

The AAPC Foundation AI Voter Study



FOUNDATION FORUM 2026

POWER, POLITICS & AI



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WASHINGTON, DC

Seen, Not Sought

How Voters Encounter AI in the 2026 Election

Methodology

Survey of 1,568 likely 2026 general election voters nationwide, conducted September 14 – 22, 2026 for the AAPC Foundation using a mixed-mode design of text-to-web and live telephone interviews.

Likely 2026 voters were identified using voter registration data and vote history.

Results were weighted (raking) to targets for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, urbanicity, census region, and party identification. Weighting efficiency is 83% (effective n = 1,295; design effect 1.21).

The design-adjusted margin of error is ± 2.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Subgroup margins are larger. The campaign-AI items (Q27–Q36) and deepfake items (Q41–Q42) were asked of random split samples.

Commissioned by the AAPC Foundation and conducted by Inquoro, Inc., The Tarrance Group, and AMM Political Strategies.

 AMM
POLITICAL STRATEGIES Catalist Inquoro THE TARRANCE GROUP



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Made possible with support from SparkFire Technologies

The AAPC Foundation retained sole editorial control over the study design, findings, and publication.

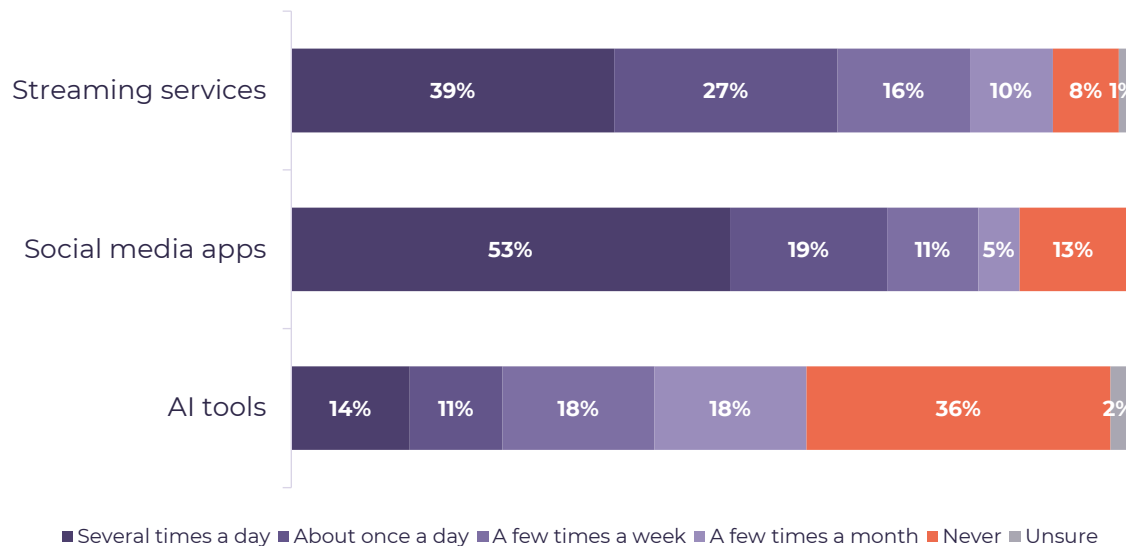


SECTION 01

AI Tools: Voter Use and Views

How voters interact with AI tools, and their general opinions

AI tools are used daily and intentionally by a quarter of voters, while six in ten use them at least monthly



25%

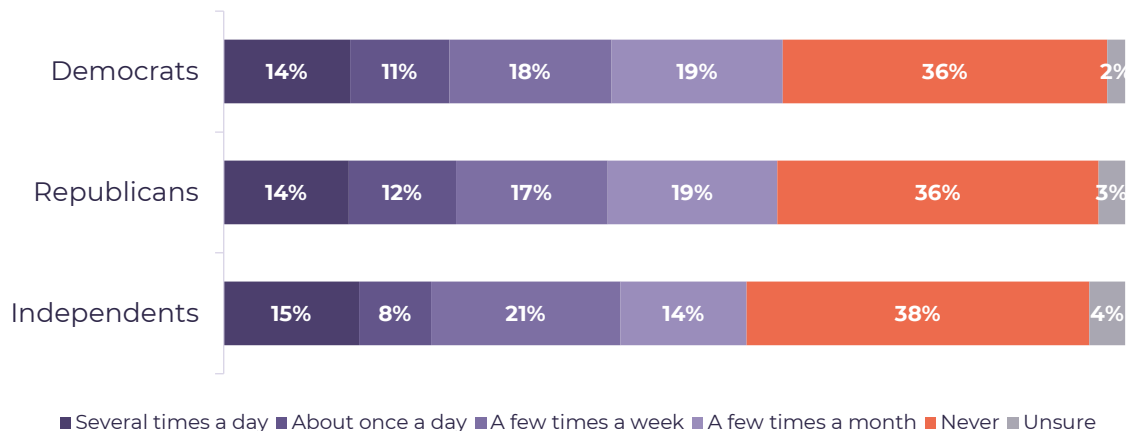
are 'Heavy AI Users'

36% 'Moderate AI Users'

61% Total

Q5-Q7 · How often do you use streaming services / social media apps / AI tools? · N=1,568

AI tools are used daily and intentionally by a quarter of voters, while six in ten use them at least monthly



No significant differences by party identification

Q5-Q7 · How often do you use streaming services / social media apps / AI tools? · N=1,568

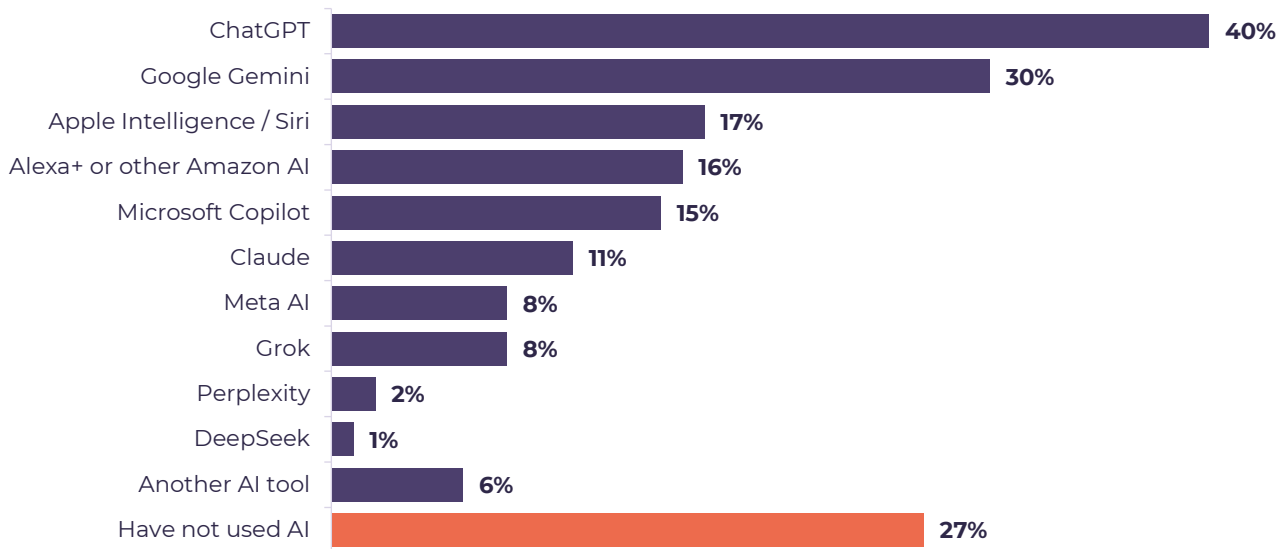
25%

'Heavy AI Users'

34% of 35-49 year olds

Only 20% of Seniors 65+

Provided a list of AI tools, mentions of total purposeful use inches up, driven by ChatGPT and Google Gemini



