



2019

Reimagining local news to fulfill its democratic function

Chaplin, Heather

Suggested citation:

Chaplin, Heather (2019) Reimagining local news to fulfill its democratic function. In: Relating Systems Thinking and Design (RSD8) 2019 Symposium, Oct 13-15 2019, Chicago, USA. Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/3246/>

Open Research is a publicly accessible, curated repository for the preservation and dissemination of scholarly and creative output of the OCAD University community. Material in Open Research is open access and made available via the consent of the author and/or rights holder on a non-exclusive basis.

**JOURNALISM
+ DESIGN**

**THE
NEW
SCHOOL**

**The free press is not a
newspaper!**

The **function** of the free press
is to collect, process and
share the news

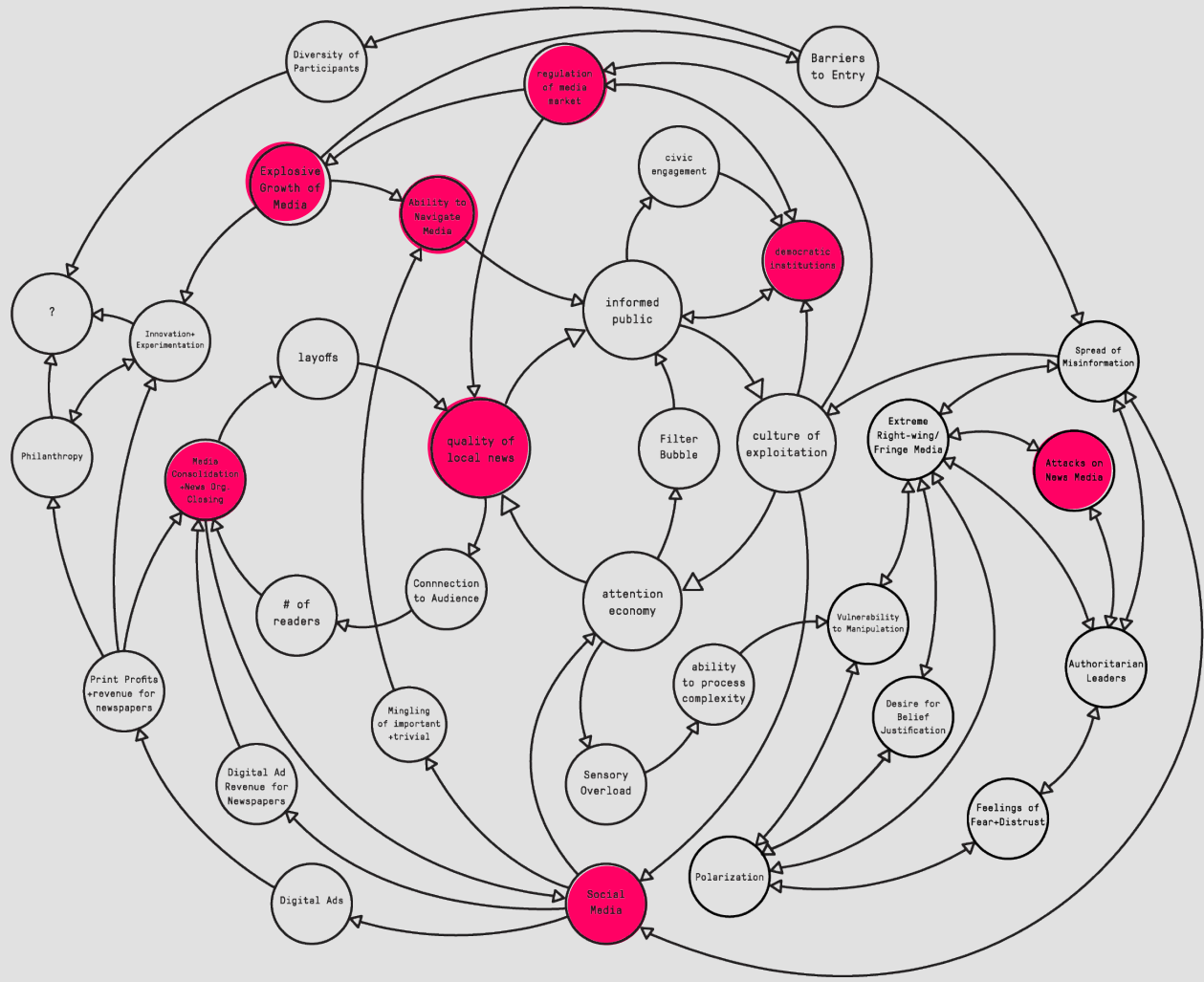
**It's the system in a
democratic system**

Watching power

**Providing a place for deliberation
and debate**

Creating an informed citizenry





If the system of journalism
doesn't function then the
system of democracy can't
function.

A Culture of Exploitation



What's at stake?

Everything.

