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Breaking Down the 21st Century Newscast: Corporate Control Over the Content of the Local Newscast

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Breaking Down the 21st Century Newscast: Corporate Control over the Content of the
Local Newscast

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DePauw University Honors Scholar Program

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Abstract

News media are in turmoil as the public is less informed and more polarized than ever. This issue dates back to the late 1970s, and early 1980s when corporations took over news organizations and began to demand profits out of them. This changed news from a public good to a business. As this business model began to develop, the news industry experienced layoffs, a decrease in quality, increase in quantity, and enhanced importance placed on advertising. The current news is delegitimized and polarized, with citizens being able to choose from where they get their news, thus eliminating shared experiences among the public. This is detrimental to democracy as respected media is required to keep institutions of government in place and inform the public. News must regain its' position of authority and have its' purpose be restored in informing the public, not making money. Only then will citizens be able to trust news as a legitimate source, and news can continue its' role of protecting democracy. Local news is of particular importance as most policy changes happen at the local level and it is the main news source for citizens (Gallup). To support the assertion that corporate owners control media outlets at the expense of local news, this study will examine local news in one market, Chicago, across four different stations and owners to establish if the before mentioned factors are present, or not, in these local news stations. This will be done by breaking down the 6:00 nightly newscast, recording how much time is allotted for each segment and story, as well as doing a qualitative content analysis on the individual stories themselves.

Introduction

Six corporations control 90% of all the news that citizens consume in America (Lutz). This is in stark comparison from the news industry in the 1960s and 1970s, where news was controlled by separate entities, privately owned (Griffin). Media corporatization made it so those who are in charge of news organizations are not in the business of reporting reliable news, they are in the business of making money. This has led to a news industry where pushing a story is more important than fact checking and quality, as well as one where more radical viewpoints, which often sell better, are encouraged.

This is a departure from the past as news stations once covered news without the expectation of turning a profit. These companies instead relied on their entertainment programs as money makers. For these companies, news was a public service that was broadcasted for the good of the citizens (Gunther). News is now looked at as the biggest money maker, as opposed to entertainment programs, and often viewed as a subsidy for entertainment programming. Coupled with this demand for profits, news has also become a competitive industry, with dozens of television outlets and online resources providing programming. This presents an opportunity for companies to appeal to their audiences by often bringing citizen's information they want to see, not what they need to know, this is a choice stations have made (McChesney and Nichols). The need to be competitive and compete for viewers is crucial, without which stations would not exist.

Advertisers have played a complicit role in monetizing news as well, as corporations seeking profits are at their will. In the 1990s there was an increase in the amount of programming

provided (McDowell, 218). As this happened, advertisers preferred to advertise their products in niche markets, in order to target their desired audience. This led companies to create more programming, increasing partisan media and incentivizing radical voices (McChesney and Nichols). This has changed the industry from having one news show a night, to several different news programs from various competing networks which vary in ownership and thus content. This wide array of programming can be dangerous for democracy as it has led to less common experiences among the public, and a more polarized society. As more time is being devoted to selling products and less to broadcasting news, the consumer realizes that the purpose of news has changed. As Ed Herman put it, “Newspapers were once thought to bring communities together. That’s not the case anymore. People recognize when their local newspaper loses interest in them as anything but consumers of advertising.” (McChesney and Nichols).

This desire for revenue also led to budget cuts, especially in terms of reduced staff. In today’s world of the 24/7 news cycle, this means that fewer people are producing more news than ever. As layoffs hit the industry, hard-hitting, respected journalists left as well. These respected faces of journalism were important as they often exposed readers to new ideas and perspectives (Gunther). As these respected figures left, banter and “happy talk” between news anchors started as a way to connect with the viewers and lighten the news. Public interest stories on health and finance were also added to the news agenda as companies catered to the public and put style over substance (Halbrooks).

Although dated, these changes remain a problem as they have contributed the low trust of mass media in America. Consumer trust of media is at an all-time low as the Pew Research Center reports that only 32% of the American population trusts the media “a great deal” or a “fair amount” (Gallup). This has lessened the legitimacy and power of the media, and for good

reason. Ratings and revenues for hard hitting news continue to decrease, calling into question what is newsworthy, and what is a ratings and money boost.

This dwindling trust in media is detrimental as the news media plays a critical role in American democracy (McChesney). News has a special privilege, outlined in the constitution, as watchdogs of democracy. In this role, news reports on matters which the public would not normally have access to. Citizens need an informed media in order to remain active participants in society. Without this trustworthy media, Democracy does not work.

This paper will examine how the institutions of news media have changed, thus changing the integrity of news and creating the environment seen today, through a content analysis of local news. The argument made is, because of media corporatization, American distrust of news media is valid as these changes have not been able to preserve the quality and integrity of the news. This study seeks to support this by examining four different local news programs owned by four different owners. I hypothesize this will show that corporate greed and profitability has moved networks out of hard news, and the American people have suffered because of this. Also, this study will present suggested solutions to improve the institution of news media. As citizens control what they choose to view, and thus the profits news makes, citizens must demand media make substantial changes to once again take its' role back as a legitimate and trustworthy institution.

Hypothesis:

H1: Commercials make up a large part of a 30-minute newscast.

H2: Sports, weather, and "happy talk" deter from hard news programming.

H3: Feature news will appear half as often as hard news.

H4: Fox news differs the greatest from other affiliates in their content structure.

Review of Literature

Television News History

Television news formally started in the 1960s, since then, there have been numerous changes to television news from content and other properties of the newsroom. In its' inception, television news had to compete with newspaper and radio. In fact, many who worked for television news had a background in these subjects (Halbrooks). This made it so those who worked in television were well informed on the issues they reported. However, television was able to compete as it had something that both of those mediums did not: images. This era of television news was one in which an anchor would simply get on camera and read a script (Griffin). This meant that television did not hold entertainment and design as paramount, instead information was most important. Also, newsrooms in the 1960s only employed men to read the news, and there was only a single newscaster (Halbrooks). This meant no banter between newscasters, and the point of view was restricted to only that of a white male.

Later in the 1900s, the 1970s brought many changes to news. The news team closer resembled what Americans see today, with women joining the ranks and teams presenting the news, not just an individual (Halbrooks). Color television also came along, changing news forever and bringing with it a focus on design. This era created "happy talk" where anchors were encouraged to be warm and friendly, bantering amongst themselves to appeal to their audience. This began the news Americans see today where citizens are given the news they want to see, not what they need to know (Halbrooks). Television news grew in popularity when it began to incorporate on-the-scene reporting and video from events around the country. The ability to "go

live” was introduced to stations, which made local news and events able to be seen at a moment’s notice (Halbrooks).

