



LOCAL NEWS RESEARCH
PROJECT



SPATIAL INFORMATION FOR
SPICE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local News Map Data
December 1, 2023

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The [Local News Map](#) is a crowd-sourced resource that tracks what is happening to local newspapers, broadcast outlets and online/digital news sources in communities across Canada. The map displays information going back to 2008, the start of a deep recession and a turning point for many previously profitable local news organizations. This report summarizing the latest information gleaned from the map is published every two months along with a spreadsheet displaying the latest data. Both are archived [here](#).

The map displays markers that represent changes to free local daily newspapers, paid subscription local daily newspapers, community newspapers (published fewer than five days per week), private/public radio stations, private/public television stations and online/digital news sources, including online radio stations, newsletters, web-based digital news sites and other emerging online formats.

The following types of changes to local news operations are recorded on the map:

- the closing or launch of a news outlet
- service improvements such as a new or extended local television newscast
- service reductions such as a reduction in the number of times a newspaper publishes per week
- mergers of local news outlets that result in the launch of a new entity and/or the closing of an existing news operation
- local free daily newspapers that become community newspapers
- local paid-subscription daily newspapers that become community newspapers
- local news operations that shift to making content available online only

Map markers only reflect the most recent change at a news outlet so a digital site that launched in 2016 would show up on the map/in the data as a “new” online/digital outlet. If that news operation subsequently expanded service by, for instance, opening bureaus in nearby communities, the marker would be changed to a “service increase” marker and appear that way in the overall data. The marker description would, however, include information about the history of the launch and any other previous changes.

A local news organization is defined as a news outlet that maintains independence from those it covers, demonstrates a commitment to accuracy and transparency in reporting methods, and is devoted primarily to reporting and disseminating timely, originally produced news about people, places, issues and events in a defined geographic area.

When users click on a map marker, a pop-up box displays the name and owner of the news outlet along with information on what changed, the community name, when the change occurred, language of operation and links to the source of information about the change. Filters allow users to sort the markers by news outlet ownership, media type and type of change.

The information that registered users add to the map about changes to local newspaper, radio, television and online/digital news sources is displayed using color-coded markers. Map administrators also regularly add markers. The fact that the pace of change is steady but slow helps ensure the accuracy of map data because, with fewer than a dozen markers typically

added each month, administrators are able to verify each crowd-sourced submission. This includes reviewing the contents of links that provide details of the change that has occurred. These links are published with the markers so the source of the information is clear to map users. The journalists, researchers, journalism students, media owners and community members who visit the site and are quick to point out errors also constitute a form of quality control for the data.

This project is the result of a collaboration between Professor [April Lindgren](#), lead investigator for the [Local News Research Project](#) at Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Journalism and Associate Professor [Jon Corbett](#), who leads the University of British Columbia's [SpICE Lab](#) (Spatial Information for Community Mapping). Funding for this project has been provided by the Rossy Foundation, the [Ken and Debbie Rubin Public Interest Advocacy Fund](#), the [Canadian Geospatial and Open Data Research Partnership](#), the Canadian Media Union/CWA Canada, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, a Mitacs Accelerate grant, Unifor and Toronto Metropolitan University.

Credits/citations: The Local News Map is a joint project of the Local News Research Project at Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Journalism and the University of British Columbia's SpICE Lab (Spatial Information for Community Mapping).

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Visit the map: <https://localnewsmap.geolive.ca/>

