



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Findings of Poll on Attitudes towards Fake News

*Majority of respondents concerned with the spread of fake news and support the strengthening of laws to better deal with this issue.*

1 In an attempt to better understand public sentiments and attitudes towards false information, REACH conducted two Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) polls from **8 to 19 May 2017** and from **12 to 20 February 2018**. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to their experiences regarding fake news so as to study and track attitudes towards the spread of false information.

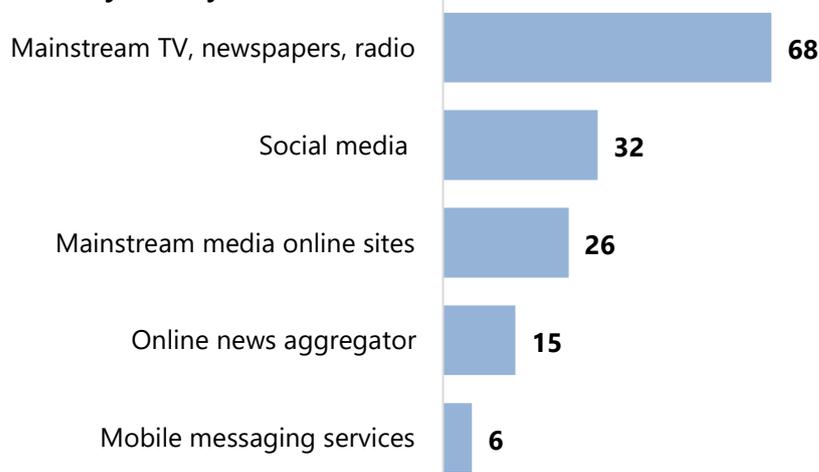
2 Respondents were randomly selected Singapore residents aged 15 and above. The estimated margins of error were 2.4% and 3.3% at a 95% confidence interval respectively. Details of the polls are appended in table below. The sample was weighted by gender and age to ensure representativeness of the national population.

Polls	Period of Data Collection	Sample Size / (Margin of error)
Phase 1	8 – 19 May 2017	n = 1617 (+/- 2.4%)
Phase 2	12– 20 Feb 2018	n = 887 (+/- 3.3%)

### Accessing news and current events

3 Mainstream television, newspapers, and radio were the main sources of news and current events for most Singaporeans. **66%** had accessed news and current events through at least some form of online platform.

