Study release date: July 20, 2007

The local TV news experience:
How to win viewers by focusing on engagement

A study by Medill / Media Management Center at Northwestern University

Funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

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Summary

Local television news has seen competition for audiences increase as mass audience fragments, appointment viewing disappears, and Internet usage explodes. How can television stations produce quality local news that attracts and engages audiences in this ever-shifting landscape?

A new study by the Medill School and the Media Management Center at Northwestern University, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, addresses this and other questions.

The study gives television stations insights that will help them better engage their audiences, stimulate strategic thinking about their position and role in the market, and better connect with viewers in ways that could lead to improved civic involvement.

In today's changing media world, it is critically important for news media to understand what builds emotional connections and engagement, and how to use that understanding to attract, keep and build audiences.

The Media Management Center has already investigated consumers' engagement with newspapers, magazines and online media through ground-breaking research. With this new study, Medill and MMC bring this expertise for the first time to the challenges of television news.

Our research over several years shows that how people *experience* a news medium – how they feel and think about and react to it – is a strong predictor of usage. Some experiences cause

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engagement; others contribute to disengagement. Understanding these experiences gives news executives insights that they can then use to develop strategies for differentiating their news programs from other news outlets in the market, and to conceive and test content and marketing tactics that will enhance positive experiences.

Please note that this study differs from those that study the relationship between content characteristics and viewer metrics, such as ratings and shares. Our work focuses on understanding what's going on within the consumer as he or she experiences a television news program, and how that drives frequency and completeness of viewing. We suggest you cannot substantially change level of viewership without substantially changing the experiences viewers have with a news program. In turn, changing the content – and any other contact points viewers have with the television news brand, such as marketing messages or the station's online site – can affect the experiences.

But it is important, first and foremost, to understand how viewers are currently experiencing local television news. We examine experiences in two main ways – first, to assess the level of experience viewers are currently feeling; and second, to determine the effect of experiences on viewership.

So, the main questions this study sets out to answer are: How do people feel about and react to local television news – what are their *experiences* with it? How engaged are they? What is on the local news and does it help explain audience engagement? Does use of local television news relate to more interest in public affairs, voting, and involvement in the community?

Results are based on a survey of about 1,400 local television news-watching adults in the Chicago metropolitan area and a content analysis of 46 randomly selected night-time news programs on five of the main commercial broadcasting networks: WBBM CBS2 Chicago (news at 10 pm), WMAQ NBC5 (news at 10 pm), WLS ABC7 (news at 10 pm), WGN-TV (news at 9 pm), and WFLD-TV FOX 32 Chicago (news at 9 pm).

The survey, fielded in the fall of 2006, explored Chicagoans' attitudes, experiences, engagement, and viewing behavior. While the results are market-specific, they provide many helpful insights for news executives and suggest directions for future research.

The main findings from the survey:

- Viewers have very similar experiences with the five local news programs. That is, no program causes its viewers to react or feel differently than the others. (The content analysis, below, also shows that all programs deliver very similar content and approaches.)
- We identified seven positive experiences that motivate people to watch local news (or engage with it) and four that inhibit viewership (or cause disengagement).
- Overall, the effect of the experiences on viewership is low compared with other media such as newspapers and online. This indicates many opportunities to improve viewership, but probably not by continuing current strategies.

- A strongly-felt experience, and the one most linked with loyal viewing is what we call Routine – where watching the news is a regular part of one's day. This is experienced more intensely by women than men.

- The news programs deliver relatively high levels of the Positive Emotional experience, which means that viewers are touched by stories, feel caught up in story lines, or like to see how things turn out. Our work with other media shows this experience is a definite strength for television. It is felt more strongly by women viewers than men. But having the Positive Emotional experience does not currently translate strongly into loyal or increased watching – it has virtually no effect.

- Another news experience that viewers feel fairly strongly is Anchor Camaraderie – enjoying it when presenters chat with each other, feeling they are watching qualified professionals and believing that they are getting to know the anchors. This experience is a moderate driver (or predictor) of viewership. Women tend to experience it more than men, and young people have lower levels.

- Viewers rate the Makes Me Smarter experience highly and it is a moderate driver of viewership. With this experience, viewers feel that the local night-time news program keeps them up to speed and stimulates their thinking.

- Local television news is experienced as reasonably credible. When these market-specific results are compared with results from broader studies of other media, we see that Chicago local television news holds its own and is substantially more credible than some newspapers. This experience, which we call Trustworthy, is a low driver of viewing.

- As the name suggests, the Relaxing experience reflects the feeling that watching local news is a way to wind down and enjoy it as much for the entertainment as the information value. It is not strongly felt and is currently a low driver of viewing.

- Viewers have a moderately low Civic experience – the experience that watching the news makes one feel like a better citizen and like part of the community and that local television news is a good thing for society. It is currently a low driver of viewership.

- Young people show higher levels of disengagement with local night-time television news. They experience what they perceive as too much sad and frightening news, an emphasis on a certain kind of news (crime and accidents) and a cynical feeling about the station's motives. We call these two experiences Negativity and Hype.

- Another experience that contributes to young people's disengagement and which, like Routine, is behavioral in nature is Selective Surfing – picking specific stories or segments to tune into, checking in and out with the news, wondering what other newscasts are carrying.

- Men have a stronger Hype experience than women, perceiving too much talk and too much of the same kind of news and feeling cynical about the station's motives.

- Another experience related to disengagement is All the Same – the feeling that stories and approaches vary little from one program to another. The content analysis confirms that this is indeed the case.

- Overall, disengagement doesn't cause people to watch less. But this finding must be interpreted with care. It could be that these disengagement experiences explain a lot about non-viewers of the program. It is also possible that disengagement among viewers will grow as media continue to fragment and competition intensifies. Since disengagement is similar

from station to station, current viewers don't have an alternative and watch anyway – but reducing the negative experiences could present an opportunity.

- The more engaged people are with local television news, the more likely they are to say they follow politics and think it is important to vote, keep up with community issues and events, do volunteer work or donate money to worthy causes. However, engagement is not linked with actually voting, attending a political rally, contacting an elected official or other active forms of involvement.

- Further, we found a small relationship between viewership and staying informed and voting, but not with other forms of active civic participation. This contrasts notably with newspapers, where readership and civic outcomes are more strongly correlated.

The content analysis portion of the study characterizes and measures the news content on the five Chicago stations' night-time news programs. It is based on a random sample of programs, reconstructed into two composite weeks (no weekends) during the period of September, 2005 through February, 2006.

The main findings from the content analysis:

- Overall, the stations are more similar than they are different in the content of their night-time news programming. (Variations among stations are detailed in a later section of the report.) This explains the strength of the "All the Same" experience, where people perceive that local stations carry the same news, approached in the same ways.

- Less than half of every local news program is devoted to news stories (about 45%). Sports and weather take up between 9-10% of the time each, on average, and commercials take up almost 30% of the time.

- Crime leads the news – it's in the first block, and stories get proportionately the most time (19%) of any story topics.

- More than one-third of all news stories are about crimes, fires and accidents, while politics accounts for 15%. Health, science and environment stories comprise 11% of all stories, and weather stories 10%.

- Stories about business, commuting, real estate, health, science and environment are least likely to make the top of the news.

- About 80% of stories employ a "straight news" story-telling technique.

- Stories run just over a minute on average (69 seconds) and there are 12-14 stories in a 30-minute program, about 21 in 60-minute programs.

- Much of the news happens in and around Chicago – it is local.

- While stories are geographically local, most news stories have no direct effect on the lives of people in the viewing area.

- Only a small portion of news stories include actionable information and they occupy less prominent positions in the lineup.

- Less than 10% of the stories are initiated by the station (enterprise reporting) and less than 20% of enterprise stories appear in the first block of the program. Enterprise stories are also more likely to appear during the sweeps periods.

- Enterprise reporting covers mostly health and consumer issues.
- For every one woman who is heard in a story, there are two men.
- For every non-White person who is heard in a story, there are three White people.
- People who are White, male and official dominate news about politics – other topics vary in balance.

Observations and Implications

This research does not aim to critique local television news or draw attention to its flaws, but to help stations differentiate their news programs and grow audiences for news. It differs from – but complements – the ongoing research conducted by each station in that it provides new insights, based on rigorous academic standards, about viewer experiences. Experiences are a powerful way of measuring and understanding how and why people make time in their lives for a news medium.

The research is also intended to be applied. Based on the findings, stations can focus on what viewer experiences they want to intensify and/or decrease, then develop and test ideas about content and approaches that could produce that result.

The findings can also stimulate strategic thinking about the station's competitive position and role in the market.

Finally, the findings can give rise to discussion about how news programs might contribute to improved civic behavior on the part of viewers.

There are two primary ways in which this research can be applied to everyday decisions about local news. First, experiences can serve as a strategic focus for improving a program. Let's imagine a station wanted to reduce the Negativity experience, because doing that, the research suggests, should have a positive effect on viewership. The Negativity experience leaves people with a sense of powerlessness, that there's more wrong than right happening, and nothing is being done or could be done to improve the situation. The news program could examine its balance of news and the approaches it takes. When it covers, as it must, problems and inherently negative news, it could offer advice and perspectives on how real people can help and what other solutions might be. When horrible things happen, reporters can point out how exceptional the event was. Such approaches are not meant to candy-coat reality or simplify complex situations – rather, to encourage viewers to view things in perspective or to think about, discuss, and perhaps act on issues.

After selecting certain experiences to focus on, the stations should take a baseline measure of them on a random sample of *targeted viewers*. Then it should implement changes in the content and monitor experience levels and viewership periodically to see if the changes are working, refine the changes and measure again. (See diagram below.)
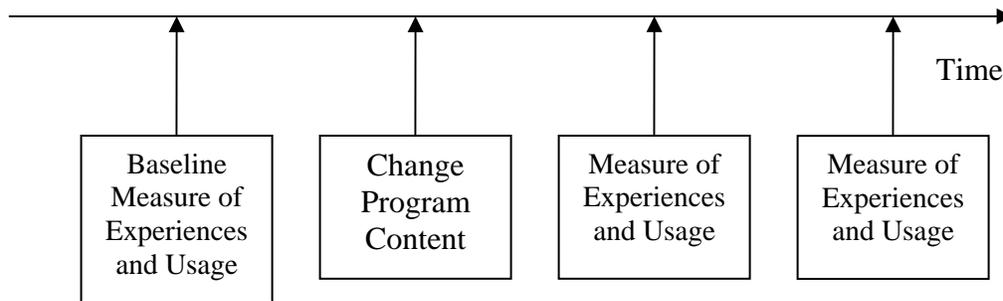
A second application of experiences is for a program to elect to deliver exceptionally high – or low – levels of certain experiences, thereby differentiating itself from other programs. For example, a station could elect to focus on Anchor Camaraderie. As explained below, this experience taps into the fondness and the respect viewers feel for the people on the news and the feeling that the anchors, as people, are part of the viewer's life. This experience speaks to the relationship viewers have with anchors and viewers' sense that the anchors are like friends, but it has been traditionally interpreted as "happy talk" – anchors chatting with each other on the air. However, a station could also showcase anchors interacting with each other in a friendly but thoughtful and professional way, making the viewer feel included in their circle. In addition, anchors could directly interact with audiences, via live events, online chats, or blogs, trading on their celebrity and enhancing people's belief that they care about the community. On the other hand, another station could choose to do the opposite, focusing on just telling news stories rather than on camaraderie among anchors. It could send a message that its anchors and reporters are not celebrities, but ordinary, professional people doing their job. The two news programs would appeal to two different segments of viewers, which our research found exist. Both segments would likely be less satisfied if the stations adopted one-size-fits-all hybrid approaches. The goal is to identify sufficiently large market segments who desire experiences different from the rest of the market.

Additionally, it is important to note that experiences are not mutually exclusive, and some programs could deliver high levels of multiple ones. And there are lessons to be learned from similar research that explores how people engage with print and online. An example is the Helps and Improves Me experience, where people feel they get useful advice and tips that help them do things better and be better. The content analysis identified few television news stories with this approach.

The content report indicates that Chicago television stations do work to differentiate their night-time news broadcasts from each other in a number of ways, including production elements, story lengths, sequencing of stories, relative emphasis and prominence of topics and signature touches at the end of the program. But these differences don't seem to be substantive enough to affect how viewers experience the news or their engagement/disengagement with it, since those measures are similar across all stations.

The question then becomes – how might a station differentiate its content in ways that will intensify experiences for its target audience and grow viewership?

For various reasons – the structure of Nielsen ratings, similar market research – there are many truisms in local television news. One is that weather, sports, and traffic are a main draw for viewers – and they are. Because they are also local by definition, many television executives believe that they should focus on these topics. But how sustainable is a strategy that focuses on weather, traffic and sports as the main differentiating strategy, when the Internet is growing so rapidly? Why would someone wait for a television news program to get to the weather when it's a click away online? There needs to be more.

This study suggests it is worth paying much more attention to enterprise news, relative to the time devoted to coverage of planned events and spot news, such as crime, accidents and fires.[5] Enterprise is original news that viewers are unlikely to get anywhere else, though that characteristic alone is not enough – it must *matter* to them. Watchdog journalism is one example of enterprise reporting, and it need not always involve long, resource-consuming investigations. We know from our other experience research, particularly with newspapers, that feeling a news organization is "looking out for my interests" is a strong motivator to use that medium.

The study also suggests that news stories should strive to deal with the impact on people's lives or include actionable and helpful information. While local television news is indeed geographically local, little of it has that second layer of "localness" – personal relevance and actionability.

Finally, and especially in a very diverse area like Chicago, there is a need to diversify the race and gender of sources used in stories or who appear on camera.

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[5] For a good discussion of enterprise reporting and other approaches correlated with improvements in ratings and share, see "We Interrupt This Newscast," Rosenstiel, et. al., Cambridge University Press, 2007

This report includes the following sections:

Background: Local TV news

This section begins with a brief overview of the history of local television news in the United States. It then discusses some of the main issues facing local television news, as seen by local television station executives.

Studies show that in the United States people get most of their news from local television news programs. The 2007 State of the Media study has found that local television news is "by far the most popular choice to get news," regardless of age and income (State of the Media 2007). However, "while local television news still outpolls the broadcast news divisions and local newspapers for believability, the public's trust is diminishing." (State of the Media 2004) Recent trends also show a decline in viewership of local television news programs. An analysis of the percent of station revenue produced by news, by network affiliation, shows that on the whole news is fairly stable as a source of revenue. About 90 percent of television stations (748 stations in 2005) are affiliated with one of the four large networks (CBS, NBC, ABC, and FOX), though fewer are owned and operated by these networks.

Local television news historically has an important place in the United States. As of the Federal Radio Act of 1927, the federal government has argued that the right to own a license to a broadcasting station hinges on the station's operating in the public interest. The Localism principle is one of the means by which stations can serve the public interest. Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 requires that broadcasting stations, to keep their licenses, create and air programming that meets the needs of the communities they serve by providing information about the area that is relevant and useful to the local community. In 2003, the FCC launched the "Localism Task Force," to study the issue, conduct public hearings on localism, and make recommendations.

While it is not easy to find a clear, simple definition of what localism is, it is one of the primary principles guiding the FCC. Local television stations understand that this is critical. As Dennis Wharton, senior vice president, Corporate Communications, NAB said in 2004, "America's local over-the-air stations have an unmatched record of community service. From telethons to tornado warnings, from Amber Alerts to school closing announcements, radio and television stations provide leading-edge local programming that has made the U.S. system of broadcasting the envy of the world."

In 2003, about 70 years after the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, the FCC launched the "localism in broadcasting" initiative (FCC, Localism Task Force, Mission statement), created to help define the meaning of "local programming." In recent years, television stations have had their license challenged on compliance with public service requirements grounds (see recent challenge, denied by the FCC, in Chicago and Milwaukee brought by the Media Access Project and partners).

In the public discourse, too, there are concerns about the quality of local news. Various organizations study television news content and find its quality lacking. For example, studies by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California, Annenberg, and the Grade the News project of the School of Journalism and Mass

Communication at San Jose State University and the Graduate Program in Journalism at Stanford University have all analyzed and reproached the local coverage of television stations.

The majority of these studies, however, have not directly linked their findings to audience research. This study is not intended to critique local television news content, but rather to provide an accurate representation of it through a systematic and objective analysis. In addition, with our unique approach to audience understanding, the study can also offer television stations a fresh approach for dealing with some of the content issues raised by this and other studies. Our hope is that this approach will help stations achieve their dual goals of social responsibility and commercial success.

Currently in Chicago, the nation's third largest market with about seven million viewers, stations offer local news several times a day. Local news programs begin as early as 4:30 am, with the last program on at 10 pm. Some stations offer news programs five times every weekday. To a large extent, the time of day determines the content, "feel," and format of the program, as well as who watches it and in what ways they engage with the program.

To better understand some of the challenges facing local television news, we interviewed television executives about the state of local news, specifically focusing on late night news programs. They told us that they see declining viewership as a serious problem and that, while ever mindful of the other stations in the market and the competition they pose, they see the Internet and general proliferation of information sources as the looming giant that has changed the rules of the game. "By the time the news comes on television, for the most part, people know what has happened," a television executive told us. "We no longer can just think that the first time they're hearing a story is on one of our newscasts," said another. This is especially true for younger people, who are preferred by advertisers.

For local television news, the end of "appointment viewing" means that they need to be creative and innovative. One strategy stations have adopted is product improvement – making changes to current on-air programs that will offer more to viewers. As one of the executives we interviewed put it: "That's why creating an experience that is enjoyable is more important than ever. It's not just informing… it's presenting it in a way that is provocative, that creates an emotional connection."

Another strategy is to have a better understanding of the audience's viewing patterns throughout the day. A lot of research resources are put to that question, and executives tell us that viewers of various news programs are different, that they watch for different reasons, and that they have different expectations. Late night news viewers tend to be older and watching the news for them is a habit. "People 55-plus have been watching news forever. They're used to turning on their newscast at 9:00 or 10:00 in the evening and they do so," an executive said. "The younger demographics are very fickle. They really don't have a newscast." Younger viewers might "stick around" for the news if they watched the previous program.

So, making a better news product is essential, but not sufficient – stations need to be able to manage the "flow" from one program to another. The thought here is to capitalize on an engaged audience, with a focus primarily on demographics (e.g., if women tend to be the viewers of a program the station offers at 4:00 pm, then the news at 5:00 pm should include content and other elements that would appeal more to women). In addition to demographics, as we explain later,

we suggest it would be useful to understand the particular "flavor" of engagement viewers have and reinforce it with the news program as part of a station-wide strategy.

A third strategy to combat the fact that many in the audience do not wait until the late program to get the news, is to get the news to the audience in other ways. "The most important thing for my newsroom right now is to provide the content that will go on whatever platform," an executive told us. Another said: "I think what we're seeing is [that] people want what they want, when they want it, how they want it, and so I think we've got to figure out how to crack that code and be everywhere." How to "crack the code" and have the brand live online is a major challenge for local television news.

The Internet
Stations are increasingly realizing the Web is more than another distribution channel for content produced for on-air programs or a vehicle for cross-promotion. A major benefit of having a presence on the Web, according to television news executives, is that it affords unlimited space and time not available on the air, allowing stations the freedom to provide coverage they couldn't otherwise do. Stations can offer live online coverage of major events in the city, such as the large immigration march in downtown Chicago on March 10, 2006. This allows the station to avoid breaking into pre-scheduled programming, as well as to reach people who have access to the Internet in their offices, but not to a TV set. Stations that have experience with this report positive feedback from users, who appreciated the updates about street closings and other important information. Beyond streaming live events, some stations put up additional information and complete interviews online. Some stations have experimented with online features like reporters' blogs and claim to have seen good results. Some can even imagine breaking stories online rather than on the air.

An additional benefit to putting content on the Internet, executives say, is that by offering online coverage of important local events, such as the White Sox parade after their World Series victory, stations can reach people who take interest in such events but are physically outside the market. This is a service to out-of-town Chicagoans but also an opportunity to expand the station's audience base.

However, while executives understand the importance and benefits of the Internet, they are not always sure how to utilize it and they don't always have control over it (some companies choose to standardize their stations' Web sites, leaving little discretion to the local stations). Some struggle with what exactly the Web site is for: "People go to the newspapers a lot for news, generally, because they're used to newspapers having that. They go to our site for a lot for weather, sports, things that they may think of as having a little more to do with us."

The Internet brings up many other issues that have implications for every-day decision making, such as resource allocation, technology needs, and equipment purchases. "We're all trying to figure out how to create more content within the parameters – still doing what we're doing on the air, with the quality that we're doing on the air, but yet provide content to the internet."

Another issue raised by the Internet relates to the skills and experience that are most valuable for new hires. Stations vary in their embrace of new skills and have differing degrees of training they offer or require their of staff, but they all say they need people who have multiple skills such as reporting, shooting video, and editing. This makes financial sense as stations struggle to

meet goals and cut staff, but it also reflects the need for employees who are more nimble and who are digitally savvy enough to take advantage of multimedia. This last point is important – some executives see their staff's multimedia abilities as a competitive advantage if not a survival strategy. "Instead of hiring somebody who's right on the line all day, I want another special projects producer who can go out and create original content for our newscast to try to make us look different because we all know, the first 10 minutes of all our newscasts are going to be relatively the same."

Differentiation
This last point, the need for differentiation, came up in our conversations also in the context of the current rating system and its effect on content and hiring decisions. Many executives we talked to felt that local news programs are similar and that this homogenization is due partly to the constant measurement (the Chicago market is now measured by Nielsen with People Meters):

> "I think the shows are too much alike and I'll tell you why that is; it's because of Nielsen… you need five minutes of viewing to count it for a quarter hour of viewing… and the placement of certain things like weather and sports and certain stories are driven by that."

Not to single out Nielsen, we should point out that all stations also do their own basic research, testing content, format, talent, day parts, and the demographic make-up of lead-in programs. The collective effect of all this research may also contribute to the homogenization across stations. To differentiate their station, managers are looking for ways to appeal to the audience by producing more original reporting or updating various program features (e.g., new set, new studio, anchors standing, etc.) "The challenge for us is to make it interesting, to not make it boring, to not make it some sort of exercise in dullness," said one executive. "Part of our job," said another "is to appeal to the viewer watching prime time, and give them [sic] something unique, something different."

The question of how to appeal to viewers and how to stand out in the market, however, makes some executives uneasy because it might imply a certain surrender of quality. "The news is the news; certain decisions are self-evident," a local television news executive told us. While it is acceptable for some content to be tested into the program, this executive is saying, there is some content that is above such considerations. That said, all acknowledged that overall declining viewership is a major concern, especially as it has impact on revenue from advertising. As one executive put it, "it's a challenge to make sure that the viewers aren't growing out of the advertising target."

The pressure by advertisers leads television stations to be keenly aware of their audience makeup. Many said that their viewers are aging and that the younger demographics, while more desirable, are elusive. Some feel that they need to cater to their current viewers and forgo the idea that they can attract young people on the air (though they see potential to attract this group online), while other stations are more actively targeting younger people in the late news program. Stations have varying degrees of sophistication in terms of articulating a strategy to target specific audiences, and most declare that they are going after the general population, trying to reach a mass audience.

