New Ideas for Improving the Economics of Producing Local Journalism

By
MARK S. NADEL

Many ideas have been proposed for improving the economics of producing journalism, but this article explores a few new ones focused on local journalism. These ideas include an increased reliance upon retired journalists, more collaboration with academic researchers, providing reports to aid those looking to move to a new community, and an outline for allowing news organizations to gain a legal right to a much larger portion of the financial benefits associated with prosocial investigative journalism.

Keywords: local journalism; economics; investigative journalism; news production; news revenue models

Many ideas have been suggested for improving the financial condition of local news services, and some have already been implemented. For example, Report for America (n.d.), a donor-funded national service program, places emerging journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered topics and communities across the U.S. Others, like an antitrust exemption to allow news services to negotiate for copyright fees from Google, Facebook, YouTube, and other large online platforms (similar to the arrangement adopted for Australia [Morrison 2021]), have almost been adopted by Congress. Many others have been compiled at the websites of Solutions to America's Local Journalism Crisis (Forman 2022) and Rebuild Local News (Rebuild Local News Coalition 2023) and in a 2023 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.

Mark S. Nadel is an attorney/advisor at the Federal Communications Commission, but this analysis represents solely his own views and not those of the Commission or the U.S. government and is unrelated to his work at the Commission. His research has focused on the First Amendment and the economics of media access.

Correspondence: msnadel@gmail.com

DOI: 10.1177/00027162231220475

Each proposal offers an incremental improvement, but additional efforts are essential if local journalism is to be sustainable at the level that maximizes its net benefit to society. The ideas discussed below are an attempt to supplement existing proposals with a few new ideas. None appear to have gotten any significant attention, and they are offered with the hope that they will stimulate further discussion that can make them more practical or expose their fatal flaws. Each appears to be relevant for at least some local communities.

Increase the Use of Retirees

Nonprofit news services should seek out and increasingly rely on retired journalists, teachers, and local leaders for *pro bono* service. Social norms already encourage residents to donate time and effort to important local community services. Providing local news certainly fits that bill. Technology can help this effort in at least two ways: not only are health care advances enabling retirees to remain sharp many years after retirement, but new media technologies have also reduced the cost and physical requirements of journalism. Public meetings are typically streamed and recorded, video interviews can be conducted via Zoom or FaceTime, contacts can be reached at their cell phones or email inboxes, and databases can be searched from home. Even when people relocate, all they need to conduct business is good internet access. Given that environment, nonprofit news services can encourage retired journalists, local leaders, and teachers to commit to *ad hoc* projects on a somewhat regular basis.

The culture of volunteerism

The strong spirit of volunteerism in the U.S. has been recognized as far back as Tocqueville (1835/2000) in *Democracy in America*. Moreover, volunteers are particularly active in their local communities. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) supplement public school teachers and administrators; boards of directors and trustees of churches, temples, and mosques supplement the work of the paid clergy; and locals act as volunteer firefighters and neighborhood watch participants. The same principle of volunteerism could easily be applied to local journalism, and examples of this kind of engagement are already emerging across the U.S.

Citizen journalism is expanding

There are already many examples of those paid little or nothing to provide local news. After the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* dramatically cut its newsroom and became a web-only news organization, it supplemented its coverage of the Seattle area with blogs produced by local residents (Rogers 2017). When Gatehouse Media took over *The Star Press* and cut its staff, *The Ball State* [University] *Daily News* stepped in to fill the civic information gap for Muncie,

Indiana (Fallows 2022). The University of Vermont's Center for Community News connects student journalists with local news organizations (University of Vermont 2023). Nextdoor, a hyperlocal news service appearing in many communities, relies on unpaid neighborhood reporters and the moderators who manage their posts (Nextdoor.com 2023; Oremus 2021; Stanford Center on Longevity 2021).

