



## **AI Scores Lower in Trust than Advertising, Congress and the Media, ARF Study Finds**

*Consumers are More Concerned than ever over How Digital Technologies Treat their Data, ARF Privacy Report Reveals*

February 25, 2025 – The [Advertising Research Foundation](#) (ARF) has released the results of its seventh Annual Privacy Study, which surveyed 1,242 American consumers to gauge their attitudes regarding online privacy. The study reveals significant insights into their privacy concerns, trust in institutions and the general awareness of digital privacy related issues.

### **Key Findings:**

- **Emerging Concerns about AI:** Newly assessed in 2024, AI technologies ranked among the least trusted when it came to safeguarding digital privacy. Emerging concerns about AI underline a broader skepticism toward data-driven technologies.
- **Decline in Trust:** Trust in institutions and brands declined across the board, driven by adults (ages 18-55) who had statistically significant declines in trust, while trust levels among older respondents (55+) remained stable. Medical and financial institutions retained higher trust, in contrast to declining trust in advertisers and social media platforms.
- **Increased Privacy Concerns:** Political affiliation and racial demographics influence privacy concerns, with conservatives and minority groups showing higher levels of concern. The willingness to share sensitive information, particularly social security and financial data, decreased, alongside a heightened sensitivity to data breaches.
- **Resistance to Data Collection:** Respondents demonstrated increased resistance to data collection, even when tied to personalization or improved ad experiences. Older respondents were particularly resistant (55+). Free or discounted services emerged as a leading incentive for data sharing.
- **Decline in Privacy Awareness:** The study found that perceived knowledge about online privacy has declined from 46% in 2023 to 40% in 2024, despite general stability over the past four years. Respondents generally lacked awareness about privacy measures, with only 36-42% aware of implemented measures such as IOS opt-in.

"The 7th annual Privacy Study reveals a growing aversion to data sharing, a declining trust in institutions, and an increasing skepticism toward AI and other advanced technologies," said ARF CRO Paul Donato. "This underscores the need for transparent and ethical practices to build greater consumer trust."

**About the ARF** Founded in 1936, the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) has emerged as the preeminent authority on unbiased quality in advertising, media and marketing research. With over 400 member companies, ARF's powerful knowledge, unified standards and best practices have proven invaluable, time and again. The ARF continues to drive continuous improvement in advertising and marketing practices by fostering collaboration and innovation, shaping the industry's future.

In today's rapidly changing technology landscape, ARF remains committed to providing accurate information, setting industry standards and promoting transparency. For more information on the ARF visit (<http://www.thearf.org>) or find us on LinkedIn, YouTube, X or Facebook.

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