

Changing Definitions of News

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Overall Summary

Is there really a trend toward entertainment as news? If there is, what form does it take?

We decided to find out by conducting a two-part content study of the so-called traditional mainstream national news media that examined what topics it covered and what was the emphasis of those stories.

One part of the study compared coverage in newspapers, nightly news and news magazines over a 20 year span. The second part looked at a larger universe of news media, including all the prime time network news magazines, over a seven week period in 1997 to identify what audiences are getting today. In all, the study, conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Medill News Service Washington Bureau, examined 6,020 stories in 16 news outlets ranging over a span of 20 years.

Overall Findings

There has been a shift toward lifestyle, celebrity, entertainment and celebrity crime/scandal in the news and away from government and foreign affairs. But infotainment still comes nowhere near dominating the traditional news package.

There is an even more pervasive shift toward featurized and people-oriented approach to the news, away from traditional straight news accounts. This tends to make the news more thematic and make the journalist more a story teller and mediator than a reporter.

The news media are dividing into market-based niches, with a result that a citizen's perception of society can vary greatly depending on the source of news. Prime time network news magazines, which have replaced documentaries on network television, have all but abandoned covering traditional topics such as government, social welfare, education and economics in favor of lifestyle and news-you-can-use. News magazines which once concentrated heavily on coverage of ideas have moved heavily toward celebrity. Newspapers continue to cover government, foreign policy and domestic policy as a staple. The network news has become a hybrid of all the others.

Moreover, if one expands the definition of news media to include the universe of everything on television or the news rack, celebrity, entertainment and scandal have become a much larger percentage of what audiences get. Consider the proliferation of

such programs as Entertainment Tonight, Extra, Access Hollywood or the pseudo news programs like Inside Edition or Hard Copy, as well as the expanding universe of prime time network news magazines that have replaced documentaries on network television.

While content studies have their limits, and the question of what is entertainment and what is news is open to interpretation, the data clearly indicates that there have been major shifts in how the news media define the news.

We are not attempting to make definitive judgments about whether these trends are necessarily positive or negative. In many cases, there are sound reasons for these shifts. The news media are clearly now covering more of the society, moving away from institutional coverage of buildings and trying to make the news more relevant to audiences. With the end of the Cold War and other social and economic changes, the relevance of many traditional stories change, naturally moving the press in other directions. Some of the changes occur more in some media than others; as audiences fragment, different news outlets find different niches. As a basis for beginning a discussion, this study tries to quantify just what changes occurred in the various news media categories of newspapers, weekly news magazines, and television network news.

What was Studied

The first part of the study compared coverage from 1977, 1987 and 1997 in seven media outlets. It looked at all the coverage on the three main network newscasts for one month (March) of each of those years, as well as the front page coverage of the New York and Los Angeles Times, and the cover stories in Time and Newsweek for the entire years of 1977, 1987 and 1997, some 3,760 stories in all.

The second part looked at 15 media outlets over six weeks in the fall of 1997, the three nightly newscasts, every prime time network news magazine, every story in Time and Newsweek and five newspapers' front page coverage, some 2,260 stories in all.

In both parts of the study, we examined the stories according to two basic categories. What were they about (subjects such as government, entertainment, foreign affairs)? And what was the theme emphasized in the story (themes such as personality, lifestyle, policy, war, political process)?

A Shift in Emphasis

Twenty years ago, coverage was dominated by straight news accounts of events--what happened yesterday. Today, the news tends to have a more mediated or thematic approach to stories. In 1977, more than half of all stories (52%) were basically straight news accounts of what had happened. By 1997, that figure had fallen to less than one in three stories (32%), a 40% drop.

The thematic emphasis of stories today has moved away from such concerns as the political process, war and peace, policy and from updating or analyzing in depth continuing events--what might be called traditional news emphasis. The emphasis on people, human interest and news you can use. There is also a new emphasis on scandal, the bizarre and fear about the future. For instance, in 1977, stories with a traditional news emphasis outweighed stories with a feature or scandal emphasis by two to one, 32% traditional versus 15% feature. (See table.)

Twenty years later, that relationship was essentially reversed. Only one in four stories concerned these traditional hard news themes while more than four in ten emphasized the softer or more sensational themes.

Story Topics

If you look at simply what the stories were about--the subject rather than the thematic emphasis--there are similar shifts.