Retirees to the rescue, aided by technology

Over the past decades, as the health and longevity of Americans have improved (Stanford Center on Longevity 2021) and retirement benefits of at least Social Security—if not IRAs, 401(k) plans, or pensions—have freed people from the need to continue working, increasing numbers of retired journalists have shown themselves willing and able to volunteer in their communities. In fact, more and more of them are creating their own nonprofit local news services (Marcus 2023). In North Carolina, for example, a group of journalists who "failed at retirement" created the *Asheville Watchdog*, a website to cover local investigative stories that others were neglecting (L. Harris 2022).

Motives vary among the many experienced, retired journalists. As Jeff Rowe, formerly of *The Wall Street Journal*, observes, "The bottom line is, we've got this expertise. We want to share it." Mark Wert, a former investigative and enterprise reporter at *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, confesses that he is an "adventure junkie" (Marcus 2023). A cofounder of Axios admits, "This is my life's work. It's my passion. I would do it for free" (Mullin 2022). In fact, many who choose journalism seek "the satisfaction of being known and noticed, with your name in print and perhaps your face on the air; the opportunity to play a part in shaping public issues without having to go into politics" (Fallows 1996). Sue Cross, executive director of the Institute for Nonprofit News, believes that there are "a wealth of people who want to really see journalism continue"; and Barbara Roessner, former managing editor of the *Hartford Courant*, reports that "it's a national phenomenon"—even though new all-volunteer startups still need to worry about liability insurance and other business matters (Marcus 2023).

Meanwhile, technology has greatly reduced many of the burdens placed on reporters. Journalists can conduct video interviews on Zoom or FaceTime and cover streamed meetings from anywhere with internet access. Plus, recording technology enables reporters to cover simultaneous events. And although online attendance is certainly inferior in many ways—one cannot see off-camera activity or reach out to unnamed participants—it does eliminate travel time, lodging expenses, and the cost of hiring a caregiver for dependents, including pets.

In addition to retired journalists, major contributions could also be provided by retired community leaders, who are often very familiar with key local issues and have a wealth of contacts among current local stakeholders.

Collaborate with Academics Seeking Important Research Projects

Local news services should take better advantage of the many scholars and professionals in academia who might be willing to select research topics that are important to local reporting. Where reporters typically train on computer-assisted reporting (CAR) or other data analysis tools (Hamilton 2016) and have shorter time frames, academics generally have more time and can use more sophisticated statistical and survey research tools. The Conversation (2023), a website that reaches out to academic experts to produce explanatory journalism on the events, discoveries, and issues that matter today, suggests a model.

Local media could also create these kinds of collaborations with academics. Specifically, local news services could post lists of research projects they would conduct if they had the resources. Requests for research (RfRs) describing labor-intensive, locally focused projects, including data analysis and surveys, could appear on their own websites and also be submitted to a national, searchable database organized by the Library of Congress Classification System. Professors and students looking for research topics could then browse the database to learn about analyses sought in their area of expertise as well as what research their hometowns are seeking. Analyses by an experienced professor or a student supervised by an instructor with expertise in the field would likely be of significant net value. Academics, meanwhile, would benefit from getting feedback from local experts as well as greater publicity for their work. Projects could include measuring disparities in health care, gun licensing, or K–12 student achievement among different neighborhoods or socioeconomic groups in the community.

Local Libraries Should Curate Unbundled Local News

Local libraries have long served as curators of books and periodicals of interest and importance to their communities. In the internet age, they can and should host a page that curates online sources of local news, particularly when their locality has become a news desert with the loss of its local newspaper (Abernathy 2020). Libraries should identify the most important issues of public interest and, for each, post links to *bona fide* sources of online news on those topics, including reporters from online news services, bloggers, Tweeters, neighborhood and organizational newsletters, and TikTokers. Government funding for this task, rather than enhancing the position of the most established news services in a market (Picard 2020), would favor the least established journalists.