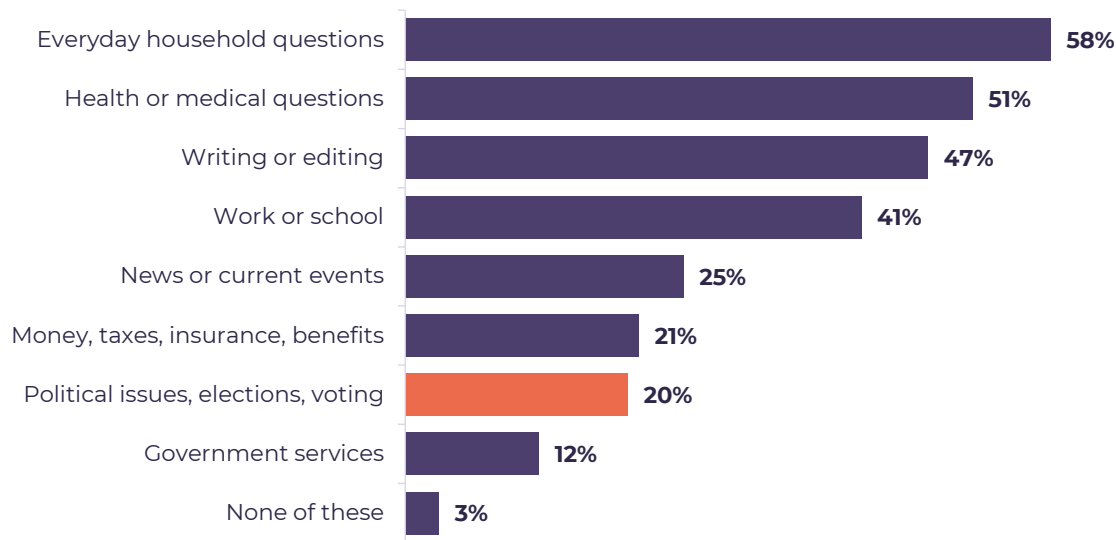
Given specific names, more voters admit to having used an AI tool.

Claude climbs to 4th among Independents

Grok climbs to 5th among Republicans.

Q13 · Which of the following AI tools, if any, do you use? (select all that apply) · N=1,568

Majorities of intentional AI users engage the tools for everyday household or health questions



20%

of purposeful AI users have turned to it to learn about political issues, elections, or voting.

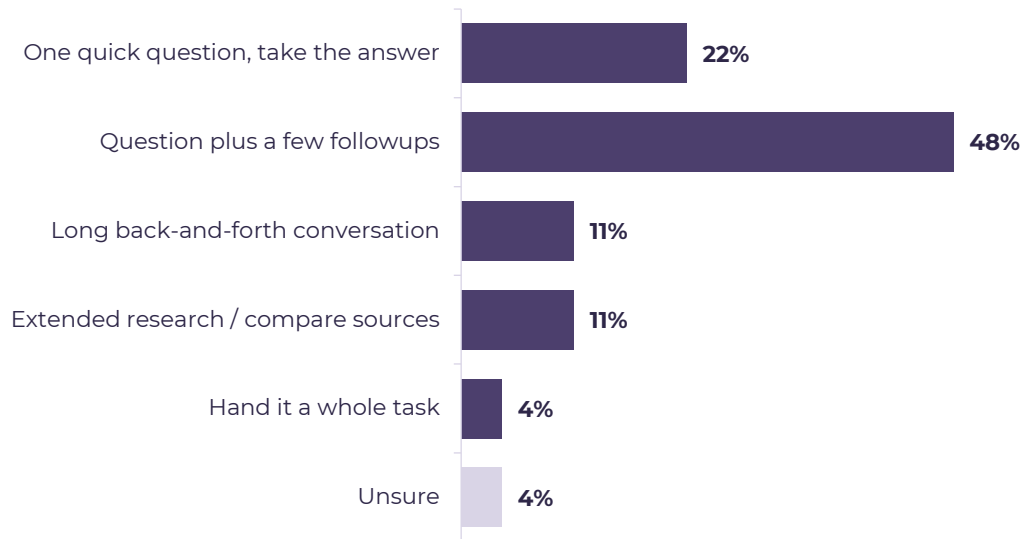
Q14 · Which of these have you used AI tools for? (among AI users in Q7, N=919, select all that apply)

Majorities of intentional AI users engage the tools for everyday household or health questions (by Party ID)

Response	Total n=919	Republican n=371	Independent n=152	Democrat n=396
Everyday household questions like recipes, repairs or planning	58%	64% ▲	57%	53% ▼
Health or medical questions	51%	61% ▲	45%	44% ▼
Writing or editing	47%	42%	55% ▲	47%
Work for your job or school	41%	31% ▼	45%	48% ▲
News or current events	25%	29% ▲	31%	19% ▼
Money, taxes, insurance or benefits	21%	24%	24%	16% ▼
Learning about political issues, elections, or voting	20%	21%	23%	17%
Government services	12%	12%	15%	10%
Something else	13%	11%	13%	14%
None of these	3%	2%	3%	3%

Q14 · Which of these have you used AI tools for? (among AI users in Q7, N=919, select all that apply)

Most interactions among intentional users involve one question or just a few follow-ups.

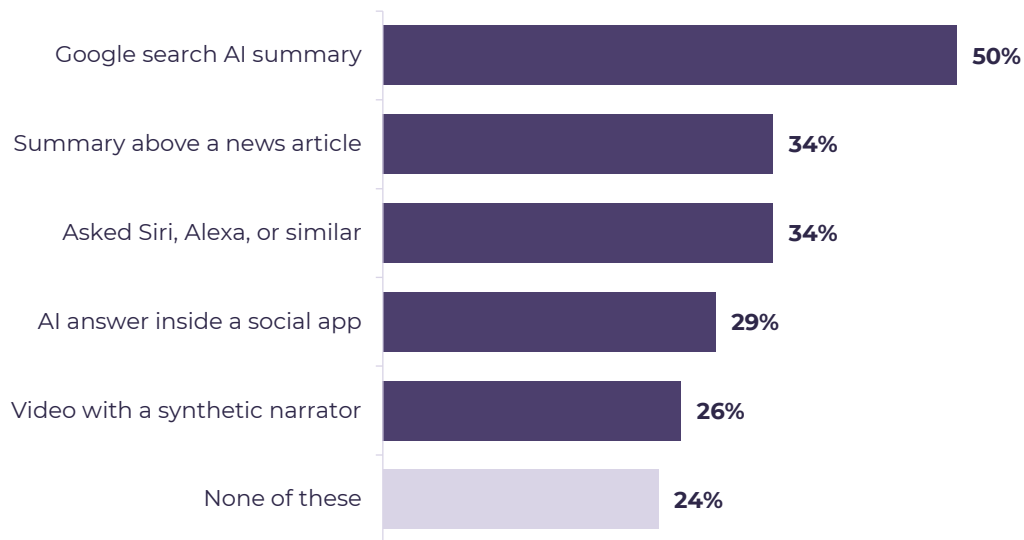


70%

of voters engage in limited interactions with AI tools, while 26% take their interactions with AI deeper.

Q15.Thinking about how you typically use AI tools, which of these comes closest to describing what you usually do? (among AI users in Q7, N=919)

Meanwhile, three-fourths of voters have 'Ambient' exposure to AI-generated content



Q8 · In the past month, have you done any of the following? (select all that apply) · N=1,568

76%

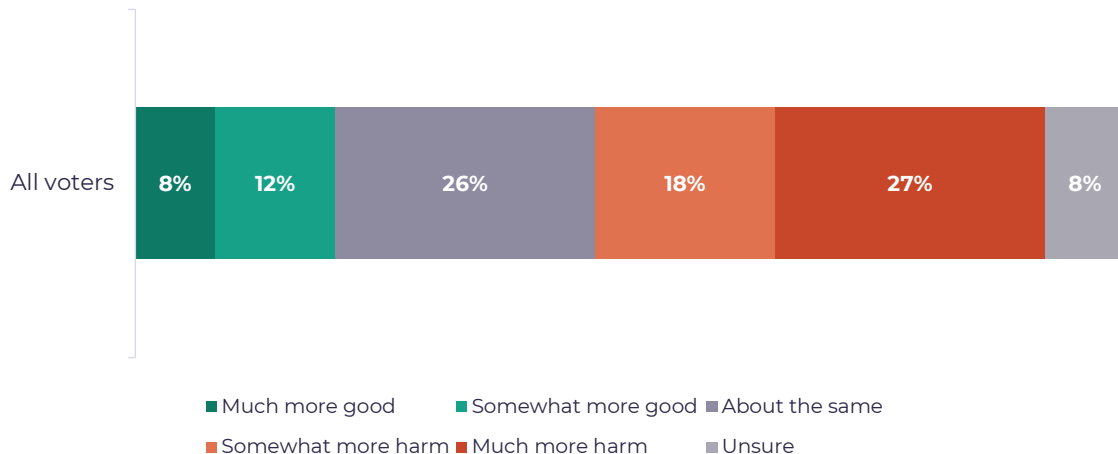
have run into AI-generated content in the past month, without necessarily thinking they are engaging AI tools.