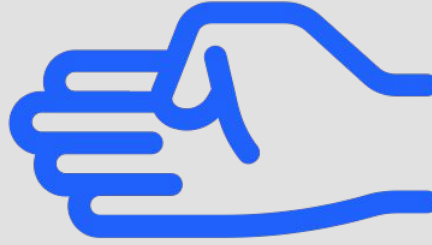


**What might a resilient free
press look and act like in the
future?**

**Nurturing a resilient free press –
no matter what it looks like or
where it happens**

Our Strategy

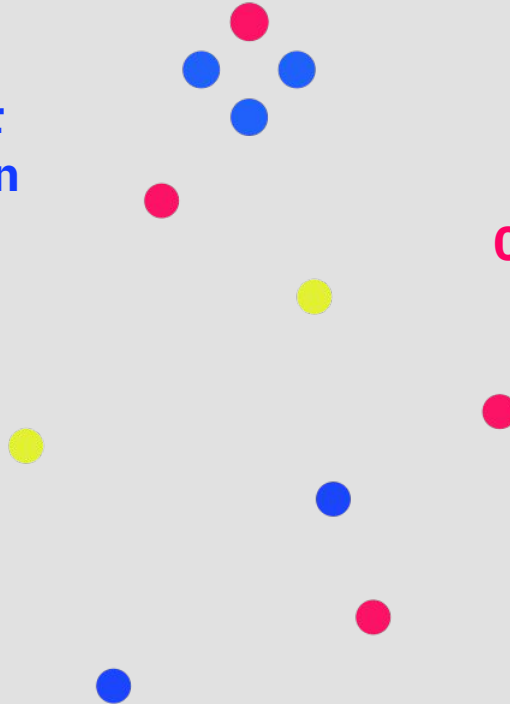
**Bringing more people and more
different kinds of people into the
system**



