

# DELEGATED INFORMATION CHOICE

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ABSTRACT. News media provide an editorial service for their audiences by monitoring a large number of events and by selecting the most newsworthy of these to report. Using a Latent Dirichlet Allocation topic model to classify news articles, we document the editorial function of US newspapers. We find that, while different newspapers on average tend to emphasize different topics, news coverage becomes more homogenous across newspapers after major events. We propose a theoretical model that can match these facts. In the model, agents delegate the choice of what to get information about to information providers that monitor the world on their behalf. The degree to which information about a given event is common among agents is endogenous and depends both on agents' preferences and the distribution of possible events. When agents have a strategic motive, they respond more strongly to events that they can infer are closer to common knowledge. Delegating the choice of what to get information about to providers that condition on ex post events introduces correlation in agents' actions that is absent if agents choose ex ante what to get information about.