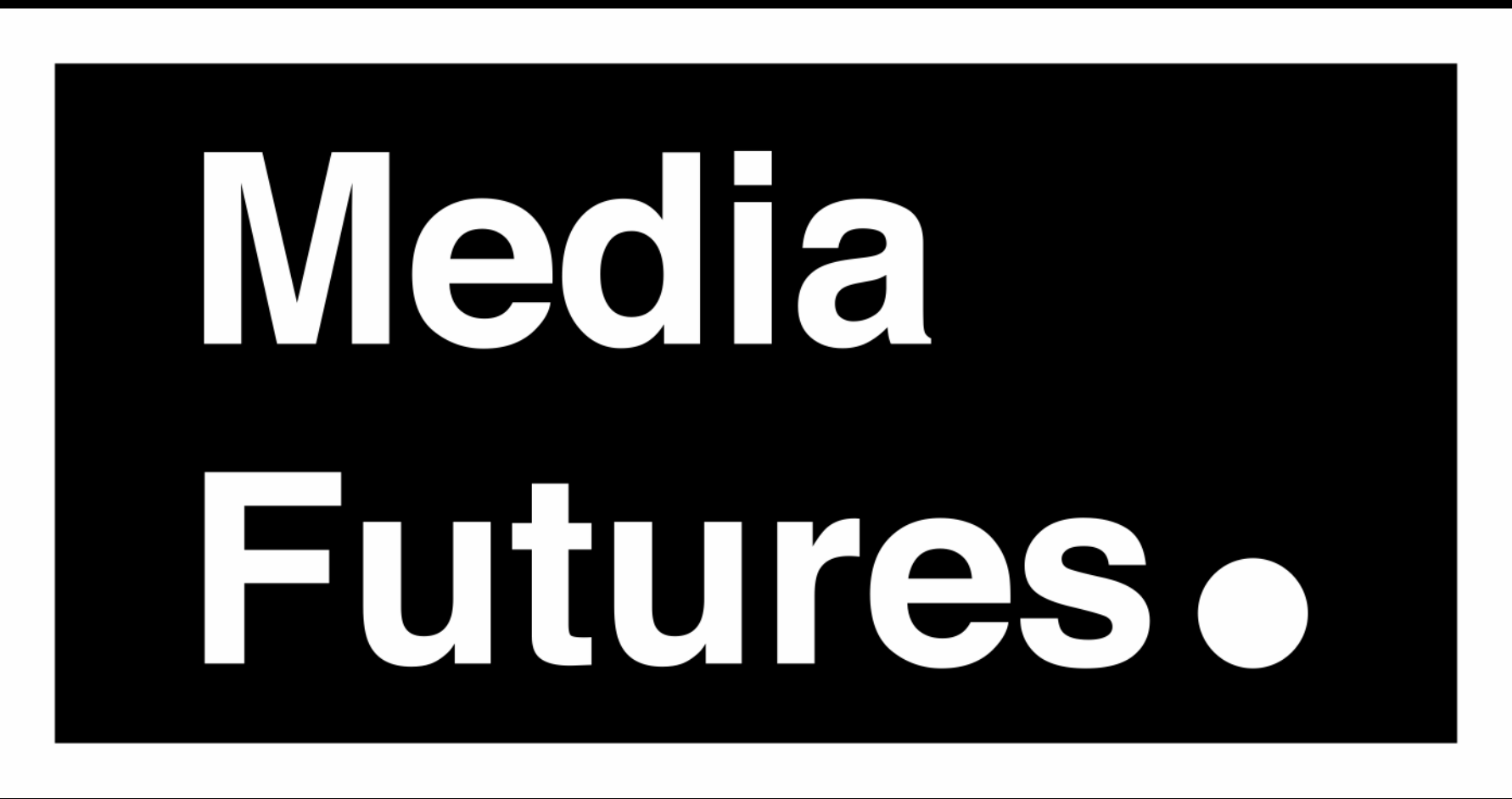