Further changes came in the 1980s as news organizations sought to improve their viewers’ lives by including health and consumer reporting in the regular lineup of news, weather, and sports (Halbrooks). Importantly, computers were added to the newsroom, which made it easier for networks to research stories and archive work. Newsrooms started differentiating themselves by their anchors and likability, generating views in other ways besides content (Halbrooks).

By the 1990s, 98% of U.S. homes had at least one television (Stephens). There was now also a wide array of entertainment news programs, such as *Dateline NBC* and *Primetime Live* as entertainment and investigative reporting became popular (Halbrooks). This came with it a turn from the consumer stories to hard-hitting scandal based news. This also meant that stations took more risks in the stories they aired, with more controversial topics receiving news coverage. Cable television now meant that viewers had more choice and programs to choose from, making it so news networks had to work harder to attract the attention of viewers (Halbrooks).

In the 2000s, events such as 9/11 brought a renewed importance back to television news (Halbrooks). This was because newscasters had to report difficult topics, as they had an important role as the ones to inform the Nation of breaking stories. News was often relied on as the first source to report breaking matters, with its’ ability to capture footage at a moment’s notice and stream breaking news. As the internet became so widely used and popular, video clips began to be posted on the internet, presenting more competition for television news against this growing medium (Halbrooks).

Today, in the 2010s, news is rapidly changing as the internet is as well. This has meant that there are numerous different platforms for citizens to view and read news. On television there is an array of networks, and the internet has created echo chambers out of blogs and social media (Halbrooks). Due to these, and numerous other factors, daily news programs are dwindling in their viewership. To survive, news channels have focused on different mediums, such as enhancing their website and using online coverage. The reliability of news coverage itself, as well as what makes the news agenda, is a concern as citizens now more than ever stick to their political views when creating their personal news lineup. The current state of news begs the question if news is legitimate, if it will last, and if so how? There is a need for change, as consumers turn to other platforms and feel cheated by their news providers. News has been de-legitimized and consumer trust is at an all-time low.

FCC

Before television, all of the different means of communication needed a regulatory agency. Since its' creation by the Communications Act of 1934, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been the regulatory agency for interstate communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable. This government agency reviews all matters involving the license and licensee of a television station. In order for the Commission to approve a grant for a station, the proposed owner must prove they are qualified and that operation of the proposed station would be in the public interest (FCC). This agency is crucial as it is able to regulate the voices of media by placing rules on ownership.

The FCC has been responsible for many crucial rulings which have shifted the power and control of media. In 2017, the Federal Communications Commission further allowed media conglomerates to focus on making profits by making it easier for media outlets to be bought and

sold (Fung). This limited the diversity in ownership by making it easier for one company to control all markets in a community. The FCC has also voted and passed a rule that no longer requires broadcasters to have a physical studio in the markets they are licensed (Fung). All of these new rulings could lead to a future where a single company could potentially own all of the media outlets in a community, from newspapers to multiple television and radio stations, thus making a sole voice responsible for equipping a whole community with important knowledge. A community needs to be informed, with most of its' news coming from local television.

Local Television News

This study will examine local news as previous research in 2006 showed that 55% of the public watched local television news every day (Yanich, 52). Television news has also been a primary news source for most, making it a relevant study. Yanich in "Does Ownership Matter? Localism, Content, and the Federal Communications Commission" argues that central to democracy is informed citizens, as citizens are relied on to make policy decisions through voting. This is not possible if citizens cannot depend on the media for reliable and important information. The expectation is that television news is informed and reliable, as well as "geared to the information needs of society" (Yanich, 53). At the same time, the media has become more polarized and biased, effectively a political institution (Yanich, 53). Lastly, local news has the strongest effect in local markets as the majority of politics and policy occurs at the local level (Yanich, 54). Because of these factors and scope of influence, local television news is a topic worth studying.

Ownership

Most television stations are owned by corporations, with few independent stations left. As local news is more expensive to produce, stations with more financial resources may be more likely to broadcast this news (Napoli, 41). However, since corporate owners are more concerned with profits versus public interest, they do not use their monetary clout to the public's advantage. Yan and Napoli in a 2006 study found evidence that station ownership size was not positively related to a station's quality of programming, but was positively correlated to their decision to air local public affairs programming (Napoli, 42). These studies show a connection between ownership and local news.

When it comes to how this important medium is owned, Napoli in "Media Ownership Regulations and Local News Programming on Broadcast Television: An Empirical Analysis" presents two theoretical perspectives, one that a community can be better served when ownership of local media outlets have close ties to the community itself, and second that economic profits control what media outlets report, thus consumer decisions. The first perspective argues that those in the community are more privy to the needs of their community and would favor local programming (Napoli, 41). This has had an effect on both the amount of local television stations and the quality of programming produced. As local news is expensive to produced, and viewers and revenues are dwindling, there is the threat that corporations could completely eliminate local news, solely focused on their profits.

"As more and more stations become controlled by larger media companies, local television news has also become more bottom-line oriented. In the first few weeks of 2002, for example, three station groups decided to completely eliminate local news at their subsidiary stations (Schultz and Sheffer)."

Localism

This is troubling as a news station has a responsibility to the community in which it operates. Localism is a station's commitment to the community it serves (Napoli). As individual broadcasters are often affiliated with national networks (NBC, FOX, ABC, etc.), and there are fewer independent stations, this local content and connection is waning. Local communities need to ensure that news meets their local needs and makes them better informed decision makers, making media conglomerates dangerous (Napoli).

Diversity

Also important to maintain in a local newscast, diversity in the news agenda is defined as a range of topics and voices in news (Smith, 388). It is the duty of the FCC to create policies that both protect the public interest and allow broadcasters to survive in the competitive television market (FCC). Serving the public interest, which has many diverse voices, is a cornerstone of American broadcast policy (FCC).

Advertising

Over the course of a year, the average American watches 1,550 hours of television programming and is exposed to approximately 38,000 commercials (Wood, 807). Furthermore, in a 30 minute newscast, on average 22.5 minutes are dedicated to news, leaving 7.5 minutes for commercials (Yanich). This important institution needs as much time to devote to news as possible, instead of compromising that time to allow for commercial content which does not serve the citizens, only corporate greed.

As media conglomerates practice vertical and horizontal integration, promotional items may be added to the news agenda to benefit the media conglomerate, not the public. A study which showed growing advertising in television news looked at two commercial practices,

unpaid brand/company content appearing within the news, and cross-promotion with other shows (Wood, 808).

