

Man Bites Dog: Editorial Choices and Biases in the Reporting of Weather Events

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Abstract:

Every day, editors of media outlets decide what is news and what is not. We unpack the process of news production by looking at the share of newscasts devoted to weather events by local TV stations in the United States. We document that coverage increases with the severity of the weather event that day. We also uncover that stations operating in Democratic-leaning markets devote more time to extreme weather events and mention climate change more than outlets in Republican-leaning markets. We make sense of these publication and presentation biases with a stylised model of news production and consumption.