

**YouGov**<sup>®</sup> x **Meltwater**

# Trust in the Age of Generative AI

Tracking consumer perception, trust, and  
the demand for transparency in 2026



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# Foreword

“ Generative AI has moved from novelty to normality at remarkable speed. In just a few years, technologies capable of producing text, images, video and voice have become embedded across communications, marketing and everyday digital experiences.

For brands and the comms professionals who support them, the implications are set to be profound. Generative AI is changing how content is created and reshaping how audiences interpret authenticity, credibility and trust.

As PR and brand professionals, we now operate in a landscape where the line between human and machine-generated content is increasingly blurred. While generative AI presents clear opportunities to scale creativity and efficiency, it also introduces new questions. How do consumers feel when brands use AI? How confident do they feel that they can spot AI-generated content? And to what extent do audiences expect brands to disclose when AI has been involved in creating content?

This report seeks to answer these questions and more by tracking consumer perceptions of generative AI and its impact on brand trust. Drawing on YouGov data from almost 10,000 respondents across Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States, and Meltwater’s insights from social and media coverage, it explores both how consumers feel about AI-generated content and what media they are absorbing around it.



It is important for PR professionals and brand insight analysts to understand these dynamics. The data points to the generative AI revolution not just being a technological shift; it is a potential trust challenge. The findings in this report suggests that ultimately, the brands that succeed in the generative era may not simply be those that adopt AI fastest, but those that earn and maintain the trust of the audiences they serve.



**Andrew Farmer**, Global Head of PR and Editorial, YouGov

# About YouGov

## The most trusted market research company

YouGov is a market research and analytics company powered by reality: Insight from real people, captured in real time, built to hold up when decisions matter. Because quality is easy to claim and hard to prove, we don't just publish data – we stand behind it. An owned, highly engaged panel, rigorous quality controls, and technology that strengthens the human response instead of distorting it.

\* 3rd party piece of research across over 3,000 market research users globally, August 2025

\*\*Based on the results of a report built using the Meltwater platform for YouGov on competitor performance, 1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025

Trust isn't a claim;  
it's something we can prove.

**#1** most trusted research company  
amongst market research users\*

**4.5** TrustScore on Trustpilot  
– the highest amongst panels globally

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by the world's media\*\*

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# About Meltwater

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Meltwater empowers companies with a suite of solutions that spans media, social and consumer intelligence. By analyzing ~1 billion pieces of content each day and transforming them into vital insights, Meltwater unlocks the competitive edge needed to drive results. With 27,000 global customers, 50 offices across six continents, and 2,200 employees, Meltwater is the industry partner of choice for global brands making an impact.

Named

# #1

for Media Monitoring, PR & Analytics, and  
Media & Influencer targeting by G2

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Named

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# How Enthusiastic Are Consumers About Generative AI?

Over the past few years, the topic of AI has gone from a niche topic to something being discussed widely every day. Meltwater's analysis across both social and conventional media, shows that mentions of AI increased by 53% between March '25 (10.3M) to February '26 (15.8M), with media coverage accounting for 34% of total mentions.

Meltwater also finds that the most influential of these conversations comes from a wide mix of individual creators rather than media.



**92% of the top posts** originated on social platforms, **with TikTok leading the way.**

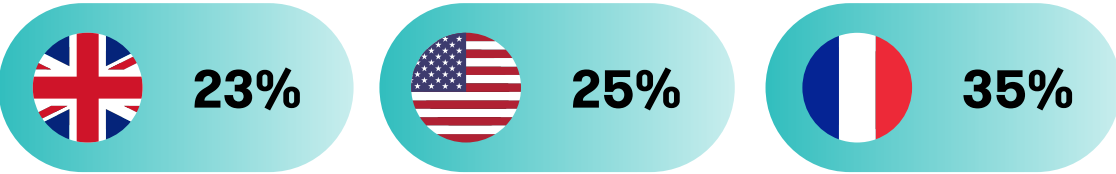
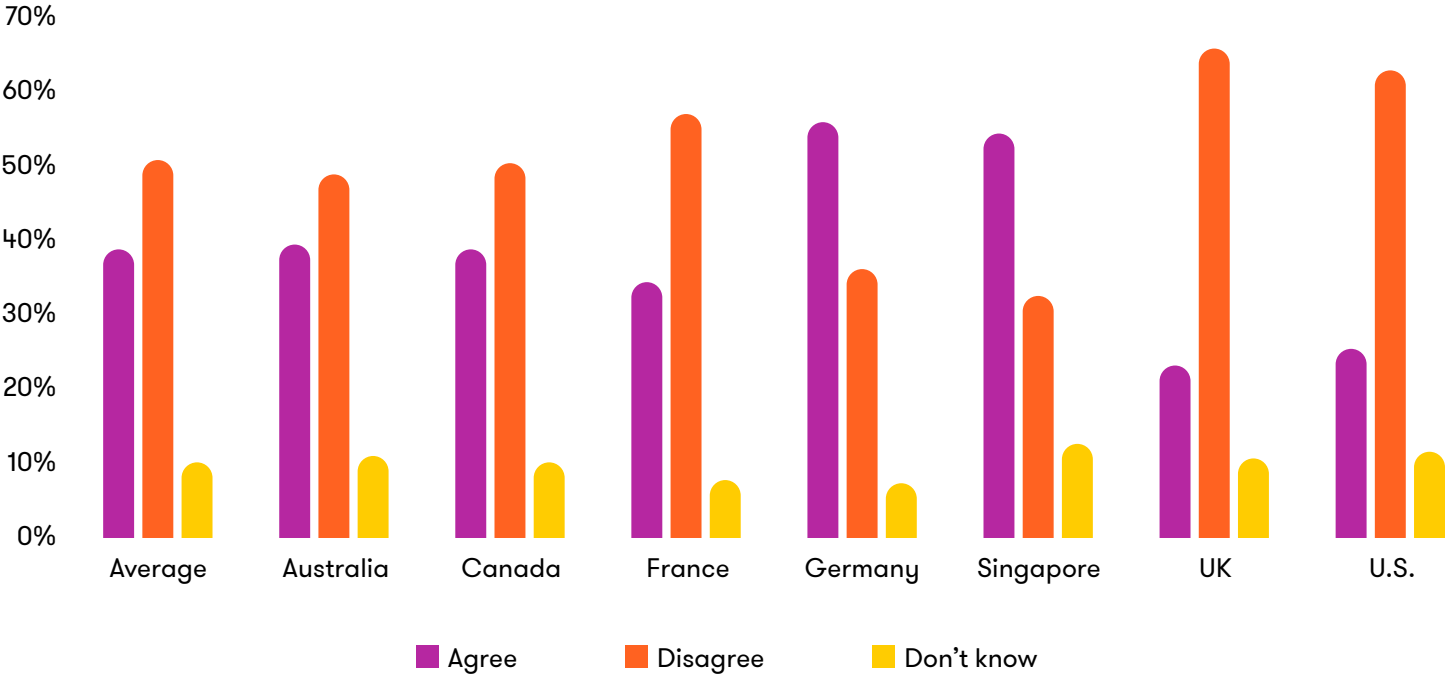
Only 8% of the most engaging posts came from traditional online news. At the same time, media coverage skews more positive (49% positive vs. 25% on social), while social conversations, where most engagement happens, are more neutral and critical (18% negative vs. 7% in media).



This may partly explain why YouGov finds lower overall public enthusiasm toward generative AI. While 39% of respondents across the seven markets surveyed say they are excited about what the future looks like with more generative AI in the world, the majority (51%) disagree. Meltwater’s analysis shows online conversation reflects a growing concern, with positive sentiment toward AI dropping through the year, from 22% in mid 2025 (March through June) to 17% by February 2026.

YouGov’s data finds public sentiment differs by country. Germany (56%) and Singapore (55%) stand out as the only markets where excitement clearly outweighs scepticism.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
“I’m excited about what our future looks like  
with more generative AI in the world”**

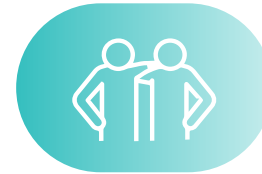


**The UK and the U.S. report the lowest levels of excitement, with France higher**

Australia and Canada sit closer to the global average, where sentiment is more evenly balanced, but still leans negative overall.



### Younger audiences are more enthusiastic about AI's future.

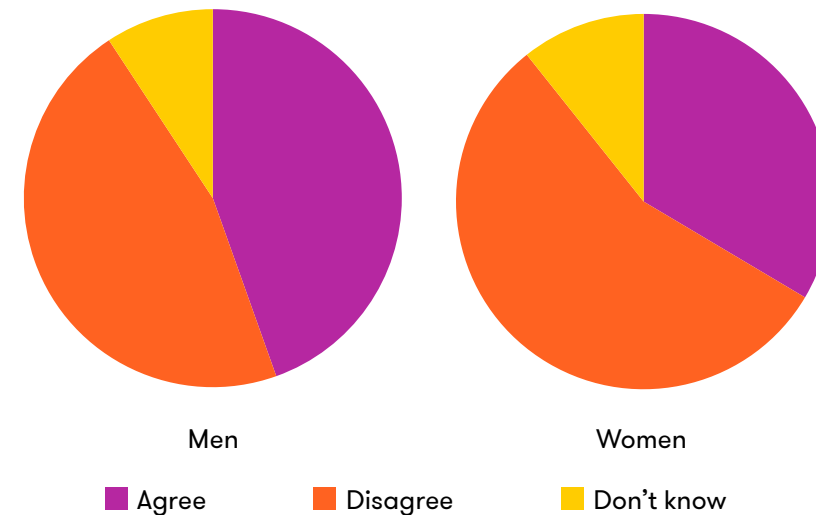
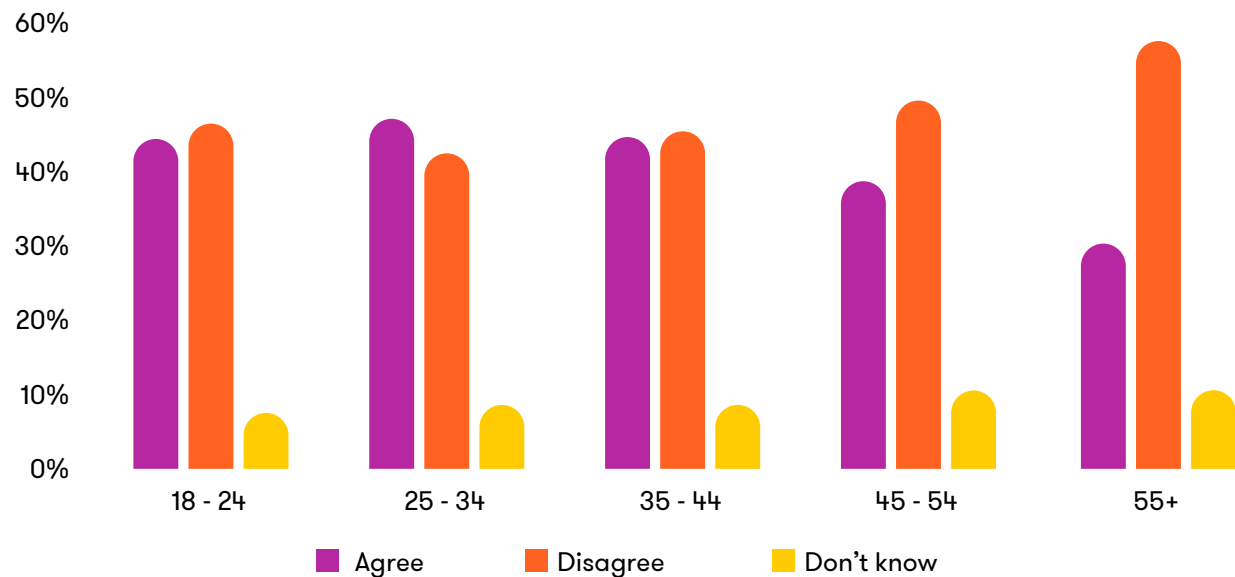


### Men are more enthusiastic about AI than women

Age is also a factor. Close to half (48%) of those aged 25–34 across the markets surveyed are excited by AI (closely followed by those aged 18-24 and 35-44 on 45%). This figure falls to 31% among those aged 55 and over.