The number of stories about government dropped by 38% from 1977 to 1997, from one in three stories to one in five, still a sizable number, but lower.

The number of stories about foreign affairs dropped by 25%, from nearly one in

Subject of Stories by Year			
	1977	1987	1997
Government	34.3%	31.5%	21.2%
Military	1.4	1.3	1.7
Domestic Affairs	8.4	7.7	9.3
Foreign Affairs	22.2	21.8	16.7
Total Traditional	66.3	62.3	48.9
Entertainment/Celebrity	2.0	2.8	3.7
Lifestyle	2.7	2.9	4.2
Celebrity Crime	.4	1.1	3.2
Total Feature	5.1	6.8	11.1
Personal Health	.7	.6	3.5
Crime	8.4	6.1	11.4
Business/Commerce	6.6	8.8	6.8
Science	2.7	4.6	5.9
Religion	.5	3.1	3.7
Disaster-	8.0	4.1	5.7
Natural/Manmade			
Other	1.7	3.7	3.0
Total	100	100	100

four stories to about one in every six.

The number of stories about celebrity, entertainment or celebrity crime tripled from one in every 50 stories to one out of every 14; the total number is still not huge, but it is rising.

The news media also began covering other topics more. Coverage of science, religion and also rose, though not to particularly high numbers, less than one in ten combined.

Clearly these shifts in topic and thematic emphasis represent the media covering a broader spectrum of news, searching for new relevant topics in the face of declining audience share.

One question not answered here is whether that broadening is helping to provide audiences with more of the information they require in a democratic society or whether we are moving too far in the direction of amusement.

News Magazine Cover Appeal

We also found, looking at the covers of the news magazines themselves, that there has been a change in the way stories are sold to readers. Serious topics are sometimes presented through a Hollywood prism. Brad Pitt fronts a story about Buddhism in Time; Robin Williams fronts a story about brain research in Newsweek, coinciding with his role as a mad professor in the recent movie Flubber, though the story says nothing about the movie or Robin Williams. It was unclear in some instances whether there was a real predicate for some of these stories. Was there really a move toward Buddhism in

America, or was this a way of putting Brad Pitt on the cover? Why not Islam rather than Buddhism, which is a larger, growing religion in America?

In 1977, political or international figures represented nearly one in three of all the Time and Newsweek covers. By 1997, that number fell by more than 60% to one in ten covers. Interestingly, much of that shift occurred between 1987 and 1997.

Covers that sold the story with celebrities, a sexy man or woman or an image story about sex itself doubled from 1977 to 1997, from one in six to one in three. Covers about new ideas in science doubled from 1977 to 1997, from 8% of covers to 15%. Interestingly, covers about people who were not necessarily leaders but who had become

News Magazines' Cover Appeal by Year			
	1977	1987	1997
Political/Intern'l Figures	30.8%	26.9%	11.6%
National Figures	6.7	1.0	12.6
Entertainment/Celebrities	15.4	14.4	21.4
Sex Appeal	1.9	1.9	1.9
Sex Issues	0	3.8	5.8
National Issues	21.2	26.9	14.6
Sciences Issues	7.7	8.7	14.6
Business Issues	1.9	2.9	2.9
Morality	1.0	5.8	2.9
Fear	6.7	6.7	10.7
Other	6.7	1.0	1.0
Total	100	100	100

known, perhaps momentarily, such as the parents of septuplets, nearly doubled from 7% to 13%.

The shift toward celebrity can be seen by another benchmark as well. Time and Newsweek had the same cover as People magazine seven times as often in 1997 as in 1977. Interestingly, People moved away from celebrity and entertainment somewhat over the last twenty years, with seven trend or news covers in

1997, versus none twenty years ago. Yet only one of those did it have in common with Time and Newsweek, the cult mass suicide in Southern California.

Differences in Media

Today, what Americans know may differ greatly depending on their source of news. In the second part of the study, looking at a broader universe of the news media in the fall of 1997, we also found different kinds of news media offering markedly different definitions of news depending on what they perceived their market niches to be.

Prime Time Magazines

Prime time network television news magazines, the growth area of network news, is a genre oriented around people stories, lifestyle/behavior, news you can use and celebrity entertainment. Overall 55% of their stories concerned these issues.

They also covered crime and justice heavily, 23% of the time.