'Ambient' exposure to AI generated content includes 61% of non-intentional users

Response	Total n=1,568	Heavy user n=387	Moderate user n=535	Non-user n=646
Read the summary that appears at the top of Google search results	50%	65% ▲	57% ▲	33% ▼
Read a summary of a news article that appeared above the article itself	34%	47% ▲	36%	24% ▼
Asked a question of a voice assistant like Siri or Alexa	34%	49% ▲	36%	21% ▼
Seen an AI-written answer or summary inside a social media app	29%	45% ▲	34% ▲	14% ▼
Watched a short video where the narrator's voice was computer-generated	26%	34% ▲	28%	19% ▼
None of these	24%	13% ▼	15% ▼	39% ▲
Any AI exposure	76%	87% ▲	85% ▲	61% ▼

Q8 · In the past month, have you done any of the following? (select all that apply) · N=1,568

A 45% plurality think AI does more harm than good



-25

net good-harm. 45% say AI does more harm than good against 20% who say more good, and 27% say much more harm.

Q11 · Overall, do you think AI does more good than harm, or more harm than good? · N=1,568

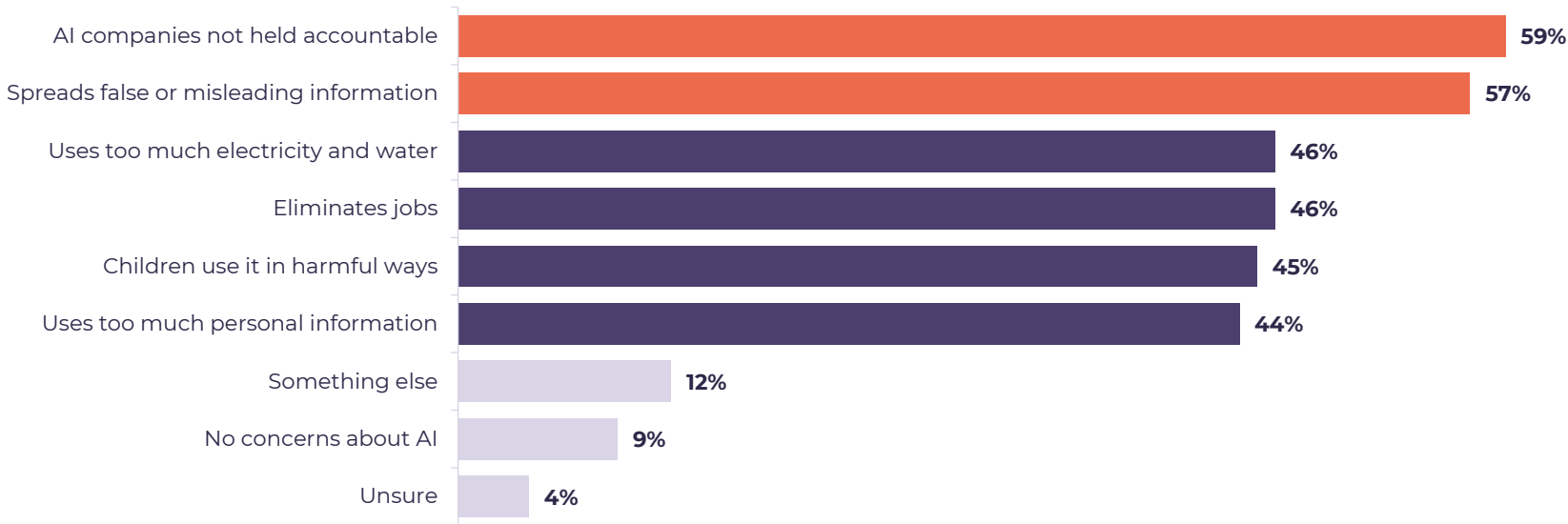
A 45% plurality think AI does more harm than good (by Party ID)

Response	Total n=1,568	Republican n=657	Independent n=269	Democrat n=642
Much more good than harm	8%	13% ▲	10%	3% ▼
Somewhat more good than harm	12%	18% ▲	5% ▼	11%
About the same amount of each	26%	26%	29%	26%
Somewhat more harm than good	18%	16%	15%	21% ▲
Much more harm than good	27%	18% ▼	33% ▲	32% ▲
Unsure	8%	10%	8%	7%

NET -24 -3 -32 -40

Q11 · Overall, do you think AI does more good than harm, or more harm than good? · N=1,568

Accountability and misinformation top the list of concerns about AI



Q12 · What concerns, if any, do you have about AI tools? (select all that apply) · N=1,568

Accountability and misinformation top the list of concerns about AI (by Party ID)

Response	Total n=1,565	Republican n=657	Independent n=266	Democrat n=642
AI companies are not being held accountable	59%	44% ▼	60%	73% ▲
They spread false or misleading information	57%	49% ▼	58%	65% ▲
They use too much electricity and water	46%	25% ▼	49%	66% ▲
They eliminate jobs	46%	34% ▼	45%	57% ▲
Children use it in harmful ways	45%	39% ▼	46%	50% ▲
They use too much personal information	44%	33% ▼	47%	53% ▲
Something else	12%	12%	13%	12%
I don't have concerns about AI	9%	13% ▲	10%	5% ▼
Unsure	4%	6% ▲	5%	2% ▼

Q12 · What concerns, if any, do you have about AI tools? (select all that apply) · N=1,568

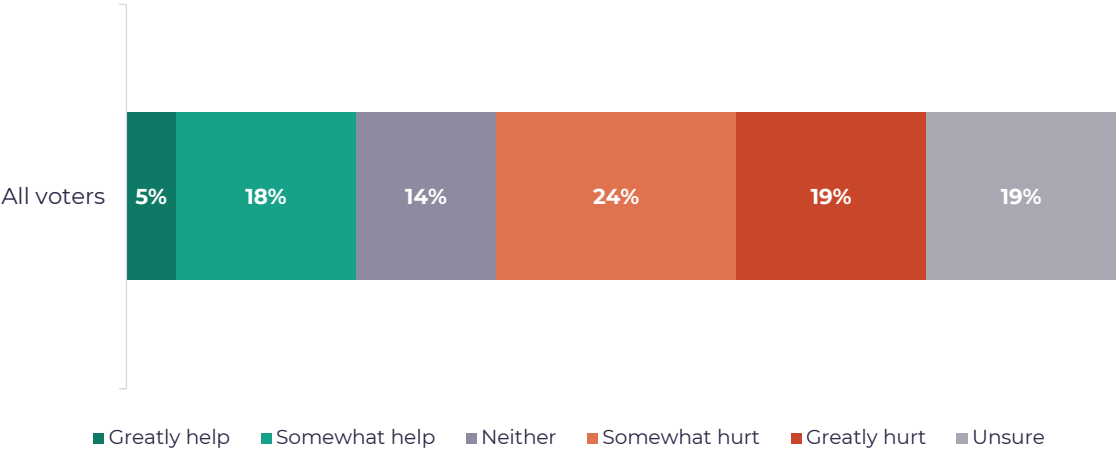


SECTION 02

AI Tools: Voter Use in Elections

How voters interact with AI tools in context of politics and elections

Similar to overall views, 43% think AI hurts people's understanding of elections and political issues

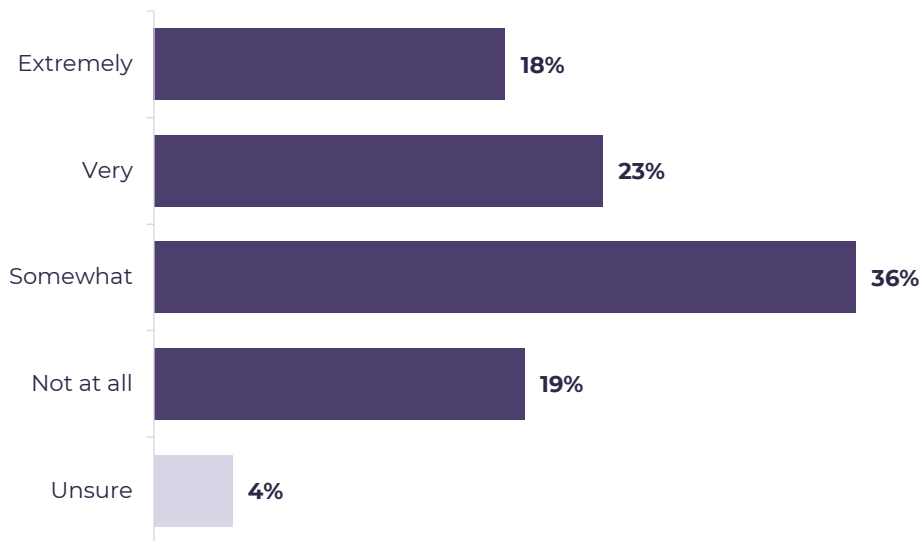


-20

Net hurt-help. 43% say AI tools hurt people's understanding of elections and political issues. Only 23% say they help.

