



BBG Research Series Briefing:  
Iran Media Use 2012  
June 12, 2012

# Methodology

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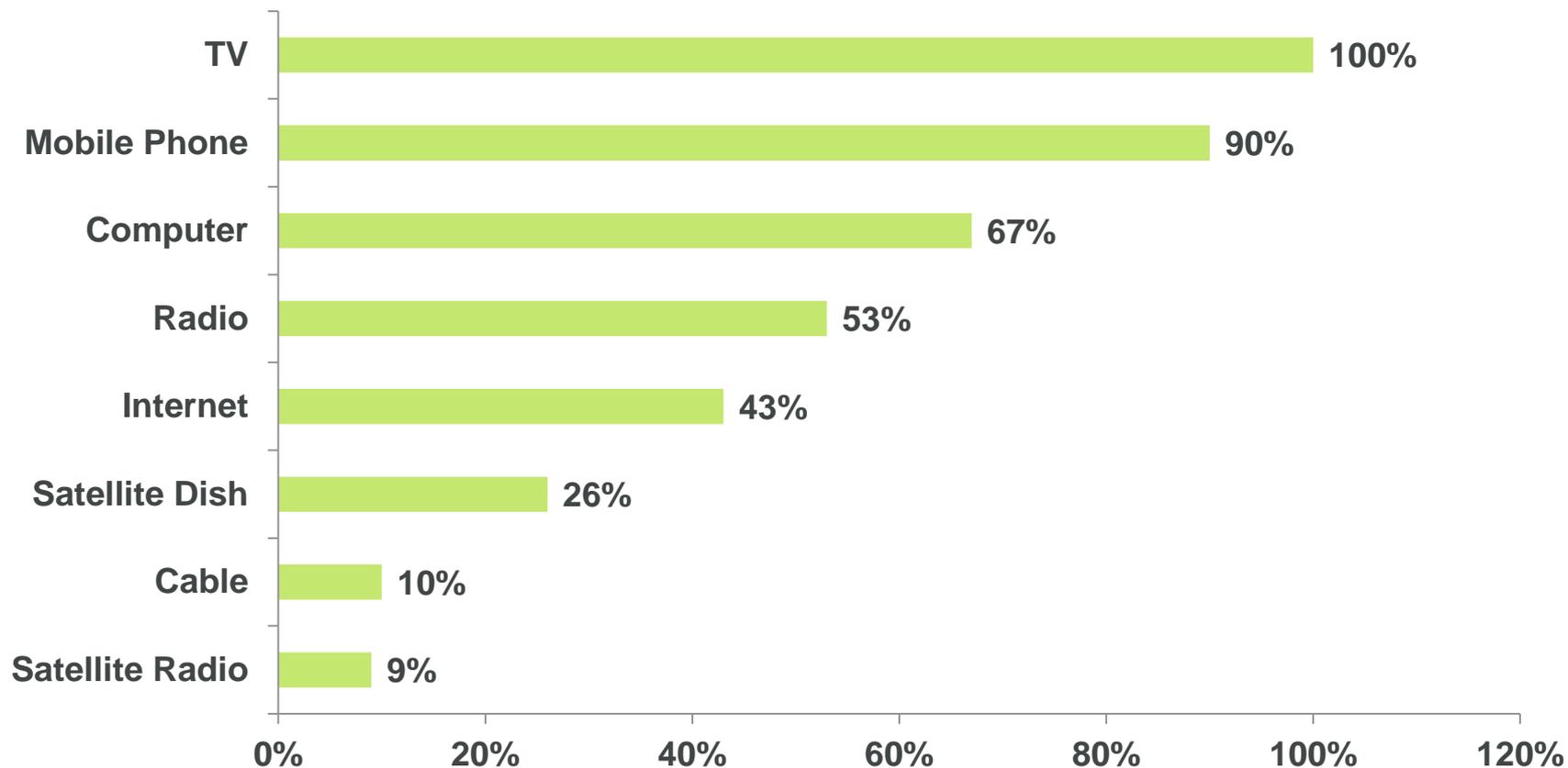
- Coverage: National (all 31 provinces)
- Sample size: 2,000
- Methodology: Telephone (landline + Mobile)
- Field period: March 3<sup>rd</sup> – March 30th



# Media Access and Usage

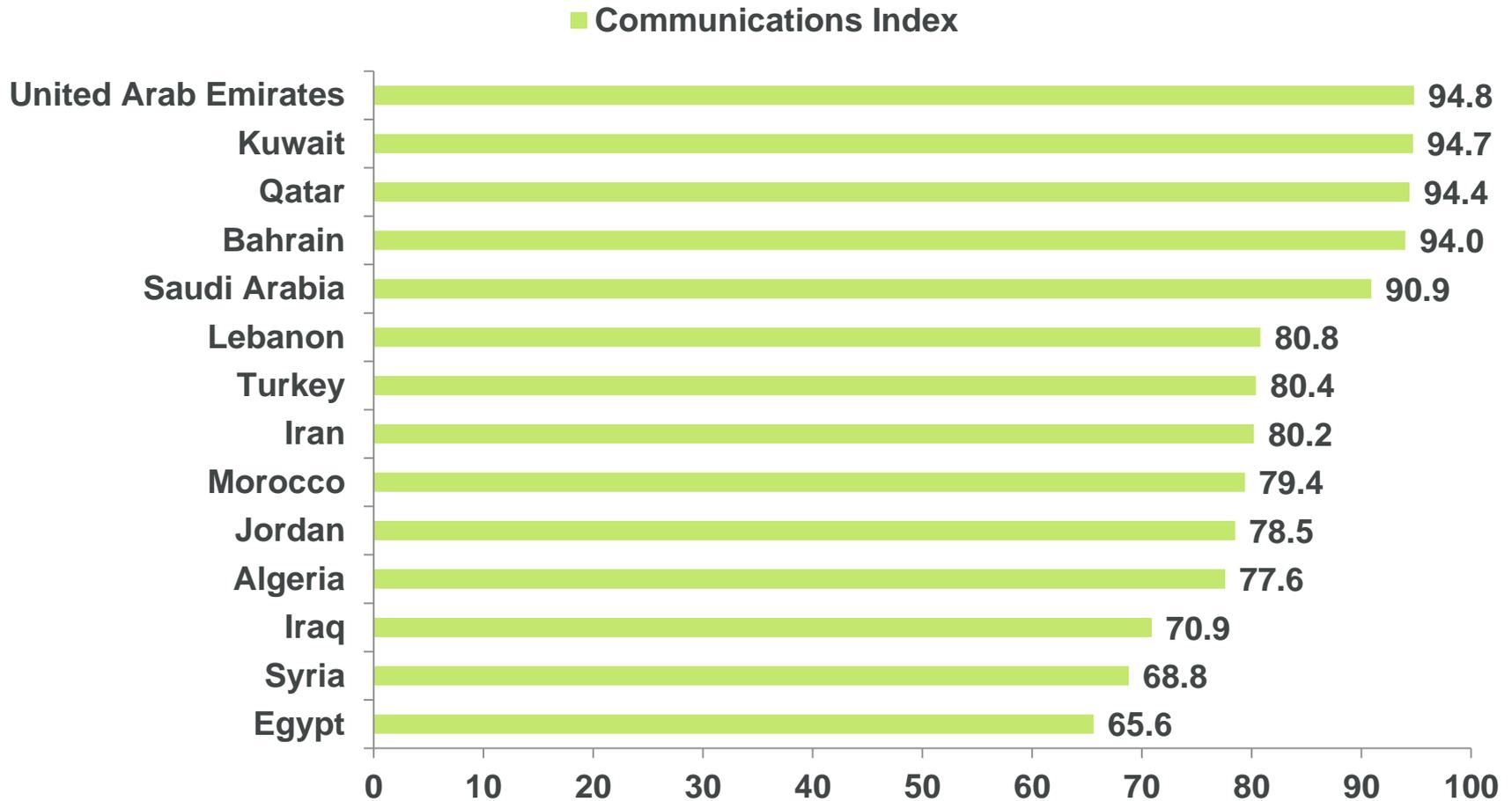
# Universal Access to Television and Mobile Phones