What is also striking is what the TV news magazines don't cover. Only eight percent of the stories on the prime time news magazines concern the combined areas of education, economics, foreign affairs, the military, national security, politics or social welfare issues.

Such an emphasis on people stories and away from politics, foreign affairs arts, education and religion may not be surprising given that these programs are set against

prime time entertainment programming, and often are aimed at audiences that do not watch network news. They might, in that sense, be considered the "back of the book" of TV network news.

It is important to remember as well, however, that the prime time magazines have supplanted documentaries on network television; also, most of television's in-depth news coverage and the vast majority of its investigative reporting occurs on these programs. It means, however, investigative work in network television today for the most part does not concern education, economics, foreign policy, military, social welfare, government, politics or the military.

Profiles and crime were the most popular categories of stories on the news magazines, followed closely by stories about consumer news, then health and medicine and law and justice.

Print Magazines

The print news magazines, Time and Newsweek, have seen broad shifts in emphasis. One of the most notable is a decline in coverage of ideas. In 1977, nearly one in five cover stories (18%) concerned policies or ideas. By 1987, that had fallen to just one in twenty covers, where it remains.

Today, Time and Newsweek most often have cover stories in the area of consumer and health news and celebrity entertainment. Consumer and health news emerged as the largest category of news, ahead of government, with celebrity entertainment a close third.

The longitudinal study suggested the changing style of the news weeklies cannot be attributed to the rising speed with which news is delivered as is often suggested. The emphasis on straight news accounts in the news magazines remained steady--unlike on TV or in newspapers. (It actually increased 3 percentage points).

	1977	1987	1997
Newspapers	61.6%	33.1%	30.7%
TV Networks	51.4	32.9	34.3
Magazines	16.3	20.2	19.2

Network News

Network newscasts have become a hybrid. They have moved somewhat in the direction of the prime time news magazines, toward consumer and health news. Yet they have also maintained a relatively sizable commitment to areas not covered elsewhere on television, such as foreign affairs.

The greatest new shift in emphasis of network news was a marked rise in the number of stories about scandals, up from just one-half of one percent in 1977 to 17% in 1987 and 15% in 1997. That increase in scandal related stories also is true for other media as well. As a point of context, the 1987 coverage studied occurred in the middle of

the Iran Contra scandal, whereas 1997 did not come at a moment of particular peak for any one scandal. That suggests that scandals have become a fixed category of news over the last two decades.

The next biggest shift in emphasis in network news is a rise in human interest and quality of life stories. (Human interest was defined as stories not related to any particular news event or trend but were feature stories about people that were simply interesting. Quality of life stories were defined as stories whose emphasis was largely how to improve one's life, health or safety.) On network TV, human interest and quality of life stories doubled from 8% of the stories that appeared in 1977 to 16% in 1997.

Unlike the print news magazines, the networks saw a substantial decline in stories that were either straight news or were in depth-analysis or updates, falling from seven in ten stories in 1977 to four in ten by 1997.

Interestingly, network news saw a decline in political horse race and strategy stories, an area of persistent criticism among academic critics.

Front page newspaper stories saw some changes in emphasis similar to the shifts in network TV, but not to the same degree. Straight news accounts decreased by 50% from six in ten in 1977 to three in ten in 1997. The percent of stories that emphasized scandal increased from one in twenty-five to one in eight. Quality-of-life stories doubled from one in 25 to one in twelve. Stories that emphasized the bizarre grew four-fold from one in 200 to one in twenty-five. Human interest stories on the front page grew from one-in-fifty to one in seventeen. If you combine stories that emphasize human interest, quality of life, the bizarre, personality, and public fear into a broad category of features, they rose from accounting for just 8% of newspaper front page stories to nearly 25% today. Very possibly, newspapers included some of these types of stories deeper in the paper in 1977, but by 1997 they had become front page material.

	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	7.3%	8.4%	7.5%
Political Process	5.9	5.9	—
War & Peace	2.5	4.0	4.5
Political Strategy	4.9	4.0	2.2
Update Analysis	14.2	12.9	6.5
Historical Outlook	1.9	.6	1.5
Personality	3.4	6.5	5.5
Scandal	.5	17.1	15.1
Quality of Life	2.2	3.3	7.8
Public Fear	.1	.2	1.0
Bizarre	—	.9	6.2
Human Interest	5.4	3.3	8.0
Straight News	51.4	32.9	34.3
Total	100	100	100

Newspapers

Despite the shift in emphasis, front page newspaper stories remained most oriented around traditional news categories. Though the percentage fell slightly, a plurality of the stories were about government or foreign affairs in 1977 (60%), 1987

(60%) and in 1997 (50%). Stories on domestic affairs were also prominent, counting for 14% of the front page stories in 1997.