Historically, the substantial economies of scale and scope in news distribution channels dictated that local news stories generally circulated only as part of a local news package (e.g., the local newspaper or news broadcast controlled by its owner [Owen 1975]). Thus, Liebling's (1960) observation that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." The internet has radically reduced entry barriers and thus empowered individuals to post accessible local

news reports on an *à la carte* basis. Yet reaching one's intended audience can be difficult (Nadel 2004). Marketing assistance from credible librarians could encourage more budding journalists, as well as gadflies and affinity groups, to produce valuable content about local issues and help local residents find the clearest presentations of the pros and cons of competing positions on important local issues.

Curation

A primary role of librarians, selecting the content to offer to patrons, is analogous to a primary task of journalists and, in particular, editors: that is, identifying the topics and stories that would most interest their audience. In a sense, both librarians and journalists act as "retailers" of content by (1) identifying, searching for, and gathering material of value and interest to their target audience; (2) evaluating items and screening out defective or lower-quality ones and/or labeling them as such; and (3) organizing material to make it easy for their customers to find what they seek (Nadel 1987, 223–33).

In addition to offering patrons access to all significant local newspapers and magazines, libraries should curate other sources of content they view as quality news, even if it is not provided by journalists, as long as it appears credible and focused on local issues, and present it by topic (Hill 2019). It might seem that internet search engines make this task superfluous, but the algorithms used by the major social media platforms can be manipulated through the use of clever metatags or other techniques, and the platforms themselves often favor entertaining or even disturbing content that excites and may distract the searcher (see Grind et al. 2019; Oremus 2021; Soroka, Fournier, and Nir 2019; Wu 2019). As more trusted curators (Doran-Myers 2016; Ipsos 2021), librarians could provide much better service, particularly for those, like many elderly patrons, less skilled at navigating the internet. Of course, internet surfers would also need to be taught to turn to their local library websites when seeking *bona fide* local news.

Ascertaining local news topics of value and interest and identifying new sources

To begin, libraries would need to ascertain the most important topics of local news or, alternatively, delegate this task to a volunteer committee or even a journalism class (and instructor) at a local high school or college.[1] To avoid unintentionally omitting issues of interest to overlooked groups, that initial list could be posted for patron feedback. Next, librarians would compile a list of *bona fide* sources that covered those topics, beginning with the traditional local news sources such as newspapers (dailies, weeklies, biweeklies, etc.), magazines, radio, TV, and cable TV news channel websites. Again, a volunteer committee might be recruited to identify others. In news deserts, local leaders and former local journalists might be consulted for their sources of local news.

The online news services might include sites like Patch and Nextdoor[2] as well as online newsletters of local civic associations, large apartment buildings, or homeowners' associations (HOAs). They should also include credible bloggers, Tweeters, podcasters, and TikTokers, or content creators on paid services like Substack or Ghost, if they covered local issues. Finally, to the extent that local affinity groups or branches of national groups, like the NAACP or the Nature Conservancy, published informative material about local aspects of topics like racial equality and climate change, the relevant sections of their websites could be included. Adding these less traditional sources of local news would help fill gaps left by traditional media (Center for Media Engagement 2023). Where sources did not strive for journalistic objectivity and had clear, even if unacknowledged, biases, librarians might label them (e.g., "libertarian," "progressive," "conservative," etc.).

In compiling their list of sources, librarians would be free to omit those they judged "unworthy" of inclusion—as they do for book donations—although the First Amendment would limit their discretion (Nadel 2000). The Supreme Court has ruled that librarians may not reject or remove books simply because they disagree with the authors' viewpoint (*Island Trees School District v. Pico* 1982; see also Kurtz 2022). In exercising "editorial" judgment over what materials to include, libraries would act in a role similar to public broadcasters and educators who create school curricula.[3] Ideally, librarians would be given sufficient resources to monitor the credibility of the various sources they were curating—removing those that often provide misinformation—but libraries with more limited budgets might have to settle for simply warning patrons that sources were not being carefully vetted. Where local high schools teach media literacy, students might be assigned to fact-check sources and report any apparent misinformation to library staff, who might then delist those that were too often inaccurate.