*Which of the following do you have working in your household ?*



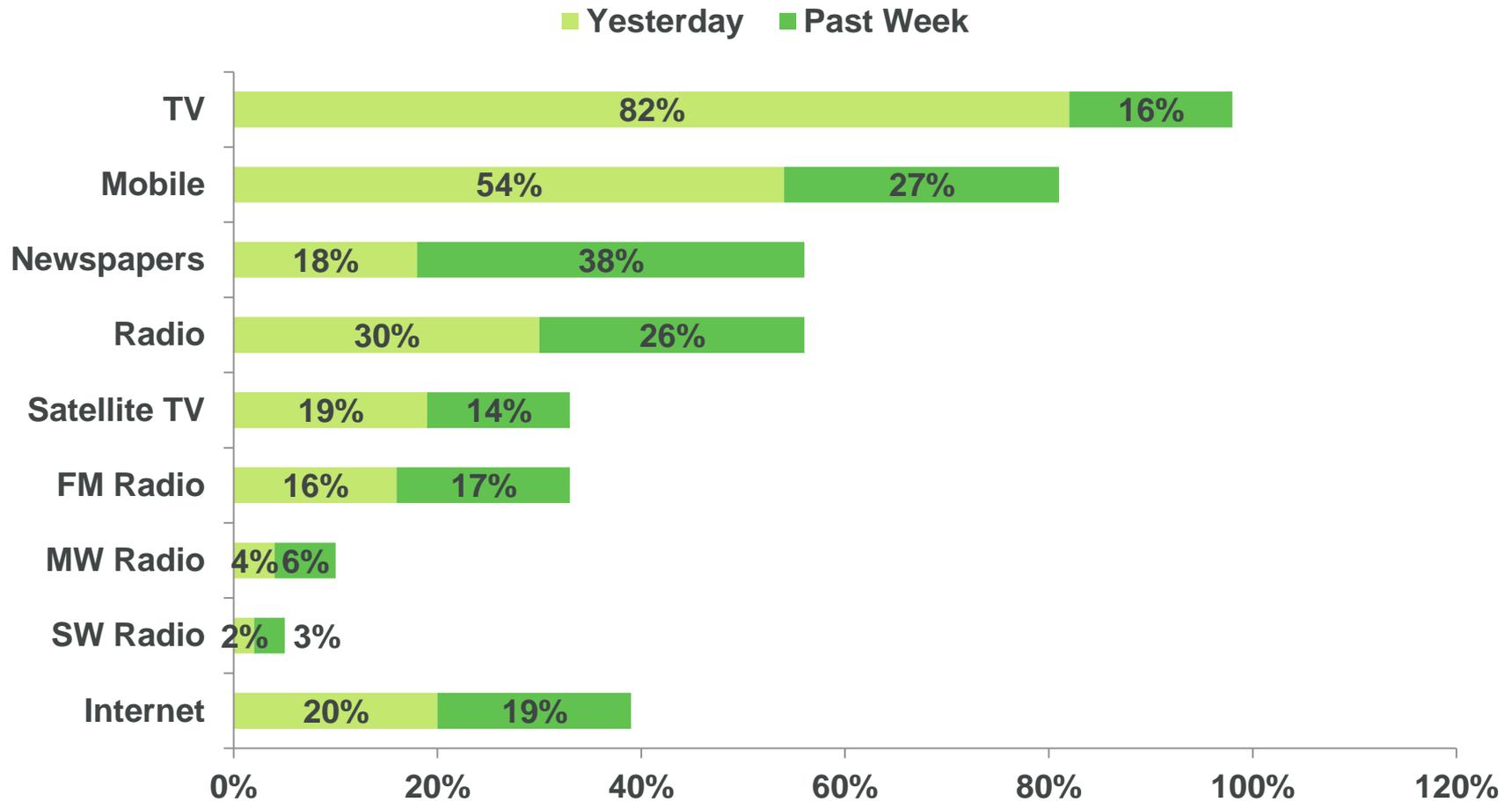
*Base: All respondents (n=2,000)*

# Technology Prevalence on Par with Turkey



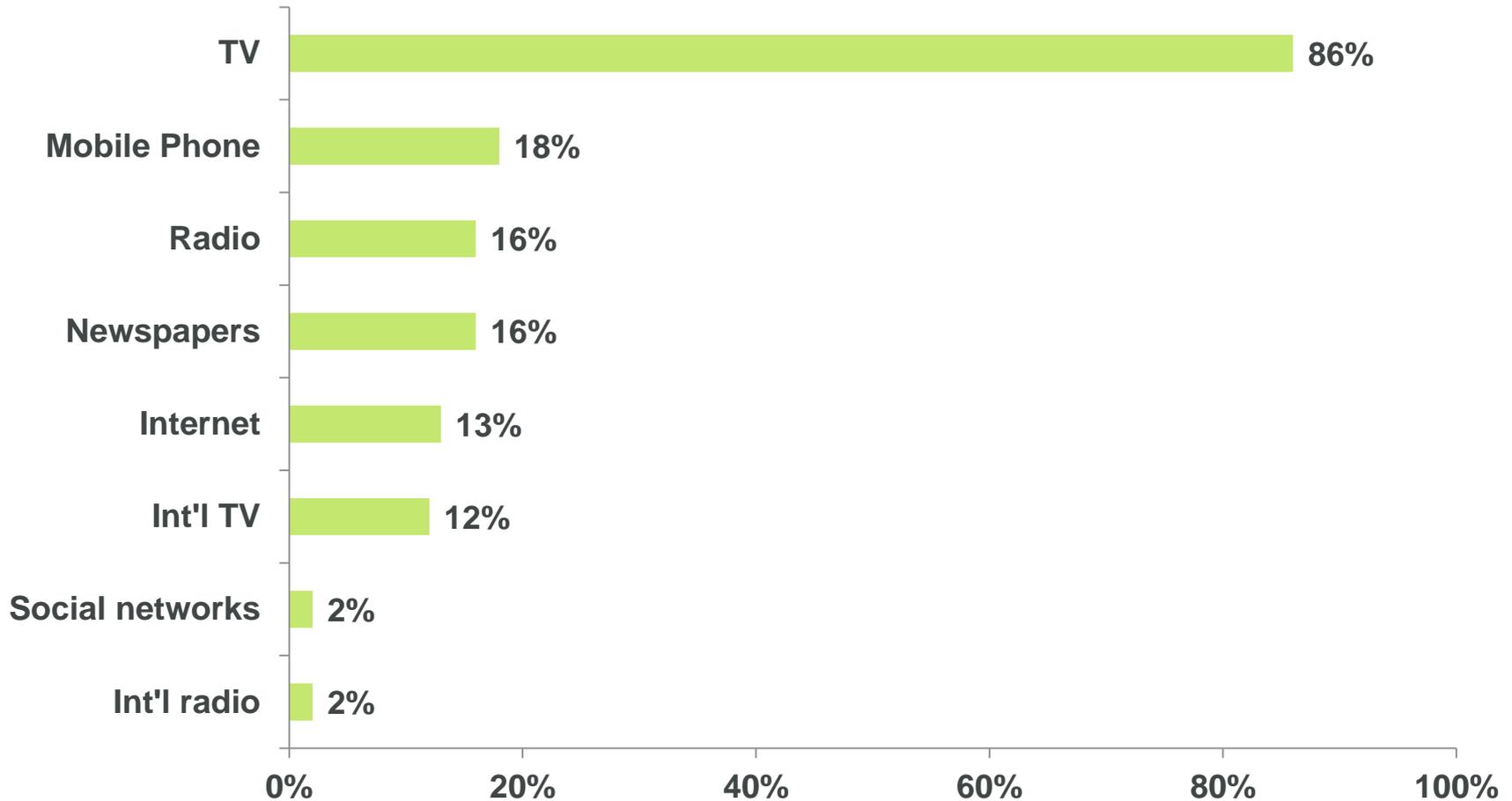
Source: Gallup World Poll 2011

# Widespread Regular Use of Television and Mobile Phones



Base: All respondents (n=2,000)

