Using solutions journalism to cover climate change

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SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM NETWORK

SOL
JOU
NET

Solutions journalism is

rigorous, evidence-based reporting on responses to social problems.

WHAT IS SOLUTION JOURNALISM?

- Covers a **response** to a problem and **how** it happened.
- Provides **evidence** of impact, looking at effectiveness, not just intentions (if a pilot, evidence may be incomplete)
  - *Qualitative or quantitative data*
  - *Evidence showing that the response is not working? You can write sojo about a failed response too! There's still a story here.*
- Produces **insights** that can help others respond too
- Points out any **limitations or caveats** of the response ("to be sure…")

NOT A SILVER BULLET

Current Issue SIGN IN SUB

DownToEarth

CLIMATE CHANGE

Best way to remove carbon: Sequestering it in its natural sinks

To curb desertification, we need to restore degraded soil via forest improve vegetative cover, enhance water use efficiency, reduce so erosion and adopt better farming systems

NEXT BLO

By Chandra Bhushan
Last Updated: Saturday 07 September 2019

INSTEAD, FOCUS ON WHERE THE RESPONSE DOES (AND DOESN'T) WORK

These probiotics for plants help farms suck up extra carbon dioxide

A mix of fungi and bacteria added to the soil makes agriculture more productive–and helps stop climate change.

NOT A THEORY

salon

(AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

Citizen science could help address Canada's plastic pollution problem

Plastics straws are now hard to find. Are plastic bags next?

2

TONY ROBERT WALKER

SEPTEMBER 16, 2019 1:00AM (UTC)

This article was originally published on The Conversation.

Oceans have become sinks for vast quantities of anthropogenic debris — the human-created litter we dispose of. This debris has been a growing concern for decades and is one of the most

INSTEAD, SOMETHING THAT'S ALREADY IN PROCESS

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KRWG
Here and Now

We're currently experiencing technical difficulties with our TV signal in Truth or Consequences and are working to fix it ASAP.

American Spring LIVE

New Mexicans Use Rain Gauges to Help Scientists Map Precipitation Levels

By MICHAEL HERNANDEZ • FEB 9, 2019

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KRWG NEWS krwg.org New Mexicans Use Rain Gauges to Help Scientists Map P... Watch later Share

NOT FAVOR FOR A FRIEND

FEATURE

The Tiny Swiss Company That Thinks It Can Help Stop Climate Change

Two European entrepreneurs want to remove carbon from the air at prices cheap enough to matter.

By Jon Gertner

Feb. 12, 2019

700

Just over a century ago in Ludwigshafen, Germany, a scientist named Carl Bosch assembled a team of engineers to exploit a new technique in chemistry. A year earlier, another German chemist,

INSTEAD, FOCUS ON THE PROS AND CONS

gt

FutureStructure

INFRASTRUCTURE

Green and Cool Roofs Provide Relief for Hot Cities, but Should be Sited Carefully

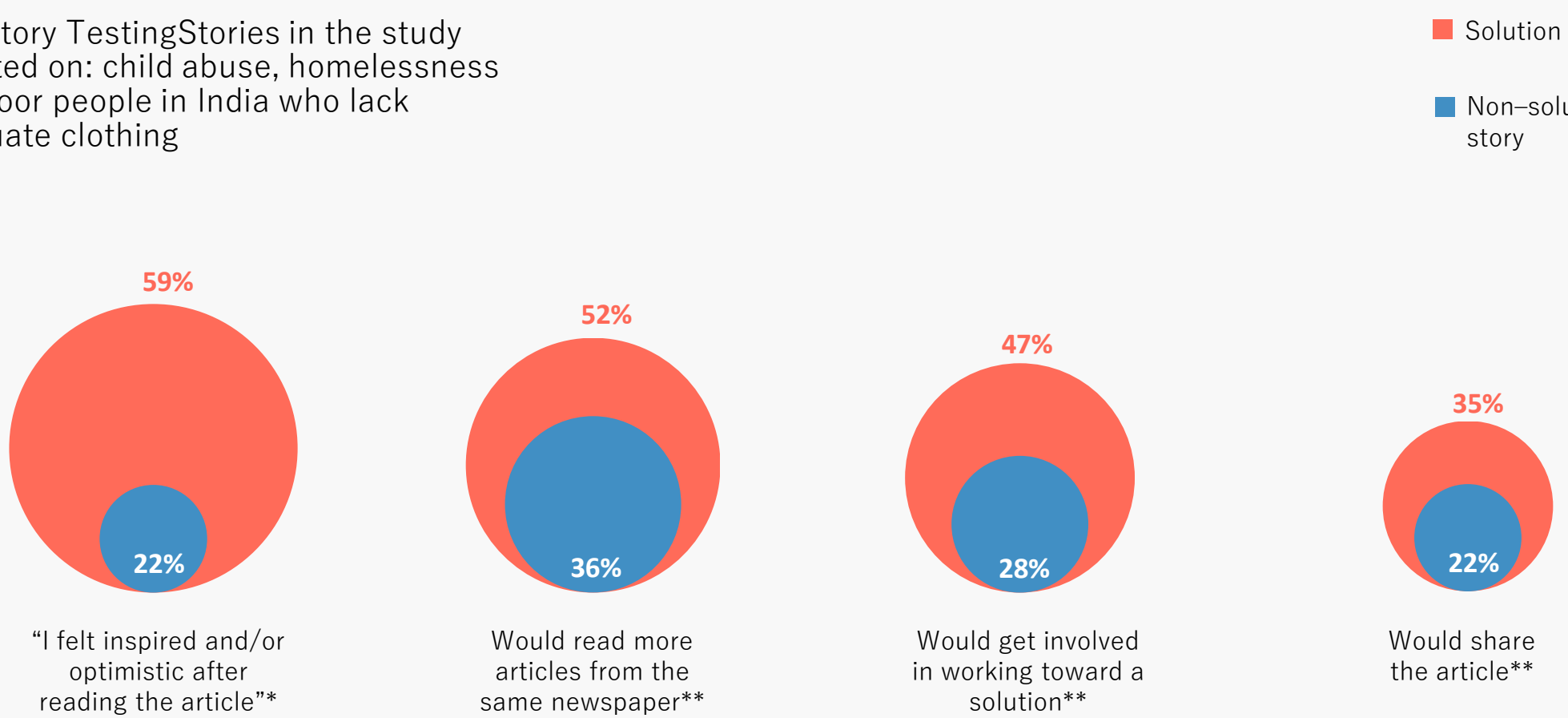
Reflective roofs are effective tools for cooling overheated cities. Research in Chicago shows that their impacts depend on local conditions, so planners should site them carefully.

