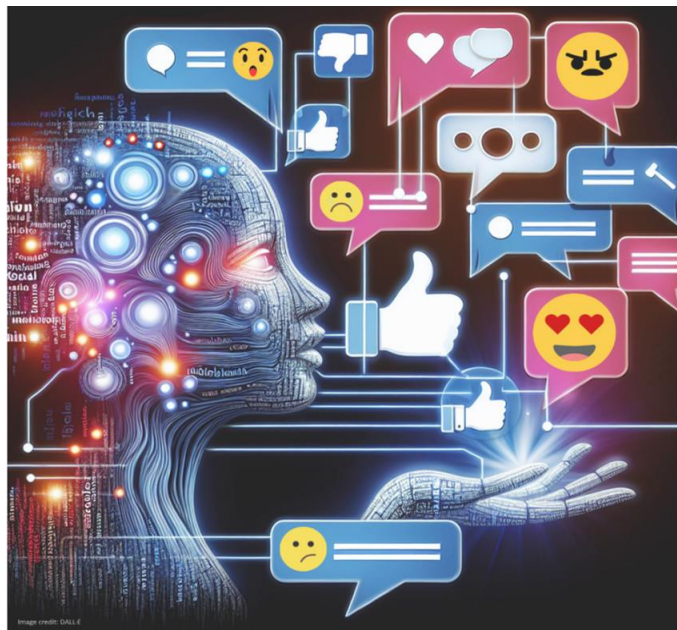




French



P2P 2025  
National  
Conference



English

# Fractured Facts: How Generative AI Fuels Anti- Immigrant Misinformation

Philip Mai



@PhilipMai.com

@SocialMediaLab.ca

Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

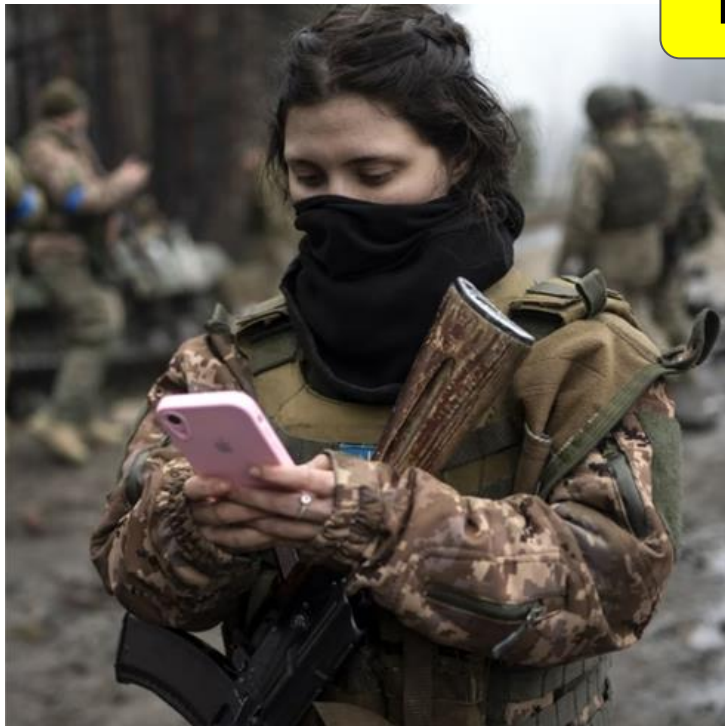
info@SocialMediaLab.ca



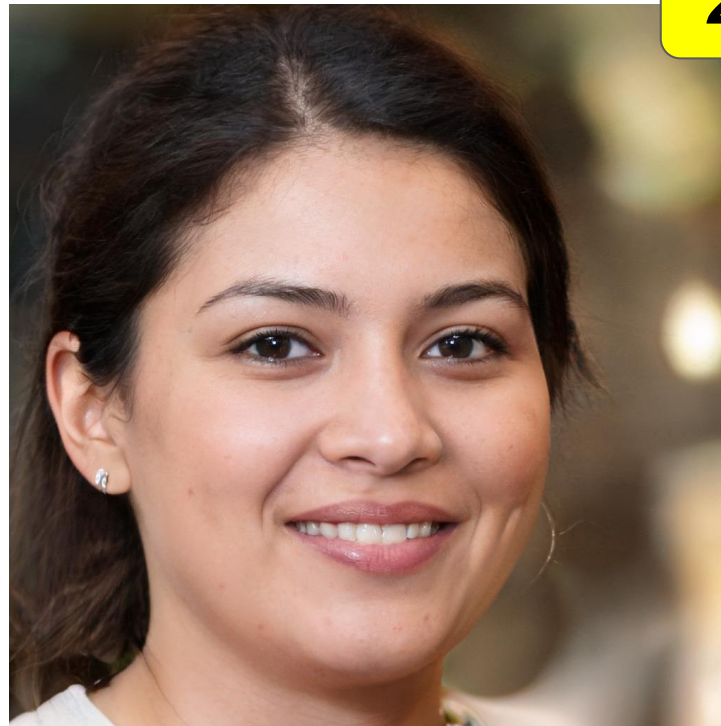
French

# Which photo is AI-generated?

1



2





French

# Which photo is AI-generated?

Authentic



Ukrainian army soldier Dasha, 22, checks her phone after a military sweep to search for possible remnants of Russian troops after their withdrawal from villages on the outskirts of Kyiv, on April 1, 2022.