#### What are your major sources of news and current events?

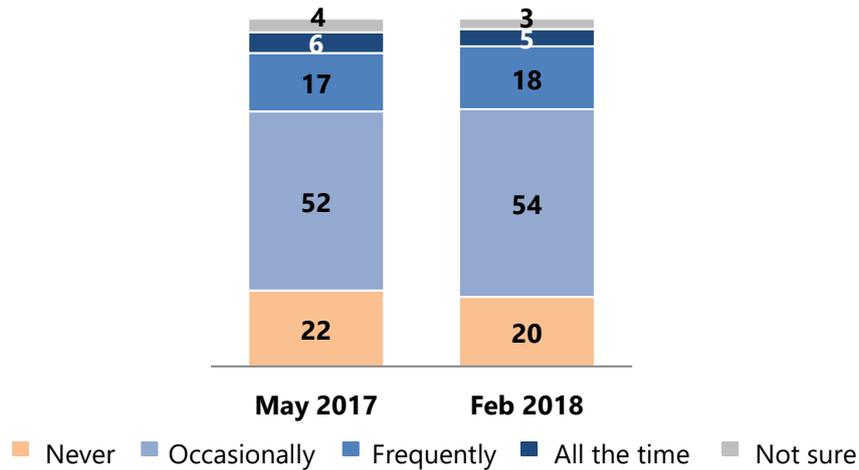




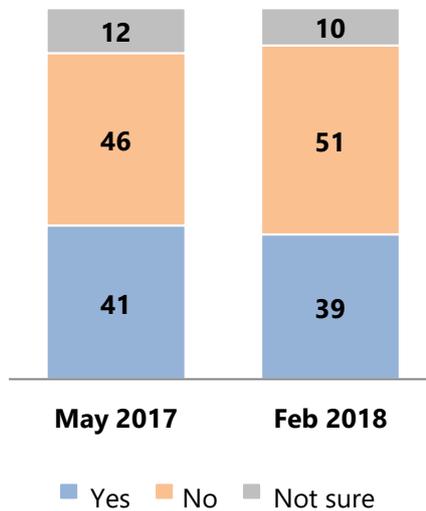
Frequency of encountering fake news

4 **77%** came across online news that they thought were not fully accurate. Of those who came across inaccurate online news, almost **4 in 10** came across fake news related to Singapore in the past one year.

**How often do you come across online news that you think are not fully accurate?**



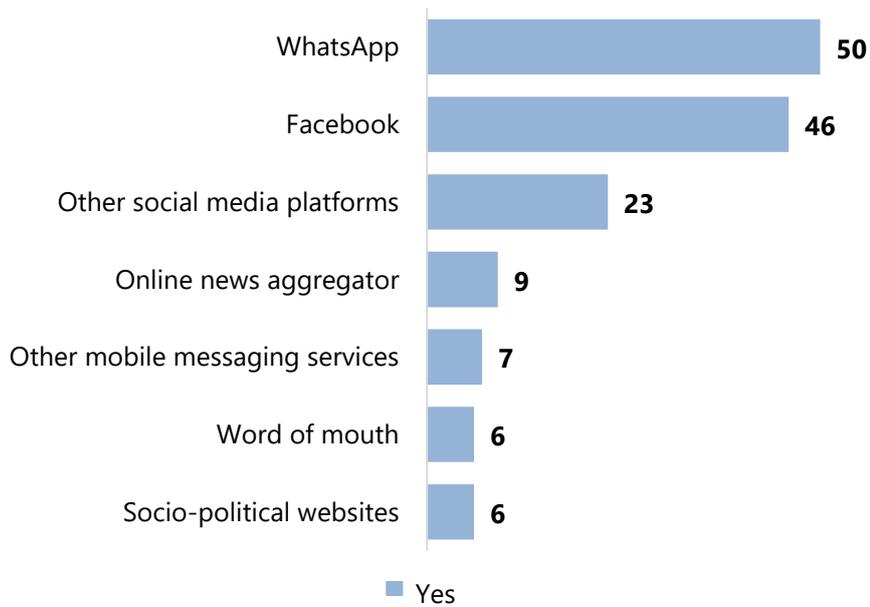
**Have you ever come across any fake news related to Singapore in the past 1 year?**  
 (% within those who said they came across online news that they think are not fully accurate at least occasionally)





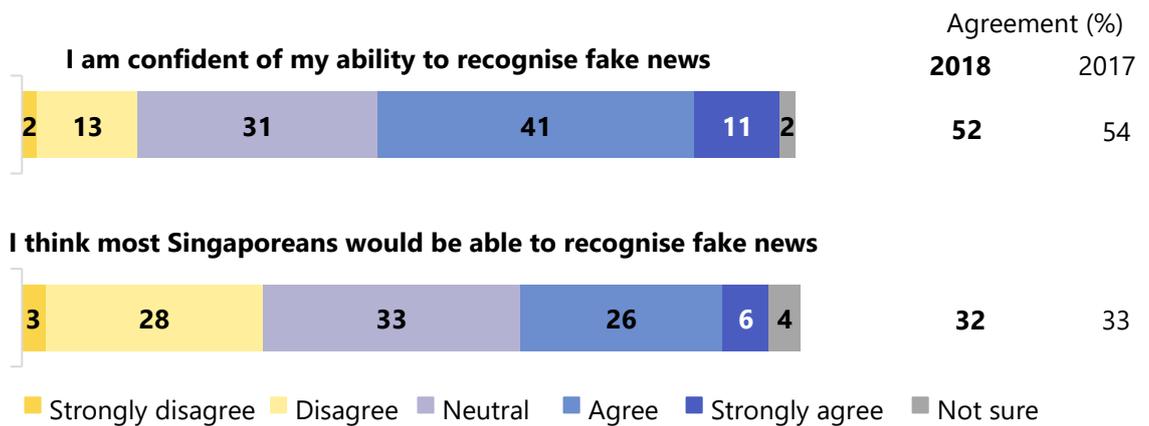
5 Among respondents who came across inaccurate online news, **50%** came across it on WhatsApp and **46%** came across it on Facebook.

