WHERE THE WOMEN ARE: MEASURING FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW

JOURNALISM ECOLOGY

Thesis Presented

by

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to

The Northeastern University School of Journalism

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism

Northeastern University

Boston, Massachusetts

December 2013

ABSTRACT

This project measures women's leadership in emerging digital news organizations in the United States and places their work in a broader historical and social context. For more than a century, women have had complex relationships with journalism institutions. Now that those institutions are just one part of a fast-changing media ecosystem, it's necessary to look beyond traditional newsrooms and examine the role of women developing the entities that will produce and define journalism in the decades to come.

The researcher found that women are slightly more likely to hold leadership roles in emerging digital news organizations than in legacy media, but those jobs are clustered at small, hyperlocal websites. At the largest digital news organizations, meanwhile, female leadership is rare. This raises serious questions about how journalism produced by women will be perceived and valued in the future. It also hints that emerging media may be adopting some habits of legacy newsrooms, habits that stymied evolution in response to social and technological change.

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DISCLOSURES

My professional network intersects with many of the news organizations referenced in this report. I've worked for three of them: the *Connecticut Health I-Team*, which published two of my stories in 2013; *ProPublica*, which hired me for a few hours of research in 2012; and *Watchdog New England*, where I provided some technical support when I was a graduate assistant at Northeastern University during the 2012-2013 academic year.

I also have loose ties to *Patch* and *VillageSoup*. From 2008 to 2012, I served on the board of the New Hampshire Press Association. Several of my fellow board members took jobs with *Patch* during that time. While I was president, the association opened membership to online-only news organizations; *Patch* was the first to join. About the same time, I spoke to the founders of *VillageSoup* in my capacity as online editor at the *Concord (New Hampshire) Monitor*. The *Monitor's* parent company, Newspapers of New England, was considering using the *VillageSoup* content management system. I was one of several editors who advised choosing a different platform.

I've known Grant Bosse, from *New Hampshire Watchdog,*[1] for many years. He and I are both freelance contributors to the *Monitor*. I've also interviewed some of the journalists involved in these organizations in the course of my freelance work for *NetNewsCheck.com*, *Editor & Publisher* and *Poynter.org*. In August 2013, I wrote an essay for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, which hosts one of the databases I used for my research. In October 2013, *NetNewsCheck* hired me to cover the Local Independent Online News Publishers' summit, an event referenced in this report. Finally, *Homicide Watch* began a partnership with Northeastern's School of Journalism in September 2013.

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[1]There is no relationship between *Watchdog New England* and *New Hampshire Watchdog*.

INTRODUCTION

John Ward leaned over his lunch plate and said something that was beginning to sound familiar: "Most of my heroes in this business are women."

Ward is the publisher of *RedBankGreen.com*, a hyperlocal news website in New Jersey with the slogan "a town square for an unsquare town." We were among the roughly 75 people who had gathered at Columbia College Chicago for the inaugural summit of the Local Independent Online News Publishers, or LION, a trade group that was formed to "foster the viability and excellence of locally focused independent online news organizations."[2] It was the fall of 2013; LION was a year old and growing fast. As one of group's early members, Ward was there to advise newcomers planning to launch publications in their communities. I'd traveled to Chicago for a different reason: My research had shown that nearly 50 percent of LION's members were female, giving the group a kind of gender parity that's rare in the male-dominated news business. I wanted to learn more about these female publishers and understand how their work fit into the modern journalism landscape.

By the time I met Ward at lunch on the first day of the summit, word of my research had spread among the attendees. He wasn't the first — or the last — to enthusiastically list the women who had developed the framework for local digital news: Debbie Galant, who launched one of the first hyperlocal news sites, *BaristaNet.com*, in 2004; *PlanetPrinceton.com* founder Krystal Knapp; and Teresa Wippel, whose network of local sites has grown to cover several communities in suburban Seattle. It was fantastic to see such gender balance at a journalism convention, but the broader implications remain unclear. Is LION's membership indicative of a demographic shift in digital journalism, or does it illustrate something else? Are these sites

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[2] "LION Publishers Mission and Values," 2012, http://www.lionpublishers.com/about/mission/.

creating a pipeline of talented, entrepreneurial women who will find new ways of practicing —

and paying for — digital journalism? Or is the concentration of women at the hyperlocal level a

new symptom of old barriers that have kept all but a few women from reaching the top ranks of

the American media?

Throughout American history, women have practiced, and at times, redefined journalism.

That's been especially true in recent decades as they've played crucial roles in developing digital

journalism as a genre. They're also heavily involved in building the future of news, hustling for

grants, venture capital or subscribers to support work they view as marketable, crucial to

democracy or both. The work of women inside the digital arms of legacy newsrooms is

interesting (and addressed briefly in later chapters), but it's more important to examine the scope

of their leadership outside traditional journalistic institutions. It's here, in a rapidly changing

arena of startups, spinoffs and superstar bloggers, that journalists have the best chance of

transcending old habits that tend to overvalue the work of white men.

In the past, researchers have focused on women's relationships with newspapers,

magazines and broadcasters. Now that those institutions are just part of the media landscape, it's

necessary to look beyond traditional newsrooms and attempt to gauge women's involvement in

the development of the entities that will practice journalism in the decades to come. As C.W.

Anderson writes in *Rebuilding the News*, media scholars consider the "larger journalistic

'ecosystem' that is coalescing outside newsrooms walls."[3] Hyperlocal sites like those operated

by LION members are one product of this ecosystem; other varieties of startup include

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[3] C.W. Anderson, *Rebuilding the News: Metropolitan Journalism in the Digital Age*
(Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2013).

investigative foundations, data-driven projects and niche sites covering topics like sports, politics, science and technology.

It's a rapidly changing landscape. Several of the sites I used in my sample have closed or switched ownership since this project began. New entities have appeared almost monthly. As I write this, *paidContent* is merging with *Gigaom*, e-Bay founder Pierre Omidyar is preparing to launch an investigative outfit and the future of the *Patch* network is uncertain. Instead of trying to track these changes in real time, I looked for directories of online journalism startups to serve as snapshots. The LION membership roster is one such source. Other data come from directories maintained by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Harvard's *Neiman Journalism Lab* and journalism consultant Michele McLellan. None of these are comprehensive, but the information they include about the staffing arrangements at hundreds of fledgling news organizations is enough to sketch rough outlines of women's involvement.

Contextualizing that information has been difficult. Academic research into journalism's startup culture is limited, and the industry trade publications focus on smaller changes, not big trends. It was necessary to draw on historical perspectives on female journalists, plus research about gender disparities in two fields related to modern journalism: blogging and entrepreneurship. Two recently published books were crucial to framing this project: Anderson's *Rebuilding the News* for its methods and Dan Kennedy's *The Wired City* for its thoughtful overview of the forces — both human and economic — that are driving the creation of modern news organizations. I also used plenty of shoe leather reporting, conducting dozens of interviews and traveling to Washington, D.C., Chicago and rural Vermont to gather additional information at conferences and workshops.

I discovered that women are slightly more likely to hold leadership roles in emerging organizations than in legacy newsrooms, but a deeper analysis shows a replication of the gender disparities that have plagued the media for decades. Female leaders are common in small, rural online publications but remain rare at larger digital organizations. In fact, the largest digital news organizations examined were less likely than legacy publications to have female leaders. Jobs at those smaller publications may not carry full-time salaries and benefits, and may lack the professional recognition necessary to advance. During my year of research, I met dozens of male and female journalists standing at the intersection of technology, business and news, hopeful about the future but facing hurdles on all sides. For women, those hurdles might be harder to clear. What follows is an exploration of some of the reasons why.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose: To measure women's leadership in emerging digital news organizations in the United States and compare it to their involvement in legacy media. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used.

Key terms and definitions:

Blog: The Oxford Dictionary defines a blog as "a personal website or web page on which an individual records opinions, links to other sites, etc. on a regular basis." The term is short for "weblog" and, by most accounts, was first used in 1999. This report references three different types of blogs: filter blogs, journal blogs and mommy blogs. Filter blogs are, according to Sarah Pedersen, "links driven blogs with editorial commentary. More focused on external events than a filter blog."[4] Journal blogs, Pederson writes, are "more focused on the bloggers' life." Mommy blogs are generally defined as blogs women write about childrearing and other domestic matters.[5]

Digital news organization: An entity with a journalistic mission that meets the inclusion requirements of at least one of the directories outlined below.

Gender: The concept of gender is far more complex than the binary distinction between female and male. This project will focus on journalists who identify as female, which reflects the standards described by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. In its stylebook,

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[4] Sarah Pedersen, "Women Bloggers Seeking Validation and Financial Recompense in the Blogosphere," in *Handbook of Research on Social Interaction Technologies and Collaboration Software: Concepts and Trends* (IGI Global, 2010), 281–291, http://services.igi-global.com/resolvedoi/resolve.aspx?doi=10.4018/978-1-60566-368-5.ch025.
[5] Gina Masullo Chen, "Don't Call Me That: A Techno-Feminist Critique of the Term Mommy Blogger," *Mass Communication and Society* 16, no. 4 (March 28, 2013): 510–532, doi:10.1080/15205436.2012.737888.

the association defines "gender identity" as "an individual's emotional and psychological sense of being male or female. Not necessarily the same as an individual's sex at birth."[6]

Hyperlocal: This is perhaps the most ubiquitous term in conversations about emerging digital media, but there's been a good deal of debate around what organizations are and are not hyperlocals. This report will use a definition proposed in 2011 by Emily Metzgar who described hyperlocals as "geographically-based, community-oriented, original-news-reporting organizations indigenous to the web and intended to fill perceived gaps in coverage of an issue or region and to promote civic engagement."[7]

Legacy media: One of several terms used to describe publications and communication techniques that existed before the Internet and World Wide Web. Synonyms include "old media" and "traditional media." Common examples are newspapers, magazines, broadcast TV and terrestrial radio.

Leadership role: Legacy media organizations have historically used standard staffing structures that make it fairly easy to determine leaders. That's not the case with many emerging digital news organizations, where one staff member will often assume multiple roles. Therefore, it was necessary to use contextual cues in each of the directories to infer leadership positions.

Quantitative methods: Data about the number of women involved in leadership roles in digital news organizations were gathered from four publicly available directories. They are:

1. The *Columbia Journalism Review's* Guide to Online News Startups (The Guide).

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[6] "Stylebook Supplement on LGBT Terminology | NLGJA," accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.nlgja.org/resources/stylebook.

[7] Emily T. Metzgar, ,David D. Kurpius, and Karen M. Rowley, "Defining Hyperlocal Media: Proposing a Framework for Discussion," *New Media & Society* 13, no. 5 (August 1, 2011): 772–787, doi:10.1177/1461444810385095.

2. A portion[8] of the *Nieman Journalism Lab's* Encyclo (Encyclo).

3. The membership roster of the Local Independent Online News Publishers (LION).

4. Michele's List, a database maintained by journalist Michele McLellan (Michele's List).

Each of these lists has different criteria for which types of publications to include (see table below), although there are some common characteristics including a focus on original content, frequent updates and an indication that the publication is striving for financial sustainability. None of these lists are definitive directories, but taken together they provide snapshots of the entities practicing digital journalism in the United States during the early part of the 21st century.

| Source	Inclusion criteria
The Guide	Focused on content creation and original reporting. At least one full-time staff member. Making a "serious effort" at financial sustainability. Not the digital arm of a legacy media entity.
Encyclo	"Companies and organizations that are having a big impact on the future of news" and have "something to teach us about how the business of news is changing."
LION	Distributes information about a "defined geographic area" primarily through the Internet. Has publishers who are "actively involved" in daily operations. Provides (or is intended to provide) a "meaningful" income. Is updated regularly with "news in the general public interest." Upholds "high professional standards, including transparency, integrity, fairness, accuracy, completeness, and accountability." Has been granted approval by the LION board of directors.
Michele's List	Publishes mostly original news. Aims "to practice accuracy, transparency and fair play." Promotes civic engagement and/or audience participation. Is updated at least three times a week. (Less frequent updates are acceptable for sites devoted only to investigative journalism.) Is making a "serious effort" toward financial sustainability.

