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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony: House Bill 74, Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice - Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper in General Circulation - Digital Newspapers

Committee: Judiciary

Hearing Date: January 22, 2025

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Barlett. For the record, I'm Delegate Linda Foley, and I am presenting HB 74 Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice – Publication in Newspaper in General Circulation – Digital Newspapers.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill.

As a former journalist and former president of the union representing news workers, I believe it is crucial that we update our state laws to keep pace with the changing media landscape. The rise of digital publications has dramatically changed how the public accesses information, including legal notices and advertisements.

In addition, the finances and scope of local media in Maryland has changed drastically since the legal notice statute was first enacted.

For some context, the Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland recently conducted a comprehensive study that provides a snapshot of the current local media landscape in Maryland. We all know how critical locally based, journalistically sourced news outlets are to the functioning of our communities and the democratic governments that run them. (The study is attached to my written testimony.)

The Merrill study found that there are 176 local media outlets in Maryland, 156 of which are focused on news and journalistically supplied content. Seventy-eight (78) of them are print-based “newspapers” that also publish websites or PDFs of their publication. Fifty-three (53) are digital-only publications. The study also looked at the geographic landscape of Maryland’s local media. There is one county, Caroline County, with no news outlets at all, and 8 counties with 3 or fewer news outlets. While the number of so-called “legacy” media (newspapers, TV stations,

radio, etc.) is shrinking, the number of media outlets in Maryland has grown since 2020, with all the growth coming from the start-up of digital media.

It's important that local media outlets be supported. It's also important that there be regular, independent notice of local government functions available to members of the community. Local, independent news outlets are the best vehicles to fulfill that mission. Solely posting required legal notices on government websites is contrary to basic transparency and the constitutional role of a free press.

That's why current law has clear requirements for the publication in independent media of legal notices and advertisements by counties and municipalities across Maryland. This bill would allow the notices to be published in **either** print or digital formats, providing access to the widest possible audience and, at the same time, providing some cost-savings for some municipalities and counties.

Importantly, HB 74 also mandates that any digital publication running these legal notices must have an archive accessible to the public and employ at least one employee focused on reporting local news and information. This will help guarantee that legal notices remain readily available and are accompanied by the context and analysis that citizens need to stay informed. It also guarantees that any digital publication containing legal notices is a legitimate, ongoing concern.

In an era where many local newspapers have shuttered or reduced coverage, it is essential that we adapt our laws to conform to the new media reality. This bill strikes the right balance, leveraging digital platforms while also upholding key standards of transparency and journalistic integrity.

A similar bill covering just Dorchester County was passed last year.

For all these reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB 74 so we can help bring Maryland's public notice requirements into the 21st century. Thank you.



PHILIP MERRILL
COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM

MARYLAND LOCAL NEWS ECOSYSTEM STUDY

APRIL 2024



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WHAT IS THE STATE OF JOURNALISM IN MARYLAND: AN ECOSYSTEM STUDY OF THE NEWS LANDSCAPE

I. OVERVIEW

A new study of the state of local news in Maryland finds there are roughly 176 organizations producing news and information about the state — ranging from conventional TV, radio stations and newspapers to neighborhood blogs and Facebook pages — of which, roughly 156 can be described as news or journalistic. One county, Caroline, is without a stand-alone news outlet that publishes regular updates online — although an APG Chesapeake reporter covers the county half-time and the chain's Easton Star Democrat prints a weekly insert covering the county. Eight counties in the state have three or fewer news outlets, and some of those are one-person blogs that function as community bulletin boards.

The great majority of outlets providing news and information in Maryland are small. Many have one or two names credited with producing all content. In a survey, six in 10 said they have news staff of five people or fewer. And the future for many of these outlets is in question.

As a consequence, the news agenda in the state is substantially driven by official and establishment voices. Most of the content in these news outlets is spot or breaking news triggered by official announcements. Out of more than 1,450 stories examined in the study, 69% were breaking news — most often about crime, announcements about local groups or people, or announcements about local government. Two in 10, or 21%, were enterprise stories — defined as anything from a light feature to something more involved, as long as the idea originated in the newsroom rather than being triggered by breaking news.

THE MARYLAND NEWS ECOSYSTEM AT A GLANCE

- **176** outlets offering news and information in Maryland
- **69%** of stories were simple breaking news
- **21%** of stories were enterprise or feature stories
- **18%** of stories were about crime/courts/police
- **15%** were stories about activities of local groups and people
- **11%** of news outlets surveyed are less than five years old
- **39%** of outlets said they were skeptical they could survive in two years without revenue growth

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

And many of these organizations say they need to grow or they may not survive. When asked how long they could continue at their current levels without more revenue than they have now, 39% said less than two years.

These are some of the findings of a first-ever Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study produced by the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. The study included a landscape assessment aimed at identifying all the outlets offering news and information in the state, a content analysis of those outlets offering news, and a comprehensive survey of their needs, challenges, staffing and finances.

The Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study offers the first-ever comprehensive baseline assessment of the status and health of journalism in the state. It also offers a recipe book for how other universities could replicate our work, using our content analysis codebook and our survey questionnaire as an initial template to produce baseline studies in their own states.

The most covered topic in Maryland is crime, comprising 18% of the stories studied, followed by news about local groups and people at 15%, county and municipal government at 12%, business at 10%, and schools and education at 8%.

For all their challenges and generally modest scale, seven out of 10 of those surveyed said their digital audiences had grown in the last 12 months. And 75% said they were financially solvent — with nearly six in 10 saying they had been so for more than five years.

Among the findings of the study:

- **Official voices dominated some topics more than others, but announcements or breaking events dominated most topics.** Fully 90% of crime stories were breaking news, mostly from official announcements, as were 90% of stories about fires, disasters and accidents. This was also true for 81% of government news.
- **The study found higher levels of journalistic enterprise in the coverage of food, arts and entertainment, culture and business.** More than 25% of stories on those topics were classified as enterprise. Food and stories about local history were the only subjects for which we found more enterprise coverage than breaking news (53% and 75%, respectively). That level of enterprise for business was driven heavily by a thriving business press, particularly surrounding Baltimore.
- **As newsrooms cut back, press releases play a large role in what people in Maryland learn about their communities.** Fully 13% of all stories were statements issued by groups or businesses or government or press releases posted online without being rewritten and including no further reporting. Another 12% were listed as “staff”-produced without an author’s name, and appeared to be adaptations from official announcements. In addition, a large percentage of bylined stories fell into the same category.
- **The ecosystem is evolving quickly.** Of the 55 news organizations that told us how old they were, 30 have been launched since 2000, nine of those since 2020. Seven were founded in the 19th or 18th centuries and are still publishing. Eleven more were founded in the 20th century, four in the 1980s.
- **Most outlets in Maryland are small, both new and old.** The majority had budgets of less than \$250,000 a year. More than a third — 39% — reported budgets of \$100,000 or less. (These figures did not include the commercial radio and television stations in the state¹, none of which took the time to fill out the survey.)

¹ Interestingly, not one of the more than roughly 20 commercial TV or radio stations took the time to answer the survey, though most of the major newspapers in the state did.

- **Despite the sense of crisis about local news, the picture from the survey was more nuanced.** Twenty percent of news outlets had expanded their staff in the last two years, 29% had cut staff and 51% had remained the same.
- **The rise of purely ideological or propaganda sites in Maryland appears small.** We found fewer than five purely ideological outlets that were more advocacy than journalism. In other states, a trend of expanding online ideological outlets, many subsidized by political organizations and/or large ideological donors and deceptively publishing skewed “news” reports, has been dubbed “pink slime.” The ideological outlets we found were transparent in their philosophy and purpose.

In conducting this study, we took a wide-lens approach. In the survey, for instance, we asked each newsroom leader what other outlets of any kind offered news and information in their circulation areas. This led us to email newsletters and Facebook groups, as well as sites that featured traffic cameras and others run by local chambers of commerce and fire departments.

Thus the study assesses the ecosystem at a few different levels. Our content analysis includes a granular look at outlets that are still in operation and that offer news or e-editions online. That universe includes 156 outlets. A larger universe of outlets, featured in the Thumbnails section of the report, offers a summary description not only of those but also descriptions of outlets that offer less journalistic content of interest to community residents, such as more social Facebook pages, pennysaver papers or chamber of commerce promotional pages, as well as descriptions of outlets that are no longer in operation. That Thumbnail section includes 176 organizations.

The survey also asked these news outlets what they needed. Just under half said their first priority would be more reporters, but another half identified other needs — digital skills, more business people, and better tools and skills for understanding their audience.

“We have the digital skills on staff,” one newsroom leader told our survey. “We lack the time to put those skills to use.”

“Had to scale back coverage of breaking news, council and board meetings, and local sports. Most government/crime coverage is superficial (e.g. rewriting police press releases). Also significantly reduced human-interest stories. Went from four [to] six original bylined stories per week to two [to] three,” another newsroom leader confided ominously.

“We don’t have anyone whose sole or primary responsibility is tending to our website and social media,” a third wrote. “It is done piecemeal by many people.”

Yet others have added staff — on education, environment and local sports — and many report having similar needs, which seems a clear opportunity for the University of Maryland and others to provide shared digital skills and tools at scale.

Taken together, the open-ended responses and content analysis depict an ecosystem in crisis but with signs of innovation. A handful of local startups offer interesting content and attractive digital packages. A couple of technology-driven regional or national entrants, notably the Connecticut-based Daily Voice and the New York-based Patch, offer scale but little enterprise. Those outlets chase breaking news that seems readily available elsewhere.

A couple of small newspaper groups, APG Chesapeake and Bay to Bay News, seem — for the moment — to have found a middle ground, offering shared technology platforms to their smaller but well-established community newspapers, whose newsroom leaders offer some of the richest hyperlocal content we found.

In Baltimore, despite the controversies over the changing ownership of the 187-year-old Baltimore Sun, there is a vibrant ecosystem of new and old outlets, including some feisty startups and strong, if challenged, outlets carrying on the tradition of the Black press.

But overall, much of the landscape is dotted with news outlets trying to fend for themselves, bootstrapping old technology, whose owners, managers and staff know what they need but recognize they lack the time, resources or expertise to get it.

And almost everyone seems to lack a meaningful presence on social media. While many social media companies are downgrading news, publishers told us that TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms remain places where younger audiences are spending time. Publishers acknowledge that while they need to reach those audiences, they lack the social media presence that might attract young readers.

Meanwhile, the local television news industry, which remains profitable but faces the challenges of viewers cutting the cord, continues to pursue a model online that largely promotes its TV shows and leans heavily on breaking news, fires, accidents, weather and crimes — the kind of news the study found to be most plentiful everywhere.

This initial attempt to map and capture the character of the Maryland news ecosystem no doubt missed some outlets, particularly those that might exist primarily as neighborhood newsletters or listservs. We are sure, too, that some foreign-language outlets in the state are missing. Asian language outlets, published in different languages, proved to be especially hard to track. Our goal is for this first study to set down a useful baseline, and our intention is to repeat the study in future years to track what has changed — and expand it to include what we may have missed.

II. WHAT NEWS GETS COVERED IN MARYLAND

The study identified 176 outlets or publications that produced news and information about events and issues that affected people in Maryland. This included some in the District of Columbia, such as the TV-, radio- and newspaper-based outlets there, but the study analyzed only the content about Maryland or stories that obviously might affect people in Maryland, such as discussions of moving a sports team or plans to increase speeding tickets in the District.¹

Of those 176 outlets the study identified offering news and information about Maryland, 32 were TV- or radio-based (including public broadcasting), 78 were print-based (and either had websites or PDFs of the publications), 53 were digital-only (including email newsletters), 10 were blogs and three existed exclusively on social media platforms, primarily Facebook.

But some of these sites consisted entirely of advertising, or were Facebook pages that included some weather and then pictures of pets and other examples of community members sharing information. They were not journalistic enterprises in any formal sense. Others shared news from other publications but created none of their own. We did not conduct content analyses of these sharing and curation sites. Our goal was to understand what news was created about Maryland, not to chart its secondary flow in other places.

WHAT TYPE OF NEWS OUTLETS COVER MARYLAND

Type	Count ▼	Percent
Print & online news	78	44%
Digital only news	53	30%
TV/radio	32	18%
Blog	10	6%
Facebook group	3	2%

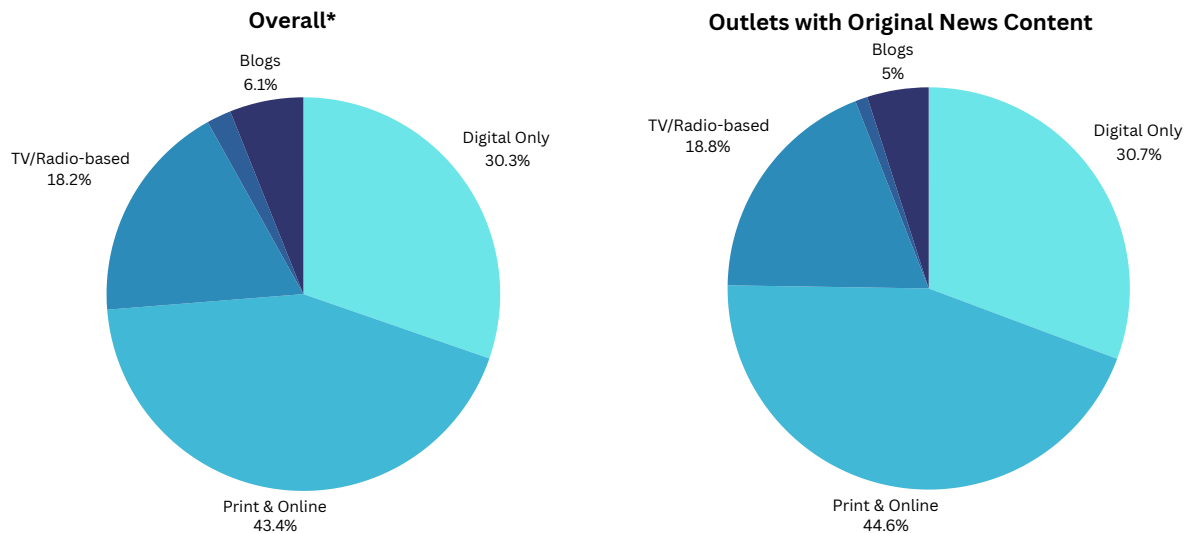
**The overall column includes all outlets that we were able to identify, including sites that offered only curated news content, only official press releases, only traffic cams and other public information that was not original or had any journalistic filtering. The second column includes every site we found that produced at least some original news content, either by news staff, community contributors, bloggers or someone associated with a Facebook page.*

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

¹ As an example, stories about crime incidents that occurred in the District were not coded. Stories about plans for the Washington basketball and hockey teams to relocate to Virginia were, as Marylanders might be fans of those teams.

WHAT IS THE MAKEUP OF NEWS OUTLETS COVERING MARYLAND

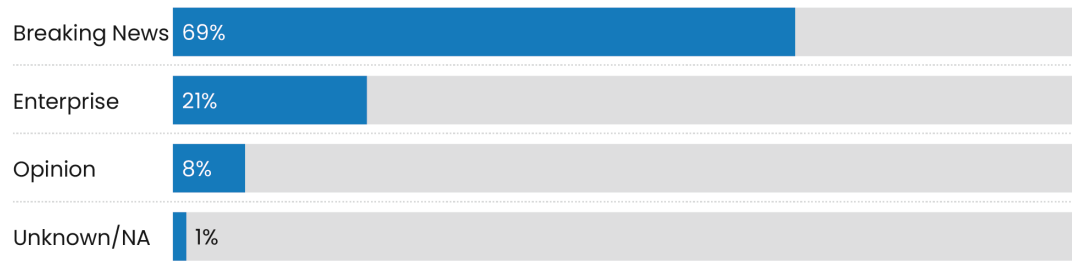


Thus the universe of sites for which we conducted a content analysis was smaller — 156 sites. To qualify, however, the bar was low. Sites, whether they were Facebook pages, blogs or described themselves as more formal news sites, merely had to contain one piece of original content and to still be in operation. Places that had not posted anything for more than six months were deemed to be no longer publishing. To assess each site, we analyzed original content for what news topics were covered; the nature of the content (breaking news vs. enterprise vs. opinion); author type (bylined, staff or other, usually press release). We coded the stories on home pages for one day but included stories that would go back as far as one week, depending on the amount of new content each day. (This also indicated how frequently new content was produced.) Every site was also identified by the county in which it was located, the size of its coverage area if it exceeded that location, the frequency and type of publication, the general story topic (primary and secondary), the level of enterprise and author (byline, staff, etc.). While this “snapshot in time” coding scheme does not offer a definitive assessment of the totality of what any one individual outlet might cover over time, it provides a robust sense of how news is produced across the state overall.

WHAT GETS COVERED

The most striking finding is the overwhelming degree to which the coverage we saw was breaking news, most often in the form of official announcements, most often by police. Overall, 69% of stories we coded were fairly straightforward breaking news stories, almost all of them triggered by official announcements by civic groups, government or law enforcement agencies, or local businesses.

THE NATURE OF NEWS IN MARYLAND



Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

Only 21% of stories were enterprise features — and our definition was generous. Any feature story, any follow-up story or any story that was not breaking news was listed as either enterprise or opinion.

Opinion content made up 8% of the stories coded.

And *what* was the news about?

Four topics made up the majority of stories. Crime led with 18%, with local groups and people at 15%, followed by local government at 12%, and business and economy at 10%. Those topics alone comprised 53% of all stories.²

Schools and education were next at 8%, followed by several topics that each made up 6% of stories: arts and entertainment, state government, infrastructure/development/transportation and fires/accidents/disasters.

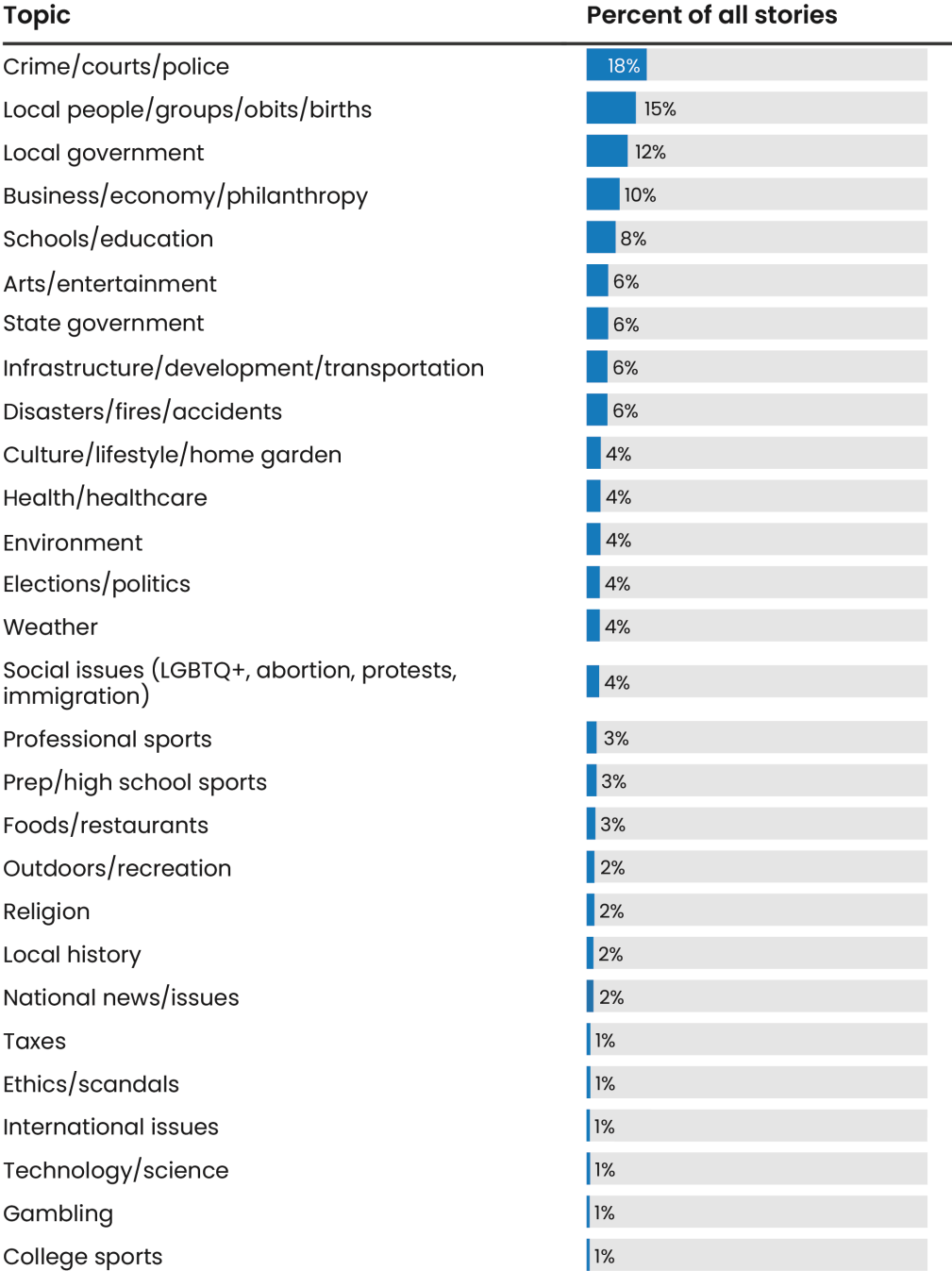
Seen another way, stories about crime, fires and accidents, local and state government, and business comprised roughly half of all stories — 51% — an overall news agenda driven substantially by official voices. Crime, fires and accidents together made up 24% of stories.

Add in stories about education, which in our sample were largely about money and school boards — more official voices — and the total rises to 59% of all stories.

Stories about the cultural life of communities, meanwhile, made up just over a quarter of all stories. That would include stories about local groups and people (14%), arts and entertainment (6%), cultural and lifestyle stories (4%), and food and restaurants (3%).

² Each story could be coded for up to two topics (for instance, the city council is discussing roads would be local government and transportation), but it might easily have only one topic (pro sports).

WHAT NEWS GETS COVERED IN AND ABOUT MARYLAND?



Note: totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

Does the character of the coverage vary by topic? Yes. Some subjects naturally lend themselves to more enterprise, and more community opinion and contributions than others. But overall, particularly regarding hard news, the study found markedly low levels of enterprise.

The chart below breaks down the level of enterprise coverage vs. breaking news vs. opinion for each topic. But in general, food, culture, lifestyle, arts and entertainment generated higher levels of enterprise. So did coverage of the outdoors.

Another topic that stood out for enterprise was coverage of local history. There was not an enormous amount of coverage of local history — it amounted to 2% of the more than 1,460 stories analyzed — and was often generated by news of celebrations and anniversaries. But fully 75% of the local history stories were enterprise pieces. Many of these, particularly in some of the most local publications, were regular columns by local people about the community and its past.

The hard news topic with the highest level of enterprise was business. Some of that was due to the specialized business outlets we found, such as Baltimore Business Journal, I95 Business and The Daily Record.

The study found just 1% of stories — 15 in total — could be categorized as involving ethics or scandals. Any story that involved wrongdoing would touch this category. Given that under our coding procedure, any story could involve two topics, a story might involve a scandal in government, with police, a sports team or anything else. This was the category where any exposes or investigative reporting would show up, but the study found little of it. Of course, we only examined stories in a snapshot in time, and that is not a definitive accounting of how much investigative reporting might exist. But it is also true that if a publication does an expose, it would likely feature that special work on its site for more than a day or two. About half of the stories involving scandals — though this is just seven — were news stories, which were largely official actions by government or courts about an official who was accused of wrongdoing. We found six enterprise stories among the 1,460 examined that involved enterprise reporting about wrongdoing. Two were opinion pieces.