[Photos: Faces of Ukraine - The Atlantic](#)

Synthetic



<https://thispersonnotexist.org/>

Slides in French:

[bit.ly/halifax-fr](https://bit.ly/halifax-fr)



Slides in English:

[bit.ly/halifax-en](https://bit.ly/halifax-en)



## Agenda

- ➔ ● **About the Social Media Lab**
- News Consumption Habits and Social Media Use
- GenAI Adoption in Canada & Concerns About Misinformation
- Risks & Mitigation Strategies For Immigration & Settlement







French



Social

Media

Lab



## A Multidisciplinary Research Laboratory at Toronto Metropolitan University

The Lab's research seeks to advance the public's understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of technology adoption and use.

### *Laboratoire de Recherche Multidisciplinaire à l'Université Métropolitaine de Toronto*

*Les recherches du laboratoire visent à faire progresser la compréhension du public quant aux avantages et aux inconvénients de l'adoption et de l'utilisation de la technologie.*



Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University

TED  
ROGERS  
SCHOOL  
OF MANAGEMENT



French



## [Recent Publication 2024] Falling for Russian Propaganda: Understanding the factors that contribute to belief in pro-Kremlin disinformation on social media

### Key Findings

1. Individuals who hold right-leaning ideology are more likely to believe in pro-Kremlin claims overall as compared to those who hold mixed or left-leaning views.
2. Those who believe in pro-Kremlin claims are more likely to rely on social media for news about the war than those who do not believe.
3. Exposure to disinformation on social media is positively correlated with belief in it.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231220330>



Soares, F. B., Gruz, A., & Mai, P. (2023). **Falling for Russian Propaganda: Understanding the factors that contribute to belief in pro-Kremlin disinformation on social media.** *Social Media+ Society*, 9(4), 20563051231220330.





French



## [Recent Publication 2024] Digital battleground: An examination of anti-refugee discourse on Twitter against Ukrainians displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine



Collected and analyzed **811,933** Twitter posts shared between **Feb. 24, 2022 - Feb. 22, 2023** that mentioned the word “**Ukraine**” and either “**refugees**,” “**immigrants**,” or “**asylum seekers**” in 10 European languages.

### Key Findings

1. **53%** of the sample posts aligned with pro-Kremlin narratives against Ukraine.
2. Most prevalent posts were politically motivated and included partisan content (**33%**), followed by posts containing expressions countering anti-refugee narratives (**20%**).
3. These findings highlight the escalating politicization and polarization of discussions about Ukrainian refugees both online and offline.

**Source:** Gruzdt, A., Mai, P., & Taleb, O. (2024). Digital battleground: An examination of anti-refugee discourse on Twitter against Ukrainians displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. First Monday, 29(8). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v29i8.13734>





French



## PUBLIC REPORTS

### Data About Canadians For Canadians and the World

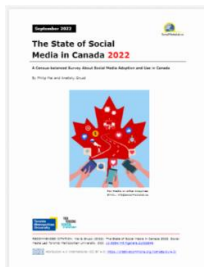
We produce public reports that provide a snapshot of **social media usage trends** in Canada and a window into Canadians' attitudes and perspectives toward issues such as: **misinformation, AI, politics, and privacy in the context of social media.**

Our public reports are widely used by different stakeholders including parliamentary committees, government departments, journalists, researchers, educators, the business community and the general public.

[socialmedialab.ca/public-reports](https://socialmedialab.ca/public-reports)



#### State of Social Media in Canada



#### Generative AI



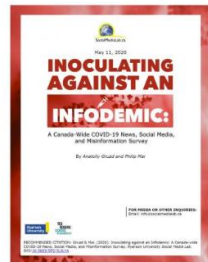
#### Social Media and Anti-Social Behaviour



#### Social Media and Political Engagement in Canada

Reports

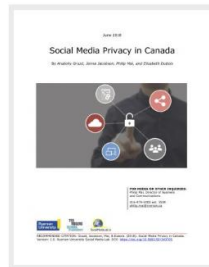
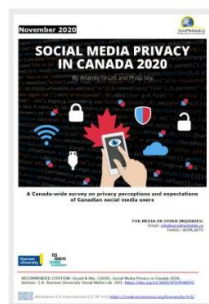
#### Misinformation Research



#### The Influence of Influencers



#### Social Media and User Privacy







French



# COMMUNALYTIC.ORG

A no-code computational social science research tool for studying online communities and discourse.