The future
In terms of their position vis-à-vis national and cable television news programs, executives were quite optimistic about the prospects for local television news. News in general has become a

commodity, they said, and there's just too much of it, everywhere. "We have a lot of news on the air right now and, at some point, it's going to be too much." But, television executives say, local content is something "no cable station, no network is really going to be able to provide day in and day out." Most see the potential for local news to become a driving force for stations, although they also acknowledge that their companies don't always see it this way and that sometimes it makes financial sense to cancel a local news program and replace it with another program that is seen to have better commercial potential. And, there is also a limit as to how much local television news a market can support.

Still, "somebody has to provide local content." That "somebody," many television executives believe, might very well be determined by who can provide the best weather coverage: "Weather coverage and your ability to cover the weather well is probably the single most important content area for local television," said one executive. "We know that people watch local TV for weather, so if there's a weather story, we're going to do it, and prominently," said another. Traffic reports are also considered a major draw to local news, although to a lesser extent than weather.

The forces of audience fragmentation, commoditization of news, and homogenization of content bring about certain nostalgia for long-gone golden era: "Watching news is a habit," said one executive, "and one out of three homes stopped watching the news." "The loyalty is not there… and that's really what drives people to your station."

Still, we found local television executives to be forward-thinking and optimistic, if not always certain how to navigate these new realities. Most think that local television news is going in the right direction by embracing new technology. One said the threats help create "a culture that allows you to try and fail and learn" and that the Web brings about a spirit of experimentation. "Now the game, the competition, is to do the best job of variety in the kind of video content that users want to have. We're all figuring that out, we're all trying things, moving different directions, putting different things out there."

Background: Consumer engagement with media

The concept of engagement with editorial content and its relationship with advertising has been discussed for at least 50 years. But there is no agreement about what engagement is and, while content producers and advertisers generally agree that engagement is important, they are also unsure how to measure and use it. We attempt to address these issues.

We define viewer engagement as the *collective experiences with content*. Content can engage viewers in many different ways. Some content is engaging because it informs viewers about topics relevant to them. Other content could be engaging because it helps the viewer relax and escape from the pressures daily life. Content could also engage its viewers by giving good advice and tips, hereafter called the Helps and Improves Me experience. Informing the viewer, providing relaxation, and giving advice and tips are three specific *experiences* that people can have with media.

To be engaging, different media products need not deliver the same experiences – some engaging content could conceivably deliver high levels of the relaxation experience, while other successful content could focus more on informing. Experiences are not mutually exclusive, and some programs could deliver high levels of multiple ones. By focusing on different experiences, a media product can differentiate itself from competitors. Our point is that there are many paths to engagement, which is the aggregate collection of experiences. This conceptualization is illustrated in the figure below.

Relationship between engagement, specific experiences, and its consequences
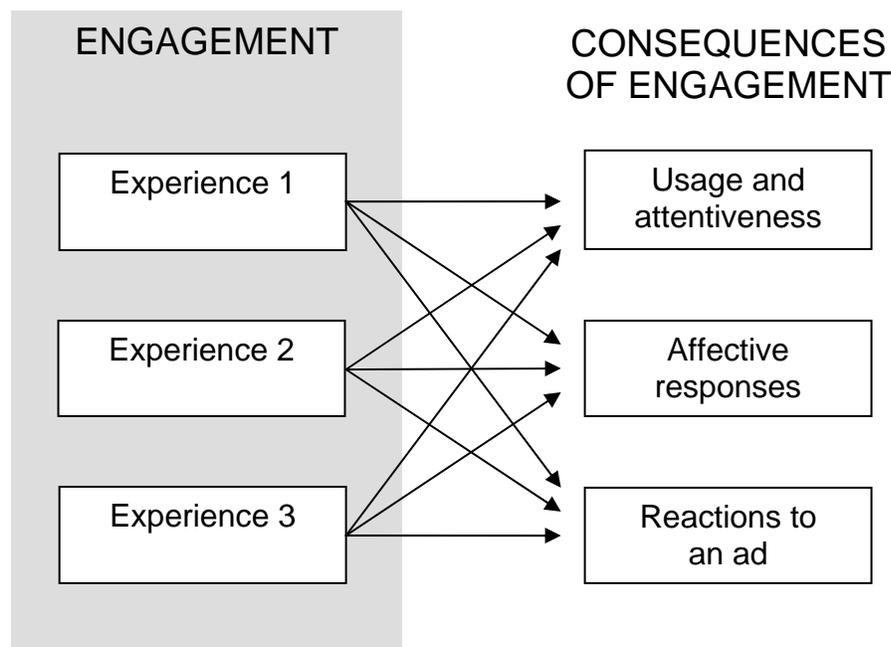
Our formulation of engagement is somewhat different from other definitions, which usually characterize it in ways that we regard as *consequences* of engagement. For example, Marc (1966)

defines engagement as "how disappointed someone would be if a magazine were no longer published." Syndicated market research often asks whether a publication is "one of my favorites," whether a respondent would "recommend it to a friend" or is "attentive." Many equate engagement with behavioral usage. That is, they define engaged viewers as those who spend substantial time viewing or who watch frequently.

While all of these outcomes are important, we argue that they are consequences of engagement rather than engagement itself. It is engagement with a local news program that causes someone to want to watch it, be attentive, recommend it to a friend, and be disappointed if it were no longer on the air. Likewise, a lack of engagement will likely result in an absence of these outcomes. Our conceptualization is thus more fundamental than these other approaches. As illustrated in the Figure above, these outcomes are symptoms of engagement, but not engagement itself. These consequences are less actionable than experiences because the latter suggest strategies for differentiating a media product from competitors, increasing usage and affective loyalty, optimizing the execution of advertising, etc.

We now provide a detailed discussion of experiences, which, again, are the specific manifestations of engagement. Experiences are the *thoughts, feelings and beliefs that people have about a specific program or publication*. We emphasize that experiences do not characterize the editorial content itself, but rather the viewer's reactions to it. For example, the Helps and Improves Me experience characterizes the extent to which viewers *believe* they get good tips and advice from a program, which may not be directly related to the amount of time a program devotes to such information. An occasional, especially relevant tip could give this perception, without an entire program being devoted to such content. While the content itself, along with advertising about the content and other "brand-building" contact points[6], shape viewers' beliefs about a program, it is ultimately their perceptions about content that will determine whether or not they watch.

By focusing on viewers' perceptions, experiences describe the role that media serve in their lives. For example, people have a fundamental need for relaxation that can be satisfied in many different ways. For some, a quiet walk through the park may fulfill this need. Listening to music or watching a funny movie could also provide this break, taking the consumer's mind off other things. For others, reading about last night's game on the Web or in a newspaper during lunch could provide this timeout. Watching the local news at the end of the day could be another moment of downtime in their life. Media managers who understand that their content plays this role can then strategically focus on providing this experience and ensure continuing usage.

Northwestern University's Media Management Center has already conducted several large studies to understand experiences with Web sites, magazines and newspapers. All of these studies followed a similar methodology as the one used here for local television news. Extensive one-on-one interviews with readers/users/viewers generated large sets of statements describing specific beliefs about a certain publication, site or program in their own words. These statements

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[6] Contact points are all communications about a program or publication. They include exposures to any form of traditional advertising such as a television ad, billboard, newspaper ad, public relations events, etc. Contacts also include discussion of a program or news story at the water cooler or chat room, reading a blog or online review, reading about a program in the news, etc.

were then measured in a quantitative survey and factor analyzed, revealing and measuring distinct experiences with the specific medium.

Below are examples from our research of media experiences that are common across various media in detail. For each experience, we include all the specific statements made by consumers. Note that as the experiences below are common to various media, the statements include references to the various media.

Local television news shares many experiences with other media, as we show below. Other experiences discussed in this section may be found in other types of television programs, but were not measured for local television news in this study. These experiences could present opportunities for local news, as we discuss later.

This is not a comprehensive list of experiences; see www.MediaManagementCenter.org for a complete list. The first group consists of experiences that are common to local television news and other media and that have a positive effect on viewership/readership. The second group consists of experiences we found in other media.

Experiences common to television news and other media:

The Relaxing Experience. This is a way of having a break and forgetting about everything else. Specific statements from our consumer interviews indicating this experience include:
1. I lose myself in the pleasure of reading/watching this site/magazine/newspaper/television program
2. It is a quiet time
3. I like to kick back and wind down with it
4. It's an escape
5. The magazine takes my mind off other things that are going on
6. I like to go to this site when I am eating or taking a break.
7. It is my reward for doing other things
8. Reading/watching it is a way of not being bothered by whatever else is going on
9. Reading is my time alone
10. I feel less stress after reading it
11. Going to this site improves my mood, makes me feel happier

The Makes Me Smarter Experience
1. It address issues or topics of special concern to me
2. I look at it as educational. I am gaining knowledge
3. It updates me on things I try to keep up with
4. It's important I remember later what I have read
5. Even if I disagree with information on this site, I feel I have learned something valuable

This experience is similar to Helps and Improves Me (see next section), but is focused more on keeping up with certain topics than on how to do something specific. Those who believe they keep up with international affairs by using certain media have this experience, likewise for those who want to know everything about next year's automobiles, fashions, technologies, etc. For example, an article in a computer magazine describing the next generation of storage devices is providing more of a Makes Me Smarter experience, while an article describing how to remove

viruses is more of a Helps and Improves Me experience. A publication or program may consciously focus on providing both kinds of content.

The Trustworthy Experience
1. They do a good job of covering things. They don't miss anything
2. I trust it to tell the truth
3. It does not sensationalize things
4. You don't have to worry about accuracy with this site/magazine/newspaper/television program
5. It is unbiased in its reporting
6. I would trust this site with any information I give it
7. I feel safe in using this site

This experience is about believing that the program, site, or publication provides reporting that is truthful, comprehensive, even-handed, in-depth, and professional. This is distinct from the Makes Me Smarter experience, which is more about having confidence that stories the viewer thinks are important are covered.

The Anchor Camaraderie (or Knowing the Journalist) Experience
1. I enjoy watching the people doing the news talk with each other
2. I feel like I get to know the anchors on the news programs I watch
3. The anchors and reporters on the programs I watch are qualified professionals
4. I look forward to reading certain writers in this magazine/newspaper
5. I feel like I get to know the anchors / people writing the articles

This experience refers to the audience's feeling of personal connection with a particular journalist. Readers and viewers who have this experience feel they get to know the journalist's personality and views and might like to check an anchor's blog daily, sign up for RSS feeds of a certain writer, or buy books written by the journalist to whom they feel close. They look forward to seeing their favorite anchor or reading their favorite columnist, and may feel disappointed when they are on vacation or maternity leave. With television news, there is a different aspect to this experience which is a sense of *anchor camaraderie,* where viewers find it entertaining when the anchors talk to each other and may feel like they are talking directly to them.

The Civic Experience
1. Reading this newspaper / watching the news makes me feel like a better citizen
2. I think people who do not read this newspaper or one like it are at a disadvantage in life
3. I count on this newspaper/station to investigate wrongdoing
4. Our society would be much weaker without newspapers / TV news
5. Reading / Watching makes me more a part of my community

People believe that news organizations are vital to the well-being of a community because they connect them with others in the community. Reading or watching what is happening in the community, who has died or graduated, etc. can cause a person to feel more a part of it. Moreover, people believe news organizations can serve as a balance against the powerful, and investigative reporting that exposes government corruption, illegal business practices, and other wrongdoing contribute to this experience. The *Chicago Tribune* has a column called "What's Your Problem?" in which a reader can, for example, describe some conflict he has with the local

electric company, but has been unable to resolve. The *Tribune* would then call the power company and help resolve the problem. Many local television news programs also have investigative units.

The Positive Emotional Experience
1. It helps me to see that there are good people in the world
2. Some articles touch me deep down
3. It features people who makes you proud
4. The magazine definitely affects me emotionally

Television's ability to convey emotional messages via sight and sound is well known, and many viewers feel touched emotionally by stories they see on the news. For example, a story about fire fighters who died attempting to save some children from a burning building could have a strong emotional effect on its viewers. Many "kicker" stories on the local television news programs – the children's choir during the holidays, or the neighbor who saved the cat – can create this experience. The Positive Emotional experience is similar in some ways to the Inspirational experience (see below), but the latter tends to inspire the person to take action, while this experience has more to do with feeling good about the world.

The Routine Experience
1. It's part of my routine.
2. I use it as a big part of getting my news for the day
3. I usually read/watch it at the same time of the day
4. This is one of the sites I always go to anytime I am surfing the Web
5. I follow a routine pattern each time I read it, reading the same sections in the same order
6. It helps me get my day started in the morning

For some, breakfast is not complete without having a morning news program on. Watching is part of a ritual: turn the program on, make coffee and breakfast, and watch or perhaps listen. For others, the morning newspaper is the habitual breakfast companion. Some people have a news site (e.g., cnn.com or nytimes.com) or aggregators such as yahoo as their homepage. These sites become a primary source of "their" news. Some people have a ritual of watching the late-night news before going to bed. They do not feel ready for bed until they have watched.

This experience could be a consequence of others. For example, viewers could make watching a certain program part of their ritual because the anchors are entertaining, they find the reporting credible and trustworthy, or they feel relaxed watching.

Experiences found in other media:[7]

The Something to Talk About Experience
1. Reading this site/magazine/newspaper/television program gives me something to talk about
2. I bring up things I have read on this site in conversations with many other people

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[7] Our current analysis did not find these experiences in local television news.

3. I use things I have read in this newspaper in discussions or arguments with people I know
4. A big reason I read it is to make myself more interesting to other people
5. I show things in the NP to people in my family

Media enables people to be more interesting because they can better talk to others, and to themselves, about what they read or watched. In some cases, topics could be about strange or silly things that really happened: "Did you see where some guy tried to dry his dog by sticking it in the microwave oven?" "Can you believe that some couple in New Zealand wants to call their son '4real?' Imagine when the poor kid goes to school." Some people like to argue or debate about important current events. "Why on earth would the governor do this when all the facts show that it is the worst possible decision?" "How could the quarterback have been so stupid?" "Why is the team trading a certain player?" Media can provide news and information that lends itself to this experience.

The Helps and Improves Me Experience is the belief that one receives useful advice and tips from some publication or program.

1. I learn about things to do or places to go in this newspaper
2. This newspaper has columns that give good advice
3. It shows me how to do things the right way
4. You learn how to improve yourself from this site
5. I get good ideas from this Web site
6. This site provides information that helps me make important decisions
7. It helps me make up my mind and make decisions
8. I really like the tips in the magazine
9. This site provides a lot of "how-to" information

For example, cooking programs (or a segment within a television news program), cooking magazines, and newspaper food sections often expose people to new techniques, ingredients, recipes, and so on. A gardening magazine could help a person decide what flowers to plant in a shady location. An astronomy Web site could tell the reader how to find certain objects. A fitness segment of a program could provide the viewer with diet and exercise suggestions.

The Self-Esteem Experience
1. I am a better person for using this site
2. I like for other people to know I look at this site/magazine/newspaper/television program
3. Reading this newspaper makes me feel good about myself

People feel better about themselves because they read or view something. Someone may take pride in having a reputation for knowing everything about movies. Everyone knows they should ask her when they have a question about what movie to see or how some scene was shot. Such a person builds a reputation by reading or viewing certain media. Reading or viewing could also be an indication of a person's identity. To some, reading the *New Yorker* magazine confirms one's membership among a certain intellectual community. Having a copy of the *Harvard Business Review* or today's *Wall Street Journal* on top of the coffee table or desk is a signal that one is "in the know" on business issues and is a leader. Watching the *Daily Show* is a hip and cool way to stay informed and some viewers believe they are part of a group by watching.

The Entertaining Experience
1. It always has something that surprises me
2. It often makes me laugh
3. It is definitely entertaining
4. Once you start surfing around this site, it's hard to leave
5. I like stories about the weird things that can happen
6. I really do have a lot of fun visiting this site

This experience is about feeling entertained and absorbed in the site, magazine, newspaper or television program. Providing stories about unusual topics, or stories told in an unconventional way can enhance this experience. The Metropolitan Diary column in the *New York Times* is an example of content that grabs people's attention in this way.

The Passive Participation Experience
1. A big reason I like this site is what I get from other users
2. I'm as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content on this site
3. Overall, the visitors to this site are pretty knowledgeable about the topics it covers
4. This site does a good job of getting its visitors to contribute or provide feedback
5. I'd like to meet other people who regularly visit this site
6. I've gotten interested in causes I otherwise wouldn't have because of this site

This experience is most associated with Web sites. The Internet facilitates communication between people and many use it for that purpose. People are naturally curious about other people's opinions and online they can access those easily. Television news programs can also enhance that experience if they present news that features ordinary people as subjects of stories or as participants in polls. Interactivity – where viewers respond to a question during a news program – can cause a person to feel the program does a good job of getting people to contribute and give feedback.

The Active Participation Experience
1. I contribute to the conversation on this site
2. I do quite a bit of socializing on this site
3. I often feel guilty about the amount of time I spend on this site socializing
4. I should probably cut back on the amount of time I spend on this site socializing

This experience also applies mostly to Web sites and taps into the feeling that the site is replacing "real world" activities. "Second Life" would be a perfect example. News organizations might be able to create a community around a topic (say, a sports team) that is so involving to its members, they feel they almost spend too much time with it.

The Overload Experience
1. It tries to cover too much
2. Too many of the articles are too long
3. It has too many special section
4. I wish this newspaper had fewer pages
5. Reading this site/newspaper makes me feel like I am drowning in the flood of information that comes out each day
6. Unread copies of this newspaper pile up

For some, there is just too much news and information all around. This feeling is most acute with newspapers. For all media, discretion about when to use shorter stories can be one way to combat this belief. For example, news briefs about developments from around the world or in the economy might reduce this experience. On the other hand, long format stories might be appropriate for certain topics, or under certain conditions, providing the viewer, user, or reader with a satisfying in-depth news experience that feels just right and not too much. This experience touches on the issue of control (especially online) – the audiences' wish to be able to get the news they want, when and how they want it.

The Visual Experience
1. Most often I look at the pictures before reading the article
2. I like to look at the pictures even if I don't read the story
3. I look at the pictures in it and think "Wow"
4. I sometimes show a picture in it to someone else
5. I like to look at the pictures for a while

With this experience, television – a visual medium – has a natural advantage over print media (this experience was not measured in this study). Images grab people's attention, and television news provides abundant images. Some magazines that rate high on this experience are fashion, travel, and home magazines. All have professional photography that attempts to attract attention. Fashion magazines include beautiful people and clothes, travel magazine have aesthetic photos of travel destinations, and home magazines are filled with photos of beautiful rooms (with lots of grandma's china), outdoor living areas, the countryside and the like. The idea is to capture the imagination of the reader.

The Inspirational Experience
1. It makes me feel like I can do important things in my life
2. Reading it makes me want to match what others have done
3. It inspires me in my own life
4. Reading this magazine makes me feel good about myself

This experience is also closely related to Helps and Improves Me, yet is distinct. The Inspirational experience is about believing that one can do something while the Helps and Improves Me experience is about giving specific advice about how to do something. A good example of the inspirational experience is in the "I Did It!" column of the *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, featuring ordinary people who completed impressive projects on their homes. The emphasis is not on how they did it, but rather on the fact that they did it. A young man may read/watch a muscle or fitness magazine or program to be *inspired* to visit the gym and believe doing so will transform his body. A Helps and Improves Me experience would give him specific exercises, regimes and diets. Watching a premier chef cook complicated recipes requiring dozens of ingredients and special equipment is probably not a Helps and Improves Me experience for most viewers because the recipes are too difficult and time-consuming. Such a program, however, may be Inspirational, motivating the viewer to do something extra in the kitchen.

The Ad Attention Experience
1. I like the ads as much as articles
2. I look at most of the ads
3. I like how colorful the ads are
4. I click on the ads from this site more often than most other sites I visit
5. This site has ads about things I actually care about
6. I used the ads in this newspaper to understand what is on sale
7. I value the coupons in the newspaper

With some publications or programs, the advertising can be an important part of the content and can be an important reason for buying the publication, visiting the site or viewing the program.

Looking at the ads is a core part of the experience of reading a fashion magazine. Likewise, the ads in hobby magazines and programs could be highly relevant to readers/viewers. For example, the reader of a knitting magazine may be interested in learning where she can order certain yarns. The viewer of a cooking show could be attentive to advertisements for new cooking utensils and pans. Great ads can draw viewers, as do the ads during the Super Bowl.

The Ad Interference Experience
1. The number of ads makes it harder to read the articles
2. I am annoyed because too many of the ads on this site have too much movement
3. Sometimes the ads are overdone or even weird
4. The ads in this magazine are so similar in style they blend together
5. I don't like the number of popup ads on this site
6. I make a special effort to skip over and avoid looking at ads
7. I don't really look at the ads on this site.
8. I hate the inserts they put in it
9. All too often the ads are dull or boring

This negative experience is found in all media, to varying degrees. The opposite of Ad Attention, this experience is a negative one and can create resentment with the program, site, or publication because the ads seem to interrupt the flow of otherwise enjoyable content. Placing ads that are contextual or especially relevant to the audience (based on demographics or psychographics) can help diminish this experience.

Results: Experience with local television news

This section summarizes the results from the experience portion of the study for local night-time news programs. We began by doing in-depth interviews with consumers that explored the general thoughts and feelings that they have about specific local news programs. The statements from these interviews were then included in a quantitative survey and about 1,400 adult respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each one on a five-point scale. Factor analysis was used to identify specific experiences. More details about the method are provided in Appendix 1.

After highlighting the main findings, we present the results in the following order: First, we describe the experiences we found people have with local television news. Next, we profile the five local news programs in this study and compare the experiences viewers have with them to experiences people have with newspapers, magazines and Web sites. Third, we relate experiences to usage and then to civic participation.

Highlights from the experience findings

- Viewers have very similar experiences with the five local news programs. That is, no program causes its viewers to react or feel differently than the others. (The content analysis, below, also shows that all programs deliver very similar content and approaches.)

- We identified seven positive experiences that motivate people to watch local news (or engage with it) and four that inhibit viewership (or cause disengagement).

- Overall, the effect of the experiences on viewership is low compared with other media such as newspapers and online. This indicates many opportunities to improve viewership, but probably not by continuing current strategies.

- A strongly-felt experience, and the one most linked with loyal viewing is what we call Routine – where watching the news is a regular part of one's day. This is experienced more intensely by women than men.

- The news programs deliver relatively high levels of the Positive Emotional experience, which means that viewers are touched by stories, feel caught up in story lines, or like to see how things turn out. Our work with other media shows this experience is a definite strength for television. It is felt more strongly by women viewers than men. But having the Positive Emotional experience does not currently translate strongly into loyal or increased watching – it has virtually no effect.