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[8] The Encyclo includes sections for online news organizations, magazines, newspapers, journalism organizations, wire services and tech companies. This study focuses on the online news organization section.

A total of 402 *digital news organizations* are included; roughly one third appear in more than one directory. The size, scope and focus of these organizations vary greatly. Both for-profit and non-profit models are represented. The smallest organizations are owned and operated by a single person. The largest report more than 80 employees. They represent the most common types of digital publications, which are described in later chapters. Roughly two-dozen
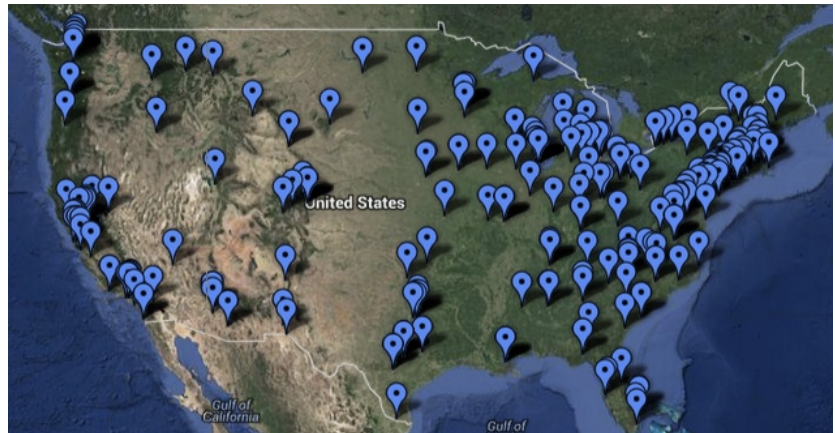
publications launched before 2000, but most appeared during or after 2009. As the accompanying map illustrates, the organizations are distributed throughout the United States, with clusters in Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco and New York.[9]

Women's participation was counted based on the names associated with each news organization. Determination of gender was based on names and, if available, gender pronouns. If the gender was unclear, I used online biographical information — including available photos — to make a determination. This method is consistent with generally accepted techniques for byline counts and other inquires into gender representation in journalism and blogging.[10]

Two additional lists of digital news organizations were also reviewed, but neither contained enough information to ascertain the gender of key staff members. One list was

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[9] Networks of sites like *Patch* and *Village Soup* are excluded from the map.
[10] Herring.

developed by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) for its 2013 diversity survey.[11] The second list is the Knight Citizen News Network's directory of community news sites.[12] With more than 600 entries, it's an interesting sample, but it does not consistently include the names of key staff members.

Leadership roles were determined based on contextual information or, in the case of LION, membership requirements. Most records in The Guide contained a section for "principal staff." That information was reported by the news organizations. Many of the Encyclo entries identified key staff members either in the narrative entry or through hyperlinks to related stories. If neither the main narrative nor linked material provided names, no leadership information was recorded for that record. Most records in Michele's List include the name of a publisher or founder. For LION, anyone listed must be, under the organization's bylaws, a "publisher, director or other CEO." Therefore, all names were counted.

Any news organization based outside the United States was excluded. Several other Encyclo entries were excluded because they described an app or publishing platform, not a news organization. The Guide, the Encyclo and the LION membership list were reviewed in August 2013; Michele's List was reviewed in October 2013. The tables below provide details about scoring techniques and the number of records reviewed/excluded from each directory.

Source	Scoring technique
The Guide	Counted the names in the "principal staff" section of each entry. Excluded publications based outside the U.S.
Encyclo	Counted staff members named in the narrative entries or linked information. Records describing news organizations based outside the U.S., apps or publishing companies were excluded.

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[11] ASNE.
[12] Knight Community News Network, *Directory of Community News Sites*, Web directory (J-Lab, n.d.), http://www.kcnn.org/citmedia_sites/.

LION	Counted names on the membership roster. No exclusions necessary.
Michele's List	Counted names listed in each record. One record was excluded because it described a news organization based outside the U.S.

Source	Total pubs listed	Excluded	No staff information
The Guide	275	1	0
Encyclo	97	8	21
LION	109	0	0
Michele's List	132	1	21

The data represent a single point in time, although longitudinal comparison is possible in The Guide thanks to a similar study conducted in 2011 by a blog called *The Gender Report*. That comparison is included in the quantitative results section.

Qualitative methods: I conducted nine semi-structured interviews with a snowball sample of women in leadership positions at emerging online news organizations. Most of the interview subjects were selected from the four lists outlined above. The sample aims to represent publications of different sizes and geographic locations and to include the voices of women who identify with a variety of racial backgrounds. Most of these interviews were conducted by phone or Skype during October 2013. Two were conducted in person at the annual meeting of the Journalism and Women Symposium in Essex, Vermont. The interviews were informal, although subjects were asked many of the following questions:

- How did you decide to start your news venture?

- What's your business model?

- What kind of experience have you had with traditional news outlets, both generally and in terms of your gender? How do those experiences compare to your current experiences with your online news venture?

- How does your gender influence the types of stories that your outlet covers?

- How is your work received by your audience? By the broader journalistic community?

- Where do you see your publication in a year? In five years?

Interviews were transcribed and reviewed for common themes. The oldest of these women is 61; the youngest is 31. Five identify as white or Caucasian. Two are Latina. One is African American, and one is of mixed ethnic background. Three of the sites are based in California. Two are in Texas, and another two are in New York City. One is in Connecticut, and one is in South Carolina. Seven of the women launched their organizations either alone or with a single partner. Two worked with larger community groups. Three of the nine publications are operating as nonprofits.

Additional field research was conducted on three occasions: The New Media Women Entrepreneurs workshop in Washington, D.C., on September 12, 2013; at LION's annual summit in Chicago on October 4-5, 2013; and at the annual meeting of the Journalism and Women Symposium (JAWS) in Essex, Vermont, on October 25-27, 2013. These events were documented through notes, photos and audio recordings.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN IN AMERICAN JOURNALISM

The first person to document the work of female journalists in America was Ishbel Ross, a reporter for the *New York Tribune* who covered the Lindbergh kidnapping and, in the early 1930s, wrote *Ladies of the Press*. Although the book contains some errors of fact,[13] it's a useful primer on the complex relationship between women and the institutions that produced journalism during the 19th and 20th centuries.[14]

Women have been involved in American journalism as reporters, columnists and even publishers since the colonial era, although their roles were limited until the second half of the 1800s. During that time, literacy rates rose, and the cost of newspaper subscriptions dropped. Publishers wanted to offer advertisers, especially department stores, a female audience and decided the best way to attract women as readers was to hire women as reporters. These new journalists filed features for the women's pages and, later, became plucky soldiers in big-city newspaper wars, pulling off publicity stunts like Nellie Bly's race around the earth on behalf of Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World.*

The demand for their services was high: Ross notes that that the *Chicago Tribune's* female workforce grew from just 16 in 1896 to more than 400 by the mid 1930s.[15] Ross's book celebrates their work but also illustrates the tension between male-dominated newsrooms and the era's social expectations of women. Women who dare to work late in pursuit of a front-page story are, in Ross's estimation, "freaks" better suited to meeting deadlines than meeting the

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[13] In her 1994 biography of Nellie Bly, journalist Brooke Kroeger notes that Ross repeated several myths about Bly's life. That, Kroeger writes, "opens up the question of how reliable her other accounts of early women reporters may be." Kroeger, Brooke, *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist* (New York: Times Books, a division of Random House, 1994).
[14] Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1936).
[15] Ross.

needs of a husband and children. This narrative plays out over and over again in autobiographies and other first-person accounts by female journalists from the same era.[16]

Most broader media histories exclude women altogether. For example, the seminal *History of American Journalism* opens with portraits of nine men.[17] That's changed somewhat in the past 30 years as media scholars have sought to document the lives of female journalists throughout history. Many of those authors argue that, to fully account for women's contributions, it's necessary to move beyond studies of what communications scholar Maurine Beasley calls "media empires"[18] and rethink the definition of journalism. Women, Beasley writes, tended to work in areas undervalued in newsrooms and overlooked by historians:

> Soft news traditionally has been the area conducive to success for women, although it has been given only limited attention by journalism historians, who have seen it as being of less consequence than male-dominated hard news.[19]

Although women's pages did, indeed, feature plenty of features about fashion, family life and society, they also became arenas for topics that helped fuel the feminist movement of the 1960s. Starting in the 1950s, women's pages began publishing stories about domestic violence, birth control and equal pay. One women's page editor, the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* Dorothy Jurney, went on to conduct the first gender demographic surveys of newsrooms, which are outlined in later chapters. As journalism historian Kimberly Wilmot Voss notes, many female editors saw opportunities rather than restrictions in their work for the women's page:

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[16] Linda Lumsden, " 'You're a Tough Guy, Mary and a First-Rate Newspaperman': Gender and Women Journalists in the 1920s and 1930s," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 1995): 913–921, doi:10.1177/107769909507200414.

[17] J.M. Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917).

[18] Maurine Beasley, "Recent Directions for the Study of Women's History in American Journalism," *Journalism Studies* 2, no. 2 (2001): 207–220, doi:10.1080/14616700117394.

[19] Beasley.

While some have criticized the placement of women's liberation news among recipes and fashion stories, several progressive editors used the approach to reach women readers and, through their work, they spread news about topics impacting women in a way that was more positive than most mainstream media.[20]

Still, women's pages were overwhelmingly considered "pink ghettos" focused on subjects that weren't important enough for the front page.[21]

Also marginalized are women who have worked for — and in some cases owned — publications that operated outside the strict objectivity standards observed by most city newsrooms. There were a number of women who founded publications during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some of these women are well known for their social activism, but not their journalism. In a 2002 essay, historian Carolyn Kitch provides a partial list of female publishers from that era:

> Jane Swisshelm published an anti-slavery newspaper in Minnesota.... Amelia Bloomer...started a temperance newspaper, *The Lily,* in 1849, and four years later Paulina Wright Davis launched the first women's-rights newspaper, *The Una.* The years after the Civil War yielded two more important publications, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's radical newspaper, *The Revolution,* and Lucy Stone's more conservative suffrage publication, *The Woman's Journal.* In the 1890s South, Ida B. Wells, who had

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[20] Kimberly Wilmot Voss, "Dorothy Jurney: A National Advocate for Women's Pages as They Appeared and Then Disappeared," *Journalism History* 36, no. 1 (2010): 13–22.
[21] Erika Fry, "Don't Think Pink," *Columbia Journalism Review*, June 12, 2012, http://www.cjr.org/the_kicker/dont_think_pink.php.

been born a slave, campaigned against lynching in the *Memphis Free Speech,* an African-American newspaper of which she was part owner.[22]

Another interesting figure was Charlotta Bass, who bought the *California Eagle* in 1912 for $50 and used the paper to advocate for racial and gender equality.[23] More recently, women have also held key positions in the alternative and lesbian press, two types of publications that have struggled for mainstream recognition.[24]

This lack of recognition, plus low pay and little hope of promotion, led some female journalists to seek professional legitimacy, camaraderie and training through women's press clubs, which began to appear around the turn of the 20th century.[25] Women used other techniques to gain professional credibility as well, enrolling in journalism schools and adopting male characteristics to blend in with their male peers.[26] During the 1970s, women filed gender discrimination lawsuits against the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* and other major publications,[27] suing for equal pay and access to promotion. Such efforts were only partially successful. As the following chapters will show, women remain a minority in the American press. That's especially true among its highest ranks.

In addition to formal histories, there are two other types of efforts under way to better understand the relationship between women and the press: oral histories and byline surveillance.