The trend in the subjects of newspaper stories was supported in the focused look at 1997. In that six week study, over half (59%) of the stories were about government, foreign affairs, the justice system or social welfare.

Subjects of Front Page Newspaper Stories by Year			
	1977	1987	1997
Government	33.0%	32.9%	29.3%
Foreign Affairs	26.7	26.7	20.9
Military	.8	2.5	.4
Domestic Affairs	8.6	9.3	14.4
Entertainment/Celebrity	.4	1.7	1.6
Lifestyle	1.5	2.3	3.8
Celebrity Crime	—	—	1.1
Personal Health	1.3	—	.9
Crime	9.2	6.2	10.4
Business/Commerce	8.4	5.6	5.1
Science	.6	4.5	4.7
Religion	.6	2.5	1.1
Disaster	7.3	3.1	2.0
Other	1.6	2.9	3.6
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of Front Page Newspaper Stories by Year			
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	6.1%	11.0%	8.4%
Political Process	.4	2.5	2.7
War & Peace	1.9	7.4	6.4
Political Strategy	4.2	6.4	6.7
Update Analysis	13.4	6.2	7.6
Historical Outlook	.4	1.4	1.1
Personality	1.5	3.5	4.9
Scandal	3.8	14.9	11.6
Quality of Life	4.0	7.4	8.0
Public Fear	.8	2.1	1.1
Bizarre	.4	.4	4.4
Human Interest	1.7	3.5	6.4
Straight News	61.6	33.1	30.7
Total	100	100	100

Methodology

Selection of Broadcasts and Publications

Newspapers, magazines and network news broadcasts were selected to provide a snapshot of national mainstream news media. The years, months and weeks of study were chosen on an ad hoc basis and remained constant for each year.

Longitudinal Study

The longitudinal study was conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism in association with Martin Schram. It examined the cover stories for Time and Newsweek for entire years of 1977, 1987 and 1997. Front pages of newspapers and network news broadcasts were coded for the month of March in 1977, 1987 and 1997. Newspaper stories were downloaded from the Nexis database; television broadcasts were obtained in summary format from the Vanderbilt Archives; and the news magazines stories and covers were obtained from the Library of Congress.

1997 Study

The study of major media in the fall of 1997 was conducted by students at the Medill News Service, Washington Bureau under the supervision of Frank Starr and Tom Rosenstiel. All media were coded for six weeks of content between Oct. 2 to Nov. 21, 1997. Newspaper front pages and print magazine stories were coded from the publication itself. Broadcasts were captured on tape and then reviewed from video.

The study included Time, Newsweek, The New York Times, USA Today, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, NBC Nightly News, NBC Dateline (all nights broadcast), ABC World News Tonight, Prime Time Live, 20-20, CBS Evening News, CNN The World, 48-Hours, 60 Minutes.

Coding

Coders analyzed each story, identifying the number of paragraphs or seconds devoted to the various subject and emphasis categories. To be coded as a particular emphasis or a particular subject, it must have been the emphasis or subject of at least 50% of the story. Those stories coded from the summaries in the Vanderbilt archives were coded for subject and emphasis based on the summaries.

Intercoder reliability

In the longitudinal study, intercoder reliability tests were performed at the outset and monitored regularly throughout the study.

In the 1997 study, teams of students coded stories under the supervision of a professor who also checked their assessments and their data entry to ensure intercoder reliability.