PERCENTAGE OF STORIES THAT WERE NEWS, ENTERPRISE AND OPINION

Topic	Percent news stories	Percent enterprise stories	Percent opinion stories
Arts/entertainment	55%	30%	10%
Business/economy/philanthropy	61%	29%	9%
College sports*	67%	0%	25%
Crime/courts/police	90%	7%	2%
Culture/lifestyle/home garden	38%	38%	24%
Disasters/fires/accidents	90%	8%	1%
Elections/politics	56%	25%	18%
Environment	62%	21%	17%
Ethics/scandals	47%	40%	13%
Foods/restaurants	42%	53%	5%
Gambling	83%	8%	8%
Health/healthcare	48%	34%	11%
Infrastructure/development/transportation	75%	20%	4%
International issues	43%	21%	36%
Local government	81%	13%	4%
Local history	18%	75%	7%
Local people/groups/obits/births	69%	24%	5%
National news/issues	65%	13%	22%
Outdoors/recreation	42%	44%	11%
Prep/high school sports	74%	23%	0%
Professional sports	65%	33%	2%

Religion	59%	9%	31%
Schools/education	75%	19%	7%
Social issues (LGBTQ+, abortion, protests, immigration)	47%	42%	11%
State government	79%	15%	4%
Taxes	47%	33%	20%
Technology/science	36%	21%	43%
Weather	96%	4%	0%

Note: totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

**9% of college sports was coded as unknown whether it was news, opinion, enterprise or other*

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

Did the type of news organization make a difference in the kind of work that was produced? In other words, were newer online sites more inclined to opinion, or newspaper- and magazine-based media more inclined to enterprise?

The answer is yes, but only marginally. For instance, 84% of the content from TV- and radio-based media (which were analyzed from their websites) was breaking news. That number was 64% for print-based media (from their websites). Digital-only outlets were in between, at 70% breaking news. Blogs, by contrast, were nearly 22% opinion, 56% news and 22% enterprise — though the number of news blogs in Maryland we deemed to have codeable content was limited. The number of Facebook pages with original news content was even smaller. Those are more highly represented in the section of thumbnail sketches below that describes all 176 sites we identified. Indeed, some sites that had begun as blogs a few years ago have blossomed into websites.

TYPE OF NEWS CONTENT BY MEDIA CATEGORY

Media Type	News	Enterprise	Opinion
Digital	70%	20%	9%
Print based	64%	25%	10%
TV/Radio	84%	14%	0%
Blog	56%	22%	22%

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

III. THE GEOGRAPHY OF MARYLAND JOURNALISM: NEWS DESERTS AND OASES

One of the biggest topics surrounding local news in the last decade is the question of “news deserts.” Penny Abernathy, who for years has conducted breakthrough research on the shrinking news coverage landscape, currently defines a news desert as a county “with no newspapers, local digital sites, public radio newsrooms or ethnic publications.”³

What did we find in Maryland? We mapped the geography of news organizations two ways. We identified their physical locations based on information in their websites, and we identified their coverage areas based on the self-descriptions on their sites and from our survey.

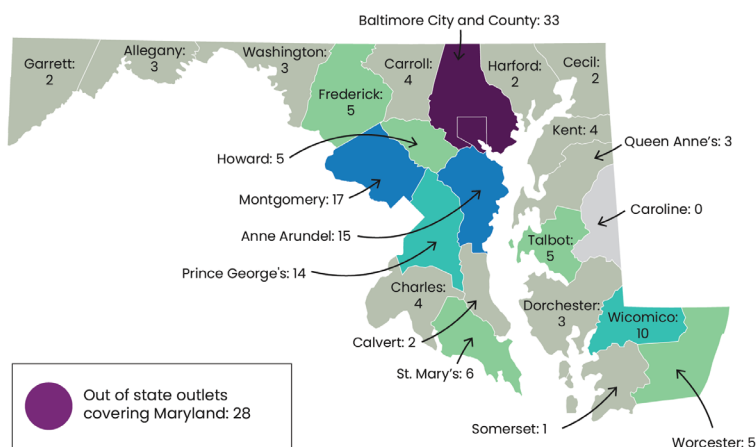
The results indicate definite signs of risk of news deserts emerging in Maryland. The study identified one county, Caroline on the Eastern Shore, with no stand-alone news outlet. The Times Record, which was owned by Adams’ APG Chesapeake Group, has not posted as a distinct online news outlet since July 2023. Readers are directed to the Easton Star Democrat, and Times Record subscribers were given automatic access to it. APG Chesapeake has a reporter assigned to the county half-time and a slimmed version of the Times Record, with stories, is inserted in the Star Democrat each week with stories. A blog by the local economic council, which carried occasional business announcements, has not posted since November of last year. If there are other outlets emerging there, we did not find them.

The study also identified one county, Somerset on the Eastern Shore, with only a single news outlet, four with only two, and another three counties with just three outlets that offered news and information. And the outlets varied widely in character.

WHERE IS MARYLAND’S MEDIA LOCATED?

Number of Outlets per County

1-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25-29 30+



PUBLICATION LOCATION	NUMBER OF OUTLETS
Out of state	28
Baltimore	28
Baltimore City	5
Anne Arundel	15
Montgomery	17
Prince George's	14
Wicomico	10
Worcester	5
Frederick	5
Howard	5
Saint Mary's	6
Talbot	5
Carroll	4
Charles	4
Kent	4
Allegany	3
Dorchester	3
Queen Anne's	3
Washington	3
Cecil	2
Garrett	2
Harford	2
Calvert	2
Somerset	1
Caroline	0

Caroline County has zero outlets within its borders.

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

Created with Datawrapper

³ “The State of Local News 2023,” published by the Northwestern University/Medill Local News Initiative, November 2023.

A CLOSER LOOK AT COUNTIES WITH THREE OR FEWER NEWS AND INFORMATION OUTLETS

The county with only one news outlet in the state was Somerset. But the outlet is Crisfield-Somerset County Times, a newspaper and website that are part of the Bay to Bay Group, a small chain that includes three outlets on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Bay to Bay Group is part of Independent Newsmedia Inc., which bills itself as owned by "a unique nonprofit trust" that also has news outlets in Florida and Arizona. The print edition of the Crisfield-Somerset County Times is a weekly, but the website posts content more frequently, including wire and local content, and announcements.

The study found four Maryland counties with just two outlets located in them — Calvert, Cecil, Garrett and Harford. It is worth a closer look at each.

Calvert has two weeklies, The Calvert Recorder and The Calvert County Times. The weekly Recorder is part of the APG Chesapeake group. The weekly print edition is augmented by a website on a shared platform with the other APG papers in Southern Maryland, though The Recorder has its own content from its sister publications and is updated more often than the print edition. The content is hyperlocal and almost all is bylined. Most of the stories are made based on announcements about local groups and people, government or police, but the site overall has the distinct feel of a community weekly.

The Calvert County Times is a print weekly magazine that is a sister publication of The St. Mary's County Times. The weekly contains about seven or eight stories a week of hyperlocal news, almost all of it bylined, mostly based on announcements about local people, groups, government and police, most but not all written by a single author, surrounded by local ads, calendars and obituaries.

Cecil features two relatively robust and highly local outlets, The Cecil Whig and Cecil TV.

The Whig is part of the APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of the Adams Publishing Group, a family-owned community newspaper company that began acquiring papers in 2014 and owns 14 weeklies and twice-weeklies in Maryland. The Whig is one of the more impressive local operations the study encountered. The print paper comes out twice weekly, but the website, Cecil Daily, posts original news from The Whig's staff and locally relevant items from its sister papers every weekday and is rich in original local content. It covers prep sports, culture, government and crime, and has a feature that plumbs local history from The Whig's pages, which reach back to 1841, when the paper was launched to promote the Whig party in Maryland by Palmer C. Ricketts. (Two years later, Ricketts shot the editor of the rival Cecil Democrat to death. He was later found to have killed the man in self-defense after continuing to publish from his jail cell.)

Cecil TV is a remarkably robust nonprofit television and digital news operation that covers events in the county. It's a member of the nonprofit news association called the Institute for Nonprofit News (which, among other services, assists its members in sustainability and requires members to adopt specific ethics codes for independence and funding). The site has a copious amount of local content on everything from local politics, education, music and practical "news you can use" content called "how to." It reflects a significant level of enterprise. This is not highly visual television. Most of the content involves interviews with local people, and has the visual dynamics of public access television, but the substance is lively.

"Our purpose is to build civic and cultural awareness in Cecil County, an area long underserved by media of any kind," said Doug Donley, executive director of Cecil TV. "Through conventional news reporting, live coverage and a better facility are objectives we fulfill our core mission through interviews with the people who shape life in Cecil County. We have produced over 1,000 such segments since 2016."

The situation in Garrett County in Western Maryland, home to the popular Deep Creek Lake resort area, is more fragile. The Garrett County News is a Facebook page with news that is updated every few hours with new content, both contributed by members of the community and curated from other news sources. The Deep Creek Times site posts press releases from local civic, community and government institutions. It is, in effect, a digital county bulletin — useful but not particularly journalistic.

The county is also served by The Garrett County Republican, a weekly print paper that is part of the West Virginia News group based in Clarksburg, West Virginia. The website for The Republican, which includes an amalgam of West Virginia and Garrett County news, has a Maryland page, but most of the content is AP wire copy relevant to the state.

The situation in Harford County, northeast of Baltimore, can also be described as fragile — but is also revealing. One of the two news outlets, Bel Air News & Views, is a community news and information site launched in 2006. Virtually all content is “By Stacey” — publisher Stacey Alatzas, who founded Bel Air News & Views in 2006 after spending 12 years as a reporter and editor at the Democrat & Chronicle in Rochester, New York, and The News Journal in Wilmington, Delaware.

“I discovered a welcoming online community and attracted a decent following that continues today,” Alatzas said. “My mission at the start was to be the first to break local news online. Today, my site is more focused on informing readers of upcoming events and stories that celebrate Harford County’s people and their achievements.”

Bel Air News & Views is an energetic hyperlocal community site with copious amounts of content about everything from local school athletics to local arts. We found new content there if not quite every day, close to it.

The other publication in the county is The Dagger, an online-only site launched in 2007. The outlet describes itself in bold terms: “The Dagger ... breaks the stories readers won’t find anywhere else and hosts a lively community that drives the daily discussion of community events. Overseen by a diverse group of well-connected reporters, active community organizers and knowledgeable locals, The Dagger is a next-generation model of journalism.”

Our content analysis of the site, however, showed something that was harder to make out than the kind of enterprise journalism The Dagger promises. Most of the stories posted are listed as coming from Dagger News Service, yet there is no definition anywhere of what that means. Every one of the stories we encountered then appeared to be press releases, or at least that is how they were described, without any more detail.

Yet some of these innocuously labeled statements from the government or the police department read like infighting among city government factions. One, for instance, accused a county council member of making an “untrue and outrageous claim” when he alleged the county executive “signed a real estate plat ... on behalf of a family member” and went on to pillory the council member for his accusation. That prompted responses in the comments section that read: “Seriously, get the %\$&# out of Fallston already, you’re a stooge.”

With a lack of context that might have come from traditional reporting, and a lack of transparency of who exactly had written what, one has the impression they have walked into a local family squabble that is hard to understand.

The other most fragile counties in the state, based on the number of outlets located there, are Queen Anne’s, on the Eastern Shore, as well as Allegany, Dorchester and Washington, on the western panhandle. Each has three news outlets.

Queen Anne's County is served by a local weekly (The Kent Island Bay Times and Record Observer), a public access TV station (Queen Anne's County TV) that airs public meetings and some local sports events, and Shore Update, a website offering coupons, classified, events calendars and local press releases.

In Allegany, there is a daily newspaper, the Cumberland Times News, whose site and e-paper edition featured original bylined local coverage and photography of prep sports and other hyperlocal activities, including business and development, and news of local government, along with a substantial use of daily AP wire copy for regional and national news. The site's "about" page says: "The Cumberland Times-News serves Cumberland and the surrounding areas, which includes Allegany and Garrett counties in Maryland, and Mineral, Hampshire and Hardy counties in West Virginia." It's a lot of territory for a small paper, but it is more than some other counties could boast.

Allegany County also has a Facebook page called Tri-State News that is associated with a group of local radio stations and posted Facebook summaries of press releases about the area. It claimed 27,000 followers. And there was a website from WCBC radio that publishes short news items distilled from local press releases.

Washington County features three outlets offering news and information as well, and together these appear to offer a more robust sense of the community than the outlets in neighboring Allegany. The Hagerstown Herald Mail is a daily newspaper with consistent local news coverage. The Hancock News says it is "considered the state's smallest weekly paper." The site features schools, sports and police reports, and has a heavy reliance on announcements and press releases.

Yet the county also features something called Radio Free Hub City, which began as a provider of Internet Radio and Streaming Television for Western Maryland, "from Hagerstown to Hancock, Clear Spring to Boonsboro, Smithsburg to Williamsport, or Sharpsburg to Halfway." As the site describes itself, it "started as an entertainment distribution platform, and never imagined that residents would begin to turn to us for their local news. But here we are, providing fresh, unique coverage of local news topics important to the area." And the site does. It posts a range of local news, but rather than press releases, it appears to usually distill reports on such things as the opening of a new restaurant or a candidate's announcement for local office by combining materials. Most of the posts say at the bottom, "Story by multiple RFHC contributors."

Dorchester County might be viewed as the least fragile of these four counties. It is home to a weekly print and online newspaper called the Dorchester Star, part of Adams' APG Chesapeake group. Coverage is often shared with partner sites including the Bay Times and Record Observer, Kent County News and Star Democrat (all three are aggregated on the myeasternshore.com site) and includes a focus on local government, crime, events, schools and culture. The county is also served by the Dorchester Banner, which can trace its roots to one of the state's oldest papers. It's part of the Bay to Bay group and shares a web platform with other members around the region, but has its own pages. The Banner became a weekly in 2017. Coverage is a newspaperly mix of local and state government news, community and business developments, and school news.

The county is also home to The Cambridge Spy, a local news site that shows an unusual level of enterprise and skill for such a small outlet. The Cambridge Spy is part of the Spy Community Media Fund at the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. The Cambridge Spy describes its mission as being "to provide communities with a non-profit, non-partisan, educational news source to inform and engage citizens with local public affairs, the arts and regional culture." The editorial staff box lists 24 people (shared with its two Eastern Shore sister publications, The Chestertown Spy and The Talbot Spy): four editors, one digital tech position and the rest columnists and contributors, many of them with long civic resumes.

HYPERLOCAL EFFORTS FROM OUT OF STATE: OFFERING PATCHY COVERAGE

What of the two larger, out-of-state companies, the Daily Voice and Patch, that together claim to produce 62 local news sites in the state? We found that these two news outlets repurposed content so often across their various sites that we are describing the Daily Voice and Patch each as single news organizations rather than 62 separate publications.

The Daily Voice is a Connecticut-based for-profit hyperlocal news company with sites across seven Northeastern states. “Our mission is to report on need-to-know local information and up-to-the-minute breaking news. We bridge the ‘news desert’ between national and hyper-local, covering town, city, county, and state,” its website says.

There are 13 Daily Voice county sites in Maryland, but there is significant content overlap between them. The 79 Daily Voice original stories we analyzed (a single week of coverage) were published a total of 248 times across all Maryland sites, so stories were used an average of three times.

We found something similar for Patch. While the company claims 49 sites in Maryland, our content analysis found that most of these sites contained mostly duplicated stories from other Patch towns sites and only one or two original stories from the past week. Some Maryland Patch sites consisted of nothing but repurposed content.

The content analysis of Patch and the Daily Voice sites is revealing in other ways as well. The news agenda of these two more automated operations is even more crime-oriented than the rest of the Maryland press — and more reliant on breaking news over enterprise.

Ninety percent of Daily Voice stories were breaking news, and 10% were stories that demonstrated enterprise — the latter figure about half that of Maryland media as a whole. The breaking news coverage focuses overwhelmingly on crime (59% — more than triple the rate of the Maryland press overall) and on accidents and disasters (24% — four times the Maryland press). In other words, 83% of all Daily Voice stories focused on mayhem and mishaps. Items on local people were a distant third: 10% of stories. Virtually all stories — most bylined by a tiny handful of staffers covering most of the state, publishing multiple stories per day — are based on press releases and announcements from official sources. Many enterprise stories focus on post-accident or disaster human interest, such as reports on GoFundMe campaigns by those affected.

At Patch, after eliminating the majority of stories that were repeated across multiple sites, we found not a single enterprise story. Every story was breaking news. Crime was the top subject, but at 40% of all stories — still more than double the Maryland news media overall. Education stories came next, making up 17% of what we coded, followed by local people. Local government made up 2% of stories.

IV. THE BALTIMORE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

While eight counties in Maryland have three or fewer news outlets, at the other end of the spectrum are Baltimore and Baltimore City. For the sake of clarity in this report, we are treating outlets located in the city and county as one media market, the Baltimore metro area. The study found 33 news outlets located in the Baltimore market. Together, those made up 19% of the news outlets we counted. Another 28 outlets that include some coverage of Maryland, or an additional 16% of all those we were able to analyze, are located out of state, mostly in Washington, D.C. A section on how the Washington news media cover Maryland is below.

What is the situation in Baltimore? It's worth a closer look.

Much has been said and written about the long-term decline of The Baltimore Sun, beset by changing ownership and shrinking staff — but Baltimore city and county emerge from this study as probably the most robustly covered community we found. As it happens, our study indicates that Baltimore gets more comprehensive local news coverage than the District of Columbia.

The study identified 33 news outlets in Baltimore city and county. These include seven television and radio stations offering news (four commercial TV networks in English plus Univision in Spanish). There are two Catholic publications, one Jewish and one Methodist offering significant original content (Baltimore Jewish Times is headquartered in Columbia in Howard County, but its coverage includes Baltimore city and county). There are three business and legal publications: The Daily Record, Baltimore Business Journal and I95 Business.

The city and county also boast three publications representing the tradition of the Black press in Baltimore: The Afro, the weekly Baltimore Times and Baltimore Beat.

Along with Baltimore Beat, there are three other feisty startups that probably fall more in the tradition of the smart alternative press than mainstream metro outlets — Baltimore Brew, Baltimore Fishbowl and Baltimore Post-Examiner. There is also a progressive-leaning website called The Real News Network that produces podcasts and online video, including from some prominent journalists, though its focus is not really local.

Hyperlocal neighborhood news is perhaps not as plentiful as it is in some metro areas. The study identified three hyperlocal neighborhood outlets: The Dundalk Eagle and The Avenue News (both owned by APG Chesapeake) and the East County Times, an attractive site that offers news updated almost daily for the eastern part of Baltimore County.

We found an Ethiopian site (Ethiopique), a city magazine (Baltimore Magazine), and three somewhat curious sites that are not particularly local and are not locally owned but sound local: the Baltimore Star, The Baltimore Examiner and The Baltimore Post.

Most of the headlines around Baltimore journalism, however, surround a modern take on an old-fashioned newspaper war between The Baltimore Sun and The Baltimore Banner. This battle pits a shrunken version of a once-great newspaper against a feisty, well-staffed online nonprofit.

Alden Capital, a hedge fund notorious for slashing staff at the papers it owns, recently sold The Sun to David Smith, the executive chairman of Sinclair Broadcast Group. Smith is famous for trying to press a conservative slant onto Sinclair's local broadcasting properties, insisting on must-carry conservative opinion pieces. The Banner has even alleged in its reporting that Smith is anonymously funding a lawsuit alleging corruption in the local school system, which Sinclair's local TV station, WBFF Fox45, has in turn reported on. He also is a major contributor to the mayoral campaign.

The Banner, meanwhile, was started by local hotel magnate Stewart Bainum Jr., who tried but failed to buy The Sun from Tribune Publishing before the Alden group bought it (two years before they turned around and sold it at a reported premium to Smith).

However one views these two organizations, Baltimore is now among the few major cities in the United States with what could be described as a newspaper war of competing metro dailies. The Banner is a digital-only non-profit. The Sun is now a privately owned newspaper, with a handful of local sister publications in the state that the previous owners were shrinking or shutting down.

In our snapshot coding of The Banner and The Sun, and subsequent analysis of the two outlets on additional days, we see two publications that both could be described as robust, by the frankly diminished standards of 21st-century metropolitan journalism. Both The Banner and The Sun are among the highest producers of new stories about Maryland each day of any outlet in the state. The Frederick News-Post is one of the few that would rival them, including local TV news stations. Both cover a wide range of topics.

We found a notably higher level of enterprise at The Banner, higher than The Sun and far higher than the mean across the state. (In our January analysis, The Sun had very little enterprise, whereas about a third of The Banner stories were classified as enterprise pieces.) The Banner also showed more evidence of collaboration with other news producers in the market, carrying content, for instance, from WJZ-TV and Capital News Service. In the snapshot analysis, The Banner had a somewhat wider variety of topics as well.

Then we analyzed The Sun's coverage a second time after its purchase by Smith. It had added more reader commentary to its home page. The home page also featured stories that probably would not have appeared in The Sun earlier, such as one about a Sinclair-owned Fox 45 TV personality winning an award. After the catastrophic collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge in March, both publications had copious coverage with high levels of follow-up and enterprise coverage about the crisis.

NEWS OUTLETS IN BALTIMORE CITY AND COUNTY

City, county host 33 news outlets

Baltimore Banner
Baltimore Beat
Baltimore Brew
Baltimore Business Journal
Baltimore Examiner
Baltimore Fishbowl
Baltimore Magazine
Baltimore Post
Baltimore Post Examiner
Baltimore Star
Baltimore Sun
Baltimore Times
Catholic Standard
Dundalk Eagle
East County Times
Ethiopique
I95 Business
Latin Opinion Baltimore
Maryland Daily Record
Real News Network Baltimore
Somos Baltimore Latino
The Afro Baltimore
The Avenue News
The Catholic Review
United Methodist Church Baltimore–Washington Conference
Univision
WBAL
WBAL News Radio
WBFF Fox 45 News Baltimore
WEAA
WJZ
WMAR
WYPR

Source: University of Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study

V. MARYLAND COVERAGE IN THE WASHINGTON MEDIA

One major issue in Maryland journalism is what has happened as the biggest paper in the D.C. region, The Washington Post, has become more of a national and international product since Amazon founder Jeff Bezos purchased it in 2013. Under Bezos, The Post made significant investments in hiring and digital technology (though staff has lately been cut back amid falling revenues), while reducing coverage of the D.C. suburbs — once a cornerstone of its business model.

The study finds Maryland journalism has suffered in a significant way with this shift in orientation in The Post. As noted below in the section on Prince George's County and Montgomery County, across several days of analysis, we found largely only spot news coverage of the counties in The Post, something not markedly dissimilar to what we found from local television.

The Post's retreat also poses a second question: to what extent do other Washington, D.C.-based news outlets cover events in Maryland — including radio and television outlets, and organizations focused on specialty subjects?

First, let's take what news the Washington media is covering about Maryland, starting with The Washington Post.

Online, The Post has a Maryland section. In our formal coding, we would code all the stories posted that day by an outlet. If they did not post every day, we would code the last seven stories on the site. To get an even deeper sense of The Post's coverage of Maryland, we wanted to go further, so we did our typical coding and then, a month later, we looked at two full weeks' worth of coverage in the Maryland section.

The analysis beginning on Feb. 2 found The Post was publishing roughly one Maryland story a day. Of those seven stories, five were about crime (including one about both crime and business), two about disasters and one about the resignation of the Montgomery County school superintendent.

We then went back a month later and analyzed two weeks' posting of stories. From Feb. 29 back to Feb. 12, The Post had published 18 stories on its Maryland page. Of those 18 stories, 11 were about crime (of which two were crime and business), and three about state or local government. Two were about the arts or entertainment, one an obit of a local bluegrass artist and another a feature about local residents from Virginia and Maryland facing off on "Jeopardy!" Over three weeks of coverage, we found The Post ran only two enterprise stories about Maryland.

Meanwhile, an analysis of The Washington Times newspaper, a generally conservative outlet still owned by the Unification Church, found no stories focused on Maryland.

What about local television news from Washington, D.C.?

A close look at Jan. 9 in the electronic media in Washington found a varied focus on Maryland among the D.C.-based stations.

- WUSA9, the Tegna-owned CBS affiliate, featured 12 stories on its website that day that were either about or relevant to Maryland residents. Seven of those, however, were about the Washington Commanders football team, which was looking for a new coach. One was a crime story and four were weather stories affecting the region.
- Fox-owned Fox 5 WTTG had 11 stories on its site that affected Maryland residents. Five were about weather, four about crime, one about a house fire and one was a national story.

- NBC4 had eight stories we deemed were about or might affect Maryland residents. Two involved the state government in Maryland, one was about a show at the Kennedy Center, one was about the Washington Capitals' planned move to Virginia, one on an accident involving a car crashing at the White House, two weather stories and one about how to improve one's health.
- WJLA had 15 stories that day that might have affected Maryland residents, the most of any station. Five were about weather, and five involved state or local government (such as one about new D.C. speeding laws we deemed relevant to commuters). There was a tech story, three Maryland crime stories and one about a philanthropist who was offering to outfit prep football athletes with equipment around the region.
- WTOP radio had four stories on its site we deemed might interest Maryland residents, including the D.C. council vote on fines for speeding. None of the stories that day, however, were about matters in Maryland itself.