- Another news experience that viewers feel fairly strongly is Anchor Camaraderie – enjoying it when presenters chat with each other, feeling they are watching qualified professionals and believing that they are getting to know the anchors. This experience is a moderate driver (or predictor) of viewership. Women tend to experience it more than men, and young people have lower levels.

- Viewers rate the Makes Me Smarter experience highly and it is a moderate driver of viewership. With this experience, viewers feel that the local night-time news program keeps them up to speed and stimulates their thinking. .

- Local television news is experienced as reasonably credible. When these market-specific results are compared with results from broader studies of other media, we see that Chicago local television news holds its own and is substantially more credible than some newspapers. This experience, which we call Trustworthy, is a low driver of viewing.

- As the name suggests, the Relaxing experience reflects the feeling that watching local news is a way to wind down and enjoy it as much for the entertainment as the information value. It is not strongly felt and is currently a low driver of viewing.

- The Civic experience – that watching the news makes one feel like a better citizen, and part of the community and that it is a good thing for society -- is felt somewhat, and is a low driver of viewership.

- Young people show higher levels of disengagement with local night-time television news. They experience what they perceive as too much sad and frightening news, an emphasis on a certain kind of news (crime and accidents) and a cynical feeling about the station's motives. We call these two experiences Negativity and Hype.

- Another experience that contributes to young people's disengagement and which, like Routine, is behavioral in nature is Selective Surfing -- picking specific stories or segments to tune into, checking in and out with the news, wondering what other newscasts are carrying.

- Men have a stronger Hype experience than women, perceiving too much talk and too much of the same kind of news and feeling cynical about the station's motives.

- Another experience related to disengagement is All the Same – the feeling that that stories and approaches vary little from one program to another. The content analysis confirms that this is indeed the case.

- Overall, disengagement doesn't cause people to watch less. But this finding must be interpreted with care. It could be that these disengagement experiences explain a lot about non-viewers of the program. It is also possible that disengagement among viewers will grow as media continue to fragment and competition intensifies. Since disengagement is similar from station to station, current viewers don't have an alternative and watch anyway – but reducing the negative experiences could present an opportunity.

- The more engaged people are with local television news, the more likely they are to say they follow politics and think it is important to vote, keep up with community issues and events, do volunteer work or donate money to worthy causes. However, engagement is not linked with actually voting, attending a political rally, contacting an elected official or other active forms of involvement.

- Further, we found a small relationship between viewership and staying informed and voting, but not with other forms of active civic participation. This contrasts notably with newspapers, where readership and civic outcomes are more strongly correlated.

Defining engagement and local television news experiences

This section gives a list of the experiences we found viewers have with local television news and the specific statements used on this survey which grouped into these experiences. General media experiences have already been discussed in a previous section of this report.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the individual statements (e.g., "I trust it to tell the truth") on five-point scales where 1 = I strongly disagree and 5 = I strongly agree. The average of the items is a measure of the experience for a respondent.

Local television news experience	Statements
Trustworthy	• They do a good job covering things. They don't miss things. • It is unbiased in its reporting. • It does not sensationalize things • I trust it to tell the truth.
Civic	• Watching the news makes a difference in my life. • Watching the news makes me feel like a better citizen. • Our society would be much weaker without television news. • It makes me more a part of my community.
Positive Emotional	• Some stories on the news touch me deep down. • The stories in the news affect me emotionally. • When watching the news, I want to learn how stories end. • I find myself wondering how things could have turned out differently.
Makes Me Smarter	• The television news I watch stimulates my thinking about things. • It updates me on the things I try to keep up with • It addresses issues or topics of special concern to me. • I look at the television news I watch as educational. I am gaining something. • Even if I disagree with things I see in the news, I feel I have learned something valuable. • It is time well spent.
Routine	• I tend to watch television news at the same time or times each day • It helps me to get my day started in the morning • It's part of my daily routine. • I use television news to get my news for the day.
Relaxing	• I like to kick back and wind down with it • It's a treat for me. • I watch it as much for the entertainment value as for the information value
Anchor Camaraderie	• I enjoy watching the people doing the news talk with each other. • I feel like I get to know the anchors on the news programs I watch. • The anchors and reporters on the programs I watch are qualified professionals.
Negativity	• There is so much sad and scary news that it is hard to watch. • Too much time is spent on negative things. • Not enough effort is made to cover the good things that happen. • They are always trying to catch people or tear them down.
Hype	• The local news that I watch covers accidents and crimes way too much. • I wish they would talk less and show me more. • Too much of what they do is done mainly to try to get more people to watch. • The same stories on the news are repeated day after day.
All the same	• The different news programs I watch are all very similar in the way they do the news. • The different news programs all have the same stories.
Selective Surfing	• When watching the television news I try to see what stories are coming up so I can catch the ones I want to see and avoid the ones I don't. • I always wonder what the other news programs are covering when I am watching the news. • I pick and choose what I pay attention to on the news. • I often turn on the news to see if there is anything going on.
Background	• I like to have the television news on in the background while I am doing other things. • When I watch the news I prefer to sit and focus on it. (negative loading) • While I am watching, usually the activity going on in the room around me is on my mind.

Recall that we defined engagement as the collective set of experiences that people have with media. We therefore applied factor analysis to the 12 experiences identified above. This analysis groups the experiences into the following two sets:

Engagement
- Trustworthy Experience
- Civic Experience
- Positive Emotional Experience
- Makes Me Smarter Experience
- Routine Experience
- Relaxing Experience
- Anchor Camaraderie Experience

This group of experiences constitutes the qualitative dimensions of engagement with local television news.

Disengagement
- Negativity Experience
- Hype Experience
- All the Same Experience
- Selective Surfing Experience

This second set of experiences shows ways of being disengaged with a news program and are therefore labeled *disengagement*. Note that the Background experience did not correlate substantially with either engagement or disengagement and was omitted from these second-order factors.

Profile of local television news experiences and comparison with other media

This section profiles the experiences provided by the five local television news stations in this study. The table below shows the average level of each experience currently rated by viewers of local television late-night news programs in Chicago. Overall, these programs deliver the Makes Me Smarter and Anchor Camaraderie most strongly.

Overall average local television news experience levels

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Makes Me Smarter	3.77	0.60
Anchor Camaraderie	3.70	0.71
Positive Emotional	3.59	0.58
Routine	3.57	0.76
Selective Surfing	3.54	0.62
All the Same	3.46	0.74
Civic	3.41	0.69
Trustworthy	3.33	0.72
Hype	3.10	0.71
Negativity	3.07	0.76
Relaxing	3.06	0.75
Background	3.00	0.64
Engagement	**3.49**	**0.52**
Disengagement	**3.21**	**0.60**

Average experience level for Chicago local television news
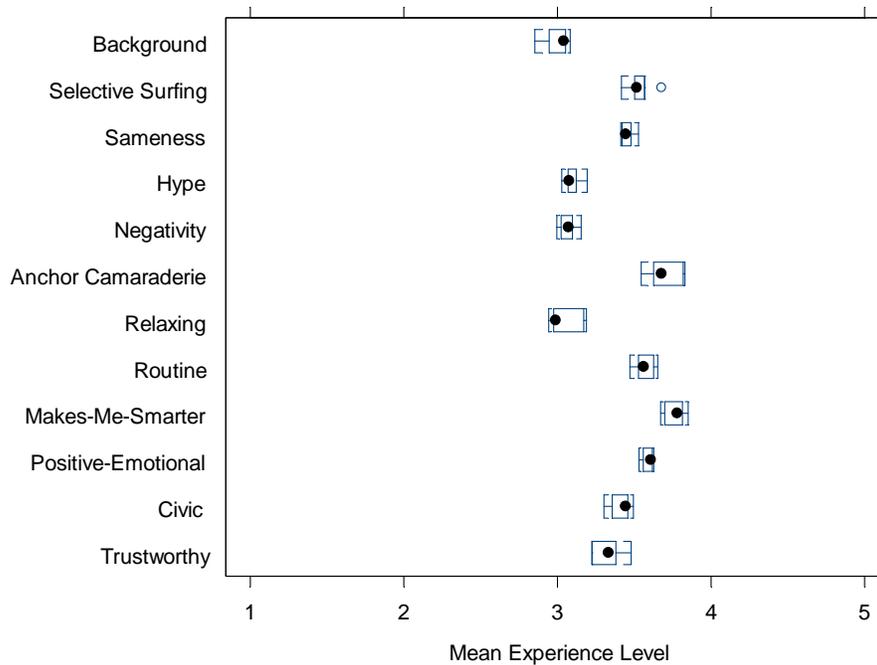
The figure below show the average experience levels for each of the five programs – for each experience there are five dots, corresponding to the five stations. First note how similar the programs are to each other, indicated by the average experiences levels (dots) being nearly equal

across stations for each experience. For example, the station averages for the Trustworthy experience are 3.23, 3.23, 3.33, 3.38, and 3.48, which are all within about a quarter scale point of each other. This suggests that there is little differentiation between the stations and could be an opportunity for individual stations to do something different so that they are more relevant to specific segments within the market. This is different from magazines and Web sites which, as we show below, have substantially more variation in the experiences they offer.

Program variation in experience levels
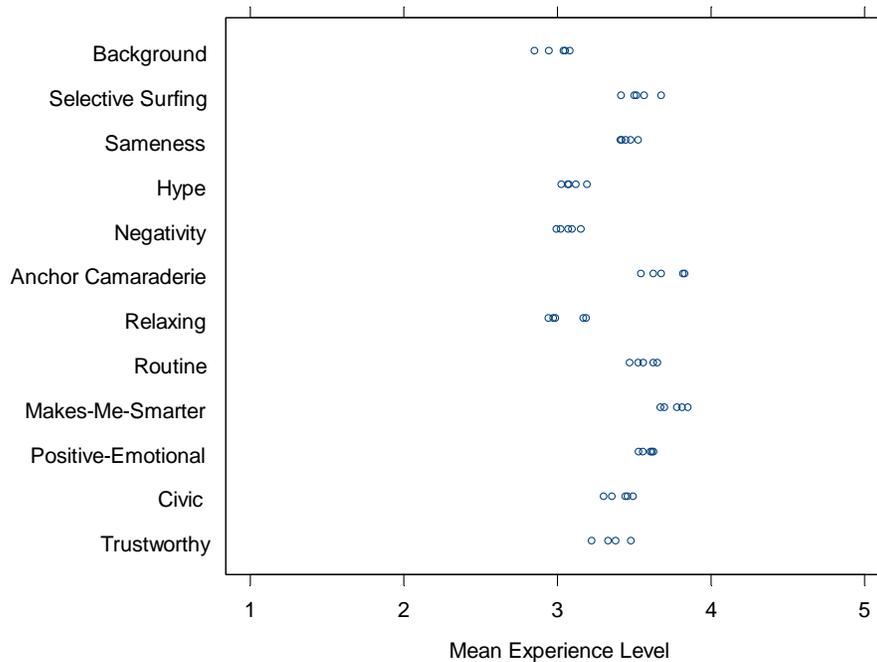
We can compare which television news experiences are rated highly by examining the relative positions of the dots along the horizontal axis. Across all five stations, the Makes Me Smarter and Anchor Camaraderie experiences are rated relatively higher than the other ones. The Positive Emotional, Routine, Selective Surfing, All the Same, and Civic experiences are also fairly highly rated by consumers.

The experiences with television news can also be compared with other media. Below, we compare previous studies with other media on several experiences: Trustworthy, Relaxing, Positive Emotional, and Helps and Improves Me.

The Media Management Center has conducted prior studies with other media: Two studies of newspaper experiences, one for online and one for magazines. The first newspaper study (Newspaper 1) measured 44 experiences of a broad cross-section of 100 newspapers that included papers of all sizes ranging from small-town papers to large-city metros. The second newspaper study (Newspaper 2) measured experiences in 52 ethnically diverse markets and

therefore focused more on mid-size and large papers. The Web study identified 22 experiences and measured them for 39 Web sites including local-news Web sites, national news Web sites, aggregators (e.g., Yahoo and Google), business Web sites, and special interest sites such as those devoted to games. The magazine study found 39 experiences and measured them on the MRI 100 largest magazines.

Note that these studies were broader than the present study in a sense that they included more markets and that they examined experiences with a medium as a whole. In this study, we study one market and one type of content (late night news). Additional research into general television experiences would be beneficial.

The graph below compares the media and specific outlets within a medium on the Trustworthy experience. Compared with other media, television news has comparable levels on the Trustworthy experience. Some Web sites and magazines have somewhat higher ratings than the highest-rated television station, but the average across stations is approximately equal to the average across magazines. Local television news is substantially more trusted than many newspapers. There is more variation in trust across the other media than among television news programs, again suggesting that television news programs are more similar to each other than, for example, magazines are to each other.

Trustworthy
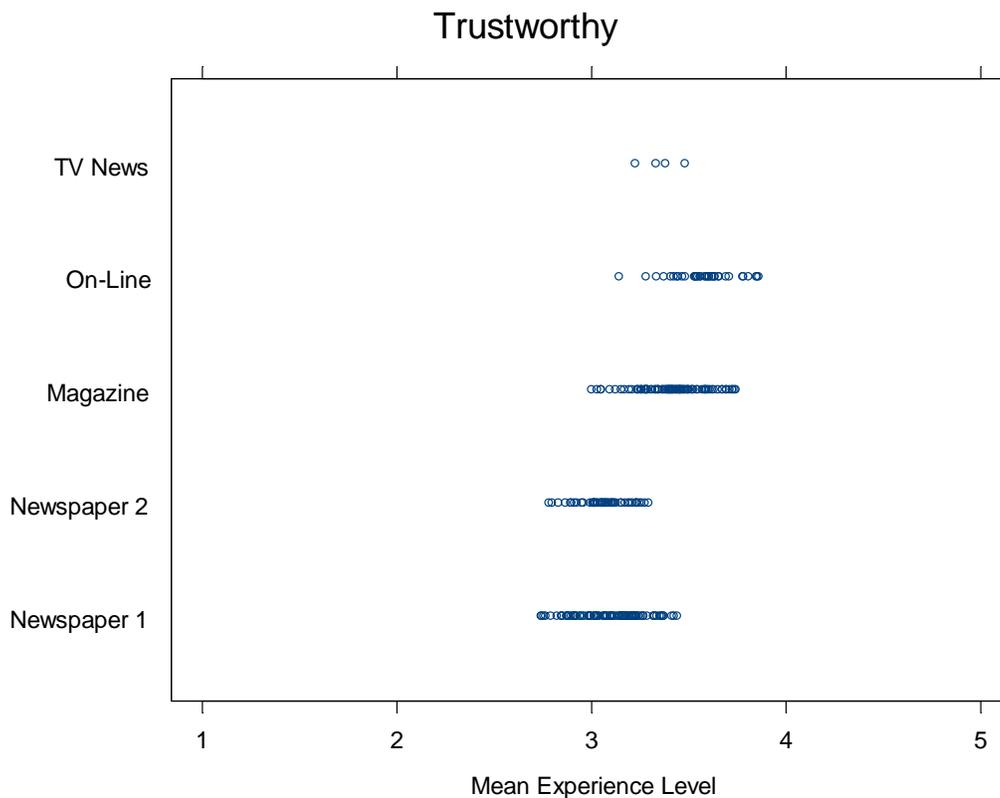
Next, we compare media on the Relaxing experience. The conclusions are similar: (1) there is more variation across publications in other media than across television news stations; and (2)

some magazines and Web sites do substantially better on providing the Relaxing experience than television news, but some newspapers are substantially worse.

Relaxing
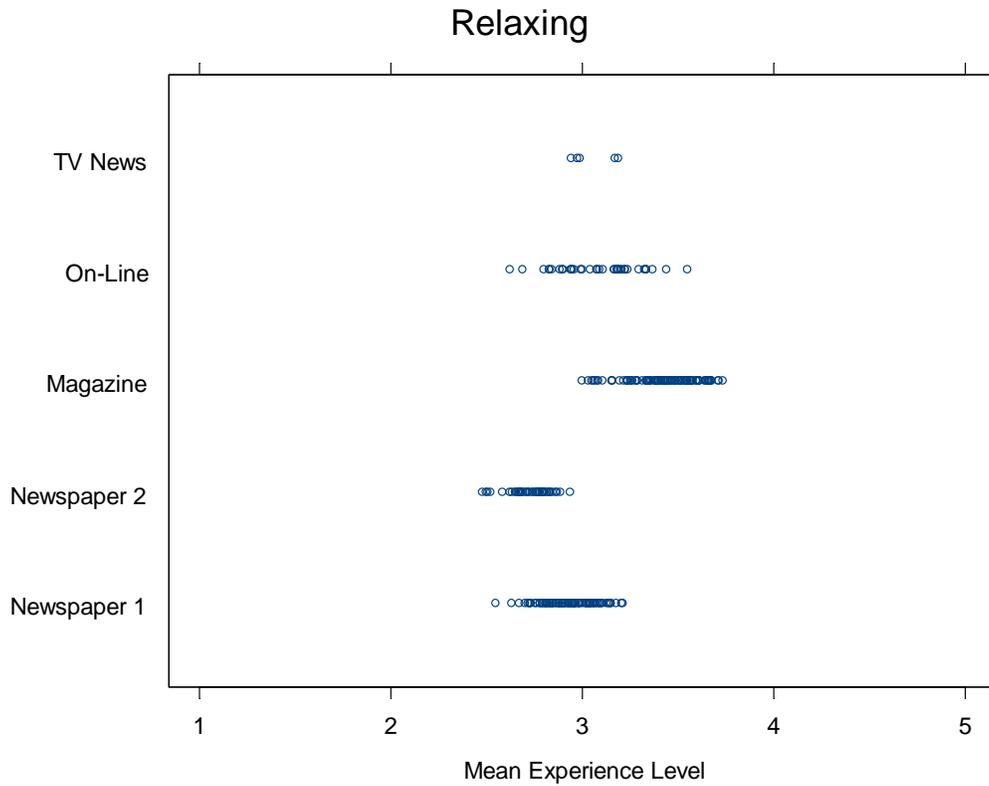
The Positive Emotional experience is compared below and shows a somewhat different pattern. Television news does a very good job of providing this experience compared with other media. There is only one magazine that is substantially better than any of the television news stations, and all five stations are better than the best of the Web sites and newspapers. The Positive Emotional experience can therefore be regarded as a strength of television news. The amount of variation across magazines is striking. One magazine has an average of 4.11 while the lowest level is just 2.44 (the magazine with a score of 2.44 delivers high levels of other experiences to be successful). This shows that magazines are highly differentiated on this experience. Television news programs may *not* want to differentiate from each other using this experience because it is a strength of the medium, but they should consider focusing on using other experiences for differentiation as the markets continue to fragment.

Positive Emotional
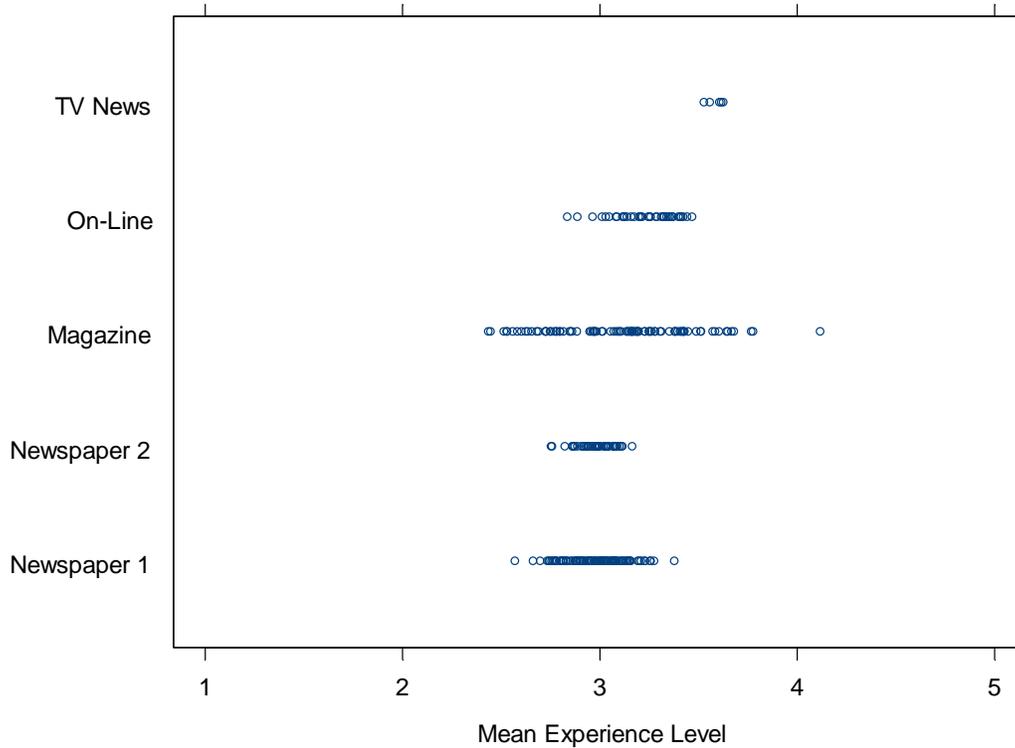
For comparison purposes, we show the Helps and Improves Me experience, which was not measured for night-time television news. Notice that magazines and Web sites differ greatly on this experience, just as they did with the Positive Emotional one. Other news programs (e.g., morning news programs) were not included in this study, but we suspect that some would receive good ratings on this experience, because many of them routinely include segments giving travel advice, cooking suggestions, etc.

Helps and improves me
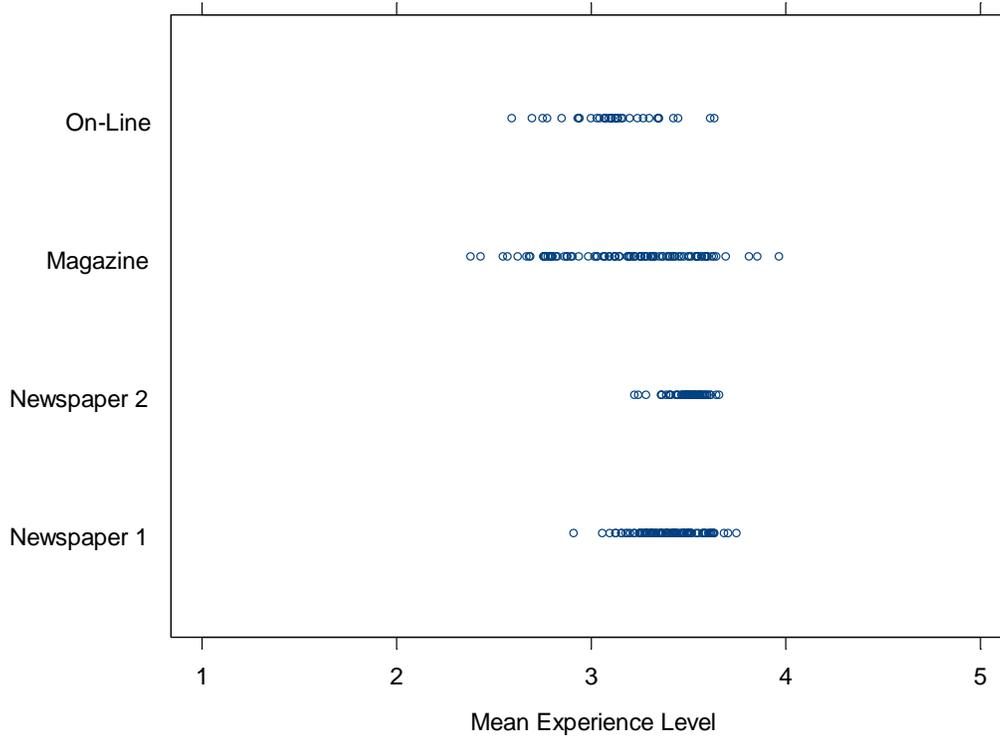
Local television news experiences and demographics

We now examine whether various demographic groups have different experiences with local television news. First consider gender. The average experience levels for males and females are provided in the table below along with the differences. Differences that are significant at the 0.01 level are shown in **bold** and those significant at the 0.05 level in *italic*.

