

Confronting the Crisis

Imagining a Public Model for Journalism

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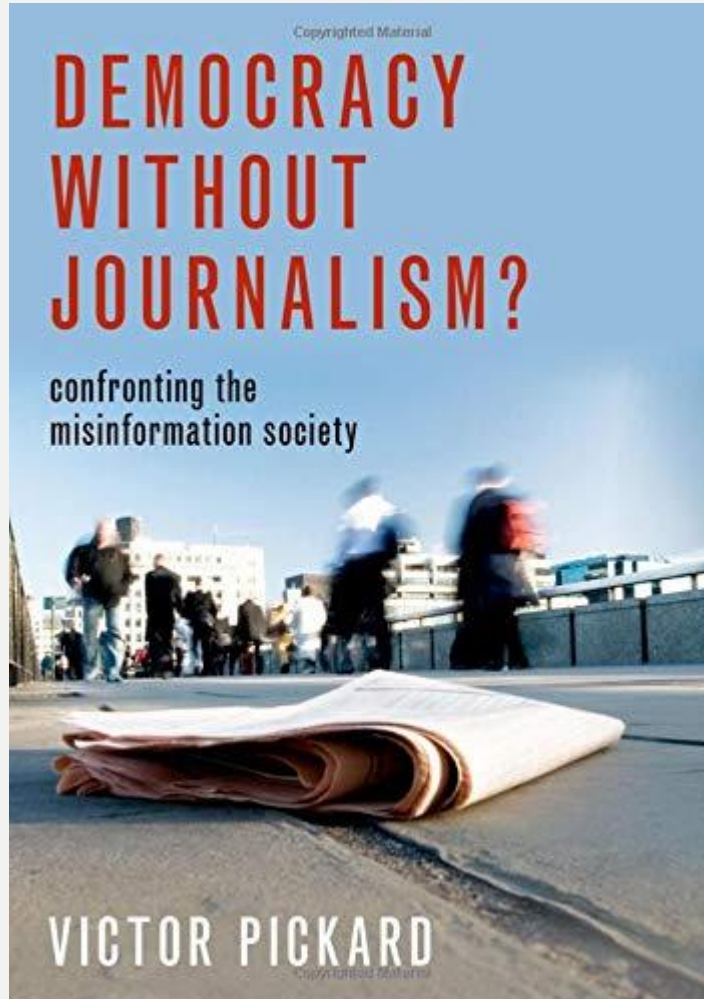
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DEMOCRACY WITHOUT JOURNALISM?

confronting the
misinformation society



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American Media Exceptionalism

- Dominated by oligopolies
- Lightly regulated
- Predominantly commercial

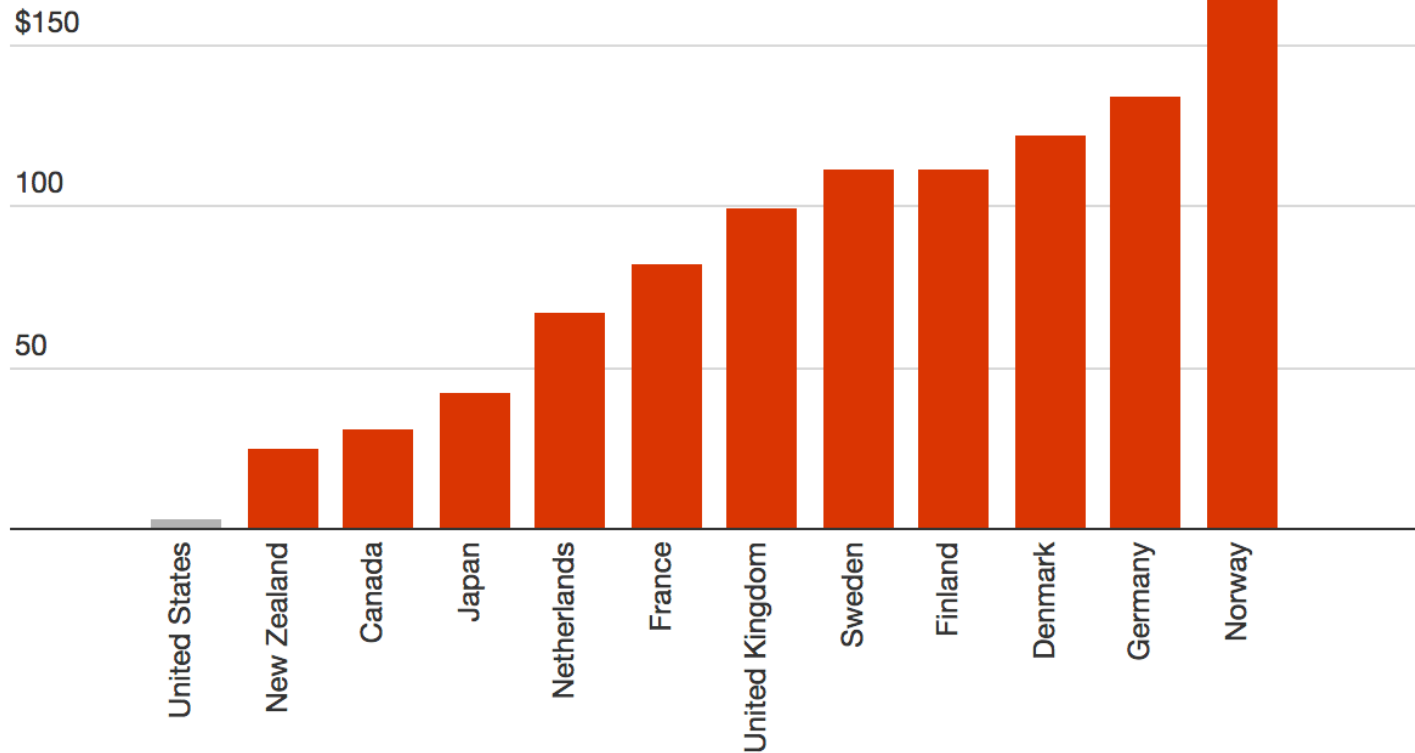
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American Monopoly Problem



