February 22, 2022

Dr. Regina Lawrence

Editor-in-Chief, *Political Communication*

Dear Dr. Lawrence and Editors at Political Communication,

I’m writing submit our manuscript, entitled ‘Between Individuals and News Organizations: Developing the “News Niche” as a Conceptual Tool for Examining Audience Fragmentation,’ to *Political Communication*.

In this study we propose an update to the concept of ‘niche news’. Building on approaches to the study of audience fragmentation, we explicate the niche as one’s position within the broader news eco-system. This conceptualization allows researchers to capture audience-level traits that influence one’s preference for ideological news. That is, one’s preference for partisan news is not just a personal decision, but it is also influenced by others in the same niche. To test these claims, we develop an empirical tool for identifying and modelling the news niche using network analysis techniques.

This contribution is important for the field, as attention to news and public affairs is increasingly determined by aggregators and social feeds, which group users by shared interests or motivations. We move beyond the role of individual-level selection habits to incorporate audience- and system-level influences on one’s news ideology. Many of these conversations are already taking place in this journal. We hope you agree that the paper is a good fit for *Political Communication*, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

Dr. Trevor Diehl

Central Michigan University