These practices lead to blurred lines between companies. For example, Wood describes a station which was so concerned with revenues, they morphed sales and news coverage. In doing this, they attempted to sell favorable news coverage to local businesses (Wood, 808). This is a clear violation of the public interest as the news is facts that the citizens trust. If news is bought, there is no validity. Throughout news, there are many feature segments which effectively act as unpaid advertising for companies. This comes in the form of numerous different stories, from covering a store opening, a concert, or a service. These stories are littered through a news cast and deter from hard news. In addition, newscasts have started including sponsored segments, where a company is allowed to pay for their name to appear in some form in a newscast.

Advertising Age commissioned two studies in 1990 and 1993. The 1990 study examined 24/7 programming of ABC, CBS, NBC affiliates in Chicago. This study found a total of 818 "ad plugs," or an average of 11.4 brand/company appearances per hour of network television, when looking at 24/7 station coverage. The 1993 study added FOX and found 1,035 brand /company appearances or an average of 10.8 appearances per hour of television. Even more troubling, both of these studies found that brand /company content occurred most during the evening news at 39.9%, as opposed to during entertainment programming. This study confirmed that brands and companies receive significant visibility through television programming, particularly news.

Largely viewed as the first program which showed that news could make money, "60 Minutes" altered broadcast journalism (Susca). This made news the biggest money maker for many stations, with local news accounting for more than 40% of annual revenues (Mitchell and

Page). Local Television Station Revenue Reached \$28.4 billion in 2016, thus proof that the industry is a money maker (BIA/Kelsey).

As shown, the integrity of television news is being compromised by commercial content; product placement has also infiltrated television programs. A 2013-2014 study found that 611 different brands took part in product placement over the course of the year, with this number on the rise (Lafayette). This kind of advertising builds brand loyalty and connects the viewer to fictional characters in entertainment television. While it may seem that product placement does not proliferate the news industry, there was a direct case in 2008 where it did. Fox affiliate KVVU used product placement during the morning news by replacing the anchors generic coffee mugs with McDonalds' new iced coffee (Swearingen). This made part of the newscast an advertisement that the viewer was not aware they were purposefully receiving. These ad plugs during serious news programs is distracting for the viewer and infiltrates the news agenda (Swearingen).

This new form of advertising is popular as a greater amount of people use DVRs and mute commercials. This makes product placement more effective as audiences are more engaged during the show itself. It has even been found that television viewers would rather see product placement than a commercial (Ham, Park, and Sejin). In 2015 alone, Advertisers spent \$5 billion on product placement (Villarreal). Nielsen has even started tracking product placement as part of their regular television metrics, showing that this advertising is sure to rise in use (Swearingen).

Cross Promotion

Another form of advertising used in television news is cross promotion. Cross promotion is “the cooperative marketing by two or more companies of one another’s products” (Anderson).

This is found in daily talk shows frequently, such as the “Today Show”. One instance of this cross promotion being used in place of crucial news, the “Today Show” broadcasted a promotional movie interview with Robert Redford instead of broadcasting a story of Saddam Hussein's court appearance in Baghdad (Rich). This air time of feature stories over hard news for monetary gain is dangerous as important news stories are being ignored over money making opportunities for television stations.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting suggests that the media has the power to set the public agenda by choosing what to cover. This theory states that:

“People are aware or not aware, pay attention to or neglect, play up or downgrade specific features of the public scene. People tend to include or exclude from their cognitions what the media includes or excludes from their content. People also tend to assign a given importance to what they include that closely resembles the emphasis given to events, issue, and persons by the mass media.” (Shaw)

This theory is important as it shows the power that the media has in determining the issues of society.

Sports

There are numerous different segments in television news, some receiving more air time than others and some more serious than others. Sports in local news has undergone many changes, as local television stations strive to keep sports segments unique by emphasizing localism (Shultz and Sheffer). Sports has long been considered a “tune out” factor as it is polarizing to audiences (Shultz and Sheffer). A survey by the Radio and Television News

Directors Foundation indicated that only 31% of viewers said they were ‘very interested’ in the sports segment while 32% said they were ‘somewhat interested’ (Schultz and Sheffer). Sports typically receive three to five minutes in a broadcast, further taking away time from hard news (Shultz and Sheffer).

Weather

Weather is the part of a local news broadcast that the most people watch, and is often two to three minutes long (Laskin). With the first TV weather report in 1941, this segment has always been a fixture of local news. Weather often appears at the end of a news broadcast and has been seen as a place to put a “pretty face” (Laskin). This is the one aspect of news that varies greatly from network to network, and is left up to judgment. Weather reporters are also expected to engage in “happy talk” with the anchors, which takes up more of the allotted time (Laskin). While there is the *Weather Channel* for more accurate weather, weather in news still holds an important place based on a personal relationship with the viewer (Laskin). Though not the most accurate source of news, a weather segment in local news is not likely to go away as it provides comic relief to a news broadcast. As compared to the polarizing effect of sports, 72% expressed an interest in the weather (Schultz and Sheffer).

Case study

“Does Ownership Matter? Localism, Content, and the Federal Communications Commission” by Danilo Yanich looks at “the extent to which the ownership of local stations affected, if at all, the local content of television news broadcasts” (Yanich, 59). This research was an extension of work done by Peter Alexander and Keith Brown in 2004 with the FCC. This research was done in an effort to aid the FCC when deciding on issues concerning diversity,

competition, and localism (Yanich, 66). Yanich's study will reveal if local news really does serve the public interest.

This study by Yanich was done by examining seventeen television markets across the United States. Yanich used content analysis to see the relationship between these local markets news content and ownership structure. Local content was defined as "having being seen by the average viewer as a local story" (Yanich, 58). There were four ownership profiles among these stations, owned-and-operated (O&O), stations that were part of a duopoly, stations that were O&O by a network and were part of a duopoly, and stations that were neither O&O by a network, nor part of a duopoly, making them independent. For O&O stations, the networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, or FOX) "exercised direct control over their operation" (Yanich, 57). A duopoly is "stations within one television market that were owned by the same firm" (Yanich, 57). Yanich determined the sample from sweep and nonsweep periods in March, April, and May of 2002. A sweep period is when Nielsen is recording to establish the size of a shows audience, thus determining the price of advertising. A nonsweep period is when Nielson is not recording for this. Yanich was studying the individual story that was shown on the newscast. Ultimately, the sample included "514 broadcasts that were broadcast by 53 stations in 17 markets and yielded 7,137 separate stories, excluding sports and weather" (Yanich, 56).

