

When Platforms Make the News:

A snapshot of social media and technology-related
keywords in TV news

Insights from a Baseline Frequency Analysis

PREPARED FOR:

Luminate

PREPARED BY:

The Media Impact Project

This presentation is based on research funded by Luminate. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of Luminate.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Overview

Objective: To establish a baseline for how often social media and related issues are mentioned in TV news across three western media markets: United States (US), United Kingdom (UK) and France.

Research Questions:

- How often do keywords related to social media companies, leaders, and related issues appear in TV news?
- How often do these keywords intersect with other topics such as children and youth, democracy, gender, and climate?

To address these research questions, the USC Norman Lear Center's Media Impact Project (MIP) — with support from Luminate — monitored the frequency of mentions of social media-related keywords* in TV news content in 3 countries over 6 months.

*Note that the large majority of keywords pertained to social media; however, a few terms related to technology companies and industry, such as Microsoft, Google, OpenAI and Big Tech.

Methods

- Using the TVEyes Media Monitoring System, we tracked the frequency of mentions of 40 social media keywords in TV news content in the US, UK, and France from August 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025.
- The 40 keywords* fell into the following categories:
 - 3 core keywords representing central topics (e.g., social media)
 - 15 company keywords (e.g., Facebook, YouTube)
 - 4 company leaders (e.g., Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg)
 - 18 issue-based keywords describing social issues related to social media (e.g., misinformation, algorithm)
- For each keyword, we investigated:
 - Frequency of mentions
 - Country of origin
 - TV market (cable, broadcast)
 - Mentions of intersecting topics

*For the full list of keywords and more detailed methods, see Appendix A: Methodology.

Key Findings

Top Keywords

- We counted 404,793* mentions of 40 social-media related keywords in a six-month period from August 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025 from 43 news stations in the US, UK, and France.
- The top mentioned keywords across all 3 countries were social media, X, and Elon Musk, which accounted for nearly half (49%) of all mentions during the study period.
- All three countries*** had the same top 3 keywords as above.
 - However, in the **US**, TikTok was the next most talked about keyword, while the **UK** frequently mentioned YouTube, and **France** had the most mentions of platforms.

* For comparison, similar frequency analysis research on various topics found:

- over 165K mentions of 15 [poverty keywords](#) in 1 month of US broadcast and cable TV data collection
- nearly 300K mentions of 12 [charitable giving keywords](#) in 4 months of US broadcast and cable TV
- more than 28K mentions of 75 [sustainability keywords](#) in 6 months of unscripted television**

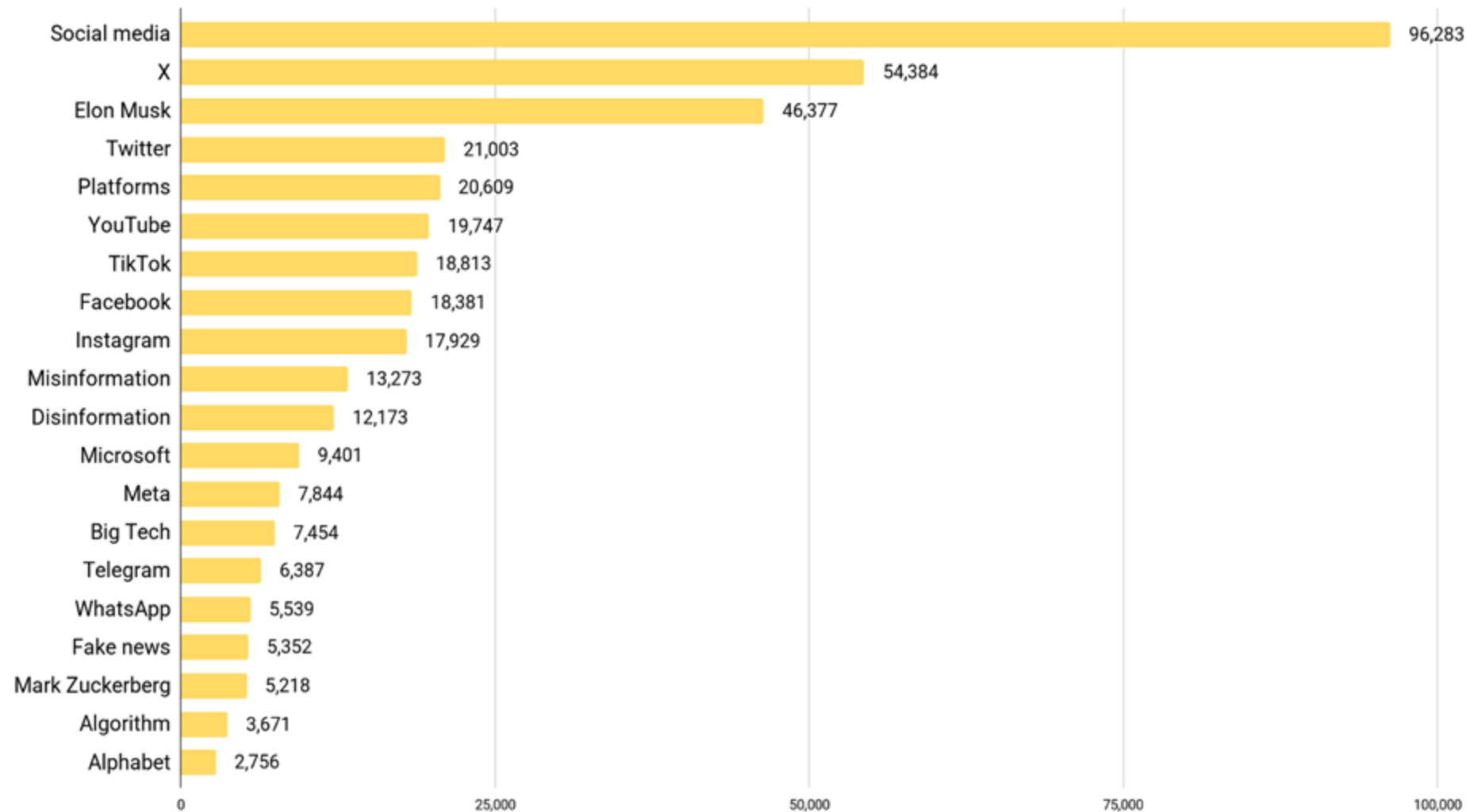
** Note that the above findings, however, do not exclusively focus on TV news, as is the case with this study; nor do they include international data collection.

*** The findings in this deck are color-coded by country: **blue** charts indicate US data, **grey** for the UK, and **red** for France. **Yellow** is for charts that compile data across all three countries, including French-translated keywords.

Key Findings

Top 20 Keywords

Top 20 Keywords Overall (US, UK + France)



*For the list of the bottom 20 keywords, which each had around 2000 or less combined mentions across all countries, please see Appendix B.

Key Findings

Core & Issue Keywords

- All 3 core keywords (social media, platforms, Big Tech) featured prominently, accounting for 31% of all mentions across countries.
- The 18 issue-based keywords made up 10% of all mentions.
 - Among these, misinformation, disinformation, and fake news accounted for nearly 80% issue-based keyword mentions.
 - With the exception of algorithm and hate speech, all other **issue-based** keywords (e.g., harmful content, cyberbullying) each had less than 1000 mentions combined across all 3 countries.
 - Notably, **issue-based** keywords describing *systemic issues* related to social media (i.e., surveillance capitalism, attention economy) had less than 50 combined mentions in total.

Key Findings

Companies & their Leaders

- The 15 company-based keywords made up 46% of all mentions.
 - The most frequently mentioned companies were X / Twitter (75,387), YouTube (19,747) and TikTok (18,813).
- Company leaders constituted 13% of keyword mentions, with Elon Musk receiving the greatest share of mentions at over 46,000 — or 87% of mentions of company leaders.
 - Compared to the other leaders in the dataset,* Elon Musk received the most attention by far, with nearly 9 times more mentions than the next most talked about individual (Mark Zuckerberg at 5K)
- Elon Musk and his social media platform (X, formerly known as Twitter) dominated discourse, accumulating over 120K mentions, or *more than a quarter of all mentions within the study period.*

* Sam Altman (OpenAI CEO) received 1,346 mentions, while Sundar Pichai (Google CEO) had notably less coverage, at 173 mentions total in the US, UK, and France.