BY ASHISH SHARMA, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME / JULY 1, 2016

WHY USE SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM TO COVER CLIMATE?

A/B STORY TESTING

A/B Story TestingStories in the study reported on: child abuse, homelessness and poor people in India who lack adequate clothing



"I felt inspired and/or optimistic after reading the article"*

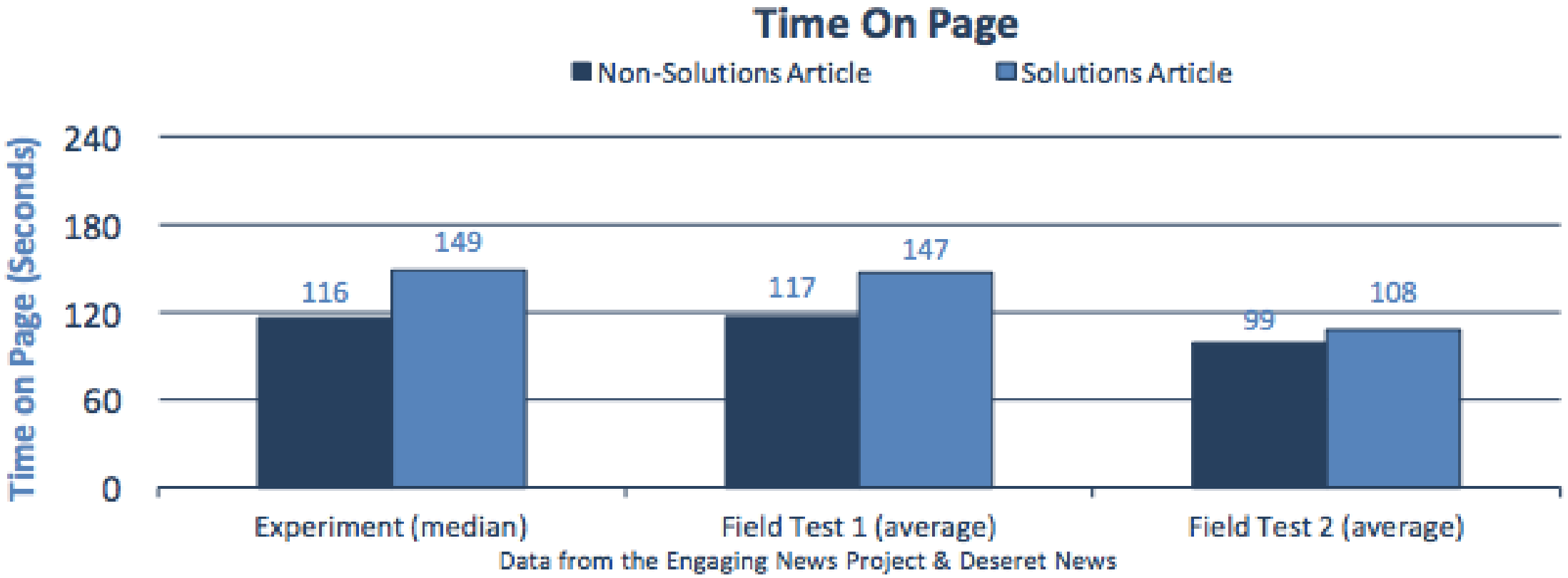
Would read more articles from the same newspaper**

