

Un-liking Facebook: 3-in-4 Canadian users say data mining scandal will change how they use the platform

Four-in-ten say their opinion of the company has worsened in the last month

March 26, 2018 – The revelation that U.K. data firm Cambridge Analytica surreptitiously gathered data from some 50 million Facebook users – among numerous other [alleged shady practices](#) – has fueled a growing [#DeleteFacebook](#) movement in recent weeks.

In Canada, a two-part public opinion survey from the Angus Reid Institute finds a significant number of Canadians joining in. Nearly three-quarters of Facebook users (73%) in this country say they'll make at least some change to how they interact with the ubiquitous social media platform, while fewer than three-in-ten (27%) say they'll take a 'business as usual' approach to their Facebook use.

One-in-ten (10%) say they plan to abandon the platform, at least temporarily, as a result of what they learned from Canadian whistleblower Christopher Wylie.

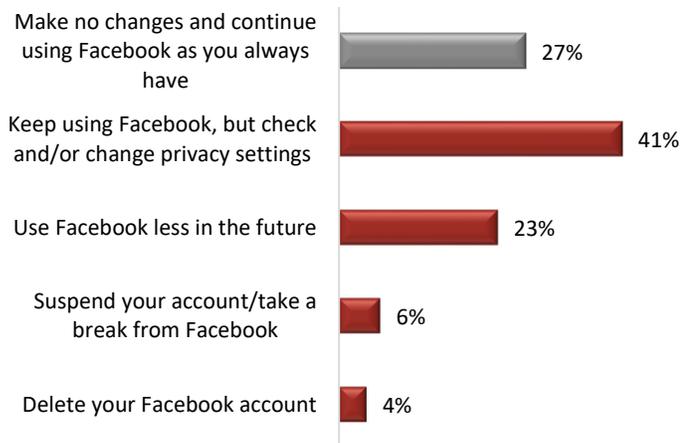
The second wave of data shows the Cambridge Analytica disclosures have further damaged favourable views of Facebook, which was already dealing with questions about its advertising algorithm [disproportionately benefitting](#) the Trump campaign and its [handling of fake news](#) on its platform during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.

All of this public scrutiny is taking a toll on Canadians' perceptions of the platform nearly six-in-ten (57%) say they use every day. Even before the latest Cambridge Analytica story broke, Facebook was the large tech company Canadians were most likely to view unfavourably. Now, 38 per cent say their opinion of the social media giant has worsened in the last month.

More Key Findings:

- Roughly twice as many Canadians say Facebook has a negative influence on public discourse in this country (35%) as say it has a positive one (18%), though the ratio is closer to an even split (23% positive, 30% negative) among those who use the platform daily

What effect, if any, might this Cambridge Analytica story have on your own personal use of Facebook in the future? Will you ... (question asked of Facebook users, n=1256)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted two online surveys, the first between February 28 and March 2, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 1,501 Canadian adults, and the second from March 21 – 22, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 1,509 Canadian adults. Both surveys were conducted on the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, probability samples of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- More Canadians have a favourable opinion of Facebook (41%) than an unfavourable one (33%), but Facebook’s unfavourability rating is considerably higher than those of Apple (20%), Amazon (12%), Microsoft (11%) or Google (10%)
- Daily users of Facebook have a more favourable opinion of the company (57% view it favourably) than those who use the service less frequently

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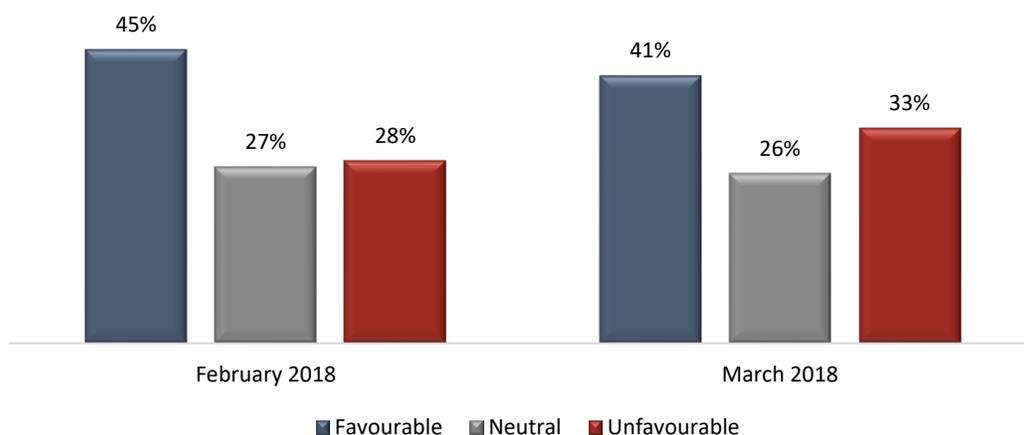
Big tech: What’s most-used, what’s most-maligned?