Q16 · Do you think AI tools help or hurt people's understanding of elections and political issues? · N=1,568

A candidate's position on AI is at least somewhat important to most, but deeply important to few



41%

Say a candidate's position on artificial intelligence is very or extremely important to their vote.

Q17. How important is a candidate's position on artificial intelligence to your vote this November? · N=1,568

A candidate's position on AI is at least somewhat important to most, but deeply important to few (By Party ID)

Response	Total n=1,568	Republican n=657	Independent n=269	Democrat n=642
Extremely important	18%	8% ▼	23% ▲	25% ▲
Very important	23%	18% ▼	22%	28% ▲
Somewhat important	36%	43% ▲	30%	31% ▼
Not at all important	19%	26% ▲	20%	12% ▼
Unsure	4%	4%	5%	4%
Extremely/very important	41%	26% ▼	45%	53% ▲

Q17. How important is a candidate's position on artificial intelligence to your vote this November? · N=1,568

A candidate's position on AI is at least somewhat important to most, but deeply important to few (By use of AI tools)

Response	Total n=1,568	Heavy user n=387	Moderate user n=535	Non-user n=646
Extremely important	18%	16%	15% ▼	22% ▲
Very important	23%	22%	24%	23%
Somewhat important	36%	40%	39%	30% ▼
Not at all important	19%	19%	19%	20%
Unsure	4%	3%	4%	6% ▲
Extremely/very important	41%	38%	39%	45% ▲

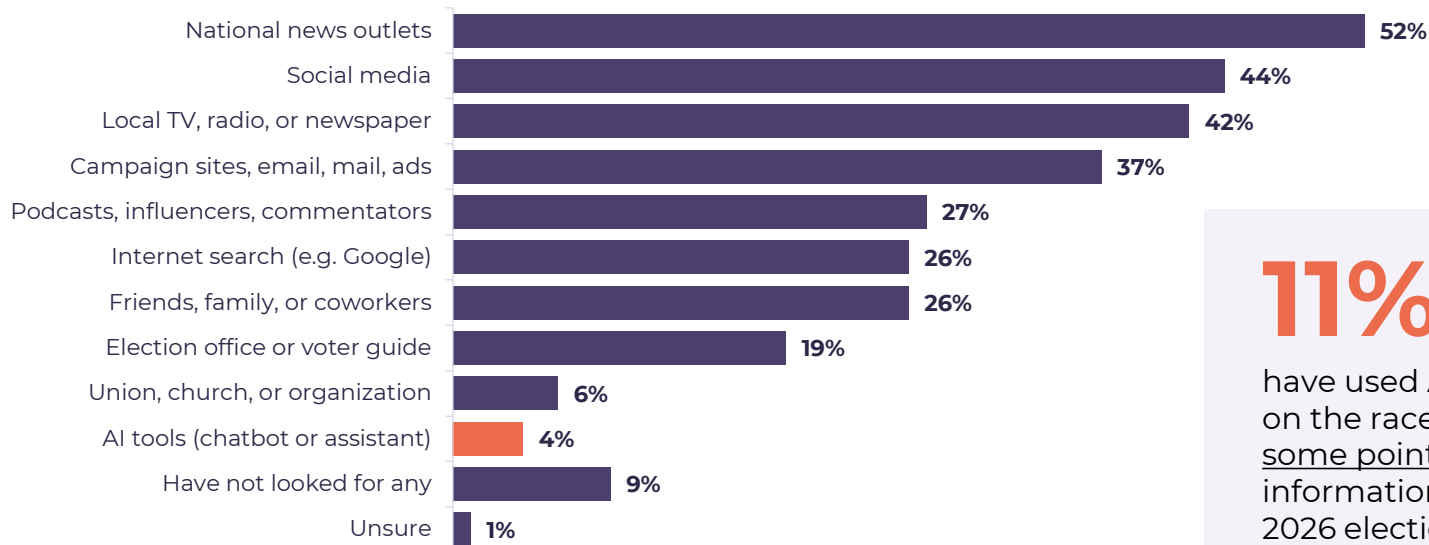
Q17. How important is a candidate's position on artificial intelligence to your vote this November? · N=1,568

A candidate's position on AI is at least somewhat important to most, but deeply important to few (By views of AI impact)

Response	Total n=1,568	More good n=360	About the same n=395	More harm n=666
Extremely important	18%	9% ▼	10% ▼	29% ▲
Very important	23%	21%	19% ▼	28% ▲
Somewhat important	36%	42% ▲	44% ▲	28% ▼
Not at all important	19%	26% ▲	23%	13% ▼
Unsure	4%	3%	5%	2% ▼
Extremely/very important	41%	30% ▼	28% ▼	57% ▲

Q17. How important is a candidate's position on artificial intelligence to your vote this November? · N=1,568

When it comes to **elections**, few have recently sought election information from AI tools

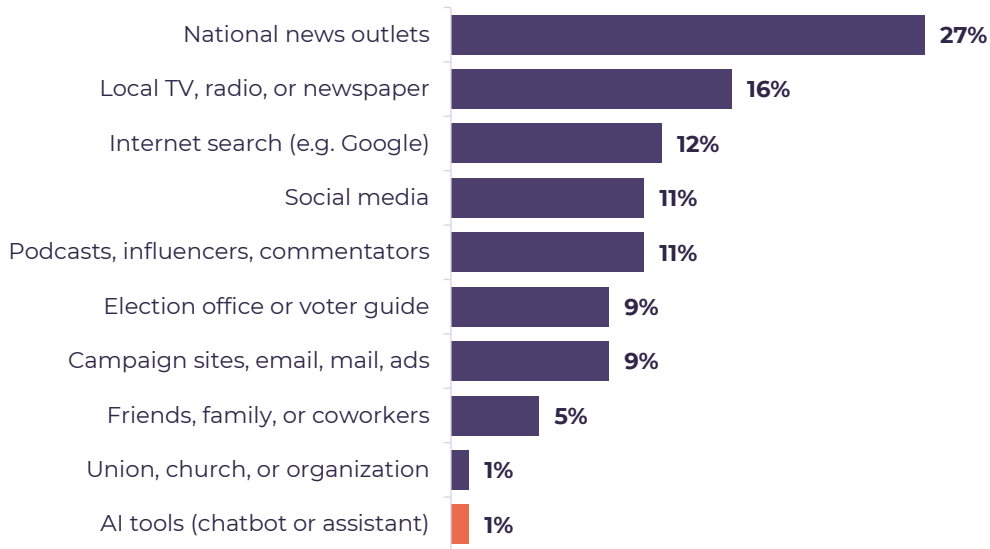


11%

have used AI tools on the races at some point for information on the 2026 elections

Q3 · In the past 30 days, where have you gotten information about the election or how to vote? (select all that apply)
 Q22 · Thinking specifically about the 2026 elections and the races for Congress and the other offices on your ballot this November, have you used AI tools to get information about any of those races? N=1,568

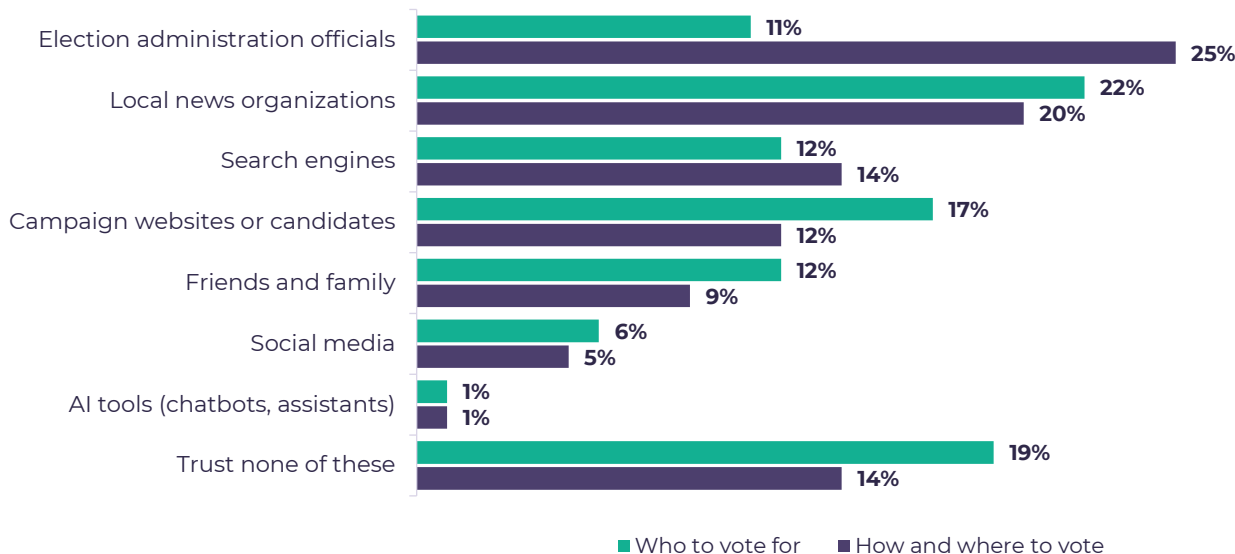
And broadly among seekers of election information, AI tools are cited **last** as most credible



Q4 · And when a question about the election comes up, which one do you find most credible?