Would get involved in working toward a solution**

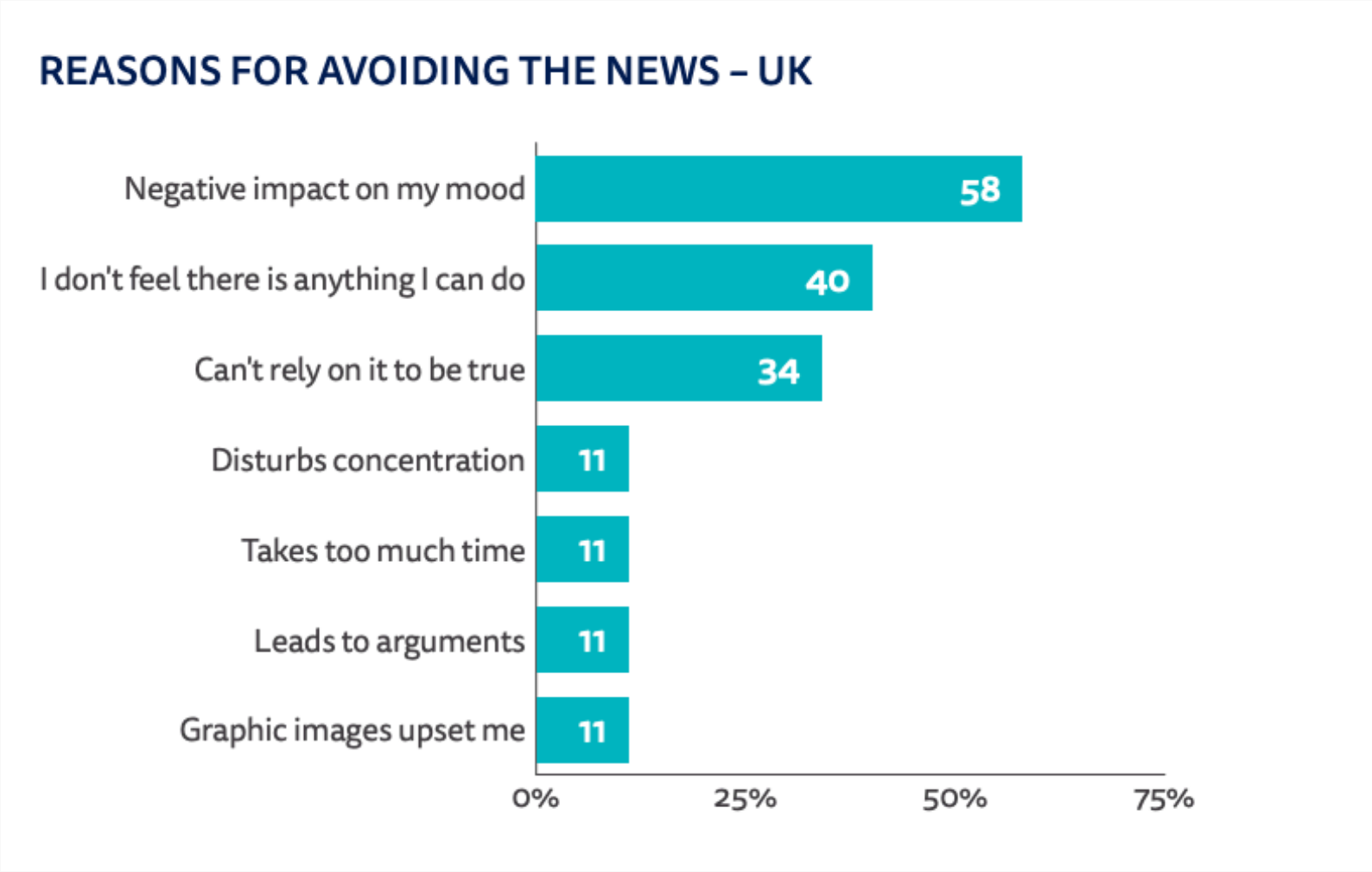
Would share the article**

A/B study done in collaboration with student team at BYU and in consultation with the Engaging News project at the University of Texas. Survey conducted by Survey Sampling International (SSI); n=750 respondents, p<=.05

