



### THE COLOR OF NEWS: How Different Media Have Covered the General Election

When it comes to coverage of the campaign for president 2008, where one goes for news makes a difference, according to a new study.

In cable, the evidence firmly suggests there now really is an ideological divide between two of the three channels, at least in their coverage of the campaign.

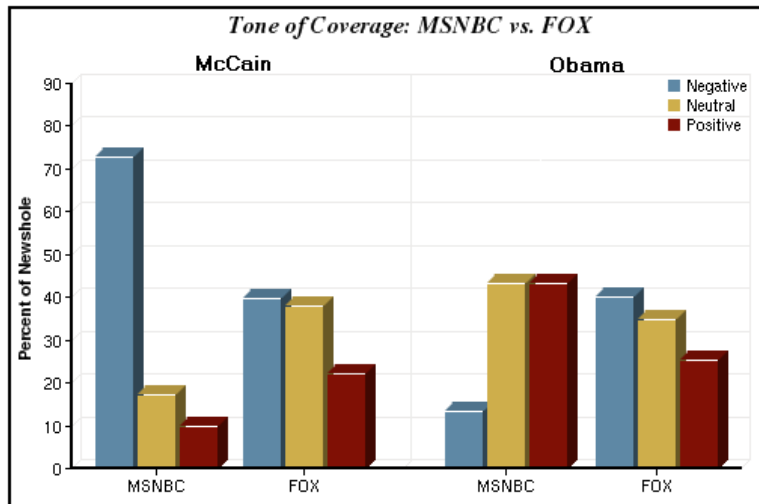
Things look much better for Barack Obama—and much worse for John McCain—on MSNBC than in most other news outlets. On the Fox News Channel, the coverage of the presidential candidates is something of a mirror image of that seen on MSNBC.

The tone of CNN’s coverage, meanwhile, lay somewhere in the middle of the cable spectrum, and was generally more negative than the press overall.

On the evening newscasts of the three traditional networks, in contrast, there is no such ideological split. Indeed, on the nightly newscasts of ABC, CBS and NBC, coverage tends to be more neutral and generally less negative than elsewhere. On the network morning shows, Sarah Palin is a bigger story than she is in the media generally.

And on NBC News programs, there was no reflection of the tendency of its cable sibling MSNBC toward more favorable coverage of Democrats and more negative of Republicans than the norm.

Online, meanwhile, polling tended to drive the news. And on the front pages of newspapers, which often have the day-after story, things look tougher for John McCain than they tend to in the media overall.



These are some of the findings of the study, which examined 2,412 stories from 48 outlets during the time period from September 8 to October 16.<sup>1</sup> The report is a companion to a study released October 22 about the tone of coverage overall. This new report breaks down the coverage of tone by specific media sectors—print, cable news, network television and online.

Among the findings:

- MSNBC stood out for having less negative coverage of Obama than the press generally (14% of stories vs. 29% in the press overall) and for having more negative stories about McCain (73% of its coverage vs. 57% in the press overall).
- On Fox News, in contrast, coverage of Obama was more negative than the norm (40% of stories vs. 29% overall) and less positive (25% of stories vs. 36% generally). For McCain, the news channel was somewhat more positive (22% vs. 14% in the press overall) and substantially less negative (40% vs. 57% in the press overall). Yet even here, his negative stories outweighed positive ones by almost 2 to 1.
- CNN fell distinctly in the middle of the three cable channels when it came to tone. In general, the tone of its coverage was closer than any other cable news channel to the press overall, though also somewhat more negative than the media overall.
- The distinct tone of MSNBC—more positive toward Democrats and more negative toward Republicans—was not reflected in the coverage of its broadcast sibling, NBC News. Even though it has correspondents appear on their cable shows and even anchor some programs on there, the broadcast channel showed no such ideological tilt. Indeed, NBC’s coverage of Palin was the most positive of any TV organization studied, including Fox News.
- At night, the newscasts of the three traditional broadcast networks stood out for being more neutral—and also less negative—than most other news outlets. The morning shows of the networks, by contrast, more closely resembled the media generally in tone. That might surprise some who imagined those morning programs were somehow easier on political figures. Overall, 44% of the morning show stories were clearly negative, compared with 34% on the nightly news and 42% in the press overall.

These findings augment what was learned from a broader report on campaign media coverage released a week earlier entitled [“Winning the Media Campaign: How the Press Reported the 2008 General Election.”](#) That study found that in the media overall—a sample of 43 outlets studied in the six weeks following the conventions through the last debate—Barack Obama’s coverage was somewhat more positive than negative (36% vs.

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<sup>1</sup> Secondary coding was performed on a subset of the campaign stories to further examine the tone of the coverage. That sample included 857 stories from 43 outlets.

29%), while John McCain's, in contrast, was substantially negative (57% vs. 14% positive). The report concluded that this, in significant part, reflected and magnified the horse race and direction of the polls.

### **Cable: Three different networks, three different perspectives**

In many ways, the long and closely followed 2008 presidential campaign has been a boon for all three of the major cable news channels, Fox News Channel, CNN and MSNBC. The cable news networks have devoted considerably more time to the race for the White House than any other media platform and have seen their ratings benefit as well. Given the intense attention to the daily campaign trail, their extensive coverage of primary election nights, the two major conventions, and their sponsoring of primary debates—as well as the diminished coverage of such key moments on the three traditional broadcast networks—cable news has in some ways become the primary medium for politics on television now.

At the same time, with a prime-time lineup dominated by talk and even more so this year by opinionated hosts, cable news has in this campaign further institutionalized the sometimes uneasy hybrid of opinion and reporting. And those opinions are often quite different from one channel to the next.

