







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- Existing lists are incomplete and years out of date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

Outputs

2.3 Comparing local authority areas

The distribution of local news outlets across Local Authority Districts in the UK, and across nations, is uneven. There are clusters

stronger than average, such as large parts of Northern Ireland, the Highlands, the southern part of Scotland, central and

parts of the country, including the Central

Belt in Scotland, London, the Midlands, and

parts of the North East are instead the

per 100,000 people. English districts, in

Northern Ireland, and Scotland, In Greate

the median in terms of provision per 100,000 people is the City, which is merely

s using public data Intelligence

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

Research Open Source

Inclusion

Criteria

 Reader numbers → See papers tracked/not tracked by auditors

Methodology

- 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

Computer Analysis

- Search for keywords like "closed" or "sold" in news articles
- All 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

Human Verification

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



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

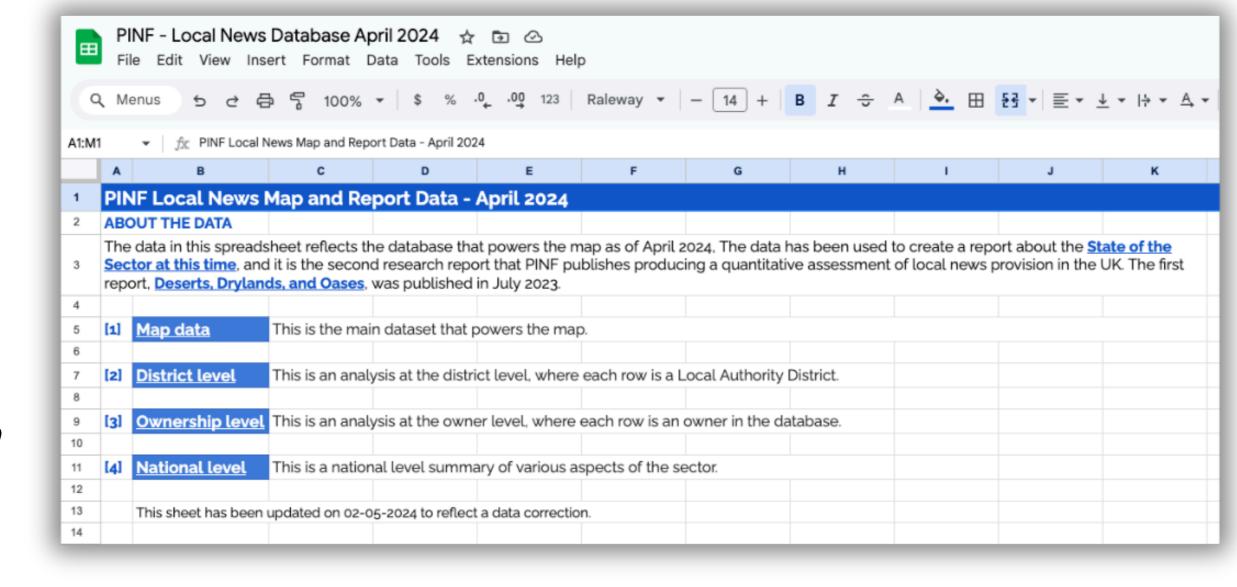
Public Interest News Foundation

UK Local News

Report

April 2024





Paper



Project

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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
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- 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