In the current polarized, tribal environment, where librarians are on the defensive for their book selections (E. A. Harris and Alter 2022), many might be reluctant to add another risk of lawsuits. Therefore, to encourage this action, the American Library Association might turn to the legal profession—through outreach to the American Bar Association, American Civil Liberties Union, or Association of American Law Professors—to recruit legal experts willing to provide *pro bono* assistance to librarians facing legal actions for curating local news sources.[4]

Financing the project

Ideally, voters would directly approve funding earmarked for this project; alternatively, the local, state, or federal government could choose to fund this project (GAO 2023). Government funding of journalism generally creates the danger that it will chill journalists from criticizing the government, but providing the support to local library curation would seem to provide good insulation against such a chill. This approach could be comparable to or even better than funneling funds through entities like the Corporation of Public Broadcasting or

New Jersey's Civic Information Consortium of five of the state's institutions of higher education (GAO 2023; Rispoli 2022).

Warn Home Buyers about Information That Real Estate Agents Might Not Disclose

Despite requirements that sellers disclose known defects in their homes, most home buyers spend hundreds of dollars for an engineer's report to spot undisclosed defects. Fortuitously, local news services are ideally positioned to sell home buyers two other types of information that real estate agents are apt to withhold: (1) local developments—past, present, and future—that might negatively affect a buyer's purchase decision, such as the expected harms from climate change, rezoning, or property tax increases; and (2) the attitudes and conditions of the community with respect to race, ethnicity, or other demographic characteristics. Real estate agents are generally instructed to respond to the latter questions by directing clients to third-party sources for answers.

Home sellers and real estate agents happily proclaim the positive aspects of a local community or neighborhood, including changes that are expected to enhance its attractiveness. Yet these parties have little incentive to disclose local news stories that may dissuade buyers from considering any homes in their service area.

A key role of the local news media, however, is to expose and discuss the problems and challenges facing their community, empowering residents to face and address them. For example, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (2022) exposed electrical problems with local rental units in its 2021 to 2022 series "Wires and Fires." Local news services should offer to sell this "information you should know about this community" to potential home buyers. These reports could be a simple collection of articles about, say, the 10 most significant, relevant developments in the recent past or about upcoming actions that might affect properties negatively or positively. A more built-out version of such a service would combine the articles into a well-organized report. And where other entities had already aggregated and supplemented statistical and other reviews of local areas (e.g., Old Republic Home Protection 2023), these reports could link to them and possibly to hyperlocal versions (Crosstown 2023; Kahn 2022). Where they were lacking altogether, the news service itself could provide them.

Social conditions: Who is welcome, who not so much

Many home buyers looking to move to a new community may also want information about social conditions and attitudes towards people of their race, religion, ethnicity, or political perspective. Out of an abundance of caution, real estate agents generally avoid commenting on these matters, even indirectly, since their words might be misconstrued as violating federal law against steering

minority home buyers to or away from particular neighborhoods, leading to costly lawsuits.[5] This creates an opening for local news services.

College guides provide a model: they often offer such information to applicants in the form of lists of on-campus affiliate groups and through comments from current students and recent graduates about how comfortable members of specific groups find the campus. News services with diverse staffs should be well aware of these social conditions and, if not, could interview current and previous residents of different minority groups; those lacking in diversity could seek out local affinity groups for assistance. Local news services could note the presence of relevant local organizations (e.g., the NAACP or the National Rifle Association); report on how the community was promoting better relationships among different racial, ethnic, or political groups; and provide data on the community's voting records. Local reporters could also note whether there appeared to be tension between longtime residents and "newcomers." Buyers may also be interested in the leanings of local residents on issues like housing affordability, climate change, bike lanes, recycling—all matters likely to have been covered by local news media.