The Facebook social networking platform claims more than 2 billion monthly users – more than a quarter of the world’s population. It’s a part of daily life for people in Canada and across the globe in a way that compares to few other corporations.

This two-part survey looked at the world’s five most-valuable technology companies as measured by market capitalization: Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, and Google’s parent company Alphabet, Inc.

Canadians view each of these companies more favourably than unfavourably, but Facebook is the least well-regarded. Notably, this was the case even before Wylie’s revelations, as seen in the graph that follows.

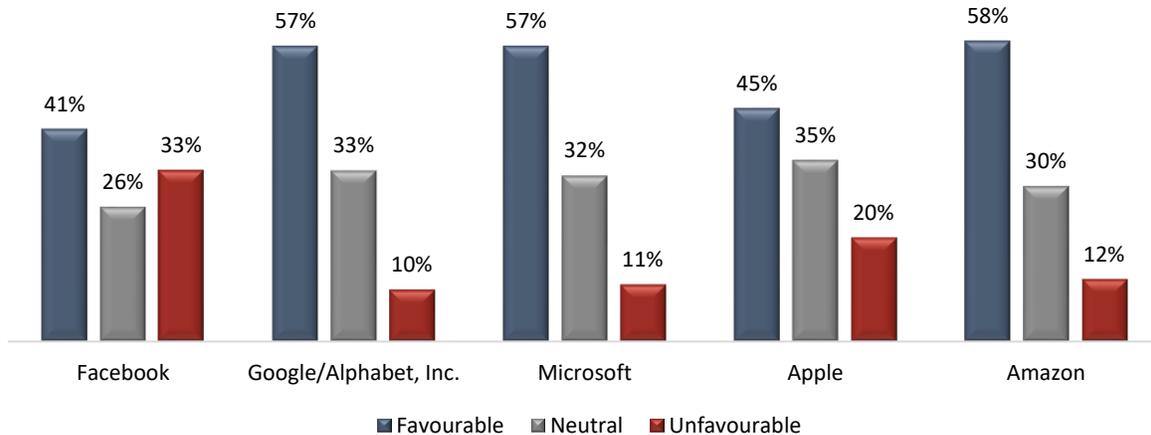
Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Facebook?



As the graph shows, views of Facebook have worsened slightly in the last month, but remain largely unchanged. Compare Facebook’s unfavourable number to those of the other companies asked about in

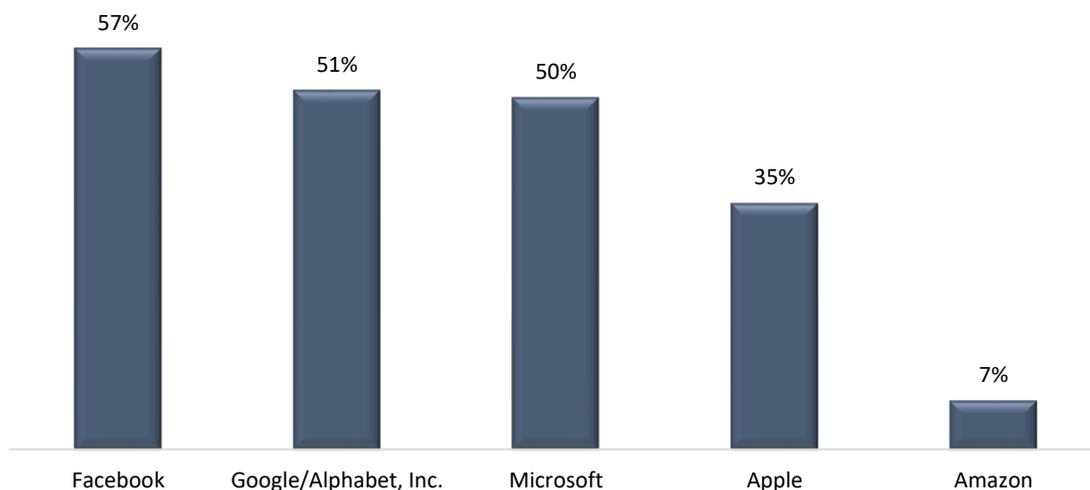
this survey, however, and it becomes clear that Facebook was already less well-regarded than similarly sized tech companies:

Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of each company? (Data from the second wave of fielding, March 22)



Of the five companies canvassed in this survey, Facebook is the company whose products and services Canadians use most frequently. More than two-in-three (69%) report using Facebook multiple times per week, and nearly six-in-ten (57%) use it daily:

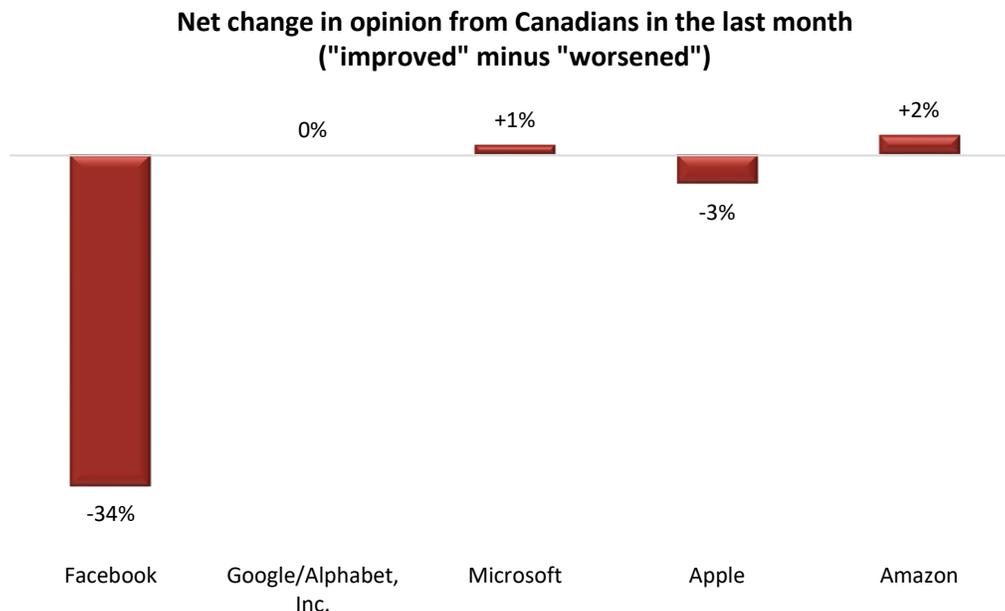
Percentage of Canadians who use each company's products/services daily



But Canadians' heavy use of Facebook's services doesn't necessarily correlate with satisfaction with the company providing them. People in this country are nearly ten times as likely to say their opinion of Facebook has worsened (38% say this) in the last month – as the Cambridge Analytica story has unfolded – than to say it has improved (4%). Most (58%) say their opinion of the company has stayed the

same, but it's notable that Facebook fares much more poorly on this metric than the other companies canvassed in this survey.

Subtracting those who say their opinion has worsened from those who say it has improved yields a net score for each company. As seen in the following graph, only one other company – Apple – is more likely to have worsened than improved in the eyes of Canadians, and in that case, the difference is only 3 percentage points, compared to Facebook's 34:

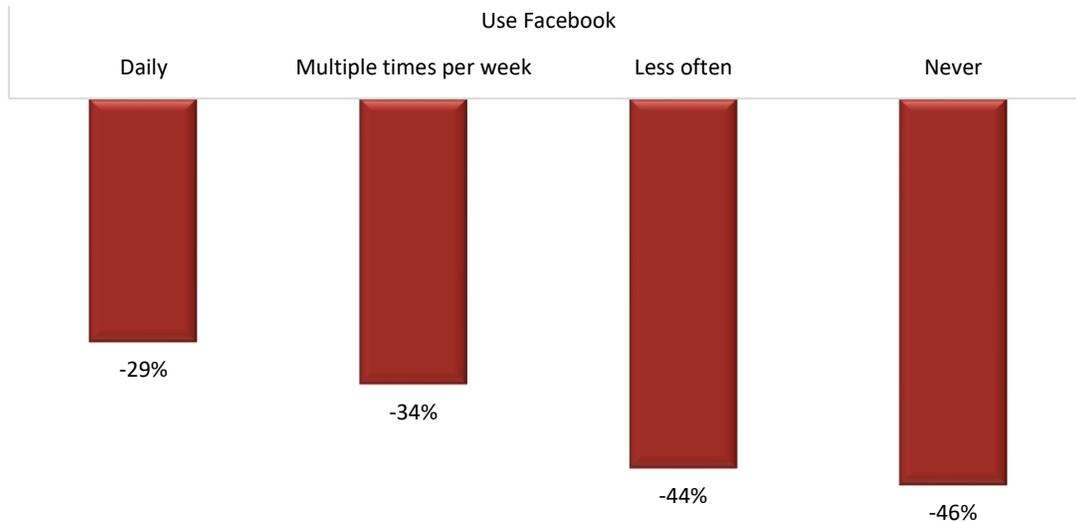


The plummeting public perception of Facebook is almost certainly a result of the Cambridge Analytica news. Opinion on the other four companies has mostly stayed the same in the last month.

Notably, Canadians declining esteem for Facebook can be seen across all levels of engagement with the company. Those who use the social network daily are more likely than less-frequent users to say their opinion has stayed the same (62% do), but Facebook's net score with this base of frequent users is still negative (33% worsened versus 4% improved).

Those Canadians who never use Facebook, meanwhile, overwhelmingly report a worsening of their opinion of the company in the last month, as seen in the graph that follows.

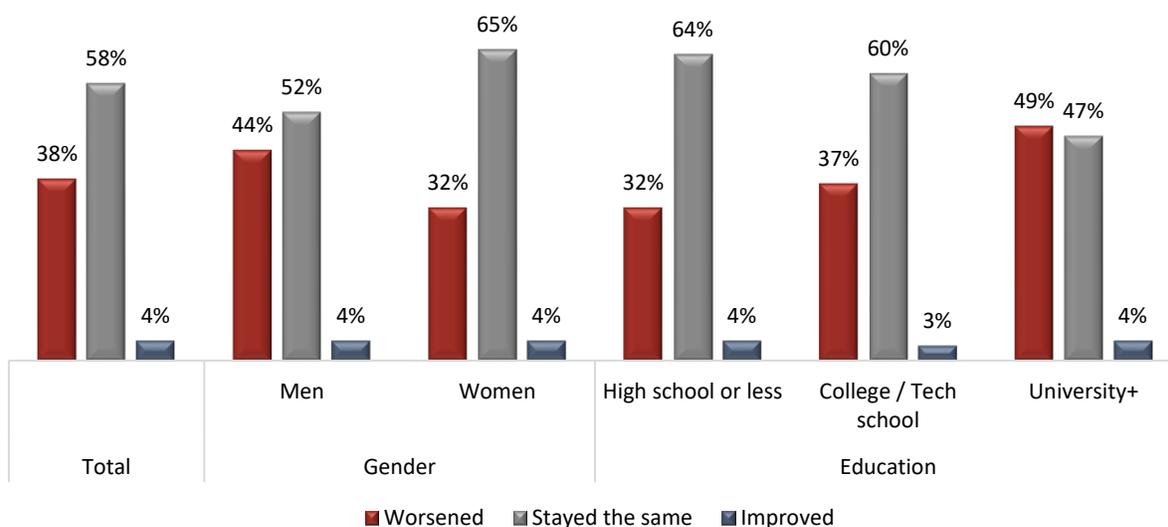
**Net change in opinion of Facebook over the last month
("improved" minus "worsened")**



Perhaps surprisingly, given that younger people generally report heavier use of all social media, including Facebook, age does not appear to be a key driver of opinion. Roughly four-in-ten (38%) Canadians of all ages say their opinion of Facebook has worsened in the last month.

