Appendix B: Research and Resources

The Decline of Local News

Many local news organizations have vanished and those that remain face plummeting advertising revenues and changes in ownership. Regulatory changes also have exacerbated the trend toward national ownership and a move away from local news reporting. The following resources discuss the decline of local news and various policy proposals to address this decline.


Platform Economics

Knowledge of the economics of platforms is critical to understanding how they operate. Facebook, Google, and other online platforms operate what economists call a “multi-sided platform” by providing services to users (generally without charge) and advertisers (for a fee). While platforms can provide benefits to both ends of this two-sided market,
they also use their structure to create asymmetries that can be difficult for regulators to identify and control. Today's dominant platforms are also characterized by strong network effects, which increase as their number of users increases. The following resources discuss the business model and economics of platforms.


Platforms and the Moderated Public Sphere

Platforms play an increasingly important role in providing a space for public discourse and democratic participation. Due in part to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, 47 USC § 230 (2018), online platforms have wide latitude to decide what content to allow on their services. The following resources examine the role that platforms play in moderating the public sphere.


Misinformation and Disinformation
One of the core challenges that platforms are dealing with is the presence of misinformation and disinformation on their sites. Misinformation (false or misleading information spread unknowingly or without regard to its veracity) and disinformation (false information spread intentionally to damage other people or organizations) have spread with assistance from foreign actors, platform users, and even the platforms themselves. The following resources examine the problems associated with the spread of misinformation and disinformation, what contributes to the spread, and how platforms can respond to this growing issue.


**Platform Policies**

The following resources provide links to various online platforms' policies and content moderation practices.

- Facebook's [Community Standards](#) and [Oversight Board Charter](#).
- Google’s [Community Guideline’s Enforcement Report](#)
- YouTube's [Community Guidelines](#)
- Twitter's [Rules and Policies](#)
- Instagram's [Platform Policy](#)