A preliminary understanding of the structure of media control was presented as Yanich described the Local Task Force and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Yanich states that the FCC had already examined this relationship between localism and media ownership, through the Localism Task Force. In this case, "the FCC researchers concluded that ownership does matter in the delivery of local news in local television markets" (Yanich, 52). As this study is an extension of this finding, Yanich also used the same definition for localism that

they used, “local places that have physical geographic boundaries” (Yanich, 54). Together, this literature review suggests that “ownership does matter in the production of total news and local news on local television newscasts, and ‘consolidated’ stations produce less local content than those that are ‘independent.’” (Yanich, 52).

The study found that stations in smaller markets devoted the most broadcast time to local stories with 91% of local content broadcast time in Baton Rouge, to the biggest market, New York, devoting 65% (Yanich, 58). The study also found that “local stories were significantly longer than non-local stories” (Yanich, 58). O&O and duopoly stations, owned by CBS and General Electric (NBC), accounted for Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York, and had the least amount of local content at 66%. Only O&O stations, owned by CBS, Walt Disney (ABC), and General Electric (NBC), accounted for Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York had 69% local news. Duopoly stations, owned by BELO, CBS, Hearst, and Sunbelt, accounted for local news in Boston, Honolulu, Houston, Las Vegas, Miami, and Sacramento and accounted for 72% local news. Independent stations accounted for the most of the sample, at 34 stations and produced 74% local news (Yanich, 57). This correlation between ownership and local content was found to be statistically significant and made clear that ownership did matter.

In conclusion, Yanich’s study found that ownership does matter in the production of news on local broadcasts as independent stations overall broadcasted the most local content. The average proportion of broadcast time devoted to local content was 72%. Stations owned by Freedom Broadcasting devoted 90% of their time to local content, whereas stations owned by News Corporation only devoted 48% to local content, the least of any owner. On average, large media companies like CBS, ABC, and NBC devoted a significantly smaller portion of their broadcasts to local news.

Ethics

Journalists have an ethical code to abide by as they are an important part of restoring justice and democracy. The Society of Professional Journalism outlines specific principles that those in the media field should abide by in order to protect this institution.

1. Seek Truth and Report It

- a. “Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.”

2. Minimize Harm

- a. “Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.” (SJP)

3. Act Independently

- a. “The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.” (SJP)

4. Be Accountable and Transparent

- a. ”Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one’s work and explaining one’s decisions to the public.” (SJP)

This code of ethics is important as it shows that there are certain journalistic practices in place to protect the public and ensure the voices of media act with legitimacy. These are the guidelines that the Society of Professional Journalists encourage everyone in journalism to use in order to be responsible about the information they provide (SJP).

Public Interest

Discovering the truth is in the public interest of society. Public interest is defined as what matters to everyone in society, a common good (Ethical Journalism Network). The public interest is not just what the readers, listeners, or viewers want either as consumers or people who want to be entertained. Therefore, what is in the public interest and what interests the public is not the same (Ethical Journalism Network). While boring or harsh matters of society such as local government meetings, crime, and public services, these issues effect society more than things such as sports, celebrity news, or even weather. Citizens need to be well informed on these issues of hard news, as opposed to trivial feature stories. Hard news gives citizens the information needed to take part in the democratic process (Ethical Journalism Network).

Study

Methodology

This study is a qualitative content analysis to examine four local stations in Chicago. These four stations are affiliate stations, WBBM (CBS Corporation), WMAQ (NBC Universal), WLS (ABC), WFLD (Fox Television Stations). The unit of analysis is the 30-minute nightly 6:00 newscast, and for Fox News, 30 minutes of their hour long 5:00 newscast. This adjustment was made as WFLD does not have a 30-minute 6:00 nightly newscast. The researcher looked at this nightly news coverage for three independent days in the spring of 2018, April 4th, 6th, and 9th. These days were randomly selected to ensure the researcher did not have a bias in selecting days that might have more national coverage, thus skewing results. The sample totaled 12

individual 30-minute newscasts, making this six hours of television to analyze. In this study, the researcher analyzed how these individual stations differed in coverage of individual stories, as well as the time each devote to stories pertaining to sports, weather, “happy talk”, advertisements, local news, and national news. This study was done to prove or disprove that local television news has little space for true hard hitting news. The argument is therefore that the newscasts of today are instead made up of matters which are not pertinent to maintaining democracy.

Procedure

For each thirty-minute newscast watched, the researcher noted the date and time of the newscast, as well as what station was looked at. The researcher first did a content analysis to record the time allotted for several different segments of a newscast. This included how much time is devoted to weather, sports, banter and teasers, commercials, local news, national news, and both local and national news. This content analysis was taken from Gearhart and Dinkel when they looked at breastfeeding in television news (Gearhart and Dinkel, 887-889).

To determine what category each story fits into, the researcher used previously established definitions from Yanich in “Does Ownership Matter? Localism, Content, and the Federal Communications Commission”, in this, local content was defined as “having being seen by the average viewer as a local story” (Yanich, 58). Similarly, a national story was defined as seen by the average viewer as pertaining to issues of the Country or World. Both local and national stories were defined as stories which are national, but have a local connection. An example of this is a story about Martin Luther King Jr. Day which brings a local citizen traveling for Martin Luther King Jr. Day into the segment and relates why this day is important for Chicago.

Commercial time was recorded as the formal time allotted for advertisements outside of the newscast. The researcher started recording for this time as soon as the newscaster stopped talking and the picture went away from the studio. Additionally, the commercial was recorded as over once the studio came back on screen and the newscaster was speaking again, thus ending a commercial break. The researcher recorded for banter or “happy talk” under the definition of “additional and often meaningless commentary interspersed into television news programs by news anchors and others on set” (Rich). Teasers were grouped with this category and were defined as “consisting of auditory or visual information, or both, providing the viewer a glimpse of what he or she can expect as programming continues” (Tovares). These two categories were grouped together as they were both commentary amongst newscasters where no news was being formally reported.

Sports segments were recorded for and defined as what an average person would consider sports. The researcher did not include in this local stories which talked about elements of sports, such as an interest piece on Wrigley Field, and instead only included the formal sports segment. Similarly, weather was recorded as the formal time allotted to a weather person’s report. The definition used for weather was what an average person would perceive to be a weather segment.

To record for all of these elements, the researcher used a stopwatch and wrote down the allotted time for each segment. As the newscasts ran, the researcher did this every time there was a new segment and counted every story individually. The researcher recorded time to the hundredth place for each segment recorded in order to best account for the minutes and seconds of each segment.

In addition to determining the different segments of news, the researcher divided the national, local, and national and local stories as either hard news or feature (soft) news. Hard news was defined as “relates the circumstances of a recent event or incident considered to be of general local, regional, national, or international significance and concerns issues, politics, economics, international relations, welfare, and scientific developments” (Mills-Brown). Feature news was defined as “centers on the lives of individuals and has little, if any, perceived urgency and focuses on human-interest stories and celebrity.” (Mills-Brown). The researcher did this after watching every newscast a second time and recording for the content of each individual news story and analyzing if its’ content made it feature or hard news. The content of each news story was recorded in brief and added to the coding sheet (see appendix).