# Dominance of TV as Platform for Daily News and Information

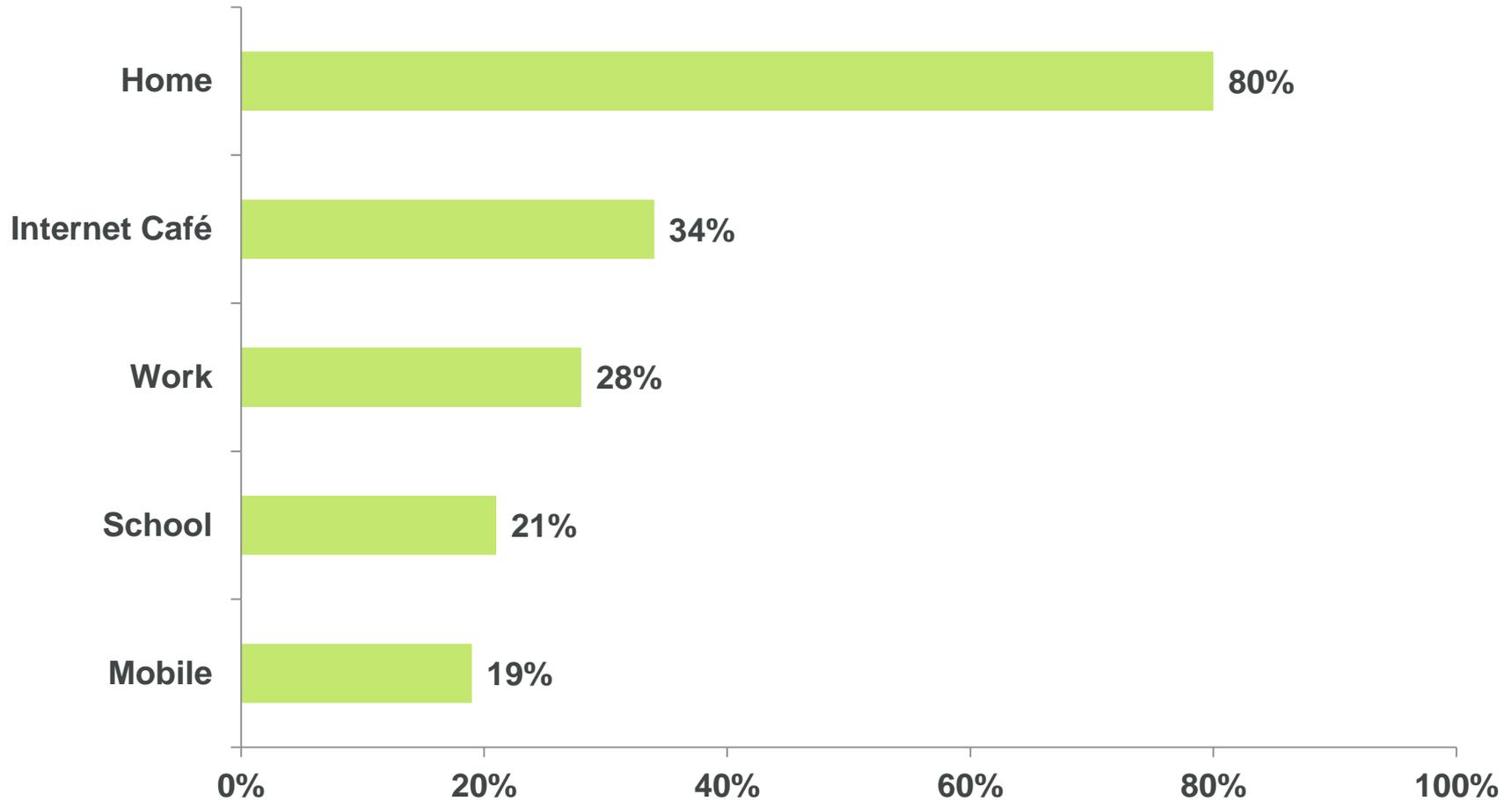


Base: All respondents (n=2,000)



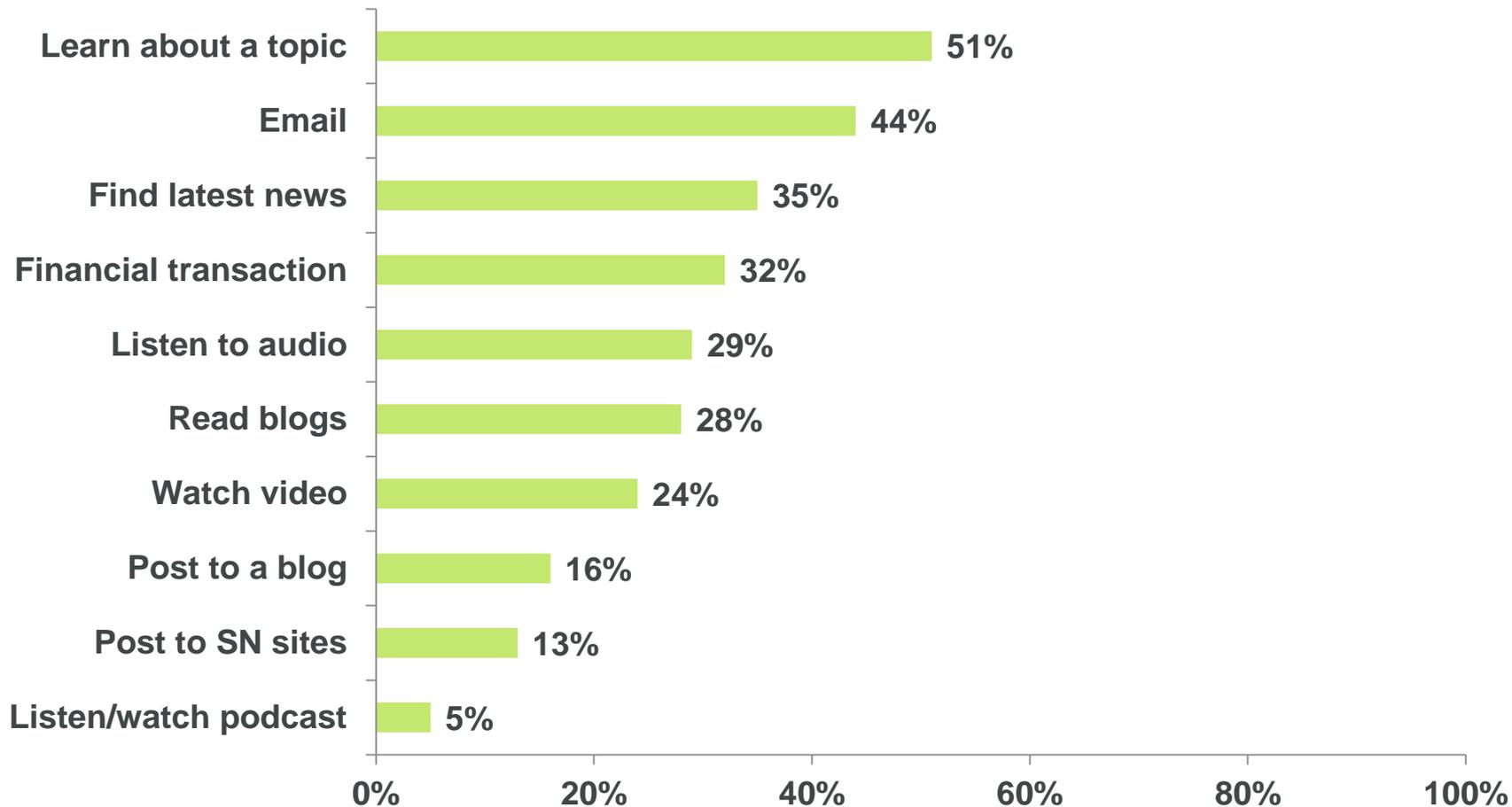
# Digital Media and Information Sharing

# Majority Access the Internet in the Privacy of Their Homes



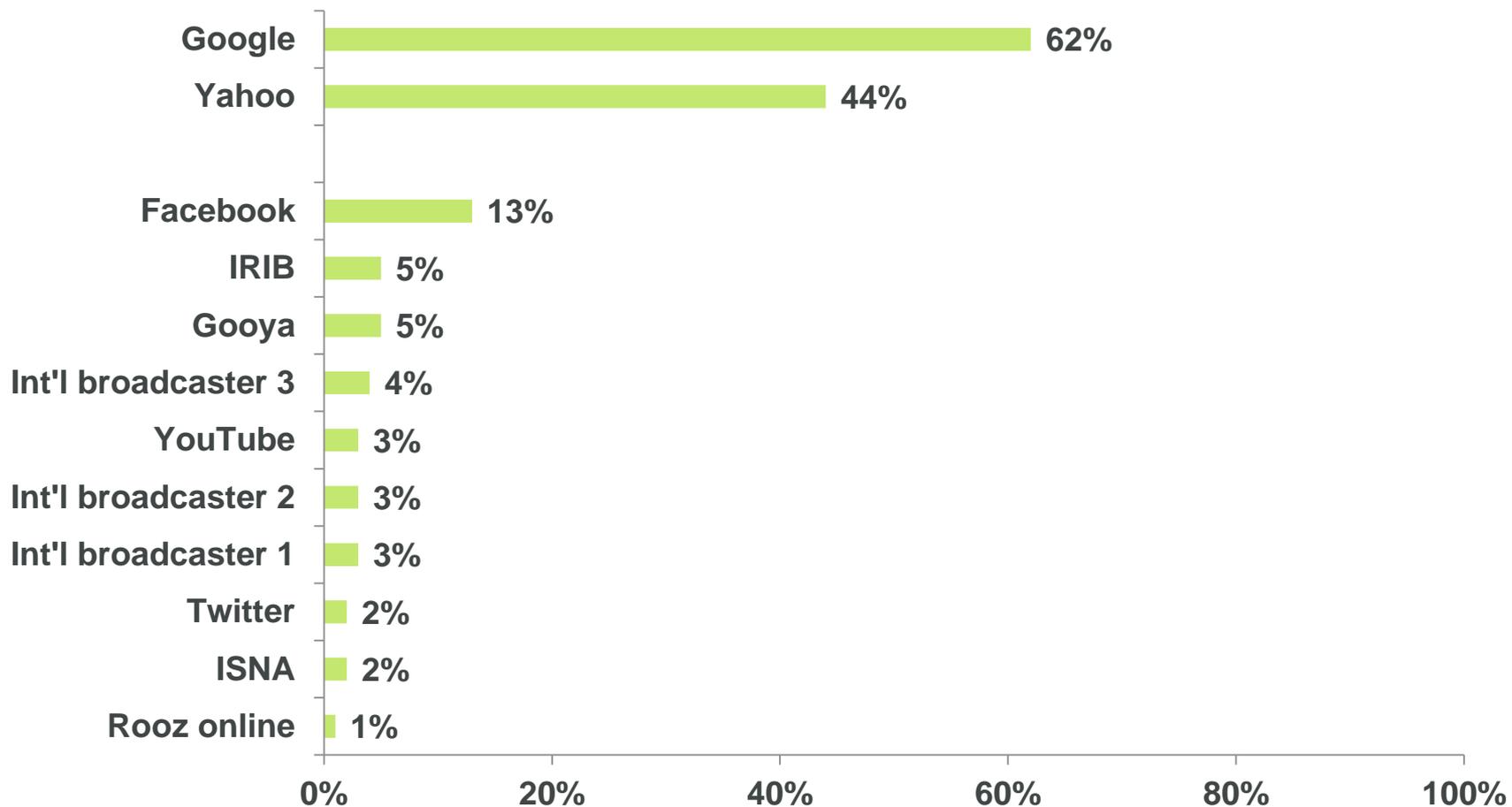
Base: Past-week Internet users (n=780)