Financially Reward Successful Investigative Reporting

In his 2016, prize-winning, empirical review of investigative reporting—*Democracy's Detectives*—James Hamilton (2016, 133) found that, for the stories and rules he examined, "the expenditure on investigative reports appear to be a relatively good investment from society's perspective." Although successful investigative projects are occasionally rewarded with prizes, incremental increases in advertiser revenues, more subscribers, and sometimes even a book or film contract, those benefits rarely, if ever, justify the costs from a business perspective. Most of the benefits are dispersed throughout society, while all the costs are borne by the news outlet; thus, the economic incentives are rarely sufficient to motivate investigative reporting.

This imbalance could be significantly remedied if the legal system gave investigative journalists the right to recover a substantial share of the social benefits their successful stories generated. Consider that personal injury attorneys typically earn more than 30 percent of what they recover for their clients, and the IRS and U.S. Department of Justice reward *bona fide* whistleblowers with a 15- to 30-percent share of the value their disclosures yield (Expenses of Detection of Underpayments and Fraud, etc. 2001; False Claims Act 1863). Building on analyses used for setting percentage fees for tort lawsuits, standards could be established for determining the appropriate share of benefits to award to an investigative journalist. (Cases of journalist-attorney collaboration would call for establishing a default method for determining the share of benefits.)

How do we place a dollar value on the benefits produced by a journalist's investigation? The American legal system has developed a mechanism for setting dollar values on "unquantifiable" damages individuals have suffered from harms, such as wrongful deaths, environmental disasters, and racial discrimination, among others. Tort cases such as these delegate this task to juries, who are aided

by the precedents and economic models presented by attorneys. A system for rewarding investigative journalism could, similarly, ask a jury to estimate the positive social value of an investigative story—call it a "negative tort"—aided by a set of suggested values and tools for valuing benefits. Hamilton (2016, 118–33, 226–29) offers examples of such analyses to estimate benefits from some investigative projects.

Alternatively, investigative journalists could be permitted to recover some multiple of the costs they incurred in pursuit of their story. Allowing them to recover only their actual costs would probably not be enough to encourage such projects; since many investigations produce little or nothing, the net expected value would clearly be negative. To make investigative journalism economically attractive would require the recovery of some multiple of costs for successful stories. Given that other causes of action have, at times, allowed recovery of treble damages, perhaps granting a right to treble costs would be appropriate here.

Probably the biggest challenge to creating an administratively practical mechanism, however, would be identifying whom the investigative journalist could recover from. In cases of government corruption, the relevant government body might reasonably be held liable, just as it is generally liable for any racial or sexual discrimination by its employees. For stories about private business corruption, it might make sense to view the case as if it were a shareholder derivative suit, with recovery coming from the company. For cases involving revelations about elections—like Watergate in 1972 to 1974 or George Santos in 2022 to 2023—there is no obvious deep pocket to pursue, unless the state or federal government was willing to allocate funds for this purpose.

For this process to work best for working journalists, it would probably make sense to permit a secondary market to arise, allowing media firms to sell their rights to recover for an investigative story to a third party, probably a law firm. That way, those rights to recover could be turned into funds relatively quickly (although, presumably, at a significant discount), irrespective of how long it took to determine precisely how much was due.

In an effort to limit abuse, it would be prudent to limit recoveries to *bona fide* journalists. Eligibility could be limited to those who would qualify as representatives of the news media for the purposes of the federal Freedom of Information Act. And to avoid cases that were apt to fail a cost-benefit analysis, it should probably be available only for cases where benefits exceeded some benchmark, say, the $75,000 minimum required to give a federal court original subject matter jurisdiction when parties have diverse citizenship.

Could an approach like this work? Would it be administratively practical? It's hard to say. But given the possible payoff, the idea is worth a careful examination.

