



A LIVE INSTRUCTION MANUAL

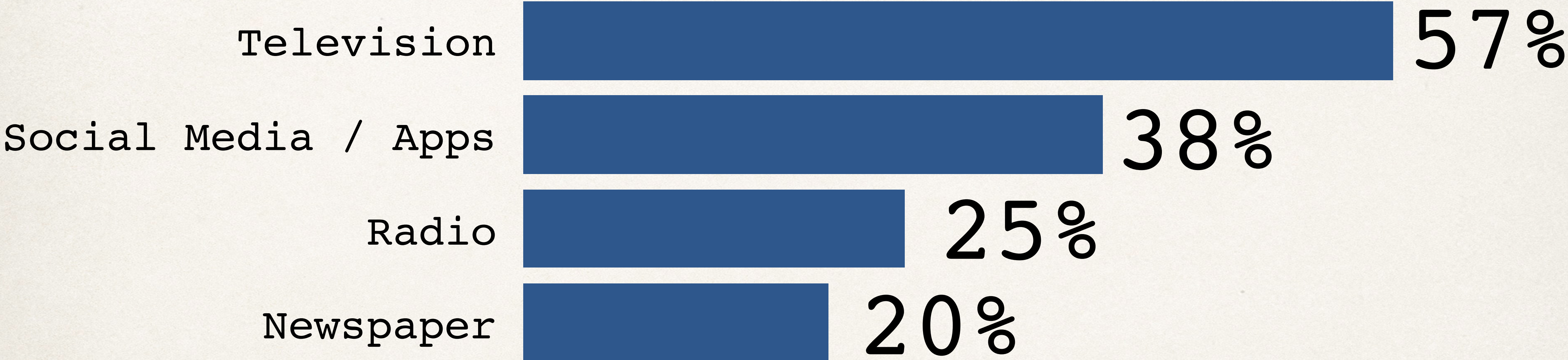


PUT THE MEDIA ON TRIAL

When the News Started

- 1690** The first newspaper in America, *PUBLICK OCCURRENCES, BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC*, is published in Boston by Benjamin Harris. Because Harris did not have permission from the local government, he was immediately arrested and all copies of it were burned (a single remaining edition was later found in the British Library).
- 1735** *New York Weekly Journal* publisher John Peter Zenger is arrested and put on trial for using sarcasm, innuendo, and allegory to ridicule New York Governor William Cosby.
- 1791** The Bill of Rights is ratified, guaranteeing the First Amendment and the freedom of the press.

