Our Precarious Local News

As change disrupts media, how do we meet our information needs?

Presented to CABQ Cable Board February 25, 2020 By Michael V. Marcotte

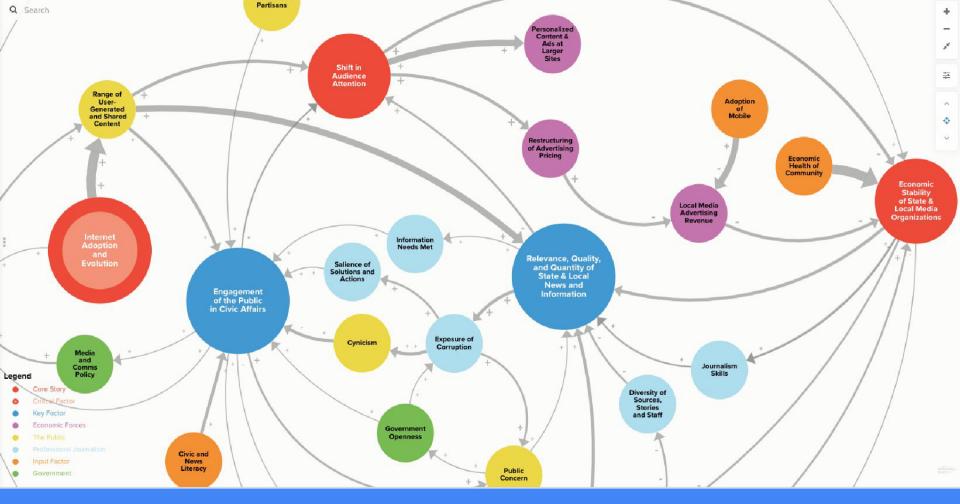
About Michael Marcotte

Veteran journalist who is committed to local public service media

- UNM Professor of Practice in Journalism 2013-today
- Owner, MVM Media Consulting –2007-today
- UNR Reynolds Chair in Ethics of Entrepreneurial Journalism 2012-2013
- Stanford Knight Fellow (focus on local news) 2010-2011
- Veteran manager of public broadcasting newsrooms 1987-2007
- Faculty at Ohio State, San Diego State, Pacific Lutheran U.
- B.A. & M.A. Journalism/Mass Communication from University of Georgia

Agenda

- What is a local newsecosystem?
- Knight Commission Goals
- Democracy Fund & NM First Research
- Recommendations
- Discussion



Polarization of

A local news "ecosystem" includes many factors affecting information quality and availability.

Knight
Commission on
Information Needs
of Communities

"Information is as vital to the healthy functioning of communities as clean air, safe streets, good schools and public health."

A healthy community means...

- People have convenient access to both civic and life-enhancing information, without regard to income or social status.
- Journalism is abundant in many forms and accessible through many convenient platforms.
- People have affordable high-speed Internet service wherever and whenever they want and need it.
- Citizens are active in acquiring and sharing knowledge both within and across social networks.

- Digital and media literacy are widely taught in schools, public libraries and other community centers.
- Technological and civic expertise is sharedacross the generations.
- Local media—including print, broadcast, and online media—reflect the issues, events, experiences and ideas of the entire community.
- People have a deep understanding of the role of free speech and free press rights in maintaining a democratic community.
- Government is open and transparent.

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Defining the Local News Ecosystem Core Interview Questions Interviewee list

Persoectives on Local News in New

A Tattered Print Legacy

Legacy Leaders

Anchoring the Ecosystem

CompetitionTrumps Collaborati⊲
The Rural DHemma

Digital Disruptors

Radio and Television

Commercial TV

PublicTV

Radio, Mostly Public

Alternative & Advocacy Journalism

Ethnic Media Dearth

Wanted: Talent & Training

University Underachievers

PromisingProjects and Startups

Disappearing Media Outlets of Note

<u>Funders</u>

Conclusion: Seeking Opportunity in 0

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inte ractive Map of New Mexico Media New Mexico Media Database (sorted byc

AMONG THE KEYTAKEAWAYS

NEED MORE:

- Innovation: Fostering experimentation, risk and entrepreneurism.
- Collaboration: Encouraging journalistic cooperation for public service.
- Talent: Training, promoting, rewarding and retaining skilled and diverse workers.
- Civic Engagement: Deeper listening, better conversations.
- Depth Coverage: Strong stories in context with data, accountability and solutions.
- Media Literacy/Trust: Practices to affirm centrality of news ethics and values.

