Questions 11-21 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Stephen Coleman, Scott Anthony, and David E. Morrison, "Public Trust in the News." ©2009 by Stephen Coleman.

The news is a form of public knowledge. Unlike personal or private knowledge (such as the health of one's friends and family; the conduct of a private hobby; a secret liaison), public knowledge increases in value as it is shared by more people. The date of an election and the claims of rival candidates; the causes and consequences of an environmental disaster; a debate about how to frame a particular law; the latest reports from a war zone—these are all examples of public knowledge that people are generally expected to know in order to be considered informed citizens. Thus, in contrast to personal or private knowledge, which is generally left to individuals to pursue or ignore, public knowledge is promoted even to those who might not think it matters to them. In short, the circulation of public knowledge, including the news, is generally regarded as a public good which cannot be solely demand-driven.

The production, circulation, and reception of public knowledge is a complex process. It is generally accepted that public knowledge should be authoritative, but there is not always common agreement about what the public needs to know, who is best placed to relate and explain it, and how authoritative reputations should be determined and evaluated. Historically, newspapers such as *The Times* and broadcasters such as the BBC were widely regarded as the trusted shapers of authoritative agendas and conventional wisdom. They embodied the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of authority as the "power over, or title to influence, the opinions of others." As part of the general process of the transformation of authority whereby there has been a reluctance to uncritically accept traditional sources of public knowledge, the demand has been for all authority to make explicit the frames of value which determine their decisions. Centres of news production, as our focus groups show, have not been exempt from this process. Not surprisingly perhaps some news journalists feel uneasy about this renegotiation of their authority:

> Editors are increasingly casting a glance at the "most read" lists on their own and other websites to work out which stories matter to readers and viewers. And now the audience—which used to know its place—is being asked to act as a kind of journalistic ombudsman, ruling on our credibility (broadcast journalist, 2008).
>
> The result of democratising access to TV news could be political disengagement by the majority and a dumbing down through a popularity contest of stories (online news editor, 2007).

Despite the rhetorical bluster of these statements, they amount to more than straightforward professional defensiveness. In their reference to an audience "which used to know its place" and conflation between democratisation and "dumbing down," they are seeking to argue for a particular mode of public knowledge: one which is shaped by experts, immune from populist pressures; and disseminated to attentive, but mainly passive recipients. It is a view of citizenship that closes down opportunities for popular involvement in the making of public knowledge by reinforcing the professional claims of experts. The journalists quoted above are right to feel uneasy, for there is, at almost every institutional level in contemporary society, scepticism towards the epistemological authority of expert elites. There is a growing feeling, as expressed by several of our focus group participants, that the news media should be "informative rather than authoritative"; the job of journalists should be to "give the news as raw as it is, without putting their slant on it"; and people should be given "sufficient information" from which "we would be able to form opinions of our own."

At stake here are two distinct conceptions of authority. The journalists we have quoted are resistant to the democratisation of news: the supremacy of the clickstream (according to which editors raise or lower the profile of stories according to the number of readers clicking on them online); the parity of popular culture with "serious" news; the demands of some audience members for raw news rather than constructed narratives.

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Percentage of Respondents Seeing News Stories as Inaccurate or Favoring One Side

	1985	1992	2003	2007	2011
News organizations...					
• Get the facts straight	55	49	36	39	25
• Often have inaccurate stories	34	44	56	53	66
• Don't know	11	7	8	8	9
• Are pretty independent	37	35	23	23	15
• Are often influenced by powerful people and organizations	53	58	70	69	80
• Don't know	10	7	7	8	5
On political and social issues, news organizations...					
• Deal fairly with all sides	34	31	26	26	16
• Tend to favor one side	53	63	66	66	77
• Don't know	13	6	8	8	7

Adapted from "Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Report on Views of the News Media, 1985–2011." ©2011 by Pew Research Center.

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