Contact us: localnewspoverty@gmail.com

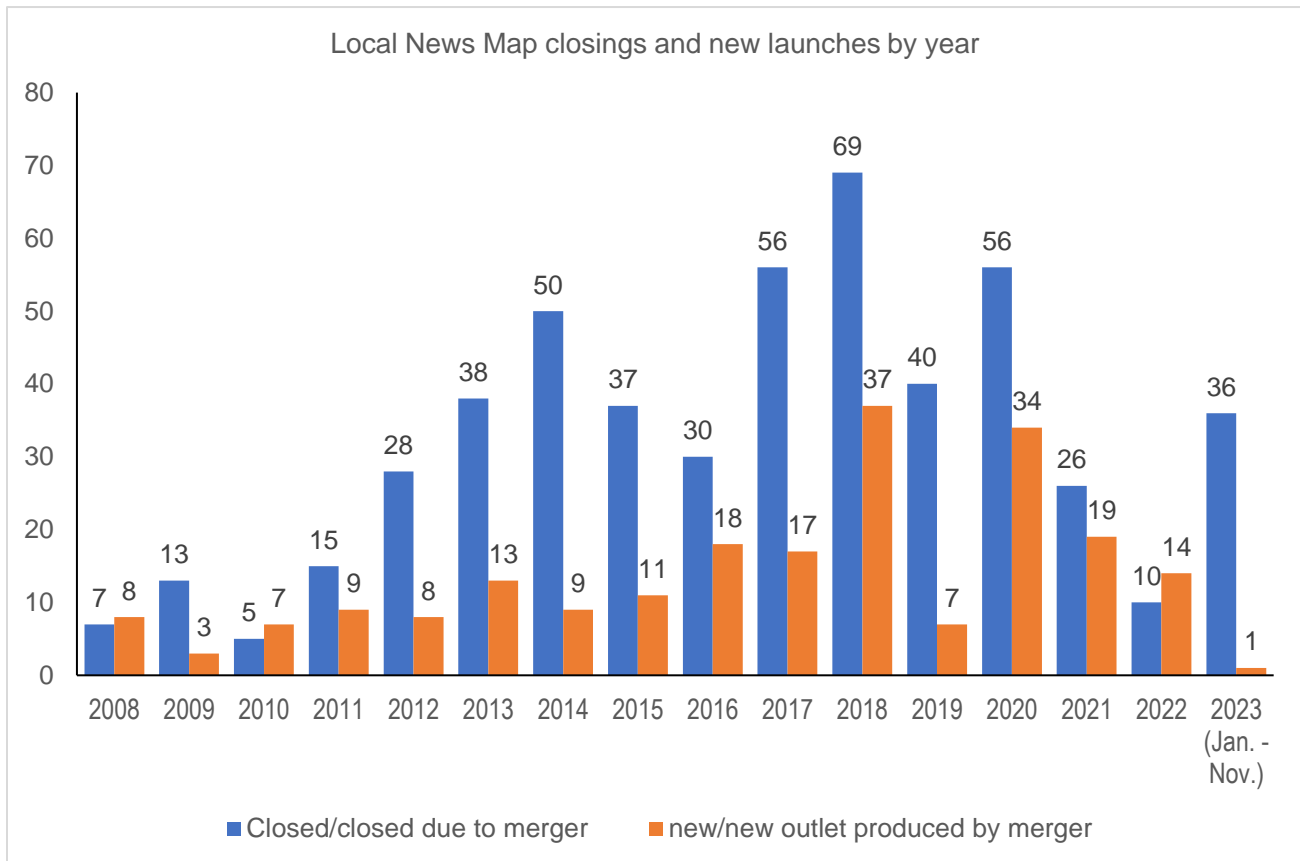
Contents

Worth noting.....	3
Overview of map data	6
Local news outlets that have closed since 2008	7
Newly launched local news outlets since 2008.....	7
Increases in service since 2008	8
Decreases in service since 2008.....	8
Breakdown of data by type of local media (2008 to December 1, 2023).....	8
Provincial data for changes to local news media since 2008	10

Worth noting

General

- between 2008 and December 1, 2023, a total of 516 local news operations closed in 345 communities across Canada
- community newspapers, which publish fewer than five times per week, account for 77 per cent or 397 of those closings
- 215 new local news outlets launched between 2008 and December 1, 2023, in 152 communities