The data also points to a notable gender divide. Men (45%) are more likely than women (34%) to say they are excited about a future shaped by generative AI.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “I’m excited about what our future looks likewith more generative AI in the world”



# Risk vs. Reward in Content Creation

YouGov's data shows that the public is aware of a "trade-off" when it comes to generative AI's use for content creation. On one hand, the technology has the potential to make content creation faster, more accessible and more efficient. On the other hand, there are concerns about the risks it introduces – from misinformation and deception to the erosion of authenticity and human creativity.

“

*Generative AI is changing how information is created and shared, which may influence how misinformation circulates and how brand trust is affected. As a result, brands may need to consider not only what they publish, but also how they monitor and respond to external conversations about them.*

**Antony Cousins**, EVP, Product, Meltwater

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# Key Concerns

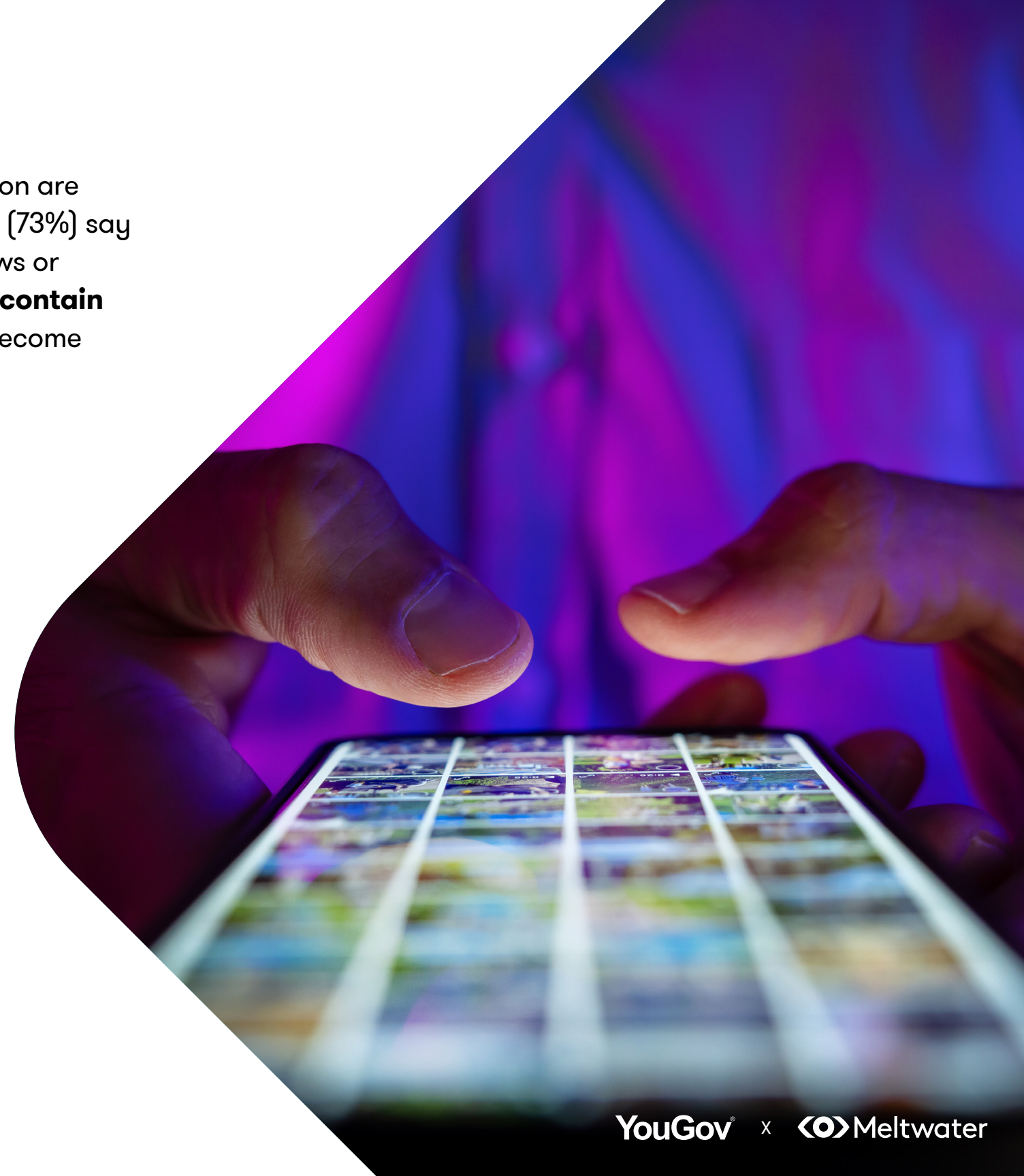
YouGov's data shows concerns about the use of generative AI in content creation are widespread across all markets surveyed. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) say they are concerned that AI-generated content could be used to create fake news or scams. **Closely following this, 69% worry that AI-generated content may contain incorrect or misleading information**, while 67% are concerned that it may become difficult to tell whether content was created by a human or by AI.



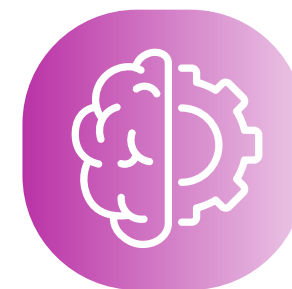
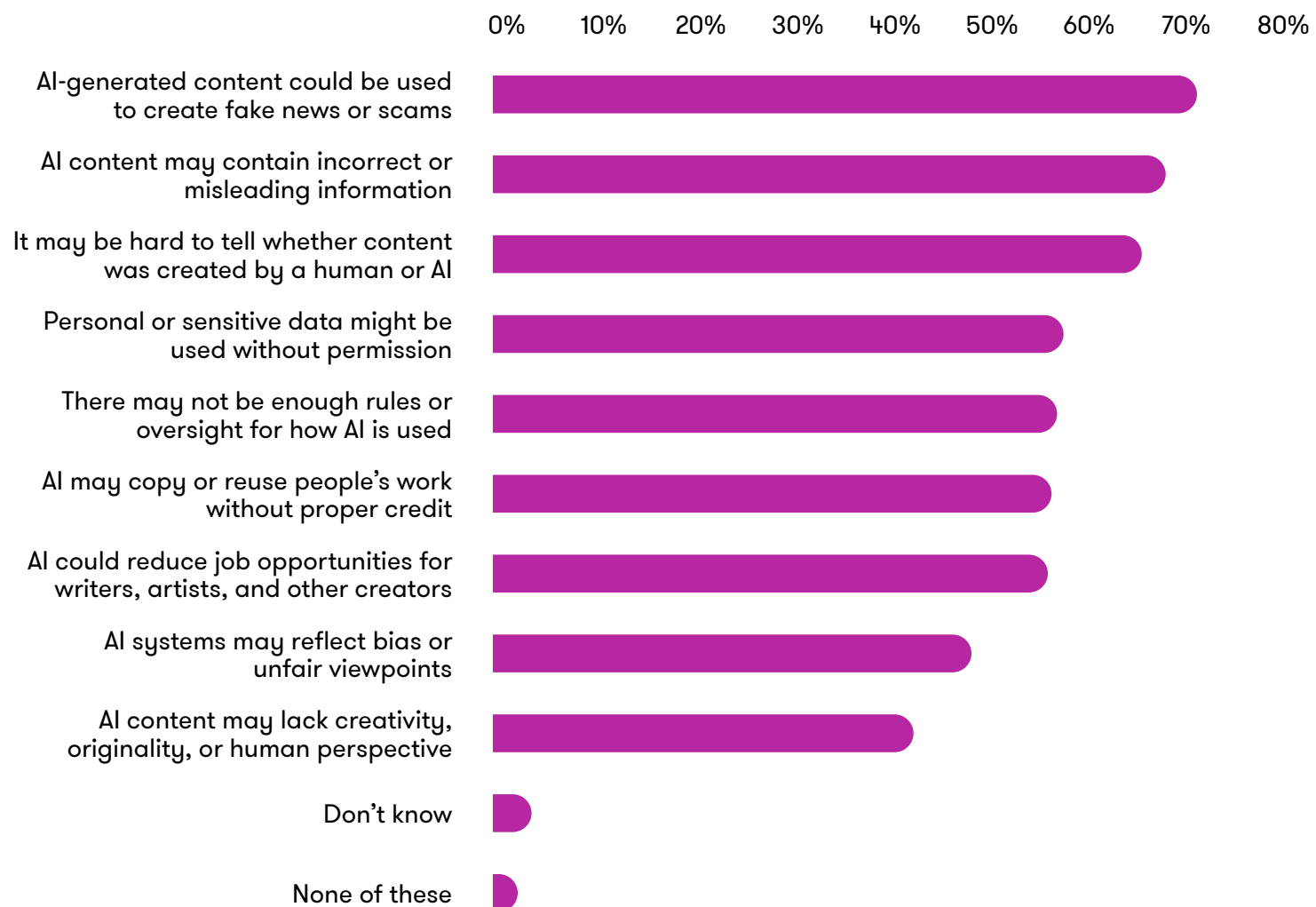
**69%**

**worry that AI-generated content may contain incorrect or misleading information**

Meltwater data finds that concern surrounding the blurred lines between real and AI-generated content occupies 19% of the online conversation, well ahead of other areas of concern such as content ownership (1%) and deepfakes (0.4%). This highlights growing sensitivity to misleading or unclear AI-generated visuals, as well as a preference for clearly labelling AI use and using it to support, rather than replace, human creativity.