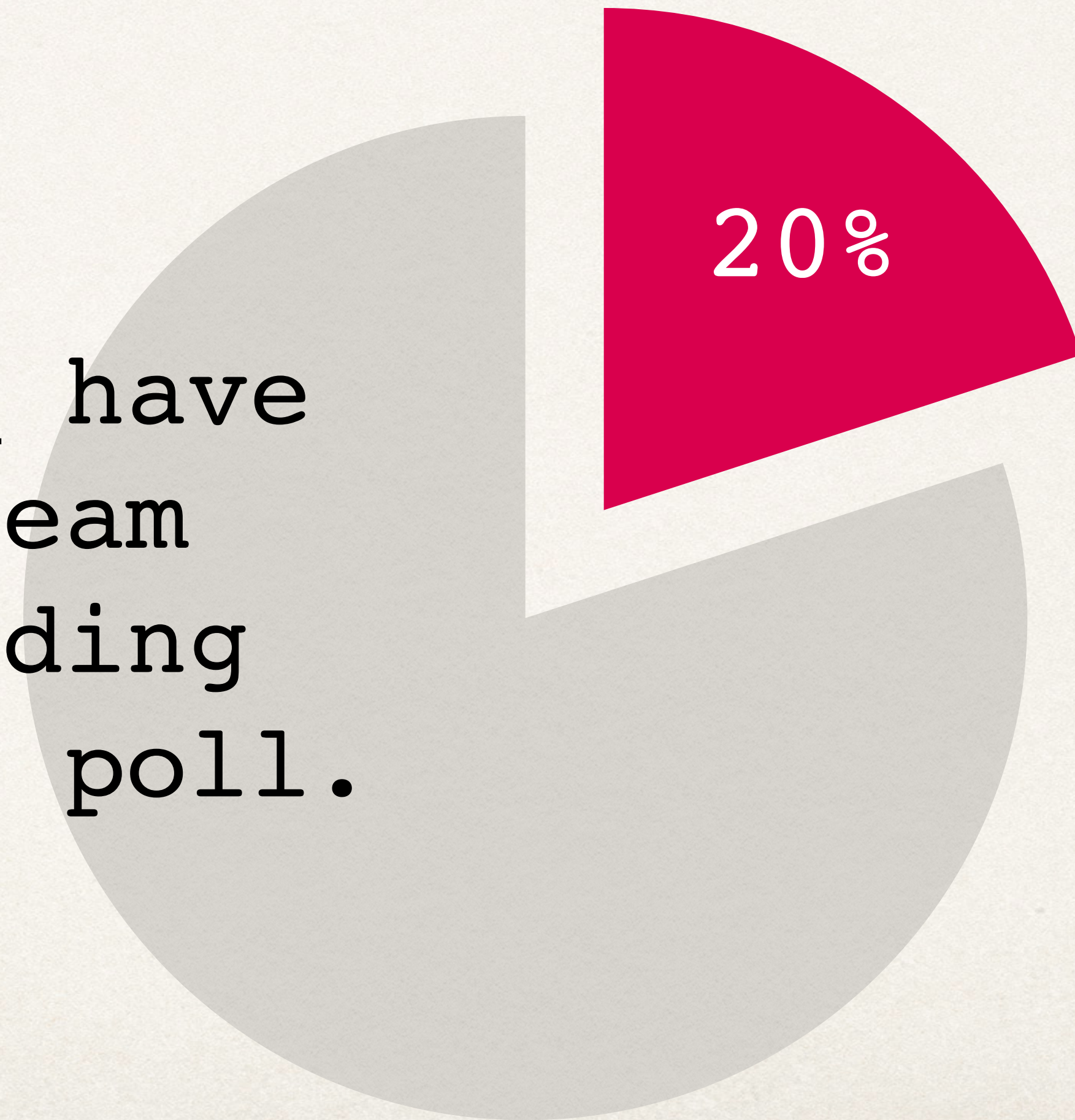
Where Americans Get Their News



According to Pew Research Associates

EVIDENCE

Just 20% of Americans have confidence in mainstream news reporting, according to a 2016 Gallup news poll.



EXPERT WITNESS

"On virtually all major development issues dividing Denver.. the media [have been] more glorified public relations hacks than critical watchdogs.

...Lacking a base or a vision other than promoting growth and celebrating sports, the [Denver] media could do no more than reflect a city forever drifting from one panacea to the next.

They could tell about the booms and busts, but their constitutional nature made them unable to understand them."

- Phil Goodstein

EVIDENCE

In 1983, 90% of media (television, film,
radio, print) was controlled by fifty
companies;
in 2017 the number was five.

EVIDENCE

1792 A progressive Congress passes a law to reduce postal rates to support the circulation of newspapers and periodicals.

1798 A paranoid Congress passes The Sedition Act, which makes it illegal to write anything bad about the government. Facing the possibility of war with France, the government prosecuted French immigrants, writers, editors, printers, and "even drunks who were overheard condemning President John Adams".

TESTIMONY

- 1841** Horace Greeley publishes the *New York Tribune*: the widely-read paper (circulation 10,000) was anti-slavery, and reported on socialist and feminist ideas. By 1850, it had 250,000 readers and was a pillar of intellectual culture in the American north and west.
- 1859** Rocky Mountain News is founded.
- 1880s** Now that newspapers are becoming a highly profitable undertaking, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer begin trying to one-up each other with sensational, bordering on the hysterical, "yellow journalism."
- 1892** The Denver Post founded.