Females have significantly higher levels of the Anchor Camaraderie, Positive Emotional, and Routine experiences, while males have higher levels of the Hype experience. Females also have slightly higher levels of the Makes Me Smarter experience.

Local television news experiences and gender

	Male	**Female**	Male – Female
Sample Size	335	1051	
Trustworthy	3.28	3.35	0.07
Civic	3.40	3.42	0.02
Positive Emotional	**3.46**	**3.63**	**0.18**
Makes Me Smarter	*3.71*	*3.79*	*0.08*
Routine	**3.45**	**3.61**	**0.15**
Relaxing	3.08	3.05	–0.03
Anchor Camaraderie	**3.54**	**3.75**	**0.22**
Negativity	3.13	3.05	–0.08
Hype	**3.27**	**3.05**	**–0.22**
All the Same	3.47	3.45	–0.03
Selective Surfing	3.49	3.55	0.06
Background	2.96	3.01	0.05
Engagement	**3.42**	**3.51**	**0.10**
Disengagement	**3.29**	**3.18**	**–0.11**

Next, we examined experience levels for different age groups. By far, the largest demographic difference is the Background experience, where younger people tend to have the experience most – the younger the person, the higher the Background experience. Likewise, young people are more likely to have higher Selective Surfing, Negativity and Hype experiences. Consequently, young people are significantly more Disengaged. Young people also have higher levels of the Relaxing experience and lower levels of the Anchor Camaraderie experience.

Local television news experiences and age

	18-29	**30-49**	**50+**
Sample Size	318	652	416
Trustworthy	3.32	3.35	3.31
Civic	3.45	3.41	3.40
Positive Emotional	3.61	3.60	3.56
Makes Me Smarter	3.74	3.77	3.78
Routine	3.51	3.59	3.58
Relaxing	**3.20**	**3.05**	**2.96**
Anchor Camaraderie	**3.58**	**3.72**	**3.77**
Negativity	**3.25**	**3.04**	**2.97**
Hype	**3.25**	**3.03**	**3.09**
All the Same	*3.56*	*3.42*	*3.42*
Selective Surfing	**3.67**	**3.53**	**3.46**
Background	**3.20**	**3.01**	**2.83**
Engagement	3.49	3.50	3.48
Disengagement	**3.35**	**3.17**	**3.16**

We also compared average experience levels across racial and ethnic groups. In the following table, bold numbers indicate that there is at least one significant difference at the 0.01 level. Whites have lower Relaxing experience than the other racial groups which are not different from each other. Asians and Hispanics have significantly higher Hype experience than Whites and African Americans. Asians, and to a smaller extent Whites, have lower Positive Emotional experiences. Asians and Whites have less of the Routine experience. Whites have slightly lower Selective Surfing experiences. Whites and African Americans have slightly lower levels of the Background experience. Asians have lower levels of the Anchor Camaraderie experience. Asians experience more Negativity, while Whites experience the least.

Local television news experiences and race / ethnicity

	White	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Sample Size	880	265	108	129
Trustworthy	3.31	3.38	3.37	3.39
Civic	3.38	3.47	3.49	3.48
Positive Emotional	**3.56**	**3.72**	**3.42**	**3.63**
Makes Me Smarter	3.74	3.87	3.70	3.78
Routine	**3.52**	**3.75**	**3.47**	**3.64**
Relaxing	**2.97**	**3.19**	**3.25**	**3.23**
Anchor Camaraderie	**3.71**	**3.76**	**3.48**	**3.72**
Negativity	**3.02**	**3.12**	**3.26**	**3.13**
Hype	**3.07**	**3.02**	**3.39**	**3.19**
All the Same	3.44	3.40	3.56	3.54
Selective Surfing	**3.49**	**3.60**	**3.64**	**3.70**
Background	**2.99**	**2.91**	**3.17**	**3.10**
Engagement	3.46	3.59	3.45	3.55
Disengagement	3.18	3.18	3.40	3.29

Local television news experiences and viewership

We suggested earlier that the experiences people have with media cause them to view or read these media. People will want to watch a news program because it is engages them by providing some combination of experiences. This theory suggests specific ways of increasing viewership – strategic changes to editorial content so that viewers have more of a certain experience would cause viewership to increase. Likewise, changes to editorial content that reduce the disengagement experiences should cause viewership to increase.

We have two measures of television viewership,
1. The number of days that the respondent watches the program (frequency)
2. The percentage of the show that is typically watched (completion). Note that completion is equivalent to time, e.g., "half" of a 30 minute program is the same as 15 minutes.

Averaging the two gives a composite measure of usage called the ***Program Usage Measure*** (PUM). PUM ranges from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates a non-viewer (0 frequency and completion) and 7 indicates a very heavy viewer (watching the entire program every evening).

Correlating between PUM and experiences indicates the strength of the relationship between them (see table below).

Correlations between experience and usage

	Usage: Frequency	Usage: Completion	PUM: Program Usage Measure
Trustworthy	0.20	0.25	0.28
Civic	0.15	0.20	0.21
Positive Emotional	0.13	0.15	0.17
Makes Me Smarter	0.22	0.31	0.32
Routine	0.40	0.38	0.48
Relaxing	0.18	0.26	0.26
Anchor Camaraderie	0.25	0.31	0.34
Negativity	-0.11	-0.12	-0.14
Hype	-0.09	-0.13	-0.13
All the Same	-0.06	-0.06	-0.08
Selective Surfing	0.01	-0.10	-0.06
Background	-0.06	-0.23	-0.18
Engagement	**0.30**	**0.35**	**0.40**
Disengagement	**-0.11**	**-0.13**	**-0.14**

Some experiences have positive correlations with all three usage measures. We call these experiences *motivators*. The strongest association is between the Routine experience and usage. Other motivators include Anchor Camaraderie, Makes Me Smarter, Trustworthy, Relaxing, Civic and Positive Emotional.

Other experiences have negative relationships with usage and are called *inhibitors*. The more viewers believe that a program is hyped or negative, the less they watch. The Background, All the Same, and Selective Surfing experiences are also inhibitors.

The experiences in order of impact on usage (PUM) are:

1. Routine
2. Anchor Camaraderie
3. Makes Me Smarter
4. Trustworthy
5. Relaxing
6. Civic
7. Background (inhibitor)
8. Positive Emotional
9. Negativity (inhibitor)
10. Hype (inhibitor)
11. All the Same (inhibitor)
12. Selective surfing (inhibitor)

Note that we do not recommend stations only determine their strategy by which experiences have the most impact on usage. Other considerations should have weight in these decisions:

1. Stations or programs should articulate which experiences are part of their concept and focus on delivering these experiences. This means that different programs can choose to focus on different experiences. This makes sense: What drives someone to read the Economist (Makes Me Smarter, Trustworthy, etc.) is completely different that what drives somewhat to read (or look at) Country Homes (Inspirational, Visual, Relaxing, Helps and Improves Me, etc.) or Vogue. Brief and easy to read should be a strong driver for USA Today, but probably less so for the New York Times.

2. Some experiences are overlapping – they are not completely separate from each other. This means that some of the correlations we see above may be overstated. It's best to think of all experiences as having some effect on usage.

3. Experiences with relatively low impact on usage should not necessarily be ignored. For example, we show very little effect for Positive Emotional in the multiple regression (see below), but all the stations do a pretty good job on this (relatively high means). We can't test this with our data, but this experience could be a "category requirement" – just as all cars had better have horns, stations have to offer some of this to be in the game, but doing more of it may not lead to higher usage.

The table above shows correlations between each individual experience and usage. Below, we show the results of a univariate regression analysis, predicting usage from each experience. The advantage of this approach is that it more directly indicates how much a program could gain in usage by increasing each specific experience. The order of the experiences in terms of impact on usage echoes that above.

Univariate regression predicting usage from experiences

	Frequency		Completion		PUM	
	Intercept	Slope	Intercept	Slope	Intercept	Slope
Trustworthy	1.95	0.57	2.25	0.45	2.41	0.62
Civic	2.39	0.43	2.52	0.35	2.84	0.48
Positive Emotional	2.16	0.47	2.56	0.33	2.75	0.48
Makes Me Smarter	1.04	0.75	1.27	0.65	1.22	0.87
Routine	–0.02	1.09	1.51	0.62	0.87	1.01
Relaxing	2.40	0.48	2.40	0.43	2.75	0.57
Anchor Camaraderie	1.19	0.72	1.59	0.56	1.59	0.78
Negativity	4.76	–0.29	4.34	–0.20	5.39	–0.29
Hype	4.63	–0.25	4.47	–0.24	5.42	–0.30
All the Same	4.46	–0.17	4.10	–0.11	5.06	–0.17
Selective Surfing	3.80	0.02	4.49	–0.21	5.02	–0.15
Background	4.47	–0.20	5.11	–0.46	5.82	–0.45
Engagement	**–0.18**	**1.16**	**0.73**	**0.86**	**0.21**	**1.23**
Disengagement	**5.04**	**–0.36**	**4.62**	**–0.28**	**5.73**	**–0.39**

We put the data to a more stringent measure of how experiences affect usage, by using a multiple regression analysis predicting usage from all 12 experiences at the same time (see table below).

Multiple regression[8] coefficients predicting PUM

	Impact on usage (slope)
Trustworthy	0.10
Civic	–0.04
Positive Emotional	–0.01
Makes Me Smarter	0.17
Routine	0.54
Relaxing	0.11
Anchor Camaraderie	0.22
Negativity	–0.06
Hype	0.01
All the Same	–0.05
Selective Surfing	–0.28
Background	–0.22
R-squared	**35%**

Some key observations:

- The Routine experience has the strongest effect on usage – the more people believe that watching the news is part of their routine, the more likely they are to watch.

- The Selective Surfing and Background disengagement experiences also play a large role in explaining usage.

- Routine, Selective Surfing and Background are all experiences that characterize behavior patterns.

- Anchor Camaraderie and Makes Me Smarter are more actionable experiences that also have strong effects on usage. This is consistent with industry beliefs that people select a television news program because of the anchor.

- The Trustworthy and Relaxing experiences also have some effect.

- As with the previous regression analysis, the Disengagement factors (Negativity, Hype, All the Same) have small effects.

- The counter-intuitive signs for Civic and Positive Emotional are a result of the correlation between the two (i.e., multicollinearity).

- The analysis of program averages in the previous section showed that television news does a good job of providing the Positive Emotional experience, but the analysis here suggests that

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[8] Estimated with ridge regression and shrinkage coefficient = 0.5.

higher levels of this experience do not translate into higher usage levels. Consequently, a program may not want to make the positive emotional experience a strategic focus.

We also correlated the usage measures with the higher order engagement variables (Engagement and Disengagement). The negative effect of Disengagement is much less than the positive effect of Engagement, indicating that people may have negative Disengagement experiences with television news, but that does not cause them to watch less.

This finding, however, must be interpreted with care. It could be that these Disengagement experiences are the reasons why non-viewers do not view the program. It is also possible that the effects of Disengagement experiences on usage will become stronger as the market fragments and competition grows even more intense. Since the five stations in Chicago are approximately equally negative, viewers do not have an alternative and watch anyway.

Regressions using second-order factors

	Frequency	Completion	PUM
Intercept	0.79	1.47	1.24
Engagement	1.12	0.84	1.19
Disengagement	–0.27	–0.21	–0.29

Finally, we investigated whether the correlations between experiences and usage vary across programs. For example, it could be that Anchor Camaraderie has a stronger correlation with usage for one station than for another, making it more important for the first station. It turns out that there are no significant differences in the correlations across stations (from ANCOVA model). This further reinforces our conclusion that the five late night television news programs in the Chicago market are similar to each other in terms of viewers' experiences.

Local television news experiences and civic participation

In addition to examining the relationship between experiences and usage, we also measured the relationship between experiences and several civic outcomes. As mentioned above, the localism principle is one of the means by which a television station can serve the public interest. It can be hypothesized that, if stations have a license (i.e., in compliance with FCC requirements), their viewers – consuming local television news – will exhibit higher levels of civic participation.

We measured civic participation in several ways. We asked how important it is for the respondent to participate in various civic activities such as elections, keeping up with local events, and doing volunteer work or community service. Another question measured the extent to which the respondent follows politics. We also asked directly about civic activities such as voting, contacting political officials, attending political meetings or rallies, signing a petition, and the like.

An exploratory factor analysis of all the above items resulted in three items measuring civic outcomes: Informed, Voting, and Civic Participation (3 eigenvalues greater than 1 and no large cross loadings after a varimax rotation).

Informed (α=0.83)	"How important is it for you, personally, to participate in the following types of civic activities?" • Elections • Keeping up with local/community events • Keeping up with state and national issues • Doing volunteer work or community service • Donating money to worthy causes "Which describes you best? I follow politics (most of the time), (some of the time), (now and then), (hardly at all)."
Voting (α=0.83)	Did you vote/do you intend to vote in (2004), (2006), (2008)?
Civic Participation (α=0.74)	"In the last 12 months, have you…? (yes, no, don't know)" • Contacted an elected political official • Attended a political meeting or rally • Participated in a protest, march or demonstration • Signed a petition, on paper or on the Internet • Participated in an organized project to try to solve a community problem

We find that engagement with local television news is positively correlated with the Informed variable (an index of the question of how important it is for a person to participate in five different civic activities and the extent to which he or she follows politics). The more viewers are engaged with local television news, the more likely they are to feel it is important to participate in civic activities and to follow politics. We find that engagement, however, is not correlated to actual voting or civic participation.

Correlations between Experiences and civic outcomes

	Informed	**Voting**	**Civic Participation**
Engagement	**0.23**	0.01	0.00
Disengagement	0.00	–0.02	0.06
Program Usage Measure (PUM)	**0.07**	**0.07**	–0.06
Newspaper Readership	**0.17**	**0.17**	**0.11**

n=1386, bold values are significant at the 0.01 level

Interestingly, these data show that viewership of local television news programs barely translates into civic outcomes – we find a very small, but significant, relationship between PUM and Informed and PUM and Voting, and no relationship between PUM and Civic Participation. For comparison, newspaper readership has a positive correlation with all three measures of civic participation.

Results: The content of local television news

The content analysis of local TV news programs in Chicago examined 46 randomly selected late-night news programs, on average nine programs per station, over a course of six months. The goal of this systematic content analysis is to provide an accurate and objective depiction of what is actually on the local nightly news in Chicago.

The analysis examines the content of late night news programs on five Chicago television stations: WBBM CBS2 Chicago (news at 10 pm), WMAQ NBC5 (news at 10 pm), WLS ABC7 (news at 10 pm), WGN-TV (news at 9 pm), and WFLD-TV FOX 32 Chicago (news at 9 pm). Weekday (Monday-Friday) nightly news programs were recorded during the third week of each month from September, 2005 through February, 2006.

A note about the time period studied: In the fall of 2005, two major events – an unusually active hurricane season with hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf Coast and hurricane Wilma hitting Florida and the White Sox victory of the World Series – contributed to the quantity of weather and sports stories and is likely atypical. Additionally, in March 2006, Illinois held election primaries, which may have contributed to the quantity of politics stories. Finally, November and February are traditional "sweeps" periods for television stations, in which advertising rates are determined. Even though the Chicago market now uses Nielsen's People Meters – which provide daily data – days coded during these months may have had atypical types of stories (e.g., more enterprise stories) and therefore may have an impact on the results of the content analysis.

The content analysis examined all the segments in each news program, with more in-depth analysis of stories (categorizing them in terms of topic, sources, location, local relevance, complexity of story and other measures). See Appendix 1 for more details on the sampling frame and coding procedures.

Following the highlights of the main content findings, we begin with a discussion of the make up of a typical late night local television news program. We then explore news stories (as opposed to other segments such as the sports or weather) in more depth, including general characteristics, topics, prominence, station initiative (enterprise), location, relevance and utility as well as the characteristics of people in the news.

Highlights content analysis

- Overall, the stations are more similar than they are different in the content of their night-time news programming. (Variations among stations are detailed in a later section of the report.) This explains the strength of the "All the Same" experience, where people perceive that local stations carry the same news, approached in the same ways.

- Less than half of every local news program is devoted to news stories (about 45%). Sports and weather take up between 9-10% of the time, on average, and commercials take up almost 30% of the time.

- Crime leads the news – it's in the first block, and stories get proportionately the most time (19%) of any story topics.

- More than one-third of all news stories are about crimes, fires and accidents, while politics accounts for 15% of the news is about crime or fires and accidents Health, science and environment stories comprise 11% of all stories, and weather stories 10%.

- Stories about business, commuting, real estate, health, science and environment are least likely to make the top of the news.

- About 80% of stories employ a "straight news" story-telling technique.

- Stories run just over a minute on average (69 seconds) and there are 12-14 stories in a 30-minute program, about 21 in 60-minute programs.

- Much of the news happens in and around Chicago – it is local.

- While stories are geographically local, most news stories have no direct effect on the lives of people in the viewing area.

- Only a small portion of news stories include actionable information and they occupy less prominent positions in the lineup.

- Less than 10% of the stories are initiated by the station (enterprise reporting) and less than 20% of enterprise stories appear in the first block of the program. Enterprise stories are also more likely to appear during the sweeps periods.

- Enterprise reporting covers mostly health and consumer issues.

- For every one woman who is heard in a story, there are two men.

- For every non-White person who is heard in a story, there are three White people.

- People who are White, male and official dominate news about politics – other topics vary in balance.

The makeup of a typical local TV news program

Of the coded programs, approximately 40-50% of the time is devoted to stories (news and features), with between 25% and 34% of the time is devoted to commercial breaks. About 8-12% of the time is devoted to the sports segment and 6-10% to the weather segment. This accounts for between 92-94% of the time on all stations. On average, about 5% of the time is devoted to promoting the program, with very little time for promotions of other network programs and affiliates, lottery and other indices (e.g., stock markets), viewer participation and news roundups.

Program elements as percent of total program time

	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Stories	**45.3**	41.0	48.2	45.3	42.0	49.8
Commercials	**29.5**	34.2	24.7	27.0	33.6	28.0
Sports	**9.8**	10.0	10.5	12.2	8.3	7.9
Weather	**8.9**	8.8	9.7	9.8	10.0	6.4
Show promotion	**5.1**	5.3	5.4	4.6	4.5	5.5
Lottery, index	**0.7**	0.6	0.5	1.2	1.0	0.4
Other promotion	**0.2**	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.0
Viewer participation	**0.3**	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.7
News round up	**0.4**	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.3
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Typical news program elements (% time of entire program)
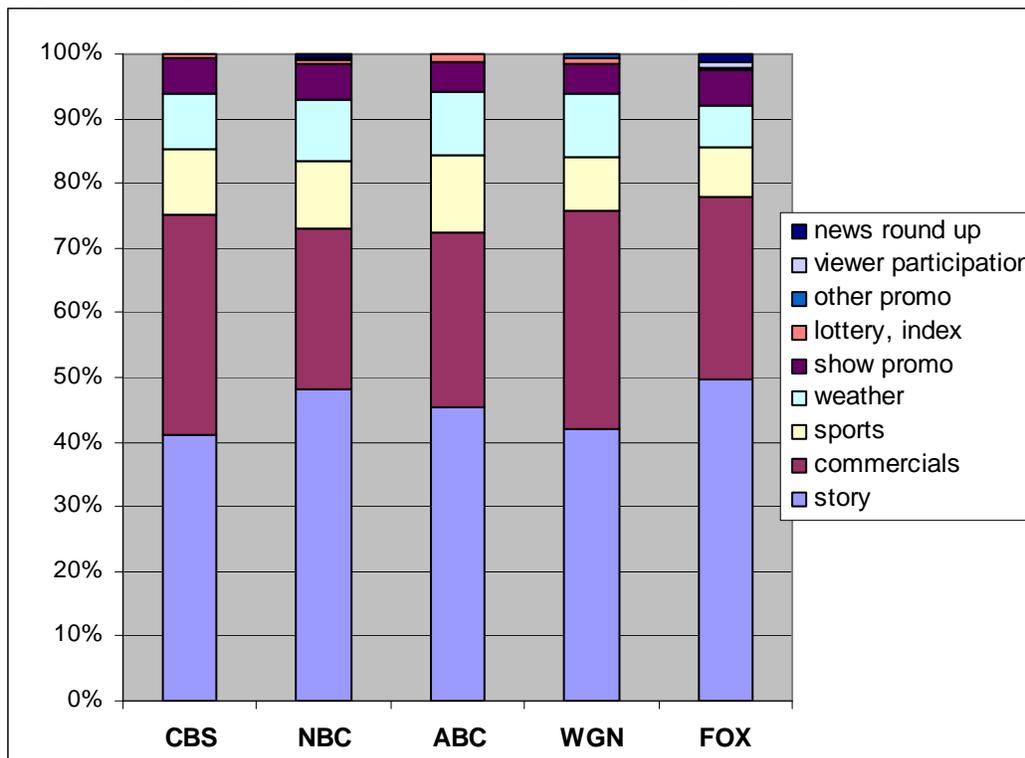
Average number of each program elements in 30-minute programs
During the 30-minute news programs (CBS, NBC, and ABC), there are between 12-14 stories per show and one each sports and weather segments. CBS has more commercial breaks (about five) than NBC and ABC, who have four breaks each. CBS also has more program promotions (average 6.1 per program) than the other two (average about 5 per program). NBC has a viewer participation and a news round-up segment per show.
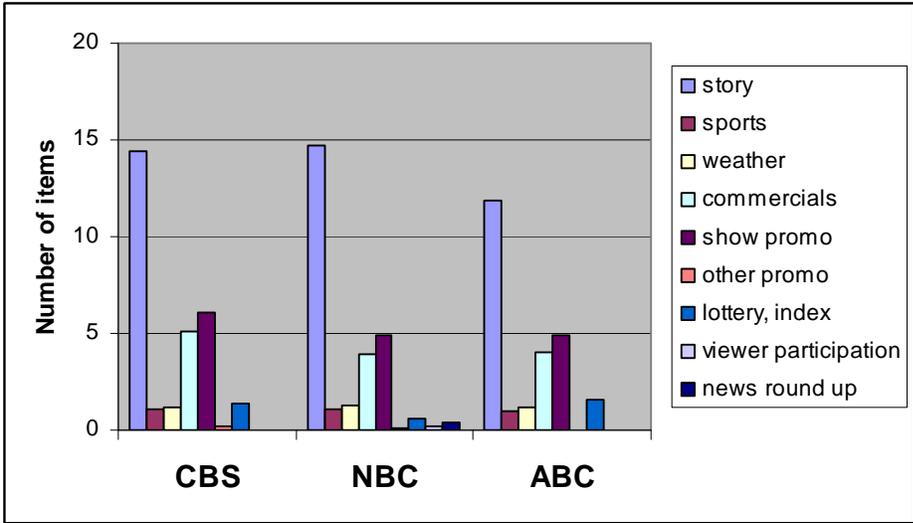
Average number of each program elements in 60-minute programs
The two 60-minute news programs (WGN and FOX) have about 21 stories per show, one sports and two weather segments. WGN has more commercial breaks (7.2) and program promotions (8.1) than FOX (6.1 and 6.8, respectively), while FOX has one viewer participation segment on each program.
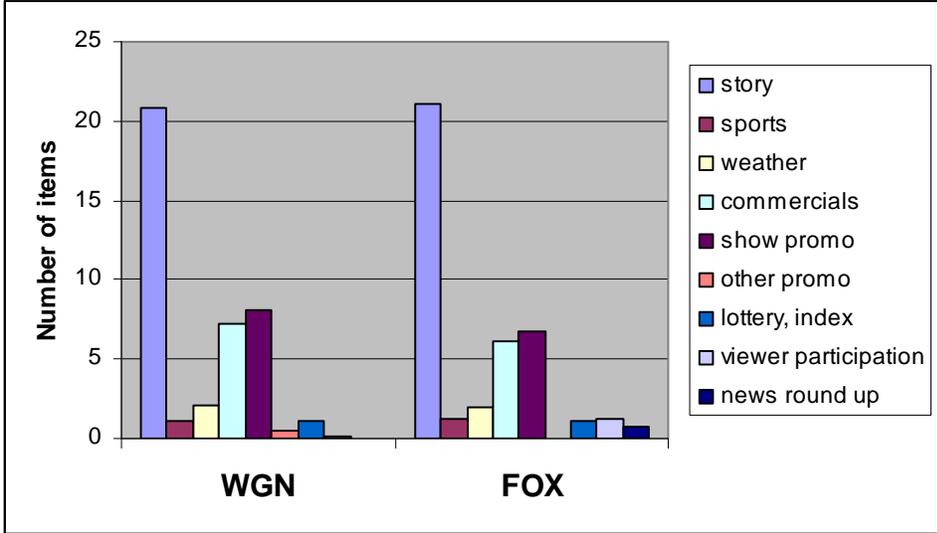
News stories – general characteristics
In the next step of the analysis we examined 755 stories to describe and measure what they were about, what production elements were used, who appeared in them, what the location was, and what relevance they had to the local public.

