

DIGITAL MEDIA RESEARCH CENTRE

visitor seminar

with visiting fellow
RICHARD FLETCHER

Director of Research at the Reuters Institute
for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford



FRIDAY

12 JULY 2024



TIME

12:00PM - 1:00PM



VENUE

QUT KELVIN GROVE,
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Is the public's connection with news fraying? Global trends in news use and attitudes

The news media play a vital role in democratic societies. To fulfil this role, the news media need to provide coverage that helps people understand how society works, how it is governed, what alternatives exist, and—according to some theorists—to enable participation and debate. However, the value of news for democracy can only be fully realised if the public actually engages with it—making changes to news use and attitudes critically important. Using annual survey data collected from 2012 to 2024 across 47 countries, I explore key trends in news access, interest in news, news participation, news avoidance, and trust in news, to develop a broader understanding of how the relationship between the news media and the public is changing. Taken together, the data suggests that the public's connection with the news media is fraying. Although we see different patterns in different parts of the world, on average news use and participation is declining, interest in news is waning, news avoidance is rising, and trust in the news media is falling. Focusing on trust in news, I further explore how these trends are interconnected, and how recent changes to the media environment—specifically the decline of television and newspapers, and the growth of social media—have both contributed to a decline in trust, and are also part of the public's response to it.

Biography | Dr. Richard Fletcher is Director of Research at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. He is primarily interested in global trends in news consumption, comparative media research, and the use of technology by journalists and news organizations. Richard is lead researcher and co-author of the Digital News Report – the world's largest annual survey of global news use. Richard is a recipient of the Wolfgang Donsbach Outstanding Journal Article of the Year Award (with Rasmus Kleis Nielsen) for 'Are News Audiences Increasingly Fragmented?', published in the Journal of Communication.



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