Facebook) are frequently accessed for security-related information, with 29% of ET respondents and 42% of RU respondents regularly reading such content on social platforms. Approximately 32% of ET and 12% of RU respondents reported occasionally consuming security-related news on social media.

There is a significant difference in daily consumption patterns, with 42% of RU respondents accessing security-related information on social media daily, compared to 29% of ET respondents. Rare consumption of security-related social media content was reported by 21% of ET respondents and 15% of RU respondents. In comparison, 14% of ET and 15% of RU respondents do not access any security-related information or news on social media.

This data shows similar responses for the “rarely” indicator among both ET and RU respondents, with no significant percentage difference. It also indicates that a similar portion of both groups (14% of ET and 15% of RU respondents) do not consume any security-related news from social media. This suggests that security-related information communicated via social media may not reach the readers and that social media channels are mainly used for entertainment purposes.

When comparing public, private and social media channels, a clear pattern emerges: a significant portion of RU respondents do not read any security-related news from public media channels (19%) or from social media channels (15%). In contrast, 14% of ET respondents do not read any security-related news from social media channels, while only a small percentage of ET respondents (7% for public media and 4% for private media) reported not reading any security-related news from other channels (see Figures 1 and 2).

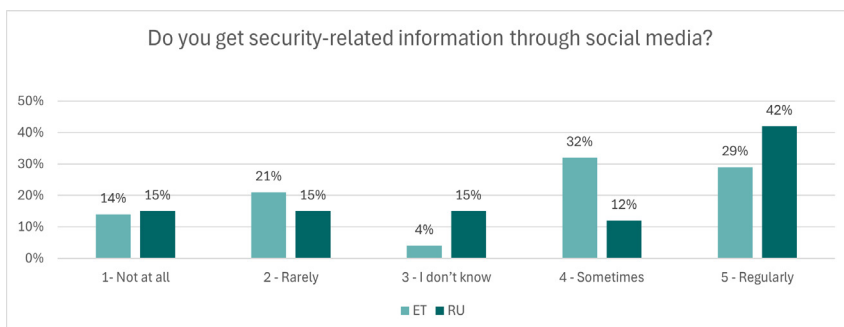


Figure 3. The consumption of security-related information through social media

(IV) OFFICIAL STATE CHANNELS

Figure 4 indicates that the official channels of the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB), such as the website, Facebook and Instagram, are mostly accessed occasionally, with similar percentages of ET respondents (39%) and RU respondents (40%) reporting occasional use. In comparison, 25% of ET and 24% of RU respondents reported rarely using these channels.

Regular consumption of security-related information from the PBGB’s official channels is relatively low compared to public and private media channels and social media channels, with 25% of ET respondents and 20% of RU respondents regularly reading security-related information from these channels. In contrast, ET respondents report regular consumption of security-related information from public media channels (38%), private media channels (32%) and social media channels (29%). For RU respondents, the corresponding percentages are 38% for public media channels, 46% for private media channels and 42% for social media channels.

Overall, public media channels are an important daily source of information for ET respondents (38%), while private media channels play a significant role for RU respondents (46%), as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

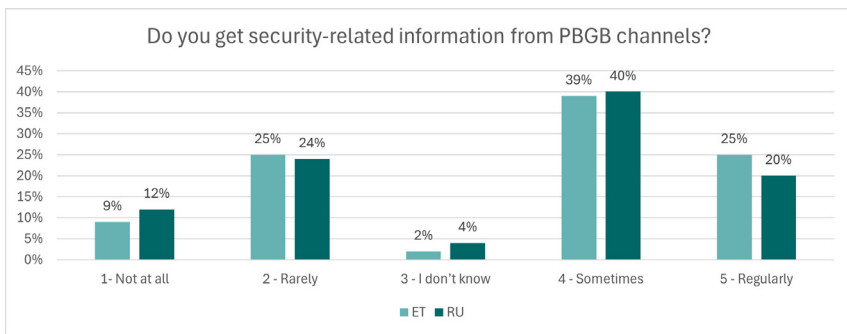


Figure 4. The consumption of information from the official channels of the Police and Border Guard Board