ENP experiment: Time on page up 10-25%



People are avoiding news. Why? Well…



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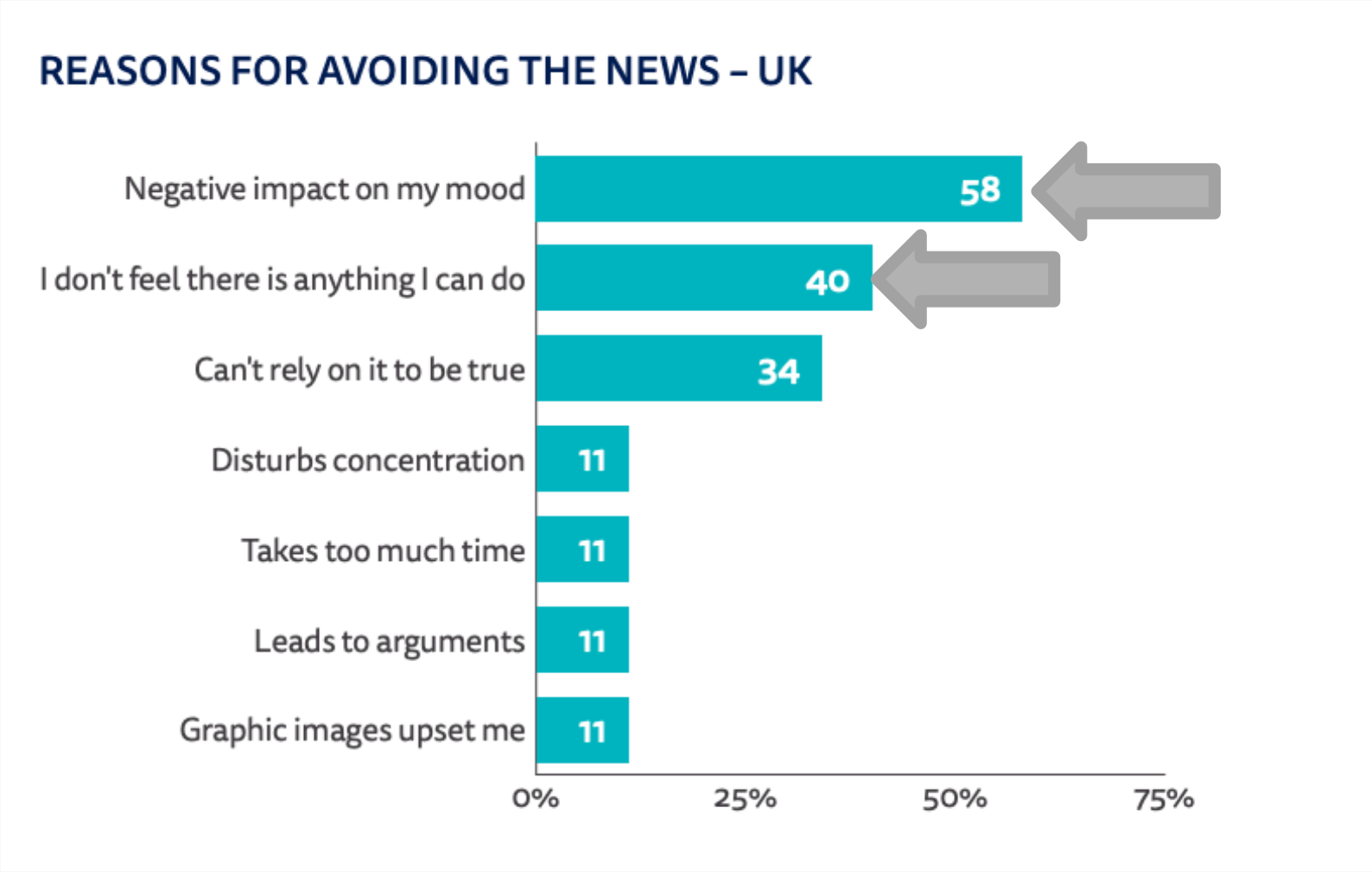


And climate change is one of the worst offenders

HARVARD Kennedy School
SHORENSTEIN CENTER
on Media, Politics and Public Policy

- Coverage creates a “hope gap”
- Coverage frames people as “helpless” and “voiceless victims”
- No focus on resilience and response

> Journalists shape narratives about climate change and do so by choosing the importance of one storyline over another. A classic storyline arc is in the shape of a “U.” A man falls into a hole and figures out a way to get himself up and out of it. The storyline ends slightly higher than where it began, which is encouraging, because after all, the man climbed up and out. The story is not as encouraging if he simply falls into the hole. Yet, most climate change reporting is the story of falling into an inescapable hole.

HOW TO DO SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

Where might you find these stories?

- Think tanks/policy experts
- Academic experts
- Large datasets
- People involved in implementation
- People involved in the problem
- Networks of innovators
- Program officers in foundations
- Hold up a mirror to your own life
- Solutions Story Tracker

Who's doing it better?

What question should I ask?

OTHER KEY QUESTIONS FOR SOLUTIONS STORIES

- How does the response work? Slow the interview down.
- What parts of the problem aren't addressed by the response?
- Where did this idea come from?
- Is it being replicated elsewhere? With what effects?
- What does the research say?
- What do the critics say?
- What metrics matter when it comes to measuring success?
- In what ways is that response working, in what ways is it not working, and how do we know?
- What are its barriers to replication?

HOW TO AVOID ADVOCACY?