Amount Spent on Public Media on a Per Capita Basis (in U.S. dollars)

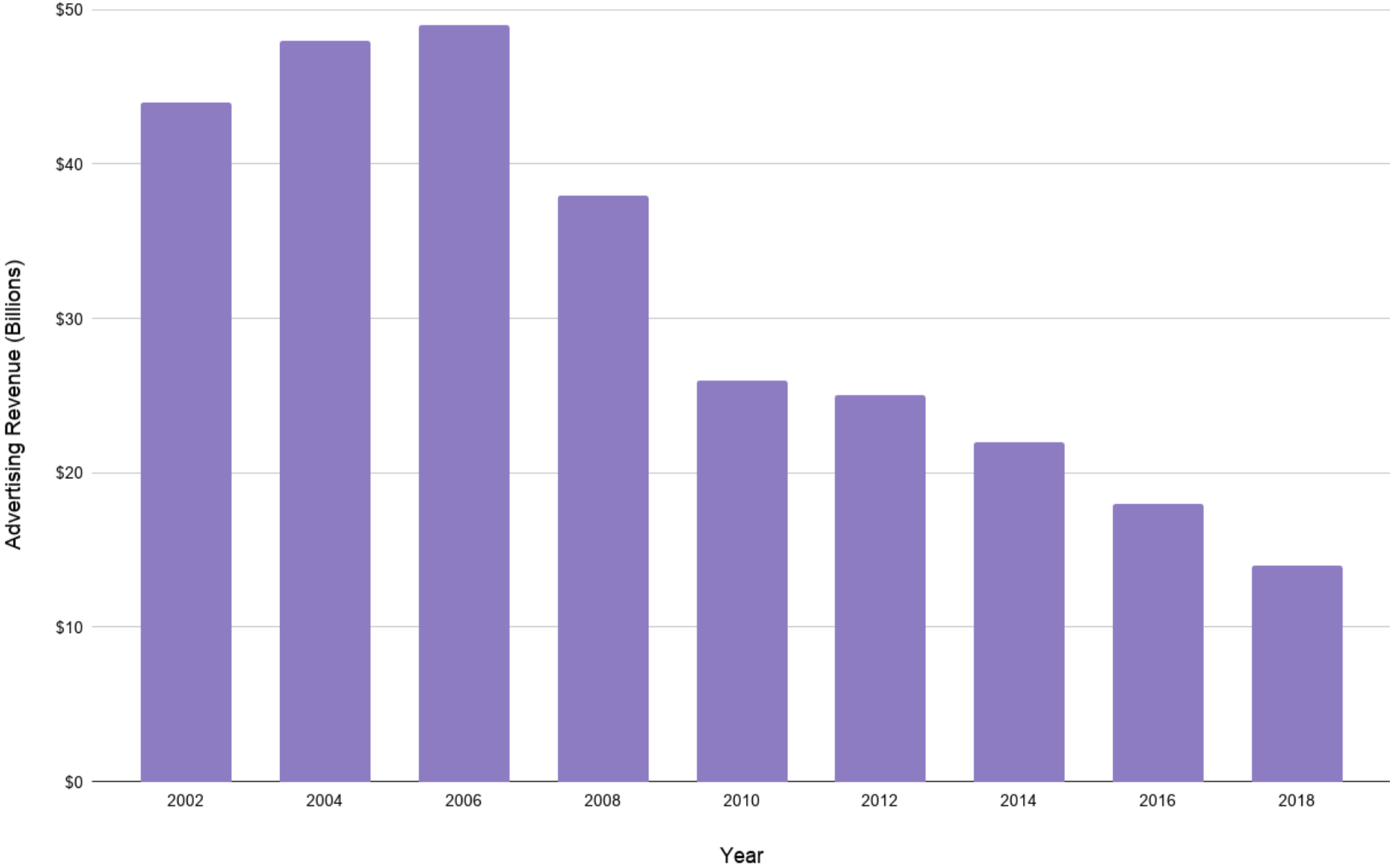


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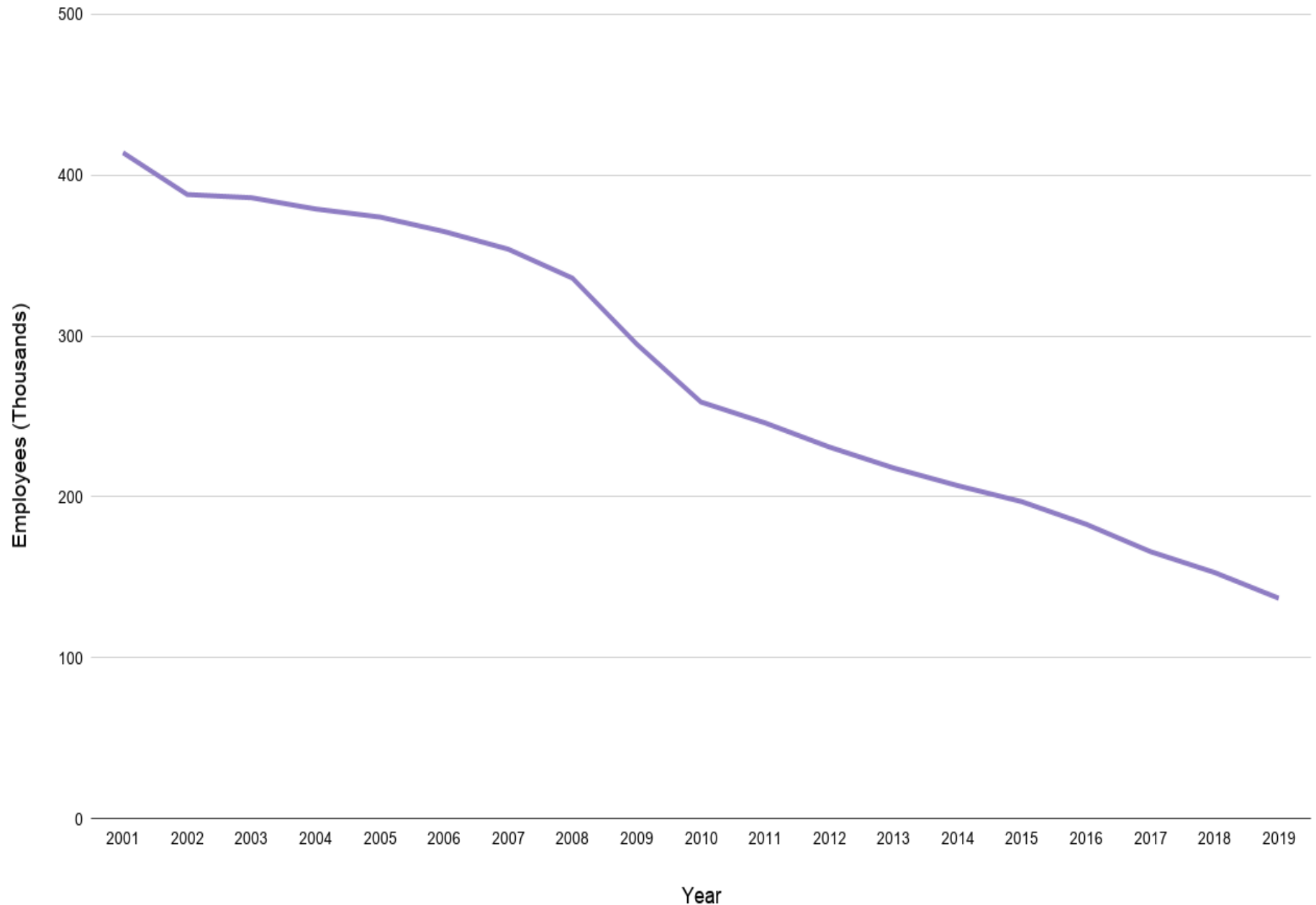
Local Journalism Crisis

- Advertising-dependent business model irreparably broken
- Fewer revenues, fewer journalists
- Newspapers closing, declaring bankruptcy, going online only
- Virtually no public policy response thus far