There are differences, however, by gender and education. Men and those with university degrees are more likely to say their opinion of Facebook has worsened, as seen in the following graph:

In the last month, has your opinion of Facebook improved, worsened, or stayed the same?



Similar patterns can be seen in Canadians' overall favourability toward Facebook. While more respondents view each of the five technology corporations asked about in this survey favourably than unfavourably, as seen in the graph that follows, there are differences of opinion on Facebook along gender, education, and user-propensity lines ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

Dislike: Canadian views of Facebook's influence on society

From sign in requests [for other apps](#), to [personalized advertisements](#), to [algorithmic control](#) over whose updates a user sees, Facebook is a big part of its users lives, and may affect them in ways they don't necessarily see.

Recent scrutiny over data mining has led many to question the impact of Facebook's influence. We asked Canadians to consider three different areas where Facebook, along with other large tech firms, may have an influence. On each of the three areas canvassed, influence on: Canadian politics and government, the public discourse in this country, and consumer choices, Canadians are much more negative about Facebook than they are about other technology firms.

Would you say each company generally has a positive, negative, or neutral influence on...?					
	Canadian Politics and Government				
	Apple	Google	Microsoft	Amazon	Facebook
Positive influence	11%	13%	13%	13%	10%
Neutral influence	48%	45%	50%	48%	32%
Negative influence	7%	7%	5%	7%	32%
Not sure/Can't say	34%	34%	33%	32%	26%
	Public discourse in Canada (i.e. what people talk about, who they talk to, and how they talk to them)				
	Apple	Google	Microsoft	Amazon	Facebook
Positive influence	21%	27%	23%	25%	18%
Neutral influence	45%	42%	48%	45%	29%
Negative influence	7%	6%	4%	7%	35%
Not sure/Can't say	27%	25%	25%	24%	18%

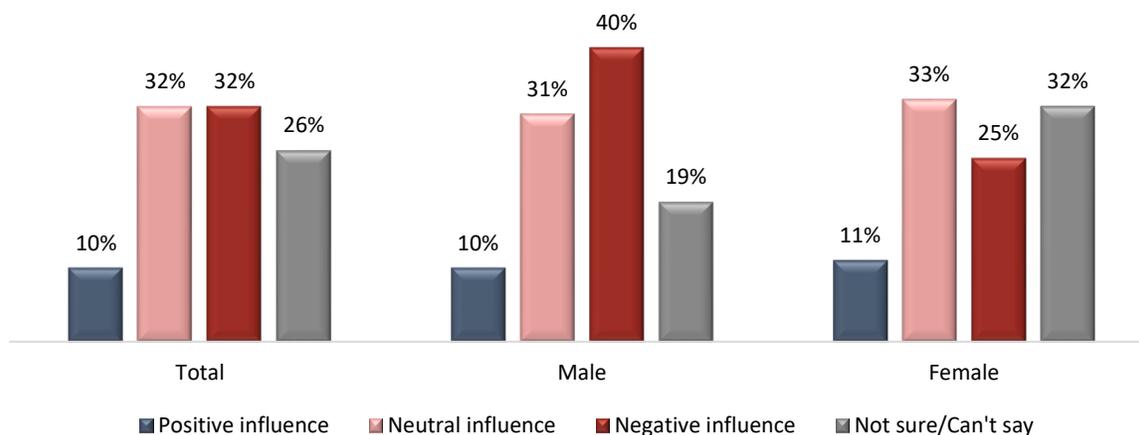
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Would you say each company generally has a positive, negative, or neutral influence on...?					
	Consumer choices				
	Apple	Google	Microsoft	Amazon	Facebook
Positive influence	30%	36%	32%	47%	21%
Neutral influence	37%	36%	42%	28%	36%
Negative influence	10%	5%	5%	9%	25%
Not sure/Can't say	23%	23%	21%	16%	18%