Figure 5 shows that 42% of ET and 16% of RU respondents do not access the Riigi Teataja portal at all. Infrequent users account for 33% of ET respondents and 20% of RU respondents. The most significant difference in media consumption patterns is observed in the “read sometimes” category. Specifically, 14% of ET respondents and 40% of RU respondents have indicated occasional reading use of the Riigi Teataja portal, which primarily publishes legal acts and court decisions. Regular readers of the Riigi Teataja portal account for 20% of RU respondents and 4% of ET respondents. A tentative explanation for this pattern could be that, since most participants in the study were educated women, the Riigi Teataja portal may be part of their daily work tools, prompting them to select the option “regularly” or “sometimes” due to work-related tasks.

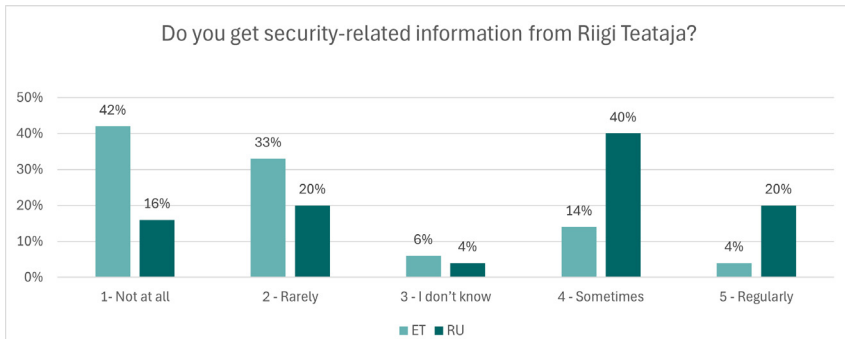


Figure 5. The consumption of information from the state portal Riigi Teataja

(V) OTHER CHANNELS

Figure 6 shows that 58% of ET respondents and 33% of RU respondents do not use other channels for obtaining information. Additionally, a significant portion of respondents (25% of ET and 48% of RU respondents) were uncertain whether they use other information channels. This percentage is considerably higher than for public, private and media channels. Specifically, for public media, 2% of ET respondents and 8% of RU respondents were uncertain, while for private media, the percentages

were 3% among ET respondents and 0% among RU respondents. For social media, the uncertainty rates were 4% among ET respondents and 15% among RU respondents. For the PBGB’s official channels, the uncertainty rates were 2% among ET respondents and 4% among RU respondents, and for the Riigi Teataja portal, 6% of ET and 4% of RU respondents.

However, it is worth noting that 7% of ET respondents mentioned regularly using other information channels, but without specifying which ones. Meanwhile, 10% of RU respondents reported sometimes using other information channels, with some explicitly mentioning Russian television channels and the Estonian state Russian-language radio station Radio 4.

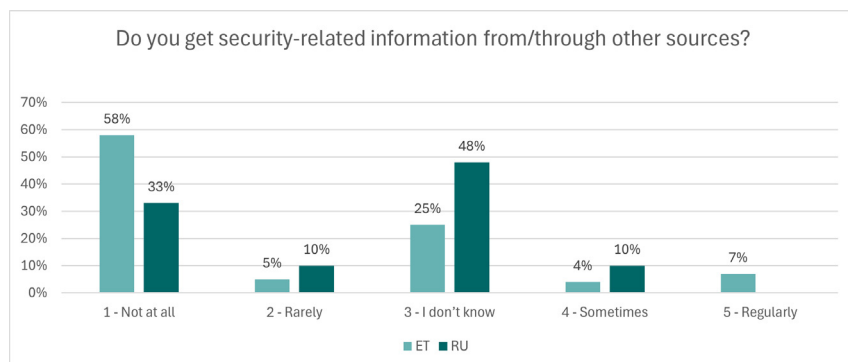


Figure 6. The consumption of information from other channels

(VI) CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES

Figure 7 indicates that only 10% of ET respondents regularly receive security-related information from acquaintances, friends and relatives, while 24% of RU respondents do so. Although there are no significant differences between the two communities, considering the communication styles of the two groups, it can be suggested that information may circulate more quickly among acquaintances, friends and relatives in