Decline in Newspaper Advertising Revenue



Employees at Newspaper Publishers



Concerns About Degraded Journalism

- Native advertising/behavioral tracking
- Casualization/precarity of journalistic labor
- Loss of particular kinds of public service journalism and the rise of “news deserts”
- Effects on political behavior and democracy

Potential Solutions

- Subscriptions/Paywalls/Micropayments/Members
- Citizen journalism/crowd-sourcing
- Support from foundations and “benevolent billionaires”
- Public media subsidies

America's Battle for Media Democracy

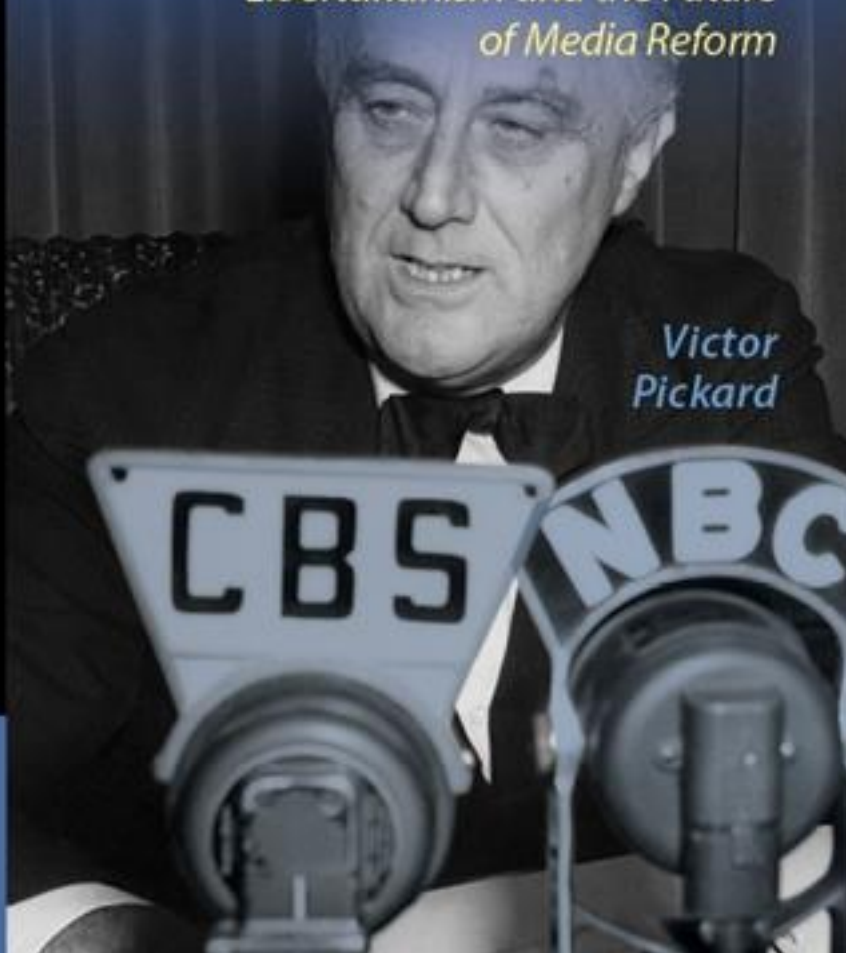
*The Triumph of Corporate
Libertarianism and the Future
of Media Reform*

Victor
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Pickard

America's Battle for Media Democracy

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Postwar Settlement for American Media

- Media would remain only lightly regulated
- Practice largely industry-defined social responsibility
- Protected by a “negative” reading of the First Amendment

A Market Ontology of Journalism

- State of journalism understood as supply and demand
- Institutional collapse of journalism is beyond our control
- Market forces and new technologies will guide us out of this predicament

Political Economic Rationales for Policy Intervention

- News and information are public goods
- Media organizations are subject to systemic market failure
- These media failures are social problems, and thus require public policy interventions

What's to Be Done?

De-commercialize and Democratize

- **Establishing “public options”** such as well-funded public media and public broadband networks;
- **Breaking up/preventing monopolies** and oligopolies to encourage competition and diversity, and to lessen profit-maximizing behavior;
- **Regulating news outlets** via public service obligations such as impartiality and ascertainment of society's information needs;
- **Enabling worker control** by unionizing newsrooms, facilitating employee-owned institutions, and establishing protections that buffer journalism from business operations;
- **Community governance of newsrooms**, especially as newspapers transition to non- or low-profit structures that are incentivized by tax laws.

Expand Public and Nonprofit Media

- *Leveraging already-existing public infrastructure*
- *Using tax law to facilitate the transition to low-profit and nonprofit newspapers*
- *Creating a “public media/journalism trust” from various revenue streams, including levies on Facebook and Google*

A Moment of Opportunity?



Thank You For Listening!