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[22] Carolyn Kitch,"Women in Journalism," *American Journalism. History, Principles, Practices. Jefferson & Londres: Mcfarland.* (2002).
[23] R. Streitmatter, *Raising Her Voice: African-American Women Journalists Who Changed History* (University Press of Kentucky, 1994).
[24] J. Whitt, *Women in American Journalism: A New History* (University of Illinois Press, 2008).
[25] E.V. Burt, *A Bid for Legitimacy: The Woman's Press Club Movement, 1881-1900*, 1996.
[26] Lumsden.
[27] Nan Robertson, *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* (New York: Random House, 1992).

The oral histories are being collected by the National Press Club and at the State Historical

Society of Missouri's National Women and Media Collection. Technological developments have

brought renewed attention to byline counts, which use authors' names to gauge women's

participation in certain types of coverage. In addition to traditional hand counts, emerging

software is making possible rolling, real-time tallies of gender representation.[28]

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[28] Meg Heckman, "Software Seeks to Measure Women's Participation in Journalism," *Poynter.org* (September 4, 2013), http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/top-stories/221605/software-seeks-to-measure-womens-participation-in-journalism/.

**BLACKBERRYS, BLOGGERS AND OTHER THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED
JOURNALISM**

I remember two things about the 2004 Democratic National Convention: the machine guns and the BlackBerrys. The guns were the only reason I'd been assigned to the convention just a couple of years into my journalism career. The newspaper I worked for in New Hampshire sent two of us to Boston for the week: a political reporter to cover the delegates and me to monitor the well-armed state troopers working security details at the first major political event after 9/11. On the first day, I bumped into a friend working for *Congressional Quarterly*. He excitedly showed off a small black gadget with a tiny keyboard and described how he'd used it to file a mini-story while touring Fenway Park. It was the first time I'd seen a BlackBerry, but I soon understood that this device and the technology it represented were altering the flow of information and, with it, journalism. There was another sign of change at that convention, too: legions of laptop-toting political bloggers, huddled in corners of the FleetCenter, tapping out dispatches about the speeches, the music, the food. By the time New Hampshire's 2008 presidential primary came around, some of those blogs had grown into business ventures. The same reporter who showed me that BlackBerry documented the primary through video dispatches posted to *CQ's* website. By 2012, I was enmeshed in the word of mobile reporting, video production and blogging that I'd witnessed during the previous two election cycles. Fewer reporters came to New Hampshire from the networks and major metros, but we faced stiff competition from fast-growing online publications like *Politico*.

The past decade has brought sweeping changes to journalism as both a professional practice and as a business. Social media, smartphones and easy access to inexpensive digital publishing tools have rocked traditional newsrooms, creating opportunities for new genres of digital storytelling while decimating the revenue streams that have long supported journalism. A

2012 report from the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University's journalism

school sums it up this way:

> Everybody suddenly got a lot more freedom. The newsmakers, the advertisers, the
>
> startups and, especially, the people formerly known as the audience have all been given
>
> new freedom to communicate, narrowly and broadly, outside the old strictures of the
>
> broadcast and publishing models.[29]

These disruptions plus the financial crash of 2008 led to massive layoffs. In 2012, newspapers

employed 30 percent fewer editorial staffers than in 2000, and the quality of news suffered as

cash-strapped publishers and broadcasters cut back on costly investigations.[30] The result, the

Tow Center report continues, is "a moment of both catastrophe and rebirth for institutions that

house journalistic work."[31] As Northeastern journalism Prof. Dan Kennedy writes in *The Wired*

City, this rebirth often happens at the community level, at small organizations founded by people

who believe in the importance of quality news:

> Journalism, if not newspapers, is already being saved — not everywhere and not
>
> perfectly. But in city after city, region by region, dedicated visionaries are moving
>
> beyond the traditional model of print newspapers supported mainly by advertising.[32]

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[29] C.W. Anderson, Emily Bell, and Clay Shirky, *Post-Industrial Journalism: Adapting to the Present* (Tow Center for Digital Journalism: Columbia Journalism School, 2012), http://towcenter.org/research/post-industrial-journalism/.
[30] *State of the News Media 2013* (The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2013), http://stateofthemedia.org/2013/overview-5/.
[31] Anderson, et al.
[32] Dan Kennedy, *The Wired City: Reimagining Journalism and Civic Life in the Post-Newspaper Age*, 1st ed. (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

This vision — plus an ample supply of unemployed or underemployed journalists of both genders — has created a culture of experimentation, one that has yielded hundreds of new entities producing digital news.

These new entities take many forms. Perhaps most common are the hyperlocals — websites using a mix of reader-generated content and traditional reporting to cover neighborhoods or small towns. AOL's *Patch* and the Maine-based *VillageSoup* tried to create large-scale networks of such sites; these efforts have largely failed. But a growing number of individual journalists are launching hyperlocal publications of their own. Some are for-profit ventures that operate like small businesses; others are nonprofits with links to a variety of community foundations.[33] In 2012, two dozen of these publishers — more than half of them women — formed the Local Independent Online Publishers, or LION. By late 2013, the group had more than 100 members representing dozens of sites across the country. According to a preliminary survey, those sites were bringing in an average of $4,000 a month — enough for many publications to break even or turn a small profit.[34]

Two other popular varieties of digital journalism startups are investigative foundations and niche publications. In 2009, 27 investigative organizations formed the Investigative News Network with the goal of supporting journalists seeking to continue the kind of in-depth reporting threatened by the economic crisis.[35] The network now includes more than 80 nonprofit sites across the United States that investigate campaign finance, the environment and other

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[33] For an excellent discussion of these business models, see chapter five in Kennedy's book.
[34] Meg Heckman, "Optimism Reigns at Hyperlocal News Confab," *NetNewsCheck.com*, October 9, 2013, http://www.netnewscheck.com/article/29460/optimism-reigns-at-hyperlocal-news-confab.
[35] "Investigative News Network » About INN," *Investigative News Network*, accessed November 11, 2013, http://investigativenewsnetwork.org/about/.

matters of public interest. Niche publications focus on in-depth coverage of topics like health, science, sports and politics. Some, like *Politico*, are stand-alone brands. Others distribute their work through partnerships with legacy news organizations. The *Washington Post* and NPR, for instance, publish projects reported by *Kaiser Health News*.

Also on the rise are organizations equipped to support potential publishers. A small but growing number of journalism schools offer classes that teach entrepreneurial skills. Mid-career journalists with ideas for startups can apply for fellowships from a variety of institutions. Grant programs abound. At least two — the New Media Women Entrepreneurs and the International Women's Media Foundation — are devoted to advancing female founders, including many of the women interviewed for this project.

These sweeping technological and industrial disruptions have fundamentally changed the way journalists rise to the top of their profession. In describing what he calls a "diaspora of journalism," Harvard's Nicco Mele explains that "news is migrating to all kinds of places, some of them unexpected, all of them small. Gone are the days when a job as a cub reporter in a city paper was the start of promising career in journalism."[36] Instead, there are new — and varied — avenues to professional advancement for journalists. This shift brings both new challenges and new opportunities for women.

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[36] Nicco Mele, "Small Pieces, Loosely Joined," *Nieman Reports*, Spring 2013.

LET'S TALK ABOUT WOMEN (OR NOT)

USA Today launched its first website just a few days before a truck bomb decimated the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The paper wasn't alone in experimenting on the newly popular World Wide Web, but its digital staff was still on a journalistic frontier. For the first time in human history, the web was a significant source of information for anyone seeking to understand a national tragedy — and the work that appeared on *USAToday.com* helped create a template for a new kind of crisis storytelling.[37] Two years later, another major paper would continue to shape our understanding of digital news when a producer at *Philly.com* assembled a multimedia narrative about the American military actions in Somalia in 1993. It was published in tandem with a series in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and, according to media scholar C.W. Anderson, was "one of the first newsroom projects to tap into the digital potential of the Internet." On the West Coast, meanwhile, the *San Jose Mercury News* unveiled a sort of proto-blog focused on the booming tech industry. It wasn't long before the online column, called Good Morning Silicon Valley, had 50,000 subscribers — so many that the *Mercury News* spun off a niche site called *SiliconValley.com*.

The people involved in these projects had more in common than a knack for technical experimentation: All three were women. Lorraine Cichowski, now senior vice president of technology for the Associated Press, was leading *USA Today's* digital operations. Jennifer Musser Metz crafted the groundbreaking interactive for *Philly.com*.[38] And it was Patricia Sullivan, now a reporter at the *Washington Post*, who hand-coded hyperlinks into her online column early every morning. Women were heavily involved in the early days of digital

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[37] Wendal Cochran, "A Watershed Event for Online Newspapers," *American Journalism Review*, June 1995, www.ajr.org.
[38] Anderson.

journalism, although it's difficult to quantify the scope of their involvement. As Sullivan writes

on her personal website, archiving was spotty: "We didn't save the content in any organized way.

Forgotten backups, software and hardware changes and the inability of librarians and

programmers to understand why we'd want to save a column of links meant that we lost a lot of

work from those days."[39] A partial archive of Good Morning Silicon Valley exists only because

Sullivan was able to assemble it from a box of floppy disks she found in her office.

Spotty archiving is one reason there's limited formal research into the work of early

female web journalists. But the 1990s weren't that long ago, so I was able to gather some

information directly from the journalists involved. Many of the women I interviewed learned

digital skills working for the online arms of legacy news organizations. One of them is Charlotte-

Anne Lucas, the managing director of a Texas hyperlocal called *NOWCastSA*. Lucas started her

career as a financial reporter, and would eventually serve as the first female business editor at the

San Antonio Express-News. She took a web-focused job in 1999 in part because "there were

none of those glass ceilings" in the digital department:

> By and large the guys did not see the web as something to aspire to...so they weren't
>
> fighting me for that job. There were a lot of women who went to the online news
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> operations because there weren't obstacles….You could go there, you could innovate and
>
> you could fail.[40]

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[39] Patricia Sullivan, "The Late, Great GMSV," Personal blog, *Workingpress.net*, January 6, 2008, http://workingpress.net/GMSV/.

[40] Lucas, Charlotte-Anne. Interview by Meg Heckman. Google Hangout. October 11, 2013.

Lucas did plenty of serious work online, but she also pioneered a couple of features common today: taking a webcam to a local dog show and publishing galleries of reader photos from a freak snowstorm.

The early days of digital news, while not entirely egalitarian, appear to have provided women with leadership opportunities and allowed them to shape our concepts of digital news. That's not, however, the narrative that emerged when a group of fellows at Harvard's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy assembled an oral history of what they called "the epic collision between journalism and digital technology." The project, called "Riptide," featured 61 interviews. Only five were with women. There have been other recent examples of excluding women from high-profile conversations about digital communication. For instance, *Time* magazine published its annual list of top Twitter users in March. According to my count, the list was overwhelming male, especially when it came to topics like politics and science.[41]

Omissions like these are similar to the marginalization of female journalists throughout history, but they also mirror women's exclusion from conversations about two fields closely related to digital journalism: blogging and entrepreneurship. Both topics have been the subject of recent scholarly work, with researchers finding that, while both men and women participate in these arenas, the public conversation — or, in academic parlance, "discourse" — focuses almost entirely on men.

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[41] Meg Heckman, "Time's List of Top Twitter Users Is Basically a Boys' Club," *A Site of Her Own*, accessed November 11, 2013, https://megheckman.wordpress.com/2013/03/25/times-list-of-top-twitter-users-is-basically-a-boys-club/.