Two Versions: **EDU** - for Teaching & Learning (30k records) and **PRO** - for Research (10M records)

## Research Tools & Dashboards

In addition to conducting original research, we also develop research tools that support social science research.

Our tools and dashboard are used by thousands of students, educators, researchers & analysts worldwide each year.

[socialmedialab.ca/apps](https://socialmedialab.ca/apps)

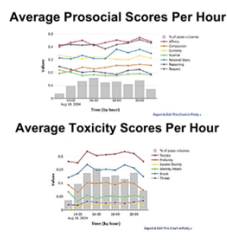
## SOCIAL MEDIA DATA COLLECTORS

Bluesky Mastodon Reddit Telegram X (Twitter) YouTube  
or Bring Your Own Dataset

## DATA ANALYZERS

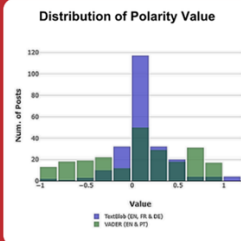
### Civility Analyzer

Detect toxic and prosocial interactions



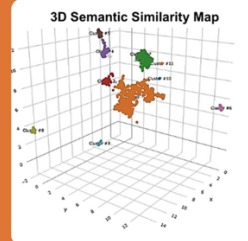
### Sentiment Analyzer

Detect and analyze the polarity of text



### Topic Analyzer

Discover and label latent topics that are semantically similar



### Network Analyzer

Visualize and analyze large networks



admin@communalYTIC.org





## French Research Tools & Dashboards

In addition to conducting original research, we also develop information dashboards to track misinformation.

Our tools and dashboard are used by thousands of students, educators, researchers & analysts worldwide each year.

[socialmedialab.ca/apps](https://socialmedialab.ca/apps)



A dashboard for tracking fact-checks involving deepfakes & out-of-context media and narratives



A dashboard for tracking mis/disinformation about the Russian-Ukraine War



DASHBOARD

[notetracker.socialmediadata.org](https://notetracker.socialmediadata.org)

An searchable database and dashboard for all Community Notes on X.



French



## About the Lab

Making Sense of a Networked World since 2010



@SocialMediaLab.ca

### Research

How social media changes the ways people communicate and connect



### Train

Postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduate students



International conferences and research seminars

### Organize



Social media analytics software

### Develop

Slides in French:

[bit.ly/halifax-fr](https://bit.ly/halifax-fr)



Slides in English:

[bit.ly/halifax-en](https://bit.ly/halifax-en)



## Agenda

- About the Social Media Lab
- ➔ • **News Consumption Habits and Social Media Use**
- GenAI Adoption in Canada & Concerns About Misinformation
- Risks & Mitigation Strategies For Immigration & Settlement