# In Addition to Emails, Internet Largely Used for Accessing News and Information



Base: Past-week Internet users (n=780)

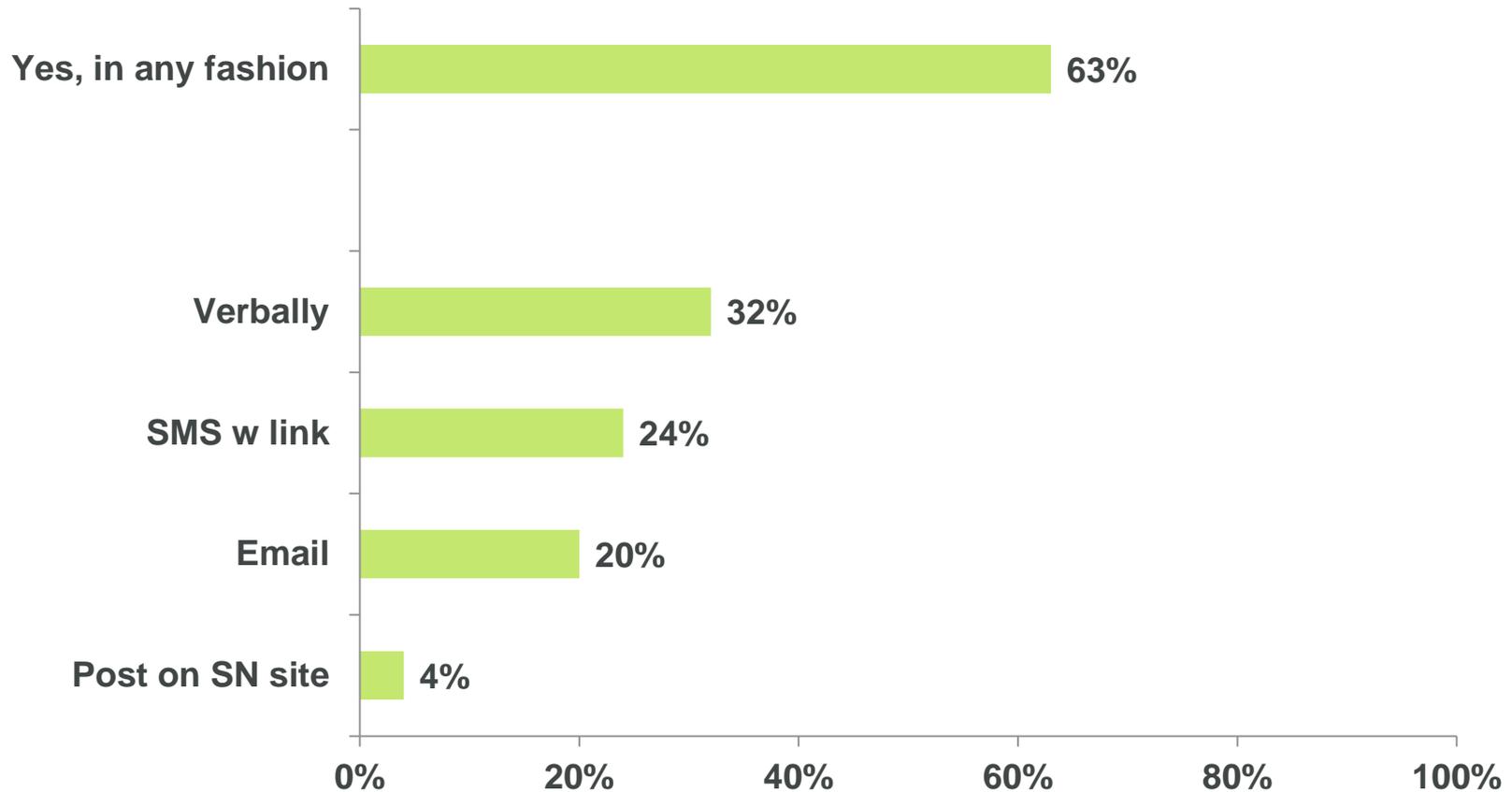
# Sites Visited in Past Week



Base: Past-week Internet users (n=780)

# Among Regular Internet Users a Majority Share News Story with Family and Friends

*If you see an interesting news story via the Internet, do you pass it along to friends and family?"*



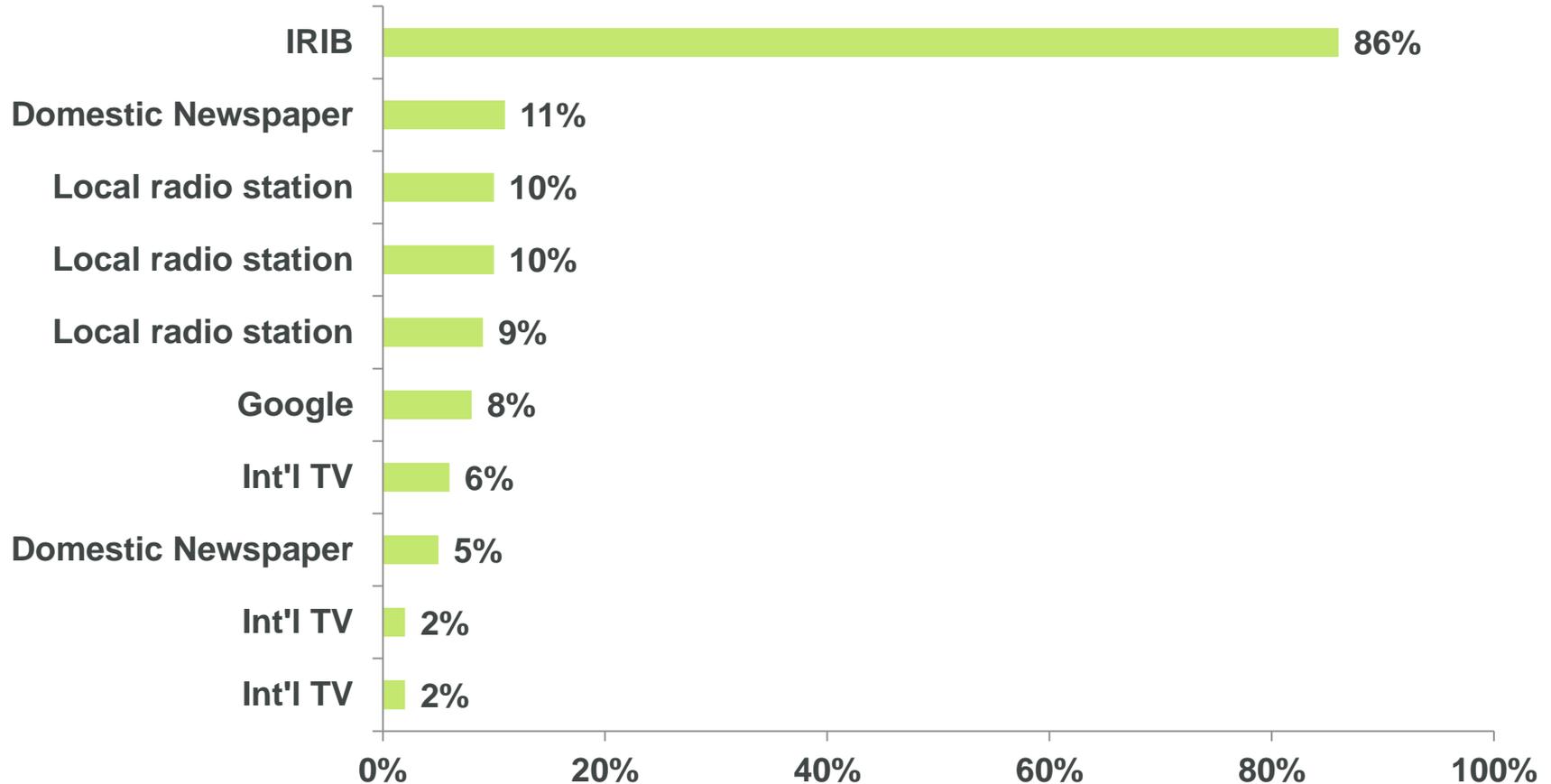
*Base: Past-week Internet users (n=780)*



# Adding Further Nuance to the Picture

# Domestic Media Remains Most Important Source of Information

Please think about all of the television stations, radio stations, newspapers, magazines or Internet sites you use to get news about current events. Which stations, publications or sites are your three MOST important sources of information?