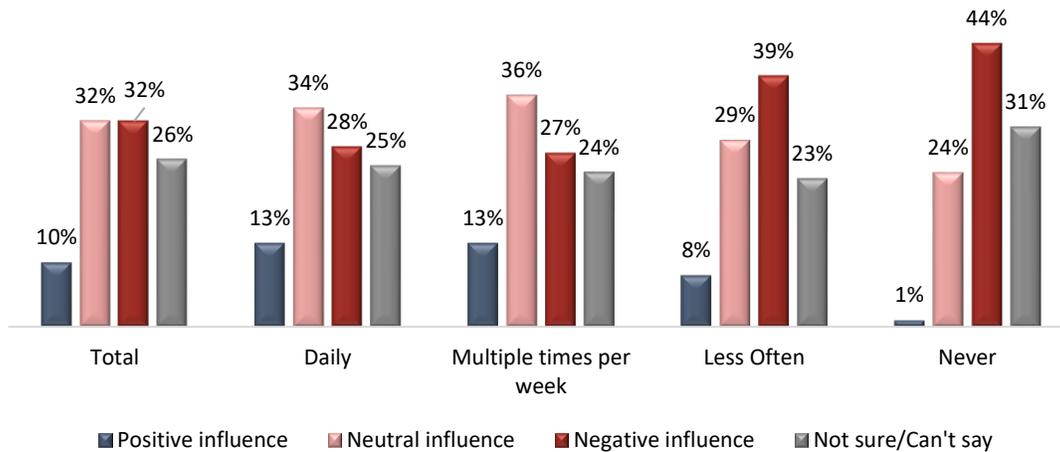
While men and women are equally likely to say Facebook has a positive impact on the political sphere in this country (just one-in-ten say so), men are much more negative about the company's influence. Four-in-ten men (40%) say that Facebook has a negative influence on this area of public life, while one-quarter of women say the same (25%).

Would you say Facebook generally has a positive, negative, or neutral influence on Canadian politics and government today?



Notably, there are no significant differences of opinion by age or political affiliation in Canada ([see comprehensive tables for more detail](#)), though it appears familiarity with Facebook is a factor. Those who use the app regularly are much more likely to perceive positive influence than those who abstain from it, and consequently, less negative about Facebook overall.

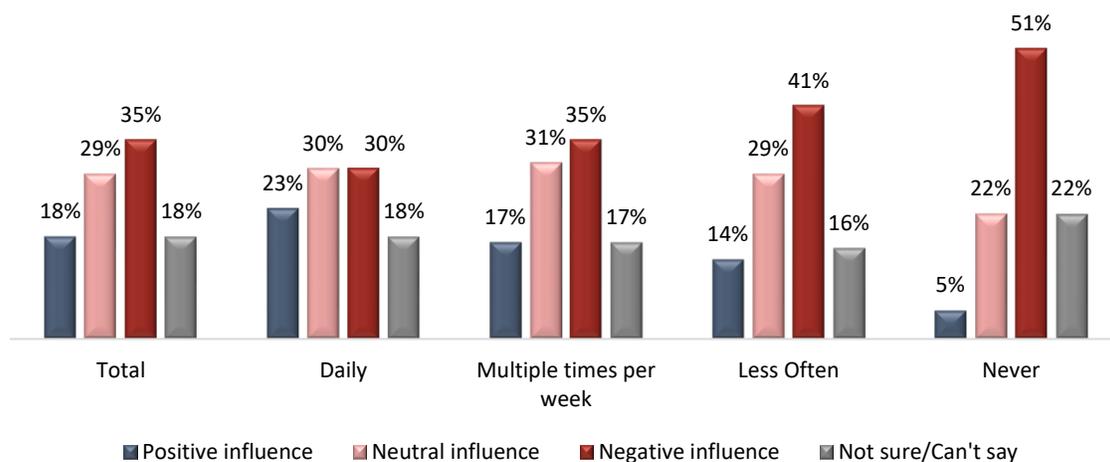
**Would you say Facebook generally has a positive, negative, or neutral influence on Canadian politics and government today?
By Facebook Usage**



This same trend holds, and is slightly exacerbated, when looking at the perceived influence of Facebook on public discourse in Canada. More Canadians say Facebook has a negative influence than a positive one by a two-to-one ratio, but those further removed from the app are most critical.