Data processing for both studies was performed by Greg Flemming, survey analyst for the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.
Number in charts may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Tables about Subjects of News Stories

Subject of News Stories On ABC World News Tonight

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	40.2%	33.8%	15.9%
Military	1.7	.5	2.8
Domestic Affairs	6.7	5.9	7.0
Foreign Affairs	23.0	20.1	19.2
Entertainment/Celeb	1.3	2.0	3.3
Lifestyle	2.1	2.0	3.3
Celebrity Crime	.8	2.5	4.2
Personal Health	.4	0	5.1
Crime	6.7	5.4	11.2
Business/Commerce	4.2	12.7	8.9
Science	3.3	4.4	2.8
Technology	0	.5	.9
Arts	.4	1.5	.5
Religion	0	2.5	4.2
Sports	1.3	2.0	.9
Weather/Disaster	7.9	4.4	9.8
Sci-Fi/Supernatural	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Subject of News Stories On The CBS Evening News

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	38.9%	28.3%	18.7%
Military	1.9	.9	2.4
Domestic Affairs	8.1	7.4	4.8
Foreign Affairs	18.9	17.8	14.4
Entertainment/Celeb	.4	.9	2.4
Lifestyle	1.9	2.6	2.9
Celebrity Crime	.7	1.7	4.3
Personal Health	0	.4	6.7
Crime	7.8	8.3	14.4
Business/Commerce	4.4	12.6	7.2
Science	3.7	4.8	6.7
Technology	0	1.3	1.4
Arts	.7	.9	.5
Religion	.7	3.0	4.8
Sports	0	3.9	1.0
Weather/Disaster	11.5	5.2	7.7
Sci-Fi/Supernatural	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Subject of News Stories On The NBC Nightly News

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1977
Government	32.7%	34.8%	18.5%
Military	1.4	0	3.4
Domestic Affairs	8.9	6.7	4.5
Foreign Affairs	19.6	18.6	12.4
Entertainment/Celeb	2.5	1.9	3.9
Lifestyle	3.2	4.3	4.5
Celebrity Crime	.4	1.0	5.1
Personal Health	0	1.0	4.5
Crime	9.6	6.7	13.5
Business/Commerce	7.8	8.1	6.2
Science	3.6	1.9	5.1
Technology	0	.5	.6
Arts	.4	1.0	.6
Religion	.4	4.8	6.2
Sports	1.1	1.9	0
Weather/Disaster	8.5	6.7	11.2
Sci-Fi/Supernatural	0	.5	0
Total	100	100	100

Subject of Front Page Stories In The Los Angeles Times

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	38.7%	38.8%	31.0%
Military	.4	2.3	.8
Domestic Affairs	9.6	9.1	12.7
Foreign Affairs	26.1	27.4	17.5
Entertainment/Celeb	.9	1.5	2.8
Lifestyle	1.7	1.9	4.8
Celebrity Crime	0	0	1.6
Personal Health	.4	0	1.6
Crime	9.1	4.9	12.3
Business/Commerce	.4	4.2	2.8
Science	.9	3.8	6.0
Technology	0	0	0
Arts	.9	1.1	2.0
Religion	0	2.3	1.2
Sports	0	.4	2.0
Weather/Disaster	10.9	2.3	1.2
Sci-Fi/Supernatural	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Subject of Front Page Stories In The New York Times

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	27.7%	25.8%	27.3%
Military	1.2	2.7	0
Domestic Affairs	7.6	9.5	16.7
Foreign Affairs	27.3	25.8	25.3
Entertainment/Celeb	0	1.8	0
Lifestyle	1.2	2.7	2.5
Celebrity Crime	0	0	.5
Personal Health	2.0	0	0
Crime	9.2	7.7	8.1
Business/Commerce	15.7	7.2	8.1
Science	.4	5.4	3.0
Technology	0	0	1.5
Arts	1.2	1.4	1.5
Religion	1.2	2.7	1.0
Sports	1.2	3.2	1.5
Weather/Disaster	4.0	4.1	3.0
Sci/Fi Supernatural	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Subject of Cover Stories In Time Magazine

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	15.4%	17.3%	3.8%
Military	1.9	0	1.9
Domestic Affairs	9.6	7.7	7.7
Foreign Affairs	21.2	26.9	5.8
Entertainment/Celeb	7.7	13.5	15.4
Lifestyle	7.7	3.8	13.5
Celebrity Crime	0	0	5.8
Personal Health	0	3.8	5.8
Crime	7.7	0	5.8
Business/Commerce	9.6	9.6	13.5
Science	7.7	9.6	11.5
Technology	0	0	0
Arts	3.8	0	0
Religion	1.9	5.8	7.7
Sports	3.8	1.9	0
Weather/Disaster	1.9	0	0
Sci-Fi/Supernatural	0	0	1.9
Total	100	100	100