Base: All respondents (n=2,000)

# Why Do Iranians Use State Media?

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- Does usage = trust?
- Are Iranians using different media for different purposes?
- “Know the enemy”
- “Triangulating” the truth

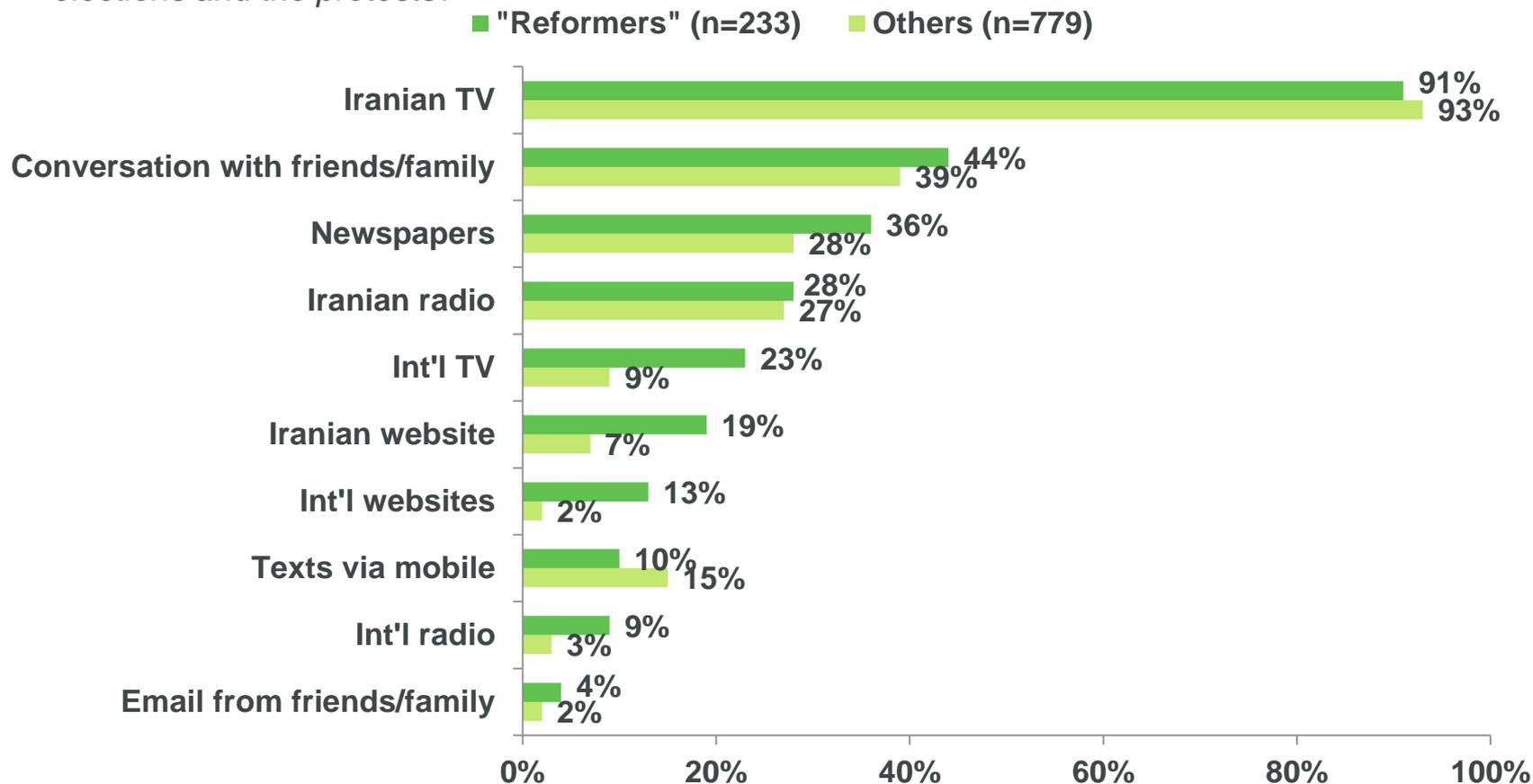
# Iranian TV Viewers Speak

- *“We can tolerate neither domestic TV channels and their news, nor their hosts, nor their studio settings. However, we have to watch them to evaluate what they are reporting, therefore, I watch their news to see what the policy of the government is.”*
- *“Domestic and international channels are not comparable at all because domestic media outlets try to induce us to believe the news stories whereas it is not the case for international outlets. The latter can tell the truth very easily, however, it does not necessarily mean whatever they say is accurate.”*
- *“When I am in Iran, I follow both domestic and satellite TV channels. Because, I think sometimes we need to follow domestic media, too. I watch domestic channels 1, 2, 3 and the news channel and VOA on satellite.”*

*(Quotes from interviews with Iranian travelers in Istanbul, 2011)*

# Media Choices by Attitudes

Which of the following sources have you been using to follow the news about the Presidential elections and the protests?



BBG flash election poll, June, 2009



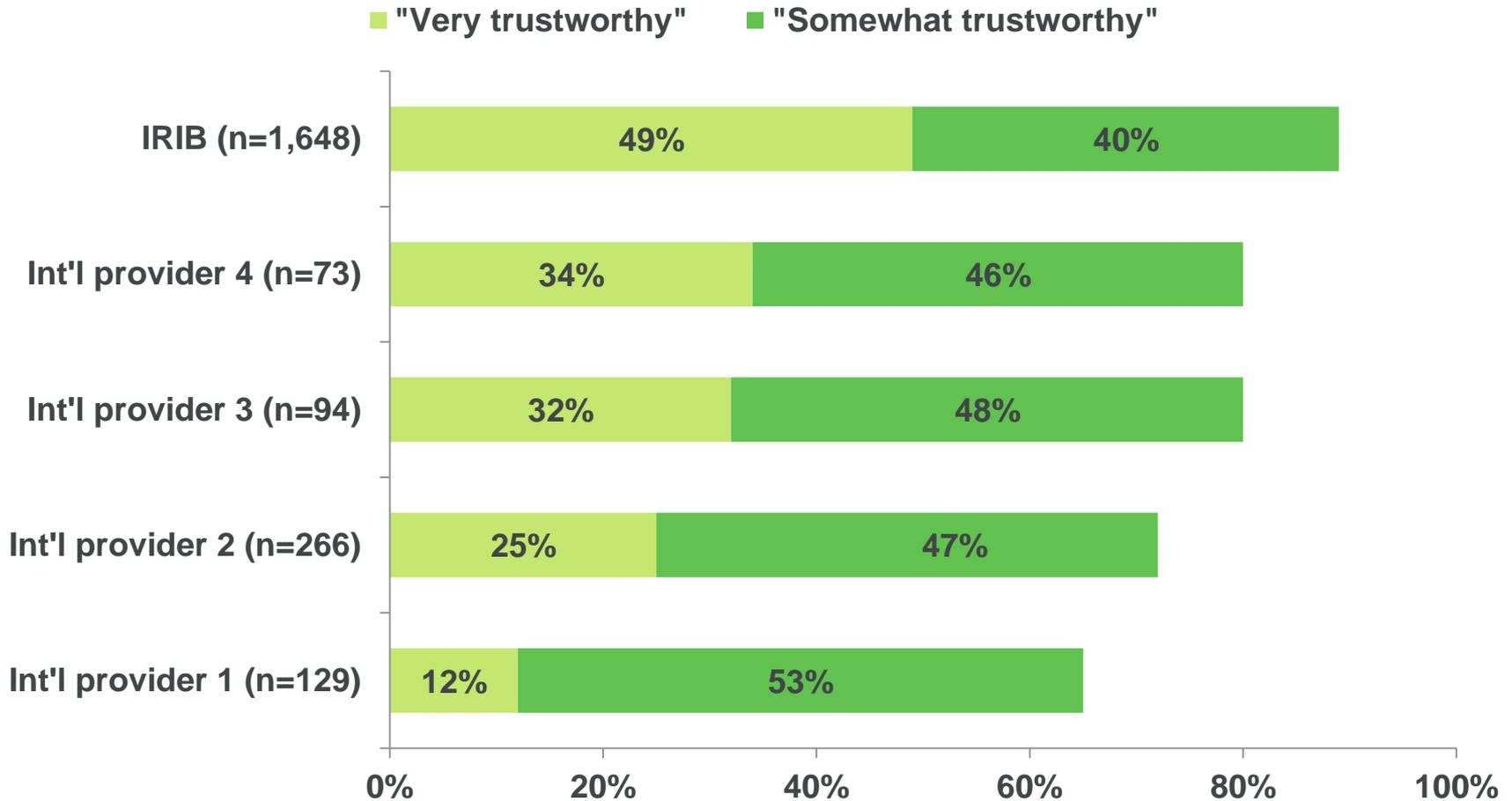
# Appeal of “External” Media

# Attitudes Towards External Media

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- Positive:
  - Reporting on domestic affairs free of censorship
  - Entertainment/cultural programming not locally available
- Negative:
  - Dislike of external criticism
  - Perceived agendas of outside parties