A part of feature news was “promotional” content. This content was determined feature by using four established categories developed from Upshaw, Chernov, and Koranda (2007), and were also used by Chernov in “Stealth Advertising: The Commercialization of Television” (Chernov).

1. “TV news story in which a local company is both star and beneficiary: Its name, spokespersons, product brands, or other company-specific identifiers are shown or discussed on-screen and the company is portrayed in a generally positive context. This category includes all video news releases (VNRs)” (Chernov). This will also include things such as store openings or advert discussions of products.
2. Formal product placement in a newscast from things such as coffee mugs.
3. Segment sponsorship where a company has infused their interests into the news.

Finally, after obtaining results on the time, placement, number of stories, content of advertising, and type of story, the researcher was able to compare the individual networks to

each other, thus proving or disproving the research hypotheses. The researcher was able to do this by adding together the total allotted time for each segment of weather, sports, banter and teasers, commercials, local news, national news, and both local and national news in each 30-minute newscast. The researcher then looked at all three newscasts watched for each station and the average time devoted to each segment. This was then used to compare each network to each other in the average amount of time used for each segment subject. The researcher counted for how many of each kind of story was in each respective newscast (see charts in appendix), and importantly compared the number of hard news and feature news stories each station ran on average.

Variables

Each newscast was examined by story. The researcher determined the total time that was devoted to each subject area, as well as preformed a qualitative analysis on the quality of the content. This allowed the researcher to determine what each news story was about, and if its' contents related to hard or feature news. This information led the researcher to important conclusions on the amount of hard news in a newscast at each station.

Results

Time Allotments in Local Newscasts

	WBBM (CBS Corporation)	WMAQ (NBC Universal)	WLS (ABC)	WFLD (Fox Television Stations)
<i>Sports</i>	3.97	2.12	2.04	N/A
<i>Weather</i>	4.69	3.59	4.83	4.46
<i>Banter and Teasers</i>	1.38	1.21	1.28	1.43
<i>National News</i>	0	1.63	1.60	7.84
<i>Local News</i>	7.4	8.48	7.4	6.92
<i>Local+ National News</i>	.85	1.15	1.41	.06
<i>Commercials</i>	7.13	5.86	5.39	3.73
<i># Hard News</i>	5.33	7	9	19.33
<i># Feature News</i>	2.33	3.67	4	7

Discussion

When examining these four different stations across three different individual newscasts, it became clear that each newscast had a surprising amount of time allotted for commercials. In 2013, the average time cable networks allotted to commercials was 15 minutes and 38 seconds per hour (Flint). For many of the stations looked at, that would make half hour cable television advertisement time comparable to nightly news commercial time. News should not be something that is treated similarly to entertainment programming, and thus should not be able to sell as much commercial time. This time does not benefit citizens.

Commercial time did vary greatly between the providers, with Fox news allotting the least amount of time for commercials at 3.73. CBS allotted the most time for commercials at 7.13. This evidence supports the hypothesis that Fox News will differ the most from the other affiliate networks. In one channel there was more promotional content from the rest, which was ABC. In this newscast, they formally acknowledge a sponsor for different segments. They had a time and temperature sponsor, sponsor of closed captioning, and a sponsor of sports. While other networks may have still had these sponsors, they did not verbally recognize them before each segment. In the ABC broadcast there was also a recognized promotional story on Ribfest. While all other networks studied that day acknowledged Ribfest and spoke about the lineup, ABC also mentioned they were a sponsor of Ribfest. This advertising during non-commercial time is not beneficial for the consumer who cannot differentiate the promotional or paid story from news.

The hard news in these local stories were more prominent than feature news in all cases. This supported the hypothesis as well which stated that there would be double the amount of hard news versus feature news. In most cases, it was almost exactly half. However, Fox News was again the outlier as they had more stories total than every other station. Hard news in these stories was most often related to crime such as drugs, robbery, car crash, fire, or death. These were important stories because they informed the viewer on what to watch for in their community. Stories about government and transportation were also observed often in the newscast.

Feature news in these newscasts most often focused on a single individual who was doing a good thing in their community. For instance, a NBC newscast aired a story on a family who had just received funding for a Habitat for Humanity house for their disabled son. The station that averaged the most amount of feature news stories, Fox, always had a number of stories about

celebrities and matters that had no place in a serious newscast. This could be because the Fox newscast was a full hour (though only recorded for 30 minutes), and thus the station had to insert popular culture news.

Weather made up a large chunk of every newscast, further taking the little time left after commercials and soft news. Weather was always randomly placed throughout the newscast and used for banter between anchors. Sports was always observed at the end of a newscast, receiving the most amount of time at CBS, and the least at Fox. At Fox News there was no sports broadcasted, however that could be because sports is most often at the end of a newscast and the full hour was not recorded for.

One surprising element was that banter between newscasts was not as long as expected. This banter was often brief between anchors and was a simple antidote transitioning from one topic or another, relating a particular story to their own life, or offering their sentiments after a sad story. Banter was recorded for in this study if a story did not simply lead into another story, and the anchors instead dwelled on subjects largely unrelated to news. Teasers took up more time than banter, and hold no value. These teasers always came before a commercial and were a way to make sure the viewer did not change the channel.

Promotional stories were occasional in newscasts and were included in local news feature stories, but noted as promotional. There were not as many promotional stories in these newscasts as expected. With most promotional stories, it was hard to tell if the stories were paid for, it was only clear that the company would gain some benefit from the story being shown on nightly news.

Through this study, it became clear that there are too many elements in local television news that deter from hard news. This study effectively tested all hypotheses and proved them correct. The results proved that corporate influence on affiliate stations has led them to include stories for profit making purposes. This evidence is troubling as hard news is what is most important for citizens to hear and is what keeps citizens informed on their community.

Suggestions

When asked about the degradation of journalism, Lee Hamilton, former member of the United States House of Representatives, stated that in the current state of journalism, being a pundit is where the most money is (Class Notes). This is an issue as hard hitting news is no longer what the American people want to see, and therefore is not aired by television stations. Hamilton also stated that people want to see polarized, radical views, which corporate partners are willing to produce to benefit their bottom line, not the American citizens. This is damaging when there is also an electorate who sticks to their news, and that supports their views. This has all led to an electorate without a common base of facts. Furthermore, media owners want to make as much money as possible, therefore, they present news in a way that their audience finds appealing, as news becomes more polarized, channels attract certain audiences based on political views. Thus, media owners have given into those demands and have altered their news coverage of national news issues to these values. Hamilton also stated that news outlets are also no longer objective, with editors advocating for their point of view and using their own bias (Class Notes). Owners care about their bottom line and have fed into this polarization for personal economic gain.

