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Media Insight Project Expands With New Partners

Northwestern University and the University of Maryland Join Ongoing Effort with the American Press Institute and the AP-NORC Center to Advance Research on News, Media, and Democracy.

CHICAGO, April 15, 2026 — The [Media Insight Project](#), a collaboration of the [American Press Institute](#) and [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) since 2014, announced today the addition of two new partners — [Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications](#), and the [Local News Network at the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism](#) — strengthening the initiative’s capacity to conduct rigorous, independent research on the evolving relationship between journalism and audiences.

The expansion reflects the Media Insight Project’s continued commitment to producing high-quality research that helps news organizations, researchers, and the public better understand how people engage with news and information in a rapidly changing media environment.

The Media Insight Project and its newly expanded group of partners will soon release a new study examining how adults and teens engage with news and information in today’s media environment. The forthcoming research will explore audience behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions across a wide range of news sources, with in-depth analysis of local news organizations, independent creators and influencers, and how different age groups understand and navigate misinformation, information trust, and credibility of sources. The study is designed to provide timely, evidence-based insights to help journalists, researchers, and civic leaders better understand how the public across generations gets and values news.

Medill at Northwestern University brings long-standing expertise in journalism, media innovation, and audience research, while the University of Maryland contributes strengths in data, investigative journalism and public trust. Together, the institutions will collaborate with the Media Insight Project on survey research, qualitative studies, and public-facing reports designed to inform newsroom strategy and public understanding.

“Partnering with the Media Insight Project allows Medill to contribute rigorous, audience-centered research on some of the most pressing questions facing journalism today,” said Stephanie Edgerly, Associate Dean of Research at Northwestern University Medill School. “By working alongside the American Press Institute, The AP-NORC Center, and the Local News Network at the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism, we can help ensure that scholarly insights meaningfully inform newsroom practice and strengthen the connection between journalism and the public.”

The Media Insight Project was created to bridge the longstanding gap between research and the practical needs of journalists and news organizations.



“Too often, high-quality research and newsroom decision-making operate in separate worlds,” said Tom Rosenstiel, Professor of the Practice and Eleanor Merrill Scholar on the Future of Journalism of the University of Maryland. “The Media Insight Project ensures that social science research doesn’t just sit on a shelf but directly informs how journalism serves the public in the real world.”

The addition of new partners also reflects growing interest among academic institutions in collaborating across disciplines and sectors to address questions of public trust, information quality, and the role of journalism in society.

“With the addition of Northwestern University Medill School and the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, the Media Insight Project deepens its connection to leading centers of scholarship in journalism, communication, and public policy,” said Robyn Tomlin, Executive Director of the American Press Institute. “These partnerships strengthen our ability to ask important questions and apply methodological rigor and then translate insights into practical tools, programs and strategies that help news organizations better serve their communities.”

Research produced through the Media Insight Project will continue to be made publicly available, with findings shared through reports, briefs, and presentations aimed at journalists, scholars, and civic leaders.

Details about the Media Insight Project can be found at: <https://apnorc.org/projects/the-media-insight-project/>.

About the Media Insight Project

The Media Insight Project is a collaboration between the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, the Local News Network at the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism and The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with the objective of conducting high-quality, innovative research meant to inform the news industry and the public about various important issues facing journalism and the news business. The Media Insight Project brings together the expertise of the organizations and their respective partners and involves collaborations among key staff at the American Press Institute, Northwestern University Medill School, the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism, NORC at the University of Chicago, and The Associated Press.

<https://apnorc.org/projects/the-media-insight-project/>

About the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.



NORC



Northwestern
MEDILL



PHILIP MERRILL
COLLEGE of JOURNALISM

- The Associated Press (AP) is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world’s population sees AP journalism every day. www.ap.org
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. Learn more at www.apnorc.org

About the American Press Institute

The American Press Institute supports local and community-based media through research, programs and products that foster healthy, responsive and resilient news organizations. API envisions an inclusive democracy and society, where communities have the news and information they need to thrive. API is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization, and its parent organization is the News/Media Alliance. americanpressinstitute.org

About Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing, Communications

The Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University is a leading journalism school offering undergraduate and graduate programs that combine enduring journalistic values with innovation, data-driven strategies and global perspectives. Founded in 1921, Medill emphasizes real-world reporting, media entrepreneurship, and leadership in media’s digital transformation. <https://www.medill.northwestern.edu/>

About Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland

The University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism is one of the world’s premier journalism schools. One of only a handful of programs in the country devoted exclusively to journalism, Merrill College emphasizes immersive, hands-on learning to prepare students for success across today’s — and tomorrow’s — information ecosystem. Guided by a faculty of accomplished journalists and researchers, students work on data-driven national investigations through the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, a 2025 Pulitzer Prize finalist. They report from Washington and Annapolis with Capital News Service, cover sports beyond the playing field at The Shirley Povich Center for Sports Journalism, report on issues vital to Maryland communities through the Local News Network, and contribute to building innovative artificial intelligence-based tools that strengthen journalism. They also pursue international reporting opportunities across the globe. <https://merrill.umd.edu>