the Russian-speaking community compared to the Estonian-speaking community.

Significant differences can be observed in the “sometimes” category. 67% of ET respondents and 45% of RU respondents report sometimes receiving security-related information from acquaintances. For infrequent reception (“rarely”), the percentages are 19% for ET respondents and 17% for RU respondents. In both communities, a small percentage (2% for ET respondents and 3% for RU respondents) indicated that they “do not receive” any information from acquaintances about security-related matters.

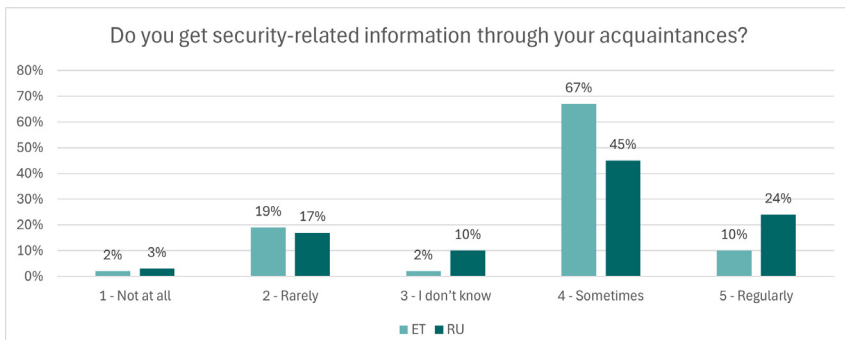


Figure 7. Receiving security-related information from acquaintances

The respondents’ media consumption choices can be summarised as follows:

- ET respondents primarily rely on Delfi, Eesti Päevaleht, ETV and Facebook as their primary sources of information.
- RU respondents rely on Delfi.ru, Postimees, ETV+ and Facebook as their primary sources of information.
- Some respondents in both groups occasionally access the official channels of the Police and Border Guard Board.

- Many respondents do not actively seek security-related information, such as police announcements, but will read it if they come across it.
- Respondents see no need to use other information channels, as those mentioned in the study are considered sufficient.

The study identified the following media consumption patterns among ET and RU respondents regarding the consumption of security-related information:

(I) *Public media channels*: ET respondents show a higher rate of regular readership (38%) compared to RU respondents (23%). Both groups occasionally consume news related to internal security (35% ET, 42% RU).

(II) *Private media channels*: RU respondents have a higher regular readership (46%) than ET respondents (32%). Occasional consumption is reported by 40% of ET and 18% of RU respondents.

(III) *Social media channels*: RU respondents read security-related information more frequently (42%) compared to ET respondents (29%). Occasional consumption is reported by 32% of ET and 12% of RU respondents. A notable percentage of respondents (14% ET, 15% RU) do not consume security-related news from social media channels.

(IV) *Official state channels*: both ET and RU respondents consume information from the Police and Border Guard Board's channels occasionally (39% ET, 40% RU), with lower levels of regular readership (25% ET, 20% RU). A higher percentage of RU respondents (40%) read the Riigi Teataja portal occasionally compared to ET respondents (14%).

(V) *Other channels*: A significant percentage of respondents do not use any other channels for obtaining information (58% ET, 33% RU), and a large number are uncertain (25% ET, 48% RU). ET respondents mention Delfi, Eesti Päevaleht, ETV and Facebook as their primary sources of information, while RU respondents prefer Delfi.ru, Postimees, ETV+ and Facebook. Some respondents in both groups occasionally access the official channels of the Police and Border Guard Board. Many respondents do not actively seek security-related information but will read it when it comes to their attention.