TESTIMONY

According to a 2017 survey by the Columbia Journalism Review, at least seven counties in Colorado---all rural---are "news deserts," with no daily local journalism resource. Of the remaining 57 counties in Colorado, 46 have only one daily local journalism resource.

EXPERT WITNESS

"The fault I find with most American newspapers is not the absence of dissent. It is the absence of news. With a dozen or so honorable exceptions, most American newspapers carry very little news. Their main concern is advertising."

- I.F. Stone

EXPERT WITNESS

"Journalism has evolved into a career with significant entry barriers, one of which is the unpaid internship. This makes the profession whiter, wealthier...and less concerned with policy issues that affect the poor, and even the middle class"

- Dana Goldstein

EVIDENCE

There are only 65,000 local news reporters in the U.S. - about one for every 5,000 people.

TESTIMONY

1896

Adolph Ochs purchases the New York Times, declaring the paper would "give the news impartially, without fear or favor."

It's right about this time that the idea of "objective journalism" emerges. The reason was not, however, in the name of "impartiality, without fear or favor," but because reporting in a basic, dry style that always hit on basic points would expand readership to customers who may not be as literate or learned as readers of more partisan publications.

TESTIMONY

1914 TO

1920s

These years encompass the first "Red Scare" in America, where dissidents, writers, and artists are jailed or deported to their "country of origin." Anarchist, socialist, and otherwise radical publications are shut down or seized. Not until 1925 would the Supreme Court decide to "re-extend" the freedom of the press to dissident publications.

1934

Congress passes the Communications Act, establishing that the airwaves are public property which radio and television broadcasters are licensed to use. The basis for licensure is whether a broadcaster serves "the public interest, convenience, and necessity."

1934

The Federal Communications Commission establishes the Fairness Doctrine, which holds that broadcasters must balance controversial views and ideas with opposing perspectives.

"Ways to Make People Confused and Want to Hate Each Other, Using the Media"

(via Matt Taibbi)

- ◆ **THERE ARE ONLY TWO IDEAS**
 - ◆ Republican and Democrat, liberal and conservative
- ◆ **THE TWO IDEAS ARE IN PERMANENT CONFLICT**
- ◆ **HATE PEOPLE - NOT INSTITUTIONS**
- ◆ **EVERYTHING IS SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT**
 - ◆ ("The overwhelming majority of "controversial news stories" involve simple partisan narratives cleaved quickly into hot-button talking points. Go any deeper and you zoom off the flow chart")
- ◆ **NOTHING IS EVERYONE'S FAULT**
 - ◆ ("If both parties have an equal or near-equal hand in causing a social problem, we typically don't cover it.")

EXPERT WITNESS

"The outraged do not form a stable we who are displaying concern for society as a whole. Enraged citizens, even though they are citizens, do not demonstrate concern for the whole of a social body so much as for themselves. For this reason, outrage quickly dissipates.

"...Outrage lacks the mass---the gravitation---that is necessary for action. It generates no future."

- Byung-Chul Han

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A LIVE INSTRUCTION MANUAL



PUT THE MEDIA ON TRIAL

"Ways to Make People Confused and Want to Hate Each Other, Using the Media", Continued

◆ ROOT DON'T THINK

- ◆ ("By the early 2000s, TV stations had learned to cover politics exactly as they covered sports, a proven profitable format. The presidential election especially was reconfigured into a sports coverage saga.")

◆ NO SWITCHING TEAMS

- ◆ ("Being out of touch with what the other side is thinking is now no longer seen as a fault. It's a requirement.")

◆ THE OTHER SIDE IS LITERALLY HITLER

◆ IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HITLER, EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED.