Because the image of an entrepreneur is usually that of a "heroic self-made man," business ventures led by women are seen as secondary.[42] When female entrepreneurs are included in academic research, they're often described in terms of a larger family business. Men, on the other hand, are valued for their ability to innovate, something that's "regarded as being essentially a quality intrinsic to persons rather than simultaneously a set of practices."[43] There are real-world consequences to such a male-centric view of startup culture. Just 7 percent of venture capital goes to businesses led by women, and one recent study found that investors were 40 percent less likely to back business ideas pitched by women.[44]

Blogging, too, has clear discrepancies between the genders. Although the majority of bloggers are female, the types of blogs created by men — so-called filter blogs — receive the most media attention.[45] They also tend to be the kind of blogs that become for-profit publications. The term most often assigned to women who blog— mommy blogger — is fraught with gender stereotypes that create what Gina Masullo Chen calls "digital domesticity."[46] While there is certainly a robust market for mommy blogs, the women who produce them are unlikely to receive intellectual recognition for their work. Even the most successful of such blogs may not

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[42] Helene Ahl, "Why Research on Women Entrepreneurs Needs New Directions," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 30, no. 5 (2006): 595–621, doi:10.1111/j.1540-6520.2006.00138.x.

[43] Attila Bruni, Poggio, Barbara, and Gherardi, Silvia, *Entrepreneur-Mentality, Gender and the Study of Women Entrepreneurs*, SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 2004), http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1503876.

[44] Fiona Murray, "Playing by the Rules: How Female Entrepreneurs Can Get in the Venture-Capital Game.," *Boston Globe Magazine*, November 9, 2013, http://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2013/11/02/how-female-entrepreneurs-can-get-venture-capital-game/Ahn0XfhG3WABm8Q4uoAq6O/story.html?event=event12.

[45] Susan C. Herring et al., "Women and Children Last: The Discursive Construction of Weblogs," in *Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs*, 2004, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/women_and_children.html.

[46] Gina Masullo Chen, "Don't Call Me That: A Techno-Feminist Critique of the Term Mommy Blogger," *Mass Communication and Society* 16, no. 4 (March 28, 2013): 510–532, doi:10.1080/15205436.2012.737888.

be viewed as viable business ventures. As Sarah Pedersen points out, inquiries into why women blog have tended to focus on emotional reasons as opposed to financial or professional motivations.[47]

Both areas of research raise important questions about how women are perceived, something that's especially important in a media climate where journalists are coached to build their personal brands. If women aren't viewed as capable professionals, what will that mean for their ability to create viable digital publications in the future?

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[47] Sarah Pedersen, "Women Bloggers Seeking Validation and Financial Recompense in the Blogosphere," in *Handbook of Research on Social Interaction Technologies and Collaboration Software: Concepts and Trends* (IGI Global, 2010), 281–291, http://services.igi-global.com/resolvedoi/resolve.aspx?doi=10.4018/978-1-60566-368-5.ch025.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT LEGACY NEWSROOM DEMOGRAPHICS

Modern journalists are operating in a new media ecology, but it's not without echoes of the traditional press. That's especially true when it comes to diversity. The most-cited demographic statistics in journalism come from the American Society of News Editors' annual census. The society, called ASNE, has been calculating the racial composition of newsrooms at daily newspapers since 1978 as part of its goal of "having the percentage of minorities working in newsrooms nationwide equal to the percentage of minorities in the nation's population by 2025."[48] Gender was added to the ASNE count in 1998. Some gains have been made, but the American press remains overwhelmingly white and male, especially at its highest ranks. Before exploring gender imbalance in the digital arena, it's important to understand legacy media's struggles with diversity.

The ASNE census was launched at the end of a decade that forced newsroom leaders to reconsider hiring and promotion practices that marginalized women and people of color. The 1960s included the best-known years of the civil rights movement, the rise of leading feminists like Gloria Steinem and legal protection from race and gender discrimination in the form of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1968, the Kerner Commission - created by President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the causes of race riots - critiqued coverage of racially motivated violence, saying the media tended to "report and write from the standpoint of a white man's world."[49] In her 2006 dissertation, Gwyneth Mellinger explains that ASNE was slow to adopt formal

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[48] American Society of News Editors, "ASNE Newsroom Census" (American Society of News Editors, 2013), http://asne.org/content.asp?contentid=121.

[49] "Nieman Reports | Diversity in Newsrooms: Fresh Strategies, New Goals," *Nieman Reports*, accessed October 16, 2013, http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/102673/Diversity-in-Newsrooms-Fresh-Strategies-New-Goals.aspx.

integration efforts, but many of its members recognized the need to diversify their newsrooms.[50] By the 1980s, ASNE was supporting job fairs and scholarship programs for journalists of color.

About the same time, what became known as the Maynard Institute began specialized trainings for journalists of color. Founded by *Oakland Tribune* owner Robert Maynard and now run by his daughter, Dori Maynard, the institute focuses on management and leadership seminars; in recent years its curriculum has grown to include technical training for journalists looking to advance in digital news organizations. Graduates of these programs framed diversity as a matter of ethics, accuracy and fairness, basic tenets long valued by the American press. Think tanks like the Poynter Institute for Media Studies published reports and training materials. One example is *Doing Ethics in Journalism*, a collection of case studies to help editors navigate challenging situations. The authors make a case for considering race and gender in newsroom decisions:

> Diversity is certainly a part of accuracy and fairness, whether it relates to avoiding stereotypes or redefining news to better reflect a multicultural society. Diversity is about the makeup of news organizations and about who is making decisions. Diversity is about the way story ideas are developed and who does the reporting. Diversity is about inclusiveness in choosing sources and about giving voice to the voiceless.[51]

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[50] Gwyneth Mellinger, "Members of the Club: A Genealogy of the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Diversity Initiative" (Ph.D., The University of Kansas, 2006), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text (305319346), http://ezproxy.neu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/305319346?accountid=12826.

[51] J. Black et al., *Doing Ethics in Journalism: A Handbook with Case Studies* (Allyn and Bacon, 1999), http://books.google.com/books?id=ZyLuAAAAMAAJ.

Although industry leaders were focused on race during the 1970s, women were also working for equal pay and fair chances at promotion.[52] Prominent publications including the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* were subject to federal class-action lawsuits filed by female employees. In some cases, like the one against the *Times*, the plaintiffs sought monetary compensation. In other cases, they demanded clear plans to bring more women into leadership roles.[53] In 1979, a year after ASNE launched its race census, Dorothy Jurney started a gender-based count of her own. Jurney, a retired *Philadelphia Inquirer* editor, used newsroom directories to tally the number of women in leadership roles. She found that, in 1979, women accounted for 6.5 percent of newsroom management. That number was lower — 4.4 percent — at papers with circulations above 25,000. Mellinger writes that "while women's concerns remained outside the ASNE's official frame of diversity, the reports initiated by Jurney ensured that a counter-discourse on women's underrepresentation in journalism...circulated within the organization."[54] That discourse soon extended beyond ASNE.

In 1984, a small group of female journalists and journalism professors convened at the University of Missouri to compare professional experiences. It wasn't long before they grew into what's now known as the Journalism and Women Symposium, or JAWS.[55] The group remains active today. Members hold events and interact daily through a lively Google group. I joined JAWS during the summer of 2013, and its members have enthusiastically supported this research project. The 2013 Conference and Mentorship Project (an annual event members call "CAMP")

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[52] Mellinger's dissertation discusses the complicated interplay among race, gender and white privilege in traditional newsrooms. Women, she writes, became shorthand for "white women," marginalizing women of color and eliminating "the opportunity for women to present a unified front in matters relating to gender discrimination."
[53] Roberts.
[54] Mellinger.
[55] Kay Mills, "JAWS Her Story," http://www.jaws.org/about-jaws/herstory-of-jaws/her-story/.

was held in Essex, Vermont, where more than 200 women assembled at the end of October. The weekend was a study in how much and how little things have changed for female journalists. Technical training was in high demand, as was advice on funding startups or long-term reporting projects. One of the most popular panels featured Laura Amico, the founder of *Homicide Watch*, and Erin Polgreen, founder of *Symbolia*. The mood was optimistic, but there was a dark undercurrent: Too many young women privately shared stories of harassment from sources[56] and a sense that their work was somehow seen as less credible and less valuable than that of their male peers.

The conference was a reminder that, despite an intense focus on diversity, the American press remains largely the domain of white men. Women and minorities of both genders are underrepresented in most newsrooms, and they may have been more likely than their white, male peers to face layoffs or buyouts in recent years.[57] Detailed demographic data from several sources is listed in Appendix A. What follows is a broad summary:

> 1.) **Women represent roughly one-third of American journalists working in TV, radio and print.** This ratio hasn't budged since the early 1980s and, according to some calculations, may have actually decreased slightly.
>
> 2.) **As they grow older, female journalists are more likely to leave traditional news organizations than men.** Their departure is more pronounced in journalism that it is in other segments of the workforce.

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[56] For an overview of the types of things female journalists hear from sources – and sometimes colleagues – visit the Tumblr called "Said to Lady Journos." http://saidtoladyjournos.tumblr.com/

[57] Riva Gold, "Newsroom Diversity: A Casualty of Journalism's Financial Crisis," *The Atlantic*, July 9, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/07/newsroom-diversity-a-casualty-of-journalisms-financial-crisis/277622/.

3.) **Women remain in the minority among newsroom leaders**. According to one industry-wide survey, 74.7 percent of senior managers are male, as are 71.6 percent of junior managers.[58]

4.) **These trends persist despite indications that young women want to be journalists.** Roughly 70 percent of students enrolled in college journalism and communications program are female[59] and, in 2002, women represented 60 percent of working journalists under the age of 25.[60]

The table below[61] shows the percentage of female journalists in different kinds of newsrooms:

Platform	1971	1982-83	1992	2002
Radio	4.8	26.3	29	21.9
Television	10.7	33.1	24.8	37.4
Wire services	13	19.1	25.9	20.3
Daily papers	22.4	34.4	33.9	33
Weekly papers	27.1	42.1	44.1	36.9
News magazines	30.4	31.7	45.9	43.5
Total	*20.3*	*33.8*	*34*	*33*

Does the lack newsroom diversity influence the type of news that's produced? Two recent studies hint that the gender of the reporter affects the mix of experts cited in stories. In one study, researchers found that female reporters at the *New York Times* were slightly more likely to quote female sources.[62] A more pronounced difference emerged during a review of NPR

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[58] David H. Weaver et al., *The American Journalist in the 21st Century: U.S. News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium* (Routledge, 2006).

[59] Craig T. Dearfield, and Robin H. Pugh Yi, *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2012* (Women's Media Center, 2012), http://wmc.3cdn.net/a6b2dc282c824e903a_arm6b0hk8.pdf.

[60] Weaver.

[61] Adapted from Weaver.

[62] Alexi Layton, Alexi and Alicia Shepard, "Lack of Female Sources in NY Times Front-Page Stories Highlights Need for Change," *Poynter.org*, accessed July 28, 2013,

coverage of the 2012 presidential election, with male journalists quoting men 80 percent of the time and female journalists quoting men 52 percent of the time.[63] Other research shows that woman-led newsroom have cultures that differs from those led by men.[64] Newspapers with female leaders were less likely to differentiate between male and female reporters when assigning beats, which is important because beat assignments influence pay, promotion and job satisfaction.[65]

Despite more than two decades of intense focus on diversifying the ranks of the American press, most modern news organizations remain overwhelmingly white and male. It's unclear if these legacy disparities will be replicated in the digital world.

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http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/top-stories/217828/lack-of-female-sources-in-new-york-times-stories-spotlights-need-for-change/.

[63] "Dramatic Gender Difference in NPR Stories," *Forbes*, accessed July 29, 2013, http://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhowe/2013/03/02/dramatic-gender-difference-in-npr-stories/.

[64] Stephanie Craft and Wanye Wanta, "Women in the Newsroom: Influences of Female Editors and Reporters on the News Agenda," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2004): 124–138.

[65] Meg Heckman, "Software Seeks to Measure Women's Participation in Journalism," *Poynter.org*.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Based on the information available in the directories described above, it's possible to draw the following conclusions about the extent of women's leadership in emerging digital news organizations in the United States:

Men outnumber women in leadership positions in digital news organizations. The extent to which this is true varies among the directories. The LION membership list comes closest to gender parity with 45.1 percent women. Nieman's Encyclo has the most lopsided representation with 19 percent — something that may be explained by the Encylco's limited inclusion of the hyperlocal organizations where women are more likely to work. In the middle are *CJR's* The Guide with 34 percent of leadership positions held by women and Michele's List with 37.6 percent.

