Headlines & Hashtags: Journalists, Creators and the Future of Local Storytelling

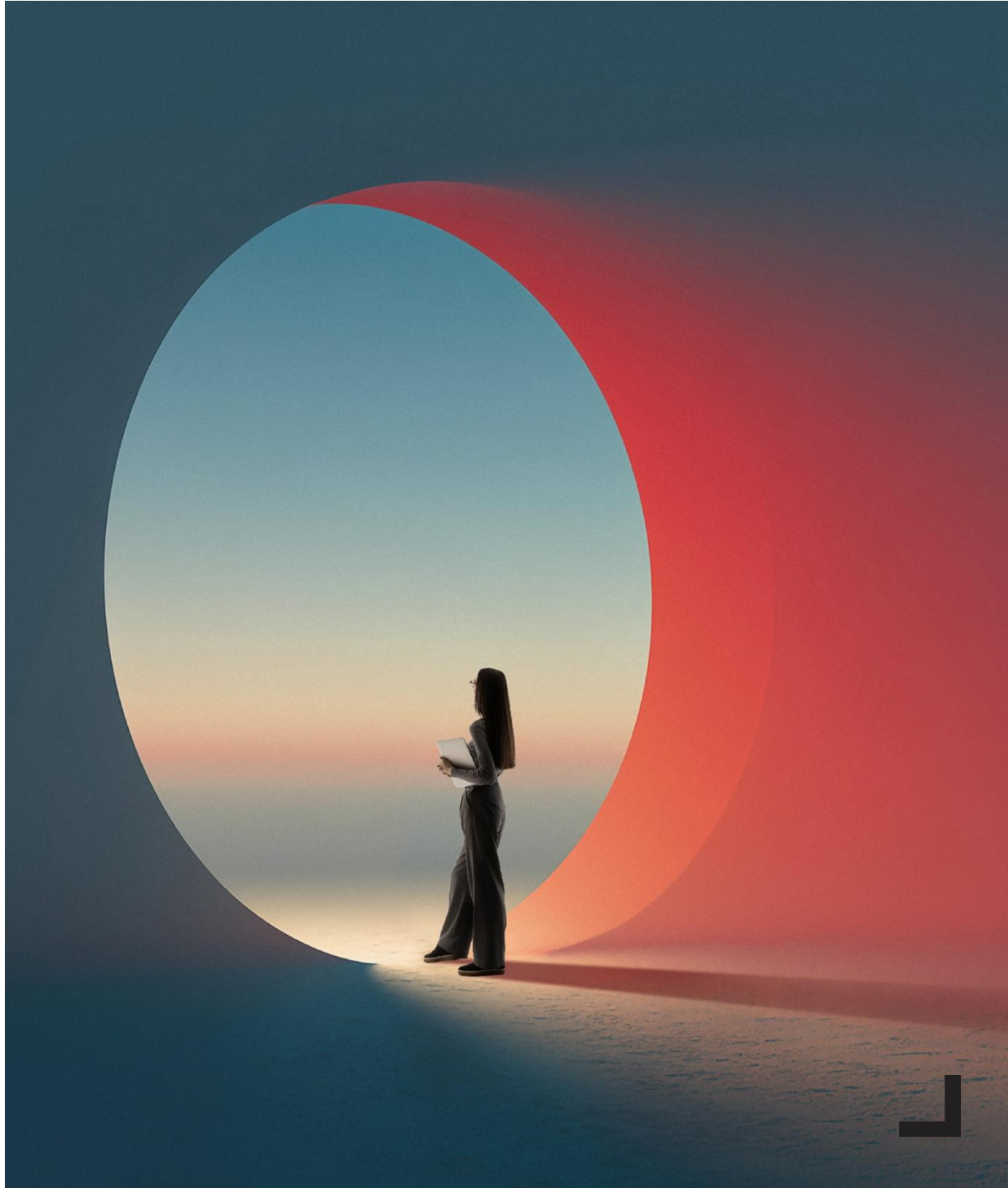
FROM HEADLINES TO HASHTAGS:

JOURNALISTS, CREATORS & THE FUTURE OF LOCAL STORYTELLING

ANNE MARIE LEVIS

PRESIDENT & CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Funk/Levis & Associates



WHY ME?

- Not a Journalist
- Not Technically in Media
- But Found My Place









FROM PUBLIC INFORMATION TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: HOW THE WORLD OF CONNECTING YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAS CHANGED

- Trust in Government at an All Time Low
- Trust in Media is Even Lower
- Power of Traditional Media Disappearing
- Fractured Communication Channels