Year in review

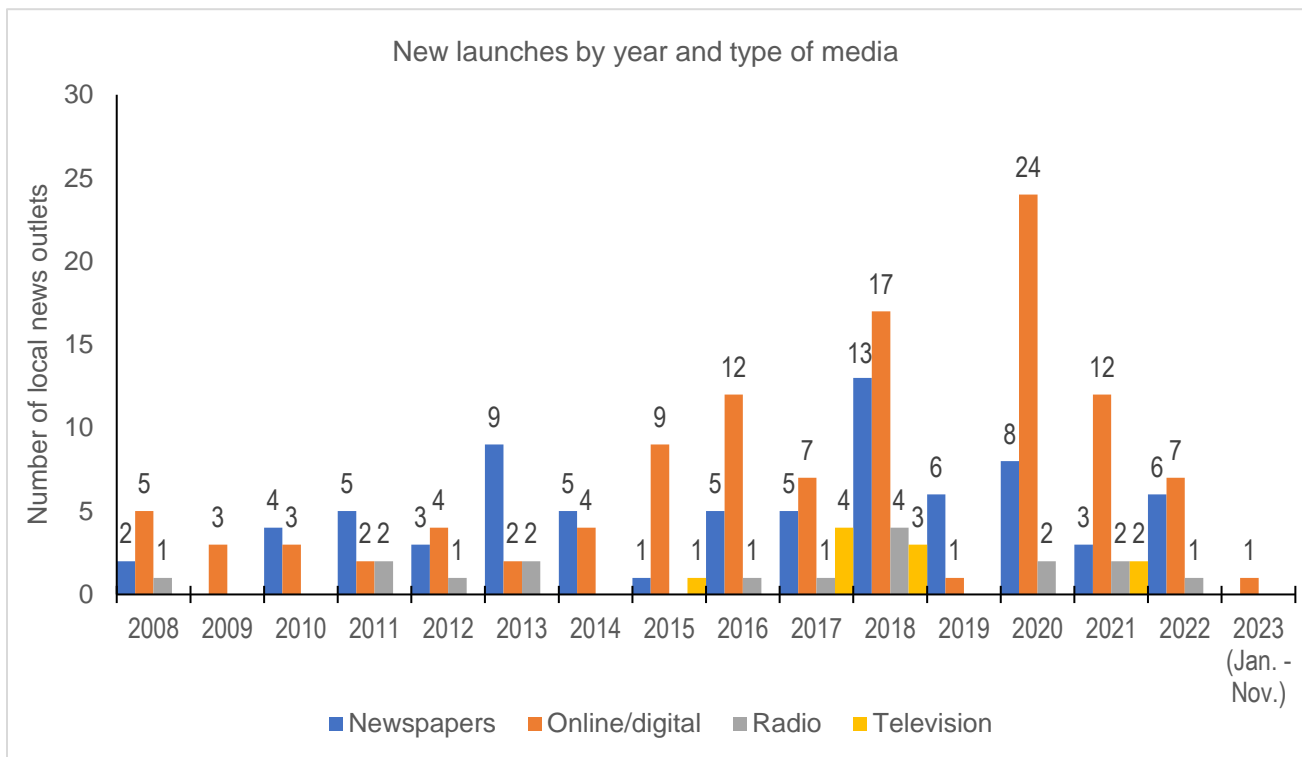
A special [report](#) published in mid-2022 that examined the effects of the pandemic on news media in Canada suggested difficult times may be ahead given the end of government COVID subsidies and uncertain prospects for a major recovery in advertising. Recent developments suggest those difficult times are here.

Notable developments between Jan. 1, 2023 and Dec. 1, 2023 include:

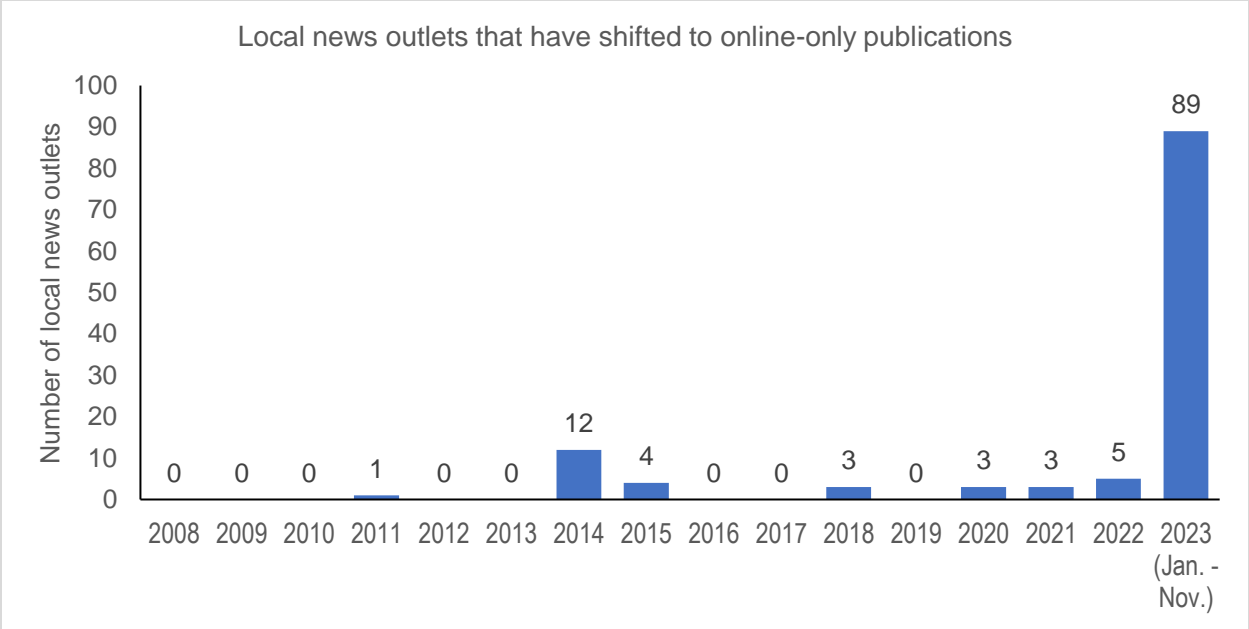
- a resurgence in local news outlet closures after a lull in 2021 and 2022. Of the 36 closures, 29 were community newspapers and seven were privately-owned radio stations. Nearly half of the closings occurred in the Montreal area in August 2023 when

Métro Média announced it was halting publication of 17 community newspapers. The company declared bankruptcy a month later.

- cuts - actual and proposed - affecting the provision of broadcast news. In June 2023, BCE Inc. announced the [layoff of 1,300 people and the closing of six local radio stations](#). Bell Media, which is part of BCE, also told the federal telecommunications regulator that its 35 local television stations are under financial strain and asked for [major reductions in local news content requirements](#). If the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) agrees, Bell Media's television stations in major markets will no longer have to broadcast six hours of locally reflective news per week. In smaller markets, Bell wants permission to broadcast fewer than three hours of locally reflective news per week.
- a stall in the number of new local news outlets being launched.



- a massive increase in the number of publications that have abandoned print and are now published online only. All of the 89 publications affected were community newspapers. Nordstar accounted for most of the changes - the company announced in September 2023 that all of its 71 community newspapers in Ontario would immediately become digital-only publications. The decision came as the company put its Metroland Media Group division into creditor protection under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.



Recent information added to the Local News Map

Since the last Local News Map update on October 1, 2023, seven new markers representing changes to local news media were added to the map including three from previous years that came to our attention. Among the changes:

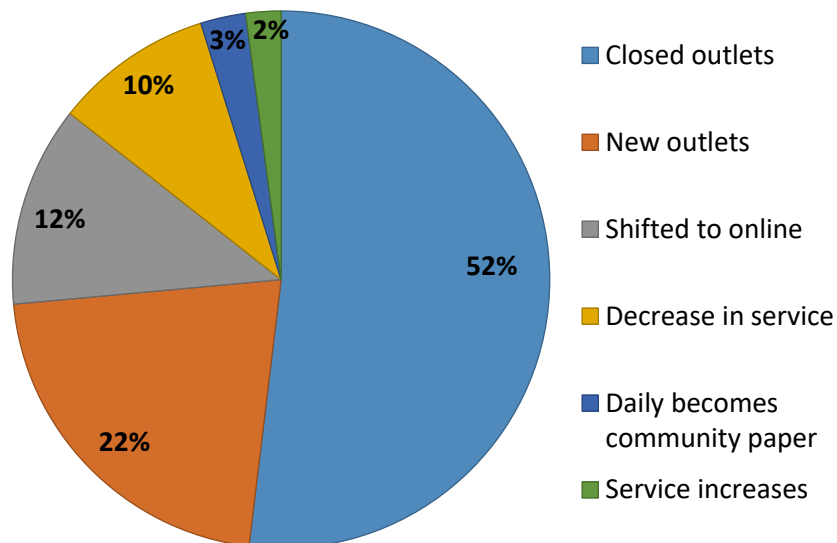
- A new marker was added for a community newspaper that shifted online: Richmond News in Richmond, British Columbia, became a digital-only publication in November 2023.
- 2 new markers were added for community newspapers that closed: Fort Nelson News closed in September 2023 and Dawson Creek Mirror closed in October 2023 in British Columbia. Another two existing map markers were updated: Alaska Highway News and Kamloops This Week closed in October 2023 in British Columbia.
- A new marker was added for a private radio station that closed: CityNews Ottawa 1310 AM closed in October 2023 in Ontario.
- 3 new markers were added for new community newspapers: In Ontario, [Mohsin Abbas published the first issues](#) of Lakeshore News Reporter, LaSalle Post Reporter and Tilbury Times Reporter in March 2022.

Overview of map data

The map displayed a total of 994 markers representing changes to local news outlets of all types between 2008 and December 1, 2023.

Breakdown of all markers by type of change that occurred:

closed	402
closed due to merger	114
daily (free) becomes a community paper	0
daily becomes a community paper	27
decrease in service	95
increase in service	21
new	184
new outlet produced by merger	31
shifted to online	120



Breakdown of all markers by type of media:

community paper	608
daily paper - free	30
daily paper - paid	73
online/digital	150
radio - private	54
radio - public	11
TV - private	41
TV - public	27

Breakdown of all markers by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	197
Postmedia	109
Metroland	99
Black Press	45
Glacier Media	40
Transcontinental	38
Torstar	36
SaltWire Network	33
Bell Media	29
CBC/Radio-Canada	28
Métro Média	28
Sun Media	27
Quebecor	18
Rogers Media	18
Village Media	17
Great West Newspapers	16
Other	216

¹Only owners associated with more than 15 markers are listed except in the case of independent owners

²Owners with fewer than 3 media properties

Local news outlets that have closed since 2008

Total number of closings: 516 (402 direct closings + 114 closings due to mergers)

Number of communities where a local news outlet has closed: 345

Breakdown of closings by type of media:

community paper	397
daily paper - free	27
daily paper - paid	13
online/digital	28
radio – private	34
radio – public	6
TV – private	11
TV – public	0

Breakdown of closings by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	84
Postmedia	57
Transcontinental	34
Black Press	32
Glacier Media	31
Métro Média	28
Sun Media	25
Metroland	24
SaltWire Network	24
Torstar	22
Star News Inc.	14
Great West Newspapers	13
Other	128

¹Only owners associated with more than 10 markers are listed except in the case of independent owners

²Owners with fewer than 3 media properties

Newly launched local news outlets since 2008

Total number of markers representing new outlets: 215 (184 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers)

Number of communities where a new local news outlet has been launched: 152

Breakdown of new outlets by media type:

community paper	74
daily paper - free	1
online/digital	113
radio – private	14
radio – public	3
TV – private	5
TV – public	5

Breakdown of new outlets by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	92
Village Media	16
Torstar	10
Big and Colourful Printing and Publishing	6
Overstory Media Group	6
Rogers Media	6
Black Press	5
The Discourse	5
Other	69

¹Only owners associated with more than 4 markers are listed except in the case of independent owners

²Owners with fewer than 3 media properties

Increases in service since 2008

Total number of service increases: 21

Number of affected communities: 20

Breakdown of service increases by type of media:

community paper	1
daily paper - free	0
daily paper - paid	2
online/digital	8
radio - private	0
radio - public	1
TV - private	9
TV - public	0