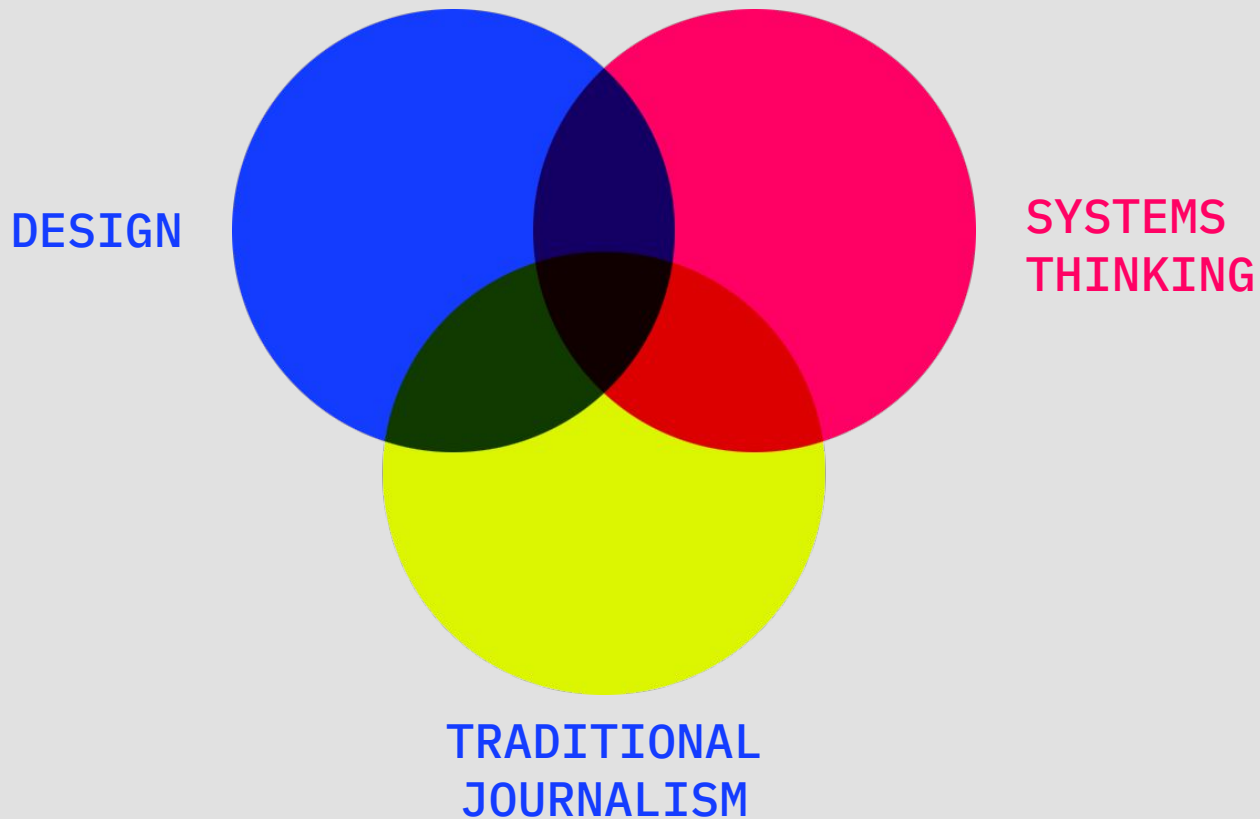
Pathways for participation

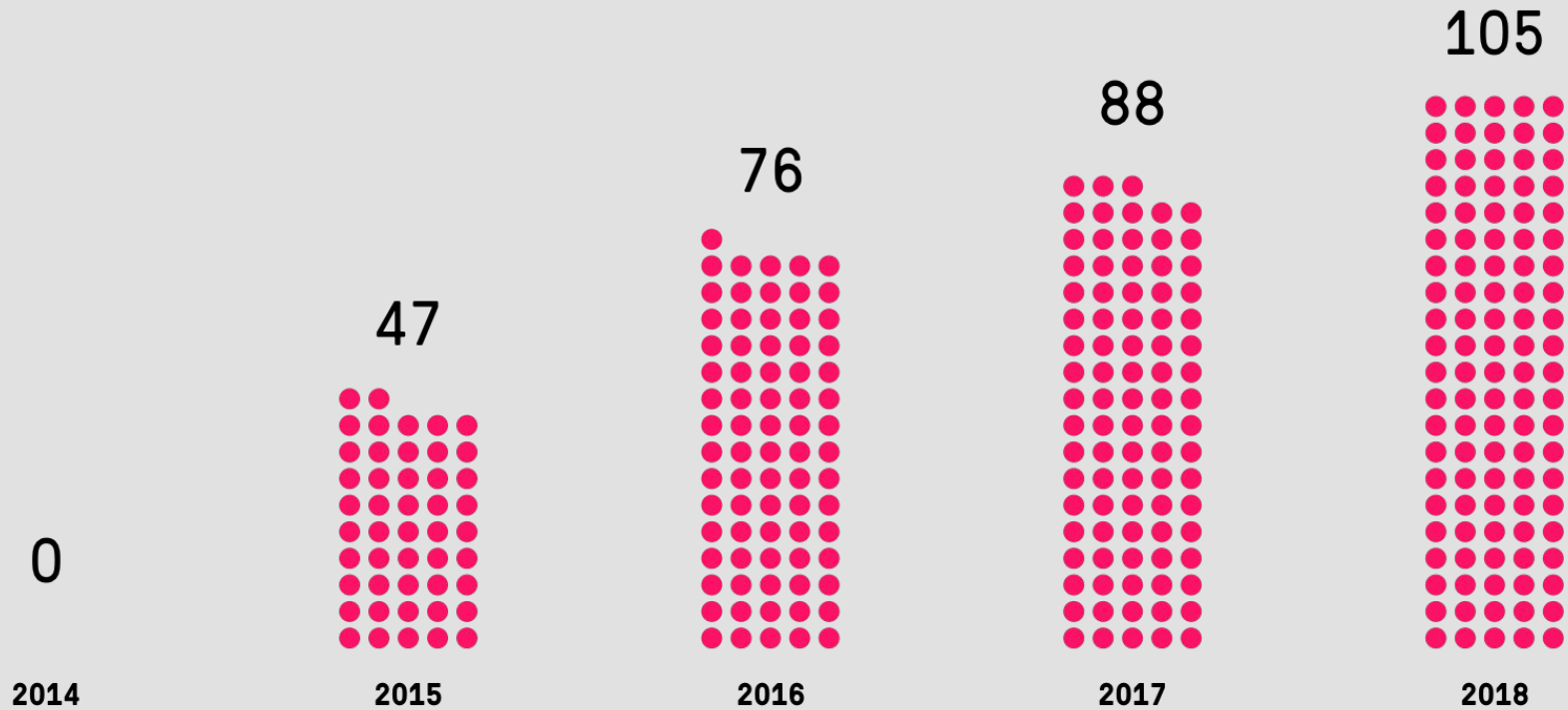
Community news networks

Research



Journalism + Design





NUMBER OF JOURNALISM + DESIGN MAJORS

**FULL
FRONTAL**
WITH SAMANTHA BEE



The New York Times

GIZMODO

Vox

THE
TRACE



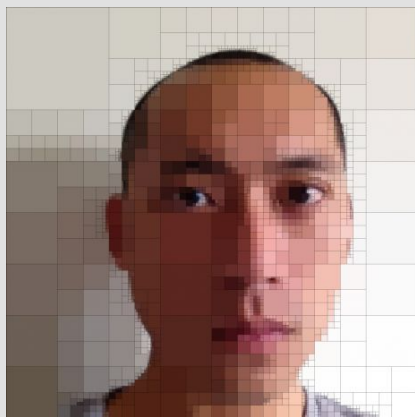
grist

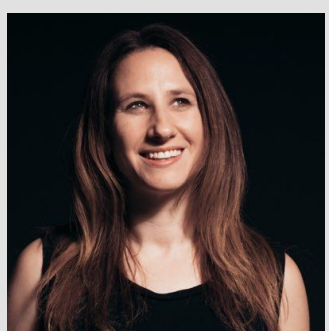
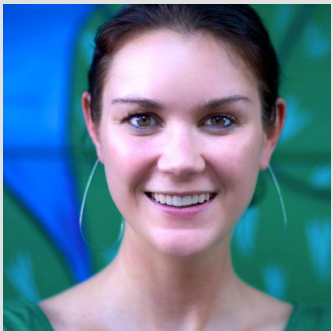
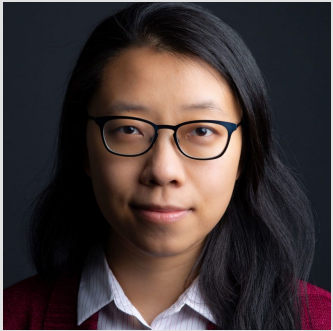