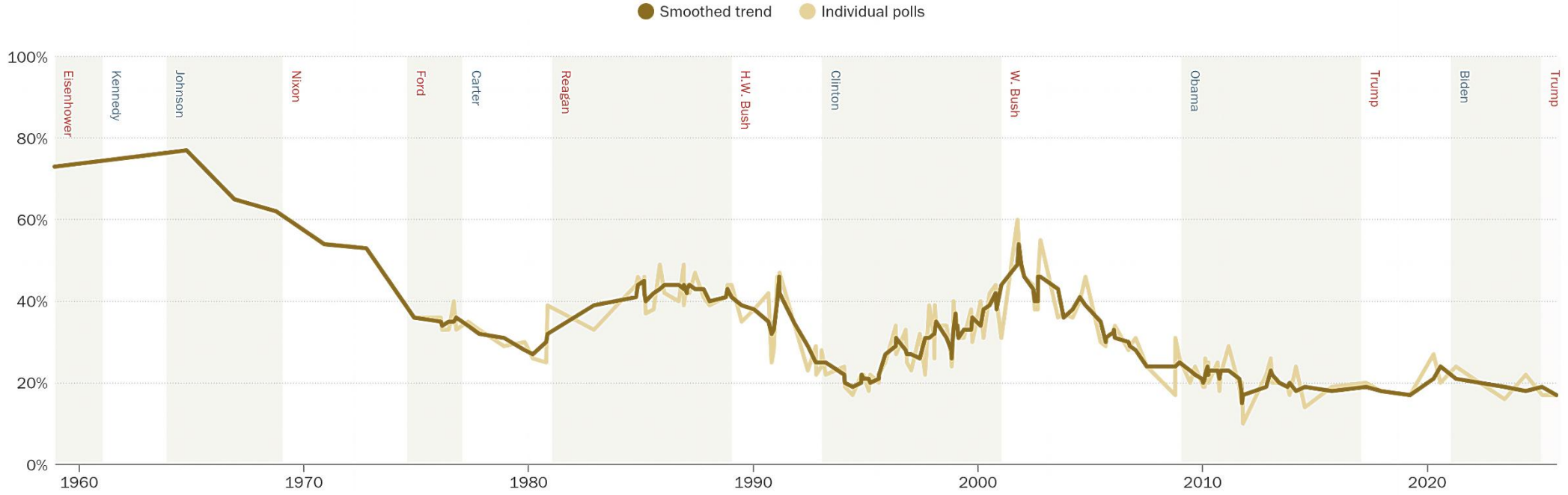


PUBLIC TRUST IN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE YEARS: 1958-2025

–PEW RESEARCH

Public trust in government near historic lows

% who say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right ***just about always/most of the time***