**Which, if any, of the following concerns, do you have about the use of generative AI in content creation (e.g. for videos, images, sounds etc)?**










**43%** have concerns that AI-generated content may lack creativity or a human perspective

Around six in ten people asked by YouGov across the seven markets are concerned that personal or sensitive data could be used without permission (59%); that there may not be enough rules or oversight governing how AI is used (58%); that AI may copy or reuse people's work without proper credit (58%); and that technology could reduce job opportunities for writers, artists and other creators (57%).

Other issues, such as bias in AI systems (49%) and **concerns that AI-generated content may lack creativity or a human perspective (43%)**, are also cited by substantial portions of respondents.

Lower %  higher %

	 AUS	 CAN	 FRA	 GER	 SGP	 US	 UK
AI content may lack creativity, originality, or human perspective	68%	71%	65%	67%	74%	72%	75%
AI systems may reflect bias or unfair viewpoint	64%	65%	59%	67%	66%	65%	75%
AI could reduce job opportunities for creators	61%	62%	46%	52%	59%	63%	66%
AI may copy or reuse work without proper credit	58%	57%	50%	51%	55%	59%	70%
Not enough rules or oversight for how AI used	59%	58%	46%	46%	53%	64%	69%
Personal sensitive data used without permission	48%	51%	33%	47%	43%	55%	59%
Hard to tell if content was created by human or AI	40%	41%	30%	30%	31%	49%	54%
AI content may contain incorrect or misleading info	40%	41%	30%	31%	31%	40%	55%
AI-generated content could create fake news or scams	58%	58%	46%	58%	63%	58%	64%
None of these	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Don't know	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%



**59%**  
of respondents still  
express reservations in a range of  
areas, including misinformation risks

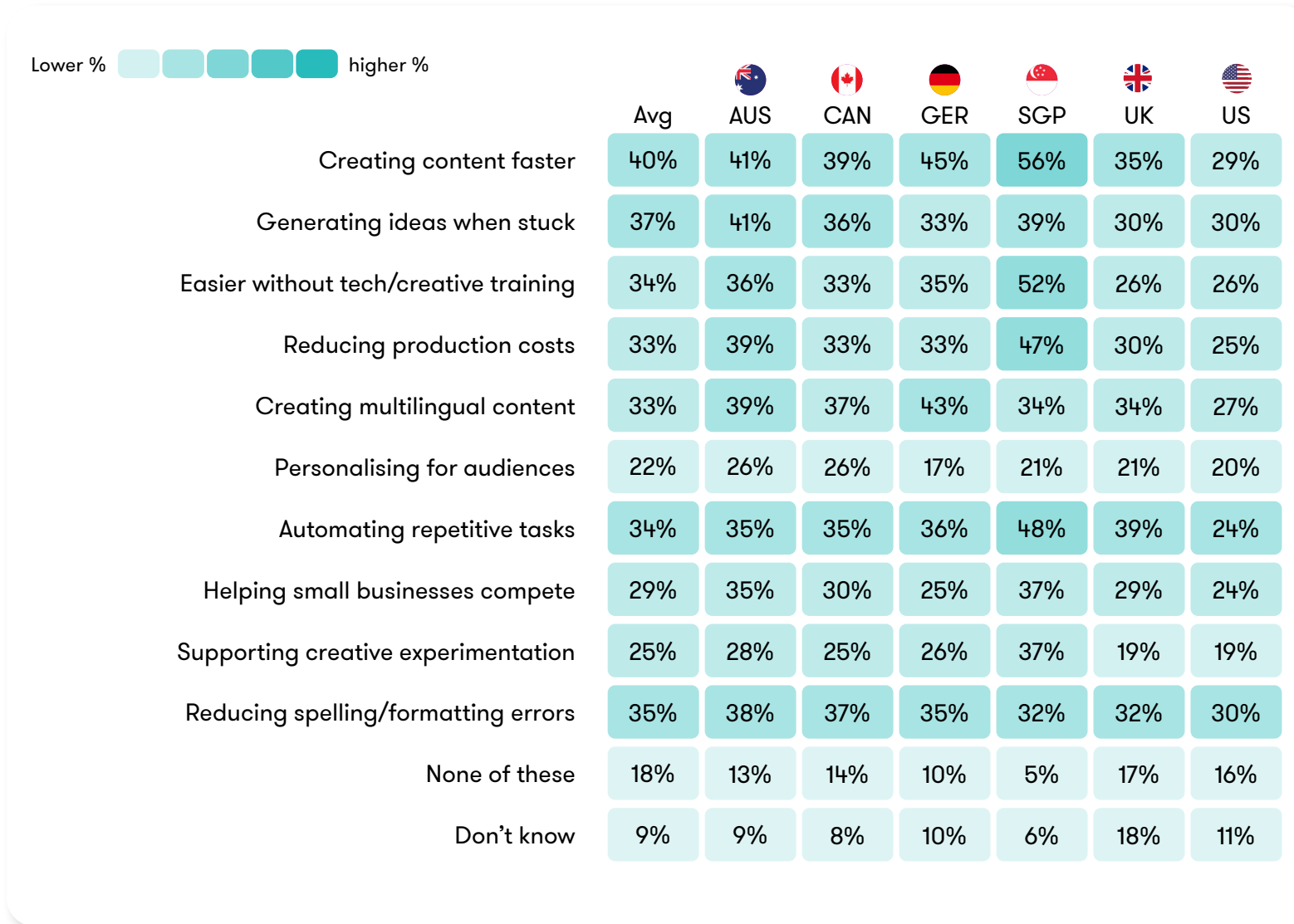
The UK consistently records the highest levels of concern across these areas. Overwhelming majorities worry about fake news or scams (81%), misleading information (79%), difficulty distinguishing AI from human-created content (74%) and fears about job displacement (69%).

In contrast, France generally reports lower levels of concern than other markets, for example, less than half (48%) are worried that AI could reduce job opportunities in creative industries. However, the majority of respondents still express reservations in a range of areas, including misinformation risks (59%) and the ability to distinguish human-generated content from AI work (58%).

# Key Benefits

The most frequently recognised benefit of generative AI content creation is speed and efficiency (42%). This is followed by creating content in multiple languages (40%), generating ideas when people feel stuck (39%), and reducing human errors such as spelling or formatting mistakes (39%). Many respondents also highlight the potential for AI to automate repetitive writing or design tasks (38%).

**Which, if any, of the following do you believe are benefits of the use of generative AI for content creation (e.g. for videos, images, sounds etc)? (Please select all that apply)**



Around one in three (35%) believe generative AI can make content creation easier for people without technical or creative training, while the same proportion say it could reduce the cost of producing content. A further 30% say the technology could help smaller businesses and individuals compete with larger organisations.

As with concerns about AI, perceptions of its benefits vary significantly by market. Singaporeans consistently take a more positive view of the potential benefits of AI – including saving time (58%) and reducing errors (53%).

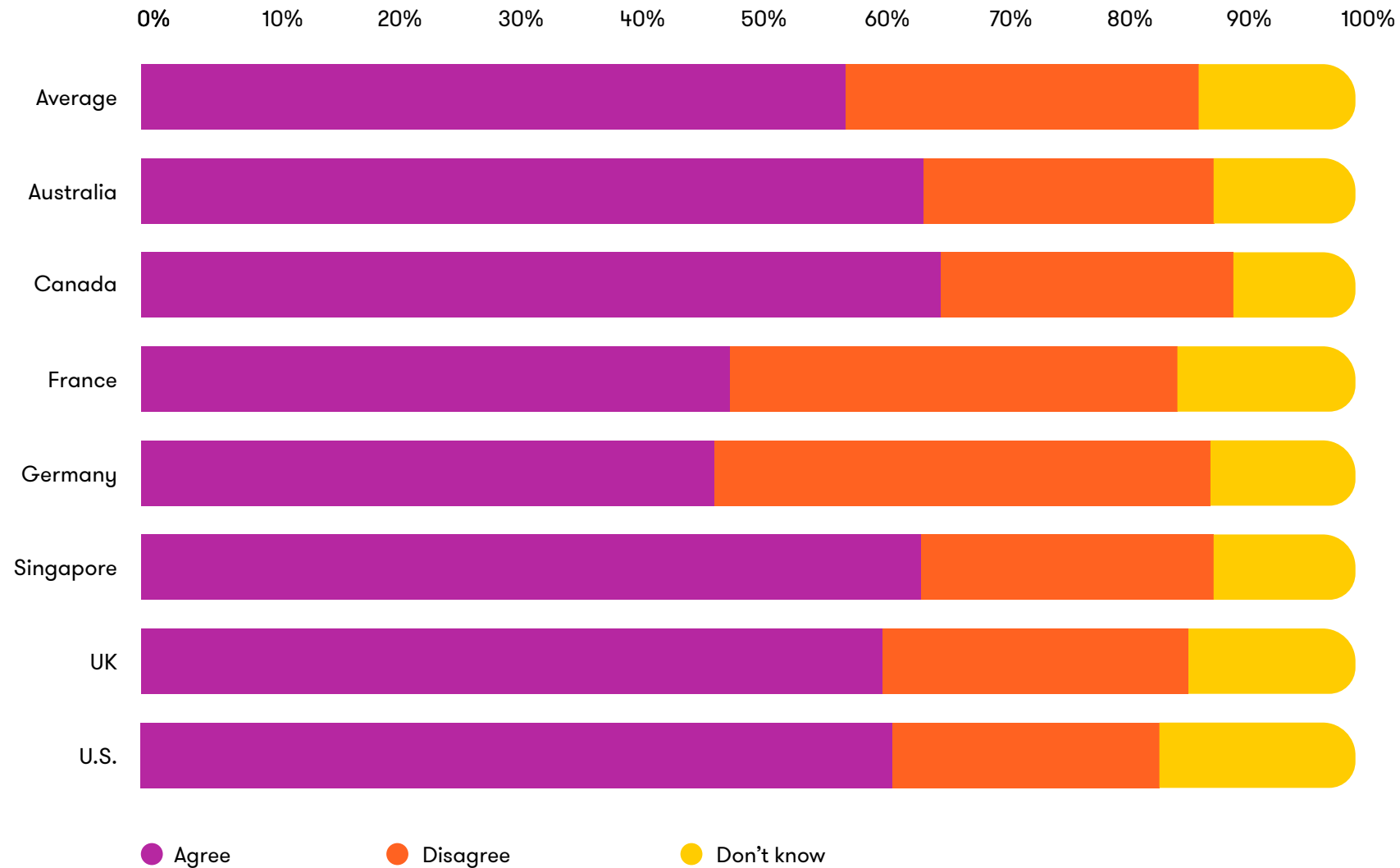
Again, respondents in the UK – as well as those in the U.S. – are more sceptical. Fewer people perceive the technology’s benefits across many categories, for example, saving time (38% in the UK and 30% in the U.S.) and reducing human errors (35% in the UK and 32% in the U.S.).