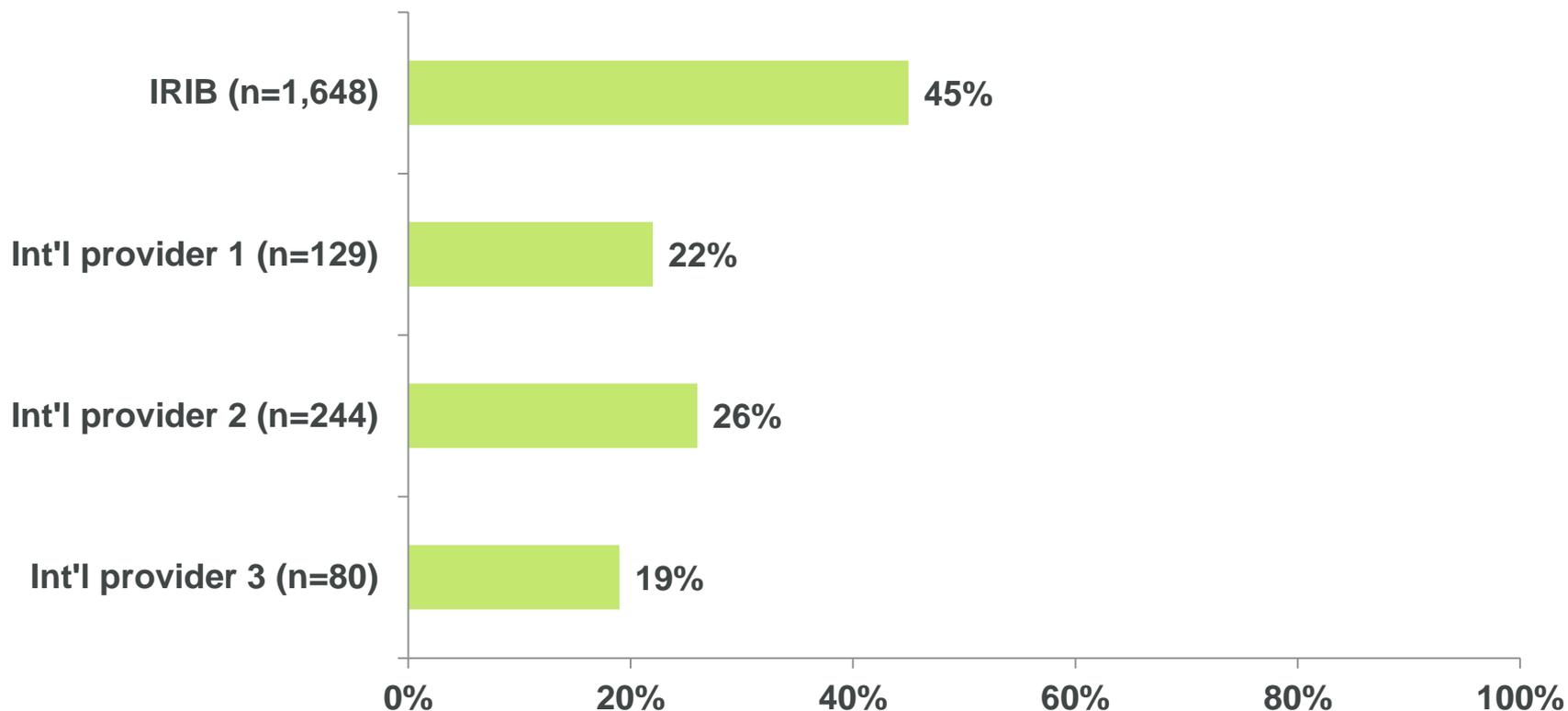
# How Trustworthy is the News On...?



Bases: Past week users of each station; valid responses only (DK/NRs not included in base).

# Which Stations are “Unbiased?”

Q. “And now, I’m going to read out a list of statements that people have made about different news and information providers. Please tell me which of the following providers you think each of these statements applies to. You may mention as many or as few providers as you like for each statement.  
This station provide unbiased news and objective information”



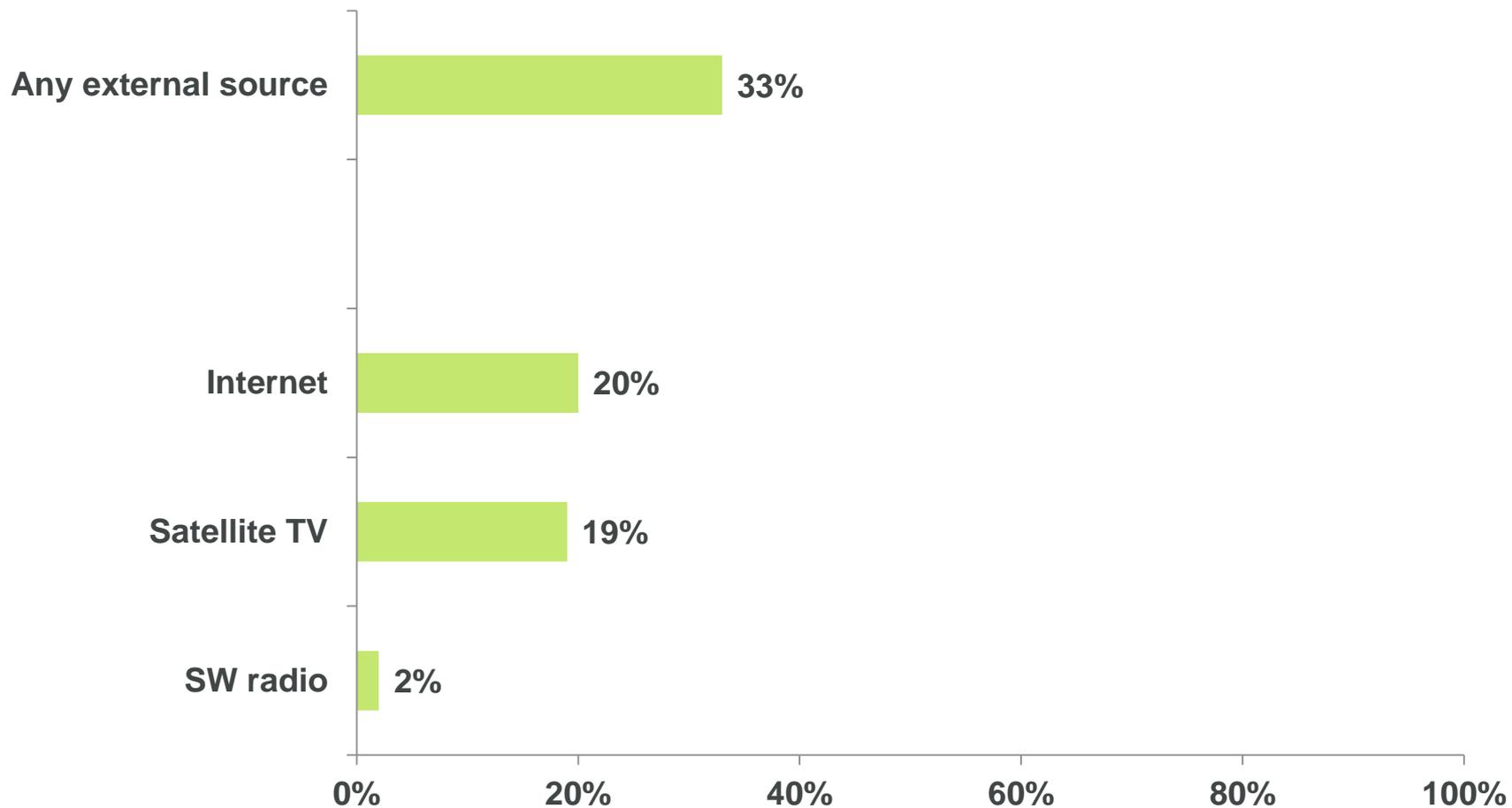
Base: Past week users of each station

# Iranian Viewers Assess VOA's Objectivity

- *“No, (VOA is) not objective. Most of the time, they clearly support American government policy.”*
- *“I don't think VOA TV supports any particular group. If there is any tendency in VOA, it is relevant to human rights and women's rights. A professional news channel must be objective like VOA TV and permit all people to express their ideas and discuss everything.”*
- *“I think they are not objective and that is normal because this channel is broadcasting from U.S. Therefore, that is normal to support U.S. thoughts and show their opposition against Iranian government.”*
- *“They are impartial. They consider all views so they can't be supporter of any particular group and do their work pretty good.”*

