

# Media Action Inventory: Who's fighting for truth in the information war? Winter 2023

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POTENTIAL EFFECT ON MISINFORMATION AND/OR DISINFORMATION	
<p><b>1. Suppressive:</b> <i>Goals are changes in the legal environment or economic conditions that are conducive to the creation and/or spread of mis/disinformation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Smartmatic</a> and <a href="#">Dominion</a> defamation lawsuits involving Fox “News” and its promotion of false claims about election fraud.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Petition to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)</a> to determine that Fox Corporation has demonstrated such bad corporate character in management of Fox News that its broadcast TV licenses should not be renewed.</li> <li>• Federal legislation proposing changes to <a href="#">Sec. 230 of Communications Decency Act that would eliminate carve-out of online platforms from being considered “publishers.”</a> and associated <a href="#">Supreme Court cases</a> relating to social media outlets and their responsibility for false content.</li> <li>• <a href="#">New Jersey Civic Information Consortium</a> - Public funding is provided to projects that address “the growing problem of news deserts and misinformation.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Advocacy for “Local News Dollars.”</a> vouchers to support local media outlets.</li> <li>• <a href="#">UnFoxMyCableBox</a> – A <a href="#">Media Matters for America (MMFA)</a>-affiliated website on which data submitted by TV bundle-subscribers can indicate interest in Fox-News-free bundles; MMFA indicates that it will use these data to pressure companies providing TV bundles to satisfy this consumer demand when the companies negotiate contracts with Fox Corp., parent of Fox “News,” contracts that provide the vast majority of the channel’s revenue.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Media Action Center</a> – Advocates for improved FCC regulation of broadcast TV and radio.</li> <li>• Proposed tax subsidies (as in <a href="#">Build Back Better</a>) of local news outlets.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CA statute</a> promoted by No License for Disinformation (doctors' group) giving medical licensing boards more authority to discipline doctors misinforming patients about Covid-19. (<i>This group has disbanded; it did not receive support from doctors and may have suffered harassment by right-wing extremists.</i>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Real Facebook Oversight Board</a> – Online advocacy organization drawing attention to instances in which Facebook violates its own policies regarding hate speech, advocating violence, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Competitive:</b>  <i>These outlets (some partisan) have journalistic integrity and 1) a mission (implicit or explicit) of sustained introduction of appealingly mixed content, most anchored locally, 2) a means (natural or by design) to engage audiences now largely detached from mainstream, national news coverage.</i></p>	<p><b>Local media outlets with journalistic integrity (and their advocates)</b>  <i>Extensive research demonstrates that <a href="#">legacy local news outlets boost civic health</a>. <a href="#">Here's a good argument for mobilizing to support them as a category of news entity we christen "civic media."</a></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The news outlets themselves – as in this <a href="#">directory of 1,000 local news outlets</a>, this list of <a href="#">hundreds of local public radio stations</a>, outlets like the <a href="#">Public News Service</a>, distributing high-quality public interest news to rural audiences, <a href="#">Cal Matters</a>, reporting on the largest state and 5th largest world economy, or <a href="#">States Newsroom</a>, a network of 30+ newsrooms covering state governments, politics, and policy.</li> <li>o Organizations supporting local media outlets with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Technical support: the <a href="#">Lenfest Institute</a>, the <a href="#">National Trust for Local News</a>, the <a href="#">Institute for Nonprofit News</a>, and Michael Moore's <a href="#">Blue Dots in a Red Sea</a>, a podcast how-to guide for creating a local news start-up.</li> <li>§ Funding, as in Press Forward, a <a href="#">new effort spearheaded by the McArthur Foundation</a>.</li> <li>§ Publicity: The above <a href="#">directory of 1,000 local news outlets</a> was compiled by the <a href="#">Media and Democracy Project</a></li> <li>§ New approaches to local reporting: <a href="#">America Amplified</a> is working with public media stations nationwide to expand the use of journalism practices that meaningfully address local information needs, especially in communities that have been traditionally underserved by public media. <a href="#">The Documenters Network</a>, an organization that trains people to attend and annotate government meetings, harnessing their collective knowledge, relationships, and capacity to create a powerful new information resource. Atlanta example: <a href="#">Canopy</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Start-ups attempting to engage audiences who underconsume reputable media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Courier Newsrooms</a> – Eight (soon to be eleven) state-based newsrooms providing local news content leavened with local lifestyle content to otherwise non-news-reading audiences via email newsletters, social media newsfeeds, and trusted messengers.</li> </ul>