This problem can be fixed by the use of alternative forms of media, such as community based and alternative media. Manjoo in a *New York Times* article, “How to Save Local News:

Make People Pay for It”, asserted that the solution to this state of news media is a business model for funding local news, and not via advertisers. This suggests local TV affiliates, whose local stations have been reduced due to the internet and other pressures, start covering local news, these need to be stories no one else is covering. Manjoo suggests that instead of relying on advertising, ask readers to pay for stories via subscription service. This idea of subscription-based local coverage also shows that advertisers have played a role in diminishing local news, therefore there is a need to eliminate their influence.

Participatory media allows citizens to take part and contribute to the media in their community. Alternate media challenges the dominate forms of media and often offers counter-information that is aimed at social change (Harlow). While social media has fostered this by allowing outlets for change, this media has little authority. These forms of alternative media are crucial as they deny the corporate entities that are so prominent in news and offer journalism that challenges the power and legitimacy of the typical news structures (Harcup).

Alternate media which does not rely on advertising dollars or corporate funding have begun to rise. The Knight Foundation is one example of this. This is a foundation which invests in journalism with the goal to foster informed and engaged communities, which are essential for democracy (Knight Foundation). To do this, they support the first amendment, journalism excellence, and foster talent with a commitment to truthful journalism (Knight Foundation). The Knight Foundation also fosters civic engagement in communities through journalism. The foundation has championed ways to transform local community news through grants and has led to a healthier news media in numerous communities across the United States (Knight Foundation).

Further Research

While this study led to many important conclusions, there were limitations of this study which need further research. The first limitation was that there was one person doing the coding, thus presenting a bias. This also meant one researcher recording time, as opposed to multiple different ones. Further research should use a committee of multiple people from varying backgrounds to account for this bias. Further, this work only examined coverage from two different weeks. This could be skewed if a big news event occurred in that week, and would be different from a typical news week. The researcher also only studied Chicago news, further research should examine multiple different regions.

Limitations of this study are also timely issues, which could be solved by doing this test over several months. Pertaining to the days in this study, the Cubs and Sox season openers were during these two weeks so sports could have received more time than usual. Also, this recorded period saw unusual weather as there was a tornado warning, torrential downpour of rain, and below average temperatures. National news of week one received a spike with the YouTube shooting, which was discussed in newscasts throughout the week. This meant that the researcher had to omit the day of Tuesday April 3rd. Another limitation of this study was that the technology failed on one of the scheduled days to record the newscast. This day was Tuesday, March 27, and made it so these three different studies had to be done in only two weeks, instead of spread out over three different weeks.

Another difficulty of this study was that in none of the cases the segments recorded added up to exactly 30-minutes. This is due to several reasons, but mostly because the researcher did not count the commercial time before the news started, nor did the researcher count the commercial after the newscast ended. Also, the researcher rounded to the nearest hundredth, so

there could be a slight skew in the time recorded. Again, this could be controlled for by use of a committee instead of one individual.

Also, further research should include an independent station. An independent station was not able to be included in this study as Chicago's most prominent independent station, WGN, only had a two-hour nightly newscast at 6:00. Therefore, it had to be omitted from this study. Had the independent station been included, greater conclusions about the difference of affiliate and independent station ownership would have been concluded. The local Fox affiliate was another outlier in this study as their local news was at 5:00 and was an hour long. To control for this, and still include it in the study, the researcher only examined the first 30-minutes of this newscast. This was so the time analyzed was comparable to other stations. There needs to be further research which ensures the validity of these results. With these limitations resolved, the studies' validity would be more assured. This would solidify the results received and prove that these content and time results are themes for these stations, not just random occurrences.

Other Factors

While this study seeks to look at one component that contributes to the degradation of news media, corporatization and monetization, there are numerous other factors which have largely contributed to the current environment of skepticism, not authority. These factors include the 24/7 news cycle, delegitimized news personalities, and new technology. There has been a changed in the voices of media, as reporters used to be a part of the local community. With corporate ownership, owners are not concern with the community they are serving as they are so far removed from its' issues. Furthermore, the 24/7 news cycle and the rise of the internet has brought with it blogs and social media that has made news constant, and often inaccurate.

The public relies on the media to act as their surrogate. As a surrogate, the media needs to be

a reliable and authoritative news source. The media is also called upon to serve as watchdog, to inform the public about the institutions of government and keep those institutions in check.

There was a time when news came in the form of one newscast, once a day. Now, with the 24/7 news cycle and new technology, it never ends. This has further delegitimized the news media as it has made everything newsworthy, as well as led to sloppy stories with little fact checking. This has made media unreliable and wrong at times. What is news-worthy has also changed as reporters have to fill 24/7 news time. What was once typical news, weather, and sports; then health and consumer reporting; to now hard hitting tabloid style investigation stories no longer serves the public interest. This constant news cycle as well as the rise of social media has changed news media as citizens themselves are able to directly and easily participate in the conversation. The dangers of the delegitimized news media is that citizens have started to listen to news stories that they want to hear, and call the others “fake”. This has led to an uninformed public that feels the media is lying to them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the makeup of a local news broadcast is consumer and profit driven, as a corporate controlled station, affiliate, has no interest in how news is serving citizens as long as they are watching it, thus making a profit. This has been proven from this research study which examined both the makeup of a newscast and the content in a newscast. These results showed that a substantial amount of time is devoted to sports, weather, feature stories, banter and teasers, and commercials. Stories relating to celebrity news and promotional stories should not be in a newscast, as they offer no benefit to the citizen viewing them. Television news has thus become vehicles to generate revenue, not beacons of information, no longer providing for the

conversation of democracy. The American public must demand more out of their television news by turning to other forms of alternative media which encourage localism, diversity, and serious news content.