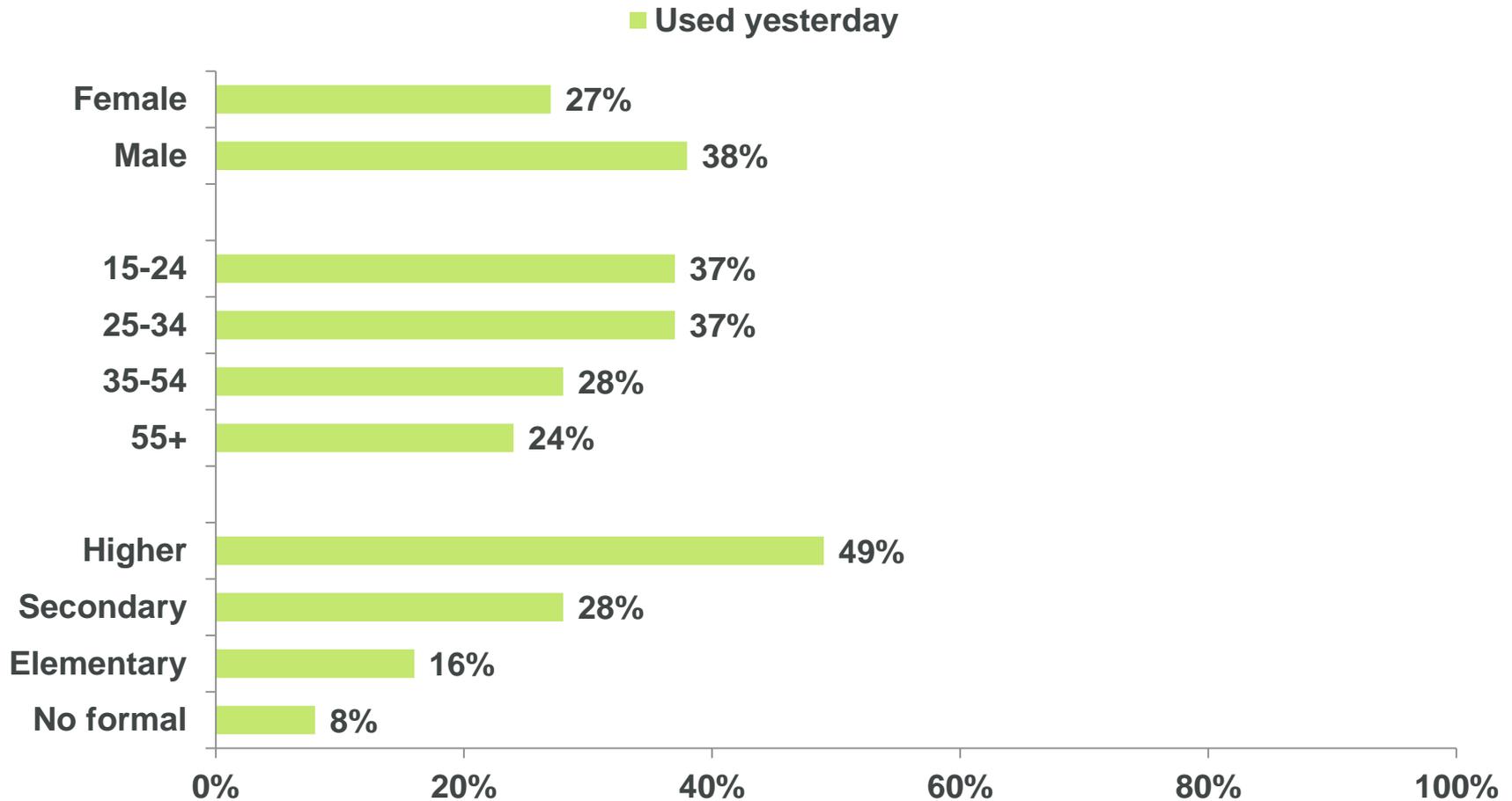
*(Quotes from interviews with Iranian travelers in Istanbul, 2011)*

# Use of “External” Information Sources

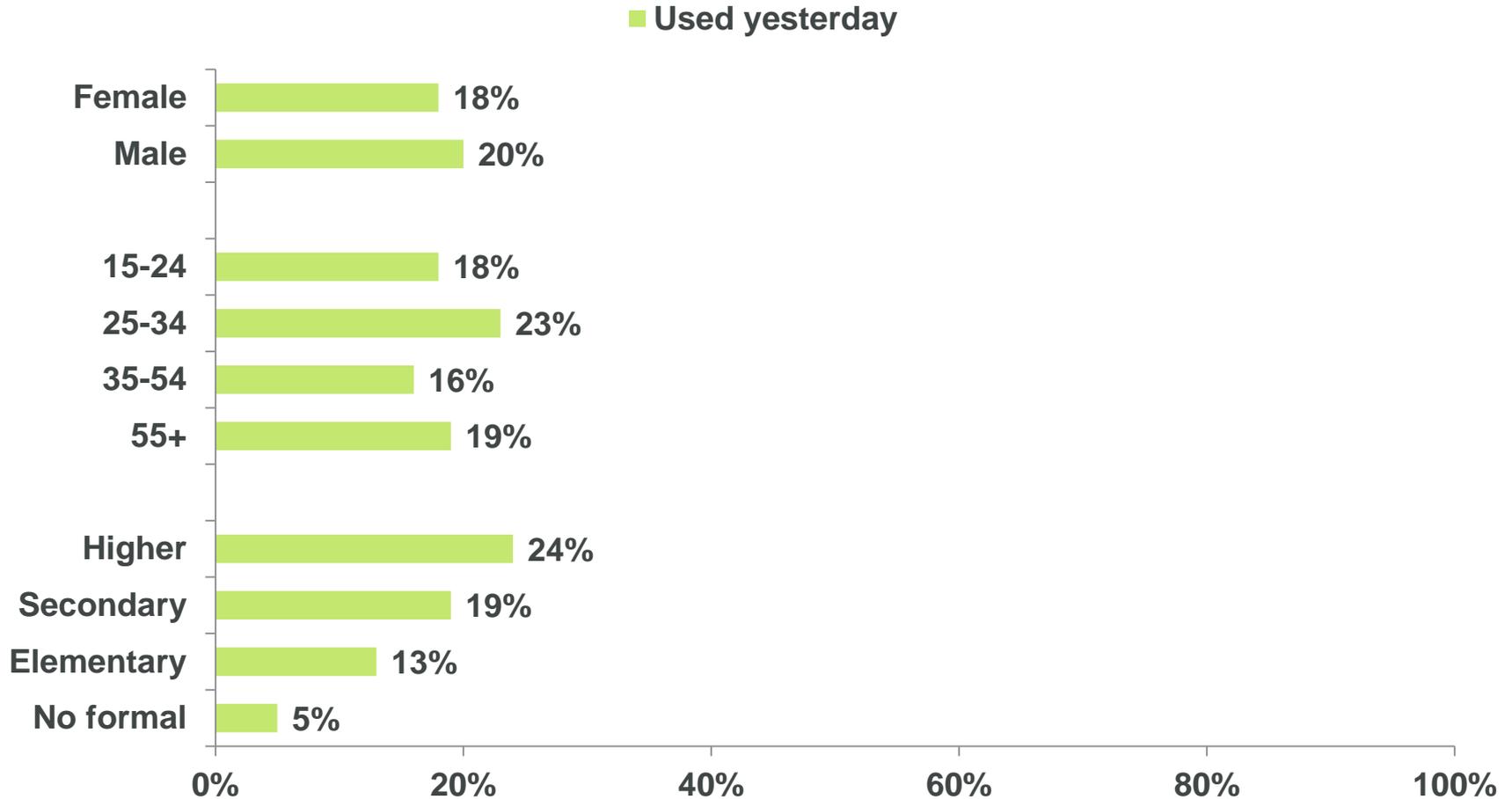


Base: All respondents (n=2,000). Percentages using each source “yesterday”

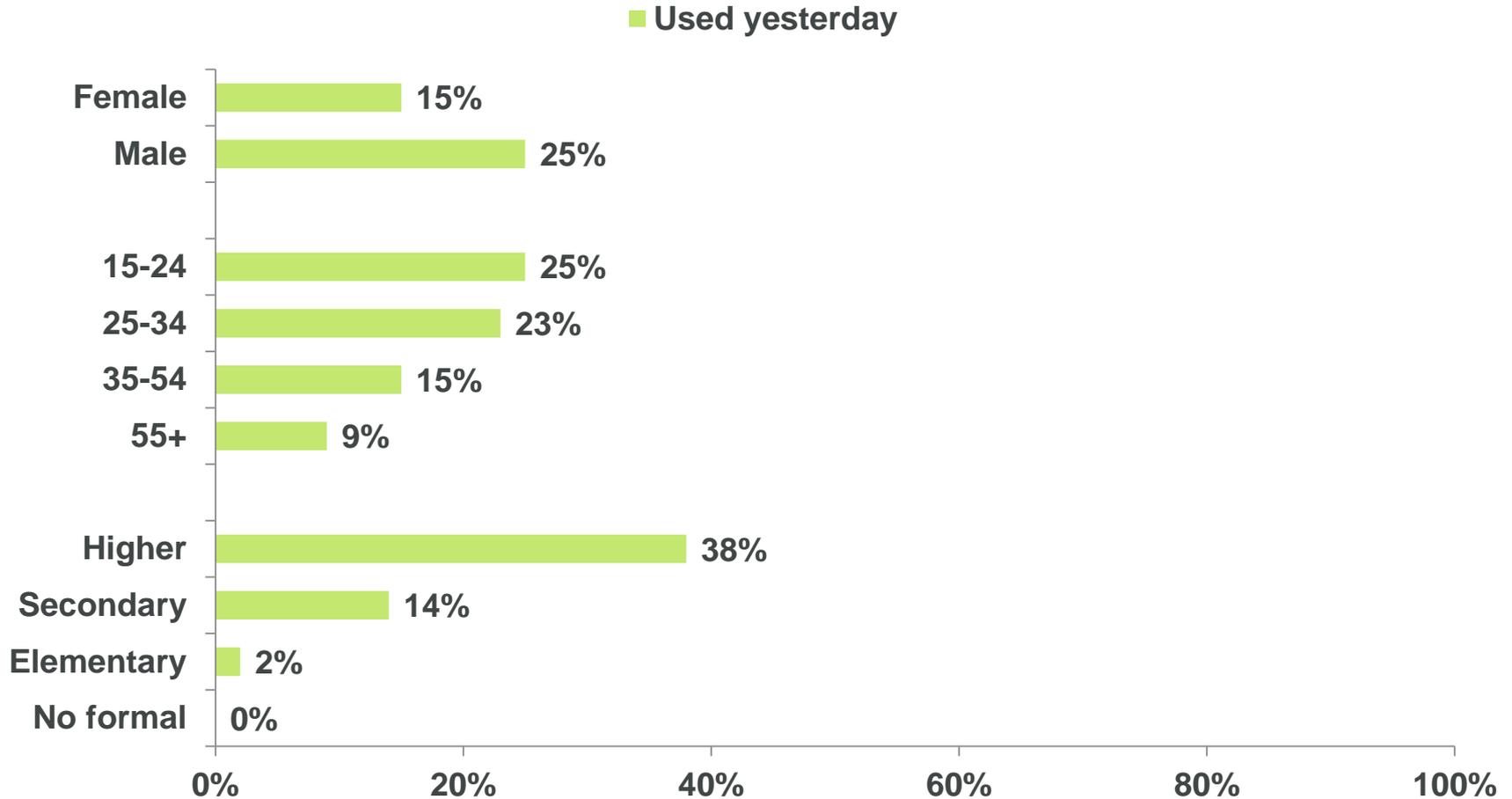
# Use of “External” Sources by Demographics



