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**Outline of Paper #01 (March 21, 2017)**

**Rationale**

\* Most political theorists adhere to the assumption that effective self-government requires citizen deliberation of public affairs, in which citizens are adequately informed by quality news media.

\* People are worried that the steady ebb of credible legacy news media, especially daily newspapers, could undermine the public sphere and the ability of people to effectively self-govern.

\* These effects are felt most deeply at the metropolitan level, as that is where newspaper losses are deepest.

\* Most studies that examine the effect of media loss on the public sphere are predicated on the assumption that the public sphere depends mostly on traditional news sources despite the growing body of information from other sources that is available electronically.

\* My study examines the public sphere itself to learn what sources are trusted and shared in discussions of civic matters at the municipal level, including but also not limited to traditional news media.

**Objectives**

**General Objectives:**

\* To examine the extent to which discussants in the public sphere use information sources other than traditional or “legacy style” news sources as evidentiary support for claims.

**Specific Objectives:**

\* To examine a sample of 2,000 links posted in conversations on civic topics that took place during two years’ worth of activity on Seattle’s subReddit r/Seattle to see what, if any, sources beyond legacy media are linked as evidence in support of discussants’ arguments.

\* To examine whether sources and topics are associated.

\* To examine whether sources and purpose of the link are associated.

**Null hypotheses**

\* The majority of links will connect to legacy media sources.

\* There is no relationship between source and topic.

\* There is no relationship between source and purpose of a link.