Key Findings

Intersecting Topics

- About 1 in 4 TV news mentions featured one or more intersecting topics.*
 - Children and youth was the topic that most frequently appeared alongside our social media keywords, with over 21K intersecting mentions (e.g., Children & Instagram).
 - This topic appeared in 5% of all mentions.
- The next most common intersecting topics were:
 - Health (2% of all mentions)
 - Data (2%)
 - Elections (1%)
 - Censorship (1%)
 - Democracy (1%)

*This analysis captured how often a term/topic like democracy appeared alongside one of our 40 social media-related keywords (e.g., democracy & Big Tech, democracy & Facebook). See slide 29 for the full list of intersecting topics.

Key Findings

Intersecting Topics

- Profit, with over 4000 mentions (1%), was the only intersecting topic among the top 20 that described a systemic motive or source of harm from social media companies.
 - All other intersecting topics in this category (e.g., business model, monopoly power, tech oligarchy) received a little over 1000 (0.3%) combined mentions across the three countries.
- Solutions-based topics did not fare much better:
 - Topics describing specific legislation or solutions aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech (e.g., Digital Services Act, antitrust) received just 1500 intersecting mentions (0.4%) in total in the US, UK and France.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study of social media-related keywords in TV news across 3 Western media markets lend themselves to future research directions, such as:

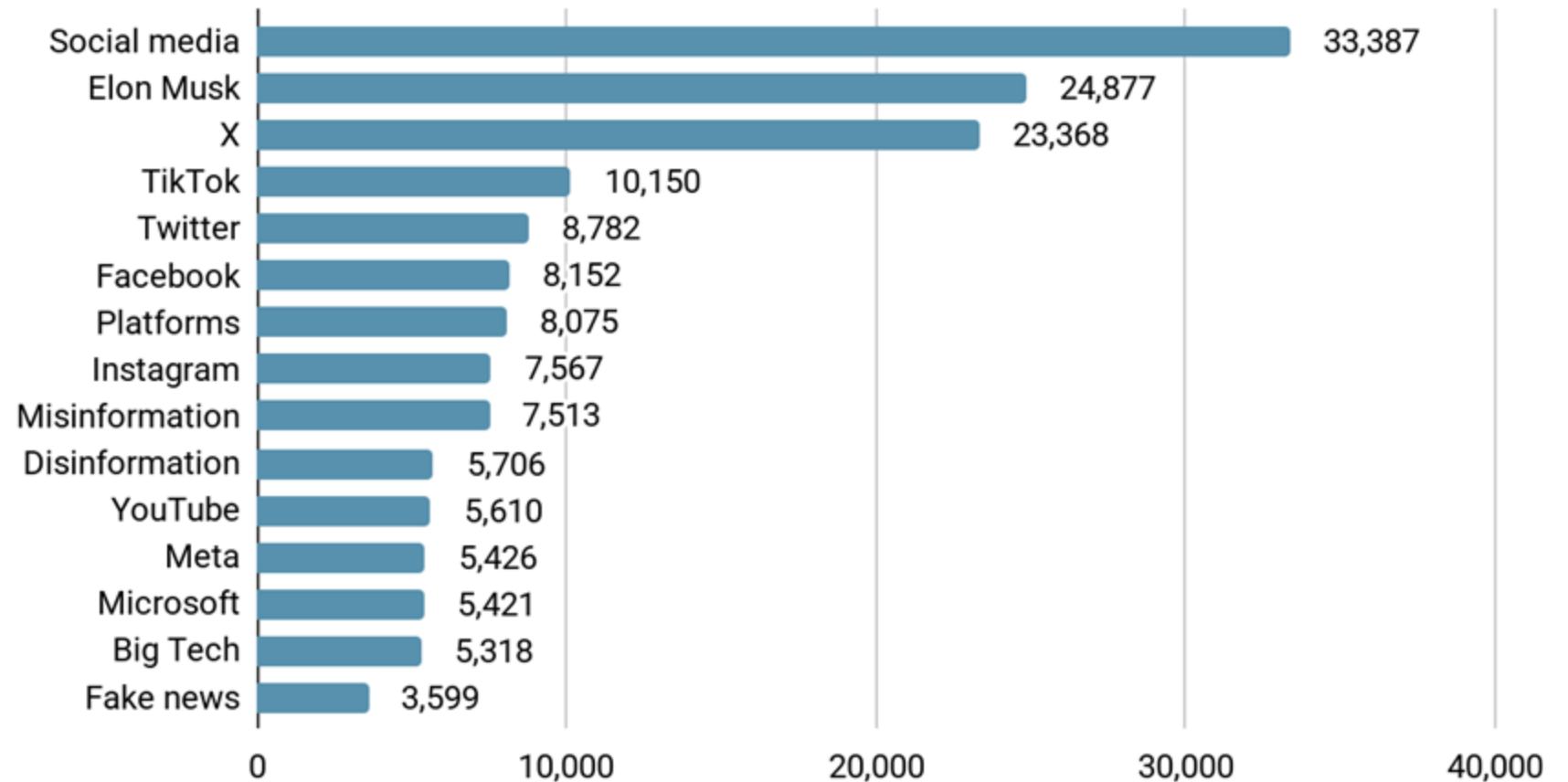
- A deeper dive into how often prominent tech figures are framed as individuals versus embodiments of larger systemic problems in news coverage
- A study of the top social media keywords according to the partisan leanings of each TV news station
- A study of the most popular social media-related keyword searches in Google Trends and how this may triangulate with the findings from our TV news analysis
- A longitudinal study reprising this same multinational TV news analysis 1-2 years later to see how the frequency of certain keywords may have shifted



DETAILED FINDINGS BY COUNTRY

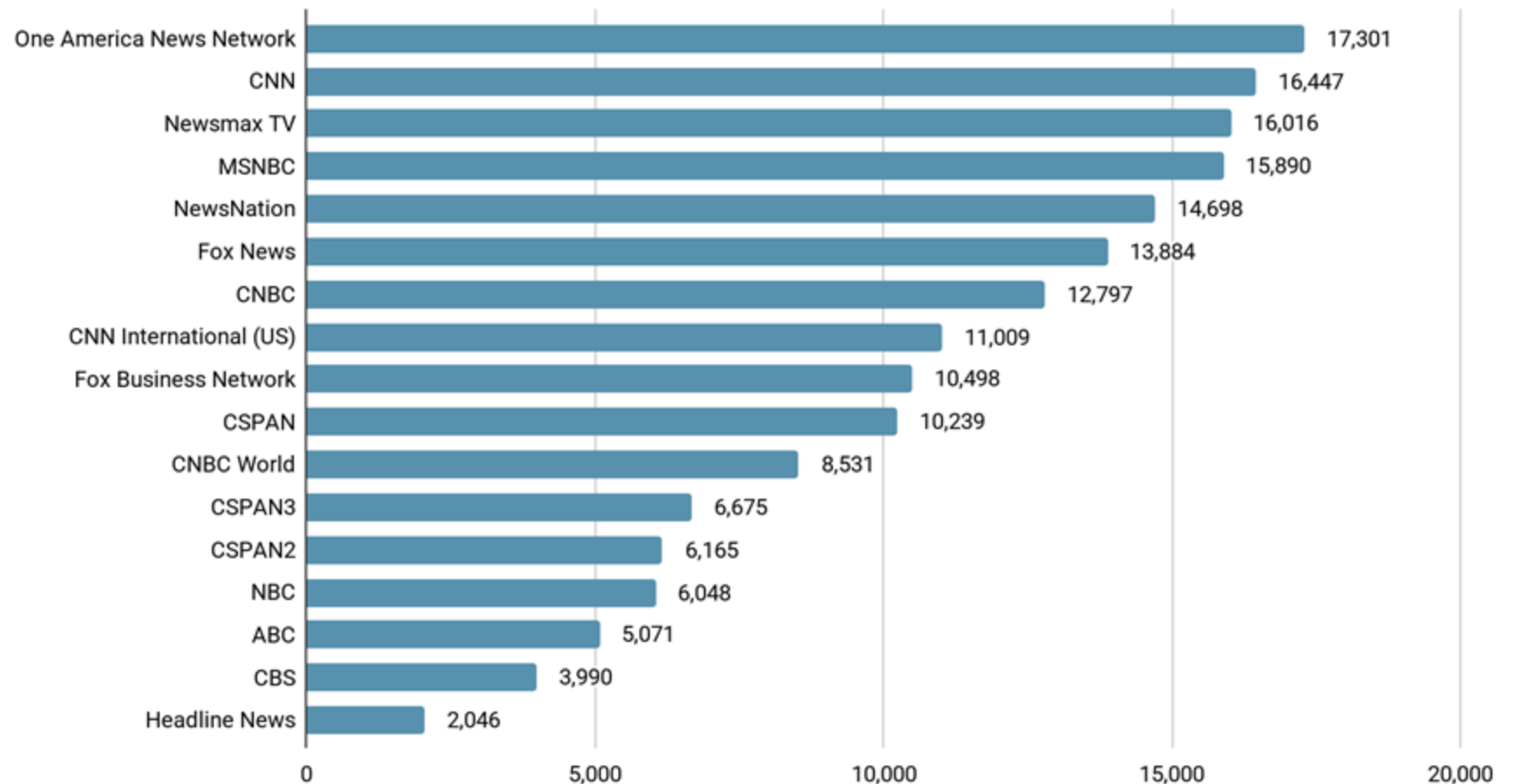
Most Frequently Mentioned Keywords: United States