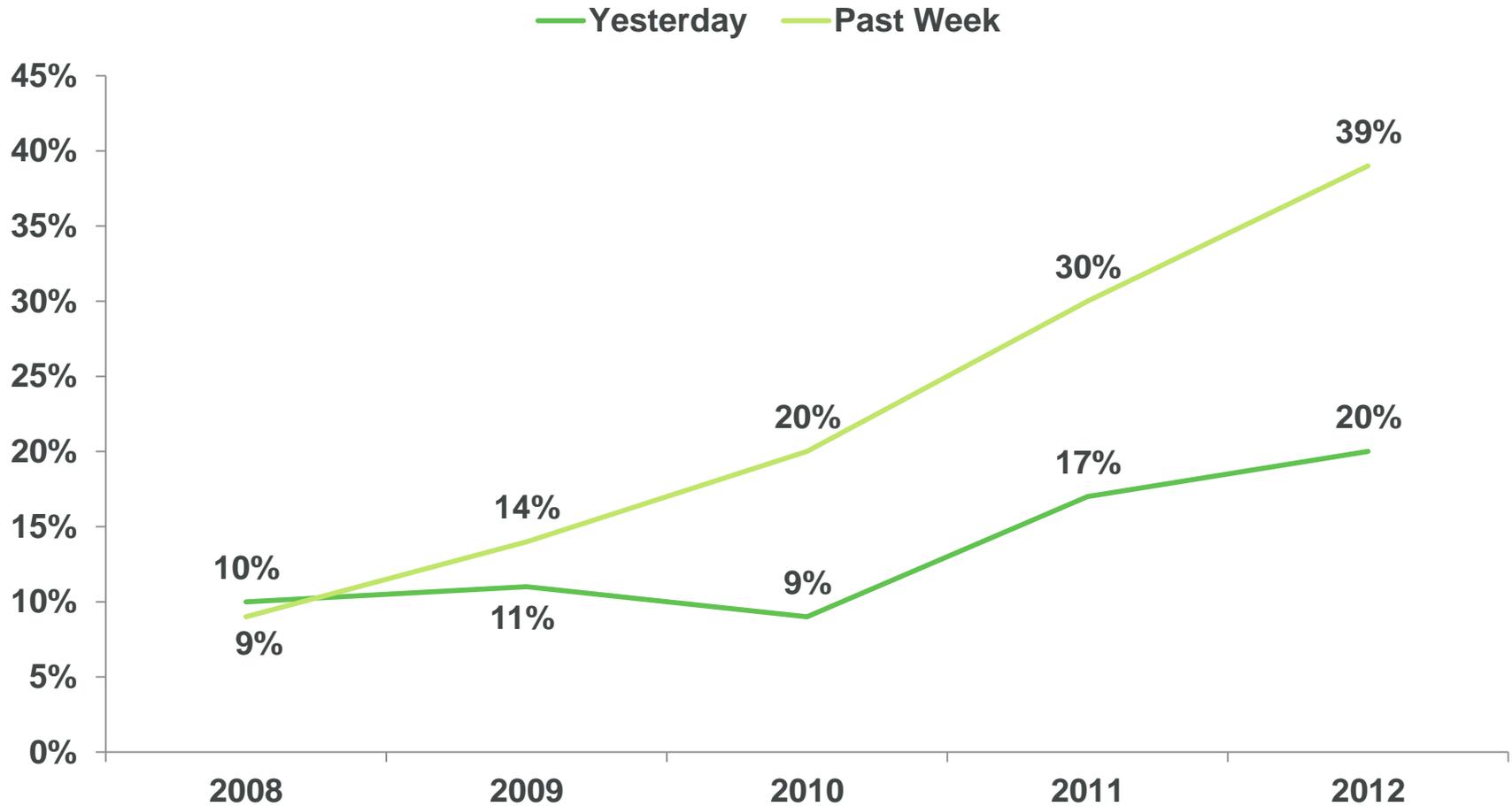
# Use of Satellite TV by Demographics Used “Yesterday”



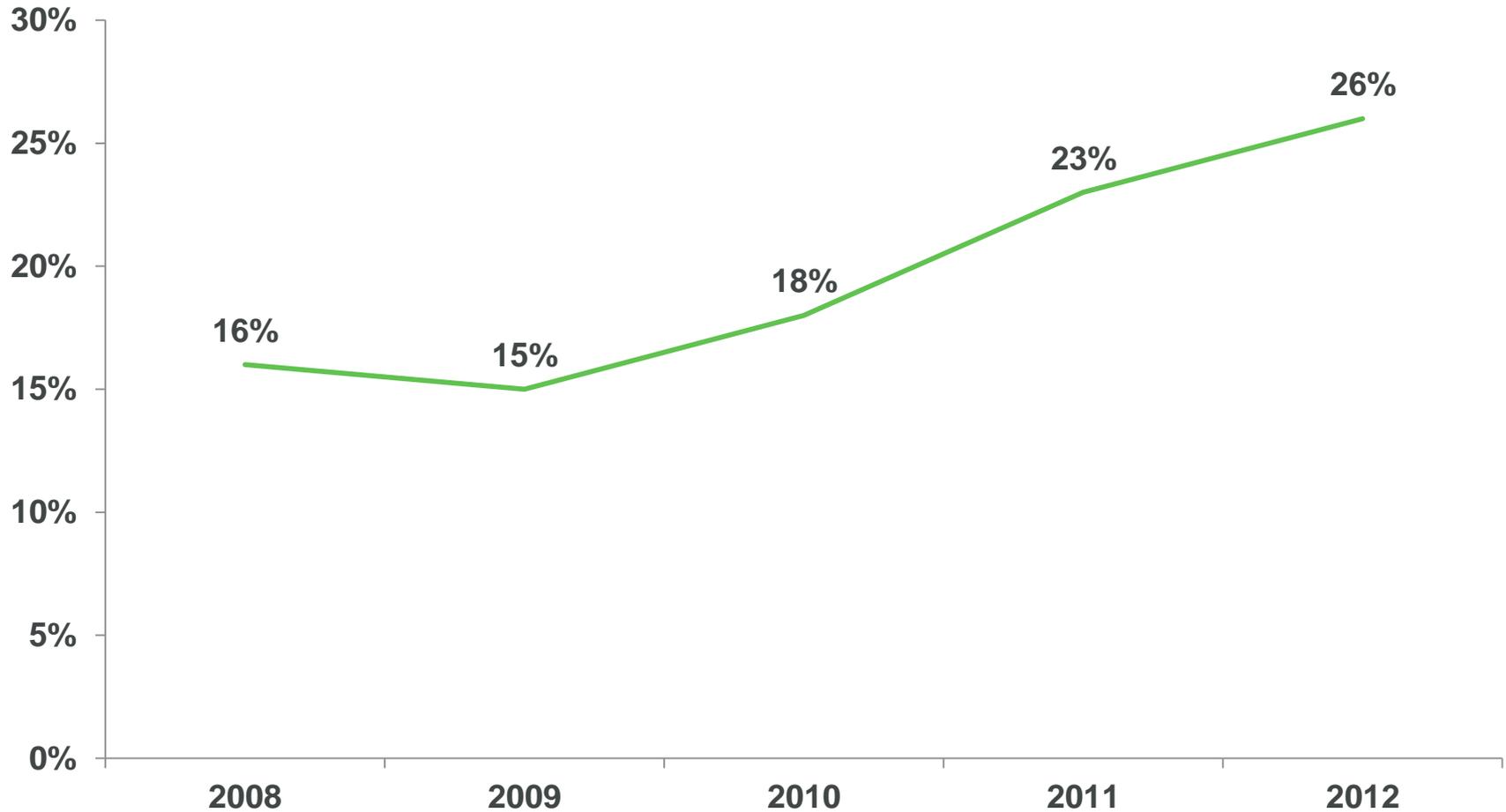
# Use of Internet by Demographics Used “Yesterday”



# Internet Usage Trends



# Growth of Satellite Dish Ownership



# Conclusions

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- State media will continue to play a critical role in Iran
- The audience for external media platforms is large and will remain so absent any significant reforms in domestic media
- Attitudes towards specific media outlets are rarely uni-dimensional, and few enjoy unqualified trust
- Satellite TV remains the medium of choice for reaching Iranians from outside of the country
- The audience for digital platforms continues to grow, but future will partly depend effectiveness of the Iranian's "walled garden" approach
- There continues to be an important role for international broadcasters like VOA, Radio Farda, BBC, and others