(VI) *Circle of acquaintances*: A small percentage of ET respondents (10%) receive security-related information regularly from acquaintances, while a higher percentage of RU respondents (24%) receive such information. Occasional reception is reported by 67% of ET respondents and 45% of RU respondents. Infrequent reception is reported by 19% of ET and 17% of RU respondents. A small percentage in both groups (2% ET, 3% RU) indicate that they do not receive any information about security-related matters from acquaintances.

The main differences between ET and RU respondents are as follows:

- *Public media channels*: ET respondents have a higher regular readership (38%) than RU respondents (23%).
- *Private media channels*: RU respondents have a higher regular readership (46%) than ET respondents (32%).
- *Social media channels*: RU respondents read internal security-related information more frequently (42%) than ET respondents (29%).

In conclusion, the analysis reveals differences in media consumption patterns between ET and RU respondents, particularly in their use of public media, private media, social media and information from acquaintances. ET respondents rely more on public media channels, while RU respondents prefer private ones. Social media channels are used more frequently by RU respondents, although some do not consume security-related news from this source. Both groups use the Riigi Teataja portal less than other sources. Considering these findings, a tailored approach to content and distribution channels, based on the preferences of each group, may be beneficial.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, media consumption patterns differ between the two language groups depending on the media channels used. Public media channels are accessed more frequently by ET respondents, who are also more likely than RU respondents to regularly

follow security-related news. In contrast, RU respondents show a higher consumption of private media channels. Social media consumption for security-related information is also significantly higher among RU respondents. However, it is essential to note that social media is primarily used in both groups for entertainment purposes, and some respondents from both groups do not consume any security-related information from social media at all.

The study's results also revealed that both language groups displayed similar patterns in their consumption of the official channels of the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB). Most respondents in both groups were occasional or infrequent readers of these channels. Only 25% of ET and 20% of RU respondents regularly read security-related information from PBGB channels. For regular consumption, ET respondents prefer public media channels (38%), while RU respondents prefer private media channels (46%). Meanwhile, 42% of ET and 16% of RU respondents do not read the Riigi Teataja portal. The most significant difference appears in the "sometimes" category, with 14% of ET respondents and 40% of RU respondents accessing the Riigi Teataja portal occasionally.

The results also indicate that most respondents do not use other channels to obtain information, but respondents who do so reported the main information channels they regularly follow. For ET respondents, significant channels include Delfi, Eesti Päevaleht, ETV and Facebook, while for RU respondents, important channels include Delfi.ru, Postimees, ETV+ and Facebook. In the RU community, respondents receive more regular information from acquaintances (24%) than in the ET community (10%). However, a similar percentage of respondents receive information occasionally from acquaintances in both communities.

The findings have significant implications for understanding the dissemination and reception of information within the ET and RU communities. The observation that a larger proportion of RU respondents receive security-related information from acquaintances and close contacts suggests a potentially more interconnected information network within the RU community. The disparities in media consumption patterns between ET and RU respondents, influenced by language and cultural preferences, highlight the need for tailored communication strategies to reach these communities effectively.

It is worth noting that further studies on media consumption among different language groups in Estonia would be valuable. Recent surveys conducted by the Government Office (Public Opinion, 2024) highlight an increasing preference for social media over official media networks, suggesting the opportunity for more research on this issue.

CONCLUSION

Considering that Estonian-speaking respondents prefer public media channels, while private media channels are more popular among Russian-speaking respondents, it would be advisable to adapt the content and distribution channels according to the preferences of each target audience.