- In the US, social media was the most frequently mentioned keyword with 33,387 mentions. However, Elon Musk and X (formerly Twitter, now owned by Musk) had more combined mentions at 48,245.



Top Stations: United States

- In the US, the right-leaning* cable news station, One America News Network (OAN), had the most total mentions of social media-related keywords at 17,301, followed by CNN and Newsmax.
- The top broadcast news channel in the US for social media keyword mentions was NBC, followed by ABC and CBS.



*<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-oneamerica-att/>;
<https://app.adfontesmedia.com/chart/interactive>

Top Stations: One America News Network

- Taking a deeper dive into One America News Network, the top US station for social media-related keyword mentions, we saw the following keywords most commonly mentioned:*
 - Social media
 - Elon Musk
 - X
- Notably, OAN was one of the top 5 stations for mentions of the keyword, fake news:

Station	Fake News Mentions
Newsmax TV	1402
CSPAN	417
GB News	397
Fox News	356
One America News Network	348

- All of the above mentioned stations, with the exception of CSPAN, are right leaning stations in the US and UK.**

*These are consistent with the top 3 most mentioned keywords in our overall sample.

** <https://app.adfontesmedia.com/chart/interactive>

Top Stations: One America News Network

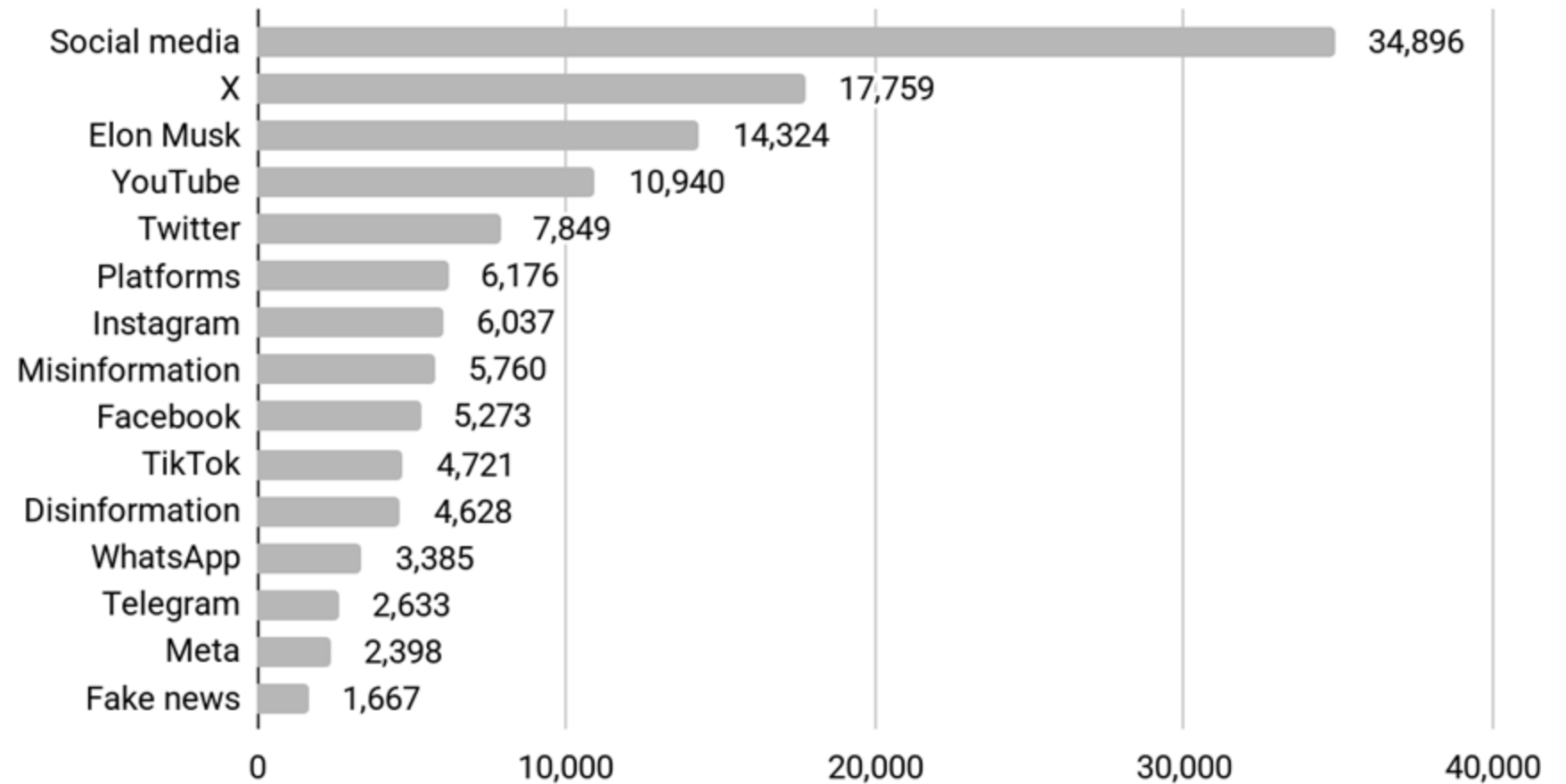
- At over 1200 mentions, censorship was the top intersecting topic* on OAN, most frequently appearing alongside the following keywords:
 - Social media & censorship (187 mentions)
 - Facebook & censorship (128)
 - Big Tech & censorship (123)
- OAN also led the pack among all stations in our sample for the greatest number of intersecting mentions of censorship.
- In fact, all top 5 stations that mentioned censorship the most are primarily right leaning stations in the US and UK:

Station	Censorship Intersecting Mentions
One America News Network	1224
Newsmax TV	740
Fox News	397
Fox Business News	356
GB News	348

*The next most frequent intersecting topics on OAN were: children/youth, health, influencers, and elections.