ISSUES INCLUDE:

- · Poverty contributes to the sustainability issue
- c an you out-Facebook Facebook?," Greg Bright on the REAL competition.
- · Practically everyone is moving online and expects their news to be there
- · Burnout! "We're all fried Damon Scott
- · Need more skilled talent
 - a From university programs
 - a In-migration from elsewhere
 - Need to keep skilled talent
- Community dialogue reinforces our role as informers
- The more local, the closer to people's lives. Distant coverage is weaker.
- For a state with an Hispanic plurality, we have very few Spanish outlets
- We need habitual use of our service; we need to feed an info habit!
- Legacy newspapers are still the base of the pyramid, but innovationis going slowly
- Gannett, given its reach, should be a better feeder of originalnews, but it is shrinking
- · Competition and collaboration can co-exist. Both are helpful when used well.
- The barriers to entry in journalism are low but new and viable contenders are few and far between. Do we need to encourage greater entrepreneurship?

In 2018, NM First held focus groups with journalists, students, educators in 4 communities to explore challenges in local news today.

FOCUS GROUP OUTCOME REPORT



Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico

Society of Professional Journalists, Rio Grande Chapter

RESEARCHER

New Mexico First

Thornburg Foundation and Democracy Fund April 2018





Strengthening the Journalism Sector Impactful Solutions from Journalists and Students

- Cultivating the next generation of journalists
- Professional development for existing reporters
- Improved collaboration on actual reporting
- Legal defense fund for media
- Journalism financing models
 - Media literacy for the public





In 2019, NM First held focus groups with leaders in business, academia, media, faith and civic lifein 7 communities to explore the importance of local media.





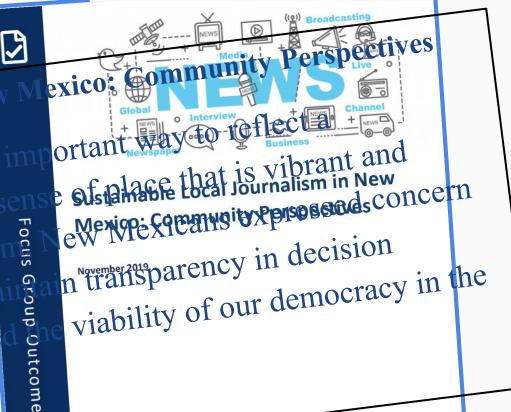
Sustainable Local Journalism in New Mexico: Community Perspectives

November 2019





In 2019, NM First tainable focas Journalism in Ne localsournalism was seen as an mracaities nyalues and sustain a nnected awithout local. pout a communities ability to ma explorent fact, they questione nportance stutnalism."





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- 1: Increase support for **public service media** aimed at meeting community information needs.
- 2: Increase the role of **higher education**, **community and nonprofit institutions** as hubs of journalistic activity and other information-sharing for local communities.

- 3: Develop systematic **quality measures** of community information ecologies, and study how they affect social outcomes.
- 4: Integrate digital and **media literacy** as critical elements for education at all levels through collaboration among federal, state, and local education officials.

5: Fund and support public libraries and other community institutions as **centers of digital and media training**, especially for adults.

6: Set ambitious standards for **broadband availability** and adopt public policies encouraging consumer demand for broadband services.

- 7. Support the activities of information providers to **reach local audiences** with quality content through all appropriate media, such as mobile phones, radio, public access cable, and new platforms.
- 8: Expand local media initiatives to **reflect the full reality of the communities** they represent.

- 9 Engage young people in developing the digital information and communication capacities of local communities.
- 10. Empower all citizens to participate actively in community self-governance to address community affairs and pursue common goals.

Discussion?

- Does the city have a role to play in the health of a local information ecosystem?
- In what ways might the city do more?
- What might some next actions be in this regard?