A multi-channel approach should be considered. For example, important information channels for Estonian-speaking respondents include Delfi, Eesti Päevaleht, ETV and Facebook, while Russian-speaking respondents prefer Delfi.ru, Postimees, ETV+ and Facebook. Using multiple channels simultaneously may be an effective approach to increasing awareness and disseminating security-related information. Social media presents an opportunity for spreading security-related information, especially among the Russian-speaking audience. However, social media channels are primarily used for entertainment, and some respondents do not consume any security-related information from social media. Therefore, security-related content should be transparent (clear, easy to understand, free from hidden agendas or biases) and convey trustworthiness so that it can cut through the entertainment filter to deliver crucial information.

Measures should also be taken to increase the adoption and awareness of the Riigi Teataja portal to reach more respondents in both language groups. The Riigi Teataja portal is currently underused by Estonian-speaking respondents, suggesting the need for alternative channels for disseminating security-related information or increasing awareness about the advantages of the portal.

APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE



Dear Estonian citizen! We invite you to answer a questionnaire by the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences exploring the reception and comprehension of the messages by the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board. Answering the questionnaire takes about 15 minutes and it is anonymous.

Part A: General questions

This section includes questions about the respondent.

A1. Gender:	male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	female	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2. Age:	Do not wish to reveal	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18- 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25- 44	<input type="checkbox"/>
	45- 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
	65- 74	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3. Level of education:	75+	<input type="checkbox"/>
	basic education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	secondary education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	vocational education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	higher education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Part B: Part I Please read the following text and answer the questions.

Message 1

Inform the police of places where speeding is a problem 5 September 2022 The Police and Border Guard Board is waiting for observations on locations where drivers constantly exceed the speed limit to be posted at www.liiklustalgud.ee. Based on the given information, the police will conduct speed checks on 22 September. Police Lieutenant Colonel Sirle Loigo invites all people to register their observations on the map application as traffic safety needs everyone's contribution. "The *Liiklustalgud* event will focus on speeding as it is the most pressing problem in traffic at the moment. Following the speed limit is highly important in preventing tragic consequences. Especially now that there are more drivers and children starting their school in traffic," Loigo stresses. The aim of *Liiklustalgud* is to take action by involving the community, make people think about the safety of their neighbourhood and understand the dangers of speeding. "It allows everyone to contribute to traffic safety by letting us know of places where following the speed limit is a problem. It is excessive speed that is the main cause of traffic accidents resulting in serious injuries or death. With the event, we steer drivers to think if the few seconds they gain is worth putting their own and other people's life at risk," the police officer added. Additions on the map application can be made until Friday, September 9. This year, the *Liiklustalgud* event will take place for the sixth time.

Annika Maksimov PBGB press officer 5655771

B1. 1. Was it easy or difficult to read the text?

1- It was very difficult to read it.

2- It was quite difficult to read it.

3- Cannot say.

4- It was quite easy to read it.

5- It was easy to read it.

B2. 2. How would you characterise the message of the text? Please explain.

Warning

Threatening

Commanding

Neutral

Friendly, well-intentioned

Recommendation

Instructive, didactic

other

B3. Please explain:



B4. 3. Did you understand the content of the message? (select on the scale 1-5)

1- did not understand at all

2 -I understood partially

3 - cannot say

4 - I rather understood

5 – I understood very well

B5. 4. The aim of the message was to:

1 - uphold my safety

2 - give recommendations on how to act

3 - change my behaviour

4 - frighten me with the possible consequences

5 – other

B6. Please explain:

B7. 5. Will you act after reading the message?

1 - I do not intend to act

2 - I probably will not act

3 - cannot say

4 - I probably will act

5 – I will definitely act

B8. Please explain:

B9. 6. How relevant is the message for you?

1 - the message does not interest / concern me

2 - quite irrelevant

3 - cannot say

4 - quite relevant

5 – the message is very relevant to me/ I will definitely consider the message



B10. Please explain:

B11. 7. Why do you consider the message relevant?