# Consumers' Confidence in Spotting Generative AI

Across the seven markets surveyed, the majority of consumers believe they can identify AI-generated content. On average, 58% agree that they can spot AI-generated material, while 29% disagree.



**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
“I think I can spot AI-generated content”**



**However, this confidence is not consistent across the countries studied.**



**66%** of Canadians think they can spot AI-generated content

It is closely followed by Australia and Singapore (both 64%), while the U.S. (62%) and the UK (61%) also report relatively strong belief in their ability to detect AI-generated content.

In contrast, only 48% of consumers in France and 47% in Germany agree that they can spot AI-generated material.



However, confidence declines markedly among older groups, dropping to

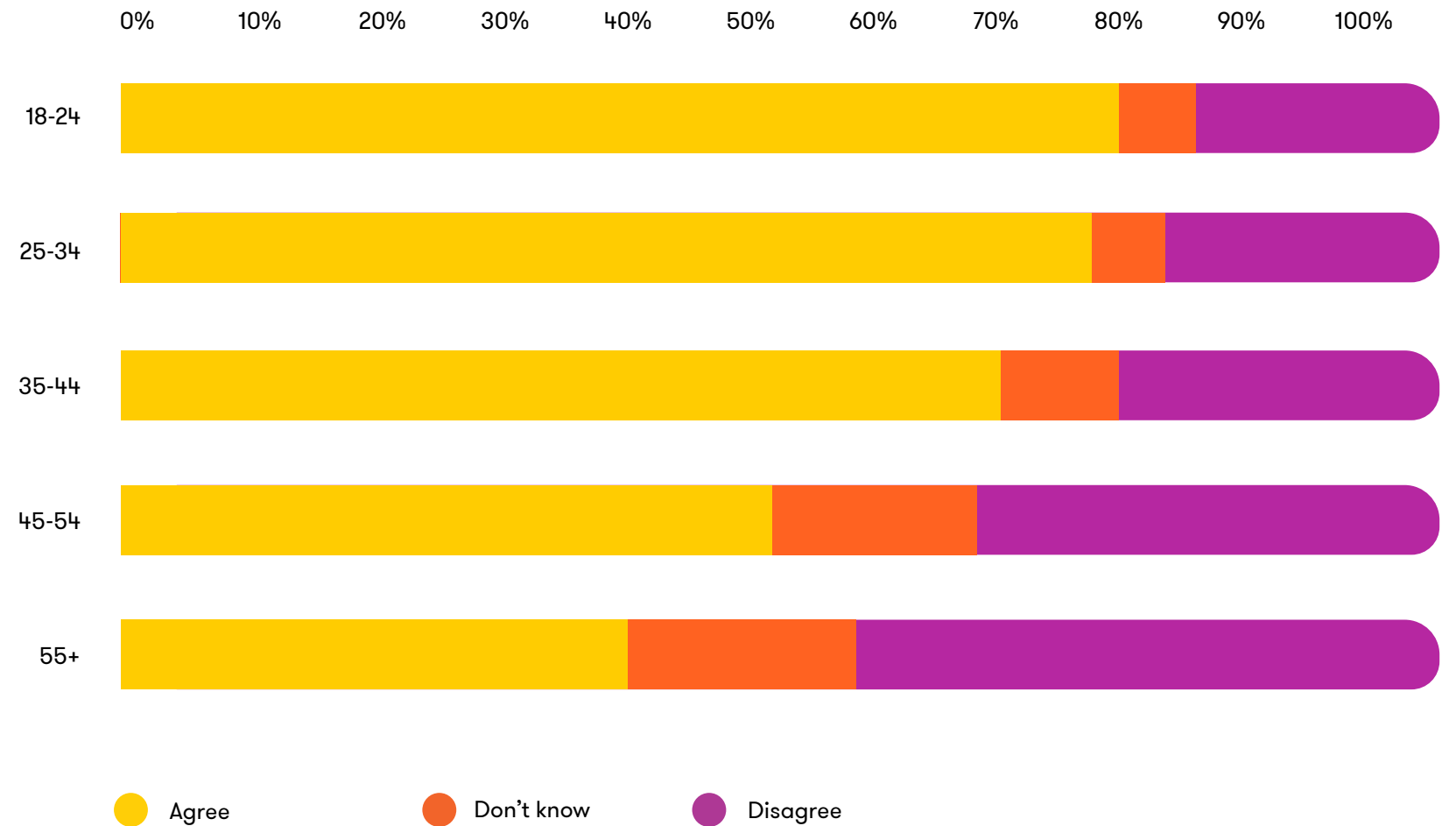
**40%**

among consumers aged 55 and above

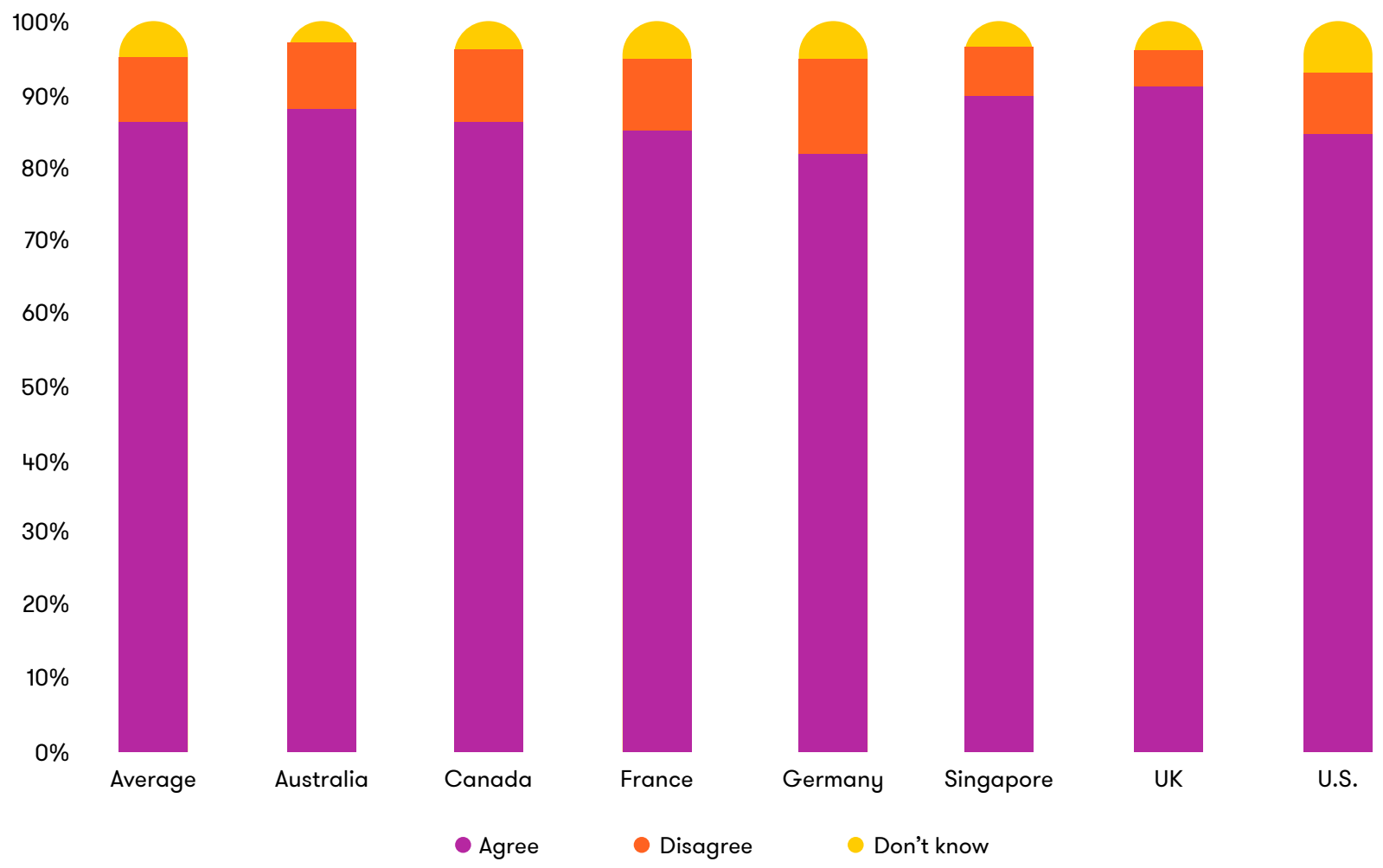
### Younger people are far more confident in their AI-detection abilities

18–24-year-olds have a high level of confidence in their perceived ability to detect AI-generated material, with 80% across markets agreeing that they can spot AI-generated content.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
“I think I can spot AI-generated content”



**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
 “With more generative AI content out there, I’m worried that I (or others) won’t be able to tell what is real and what is fabricated by AI”**



**Across all surveyed markets, 87% are worried that they and others will struggle to distinguish what is real from what has been fabricated by AI**

