Methodology

This study used digital news articles to compile information on layoffs and buyouts occurring at the highest-circulation U.S. daily newspapers and highest-traffic digital-native news outlets in two years: 2017 and 2018.

Selecting news outlets

For each year, we examined daily newspapers and digital-native news sites with the largest audience reach in the country.

Newspapers: The daily newspapers were selected based on circulation data provided by the Alliance for Audited Media (AAM) and include all papers whose total Sunday circulations (print and digital combined) were over 50,000 in the fourth quarter of each year analyzed. The Wall Street Journal was then added to the list as it is one of the largest papers in the U.S. that does not report Sunday circulation to the AAM.

In 2018, 97 newspapers fell into this category:

- The Advocate (Louisiana)
- Akron Beacon Journal
- Albuquerque Journal
- Arizona Daily Star
- The Arizona Republic
- Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- Asbury Park Press
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- Austin American-Statesman
- The Baltimore Sun
- The Birmingham News
- The Boston Globe
- Boston Herald
- The Buffalo News
- The Charlotte Observer
- Charlotte Sun (Florida)
- Chicago Sun-Times
- Chicago Tribune
- The Cincinnati Enquirer
- The Columbus Dispatch
- The Commercial Appeal (Tennessee)
- The Courier Journal (Kentucky)
- Daily Herald (Illinois)
- Daily News (New York)
- Daily Press (Virginia)
- The Dallas Morning News
- Dayton Daily News
- The Denver Post
- The Des Moines Register
- Detroit Free Press
- El Nuevo Día (Puerto Rico)
- The Florida Times-Union
- Fort Worth Star-Telegram
- The Fresno Bee
- The Grand Rapids Press
- Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- Houston Chronicle
- The Indianapolis Star
In 2017, 110 newspapers fell into this category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper (City, State)</th>
<th>Newspaper (City, State)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Advocate (Louisiana)</td>
<td>Arkansas Democrat-Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron Beacon Journal</td>
<td>Asbury Park Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albuquerque Journal</td>
<td>The Atlanta Journal-Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Daily Star</td>
<td>Austin American-Statesman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arizona Republic</td>
<td>The Baltimore Sun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Disclaimer: This text is a representation of the document's content. The actual document may contain additional information or formatting not captured in this extract.*
The Birmingham News
The Blade (Ohio)
The Boston Globe
Boston Herald
The Buffalo News
The Canton Repository
The Charlotte Observer
Charlotte Sun
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago Tribune
The Cincinnati Enquirer
The Columbus Dispatch
The Commercial Appeal
The Courier Journal
The Daily Gazette (New York)
Daily Herald (Illinois)
Daily News (New York)
Daily Press (Virginia)
The Dallas Morning News
Dayton Daily News
The Daytona Beach News-Journal
The Denver Post
The Des Moines Register
Detroit Free Press
El Nuevo Día
The Florida Times-Union
The Fresno Bee
The Gazette (Colorado)
The Grand Rapids Press
Hartford Courant
Honolulu Star-Advertiser
Houston Chronicle
The Indianapolis Star
The Journal Gazette/The News-Sentinel
(Indiana)
The Journal News (New York)
Journal Star (Illinois)
The Kansas City Star
Knoxville News Sentinel
Las Vegas Review-Journal
Lexington Herald-Leader
Lincoln Journal Star
LNP
Los Angeles Times
The Mercury News
Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
The Morning Call
New York Post
The New York Times
The News & Observer
The News Journal (Delaware)
The News Tribune (Washington)
The News-Press (Florida)
Newsday
The Oklahoman
Omaha World-Herald
The Orange County Register
The Oregonian
Orlando Sentinel
The Palm Beach Post
The Patriot-News (Pennsylvania)
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Pioneer Press
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
The Plain Dealer
The Post and Courier (South Carolina)
The Post-Standard (New York)
The Press Democrat (California)
The Press-Enterprise (California)
The Providence Journal
Reading Eagle
The Record (New Jersey)
The Republican (Massachusetts)
Richmond Times-Dispatch
| Digital-native news outlets: Researchers used the list of digital-native news outlets originally created for Pew Research Center’s research on the state of the news media for the Digital News sector, as follows. First, all domains from 11 Comscore categories (Business to Business, Directories/Resources, Entertainment, Games, Lifestyles, Multi-Category, News/Information, Services, Social Media, Sports and Technology) with at least 10 million average monthly unique digital visitors in the fourth quarter of the year were identified. From that set of entities, they then selected digital-native news outlets using the following criteria: |
|---|---|
| Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | The Tennessean |
| The Sacramento Bee | The Times (Indiana) |
| San Antonio Express-News | The Times-Picayune |
| The San Diego Union-Tribune | The Virginian-Pilot |
| Sarasota Herald-Tribune | The Wall Street Journal |
| The Seattle Times | The Washington Post |
| South Florida Sun-Sentinel | The Wichita Eagle |
| The Spokesman-Review | Times Union |
| The Star-Ledger | Tribune-Review (Pennsylvania) |
| Star Tribune | Tulsa World |
| Star-Telegram | USA Today |
| The State (South Carolina) | Wisconsin State Journal |
| St. Louis Post-Dispatch | |

1. Must be “born on the web,” i.e., not the website of a legacy news brand (though it may be owned by a legacy media company).