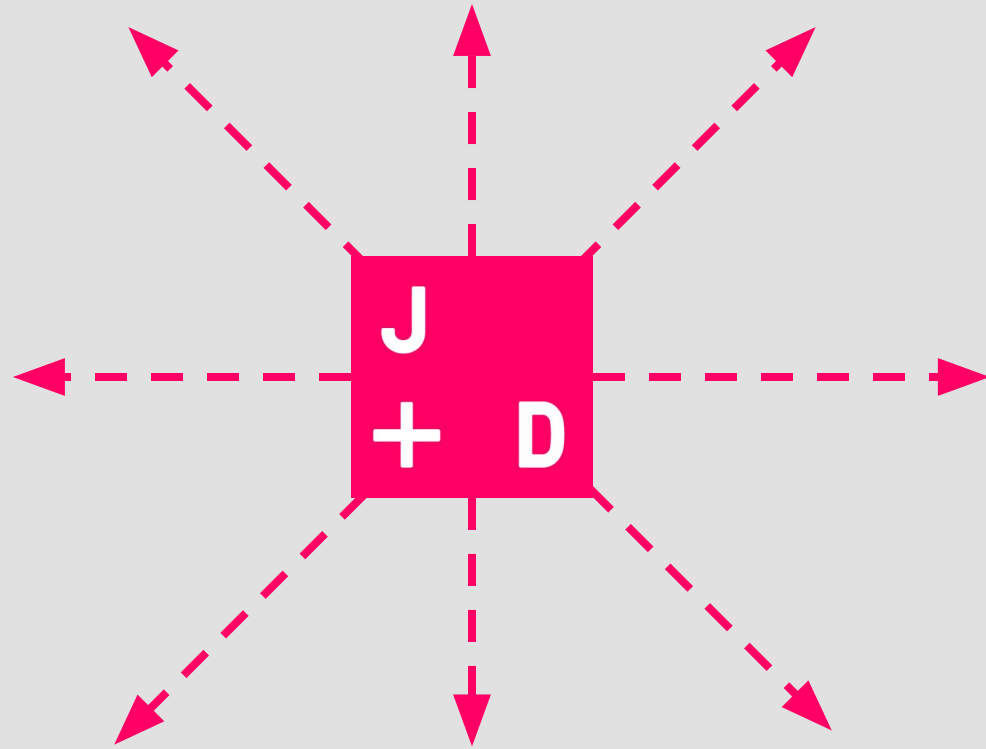
PRX

QUARTZ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.







**PATHWAYS FOR PARTICIPATION:
Open-sourced curriculum**

PATHWAYS: Open-sourced Curriculum

FAIRY TALE LEDES

Students create headlines and traditional news leads.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will learn to write headlines and leads.

SYSTEMS THINKING STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Students identify stakeholders in their stories, map relationships between them, and explore the underlying systems.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will learn to think about the different stakeholders in their stories and how they are connected.

MATERIALS

Post-its, markers

TIME

30-45 mins

Note: This activity should be done after students have participated in the [and Connect](#) exercise. It should also be done after students have generated a story idea. It works particularly well when students are working on a story idea.

Process

MIND-MAPPING AND STORYBOARDING

Students create "mind maps" of their stories, look for new ideas and connections, and create a storyboard based on their findings.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will learn to look for new and surprising aspects to their stories and understand how a story can change when told from a fresh perspective.

MATERIALS

Chart paper, markers

TIME

60 minutes

Note: This exercise should be used after students have spent a few weeks reporting on a story; they've conducted a handful of interviews, gathered research, and are starting to draft their projects. Alternately, this exercise can be used after students have completed a first draft and want to rethink their approach.

Process

Step 1:

Explain what this activity will be about: students will use "mind maps" to take a fresh look at the stories they've been working on and identify new elements or connections to pursue. Then, they will create storyboards based on these new ideas.

Step 2:

Begin mind-mapping. First, have students write down their topics in the center of chart paper or whiteboard space. Then give them ten minutes to add names, keywords, images, or any other facet of the story that they can think of around the topic.

Step 3:

Have students take a step back and look at the mind map they just created. Are there any connections between the various things they've written down? Give them five minutes to draw lines showing those connections.

REFINE

Apply Skepticism

Review your work through the lens of a healthy skeptic.

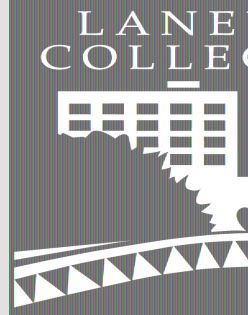
Identify the source that you trusted most and review what you learned from them twice.

Question what you see and hear from others. Be skeptical about your ability to know what it means.

JOURNALISM + DESIGN

**PATHWAYS FOR PARTICIPATION:
Community College Initiative**

PATHWAYS: **Community College Initiative**



PATHWAYS: Community College Initiative



PATHWAYS: Community College Initiative



PATHWAYS: Open-sourced Curriculum



PATHWAYS: **Community College Initiative**

We want to be the de facto way journalism is taught in community colleges.

