



LOCAL NEWS RESEARCH
PROJECT



SPATIAL INFORMATION FOR
SPICE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local News Map Data
June 1, 2024

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/>

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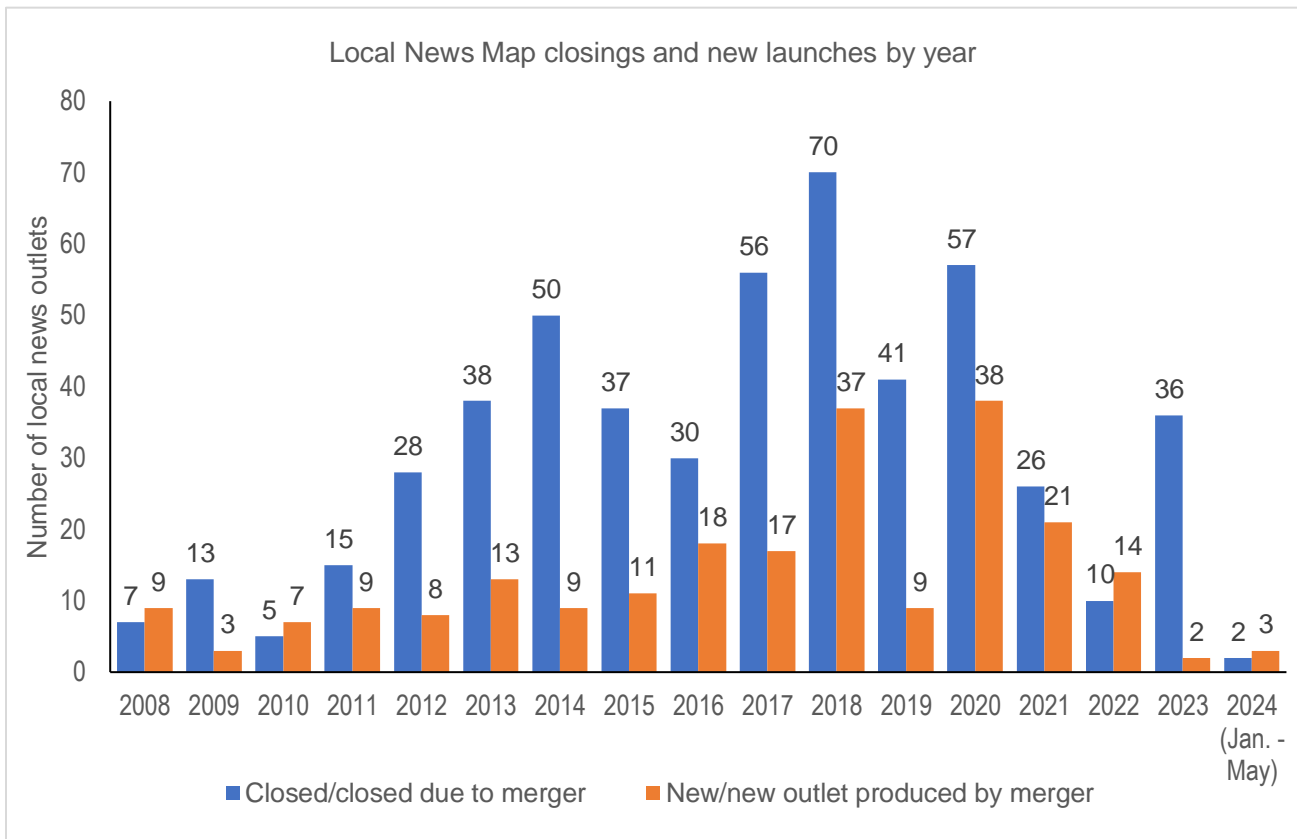
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Worth noting

General

- between 2008 and June 1, 2024, a total of 521 local news operations closed in 347 communities across Canada
- community newspapers, which publish fewer than five times per week, account for 77 per cent or 400 of those closings
- Of the 521 closings, 111 were local community newspapers that closed because they were merged to produce regional publications.
- 228 local news outlets launched between 2008 and June 1, 2024, in 160 communities. An additional 32 others opened and either increased or decreased service.
- 126 local news outlets launched and closed over that same period



Note: This chart only reflects launch data for the 228 news outlets that opened since 2008 and are represented on the map as "new" or "new outlet produced by merger" map markers. It does not include the 32 outlets that launched and experienced other service changes.