Female leadership by directory
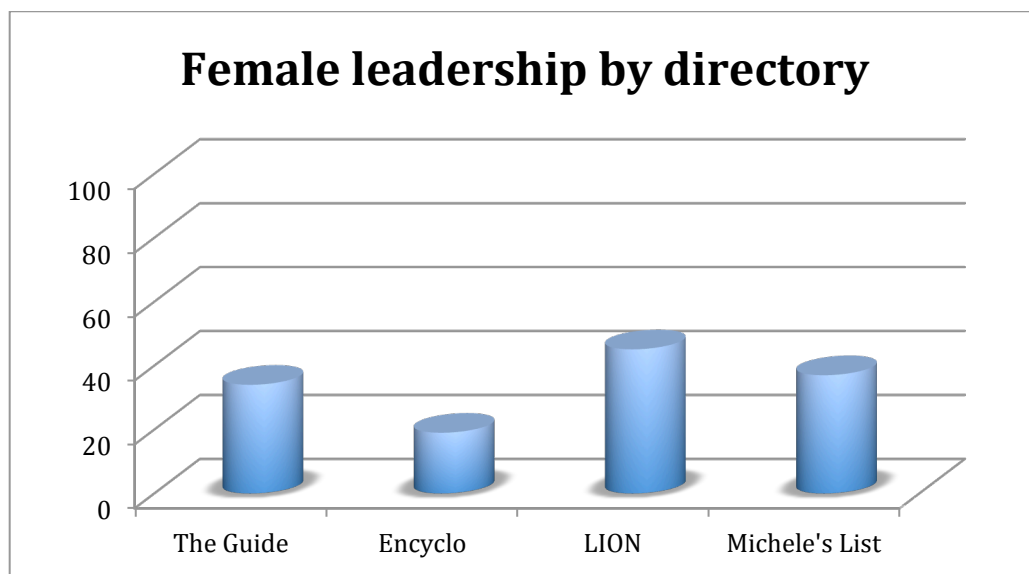
The larger the news organization, the lower the percentage of female leaders. *CJR*'s

The Guide includes detailed information about the size[66] of each publication's editorial and

business staff. An analysis of that information shows that women are most likely to hold

leadership roles at organizations with fewer than 19 employees.
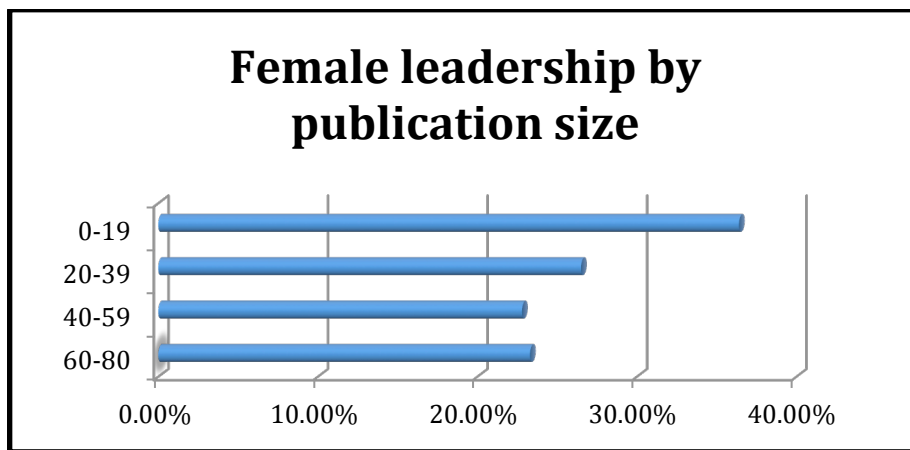
Although only some of the Encyclo records include staff size, the same trend appears to be true

in that directory. The demographics of the LION membership list also support this trend. Most

LION members have two to five employees,[67] and women comprise nearly half of named

members. No information about staff size is consistently available in Michele's List, so it's not

possible to determine if this trend applies to the news organizations listed.

Women are more likely to hold leadership roles in publications that launched in

2008 or later, but those publications are far smaller than their older counterparts.

According to an analysis of The Guide — which was the only one of the four directories to

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[66] Staff size was reported in The Guide in ranges and broken down by editorial and business positions. I calculated the total largest possible staff size by adding together the numbers at the top end of the range.

[67] Staffing information about LION members came from a survey conducted on the group's behalf by the Reynolds Journalism Institute during the summer of 2013. Preliminary results were reported at the LION summit in October 2013. A formal report was not available at the time of this writing.

consistently include launch dates — publications that debuted during or after 2008 reported that 39.6 percent of principal staff members were female. This is a significant increase from publications founded before 2004, which reported roughly 27 percent of principal staff members were female. The average staff size of the publications founded in 2008 or later is 8.8. Publications founded in 2000 or earlier, meanwhile, have an average staff size of 27.4.

Women are slightly more likely to hold leadership roles in nonprofit news organizations. In The Guide, women hold 37 percent of the named leadership positions in nonprofits versus 32.5 percent at for-profit publications.[68] In the Encyclo, women represent 20.6 percent of the named leaders in nonprofit entities versus 18.9 percent at for-profits.

The percentage of female leaders listed in The Guide has increased since 2011. A blog called *The Gender Report* analyzed gender representation in *CRJ's* The Guide in June 2011.[69] The Guide was smaller at the time with just 125 publications compared to the nearly 300 listed in 2013. The percentage of women was lower — 28 percent versus 34 percent in the 2013 count. *The Gender Report* also observed that, at the time, women were more likely to lead the smallest organizations. It wasn't possible to analyze changes over time in other directories.

Women may be more likely to hold leadership roles at hyperlocal publications. LION and Michele's List — the directories with the highest concentration of hyperlocal publications — also had the highest percentage of women. The Guide was inconsistent with the

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[68] Roughly a dozen entities are listed in The Guide as unincorporated. Women represented 28.5 percent of named leaders in those records. One organization operates as an L3C; it reports a single female leader.

[69] Jasmine Linabary, "Database Shows Women as 28 Percent of News Sites' Principal Staff," *The Gender Report*, accessed September 14, 2013, http://genderreport.com/2011/06/06/database-shows-women-as-28-percent-of-news-sites-principal-staff/.

type of publication it categorized as hyperlocal, but records carrying that tag had a slightly higher percentage of female leaders than the database overall — 35.4 percent versus 34 percent overall.

Given the available data, it wasn't possible to determine if women are better represented in certain geographic areas, nor was I able to discern variations in the extent of women's involvement in publications covering specific topics like sports, politics, arts or business. Although some of the records included information about revenue, there wasn't enough data to determine if there is a relationship between the financial success of a publication and the gender of its leadership team. It would also be interesting to know how the longevity of publications founded by women compared to those founded by men.

THREATS TO VALIDITY

*Errors in the directorie*s: The organizations that created these directories adhere to high standards of accuracy, but it's still possible that some of the information used for this analysis contains mistakes.

Sampling error: As noted above, none of these directories should be viewed as definitive lists of digital news organizations. My research has also revealed that there are a number of female-led organizations that don't appear in any of these directories. Therefore, it's important to be clear that the ratios in this report reflect gender composition of the news organizations listed in the directories. Although every effort was made to represent a broad variety of publications, it's impossible to know if this list is representative of the whole because no one knows exactly how many digital news organizations exist.

*Coding erro*r: All information was collected by a single researcher: me. To verify my work, I randomly[70] selected 20 publications (roughly 5 percent of the entire sample) and checked them for accuracy. If one of those publications appeared in more than one directory, I checked across all directories in which that site appears. During the verification process, I found one spelling error and no statistical errors.

The Tootsie Roll problem: The staffing arrangements of emerging news organizations can seem unorthodox when compared to the roles common in traditional newsrooms. One LION member, a publisher named David Boraks, demonstrated the flexibility of his own staff with a handful of Tootsie Rolls scattered across a table. Each roll, he said, represented a staff member. On any given day, those rolls could be rearranged, suddenly placing a rank-and-file reporter or

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[70] To randomly select publications, I used a list of numbers generated by Random.org and checked the records associated with the corresponding rows on a spreadsheet.

sales rep in a leadership position. This issue is somewhat mitigated by relying on the publications themselves to define and report leaders, but it's likely that there are people of both genders making important decisions who are not listed in these directories. It is also possible that the overall staff size fluctuates at many of these organizations. This is particularly true of organizations that rely on short-term grants to fund certain areas of coverage.

The nature of new media: It's important to remember that these directories are snapshots. The new media landscape is fluid, making it difficult to keep track of the launches, mergers, expansions and collapses of digital publishers. Some brands like *Huffington Post*, *Slate* and *ProPublica* are too big to miss, but most online journalism ventures appear and vanish with little fanfare.

QUANTITATIVE DISCUSSION

At first glance, the data above appear to show a slight improvement over the state of female leaders in legacy media, but a deeper look reveals a troubling replication of the gender disparities that have existed in traditional media for decades. There are three areas where this is especially clear:

Women are well represented in small, community publications, but less likely to have roles in building bigger publications. This has been true since Ishbel Ross wrote *Ladies of the Press*. In a chapter devoted to what she called "country journalism," Ross marveled at the freedom women had in the rural press. Such a journalist, she wrote, "practically raises her babies in the waste-paper basket, cooks rice pudding to the friendly thud of the linotype or chronicles the town doings from the cracker box stance."[71] At the time the book was published, Ross counted more than 300 female editors and publishers working at small papers across the United States. These women had a smaller audience, but, as Ross noted, "a freedom of expression denied the metropolitan reporter. She can push a local cause, mix freely in political fights, write what she likes." The results of my analysis — and the demographics of the LION organization — show that women are more likely to lead modern versions of small, community publications. This concentration of women at the hyperlocal level isn't necessarily a problem; many of the women I spoke to during my research launched community sites because of a perceived lack of coverage, not because they encountered barriers at larger startups. Going forward, however, it will be interesting to monitor how the hyperlocal space is perceived. Will it be viewed as a robust, important area of digital journalism? Or will it be feminized, marginalized and turned into a modern version of the "pink ghetto" of women's pages?

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[71] Ross.

Women are being excluded from the authoritative narrative about digital journalism. Although none of these lists are definitive directories, they do have a certain element of credibility. This is especially true of the *Columbia Journalism Review* and the *Nieman Journalism Lab*, which are affiliated with respected universities — and there are a number of woman-led publications that don't appear on these two lists. Since 2009, roughly two dozen projects have received funding from either the New Media Women Entrepreneurs organization or the New Media Women Foundation. None appear in the Encyclo and only two appear in The Guide even though nearly all of these projects meet the inclusion criteria for these directories. Michele's List also overlooks all but one of these sites.[72] The subject matter of the excluded sites is varied: *ShineInPeace.com* seeks to document every murder in Oakland, California; *FullCourt.com*[73] has been covering women's basketball online since 1996; and *Symbolia* is a tablet magazine that uses illustrations to explore current events. The exclusion of these sites could someday skew historians' understanding of the role women played in building digital journalism.

Women may be doing similar work for less pay. Compensation is a challenge for any journalist, male or female, trying to make a living online, but the concentration of women in smaller startups focused on local news could be creating a pay gap between the genders. While the hyperlocal space is robust, important and interesting, it's not as lucrative as other types of digital journalism startups. According to Michele McLellan, the founder of Michele's List, roughly ⅔ of the hyperlocal sites she surveyed in 2013 made $100,000 or less, "enough to keep a

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[72] Many of these sites don't meet LION's definition of hyperlocal, so its membership roster is not included in this part of the discussion.