PATHWAYS: **Community College Initiative**

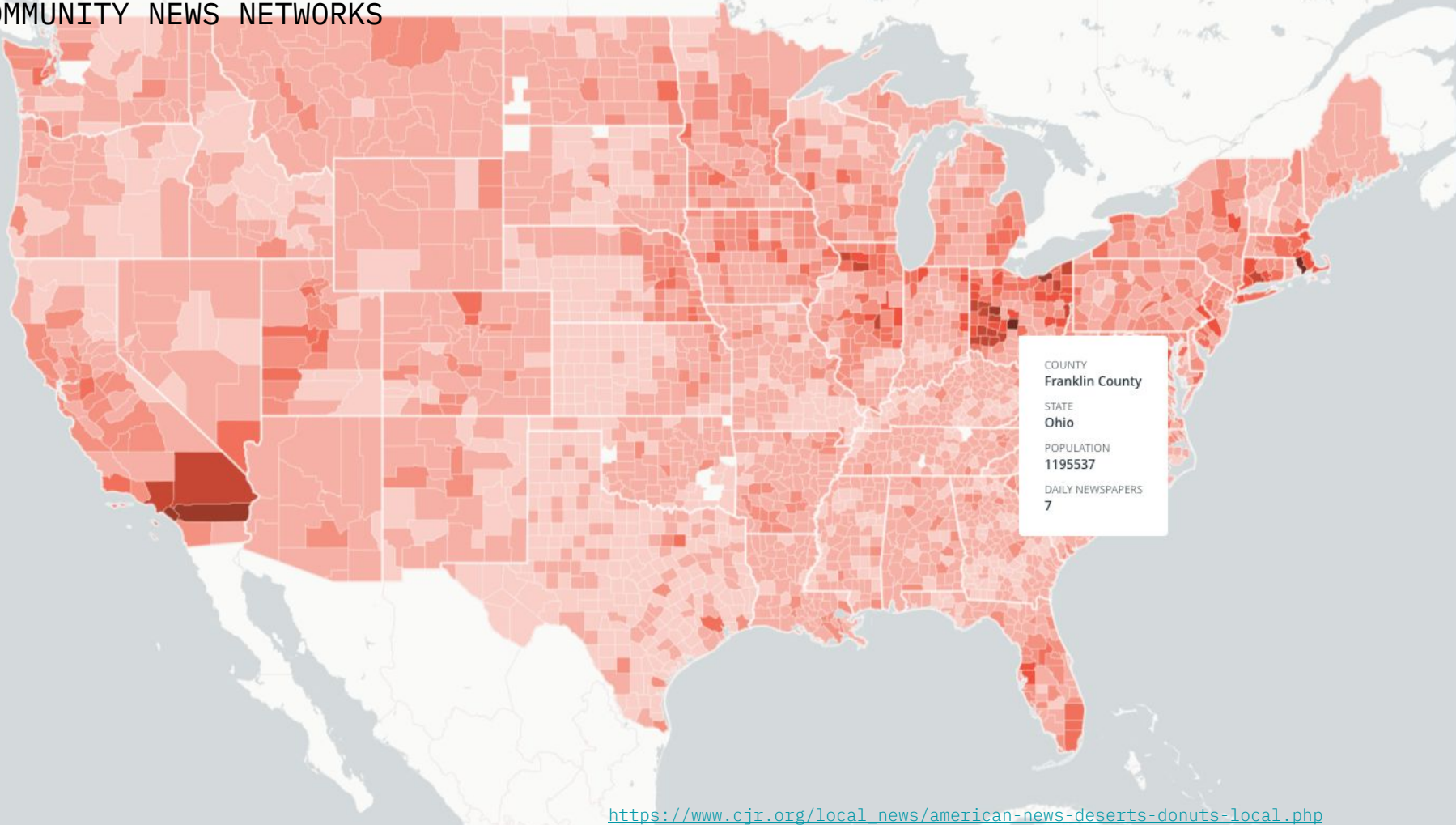
Teaching **journalism** is a way
of teaching **civic**
participation.

PATHWAYS: **Community College Initiative**

The kind of student who goes to
community college has a role to play
in the media ecosystem.

Community news networks

COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



**A decline in shared information =
decline in civic participation =
increase in unchecked government
spending**

Discord rather than **problem-solving**

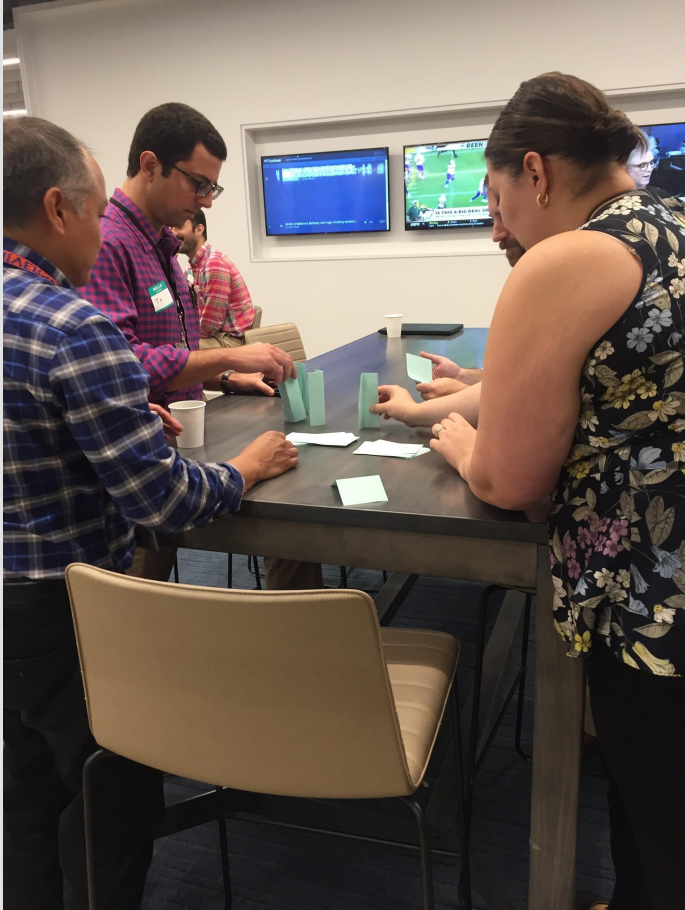
COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS

POLARIZATION

COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS: **Baltimore Sun**



COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS: **Baltimore Sun**

Systems change approach

The future of news is not going to be just in the newsroom.

COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS

Identify existing networks

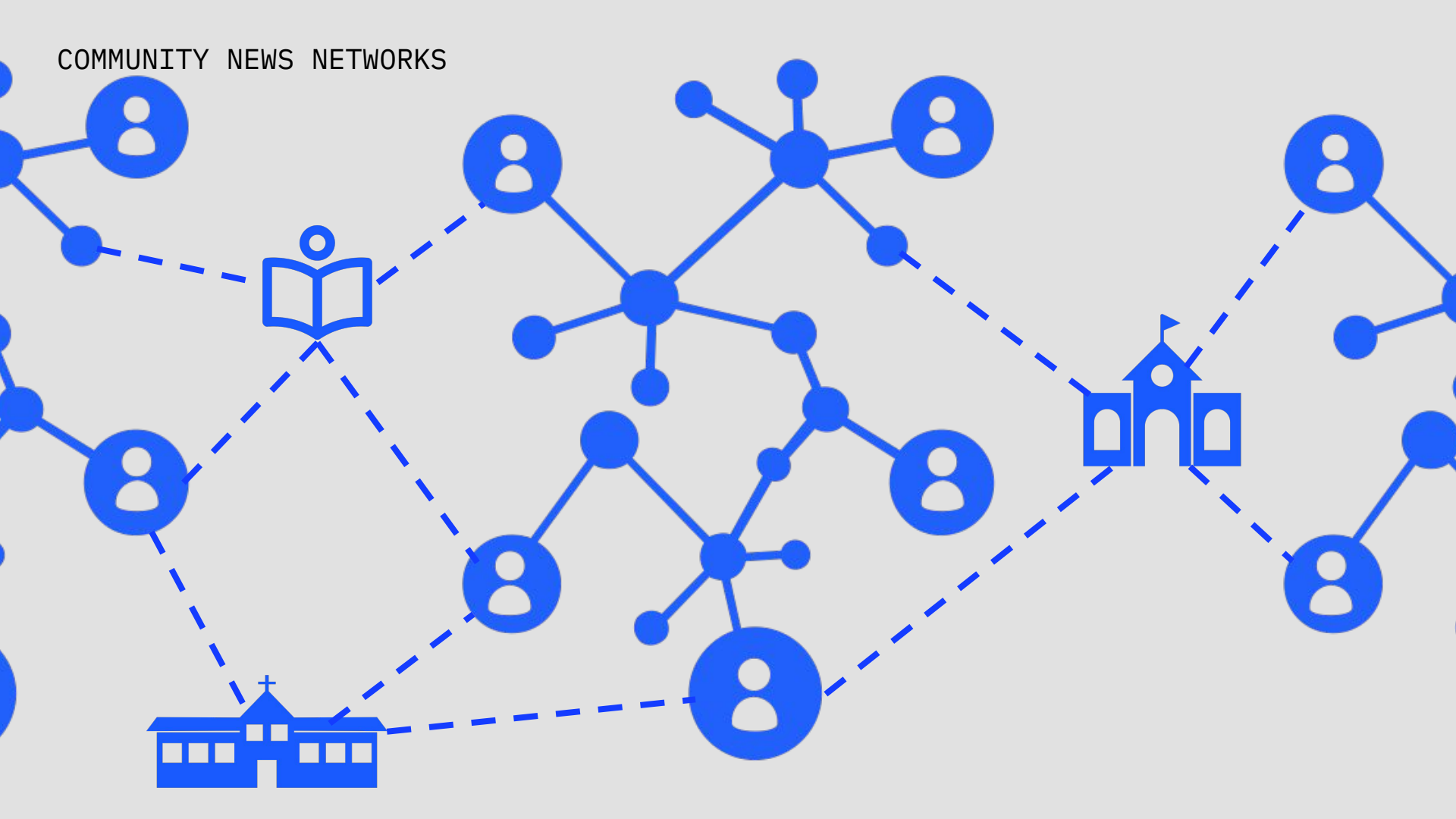
Build them

Nurture them

COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



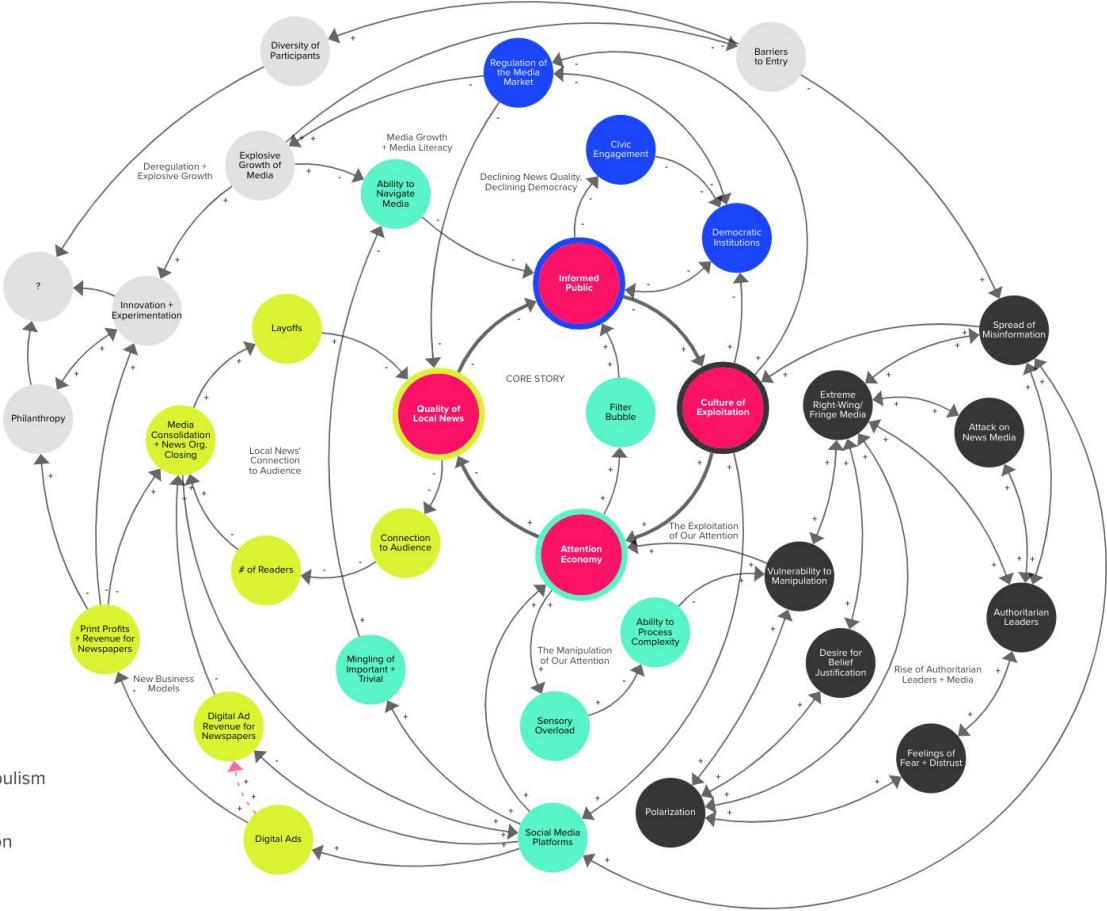
COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORKS



The Village Tavern, by John Lewis Krimmel.
Courtesy of Toledo Museum of Art

Research

Research



Legend

- Core Story
- Authoritarianism/Populism
- Democracy
- Information Confusion
- Journalism
- Media Growth

RESEARCH

H I S T O R Y

GOVERNMENT
(Rules and Penalties)

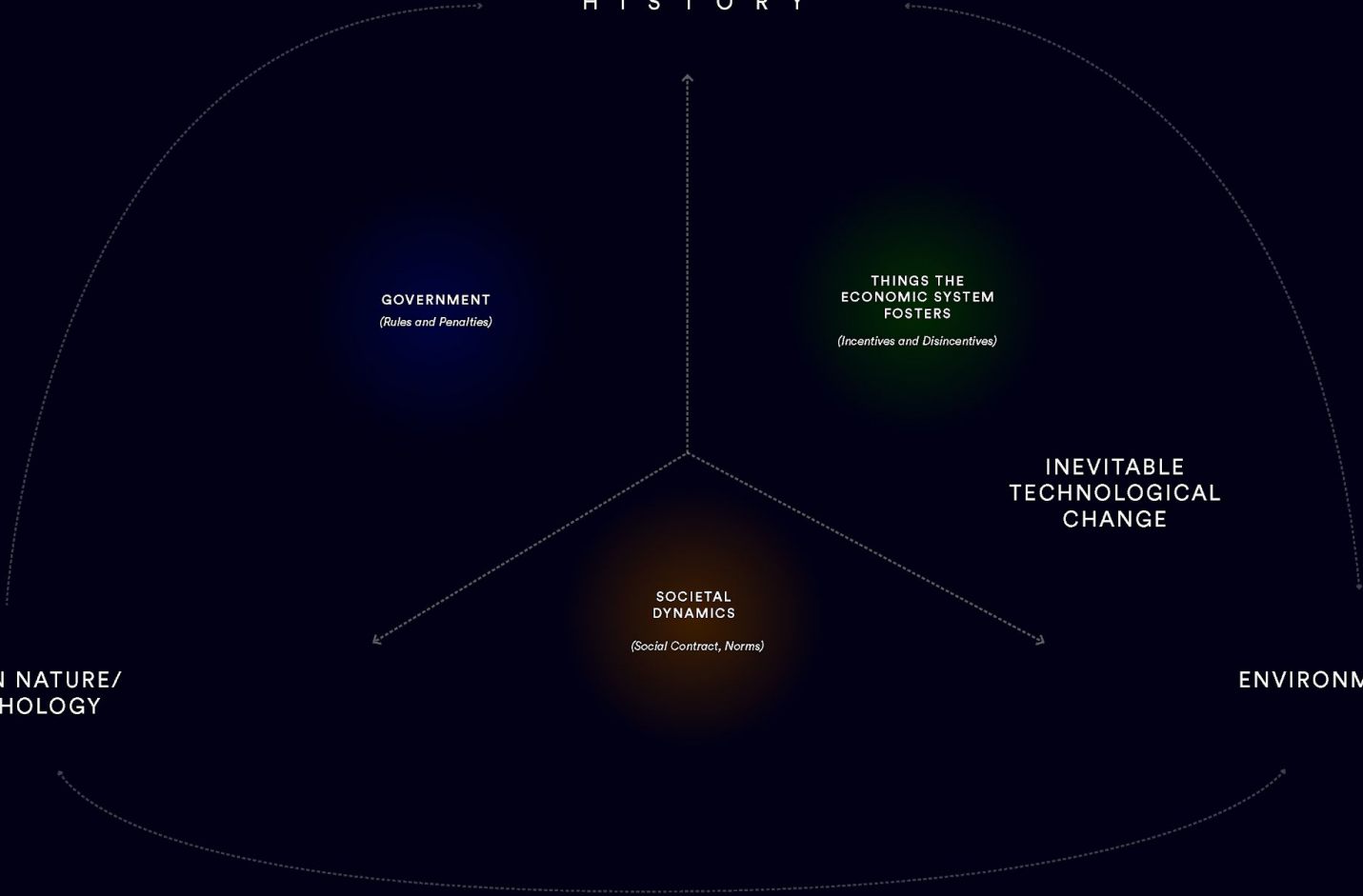
THINGS THE
ECONOMIC SYSTEM
FOSTERS
(Incentives and Disincentives)

INEVITABLE
TECHNOLOGICAL
CHANGE

SOCIETAL
DYNAMICS
(Social Contract, Norms)

HUMAN NATURE/
PSYCHOLOGY

ENVIRONMENT



RESEARCH

PERIOD

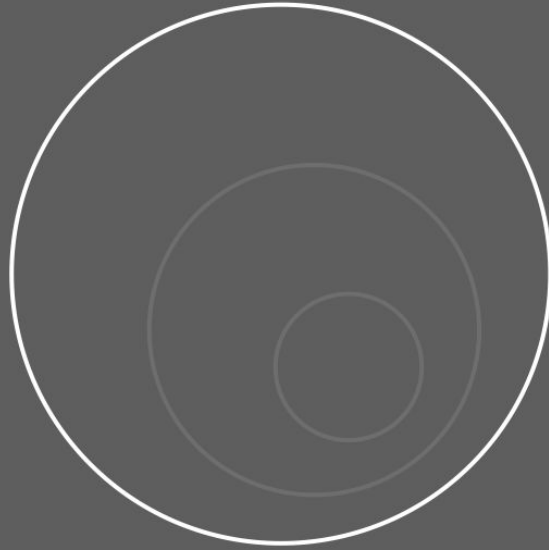
**The Great
Inward Migration
begins as coastal
cities begin to flood
from rising seas.**