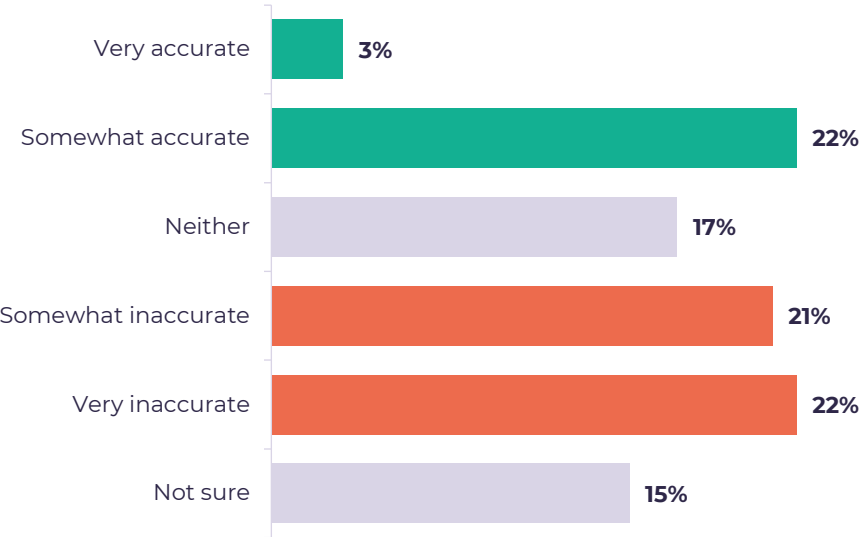
N=1,431 voters with at least one source

AI tools also lowest on trust in information about mechanics of voting and who to vote for



Q24, Q25 · Which source do you trust most for accurate information about voting / when deciding how to vote? · N=1,568

Only a quarter of voters call AI accurate when providing information about elections and voting

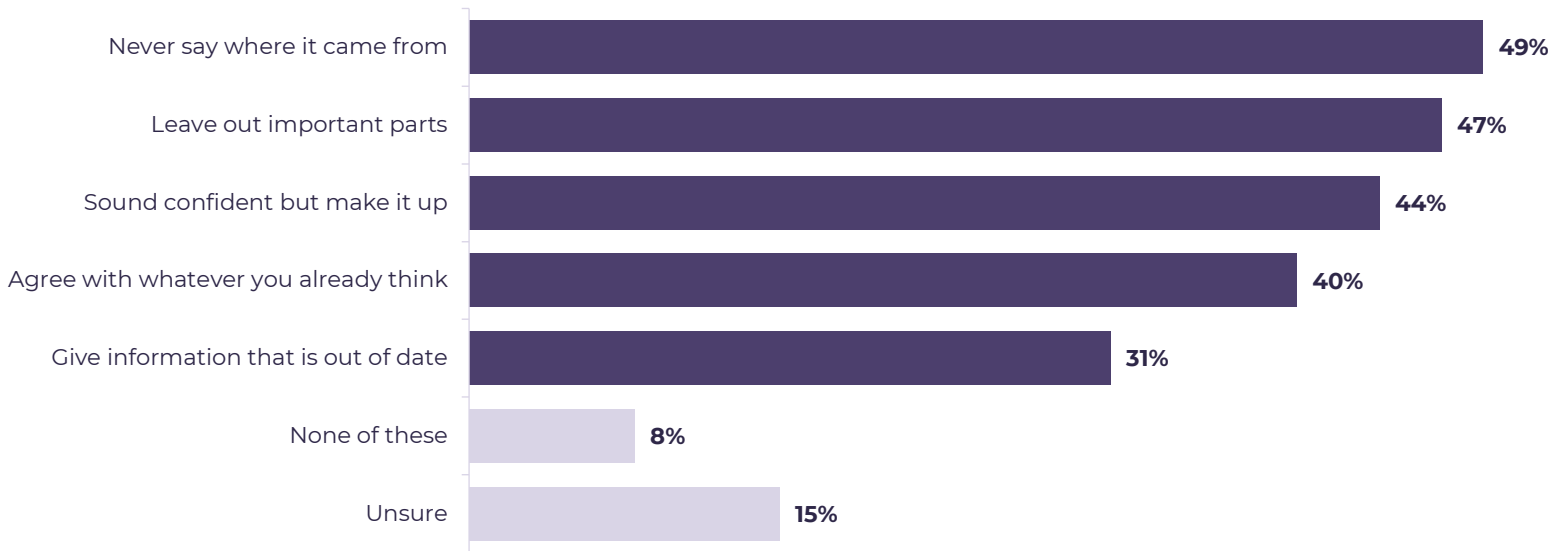


25%

rate AI tools very or somewhat accurate on elections and voting; 43% call them inaccurate and 32% will not say either way.

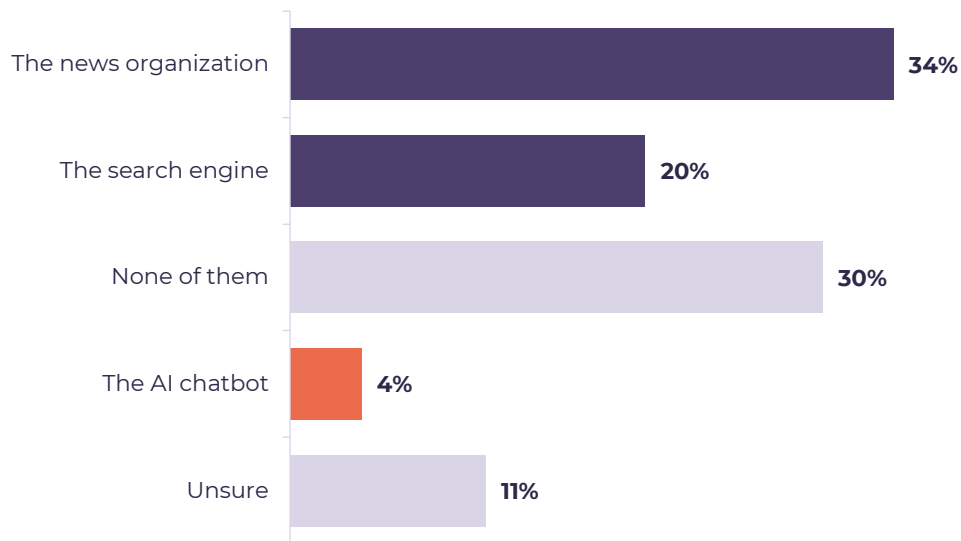
Q37 · How accurate do you think AI tools are when providing information about elections and voting? · N=1,568

Voters have concerns about the answers AI tools give on questions about politics and elections



Q40 · Which of the following do you think AI tools sometimes do when answering questions about politics or elections?
(select all) · N=1,568

When the sources conflict, AI loses

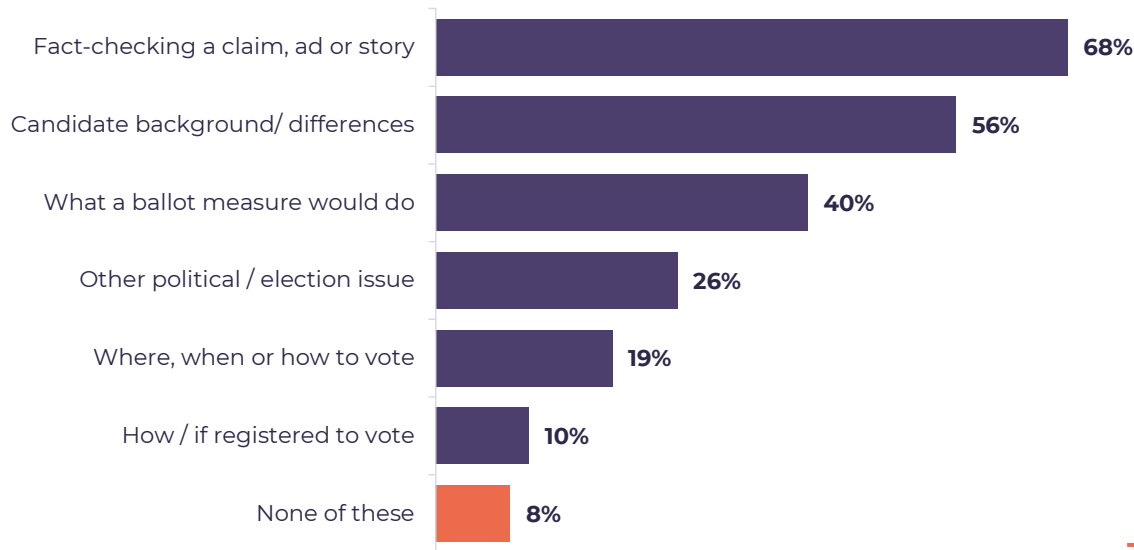


4%

would believe the AI chatbot over a news organization or a search engine. 30% would not believe any of the three.