Note: Examples of service increases include longer local newscasts, the launch of a new local news program, increased frequency of publication for newspapers

Decreases in service since 2008

Total number of service reductions: 95

Number of affected communities: 53

Breakdown of service reductions by type of media:

community paper	23
daily paper - free	1
daily paper - paid	25
online/digital	0
radio - private	6
radio - public	1
TV - private	17
TV - public	22

Note: Examples of service decreases include shorter newscasts or fewer print editions per week for newspapers

Breakdown of data by type of local media (2008 to December 1, 2023)

NEWSPAPERS

- Total number of markers representing changes at daily and community (published fewer than five times per week) newspapers: 711
- Total number of daily and community newspapers that have closed: 437 (323 direct closings + 114 closings due to mergers) in 318 communities
- Total number of markers representing newly launched daily and community newspapers: 75 (44 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers) in 69 communities
- Total number of daily and community newspaper service decreases: 49
- Total number of daily and community newspapers that shifted to online: 120
- Total number of daily newspapers that became community newspapers: 27
- Total number of daily and community newspaper service increases: 3

Community newspaper markers on the map:

- Total number of community newspaper markers: 608
- Total number of community newspapers that have closed: 397 (286 direct closings + 111 closings due to mergers) in 302 communities
- Total number of new community newspapers: 74 (43 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers) in 69 communities
- Total number of community newspaper service decreases: 23
- Total number of community newspapers that shifted to online: 113
- Total number of community newspaper service increases: 1

Daily newspaper markers on the map:

- Total number of daily newspaper markers: 103
- Total number of daily newspapers that have closed: 40 (37 direct closings + 3 closings due to mergers)
- Total number of new daily newspapers: 1 (1 new outlet)
- Total number of daily newspaper service decreases: 26
- Total number of daily newspapers that became community newspapers: 27
- Total number of community newspapers that shifted to online: 7
- Total number of community newspaper service increases: 2

ONLINE/DIGITAL

- Total number of markers representing changes at online/digital news sources: 150
- Total number of newly launched online news sites: 113
- Total number of closed online news sites: 28
- Total number of online news sites service increases: 9

RADIO

- Total number of markers representing changes at radio stations: 65
- Total number of new radio stations: 17
- Total number of closed radio programs: 40
- Total number of radio station service reductions: 7
- Total number of radio station service increases: 1

TELEVISION

- Total number of markers representing changes to television stations: 68
- Total number of new TV stations: 10
- Total number of closed TV stations: 11
- Total number of TV station service reductions: 39
- Total number of TV station service increases: 8

Provincial data for changes to local news media since 2008

Breakdown of changes to local news outlets by province/territory

Province/territory	Number of closings/ closings due to mergers	Number of new/new outlets due to merger	Number of service reductions	Number of service increases	Total # of markers
Alberta	59	23	27	1	110
British Columbia	81	42	23	1	147
Manitoba	31	11	5	1	48
New Brunswick	11	6	7	1	25
Newfoundland and Labrador	22	1	3	0	26
Northwest Territories	2	1	1	1	5
Nova Scotia	23	9	5	3	40
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	0
Ontario	148	94	126	9	377
Prince Edward Island	0	0	3	0	3
Quebec	101	17	36	0	154
Saskatchewan	38	11	4	4	57
Yukon	0	0	2	0	2
Canada (total)	516	215	242	21	994

Breakdown of number of changes to different types of media by province/territory

Province/territory	Newspaper	Online/ digital	Radio	Television	Total # of markers
Alberta	80	12	7	11	110
British Columbia	86	36	19	6	147
Manitoba	39	1	3	5	48
New Brunswick	18	5	0	2	25
Newfoundland and Labrador	19	1	5	1	26
Northwest Territories	2	1	1	1	5
Nova Scotia	32	7	0	1	40
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	0
Ontario	267	72	18	20	377
Prince Edward Island	2	0	0	1	3
Quebec	116	11	12	15	154
Saskatchewan	48	4	0	5	57
Yukon	2	0	0	0	2
Canada (total)	711	150	65	68	994