**Concern about distinguishing real from AI-generated content is widespread**

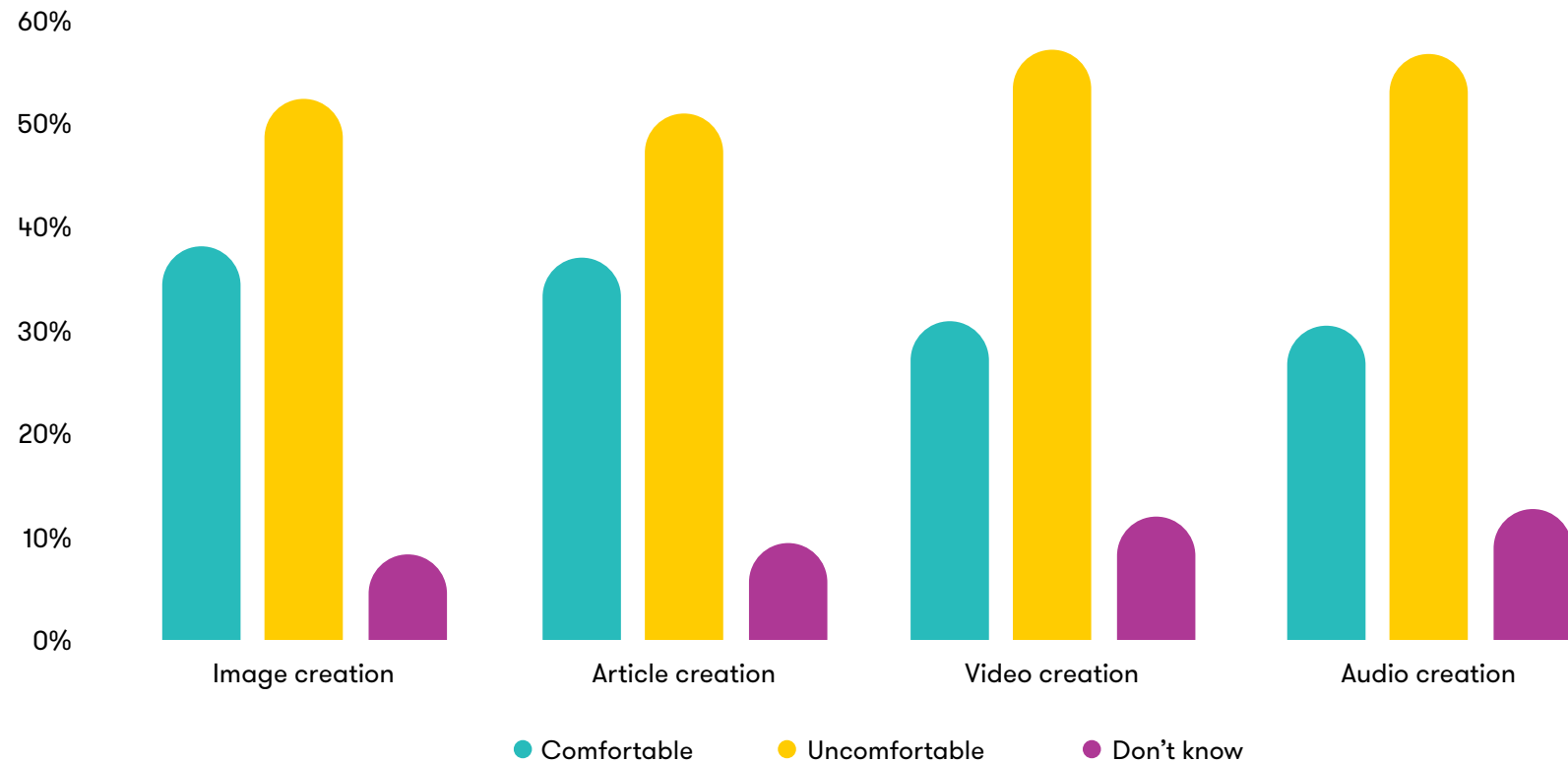
While many consumers believe they can personally identify AI-generated content, there is a widespread concern that people in general can't. This view is held by at least four in five across each of the seven countries surveyed.

# Where Audiences Do and Don't Accept AI (Formats, Contexts and Countries)

Public comfort with generative AI in content creation is relatively limited across the four formats asked about – images, video, articles and audio. In each category, more people are apprehensive about the use of AI than are accepting.



**How comfortable or uncomfortable are you with the use of generative AI for each of the following types of creation? (Please select one option for each type)**



Just under four in ten (38%) are comfortable with AI being used to generate images or articles, while just over half (52%) are uncomfortable.

Unease is even more pronounced elsewhere. While around three in ten surveyed by YouGov are comfortable with AI-generated video (31%) and audio (30%), well over half are uncomfortable (57% for each). YouGov's data finds that Australia and Singapore are the markets most comfortable with AI being used to generate each content type. While the UK and the U.S. are the least comfortable with it creating images (29% UK, 31% U.S.) and articles (30% UK, 29% U.S.), for both audio and video, France (22% video, 22% audio) and Germany (24% video, 22% audio) are the least comfortable.

Meltwater data finds that posts referencing AI video are the most-engaged, compared to posts referencing ads and images, averaging 206 interactions per post, and generating greater positive sentiment than AI imagery.

AI videos show the strongest growth over time compared to other content formats. Reddit discussions are a major driver accounting for 29% of total mentions. Meltwater's data finds that Reddit is where sentiment towards AI-generated videos is most negative (21%), making it the primary space for critique and debate. TikTok audiences are the most optimistic about AI in videos, with 40% positive sentiment.



**Between March 2025 - February 2026**

**275k → 819k**

**mentions increased x3**

**28m → 184m**

**and engagement grew**



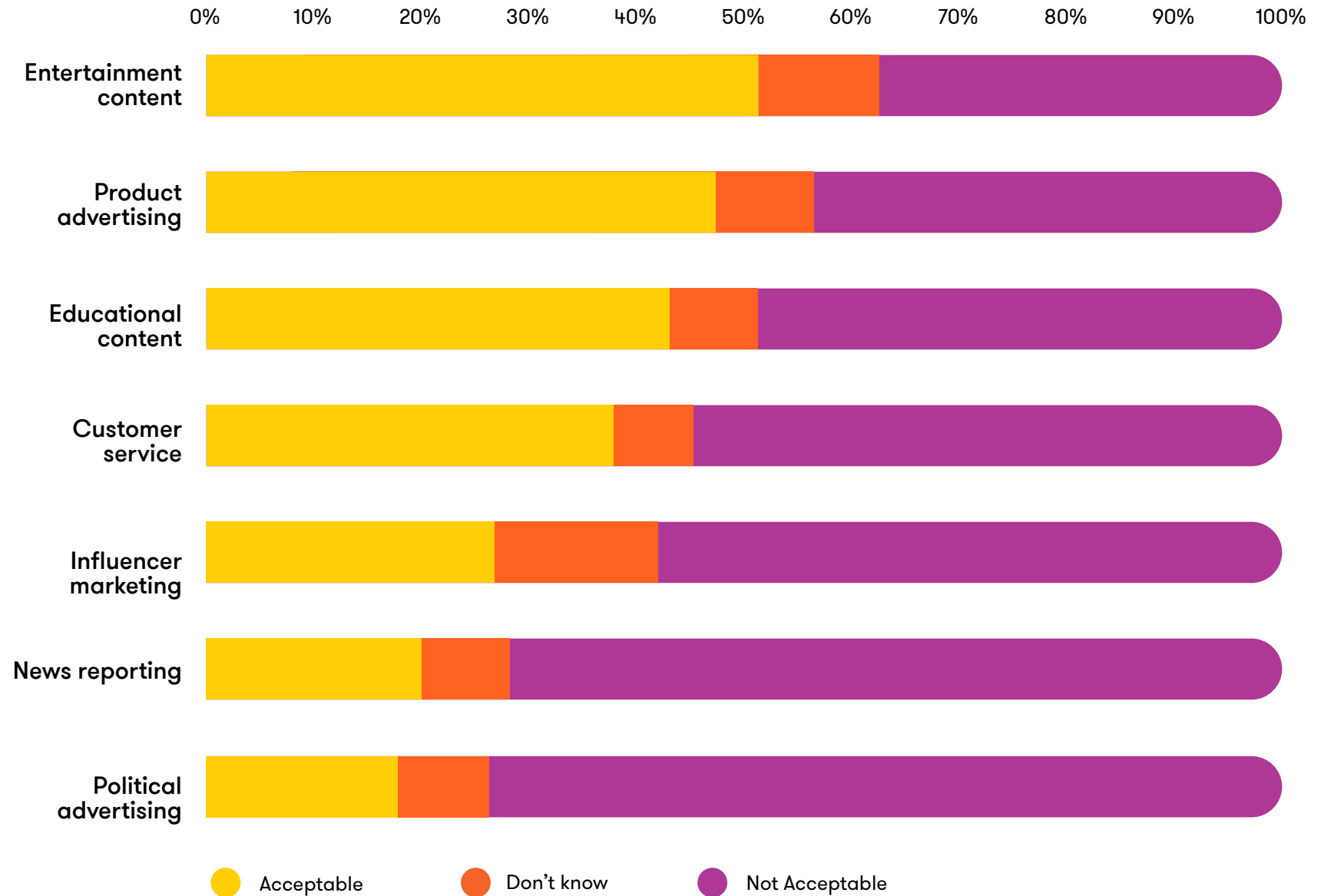
**53%**

**accept the use of generative AI when applied to entertainment content**

**Context matters: consumers are more open to generative AI in advertising than in news coverage**

The data shows that public acceptance of generative AI depends on where and how the technology is used. Among all respondents, a majority (53%) accept its use when applied to entertainment content, compared to more than a third (37%) who don't.

**How acceptable do you find the use of generative AI in the following contexts?**



**YouGov’s data shows that AI also receives relatively higher levels of acceptance in product advertising (47%) and educational content (44%).** Meltwater analysis shows that when people on social media talk about AI in advertising, **conversations show slightly higher negative sentiment than imagery or video (14.3% vs 13.2% and 12.9%),** although the difference is narrow and should be interpreted directionally rather than as a significant gap. While AI-generated images are widely shared, sentiment is more polarized (17.4% positive and 13.2% negative). They often sit at the intersection of creativity and controversy: social media users praise them for their creativity, aesthetics, and accessibility, yet criticize them for authenticity issues, “AI slop,” and artist backlash.

YouGov data shows that receptiveness is lower in contexts where credibility, trust or influence are arguably particularly important.

