

Methodology

This study used digital news articles to compile information on layoffs occurring at the highest-circulation U.S. daily newspapers and highest-traffic digital-native news outlets in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

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. Since newspaper audience data for 2020 was not yet available at the time this analysis was conducted, the same list of newspapers in 2019 was used for 2020

In 2019, 86 newspapers fell into this category:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| The Advocate (Louisiana) | New York Daily News |
| Akron Beacon Journal | New York Post |
| Albuquerque Journal | The New York Times |
| Arizona Daily Star | The News & Observer (North Carolina) |
| The Arizona Republic | Newsday |
| Arkansas Democrat-Gazette | The Oklahoman |
| Asbury Park Press | Omaha World-Herald |
| The Atlanta Journal-Constitution | The Orange County Register |
| Austin American-Statesman | The Oregonian |
| The Baltimore Sun | Orlando Sentinel |
| The Birmingham News | The Palm Beach Post |
| The Blade (Toledo) | The Patriot-News (Pennsylvania) |
| The Boston Globe | The Philadelphia Inquirer |
| Boston Herald | Pioneer Press |
| The Buffalo News | The Plain Dealer |
| The Charlotte Observer | The Post and Courier (South Carolina) |
| Chicago Sun-Times | The Post-Standard (New York) |

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| Chicago Tribune | The Providence Journal |
| The Cincinnati Enquirer | Reading Eagle |
| The Columbus Dispatch | The Record (New Jersey) |
| The Courier Journal (Kentucky) | The Republican (Massachusetts) |
| Daily Herald (Illinois) | Richmond Times-Dispatch |
| Daily Press (Virginia) | The Sacramento Bee |
| The Dallas Morning News | San Antonio Express-News |
| Dayton Daily News | The San Diego Union-Tribune |
| Democrat and Chronicle (New York) | The San Francisco Chronicle |
| The Denver Post | The Seattle Times |
| The Des Moines Register | South Florida Sun Sentinel |
| Detroit Free Press | The Spokesman-Review (Washington) |
| Fort Worth Star-Telegram | The Star-Ledger (New Jersey) |
| The Fresno Bee | Star Tribune (Minnesota) |
| The Grand Rapids Press | St. Louis Post-Dispatch |
| Hartford Courant | Tampa Bay Times |
| Honolulu Star-Advertiser | The Tennessean |
| The Indianapolis Star | The Times (Indiana) |
| The Journal Gazette/News-Sentinel (Indiana) | The Virginian-Pilot |
| The Kansas City Star | The Wall Street Journal |
| Las Vegas Review-Journal | The Washington Post |
| Lexington Herald-Leader | Times Union (New York) |
| LNP (Pennsylvania) | USA Today |
| Los Angeles Times | Wisconsin State Journal |
| The Mercury News (California) | |
| Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald | |
| Milwaukee Journal Sentinel | |
| The Morning Call | |

In 2018, 97 newspapers fell into this category:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| The Advocate (Louisiana) | Asbury Park Press |
| Akron Beacon Journal | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution |
| Albuquerque Journal | Austin American-Statesman |
| Arizona Daily Star | The Baltimore Sun |
| The Arizona Republic | The Birmingham News |
| Arkansas Democrat-Gazette | The Boston Globe |

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| Boston Herald | New York Post |
| The Buffalo News | The New York Times |
| The Charlotte Observer | The News & Observer (North Carolina) |
| Charlotte Sun (Florida) | Newsday |
| Chicago Sun-Times | The Oklahoman |
| Chicago Tribune | Omaha World-Herald |
| The Cincinnati Enquirer | The Orange County Register |
| The Columbus Dispatch | The Oregonian |
| The Commercial Appeal (Tennessee) | Orlando Sentinel |
| The Courier Journal (Kentucky) | The Palm Beach Post |
| Daily Herald (Illinois) | The Patriot-News (Pennsylvania) |
| Daily News (New York) | The Philadelphia Inquirer |
| Daily Press (Virginia) | Pioneer Press |
| The Dallas Morning News | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette |
| Dayton Daily News | The Plain Dealer |
| The Denver Post | The Post and Courier (South Carolina) |
| The Des Moines Register | The Post-Standard (New York) |
| Detroit Free Press | The Press Democrat (California) |
| El Nuevo Día (Puerto Rico) | The Providence Journal |
| The Florida Times-Union | Reading Eagle |
| Fort Worth Star-Telegram | The Record (New Jersey) |
| The Fresno Bee | The Republican (Massachusetts) |
| The Grand Rapids Press | Richmond Times-Dispatch |
| Honolulu Star-Advertiser | Democrat and Chronicle (New York) |
| Houston Chronicle | The Sacramento Bee |
| The Indianapolis Star | San Antonio Express-News |
| The Journal Gazette/News-Sentinel (Indiana) | The San Diego Union-Tribune |
| The Kansas City Star | The San Francisco Chronicle |
| Knoxville News Sentinel | Sarasota Herald-Tribune |
| Las Vegas Review-Journal | The Seattle Times |
| Lexington Herald-Leader | South Florida Sun Sentinel |
| Lincoln Journal Star | The Spokesman-Review (Washington) |
| LNP (Pennsylvania) | The Star-Ledger (New Jersey) |
| Los Angeles Times | Star Tribune (Minnesota) |
| The Mercury News (California) | The State (South Carolina) |
| Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald | St. Louis Post-Dispatch |
| Milwaukee Journal Sentinel | Tampa Bay Times |
| | The Tennessean |