The sample included a total of 755 stories:

Station	Number of stories coded
CBS	144
NBC	147
ABC	107
WGN	188
FOX	169
Total	**755**

Stations with 30-minute news programs have between 12 and 14 stories per show compared with stations with 60-minute news programs which have about 21 stories per show.

The average length of a story across all five stations is just over one minute (69 seconds), with station averages ranging from 59 seconds to 80.5 seconds.

The average story length for 30-minute news programs is about 64 seconds, twelve seconds less than the 76 seconds average story length for a 60-minute program.

Station	Average length of stories in seconds
CBS	59.0
NBC	61.6
ABC	71.2
WGN	70.9
FOX	80.5
Average	**68.6**

Average length of stories
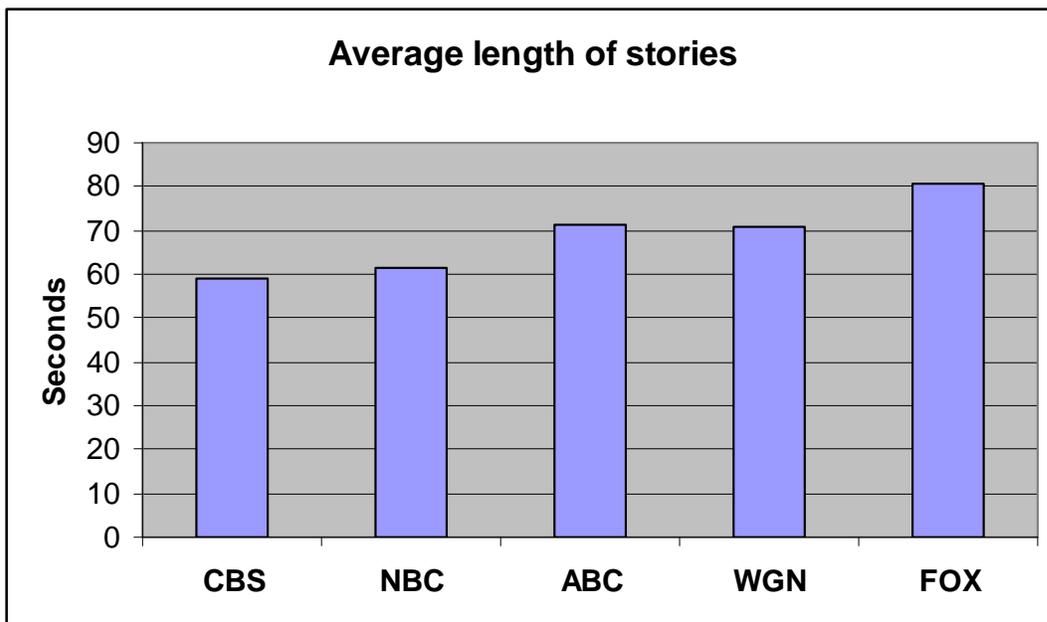
In terms of the production of the stories, there are strong similarities among the stations. About 90% include an anchor speaking to the camera and either telling the story, or introducing it. About 50% of the stories include voice over video (VO; the anchor reading with video in the background), with only about 20% of the stories with a VOSot (literally: voice over video with sound on tape; this means there is also soundbites in the video). Close to 30% of the stories include a package (a self-contained report with video and soundbites) and about a quarter of the stories include a full screen graphic. Showing a reporter live in the studio is a bit more common than showing a reporter live on the scene (14% and 10%, respectively). About 9% of the stories include "anchor talk" – anchor or reporter chat after a story or in reaction to a segment. A very small percentage of stories include live interviews or promoting the station's Web site.

While, as a group, 30-minute programs are not very different from 60-minute programs in elements of story production, there are notable differences between individual stations in the use of VOSot and the presence of anchor talk. NBC has a higher percentage of stories that include VOSot. CBS and FOX have a higher proportion of stories that include anchor talk than the other stations.

Percent of stories with various production elements

	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Reader	**90.1**	94.4	87.0	99.1	83.5	86.3
VO	**49.8**	48.6	51.4	58.9	46.8	43.5
PKG	**28.7**	28.5	26.7	28.0	27.7	32.7
Full screen graphic	**24.7**	28.5	21.9	26.2	20.2	26.8
VOSot	**20.7**	17.4	28.1	19.6	17.6	20.8
Reporter live in studio	**14.0**	11.1	11.6	17.8	15.4	14.3
Reporter live on scene	**10.3**	10.4	10.3	9.3	10.6	10.7
Anchor talk	**8.8**	13.2	4.8	3.7	9.0	13.1
Web promotion	**1.8**	2.1	2.7	3.7	0.0	0.6
Live interview	**0.4**	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0

* Base = 755. Percentages do not add to 100% as multiple elements were coded.

Story topics

On average, one in five stories in local television news in Chicago is related to crime. WGN has the lowest percentage of crime stories, while CBS the highest.

The next most common topic is politics, with an average of about 15% of the stories. WGN stands out as having the highest percentage of politics stories, while ABC has the lowest.

For some topics, there is a wide variation among the stations: WGN and CBS rank highest for stories about sports (apart from the sports segments), with over 8% of the stories, compared to 5% or less for other stations. ABC ranks the highest with international stories with over 8% of the stories, while NBC the lowest with just over 1%. NBC leads with the highest percentage of fire and accidents stories (almost 12%), compared with half that for WGN (6%). CBS has by far

the highest percentage of business and economy stories (over 10%) compared with about 3% for ABC. NBC and FOX lead with a high percentage of weather stories (apart from the weather segments), mostly about the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, with about 15% and 13% respectively, compared with about 7% of the stories on CBS.

Topic as percent of stories

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	**20.2**	24.3	21.4	19.6	15.4	21.4
Politics	110	**14.6**	13.2	11.7	10.3	20.2	14.9
Health, science, environment	84	**11.2**	9.7	9.0	13.1	13.3	10.7
Weather story	76	**10.1**	5.6	14.5	9.3	8.5	12.5
Fire, accidents	60	**8.0**	6.9	11.7	8.4	6.4	7.1
Other	59	**7.8**	6.9	11.0	7.5	5.3	8.9
Entertainment	51	**6.8**	6.3	7.6	7.5	7.4	5.4
Sports	43	**5.7**	8.3	2.8	1.9	8.5	5.4
Business, economy	37	**4.9**	10.4	5.5	2.8	4.3	1.8
International	33	**4.4**	4.9	1.4	8.4	4.3	4.2
Transportation, commuting	16	**2.1**	1.4	2.1	1.9	2.7	2.4
Home, real estate	9	**1.2**	0.7		2.8	1.1	1.8
Religion, spirituality	7	**0.9**	0.7		1.9	0.5	1.8
Education	6	**0.8**		0.7	1.9	1.6	
Food	4	**0.5**			1.9		1.2
Travel	3	**0.4**	0.7	0.7		0.5	
Technology	2	**0.3**			0.9		0.6
Total	**752**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
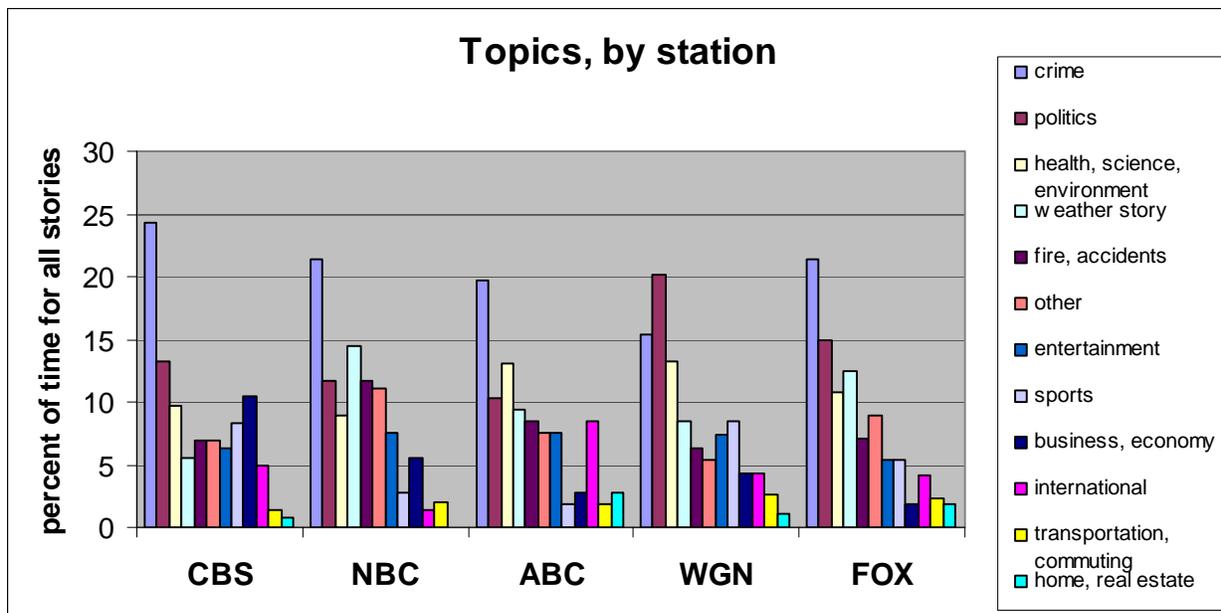
* These topics account for over 94% of the stories. Religion and spirituality, education, food, travel, and technology are each less than 2% of the stories across all stations and make up the remainder of the stories.

The next table gives a better sense of the actual on-air time devoted to each topic. It shows the time stories about each topic got, as a percent of the total time devoted to stories in the program. Comparing the table above to the one below, we see an overall similar distribution (e.g., that the same topics make the top five), indicating a correlation between the number of stories and the overall time devoted.

Topic as percent of time devoted to stories

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	19.4	26.5	19.6	18.4	13.7	19.0
Politics	110	12.8	13.5	8.1	10.5	18.9	12.9
Weather story	76	12.7	8.6	15.1	15.1	13.0	11.4
Health, science, environment	84	11.5	7.7	9.7	12.6	15.3	12.3
Fire, accidents	60	8.4	10.1	11.9	6.4	7.3	6.5
Sports	43	7.1	9.7	6.6	2.0	10.2	7.1
Entertainment	51	6.0	4.1	9.0	5.4	6.3	5.3
Other	59	5.7	5.4	5.5	3.8	4.3	9.5
International	33	4.6	4.3	3.4	7.3	3.0	4.8
Business, economy	37	4.0	6.2	7.3	1.6	3.2	1.7
Education	6	2.2	0.0	0.4	5.4	0.8	0.0
Technology	2	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.8
Transportation, commuting	16	2.0	2.7	1.9	1.9	2.7	0.9
Home, real estate	9	1.9	0.6	0.0	0.8	1.0	5.0
Food	4	1.8	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.4
Religion, spirituality	7	1.3	0.4	0.0	2.3	0.2	2.5
Travel	3	0.7	0.2	1.7	0.0	0.2	0.0
Total	**752**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

The top five story topics, as a percent of the time devoted to stories, by station are:

CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	Crime	Crime	Politics	Crime
Politics	Weather story	Weather story	Health / science	Politics
Fire / accidents	Fire / accidents	Health / science	Crime	Health / science
Sports	Health / science	Politics	Weather story	Weather story
Weather story	Entertainment	International	Sports story	Other

Note that the percent of time devoted to sports and weather, as stories, is highly unusual and can be attributed to the time period of the coding, which included the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma in the fall of 2005 and the Chicago White Sox's championship of the World Series in baseball in October 2006. Specifically, the three hurricanes were the subject of 75% of all weather stories and the White Sox were the subject of 88% of all sports stories.

When looking at length of stories, the distribution is a bit different, with some topics getting more time per average story than others. The table below shows that stories about technology

tend to be longer, as well as stories about sports (not sports segments), education, home / real estate and weather stories (not weather segments). However, keep in mind that these are not typical stories: there are only two technology stories in this data set, and weather and sports are related to very specific events that brought them out of their segments into the news. Politics, among the top five in terms of number of stories, drops toward the bottom of the list because the stories are rather short on average. In general, there are large variations among the stations in terms of the average length of story by topic.

Topic and average number of seconds per story

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Technology	2	**177.5**	0.0	0.0	251.0	0.0	104.0
Sports	43	**95.8**	69.0	143.8	75.0	84.9	106.1
Education	6	**91.3**	0.0	32.0	204.5	37.3	0.0
Home, real estate	9	**90.6**	49.0	0.0	20.7	65.5	227.3
Weather story	76	**90.3**	91.8	63.0	115.3	108.1	73.6
International	33	**80.7**	52.6	146.5	61.4	49.9	93.3
Food	4	**76.8**	0.0	0.0	124.0	0.0	29.5
Fire, accidents	60	**71.2**	86.0	61.4	53.8	81.3	73.4
Health, science, environment	84	**70.8**	46.5	64.9	68.4	81.6	92.7
Transportation, commuting	16	**69.1**	115.5	55.3	73.5	71.4	30.0
Crime	152	**64.2**	64.3	55.2	66.8	63.1	71.5
Travel	3	**63.3**	19.0	147.0	0.0	24.0	0.0
Religion, spirituality	7	**62.5**	32.0	0.0	87.0	20.0	111.0
Politics	152	**62.3**	60.3	41.6	72.9	66.5	69.9
Entertainment	51	**60.3**	38.6	71.6	51.6	59.5	80.2
Business, economy	37	**57.1**	35.1	79.6	41.3	53.0	76.3
Other	59	**51.0**	45.8	29.9	36.6	57.3	85.4

<u>Topics and prominence</u>

It is reasonable to assume that stories that lead the news programs are those that broadcast news decision-makers think have significance for their viewers. The table below shows various topics and where they are likely to appear in a typical local television news program. We divided each program into blocks which denote a segment between commercial breaks. Note that we present the first six blocks, since the majority of 30-minute programs did not have more than that.

An analysis in the table below shows the relative proportion of stories in various blocks in the program.

Overall, almost a third of the stories in the first block are about crime (31.4%) and together with politics and fire and accident stories, makes up over half of the stories in Block A. Crime and politics still dominate Block B, but have a diminished presence later in the program. On average, for all stations in this study, over fifty percent of the second block includes stories about crime and politics.

So-called "softer" news is found later in the program, and these data confirm that entertainment receives an increasing emphasis as the program progresses, as do health, science and environment which make up about one quarter of the third, fifth and sixth blocks. Note also that stories in the "other" category are more likely to appear later in the program – these are the offbeat or feel-good stories, such as the children's choir singing holiday songs, that do not neatly fit into any other category.

Distribution of story topics by blocks

	N	Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D	Block E	Block F
Crime	152	31.4	27.8	7.1	4.7	7.0	0.0
Politics	110	15.5	25.3	10.0	11.6	3.5	6.4
Fire, accidents	60	10.7	13.0	3.6	2.3	1.8	2.1
International	33	3.8	11.1	1.4	0.0	0.0	4.3
Business, economy	37	2.8	1.9	7.9	23.3	3.5	4.3
Health, science, environment	84	1.7	8.6	23.6	11.6	21.1	27.7
Technology	2	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Entertainment	51	0.3	1.2	10.7	16.3	17.5	19.1
Travel	3	0.0	0.6	0.0	2.3	1.8	0.0
Home, real estate	9	0.3	0.0	4.3	2.3	0.0	2.1
Food	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.0
Transportation, commuting	16	1.0	2.5	3.6	4.7	1.8	2.1
Religion, spirituality	7	1.0	1.9	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0
Weather story	76	17.9	2.5	6.4	11.6	8.8	2.1
Sports	43	10.0	0.6	4.3	2.3	0.0	12.8
Education	6	1.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.8	0.0
Other	59	2.1	3.1	15.0	4.7	24.6	17.0
	752	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

To compare stations whose programs vary in length and number of blocks, we looked at the first, middle, and last blocks. As the table below shows, in Block A, WGN and FOX are more likely to have stories about politics. ABC carries less politics, but significantly more international news stories and is least likely to have sports story in the first block. WGN and ABC carry less crime stories in Block A, while at CBS, almost 40% of the stories in Block A are about crime.

First block: Topics

	n	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	39.7	33.8	26.8	25.7	29.4
Politics	110	14.3	15.4	7.3	18.6	19.6
Fire, accidents	60	9.5	15.4	12.2	7.1	9.8
International	33	3.2	3.1	17.1	0.0	0.0
Business, economy	37	1.6	1.5	2.4	7.1	0.0
Health, science, environment	84	1.6	1.5	0.0	1.4	3.9
Technology	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Entertainment	51	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Travel	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home, real estate	9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Food	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transportation, commuting	16	1.6	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0
Religion, spirituality	7	1.6	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.0
Weather story	76	9.5	18.5	19.5	21.4	21.6
Sports	43	15.9	6.2	2.4	14.3	7.8
Education	6	0.0	1.5	2.4	1.4	0.0
Other	59	1.6	3.1	2.4	0.0	3.9
Total	752	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

How likely is a topic to appear in the beginning of the news program? The stories that have the best likelihood of being in Block A are stories about weather, crime, and fire and accident stories. Half of all sport and technology stories also made it to the program's first block.

Note that the prominence of sports and weather, as stories, in the first block is highly unusual and can be attributed to the time period of the coding, which included the hurricanes and the Chicago White Sox's championship of the World Series in baseball in the fall of 2005. As sports and weather are typically delegated to special segments later in the program, the fact that we find these topics at the program's opening illustrates the enormous significance stations afforded these two events.

Note also that some topics, while they are covered frequently are less likely to appear in Block A than other less frequently covered topics. For example, there were 84 stories about health, science and environment in this data set, but only 6% appeared in the first block. Conversely, there were 60 stories about fires and accidents, but over 50% of those appear in the first block.

Percent of story topic in Block A

Topic	n	Percent of stories about this topic that appear in Block A
Weather story	76	67.4
Crime	152	59.9
Fire, accidents	60	51.7
Sports	43	50.0
Technology	2	50.0
Religion, spirituality	7	42.9
Politics	110	40.9
International	33	33.3
Business, economy	37	21.6
Transportation, commuting	16	18.8
Home, real estate	9	11.1
Education	6	10.2
Health, science, environment	84	6.0
Entertainment	51	2.0
Travel	3	0.0
Food	4	0.0

Looking specifically at the topics that are most common in Block A, we can compare the stations in the graph below:
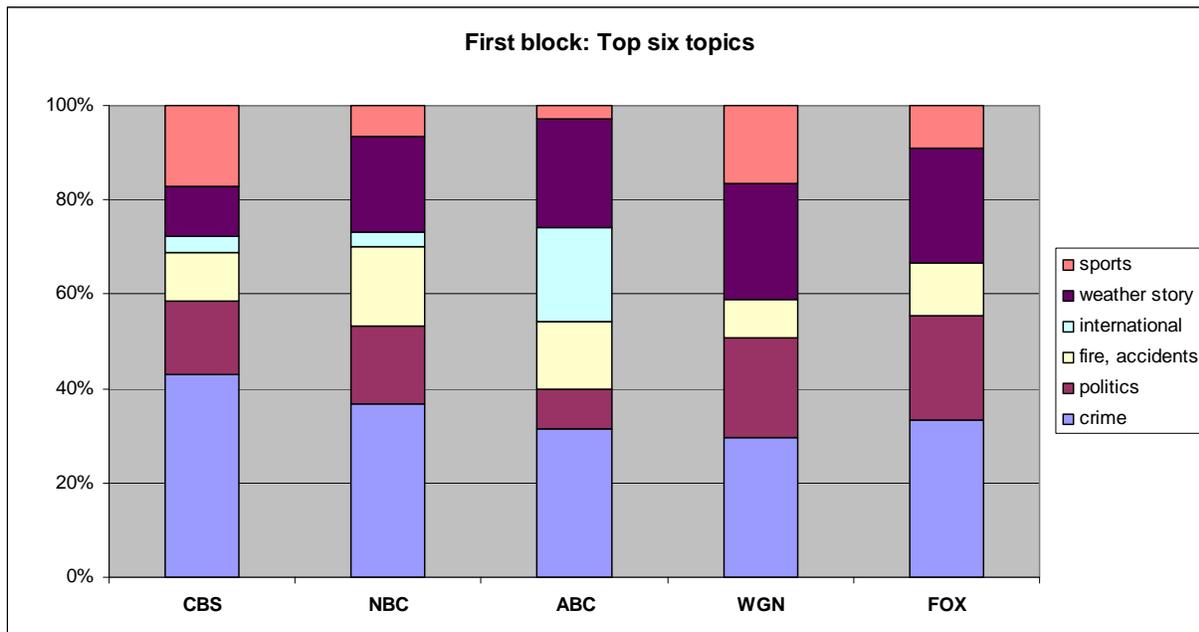
The middle block in each program (relative to its length) shows variations among the stations: CBS includes a significant proportion of stories (about 40%) about business and the economy

and almost 20% of the stories about politics, whereas other stations have few or no stories on these topics. Fifty percent of the stories on WGN in this block are about health, science, and the environment. ABC also has more than a third of the stories in this block about health, science, and the environment, but also carries stories about home and real estate in this block. NBC offers a variety of topics in this block, with about a fifth of the stories in the "other" category. FOX's middle block is also characterized by variety, with a significant proportion of the stories (about 22%) about the weather.