A closer look at data on the launch of new outlets

Over the past six months, map administrators conducted an in-depth review of launch data that has resulted in refinements that more accurately reflect the number of new local news outlets that came into being between 2008 and the current period.

Until now, data were only available for newly launched outlets represented on the map as "new" or "new outlet produced by merger" map markers. With this review, we sought to capture the outlets that launched during our study period and subsequently announced a change in service. These changes altered how the outlets are represented on the map from "new" to "increase in service," "decrease in service," "shifted to online," "closed" or "closed due to merger" markers. This approach is consistent with map protocols that require markers to reflect the most recent changes. We were concerned, however, that it also resulted in an undercounting of new local news outlets.

We conducted research to find the launch years of all outlets on the map that were not categorized as "new" or "new outlet produced by merger." Of the 796 map markers that represent other types of service changes, 158 outlets were confirmed to have launched since 2008. These results allow us to paint a fuller picture of what has been happening to news outlets launched during our study period. Notably:

- 228 new local news outlets launched between 2008 and June 1, 2024 in 160 communities that have not experienced any other service changes. They appear on the map as "new" or "new outlet produced by merger" markers.
- *158 local news outlets launched between 2008 and June 1, 2024, but subsequently experienced other changes in service. They are currently represented on the map as the following types of markers:

Current marker type	Number of outlets
Closed	109
Closed due to merger	17
Decrease in service	5
Increase in service	8
Shifted to online	19

- No launch year information could be found for 13 local news outlets

*These data are only captured in the sections of this report that provide information on closings, shifts to online, increases in service and decreases in service.

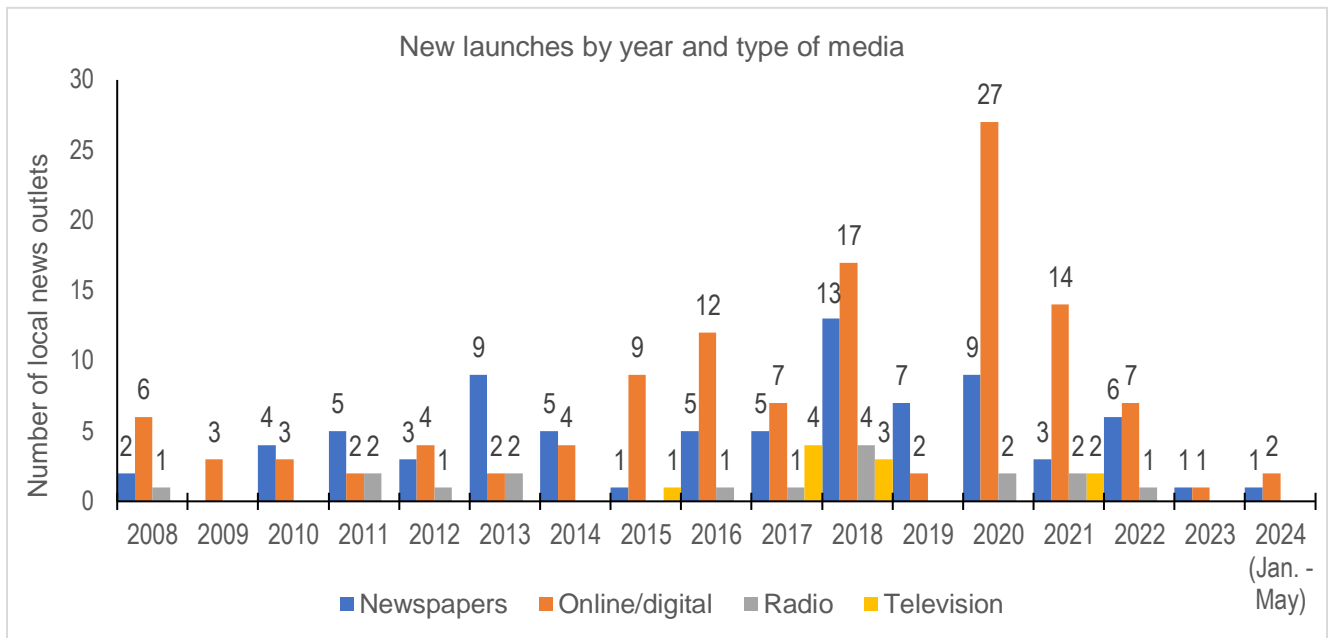
Post-pandemic bad news continues to unfold