[73] The publication that received funding was called *Inside Women's Basketball*. It merged with *FullCourt.com* in 2001, although Inside Women's Basketball, LLC still exists as a business entity.

sole proprietor with a few freelancers afloat, but it's not a formula for revenue development that will be required for sustainability."[74]

For comparison, I pulled the most recent tax returns for some of the larger nonprofits listed in the database. For instance, the top editor at the *Texas Tribune*, Evan Smith, made $307,000 in 2011. The other two highest earners at the *Tribune* — business development director April Hinkle and executive editor Ross Ramsey — made $300,000 and $165,000 respectively. Charles Giller, president of *Grist Magazine*, made $157,000 a year. It would be inaccurate to say that women involved in digital journalism startup are being paid less because of their gender, but the numbers cited above indicate that they are more likely to be involved in smaller organizations that offer lower pay.

Many of the women I interviewed were reluctant to give details about their income. They might have been more likely to do so if I had conducted anonymous interviews, but I chose not to do so for two reasons: I tend to avoid anonymous sources of any kind; the universe of digital startups is so small that I worried it would be unrealistic to promise them anonymity. It would be interesting in the future to devise a survey to aggregate information about income and gender in online news.

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[74] Michele McLellan, "Local Online News Startups: Profits, Progress and Persistent Challenges," *Knight Digital Media Center*, October 1, 2013, http://www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org/blogs/mclellan/2013/09/local-online-news-start-ups-profits-progress-and-persistent-challenges.

QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION

The nine women interviewed for this project are involved in very different news organizations, but they were united by a common desire to tell stories they felt were missing from existing media. For three of them, that meant finding a way to cover the growing Latino population. Lori Robinson, of New York City, founded *VidaAfroLatinia* in 2008 to reach the 150 million people who identify as both Latino and African American because there wasn't an existing venue for work about that community:

> I had been pitching stories about Afro Latinos and I couldn't get anyone who was interested in my story ideas… I was able to produce and put out into the universe the types of articles I wanted to see, I wanted to read. Issues and people that weren't being covered.[75]

Diane Alverio, founder of the Connecticut-based *Latino News Network*, is seeking to fill gaps she sees on both the editorial and business sides by focusing on the growing English-speaking Latino population in southern New England:

> Coverage of Latino issues was nonexistent or extremely limited. That was one motivation. The second [reason] is that it's a good business. Latinos are a demographic that everyone wants to reach, but no one understands. They're still operating under the old traditional idea that they speak Spanish and you have to put an ad in Spanish. I know better.[76]

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[75] Lori Robinson. Interview by Meg Heckman. In person. Essex, Vermont. October 27, 2013.
[76] Diane Alverio. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. October 16, 2013.

Marisa Treviño, publisher and founder of Texas-based *LatinaLista*, was frustrated by how some traditional journalists perceived Latinos:

> I trace the beginning of *LatinaLista* to what a Midwestern editor told me when I submitted a column to him. He said to me — this was in '96 — there's no way we would ever publish something from you because Latinos don't read.[77]

More recently, Trevino has used her site to cover a range of issues. Although she started by focusing on women, she now regularly covers immigration and politics.

Three other women are using their news organizations to fill gaps in local news. Brandy Tuzon Boyd, publisher of the *Natomas (California) Buzz*, launched her hyperlocal website in 2008 because she wanted to provide regular coverage to a community often ignored by the daily paper:

> I noticed that the only time we got any news coverage, it was pretty much negative news. The residents of the area where I live had created a number of Yahoo groups about affordable housing, planning and development…. I was on all these lists and part of me was thinking, we need to get news out more than just when something bad happens. And wouldn't it be nice it there was one place where people could go?[78]

Charlotte-Anne Lucas, the managing director for *NOWCastSA*, wanted to provide a different kind of local coverage. *NOWCast's* goal is to use live streaming video to build civic engagement in the San Antonio area. Lucas likes that this format allows her to redefine the role of a news organization in the community:

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[77] Marisa Treviño. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. October 2, 2013.
[78] Brandy Tuzon Boyd. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. October 23, 2013.

For me, it's good if it doesn't fit the old template. I don't need to write the story to say

this is the most important thing that happened at the city council meeting… I'm really

enjoying letting people see the whole thing and decide for themselves what's the most

important...The very essence of what journalism was from the beginning was providing

people access to power, access to places, access to ideas. I'm providing access.[79]

Julie Morris is a former newspapers reporter now active in community organizations in San

Benito County, California. She got involved with building and launching a nonprofit hyperlocal

site called *BenitoLink* after community surveys revealed that residents missed daily news: "One

of the common denominators we heard over and over again across economic lines was that there

was a lack of information in this county."[80]

Two others women I spoke with sought to cover topics they believed were overlooked.

Rose Hoban, founding editor of *NorthCarolinaHealthNews.org* launched her site after watching

health coverage in the state dwindle. When she started work as a reporter at the local public radio

station, WUNC, she was one of many journalists focused on the state's robust biotech industry

and its many medical schools. That soon changed: "By the time I left WUNC in 2011, I was the

last person standing."[81] Ashley Milne-Tyte launched her podcast-based website, *The Broad*

Experience, after personal experiences led her to ponder the often complicated — and under-

covered — issue of gender in the workplace:

I'm a really unlikely person to be doing a podcast about women and work. I was like so

many other people: What does this have to do with me? That's all over with. That was

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[79] Lucas.
[80] Julie Morris. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. October 23, 2013.
[81] Rose Hoban. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. November 13, 2013.

my mother's generation. I really only started to notice when I was working at a particular place; if I had advocated for myself more, outcomes might have been different.[82]

Since launching her site, Milne-Tyte has heard from a number of listeners who lament that more journalists aren't talking about women's careers.

Erin Polgreen, co-founder of *Symbolia*, saw opportunities in terms of genre and device when she launched a tablet magazine built around non-fiction comics. "I got my first iPad and went from reading a Wonder Woman comic to reading a magazine about photojournalism and all the research that I had done, all of the work that I had done just gelled in one very special moment."[83]

Another theme that emerged during these interviews was that of bootstrapping — or self-funding — as the preferred method of raising capital. Treviño says she's "flirted" with the idea of finding investors for *Latina Lista*, but she fears big money could cause its own set of problems:

It kind of frightens me to be responsible to someone else's investment in the company…. I've seen so many people who have had a background in traditional media who have left the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* to go out and start the next big thing...They were getting a lot of funding… and three years was as a long as they lasted…. I couldn't justify putting myself under that much stress.[84]

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[82] Ashley Milne-Tyte. Interview by Meg Heckman. In person. Essex, Vermont. October 26, 2013.
[83] Erin Polgreen. Interview by Meg Heckman. Phone. November 13, 2013.
[84] Treviño.

Polgreen's *Symbolia* was awarded grants by J-Lab's New Media Women Entrepreneurs and the

International Women's Media Foundation but is still "very much in bootstrapping mode."

Polgreen says that's not unusual for women-led businesses:

> Women are more likely to be risk averse than men and are more likely to play their cards
>
> a lot closer to their chests, make sure they have a proof of concept… In some ways that
>
> makes women really great entrepreneurs. In some ways, it can create challenges.[85]

Alverio also received a grant from J-Lab which, along with personal funds and support from a

single investor, has been enough to grow the network to span two states. She's confident in her

business plan but says the network is about more than just the business. "I've been successful… I

have the capital to invest. Everybody has to give back. Some people do it by going on missionary

work. I chose to do this."[86]

All of the women seemed optimistic about the future of their publications, but they admit

that finances are a challenge. *The Natomas Buzz* will celebrate its sixth anniversary in January

2014. Boyd is proud of that milestone, but she's still struggling to turn a profit. "I would like to

be sustainable," she said. "Actually pay myself a living salary. I cover my costs."[87] Hoban

sometimes regrets her decision to form *NorthCarolinaHealthNews.com* as a nonprofit.

Foundation support has been hard to come by, newspapers have been unwilling to syndicate her

content and IRS approval is taking longer than expected. Although she has an engaged audience

and expects to bring in about $10,000 in individual donations in 2013, more substantial sources

of income have been elusive:

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[85] Polgreen.
[86] Alverio.
[87] Tuzon Boyd.

Revenue sucks. My husband has been backstopping me for the last several years. I'll admit it. I have a funny feeling there's going to be money coming, that in six months I'll have a foundation grant. The first chunk of money I get is not going to go to pay me. It's going to go to hire a business development expert.[88]

(It's important to note that relying on spousal support isn't unique to women. Many of the male publishers I met at LION were dependent on their spouses for health insurance, housing and other expenses.) Milne-Tyte produces *The Broad Experience* alongside her regular freelance work. Although she's landed a few small sponsorships through podcast networks, the show isn't her main source of income. "I just don't have thousands and thousands of listeners," she said. "It's nice to get a check every quarter for something, but that something is the equivalent to one freelance piece."[89]

Fellowships, professional associations and networking are valuable for these women. Five are members of LION, at least three were at the JAWS conference and two — Robinson and Milne-Tyte — are alumna of an entrepreneurial journalism fellowship at the City University of New York. Robinson had put *VidaAfroLatina* on hiatus, but her fellowship has given her new hope that the publication could become sustainable:

Through the program I did learn more about the business side. I still can't say I came out with a clear idea of how this will make money because there's not a silver bullet…. I really want to figure out revenue streams… figure out a business model that will be sustainable without being dependent on foundations.[90]

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[88] Hoban.
[89] Milne-Tyte.
[90] Robinson.

Milne-Tyte used her time at CUNY to incubate her podcast, which quickly grew from class project to startup business:

> I knew in my gut that I wanted to keep doing it. It somehow got out there in the world… I was really encouraged when I got an email from a complete stranger… who wrote me a sizeable email about her own career experience, saying 'I've never understood why women's careers don't get more attention.[91]

Polgreen, meanwhile, credits her success in part to "a really strong network of women who work in tech, who work in media, who work in politics. I know these women have my back."[92]

Many of the women I interviewed also like the idea of pushing the boundaries of what we consider journalism. This was especially true of Lucas, who loves how digital journalism allows the audience to participate and who often wonders if, as a woman, she's more likely to let that happen:

> It's a willingness to relinquish control...We're a platform for you to participate in your community, not just to watch what's going on in your community like you're watching the symphony, but to participate, to ask questions, to ask some of the best questions of the day… I'm much more comfortable being the facilitator. I think part of that is gender.[93]

Polgreen's model of comics as journalism is redefining how non-fiction stories are told. And Robinson envisions a publication that seamlessly presents information in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

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[91] Milne-Tyte.
[92] Polgreen.
[93] Lucas.

As enthusiastic as these women were about their work, they also shared the kind of frustrations typical among small-business owners. Money is uncertain. The hours are bad and the stress is high. When I asked Hoban about work-life balance, she had this to say:

> That has just been a total clusterfuck. I have an incredibly patient husband. I think this business model is one of the ones that can work, but I had no idea what it was going to be like to start a business. It's been really intense.[94]

Milne-Tyte observed that one of the best parts of running a startup — independence — has some challenging aspects as well. "It can be really lonely," she said. "You question yourself. Am I crazy to be doing this?"[95]

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[94] Hoban.
[95] Milne-Tyte.

CONCLUSION

The first book I read for this thesis was Nan Robertson's *The Girls in the Balcony*. It's about a group of women – including lead plaintiff Betsy Wade – who sued the *New York Times* for gender discrimination in the early 1970s. Their grievances were well founded: Women at the *Time*s made about $60 less a week than their male peers, female editors were seldom promoted into management positions and all of the names on the paper's masthead belonged to men. At the time of the lawsuit, Wade held the highest position of any woman in the city room – chief of the copy desk for foreign news – but, as she told Robertson, "there were no women ahead of me. There were no women doing what I was doing."[96] The suit was eventually settled, and Wade went back to work, editing high-profile projects like the Pentagon Papers.