**Where do you usually come across such fake news?**  
 (% within those who said they came across online news that they think are not fully accurate at least occasionally)



Ability to recognise fake news

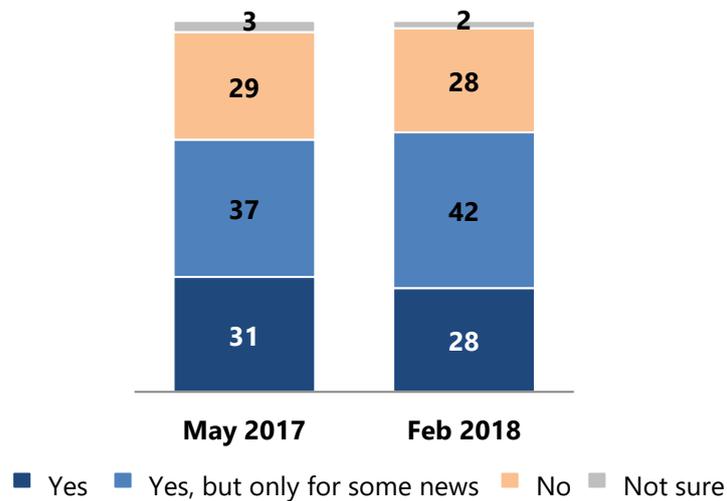
6 **1 in 2** respondents were confident of their own ability to discern fake news, but only **1 in 3** thought that most Singaporeans were able to recognise fake news.





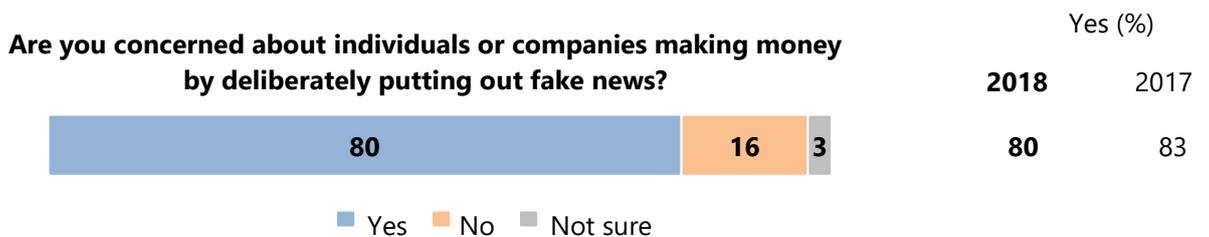
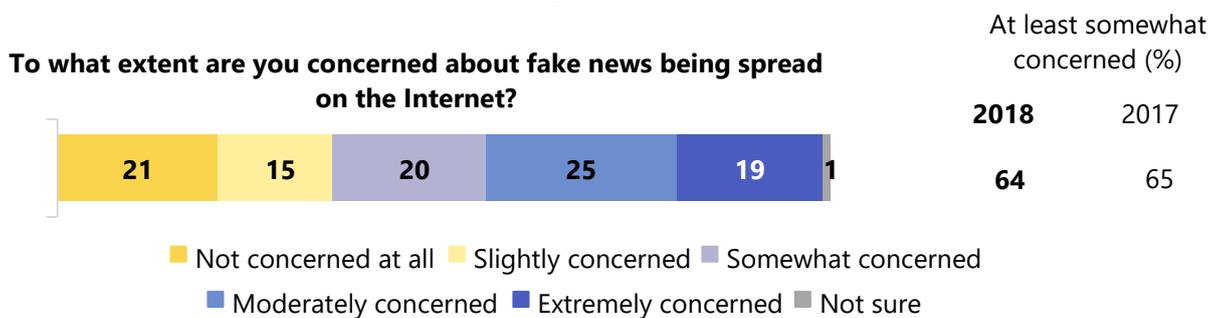
7 Of those who felt they had seen fake news, **70%** were not always able to discern falsehoods at the time they read the information.

