MMSS Senior Thesis Progress Report

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In my senior thesis, I hope to provide an empirically sound game-theoretic description of the way newspapers align themselves politically. I began with the desire to develop a game-theoretic model to describe the way news gets disseminated; feasibility and availability of information has narrowed the scope of the topic to newspapers, specifically the political dimensions. Aviv Nevo pointed me in the direction of a an interesting paper by Matthew Gentzkow at University of Chicago that proposes a model similar to what I had in mind, for entry/exit and political affiliation of newspapers from 1872 to 1924. I apply this model to the 2004 and 2008 presidential and 1) ask whether or not the model remains valid in the present-day industry and 2) anticipating that it will not be as robust, adjust the model to incorporate the shift to internet news. It could also be of interest to examine whether a newspaper can sustain a political shift after being purchased by another company.

Because of interviews and trying to secure post-graduation employment, I have had little time this quarter to devote to writing the thesis, but I plan to spend considerable time to it over winter break. I will begin compiling the newspaper affiliation data next week, and continue formulating a suitable proxy for advertising revenue for both print and online news. Next quarter my schedule will be substantially less demanding, and I plan to devote several hours a day to writing and editing.