# Where Canadians Get Their Information

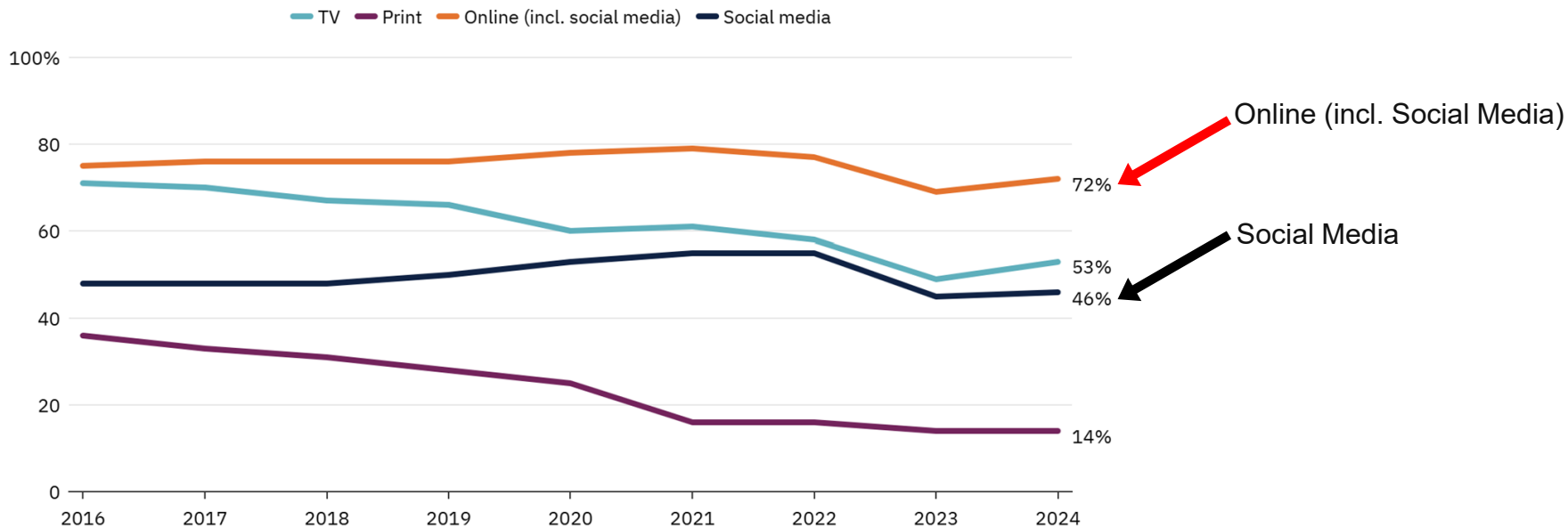


French

## Sources of news

2016–2024

Canada



[Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)



Source: [Reuters Institute & University of Oxford](#)





# [New Report] The State of Social Media in Canada 2025

A Census-balanced Survey About Social Media Adoption and Use In Canada (n=1500)

May 2025



## The State of Social Media in Canada 2025

A Census-balanced Survey About Social Media Adoption and Use in Canada

By Anatoliy Gruz and Philip Mai



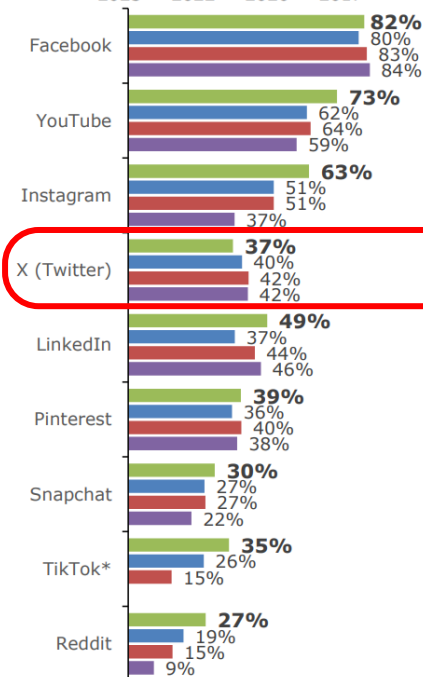
For media or other inquiries:  
EMAIL: [info@socialmedialab.ca](mailto:info@socialmedialab.ca)

RECOMMENDED CITATION: Mai & Gruz (2025). The State of Social Media in Canada 2025. Social Media Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University. DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.28830188](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28830188)

**95%** of online Canadian adults have an account on at least one social media platform, with **93%** visiting at least one of the major platforms monthly.

Online Canadian adults with a Social Media Account  
(%, n=1500)

2025 2022 2020 2017



French

**Source:** Gruz, A. & Mai, P. (2025). The State of Social Media in Canada 2025. Social Media Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University. DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.28830188](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28830188)



Slides in French:

<https://bit.ly/halifax-fr>



Slides in English:

<https://bit.ly/halifax-en>



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# GenAI Applications: A Few Examples ...



French

Marketing



The Holiday Magic is coming.