- Don’t overclaim
- Briefly paint the whole landscape
- Use data
- Make your story about the approach, not the org.
- Take out the words “inspiring,” “wonderful,” “super,” “unique,” “genius,” and, in most cases, “solution.”

SOJO FORMS

The Salt Lake Tribune

The all-electric home: Tackling air pollution by cutting off natural gas

28

LAST PART OF AN INVESTIGATIVE SERIES

THEDENVER CHANNEL.COM

School district turns old buses into mobile cafes to feed students during summer

Posted: 1:49 PM, Jun 07, 2019 **Updated:** 4:38 PM, Jun 09, 2019

By: Kumasi Aaron

QUICKIES

With eyes on COP24 in Poland, a Dutch success story offers inspiration

A lawsuit in the Netherlands shows ‘people power’ has the ability to change climate policy for the better.

BY: LIZAN NIJKRAKE / DECEMBER 7, 2018

A snowstorm, called the 'Lake-effect snow', a rare natural phenomena, arrives at the island of Schiermonnikoog, the Netherlands, February 27, 2018. REUTERS/Cris Toala Olivares

In April 2015, a motley crew of nearly 900, including

APPLES TO APPLES

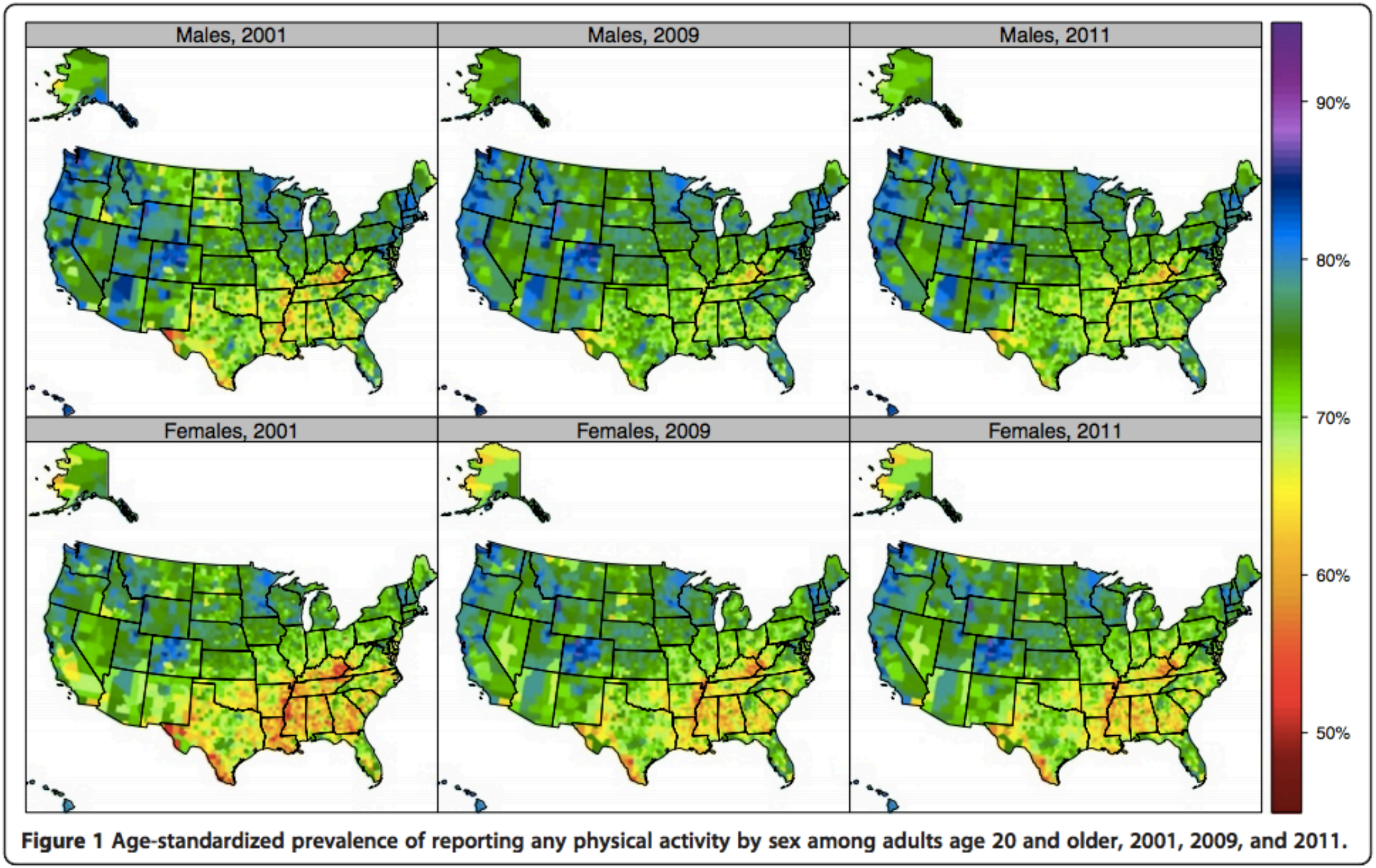
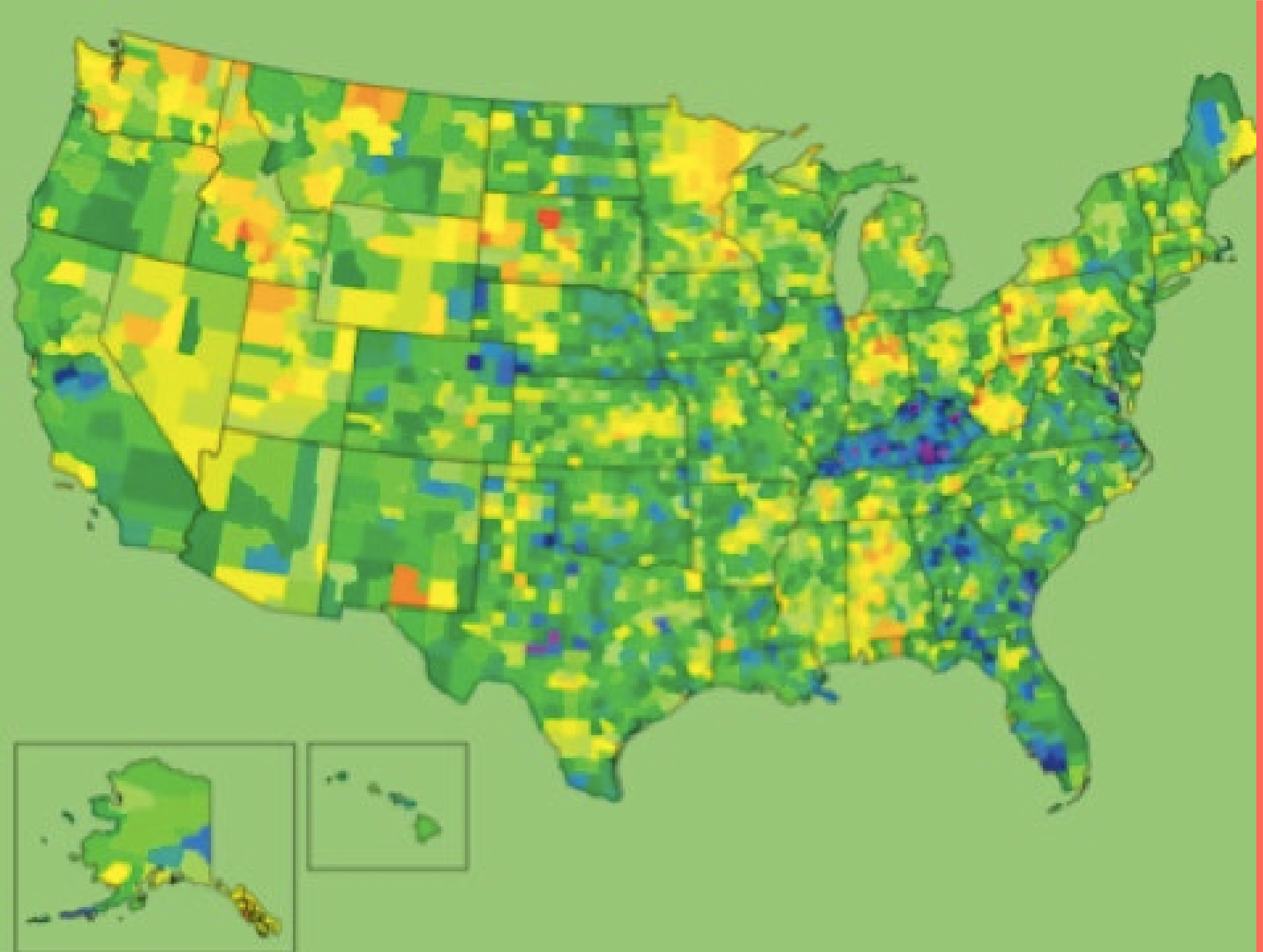


Figure 1 Age-standardized prevalence of reporting any physical activity by sex among adults age 20 and older, 2001, 2009, and 2011.



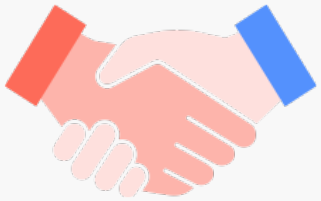
POSITIVE
DEVIANT

Data slices

Comparison to peers	*Which city has the lowest rate of air pollution?*
Change over time	*Who has improved greenhouse gas emissions the most in the last decade?*
By method/best practice	*Who's had interesting results using sustainable farming practices?*
By subgroup	*Who has reduced water usage in small-sized cities ?*

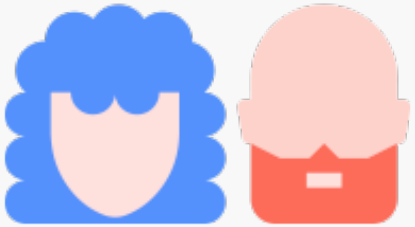
POSITIVE DEVIANT

WHAT DO WE DO?