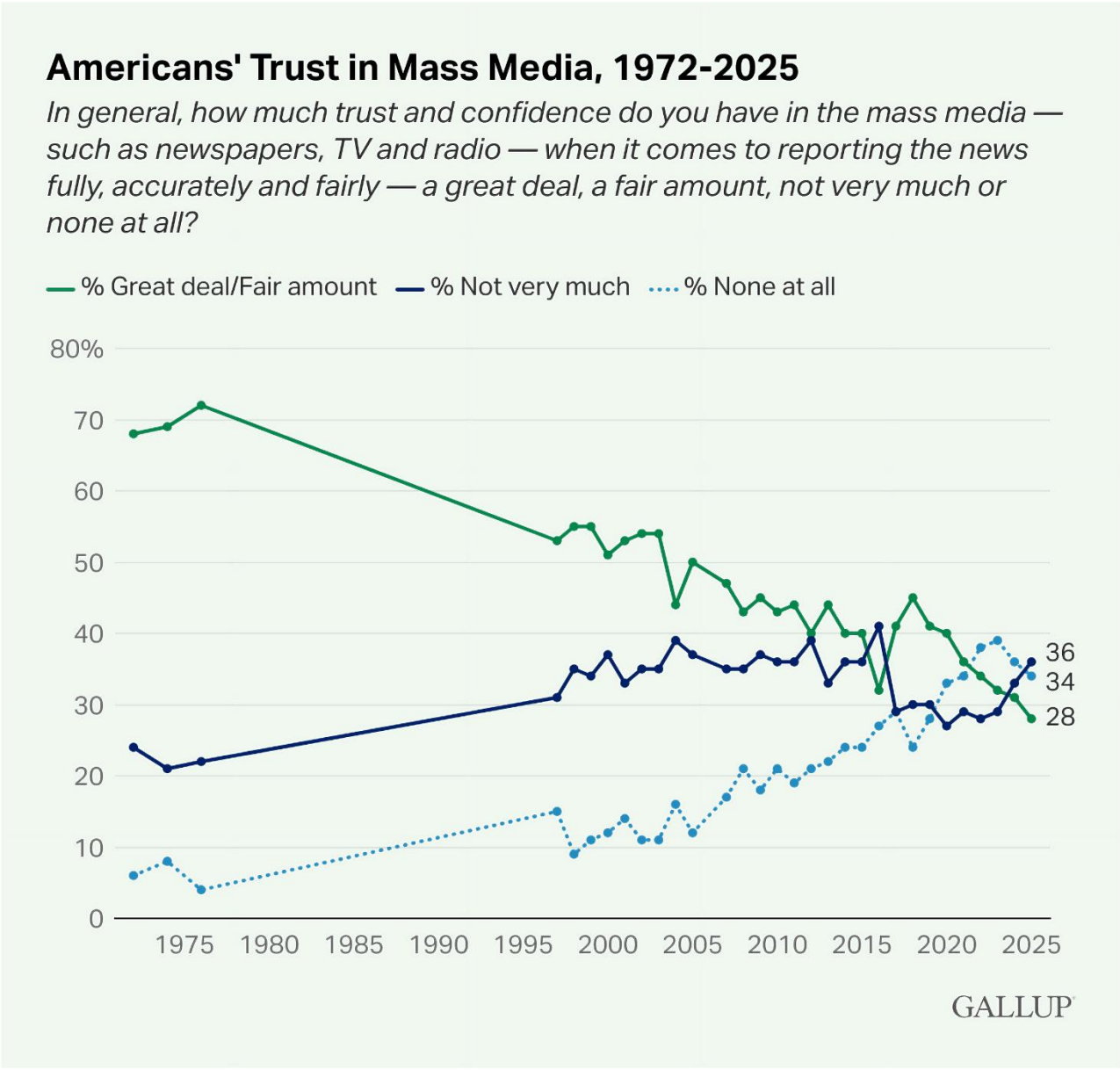


Note: From 1976-February 2025, the smoothed trend line represents a three-survey moving average. Data prior to 1976, and the most recent number (September 2025), are from individual polls.
Sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN surveys.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

PUBLIC TRUST IN MEDIA AT AN ALL TIME LOW

–GALLUP (2025)



WHY HAS TRUST ERODED SO PRECIPITOUSLY?

- Meta and Rise of Social Media as a "Truth" Source
- Media Fragmentation and Decentralization of Information
- Conflating Journalism and Commentary
- Intense and Enduring Political Polarization
- Speed over Accuracy in Reporting
- Lack of Transparency
- Google Monetizing Journalism



AND OF COURSE...



OPB INVESTIGATED AI IN 2024

FREE PRESS

AI slop is already invading Oregon's local journalism



By Ryan Haas (OPB)
Dec. 9, 2024 6 a.m.

Silicon Valley's latest hot technology is being used to further degrade the news available to Oregonians

If you believe the internet, in his first month at the Ashland Daily Tidings, reporter Joe Minihane skied the slopes of Mount Ashland, ate at 15 restaurants in Roseburg, hiked the Owyhee Canyonlands in Malheur County, took in Autzen Stadium and Multnomah Falls, and visited the Neskowin Ghost Forest on the Oregon Coast.

And sure, more than 1,200 miles of travel to write 10 stories in a month might seem excessive for a local outdoors reporter who was new to his Southern Oregon job, but who could argue with his output?

Minihane could.

“AI JOURNALISM” NOW HAS VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTORS

TECH

The Dissent has AI ‘reporters’ cover S.F., reusing the work of human journalists

A BlackRock portfolio specialist created the AI news site in his spare time.



by **BRANDON PHO**
August 12, 2026, 3:22 pm

Share



THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF MEDIA IN OREGON

A FEW FACTS ABOUT OREGON MEDIA

LOCAL OREGON NEWS BY THE NUMBERS

– UO SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AGORA JOURNALISM CENTER (2024)

Nearly 20 News Outlets have closed or merged with larger ones since late 2022

- 116 year-old Medford Mail Tribune; Columbia Press; The Columbia County Chronicle and Chief; Portland Bridgeliner
- Three dozen local newspapers sold to Carpenter Media
  - 30% of Oregon's media outlets transferred to out-of-state company.
- Smaller newsrooms = Less Local and Public Affairs News Coverage



THE NUMBERS FOR NEWSPAPERS

Oregon Newspaper Stats at a Glance

13% (18)
of Oregon newspapers closed since late 2022

Nearly **30%**
of Oregon's newspapers were sold to out of state owners in 2024

Family-owned newspapers now make up about **15%** of Oregon's newspaper ecosystem

Carpenter Media now owns **30%**
of Oregon's newspapers, more than any other company

42%
of Oregon's newspapers are now owned by non-Oregon based owners

THE BRIGHT SPOTS FOR OREGON MEDIA

- OPB and the Oregonian are Strengthening
- Oregon Journalism Project
- Lookout Eugene-Springfield
- More Multimedia Journalists Looking for Engaging Ways to Tell Stories



SO WHY SHOULD THIS ALL MATTER TO YOU?

- Information and Reporting Inspires Trust in Public Institutions
  - Most Americans (85%) Believe Local Media is Important to their Community
- Local News Connects People to Their Community
  and Civic Life
- Governments are Facing Difficult Issues and Need Community Involvement
- Fewer Outlets and Busy Reporters Don’t Have Time To Tell Your Story
  - So You Need to Find Ways to Help



LET'S HEAR FROM THE REPORTERS

- Gold Meadows, KMTR/KVAL-TV
- Bryce Dole, Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB)
- Bill Poehler, Salem Statesman Journal


THANK YOU
Funk
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& Associates