- ◆ ("If the other side is literally Hitler, this eventually has to happen. It would be illogical to argue anything else. What began as America vs. America will eventually move to Traitor vs. Traitor, and the show does not work if those contestants are not offended to the point of wanting to kill one another.")

◆ FEEL SUPERIOR

- ◆ ("We're mainly in the business of stroking audiences. We want them coming back. Anger is part of the rhetorical promise, but so are feelings righteousness and superiority.")

TESTIMONY

1966 Congress passes the Freedom of Information Act, which allows citizens and the press to request government documents at a low fee, or free.

1965-1973 Media reporting on the Vietnam War exposes the "credibility gap" of the government's version of what was happening in Southeast Asia.

1970s Major east-coast media report on The Pentagon Papers and the Watergate break-in.

EVIDENCE

The Interactive Advertising Bureau's report on the first six months of 2018 shows ad revenue was up 38% on social media, hitting \$13 billion. Digital video ad revenue was up 35%, hitting \$7 billion.

Total digital ad revenue is estimated to hit \$100 billion by 2019.

EVIDENCE

One of the biggest winners in online advertising during 2018 was Facebook, with other social media platforms like Instagram and What's App following behind.

2018 → **2 BILLION USERS** → **AVG. 50 MINUTES PER DAY** → **\$55.8 BILLION REVENUE** →

\$55 billion of that amount was from advertising.

EVIDENCE

According to Pew Research Associates, only 24% of Americans use Twitter, but it also gets lots and lots and lots *and lots* of attention. Most users make over \$75,000 a year, have a college degree or a post-graduate education, live in big cities, and they tend to be younger (18-29)---**exactly the kinds of people corporations and media companies love to sell things to** (and then cultivate to sell their consumer lifestyle ideas as products, back to us!).

EXPERT WITNESS

"It is inescapable that those determining the shape of our choices when engaging with Information Technology are physically and culturally located in a very small region. Apple, Facebook, and Google are within a stones' throw of each other, and even though they recruit from all over the world, there is an astonishing physic self-similarity among the people who work there, whatever their national or cultural origin."

- Adam Greenfield

EVIDENCE

- 1986** The oversight powers of the Fairness Doctrine are annulled by the Reagan Administration's FCC. The repeal of the Fairness Doctrine coincides with the rise of right-wing talk radio and television programs, notably Rush Limbaugh, who would be named an honorary member of the 103rd US Congress.
- 1988** Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky publish *Manufacturing Consent*, which investigates how the system of corporate-run mass media connects to the academy, business, and the government in the United States and the West.
- 1994** Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich "Forsees A World Without Public Broadcasting," according to a New York Times headline. Cuts by the Gingrich Congress in the budgets for National Public Radio and PBS would begin the long march away from community-based programming and more nationally-run commercial sponsorship.

CONTINUED...

EVIDENCE

2001

Following terror attacks in New York and Washington DC, Bush White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer warns mass media and commentators to "watch what they say."

2003

In order to build a case for invading Iraq, George W. Bush's Secretary of State Colin Powell gives a speech at the United Nations in which he presents what he claims to be evidence that Iraq is building "Weapons of Mass Destruction." Every editorial board of every major newspaper in the country declares Powell's evidence as powerful and irrefutable, giving further credence to the Bush Administration's argument to invade.

2009

The Rocky Mountain News ceases publication. For the first time in modern history, Denver has only one daily newspaper.

Yes, You Own The Media

Now Here's Some Ways to Take
Extra-Special Care Of It!

Reporters (and what they cover) in our community

If you see or hear something they might be interested in, send them a note
and help them help all of us.