Every one of the 50 stories from this day in the D.C. electronic media were breaking news accounts, save for two — a feature about how to improve your health and a feature about a show for kids at the Kennedy Center.

Our conclusion: As The Washington Post has shifted strategy away from local coverage to meet the potential of a growing digital audience elsewhere, the Washington TV and radio stations have not shifted their focus on their websites from their usual focus on breaking news and promoting their broadcasts. This is creating a void — which also could be an opportunity — particularly in the counties closest to D.C., and Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

VI. MONTGOMERY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTIES

Two suburban counties emerged as having substantially more media outlets in them than others, Montgomery and Prince George's. Montgomery has 17 outlets located in the county and Prince George's 14. But the numbers themselves can be deceiving. Unlike some of the smaller counties, including Somerset with its one outlet, there isn't anything like a metropolitan or even a local newspaper that exclusively covers either county. There are hyper-local sites and blogs. But the limited nature of the Washington Post and local TV coverage of these counties is striking in the data.

There are 17 outlets offering news and information located in Montgomery County, most of them hyperlocal. Seven are blogs, all but one basically the product of one person each (indeed four of them share much of their content and are operated by one person, Robert Dyer). Source of the Spring in Takoma Park and Silver Spring has a handful of contributors. Two are one-person blogs focused on county politics.

There are four outlets that focus on Montgomery County in general: MoCo360, Montgomery Community Media, the Montgomery County Sentinel and The MoCo Show.

The most robust outlet is MoCo360, an attractive news site operated by the owners of Bethesda Magazine. This online news outlet offers many of the traditional — and essential — hard news stories that once were found in daily newspapers everywhere: stories about government hiring, the county budget, local political campaigns, schools and development. In addition, MoCo360 features lively lifestyle and entertainment coverage, and an especially strong focus on local restaurants.

Another noteworthy local news source is Montgomery Community Media, a website and television operation that describes itself as an independent nonprofit “public access television and broadband media” outlet. The website is rich in daily bylined journalistic content on everything from schools to arts to content in Spanish, as well as links to community television programming. While “MYMCM,” as it is called, offers strong news coverage, the site doesn’t attempt to offer the lifestyle coverage featured in MoCo360.

The MoCo Show is a high volume digital-only outlet that focuses on breaking news and a wide range of other topics, from local restaurants and traffic to history and sports. There is less conventional government coverage than at other sites.

These three news outlets compete against one of the most venerable names in local journalism: the Montgomery County Sentinel. For 165 years a print newspaper — one where Washington Post superstar Bob Woodward got his start — The Sentinel shifted to an online-only format in 2020. The Sentinel site is an attractive one, but it is heavily laden with feature stories and does not appear to offer granular, day-to-day coverage of county news.

The news landscape in Prince George’s County is even more spotty than in its neighbor to the north. In fact, there is not one news organization that offers complete daily coverage of news events and government activity in this county of about 955,000 people.

The Prince George’s Sentinel, the sister publication to the Montgomery Sentinel, offers a hit-or-miss mixture of county news that is by no means comprehensive. The Prince George’s Post, which bills itself as a community newspaper for the county, frequently runs government press releases verbatim, with no original reporting. And as of late March, Prince George’s Community Television, which offers a weeknight news broadcast, has not published a story to its website since Aug. 14, 2022.

The county does offer a handful of hyperlocal sites. Streetcar Suburbs News, a nonprofit organization, publishes monthly newspapers in Hyattsville, College Park and Laurel. Powered by a mix of volunteer reporters and University of Maryland students, these sites offer more timely news reports on their websites. Meanwhile, The Bowie Sun — founded in 2021 by longtime journalist Catherine Hollingsworth and funded in part by the Google News Initiative — offers a close look at this suburban Washington community. And the Greenbelt News Review is published in print and online on a weekly basis and “seeks development support for an update to its website.”

The bottom line? Prince George’s County — home to a prominent county executive who is running for the U.S. Senate, and a school board whose legendary internal bickering has led to legal action and state intervention — is a patchy news desert. Its hyperlocal sites can be seen as oases — but the county as a whole lacks consistent, comprehensive news coverage.

VII. MEDIA COVERAGE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

While the study did not attempt a comprehensive analysis of coverage of the governor and state legislature in Annapolis, it did identify and take a snapshot analysis of outlets in the state that are specifically focused on state government and politics, or located in Annapolis. The study located 15 outlets in Anne Arundel County, but that number may be somewhat deceptive.⁴ For the purposes of clarity, outlets that cover state government and politics were identified as being located in the county where Annapolis is located — Anne Arundel.

What did we find in those government-focused publications?

Of Anne Arundel County's 15 publications, the study identified four that are politically focused. When it comes to capital coverage, the three main players are Maryland Matters, Maryland Reporter, and The Baltimore Sun's Capital Gazette, followed by A Miner Detail, a personal blog.

Maryland Matters, a States Newsroom nonprofit aimed at filling the gaps left by a shrinking media landscape in Annapolis, provides significant enterprise coverage focused on the impact of state policy. Maryland Reporter is slightly newsier, documenting the happenings of the state House, from individual bills to individual politicians, with coverage support from the University of Maryland's student-powered Capital News Service, which produces about half of their content. Tracing its roots back to the Maryland Gazette, one of the country's oldest papers, the Capital Gazette provides broad coverage of the state, with a lighter focus on Annapolis. A Miner Detail, a newsy but sharply opinionated blog, covers the statehouse and state politics through the lens of its editor, Ryan Miner.

Anne Arundel County also boasts notable environmental and cultural coverage of the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding region. Specifically, the Chesapeake Bay Journal reports comprehensively on environmental issues throughout the Chesapeake watershed. While Chesapeake Bay Magazine and Maryland Matters have a broader focus, they cover the watershed and surrounding communities as well.

⁴ For clarity, outlets focused specifically on state government and politics were identified as being located in the county where the state government is located.

VIII: UNDERSERVED AND SPECIALIZED AUDIENCES

The study also offers some sense of coverage of ethnic and religious communities, though our ability to conduct a content analysis on sites in other languages and on radio was limited.

The Spanish-language media the study identified was closely tied to urban centers — three organizations focused on Hispanic or Latino community concerns in Baltimore (Latin Opinion Baltimore, Somos Baltimore Latino, a Baltimore Univision station) and six in D.C. (El Pregonero, El Tiempo Latino, Washington Hispanic, Telemundo DC and a Univision station, plus an edition of the Spanish newspaper El País).

The Black press was represented by three publications in Baltimore, The Afro Baltimore edition, The Baltimore Times and Baltimore Beat. The Afro also has a separate section for Prince George’s County and a section on its website for Washington. Washington, D.C., also features The Washington Informer, a Black-owned, female-led third-generation publication that covers the D.C. community and the DMV with an even more digital-first look.

Meanwhile, Prince George’s County serves as home to an ambitious, audacious new magazine called The Intersection. “The Intersection is a part of the Black Press, which has a long tradition of serving the Black diaspora internationally and locally. The Intersection uses narrative storytelling to uplift, educate and challenge,” the site’s operators say on its website. Offering a mix of opinion and in-depth features, The Intersection is a lively magazine-style site, but it publishes stories only occasionally and doesn’t offer day-to-day coverage of the county’s Black community.

Other ethnic media can be difficult to assess. The Asian Media Initiative at the City University of New York’s Center for Community Media has identified five Asian American publications in Maryland’s Montgomery County, but links to two of the sites were broken — and none of the other sites appeared to focus on local news. However, in Baltimore, Ethiopique offers important breaking news coverage in Amharic, while Kaskad is a Russian-language newspaper.

The area also offers a robust religious press. Two diocesan publications, the Catholic Standard in D.C. and Catholic Review in Baltimore, offer newsy, comprehensive reports on local issues and events of interest to Catholics. Washington Jewish Week and the Baltimore Jewish Times, both owned by Mid-Atlantic Media, offer similar coverage for Jewish residents of those respective communities, and the Methodist Church of Baltimore and Washington, D.C., also offers a news outlet for its congregants. Meanwhile, a College Park-based site called Dar-us-Salaam began offering more regular coverage of the local Muslim community in the spring of 2024. No doubt other denominations have publications or newsletters the study did not identify. The ones we did are more visible, most likely because they began as newspapers long ago.

As for the gay and lesbian press, the Washington Blade, D.C.’s venerable LGBTQ news outlet, offers some limited coverage of the Maryland suburbs and shares some content from The Baltimore Banner. But the D.C.-based Metro Weekly largely offers feature coverage focusing on the city, and Baltimore OUTloud, that city’s gay news site, ceased publication last year and its domain name is now for sale.

IX. SIZE AND STAFFING AND NEEDS OF MARYLAND MEDIA

The study also surveyed Maryland news organizations to get insights into their journalism, staffing, finances and the challenges they face. While the total number of news outlets we tallied was 176, not all of those had levels of staffing or budgets relevant to the survey questions. Some, such as the Friends of Charles County, were Facebook groups. Others, such as East MoCo, were blogs produced by a single person. Some were part of larger organizations with more than one outlet. The Bay to Bay Group, for instance, operates three news outlets in the state. Adams, headquartered in Minneapolis, has 14 different publications in Maryland as part of its APG Chesapeake operation. The content analysis also determined that two operations in the state, Patch and Daily Voice — which list having publications in multiple communities — are more accurately categorized as two news operations, not 62 separate local ones.⁵

Thus the number of outlets that could be surveyed was 146. None of the 16 broadcast television stations covering Maryland markets or any of the commercial all-news radio stations responded to the survey. Of the remaining roughly 120 news outlets, 55 organizations representing 73 individual news outlets filled out the survey. What did we learn from them?⁶

To begin, they are highly local.

THE FOCUS OF NEWS OUTLETS IN MARYLAND

In all, 60% of the survey respondents said they had a news staff of five people or fewer. Another 22% had six to 10 news staff. Just 7% had a news staff of 11 to 20 people. Only two had newsroom staff of more than 50, The Sun and The Banner. We should note that not every organization answered this staffing question, and moreover, these totals do not include any of the commercial radio and television stations in Maryland or the District. Newsroom counts for television in particular can be difficult to compare to other media.⁷

Amid all the dire news about the financial prospects for local journalism, what's happened to the news staff of these different companies? Among survey respondents who answered this question, representing 65 outlets, just over half (51%) said their news staff had remained unchanged over the last two years. Another 29% said they had reduced their news staff. Twenty percent said their staff had grown.

What about non-news staff? The numbers are similar, but the number of reductions are smaller. In all, 19% of these operators added non-news staff and 62% held steady, while 19% suffered reductions.

5 The Daily Voice, a company based in Westport, Connecticut, which identifies 15 different Maryland communities for which it offers news and information. Similarly, New York City-based Patch identifies 49 different communities in which it offers news. The content analysis revealed a good deal of that content is shared across many, particularly adjacent, community sites. On a given day, for instance, the majority of the stories on those sites are duplicated on other sites, and some smaller communities have no content that is not replicated elsewhere. Thus we determined that Patch was effectively one news outlet with multiple sections or community pages, in much the way that newspapers once had "zoned" neighborhood sections, under the banner and supervision of one organization. We treated the Daily Voice the same.

6 This included Patch and Daily Voice, which together claim 65 outlets, but based on what we found in the content analysis we categorized each one of these as one outlet, not 65.

7 While commercial television and radio stations in the market were invited to participate in the survey, none of them chose to.

These news operators are also relatively confident about the future. When asked about what they anticipate the next year will look like for staff overall, news and non-news, eight in 10 said they expected to hold steady. Two in 10 said they expected to add staff. None said they expected reductions. (But it should be noted about 25% of respondents skipped the question.)

What about audiences? Some respondents apparently didn't know and/or didn't answer. Of those who did, most told us their digital audiences were growing. In all, 70% of respondents told us their online audiences had grown in the last 12 months. Only two respondents said it had decreased. A quarter told us it had remained the same.

More than 40% of these respondents said their audiences had increased by a small margin, 1-25%. A quarter said it had grown by 15-50% and three others, or 13%, said it had grown by more than 200%.

WHAT LOCAL NEWS OPERATORS IN MARYLAND SAY THEY NEED

The survey also asked these local news leaders about their needs during these difficult times.

The answers were not simply that people needed more reporters — though that is a priority. In all, 48% of the respondents, representing 65 outlets, listed more reporters as the most important staffing need. Meanwhile, 19% said their biggest staffing need was on the business, advertising or marketing side, while 6% said staff to help boost membership and 8% said their top priority was getting staffing help for fundraising.

The survey then went deeper on the question of needs. It asked respondents to rank from a list of possibilities from most important to least important, what the biggest gap or need their organization had. (Q17)

The responses were illuminating.

Just under half of respondents listed “we need more reporters” first. But when other needs were tallied together, they ranked higher. Many of these related the move to digital. In all, 12% ranked “we need more digital and technical skills” first and another 12% ranked they need “audience engagement” skills first. Sixteen percent also listed business skills, everything from business services to fundraising.

The study then drilled down more deeply on digital skills specifically, again asking people to prioritize a range of digital needs from top to bottom.

Just over half of respondents said “our digital presentation, web and mobile, could be better” as their greatest gap. “We struggle to track engagement and audience behavior” was next, with 15% listing it as their greatest gap. That was followed by organizations that listed a lack of data analysis and data visualization skills, followed by organizations that prioritized technical training and digital tools to make reporting more efficient.

The study then asked these newsroom leaders to put their needs in their own words.

Training was a prevalent theme: “We lack training and expertise in many digital tools,” said one.

“Also the staff time to use them efficiently.”

“We need more tools and training,” said another.

“Need more training, including AI.”

Time of course, was a theme. One respondent wrote plaintively, “Keeping up.” Another wrote, “The challenge is time management, finding the right balance between web and print productivity.”

And some talked about the challenge of being caught between a digital world and a loyal audience that is slow to adapt. “Our biggest challenge isn’t our ability to use technology, but our readers’ ability to use technology. Most of our readers are very dissatisfied with current social media and its accessibility. However, few understand how to tweak their own feeds so that content shows more often. Users also complain about social media censorship, which has become a huge problem for us. Facebook will often ‘shadow ban’ our page and intentionally reduce our reach to try and get us to purchase advertisements.”

Another newsroom leader, among other issues, told us: “Most of our existing audience is not digitally savvy and simply prefers a print paper. If there is a digital audience for our product, we are not doing much to reach and capture them.”

That sense of trying to refit the airplane in flight is palpable.

Yet some newer newsroom leaders talked about a different issue — the journalism, not the distribution. “Actually, our strength is technology. We suffer in the editorial/reporting area.”

FINANCES

The survey also queried these local news leaders about finances and budgets. We discovered that most of these operations are small. Fully 39% of respondents told us their budgets were less than \$100,000. And we did not survey the people running one person blogs or social media outlets. Again, this does not include the commercial radio and television operations.

Another 18% said their operations have budgets of \$100,000 to \$250,000. Fifteen percent have budgets from \$250,000 to \$500,000, and 13% from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Another 13% said they had budgets of more than \$1 million.

How many of these local news operations are financially solvent? Of the 45 survey respondents who answered this question, representing 61 different news outlets, the majority were indeed in the black. Fully 76% of those outlets said they were able to meet current expenses or were making a profit. But 18% told us they were not, and another 7% did not answer.

And of those respondents who are solvent, how long do they think they can stay in business with the assets and operating revenue they have now?

One told us they could survive less than two months. Another said two to six months. Three told us six months to a year. Eight told us less than two years. Most, 61%, of these respondents told us they could survive two years or more at current levels. And that understates how many news outlets are involved, because a number of these 20 respondents were part of groups with more than one outlet, representing 32 outlets in all.

NONPROFIT NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

Of the news organizations who responded to the survey, 14 identified themselves as nonprofit, and we asked some questions specifically about their funding. The majority of them (64%) began with a grant that accounted for more than a third of their entire budget. The majority of these grants were small. All but one was \$250,000 or less. And 40% of respondents said their funder does not give second grants. Three said their original biggest donor had agreed to a renewal, two said they were considering it and two others said their funder had decided not to renew.

X. THUMBNAIL PROFILES OF ALL MARYLAND'S MEDIA OUTLETS

ALLEGANY COUNTY

The Cumberland Times-News is a print newspaper and corresponding website serving Western Maryland, specifically Allegany and Garrett counties, and several counties in West Virginia. The paper includes local news reporting that spans lifestyle, high school athletics, local people and local government. It also publishes Associated Press wire copy for statewide and national coverage.

Tri-State News is a Facebook group linked to forevercumberland.com, a website hosting content for several local radio stations serving Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia (105.3, 106.1, 97.9, 106.7). The site provides brief news blurbs, mostly about local government, courts and sports. We found no writers identified.

WCBC Radio (FM 103.1) is a local radio station broadcast throughout Western Maryland, specifically the greater Cumberland area, and some parts of Allegany County. Though much of the station's content seems to be distilled from press releases, it covers a broad range of topics, including local high school football and basketball, weather, local news, crime and government. WCBC and Classic Hits 107.1 FM are both owned by The Cumberland Broadcasting Company.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

(For the purposes of identifying coverage area, Anne Arundel County includes any outlets focused on state government and politics, regardless of their publishing location)

A Miner Detail is a sharply opinionated online politics blog operated by Ryan Miner. A Miner Detail, which launched in 2015, primarily covers Maryland's statehouse and state policy. It also includes local entertainment reviews as well as critiques of individual Maryland politicians.

Attraction Magazine, founded in 1979 by University of Maryland alumna Louise Hawkins, brands itself as Maryland's "good news" magazine. Originally an insert in the Howard County News, the monthly magazine has since relocated to the Eastern Shore and expanded from Hawkins' one-woman endeavor into a staff of five. Broadly, the magazine highlights Maryland do-gooders, scheduled community events, health, food and entertainment.

The Bay Weekly is a former print weekly. CBM's Annapolis-based Bay Weekly is now an entirely digital news site and subscriber-only newsletter. Its coverage is mostly focused on arts, lifestyle and entertainment. There is also some emphasis on community events and local history within the Chesapeake Bay region, with attention paid to Anne Arundel and Calvert counties, and points beyond.

Capital Gazette is a daily print newspaper and website owned by Baltimore Sun Media. The Gazette, which connects itself to one of the nation's oldest papers, The Maryland Gazette, provides broad coverage of the state, with a lighter focus on Annapolis, Anne Arundel County and Kent Island.

Chesapeake Bay Journal is a notable free local print and online newspaper, published by Bay Journal Media. With a staff of 14 and circulation of 250,000, the Bay Journal reports comprehensively on environmental issues throughout the Chesapeake watershed. The Bay Journal is a member of the Institute for Nonprofit News. Bay Journal Media is independent and supported by grants and reader donations.

Chesapeake Bay Magazine is an independent regional magazine covering local news and people throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. Its coverage, which spans boating culture, ferries, fishing and the environment, includes a fair amount of enterprise coverage. It also hones in on Annapolis and Baltimore, specifically.

Eye on Annapolis is a hyperlocal news site focused on the state's capital city. "We will cover everything that affects our lives in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County — politics, education, religion, entertainment, crime, sports, local businesses and much more," the website says. Coverage relies heavily on event/organizational announcements, including police/crime press releases. The outlet also features brief podcasts (daily news roundups, interviews with local entrepreneurs).

Maryland Leader is a website that features curated national and international news content and is connected to Midwest Radio Network, based in Sydney, Australia. Maryland Leader is also an affiliate of Big News Network news agency, based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The site's content is primarily USA Today wire copy and does not have a local focus.

Maryland Matters is a polished nonprofit news site focused on Maryland politics and government, including significant enterprise coverage. Maryland Matters is one of a network of nonprofit news sites that have evolved in the last decade or so to fill the gap created by the decline of statehouse coverage in newspapers and television. It is now part of the States Newsroom network.

Maryland Reporter is a daily news website documenting the happenings of the statehouse, from individual bills to individual politicians. It features significant coverage support from the University of Maryland's Capital News Service, which produces about half of their content.

Naptown Scoop is a robust email newsletter founded in 2020 by engineer Ryan Sneddon dedicated to information for people in and around Annapolis. The content is mostly staff-written and focuses tightly on local people, events and some governmental news. Sneddon has said he focuses coverage around a 10-mile radius. According to a story in the digital outlet The Tilt, "by the end of 2023, Ryan says the newsletter has 17K subscribers, a 65% open rate and over \$200K in ad revenue. In the past year, the Scoop saw a 20% (increase) in subscribers and a 60% jump in revenue. Ryan also hired one full-time and four part-time employees."

Severna Park Voice, originally called the Severna Park Village Voice, was first published in 1981 by Marguerite L. Mills, grandmother of the current publisher, Dianna Lancione. Today, the Lanciones operate three publications, the Severna Park Voice, the Pasadena Voice and the Arundel Voice. The publications are 40- to-50 page monthly newspapers. The website repurposes that content online. The publishers say their "primary purpose is to be a positive influence on the community and to show the world around us the good things that are happening in Anne Arundel County." These outlets are unrelated to the Daily Voice chain that has several editions throughout Maryland.

The Duckpin is a mainstream Republican blog on Substack, largely written by writer and podcaster Brian Griffiths. In addition to offering opinion pieces from a right-leaning, non-MAGA viewpoint, the site regularly surveys local, state and federal candidates for their views on current issues.

What's Up? Annapolis is a lifestyle magazine that offers the usual smorgasbord of offerings typical to such publications, focusing on local food and recreational opportunities. In addition to a monthly magazine, What's Up offers more frequent updates on its website.

BALTIMORE CITY AND COUNTY

The Baltimore Banner is the nonprofit news site started by local hotel magnate Stuart Bainum Jr. It covers the city and surrounding areas with a robust news staff. Our content analysis revealed a wide range of coverage, a much higher than average level of enterprise and one of the highest levels of output of any outlet in the state.

Baltimore Brew is a feisty local news website full of accountability stories about local government. The Brew was started by former Washington Post reporter Fern Shen, who serves as editor and publisher, and former Baltimore Sun investigative reporter Mark Reutter is described as senior editor. The Brew describes itself this way: “A fixture in Baltimore since 2010, The Brew specializes in aggressive accountability reporting — we look at campaign cash, development deals, government spending, city services and more. Our reporting takes us beyond City Hall to city streets, including the city’s most neglected neighborhoods and vulnerable people.”

Baltimore Business Journal covers the Baltimore business community copiously with numerous stories every day about Baltimore businesses large and small. The website lists a newsroom staff of eight. The journal is an example of one part of the local news ecosystem that generally is thriving around the country.

The Baltimore Examiner is not the same publication it was when initially launched as a conservative daily in 2006 by conservative billionaire Philip Anschutz’s Clarity Media Group. Back then, The Baltimore Examiner was part of his national newspaper chain of several publications in numerous cities named “Examiner” that tried to offer a conservative slant to the news. Those still exist in San Francisco and D.C., but the Baltimore effort shuttered in 2009. The new Examiner, whose ownership is local but also harder to discern, features a fair amount of entertainment news with little connection to Baltimore and headlines like “Vincent Gardenia’s 5 Shocking Roles Reviewed” about a dead actor known for parts in films like *Moonstruck*. It received no comments from readers.

Baltimore Fishbowl is an online-only news site that describes itself this way: “Baltimore Fishbowl reports the fun, factual and sometimes controversial scoop on local schools, real estate, money and power, culture, lifestyle and community. Find daily posts Monday through Friday, longer original weekly stories, assorted columns and curated news from around the region, all accompanied by photos and video.” Some of the news content comes from other outlets, such as WYPR and a Philadelphia-based business publication called *Technical.ly* that seems to use content from a Baltimore-focused writer on a daily basis, making her an extension of the staff.

The Baltimore Post is a curation site that draws content from the local TV and radio stations, The Sun and something called the Buzz. Its site offers little about itself other than noting it is a News-Media Corporation. The Post offered no original content during the period of our analysis.

The Baltimore Post-Examiner is a locally owned site that offers contributor commentary, and cultural news and reviews. Its tabs include “news, commentary, reviews, poetry, special reports, literature, lyrics, sponsored posts” and its logo says “a little bit of everything.” It describes itself this way: “The Post-Examiner is a teaching media company where we mentor journalists with volunteers and help unemployed reporters get jobs. ... We will dive into some national and international issues as well as state issues on an occasional basis — including some state blogs if it has national importance. Our audience is a national audience — not Baltimore-specific.”