Notes

1. Pennsylvania's Monroeville Public Library, led by Mark Hudson, set up a "Hot Topics" section to guide patrons to reliable online news and improve their ability to participate in debates and effective political action. California's Alameda County Library also offered guides to material on "news you are

talking about," topics identified by its librarians. But these did not focus on local news topics (Putnam 2016).

2. A January 2021 article reported that Nextdoor operates in some 268,000 neighborhoods globally (Oremus 2021).

3. For First Amendment analysis, libraries are best viewed as nonpublic forums, where they may exclude materials whose quality they find lacking (Nadel 1991, 2000).

4. This idea was suggested by Jonathan Levy, former deputy chief economist of the Federal Communications Commission, in a conversation with the author, April 2022.

5. The 1968 Fair Housing Act was intended to eliminate discrimination in the sale and lease of housing (Bruce 1977). However, it is not always clear when an agent's soft cues, textured descriptions, or other actions may cross the line (Bell 2020). To avoid even the possibility of such a misunderstanding—which can lead to a costly lawsuit—most brokers direct their agents to avoid any talk about demographic characteristics, except to direct buyers to statistics compiled by others (Fair Housing Institute 2022; National Association of Realtors 2020).

References

Abernathy, Penelope Muse. 2020. *News deserts and ghost newspapers: Will local news survive?* Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, School of Media and Journalism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Available from www.usnewsdeserts.com.

Bell, Monica C. 2020. Anti-segregation policing. *New York University Law Review* 95 (3): 650–765.

Bruce, Neil C. 1977. Real estate steering and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. *Tulsa Law Journal* 12 (4): 758–73.

Center for Media Engagement. 2023. *The news Philadelphians use: Analyzing the local media landscape*. Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, Moody College of Communication, Center for Media Engagement. Available from mediaengagement.org.

The Conversation. 2023. 10 ways we're different. Melbourne: The Conversation. Available from https://theconversation.com/us/10-ways-we-are-different.

Crosstown. 2023. About us. Available from https://xtown.la/about-us/.

Doran-Myers, Miranda. 2016. *Maine State Library study finds that librarian is one of the most trusted professions*. Denver, CO: Library Research Service. Available from www.lrs.org.

Expenses of Detection of Underpayments and Fraud, etc. 2001. 26 U.S.C. §2673.

Fair Housing Institute. 2022. Fair housing and steering. Available from https://fairhousinginstitute.com/fair-housing-steering/ (accessed 24 February 2022).

Fallows, James. 1996. *Breaking the news: How the media undermine American democracy*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Fallows, Deborah. 28 August 2022. The (student) paper of record. *Washington Monthly*.

False Claims Act. 1863. 31 U.S.C. §3730 – Civil Actions for False Claims.

Forman, Craig. 2022. Solutions to America's local journalism crisis. In *Zotero* [database online]. Cambridge, MA: Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. Available from https://www.zotero.org/groups/2781167/solutions_to_americas_local_journalism_crisis/ (accessed 9 December 2022).

Government Accountability Office. 2023. *Local journalism: Innovative business approaches and targeted policies may help local news media adapt to digital transformation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office. Available from https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-105405.

Grind, Kirsten, Sam Schechner, Robert McMillan, and John West. 15 November 2019. How Google interferes with its search algorithms and changes your results. *Wall Street Journal*.

Hamilton, James T. 2016. *Democracy's detectives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Harris, Elizabeth A., and Alexandra Alter. 6 July 2022. As parents call to ban books, librarians are cast as criminals. *New York Times*.

Harris, Lauren. 11 February 2022. In Asheville, a band of retired journalists does investigative reporting for free. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Available from www.cjr.org.

Hill, Rebecca. 2019. When local newspapers close, what can libraries do? *Intellectual Freedom Blog*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, Office for Intellectual Freedom. Available from www.oif.ala.org.