Appendix

Day 1 (4/4)

ABC 4/4

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>National</i>	4.19	YouTube Shooting (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.40	Car Crash (H)
<i>Weather</i>	1.32	
<i>Local</i>	.31	Drug Dealing (H)
<i>Local</i>	.18	Robbery (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	.44	DACA (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	3.04	MLK (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.20	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.46	
<i>Local</i>	.26	Plane Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	.21	Robbery (H)
<i>Local</i>	.25	Gambling (H)
<i>Local</i>	.37	Flu (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.12	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.48	

<i>Local + National</i>	.47	Cell Phone Anniversary (F)
<i>Weather</i>	3.38	
<i>Local</i>	.19	Rib Fest Promotional (F)
<i>Local</i>	.20	Government (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.33	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.18	
<i>Sports</i>	2.52	
<i>National</i>	.25	Shark (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.7	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
2.52 min.	4.7 min.	1.35 min.	4.44 min.	3.37 min.	3.95 min.	5.12 min.	11 stories	3 stories

CBS 4/4

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Weather</i>	2.33	
<i>Banter</i>	.9	
<i>Local</i>	1.06	Car Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.43	Robbery (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.16	Government Run (H)
<i>Local</i>	.26	Fire (H)

<i>Local + National</i>	.52	MLK (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.31	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.03	
<i>Local</i>	2.06	Feel-Good, paying for washing machine (F)
<i>Banter</i>	.13	
<i>Weather</i>	.15	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.45	
<i>Banter</i>	.4	
<i>Weather</i>	3.25	
<i>Banter</i>	.5	
<i>Sports</i>	.9	
<i>Commercial</i>	3.01	
<i>Sports</i>	3.25	
<i>Banter</i>	.5	
<i>Weather</i>	.31	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
4.15 min.	6.04 min.	2.74 min.	N/A	6.97 min.	.52 min.	7.49 min.	5 stories	1 stories

NBC 4/4

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>National</i>	4.26	Shooting (H)
<i>Weather</i>	1.37	
<i>Local</i>	.35	Drugs (H)
<i>Local</i>	.36	Death (H)
<i>Local</i>	.41	Government Run (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	3.19	MLK (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.10	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.03	
<i>Local</i>	.21	Bus Lanes (H)
<i>Local</i>	.38	Gambling (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.21	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Local</i>	1.59	Feel-good disabled family new home (F)
<i>Weather</i>	3.06	
<i>Banter</i>	.5	
<i>Local</i>	.26	Concert (F)
<i>Banter</i>	.5	
<i>Sports</i>	.15	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.02	

<i>Sports</i>	2.36	
<i>Banter</i>	.10	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
2.51 min.	4.43 min.	1.41 min.	4.26 min.	3.56 min.	3.19 min.	6.06 min.	7 stories	2 stories

Fox 4/4

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Local</i>	1.23	Shooting (H)
<i>Local</i>	.46	Bus (H)
<i>Local</i>	.23	Fire (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.44	Government (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Trump (H)
<i>National</i>	1.48	Murder (H)
<i>National</i>	1.39	MLK (H)
<i>National</i>	.21	Cell Phone (F)
<i>Weather</i>	2.54	
<i>Local</i>	.24	Fire (H)
<i>National</i>	1.46	YouTube (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.45	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.35	

<i>Teaser</i>	.34	
<i>Local</i>	1.23	Car Jacking (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.45	Government (H)
<i>National</i>	.46	Congress (H)
<i>Local</i>	.32	Robbery (H)
<i>Weather</i>	2.14	
<i>National</i>	.47	Syria (H)
<i>National</i>	1.39	Facebook (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	NK. (H)
<i>National</i>	.19	Concert (F)
<i>National</i>	.25	Royal Wedding (F)
<i>Local</i>	2.03	Wrigley Field (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.46	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.40	
<i>Local</i>	.34	Body Found (H)
<i>National</i>	.18	Gwen Stefani (F)
<i>National</i>	.22	Car Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	.24	Suicide (H)
<i>National</i>	.26	Break-in (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.38	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
N/A	4.68 min.	1.63 min.	8.4 min.	9.21 min.	N/A	3.75 min.	20 stories	5 stories

Day 2 (4/6)

ABC 4/6

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>Local</i>	3.16	Sex Trafficking (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.9	
<i>Local</i>	2.40	Student Killed (H)
<i>Local</i>	.25	Hit and Run (H)
<i>Local</i>	.17	Car Jacking (H)
<i>Weather</i>	.31	(Mic was not working)
<i>Local</i>	.35	Stabbing (H)
<i>Local</i>	.38	Drugs (H)
<i>Local</i>	.24	Government (H)
<i>Local</i>	.48	Feel-good Local soccer players (F)
<i>Weather</i>	1.03	
<i>Teaser</i>	.12	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.44	
<i>Local</i>	.33	Car Crash (H)

<i>Local</i>	.22	Saving Life (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	.28	Special Olympics Anniversary (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.20	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.47	
<i>Local</i>	1.48	Cubs Home Opener (F)
<i>Banter</i>	.19	
<i>Weather</i>	3.20	
<i>Local</i>	.36	State Fair (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.06	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.26	
<i>Sports</i>	.40	
<i>Sports</i>	1.08	
<i>Sports</i>	.19	
<i>Sports</i>	.29	
<i>Teaser</i>	.15	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
1.96 min.	4.54 min.	1.62 min.	N/A.	9.82 min.	.28 min.	5.17 min.	9 stories	4 stories

NBC 4/6

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>Local</i>	4.17	Student Shooting (H)
<i>Local</i>	.29	Traffic (H)
<i>Local</i>	.32	Stabbing (H)
<i>Local</i>	.18	Robbery (H)
<i>Local</i>	.30	Fire Safety (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.07	Wrigley Field (F)
<i>Weather</i>	.34	
<i>Teaser</i>	.31	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Local + National</i>	.28	DUI (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.15	Save Life (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.34	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Local</i>	.45	Feel-good teen soccer star (F)
<i>Local</i>	.48	CPS Principal Honored (F)
<i>Local</i>	.23	Wayne's World Popup Bar Promotional (F)
<i>Local (Promotional)</i>	.25	C2E2 Convention (F)
<i>Banter</i>	.17	
<i>Weather</i>	2.58	

<i>National</i>	.29	Arby's and Tiger Woods (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.19	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Sports</i>	1.51	
<i>Sports</i>	.42	
<i>Teaser</i>	.14	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
1.93 min.	2.92 min.	1.15 min.	.29 min.	10.89 min.	.28 min.	6.03 min.	7 stories	6 stories

CBS 4/6

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Weather</i>	2.39	
<i>Local</i>	2.14	Student Shot (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.05	Government (H)
<i>Local</i>	.45	Robbery (H)
<i>Local</i>	.29	Drugs (H)
<i>Local</i>	.24	Traffic (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	.23	Store Closings (F)
<i>Local + National</i>	.34	Economy (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.28	