The Times (Indiana)
 The Times-Picayune
 The Virginian-Pilot
 The Wall Street Journal
 The Washington Post

Times Union (New York)
 Tribune-Review (Pennsylvania)
 Tulsa World
 USA Today
 Wisconsin State Journal

In 2017, 110 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 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

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| The New York Times | Rochester Democrat and Chronicle |
| The News & Observer | The Sacramento Bee |
| The News Journal (Delaware) | San Antonio Express-News |
| The News Tribune (Washington) | The San Diego Union-Tribune |
| The News-Press (Florida) | Sarasota Herald-Tribune |
| Newsday | The Seattle Times |
| The Oklahoman | South Florida Sun-Sentinel |
| Omaha World-Herald | The Spokesman-Review |
| The Orange County Register | The Star-Ledger |
| The Oregonian | Star Tribune |
| Orlando Sentinel | Star-Telegram |
| The Palm Beach Post | The State (South Carolina) |
| The Patriot-News (Pennsylvania) | St. Louis Post-Dispatch |
| The Philadelphia Inquirer | The Tennessean |
| Pioneer Press | The Times (Indiana) |
| Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | The Times-Picayune |
| The Plain Dealer | The Virginian-Pilot |
| The Post and Courier (South Carolina) | The Wall Street Journal |
| The Post-Standard (New York) | The Washington Post |
| The Press Democrat (California) | The Wichita Eagle |
| The Press-Enterprise (California) | Times Union |
| The Providence Journal | Tribune-Review (Pennsylvania) |
| Reading Eagle | Tulsa World |
| The Record (New Jersey) | USA Today |
| The Republican (Massachusetts) | Wisconsin State Journal |
| 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. Since digital audience data for 2020 was not yet available at the time this analysis was conducted, the same list of digital-native news outlets in 2019 was used for 2020. From that set of entities, they then selected digital-native news outlets using the following criteria:

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 45 entities met these criteria in 2019:

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| 247SPORTS.COM | MASHABLE.COM |
| BGR.COM | MAXPREPS.COM |
| BLEACHERREPORT.COM | MEDICALNEWSTODAY.COM |
| BUSINESSINSIDER.COM | PATCH.COM |
| BUSTLE.COM | PINKNEWS.CO.UK |
| BUZZFEED.COM | POLITICO.COM |
| CNET.COM | POLYGON.COM |
| COMICBOOK.COM | POPCULTURE.COM |
| DIGITALTRENDS.COM | POPSUGAR.COM |
| EATER.COM | QZ.COM |
| ELITEDAILY.COM | REFINERY29.COM |
| GAMESPOT.COM | SCARYMOMMY.COM |
| GIZMODO.COM | SCREENRANT.COM |
| HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM | SLATE.COM |
| HUFFPOST.COM | SNOPE.COM |
| IGN.COM | TECHRADAR.COM |
| INVERSE.COM | THEDAILYBEAST.COM |
| INVESTOPEDIA.COM | THEVERGE.COM |
| JALOPNIK.COM | TMZ.COM |

LIFEHACKER.COM
 LIVESCIENCE.COM
 LOOPER.COM
 MARKETWATCH.COM

TOMSGUIDE.COM
 VOX.COM
 WEBMD.COM

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

The following 37 entities met these criteria in 2018:

247SPORTS.COM
 90MIN.COM
 BGR.COM
 BLEACHERREPORT.COM
 BUSINESSINSIDER.COM
 BUSTLE.COM
 BUZZFEED.COM
 BUZZFEEDNEWS.COM*
 CNET.COM
 COMICBOOK.COM
 DEADSPIN.COM
 DIGITALTRENDS.COM
 EATER.COM
 ELITEDAILY.COM
 ENGADGET.COM
 GIZMODO.COM
 HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM
 HUFFINGTONPOST.COM
 IGN.COM

INSIDER.COM
 INVESTOPEDIA.COM
 MARKETWATCH.COM
 MASHABLE.COM
 MAXPREPS.COM
 POLITICO.COM
 POLYGON.COM
 REFINERY29.COM
 SBNATION.COM
 SLATE.COM
 TECHRADAR.COM
 THEDAILYBEAST.COM
 THEROOT.COM
 THEVERGE.COM
 THRILLIST.COM
 TMZ.COM
 UPROXX.COM
 VOX.COM

*Note: For Buzzfeednews.com researchers did not perform a separate search since any layoffs 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 | INVESTOPEDIA.COM |
| 247SPORTS.COM | JEZEBEL.COM |
| BGR.COM | MASHABLE.COM |
| BLEACHERREPORT.COM | MAXPREPS.COM |
| BREITBART.COM | POLITICO.COM |
| BUSINESSINSIDER.COM | QZ.COM |
| BUSTLE.COM | REFINERY29.COM |
| BUZZFEED.COM | SBNATION.COM |
| CNET.COM | SLATE.COM |
| DEADSPIN.COM | THEDAILYBEAST.COM |
| DIGITALTRENDS.COM | THEVERGE.COM |
| EATER.COM | THRILLIST.COM |
| ELITEDAILY.COM | TMZ.COM |
| GAMESPOT.COM | TOPIX.NET |
| GIZMODO.COM | UPROXX.COM |
| HUFFINGTONPOST.COM | UPWORTHY.COM |
| IBTIMES.COM | VOX.COM |
| IGN.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.

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.

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.