

Announcing the Media & Democracy Network

By The Editors

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We are delighted to announce the first iteration of the Media & Democracy Network (MDN), a project of the [Media & Democracy Program](#) at the [Social Science Research Council](#) (SSRC). MDN's primary purpose is to aggregate and curate academic research, news, and opinion investigating the close relationship between media, technology, and democracy. We hope it will be a useful tool for journalists, scholars, and everyone else who is interested in keeping up with news and analysis on media and democracy.

The idea for this platform grew out of our team's own workflows. As the Media & Democracy program launched last year, we found ourselves using a variety of channels—Twitter, Slack, email, etc.—to share interesting research, thought pieces, and news related to media and democracy. We quickly found that with so much interesting material to share, it was hard to keep up. Our team started exploring the idea of creating one place to share, organize, access, and archive both scholarly work and news/opinion pieces related to the intersection of media, technology, and democracy.

The result of this process is the Media & Democracy Network, intended to capture today's discussions on topics that include: how the news industry and democratic institutions are changing in response to a transformed media landscape; what role influential technology platforms play in this process; and how journalism and research are responding to stresses on our democratic system. Specific tags highlight themes like mis- and disinformation, polarization, hate speech and doxxing, and media consolidation—to give just a few examples. We want to capture the best of investigative journalism, thoughtful opinion, and academic research, and to share it all with you.

While MDN was in private beta, the SSRC team was already at work curating content and organizing it into categories; this content is available on the website now. The [Research and Analysis](#) category gathers academic research and investigative journalism. [In the News](#) brings you fact-based news stories relevant to topics at the intersection of media and democracy. The [Opinion and Commentary](#) section features selected insights about how media and democratic institutions and practices are changing. Finally, [Events and Opportunities](#) amplifies events, grant opportunities, or advertised jobs relevant to this broad

cross-disciplinary community. At the very top of the page, [Editor's Choice](#) highlights particularly interesting or relevant content from any of these categories. Occasionally, we do [round-up posts](#) to capture ongoing conversations, such as political scandals, major technology rollouts, or new research initiatives. These posts are featured in the most appropriate category.

MDN aggregates material with the conscious intent to amplify and credit original sources. Every post captures one illustrative quote from the original source, and directs interested readers back to the source for access to the full article. The values of sharing, citing, and collegiality are at the heart of MDN's technical and social infrastructure.

Collaboration is another key value for this project, and this summer we will launch an "editors-at-large" feature that will allow our readers—including faculty, students, journalists, and practitioners—to suggest content for inclusion on MDN. After all, a curation project of this scope calls for broad and diverse coverage, and our small team may not spot all of the most relevant content. You, our readers, can help us broaden our reach and amplify content that you think deserves to be shared. We will roll out this functionality over the summer; please [sign up here](#) to get notified when we do. In case you're curious, the process for suggesting content will be seamless and based on a bookmarklet (thank you, [PressForward](#) team). In other words, for our editors-at-large, making a recommendation will be as simple as bookmarking a web page as you read.

And for everyone who wants to follow along, there are several ways to do so. To receive updates, you can follow us on Twitter ([@SSRCmdn](#)), subscribe to our RSS feed (<https://mediawell.ssrc.org/feed/>), or simply bookmark the website for future check-ins. If you want to contact us, email us at [mdn\[at\]ssrc\[dot\]org](mailto:mdn[at]ssrc[dot]org).

We look forward to seeing how this platform, which has been useful to us, will be used by the broader community, and we welcome your feedback.

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