

A Semi-Automated Directory System for the UK Local News Landscape

Supporting Policy and Research.

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1 Abstract

- Local newspapers are disappearing - but **no one is keeping track of what's left**
- Communities lose vital news sources **without anyone noticing**
- Existing lists are **incomplete** and years out of date
- Hundreds of outlets make **manual tracking expensive** and challenging

Our solution → **Automated system that monitors local news using public data**

Define Inclusion Criteria

Research Open Source Intelligence

Computer Analysis

Human Verification

2 Methodology

Outlets must:

- Be a registered organisation
- Focus on local news
- Publish regularly (within the last month)

- Reader numbers → See papers tracked/not tracked by auditors
- News stories → Find reports about papers opening/closing
- Business records → Check if companies are still operating
- Website checks → See if news sites are still active
- Location data → Update when area boundaries change

- Search for keywords like "closed" or "sold" in news articles
- AI used to flag key events in news articles about the press
- Check if websites are broken or abandoned through HTML code
- Flag important changes for human review

- Researchers review what computers found
- Verify information is accurate
- Decide what needs updating
- Maintain quality control

3 Outputs



Pdf / interactive web report about the State of Local News in the UK

4 Features / Impact

- Policy Support:** Helps identify news deserts and inform funding and intervention strategies.
- Global Relevance and Scalability:** Potential for adaptation to monitor local news landscapes worldwide.
- Research Engine:** Generate maps showing news coverage; Identify areas with few/no local news sources; Track ownership changes

Google Sheets Dataset, including analysed data at the geographic and ownership level

PINF - Local News Database April 2024

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Related Literature

- Bisiani, S., & Heravi, B. (2023). Uncovering the State of Local News Databases in the UK: Limitations and Impacts on Research. Journalism and Media, 4(4), 1211–1231. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia4040077>
- Bisiani, S., & Mitchell, J. (2024). UK Local News Report April 2024. Public Interest News Foundation. https://www.publicinterestnews.org.uk/_files/ugd/cde0e9_31f2ee78fff64c3e8616e7eafdf28f99.pdf
- Bisiani, S., Mitchell, J., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. (2024). A Semi-Automated Directory System for the UK Local News Landscape: Supporting Policy and Research. SocArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zsxdg>

Paper



Project