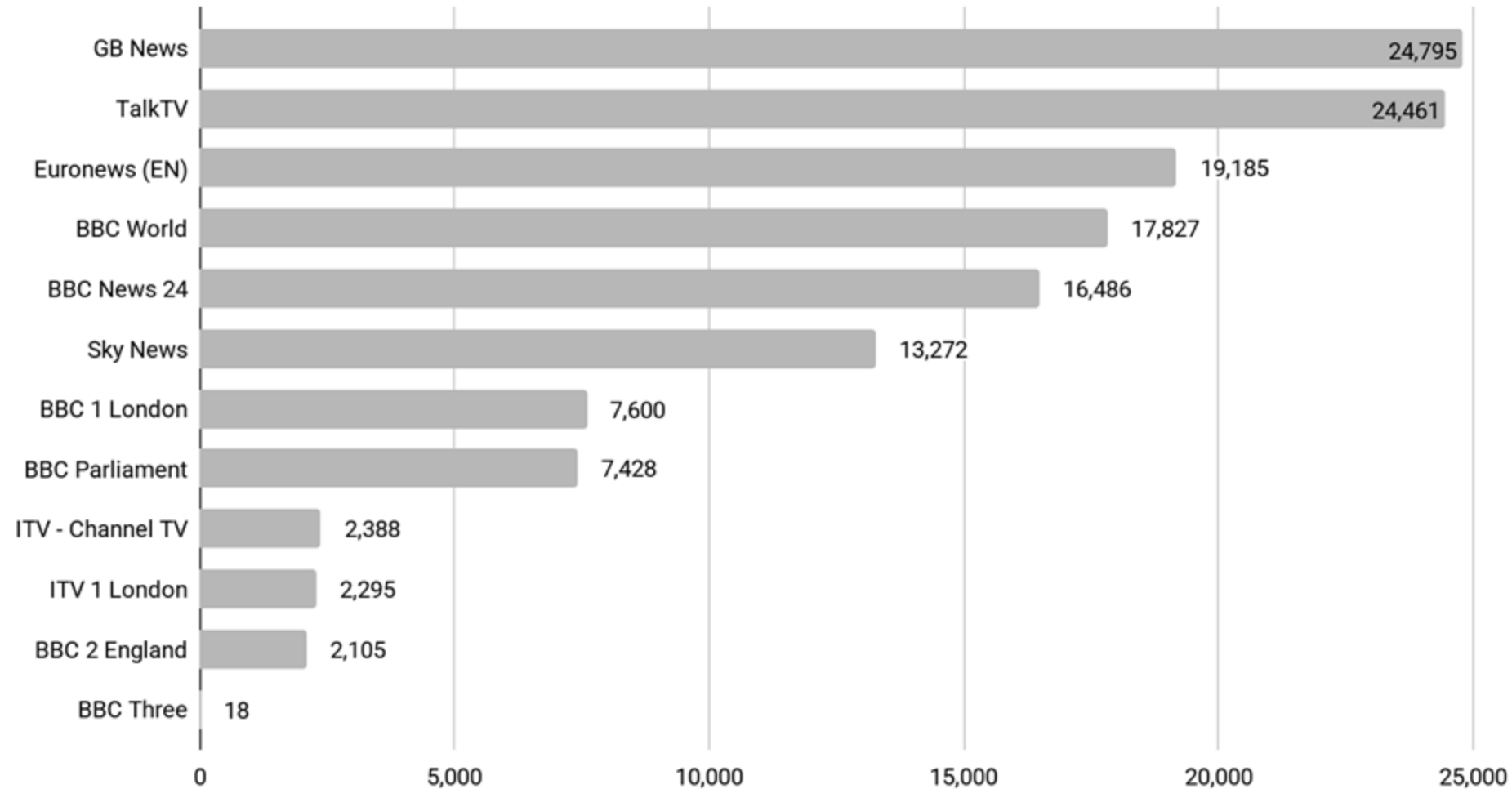
Most Frequently Mentioned Keywords: United Kingdom

- In the UK, YouTube was the fourth most common keyword, at nearly 11,000 mentions — nearly twice the number of mentions as in US news.



Top Stations: United Kingdom

- In the UK, another right-leaning station,* GB News, had the most mentions of social media-related keywords.



*<https://app.adfontesmedia.com/chart/interactive>; <https://www.barrons.com/news/right-wing-tv-channel-wins-uk-broadcast-rules-challenge-6ec3ba29>

Top Stations: GB News

- The top 3 keywords featured on GB News were social media, X, and Elon Musk — consistent with the overall pattern of findings.
- However, GB News contained over 1000 mentions of misinformation, making it the top station for that keyword in our entire sample:

Station	Misinformation Mentions
GB News	1077
MSNBC	1022
Euronews	943
CNN	922
BBC World	816

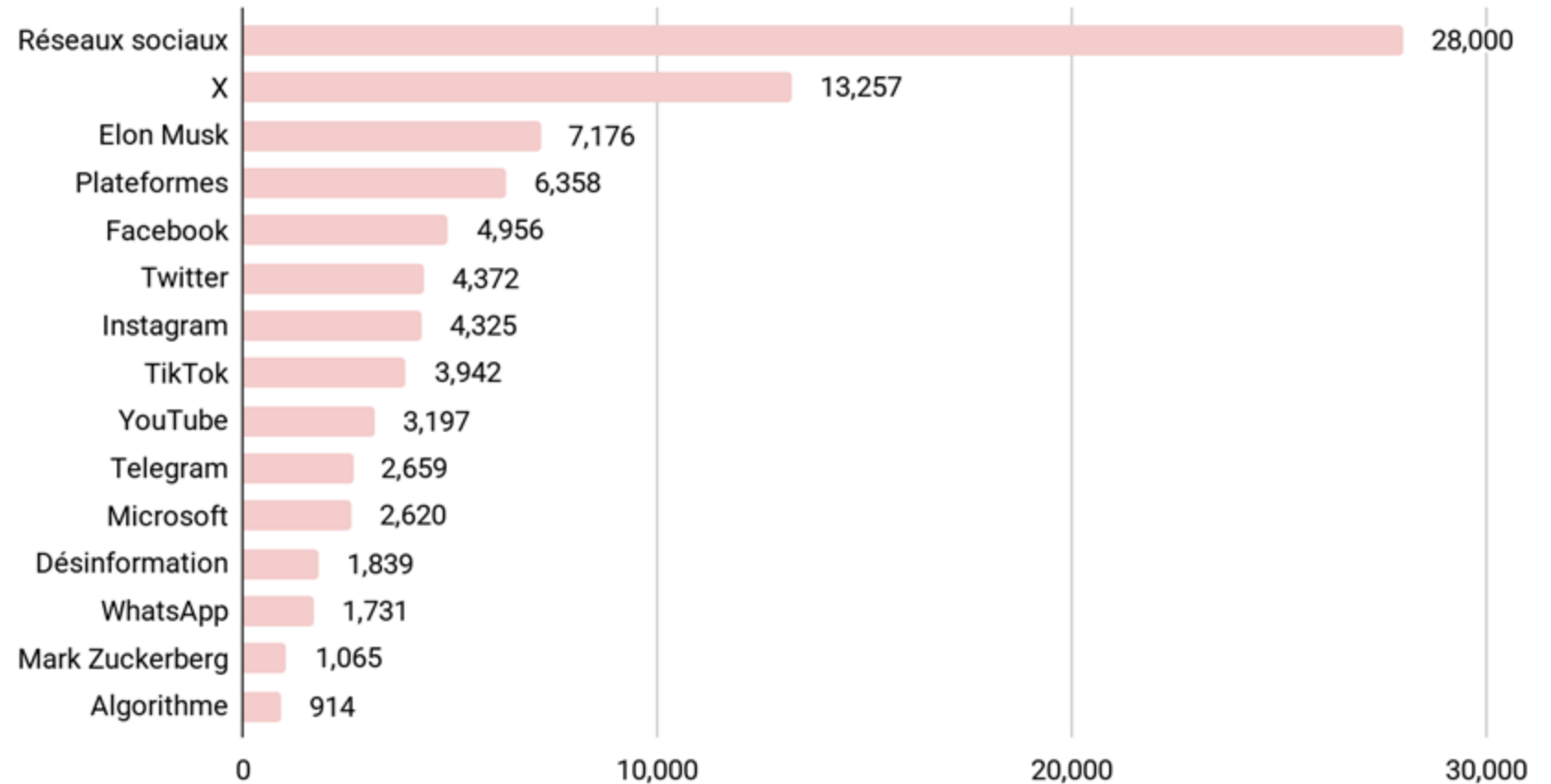
- Out of the top 5 stations for mentions of misinformation (above), GB News was the only right leaning station* included.
- Similar to its right leaning US counterpart, OAN, GB News was also among the top 5 stations for mentions of censorship and fake news.