- [Civic Media](#), a commercial network of 17 local radio stations in WI with a mission to provide content focused on salient local issues and pastimes with journalistic integrity and thereby compete for audiences with right-wing talk radio.
- [907 Initiative](#), a publicly funded communications hub in Alaska seeking to change the state's political narrative and hold its elected officials accountable.
- [Heartland Signal](#) - A regional digital newsroom anchored to the progressive radio station WCPT 820 AM in Chicago. Through a progressive lens, reporters and hosts shine a light on the issues most important to those who make up the diverse communities across the Midwest. Coverage relies solely on the facts, and aims to bolster local reporting throughout the Midwest region.
- [Report for America](#) – A national service program that places journalists into local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues and communities. An initiative of the nonprofit media organization, [The Groundtruth Project](#).
- [Latino Media Network](#) is a new company that has purchased 18 radio stations in 10 cities and plans to be a content provider serving the Latino community over multiple platforms.
- [Capital B News](#) is a Black-led, nonprofit local and national news organization reporting for Black communities across the country. Capital B's local bureau in Atlanta is the first in a growing network of local newsrooms anchored by Capital B's national hub. The Atlanta newsroom combines civic journalism, and accountability reporting, with an editorial strategy informed by intensive community listening and engagement with Black metro Atlanta residents. Capital B is expanding into Gary, Indiana as part of the [Indiana Local News Initiative](#).
- [Story Bank Project](#) of the [Focus Action Network](#), detailed ideas for policy-oriented human interest news stories, featuring local community members, that may be used by local media outlets, including print, online, broadcast TV and radio, in the presidential battleground states.
- [Parents Together](#) - Independent reporting and commentary on issues that affect kids and families, directed at women and men in non-college educated households.
- [Galvanize Action](#) - Provides to women “a trusted stream of educational digital content to increase knowledge on key issues, cut down on fear-based noise, and defuse narratives designed to trigger fears.” (The fact that Galvanize posts can touch women up to 11 times over the course of months leads to its categorization as “newsy” campaign advocacy.)
- The [Rural Democracy Initiative](#)/Communications Cohort field test funds and trains a small set of nonprofits producing about 130 news briefs annually that are then disseminated through the [Public News Service](#), an independent news service distributing high-quality public interest news to rural audiences through a network of 37 state news services, reaching an audience of over 60 million per week primarily on the radio. The RDI

	<p>is also funding a PNS Beat focused on resilience in rural communities, with particular attention to rural jobs and economic opportunity, rural response to climate change, and rural public policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Working America</a> - While not a conventional media outlet, Working America is an AFL-CIO project whose extended pre-election outreach to non-union households via letters, phone calls and door-to-door canvassing conveys content about public policies relevant to elections that connects the policies to recipients' lives.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Network-Based Content Organizing</a> - A proposed project to bolster reporting capacity of <a href="#">Civic Media</a>, a commercial network of 17 local radio stations in WI with a mission to provide content focused on salient local issues and pastimes with journalistic integrity and thereby compete for audiences with right-wing talk radio.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Beacon Media</a> – A proposed project to provide syndicated content with journalistic integrity in/from a variety of progressive voices/sources to existing NC media outlets and build the brand with advertising. (2024 update: Now incorporated: <a href="#">Beacon Media</a>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Reactive:</b>  <i>These organizations organize direct responses by individuals/groups to discrete instances of misinformation, scale messaging (“getting louder,” “building our own megaphone,” or becoming “information warriors”), and/or equip individuals to assess the validity of information.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">DemCast</a> – Through frequent text and social media notifications, motivates and supports a variety of forms of social media messaging and counter-messaging by tens of thousands of activists. A <a href="#">Michigan DemCast</a> focuses social media messaging on state and local issues and campaigns.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Indivisible Truth Brigade</a> – Several thousand volunteers trained and supported by national Indivisible to counter-message on trending misinformation topics.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Civic Listening Corps</a> – Volunteer network of individuals trained to report misinformation on diverse topics such as elections, public health, civil rights. The work is based on use of <a href="#">Junkipedia</a>, a technology platform that enables collection of data from across a full spectrum of digital communication platforms.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Disinformation Defense League</a> - League of organizations with a professional staff that warns of racialized disinformation campaigns and provides counter-messaging advice.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Truth Tuesdays</a> - Every Tuesday, holds New York City demonstrations against Fox “News.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">FactsFirstUSA</a> - New bipartisan group attempting to ensure that national discourse is grounded in facts and honest debate.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Real Voices Media</a> - Gives people the skills to stay in touch with their personal networks on social media, and to share stories with their neighbors, friends and family.</li> <li>• <a href="#">“News literacy” education programs</a> that “inoculate” those encountering misinformation. A program has just been mandated for New Jersey schools and one is already being <a href="#">used in Finland</a> (where it is sufficiently widespread to be categorized as “suppressive”).</li> </ul>

*NOTE: Many media outlets and initiatives that produce great content for activists to amplify are not included here.*