It is the official message sent by the Police and Border Guard Board

The message concerns general safety

The message concerns me and my family

I do not find the message relevant

other

B12. Please explain:

Part C: Part II Please read the following text and answer the questions.

Message 2 Police: Good Cyber-Hygiene Prevents Money from Disappearing Mysteriously 7 April 2022

Recently, there have been increasing cases of large sums of money disappearing from crypto-currency wallets. Upon closer inspection, it turns out that their devices, such as computers or cell phones, have been infected with malware. The police recently received a report that 60,000 euros had been transferred from the cryptocurrency wallet without the owner's knowledge. "To the owner's knowledge, he had not shared his passwords or other data with anyone. There are similar cases with losses varying from a few hundred to around twenty thousand euros," says Hannes Kelt, the Head of the Cyber and Economic Crime Division of the North Prefecture. These days, investing in cryptocurrency is nothing new and also scammers have discovered a quick way to make money off gullible people. "The seemingly mysterious thefts described above are possible only if the computer is infected with malware. For this, the owner does not even have to enter his data anywhere, clicking on a suspicious link is enough. Such links are spread, for instance, in social media, via e-mails, text messages or ads, but in reality they are not sent by a specific person but by a device infected with malware," Kelt added.

There are a few simple steps to keep in mind to prevent malware infection. "The most common requests accompanying malware-infected links are, for instance: "Is that you in this video?"", similarly "Look what I found," with an active link attached. Before clicking on anything, we suggest you ask the sender if he really sent it and what could it be. It is worth being critical of opening and downloading unknown files," the police officer explains. Cybercrimes have been on the rise in the recent years and only good cyber-hygiene can prevent it. Annika Maksimov PBGB press officer 5655771

C1. 1. Was it easy or difficult to read the text?

1- It was very difficult to read it.

2- It was quite difficult to read it.

3- Cannot say.

4- It was quite easy to read it.

5- It was easy to read it.



C2. 2. How would you characterise the message of the text?
Please explain.

Warning

Threatening

Commanding

Neutral

Friendly, well-intentioned

Recommendation

Instructive, didactic

other

C3. Please explain:

C4. 3. Did you understand the content of the message? (select on the scale 1-5)

1 - did not understand at all

2 - I understood partially

3 - cannot say

4 - I rather understood

5 - I understood very well

C5. 4. The aim of the message was:

1 - uphold my safety

2 - give recommendations on how to act

3 - change my behaviour

4 - frighten me with the possible consequences

5 - other

C6. Please explain:



C7. 5. Will you act after reading the message?

- 1 - I do not intend to act
- 2 - I probably will not act
- 3 - cannot say
- 4 - I probably will act
- 5 - I will definitely act

C8. Please explain:

C9. 6. How relevant is the message for you?

- 1 - the message does not interest me / the message does not concern me
- 2 - quite irrelevant
- 3 - cannot say
- 4 - quite relevant
- 5 - the message is very relevant to me/ I will definitely consider the message

C10. Please explain:

C11. 7. Why do you consider the message relevant?

- It is the official message sent by the Police and Border Guard Board
- The message concerns general safety
- The message concerns me and my family
- I do not find the message relevant
- Other

C12. Please explain:



Part D: Questions about information channels

D1. 8. Do you read such texts in your daily life?

1 - do not read at all

2 - I rarely read

3 - cannot say

4 - I sometimes read

5 - I regularly read

D2. From which channels do you get information on safety?

	1 - I do not read (watch) at all	2 rarely read	3 cannot say	4 sometimes read	5 regularly read
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Riigi Teataja</i> website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police and Border Guard Board channels (website, Facebook, Instagram etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media (FB, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private media channels (Delfi, Kroonika, Postimees etc...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public media channels (ETV, ERR online news, ETV+, Pealinn etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D3. Please explain:

D4. Do you receive information on safety from people you know?

1 - not at all

2 - rarely

3 - cannot say

4 - sometimes

5 - regularly

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