<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Sports</i>	2.29	
<i>Teaser</i>	.19	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.45	
<i>Local</i>	.29	Tribune Building (H)
<i>Weather</i>	2.52	
<i>Local</i>	.48	Feel-good student volunteer (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.15	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.49	
<i>Sports</i>	1.17	
<i>Sports</i>	.24	
<i>Sports</i>	1.41	
<i>Teaser</i>	.13	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
5.11 min.	4.91 min.	.75 min.	N/A min.	5.94 min.	.57 min.	6.95 min.	7 stories	2 stories

Fox 4/6

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Local</i>	1.13	Drugs (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.47	Student Shooting (H)
<i>Local</i>	.18	Fire (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.08	Save Life (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Palestine (H)
<i>National</i>	1.48	McGregor (F)
<i>National</i>	.17	Bill Cosby Trial (F)
<i>National</i>	.21	Menendez Brothers (F)
<i>National</i>	.21	Justin Timberlake (F)
<i>Local + National</i>	.19	Store Closing (F)
<i>Banter</i>	.08	
<i>Weather</i>	2.16	
<i>Local</i>	.19	Navy Pier Wheel (F)
<i>National</i>	.41	Flight (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.27	
<i>Commercial</i>	.40	
<i>Teaser</i>	.22	
<i>Local</i>	.34	Stabbing (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.45	Government (H)
<i>National</i>	.49	Congressman Resign (H)

<i>Local</i>	.25	Robbery (H)
<i>Weather</i>	2.16	
<i>National</i>	.27	Cancer (H)
<i>National</i>	1.39	Facebook (H)
<i>National</i>	.19	A.I. (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Jay Z (F)
<i>National</i>	.22	Prince Harry (F)
<i>Local</i>	1.03	Wrigley Field (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.31	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.32	
<i>Local</i>	.22	Body Found (H)
<i>National</i>	.19	Car Crash (H)
<i>National</i>	.18	Car Crash (H)
<i>National</i>	.20	Suicide (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Dr. Assisted Suicide (H)
<i>National</i>	.16	Car Chase (H)
<i>National</i>	.28	Crime (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.30	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
N/A	4.32 min.	1.18 min.	6.71 min.	8.34 min.	.19 min.	2.72 min.	19 stories	10 stories

Day 3 (4/9)**ABC 4/9**

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>Local</i>	3.50	EMT Crime (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.51	Cubs Game (F)
<i>Local</i>	2.25	Sox Game (F)
<i>Weather</i>	1.26	
<i>Banter</i>	.11	
<i>Local</i>	.21	Synthetic Pot (H)
<i>Local</i>	.19	Robbery (H)
<i>National</i>	.38	Facebook (H)
<i>Local</i>	.26	Elections (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.13	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.49	
<i>Local</i>	.17	Train (H)
<i>Local</i>	.35	Golf Course (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.12	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.15	
<i>Local</i>	.21	Chance the Rapper (F)
<i>Local</i>	.15	Donations (H)
<i>Weather</i>	4.00	

<i>Local</i>	.29	Promotional Portillos Lemon Cake (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.25	
<i>Commercials</i>	2.24	
<i>Sports</i>	.59	
<i>Sports</i>	.58	
<i>Sports</i>	.47	
<i>Teaser</i>	.27	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
1.64 min.	5.26 min.	.88 min.	.38 min.	9.09 min.	N/A	5.88 min.	7 stories	5 stories

NBC 4/9

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>Local</i>	4.01	Wrigley Field (F)
<i>Weather</i>	.41	
<i>National</i>	.34	FBI (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.43	Car Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	.39	Abduction (H)
<i>Local</i>	.38	Government (H)
<i>Local</i>	.22	Senator has Baby (F)

<i>Teaser</i>	.21	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Local</i>	.29	Car Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.56	Baby Saved (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.37	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.02	
<i>Local</i>	1.51	School Bus (H)
<i>Weather</i>	3.02	
<i>Local</i>	.21	Portillos Cake (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.35	
<i>Commercial</i>	1.47	
<i>Sports</i>	1.40	
<i>Sports</i>	.10	
<i>Sports</i>	.44	
<i>Teaser</i>	.16	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
1.94 min.	3.43 min.	1.09 min.	.34 min.	11.0 min.	N/A	5.5 min.	7 stories	3 stories

CBS 4/9

<i>Story</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Local</i>	3.02	Car Crash (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.49	Murder (H)
<i>Local + National</i>	1.46	FBI (H)
<i>Local</i>	2.18	Wrigley Field (F)
<i>Weather</i>	.59	
<i>Teaser</i>	.29	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.01	
<i>Local</i>	.27	Senator has Baby (F)
<i>Local</i>	.28	New Hospital (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.16	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.44	
<i>Local</i>	1.57	Sox (F)
<i>Weather</i>	2.54	
<i>Local</i>	.55	TV Show (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.11	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.50	
<i>Sports</i>	.52	
<i>Sports</i>	1.02	
<i>Sports</i>	1.11	
<i>Teaser</i>	.10	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
2.65 min.	3.13 min.	.66 min.	N/A.	9.36 min.	1.46 min.	6.95 min.	4 stories	4 stories

Fox 4/9

<i>Story</i>	Time	Content
<i>National</i>	.32	R Kelly (F)
<i>Local</i>	.16	Governor Baby (F)
<i>Weather</i>	3.03	
<i>National</i>	.29	Pot (H)
<i>Local</i>	1.12	Student Killed (H)
<i>Local</i>	.13	Car Break-in (H)
<i>Local</i>	.19	Murder (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Protestor (H)
<i>National</i>	.15	Prostitution (H)
<i>National</i>	.24	Me Too (H)
<i>National</i>	.23	Carrie Underwood (F)
<i>National</i>	.21	The Rock (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.26	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.41	
<i>Teaser</i>	.26	
<i>National</i>	1.48	Syria (H)
<i>National</i>	.22	Berlin (H)

<i>National</i>	.16	Death (H)
<i>National</i>	.25	Troops (H)
<i>National</i>	2.39	Facebook (H)
<i>National</i>	1.16	Facebook (H)
<i>Local</i>	.23	Buses (H)
<i>Weather</i>	1.35	
<i>Local</i>	1.39	Headquarters (H)
<i>National</i>	.15	Prince Harry (F)
<i>Teaser</i>	.51	
<i>Commercial</i>	2.30	
<i>National</i>	.18	Escape Jail (H)
<i>National</i>	.17	Murder (H)
<i>National</i>	.19	Crash (H)
<i>National</i>	.21	Homeless (F)
<i>National</i>	.18	Cocaine (H)
<i>Teaser</i>	.44	

Sports	Weather	Banter and Teasers	National	Local	Local + National	Commercial	# Hard News	# Feature News
N/A	4.38 min.	1.47 min.	8.4 min.	3.22 min.	N/A	4.71 min.	19 stories	6 stories

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