Middle block: Topics

	n	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	4.5	4.5	3.6	6.3	5.6
Politics	110	18.2	6.8	3.6	0.0	5.6
Fire, accidents	60	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
International	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business, economy	37	40.9	15.9	7.1	0.0	0.0
Health, science, environment	84	13.6	15.9	35.7	50.0	11.1
Technology	2	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	0.0
Entertainment	51	18.2	15.9	17.9	12.5	16.7
Travel	3	4.5	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0
Home, real estate	9	0.0	0.0	10.7	0.0	5.6
Food	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transportation, commuting	16	0.0	2.3	0.0	6.3	11.1
Religion, spirituality	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6
Weather story	76	0.0	13.6	7.1	0.0	22.2
Sports	43	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6
Education	6	0.0	0.0	3.6	6.3	0.0
Other	59	0.0	20.5	7.1	12.5	11.1
Total	752	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Middle block: Top six topics
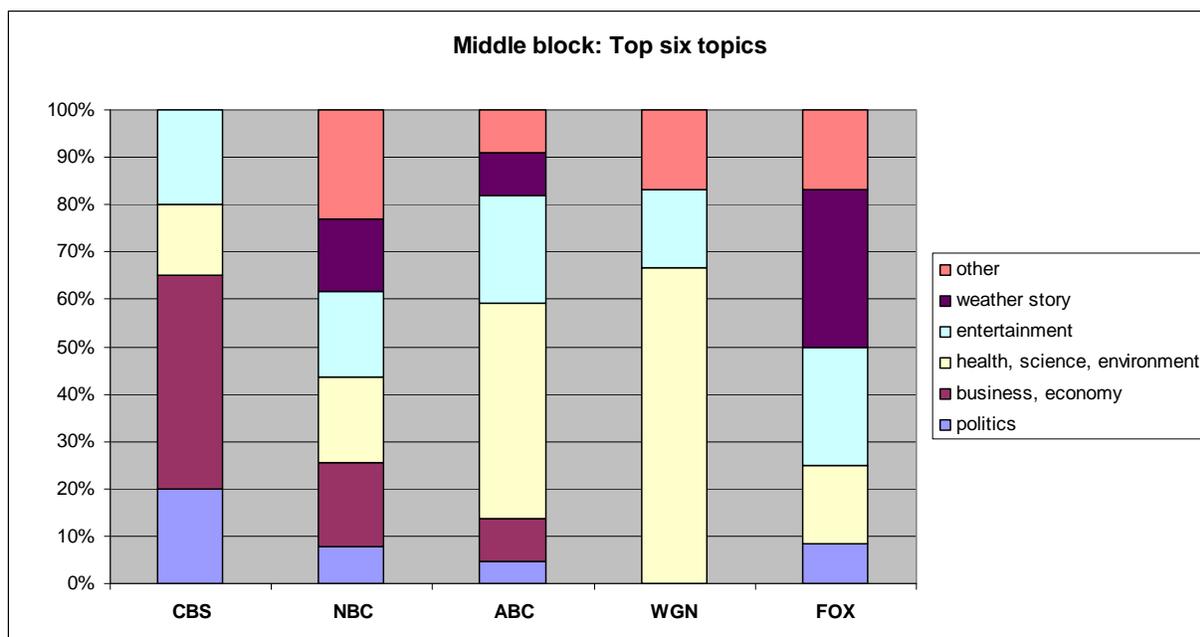
The last block is typically very brief, with few stories. Still, we report here which topics typically appear at the end of the news program. Results show that CBS always has a story about business and the economy and WGN always signs off with a story about health, science and the environment. NBC and FOX are likely to have stories about entertainment or "other." ABC has the most variety of topics in the last block.

Last block: Topics

	n	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Politics	110	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0
Fire, accidents	60	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
International	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business, economy	37	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health, science, environment	84	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Technology	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Entertainment	51	0.0	66.7	27.3	0.0	60.0
Travel	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home, real estate	9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Food	4	0.0	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0
Transportation, commuting	16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religion, spirituality	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Weather story	76	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports	43	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Education	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	59	0.0	33.3	45.5	0.0	40.0
Total	752	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Last block: Top six topics
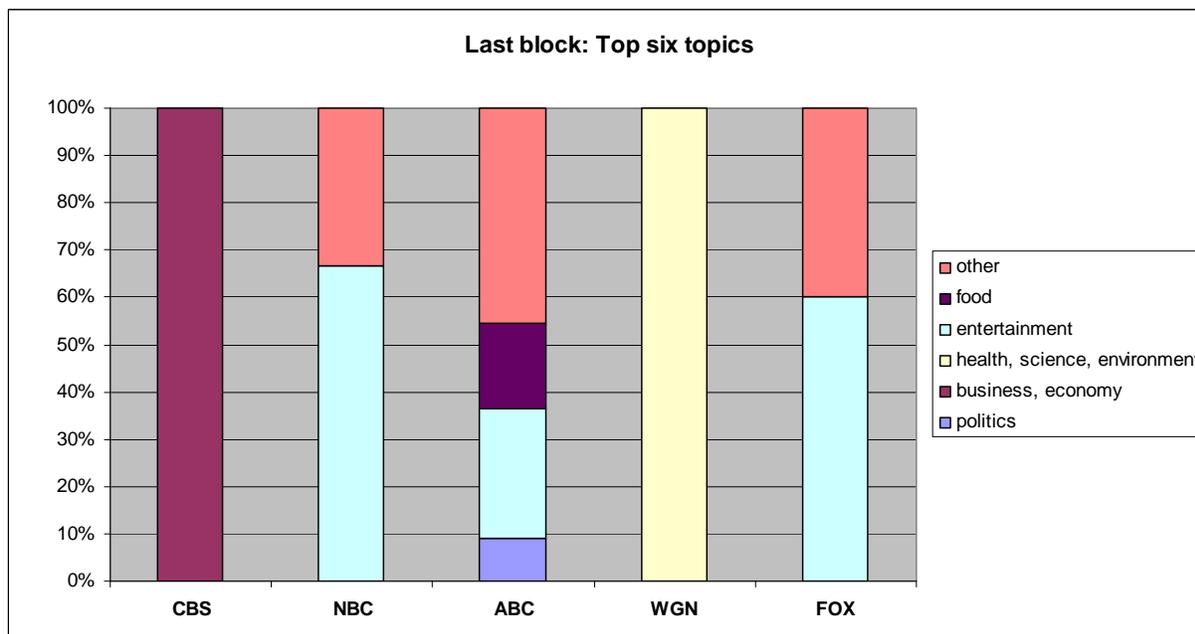
Story-telling techniques

Previous studies of print media conducted by the Media Management Center's Readership Institute show that usage increases when the newspaper employs a variety of storytelling techniques. That is, large proportions of "straight-news," inverted-pyramid style stories are associated with lower readership.

We used this concept to characterize each broadcast story as either hard news or feature style. A "straight-news" technique is usually applied to spot news, breaking news or coverage of a planned event. These stories are timely (i.e., it matters that they are reported today). These are typically stories with grave consequences or great importance. The "Feature-style" technique is usually applied to stories less bound by timeliness considerations. They usually have a more distinct narrative approach and may create a mood through pacing, use of natural sound etc. Their purpose is to show viewers "who we are and what we do" rather than to tell what the important happenings of the day are. Often this type of story is lighter in tone (entertaining, funny, "feel good", curious, bizarre).

It is important to note that this variable is independent of topic. Although some topics are typically associated with the "straight-news" style, such as crime, they can receive a different treatment. For example, one can imagine a politics story told as a narrative (i.e., "feature-style") or an entertainment story told using a "straight-news" story-telling technique.

The study found that, of the 752 stories coded for this variable, 604 (80.3%) used a "straight-news" style and 148 (19.7%) a "feature style" approach. This pattern holds up for all five stations.

Percent of stories with "straight-news" story-telling technique

Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
80.3	81.3	80.1	83.2	79.8	78.4

Many of the "straight-news" style stories appear in Block A. On average, about 44% of all "straight-news" stories appear in Block A alone, while only about 15% of all "feature-style" stories appear in Block A. CBS and WGN are more likely to have "feature-style" stories in Block A and ABC the least likely.

Percent of "straight news" and "feature-style" stories that appear in Block A
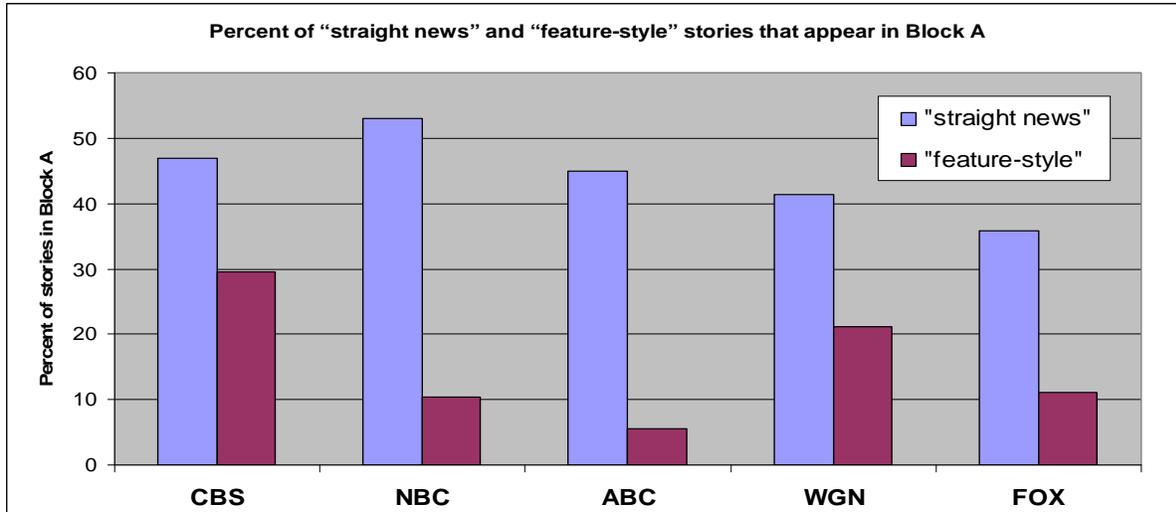
Overall, "feature-style" stories are 77 seconds long while "straight-news" stories are 67 seconds long. Statistical tests show this is not a significant difference.

However, there are differences between stations. "Feature-style" stories on FOX are significantly longer. CBS, ABC and WGN also have slightly longer "feature-style" stories, but they are not statistically longer from stories that receive the "straight-news" treatment. Interestingly, "feature-style" stories on NBC are shorter, but that difference is not statistically significant.

Average length of stories, by "straight-news" and "feature-style" story-telling technique

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
"Straight-news" style	604	66.6	58.9	62.5	69.5	70.4	71.7
"Feature style"	148	75.6	59.4	55.3	79.8	73.0	110.3

Some topics are more likely to be told in a "straight-news" style. Fire and accidents and international stories always use a "straight-news" story-telling technique. In contrast, stories about technology and travel always use a "feature-style."

The table below shows the results the percent of story time that employs a "straight-news" story-telling technique, per topic for all stations. For example, 100% of all time devoted in the local television news programs to stories about international news, fire and accidents and travel are told is a "straight-news" style. In contrast, there are no stories – and consequently no time allotted – to stories about technology told in "straight-news" style. Other topics, such as education, have more of a balance in how they are presented.

Stories told as "straight news," as a percent of total time per topic

Topic	percent of time per topic as "straight news"
travel	100
international	100
fire, accidents	100
politics	99
weather story	96
crime	95
transportation, commuting	92
business, economy	84
religion, spirituality	71
health, science, environment	67
education	46
other	41
sports	40
entertainment	26
food	19
home, real estate	14
technology	

The table below shows the average length (in seconds) of stories by topic and story-telling technique, for each station.

Average length of stories, by topic and story-telling technique

		n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	"Straight-news"	148	62. 6	58.2	55.2	66.8	63.1	69.5
	"Feature-style"	4	134.5	129.0	0.0	0.0	0.0.	140.0
Politics	"Straight-news"	108	62.7	60.3	43.9	72.9	66.5	69.9
	"Feature-style"	2	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fire, accidents	"Straight-news"	60	71.2	86.0	61.4	53.8	81.3	73.4
	"Feature-style"	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
International	"Straight-news"	33	80.7	52.6	146.5	61.4	49.9	93.3
	"Feature-style"	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business, economy	"Straight-news"	31	50.8	37.1	79.6	36.0	53.0	48.5
	"Feature-style"	6	71.2	29.5	0.0	52.0	0.0	132.0
Health, science, environment	"Straight-news"	66	60.1	48.8	48.3	71.5	79.8	52.1
	"Feature-style"	18	86.5	17.0	156.5	28.0	87.5	143.4
Technology	"Straight-news"	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	"Feature-style"	2	177.5	0.0	0.0	251.0	0.0	104.0
Entertainment	"Straight-news"	15	60.0	26.8	134.0	47.0	52.2	40.0
	"Feature-style"	36	62.8	48.0	57.8	53.2	63.6	91.7
Travel	"Straight-news"	3	63.3	19.0	147.0	0.0	24.0	0.0
	"Feature-style"	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home, real estate	"Straight-news"	4	35.7	49.0	0.0	22.0	36.0	0.0
	"Feature-style"	5	113.4	0.0	0.0	18.0	95.0	227.3
Food	"Straight-news"	2	29.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.5
	"Feature-style"	2	124.0	0.0	0.0	124.0	0.0	0.0
Transportation, commuting	"Straight-news"	14	70.2	115.5	65.0	73.5	71.4	25.7
	"Feature-style"	2	39.5	0.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	43.0
Religion, spirituality	"Straight-news"	6	56.4	32.0	0.0	87.0	20.0	86.5
	"Feature-style"	1	160.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	160.0
Weather story	"Straight-news"	71	91.8	91.8	62.3	115.3	108.1	81.8
	"Feature-style"	5	47.2	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	24.3
Sports	"Straight-news"	17	92.1	57.0	164.5	35.0	108.0	96.2
	"Feature-style"	26	104.2	77.6	123.0	115.0	79.6	126.0
Education	"Straight-news"	4	73.7	0.0	32.0	156.0	33.0	0.0
	"Feature-style"	2	149.5	0.0	0.0	253.0	46.0	0.0
Other	"Straight-news"	21	49.7	52.7	36.0	35.3	36.5	88.0
	"Feature-style"	37	47.6	42.9	27.2	38.0	62.5	67.3

The study finds that, overall, "straight-news" stories tend not to be very different from "feature-style" stories in terms of production elements. A majority of the stories, regardless of story-telling technique, have an anchor speaking to the camera and either telling the story, or introducing it. About half of the stories, regardless of technique, include packages, and close to a third use voice over tape with sound on tape. Notably, "feature-style" stories are much more likely to have live interviews, and much less likely to have voice over or full screen graphics (see table below).

Percent of stories with various production elements, by story-telling technique

	n	Reader	VO	PKG	Full screen graphic	VOSot	Reporter live in studio	Reporter live on scene	Anchor talk	Web promotion	Live interview
"Straight-news"	604	91.2	26.7	48.3	21.9	28.0	10.9	13.4	.5	1.0	4.3
"Feature-style"	148	80.4	15.5	52.0	15.5	31.8	8.1	16.2	0.	4.1	29.1

Station initiative

This section explores the extent to which local television news in Chicago is initiated by the station (i.e., journalistic enterprise), as opposed to relying on pre-planned press events such as press conferences and on feeds from external sources.

Obviously, stations have discretion over which stories they select to air on their programs and decisions are made all the time about how to allocate precious resources. While we do not know what the process was behind the scenes, there are major clues within stories that allow us to make informed judgment about whether a station story is a result of forethought and planning in the station (proactive), or coverage of events as they unfold (reactive). For example, footage of a press conference suggests that the story idea did not originate with the station, but was a response to a press release.

We find that only about 9% of the stories are initiated by the stations, and the vast majority of stories are not. On average, close to 50% of the stories cover planned events (such as a press conference, or hospital opening). Over a quarter are feeds from other sources, and about 14% cover spontaneous events (such as house fires).

Station initiative, by station

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Response to planned event	362	48.5	45.1	47.3	49.1	54.1	46.7
Feed	208	27.9	33.1	28.8	24.5	24.0	29.3
Response to spontaneous event	102	13.9	12.0	15.8	16.0	13.7	12.0
Station story or series	50	6.9	4.2	5.5	9.4	6.0	7.2
Station investigation – story or series	14	1.8	3.5	2.1	0.0	0.0	3.6
Can't tell	6	0.8	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.6
Other	2	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.6
Total	**744**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Stories initiated by the stations are not necessarily showcased in the program, and generally tend to appear later. On the whole, less than 20% of these stories appear in the first block of a local television news program.

Station initiative, by program blocks (prominence)

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Block A	11	17.3	18.2	9.1	27.3	15.4	16.7
Block B	7	10.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	15.4	16.7
Block C	26	43.5	63.6	63.6	54.5	7.7	27.8
Block D	1	1.8	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Block E	12	18.3	0.0	18.2	18.2	38.5	16.7
Block F	5	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	22.2
Total	**62**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Stories initiated by the stations include different production elements. Almost all include a package (92%) compared with only 23% of non-station initiated stories. They are much more likely to include a reporter live in the studio and have anchor talk. Station-initiated stories are less likely to have voice over or voice over with sound over tape.

Percent of stories with various production elements, by whether stories were initiated by stations

	Station initiated?	
	YES	**NO**
	n=64	n=691
Reader	98.4	88.2
Full screen graphic	29.7	23.9
VO	10.9	52.5
VOSot	6.3	21.9
PKG	92.2	22.9
Live on scene	6.3	10.7
Live in studio	53.1	10.3
Live interview	1.6	0.3
Web promo	6.3	1.2
Anchor talk	23.4	7.8

What story topics are more likely to be initiated by the station? Looking at stories coded as initiated by station, we find that food and technology stories are more likely to be initiated by the station (50%; recall that technology is a rare topic on local television news), followed by home, real estate and travel stories (33% of these are station-initiated). Stories that are more likely to be a result of a response to a planned event are typically about crime, politics, entertainment and travel. External feeds are the origin of the majority of stories about international news.

Percent of stories in each initiative category, per topic

	n	Station investigation - story or series	Station story or series	Response to spontaneous event	Response to planned event	Feed	Other	Can't tell	Total
Crime	152	2.6	2.0	17.9	62.3	15.2	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Politics	110	0.9	0.9	6.4	62.7	29.1	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Fire, accidents	60	0.0	1.7	50.0	26.7	21.7	0.0	0.0	**100%**
International	33	3.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	87.9	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Business, economy	37	8.1	0.0	5.4	51.4	32.4	0.0	2.7	**100%**
Health, science, environment	84	1.2	20.7	2.4	31.7	42.7	0.0	1.2	**100%**
Technology	2	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Entertainment	51	0.0	10.0	2.0	64.0	24.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Travel	3	33.3	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Home, real estate	9	0.0	33.3	0.0	55.6	0.0	0.0	11.1	**100%**
Food	4	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Transportation, commuting	16	6.3	6.3	18.8	56.3	6.3	0.0	6.3	**100%**
Religion, spirituality	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.7	14.3	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Weather story	76	0.0	10.8	23.0	21.6	43.2	1.4	0.0	**100%**
Sports	43	0.0	7.5	20.0	60.0	7.5	0.0	5.0	**100%**
Education	6	0.0	16.7	0.0	83.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Other	59	3.4	5.1	6.8	57.6	25.4	1.7	0.0	**100%**

The number of stories coded as initiated by the stations is too small to look at differences in topics between stations.

Additional analysis also found that programs are not more likely to initiate stories during traditional sweeps months – in this sample, November and February (Chi-Square test of independence = .536, p= 281 (one sided)).

Location, impact and utility

This study measured localism in several ways. We measured where the story takes place – locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. We also measured whether stories have a direct impact on viewers. We set a high bar and define impact as bringing about a result or a change, or likely to cause some concrete action as a result of the story. For example, a story about a power outage or a massive delay on a major highway would be coded as having impact on viewers. For the purpose of this study, we did not code as having impact (per our definition of a concrete result) stories that educate or broaden viewers' horizons, or stories about policy in Springfield or Washington if they did not explicitly mention effects on individuals (e.g., a story about tax increases that did not mention the impact on groups of people). Finally, we also measured the utility of a story – whether it provides helpful information that the viewer can act on.

One of the main local issues, one that has impact on viewers by definition, is the weather. However, here we only analyze news stories and not the weather segment. Weather stories that do make it to the news, outside the weather segment, are big stories and the same is true with sports.

The study finds that the majority of stories in local television news are local in a sense that they take place in the local geographic area. On the whole, about two-thirds of all stories on local television news took place in Chicago and the surrounding area.