5

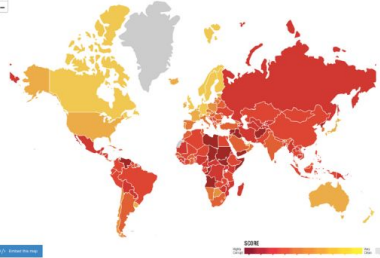
PERIOD

**We slow
the effects of
climate change,
but the world
is fundamentally
altered
geopolitically.**

START
PERIOD



END
PERIOD



Corruption Perception Index

AUTHORS

Transparency International

BRIEF

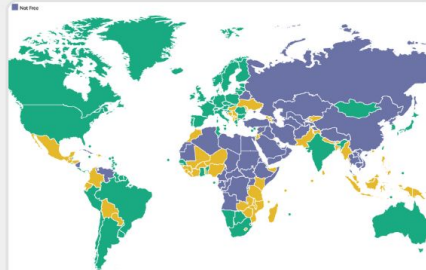
The CPI, offers an annual (since 1995) snapshot of the relative degree of corruption by ranking countries and territories from all over the globe. The ...

LINK

<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

TYPE

Health Indicators Democracy



Freedom in the World 2019

AUTHORS

Freedom House

BRIEF

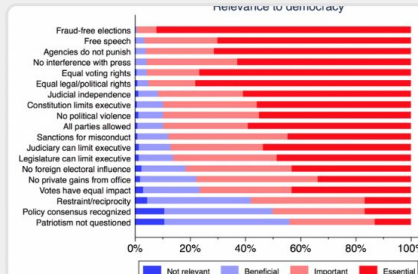
Freedom in the World, is the standard-setting comparative assessment of global political rights and civil liberties. Published annually since 1972, the ...

LINK

<https://freedomhouse.org/reports>

TYPE

Health Indicators Democracy



Results from the Bright Line Wa...

AUTHORS

Bright Line Watch

BRIEF

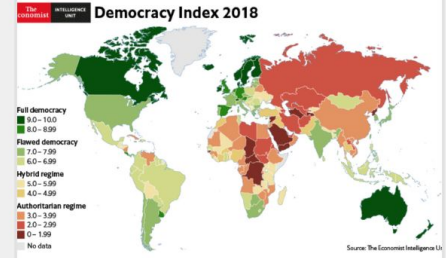
BLW conducted its first U.S. Democracy Survey from February 13–19, 2017. We invited 9,820 political science faculty at 511 U.S. institutions to participate and ...

LINK

<http://brightlinewatch.org/results-from-...>

TYPE

Health Indicators Democracy



Democracy Index

AUTHORS

The Economist Intelligence Unit

BRIEF

The eleventh edition of the Democracy Index reveals that political participation is on the rise in almost every region of the world. Whilst clearly disillusioned ...

LINK

<http://www.eiu.com/topic/democrac>

TYPE

Health Indicators Democracy



RESEARCH

□ 🔒 📄 Title	🔍 What?	🔍 So what?	📄 Att...	📅 Date...	🔗 U...	🏷️ Tags
	years, primarily associated with rumours over whatsapp. The spike is also related with increase in internet penetration and connectivity led by market forces.	emerging markets. media literacy, government intervention and localized technology platform interventions are needed to address these ...			www.bloomberg.com/opi...	
16	Media Paywalls & decline of public service media	Could lead to poor civic engagement, followed by corruption and exploitation. Philanthropy in civic engagement and journalism could lead to new innovative ideas.		8/19/2019	https://www.niemanlab.org/2018/...	Journalism De Authoritarianism/
17	State-funded journalism	Support from local and federal governments will go a long way in helping news orgs to either sustain and innovate in these difficult times. Future governments may not agree t...		8/19/2019	https://www.niemanlab.org/2018/1...	Journalism De
18	Success of Guardian's donation based business model in news	Shows sign of a new media model, where betting on a core consumers to pay for services for all other readers, where journalism is funded to stay open and free....		8/19/2019	https://digitaljournalism.co.uk/media/guardia...	Journalism De
19	The Business of Disinformation	Profit driven bad actors will continue to create dis/misinformation. There is a large quantum of attention that is available to be harnessed.		8/19/2019	https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/18/...	Information Conf Attention Econo
20	Countering DeepFakes	It takes immersion in the tech and possibilities of deepfaking in order to understand how to counter it.		8/20/2019	https://www.technologyreview.com...	

BIG PICTURE ANALYSIS & INSPIRATION



Search

Columbia Journalism Review. *The voice of journalism* [Sign Up](#)

Local News Covering 2020 Business of Journalism Innovation [About](#) [Donate](#) [Membership](#) [Reprints](#) [Advertise](#) [Contact](#)



Wicked Problem:
Journalism's saviors
may come from
unexpected places

TOV
TOM CASTER

By Heather Chaplin
AUGUST 16, 2018

IN JUNE, THE NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE will invest \$5 million in local news initiatives. It's not the amount of the money that's shocking—\$5 million for such purposes is a pittance—but the fact that an American state government wants to invest in journalism at all.

In other countries, this wouldn't be news. Per capita, Western countries spend an average of \$68 annually on public