Top Stations: GB News

- At 1527 mentions, children/youth was the top intersecting topic on GB News, most frequently appearing alongside the following keywords:
 - Social media & children/youth (439 mentions)
 - X & children/youth (139)
 - Twitter & children/youth (103)
- After children/youth, the next most frequently mentioned intersecting topics on GB News were:
 - Health (514 mentions)
 - Victims (237)
 - Gender (223)
 - Censorship (210)

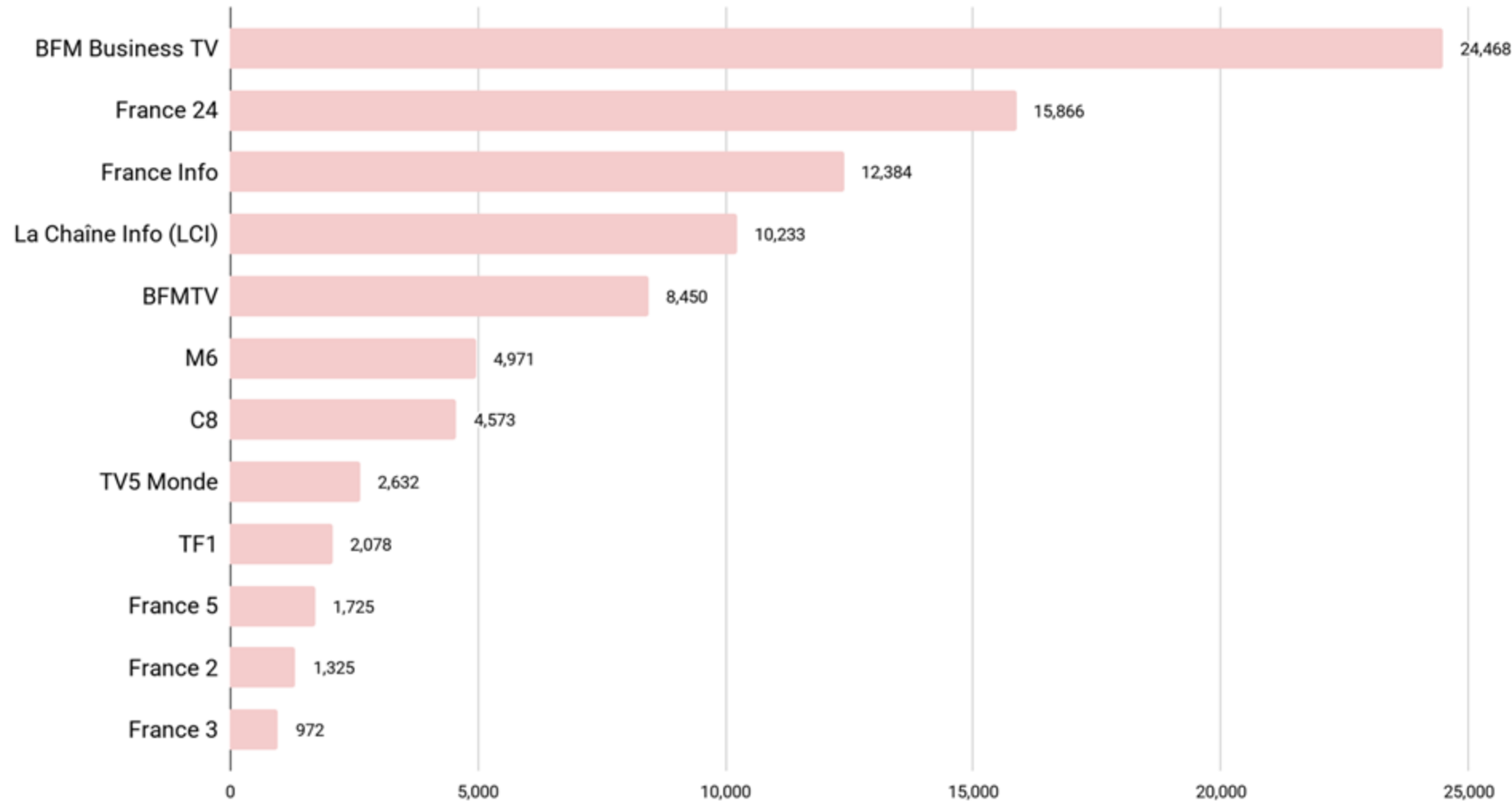
Most Frequently Mentioned Keywords: France

- In France, social media (réseaux sociaux) generated more than twice the number of mentions as the next closest keyword, X.



Top Stations: France

- In France, BFM Business TV featured the most keyword mentions, with nearly 9,000 more mentions than the next closest station.



Top Stations: BFM Business TV

- The top 3 keywords featured on BFM Business TV were social media, platforms and X.
 - Microsoft also received a substantial amount of mentions, coming in as the fourth most frequent keyword at just over 2000.
- The top 5 intersecting topics on BFM Business TV were:
 - Artificial intelligence (AI) (1325 intersecting mentions)
 - Data (866)
 - Profit (427)
 - Health (302)
 - Climate (297)
- Artificial intelligence most commonly appeared alongside the following keywords on BFM Business TV:
 - Microsoft & artificial intelligence (196 mentions)
 - Social media & artificial intelligence (163)
 - Platforms & artificial intelligence (138)

Top Stations: BFM Business TV

- Climate, with nearly 300 intersecting mentions of climate and social media keywords on BFM Business TV, was another standout.
 - Among all stations in our sample, BFM Business TV was the channel with the second highest number of intersecting climate mentions:

Station	Climate Intersecting Mentions
Euronews	361
BFM Business TV	297
BBC World	224
BBC 1 London	165
BBC News 24	141

- Notably, no US-based station made the top 5 channels featuring intersecting social media & climate mentions.