Percent of stories by location, by station

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Metro Chicago	328	39.6%	43.2%	43.9%	45.7%	44.9%	39.6%
Cook County	21	2.8%	3.4%	2.8%	2.1%	3.0%	2.8%
Suburbs	62	10.4%	6.2%	12.1%	5.9%	8.4%	10.4%
State	52	5.6%	7.5%	5.6%	8.5%	6.6%	5.6%
Region	31	4.9%	2.7%	3.7%	4.8%	4.2%	4.9%
Total Local	494	65.7	63.2	63.0	68.2	67.0	67.1
National	217	28.7	31.9	30.1	25.2	28.2	28.1
International	41	5.6	4.9	6.8	6.5	4.8	4.8
Total	752	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percent of stories by location, by station
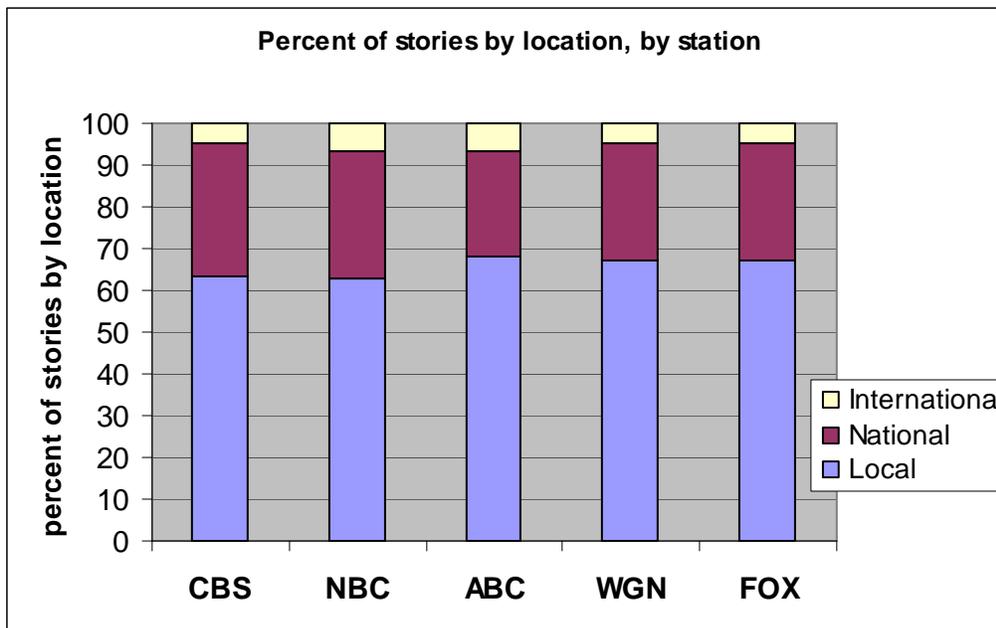
Given the high proportion of local stories, it is not surprising that most topics are more likely to be local stories. Some topics, such as weather stories, business and economy and health, science and environment are more evenly split between local and national focus. International stories obviously have an international focus.

Location by topic

	n	Local	National	International	Total
Crime	151	84.8	15.2	0.0	**100%**
Politics	110	64.5	34.5	0.9	**100%**
Fire, accidents	60	80.0	20.0	0.0	**100%**
International	33	6.1	12.1	81.8	**100%**
Business, economy	37	56.8	40.5	2.7	**100%**
Health, science, environment	84	46.4	48.8	4.8	**100%**
Technology	2	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Entertainment	51	68.6	29.4	2.0	**100%**
Travel	3	66.7	33.3	0.0	**100%**
Home, real estate	9	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Food	4	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Transportation, commuting	16	93.8	6.3	0.0	**100%**
Religion, spirituality	7	71.4	0.0	28.6	**100%**
Weather story	76	40.8	56.6	2.6	**100%**
Sports	43	83.7	14.0	2.3	**100%**
Education	6	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100%**
Other	59	66.1	30.5	3.4	**100%**

Regardless of their geographic focus, we measured whether stories have practical utility for viewers and found that the vast majority of stories are not of the "news you can use" or actionable variety.

Percent of stories that have utility, by station

Utility?	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Stories that have utility	71	9.6	7.0	4.1	15.0	11.2	10.7
Stories that do not have utility	681	90.4	93.0	95.9	85.0	88.8	89.3
Total	752	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Utility stories tend to appear later in the program, as seen in the table below. WGN and ABC, especially, have about a third of the stories in later blocks coded as utility stories.

Percent of stories that have utility per block, by station

Stories that have utility	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Block A	17	6.0	4.8	3.1	7.3	7.1	7.8
Block B	6	3.3	0.0	3.4	3.7	4.2	5.3
Block C	22	16.9	16.7	6.7	32.1	8.0	21.1
Block D	5	4.9	13.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1
Block E	15	15.7	0.0	0.0	27.3	31.3	20.0
Block F	8	8.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	11.8

"News you can use" stories tend to be about topics such as food and technology. Prevalent topics such as crime and politics tend not to have information that viewers can act on.

Percent of stories per topic that are coded as utility stories, by station

	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	151	2.3	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
Politics	110	5.3	5.3	0.0	9.1	0.0	12.0
Fire, accidents	60	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
International	33	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
Business, economy	37	5.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health, science, environment	84	33.5	21.4	15.4	50.0	36.0	44.4
Technology	2	20.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Entertainment	51	14.4	11.1	0.0	25.0	35.7	0.0
Travel	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home, real estate	9	26.7	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
Food	4	40.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Transportation, commuting	16	24.7	0.0	33.3	50.0	40.0	0.0
Religion, spirituality	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Weather story	76	7.2	0.0	4.8	20.0	6.3	4.8
Sports	43	6.7	8.3	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
Education	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	59	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7

A similar measure is whether or not a story has direct impact on viewers' lives. The study finds that most stories on local television news do not have this attribute.

Percent of stories that have a direct impact on viewers' lives

Impact?	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
No	496	66.7	64.5	68.5	69.5	64.7	66.1
Effect on small group	108	14.6	14.2	14.4	16.2	12.3	16.1
Effect on large group	59	7.3	6.4	6.2	2.9	13.9	7.1
Effect on consumer group	71	9.7	14.2	10.3	9.5	7.0	7.7
Effect on all viewers	13	1.7	0.7	0.7	1.9	2.1	3.0
Total	747	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
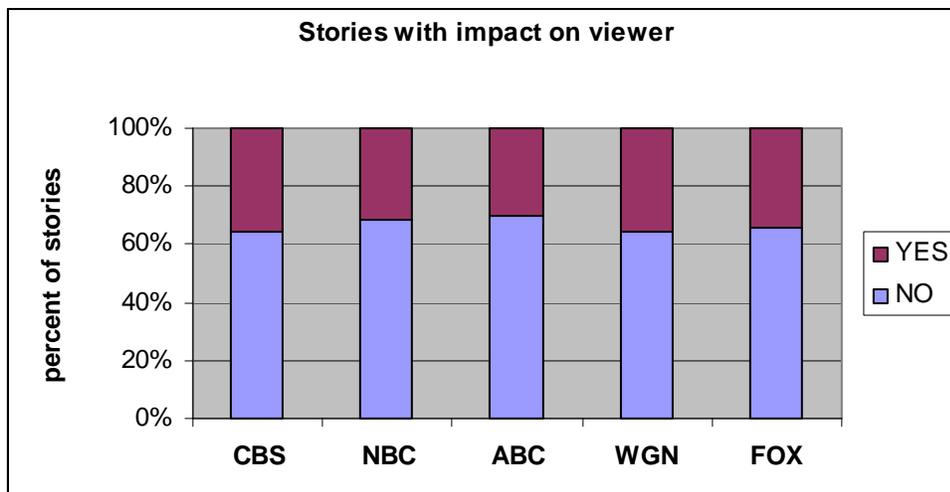
However, more local stories are likely to have an impact than national or international stories. About 43% of local stories have an impact, compared with about 18% of national stories and only 10% of international stories. Stories that have an impact also tend to be longer than those who do not:

Average length of stories and impact (in seconds)

	n	Mean
Impact	251	81.34
No impact	496	62.99
Total	747	69.16

On the whole, topics that are more likely to have impact are transportation and commuting, and health, science and environment. Recall that these are not among the most prevalent topics. Topics that are least likely to have impact are more prevalent, like crime and politics.

Percent of stories that have an impact per topic, by station

| Stories that have impact	n	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Crime	152	21.1	25.8	14.3	17.2	22.2	22.2
Politics	110	15.3	0.0	0.0	10.5	24.0	24.0
Fire, accidents	60	28.2	35.3	22.2	25.0	25.0	25.0
International	33	7.9	0.0	11.1	0.0	14.3	14.3
Business, economy	37	55.0	50.0	33.3	75.0	66.7	66.7
Health, science, environment	84	66.7	53.8	83.3	68.0	66.7	66.7
Technology	2	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Entertainment	51	34.8	63.6	37.5	28.6	33.3	33.3
Travel	3	40.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Home, real estate	9	50.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	66.7	66.7
Food	4	30.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Transportation, commuting	16	86.0	100.0	50.0	80.0	100.0	100.0
Religion, spirituality	7	46.7	0.0	100.0	100.0	33.3	0.0
Weather story	76	20.5	14.3	30.0	31.3	14.3	14.3
Sports	43	50.1	50.0	50.0	56.3	44.4	44.4
Education	6	46.7	100.0	100.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
Other	59	30.5	31.3	12.5	55.6	33.3	33.3

People in the news

Of the 755 stories we coded, 565 had sources, defined as people who have sound bites or people who are otherwise quoted or attributed in the story. On average, there are 1.8 sources per story (range between 1.5 and 1.9). On average, there are 1.2 sound bites per story (range between 1.0 and 1.3).

**Average number of sources and sound bites per story**

	Average	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Sources	1.75	1.54	1.79	1.88	1.67	1.91
Sound bites	1.20	0.96	1.36	1.23	1.13	1.30

Of the 755 coded stories, 367 had sound bites. Sound bites are defined as audio of a person speaking who is seen speaking on the screen or heard over video. We further analyzed the sound bites and identified gender, race / ethnicity, and role.

In the 350 stories with sound bites, we coded a total of 811 sound bites in which gender was identifiable. About 31% of these sound bites (254) were made by women and 69% were made by men (557). This means that for every sound bite by a woman, there were about 2.3 sound bites by a man.
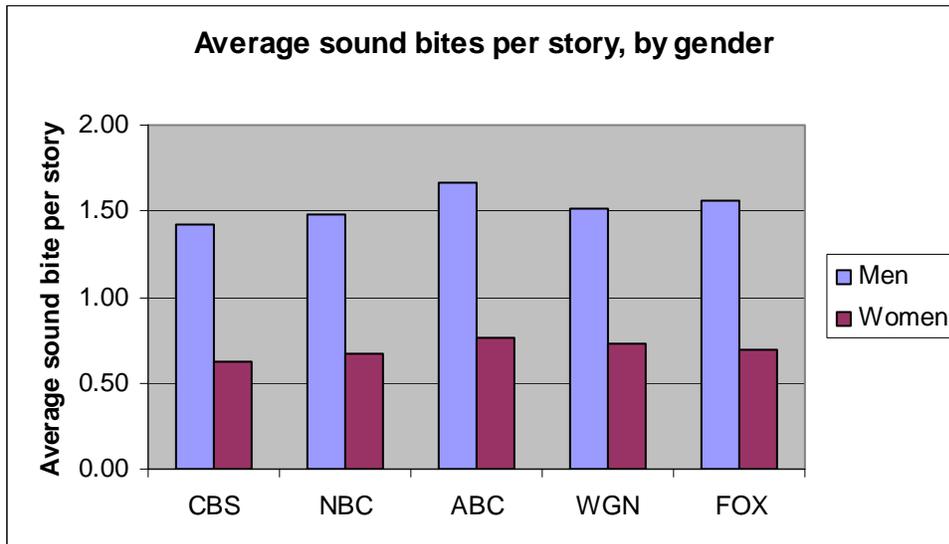
In the 350 stories with sound bites, we coded a total of 783 sound bites in which race and ethnicity was identifiable. About 75% of these sound bites were made by Whites (586) and 25% by non-Whites (197). This means that for every sound bite made by a non-White person, there were about three sound bites made by a White person.

Average sound bites per story, by race / ethnicity
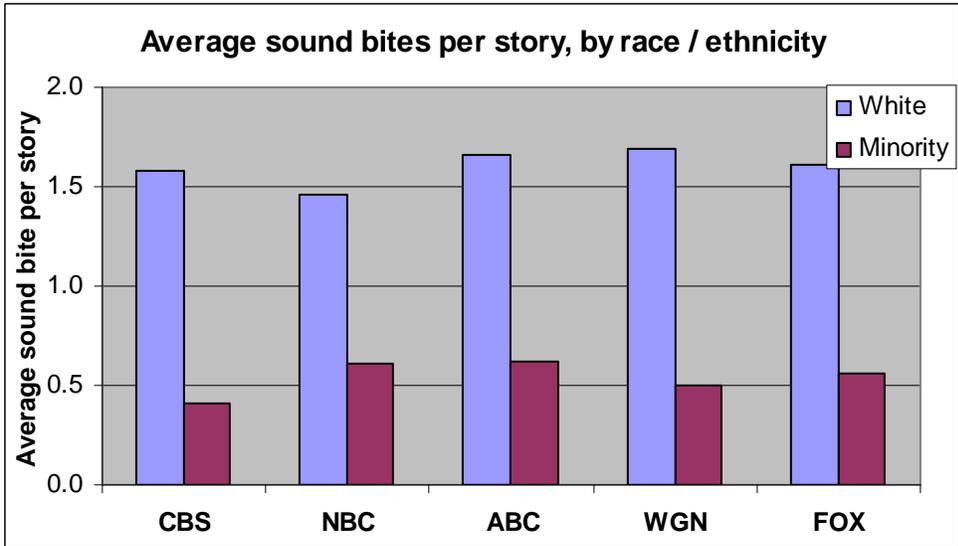
In the 350 stories with sound bites, we coded a total of 808 sound bites in which the role of the person was identifiable. About 56% of these sound bites were made by official sources (424) and 44% by ordinary people (342). This means that for every sound bite made by an ordinary person, there were about 1.3 sound bites made by an official.

Average soundbites per story, by role
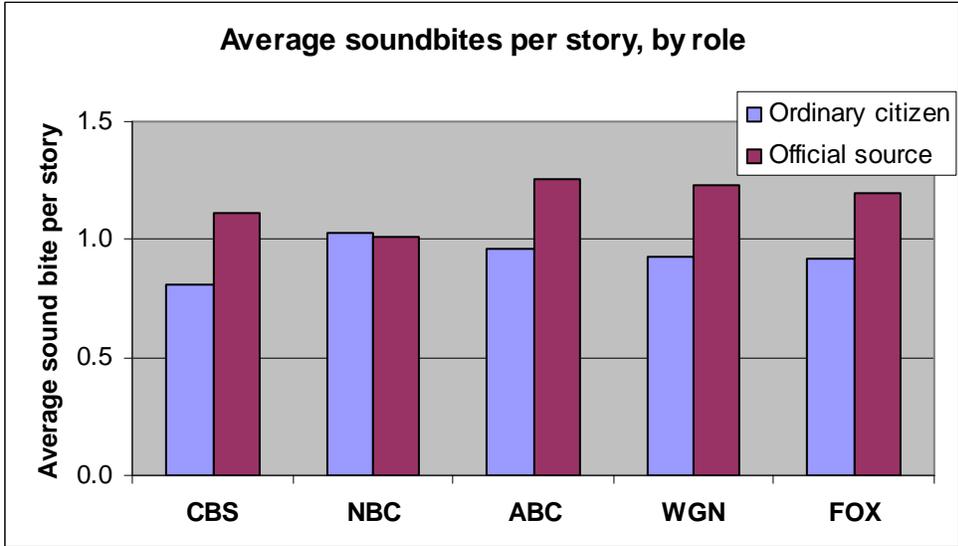
Our analysis shows that men tend to be White and official, that Whites tend to be official, and that officials tend to be White and male, while ordinary people tend to be non-White and female. The top five topics account for about two-thirds of all sound bites, so they are our focus. In other words, the stories that are longest, on average, are more likely to include sound bites of people.

Topics and sound bites, by gender, race / ethnicity and role

	Gender		Race / ethnicity		Role	
	Men	**Women**	**White**	**Non-White**	**Official**	**Ordinary person**
Crime	61.82	38.18	64.78	35.22	49.38	50.63
Weather story	65.29	34.71	73.95	26.05	37.61	62.39
Politics	89.38	10.62	90.27	9.73	94.69	5.31
Health, science, environment	56.00	44.00	84.93	15.07	54.67	45.33
Fire, accidents	58.11	41.89	54.79	45.21	35.14	64.86

As mentioned above, most sound bites are by whites, men, and to a lesser extent, officials. Nevertheless, within stories about the top five topics, women have a better chance of having a voice in stories about health science/environment and fire/accidents and very little chance of being heard in stories about politics. As for the less dominant topics, about half the sound bites in home/real estate and in technology are by women while sound bites in other topics are dominated by men.

Non-Whites have a better chance of having a voice in stories about fires/accidents and very little chance of being heard in stories about politics. Education is the only other topic that includes a sizable portion of sound bites by non-whites (50%), though there are only 10 sound bites in education stories in the study.

Almost none of the politics stories include sound bites by ordinary people, but they have a pretty good chance having a voice in the other top four topics. In the less prevalent topics, a majority of sound bites by ordinary people appear in sports, transportation/commuting and other stories.

Appendix 1: Methods

Audience survey

We define engagement as the collective qualitative experiences with media content. To understand what these experiences are, we first conducted qualitative research with local television news viewers (both light and heavy). We then selected specific local television news programs in order to ask a large number of people about their experiences with the programs. The items resulting from the in-depth interviews were included on consumer surveys.

The goal of the audience survey is to assess the extent to which specific forms of engagement are characteristic of the medium as a whole and which forms of engagement (i.e., experiences) are more specific to a particular program. Thus, the audience survey measures both the specific qualitative experiences and aggregate engagement. We test our conceptual framework by relating experiences and engagement to usage.

Stations included in study and sample sizes

Program	*n*
2 WBBM	261
5 WMAQ	260
7 WLS	275
9 WGN	288
12 WFLD	302
Total	1386

Each questionnaire contained a large battery of items measuring the respondent's thoughts and feeling about a specific program (see Appendix 2). It is important to note that respondents were asked about only one program that they watch, e.g., viewers of WGN News were asked specifically about their experiences with this program, rather than news programs in general. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to these items. We deliberately cast a wide net when developing the exploratory factors, because our goal was to explore the entire range of thoughts and feelings that readers have with a publication. We further purified the scales with a confirmatory factor analysis. The resulting factors measure experiences.

Validation of Engagement and Experience Measures
We posit that Engagement causes, in part, outcomes such as viewership of the program through the experiences. This assertion is tested in this research by relating Engagement and the experiences that comprise engagement with usage Pearson correlations, multiple regression analysis, and ANCOVA. Pearson correlations are easy to understand, but do not account for multicollinearity between experiences and are not ideal for assessing how generally the posited relationships hold across programs. Multiple regression and ANCOVA are better suited for these later objectives.

Measuring usage
Calder and Malthouse (2003) propose the Behavior Score approach for measuring media usage. The behavioral score approach treats usage as a latent variable that can be manifested in different ways. For example, usage of a newspaper is manifested through the reader spending time with

the publication, reading it often, and reading it thoroughly. These three measures form a uni-dimensional, reliable scale based on factor analysis and coefficient alpha. Similarly, the reader usage measure (RUM) has been developed for magazine usage and the site usage measure (SUM) for web sites. For TV news we consider two manifestations of usage, the number of days the respondent watches the show (frequency) and the percentage of show typically watched (completion). Unfortunately, these two measures are only moderately correlated (r=0.34) form only a modestly reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.50$). The average of them will be called the Program Usage Measure (PUM) and will be used as a dependent variable along with the separate indicators frequency and completion. PUM is scale it to have a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 7, matching RBS, SUM and RUM.

Measuring the Civic Consequences of TV Usage and Engagement
The survey included questions about civic consequences. More specifically, there were five questions measuring how important the respondent believes it is to "keep up with national news," "keep up with local news," "donate money to a worthy cause," "do volunteer work or community service," and "keep up with elections." Each was measured on a five-point scale. It asked whether or not (yes, no or don't know) the respondent "contacted an elective political official," "attended a political meeting or rally," "signed a petition on paper or the internet," "volunteered in an organization affiliated with religion," "participated in an organized project to try to solve a community problem," "gave money to any organizations or causes totaling more than $500," "voted in the November 2004 presidential election," "plans to vote in the 2006 congressional elections," and "plans to vote in the 2008 presidential election." The respondent was also asked if he/she follows politics "most of the time," "some of the time," "now and then" or "hardly at all." We apply exploratory factor analysis to these questions to develop scales.
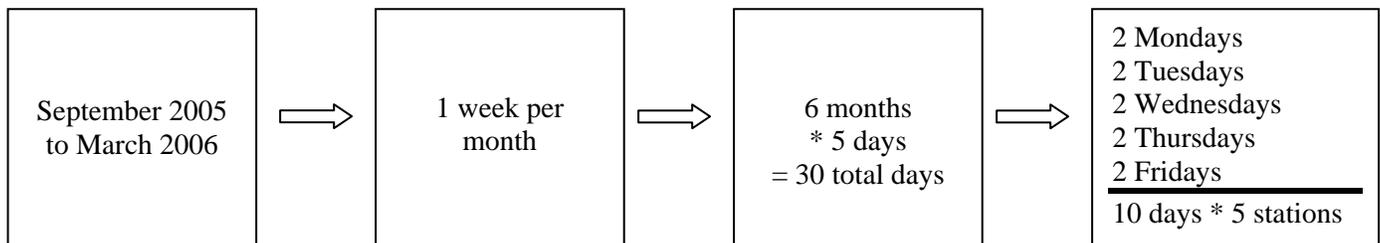
Content analysis

The content analysis is mostly descriptive, providing a picture of what is actually on the local nightly news in Chicago. It examines the content of news programs on five Chicago television stations, specifically WBBM CBS2 Chicago (news at 10 pm), WMAQ NBC5 (news at 10 pm), WLS ABC7 (news at 10 pm), WGN-TV (news at 9 pm), and WFLD-TV FOX 32 Chicago (news at 9 pm). Weekday (Monday-Friday) nightly news programs were recorded during the third week of each month from September, 2005 through February, 2006. The sample for the study consists of two constructed weeks (a total of 10 days), so that from the seven total weeks recorded, two random Mondays were selected, two random Tuesdays were selected, etc.

The sample
The news programs in this sample are drawn from the time period of six months (September 2005 to March 2006). To avoid bias in our analysis due to coverage of unusual events, we used a two-step approach to select the shows for this analysis – first selecting one week for each month and recording all weekday news programs from that week, then selecting which days to analyze from each week. Of the six weeks worth of television news programs, we randomly selected ten days for analysis for each station. The ten days are comprised of two of each weekday, thus constructing two representative composite weeks. The final sample consists of 46 local television news programs.

Sample selection

September 2005 to March 2006	⟹	1 week per month	⟹	6 months * 5 days = 30 total days	⟹	2 Mondays 2 Tuesdays 2 Wednesdays 2 Thursdays 2 Fridays
						10 days * 5 stations

Dates analyzed by station

Day of the week	CBS	NBC	ABC	WGN	FOX
Monday	10/17/05	10/17/05	--	10/17/05	--
Monday	12/12/05	12/12/05	2/13/06	2/13/06	2/13/06
Tuesday	1/24/06	1/24/06	1/24/06	1/24/06	--
Tuesday	3/14/06	11/15/05	11/15/05	11/15/05	3/14/06
Wednesday	2/15/06	2/15/06	2/15/06	2/15/06	2/15/06
Wednesday	9/21/05	9/21/05	9/21/05	9/21/05	9/21/05
Thursday	9/22/05	3/16/06	3/16/06	3/16/06	3/16/06
Thursday	10/20/05	10/20/05	1/26/06	10/20/05	10/20/05
Friday	1/27/06	9/23/05	9/23/05	9/23/05	9/23/05
Friday	11/18/05	11/18/05	11/18/05	--	2/17/06
Total	10	10	9	9	8

Due to technical difficulties and television schedule irregularities, we were not able to analyze the same dates for all five stations. In addition, for three of the stations, we were unable to analyze a complete set (i.e., two of each day of the week), resulting in a total of less than ten programs analyzed.