Coca-Cola 4.9M subscribers 7.8K likes

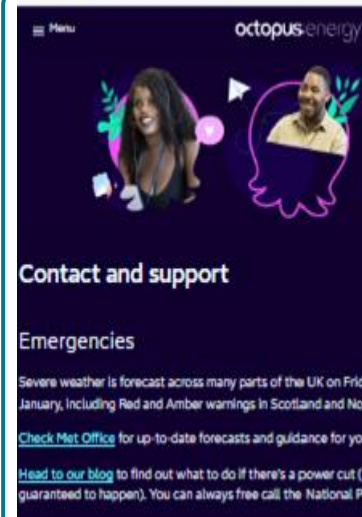
**Coca-Cola's AI-generated ad**

Entertainment



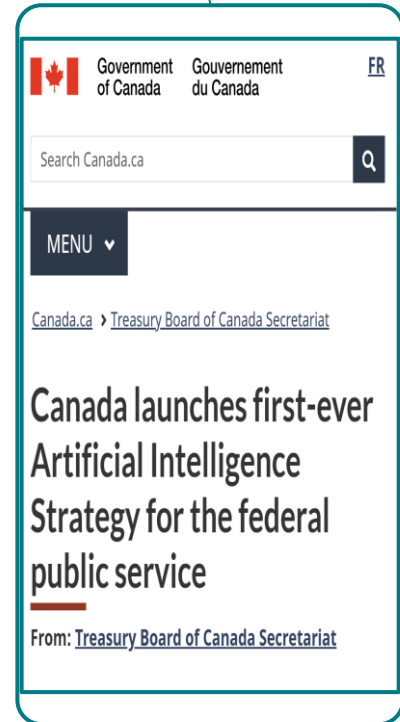
**Tom Cruise impersonator**

Customer Support



**UK-based energy supplier integrated Conversational AI in its customer support.**

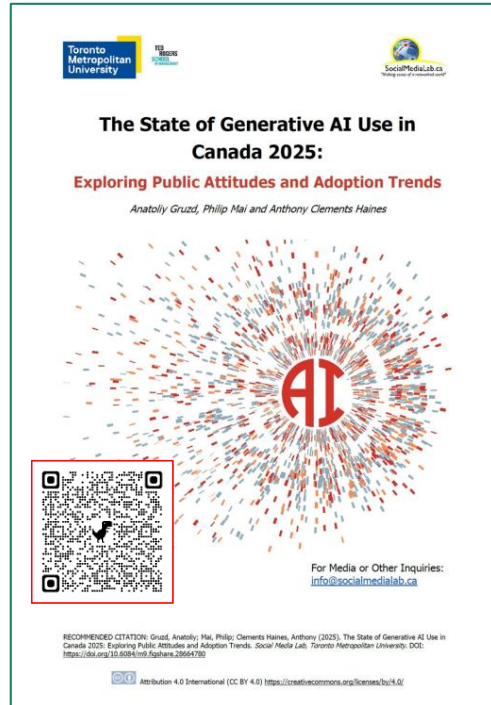
Citizen Engagement



# Generative AI Adoption in Canada (n=1500)



French



## QUESTION

Have you used Generative AI tools?

■ No

■ Yes

Generative AI use for either leisure, work or study  
(‘less than monthly’ or more frequently)

34%

66%

## QUESTION

How frequently have you used Generative AI tools for:

Based on 986 individuals who tried Generative AI for leisure, work, or study

■ Leisure ■ Work ■ Study (formal or informal)

	18-24yr	25-34yr	35-44	45-54yr	55+
Leisure	82%	90%	90%	93%	90%
Work	77%	86%	74%	67%	45%
Study (formal or informal)	91%	79%	65%	56%	39%

**Note:** All percentages are rounded to the nearest 1%.

**Source:** “The State of Generative AI Use in Canada 2025,” Social Media Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University



French

# Generative AI Adoption in Canada (n=1500)

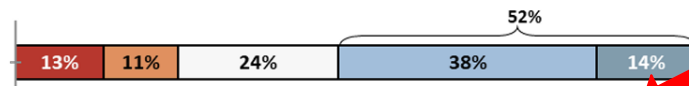


## QUESTION

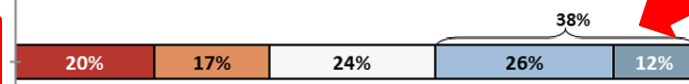
To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your knowledge and use of Generative AI tools in general?

Strongly disagree   Somewhat disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat agree   Strongly agree

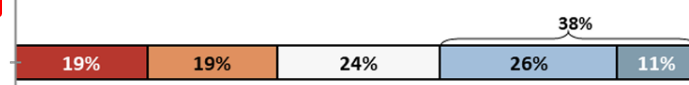
I'm aware of the issues and challenges related to Generative AI



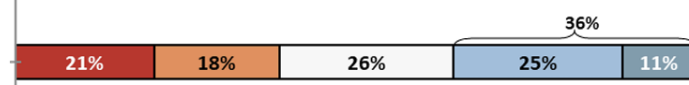
I understand how to effectively use Generative AI



I keep up with news about Generative AI



I'm familiar with the rules and ethics around Generative AI



Note: All percentages are rounded to the nearest 1%.

Source: "The State of Generative AI Use in Canada 2025," Social Media Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University"

<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28664780>



# Generative AI Adoption in Canada (n=1500)



French

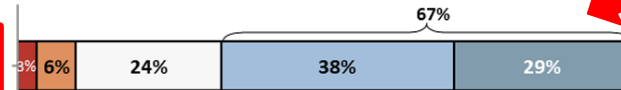


## QUESTION

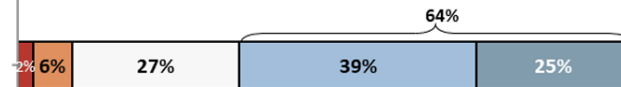
To what extent do you agree with the following statements about Generative AI's potential to influence elections?

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

I am worried about the potential for Generative AI to influence future elections



Compared to the last election, I will be more skeptical of the political content I see online



I no longer trust the political news that I see online due to the possibility that it may be fake or manipulated



**Note:** All percentages are rounded to the nearest 1%.

**Source:** "The State of Generative AI Use in Canada 2025," Social Media Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University

<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28664780>

# Canadians are Concerned About Misinformation

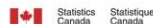


French

**Concern about misinformation:  
Connections to trust in media,  
confidence in institutions, civic  
engagement, and hopefulness**

by Helen Foran, Howard Bilodeau and Lauren Pinault

Release date: June 18, 2025



Canada

- **59%** of Canadians are highly concerned about online misinformation.
- Concern is higher among those with more education.
- Those most concerned are also more likely to fact-check their news (**69%**) than those somewhat concerned (**22%**) or unconcerned (**10%**).