Ipsos. 7 December 2021. Ipsos Veracity Index: Trust in the police drops for the second year in a row. Available from https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/ipsos-mori-veracity-index-trust-police-drops-second-year-row.

Island Trees School District v. Pico. 1982. 457 U.S. 853.

Kahn, Gabriel. 2022. *How Crosstown uses data to supercharge hyperlocal news*. Los Angeles, CA: Crosstown LA. Available from medium.com/crosstown-la/.

Kurtz, Stanley. 24 February 2022. The battle for the soul of the library. *New York Times*.

Liebling, A. J. 14 May 1960. The wayward press: Do you belong in journalism? *New Yorker*.

Marcus, Jon. 2023. *Why retired journalists are jumping back into the profession*. Cambridge, MA: Nieman Foundation for Journalism. Available from niemanreports.org.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. 9 March 2022. "Wires and fires" investigation, which exposed electrical problems in Milwaukee rental units, named finalist for Harvard journalism prize.

Morrison, Sara. 25 February 2021. Why Facebook banned (and then unbanned) news in Australia. *Vox*.

Mullin, Benjamin. 9 August 2022. Sale to Cox said to raise Axios's value. *New York Times*.

Nadel, Mark. 1987. Editorial freedom: Editors, retailers, and access to the mass media. *Hastings Communications and Entertainment Law Journal* 9 (2): 223–33.

Nadel, Mark. 1991. A technology transparent theory of the First Amendment and access to communications media. *Federal Communication Law Journal* 43 (2): 157–84.

Nadel, Mark. 2000. The First Amendment's limitations on the use of internet filtering in public and school libraries: What content can librarians exclude? *Texas Law Review* 78 (5): 1117–57.

Nadel, Mark. 2004. How current copyright law discourages creative output: The overlooked impact of marketing. *Berkeley Technology Law Journal* 19 (2): 797–801.

National Association of Realtors. 2020. *Steer clear of "steering."* Chicago, IL: National Association of Realtors. Available from https://www.nar.realtor/fair-housing-corner/steer-clear-of-steering.

Nextdoor.com. 2023. How are neighborhood leads selected? Nextdoor Help Center. San Francisco, CA: Nextdoor Holdings, Inc. Available from help.nextdoor.com.

Old Republic Home Protection. 2023. Know your neighborhood: 5 resources to get the inside scoop. Available from www.orhp.com/blog.

Oremus, Will. 27 January 2021. Nextdoor is quietly replacing the small-town paper. *OneZero*. Available from onezero.medium.com.

Owen, Bruce M. 1975. *Economics and freedom of expression: Media structure and the First Amendment*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Picard, Victor. 2020. *Democracy without journalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Putnam, Laurie. 2016. *How libraries are curating current events, becoming community debate hubs*. San Francisco, CA: MediaShift. Available from mediashift.org.

Rebuild Local News Coalition. 2023. Solutions. Available from www.rebuildlocalnews.org/solutions/.

Report for America. n.d. A call to serve. Available from www.reportforamerica.org/reporters.

Rispoli, Mike. 24 March 2022. Why the Civic Info Consortium is such a huge deal. *Free Press*. Available from www.freepress.net/blog.

Rogers, Tony. 2017. *Why bloggers can't replace the work of professional journalists*. New York, NY: Dotdash. Available from www.thoughtco.com.

Soroka, Stuart, Patrick Fournier, and Lilach Nir. 2019. Cross-national evidence of a negativity bias in psychophysiological reactions to news. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (38): 18888–92.

Stanford Center on Longevity. 2021. The new map of life. Available from longevity.stanford.edu.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1835/2000. *Democracy in America*. Eds. and trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

University of Vermont. 2023. *Millions of Americans get their news from student reporters*. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Center for Community News. Available from www.uvm.edu/ccn.

Wu, Katherine J. 28 March 2019. Radical ideas spread through social media. Are the algorithms to blame? *Nova*. Available from www.pbs.org.