Coding procedures
A coding scheme was devised to obtain descriptive information about the news programs' content. The main elements in each program and their length in seconds were recorded (i.e., stories, weather segment, commercial breaks, etc.). For stories, we further coded for such content areas such as topic of each story, location of the story, community relevance, degree of station enterprise, number of sources and sound bites, characteristics of people in the story. Coding scheme and guidelines are available from the author upon request.

Three coders coded the sample of television news programs. Coders were all Medill students, screened as viewers of television news, and familiar with its format. To minimize bias, coders were randomly assigned to code the news programs.

After a period of training in the process of content analysis (including practice coding, multiple cross-checks, and revisions of the coding rules to achieve a satisfactory level of inter-coder reliability), coders began coding the television news program and remained under close supervision. Inter-coder reliability was measured and found satisfactory (average Cohen's kappa k=.75) and disagreements among coders discussed and resolved. After completing the coding, two of the coders entered the data which was analyzed by the author using SPSS (statistical analysis software).

Measuring content
The content analysis began by examining all the segments in each news program, with more in-depth analysis of stories (categorizing them in terms of topic, sources, location, local relevance, complexity of story and other measures). See Appendix 3 for a detailed coding sheet. Analysis of the content consisted primarily of descriptive statistics.

Appendix 2: Consumer survey questionnaire

Northwestern University
Local television news experiences study

A. Please indicate your age.

B. Please indicate your gender. (Select one)

Male
Female

C. What race do you primarily consider yourself to be? (Select one)

White / Caucasian
Black / African American
Asian or Pacific Islander
American Indian, Aleut Eskimo
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
Other
Prefer not to answer

Ask Q.C1 if Q.C NOT code 5, "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino"
C1. Are you of Hispanic origin? (Select one)

Yes
No

D. In the last week, which of the following news programs have you watched all or part of? (Select all that apply)
<randomize>

10 pm local news program on channel 2 / WBBM-TV, the CBS local station
10 pm local news program on channel 5 / WMAQ-TV, the NBC local station
10 pm local news program on channel 7 / WLS-TV, the ABC local station
 9 pm local news program on channel 9 / WGN-TV
 9 pm local news program on channel 12 / WFLD-32, the FOX local station
I have not watched any of the above local news programs in the last week

PROGRAM NAMES TO INSERT:
WFLD-32 Fox Chicago News at 9 pm (QD code 5)
WGN-9 News at 9 pm (QD code 4)
CBS-2 News at 10 pm (QD code 1)
ABC-7 News at 10 pm (QD code 3)
NBC-5 News at 10 pm (QD code 2)

F. Now we'd like to ask you some questions specifically about **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**

1. In a typical **7-day week**, which days do you typically watch **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**? (Select all that apply)

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

2. When watching **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**, how much of the program do you typically watch? (Select one)

All or almost all of it
About three quarters in total
About one half in total
About one quarter in total
Only a few minutes here and there or a small part of it

3a. The statements below may or may not describe your own experience with **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**. For each statement, indicate how much you agree or disagree that it describes your own feelings about watching this program. Each statement is different, so please think about each one individually. (Select one for each) <random>

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I tend to watch television news at the same time or times each day
I like to kick back and wind down with it
It's a treat for me
It helps me to get my day started in the morning
I like to have the television news on in the background while I am doing other things
I often turn on the news to see if there is anything going on
I watch it as much for the entertainment value as for the information value
When I watch the news I prefer to sit and focus on it
It's part of my daily routine
I use television news to get my news for the day
When watching the television news I try to see what stories are coming up so I can catch the ones I want to see and
    avoid the ones I don't
While watching the news, I don't flip back and forth between channels
I always wonder what the other news programs are covering when I am watching the news
I like to eat and watch the news
I pick and choose what I pay attention to on the news
The television news I watch stimulates my thinking about things
It updates me on the things I try to keep up with
It addresses issues or topics of special concern to me
I look at the television news I watch as educational. I am gaining something
Even if I disagree with things I see in the news, I feel I have learned something valuable
It is time well spent
It is very professional
Many of the stories are really in-depth
Watching television news makes me feel like I am drowning in the flood of news that comes out each day

3b. Below are additional statements that may or may not describe your own experience with **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**. For each statement, indicate how much you agree or disagree that it describes

your own feelings about watching this program. Again, each statement is different, so please think about each one individually. (Select one for each) <random>

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

They do a good job covering things - they don't miss things
It is unbiased in its reporting
I worry about the accuracy of the television news that I watch
It does not sensationalize things
I trust it to tell the truth
If a crisis occurred, I would have confidence in turning to the television news
The news programs I watch do a good job of covering positive stories
There is so much sad and scary news that it is hard to watch
Too much time is spent on negative things
I find many negative stories are worthwhile because they point out what needs to be improved
Not enough effort is made to cover the good things that happen
They are always trying to catch people or tear them down
They will often have stories on topics I cannot stand
Some stories are so outrageous that you can't help but be interested
The local news that I watch covers accidents and crimes way too much
I enjoy watching the people doing the news talk with each other
When I am watching a story on the news, I like having information on the screen about other things (e.g., crawls at the
   bottom of the screen)
I wish they would talk less and show me more
Too much of what they do is done mainly to try to get more people to watch
I feel like I get to know the anchors on the news programs I watch
The anchors and reporters on the programs I watch are qualified professionals
I feel as though they are talking to me
I prefer local news to national news
The weather is one of my favorite things
Different reporters put their own slant on the news

3c. Below are a few final statements that may or may not describe your own experience with **<Insert
PROGRAM NAME>**. For each statement, indicate how much you agree or disagree that it describes
your own feelings about watching this program. Again, each statement is different, so please think about
each one individually. (Select one for each) <random>

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

Most of the programs I watch offer a variety of different perspectives
I wish the news programs that I watch were more conservative
I have to watch a number of news programs to get the entire story
The same stories on the news are repeated day after day
The different news programs I watch are all very similar in the way they do the news
The different news programs all have the same stories
I like to comment on the news as I watch it
I bring up things I have seen on the news in conversations with many other people
Watching the news makes me a more interesting person
While I am watching the news, I can easily picture the events in a story taking place

While I am watching, usually the activity going on in the room around me is on my mind
I am mentally involved in the news while watching
After watching the news, I find it easy to put it out of my mind
I can picture myself at the scene of the event described on the news
The stories in the news affect me emotionally
When watching the news, I want to learn how stories end
I find my mind wandering when I am watching the news
News stories are relevant to my everyday life
I find myself wondering how things could have turned out differently
Watching the news makes a difference in my life
Watching the news makes me feel like a better citizen
Our society would be much weaker without television news
It makes me more a part of my community
The news always has things that surprise me
Some stories on the news touch me deep down

4. Overall, how favorable or unfavorable are you toward **<Insert PROGRAM NAME>**? (Select one)

1 – Extremely Favorable
2
3
4 – Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable
5
6
7 – Extremely Unfavorable

The next few questions are about this TV station in general, not just <Insert PROGRAM NAME>.

STATION NAMES TO INSERT:
If assigned Q.D code 5, insert: WFLD-32 Fox Chicago
If assigned Q.D code 4, insert: WGN-9 Chicago
If assigned Q.D code 1, insert: WBBM CBS-2 Chicago
If assigned Q.D code 3, insert: WLS-TV ABC-7 Chicago
If assigned Q.D code 2, insert: WMAQ NBC-5 Chicago

5. On a typical weekday (**Monday – Friday**) how many hours each day do you spend watching **<Insert STATION NAME>**? (Select one)

None
Less than an hour
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 hours or more

6. On a typical **Saturday or Sunday** how many hours each day do you spend watching **<Insert STATION NAME>**? (Select one)

None
Less than an hour
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 – 10 hours

11 hours or more

7. In a typical **7-day week**, which days do you typically watch **<Insert STATION NAME>**? (Select all that apply)

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

8. How much do you enjoy watching **<Insert STATION NAME>**? (Select one)

Enjoy very much
Enjoy a lot
Enjoy
Enjoy slightly
Do not enjoy

WEB SITE NAMES TO INSERT:
If assigned Q.D code 5, insert: MyFoxChicago.com
If assigned Q.D code 4, insert: WGNTV.com
If assigned Q.D code 1, insert: CBS2Chicago .com
If assigned Q.D code 3, insert: ABC7Chicago.com
If assigned Q.D code 2, insert: NBC5.com

9a. Have you ever visited **<Insert WEB SITE NAME>**? (Select one)

Yes
No

9b. On a typical weekday (**Monday – Friday**) how many <u>different</u> times <u>each day</u> do you go online to visit **<Insert WEB SITE NAME>**?

None
1 time
2 times
3 times
4 times
5-6 times
7+ times

10. On a typical weekday (**Monday – Friday**) how much time <u>in total</u> do you spend visiting **<Insert WEB SITE NAME>**?

None
1 - 5 minutes
6 - 15 minutes
16 - 30 minutes
31 - 45 minutes
46 minutes – 59 minutes
1 hour – less than 1½ hours
1½ hours - less than 2 hours
2 hours or more

11. On a typical **Saturday or Sunday** how many <u>different</u> times <u>each day</u> do you go online to visit **<Insert WEB SITE NAME>**?

None
1 time
2 times
3 times
4 times
5 – 6 times
7or more times

12. On a typical **Saturday or Sunday** how much time <u>in total</u> do you spend visiting **<Insert WEB SITE NAME>**?

None
1 - 5 minutes
6 - 15 minutes
16 - 30 minutes
31 - 45 minutes
46 minutes – 59 minutes
1 hour – less than 1½ hours
1½ hours - less than 2 hours
2 hours or more

Now, we'd like to ask you some general questions about where you get the news.

13. On a typical weekday (**Monday – Friday**) how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend watching television <u>news programs</u> on any station? (Select one)

None
Less than an hour
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 hours or more

14. On a typical **Saturday or Sunday** how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend watching **any** television <u>news programs</u> on any station? (Select one)

None
Less than an hour
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 – 10 hours
11 hours or more

15. When watching a television <u>news program</u> on any station, how much of the program do you typically watch? (Select one)

All or almost all of it
About three quarters in total
About one half in total

About one quarter in total
Only a few minutes here and there or a small part of it

16. In a typical **7-day week,** how many times do you watch television <u>news programs</u> on any station? For instance, if you watch the "5 O'clock News" four times a week that would count as 4 times. (Select one)

1 – 2 times
3 – 4 times
5 – 6 times
7 – 8 times
9 – 10 times
11 – 15 times
More than 15 times

17. How much do you enjoy watching television <u>news programs</u> on any station? (Select one)

Enjoy very much
Enjoy a lot
Enjoy
Enjoy slightly
Do not enjoy

17.5. Which best describes the television <u>news programs</u> you watch? (Select one)

Mostly local news programs
Mostly national news programs
A mix of both local and national news programs

18. Which ONE of the networks below do you watch <u>the most</u> for television <u>news</u>? (Select one) <random>

ABC
CBS
Fox
NBC
CNN
MSNBC
CLTV
Fox News
WGN
PBS (11)
Other (specify)

19. On a typical weekday (**Monday – Friday**) how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend watching television in general? (Select one)

None
An hour or less
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 hours or more

20. On a typical **Saturday or Sunday** how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend watching television in general? (Select one)

None
An hour or less
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 – 10 hours
11 hours or more

21. How much do you enjoy watching television in general? (Select one)

Enjoy very much
Enjoy a lot
Enjoy
Enjoy slightly
Do not enjoy

23. In a typical **7-day week**, how often at home or during personal time at work do you use the Internet to visit Web sites that have news content? (Select one)

Less often than once a week
1 – 2 times a week
3 – 6 times a week
Once a day
Twice a day
Three times a day
Four or more times a day
Do not use the Internet for news

24. What is the average amount of time you would typically spend at the site <u>each time</u> you visit a web site with news content? (Select one)

Less than 5 minutes
5 – 10 minutes
11 – 20 minutes
21 – 30 minutes
31 minutes to less than an hour
1 hour to less than 1 1/2 hours
1 1/2 hours to less than 2 hours
2 hours or more

25. In a typical **7-day week**, how often at home, in the car, during personal time at work, or other places do you listen to radio stations that have news content? (Select one)

Less often than once a week
1 – 2 times per week
3 – 6 times a week
Once a day
More than once a day
Do not listen to the radio for news

26. What is the average amount of time you would typically spend listening <u>each time</u> you tune into a radio station that has news content? (Select one)

Less than 5 minutes
5 – 10 minutes
11 – 20 minutes
21 – 30 minutes
31 minutes to less than an hour
1 hour to less than 1 1/2 hours
1 1/2 hours to less than 2 hours
2 hours or more

27. In a typical **7-day week**, how many different news magazines do you read or look into? (Select one)

One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven
Eight or more
Do not read news magazines

28. How much time in a typical **7-day week** do you spend reading <u>news magazines</u>? (Select one)

30 minutes or less
Over 30 minutes, but less than an hour
1 – 2 hours
3 – 4 hours
5 – 6 hours
7 – 8 hours
9 – 10 hours
11 hours or more

29. In a typical **7-day week**, which days do you read or look into a newspaper? (Select all that apply)

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
Do not read or look into a newspaper in a typical 7-day week **PN: Mutually exclusive**

30. How much time do you spend on a typical <u>weekday</u> (**Monday – Saturday**) reading or looking into newspapers?
(Select one)

1 – 15 minutes
16 – 30 minutes
31 – 45 minutes
46 – 60 minutes
More than 60 minutes

31. Of all the newspapers you read or look into on a typical <u>weekday</u> (**Monday - Saturday**), how much of the papers do you read? (Select one)

Almost all or all
About three quarters
About one half
About one quarter
Almost none

32. How much time on a typical **Sunday** do you spend reading or looking into newspapers? (Select one)

Less than 1/2 hour
1/2 hour to less than 1 hour
1 hour to less than 1 1/2 hour
1 1/2 hours to less than 2 hours
2 hours to less than 2 1/2 hours
2 1/2 hours to less than 3
3 hours or more

33. Of all the newspapers you read or look into on a typical **Sunday**, how much of the papers do you read? (Select one)

Almost all or all
About three quarters
About one half
About one quarter
Almost none

I'd like to change the topic and ask you just a few questions about civic activities.

34. How important is it for you, personally, to participate in the following types of civic activities? (Select one for each statement) <randomize>

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
Not very important
Not at all important

Elections
Keeping up with local/community events
Keeping up with state and national issues
Doing volunteer work or community service
Donating money to worthy causes

35. In the last 12 months, have you… ? (Select one for each statement) <randomize>

Yes
No
Don't know

Contacted an elected political official
Attended a political meeting or rally
Participated in a protest, march or demonstration
Signed a petition, on paper or on the Internet
Volunteered in an organization affiliated with religion
Participated in an organized project to try to solve a community problem
Given money to any organizations or causes altogether totaling to more than $500

36a. Did you vote in the November 2004 (Bush/Kerry) presidential elections? (Select one)

Yes
No
No, I was not old enough to vote at that time
Don't know / can't remember

36b. Do you plan to vote in the 2006 congressional elections this November? (Select one)

Yes
No
Don't know

36c. Do you plan to vote in the 2008 presidential elections? (Select one)

Yes
No
Don't know

37. Which of the following statements describes you best? (Select one)

I follow politics most of the time
I follow politics some of the time
I follow politics now and then
I hardly follow politics at all

Next we have some questions about some things that have been in the news. You may or may not have heard of them.

38. Do you happen to know which political party the current Mayor of Chicago belongs to? (Select one)

Democratic party
Republican party
Independent
Don't know

39. Can you tell me the name of the President of Russia? (Type in your answer below. Please be as specific as possible. If nothing comes to mind, please type NA)

[Text Box]

40. Can you tell me the name of the current Secretary of State? (Type in your answer below. Please be as specific as possible. If nothing comes to mind, please type NA)

[Text Box]

41. Do you happen to know if the federal government is spending more money than it is taking in, or spending less money than it is taking in this year? (Select one)

Spending more money than it is taking in
Spending less money than it is taking in
Don't know

In this last section, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself.

42. Which best describes your education? (Select one)

Grade school (8th grade or less)
Some high school (did not graduate)
High school graduate (12th grade)
Special or technical training (not college)
Some college (1-3 years)
College graduate
Post college graduate

43. Including yourself, how many people live in your current household? (Select one)

One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Between six and ten
More than ten

44. Do you have any children in any of the following age categories currently living in your household? (Select one for each)

Yes
No

Under 2
2 – 5
6 – 10
11 – 12
13 - 17

45. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? (Select one)

Employed full-time
Employed part-time
Homemaker
Looking for work
Student
Disabled
Retired and working part-time
Retired
Not employed

46. What was the range of your <u>total household</u> income last year (2005) before taxes? (Select one)

Less than $15,000
$15,000-24,999
$25,000-34,999
$35,000-44,999
$45,000-54,999
$55,000-64,999
$65,000-74,999
$75,000-84,999
$85,000-94,999

$95,000-104,999
$105,000-114,999
$115,000 to 124,999
$125,000 or more
Prefer not to answer

47. Where were you born? (Select one)

In one of the 50 United States
Outside of the 50 United States
Prefer not to answer

48. Which of the following describes where your parents were born? (Select one)

One or both parents born outside the 50 United States
Both parents born in the United States
Prefer not to answer

49. In casual conversation with friends or family, in which language do you prefer to speak? (Select one)

English
Language other than English

Thank you for your help with this study.

Appendix 3: Content analysis - coding sheet

Block (check one)
1. A   4. D   7. G
2. B   5. E   8. H
3. C   6. F   9. I+

Segment Type (check one)
1. News / feature story
2. Sports
3. Weather
4. Commercial break
5. Anchor talk / other
6. Same-show / next day promotion
7. Other promotion
8. Lottery / index
9. Viewer participation
10. News round-up

Time _____:_____
    Minutes   Seconds

If NOT news story, end here

Topic (check one)
Indicate the most appropriate topic of the news story
1. **Crime**
    a. Violent
    b. Non-violent
    c. Prevention
    d. White collar / business
    e. Trend
2. **Politics**
    a. Routine government work
    b. Elections
    c. Political actors
    d. Corruption
3. **Fire / Accident**
4. **International**
    a. War in Iraq / Afghanistan
    b. News from other countries
5. **Business / Economy**
6. **Health / Science / environment**
7. **Technology**
8. **Entertainment**
    a. Popular music
    b. Movies
    c. Books, publishing
    d. Fine arts
9. **Travel**
10. **Home / real estate**
11. **Food**
12. **Transportation / commuting**
13. **Religion / spirituality**
14. **Network program**

15. **Weather**
16. **Other**
Treatment (check one)
1. Hard news   2. Feature

Location (check one)
1. Metro Chicago
2. Cook County
3. Suburbs
4. State
5. Region
6. National
7. International

Community relevance (check one)
1. No effect on viewing area – outside viewing area
2. No effect on viewing area – inside viewing area
3. Effect on small subgroup in viewing area
4. Effect on major group in viewing area
5. Effect on important institutions in viewing area
6. Effect on all citizens in viewing area

Utility (check one)
1. Yes   2. No

Story elements (check all that apply)
0. Reader
1. Full screen graphic
2. VO
3. VO / Sot
4. PKG
5. Live – reporter at the scene
6. Live – reporter in the studio
7. Live – reporter interview
8. Web promotion
9. Anchor talk

Journalistic enterprise (check one)
1. Station-initiated investigation - series
2. Station-initiated investigation - story
3. Station-initiated non-investigative - series
4. Station-initiated non-investigative - story
5. Response to spontaneous event
6. Response to pre-arranged event
7. Feed from network / wire / other news source
8. Corporate / video news release
9. Other
10. No attribution / explanation / can't tell

Actors in the story
_____ Total number of actors

Sound bites in the story
_____ Total number of sound bites

Code people with sound-bites only:

Applies to Person 1 to 4:

Gender (check one)
1. Male   2. Female

Race / Ethnicity (check one)
1. Caucasian
2. African American / Black
3. Hispanic / Latino
4. Asian American / Pacific Islander
5. Middle Eastern
6. Other
7. Can't tell

Role (check one)
1. Elected / Public official
2. Law enforcement / Judicial system
3. Military
4. Business leader
5. Religious leader
6. Expert
7. Ordinary person / public
8. Ordinary person / private
9. Ordinary person / crime
10. Can't tell

Links

Study reports and articles:

Calder, B. J. & Malthouse, E.C. (2003) The behavioral Score Approach to dependent Variables, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 13(4).
http://www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15327663JCP1304_06

Grade the News
http://www.gradethenews.org/feat/recentgrades/2004.htm

The Lear Center Local News Archive
http://www.localnewsarchive.org/

Marc, Marcel (1966), Using Readership Quality in Magazine Selection, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 6(4), 9-13.

Project for Excellence in Journalism
http://www.journalism.org/research_and_analysis/Studies

Rosenstiel, T., Just, M., Belt, T., Pertilla, A., Dean, W. and Chinni, D. (2007) *We Interrupt This Newscast: How to Improve Local News and Win ratings, Too*, Cambridge University Press.

State of the News Media, 2007 report (Project for Excellence in Journalism)
http://www.stateofthemedia.org/2007/narrative_localtv_publicattitudes.asp?cat=7&media=7

State of the News Media, 2004 report (Project for Excellence in Journalism)
http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/narrative_localtv_publicattitudes.asp?cat=7&media=6

Press releases:

Chairman Powell launches "Localism in Broadcasting" initiative (Federal Communications Commission press release)
http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-238057A1.doc

Purpose of the Localism Initiative (FCC Web site)
http://www.fcc.gov/localism/welcome.html

Media Reform Coalition Challenges Milwaukee and Chicago TV stations' license renewals (The Campaign Legal Letter press release)
http://www.mediaaccess.org/filings/FINAL%20License%20Challenge%20Press%20Release%2011.2.05.pdf

Statement from NAB responding to FCC Localism inquiry (national Association of Broadcasters press release)
http://www.nab.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Position_Statements1&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=2721

Web sites:

Media Management Center
http://www.mediamanagementcenter.org/

Medill School
http://www.medill.northwestern.edu/

The John L. and James S. Knight Foundation
http://www.knightfdn.org/

Previous Media Management Center experience research:

Magazines
http://mediamanagementcenter.org/research/magazineexperience.asp

Newspapers
http://www.readership.org/consumers/newspaperexperience.asp

Online
http://mediamanagementcenter.org/research/onlineoverview.asp

Acknowledgements