Q26 · If a news organization, a search engine, and an AI tool gave you conflicting information about the election, which would you believe? · N=1,568

Only one-in-five have ever asked AI for information about elections... When they do, fact-checking is first



19%

Have ever asked AI tools to get information about politics, elections, candidates or voting.

20%

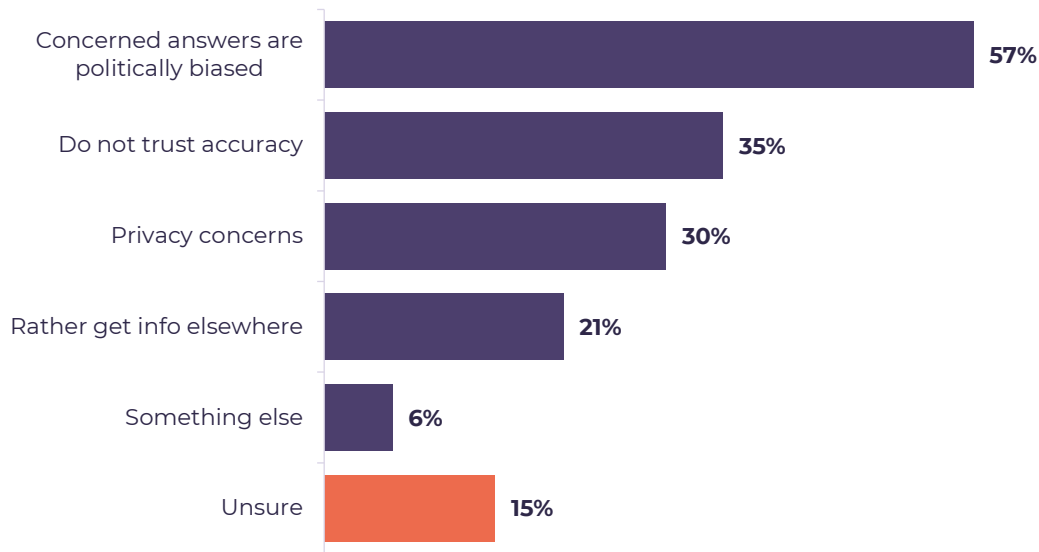
Are very or somewhat likely to do so between now and election day.

Q19 · Have you ever asked AI tools any of the following? Select all that apply. (among those who said yes to Q18, N=289)

Q18 · Have you ever used AI tools to get information about politics, elections, candidates, or voting? N=1,568

Q23 · How likely are you to use AI tools to get information about any of those races between now and election day? N=1,568

Even those who have used AI for elections in 2026 have concerns, especially political bias

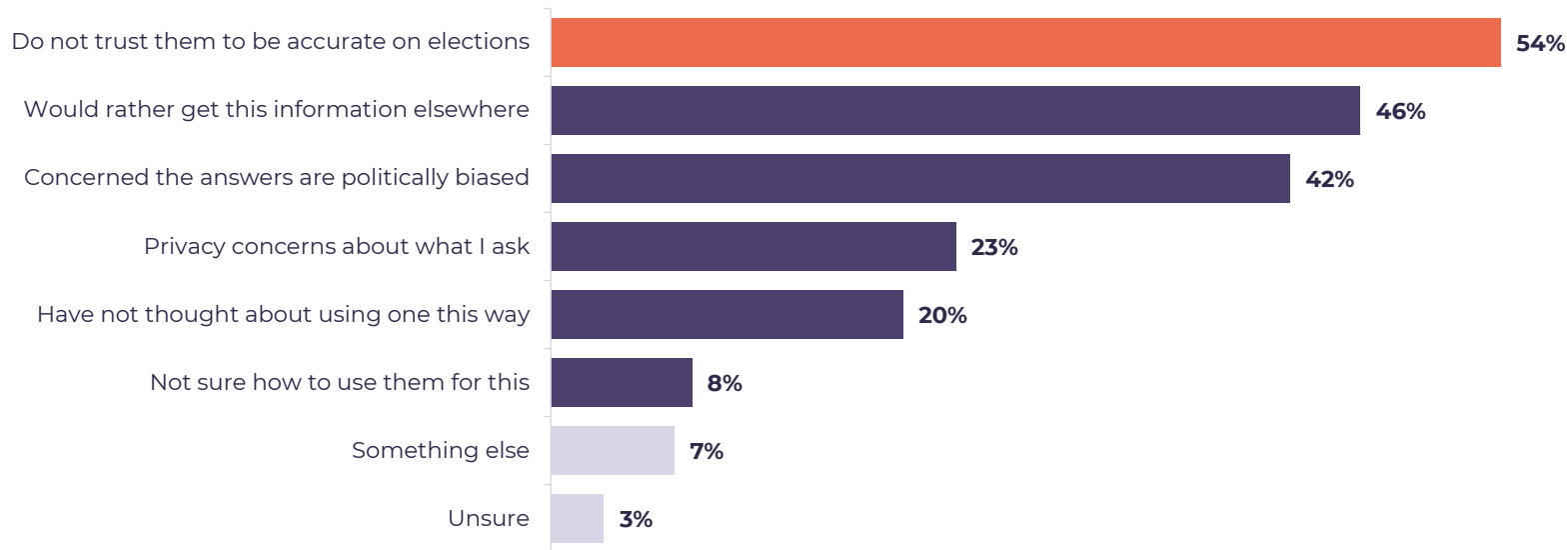


19%

Have ever asked AI tools to get information about politics, elections, candidates or voting.

Q21 Which of the following, if any, are concerns you have about using AI tools for information about the 2026 elections?
Select all that apply. (among those who said yes to Q18, n = 289)

Lack of trust keeps many of the other four-fifths away



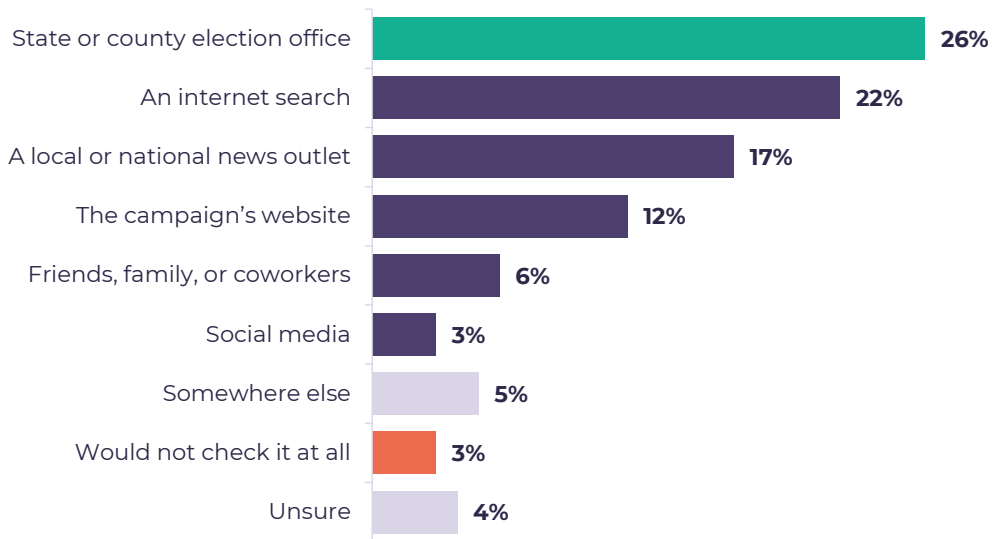
Q20 · What are the main reasons you have not used AI tools for information about the 2026 elections? (among non-users of political AI, N=1,275, select all)