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2025001/article/00008-eng.htm>

Slides in French:

[bit.ly/halifax-fr](https://bit.ly/halifax-fr)



Slides in English:

[bit.ly/halifax-en](https://bit.ly/halifax-en)



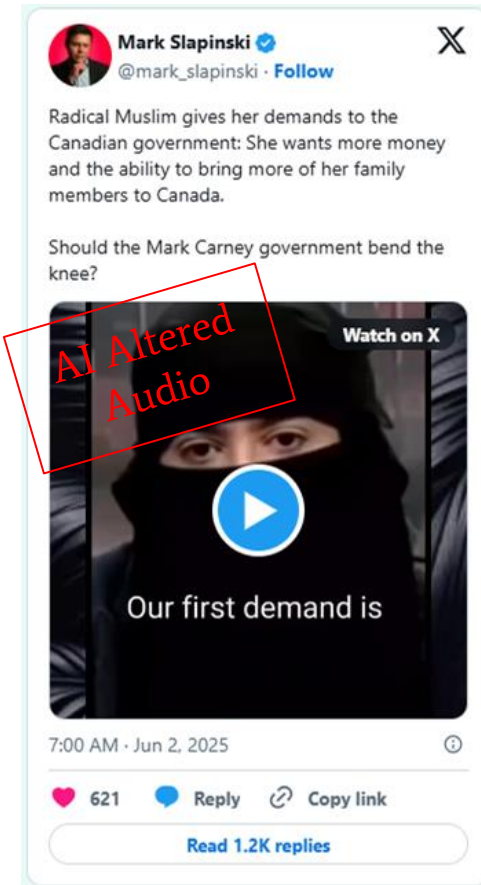
## Agenda

- About the Social Media Lab
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- ➔ • **Risks & Mitigation Strategies For Immigration & Settlement**



# The Risk Landscape in Canada

- Racialized and recent immigrant residents in Canada encounter **hate speech 50-100% more often**. (Source: TMU/Dais)
- Threat actors already use deepfakes to **inflammate debates about immigrants** in Canada. (Source: CSE)
  - spreading disinfo about immigrants and refugees
  - discrediting local/federal authorities by selectively criticizing their response using false or biased narratives
- **Social media often fails** to flag/block such content.
- **Fact-checking is crucial but** no longer a priority for platforms.



TikTok of 'immigrant' making demands to Canada is altered video of Welsh woman | thecanadianpressnews.ca



French



# How GenAI Changes Anti-Immigrant Narratives



French

**Prompt** → **AI Content** → **Social Media** → **Protests / Policy Pressure**



Cheaper

A malicious actor can generate hundreds of 'invasion' images in hours.



Faster

Disinformation campaigns can react to news in minutes, beating fact-checkers.



More Visual

Photorealistic images of 'migrant crime' may feel real, even when 100% fake.



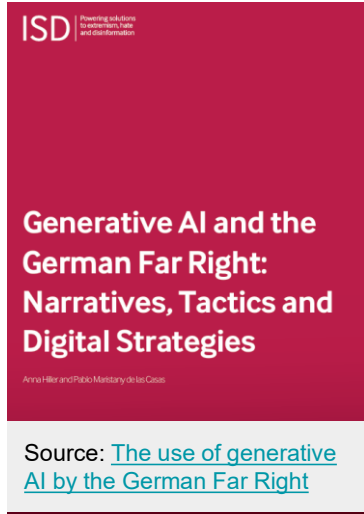
More Targeted

The same story can be re-rendered for different groups and platforms.



# Example #1: German AI Memes

## 2025 report on **Generative AI and the German Far Right** by the *Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)*



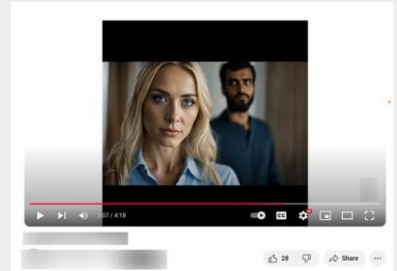
- ISD identified 883 posts by German far-right accounts incorporating AI-generated content.
- The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party - a key source of such content.
- Common narratives:
  - attacks on refugees, immigrants, LGBTQ+ and climate activists,
  - content which idealised Germany as a strong country under threat that needs to be saved.
- AI-generated content is used to create a sense of identity among members of far-right groups and their followers.



French



AI-generated video claiming that large amounts of Muslim immigrants travel to Germany to commit murder.



AI-generated video warning women about entering into relationships with Muslim men.