Wade was also one of the early members of JAWS, something I learned at the group's conference in October 2013. When I realized Wade was at the event, I introduced myself and asked her to sign my copy of Robertson's book. Next to a black and white photo of herself, Wade wrote "sisterhood is all." That theme of sisterhood was apparent throughout the conference, especially when *Times* editor Jill Abramson – the first woman to hold that job – started her keynote address by thanking Wade and her fellow plaintiffs. Any woman working as a journalist today owes a lot to Wade, but it's disappointing to note that nearly 40 years passed between the lawsuit and Abramson's appointment as editor. That's far too long, especially considering the speed at which journalism – as both a practice and a business — is changing.

Modern news organizations cannot afford to spend decades inching toward gender parity. Those that do risk repeating the mistakes of the past, when legacy newsrooms became so entrenched in their routines that they were unable to adapt quickly to social or technological change. This is apparent in both Anderson's research in Philadelphia newsrooms and in

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[96] Robertson.

Mellinger's dissertation on ASNE's diversity struggles. Although the subject matter of these two projects is different, there is an important parallel theme: Institutional habits prevented the kind of evolution necessary to remain relevant and competitive. Hiring women to work in digital newsrooms will be important, but it isn't enough. It's also necessary to value the work they're doing to redefine journalism on the local and national levels. It would be unwise from both a social and an economic standpoint to marginalize or feminize their work. Doing so could seriously limit our chances of finding distribution and business models to support journalism in the decades to come.

The women I interviewed for this project face the same challenges as anyone – male or female – trying to build the future of news: uncertain finances, long and lonely hours, technical headaches and existential questions about their organization's place in the new media ecology. But women operating in this space are also fighting against what Chen called "digital domesticity," the idea that blogs or websites produced by female journalists are modern versions of the food-and-fashion women's pages of the early 20th century. But this perception may be changing, thanks in part to trade groups like LION. Brandy Tuzon Boyd, the founding editor of *Natomas Buzz*, suspects that early coverage of digital media was focused on publishers who looked the part: white, middle-aged men. Now, she says, the narrative is shifting as the broader media realizes "it's not just a hobby for these ladies. They're also running businesses."[97]

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[97] Tuzon Boyd.

APPENDIX A: LEGACY DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

What follows are several tables detailing gender demographics across different segments of the industry, plus background on the methodology used to gather that information.

ASNE CENSUS: Participation in the ASNE census is optional, and the data is reported by top editors in each participating newsrooms. In a typical year, more than 65 percent of the 1,400 daily newsrooms contacted respond to the survey; ASNE uses that data to predict demographics in nonresponding newspaper of similar sizes. The first year that the study included women, 1999, it broke out gender over several job categories, including supervisory roles.

Survey year	Total women	Women in leadership roles
1999	36.9 %	33.8%
2008	37.4 %	35.2%
2013	36.9%	34.6%

RTDNA Broadcast survey: The demographics of broadcast outlets are monitored by the Radio, Television, Digital News Association. In 2012, the association found that just under 40 percent of the TV news workforce was female and 30 percent of TV news directors were female. In local news radio, about 32 percent of the workforce was female, and 19 percent of news directors were women.

Survey year	Total women	Women in leadership roles
2012	TV: 39.8%	TV: 30.2%
	Radio: 32.7%	Radio: 19.1%

Industry-wide data: In 2002, a group of researchers assembled a broad demographic overview of the press. Called *The American Journalist in the 21st Century*, the book catalogues characteristics of journalists, including demographics, political learnings, reading habits and job satisfaction. It also contains summaries of information about women across all sectors of the

industry. The table below shows the percentage of female journalists in different kinds of

newsrooms:

Platform	1971	1982-83	1992	2002
Radio	4.8	26.3	29	21.9
Television	10.7	33.1	24.8	37.4
Wire services	13	19.1	25.9	20.3
Daily papers	22.4	34.4	33.9	33
Weekly papers	27.1	42.1	44.1	36.9
News magazines	30.4	31.7	45.9	43.5
Total	*20.3*	*33.8*	*34*	*33*

There are two other small but interesting surveys worth noting: The first is from the

Association of Alternative Newsmedia, which conducted a demographic analysis of its

membership in late 2011 and early 2012. Nearly half of the people working at these news

organizations were female, with the highest concentration of women in the advertising and

editorial departments. All but two of the publications reported having at least one woman in a

leadership position. The other study dates back to 1997, when academic researchers analyzed the

staff composition of seven "online newspapers" and found that 64.1 percent of the journalists

were male.

APPENDIX B: IRB approval materials

The project received approval from Northeastern University's institutional review board on June 20, 2013. The board's letter of approval, a script for recruitment phone calls/emails and a blank consent form is attached.

Northeastern

Notification of IRB Action

Date: June 20, 2013

IRB #: 13-04-17

Principal Investigator(s):

Jeff Howe
Meg Heckman

Department:

School of Journalism

Address:

102 Lake Hall
Northeastern University

Title of Project:

The Role of Women in Emerging Digital News Organizations
in the United States

Participating Sites:

N/A

Informed Consent:

One (1) signed informed consent

DHHS Review Category:

Expedited #6, # 7

Monitoring Interval:

12 months

Approval Expiration Date: JUNE 19, 2014

Investigator's Responsibilities:

1. Informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting
    participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB **immediately** of unexpected adverse reactions, or new
    information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. **Any** modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be
    reviewed and approved by this committee **prior to being instituted.**
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to
    the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other
    university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #: 4630

Northeastern University, Department of Journalism
Meg Heckman (advisor: Prof. Jeff Howe)
A Site of Her Own: Female Ownership In Emerging Online News Organizations in the U.S.

Request to Participate in Research

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this research is to explore the role of women in the many online news organizations that are emerging in the United States.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project. If possible, the study will consist of an in-person interview. If that's not feasible, an interview will be conducted by phone or via Skype/Google Hangout. The interview will last for about an hour.

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to discuss your experiences regarding developing and maintaining an online news organization. We may also ask you about your experiences in traditional newsrooms, both generally and in terms of your gender.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

These interviews will be "on the record" and your name (and the name of your publication) may appear in publications related to this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Meg Heckman at mheckman@mailto:mheckman32@gmail.com,mailto:mheckman32@gmail.com. Meg is the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Prof. Jeff Howe, the principal investigator, at j.mailto:j.howe@neu.edu@mailto:j.howe@neu.edu,mailto:j.howe@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

I agree to take part in this research

_____   _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part   Date

_____
Printed name of person above

_____   _____
Signature of person who explained the study to the   Date
participant above and obtained consent

_____
Printed name of person above

APPROVED
NU IRB# 13-04-17
VALID 6/20/13
THROUGH 6/9/14

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The researchers will explain the project either verbally or in writing using language similar to the passage below:

"This is a research project conducted in conjunction with the Northeastern University School of Journalism. The goal of the study is to explore the role of women in emerging online news ventures in the United States. You have been contacted because of your involvement with an online news venture. Your participation is optional, but would be much appreciated. All or part of the information you provide may be used by the researchers for scholarly or journalistic articles or on a blog related to the project."

APPROVED
NU IRB# 13-04-17
VALID 6/20/13
THROUGH 6/19/14

APPENDIX C: List of interview subjects

The following women participated in semi-structured interviews for this project:

Name	Publication	Role
Marisa Trevino	Latina Lista	Publisher
Charlotte-Anne Lucas	NOWCastSA.com	Managing Director
Diane Alverio	Latino News Network	Founder
Julie Morris	BenitoLink	Acting publisher
Brandy Tuzon Boyd	Natomas Buzz	Publisher
Ashley Milne-Tyte	The Broad Experience	Founder
Lori Robinson	Vida Afro Latina	Founding editor
Rose Hoban	North Carolina Health News	Founding Editor
Erin Polgreen	Symbolia	Founder

APPENDIX D: List of news organizations

A list of the 402 news organizations included in the directories used in this project:

55423.info	Richfield, Minn
A2Politico	Ann Arbor, MI
ACEsConnection.com	Winters, CA
Akronist	Akron, OH
Alaska Dispatch	Anchorage, AK
Alhambra Source	Alhambra, CA
All Over Albany	Albany, NY
Altadenablog	Altadena, CA
Alternative Press	New Providence, NJ
American Independent News Network	Washington, DC
Ann Arbor Chronicle	Ann Arbor, MI
Ann Arbor News	Ann Arbor, MI
Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting	Phoenix, AZ
Arizona Guardian	Phoenix, AZ
Arlington Mercury	Arlington, VA
ARLnow.com	Arlington, VA
Ars Technica	New York, NY
Aspen Journalism	Aspen, CO
Austin Bulldog	Austin, TX
Austin Talks	Chicago, IL
B-Town Blog	Burien, WA
Backfence	Varied
Baltimore Brew	Baltimore, MD
Baltimore Fishbowl	Baltimore, MD
Banyan Project	Haverhill, MA
Baristanet	Montclair, NJ
Batavian	Batavia, NY
Bay Citizen	San Francisco, CA
Bayosphere	San Francisco, CA
Beachwood Media Company	Beachwood, IL
BenitoLink	San Benito, CA
Bensonhurst Bean	Bensonhusrt, NY
Berkeleyside	Berkeley, CA
Big Lead	New York, NY
Big World Magazine	New York, NY
Birthplace Magazine	New York, NY
Black Hills Knowledge Network	Rapid City, SD
BlackandBrownNews.com	Brooklyn, NY
Bleacher Report	San Francisco, CA
Blogdowntown	Los Angeles, CA
Bluffton Icon	Bluffton, OH
Boise Guardian	Boise, ID
Bold Italic	San Francisco, CA
Borderzine.com	El Paso, TX
Brentwood Home Page	Brentwood, TN
BrentWord Communications LLC	Brentwood, TN
Bring Me the News	St. Paul, MN
BristowBeat.com	Baristow, VA
Brooklyn Bureau	Brooklyn, NY
Brooklyn Ink	Brooklyn, NY
Broward Bulldog	Broward, FL
Brown Line Media	Chicago, IL
Brownstoner	Brooklyn, NY
Buffalo Rising	Buffalo, NY

Buffalos Fire	Buffalo, NY
Burnt Orange Report	Austin, TX
CalCoast News	Aptos, CA
Calbuz	Santa Barbara, CA
California HealthCare Foundation Center for Health Reporting	Alhambra, CA
California Watch	Berkeley, CA
Cape Cod Today	Cape Cod, MA
Capital New York	Albany, NY
CapitolHillSeattle.com	Seattle, CA
Carson Now	Carson City, NV
CaryCitizen	Cary, NC
Casper Citizen	Casper, WY
Catalyst Chicago	Chicago, IL
Center for Invesigative Reporting	Berkeley, CA
Center for Public Integrity	Washington, DC
Chadds Ford Live	Chadds Ford, PA
CHARLIE Magazine	Charleston, SC
Charlottesville Tomorrow	Charlottesville, VA
Chi-Town Daily News (now Chicago Current)	Chicago, IL
Chicago News Cooperative	Chicago, IL
Chicago Phoenix	Chicago, IL
Chicago Talks	Chicago, IL
Church Hill People's News	Richmond, VA
City Limits	New York, NY
Clear Health Costs	New York, NY
Cliffview Pilot	Cliffview, NJ
CNET	San Francisco, CA
Coachella Valley Independent	Cathedral City, CA
Coastsider	Half Moon Bay, CA
Coloarado Public News	Denver, CO
Colorado Capitol Watch	Denver, CO
Columbus Underground	Columbus, OH
Common Language Project	Seattle, WA
Connecticut Health Investigative Team	New Haven, CT
Connecticut Mirror	Hartford, CT
Connecticut Watchdog	East Longmeadow, MA
ContentNext Media (paidContent)	New York, NY
CorneliusNews.net	Cornelius, NC
Corona del Mar Today	Corona del Mar, CA
Country News Live	Hermann, MO
Cronkite News	Phoenix, AZ
Crosscut	Seattle, WA
CTNewsJunkie	Windsor, CT
CU-CitizenAccess	Urbana, IL
Dagger	Harford County, MD
Daily	New York, NY
Daily Beast	New York, NY
Daily Caller	Washington, DC
Daily Kos	Washington, DC
Daily Voice (Main Street Connect)	