Lack of trust keeps many of the other four-fifths away (by AI tool usage)

Response	Heavy user n=223	Moderate user n=430	Non-user n=622
I do not trust them to give accurate information about elections	40% ▼	50% ▼	64% ▲
I would rather get this information somewhere else	39% ▼	48%	46%
I am concerned the answers are politically biased	38%	44%	43%
I have privacy concerns about what I ask	12% ▼	17% ▼	32% ▲
I have not thought about using one this way	24%	22%	17% ▼
I am not sure how to use them for this	3% ▼	5% ▼	12% ▲
Something else	12% ▲	4% ▼	8%
Unsure	3%	3%	4%

Q20 · What are the main reasons you have not used AI tools for information about the 2026 elections? (among non-users of political AI, N=1,275, select all)

If using AI for election information, most say they would trust checking against some other source

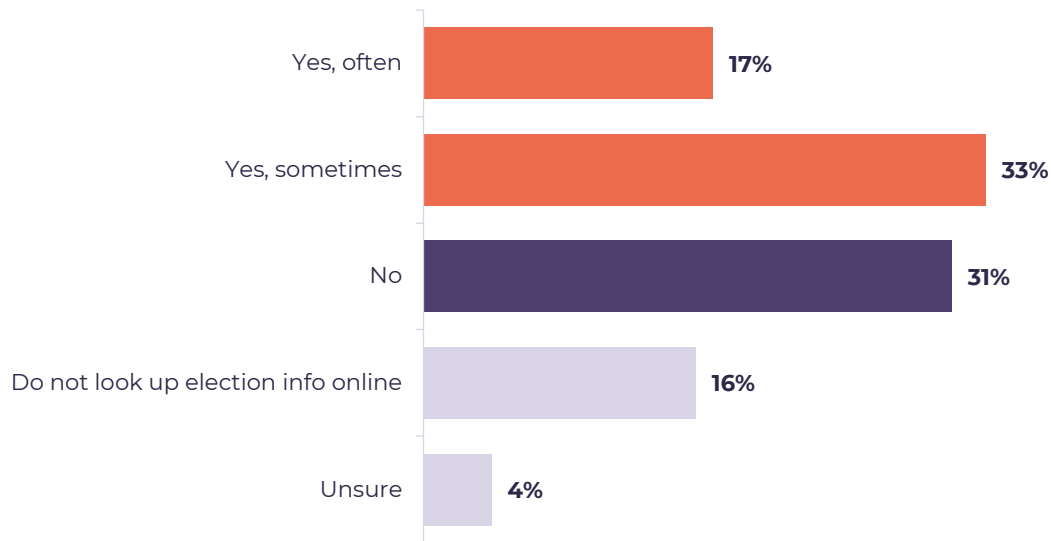


32%

of existing 2026 political AI users (19%) say a tool has already given them wrong election information

Q38 · If AI gave you information about an election, which source would you trust most to check it? · N=1,568 · key finding from Q39 (among political AI users, N=289)

Half of **Ambient** users have used a search summary when looking up **elections**



And

53%

of all Ambient AI users who use a summary know those election information summaries are AI generated.

Q9 · Have you used a search summary when looking up the election, candidates, or voting? (ambient AI exposure, N=1,168) · key finding from Q10 As far as you know, is that summary written by a person, or generated by artificial intelligence (n=996)

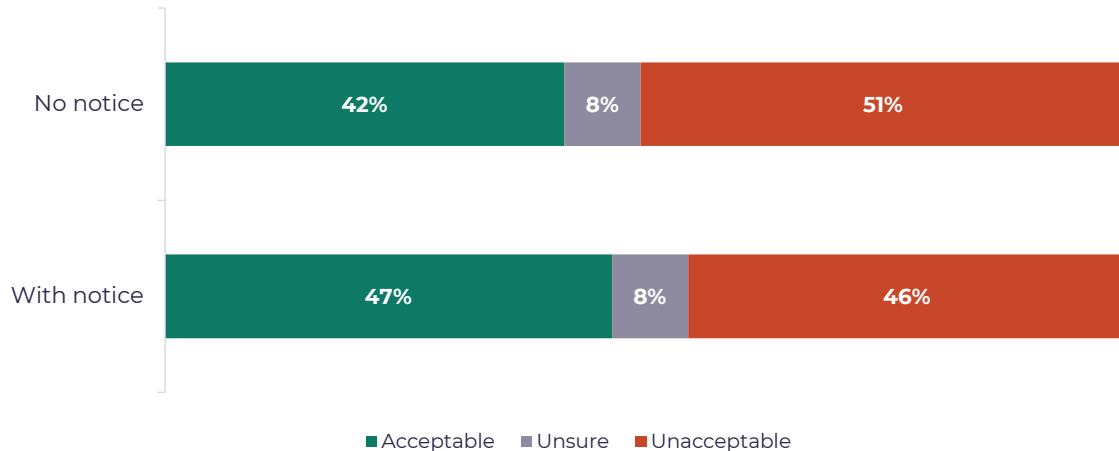


SECTION 03

Voter Views of AI Use By Campaigns

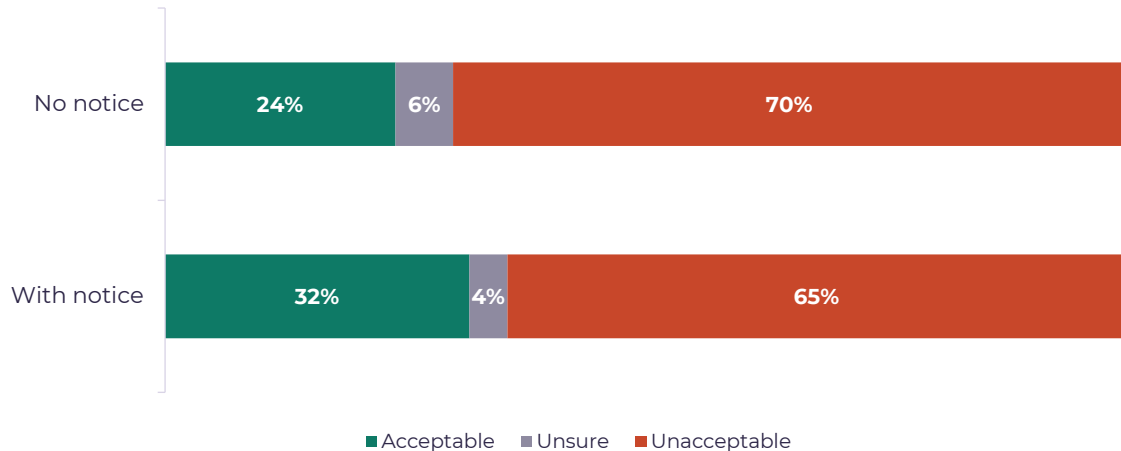
Voters' opinions of campaigns using/misusing AI

Using AI to write fundraising emails and text messages (w or w/o a notice included that AI was used)



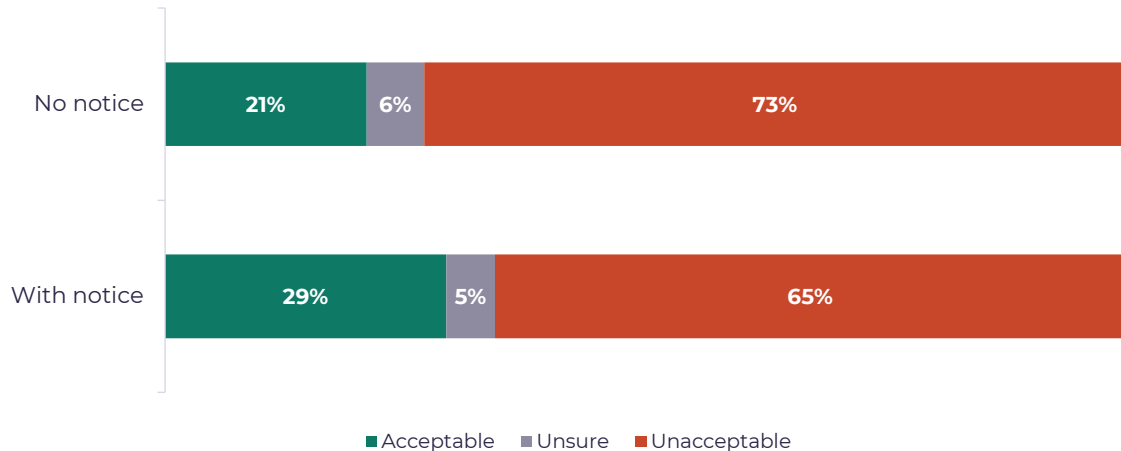
Q27/28 · ask[ing] about the way in which political campaigns may use AI in upcoming elections. For each, please say if you think those practices are acceptable or unacceptable · split sample: no notice N=757, with AI disclosure notice N=811