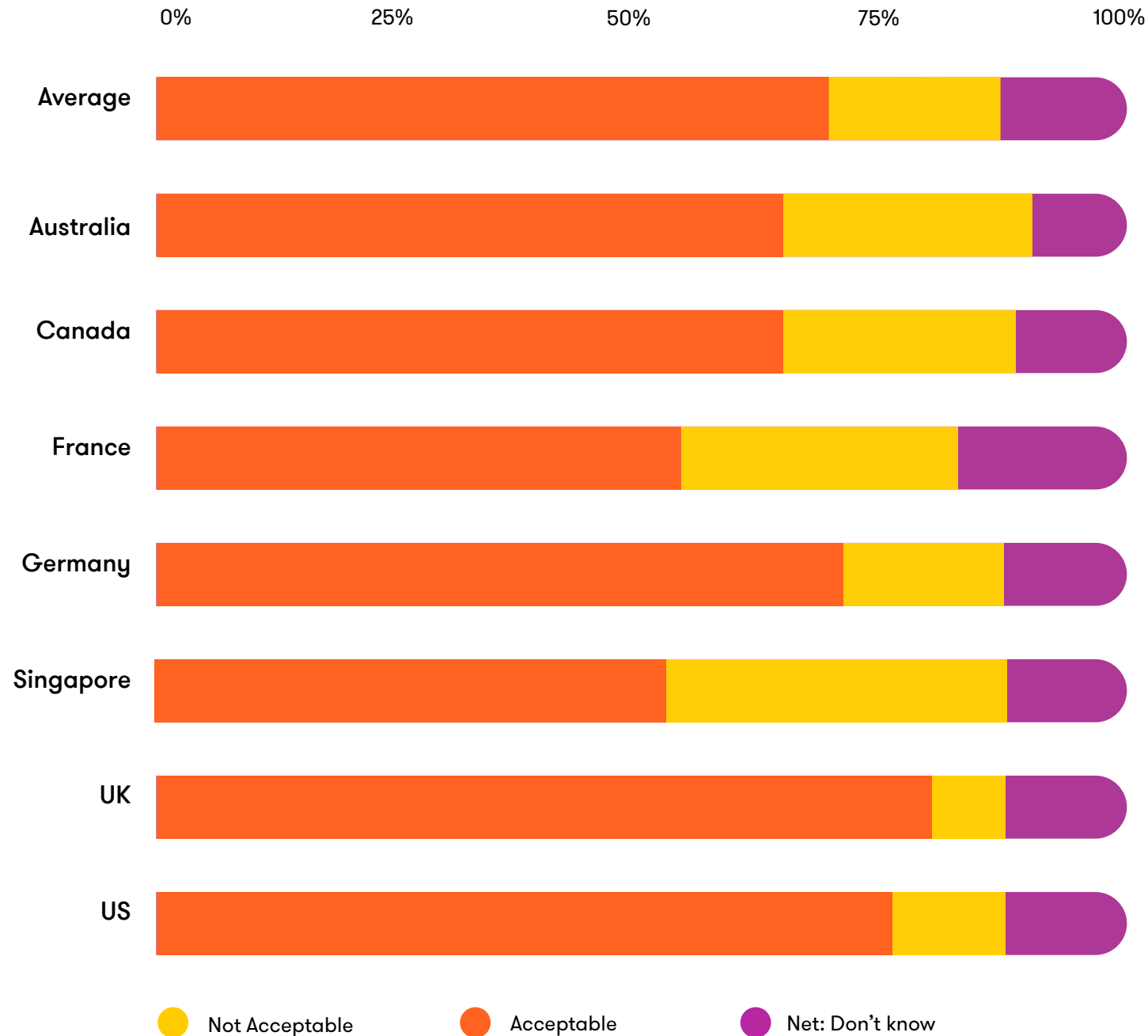


**Fewer than four in ten (39%) find the use of AI acceptable in customer service, while a little over a quarter (28%) say the same for influencer marketing.**

News and political content face the strongest resistance. Just one in five (21%) say it is acceptable for AI to be used in news reporting, compared to more than two-thirds (71%) who think it is not. Attitudes are even more negative when it comes to political advertising, where fewer than a fifth (18%) find AI use acceptable, with almost three quarters (73%) saying it’s not.



## How acceptable do you find the use of generative AI in the following contexts?



**Singapore appears relatively more open to AI-assisted journalism with **35%** saying it is acceptable**

Looking specifically at the use of generative AI in news reporting, the UK (82%) and the U.S. (78%) show the highest levels of opposition, with only 10% and 14%, respectively, saying AI use in journalism is acceptable. Germany also shows strong resistance with 74% saying it is unacceptable.

By contrast, Singapore appears relatively more open to AI-assisted journalism with 35% saying it is acceptable, followed by France (30%), Australia (28%) and Canada (26%). However, even in these markets, clear majorities still say the use of generative AI in news reporting is unacceptable.

# Brand Trust and Credibility in AI-Generated Content

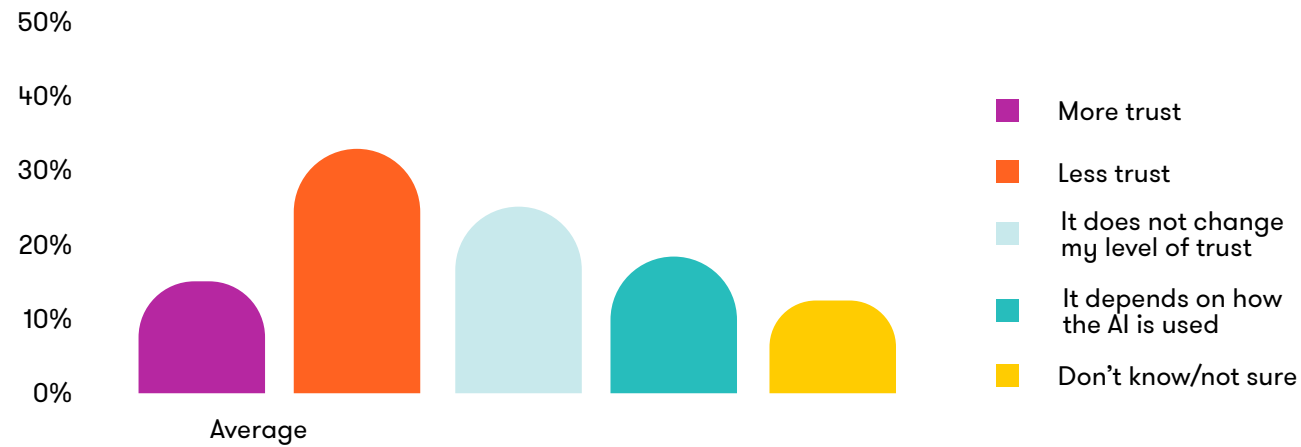
YouGov data suggests that the use of generative AI in brand content may currently carry a net trust penalty for organisations.

Across the markets surveyed by YouGov, an average of 32% of consumers say they would trust a brand less if they knew its content had been generated using AI. This is compared with 15% who say they would trust the brand more.

Meltwater's analysis finds that concerns around transparency, governance and corporate control occupy 5% of the total online conversations about AI.

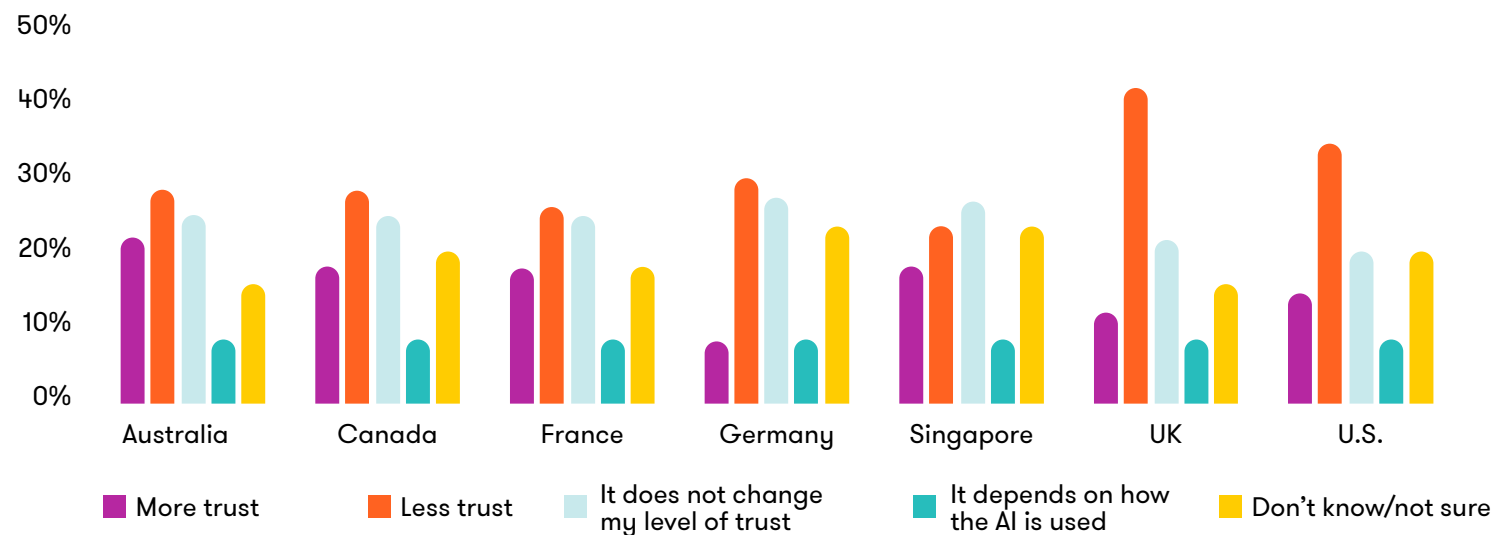


## How does knowing that content was generated using AI affect your level of trust in a brand?



**42%**  
of UK respondents say they would trust a brand less if its content was AI-generated

## How does knowing that content was generated using AI affect your level of trust in a brand?



### Trust impact varies significantly across markets

YouGov's data finds that the UK shows the strongest negative sentiment, with 42% saying they would trust a brand less if its content was AI-generated, followed by the U.S. (34%) and Germany (30%).