French

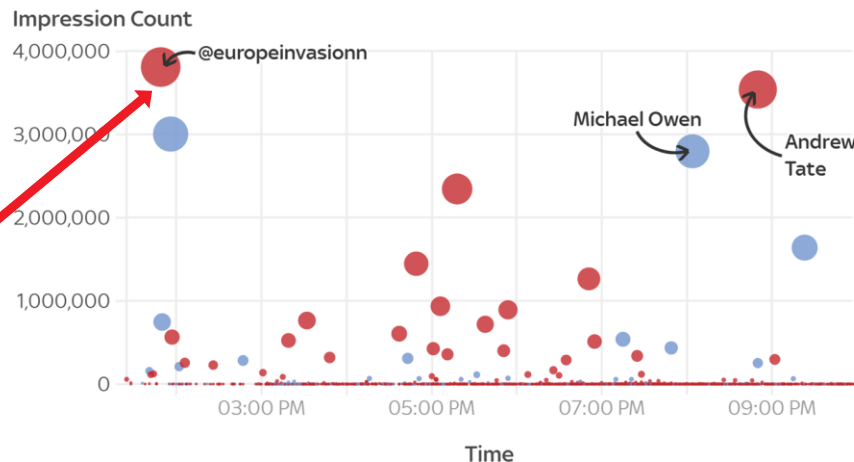
## Example #2: Southport Stabbings (UK)

**What:** AI image of “bearded men” with a knife outside UK Parliament next to a crying child.

**When:** Posted less than 3 hours after the attack, before facts were confirmed.

**Who:** ‘Europe Invasion’ X account (@europeinvasionn - no longer exists), part of a racist conspiracy network.

**Impact:** Viewed ~4M times, used to call for riots.



SOURCE: Dr. Marc O. Jones, Associate Professor at the College of Humanities and Social Science, Hamad Bin Khalifa University

[“Southport attack misinformation fuels far-right discourse on social media”](#) Sky News



# Negative Impact of GenAI and Misinformation on Immigrants & Settlement Services



French

## Impact on Immigrants

-  **Safety & Belonging** AI-driven crime stories make communities feel less welcoming and can encourage harassment and riots.
-  **Service Uptake** Fear of being filmed or misrepresented can keep people away from in-person programs.
-  **Mental Health** Repeated exposure to dehumanizing narratives raises stress during settlement.
-  **Scams & Impersonation** Deepfake calls or fake job interviews target newcomers and steal personal information.

## Impact on Services

-  **Narrative Risk** Viral AI content that labels immigrants as criminals shapes public attitudes and funding.
-  **Operational Risk** Deepfake scams that copy your logo or staff damage trust with clients.
-  **Reputation Risk** A fabricated image or quote tied to your organization can spread instantly.
-  **Equity Risk** AI screening tools can misjudge applicants based on dialect or accent.







# Mitigation Strategies: Building Resilience







French

## For Immigrants

-  **Verify Before You Share** Pause and check the source. Use tools like reverse image search to spot fake “news” photos.
-  **Double-Check “Official” Requests** If “IRCC” or “Police” call demanding money or crypto, hang up and call the official number directly.
-  **Spot Deepfake Signs** Look for unnatural blinking, weird hands, or audio that doesn’t sync with lips in videos.
-  **Rely on Trusted Networks** Confirm alarming news with settlement workers or established community leaders before reacting.

## For Organizations

-  **Establish GenAI Policies** Define clear rules: when staff can use AI (e.g., drafting) and when they cannot (e.g., client data).
-  **Mandate Human Review** Ensure a human reviews \*all\* AI-generated content to catch hallucinations or bias.
-  **Train Front-Line Staff** Equip your team with protocols to handle reports of deepfake scams from clients.
-  **Proactive Communication** Warn clients about current scams through official channels (e.g., “We will never ask for crypto”).

# A Peek at Our “Migration Ads Observatory”

A dashboard that tracks, analyzes and visualizes migration-related advertisements on Facebook and Instagram in Canada to uncover trends, narratives, and patterns.