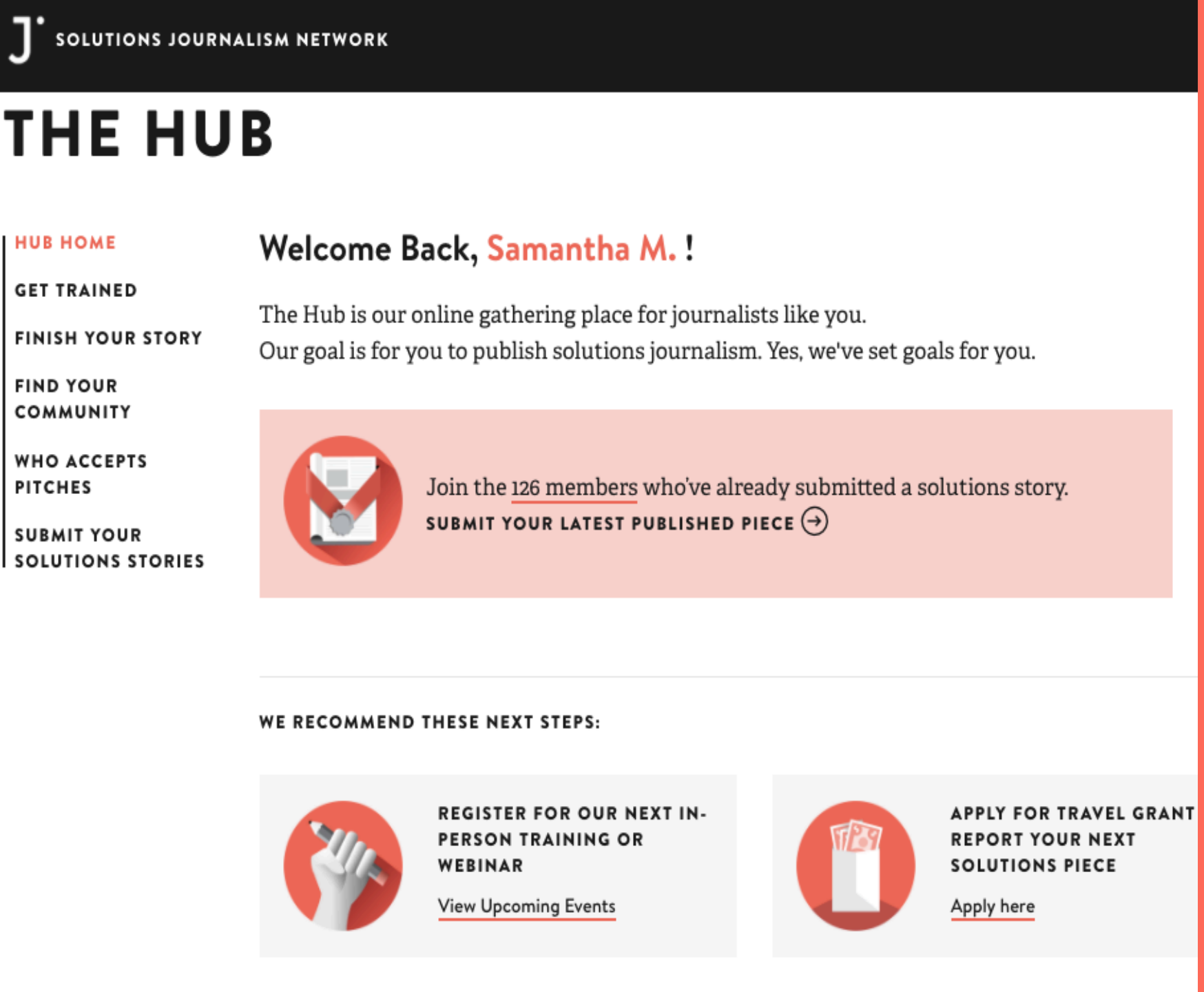
NEWSROOM PARTNERSHIPS
Workshops, coaching, research/data support and project funding

ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM
Toolkits, webinars, online courses, case studies — all for free