Baltimore Star describes itself as an affiliate of Big News Network, based in Dubai, and says it is published by the Midwest Radio Network based in Sydney, Australia. The online site provides RSS feeds, daily news by email and a news release-publishing service. The site also features local weather forecasts and features such as movie reviews. The online newspaper also provides global news stories and reports pertaining to international business, as well as state news from around Maryland. Most of the content is not local.

The Baltimore Times is a free weekly newspaper founded in 1986 that covers the African American community in Baltimore County. The newspaper says it circulates to 32,000 people, and its tagline is “positive stories about positive people.” The Baltimore Times was founded in November 1986 by Joy and Peter Bramble in their Baltimore home. The Brambles explain they focused coverage on positive stories as a way to counteract negative press of the African American community.

Catholic Standard is the official English-language newspaper of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Washington, D.C., sister publication to the Spanish-language *El Pregonero*. Local coverage of activities of the archbishop, Cardinal Wilton Gregory and Diocese organizations; local Catholic schools; church and Catholic University cultural events; and obituaries/memorials for priests/nuns. Some stories are translated from *El Pregonero*. Many wire stories from Catholic wire services about national/international Church-related news.

The Dundalk Eagle is a community newspaper begun in 1969. It describes itself this way: “For more than forty years, The Dundalk Eagle has brought you news and information about the Greater Dundalk area. Through good and bad times, The Eagle has remained true to its original mission of reporting items of local interest that other papers can’t or won’t.” The Eagle is part of the APG Chesapeake group of the Minnesota-based Adams publishing group.

East County Times evolved from the *Essex Times* in 1998 and currently serves much of eastern Baltimore County with the typical mix of local hard news stories, along with occasional features. “We are committed to providing timely, accurate nonpartisan news as a service to both our readers and advertisers,” says Publisher George Wilbanks on the website’s “about” page.

Ethiopique is a Baltimore-based Amharic-language online news outlet for the local Ethiopian community. The site, which is updated periodically, is heavy on breaking news coverage and “news you can use” items.

195 Business publishes a magazine and a periodically updated website focusing on the business community along the Interstate 95 corridor. “195 BUSINESS includes profiles of successful companies and the people who run them, insight from area business leaders, and connections to companies and professionals in the region,” the news outlet says on its website.

Latin Opinion Baltimore is a Spanish-language news site with a monthly print/e-edition, regularly updated website and active social media accounts; the company calls itself the Maryland-D.C. Hispanic multimedia platform, and also does marketing and consulting. Its coverage is heavy on translated press releases from local organizations, and state government and law enforcement announcements.

The Daily Record is a legal and business publication, which also features legal notices, government news and what the staff calls “Power Rankings.” “For more than 130 years, The Daily Record has been the only brand dedicated to covering business, legal and legislative news across the state of Maryland,” the publication says on its “about” page.

The Real News Network is a nonprofit that offers regular updates on local, national and world events from a left-leaning point of view. On its website, its editors say: “The Real News Network (TRNN) makes media connecting you to the movements, people and perspectives that are advancing the cause of a more just, equal and livable planet. We broaden your understanding of the issues, contexts and voices behind the news headlines.”

Somos Baltimore Latino is a local Spanish-language news and lifestyle site with focus on streaming content — podcasts, Facebook Live newscasts and YouTube videos (video versions of the podcasts) — including daily news summaries, self-help on emotional/financial issues, immigration advice and sports.

The Afro is one of the most long-standing outposts of the Black press. Founded in 1892 by John Henry Murphy Sr., a former slave, the Afro continues to offer in-depth, regular coverage of news and events of interest to Black readers. Though based in Baltimore, the Afro also covers Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.

The Avenue News is part of APG Chesapeake, the local arm of the Adams Publishing Group. This local paper has long served the Essex community of Baltimore County and shares headquarters with the Dundalk Eagle.

United Methodist Church Baltimore Washington, Conference: This is the website for the United Methodist Church in the region, but it offers more news than the typical such site, including staff-produced news stories and features of interest to congregants.

Univision is the Baltimore outlet of the global Spanish-language TV news network. With local coverage focusing on the DMV in particular, we found stories about crime, schools and elections (including information on voting in elections abroad).

WBAL is the NBC affiliate in Baltimore. Its website includes bylined original content from a digital staff.

WBAL News Radio is a distinct operation from the TV station with the same call letters. Its news website contains more and different content from the TV station with more focus on local government.

WBFF Fox 45 is Baltimore's Fox station, owned by Sinclair. It features abundant local coverage with heavy focus on crime, courts and car accidents. The website also includes some items from Sinclair's national news desk.

WEAA is a public radio station in Baltimore that offers jazz and community conversation. Its website features original bylined news and information, as well as some national news and entertainment offerings from National Public Radio.

WJZ, the CBS affiliate in Baltimore, offers regular newscasts as well as a website filled with stories about a mix of topics ranging from local government to professional sports.

WYPR is the NPR all news radio station in Baltimore. Its website includes bylined news about the city and state government. It also represents WYPF in Frederick and WPO in Ocean City.

Baltimore Beat is a Black-led, Black-controlled nonprofit newspaper and outlet that describes itself as honoring the tradition of the both Black press and the spirit of alt-weekly journalism. It describes itself as featuring reporting that focuses on community, questions power structures and prioritizes thoughtful engagement with readers. As the Beat describes itself: "We aim to serve all of Baltimore City, including those with limited internet access and those who are a part of underrepresented communities. Our organization aspires toward a more equitable, accountable and rigorous future for journalism that fully represents the stories of all our neighbors. ... We will provide journalists opportunity, demystify journalism and address harms perpetuated by pernicious, consent-manufacturing media."

Baltimore Magazine is a monthly magazine published by Rosebud Entertainment L.L.C., a company owned by Steve Geppi and led by its President Michael Teitelbaum. It is the oldest continuously published city magazine in the continental U.S. and was first printed in 1907 by the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce. In 1977, Philip Merrill's Capital-Gazette Communications purchased Baltimore from the chamber; Merrill sold the magazine to a group of investors in 1992. Geppi acquired Baltimore in 1994. In addition to the monthly print publication, Baltimore publishes daily content on baltimoremagazine.com and produces over 20 events per year. The tagline of the publication is "Inspiring Baltimore to discover more, do more and be more."

The Baltimore Sun describes itself as the largest general-circulation Maryland-based daily newspaper. During the course of this study, the paper was sold by the hedge fund Alden to David Smith, the CEO of Sinclair Broadcasting. Whatever changes the new ownership may bring are not yet fully evident. The content study found a robust level of production on a wide range of topics but a heavy focus on breaking news. The level of enterprise reporting increased with the bridge collapse in the city.

Catholic Review is an official publication of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore. The Review offers a comprehensive, multifaceted look at life in the region through a Catholic perspective. Finding the Catholic angle in everything from March Madness to the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The Review describes itself as aspiring to be more ambitious and thorough than much of the religious press, and notes that it routinely wins awards from the MDDC Press Association. The Review editor told us the publication extensively covers local news around Maryland (especially within the nine counties and Baltimore City that comprise the Archdiocese of Baltimore). It also delivers a print magazine to more than 62,000 homes 11 times a year and has more than 150,000 pageviews a month on the web.

WMAR is the ABC commercial TV news and entertainment affiliate in Baltimore. WMAR also offers a website with consistent coverage of local breaking news in the area.

CALVERT COUNTY

Calvert County Recorder is a weekly paper that is part of the APG Chesapeake group owned by Adams Publishing. The weekly print edition is augmented by a website on a shared platform with the other APG papers in Southern Maryland, though the Recorder has its own content from its sister publications and is updated more often than the print edition. The content is hyperlocal and almost all is bylined. Most of the stories are made based on announcements about local groups and people, government or police. Most of the stories carry one of two bylines, but this is a newspaper and website that has the distinct feel of a classic local weekly with offers a clear sense of community

The Calvert County Times is a print weekly magazine that is a sister publication of the St. Mary's County Times. This is hyperlocal news, almost all of it bylined, mostly based on announcements about local people, groups, government and police. The stories are mostly but not entirely produced by a single author. The site includes obituaries and calendars for both Calvert and St. Mary's counties and loads of ads for local businesses.

CAROLINE COUNTY

Caroline County, with a 2022 population of 33,433 on the Eastern Shore, has no online news outlet to call its own. The Times Record, which was owned by Adams' APG Chesapeake group, has not posted since July 2023. Readers are directed to the Easton Star Democrat, and subscribers were given automatic access to it. APG Chesapeake has a reporter assigned to cover the county half-time, and a weekly insert of the Times Record is now included in the Star Democrat for Caroline residents. Thus, while not entirely uncovered, the county by our determination no longer has its own stand-alone publication. A blog by the local economic council, which carried occasional business announcements, has not posted since November of last year. If there are other outlets emerging there, we did not find them.

CARROLL COUNTY

The Carroll County Observer is a digital news outlet that is part of a small group of news and information sites established by Scott Ewart in Howard and Carroll counties. The Observer covers local and state news, with coverage spanning education and county government, and a heavy focus on crime and policing. Though much of the information is from press releases, the site publishes a variety of content daily.

The Carroll County Times, founded in 1911 and long a freestanding publication, now serves as a section of The Baltimore Sun. The local section covers local news, spanning sports, crime, transportation and education.

Informed Carroll County is a local news site and Facebook page that focuses on government and civic affairs. Posts on the website are not bylined or identified by author and are written with a point of view. They may be press releases. It is unclear. The site posts new content every few days. But the sum effect is a sense of events and issues in the community but without the wider lens that reporting multiple sides of an issue would offer.

Maryland Muckraker is a conservative local news blog owned and run by Ethan Reese under Spectator Media LLC, his private company. The Muckraker covers local news throughout Carroll County from a conservative point of view. It regularly covers local government and education, but can range widely based on the writer's interest.

CECIL COUNTY

Cecil TV is an intriguing and unusually robust nonprofit digital television and digital news operation that covers events in the county. It's a member of the nonprofit news association called the Institute for Nonprofit News (which, among other services, assists its members in sustainability and requires members to adopt specific ethics codes for independence and funding). The site has a copious amount of local content on everything from local politics, education and music, along with how-to features. It reflects a significant level of enterprise. This is not highly visual television. Most of the content involves interviews with local people, and has the visual dynamics of public access television, but the substance is lively.

The Cecil Whig heralds itself as the oldest newspaper on the Eastern Shore and offers a clear sense of the community in the manner of a classic local newspaper. The paper is now part of APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of Adams Publishing Group, which was launched in 2014 and now owns 30 daily and more than 100 non-daily publications as well as other media in 19 states, including 15 outlets in Maryland. Adams appears to offer a notable level of local autonomy to its editors. The Whig also has a colorful local history. The Whig was founded in 1842 to promote the Whig political party by Palmer C. Ricketts, who two years later shot and killed the editor of the rival Cecil Democrat. (He was found to have shot the man in self-defense and continued publishing from his jail cell.)

CHARLES COUNTY

Friends of Charles County is a private Facebook group for those living and working in Charles County. It boasts nearly 14,000 members and describes itself as providing a forum for discussion and dispensation of local news and information, reminiscent of the app, NextDoor. The group has strict rules: only local county politics can be discussed, and posts must be community focused. It provides a lively look into local people, job opportunities, businesses and debates within Charles County.

The Maryland Independent is part of the Southern Maryland News Group. Though the website is shared on a platform with SouthernMarylandNews.com, a tab will take you to a separate publication with its own content. The content includes local crime, politics and education coverage, as well as a “community” page which provides information about local events, libraries, museums and entertainment.

The Southern Maryland Chronicle (SoMDC) is an online news website serving Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s counties, as well as southern Anne Arundel and Prince George’s counties. Their fairly robust coverage spans business, politics, entertainment, lifestyle and community events, with an especially notable “history” section focused on state history and local history and conservation projects.

Southern Maryland Online is an online news outlet that combines local police news with a community calendar. Its Maryland report tends to rely heavily on Capital News Service, the University of Maryland’s wire service, which has bureaus in Annapolis, College Park and Washington. Formed in 1996 and with a link-heavy website in the style of that era, Southern Maryland Online says: “Our mission is to provide a comprehensive resource guide, a sort of ‘one-stop shopping’ for Southern Maryland.”

DORCHESTER COUNTY

The Cambridge Spy is a local site that covers news but shows an unusual level of enterprise and skill for such a small news outlet. The Cambridge Spy is part of the Spy Community Media Fund at the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. (Likely not a coincidence, the name Spy harkens back to one of the earliest newspaper names from early 17th-century England.) The Cambridge Spy describes its mission as being “to provide communities with a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational news source to inform and engage citizens with local public affairs, the arts and regional culture.” The editorial staff box lists 24 people (shared with its two Eastern Shore sister publications, The Chestertown Spy and The Talbot Spy): four editors, one digital tech position, and the rest columnists and contributors, many of them with long civic resumes.

Dorchester Banner can trace its roots back to the Cambridge Daily Banner, one of the Eastern Shore’s oldest newspapers. It is now part of the Bay to Bay News Group owned by Independent Newsmedia, Inc., which publishes community newspapers and other publications in Arizona, Delaware and Florida, in addition to Maryland. Bay to Bay publishes seven newspapers, four in Delaware and three in Maryland — the Crisfield-Somerset County Times, the Salisbury Independent and the Dorchester Banner. They share content and a website. Since 2017, it has been a weekly publication on Thursdays. The Banner publishes a mix of local and state government news, community and business developments, and school news.

Dorchester Star, founded in 1973, is now a weekly print and online newspaper that is part of APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of the Minnesota-based Adams Publishing Group that has rapidly acquired small newspapers in Maryland and other parts of the country over the past decade. Coverage is often shared with partner sites, including the Bay Times and Record Observer, Kent County News and Star Democrat (all three are aggregated on the myeasternshore.com site) and includes a focus on local government, crime, events, schools and culture.

FREDERICK COUNTY

Emmitsburg.net describes itself as “a nonprofit Internet Source for News, Events, History, & Culture of Northern Frederick & Carroll County Md./Southern Adams County Pa.” The site, which has the look of a website from the early 2000s without photos, is topped by about a half-dozen hyperlocal news developments that one would have found in a newspaper, from city council decisions about new sewer lines to announcements of proposals about new civil war monuments. That is followed by a rich vein of content that offers a clear sense of community. The headings include Local History (including obituaries), Gardening, Thoughtful Writings (reminiscent of Reader’s Digest), and Jokes and Interesting Facts. There is a charm to Emmitsburg.net and its affiliate Woodsboro-Walkersville.net. The site also offers links to PDFs of the monthly print version, the Emmitsburg News Journal and the Woodsboro-Walkersville News Journal. These are tiny communities in Frederick County that would otherwise might have little or no hyperlocal coverage.

Frederick Magazine is a local city magazine, published monthly in print and posting one to two articles a week online, with features on local businesspeople, arts, restaurants and history. Online, it generally posts one story per week and features a sleek and glossy web design.

The Frederick News-Post, owned by Ogden Newspapers in West Virginia, is a daily publication online and publishes a print edition Monday to Friday and one weekend edition. Staff members at the paper write breaking news stories, features and sports pieces. They report on a variety of topics, including education, health, town and county government, and crime. The News-Post also has a weekly special edition, 72 Hours, that provides advanced coverage of weekend events. The News-Post is also one of few papers that still has a printing press operating in the building. It was also one of the most robust producers of daily content we found in the study, rivaling The Baltimore Sun and The Baltimore Banner.

Frederick’s Child is a local/regional parents magazine with focus on raising children, camps and other kids’ activities, neurodivergent and education issues, and area family activities. Owned by Mid-Atlantic Media, publishers of Baltimore’s Child, MetroKids and Washington Family. The Frederick’s Child print magazine is published bimonthly and distributed free in Frederick County and surrounding areas from Mt. Airy to Emmitsburg. The website posts the magazine content.

WFMD is the website hosting content for a Frederick County radio station. It mostly includes coverage of local courts and crime.

GARRETT COUNTY

Deep Creek Times, located in one of the most at-risk counties in the state, is a local site that posts press releases from community, civic and government institutions.

Garrett County Republican is a daily newspaper and website based in Clarksburg, West Virginia, and is part of WV NewsGroup. The newspaper and website includes some news from Western Maryland.

HARFORD COUNTY

Bel Air News and Views was founded by Publisher Stacey Alatzas as a local news blog in 2006 after working as a reporter and editor at newspapers in Rochester, New York, and Wilmington, Delaware. News includes press releases on local events, government meetings, school news, and local arts and entertainment. It is both a charming and an impressive example of what a sole proprietor can accomplish with a local news blog.

The Dagger is an idiosyncratic hyperlocal news and opinion site that describes itself as “the premier online source for Harford County, Maryland news since 2007 ... [that] breaks the stories readers won’t find anywhere else and hosts a lively community that drives the daily discussion of community events.” Whether that discussion is daily or not appears to depend on the topic. Rather than traditional journalism reporting, its content is made up largely of what appear to be based on county government announcements, as well as some press releases on crime and schools. It has also recently been a forum for political confrontation between the county executive and a council member, generating lively user comments, though there is a lack of transparency on sourcing of attacks.

HOWARD COUNTY

Baltimore Jewish Times offers a richly reported, frequently updated website with news of interest to Jewish readers. The publication, which is owned by Mid-Atlantic Media — a Columbia-based company that publishes special-interest magazines and newspapers throughout the Baltimore-Washington region — also prints a weekly edition with a full-page feature photograph on A1, leading to a related story inside.

Baltimore Style is another publication of Mid-Atlantic Media, a Columbia-based company that publishes special-interest magazines and newspapers throughout the Baltimore-Washington region. Baltimore Style bills itself as “the premier lifestyle magazine of the Baltimore metro area, the website offers a variety of features on local food, trends, fashion and personalities, as well as an event calendar.” A print edition is published bimonthly.

The Howard County Times, once an independently published weekly newspaper, is now part of The Baltimore Sun. The Times continues to offer a relatively rich amount of frequently updated reporting specific to Howard County, focusing on breaking news, local government, events and high school sports, among other topics.

The Business Monthly, which is owned by Whong Community Media, focuses on the coverage of business in Anne Arundel and Howard counties, as well as the area adjacent to BWI Airport. Its website, which is updated regularly, says it “fosters a positive discussion of identifying and solving problems and to recognize those who excel at enterprise and commitment to the betterment of our community.”

Outlook by the Bay is a seasonal magazine for 50+ Maryland residents, Outlook by the Bay (headquartered in Columbia) lists its focus as: “Targeting the unique needs and interests of the Bay area’s burgeoning 50+ population; bringing information to a specific audience of savvy seniors; articles spotlight travel, health, continuing education, lifestyle, finances, housing, money matters, Bay area activities, nutrition and an active lifestyle.”

KENT COUNTY

The Chestertown Spy is named for the first Chestertown newspaper, founded in 1793. This lively local news site begun in 2009 aims “to provide robust coverage of government, the arts and culture in a creative and responsible way to answer the region’s need for information. In many ways, our intention is to provide the same kind of coverage as one would find in larger, more urban markets.” It is part of a nonprofit group of three Eastern Shore online news sites (the others are The Cambridge Spy and The Talbot Spy) that share content and are part of the Spy Community Media Fund at the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. The Chestertown Spy publishes interviews with local business people, artists and educators; a number of local columnists on topics including politics and the environment; and some fiction. A note on its website also says: “The Spy Newspapers may periodically employ the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance the clarity and accuracy of our content.” The editorial staff box lists 24 people (shared with its two Eastern Shore sister publications, The Chestertown Spy and The Talbot Spy): four editors, one digital tech position and the rest columnists and contributors, many of them with long civic resumes.

Common Sense: Straight Talk for the Eastern Shore is a small local news site publishes a printable PDF newsletter every two weeks and posts its contents to the web. “Our goal is to help voters to be aware of the personal and local impact of Federal and State government decisions. We seek an America responsive to its citizens and its Constitution,” its website says. In keeping with that approach, many stories focus on politics, including environmental regulation and elections, with some political commentary. Other subjects include local history and photography.

Kent County News is a weekly print and online newspaper founded in 1793 that is APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of the Minnesota-based Adams Publishing Group that has rapidly acquired small newspapers in Maryland and other parts of the country over the past decade. Coverage is often shared with partner sites including the Dorchester Star and Bay Times and Record Observer (all three are aggregated on the myeasternshore.com site) and includes a focus on local arts, schools, culture and politics.

Kent County Crier is a small local online site that primarily posts press releases and other announcements from local organizations, focusing on arts and entertainment, nonprofits and schools. Sister site to the Chesapeake Crier. Founder Steve Atkinson writes that “there is still much work to be done” on developing the site.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Clean Slate MoCo is an interesting bloggy site focused on politics and news in Montgomery County delivered with a point of view. The plurality of posts are identified as being produced by the site itself, with no byline, but a few others are named as “major contributors with the number of posts they have produced tallied up.” The site might be described as a blog in the tradition of classic opinion magazine journalism. A recent series by major contributor Greg Visscher, for instance, was entitled “MOCO’s Socialism is for the Rich,” and included a part called “The Way Out.” The site invites contributions and notes that its principle values are “that your life in Montgomery County is one in which public servants actually serve you. That they enable you to make your life better; that differences in our community should exist and that when your voice is different it deserves to be equally heard and represented; that people should always come before politics; that our community belongs to us, not to elected officials, institutions or political platforms.”

East MoCo is part of blogger Robert Dyer’s network of blog sites about Montgomery Country. This one contains breaking news items about Silver Spring, Wheaton and the East County.

Greater Olney News is a news site and Facebook group covering the greater Olney area, though the site suggests it occasionally provides a print product distributed at local grocery stores and libraries. Much of the coverage is based on information drawn from press releases, with a focus on police/crime and the Montgomery County school district. The majority of their content is produced by Judith Hruz, the publication's editor.

Just Up The Pike is a blog by Dan Reed about design, planning and development issues in and around Silver Spring.

MoCo360 is a sleek and robust local news site. As it tells the story: "In the spring of 2021, Jillian and Scott Copeland acquired Bethesda Magazine and Bethesda Beat from founders Susan and Steve Hull." The Hulls had begun the magazine in 2004 and the Bethesda Beat daily website in 2014. "The Copelands envision one news and lifestyle brand that showcases all the content that matters — from timely news to engaging features and the fun, heart-warming stories that weave together the fabric of our community." The staff box lists a diverse editorial team of 10 people, a sales and ad team of seven, and a marketing and audience engagement team of five.

The MoCo Show is a Montgomery County news blog covering business, government, politics, restaurants, arts and crime, with multiple posts per day. "The MoCoShow was created by 'Mr. MoCo' Alex T (Alex Tsironis) to be the fastest, easiest and most fun way to get your Montgomery County information," the website says on its "about" page. "The name came about because The MoCo Show started as a podcast back in 2015."

Moderately MOCO: This local news blog, written by Jason Makstein, is a combination of documents from the county posted on the site, blog postings and occasional commentary pieces by its founder. Makstein describes his blog as offering "news, discussion and analysis for Montgomery County, Maryland, without negativity, hate or extremism. With a focus on local schools especially but also local government, the environment and community support."

Monocacy Monocle is a local newspaper covering the Poolesville area published monthly in print/PDF only, with coverage of local government, high school sports, events and deaths. It is headquartered in Barnesville, population 144.

Montgomery Perspective is a blog about local Montgomery County politics and to a lesser extent state politics by Adam Pagnucco, a former union researcher and staffer who was also chief of staff to a county council member. The site is well organized, and Pagnucco posts almost every day, sometimes multiple times a day, offering his views and occasionally those of guest posters.

My MC Media (Montgomery Community Media) describes itself as an independent nonprofit "public access tele-vision and broadband media" outlet. The website is rich in daily bylined journalistic content on everything from schools to arts to content in Spanish, as well as links to community television programming.

Radio America, WACA, is a Spanish-language news talk AM radio station in Wheaton owned by Alejandro Carrasco, who is also its primary on-air personality, hosting a 4-hour show weekday mornings. The station features two locally produced newscasts per day and a wide range of programming, with shows focusing on health, immigration, finance and local issues in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, including a weekly call-in show on the Montgomery County Council.

Robert Dyer at Bethesda Row is part of blogger Robert Dyer's network of five sites about Montgomery Country. This one contains breaking news items about downtown Bethesda's burgeoning commercial and residential areas, with pictures of store openings, construction and more. Dyer posts something frequently, often a picture with a caption or an incremental update, if not always daily.

Rockville Nights is another part of blogger Robert Dyer’s network of five sites about Montgomery County. This one contains breaking news items about Rockville and promises items about breaking news as well as politics and nightlife. Store openings and closings, spot crime and entertainment calendar items can be found here. Dyer posts often, if not quite daily.