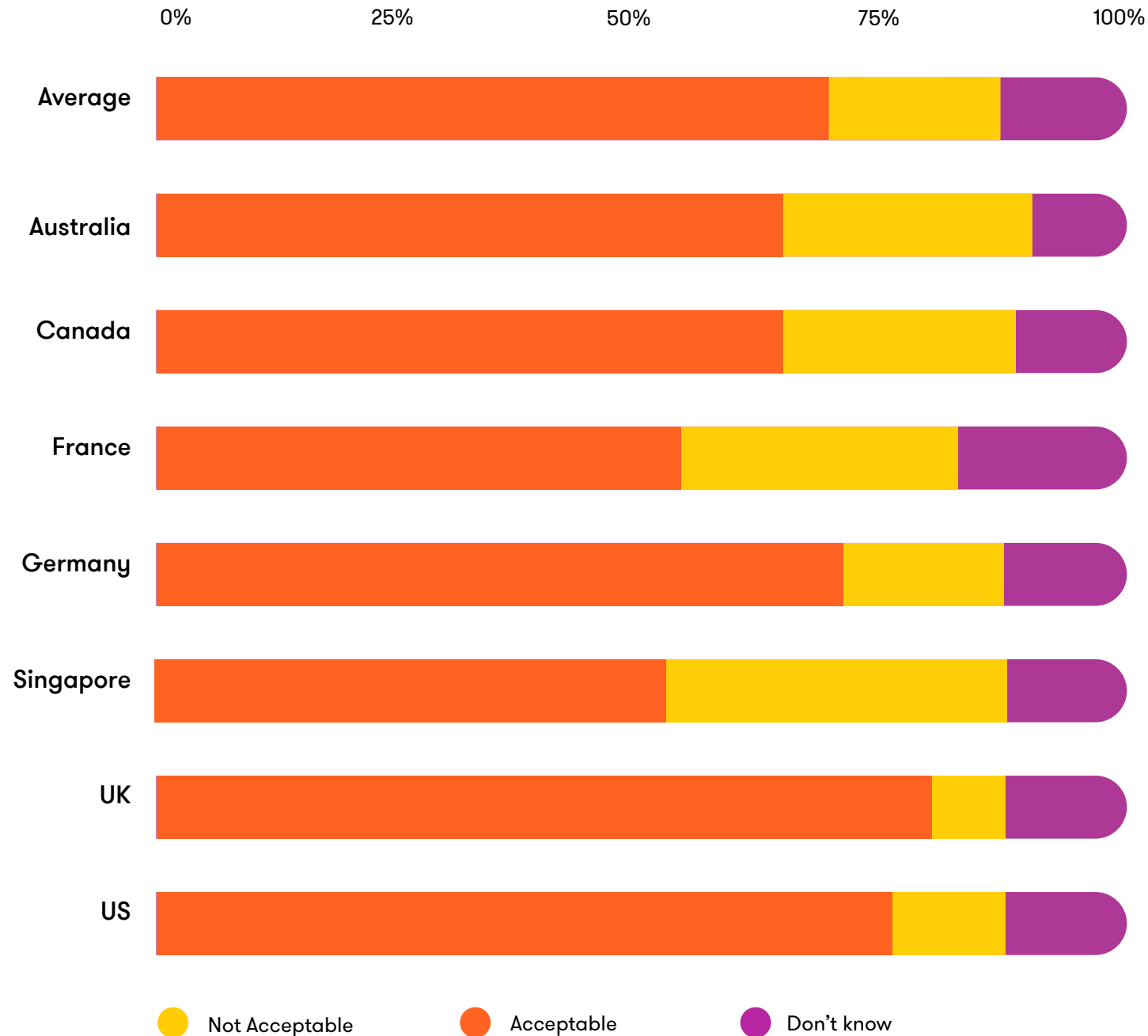
When it comes to AI-generated content increasing trust in brands, there are marked differences by country. The likes of Australia (22%), Canada (19%), France and Singapore (both 18%) all tell a slightly more positive story for artificial intelligence-generated brand content.

## How acceptable do you find the use of generative AI in the following contexts?



**42%**

**of people from the UK say they would trust a brand less if its content was AI-generated**



### Trust impact varies significantly across markets

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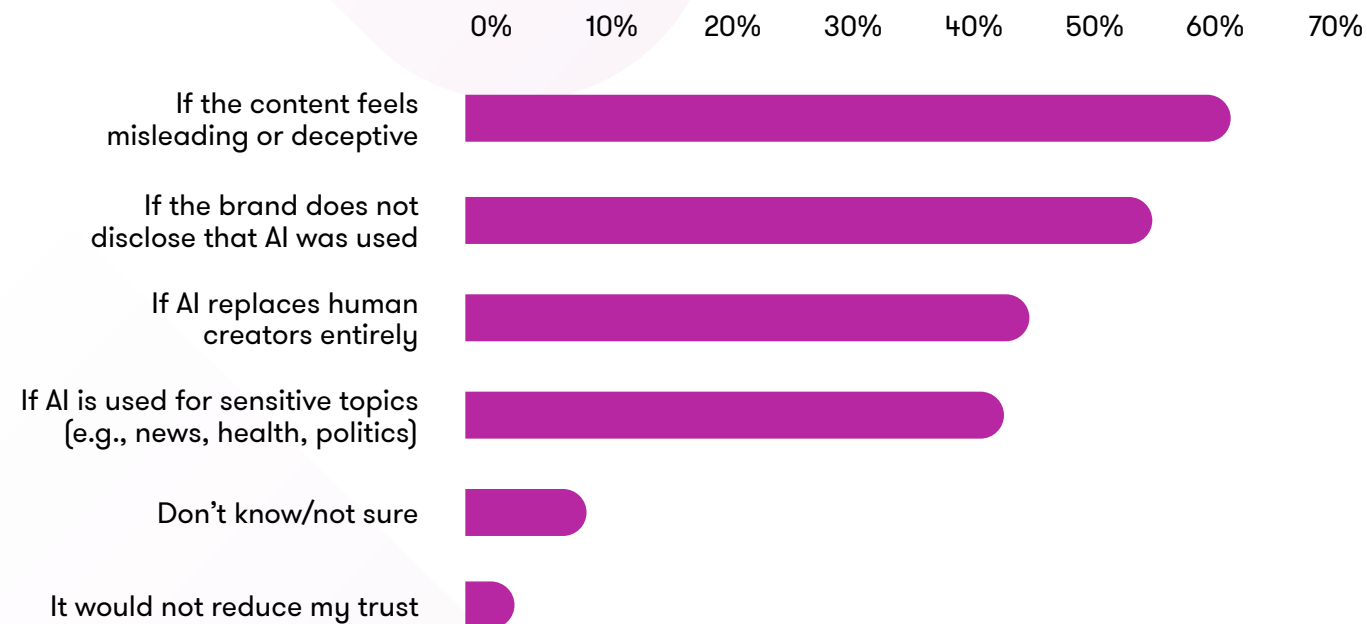
When it comes to AI-generated content increasing trust in brands, there are marked differences by country. The likes of Australia (22%), Canada (19%), France and Singapore (both 18%) all tell a slightly more positive story for artificial intelligence-generated brand content.

# Brand Trust and Credibility in AI-Generated Content

When AI-generated content feels misleading or deceptive, more than three in five (63%) respondents across all the markets studied say it reduces their trust in the brand making the content. This is closely followed by a failure to disclose that the brand is using AI (59%).



**In which situations, if any, would AI-generated content reduce your trust in a brand? (Please select all that apply)**



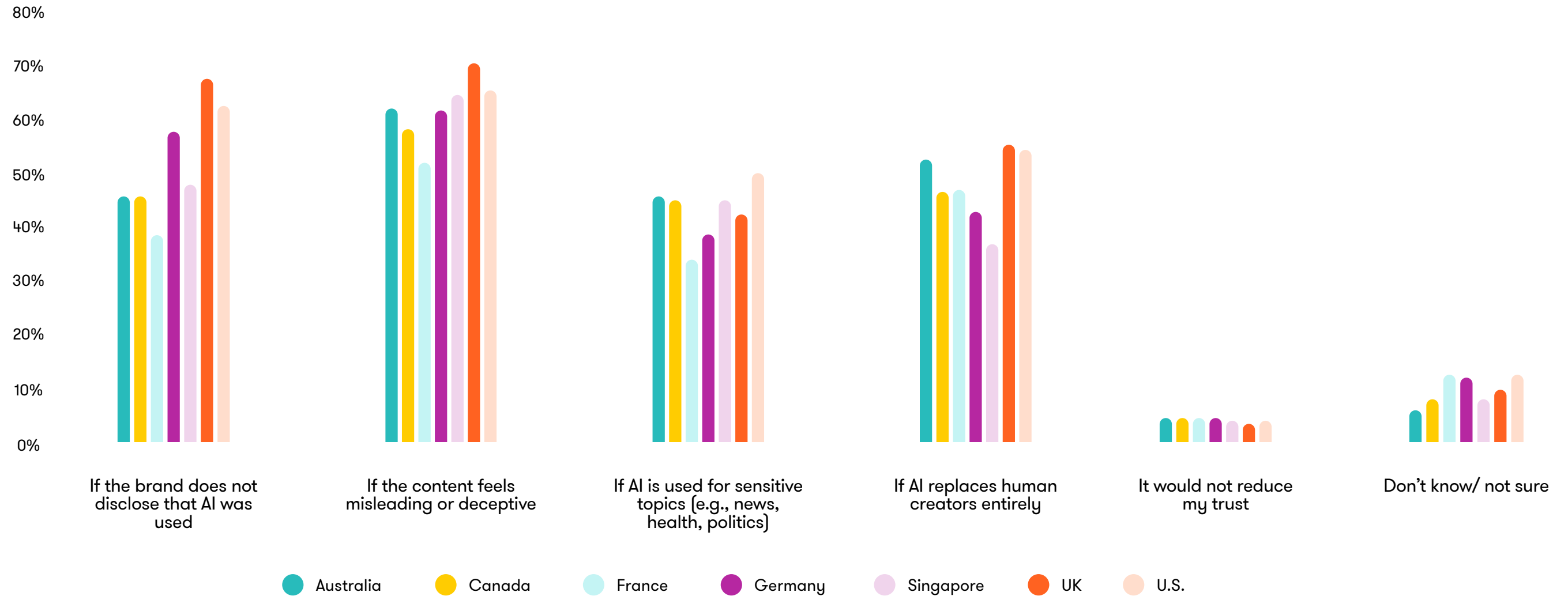
**45%**  
**say their trust would decline if AI was used to create content about sensitive topics**

YouGov's data suggest that trust would also be affected by how extensively AI takes over content production. Nearly half of respondents (49%) across the seven markets surveyed say their trust would decrease if AI replaced human creators entirely.

However, this sentiment is not seen in online media currently. Only 0.4% of mentions focused on the perceived replacement of human creativity by AI. Discussions around job disruption for creative or technical roles show the most concern with 0.8%. The lowest number of mentions surrounds concerns related to academic integrity (0.1%).

While these concerns are evident across all markets, some countries show greater sensitivity than others. Consumers in the UK and the U.S. consistently report higher levels of trust risk across multiple scenarios.

## In which situations, if any, would AI-generated content reduce your trust in a brand? (Please select all that apply)



While France and Singapore tend to report slightly lower levels of concern, majorities in these markets still say that deceptive or undisclosed AI use would negatively affect brand trust.