**Were you able to recognise that the news was fake at the time that you read it?**  
 (% within those who came across fake news related to Singapore in the past 1 year)



Concerns about spread of fake news

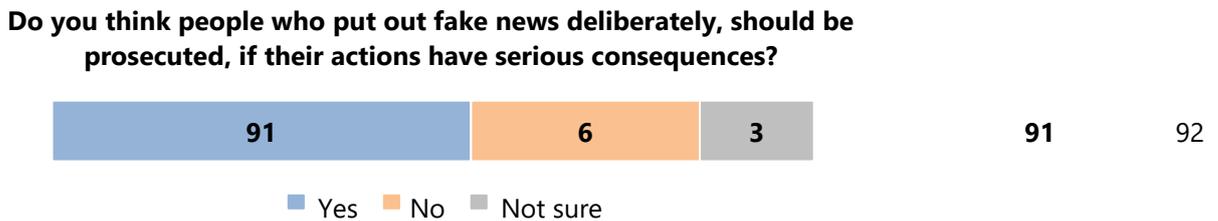
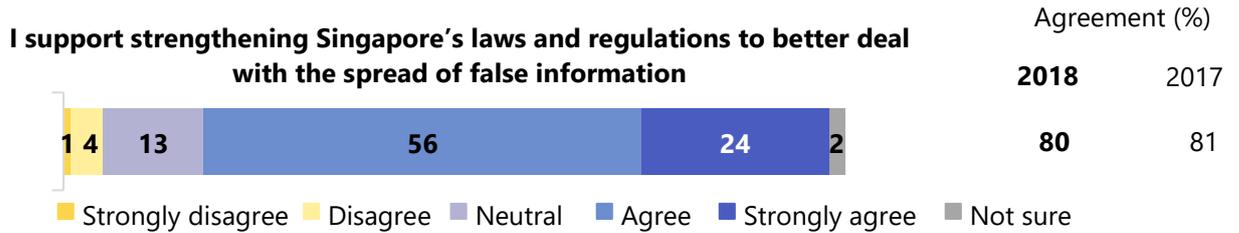
8 Close to **two-thirds** were concerned about the spread of fake news being spread on the Internet. An even higher proportion (**8 in 10**) were concerned about individuals or companies who were profiting from deliberate fake news.





Support for strengthening laws to better deal with spread of fake news

9 **80%** supported strengthening laws to better deal with the spread of false information. Over 90% felt that there should be more effective laws to require those who publish fake news to remove or correct the fake news. A similarly high proportion also felt that those who put out fake news deliberately should be prosecuted, if their actions have serious consequences.



Concluding remarks

10 Most Singaporeans have come across fake news of one form or other. It is not always easy for people to discern what they read on their social media feeds or what they might receive on their mobile devices. It is understandable that many are concerned with the spread of fake news and feel more can be done to tackle the problem. The strong support for laws to be strengthened and for malicious action to be prosecuted suggests that more needs to be done in this regard. Government, the media and social media platforms can all play a part to deal with the spread of fake news.

11 REACH Chairman and Minister of State for the Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Sam Tan said, “The prevalence of fake news and the ease with which it can propagate online presents a serious challenge to our society, not least because it can strain our social fabric and have real-life consequences in some cases. Singaporeans are aware of the



danger and understand that more needs to be done to tackle the issue, both in terms of regulation and education.”

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#### About REACH

REACH is the Government’s lead agency for engaging and connecting with citizens. It was launched in October 2006 when the Feedback Unit was restructured to move beyond gathering public feedback, signifying its renewed commitment to encourage and promote an active citizenry through citizen participation and involvement. REACH is a department of the Ministry of Communications and Information.