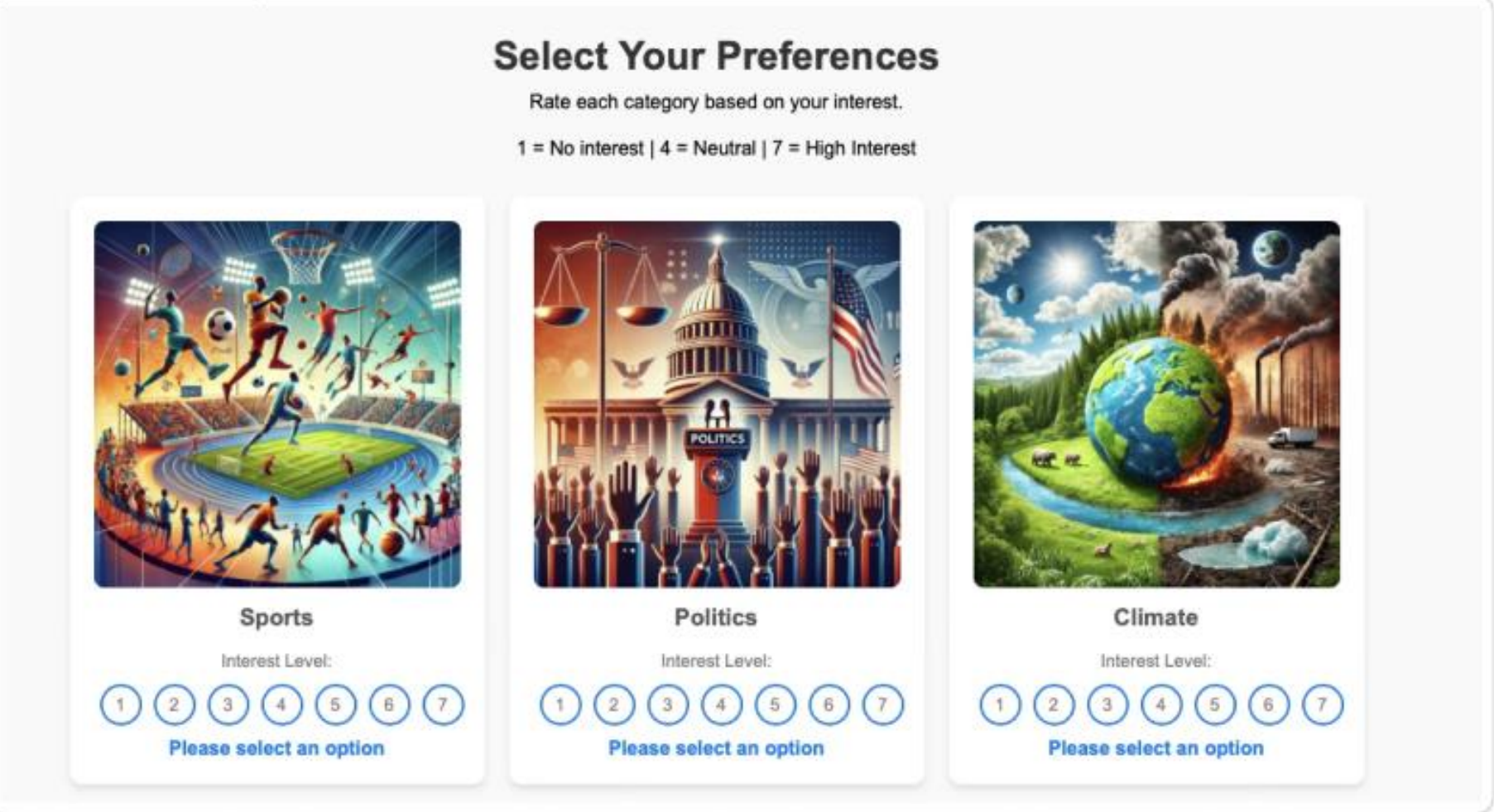