Subject of Cover Stories In Newsweek Magazine

	Percent of All Stories By Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Government	23.1%	25.0%	9.6%
Military	1.9	1.9	0
Domestic Affairs	11.5	5.8	9.6
Foreign Affairs	9.6	9.6	5.8
Entertainment/Celeb	19.2	19.2	17.3
Lifestyle	13.5	7.7	5.8
Celebrity Crime	0	3.8	3.8
Personal Health	3.8	3.8	1.9
Crime	7.7	1.9	7.7
Business/Commerce	1.9	7.7	5.8
Science	3.8	11.5	23.1
Technology	0	0	1.9
Arts	3.8	0	0
Religion	0	1.9	7.7
Sports	0	0	0
Weather/Disaster	0	0	0
Sci/Fi Supernatural	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Tables about Emphasis of News Stories

Emphasis of News Stories on ABC World News Tonight

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	7.5%	7.4%	6.1%
Political Game	3.8	5.9	2.8
War and Peace	2.9	3.4	3.7
Historical Outlook	1.3	1.0	2.8
Story Update	14.2	14.7	6.1
Political Process	6.7	8.8	0
Personality	3.8	6.4	5.6
Scandal	.4	16.2	12.1
Quality of Life	2.5	3.4	9.8
Public Fear	0	0	1.9
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	0	.5	4.7
Human Interest	5.9	2.0	5.6
Straight News	51.0	30.4	38.8
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of News Stories on The CBS Evening News

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	6.3%	11.3%	8.1%
Political Game	5.2	2.2	1.9
War and Peace	1.9	3.9	5.3
Historical Outlook	1.9	.4	.5
Story Update	17.8	10.4	7.2
Political Process	5.9	3.5	0
Personality	3.3	7.4	4.3
Scandal	.7	17.0	16.3
Quality of Life	1.1	3.0	7.7
Public Fear	.4	.4	.5
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	0	.9	5.7
Human Interest	4.4	3.9	8.1
Straight News	50.7	35.7	34.4
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of News Stories on The NBC Nightly News

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	8.2%	6.2%	8.4%
Political Game	5.7	4.3	1.7
War and Peace	2.8	4.8	4.5
Historical Outlook	2.5	.5	1.1
Story Update	10.7	13.8	6.2
Political Process	5.3	5.7	0
Personality	3.2	5.7	6.7
Scandal	.4	18.1	17.4
Quality of Life	2.8	3.3	5.6
Public Fear	0	0	.6
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	0	1.4	8.4
Human Interest	6.0	3.8	10.7
Straight News	52.3	32.4	28.7
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of Front Page Stories in The Los Angeles Times

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	.4%	14.4%	7.1%
Political Game	.9	8.0	7.5
War and Peace	0	4.6	5.6
Historical Outlook	0	.4	0
Story Update	16.5	2.3	1.6
Political Process	0	0	0
Personality	0	2.3	5.2
Scandal	3.5	17.1	11.1
Quality of Life	.4	3.8	8.3
Public Fear	1.7	3.8	2.0
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	.9	0	3.6
Human Interest	1.3	1.9	6.0
Straight News	74.3	41.4	42.1
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of Front Page Stories in The New York Times

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	11.2%	6.8%	10.1%
Political Game	7.2	4.3	5.6
War and Peace	3.6	10.9	7.6
Historical Outlook	.8	2.7	2.5
Story Update	10.4	10.9	15.2
Political Process	.8	5.4	6.1
Personality	2.8	5.0	4.5
Scandal	4.0	12.2	12.1
Quality of Life	7.2	11.8	7.6
Public Fear	0	0	0
Sex Appeal	0	.5	0
Bizarre Incident	0	.9	5.6
Human Interest	2.0	5.4	7.1
Straight News	49.8	23.1	16.2
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of Cover Stories in Time Magazine

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	26.9%	7.7%	5.8%
Political Game	0	5.8	0
War and Peace	0	0	1.9
Historical Outlook	0	5.8	1.9
Story Update	0	0	3.8
Political Process	0	0	0
Personality	21.2	15.4	28.8
Scandal	3.8	15.4	5.8
Quality of Life	23.1	21.2	19.2
Public Fear	5.8	3.8	3.8
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	0	0	5.8
Human Interest	3.8	3.8	3.8
Straight News	15.4	21.2	19.2
Total	100	100	100