Daily Yonder	Knoxville, TN
Dallas South News	Dallas, TX
Dane 101	Madison, WI
DavidsonNews.net	Davidson, NC
Davis Wiki (Local Wiki)	Davis, CA
Deadspin	New York, NY
Decatur Metro	Decatur, GA
Delaware Business Daily	Rehoboth Beach, DE
Delaware First Media News	Newark, DE
Demand Media	Santa Monica, CA
Detailed Block	Charlotte, NC
District	Savannah, GA
DNAinfor	New York, NY
DoD Buzz	Washington, DC
Drudge Report	College Station TX
Duke City Fix	Duke City, NM
E&E Publishing	Washington, DC
Eastsider	Los Angeles, CA
ecoRI	Providence, RI
EdHat	Santa Barbara, CA
EdNews Colorado	Denver, CO
Eleven Warriors	Pataskala, OH
Engadget	New York, NY
Eugene Daily News	Eugene, OR
Evanston Now	Evanston, IL
EveryBlock	Network
Examiner.com	Network
Exit 133	Tacoma, WA
Eye on Annapolis	Annapolis, MD
FactCheck.org	Philadelphia, PA
FailedMessiah.com	St. Paul, MN
FairWarning	Los Angeles, CA
Faster Times	New York, NY
Fayetteville Flyer	Fayetteville, AR
First Arkansas News	Benton, AR
Fiscal Times	New York, NY
FITSNews	Columbia, SC
FiveThirtyEight	New York, NY
Florida Center for Investigative Reporting	Miami, FL
Florida Current	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Independent	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Voices	Tampa, FL
Franklin Center for Govt & Public Integrity (WD)	Bismark, ND
Franklin Home Page	Brentwood, TN
Front Porch Forum	Burlington, VT
Futurity	Rochester, NY
Fwix (now Radius)	Network
Gapers Block	Chicago, IL
Gawker	New York, NY
GazeboNews	Lake Bluff, IL
GigaOM	San Francisco, CA
Global Post	Boston, MA
Gossip Extra	Palm Beach, FL
Gotham Gazette	New York, NY
Gotham Schools	New York, NY
Gothamist	New York, NY
Grand Prairie Reporter	Grand Prairie, TX
Great Lakes Echo	East Lansing, MI
Grist	Seattle, WA
GrossePointeToday.com	Grosse Point, MI
Groton Line	Groton, MA

Hawaii 24/7	Hilo, HI
Hawaii Independent	Honolulu, HI
HealthNewsReview.org	St. Paul, MN
Hechinger Report	New York, NY
Hispanic Nashville	Nashville, TN
Hollywood Elsewhere	West Hollywood, CA
Homicide Watch	Washington, DC
Honolulu Civil Beat	Honolulu, HI
Huffington Post	New York, NY
I-News	Denver, CO
IGN	San Francisco, CA
INDenverTimes	Denver, CO
indieWIRE	New York, NY
InMaricopa	Maricopa, AZ
Inner City Press	New York, NY
Innovation Trail	Rochester, NY
Inside Facebook	Palo Alto, CA
Inside the Hall	Bloomington, IN
InsideClimate News	Brooklyn, NY
Intersections South Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA
Investigate West	Seattle, WA
Investigative Newsource	San Diego, CA
Investigative Reporting Workshop	Washington, DC
InvestigativePost	Buffalo, NY
Iowa Center for Public Affairs Journalism	Iowa City, IA
Iowa Independent	Des Moins, IA
Iowa Republican	Des Moins, IA
Irish Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA
Issue Media Group	Detroit, MI
Ithaca Independent	Ithaca, NY
JD Land	Washington, DC
Jersey Bites	Point Pleasant Beach, NJ
Jersey City Independent	Jersey City, NJ
Journal Watchdog	Greenville, SC
Kaiser Health News	Washington, DC
Lake Country News	Lakeport, CA
LatinaLista	Rowlett, TX
Leimert Park Beat	Leimert Park, CA
Lexington Commons	Lexington, KY
LiveScience	New York, NY
Locally Grown News	Elon, NC
Locally Grown Northfield	Northfield, MN
LymeLine	Old Lyme, CT
Lynnwood Today	Lynnwood, WA
Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting	Hollowell, ME
Mashable	New York, NY
MediaStorm	Brooklyn, NY
Midway Messenger	Lexington, KY
Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting	Prairie City, MI
Milford Live	Milford, DL
MinnPost	Minneapolis, MN
Mint Press News	Minneapolis, MN
Missouri Journal	St. Louis, MO
Missouri Scout	St. Louis, MO
MLTNews	Mountlake Terrace,WA
MorristownGreen.com	Morristown, NJ
My Ballard	Seattle, WA
My Edmonds News	Edmonds, WA
My Eugene	Eugene, WA
My Everett News	Everett, WA
MyVeronaNJ.com	Verona, NJ

National Institute on Money in State Politics	Helena, MT
Near West End News	Richmond, VA
NEast Philly	Philadelphia, PA
Nebraska Watchdog	LaVista, NE
Neighborhood Notes	Portland, OR
NeighborWedSj	San Jose, CA
Neon Tommy	Los Angeles, CA
Nevada News Bureau	Henderson, NV
New America Media	San Francisco, CA
New Bern Now	New Bern, NC
New Castle Now	New Castle, NY
New Eng Center for Investigative Reporting	Boston, MA
New Hampshire Watchdog	Concord, NH
New Haven Independent	New Haven, CT
New Jersey Newsroom	Montclair, NJ
New West	Missoula, MT
New York World	New York, NY
NewarkPulse.com	Newark, NJ
Newser	New York, NY
Newsmax	West Palm Beach, FL
NewsOne	New York, NY
NewsTilt	Varied
Next Door Media	Seattle, WA
NJ Spotlight	Trenton, NJ
NMPolitics.net	Las Cruces, NM
NOLA Defender	New Orleans, LA
Noozhawk	San Antonio, TX
North Carolina Health News	Chapel Hill, NC
NowCastSA	San Antonio, TX
Oakland Local	Oakland, CA
Obit Magazine	Princeton, NJ
Ocean Beach Bulletin	San Francisco, CA
Oklahoma Watch	Norman, OK
Old Dominion Watchdog	Alexandria, VA
OnCentral	Los Angeles, CA
Open Media Boston	Boston, MA
OpenSecrets.org	Washington, DC
Oswego County Today	Fulton, NY
Outside.in (now part of Patch)	Network
Ozarks Unbound	Fayetteville, AR
Pasadena Now	Pasadena, CA
Patch	Network
PatersonPress.com	Paterson, NJ
Peach Pundit	Alpharetta, GA
Pegasus News	Richardson, TX
Philadelphia Neighborhoods	Philadelphia, PA
Philadelphia Public School Notebook	Philadelphia, PA
Pitchfork	Chicago, IL
Placeblogger	Boston, MA
Plains Daily	Fargo, ND
Planet Princeton	Princeton, NJ
PlanPhilly	Philadelphia, PA
Plaza de Armas TX	San Antonio, TX
Plunderbund	Hamilton, OH
Plymouth Daily News	Plymouth, MA
Politco	Washington, DC
PolitiFact (Tampa Bay Times)	St. Petersburg, FL
PopMatters	Chicago, IL
PoPville (Prince of	Washington, DC

Petworth)	
Portland Afoot	Portland, OR
potomaclocal.com	Potomac, VA
Prairie Village Post	Prairie Village, KS
Progress Illinois	Chicago, IL
ProPublica	New York, NY
Public Source	Pittsburgh, PA
PubliCola	Seattle, WA
qcitymetro.com	Charlotte, NC
Quorum Report	Austin, TX
Ravenna Blog	Seattle, WA
Read Write	San Francisco, CA
redbankgreen	Red Bank, NJ
Remapping Debate	New York, NY
Republic Tiger Sports	Republic, MI
Richmond BizSense	Richmond, VA
Rio Grande Guardian	McAllen, TX
RiverheadLocal	Riverhead, NY
Roosevelt Islander Online	New York, NY
Rust Wire	Cleveland, OH
RVANews	Richmond, VA
Sacramento Press	Sacramento, CA
Salon	San Francisco, CA
San Diego News Network	San Diego, CA
San Francisco Public Press	San Francisco, CA
San Jose Inside	San Jose, CA
SanFranPreps.com	San Francisco, CA
Seattle PostGlobe	Seattle, WA
SF Appeal	San Francisco, CA
SF Public Press	San Francisco, CA
Sheepshead Bites	Sheepshead Bay, NY
Silicon Bayou News	New Orleans, LA
Silicon Prairie News	Omaha, NE
Silver Lake Star	Los Angeles, CA
Slant	Weehawken, NY
Slate	New York, NY
Small Wars Journal	Washington, DC
Solutions	Denver, CO
SomervilleToday.com	Somerville, NJ
South King Media	Seattle, WA
Sports Gab Network	Mount Laurel, NJ
St. Louis Beacon	St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Globe-Democrat	St. Louis, MO
StarkvilleNow.com	Starkville, MS
Stateline.org	Washington, DC
Street Fight	Boulder, CO
Streetsblog	New York, NY
Suck.com	
Summit County Citizens Voice	Summit County, CO
Talking Points Memo	Washington, DC
TBD	Washington, DC
TechCrunch	San Francisco, CA
Technically Philly	Philadelphia, PA
Texas Tribune	Austin, TX
Texas Watchdog	Austin, TX
The Awl	New York, NY
The Forum	Northwood, NH
The Heavy Table	Minneapolis, MN
The Hill Is Home	Washington, DC
The Lens	New Orleans, LA
The Lo-Down	New York, NY
The Local East Village	New York, NY
The Locust Fork News-Journal	Birmingham, AL
The Loop	Larchmont, NY

The Loop NY	New York, NY
The Los Angeles Review of Books	Los Angeles, CA
The Manomet Current	Plymouth, MA
The Natomas Buzz	Natomas, CA
The News Outlet	Youngstown, OH
The Outer Banks Voice	Nags Head, NC
The Post	Sioux Falls, ND
The Rapidian	Grand Rapids, MI
The Root	Washington, DC
The Sacramento Press	Sacramento, CA
The Saginaw Valley Journal	University Center, MI
The Salem Connect	Salem, CT
The San Francisco Appeal	San Francisco, CA
The Sanatoga Post	Sanatoga, PA
The Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism	Boston, MA
The UpTake	St. Paul, MI
TheDigitel	Charleston, SC
Theme Park Insider	Pasedena, CA
ThePortlander	Portland, OR
This Land Press	Tulsa, OK
Tipp News Daily	Tipp City, OH
Topix	Palo Alto, CA
Town Square Buzz	McKinney, TX
Tribeca Citizen	Tribeca, NY
Tucson Sentinel	Tuscon, AZ
TucsonCitizen.com	Tuscon, AZ
Twin Cities Daily Planet	Minneapolis, MN
Universal Hub	Boston, MA
Uptown Messenger	New Orleans, LA

Urban Milwaukee	Millwaukee, WI
UtahPolicy.com	Salt Lake, UT
Village Soup	Network
Voice of San Diego	San Diego, CA
VTDigger.org	Montpeiler, VT
Washington Independent Review of Books	Washington, DC
Watchdog New England	Boston, MA
Watershed Post	Delhi, NY
We Love DC	Washington, DC
Welles Park Bulldog	Chicago, IL
West of the I	Paddock Lake, WI
West Orlando News Online	Orlando, FL
West Philly Local	Philadelphia, PA
West Seattle Blog	Seattle, WA
West Virginia Watchdog	Charleston, WV
WestportNow	Westport, CT
Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism	Madison, WI
Worthit2u.net	Sylvester, GA
Wrentham Times	Wrentham, MA
WyoFile	Casper, WY
Y'all Politics	Jackson, MI
Yadkin Valley Sports	Elkin, NC
Yale Environment 360	New Haven, CT
Yellowstone Gate	Cody, WY
YubaNet	Nevada City, CA

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