

# Pew study examines emergence of non-profit news

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More than half of emerging nonprofit news sites produce content with a clear ideological bent, according to a study released Monday by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

The report examined 46 national and state nonprofit news websites, which have become more common as traditional [newsrooms](#) have shrunk, and found 56 percent of the sites were ideologically based.

The more ideological sites tended to be funded mostly or entirely by one parent organization, although that group may have multiple contributors, the study said. Those sites tended to produce less content and be less transparent about who they are and where their funding comes from.

Sites with a more balanced political perspective tended to have multiple funders, more [transparency](#) and more content, the study found.

The most liberal sites were nine operating under the umbrella of the American Independent News Network, which is funded by a variety of individuals and organizations including the Open Society Foundations founded and chaired by [billionaire](#) financier George Soros.

The most conservative sites were 12 that shared the common name "Watchdog" and were funded chiefly by the Franklin Center for Government & Public Integrity, which was launched in part by the libertarian group the Sam Adams Alliance.

David Bennahum, founder and CEO of The American Independent News Network, said the mission and point of view of his websites leads to great journalism and justifies the network's existence.

"We have a moral perspective on all of the issues," Bennahum said. "We think part of doing great journalism includes having a perspective on what is right and what is wrong. ... When we do the stories, we endeavor to do them fairly and do them well."

The president of the Franklin Center did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The report found that topics covered also correlated with the political orientation of the sites and their backers. The Pew study found that the more liberal American Independent [News sites](#) heavily favored stories on organized labor and the environment, while the more conservative [Watchdog.org](#) sites focused on stories about government waste and inefficiency.

Only 2 percent of stories on all the sites contained more than two points of view and half the stories studied had just one point of view on controversial topics, the report said.

Pew researchers analyzed 1,203 stories from the month of September 2010 and conducted an audit of the sites and their chief supporters between May and September 2010.

**More information:** Pew Research Center report:  
[www.journalism.org/analysis-reports/non-profit-news-1](http://www.journalism.org/analysis-reports/non-profit-news-1)

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