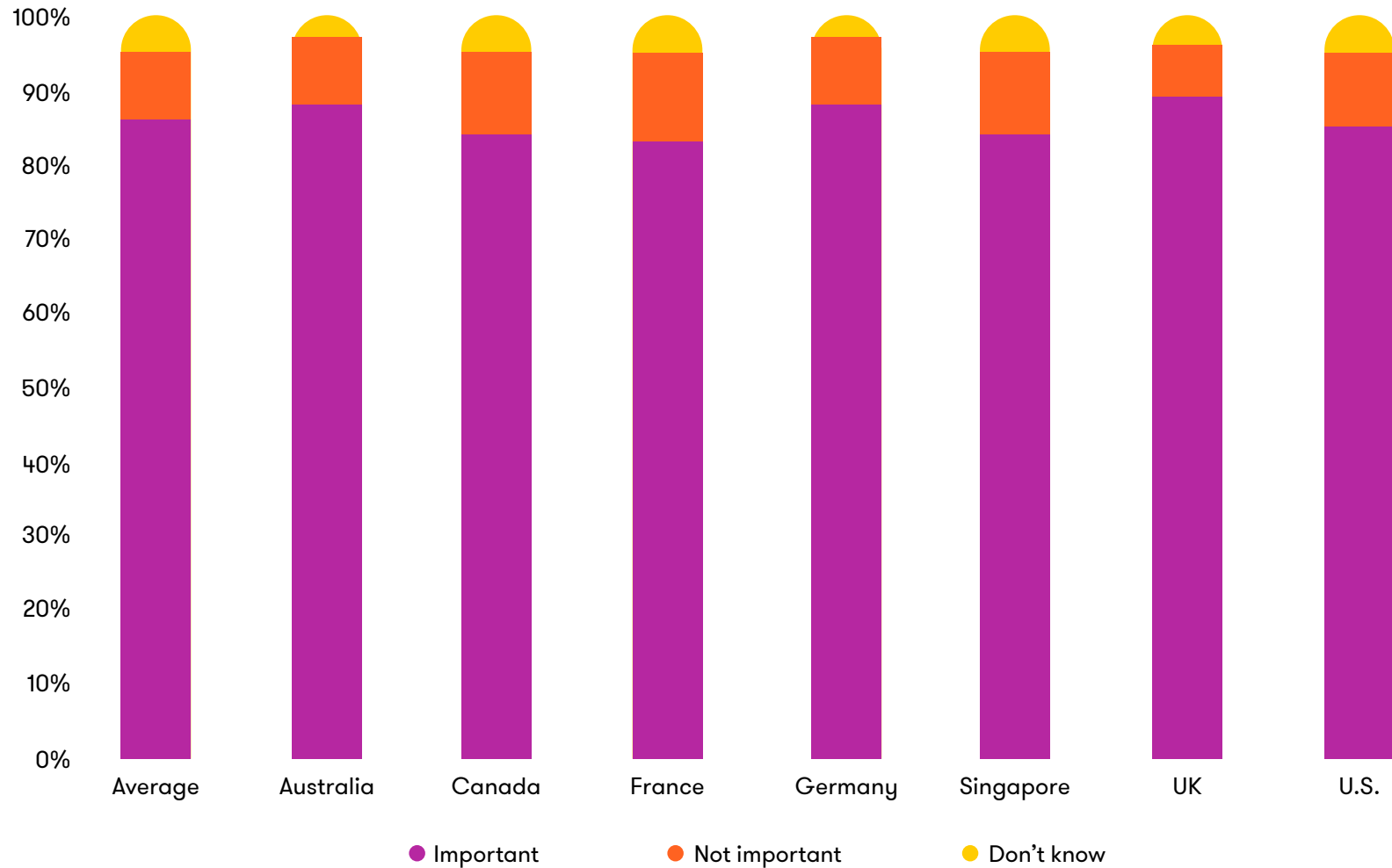
# Brand Trust and Credibility in AI-Generated Content

## Disclosure demands

Across the seven markets surveyed, 86% of respondents say it is important that content clearly states when it has been created using generative AI, while only 9% say this is not important.



**How important, if at all, is it to you that content (e.g. videos, images, sounds etc) explicitly states if it was created using generative AI?**



Meltwater's analysis also reflects a growing expectation from the media as well as social media users that AI should be reliable, responsible and governed.

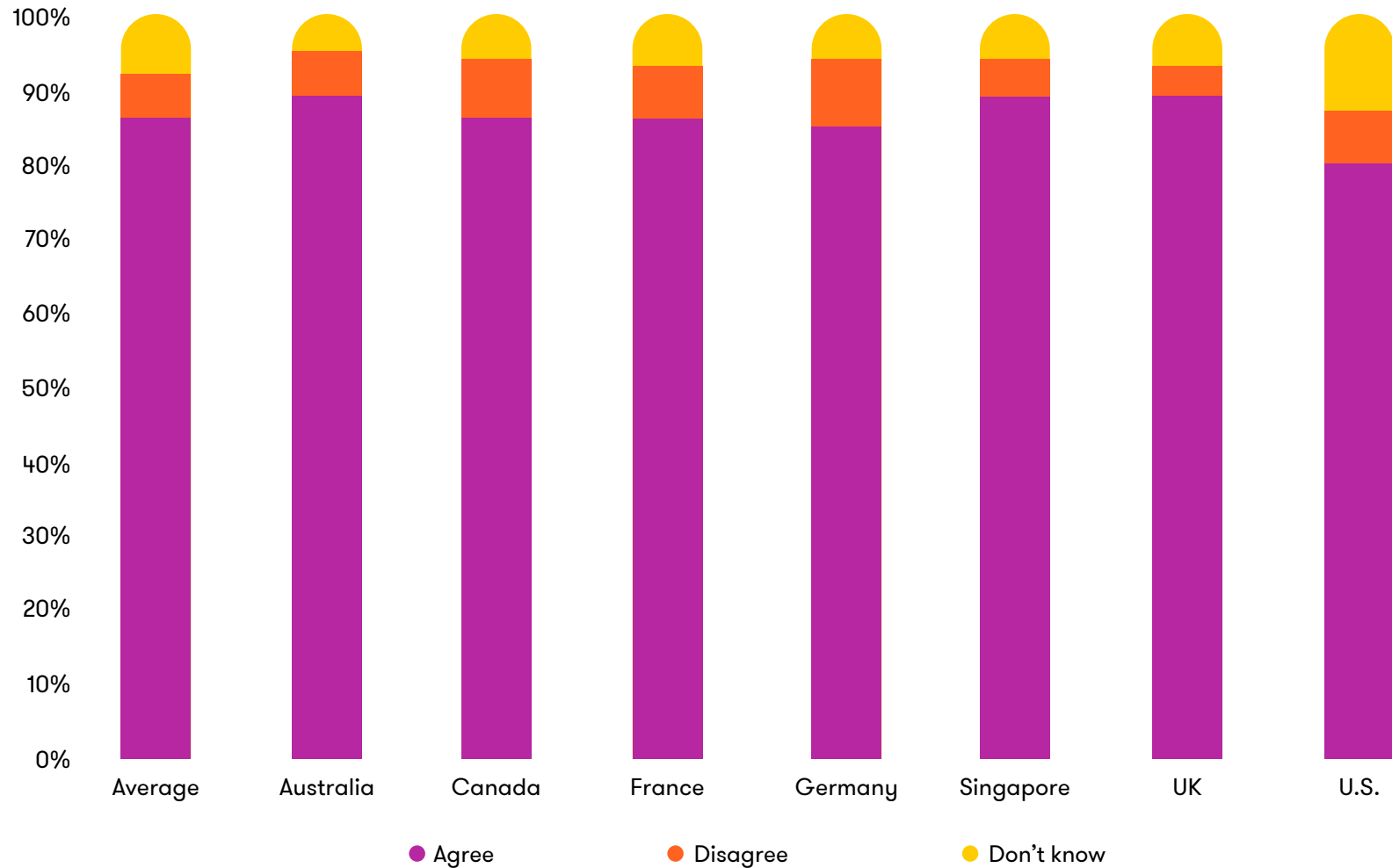


**Discussions around legislative action occupy**

**4%** with mentions of "regulations" occupying

**1.5%**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There should be greater government regulation around the usage and disclosure of generative AI for content creation**



**Support for regulation is particularly strong in Australia, Singapore and the UK**  
**89%**

Canada and France (both 86%) and Germany (85%) also show similarly high levels of agreement. While support for regulation remains high in the U.S. (80%), it is slightly lower than in other markets and accompanied by a larger proportion of respondents who say they are unsure (13%).

# Key Takeaways

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## What brand leaders need to know

What does this research mean for PR and marketing leaders?  
There are clear headline takeaways that will help you to build a strategy for winning your audience's trust.



### 1. Transparency is now a baseline expectation

86% of consumers say it's important to disclose AI-generated content, while 59% say a lack of disclosure reduces trust. This suggests visibility around AI use plays a key role in how brand communications are received.

### 4. Concern about misinformation is widespread

73% worry about fake news or scams, 69% about misleading information, and 67% about difficulty distinguishing AI from human content, highlighting ongoing concerns around accuracy and authenticity.

### 2. Trust remains closely tied to human involvement

49% say their trust would decline if AI replaced human creators. Overall, 32% say they would trust brands less if content is AI-generated, compared to only 15% who would trust the brand more.

### 5. Confidence in spotting AI does not remove uncertainty

While 58% believe they can identify AI-generated content, 87% are concerned that people will struggle to tell what is real. This points to continued uncertainty in how content is interpreted.

### 3. Acceptance of AI varies by context

Acceptance is higher in entertainment (53%) and advertising (47%), but significantly lower in influencer marketing (28%) and news (21%). This indicates expectations shift depending on where AI is used.



# Methodology

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## The details behind the data

The insights in this report were sourced via YouGov Surveys: Serviced – providing rapid answers from the right audience – and Meltwater media analysis.



YouGov's multi-region survey was conducted from February 26 – March 5, 2026. The survey was run in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Singapore, UK and U.S., with a minimum of 1,050 respondents per market. The average score reflects the average, unweighted percentage based on total respondents from all seven markets. All survey figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 9,869 adults. The survey was carried out online. Figures have been weighted and are representative of all country adults (aged 18+).



Meltwater's analysis is based on social and media data, tracking global English-language conversations about generative AI over the past 12 months, using a broad set of AI-related keywords (e.g., ChatGPT, LLMs, AI agents). The dataset includes ~150M+ mentions and engagement signals, enabling analysis of trends in volume, engagement, and sentiment over time.

**Meltwater analyzed how mentions and engagement evolved to understand shifts in attention and engagement per post.** Sentiment (positive, neutral, negative) was combined with qualitative review to identify key themes driving AI adoption and resistance. Platform insights focus on major channels (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, X, Reddit), alongside a media vs. social split to distinguish editorial coverage from consumer conversation.



# Meltwater Can Help You Build Trust in the Age of AI.

At Meltwater, we help brands navigate the evolving landscape of AI, media, and consumer trust. From understanding how audiences perceive your content to identifying emerging risks and opportunities, our media, social, and consumer intelligence solutions give you the clarity to act with confidence.

Our GenAI Lens platform can even help you increase your brand visibility in AI platforms.

Book a demonstration to discover how Meltwater can help your brand build trust in the AI era.

[Book Meltwater Demo](#)



# Most Insights Don't Reflect Reality... Yours Should

The true power of PR lies in the reliability of its claims. Behind every YouGov insight is a panel you can trust. We've spent decades building a global, verified community, backed by industry-leading safeguards and connected data systems that make accuracy possible at scale. Real people, real time, real data: in the AI age, this is how YouGov helps you generate insights that lead to better decisions and keep you ahead of the competition.

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