Emphasis of Cover Stories in Newsweek Magazine

	Percent of all Stories by Year		
	1977	1987	1997
Policy/Ideas	9.6%	1.9%	3.8%
Political Game	7.7	1.9	0
War and Peace	5.8	5.8	1.9
Historical Outlook	0	1.9	7.7
Story Update	0	0	0
Political Process	0	0	0
Personality	25.0	17.3	23.1
Scandal	7.7	19.2	7.7
Quality of Life	17.3	15.4	17.3
Public Fear	1.9	7.7	7.7
Sex Appeal	0	0	0
Bizarre Incident	0	0	5.8
Human Interest	7.7	9.6	5.8
Straight News	17.3	19.2	19.2
Total	100	100	100

Subject of Prime Time Magazine News Stories

Fall 1997	20/20	48 Hrs	60 Min.	Prime Time	Dateline
Government	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.4%
Military/ Nat'l Sec.	0	0	5.6	0	0
Foreign Affairs	3.3	0	0	13.3	0
Law Justice	6.7	10.0	16.7	0	12.3
Entertainment/ Celeb	3.3	5.0	5.6	13.3	5.5
Human Interest	10.0	45.0	0	26.7	4.1
Personality /Profile	3.3	5.0	22.2	0	19.2
Consumer business	16.7	0	5.6	13.3	15.1
Health/ Medicine	26.7	0	5.6	0	12.3
Crime	10.0	5.0	11.1	26.7	13.7
Education	0	0	5.6	0	0
Social Welfare	10.0	0	5.6	0	4.1
Economy	0	0	0	0	0
Science/ Technology	0	25.0	5.6	6.7	1.4
Religion	6.7	5.0	5.6	0	1.4
Arts	0	0	5.6	0	0
Weather/ Disaster	0	0	0	0	9.6
Sports	3.3	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Subject of Network News Stories

Fall 1997	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN
Government	15.0%	11.8%	13.5%	12.9%
Military/ Nat'l Sec.	1.3	2.5	.8	.4
Foreign Affairs	18.5	14.3	12.7	12.5
Law Justice	8.2	10.2	10.5	8.6
Entertainment/ Celeb	2.5	3.2	1.3	5.1
Human Interest	.9	1.0	0	2.7
Personality/ Profile	2.2	1.3	6.8	.8
Consumer Business	14.4	8.6	8.9	17.3
Health/ Medicine	9.4	12.4	12.2	12.5
Crime	3.1	9.6	5.1	5.1
Education	.9	.3	.4	.8
Social Welfare	4.7	1.6	7.6	.4
Economy	3.1	3.5	5.1	2.7
Science/ Technology	7.5	11.5	8.0	10.6
Religion	1.6	.3	2.1	.4
Arts	.6	0	0	.4
Weather/ Disaster	5.3	6.7	3.8	3.1
Sports	.6	1.3	1.3	3.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Subject of Front Page and Cover Stories

Fall 1997	NW	Time	NYT	USA	WP	Wash Times
Gov't	16.7%	16.0%	21.5%	20.9%	26.6%	42.1%
Military/ Nat'l Sec.	0	0	0.9	0	2.2	1.6
Foreign Affairs	13.9	5.9	21.1	15.8	14.2	14.8
Law/ Justice	8.3	2.5	9.6	10.8	10.2	3.3
Ent./ Celeb.	13.9	15.1	0.4	2.2	1.1	0
Human Interest	5.6	1.7	0.4	0	1.1	0
Personal/ Profile	5.6	5.0	4.8	2.9	2.6	0.5
Consumer/ Business	16.7	13.4	8.8	10.1	9.1	2.7
Health/ Medicine	2.8	5.0	7.9	9.4	4.4	2.7
Crime	0	6.7	1.8	2.2	5.8	8.7
Education	2.8	6.7	2.2	1.4	4.4	4.4
Social Welfare	0	3.4	8.3	5.0	5.8	6.0
Economy	5.6	5.0	5.3	8.6	4.4	3.3
Science/ Tech.	5.6	10.9	1.8	5.0	2.6	2.1
Religion	0	0	0.4	1.4	0.4	1.1
Arts	0	0.8	0.4	1.4	0.4	1.1
Weather/ Disaster	2.8	0.8	3.5	0.7	0.7	2.2
Sports	0	0.8	0.9	2.9	4.0	3.8
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100