Using Large Language Models to ‘Lighten the Mood’: Satirically Reframing News Recommendations to Reduce News Avoidance

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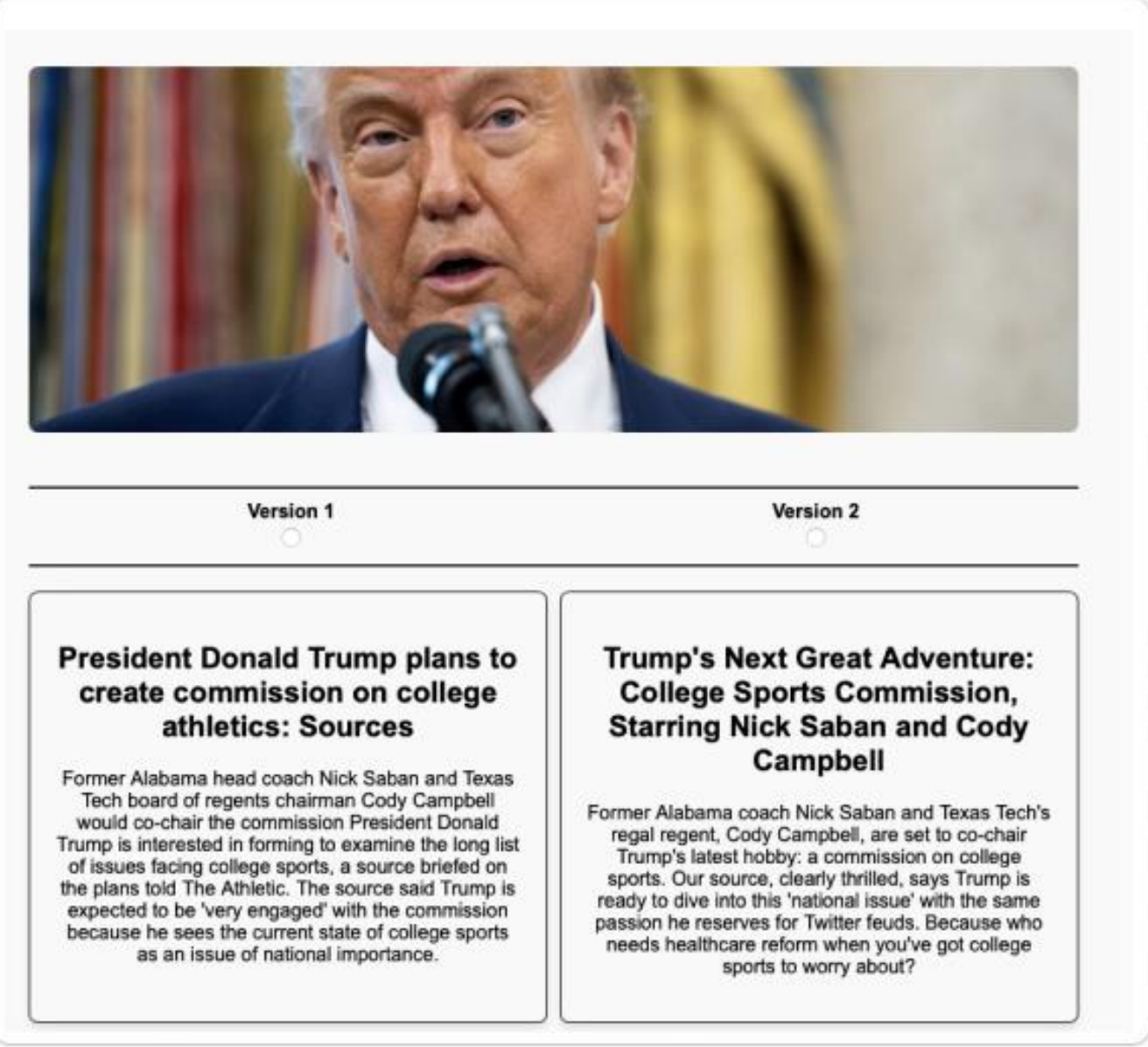


A - Select preference



← Flow of the second study

B - Make choice



C - Evaluate choice & satirical version



Abstract & Idea

News avoidance is on the rise: in 2022, 38% of people reported deliberately avoiding the news (Reuters Institute). This growing trend threatens democratic processes and undermines the informed foundation of citizenship.

Younger audiences in particular disengage because they feel news is overly negative, emotionally heavy, or repetitive, creating challenges not only for journalism but also for recommender systems.

Large language models now make it possible to automatically reframe news into a satirical style that preserves key information while making it feel more approachable. This project tests whether AI-generated satire can reduce avoidance, increase enjoyment, and maintain understanding, offering a way to reconnect disengaged audiences with important but often avoided topics.

Research questions

- How does consuming news in a satirical format affect the user’s sense of feeling informed compared to traditional news formats?
- What prompting style performs best on humor when re-framing news articles to be more satirical?
- To what extent can satirical news article summaries created by AI help reduce the occurrence of news avoidance?
- How does news consumption frequency influence the effectiveness of AI-generated satirical summaries in reducing the avoidance of news content?

Methods

Two online experiments (N = 89; N = 151).

Dataset: 90 articles across 9 categories (sports, politics, climate, finance, tech, etc.).

