



Testimony of Anne Galloway, Executive Director of the Vermont Journalism Trust

Good afternoon Madame chair and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today.

I'm grateful that the committee recognizes the importance of the issues pertaining to news media in the 21st century. Last year's passage of the Shield Law is clear evidence the Vermont legislature recognizes the vital role journalism has in our democracy and that online news organizations are a viable part of that.

My testimony today focuses on VTDigger as one credible example of the evolution of online news.

I will explain how, through the support of thousands of readers, the organization has grown to execute its mission every day throughout Vermont.

VTDigger is a nonprofit online news daily dedicated to public service journalism. VTDigger's mission is to produce rigorous journalism that explains complex issues, holds the government accountable to the public, and engages Vermonters in the democratic process.

Our readers do not have to pay any fees or subscribe to access our content.

Since its founding in 2009, VTDigger has grown approximately 30% every year in terms of readership, reporting staff and revenue.

VTDigger currently has 200,000 unique monthly readers and 10,000 daily readers and is read in every Vermont county.

We have grown from a staff of one to a staff of 19.

Within the last two and a half years, VTDigger has hired reporters in Chittenden, Windham, Rutland and Bennington counties, in addition to Washington, D.C., to fill the gaps left by a dwindling print news industry -- a decade long national phenomenon that has definitely impacted Vermont.

We have planned for a business and economy reporter, a data reporter and additional business office staff to support our ongoing work.

VTDigger is not a replacement for print news. In fact, we have established 12 print media partnerships whereby we share content on a regular basis thereby better ensuring Vermonters have the most comprehensive access to the information they need to stay informed and engaged in their communities.

Online news organizations have evolved to become a center of civic engagement. Readers have become very adroit in exploiting digital news sites. At VTDigger, readers leave news tips,

provide commentary, submit and access press releases, and converse through our comment section. Many readers have told us that VTDigger is a valuable resource in their professional work life.

I support S.97 because it recognizes the evolution of the news industry and it's role as a viable tool for citizens to participate in the democratic process. S.97 recognizes the reality of how citizens get their news in the 21st century and how public officials want to reach their communities. It offers choices to public officials to ensure they can keep their citizens informed in the manner most appropriate for them.

Thank you again for this opportunity and for your vigilance in helping Vermonters gain full access to the important public information they need.



News in pursuit of truth • VTDigger.org

READERSHIP



MONTHLY VISITORS

200,000 per month



DAILY VISITORS

10,000 per day



STATEWIDE REACH

and now Washington, D.C.

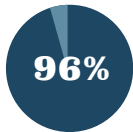
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Knowledge is crucial to political empowerment, and VTDigger is one of the few sources providing that knowledge to Vermonters.

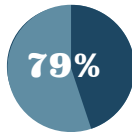
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- David Andrews, Middlebury, VT

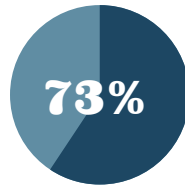
READER LOYALTY



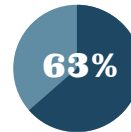
satisfied with VTDigger



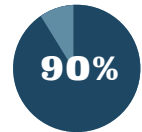
have read VTDigger for over 2 years.



readers who say VTDigger is quite a bit better compared to other Vermont news media

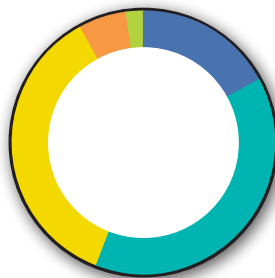


visit VTDigger at least once a day



say VTDigger is a source of state & local news

REVENUE SOURCES



- Grants 15%
- Underwriting 32%
- Contributions 47%
- News Revenue 4%
- Events 2%

SOCIAL MEDIA



14,000 Facebook Followers



17,800 Daily Digger Email Subscribers



27,000 Twitter Followers