Sam Eig is a local news blog focusing heavily on local businesses, with some government and politics, covering Gaithersburg and northern Montgomery County. It’s a partner site to the Rockville Nights blog.

Source of the Spring is a news blog serving Tacoma Park and Silver Spring. It was launched in 2016 with the express purpose of trying to fill a gap left by The Washington Post’s closure of its suburban Gazette newspapers covering those communities and its pullback from local coverage in the paper itself.

The Montgomery County Sentinel offered a print newspaper for 165 years until 2020, but now it is a web-only outlet. Once a comprehensive daily covering the county, The Sentinel now is heavy on feature coverage: it no longer provides granular coverage of county government or other local news.

WKYS is the home page of this Montgomery County-based music station, 93.8, and it contains journalistic content, including a section of originally produced local news, written by staff, some of it bylined and others identified as “DMV staff.”

PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY

The Bowie Sun biweekly was founded by journalist Catherine Hollingsworth in 2021 with a micro-grant from the Google News Initiative. The site says The Sun was launched out of a sense of urgency after a hedge fund closed the 41-year-old Bowie Blade-News. A longtime resident of Prince George’s County, Hollingsworth is a former Bowie Star reporter and past volunteer for local organizations. The Sun covers Bowie City Hall, local activism and area events. The site notes: “We clearly label news, opinion and advertising. We do not publish press releases verbatim. We give news bylines to independent reporters, not PR professionals or politicians. We identify our staff and sources and provide a valid reason why a source cannot be named. We do not pay or accept payment for interviews. ... The Bowie Sun prioritizes stories that involve a person or organization in greater Bowie. Bowie’s boundaries can seem fuzzy to some residents who have a Bowie mailing address but technically live outside the city limits. Our coverage area includes some of the outskirts: Fairwood, Glenn Dale, Mitchellville, Woodmore and Queen Anne.”

Capital News Service is the statewide news service run by the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism. With bureaus in Annapolis, Washington and College Park, CNS offers a wide variety of student-written stories, including comprehensive coverage of the Maryland General Assembly session each year. In addition to its wire service, CNS publishes all its work on its website. CNS also publishes projects produced by the Local News Network, the college’s effort to support local news outlets statewide.

College Park Here & Now is part of the Streetcar Suburbs Publishing Inc., a nonprofit corporation that publishes three monthly newspapers, also including the Hyattsville Life & Times and The Laurel Independent. The company provides hyperlocal news and information for communities along the Route 1 corridor. The combined website of the three papers, StreetcarSuburbs.News, provides more updated coverage of these same communities. The content is hyperlocal and new stories are posted intermittently.

Greenbelt News Review is a weekly paper established in 1937 and published by the Greenbelt Cooperative Publishing Association, Inc. It is home-delivered to most Greenbelt residents. It offers coverage of local politics, schools, arts and events, and its website is updated weekly with content from the print version.

Greenbelt Online is a nonprofit local news site with bloggy posts on local events, government, arts and the environment. The site is also tracking the proposal to move the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt. Stories are presented in blog format.

Hyattsville Life & Times is also part of the Streetcar Suburbs Publishing Inc., a nonprofit corporation that publishes three monthly newspapers, also including College Park Here & Now, and The Laurel Independent. The company provides hyperlocal news and information for communities along the Route 1 corridor. The combined website of the three papers, StreetcarSuburbs.News, provides more updated coverage of these same communities. The content is hyperlocal and new stories are posted intermittently.

The Hyattsville Wire is an energetic hyperlocal news site founded by a local husband and wife that mostly offers what it calls “lifestyle news” for Woodridge, D.C., Mount Rainier, Brentwood, Hyattsville, Riverdale Park, University Park, College Park, Greenbelt and the greater Route 1 corridor in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. It focuses on dining, arts and culture, history, urban planning, and real estate and development.

Intersection Magazine is a Black-led local news organization that reports on Prince George’s County, specifically South County. It describes itself as part of the historic Black press, but it represents a new, more digitally oriented addition to the tradition. The Intersection says it reports on “the convergence of tech, religion, and local politics.” As the site describes itself, “Our journalism includes narrative-style reporting, movement and solutions journalism. The Intersection operates with the assumption that religion plays a role in Black people — and other people of color — life experiences. Whenever mentioned by the interviewer, we will incorporate such experiences. Additionally, The Intersection upholds journalistic values: integrity, fairness, accountability and to do no harm.”

The Laurel Independent is part of the Streetcar Suburbs Publishing Inc., a nonprofit corporation that publishes three monthly newspapers, including the Hyattsville Life & Times and College Park Here & Now. The company provides hyperlocal news and information for communities along the Route 1 corridor. The combined website of the three papers, StreetcarSuburbs.News, provides more updated coverage of these same communities. The content is hyperlocal and new stories are posted intermittently.

Laurel Leader was a newspaper that covered Prince George’s City and was owned by The Baltimore Sun company. It is now defunct.

The Prince George’s Post is a weekly that offers a mix of Capital News Service stories and press releases published verbatim. It does not offer comprehensive, timely and independent coverage of local government and events.

The Prince George’s Sentinel, like its sister publication — the Montgomery County Sentinel — offers an attractive website. But also like its sibling, the Prince George’s Sentinel is heavy on features coverage and does not offer comprehensive, daily coverage of county government or events.

Prince George’s Suite Magazine and Media is a lifestyle publication that publishes four times per year. At its launch in 2005, the magazine was mailed to the homes of nearly 12,000 higher-income residents, business leaders and civic leaders in the county. Today, it says it reaches nearly 30,000 readers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The Afro Prince George's County is one of the local editions of one of America's most venerable examples of the traditional Black press. What's more, The Afro's Prince George's County edition offers an substantially different mix of stories than the local pages of the Baltimore and Washington editions, with a heavy emphasis on hard news and features from the county.

The Enquirer Gazette is a weekly newspaper in Upper Marlboro. Part of the Southern Maryland News Group — which is part of Adams publishing's APG Chesapeake — it features a frequently updated website, many local obituaries and some content from sister publications.

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

Kent Island Bay Times and Record Observer is a weekly print and online newspaper and the sister publication to the Kent County Times. It is part of APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of the Minnesota-based Adams Publishing Group. Its content is often shared with partner sites, including the Times and Dorchester Star and (all three are aggregated on the myeasternshore.com site). Coverage is a mix of local arts, schools, history and politics.

Queen Anne's County TV is a public access TV station based in Centreville, operating under the county government. Content is available on cable, the QACTV website, YouTube and Facebook, and includes local government meetings and short videos on local events. "QACTV makes movies about local events, businesses, local travel, shopping, food and local government news from around Queen Anne's County, Maryland," the website says.

Shore Update is a direct mail newspaper and website containing hyperlocal news about Queen Anne's County. The site is updated daily and consists mostly of press releases from various community institutions, including obituaries from funeral homes, a local calendar of events, coupons, pictures of pets for adoption locally and a crime blotter supplied by the sheriff's office.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

The Lexington Park Leader describes itself as "an online magazine updating daily with news of the defense industry, government contracting and the communities surrounding NAS [Naval Air Station]: Patuxent River, MD." Coverage focuses on a range of defense contracting issues and base-related events, as well as news from local businesses and community organizations. The site also publishes fiction ebooks by local authors.

SOMDWX News is a local news site based in Leonardtown started in 2009 as a Twitter feed focusing on weather. It continues to post to Twitter/X and also to a blog and to a Facebook page with over 80,000 followers. Weather remains the central focus, with detailed daily forecasts. "During Major Weather Events in Southern Maryland, we provide nonstop updates, including updates on news events." The feeds also include police press releases and local ads.

St. Mary's County Times is a print weekly magazine that is a sister publication of the Calvert County Times. This is hyperlocal news, almost all of it bylined, mostly based on announcements about local people, groups, government and police. The stories are mostly but not entirely produced by a single author. The site includes obituaries and calendars for both Calvert and St. Mary's counties and loads of ads for local businesses.

Southern Maryland News Net was launched in 2011. The online site adapts press releases from a range of local institutions. The topic tabs include Traffic Cameras, Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue, Weather and Community and more.

The BayNet is a digital news site launched in the early 2000s and based in California, Maryland. The BayNet covers a broad range of topics including crime and accidents, schools and government, mostly publishing press releases and announcements from various institutions around Southern Maryland. The origin of most press releases is clearly identified. A good deal of other content is attributed to “site coordinator.” The site posts large amounts of content daily.

The Enterprise is a weekly newspaper based in California, Maryland, founded in 1883, serving St. Mary’s County. The paper is part of the Southern Maryland News group owned by APG Chesapeake, a subsidiary of the Minnesota-based Adams Publishing Group. The frequently updated website shares content with sister publications the Maryland Independent, Calvert Recorder and Enquirer Gazette. It includes staff coverage of high school sports, business developments, local government and obituaries.

SOMERSET COUNTY

The Crisfield-Somerset County Times is a weekly newspaper that has been published since 1889. It is part of the Bay to Bay News Group owned by Independent Newsmedia, Inc., which publishes community newspapers and other publications in Arizona, Delaware and Florida, in addition to Maryland. Bay to Bay publishes seven newspapers, four in Delaware and three in Maryland — The Times, the Salisbury Independent and the Dorchester Banner. They share content. The Times publishes a mix of local and state government news, community and business developments, and school news.

TALBOT COUNTY

The Chesapeake Crier is an online organization that curates local news on arts and entertainment, recreation, education, business and crime on the upper Delmarva Peninsula. In Maryland, the main focus is on the counties of Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot. The Crier primarily publishes press releases and flyers, along with some original posts. Started in 2015 as the ChesaDel Crier, it was renamed in 2023.

Delmarva Farmer is a newspaper published by Easton-based American Farm Publications Inc., along with sister paper New Jersey Farmer. “Our publications are commonly referred to as ‘the farmer’s bible,’ providing our subscribers with up-to-date information to help them do business and remain viable,” the website says. Coverage includes a range of stories on agriculture-related issues from Maryland, Delaware and Virginia, along with some columns and commentary. Offered only in print and in an e-edition, with no website updates. Publication schedule is irregular — typically once or twice a month, sometimes more.

The Easton Star Democrat, part of Adams-owned APG Chesapeake, is a daily newspaper and frequently updated news website serving Talbot County on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. The Star Democrat continues to publish a variety of local news content covering government, education, high school sports and events. Unusual compared to many such news outlets, the Star Democrat also occasionally features impressive enterprise stories.

The Talbot Spy is an engaging nonprofit local news site based in Easton that offers a diverse range of content. Part of the Spy Community Media Fund at the Mid-Shore Community Foundation, it has two sister sites, the Chestertown Spy and Cambridge Spy; the three sites share content. Coverage includes video interviews with local businesspeople, public officials and artists; columns focusing on the environment and politics; and personal essays. A note on its website also says: “The Spy Newspapers may periodically employ the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance the clarity and accuracy of our content.” The editorial staff box lists 24 people (shared with its two Eastern Shore sister publications, The Chestertown Spy and The Talbot Spy): four editors, one digital tech position and the rest columnists and contributors, many of them with long civic resumes.

The Tidewater Times appears to have been published since 1952 by the local chamber of commerce. The site says it “was established in 1952 as a specialized monthly magazine which would appeal to the tourist, the prospective land buyer and others for whom the Eastern Shore has a special allure.” The publication uses a regular stable of feature writers. Distribution covers an area including Dorchester, Talbot, Caroline, Queen Anne’s and Kent counties.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Hagerstown Herald Mail is a daily print and online newspaper owned by Gannett Co. Inc. The Hagerstown Herald-Mail continues to offer locally produced, daily hard news and feature stories about life in Washington County and other parts of Western Maryland. High school sports tend to receive particularly thorough coverage.

The Hancock News is a family-owned local newspaper founded in 1914 and “considered the state’s smallest weekly paper. It serves readers in Hancock [Maryland], Berkeley Springs [West Virginia], and Fulton County, Pennsylvania, and beyond.” It is the sister publication to the Morgan Messenger in Berkeley Springs. The paper covers schools, sports and police reports with a heavy reliance on announcements/press releases.

Radio Free Hub City is based in Boonsboro, a town of fewer than 4,000 residents in Washington County, Radio Free Hub City began as an internet radio station. Its owners say: “We originally started as an entertainment distribution platform, and never imagined that residents would begin to turn to us for their local news. But here we are, providing fresh, unique coverage of local news topics important to the area.” The site now provides through coverage of local government, crime and news events.

WICOMICO COUNTY

DelmarvaNow is the frequently updated online version of the Salisbury Daily Times, a daily newspaper based in that Wicomico County community. Owned by Gannett Co. Inc., Delmarva Now continues to offer a mix of local news content focusing on government, schools, events and high school sports.

Delmarva Public Radio WESM is the public radio station for the Eastern Shore serving Maryland and Delaware, WESM also offers a website with locally produced news stories covering local government, events and people.

Eastern Shore Undercover was started by local residents during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to what they saw as a paucity of local news coverage. Eastern Shore Undercover offers a variety of stories, with a strong focus on crime coverage. “We are not like a news channel on TV and aren’t smart enough to be newspaper writers. We are simply members of the community that tell you what is happening and do it in a much quicker time frame,” the website’s founders say, adding: “We are a pro-police page.”

Salisbury Independent was started by Greg Bassett, the late former editor of the Salisbury Daily Times. The Salisbury Independent is part of the Bay to Bay News group of regional news outlets. The Independent offers a frequently updated mix of hard news stories about local government, people and events.

Telemundo Delmarva is a local Spanish-language TV news site (WOBD-LC), one of seven on the Delmarva Peninsula owned by Draper Media, and affiliated with the NBC Universal Telemundo chain. Based in Milton, Delaware, the site shares content with Draper-owned local NBC affiliate CoastTV News. The principal focus is on Delaware communities; but there is some coverage of local government/issues in Maryland Eastern Shore/beach communities.

The Talk of Delmarva is a news, talk and sports radio station for the Delmarva region. The Talk of Delmarva's website offers a striking daily flow of locally produced news that is unusual for most news, talk and sports radio outlets.

The Tidewater Trader is a "penny saver" publication based in Wicomico County that includes ads and coupons.

WBOC is the CBS affiliate in Salisbury, in Wicomico County, offers a regularly updated selection of locally produced news stories on its website as well as local news broadcasts.

WMDT is the ABC affiliate in the Delmarva region of Maryland and Delaware offers regular newscasts as well as a website with locally produced news content.

WRDE Coast TV is the NBC affiliate for the Delmarva area. Headquartered in Delaware, it covers news for the coastal area of Maryland as well.

WORCESTER COUNTY

The Bayside Gazette is a weekly print newspaper and corresponding website covering Berlin, Ocean Pines and Ocean City. The site's coverage largely focuses on local news, entertainment, events and people, with the occasional hard-hitting enterprise piece focused on the impact of local and state government. They are published by Flag Publications, Inc., which also owns sister publication OC Today-Dispatch.

The Maryland Coast Dispatch, founded in 1984, also referred to as "The Dispatch" was a weekly print newspaper and corresponding website that covers Ocean City and the Eastern Shore. The Dispatch reports on a broad range of local news topics, including elections and legislation, lifestyle, people and crime. The site also features opinion pieces, and a segment called "Vanishing Ocean City," which focuses on snapshots from the city's history. On Feb. 2, 2024, The Dispatch merged with Ocean City Today, its previous competitor of 30 years, under the name OC Today-Dispatch.

Ocean City Today, founded in 1993, was a free weekly print newspaper and corresponding website that covered Ocean City and the Eastern Shore. Ocean City Today reported on a broad range of local news topics, including elections and legislation, lifestyle, people and crime. On Feb. 2, 2024, Ocean City Today merged with The Dispatch, its previous competitor of 30 years, under the name OC Today-Dispatch. They are published by Flag Publications, Inc., which also owns sister publication the Bayside Gazette.

Oceanpinesforum.com is a website that serves as the public forum for Ocean Pines, a planned waterfront community of 8,000 homes and the second-largest homeowners' association in Maryland. The forum allows residents to share personal photography and celebrate community events. On the message board, residents can discuss topics of relevance from street closures and a nearby highway robbery to the pros and cons of TikTok.

Dispatch Ocean City Blogs. All the content on oceancityblogs.com is from the Maryland Coast Dispatch. It functions more like a “wire” than a sister publication or contributor.

REGIONAL/OUT OF STATE

The Daily Dispatch is an electronic newsletter produced by the Western Fire Chiefs Association, the newsletter distributed each weekday with news about firefighting. The Daily Dispatch site says it “recognized by all seven U.S. Divisions of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the DD is distributed to thousands of fire service members at all levels and ranks.”

The Daily Voice is a Westport, Connecticut-based hyperlocal news platform owned and run by Cantata, LLC, with news sites in seven Northeastern states — 13 in Maryland. “We bridge the ‘news desert’ between national and hyperlocal, covering town, city, county and state,” the company’s website says. Our content analysis found that in Maryland, this highly algorithmic network of sites could more accurately be described as one operation with different section fronts. A majority of its content — multiple stories per day — was shared across neighboring sites. Coverage was overwhelmingly spot news crime and accident stories — higher here than on any outlet we analyzed. The site also publishes some local human interest stories (though these too tended to be crime and accident-related), along with weather stories.

DC Military has operated in the D.C. Metropolitan area for over four decades. It is owned by APG Chesapeake, based out of Easton, Maryland. DC Military currently has a wide range of different publications, including: At Ease, a monthly military lifestyle magazine distributed at installations and other various businesses throughout the DMV, and PAX River Press, a monthly news magazine for Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Lexington Park. This replaced Tester, which was the base newspaper that printed weekly until May 2021. Other DC Military publications include The Proof, a quarterly news magazine for Aberdeen Proving Ground; Pentagon Magazine, a quarterly magazine for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, the Pentagon and Fort McNair. This replaced what once was a weekly newspaper called Pentagon. DC Military also produces a weekly newspaper for southern Prince George’s County and Joint Base Andrews called The Enquirer-Gazette. It is free to pick up on base but requires a subscription otherwise. DC Military also produces several annual installations or regional guides.

DC News Now describes itself as providing more than 67 hours of local news programming each week as an independent broadcast news station and a CW Network affiliate. “You also will find our content 24/7 through our digital and social platforms, including DCNewsNow.com. Going beyond the Beltway to cover the entire DMV region, DC News Now has five locations that include the main office in Washington, D.C., and satellite bureaus in Frederick, Hagerstown and Lanham, Maryland, and Chantilly, Virginia. DC News Now is committed to serving the DMV community through storytelling, weather coverage for the region.” DC News Now and DCW50 are owned by Nexstar Media Group, Inc., America’s largest local television and media company.

DCist is the digital home for WAMU, the public radio station in the District licensed by American University. Faced with budget shortfalls, the station recently all but shut down this innovative operation, which covered culture and the arts, and had a younger, more digital feel than the rest of WAMU.

El Pais is a Madrid newspaper and online news site owned by the Spanish conglomerate PRISA. Global coverage, including state by state in the United States. The Maryland stories we encountered were all from AP.

El Pregonero is the official Spanish-language newspaper of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Washington, D.C.; sister publication to the English-language Catholic Standard. Local coverage of/commentary by Archbishop Cardinal Wllton Gregory; Salvadoran immigrant community churches; tax season preparation; memorials to local priests. Many wire stories from Catholic wire services about national and international Church-related news.

El Tiempo Latino is a free weekly newspaper based in Washington, D.C., covering national and local issues related to Latino communities. Website updated regularly. It includes coverage of local government in the DMV and features about the region.

Fox 5 DC is the Sinclair-owned Fox affiliate in Washington, D.C. It has a slightly edgy, even pugnacious quality on air, but its website is a fairly conventional TV website, offering some breaking news but heavily oriented toward broadcast.

Garrett County News, technically located in West Virginia, is now a Facebook page that includes news and information about Garrett County in Western Maryland, the page is updated every few hours with new content, contributed and curated.

Las Américas Newspaper is a Washington, D.C.-based weekly newspaper and website that features a mix of international, national and regional news stories from wire copy, with some emphasis on Latin American countries and U.S. immigrants, though most stories are general interest. Many stories on the home page date to 2018-19. The home page has prominent verticals for Maryland, Virginia, D.C. local news, but the most recent stories on them are from 2018, indicating no local coverage since then.

LocalNews1.org is a site based in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, that covers counties in Western Maryland. Here is how the site describes itself: “LocalNews1.org brings you real, verified news from communities in SE Franklin & NE Washington Counties. We cover stories about businesses, nonprofits, the schools and school sports, churches, clubs, municipalities ... everything local. But we are not just another media company. LocalNews1.org was founded by a group of local residents who saw a need for trusted, vetted news in their community. They got together and invested their time and money into creating a platform for distributing community happenings. They recruited a very small, experienced community-minded staff focused on providing not only the news you need to know, but also the GOOD NEWS from around the region. We are the one place you can go to get vetted, accurate and timely news all in one place. Though we have a social media presence, we are not social media.”

Metro Weekly describes itself as Washington, D.C.'s LGBTQ magazine. It includes coverage of the arts, food and health, local DMV news, clublife, weather and business.

NBC4 is the NBC Affiliate in Washington, D.C. In addition to a full broadcast day, its website had eight stories that might relate to Maryland, if one includes weather and such matters as stories about the presidential election generally. The two stories among those that concerned events occurring in Maryland involved a car crash and another about the Maryland governor signing a bill about artificial intelligence.

Patch in Maryland is part of the network of Patch news sites created by AOL and later spun off to a company called Hale Global. It now operates around the country. Patch claims to be in 49 markets in Maryland. Our content analysis, however, found that most of these sites contained mostly duplicated stories from neighboring towns and only one or two original stories from the past week. Some Maryland Patch sites contained no content that was specific to that city or original to that site. For this reason, we are describing Patch as a single news organization rather than many different outlets in the state.

Shore News Network is a New Jersey-based news site with a Maryland section. Shore News Network features bylined stories but most of the Maryland news is from the crime blotter.

Stacker Maryland is an out-of-state, highly algorithmic operation. Stacker Maryland is part of the Stacker media network, which describes itself as “the first decentralized, data-driven newsroom creating data-centric journalism.” Stacker claims it uses various technologies to comb data sets each day to produce 20 stories that it distributes. The result are stories such as how much gas prices have risen in the last week, what jobs look like in the market 150 years earlier and where refugees entering Maryland are arriving from.

Telemundo 44 Washington DC is a Spanish-language TV news outlet in Washington, D.C. WZDC-CD, is part of the Telemundo network and owned by NBC Universal. It is the partner organization to NBC4 Washington, WRC-TV, and the two share newscasting facilities and some content. Telemundo 44 broadcasts 10 hours of newscasts each week. Coverage focuses on crime, schools and immigration-related issues.

The Washington Blade, one of the nation’s oldest and most respected LGBTQ+ news outlets, offers in-depth coverage of Maryland issues of interest to gay, lesbian, transgender and queer readers. Recent stories examined Moms for Liberty’s book-banning efforts in two Maryland school districts and a profile of Del. Joe Vogel, a gay Marylander now running for Congress.

Washington Hispanic is the local Spanish-language newspaper serving the Washington, D.C. area, based in Silver Spring. Main site focuses broadly on lifestyle stories; Maryland stories focus on crime, state and local government.

The Washington Informer is a Black, woman-owned multimedia news organization serving the African Americans in the DMV. It declares: “We are three generations strong — and have 59 years of delivering accurate, timely, need-to-know information that has built an established trust among our audience.” The site is attractive and transparent, with every staff member named and featured in photographs, something we did not often find in the study.

Washington Jewish Week is part of the Mid-Atlantic Media group, which also publishes Baltimore’s Child, Baltimore Jewish Times, Baltimore Style, Consumer’s Eye Magazine, Frederick’s Child, Home Services Magazine, Jewish Exponent, MetroKids, Montgomery Magazine and Washington Family Magazine. The site is rich in content, with news from everything from events in Israel to local arts and culture to activities at local synagogues, a full calendar of events and even Torah commentary. Technically based in Columbia, in Howard County, we’ve listed the Washington Jewish Week in D.C. because it is more than merely a page of content of the Baltimore Jewish Week.

The Washington Post is the region’s largest news organization. The Post’s overall/primary news focus is on the U.S. government, national and international coverage. As The Post in the last decade has oriented coverage to satisfy an increasingly national and international audience, coverage of the region, including the Maryland suburbs, has scaled back. The implications of that echo throughout this study.