2. It is a publisher of original content about news, defined as current events affecting public life (can include both original reporting and commentary/analysis). Sites are judged by an assessment of the material appearing on their homepage. A review of top stories on the home page must render some evidence of original reporting, such as interviews, eyewitness accounts or referral to source documents, by a dedicated reporter/editorial staff. Sites are also judged as news publishers if they self-describe as an organization that produces news, either in the subject headers/navigation bar and/or in their “about” or advertising section through usage of terms like “news,” “journalism,” “covering” or “informing.”

3. It is not entirely focused on reviews, advice, recipes or unedited raw data.
4. It is not primarily a user-generated or aggregated content platform (such as Medium, Reddit or Wikipedia). Branded content such as NBA.com was also excluded.

The following 37 entities met these criteria in 2018:

247SPORTS.COM  INSIDER.COM
90MIN.COM  INVESTOPEDIA.COM
BGR.COM  MARKETWATCH.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM  MASHABLE.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM  MAXPREPS.COM
BUSTLE.COM  POLITICO.COM
BUZZFEED.COM  POLYGON.COM
BUZZFEEDNEWS.COM*  REFINERY29.COM
CNET.COM  SBNATION.COM
COMICBOOK.COM  SLATE.COM
DEADSPIN.COM  TECHRADAR.COM
DIGITALTRENDS.COM  THEDAILYBEAST.COM
EATER.COM  THEROOT.COM
ELITEDAILY.COM  THEVERGE.COM
ENGADGET.COM  THRILLIST.COM
GIZMODO.COM  TMZ.COM
HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM  UPROXX.COM
HUFFINGTONPOST.COM  VOX.COM
IGN.COM

*Note: For Buzzfeednews.com researchers did not perform a separate search since any layoffs or buyouts would have been captured in searches for Buzzfeed.com. For the analysis, these two entities were considered one.

The following 35 entities met these criteria in 2017 (see methodology for how these entities were selected):

12UP.COM  BUSTLE.COM
247SPORTS.COM  BUZZFEED.COM
BGR.COM  CNET.COM
BLEACHERREPORT.COM  DEADSPIN.COM
BREITBART.COM  DIGITALTRENDS.COM
BUSINESSINSIDER.COM  EATER.COM
Overlap: When both the 2017 and 2018 groups are combined, the analysis included 156 outlets (excluding duplicates). Overall, 78% of all news outlets studied appeared in both years, including 85% of newspapers and 61% of digital-native news sites.

Searching for news articles citing layoffs

Researchers then sought to identify any publicly reported instances of layoffs at these news outlets. A number of steps were taken when searching for news articles mentioning layoffs. A round of searches was first conducted on Google using the following criteria:

- For each news outlet, researchers used the following search query: the name of the news outlet in quotations (e.g., “Chicago Tribune”) and “~layoff” – a Google Search feature that captures variations of the word “layoff” and related terms, including “lay off”, “layoffs”, “lay-offs”, “laid off”, “laid-off”, and “job cuts”.
- Articles were filtered by publication date, ranging from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year. However, searches were conducted by fiscal quarters to better ensure that every layoff that occurred in the time period was identified.
- Researchers performed searches in Incognito mode on Google Chrome so that previous browser activity did not bias search results.
- The search for articles was limited to the first page of results.

Researchers separately searched for news articles on Mediagazer, an aggregator site for media news. This additional search was done as a check on the Google searches.
**Buyouts**: Separately, researchers sought to identify any publicly reported instances of buyouts at these news outlets, using the same method. As with layoffs, a round of searches was first conducted on Google news using the “~buyouts” search term, which captured variants and related terms (e.g., “buy outs”). Researchers also searched for news articles about buyouts on Mediaplayer as a check on the Google searches.

**Identifying newsroom layoffs**

Researchers were careful to include only layoffs directly impacting the news organizations’ employees. For example, layoffs at a parent or holding company were excluded unless the announcement or coverage specified that the layoffs affected a given news outlet studied. Layoffs in an organization’s international branch or newsroom were included unless they affected a different product within the news organization. This was done to guarantee that the analysis did not overcount layoffs, since many outlets share the same parent company. Cuts to vacant positions and terminations of employees not connected to layoffs were also excluded. Mentions of buyouts that were offered or taken were counted and recorded separately, using the same approach.

The news articles examined did not always mention the kinds of positions being eliminated, so the layoffs analyzed here may include the full range of employees at newspapers and digital-native news outlets, rather than just newsroom employees. Additionally, there may have been other reasons for the reported layoffs not covered by media accounts, and the results of the analysis are limited to the information provided by the news articles examined.

Once all instances of layoffs were recorded, researchers determined the number of people each round of layoffs affected. Many news articles gave an exact number of people who were laid off, but several gave approximations or ranges, while some gave no indication at all.

When a news article cited a range of laid-off staff, the stated minimum and maximum were recorded. For articles that provided an exact number or estimate of laid-off staff, the stated number was recorded as both the minimum and maximum. When only the maximum was mentioned (e.g., “up to 10”), the stated maximum was used and one was recorded as the minimum. Conversely, when only the minimum was mentioned (e.g., “at least 10”), the stated number was used as both the minimum and maximum. This was done to be as conservative as possible. The study relied on the estimated maximum number of layoffs for any individual outlet.

**Acknowledgments**

Assistance in data analysis was provided by Nami Sumida, Sophia Fedeli, Galen Stocking, Amy Shim and Hadeel Saab.