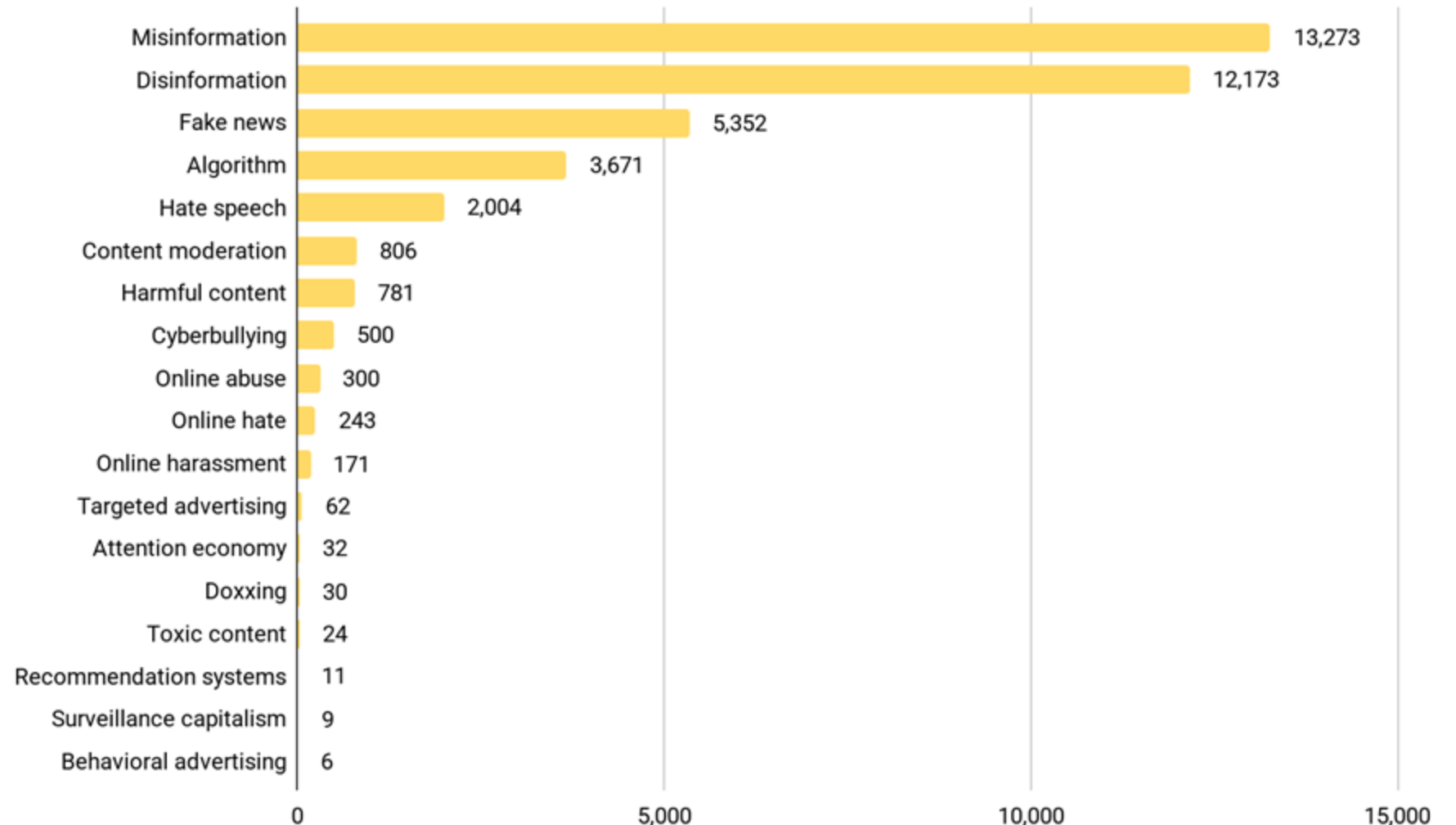
DEEP DIVE FINDINGS ACROSS COUNTRIES

Findings: Issue Coverage

- Among the 40 keywords, we identified 18 *issue-based* keywords that described systemic concepts, mechanisms, or social issues related to social media and technology:
 - Algorithm
 - Attention economy
 - Behavioral advertising
 - Content moderation
 - Cyberbullying
 - Disinformation
 - Doxxing
 - Fake news
 - Harmful Content
 - Hate speech
 - Misinformation
 - Online abuse
 - Online harassment
 - Online hate
 - Recommendation systems
 - Surveillance capitalism
 - Targeted advertising
 - Toxic Content

Findings: Issue Coverage

- Overall, misinformation, disinformation, and fake news were the most frequently mentioned issue-based keywords from the 3 countries.



Findings: Issue Coverage

- Notably, the following issue-based keywords each received less than 100 news mentions within the 6 month study window in total from all 3 countries:

Keyword	Count
Targeted advertising	62
Attention economy	32
Doxxing	30
Toxic content	24
Recommendation systems	11
Surveillance capitalism	9
Behavioral advertising	6

Findings: Issue Coverage

- We tested 45 intersecting topics to see which ones most commonly appeared in tandem* with our original list of 40 keywords:

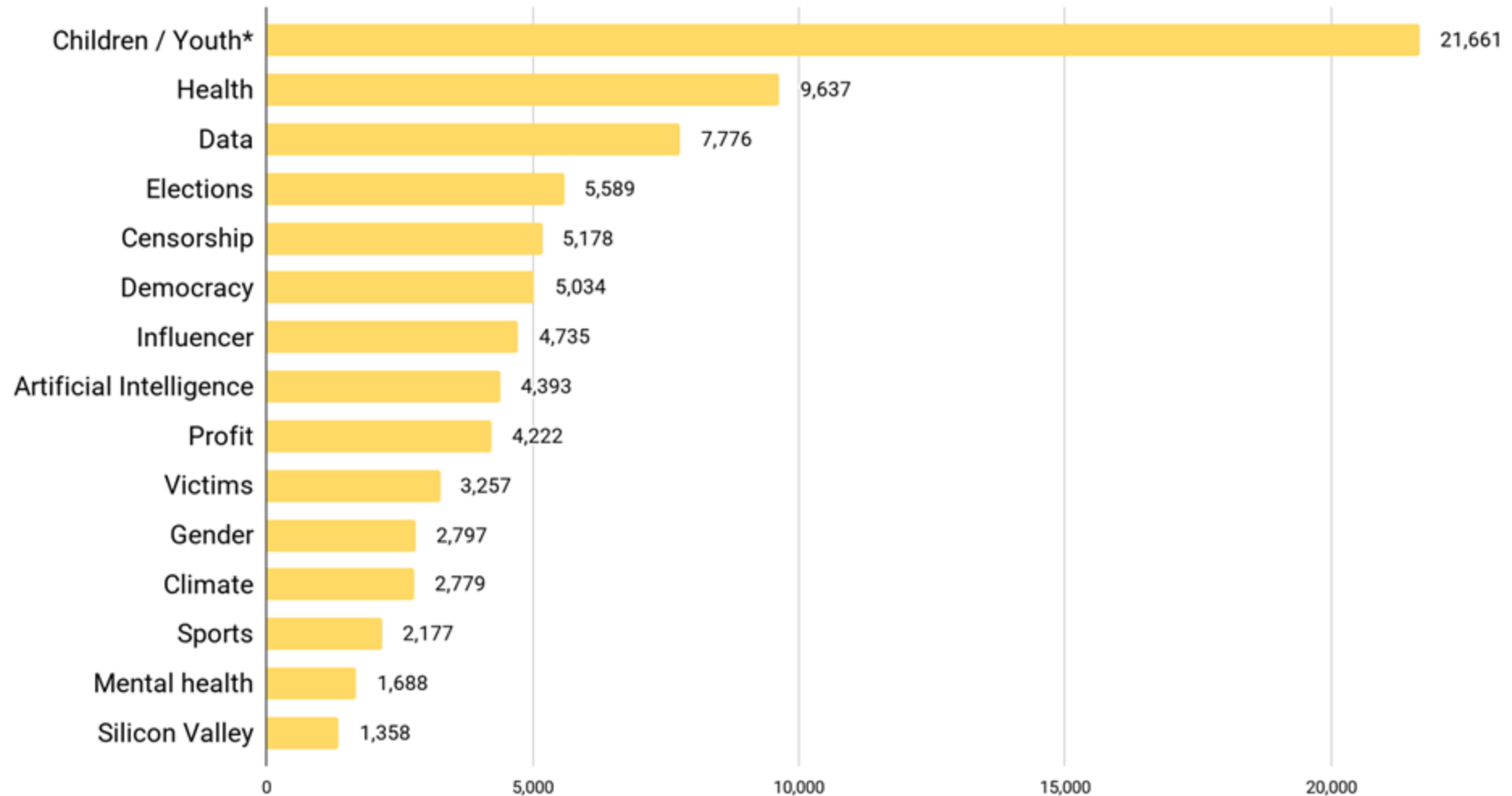
Intersecting Topics**			
Addiction	Clickbait	Gender	Silicon Valley
Amplification	Climate	Generative AI	Sports
Antitrust	Cookies	Health	Surveillance
App store	Data	Influencer	Synthetic media
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Deepfake	Mental health	Tech oligarchy
Athletes	Democracy	Monopoly / Monopoly Power	Transparency
Backlash	Digital Services Act	Newsfeed / News feed	Trust and safety
Broligarchy	Discrimination	Online Safety Bill	Victims
Business Model	Echo chamber	Polarization	Virality
Censorship	Elections	Privacy	Wellbeing
ChatGPT	Engagement	Profiling	
Children / Youth	GDPR	Profit	

*This involved searching in our dataset of 400K+ keyword mentions for any of the above intersecting topics. For example, this analysis would capture how often a term like democracy appeared alongside one of our 40 social media-related keywords (e.g., democracy & Big Tech, democracy & Facebook).

**Note that French translations of these intersecting topics were also used to search the dataset.

Findings: Intersecting Topics

- Overall, children & youth was the topic that most frequently appeared alongside our social media keywords, followed by health, data, elections, censorship and democracy.



*The children/youth intersecting topic includes the following synonymous terms (also translated into French): kids, minors, teens, teenagers, and adolescents.