The Washington Times is a conservative daily newspaper published in Washington, D.C. It covers general-interest topics with an emphasis on national politics. The paper was founded in 1982 by Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon, and it was owned until 2010 by News World Communications, an international media conglomerate founded by Moon. It is currently owned by Operations Holdings, which is a part of the Unification Church movement. Our content analysis revealed no Maryland-specific content on the days we examined.

Washingtonian Magazine is a robust and classic city magazine in the style developed years ago by Clay Felker, the founder of New York magazine. It has transitioned to a website that is interactive and far more searchable and useful than simply hunting for past editions of the print magazine and posts new content almost daily.

WJLA is the ABC affiliate in Washington, D.C. It airs a full range of TV newscasts each day and its website had more original digital content than many other stations. We found 13 stories that might be relevant to Maryland residents on its site, including nine that were specifically about events in Maryland.

WTOP is the All News Radio in Washington, D.C., and ranks as one of the more robust all-news commercial stations in the country. On the days we examined, its orientation was heavily focused on the District rather than Maryland. The stories relevant to Marylanders regarded such things as changing the fees for speeding tickets that might affect Maryland commuters.

WUSA9 is the CBS affiliate commercial TV station in Washington, D.C., owned by Tegna, which used to be part of the Gannett newspaper company. In addition to a full broadcast day, it posts digital content to its website. All of the content we coded as relevant to Marylanders was not specifically about Maryland news itself but instead involved stories that might affect them, such as weather, news about the Washington Commanders football club or the presidential election.

XI. ABOUT THE STUDY

The Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study consisted of three distinct parts:

1. **Landscape assessment:** First, in 2023, we tried to identify every outlet in or near the state that produced news and information about events in or relevant to Maryland residents. (Thus a story about a D.C. hockey team potentially moving to Virginia, given that it drew fans from Maryland, was considered of interest to Maryland residents.) This was a wide list that did not involve more than a quick glance at sites. The second stage of the assessment involved a researcher looking over each site to see if it contained original content or merely repurposed and curated other people's material. A site that did not produce its own material would be included in the thumbnails at the bottom of the report but not be part of the content analysis.
2. **Content Analysis:** Researchers in early 2024 conducted a content analysis of every site in or around Maryland that featured Maryland news. The content analysis involved 156 outlets. Each was coded for a day using a simple codebook designed to identify the:
 - *headline of each original story* (wire was excluded);
 - *two main topics each story was about:* a story about a city council might also touch on infrastructure or taxes, for instance, but simple fire might have only one topic;
 - *author:* was it a bylined staffer, an unnamed staffer, a press release, a community contributor;
 - *story type:* It might be news, enterprise or opinion. News is a story triggered by an event or announcement external to the newsroom. Enterprise is any story in which the idea came from within the newsroom. Hence enterprise could be anything from a simple human-interest feature story to a follow-up piece about a news event or something as large as a major series or investigative piece. The key was that there was no specific news event triggering the story. It was triggered by the imagination of the newsroom. At The

Chestertown Spy, for instance, a weekly Zoom call with the police chief to discuss crime in town was coded as enterprise. Opinion pieces were letters to the editor or columns that were strictly opinion. Analysis pieces that discussed the implications of events (which were rare) were enterprise.

- Intercoder reliability testing was conducted through three principal means:
 - Group training of the five-person coding team.
 - Jointly coding certain stories until we reached more than 95% agreement.
 - Coding on the same day of the 15 Daily Voice sites exceeded 95% agreement and identified that all but 78 of the 238 stories coded were actually the same stories.
 - We also had a rule that if anyone on the coding team was unsure of a code they would send a group email and we would form consensus on the decision.
 - Finally, data cleaning allowed a final researcher to compare the topic variable to be checked against the headline of each story.
- The content analysis was conducted on sites in January and February 2024. For a detailed account of the rules followed, see the Content Analysis Codebook in Appendix D.
- To standardize the coding data, we created dropdown systems for each variable that only allowed for certain entries. These options were listed in the codebook with their meanings. Using the googlesheets4 R package, we read the spreadsheets for all of the stories and all of the papers into R Studio to complete data analysis. We re-checked the data for cleanliness and ensured that all of the stories had a matching publication. We also removed straggler duplicated stories from the manual checks and any rows that did not contain relevant content. Then, we merged the datasets so that each story also had information about each publication, including the medium it was published in, what county it resides in, what area it covers and how often it publishes. Using the group_by(), count() and mutate() functions, we looked at the stories and publications by various categories.

3. **A Comprehensive Survey of Local News Operators:** The survey, which was conducted in the winter of 2023-24 and can be found in the appendices, asked newsroom leaders of local news outlets in Maryland about everything from their budgeting and staffing, their greatest needs to their editorial focus. The survey was designed to identify additional outlets that respondents considered relevant in their communities and helped us surface neighborhood listservs, Facebook pages and newsletters that we might otherwise have missed.

The survey was sent to more than 150 outlets (some companies operated more than one) though. Small operations that did not have newsrooms, such as one person blogs or listservs, were not surveyed. It should be noted here that while they were sent the surveys, no commercial radio or television stations answered the survey. A few public radio stations did. Some large news outlets, such as The Baltimore Banner and The Baltimore Sun, filled out the survey. So did important groups, such as APG Chesapeake, the Bay to Bay Group and Patch. Thus the survey population consisted of 54 respondents representing 73 outlets. The content analysis population was larger, as it included outlets without formal staff that offered news and information. The population of all the publications described in the thumbnails is larger still, as they included outlets that offered content that we considered helpful to residents but could not be called news, including some Facebook pages and classic “penny saver” newspapers or “throwaway” papers or Total Market Coverage (TMC) products that contained no journalistically produced “coverage” but had coupons, ads and other information people might find helpful.

XII. WHO WORKED ON THE STUDY

Tom Rosenstiel, Eleanor Merrill Scholar on the Future of Journalism and Professor of the Practice at Merrill College, designed the news ecosystem study and wrote the report.

Jerry Zremski, Director of the Local News Network at Merrill College, assisted in the planning, writing and editing of the report.

Joel Lev-Tov prepared the landscape study that served as the basis for the survey and the content analysis. Khushboo Rathore standardized and cleaned the list of 1,465 stories included in this study and then calculated the findings of the content analysis. Jenna Cohen prepared the charts.

Nira Dayanim, John McQuaid and Loretta Pulwer were part of the research team that conducted the content analysis and drafted the thumbnail sketches of news outlets. McQuaid and Pulwer also worked on the survey of news outlets.

Questions about this study? Contact Tom Rosenstiel at tomrosen@umd.edu or Jerry Zremski at jzremski@umd.edu.

XIII. APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: SURVEY TOPLINE RESULTS

APPENDIX B: CONTENT ANALYSIS TOPLINE RESULTS

APPENDIX C: COMPLETE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX D: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK AND RULES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY TOPLINE RESULTS

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND 2023-2024 SURVEY OF NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

FINAL TOPLINE

Survey conducted November–December 2023, January 2024

N=55 respondents representing 73 different outlets in the state

(No commercial television or commercial radio stations is among the respondents)

ASK ALL

In what year was your organization founded?

The answers among 54 overall news operations (which might represent several outlets) ranged from one paper founded in 1799, five in the 19th century and 26 that were launched since the year 2000, 12 of which began since 2015.

ASK ALL

What is the primary focus of your coverage?

- 37 General news/No specific focus
- 3 Politics
- 2 Business and Finance
- 2 Lifestyle
- 1 Education
- 1 Environment
- 1 Health
- 1 Religion
- 1 Community News/city government
- 1 Legal affairs/business/state government
- 1 Lifestyle
- 1 Immigration
- 1 Urbanism/land use/transportation
- 1 Politics/religion/tech
- 1 Agriculture
- 0 Criminal Justice
- 0 Science

ASK ALL

Is your reporting focused primarily on serving a particular group? If so, which one?

- 46 We are NOT focused primarily on any one group
- 2 Latino
- 1 Black
- 2 All people of color
- 1 Religious
- 1 Asian
- 1 Ethiopian and Eritrean Communities

ASK ALL

What is the geographic focus of your focus

- 15 Countywide
- 12 Statewide
- 7 Town
- 6 Several towns
- 1 Neighborhoods
- 5 A metro area
- 3 Multiple counties
- 1 Greater Baltimore area
- 1 A combination of all of the above
- 1 Anything we consider relevant to our readers
- 1 Northern Frederick and Carroll County
- 1 DC-MD-VA
- 1 Towns and neighborhoods
- 1 Chesapeake watershed

ASK ALL

How many people work in your news organization overall (full time, part time, etc., all departments)

- 21 One to five people
- 10 Six to ten people
- 7 Eleven to twenty people
- 5 Twenty-one to thirty people
- 2 Thirty-one to fifty people
- 3 Fifty-one to one hundred people
- 2 More than one hundred people

ASK ALL

How many people work in your newsroom?

- 29 1-5
- 13 6-10
- 4 11-20
- 0 21-30
- 0 31-50
- 1 50-100
- 1 More than 100

ASK ALL

How many full time paid employees do you have overall in the organization?

- 24 1-5
- 4 6-10
- 4 11-20
- 2 21-30
- 1 31-50
- 2 51-100
- 2 More than 100

ASK ALL

How many full-time paid news staff do you have?

- 29 1-5
- 6 6-10
- 3 11-20
- 0 21-30
- 0 31-50
- 1 51-100
- 1 More than 100

ASK ALL

How many of those FULL-TIME news staff also work on non-news activities such as business development, marketing, administration, advertising, circulation, subscriptions, membership or fundraising.

- 33 1-5 people
- 5 6-10
- 2 11-20
- 0 21-30
- 0 31-50
- 1 51-100
- 0 More than 100
- 9 No Answer

ASK ALL

How many PART-TIME staffers do you have?

- 27 1-5 people
- 0 6-10
- 2 11-20
- 1 More than 20
- 17 None
- 10 No Answer

How many UNPAID volunteers, interns or contributors do you have?

- 13 1-5 people
- 2 6-10
- 0 11-20
- 3 More than 20
- 26 None
- 13 No Answer

How many part time and unpaid volunteers/interns/contributors contribute work on news coverage?

- 19 1-5 people
- 5 6-10
- 1 11-20
- 1 More than 20
- 20 None
- 11 No Answer

ASK ALL

In the past two years, has your newsroom staff grown, been reduced, or stayed the same?

- 10 Grown
- 15 Reduced
- 25 Stayed the same
- 7 No answer

ASK OF THOSE WHO REDUCED STAFF

How many newsroom staff positions were eliminated?

- 6 One newsroom job
- 3 Four newsroom jobs
- 2 Two newsroom jobs
- 1 Three newsroom jobs
- 3 No Answer

ASK OF THOSE WHO GREW STAFF

How many editorial positions were added

- 4 One newsroom job
- 1 Two newsroom job
- 1 75 newsroom jobs
- 4 No answer

ASK ALL

In the past two years has your NON-NEWS staff grown, been reduced, or stayed the same?

- 9 Grown
- 10 Reduced
- 29 Stayed the same
- 9 No Answer

ASK OF ALL WHO ELIMINATED POSITIONS

- 2 One position
- 2 Two positions
- 2 Three positions
- 1 Four positions

ASK OF ALL WHO ADDED POSITIONS

How many positions were added?

- 3 Three positions
- 1 Five positions
- 1 One position
- 1 10 positions
- 1 30 positions

If you have had to scale back on coverage in the last two years, please describe what you have stopped or scaled back.

- “We aren’t covering Baltimore City and County with a reporter at this point”
- “We have pulled back dollars spent on freelance writers and photographers”
- “We have scaled back coverage of geographic areas furthest from our main office, i.e. Virginia, Western Maryland and Pennsylvania
- “We have reduced the size of our print paper
- “We have focused more intensively on legal affairs and gpartareovernment and trimmed back on business coverage.”
- “Adjacent counties that are part of our circulation area”
- “Housing, elections, open government”
- “No scaling back”
- “All of our contributors are independent volunteers who are responsible for soliciting their own article sponsors...We’ve scaled back our local sports coverage as our independent contributors for that areas were not seeing the success other independent contributors are seeing. This might pick back once Hagerstown has a new baseball team in 2024.
- “Yes, there is not a big enough staff to cover topics”
- “Nothing (changed)”

- “Had to scale back coverage of breaking news, council and board meeting, and local sports. Most government/crime coverage is superficial (e.g. rewriting police press releases). Also significantly reduced human interest stories. Went from 4-6 original bylined stories per week to 2-3”
- We curtailed coverage in outlying counties and now focus on [just our] County”
- “We have prioritized coverage, reducing coverage of some small towns but adding coverage for larger towns in our areas. We rely more on press releases instead of staff coverage in some areas.”
- “Daily State political coverage”
- “I stopped trying to cover news, edit, raise funds and build a business all at the same time. Each of those things is time consuming, so I gave up on being a reporter to mostly raise funds and complete grant applications.”
- “Actually increased coverage by way of podcasting”
- “No, we increased coverage.”
- “Our education, environment and features coverage has been decreased significantly.”
- “Real estate. Most of my readers do not care about the market.”
- “Circulation assistant.”
- “We scaled back coverage on state politics.”
- “Lots of false starts, constantly in a state of scaling back on everything.”
- “High school sports.”

If you have added coverage in the last two years, please describe what you have added:

- “We have sought to use freelancers to develop coverage in Montgomery County.”
- “We have added coverage of the City of Laurel, in addition to the cities of Hyattsville and College Park. As we have grown to cover three municipalities rather than just two, we have begun to provide more county coverage. The Laurel independent is a year and a half old, College Park Here & Now is four years old and the Hyattsville Life & Times is nearly 20 years old.”
- “Education, City Beat”
- “More sports coverage due to size of staff.”
- “More sports and health.”
- “More local communities, more categories of news and service, more products.”
- “More education news, which includes county but also our city.”
- “Local election forums, development issues.”
- “Environment/climate, health.”
- “Online, including Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. Always had a Facebook.”
- “Increased coverage of human interest, especially focused on scams and social media, as well as increased coverage of local crime – this has resulted in increased organic traffic to our site.”
- “Added sports coverage in readership area.”
- “We added a weekly email newsletter, so the frequency of providing news has increased. As far as the types of news coverage, our coverage has remained the same.”
- “Adding more enterprise stories, especially in our larger towns.”
- “More commentary.”

- “Adding coverage of Eleanor Roosevelt High School by its journalism students.”
- “I have a fellowship-funded freelancer for 2023-24”
- “Added a daily news podcast (M-F). Added a daily news re-cap email (365 days/yr)
- “We added coverage of 4 more towns and county affairs.”
- “We’ve added an individual to focus on political candidates.”
- “We added a part-time sales manager.”
- “More affordable housing news, crime and opportunities.”
- “Video”
- “We increased commentary and op-Ed submissions.”
- 1. Off-campus work study reporter has numerous environmental clips. Environment is a busy but underreported beat in the Bowie area. This student reporter onboarded two weeks ago and has begun a mini-project on her beat: candidate Q&A for the upcoming city election (environmental stances).
- 2. A fellowship stipend will pay for a freelancer to start early November to coverage localized national news in the burbs of ‘DC (Bowie police shortage, Bowie libraries bucking the book ban trend as Moms for Library crank up recruiting in the county, struggles with housing costs and uptick in homelessness in the wealthy suburb.

Which of these phrases best describes what you think will happen to your organizations staffing level in the next year?

- 8 We will be adding staff
- 0 We will be reducing staff
- 34 We will remain the same

ASK ALL

Would you describe your organization and primarily

- 25 Digital and print
- 17 Digital only
- 0 Newsletter
- 0 Podcast
- 0 Social media
- 1 NPR radio
- 0 PBS public TV broadcast
- 0 Joint NPR/PBS
- 1 Community radio/tv
- 2 Print only
- 1 Digital but podcast and newsletter growing fast
- 1 Mobile news site with newsletter rolling out soon
- 1 Digital and TV
- 1 Adding newsletters every morning and for breaking news

ASK ALL

What is the most important current staffing need of your organization?

- 23 News reporting
- 9 Business/Advertising/Marketing
- 3 Membership/circulation/audience engagement
- 4 Fundraising
- 2 All of the Above
- 1 Business AND membership
- 1 News leadership
- 1 Business AND Fundraising
- 1 Coverage of minority communities
- 1 Editor or Fact Checker
- 1 Product Tech

ASK ALL

Please rank in order what you consider the most important gap or need of your organization with 1 being most important the highest number being least important

OUTLET'S NEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Need more reporters	48%	30%	7%	9%	5%	2%	0%
More audience engagement skills	11%	12%	41%	11%	2%	2%	5%
Business capacity skills	16%	23%	23%	30%	7%	0%	2%
Digital and Tech skills	14%	11%	23%	43%	2%	5%	2%

When it comes to digital technology skill, please rank in order what your biggest gaps are needs are with 1 being more important and the highest number being least important

OUTLET'S NEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Better digital presentation	50%	17%	7%	12%	7%	5%	5%
We struggle to track audience behavior and engagement	14%	19%	24%	13%	19%	5%	5%
Lack digital skills to make our reporting more efficient	7%	26%	24%	21%	12%	7%	3%
Our CMS holds us back	0%	7%	7%	24%	33%	24%	5%
Data and visualization skills	12%	10%	17%	21%	17%	12%	7%
Staff needs technology training	7%	12%	14%	5%	12%	45%	0%

ASK ALL

If you could describe your organization's biggest challenge with technology in your own words, how would you do so?

- The challenge is time management, finding the right balance between web and print productivity.
- We need more tools and training -- also more people to execute our coverage.
- We do not have the budget to pay for professional web services of the caliber that we need, so what we get is a mix of what untrained staff can figure out, and what we are able to get from a professional web developer doing basically charity work to build his portfolio over a long time horizon with little accountability or integration into the organization.
- Need for more staff training.
- Need more training including AI

- Board and volunteers need technology training and the ability to see what a website could mean. Though we are a print paper, it would be great to have each news piece online for the purpose of sharing. We currently do this for front page stories only. We should also be tracking views and considering the possibility of online advertising. The website needs work. We do have fantastic archives thanks to a multi-year project and grant. They're great historical documents and primary sources and used regularly, for example a city council member recently search them to see what the body had done in past instances when there was a mid-term vacant seat.
- Cost
- Keeping up
- Our biggest challenge isn't our own ability to use technology, but our readers' ability to use technology. Most of our readers are very dissatisfied with current social media and its accessibility to show

- our content. However, few understand how to tweak their own feeds so that our content shows
- We lack training and expertise in many digital tools. Also the staff time to use them efficiently. Our audience would likely have a slower adoption than the mainstream public.
 - We are behind the times, insofar as we are print-first and digital-second; also our social media is too lightweight.
 - I am making a partnership with Google News Initiative to implement a Transformation Technological Plan and improve our standards to generate digital revenues, new website and a new newsletter.
 - Getting everyone to recognize basic navigation.
 - From time to time would like to move faster, but in general reaction time has not been a major problem. What we get just flat works well, and is easily used.
 - We're small and lack the revenue to get the tools that could be helpful
 - All digital/tech falls to one person, who is also the only editor. It's just too much for one person to handle. So social gets shortchanged and analytics are ignored entirely.
 - Synchronizing so that everyone maximizes the use of technical tools.
 - "More often. Users also complain about social media censorship, which has become a huge problem for us. Facebook will often "shadow ban" our page and intentionally reduce our reach to try and get us to purchase advertisements."
 - "We don't have some of the challenges listed on the previous page, but I couldn't eliminate them in the list. Mainly, our challenges are: an old CMS, maintaining and growing digital traffic, always optimizing SEO, finding the funding to add to our digital team (to do more video), and expanding digital ad sales."
 - "Not getting fair and equal treatment from social media platforms, compared to my competitors. Subscriber/follower counts on all platforms artificially low, relative to high value of daily content being posted over 17 years of publishing."
 - "Our biggest challenge is resources. We post online just enough to keep our followers engaged, but we could do so much more if we had time to be creative.
 - "We need more funding to support technology enhancements.
 - Big learning curve to build a customized platform, which could be cheaper over the long-term once it's off the ground. The alternative is an expensive platform or a free or low-cost site that doesn't fully meet editorial and marketing needs and is too dependent on Google clicks/views to drive traffic.
 - Our biggest challenge is me... I'm more interested in doing a print paper - don't really care about Social Media
 - Actually, our strength is technology. We suffer in the editorial/reporting area.
 - Creating a stand alone app.
 - The primary digital challenge aside from increasing cost is effectively integrating advanced technologies — such as AI, data analytics, and immersive storytelling tools — to produce high-quality, engaging content tailored to changing consumer preferences and expectations. We have skilled staff who are learning these advances but we need to move more quickly.
 - We are still a print-first product and with a limited staff, we don't devote the time/effort necessary to boost our online presence. Our website and CMS are fine, and we have an e-edition app. But most of our existing audience is not digitally savvy and simply prefers a print paper. If there is a digital audience for our product, we are not doing much to reach and capture them. A stronger presence on Facebook and more work on scheduling/presenting

content on the website would probably go a long way to address this issue.

- Lack of training on CMS
- While we have digital skills on the staff, we lack the time to put those skills to use.
- Analyzing social media and subscriber data to grow audience.
- Honing down the available tools and making the determination of what is best for our organization and keeping cost in mind.
- Our biggest challenge is time. We need time to train and then deploy that training, but we have to just limp along. Young people almost exclusively get their news bites from TikTok and Instagram, but how do we turn that into brand recognition AND revenue? I don't have time to answer that question.
- We don't have a staff member dedicated to just technology so all of us do a little bit which isn't as effective as it could be. However we are not in a position to hire someone to fill that role.
- Training

If you could describe your organization's biggest challenge with technology...

- We need more funding to purchase better technology.
- Time and money. I think the biggest challenge with technology is building systems that work cheaply and efficiently without needing much human intervention. I built some great systems that only I can access, which makes me a bottleneck now. This has nothing to do with news, though. This is more about the systems that keep the business running.
- We need more engineers to help implement our ambitions, develop the CMS and help drive subscriber conversions.

- The CMS technology seems to have been developed without consulting news reporters and editors at smaller news organizations. Limited number of SaaS options with features that don't fully meet my needs. Too few affordable customized options. I don't have time to learn DIY customization like Joomla and all the configurations that go with it. Something customized might cost \$1K a year but eat up all my time teaching myself and troubleshooting.
- We need more funding to purchase better technology
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- We need more engineers to help implement our ambitions, develop the CMS and help drive subscriber conversion
- We don't have anyone whose sole or primary responsibility is tending to our website and social media. It is done piecemeal by many people.

ASK ALL

If you could work with the Philip Merrill College of Journalism to develop tools or technology that you could use, what would you like us to build with your organization?

- Not sure.
- We would love the chance to work with the college on data visualization skills and using that in our stories.
- Better social engagement. Now we rely on happy photos to generate interest rather than fully engaging people on social media.
- Better audience engagement
- A news website for this paper that was founded in 1937 and relies primarily on volunteers. We could also use volunteer/student writers.
- An RSS feed of all local news (state and all counties), or alternatively and preferably if possible, an RSS feed for all state and counties news, and a separate RSS feed for all Baltimore and surrounds news. Obviously these would be of news stories you may be already compiling now.
- There are lots of small news organizations like ours which would do well to get increased coverage, as our content outshines the larger organizations like Herald Mail. What would truly be of benefit to not just us but all smaller independent news orgs would be some sort of mobile app that combines local, independent news with an uncensored social media style experience. This app would need to be decentralized so that no one person or company could dominate it or censor users.
- Podcast production, event brief generator
- Data visualizations/graphics and the like
- An online county news source.
- A financial model that works for community weekly newspapers.
- Information has become democratized. That's good to the extent anyone can share their thoughts and activities, but also leads to TMI and there is no particular order to it. We offer vetted, accurate and timely information - structured like traditional news. One thing we could use as a way to track down and report "Local Advisories" - street closures, electrical outages, water restrictions, gas line repairs. In the democratized info era, these fleeting but vital advisories are fragmented. We're working on a much simpler collection method than contacting 30 - 40 individual entities. Would then run them top of page 1 for our broad audience of multiple communities.
- I honestly have no idea
- Something to post to social media automatically. Digital audio recordings of stories that could be connected to readers' devices. Easy podcasting platform.
- Tracking audience engagement
- More sophisticated graphics, charts, maps to pair with our reporting. A more sophisticated and better-looking website.
- Visually, we lack infographics and other forms of charts, graphs, etc.
- Rather than technology, I wish CNS would have some of the news organizations that work with CNS, to speak to the students. They could use writing coaches.
- The issue is much larger than my own news site. What is needed in my area is a community news service platform for Prince George's County to address the local news crisis on multiple fronts mainly via technology: 1) Attract more students of all backgrounds to community news as a career choice: Allow these students the opportunity to learn how to localize county/state news in these majority-minority communities that have never had a newspaper in recent history (Capitol Heights, District Heights and the other Heights) and other

places that abruptly became news deserts (Bowie). 2) Create an intranet on this platform so that students can access community news sources and background easily year after year (municipal and county police accountability boards, HOAs, nonprofit local chapters at county and city level, etc). 3) Recruit a team of interns and work-study students to help run all aspects of the multimedia news platform to figure out which features can be improved to better serve the news needs. See the University of Michigan Desai program in which startups are assigned 10 trained interns each, except roll out the UMD community news service as non-competitive for students and start-ups. 4) A note about news needs: Communities don't always understand how county issues like juvenile crime are playing out differently in their backyard (i.e., petty crime in Bowie, violent crime in other communities, truancy across the county). So experiment with student roles like staff researcher and student assignment editor to help identify story angles based on what's already been written. These students can liaise with a student digital asset manager and traffic manager to schedule stories in advance in coordination with any local media that still exist. 5) As interest in the platform grows, consider expanding the platform to include contributions from with other student journalism programs that want to contribute stories (Bowie State, PGCC in Largo and Laurel, U-Baltimore's mostly commuter students, all of which may have comms/IT students with ties to the county).