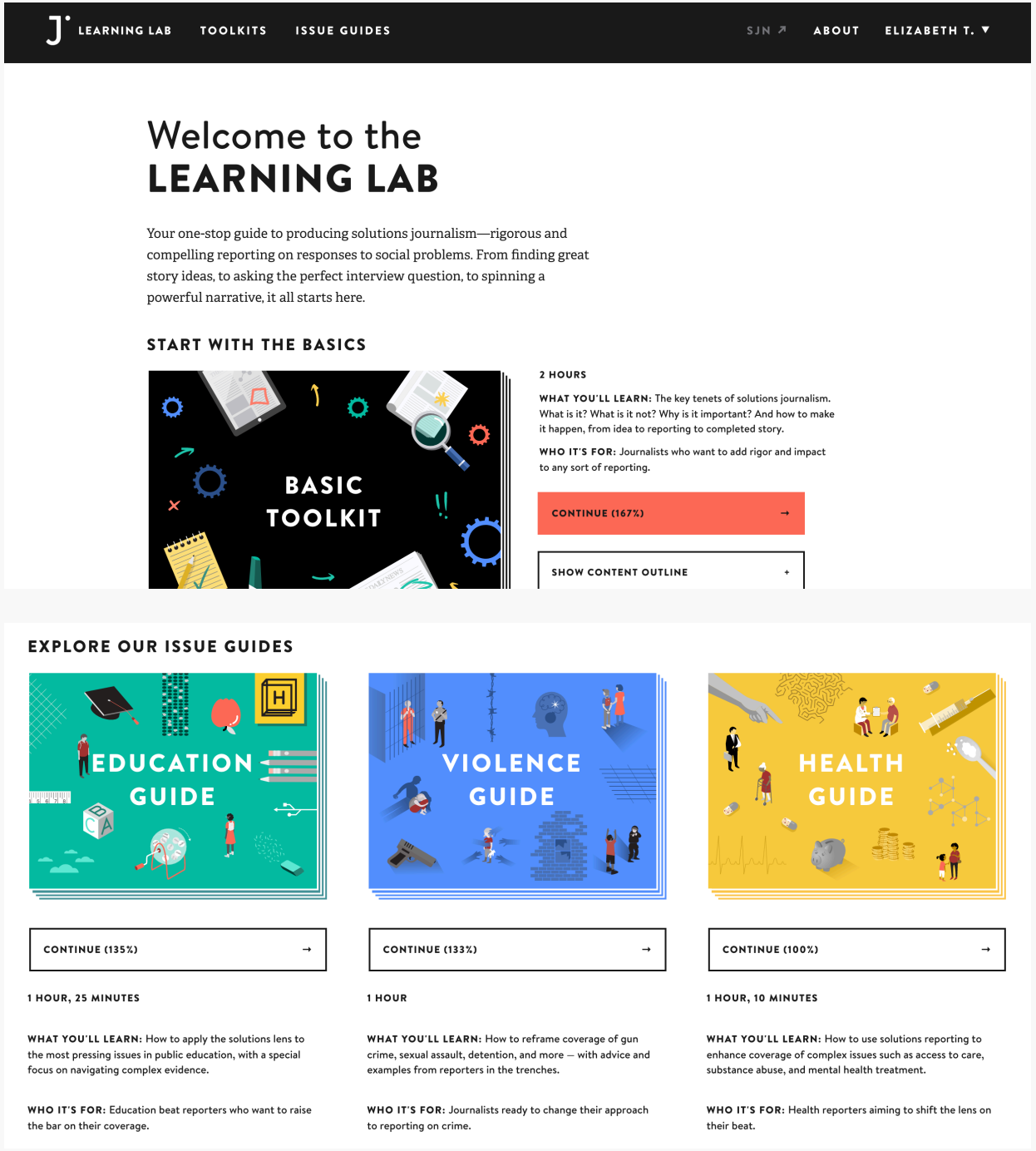
COMMUNITY BUILDING
Platform for shared learning and collaboration, regional journalist meet-ups, and the Solutions Journalism Summit

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH
Solutions journalism modules and full semester courses at partner J-Schools, plus SolutionsU works to apply sojo stories in all academic areas



JOIN THE HUB: OUR FREE MEMBER NETWORK

- **Unlimited access to toolkits, reporting guides, and the Solutions Story Tracker.**
- Info on upcoming events and webinars
- Travel scholarships, lists of editors who accept solutions pitches, and more



LEARNING LAB

- **Self-guided courses to hone your craft**
- Learn how to do solutions reporting with our Basic Toolkit
- Available in Spanish, French, Bahasa Indonesian, and soon Chinese, Arabic, and Russian
- Issue Guides for reporters covering education, violence, & health in the U.S.
- Upcoming guides for editors, engagement, collaborations, and investigative reporting

SOLUTIONS STORY TRACKER®

7,184 stories produced by 958 news outlets, from 164 countries, and growing every day.

The Solutions Story Tracker® is a curated database of rigorous reporting on responses to social problems. We collect and tag every story, providing you with the ability to find coverage of effective or promising ideas and approaches— by issue, location, journalist, and success factor (strategic insights that emerge as patterns).

Not sure where to start? Our tutorial will give you a quick tour of how to use Solutions Story Tracker®.

SUBMIT YOUR SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

“GETTING BETTER MEANS COVERING SOME ISSUES DIFFERENTLY, NOT SIMPLY MORE.”

American Press Institute

Thank you!

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NETWORK