Findings: Intersecting Topics

- Children & youth, the top intersecting topic at over 20K mentions, most commonly appeared alongside the following keywords:
 - Social media & children/youth (6412 mentions)
 - TikTok & children/youth (1622)
 - X & children/youth (1522)
 - Instagram & children/youth (1424)
 - Platforms & children/youth (1339)
- Health, the next most frequent intersecting topic, most commonly appeared alongside the following keywords:
 - Social media & health (2797)
 - X & health (1396)
 - Elon Musk & health (854)
 - Misinformation & health (634)
 - TikTok & health (545)

Findings: Intersecting Topics

- The third most common intersecting topic — data — most frequently appeared alongside these keywords:
 - Social media & data (1060)
 - Microsoft & data (822)
 - X & data (697)
 - TikTok & data (613)
 - Platforms & data (551)
- The fourth most common intersecting topic — elections — most frequently appeared alongside these keywords:
 - Social media & elections (1135)
 - Elon Musk & elections (748)
 - X & elections (732)
 - Disinformation & elections (609)
 - Misinformation & elections (353)

Findings: Intersecting Topics

- The fifth most common intersecting topic — censorship — most frequently appeared alongside these keywords:
 - Social media & censorship (649)
 - X & censorship (503)
 - Big Tech & censorship (429)
 - Elon Musk & censorship (425)
 - Twitter & censorship (412)
- The sixth most common intersecting topic — democracy — most frequently appeared alongside these keywords:
 - Social media & democracy (991)
 - Elon Musk & democracy (687)
 - X & democracy (519)
 - Disinformation & democracy (492)
 - Misinformation & democracy (429)

Findings: Intersecting Topics

- Notably, profit — at over 4000 mentions — was the only intersecting topic in the top 20 that described a systemic motive or source of harm from social media platforms and Big Tech.
 - All other intersecting topics in this category (i.e., business model, monopoly/monopoly power, tech oligarchy, and brologarchy) received a little over 1000 combined mentions across the three countries.
- Solutions-based topics did not fare much better:
 - Topics describing specific legislation or solutions aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech received just 1500 intersecting mentions in total from all three countries.
 - Solutions-based topics included the following intersecting terms: Digital Services Act, GDPR,* Online Safety Bill, and antitrust.

* GDPR stands for General Data Protection Regulation, which is an EU-based legislation aimed at regulating information privacy.

Findings: Elon Musk

- Elon Musk and keywords related to his social media platform featured prominently in news coverage across countries.
- The keywords Elon Musk, X, and Twitter collectively accumulated 121,764 mentions, or more than a quarter of all news mentions within the study period.
- The US had the most individual keyword mentions of Elon Musk at nearly 25K, followed by the UK at 14K, and France at 7K.
- Compared to the other tech figures in the dataset, Elon Musk received the most attention by far, with nearly 9 times more mentions as the next most talked about individual (Mark Zuckerberg).

Findings: Elon Musk

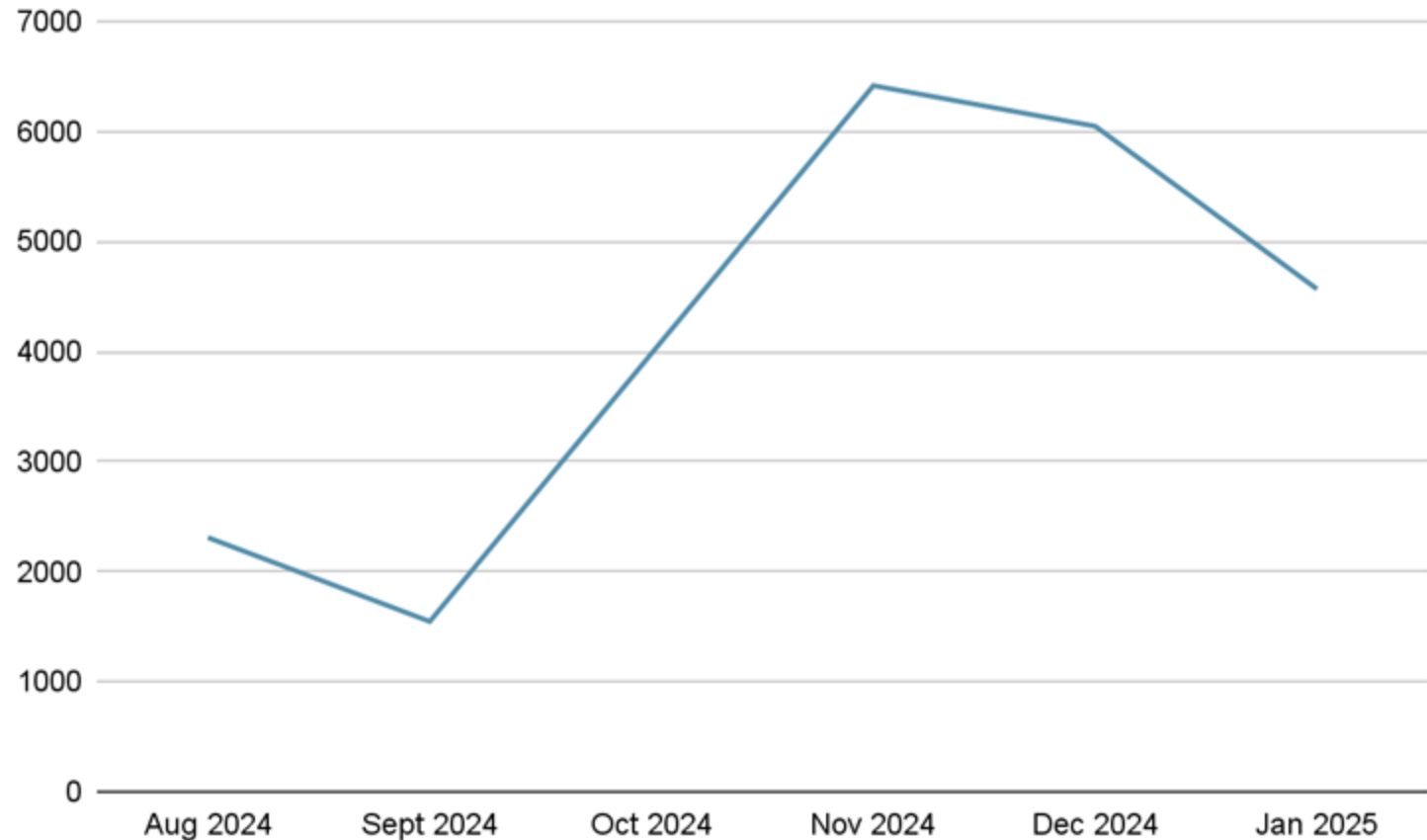
- The following topics emerged as the most common intersections with mentions of Elon Musk in the US, UK, and France:
 - Health* & Elon Musk (854 mentions)
 - Elections & Elon Musk (748)
 - Democracy & Elon Musk (687)
 - Victims** & Elon Musk (431)
 - Artificial intelligence & Elon Musk (393)
- In terms of intersections between Elon Musk and other issue-based keywords in the dataset, the following keywords most frequently appeared alongside mentions of the X owner:
 - Misinformation & Elon Musk (554)
 - Disinformation & Elon Musk (524)
 - Algorithm & Elon Musk (181)
 - Fake news & Elon Musk (170)
 - Hate speech & Elon Musk (77)

*Health was mentioned frequently in tandem with Elon Musk, partially due to coverage of Musk alongside other Trump cabinet nominees; particularly the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

**These mentions often focused on Musk's donations to wildfire and [hurricane victims](#), Musk's attendance at [Trump rally](#) for victims of the Butler shooting, Musk's [comments](#) on Holocaust victims, victims of the [Las Vegas Cybertruck](#) explosion, and Musk's posts about ["grooming gang" victims](#) in the

Findings: Elon Musk

- A time-based analysis reveals that, in the US, mentions of Elon Musk peaked in November 2024 at nearly 6,500 mentions — the same month as the 2024 US presidential election.



Findings: Elon Musk

- In the US, MSNBC was the news station with the most mentions of Elon Musk, followed by CNN and Fox News.
- The US-based TV program with the most individual mentions of Elon Musk was OAN News on One America News Network.

US Station	Mentions
1. MSNBC	3284
2. CNN	2660
3. Fox News	2611
4. One America News Network	2492
5. Newsmax TV	2488

US Program (Station)	Mentions
1. OAN News (One America News Network)	1,713
2. Public Affairs Events (CSPAN)	537
3. CNN Newsroom Live (CNN International)	464
4. Varney & Company (Fox Business Network)	445
5. The 11th Hour with Stephanie Ruhle (MSNBC)	430
5. Washington Journal (CSPAN)	430

Example Clip: Elon Musk framed as an individual problem

Findings: Elon Musk



Example Clip: Elon Musk framed as an individual hero

Findings: Elon Musk



Example Clip: Elon Musk framed as a systemic problem

Findings: Elon Musk





APPENDICES

Appendix A: Methodology

Keyword Selection

- To build the final list of keywords, MIP partnered with Luminate to brainstorm which social media-related terms and concepts would be most important to track over a 6 month period.
- Keywords were spotchecked for relevance to social media and technology-related issues.
- All 40 keywords were translated into French, using Google Translate and the input of a native French speaker.
- English keywords were used to search the US and UK* television markets, while their French equivalents were used to search the French TV market.