- Sure, why not!
- Mobile app with notifications.
- 1. A stand alone app. 2. A website where my readers can post their classifieds on our classified page. 3. A section where we can encourage others to participate in crowd sourcing news (Blogging on our website) 4. A generative AI that responds to questions from the LEP & NEP immigrants so they can get easy access of information that ultimately helps them adapt to the ways and culture of the USA, and accelerate their integration to the system.

- Several news organizations have partnered with foundations and schools to expand the application of AI in newsrooms and other divisions such as Advertising and Circulation aimed at bolstering their long-term business viability. By integrating AI to take over routine tasks, we can free our
- Tools that get our news sites' social media accounts in front of more people, and grow follower counts to equal or exceed my competitors.
- We don't know what we don't know. A collaboration with college leaders to identify technologies and how they could be built and used in our newsroom would be best.
- Data relevant to growing digital audience.
- Wow, tough question. Probably a product that could make video production easier and handle distribution to multiple platforms.
- 1. Public school data system (race, discipline, test scores, teachers, funding, facilities, etc.)
- We would love to have an app but we do not have the funds to pay for one to be developed and we do not have a dedicated technology staff member to run it.
- Would need to be free. App
- Journalists, for example, to concentrate on in-depth, enterprise reporting. This will not only enhance the quality of our journalism but also increase our operational efficiency. So if Merrill could partner with us in the effort or others such as in digital subscriptions, that would be tremendous.
- Introduce me to some kind of programming tool (preferably visual) that can: - build arrays from csv or xml - do some kind of processing to the things in the array - spit out some different XML based on what was processed that's what I am thinking of today. I don't know if that's the thing I need but it's the butterfly I dreamed up to chase when you asked.

- Develop a live blog, streamline alerts, develop AI tool that identifies missing elements for optimization and makes suggestions (i.e. meta tags, SEO, etc). Develop visual and storytelling tools.
- An App.
- Create a distribution channel for community news (an app?) that puts the news where the users already are (on their devices). Why as an industry do we force people to subscribe to a bunch of different newsletters and dig through their inbox to read them? I believe a better distribution platform could address problems alkos that block newsletters or send them to promos inbox. A two-way distribution channel would allow j-school community news reporters to post their best work and local newsrooms could republish these community-specific stories. Imagine if there was a network of j- schools in the DMV that provided a community news service!

ASK ALL

Overall, how has the size of your online audience changed in the past 12 months?

- 26 Increased
- 2 Decreased
- 10 Stayed the same

By how much as the size of your online audience INCREASED in the past 12 months?

- 10 1-25%
- 6 25-50%
- 1 51-75%
- 1 76-100%
- 1 101-150%
- 1 151-200%
- 3 More than 200%

By how much has the size of your online audience DECREASED in the past 12 months?

- 1 1-25%
- 1 25-50%
- 0 51-75%
- 0 76-100%
- 0 101-150%
- 0 151-200%
- 0 More than 200%

ASK ALL

Now we want to ask some questions about your finances. You're almost done. Only a few questions left.

What is the overall annual budget of your organization?

- 16 Less than \$100,000
- 6 \$100,000 to \$250,000
- 6 \$250,000 to \$500,000
- 5 \$500,000 to \$1 million
- 2 \$1 million to \$2 million
- 2 \$2 million to \$5 million
- 3 More than \$5 million

ASK ALL

Roughly what percentage of your organization's current-year budget is dedicated to news and editorial?

- 2 0%
- 1 10%
- 2 15%
- 2 19%
- 2 20%
- 1 25%
- 1 27%
- 1 30%
- 1 37%
- 4 40%
- 3 50%
- 1 65%
- 1 70%
- 2 75%
- 1 79%
- 1 80%

- 1 81%
 - 1 82%
 - 1 85%
 - 1 88%
 - 2 90%
 - 1 91%
- Mean = 48.42%

We want to know more about the business model of local news. To help us, can you estimate what percentage of your budget comes from the following? If you're unsure give us your best guess. Again, this information will remain entirely confidential.

Mean scores by area

- 16.91% Subscriptions/Memberships revenue
- 61.97% Advertising/Sponsorships revenue
- 28.38% Foundation Funding revenue
- 17.17% Individual donations
- 6.14% Events revenue
- 33% Other

Other includes: printing and custom printing, public notice revenue, contracts to publish municipal news-letters as centerfolds, government, custom video/audio production, services, grants and freelance fellowships, and "bootstrapped."

ASK ALL

Would you say your news organization is currently financially solvent, meaning you are able to meet your current expenses without cutting, that you are operating and break-even or better?

- 35 Yes
- 8 No
- 3 No Answer

ASK THOSE WHO ARE SOLVENT

How long has that been the case?

- 2 One year or less
- 6 2 years
- 4 2 to 5 years
- 20 More than 5 years

ASK THOSE WHO ARE NOT YET SOLVENT

How long until you believe you are operating in the black?

- 0 A few weeks
- 2 A few months
- 5 A few years

ASK ALL

Thinking of the assets your organization has on hand today, how long could you stay in operation without a growth in revenue?

- 1 Less than 2 months
- 1 2 to 6 months
- 3 6 months to a year
- 9 1 to less than 2 years
- 20 2 years or more

ASK ALL

All things considered, how confidence are you that your news organization will be financially solvent five years from now? (0 is Not at all confident; 10 is completely confident.)

SCORE		Number of Respondents
0	Not at all confident	0
1		0
2		3
3		3
4		1
5		6
6		4
7		5
8		9
9		3
10	Completely confident	11

ASK ALL

Is your news organization for profit or nonprofit? (Some respondents operated more than one publication, but they were answering for the overall company). And nine respondents did not answer this question.

- 32 For profit
- 14 Nonprofit

ASK ONLY NONPROFITS

Did your organization begin with help from an initial startup grant or donation that accounted for at least one third of your original funding?

- 9 Yes
- 5 No

In dollars, how much was the grant your organization received?

- 3 less than \$50,000
- 4 \$50,000 to \$100,000
- 1 \$100,00 to \$250,000
- 0 \$251,000 to \$500,000
- 1 More than \$500,000

When did or does that initial grant funding expire?

- ___ Expired
- ___ 2012
- ___ 2015
- ___ 2019
- ___ 2024
- ___ 2027-28
- ___ Next year
- ___ It expired but has continued in different forms and amounts

What is the current status of that grant renewal?

- 5 The funder does not give second grants
- 2 The funder is considering a renewal
- 3 The funder has agreed to a renewal
- 2 The funder considers renewals but decided not to renew us

APPENDIX B: CONTENT ANALYSIS TOPLINE RESULTS

In order to understand what news gets covered in Maryland, the Maryland News Ecosystem Study team coded more than 1,460 stories from 156 news outlets. Below are the topline results of our content analysis of those stories. In addition, there were 20 outlets that could not be coded because they were defunct or not sufficiently journalistic in content.

WHAT TYPE OF NEWS OUTLETS EXIST IN MARYLAND?

Type	Total number	% of total
Print and online news	78	44
Digital only news	53	30
TV/radio	32	18
Blog	10	6
Facebook group	3	2

WHO PRODUCES THE NEWS IN MARYLAND?

Author	Count	% share
Byline	882	60
Other	193	13
Staff	181	12
Contributor	130	9
Unknown	42	3
Sister publication	21	1
TV piece	13	1
Capital News Service	9	1
Paywall blocks this information	1	0

WHERE ARE MARYLAND'S NEWS ORGANIZATIONS BASED?

Location	Number of news outlets	% of total
Baltimore County	28	16%
Out of state	28	16
Montgomery County	17	10
Anne Arundel County	15	9
Prince George's County	14	8
Wicomico County	10	6
St. Mary's County	6	3
Baltimore City	5	3
Frederick County	5	3
Howard County	5	3
Talbot County	5	3
Worcester County	5	3
Carroll County	4	2
Charles County	4	2
Kent County	4	2
Allegany County	3	2
Dorchester County	3	2
Queen Anne's County	3	2
Washington County	3	2
Calvert County	2	1
Cecil County	2	1
Garrett County	2	1
Harford County	2	1
Somerset County	1	1
Caroline County	0	0

THE GEOGRAPHY OF JOURNALISM IN MARYLAND

The number of publications that cover particular parts of the state:

Coverage area	# of new outlets	% of total
Statewide	24	14%
Washington DMV	23	13
Baltimore	20	11
Montgomery	15	9
Prince George's	14	8
Eastern Shore	10	6
Worcester	5	3
Delmarva	5	3
Frederick	5	3
Anne Arundel	4	2
Southern Maryland	4	2
St. Mary's	4	2
Western Maryland	3	2
Baltimore	3	2
Carroll	3	2
Dorchester	3	2
Kent	3	2
Queen Anne's	3	2
Washington County	3	2
Wicomico	3	2
Central Maryland	2	1
Calvert	2	1
Cecil	2	1
Charles	2	1
Garrett	2	1
Harford	2	1
Howard	2	1
Talbot	2	1
Allegany	1	1
Montgomery & Frederick	1	1
Somerset	1	1
Caroline	0	0

WHAT NEWS GETS COVERED IN MARYLAND

Topic	# of stories	% of total
Crime/courts/police	254	18%
Local people/groups/obituaries/births	207	14
Local government	166	11
Business/economy/philanthropy	138	10
Schools/education	121	8
State government	92	6
Arts/entertainment	92	6
Disasters/fires/accidents	87	6
Infrastructure/development/transportation	87	6
Culture/lifestyle/home garden	61	4
Health/healthcare	60	4
Environment	58	4
Elections/politics	55	4
Weather	55	4
Social issues (LGBTQ+, abortion, protests, immigration)	55	4
Professional sports	51	4
Prep/high school sports	43	3
Food/restaurants	37	3
Outdoors/recreation	36	2
Religion	32	2
Local history	28	2
National news/issues	23	2
Taxes	15	1
Ethics/scandals	15	1
International issues	14	1
Technology/science	14	1
Gambling	12	1
College sports	12	1
Other sports	3	0
Military	1	0
Monthly interview	1	0

HOW MUCH ENTERPRISE REPORTING IS THERE?

Under our methodology, any news story or feature that was not about breaking news qualified as enterprise reporting. Utilizing that definition, here's what we found:

Story type	# of stories	% share
News	993	68
Enterprise	311	21
Opinion	122	8
Unknown/NA	21	1
Other	2	0
Photo	1	0

HOW IS EACH TOPIC COVERED WITH ENTERPRISES VS. BREAKING NEWS VS. OPINION?

Topic	% News	% Enterprises	% Opinion	No. of stories overall on topic
Local Government	81%	23%	4%	172
Gambling	83%	8	8	12
State Government	79%	15	4	92
International	43	21	36	14
elections/politics	56	25	18	55
National issues	65	13	22	23
Schools Education	75	18	7	123
Crime/Courts/Police	90	7	2	260
Disasters/Fires/Accidents	90	8	1	87
Arts/Entertainment	55	30	10	93
Food/Restaurants	42	53	5	38
Technology/Science	36	21	43	14
Culture/Lifestyle/Gardening	38	38	24	63
Local people/Groups/Obits/births	69	24	5	217
Business/Economy/Philanthropy	61	29	9	141
Taxes	47	33	20	15
Infrastructure/development/ transportation	72	20	8	89
College Sports	67	0	25	12
Professional Sports	65	33	2	51
Prep Sports	74	23	0	43
Weather	96	4	-	55
Outdoors/Recreation	42	44	11	36
Environment	62	21	17	58
Health/Health care	48	34	11	61
Social Issues (LGBTQ+, abortion, protests, immigration, etc.)	47	42	11	55
Religion	59	9	31	32
Local History	18	75	7	28
Ethics/Scandals	47	40	13	15

TOPIC BREAKDOWN BY TYPE OF NEWS OUTLET

Topic	Total story count	Percent in digital only outlets	Percent in print - online outlets	Percent in TV/Radio Outlets	Percent in Blogs	Percent in all outlets
Local government	172	12	11	12	17	12
Gambling	12	1	1	>1	-	11
State government	92	8	5	6	7	12
International	14		2	2		17
Elections	55	4	2	6	17	
National news	23	2	1	3	-	1
Schools/ education	123	7	811	11	5	>1
Crime / court / police	260	25	10	24	122	8
Disasters / fire/ accidents	87	7	4	9	5	5
Arts / entertainment	93	7	7	4	10	6
Food / restaurants	38	2	3	4	10	7
Technology / science	14	1	1	1	>1	2
Culture / lifestyle / garden	63	5	5	1	>1	2
Local / people / groups/ obits	217	11	21	8	>1	4
Business / economic/ philanthropy	141	9	10	6	27	2
Taxes	15	>1	5	>1	5	6
Infrastructure/development	89	5	6	7	17	2
College sports	12	1	>1	2	>1	1
Professional sports	51	2	4	8	>1	3
Prep Sports	43	2	5	>1	>1	3
Weather	55	>1	1	13	>1	8

Outdoor recreation	36	3	3	4	>1	11
Environment	58	4	5	3	2	5
Health and health care	61	5	5	3	>1	25
Social issue (LBGTQ+, abortion, protests, immigration)	55	3	5	4	>1	10
Religion	32	>1	5	>1	>1	24
Local history	28	2	2	>1	>1	12
Ethics / scandals	15	1	1	1	2	7

AUTHOR BY TYPE OF NEWS OUTLET

Type of News Outlet	Byline	Staff (unbylined)	Contributor	Other (most often press release)	Capital News Service	Unknown
Digital Only	61%	12%	6%	16%	1%	4%
Print with online	58%	9%	12%	14%	1%	3%
TV Radio	67%	19%	3%	4%	>1	>1
Blog	51%	27%	17%	2%	–	2%

* numbers are percentages of all stories from that outlet type

WHAT NEWS OUTLETS EXIST IN MARYLAND?

This list includes all the outlets we found, including those that were not coded.

Publication name	Location	Coverage area	Publication link	Frequency	Type
A Miner Detail	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://aminerdetail.com/	Other	Digital only news
Attraction Magazine	Anne Arundel	Eastern Shore	https://attractionmag.com/	Other	Print & online news
Baltimore Banner	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Baltimore Beat	Baltimore	Central Maryland	https://baltimorebeat.com/about-us/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
Baltimore Brew	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://baltimorebrew.com/about	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Baltimore Business Journal	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/	Daily	Print & online news
Baltimore Examiner	Baltimore	DMV	https://www.baltimoreexaminer.com/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Baltimore Fishbowl	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://baltimorefishbowl.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Baltimore Jewish Times	Howard	Statewide	https://www.jewishtimes.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Baltimore Magazine	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/	Other	Print & online news
Baltimore Post	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://thebaltimorepost.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Baltimore Post Examiner	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://baltimorepostexaminer.com/about	Other	Digital only news
Baltimore Star	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.baltimostar.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Baltimore Style	Howard	Baltimore	https://www.baltimostyle.com/	Other	Print & online news
Baltimore Sun	Baltimore	Central Maryland	https://www.baltimoresun.com	Daily	Print & online news
Baltimore Times	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://baltimoretimes-online.com/about-us/	Daily	Print & online news
Bay Weekly	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://bayweekly.com/	Weekly	Digital only news
Bayside Gazette	Worcester	Worcester	https://baysideoc.net/	Weekly	Print & online news
Bel Air News and Views	Harford	Harford	http://www.belairnewsandviews.com/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Bowie Sun	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://bowiesun.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Business Monthly	Howard	Howard	https://bizmonthly.com/distribution-information/	Daily	Print & online news
Calvert County Times	Calvert	Calvert	https://countytimes.somd.com/read/calvert.php	Weekly	Print & online news
Calvert Recorder	Calvert	Calvert	https://www.somdnews.com/recorder/	Weekly	Print & online news
Cambridge Spy	Dorchester	Dorchester	https://cambridgespy.org/	Daily	Digital only news
Capital Gazette	Anne Arundel	Anne Arundel	https://www.capitalgazette.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Carroll County Observer	Carroll	Carroll	https://carrollcountyobserver.com/about/	Daily	Print & online news
Carroll County Times	Carroll	Carroll	https://www.baltimoresun.com/carroll-county-times/	Daily	Print & online news
Catholic Standard	Baltimore	DMV	https://cathstan.org/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
Cecil TV	Cecil	Cecil	cecil.tv	Multiple times a week	TV/radio
Cecil Whig (Susquehanna Press)	Cecil	Cecil	https://www.cecildaily.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Chesapeake Bay Journal	Anne Arundel	Delmarva	https://www.bayjournal.com/	Other	Print & online news
Chesapeake Bay Magazine	Anne Arundel	Delmarva	https://www.chesapeakebaymagazine.com/	Other	Print & online news
Chesapeake Crier	Talbot	Eastern Shore	https://chesadelcrier.com/about/	Daily	Digital only news
Chestertown Spy	Kent	Kent	https://chestertownspy.org/	Daily	Digital only news
Clean Slate MOCO	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://www.cleanslatemoco.com/about	Multiple times a week	Blog
College Park Here&Now	Prince George's	Prince George's	vertical on https://streetcarsuburbs.news/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news

Common Sense: Straight Talk for the Eastern Shore	Kent	Eastern Shore	https://www.commonseasternshore.org/who-we-are	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Crisfield-Somerset County Times	Somerset	Statewide	https://baytobaynews.com/somerset/	Daily	Digital only news
Cumberland Times-News	Allegany	Western Maryland	https://www.times-news.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Daily Disptach	Out of state	Statewide	https://www.dailydispatch.com/About.aspx	Daily	Digital only news
Daily Voice	Out of state	Statewide	https://dailyvoice.com/maryland/baltimore/	Daily	Digital only news
DC Military	Out of state	Statewide	https://www.dcmilitary.com/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
DC News Now	Out of state	DMV	https://www.dcnewsnow.com/	Daily	TV/radio
DCist	Out of state	DMV	https://wamu.org/welcome/	Daily	TV/radio
Deep Creek Times	Garrett	DMV	https://deepcreektimes.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Delmarva Farmer	Talbot	Statewide	https://americanfarm.com/about-us/	Other	Print & online news
Delmarva Now	Wicomico	Wicomico	https://www.delmarvanow.com/	Daily	Digital only news
DelMarva Public Radio WESM	Wicomico	Delmarva	https://www.delmarvapublicmedia.org/wesm-91-3-fm	Daily	TV/radio
Dorchester Banner	Dorchester	Dorchester	https://baytobaynews.com/dorchester/	Weekly	Print & online news
Dorchester Star	Dorchester	Dorchester	https://www.myeasternshoremd.com/dorchester_star/	Weekly	Print & online news
Dundalk Eagle	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.dundalkeagle.com/	Daily	Print & online news
East County Times	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.eastcountytimes.com/	Daily	Digital only news
East Moco	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://eastmoco.blogspot.com/	Daily	Blog
Eastern Shore Undercover	Wicomico	Wicomico	https://www.easternshoreundercover.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Easton Star Democrat	Talbot	Talbot	https://www.stardem.com/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
El País	Out of state	Statewide	https://english.elpais.com/news/maryland/	Daily	Print & online news
El Pregonero	Out of state	DMV	https://elpreg.org/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
El Tiempo Latino	Out of state	DMV	https://eltiempolatino.com/category/noticias-locales/dc-dmv/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
Emmitsburg.net	Frederick	Frederick	https://emmitsburg.net/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Ethiopique	Baltimore	DMV	https://ethiopique.com/	Other	Digital only news
Eye on Annapolis	Anne Arundel	Anne Arundel	https://www.eyeonannapolis.net/	Daily	Digital only news
Fox 5 DC	Out of state	DMV	https://www.fox5dc.com/	Daily	TV/radio
Frederick Magazine	Frederick	Frederick	https://www.frederickmagazine.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Frederick News-Post	Frederick	Frederick	https://www.fredericknewspost.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Frederick's Child	Frederick	Frederick	https://www.frederickschild.com/	Other	Print & online news
Friends of Charles County	Charles	Charles	https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsof-charlescounty/	Daily	Facebook group
Garrett County News	Out of state	Garrett	https://www.facebook.com/GarrettCountyNews/	Daily	Facebook group
Garrett County Republican	Garrett	Western Maryland	https://www.wvnews.com/garrettrepublican/	Daily	Print & online news
Greater Olney News	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://greaterolneynews.com/	Other	Print & online news
Greenbelt News Review	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.greenbeltnewsreview.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Greenbelt Online	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.greenbeltonline.org/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Hagerstown Herald Mail	Washington	Washington	https://www.heraldmailmedia.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Hancock News	Washington	Washington	https://www.thehancocknews.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Howard County Times	Howard	Howard	https://www.baltimoresun.com/location/maryland/howard-county/	e. defunct	Print & online news
Hyattsville Life & Times	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://streetcarsuburbs.news/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
Hyattsville Wire	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.hyattsvillewire.com/about/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news

I95 Business	Baltimore	Statewide	https://i95business.com/	Other	Print & online news
Informed Carroll County	Carroll	Carroll	https://informedcarroll.com/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Intersection Magazine	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.theintersectionmag.com/	Other	Digital only news
Just Up The Pike	Montgomery	Montgomery	Just Up The Pike	Other	Blog
Kent County Crier	Kent	Kent	https://kentcountycrier.com/	Other	Digital only news
Kent County News	Kent	Kent	https://www.myeasternshoremd.com/kent_county_news/	Weekly	Print & online news
Kent Island Bay Times and Record Observer	Queen Anne's	Queen Anne's	https://www.myeasternshoremd.com/qa_bay_times/	Weekly	Print & online news
Las Américas Newspaper	Out of state	DMV	https://www.lasamericasnews.com/index.php/es/	Weekly	Print & online news
Latin Opinion Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://latinopinionbaltimore.com/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
Laurel Independent	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://streetcarsuburbs.news/	Other	Print & online news
Laurel Leader (defunct), closed by Balt Sun	Prince George's	Prince George's		e. defunct	Print & online news
Lexington Park Leader	St. Mary's	St. Mary's	https://lexleader.net/	Other	Digital only news
LocalNews1.org	Out of state	Western Maryland	LocalNews1.org	Daily	Digital only news
Maryland Coast Dispatch	Worcester	Worcester	https://mdcoastdispatch.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Maryland Daily Record	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://thedailyrecord.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Maryland Independent	Charles	Charles	https://www.somdnews.com/independent/	Daily	Print & online news
Maryland Leader	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://www.marylandleader.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Maryland Matters	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://www.marylandmatters.org/	Daily	Digital only news
Maryland Muckraker	Carroll	Statewide	https://www.mdsmuckraker.com/	Other	Digital only news
Maryland News Network	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://www.mdnewsnetwork.net/	Daily	TV/radio
Maryland Reporter	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://marylandreporter.com/about/	Daily	Digital only news
Metro Weekly	Out of state	DMV	https://www.metroweekly.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
MOCO 360	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://moco360.media/	Daily	Digital only news
MoCo Show	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://mocoshow.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Moderately MOCO	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://moderatelymoco.com/about-the-page/	Multiple times a week	Blog
Monocacy Monocle	Montgomery	Frederick	https://www.monocacymonocle.com/	Other	Print & online news
Montgomery Perspective	Montgomery	Montgomery/ Frederick	https://montgomeryperspective.com/	Daily	Blog
My MC Media	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://www.mymcmedia.org/	Multiple times a week	TV/radio
Naptown Scoop	Anne Arundel	Anne Arundel	https://www.naptownscoop.com/	Weekly	Digital only news
NBC4	Out of state	DMV	https://www.nbcwashington.com/	Daily	TV/radio
Ocean City Today	Worcester	Worcester	https://www.oceancitytoday.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Ocean Pines Forum	Worcester	Worcester	https://www.oceanpinesforum.com/OceanPines/About	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Outlook by the Bay	Howard	Statewide	https://outlookbythebay.com/	Other	Print & online news
Patch Maryland	Out of state	Statewide	https://patch.com/maryland/across-md	Daily	Digital only news
Prince George's Post	Prince George's	Prince George's	http://www.pgpost.com/	Weekly	Print & online news
Prince George's Sentinel	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.thesentinel.com/communities/prince_george/	Other	Print & online news
Prince George's Suite Magazine and Media	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://pgsuite.com/	Other	Print & online news
Queen Anne's County TV	Queen Anne's	Queen Anne's	https://qaactv.com/	Multiple times a week	TV/radio
Radio America	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://www.radioamerica.com/	Daily	TV/radio