Using an AI tool to answer voters' questions on a campaign website or via text message (w or w/o a notice included that AI was used)



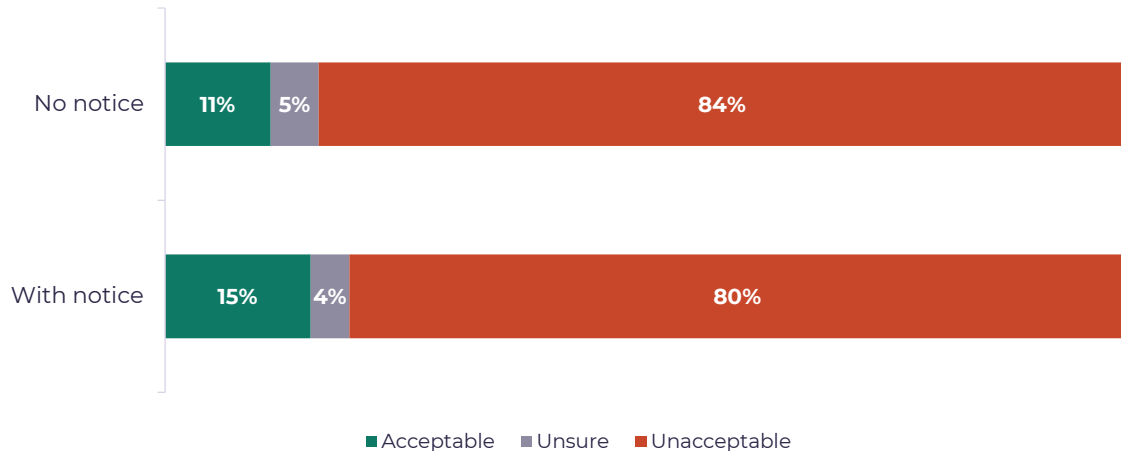
Q35/36 · ask[ing] about the way in which political campaigns may use AI in upcoming elections. For each, please say if you think those practices are acceptable or unacceptable · split sample: no notice N =757, with AI disclosure notice N=811

Using AI to generate the images or the video in an advertisement (w or w/o a notice included that AI was used)



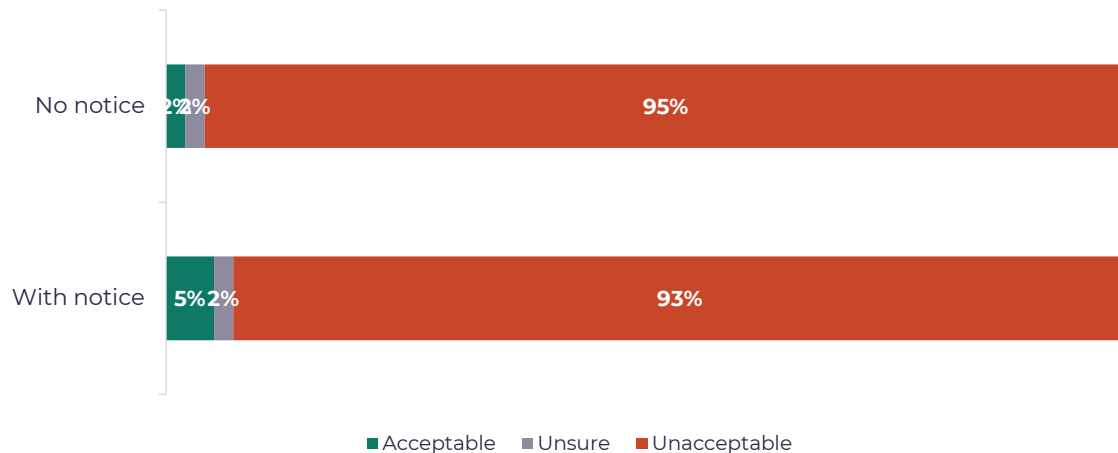
Q29/30 · ask[ing] about the way in which political campaigns may use AI in upcoming elections. For each, please say if you think those practices are acceptable or unacceptable · split sample: no notice N=757, with AI disclosure notice N=811

Using an AI-generated voice that sounds like the candidate, used by their own campaign (w or w/o a notice included that AI was used)



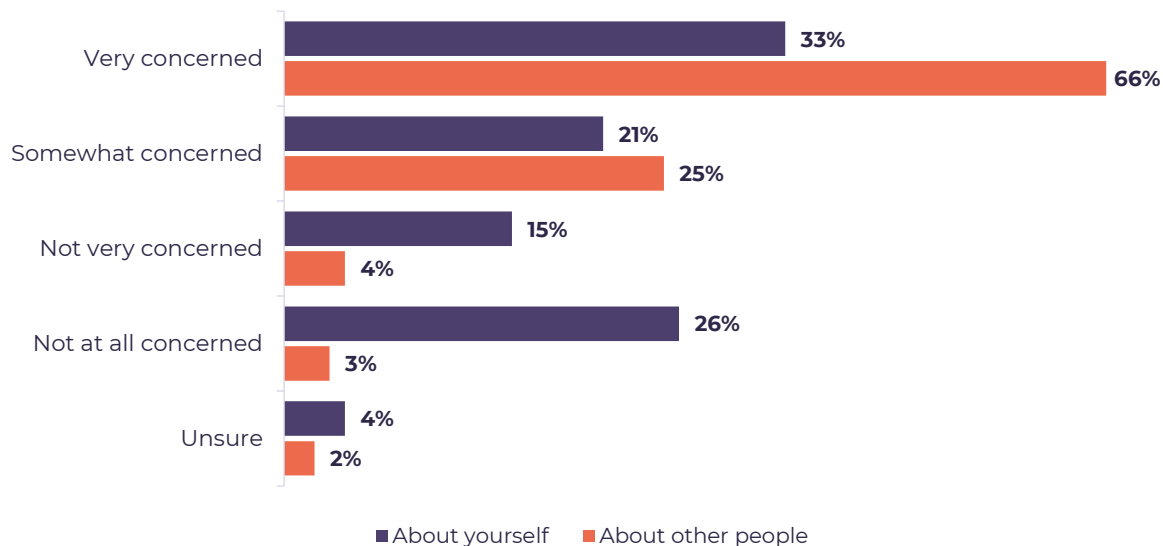
Q31/32 · ask[ing] about the way in which political campaigns may use AI in upcoming elections. For each, please say if you think those practices are acceptable or unacceptable · split sample: no notice N=757, with AI disclosure notice N=811

Using AI to create a video of an opponent saying something they never said (w or w/o a notice included that AI was used)



Q33/34 · ask[ing] about the way in which political campaigns may use AI in upcoming elections. For each, please say if you think those practices are acceptable or unacceptable · split sample: no notice N=757, with AI disclosure notice N=811

The deepfake worry is mostly about other people falling victim



37 pts

separates concern for how other people vote (91%) from concern about one's own vote (54%), a textbook third-person effect.

Q41/42 · How concerned are you that deepfakes could change how other people vote / how you vote? · split sample: other people N=754, yourself N=814

The deepfake worry is mostly about other people falling victim (by AI tool usage)

Measure	Total	Heavy user	Moderate user	Non-user
Own vote · concerned n=814	54%	48%	52%	60% ▲
Others' votes · concerned n=754	91%	90%	91%	91%
Own vote · very concerned n=814	33%	25% ▼	29%	42% ▲
Others' votes · very concerned n=754	66%	65%	58% ▼	74% ▲

Q41/42 · How concerned are you that deepfakes could change how other people vote / how you vote? · split sample: other people N=754, yourself N=814



SECTION 04

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Whether they like it or not, AI is a part of voters' everyday lives
- When it comes to elections and political info, purposeful use is rare, but ambient use and exposure is broader
- Trust in AI-provided election information is lacking
- Concerns about false and misleading information are significant

Practical Takeaways 1

- Watch what AI overviews and summaries are saying
- Traditional sources of information still matter
- For now, restricting AI usage to non-public-facing applications is a good idea.
- Disclosing AI usage, especially on voice or image, does not allay voters' concerns
- Prepare strategies for instances and accusations of AI deepfakes

Practical Takeaways 2

- Measure exposure separately from use
- Make verification of political information and news accessible and visible
- Watch where voters actually encounter AI
- Keep official voting information current and easy to find, for voters and for the AI tools that summarize it



QUESTIONS

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Made possible with support from SparkFire Technologies