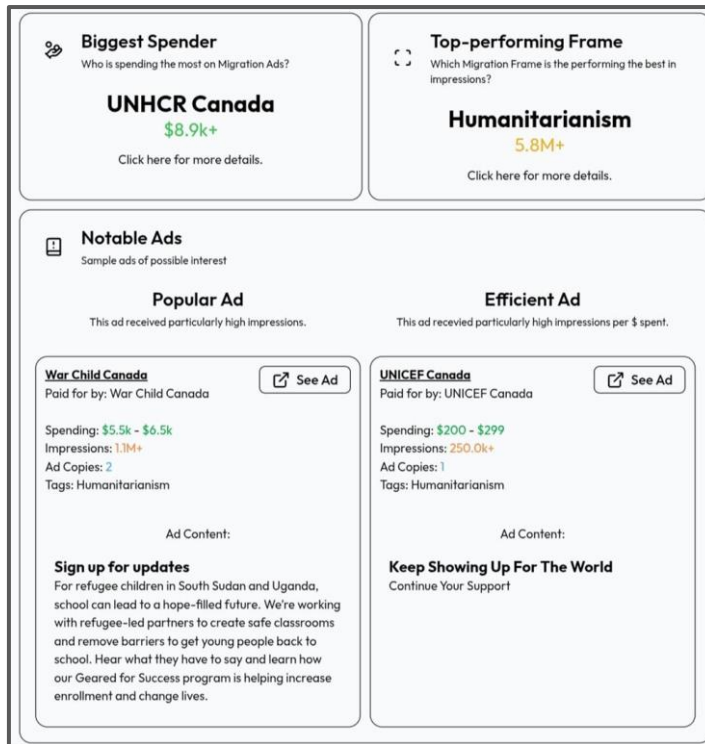
French



## Ads Group Based on 11” Frames”

1. Security Threats Frame
2. Nationalism Frame
3. Cultural Threats Frame
4. Integration Difficulties Frame
5. Economic Costs Frame
6. Administrative Costs Frame
7. Multiculturalism Frame
8. Humanitarianism Frame
9. Cultural Integration Frame
10. Economic Benefits Frame
11. Countering Frame

[migration.polidashboard.org/overview](https://migration.polidashboard.org/overview)  
(ETA Feb, 2026)

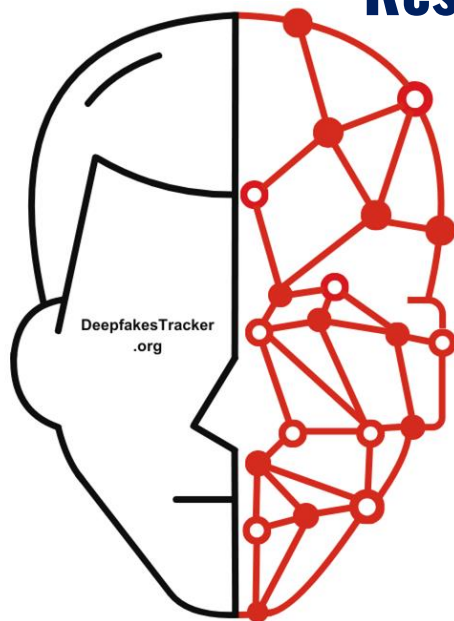






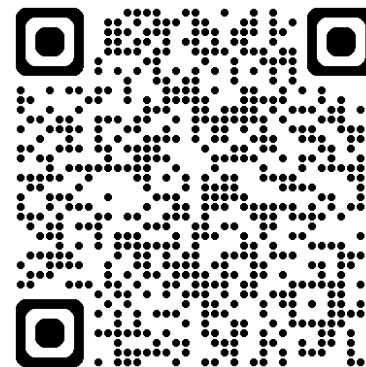
French

# Explore the Social Media Lab's AI **DeepFakesTracker.org** Research Portal to Learn More!



## Use it to:

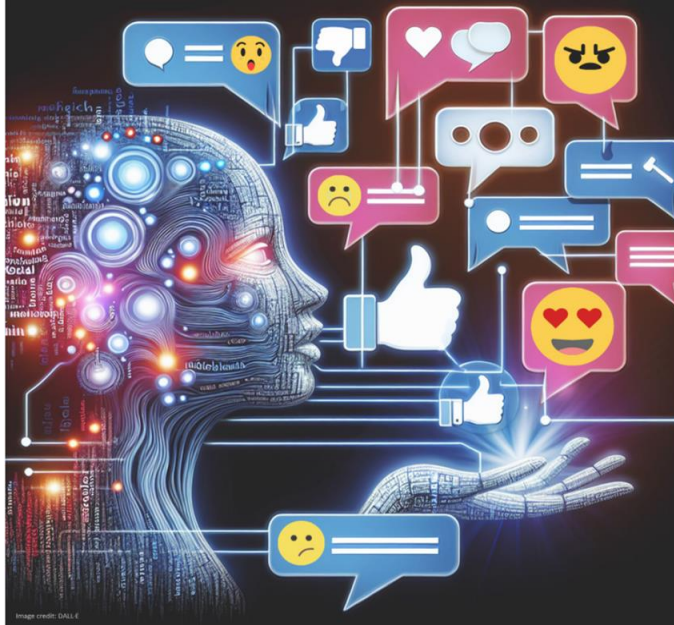
- **Learn** what deepfakes are & how they are a threat
- **Investigate** current deepfake trends
- **Access** tools to detect deepfakes
- And more!



**DeepfakesTracker.org**



French



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Conference



English

# Fractured Facts: How Generative AI Fuels Anti- Immigrant Misinformation

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