Radio Free Hub City	Washington	Washington County	https://radiofreehubcity.com/	Daily	TV/radio
Real News Network Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://therealnews.com/about	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Robert Dyer at Bethesda Row	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://robertdyer.blogspot.com/	Daily	Blog
Rockville Nights	Montgomery	Montgomery	http://www.rockvillenights.com/	Daily	Blog
Salisbury Independent	Wicomico	Wicomico	https://baytobaynews.com/wicomico/	Weekly	Print & online news
Sam Eig	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://sameig.blogspot.com/	Daily	Blog
Severna Park Voice	Anne Arundel	Anne Arundel	https://severnaparkvoice.com/	Other	Print & online news
Shore News Network	Out of state	Eastern Shore	https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/	Daily	Digital only news
Shore Update	Queen Anne's	Queen Anne's	https://www.shoreupdate.com/	Daily	Digital only news
SOMDWX News	St. Mary's	St. Mary's	https://somedwxnews.wordpress.com/	Daily	Facebook group
Somos Baltimore Latino	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.somosbaltimorelatino.com/index.html	Daily	TV/radio
Source of the Spring	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://www.sourceofthespring.com/	Multiple times a week	Blog
Southern Maryland Chronicle	Charles	Southern Maryland	https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Southern Maryland News Net	St. Mary's	Southern Maryland	https://smnewsnet.com/about/	Daily	Digital only news
Southern Maryland Online	Charles	Southern Maryland	https://somed.com/	Other	Digital only news
St. Mary's County Times	St. Mary's	St. Mary's	https://countytimes.somed.com/read/index.php	Weekly	Print & online news
Stacker Maryland	Out of state	Statewide	https://stacker.com/maryland	Daily	Digital only news
Talbot Spy	Talbot	Talbot	https://talbotspy.org/	Daily	Print & online news
Telemundo 44 (Washington, DC)	Out of state	DMV	https://www.telemundowashingtondc.com/noticias/local/	Daily	TV/radio
Telemundo Delmarva	Wicomico	Delmarva	https://www.telemundodelmarva.com/noticias/local/	Daily	TV/radio
The Afro Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://afro.com/section/news/baltimore-news/	Daily	Print & online news
The Afro PG County	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://afro.com/section/news/prince-georges-county-news/	Daily	Print & online news
The Avenue News	Baltimore	Statewide	https://www.avenuenews.com/	Daily	Print & online news
The BayNet	St. Mary's	Southern Maryland	https://thebaynet.com/news-2/	Daily	Digital only news
The Catholic Review	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://catholicreview.org/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
The Dagger	Harford	Harford	http://www.daggerpress.com/ https://www.oceancityblogs.com/ocean-city-maryland-blogs/	Other	Digital only news
The Dispatch/Ocean City Blogs	Worcester	Worcester	https://www.oceancityblogs.com/ocean-city-maryland-blogs/	Other	Print & online news
The Duckpin	Anne Arundel	Statewide	https://www.theduckpin.com/	Multiple times a week	Blog
The Enquirer-Gazette	Prince George's	Prince George's	https://www.somednews.com/enquirer_gazette/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
The Enterprise	St. Mary's	St. Mary's	https://www.somednews.com/enterprise/	Multiple times a week	Print & online news
The Montgomery Sentinel	Montgomery	Montgomery	https://www.thesentinel.com/	Daily	Print & online news
The Talk of Delmarva	Wicomico	Delmarva	https://www.wgmd.com/	Daily	TV/radio
Tidewater Times	Talbot	Eastern Shore	https://tidewatertimes.com/	Other	Print & online news
Tidewater Trader	Wicomico	Eastern Shore	https://www.tidewatertrader.com/about	Weekly	Print & online news
Tri-State News (Forever Cumberland Media)	Allegany	Statewide	Tri-State News (Forever Cumberland Media)	Daily	Print & online news
United Methodist Church Baltimore-Washington Conf.	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.bwcmc.org/news/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news
Univisión	Baltimore	DMV	https://www.univision.com/local/washington-dc-wfdc	Daily	TV/radio
Washington Blade	Out of state	DMV	https://www.washingtonblade.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Washington Hispanic	Out of state	DMV	https://washingtonhispanic.com/metro/	Daily	Print & online news
Washington Informer	Out of state	DMV	https://www.washingtoninformer.com/	Multiple times a week	Digital only news

Washington Jewish Week	Out of state	DMV	https://smnewsnet.com/about/	Weekly	Print & online news
Washington Post	Out of state	DMV	https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/maryland/	Daily	Print & online news
Washington Times	Out of state	Statewide	https://www.washingtontimes.com/	Daily	Print & online news
Washingtonian	Out of state	DMV	https://www.washingtonian.com/	Other	Print & online news
WBAL	Baltimore	Statewide	https://www.wbal.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WBAL News Radio	Baltimore	Statewide	https://www.wbal.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WBFF Fox 45 News Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://foxbaltimore.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WBOC	Wicomico	Eastern Shore	https://www.wboc.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WCBC	Allegany	Allegany	https://www.wboc.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WEAA	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.weaa.org/about-weaa-88-9	Daily	TV/radio
WFMD (Frederick's Free Talk)	Frederick	Frederick	https://www.wfmd.com/	Multiple times a week	TV/radio
What's Up? Media (Annapolis Magazine)	Anne Arundel	Eastern Shore	https://whatsupmag.com/	Daily	Print & online news
WJLA	Out of state	DMV	https://www.wjla.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WJZ	Baltimore	DMV	https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/wjz-13/	Daily	TV/radio
WKYS	Montgomery	Statewide	https://kysdc.com/	Multiple times a week	TV/radio
WMAR	Baltimore	Baltimore	https://www.wmar2news.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WMDT	Wicomico	Eastern Shore	https://www.wmdt.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WRDE (Coast TV)	Wicomico	Eastern Shore	https://www.wrde.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WTOP	Out of state	DMV	https://wtop.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WUSA 9	Out of state	DMV	https://www.wusa9.com/	Daily	TV/radio
WYPR	Baltimore	Baltimore City	https://www.wypr.org/	Daily	TV/radio

APPENDIX C: COMPLETE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

We are launching an important new study of local journalism in the state, and we need **YOUR** help. This local news ecosystem study will assess what local news and information is produced in the state, about what and where. We have already done an initial landscape inventory of what's online, but that's not enough. To be fair, we need to know more about each outlet. For that we are sending you this survey.

The work is part of our **Local News Network**. One of the goals of the network, and this study, is to find out how we can help you, with research, technology, apps, and work by our students and faculty. Thus we hope you will take the time to fill this out.

It will take you about 15 minutes.

Your answers can be entirely confidential. Though the survey contains questions about staffing and budgets, the purpose of those questions is for comparative purposes. The specific answers about any one outlet will not be released. Thank you in advance for your help.

About News Organization

1. What is the name of your news organization?

1a. In what year was your news organization founded?

YEAR _____

___ Don't know

1b. Was it more than 10 years ago?

___ Yes

___ No

___ Don't know

1) In what county are you based?

_____ County

Your Coverage Focus

2. What is the primary focus of your coverage?

___ General News/No specific focus

___ Politics

___ Business and Finances

___ Crime and Justice

___ Education

___ Environment

___ Health

___ Science

___ Other

3. Is your reporting focused primarily on serving a particular audience group? If so, which one?

___ Black

___ Latino

___ Asian (please specify)

___ All People of Color

___ Religious (please specify)

___ LGBTQ+

___ Other

___ We are not primarily focused on one group

4. What is the primary geographic focus of your coverage? (pick one)

___ Neighborhood

___ Town

___ Several Towns

___ Metro area

___ County

___ State

___ National

___ International

___ Other

Staffing

To help us understand the news landscape in Maryland as fully as possible, please name ANY other publications or platforms of ANY kind that provide news and information in your area-whether they are competitors or not. This could be Facebook groups, newsletters, etc.

5. How many people work in your news organization? Please fill in the categories below.

Overall Staff	Full-time Paid Only
(fulltime, part time, paid, unpaid)	
___ 1-5	___ 1-5
___ 6-10	___ 6-10
___ 11-20	___ 11-20
___ 21-30	___ 21-30
___ 31-50	___ 31-50
___ More than 100	___ More than 100
___ Don't Know	___ Don't know

Overall Newsroom Staff	Fulltime Paid Newsroom Staff	Newsroom volunteers/ interns/contributors	Non-news volunteers/ interns/contributors
(fulltime, part time, paid, unpaid)			
___ 1-5	___ 1-5	___ 0	___ 0
___ 6-10	___ 6-10	___ 1-5	___ 1-5
___ 11-20	___ 11-20	___ 6-10	___ 6-10
___ 21-30	___ 21-30	___ 11-20	___ 11-20
___ 31-50	___ 31-50	___ 21-30	___ 21-20
___ More than 100	___ More than 100	___ 31-50	___ 31-50
___ Don't Know	___ Don't know	___ 51-100	___ 51 -100
		___ More than 100	___ More than 100
		___ Don't know	___ Don't Know

6. How many of those FULL-TIME news staff also work on non-news activities, such as business development, marketing, administration, advertising, circulation, subscription, membership or fundraising?

- ___ 0
- ___ 1-5
- ___ 6-10
- ___ 11-20
- ___ 21-30
- ___ 31-50
- ___ 51-100
- ___ More than 100
- ___ Don't know

7. Now we want to ask about part-time and unpaid staff. Please fill out how many people work in each category.

Part-time Newsroom Staff	Part-time Non-news Staff
___ 0	___ 0
___ 1-5	___ 1-5
___ 6-10	___ 6-10
___ 11-20	___ 11-20
___ 21-30	___ 21-20
___ 31-50	___ 31-50
___ 51-100	___ 51 -100
___ More than 100	___ More than 100
___ Don't know	___ Don't Know

News Staff Trends

8. In the past two years, has your news staff grown, been reduced or stayed the same?

- ___ Grown
- ___ Reduced
- ___ Stayed the same
- ___ Don't know

8a) How many newsroom staff positions were eliminated? (Please give a number)

8b) How many editorial positions were added? (Please give a number)

Non-News Staff Trends

9. In the past two years, has your non-news staff grown, been reduced or stayed the same?

- ___ Grown
- ___ Reduced
- ___ Stayed the same
- ___ Don't know

9a) How many positions were added?
(Please provide a number)

9b) How many positions were eliminated?
(Please provide a number)

10. If you have had to scale back on coverage in the last two years, please describe what you have stopped or scaled back covering. _____

11. If you have added coverage in the last two years, please describe what you have added. _____

12. Which of these phrases best describes what you think will happen to your organization's staffing levels in the next year?

- We'll be adding staff
- We'll be reducing staff
- We will remain about the same size
- Don't know

13. Would you describe your organization as primarily:

- Online and print
- Digital only
- Newsletter
- Podcast
- Social Media or SMS based
- NPR member public radio
- PBS member public broadcast
- Joint NPR/PBS
- Community radio or TV
- Other

Organizational Needs

Now we want to ask you what you need.

14. What is the most important **current staffing need** for your organization?

- News reporting
- Business/Advertising/Marketing
- Membership/Circulation/Audience Engagement
- Fundraising
- Other

15. Please rank IN ORDER what you consider the most important gap or need of your organization with **1** being **most important** and the highest number being **least important**. (Drag and Drop selected answer)

- We need more reporters
- We need more skill at audience engagement
- We need more business capacity skills (from business services to fundraising)
- We need more digital and technical skills
- Other (please explain) _____
- _____
- Don't Know

Audience

19. Overall, how has the size of your online audience changed in the past 12 months?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same
- Don't know

19a) If it has grown, by how much has the size of your online audience increased in the past 12 months?

- 1-10%
- 11-25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%
- 100-150%
- 150-200%
- More than 200%
- Don't Know

19b) If it has shrunk, by how much has your online audience decreased in the past 12 months?

- 1-10%
- 11-25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%
- Don't know

Budget and Finance

Now we want to ask some questions about finances.

You're almost done. Only a few questions left.

20. What is the overall **annual** budget of your organization?

- Less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- \$500,000 to \$1 million
- \$1 million to \$2 million
- \$2 million to \$5 million
- More than \$5 million
- Don't know

21. Roughly what percentage of your organization's current-year budget is dedicated to news and editorial?

- 0-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- 51-60%
- 61-70%
- More than 70%

We want to know more about the business model of local news.

22. To help us, can you estimate what percentage of your budget comes from the following? If you're unsure give us your best guess. (Again your specific information will remain entirely confidential.)

Individual Donations	Events	Subscriptions/ memberships	Ads/ sponsorships	Foundation Funding	Other
(not memberships)					
___ 0-10%	___ 0-10%	___ 0-10%	___ 0-10%	___ 0-10%	___ 0-10%
___ 11-20%	___ 11-20%	___ 11-20%	___ 11-20%	___ 11-20%	___ 11-20%
___ 21-30%	___ 21-30%	___ 21-30%	___ 21-30%	___ 21-30%	___ 21-30%
___ 31-40%	___ 31-40%	___ 31-40%	___ 31-40%	___ 31-40%	___ 31-40%
___ 41-50%	___ 41-50%	___ 41-50%	___ 41-50%	___ 41-50%	___ 41-50%
___ 51-60%	___ 51-60%	___ 51-60%	___ 51-60%	___ 51-60%	___ 51-60%
___ 61-70%	___ 61-70%	___ 61-70%	___ 61-70%	___ 61-70%	___ 61-70%
___ 71-80%	___ 71-80%	___ 71-80%	___ 71-80%	___ 71-80%	___ 71-80%
___ 81-90%	___ 81-90%	___ 81-90%	___ 81-90	___ 81-90%	___ 81-90%
___ 91-100%	___ 91-100%	___ 91-100%	___ 91-100%xx	___ 91-100%	___ 91-100%
___ Don't Know	___ Don't Know	___ Don't Know	___ Don't Know	___ Don't know	___ Don't Know

23. Would you say your news organization is currently financially solvent, meaning you are able to meet current expenses without cutting, that you are operating at break-even or better?

- ___ Yes
- ___ No
- ___ No answer
- ___ Don't know

23a) How long has that been the case?

- ___ Less than 1 year
- ___ 1 year
- ___ 2 years
- ___ 2 to 5 years
- ___ More than 5 years

24. How long until you believe you are operating in the black?

- Few weeks
- Few months
- Few years
- Don't know

25. Thinking of the assets your organization has on hand today, how long could you stay in operation without a growth in revenue?

- Less than 2 months
- 2 to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to less than 2 years
- 2 years or more
- Don't know

26. All things considered, how confident are you that your news organization will be financially solvent five years from now? Please answer on a scale of one to ten, with 1 being not at all and 10 being completely confident.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Nonprofit News

27. Is your news organization for profit or nonprofit?

- For profit
- Nonprofit

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS GO ONLY TO THOSE RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED THAT THEY ARE NONPROFITS.

28. Did your organization begin with help from an initial startup grant or donation that accounted for at least one third of your original funding?

- Yes
- No

29. In dollars, how much was the grant your organization received?

- Less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- More than \$500,000
- Don't know

30. When did or does that initial grant or funding expire?

31. What is the current status of that grant renewal?

- The funder has agreed to renewal
- The funder is considering a renewal
- The funder considers renewals but has decided not to renew
- The funder does not give second grants

THANK YOU

Thank you for completing this survey. Would you be willing to be interviewed as part of our research? If so, please provide your **name**, **title** and **email** below.

APPENDIX D: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK AND RULES

NEWS ECOSYSTEM STUDY CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

This is the codebook developed by Tom Rosenstiel, Professor of the Practice and Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland, for the Philip Merrill College of Journalism's statewide news ecosystem study. The codebook was used to do a content analysis of every news source in the state – and this codebook can be used by any other organization in any other state to conduct a similar study. All of the information collected in such a study should be stored in either a Google Sheet or an Excel file, both of which allow for easy analysis once the coding is completed.

The variables that should be coded:

1. Publication
2. Date of story
3. Headline (copy the headline into the field on your spreadsheet)
4. Topic A
 - a. Local government
 - b. State government
 - c. Elections/politics
 - d. Schools/education
 - e. Crime/courts/police
 - f. Disasters/fires/accidents (including traffic)
 - g. Arts/entertainment
 - h. Food/restaurants
 - i. Technology/science
 - j. Culture/lifestyle/how people live/home and garden
 - k. Local people/community groups/deaths/births/etc.
 - l. Business/economy/philanthropy
 - m. Taxes
 - n. Infrastructure/development/transportation
 - o. College sports
 - p. Prep sports (high school)
 - q. Pro sports
 - r. Other sports
 - s. Weather
 - t. Outdoors/recreation
 - u. Environment
5. Topic B
 - a. Each story can be coded for two topics though it is not required (weather is a common case).
6. Content type
 - a. News event
 - b. Enterprise/feature (only if staff written, otherwise NA, as it may be a press release)
 - c. Don't know/not applicable
 - d. Opinion content
 - i. This variable tries to capture the level of enterprise initiative at the site. If the news organization covered an event that has occurred, the code is news event. If it is a feature story, a human interest piece, a profile, or even a followup to a news event that was not triggered by a subsequent news event, it would be enterprise. And opinion pieces, editorials, etc., are opinion.
- v. Health/health care
- w. Social issues (i.e. abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, protests)
- x. Religion
- y. Local history
- z. Ethics/scandals
- aa. Gambling
- ab. International issues (Israel/Gaza/Ukraine)
- ac. National news/issues (everything other than social issues, i.e. Trump, Congress etc.)

7. Author (see rules below)
 - a. Bylined staff
 - b. Staff (no named byline)
 - c. Contributor (see rule below)
 - d. Sister publication (see rule below)
 - e. Other (most likely press releases, see rule below)
 - f. TV piece
 - g. College- or university-based news service (such as Capital News Service in the Maryland study)
 - h. Don't know
8. Frequency of publication
 - a. Daily
 - b. More than once a week
 - c. Weekly
 - d. Other (monthly, quarterly, seasonal, arbitrary, inconsistent)
 - e. Defunct
 - f. Facebook group

Frequency of and scope of coding

The plan is to code just the homepage of each news outlet for one day.

Code everything on the homepage that meets the following criteria.

- You should only code original content from that outlet.
- Do not code wirecopy
- Do not code sponsored content.

If it is original material from a sister publication that is local, such as a nearby Gannett paper but not the national Gannett USA Today network, count it. If something is not labeled or appears to be a press release from police or other government, code it as OTHER.

Code only one day, but more than one day's content

Given that all content we have seen has date stamps, it is not necessary to code any subsequent days. You can estimate the frequency of their posting by the date stamps.

How to count stories on blogs or slow-posting websites

If it is a community blog, in which one story is posted at a time without a homepage design, one story over another, code either the most recent seven stories (if they post not that often) or stories from the last seven days if they post frequently.

Whatever the design, web page or blog style, if there are no stories from the last seven days, or fewer than seven, code the last code seven stories.

What to count if an outlet has pages dedicated to counties in your state but the homepage is more national and regional in content

Code the local page (or pages if they do it by county) rather than the home page.

How to code now, until and unless you create an automated capture

The easiest way to code manually, by far, is to copy the headline into the spreadsheet you are using and note the date. Reduce the headline size to 9 or 10 pt to fit. You should be able to code the topic from the headline. Then click on the story and note the author type (not the name) before a paywall blocker goes up.

How many stories should you count?

We have three approaches depending on the page.

1. For traditional news homepages, ***count all the stories on the homepage produced in the last seven days***. Once you hit stories older than that, stop.
2. If the site posts an enormous amount of content each day:
 - a. **Count all the stories that fill one home page screen before there is a break signifying older material up to 25 stories.** There will be some subjectivity to this. For websites that have no such break and post a vast amount of content, **stop at 25 stories for a site in this category.**
 - b. **For blogs, which may post less often and have a blog design, one story atop another, code the last seven stories.** (That will certainly go beyond seven days of content).

How to code roundup stories

If you encounter a roundup story that has no particular topic or multiple topics with no connection, you can skip it. If it is a roundup of news around a particular subject, such as business news or government news in the last week, you should code it as that topic.

Whether to code something that is not strictly related to your state

Use common sense. If it's a broader issue that affects your state (say mental health or environment) and is locally produced by that outlet, code it. The more difficult issue is if it's a story with an out-of-state dateline. Here some judgment is required. If it's a discrete event, such as a local crime outside your state, do not code it. But if it is about the opening of a park or aquarium or something that someone in your state would find relevant, err on the side of coding it now. That will at least allow you to decide later if you want to remove it. When in doubt, code it.

A note on the topic variable. Each story CAN be coded for two topics (such as a local government talking about schools). But it is not required. Hence a story about some local business has no other subtopic; simply code it as business. If you are unsure whether there is a subtopic but the main topic is clear, code it as a single topic.

The goal of this project is to find out what an outlet covers, some indication of enterprise (or type of content), and who is producing the content (staff or contributor).

Rules for coding author:

- **Byline** is for someone from that publication's staff.
- Content marked as **staff** would be a non-bylined story designated by the word staff in the credit line or byline space.
- **Contributor** is a reader, or designated as "Special to" or some other designation that is not staff.
- **QUESTION MARK:** If you cannot determine the author type, code that as "don't know."
- **SISTER PUBLICATION** - in a handful of outlets, there may be a group of publications covering neighboring communities that share content but identify it without byline as coming from one of their sister publications. This will be rare, but in those instances, code it as "sister publication."
- **OTHER:** If something is not labeled or appears to be a press release from police or other government, code it as **OTHER**.
- **If it is published by a college- or university-based news service, code it as that.**
- **TV piece** (this is to be used just for local TV news websites that are providing links to an original story they did but there is no text associated

It is relatively easy to code everything you need even if there is a paywall, except for author type. At Gannett papers, for instance, some stories are behind a paywall and we cannot determine the author though we can see the headline and determine the topic.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Maryland Local News Ecosystem Study is an inaugural effort to document the state of journalism in Maryland — at a critical time for local journalism and American democracy. The study, which we hope to make semi-annual, is designed as a template for other universities or institutions to employ.

The study is an initiative of the Local News Network at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism in association with the university's Maryland Democracy Initiative.

The research was conducted in three parts:

- An initial landscape analysis that identified every possible outlet with news and information about Maryland, from The Washington Post to neighborhood Facebook pages.
- A survey of newsroom leaders and editors about staffing, budgets and needs — and to identify any additional outlets the landscape analysis missed.
- A content analysis of the 154 different news outlets we identified that produced original news content.

WHO WORKED ON THE STUDY

Tom Rosenstiel, Eleanor Merrill Scholar on the Future of Journalism and Professor of the Practice at Merrill College, designed the news ecosystem study and wrote the report.

Jerry Zremski, director of the Local News Network at Merrill College, assisted in the planning, writing and editing of the report.

Nira Dayanim, John McQuaid, Loretta Pulwer and Khushboo Rathore were part of the research team that conducted the content analysis and drafted the thumbnail sketches of news outlets. McQuaid and Pulwer also worked on the survey of news outlets.

Jenna Cohen prepared the charts. Joel Lev-Tov prepared the landscape study that served as the basis for the survey and the content analysis.

Questions about this study? Contact Tom Rosenstiel at tomrosen@umd.edu or Jerry Zremski at jzremski@umd.edu.

ABOUT THE LOCAL NEWS NETWORK

Merrill College launched the Local News Network in 2022 with an anchor commitment from the Andrew and Julie Klingenstein Family Fund. LNN supports local news outlets throughout the state with news coverage and tools.