

Peer Review

Review of: "NewsHomepages: Homepage Layouts Capture Information Prioritization Decisions"

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Summary: This paper presents and analyzes a new dataset of news website homepages. The analysis focuses on understanding how different mapping choices encode information prioritization decisions. The paper also includes a targeted case study in a very specific context (policy in San Francisco) to concretize this framework.

Clarity of contribution: Overall, the clarity of contribution is high. The paper quickly describes both the dataset contribution at a high level (screenshots, HTML, and links for 3k sites, over a three-year period). The modelling approach is also clear and connects to the core RQs about identifying the principles underlying information prioritization.

Coverage of related work: The coverage of background (early, in section 2) and related work (later on, in Section 7) is very strong given the scope of the contribution: works from across journalism studies, visualization, and computational journalism are included.

Methods: The description of the dataset collection pipeline is also adequately detailed for replication and general use of the data. This includes the development and evaluation of a custom classifier, which may be of general use to researchers in this space.

The choice to model article placement as a pairwise preference problem is well justified, though this may be one area where other researchers wish to explore the dataset with other approaches (for instance, simply analyzing the spatial incidence of certain categories of content). The choice to use transformers makes sense but could be justified a bit further in the text.

I could imagine researchers might be interested in exploring a broader set of modelling problems here, but of course, access to the data makes this possible, and there was no particular task that stood out as

missing from the current draft.

The analysis included here is ultimately insightful, I believe, and complements the dataset contribution. The "downstream" tasks also help to show the utility of the dataset and provide some specific insights that might be useful for understanding online news media more generally.

Overall, this paper combines a very strong dataset contribution with evidence of the practical utility of the dataset for computational journalism and other fields. I expect this dataset to be useful to the community, and this paper to be of general interest to researchers interested in news homepage design.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.