*Note that one keyword used different spelling between the US and the UK: behavioral advertising (US spelling) and behavioural advertising (UK).

Appendix A: Methodology

Keywords List

Keyword Type	English Keyword	French Equivalent Keyword
Core	Social media	Réseaux sociaux
Core	Platforms	Plateformes
Core	Big Tech	GAFAM
Issue	Online hate	Haine en ligne
Issue	Hate speech	Discours haineux
Issue	Cyberbullying	Cyberharcèlement
Issue	Online abuse	Abus en ligne
Issue	Online harassment	Harcèlement en ligne
Issue	Harmful content	Contenu préjudiciable
Issue	Toxic content	Contenu toxique
Issue	Doxxing	Doxxing
Issue	Disinformation	Désinformation
Issue	Misinformation	Mésinformation
Issue	Fake news	Infox
Issue	Attention economy	Économie de l'attention
Issue	Algorithm	Algorithme
Issue	Surveillance capitalism	Capitalisme de surveillance
Issue	Behavioral advertising / Behavioural advertising	Publicité comportementale
Issue	Targeted advertising	Publicité ciblée
Issue	Recommender systems / Recommendation systems	Systèmes de recommandation
Issue	Content moderation	Modération de contenu

Appendix A: Methodology

Keywords List (continued)

Keyword Type	English Keyword	French Equivalent Keyword
Company	Facebook	Facebook
Company	Instagram	Instagram
Company	WhatsApp	WhatsApp
Company	Meta	Meta
Company	YouTube	YouTube
Company	Google search	Moteur de recherche
Company	Alphabet	Alphabet
Company	Twitter	Twitter
Company	X	X
Company	TikTok	TikTok
Company	Bytedance	Bytedance
Company	Microsoft	Microsoft
Company	Telegram	Telegram
Company	Snapchat	Snapchat
Company	OpenAI	OpenAI
Company Leader	Elon Musk	Elon Musk
Company Leader	Mark Zuckerberg	Mark Zuckerberg
Company Leader	Sundar Pichai	Sundar Pichai
Company Leader	Sam Altman	Sam Altman

Appendix A: Methodology

Analysis Process

- Using the TVEye Media Monitoring System, results from each keyword were captured from the following TV markets in each country:*
 - 3 broadcast and 14 cable news stations in the US
 - 13 national news stations and 1 regional station in the UK
 - 12 news stations in France
- This process identified the program title, station, date, time, category, and roughly 50 words surrounding the keyword for each mention.
- The research team then made every reasonable effort to identify and exclude any non-news content from the dataset. This involved eliminating:
 - Commercials/infomercials
 - Scripted shows and films
 - Unscripted programming (reality TV, game shows, sports, lifestyle, music, docuseries)

*See the next slide for the complete list of 43 stations from the US, UK, and France.

Appendix A: Methodology

List of Stations

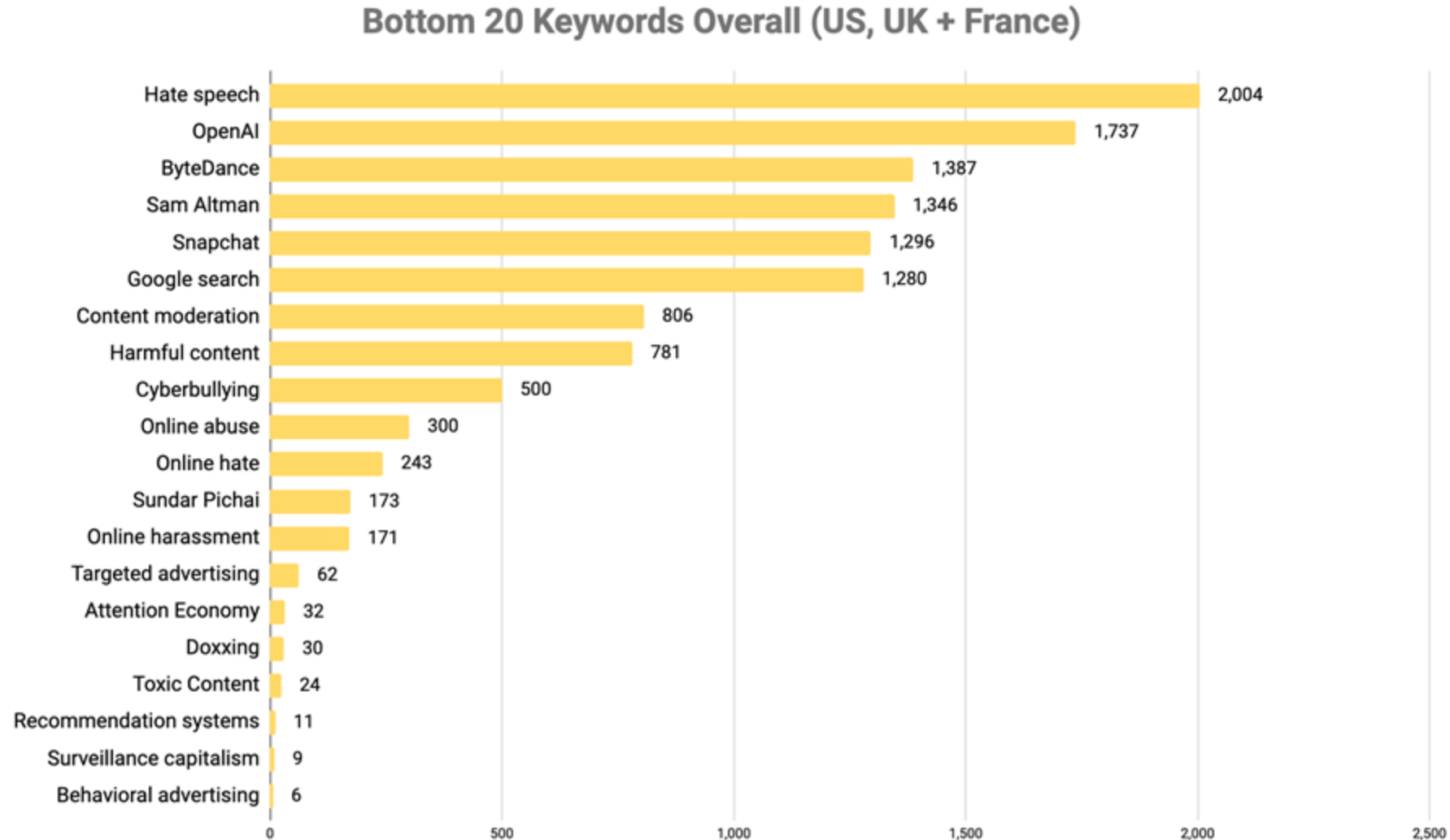
Here is the list of the stations used to search keywords in our dataset:

Country & TV Market	Station
France National	BFM Business TV
France National	BFMTV
France National	C8
France National	France 2
France National	France 24
France National	France 3
France National	France 5
France National	France Info
France National	La Chaine Info
France National	M6
France National	TF1
France National	TV5 Monde
UK National	BBC 1 London
UK National	BBC 2 England
UK National	BBC Four
UK National	BBC News 24
UK National	BBC Parliament
UK National	BBC Three
UK National	BBC World
UK National	Euronews
UK National	GB News
UK National	ITV 1 London

Country & TV Market	Station
UK National	London Live
UK National	Sky News
UK National	TalkTV
UK Regional	ITV - Channel TV
US Broadcast	ABC
US Broadcast	CBS
US Broadcast	NBC
US Cable	CNBC
US Cable	CNBC World
US Cable	CNN
US Cable	CNN International (US)
US Cable	CSPAN
US Cable	CSPAN2
US Cable	CSPAN3
US Cable	Fox Business Network
US Cable	Fox News
US Cable	Headline News
US Cable	MSNBC
US Cable	Newsmax TV
US Cable	NewsNation
US Cable	One America News Network

Appendix B: Least Mentioned Keywords All Countries

The following 20 keywords had about 2000 mentions or less, making them the most infrequently mentioned keywords in our combined dataset:



USC Annenberg
School for Communication
and Journalism
Norman Lear Center

www.mediaimpactproject.org



@learcenter | @mediametrics



facebook.com/usclearcenter