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 January 1, 2023 and June 1, 2024 include:

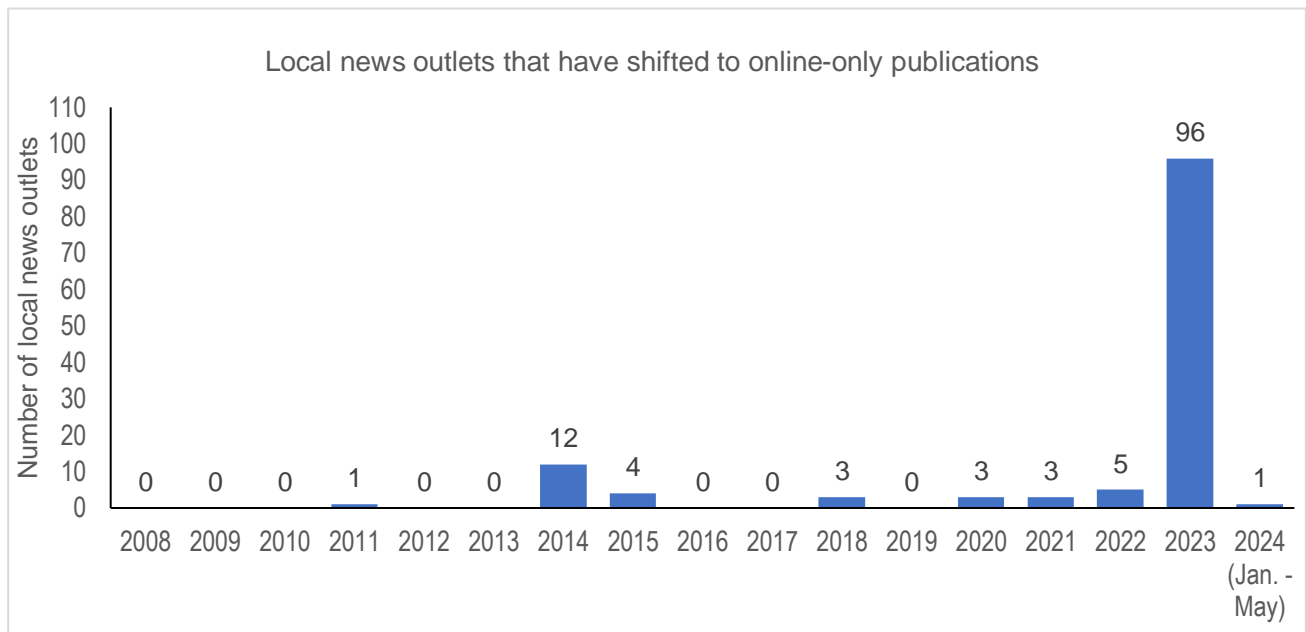
- a resurgence in local news outlet closures after a lull in 2021 and 2022. Of the 38 closures, 31 were community newspapers and seven were privately-owned radio stations. Nearly half of the closings occurred in the Montreal area in August 2023 when Métro Média announced it was halting publication of 17 community newspapers. The company declared bankruptcy a month later.