Related: One-in-four Canadians say they're being harassed on social media

**Would you say Facebook generally has a positive, negative, or neutral influence on public discourse in Canada today?
By Facebook Usage**



It stands to reason that those who do not use Facebook may be more critical. They've chosen not to engage with the program or perhaps have used the app previously and stopped. It does however, suggest there may be some difficulty for Facebook in terms of engaging non-users, given their overly negative views of the company.

Delete? The impact of Cambridge Analytica on Canadian Facebook use

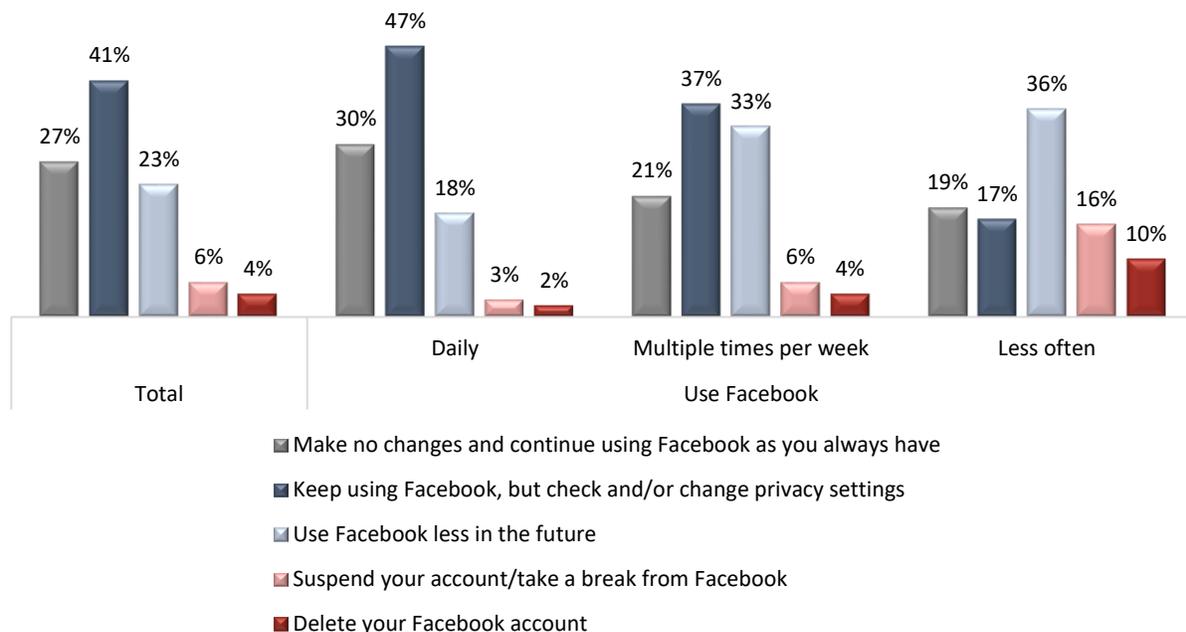
Asked directly how the Cambridge Analytica revelations might affect their use of the social platform, Canadian Facebook users overwhelmingly say they will – at a minimum – review their privacy settings. Fewer than three-in-ten (27%) say they intend to make no changes to their Facebook habits.

Those who plan to review or change their settings represent 41 per cent of Canadian Facebook users. Roughly one-quarter (23%) intend to go farther than that, saying they will decrease their use of the platform, and an additional one-in-ten plan to either take a break from the service (6%) or delete their Facebook accounts altogether (4%).

A rough extrapolation of these numbers based on the percentage of Canadian adults who report using Facebook in this survey suggests that 4 per cent of Canadian users is almost 1 million people who say they plan on deleting their accounts.

That said, those planning on deleting or suspending their accounts tend to be people who are less active on Facebook in the first place. Among those who use the platform once a week or less, the intention to delete or suspend totals more than one-in-four (26%), compared to just 5 per cent among those who use the service daily:

What effect, if any, might this Cambridge Analytica story have on your own personal use of Facebook in the future? Will you ... (question asked of Facebook users, N=1256)



Notably, political partisanship has little effect on Facebook users' reactions to the Cambridge Analytica story, despite whistleblower Christopher Wylie's [past connections](#) to the Liberal Party of Canada.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

For detailed results from the March 22 (wave 2) survey by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results from the March 2 (wave 1) survey by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results by Facebook usage (wave 2), [click here](#).

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