National & Colorado Latino Coverage: newsdesk@elsemanario.net

Local African-American Interest: editor@urbanspectrum.net

Five Points News: brotherjeff1@earthlink.net

Housing & Homelessness: editor@thedenvervoice.org

Breaking News: Saja Hindi shindi@denverpost.com

Housing & Hunger: Donna Bryson dbryson@denverite.com

City Legislative Issues: Andrew Kenney akenney@denverpost.com

Denver Neighborhoods/Planning/Zoning: David Sachs dsachs@denverite.com

Economy & Residential Real Estate: Aldo Salvi asvaldi@denverpost.com

Denver Politics: Esteban Hernandez ehernandez@denverite.com

K-12 Education: Meg Wingerter mwingerter@denverpost.com

Suburbs: John Aguilar jaguilar@denverpost.com

Reporters Use Twitter

For TV stations, you're likely to get a response by notifying their Twitter accounts, with the hashtag #Denver and/or #ColoradoNews

Channel 9 News: @9News

CBS Denver Affiliate: @CBSDenver

Fox 31 News: @KDVR

Channel 2 News: @channel2kwgn

KOAA News 5: @KOAA

Rocky Mountain PBS: @RMPBS

Telemundo Denver: @telemundodenver

Denver Open Media

One of the best local public media resources in the country. DOM has classes in television and web production, making the best use of Google search options and social media, and graphic design. DOM has its own radio show and a television show with a hyper-local focus. Here's the extra cool part: with a membership, you can upload your own video or radio programs to their broadcasts, and even request time to have your live show televised.

denveropenmedia.org

Denver 8 TV

The official community access channel for the city of Denver. Denver 8 has locally-focused arts and music programming, and it also streams many important city legislative meetings---council, mayoral, planning board, and citizen oversight board---live. It also has links to Denver Community TV, which offers classes in web and television production.



Registered Neighborhood Organizations & Facebook

Many Denver RNOs are now streaming their meetings on Facebook.

If "RNO" is new to you---RNOs got big in the 80s and 90s here in Denver, and they're now a place where a lot of surprisingly important decisions in the city can get made at the neighborhood level; additionally, elected officials regularly visit them to talk about what's happening in their districts, as they are the only recognized "voice" of neighborhoods. (You can find yours by visiting denvergov.org's registered neighborhoods site). And if they don't stream their meetings---maybe you could politely but firmly suggest it's time they did?

Twitter & City Council

Believe it or not, Twitter can be for more than screaming at celebrities who slightly disagree with you about trivial pop culture occurrences! If you're having difficulty tracking down a particular phone number or name on the Denvergov.org website, tweeting your district's city council member can clear up confusion. It's also a great way to pinpoint things that might be happening in your neighborhood they need to know about.

PRO TIP:

It's easy to snap a pic of potholes and send them info about the cross streets!

City Council & Facebook

City council members will now often post info about community improvement grants and activities they'd like more community input on.

Subscribe to Action Alerts

The logo for FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) consists of the word "FAIR" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting keeps a close eye on how issues are represented in mass media. They have a great weekly newsletter you can get in your inbox, as well as action alerts with an email or phone number you can contact to address errors or ask for corrections on stories.

fair.org/take-action/action-alerts/

The logo for POGO (Project on Government Oversight) features the word "POGO" in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid blue rectangular box.

The non-partisan Project on Government Oversight keeps an eye on corruption and malfeasance at the national level, and that includes the highly politicized Federal Communications Commission, and they often have campaigns to send comments about corporate power to the FCC.

pogo.org/

Connecting Communities of News Sources

**COLORADO
MEDIA
PROJECT**

This new group is looking to bolster mutually beneficial connections between local communities and the news sources that cover them.

coloradomediaproject.com/

Fund Independent News

THE DENVER POST



FAIR

Denverite



Independent news organizations need your dollars to keep their work going and to stay as autonomous as possible. This is one of the few ways that individual actions, like re-upping your subscription to the Post or throwing a few dollars to KGNU at Thanksgiving time, can make a positive difference!

Dream of Something Different

- ◆ What if we funded journalists the same way we fund the fire department? Or our parks?
- ◆ What if there was a journalist corps, like the military or peace corps, where young people were trained for a few years to do this work--and they learned from experienced mentors?
- ◆ What is the further invention of our Media???

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