- A wave of cuts - actual and proposed - affecting the provision of broadcast news:
 - CTV announced in February 2024 that effective immediately CTV News @ Noon newscasts on all CTV stations except Toronto were cancelled along with the 6 p.m. and late night weekend newscasts on all CTV and CTV2 stations except Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. CTV newscasts on federal stat holidays on all stations except Toronto also ceased. CTV and CTV2 stations in 21 markets were affected.
 - 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.
 - CBC/Radio Canada [announced](#) in early December 2023 that it will cut about 600 union and non-union positions over the next year and will not be filling about 200 currently vacant positions. Details of the cuts have not yet been announced.
- SaltWire Network, the largest newspaper owner in Atlantic Canada, filed for creditor protection in March 2024. In addition to publishing four daily newspapers - the Chronicle Herald in Halifax, the Cape Breton Post in Sydney, N.S., the Guardian in Charlottetown, P.E.I. and the Telegram in St. John's, N.L., SaltWire owns 14 weeklies throughout Atlantic Canada except in New Brunswick. The publications have so far remained open as [restructuring efforts](#) continue.
- Two months after entering into creditor protection, Surrey, B.C.-based Black Press [announced](#) on March 25, 2024 that the company has restructured, been sold and will continue its news operations. The company publishes 150 daily and weekly newspapers, magazines and websites in Canada and the United States, including dozens of community newspapers in Western Canada.
- a stall in the number of new local news outlet launches. Map data show only two news outlets launched last year. So far in 2024, only three new outlets have emerged. Village Media launched the local news websites FlamboroughToday.com and MiltonToday.ca in February and May, respectively. And the Yukon Star community newspaper launched in May in response to the closing of The Whitehorse Star community paper earlier that month.



Note: This chart only reflects launch data for the 228 news outlets that opened since 2008 and are represented on the map as "new" or "new outlet produced by merger" map markers. It does not include the 32 outlets that launched and experienced other service changes.

- a massive increase in the number of publications that have abandoned print and are now published online only. All of the 97 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 April 1, 2024, 3 new markers representing changes to local news media were added to the map including one from a previous year that came to our attention. Among the changes:

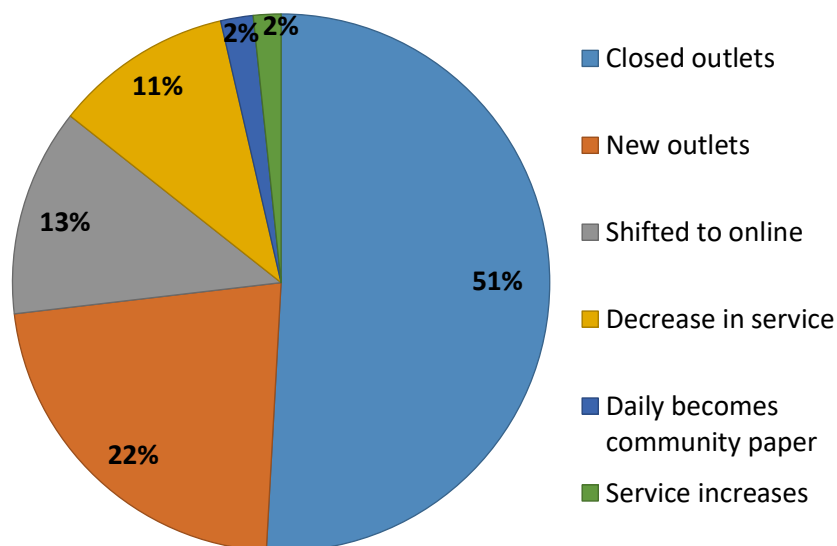
- A new marker was added for a community newspaper that closed: Lakeland Regional in the Lakeland region of Alberta closed in April 2018. Additionally, the Whitehorse Star in Whitehorse, Yukon, closed in May 2024 and the existing map marker was updated to reflect the closing.
- A new marker was added for a new community newspaper: Yukon Star in Whitehorse, Yukon, launched in May 2024 in response to the closing of The Whitehorse Star.
- A new marker was added for a new online news outlet: Village Media launched MiltonToday.ca in Milton, Ontario, in May 2024.

Overview of map data

The map displayed a total of 1024 markers representing changes to local news outlets of all types between 2008 and June 1, 2024.

Breakdown of all markers by type of change that occurred:

closed	407
closed due to merger	114
daily (free) becomes a community paper	0
daily becomes a community paper	20
decrease in service	110
increase in service	17
new	197
new outlet produced by merger	31
shifted to online	128



Breakdown of all markers by type of media:

community paper	624
daily paper - free	30
daily paper - paid	66
online/digital	162
radio - private	54
radio - public	11
TV - private	50
TV - public	27

Breakdown of all markers by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	210
Postmedia	109
Metroland	99
Black Press	45
Glacier Media	41
Bell Media	39
Transcontinental	38
Torstar	36
SaltWire Network	33
CBC/Radio-Canada	28
Métro Média	28
Sun Media	27
Village Media	20
Quebecor	18
Rogers Media	18
Great West Newspapers	17
Other	218