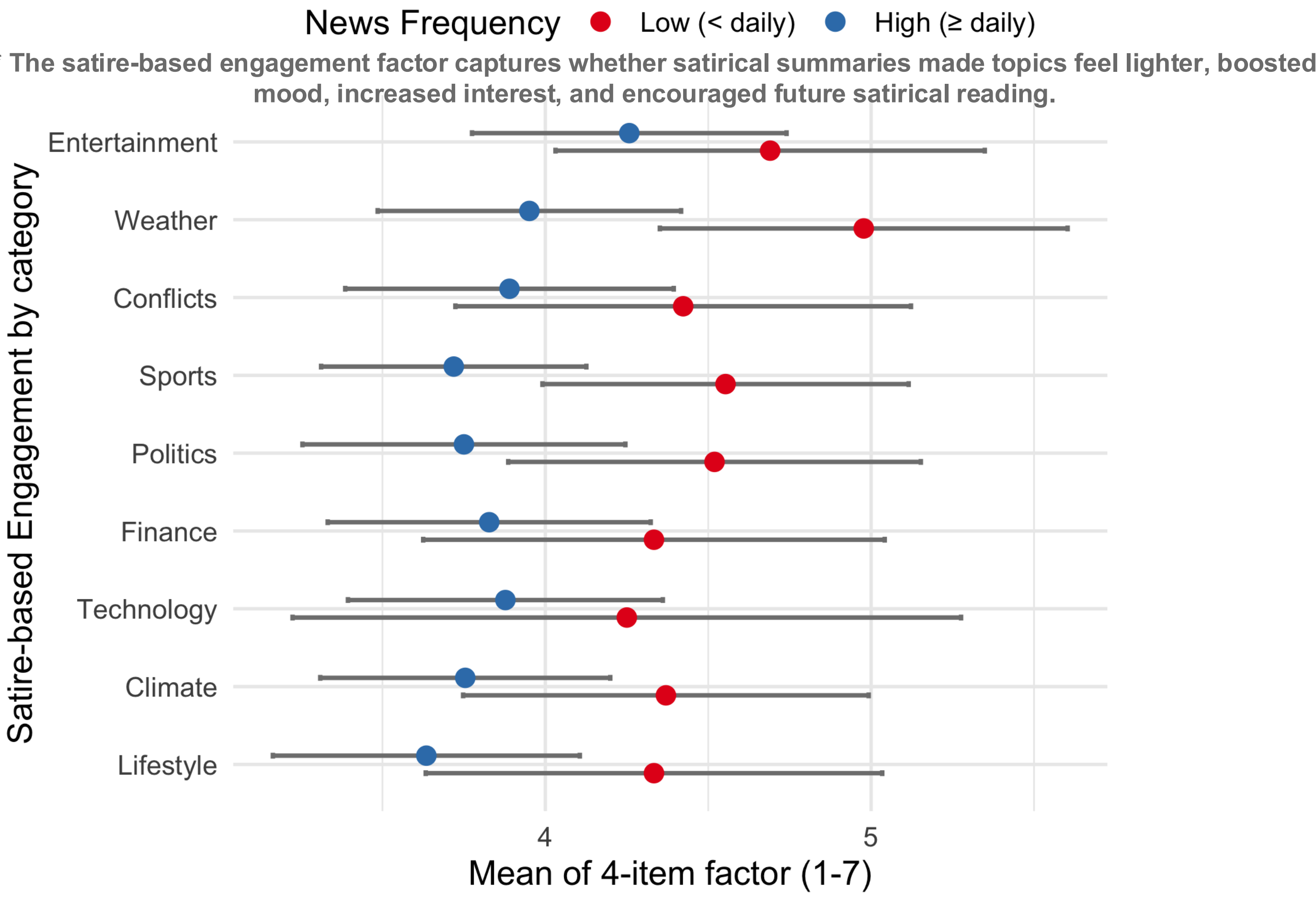
Study 1 assessed the performance of three distinct prompting styles:

- A:** Gentle satire
- B:** Bold satire
- C:** Free satire (Selected for study 2 based on reported performance)

Each article summary was reframed using GPT-4.

Participants rated article summaries on **perceived fun, enjoyment, understanding, quality & shareability**

Study 2 was a choosing experiment to evaluate user preference when having to choose between an original and reframed article summary.



Conclusion & Results

- Satirical reframing works:** Makes avoided topics more approachable and engaging across the news spectrum.
- Overall, 1 in 3 article summaries chosen was reframed** to be more satirical
- Humor results modest, but impact clear:** Participants still felt informed and rated content as high quality.
- Low-frequency readers** picked satire **43% vs 31%** for daily readers : Showing satires potential in reconnecting disengaged audiences with critical information.
- Best for avoided topics:** Lowered emotional barriers and sparked curiosity in less-preferred categories.
- Promise for news recommender systems:** AI-driven satire has the potential to balance information with entertainment and reduce news avoidance.

PARTNERS



HOST



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