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: 521 (407 direct closings + 114 closings due to mergers)
- Number of communities where a local news outlet has closed: 347

Breakdown of closings by type of media:

community paper	400
daily paper - free	27
daily paper - paid	13
online/digital	30
radio – private	34
radio – public	6
TV – private	11
TV – public	0

Breakdown of closings by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	87
Postmedia	57
Transcontinental	34
Black Press	32
Glacier Media	31
Métro Média	28
Sun Media	25
Metroland	24
SaltWire Network	24
Torstar	22
Other	157

¹Only owners associated with more than 15 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: 228 (197 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers)
- Number of communities where a new local news outlet has been launched: 160
- An additional 32 news outlets opened but then experienced service changes. These news outlets are represented on the map by “increase in service,” “decrease in service” and “shifted to online” markers.
- 126 local news outlets launched and closed over that same period. These news outlets are represented on the map by “closed” and “closed due to merger” markers.

Breakdown of new outlets by media type:

community paper	78
daily paper - free	1
online/digital	122
radio – private	14
radio – public	3
TV – private	5
TV – public	5

Breakdown of new outlets by ownership¹:

Independent owners ²	100
Village Media	18
Torstar	10
Big and Colourful Printing and Publishing	6
Overstory Media Group	6
Rogers Media	6
Black Press	5
The Discourse	5
Other	72

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: 17
- Number of affected communities: 16

Breakdown of service increases by type of media:

community paper	2
daily paper - free	0
daily paper - paid	2
online/digital	10
radio - private	0
radio - public	1
TV - private	2
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: 110
- Number of affected communities: 60

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	32
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 June 1, 2024)

NEWSPAPERS

- Total number of markers representing changes at daily and community (published fewer than five times per week) newspapers: 720
- Total number of daily and community newspapers that have closed: 440 (326 direct closings + 114 closings due to mergers) in 320 communities
- Total number of markers representing newly launched daily and community newspapers: 79 (48 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers) in 72 communities
- Total number of daily and community newspaper service decreases: 49
- Total number of daily and community newspapers that shifted to online: 128
- Total number of daily newspapers that became community newspapers: 20
- Total number of daily and community newspaper service increases: 4

Community newspaper markers on the map:

- Total number of community newspaper markers: 624
- Total number of community newspapers that have closed: 400 (289 direct closings + 111 closings due to mergers) in 303 communities
- Total number of new community newspapers: 78 (47 new outlets + 31 new outlets produced by mergers) in 72 communities
- Total number of community newspaper service decreases: 23
- Total number of community newspapers that shifted to online: 121
- Total number of community newspaper service increases: 2

Daily newspaper markers on the map:

- Total number of daily newspaper markers: 96
- 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: 20
- 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: 162
- Total number of newly launched online news sites: 122
- Total number of closed online news sites: 30
- Total number of online news sites service increases: 10

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: 77
- Total number of new TV stations: 10
- Total number of closed TV stations: 11
- Total number of TV station service reductions: 54
- Total number of TV station service increases: 2

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	61	23	28	1	113
British Columbia	81	43	26	3	153
Manitoba	31	11	6	0	48
New Brunswick	11	6	8	1	26
Newfoundland and Labrador	23	1	3	0	27
Northwest Territories	2	1	1	1	5
Nova Scotia	23	10	6	3	42
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	0
Ontario	149	103	131	6	389
Prince Edward Island	0	0	3	0	3
Quebec	101	18	37	1	157
Saskatchewan	38	11	8	1	58
Yukon	1	1	1	0	3
Canada (total)	521	228	258	17	1024

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

Province/territory	Newspaper	Online/ digital	Radio	Television	Total # of markers
Alberta	81	13	7	12	113
British Columbia	86	38	19	10	153
Manitoba	39	1	3	5	48
New Brunswick	18	5	0	3	26
Newfoundland and Labrador	20	1	5	1	27
Northwest Territories	2	1	1	1	5
Nova Scotia	33	7	0	2	42
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	0
Ontario	269	81	18	21	389
Prince Edward Island	2	0	0	1	3
Quebec	119	11	12	15	157
Saskatchewan	48	4	0	6	58
Yukon	3	0	0	0	3
Canada (total)	720	162	65	77	1024