While the concept of “blue truth” and “red truth” in the news media is overstated when one examines the mainstream press overall, the data here clearly show three distinct colors to the news of the presidential campaign on the three main cable channels.

Statistically, the biggest difference is how little negative coverage there is of Obama on MSNBC versus the press generally. On Fox, the biggest variance is how much more positive coverage there is of McCain than elsewhere.

Which network in the end varied most from the press overall? One way of testing this is to average the statistical difference in positive and negative coverage for the two presidential candidates. Doing, this Fox varied from the press overall by 40%, and MSNBC by 30%.

#### *MSNBC*

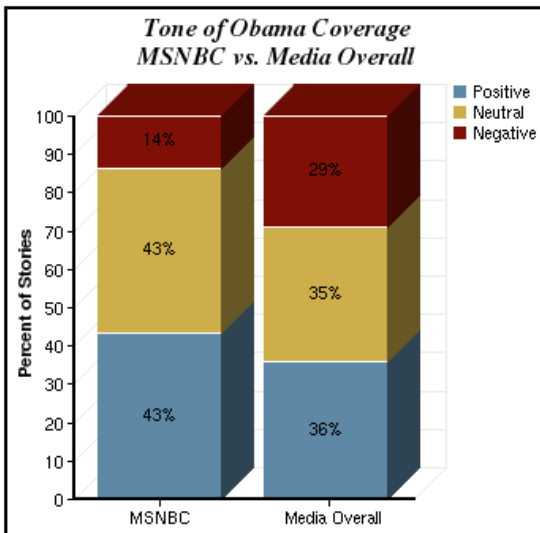
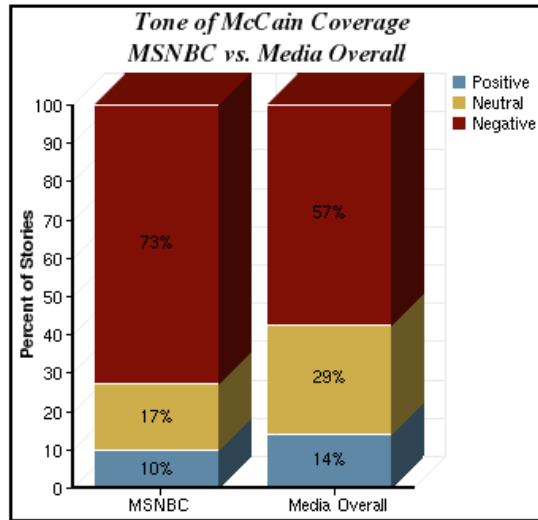
In the 2008 election season, MSNBC, the perennial third-place finisher in the cable news ratings race, unveiled a new approach—positioning itself in prime time as a leftward-leaning analog to the Fox News Channel. That personality became arguably even clearer in the general election season with the arrival of Air America radio talk show host Rachel Maddow as anchor of the 9 p.m. program following Keith Olbermann.

The editorial approach is manifest beyond just who is sitting in the anchor chair or getting the last word. When it comes to the tone of the segments and stories about candidates overall, MSNBC was more favorable and, even more clearly, less critical of

Barack Obama than the press generally. It was also clearly more negative about both John McCain and Sarah Palin.

In all, only 14% of stories studied about Obama on MSNBC carried a clearly negative tone, less than half the total in the media generally (29%). The percentage of positive stories on MSNBC about Obama, 43%, was also higher than the press generally (36%), but not as strikingly. And 43% were neutral compared with 35% in the press overall.

Conversely, McCain's coverage was more critical on MSNBC than in the press



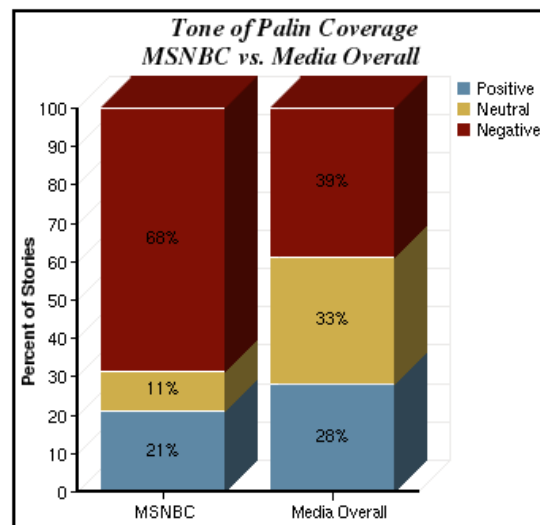
overall, not to mention any other cable news outlet. Fully 73% of the McCain stories were negative compared with 57% in the press generally. The difference on the positive side was less pronounced. In all, 10% of McCain stories were positive, compared with 14% in the press generally. Put another way, on MSNBC, negative stories studied about McCain outweighed positive ones by a ratio of more than 7 to 1.

As for Sarah Palin, on MSNBC she fared only a little better than her running mate. In the Sept. 8-Oct. 16 stretch, 21% of the Alaska Governor's stories were positive, 68% negative and a small percentage—only 11%—were neutral. This is far more

68% negative and a small percentage—only 11%—were neutral, and also less positive than in the press generally (where coverage was 28% positive, 39% negative and 33% neutral.)

Joe Biden, meanwhile, received considerably less attention than the other three candidates, and although most of his coverage was mixed, negative outweighed positive by about 2 to 1.

One example of how MSNBC's coverage differed from that of its two competitors was during the period from Sept. 8-14. At that point McCain was enjoying a post-convention bounce that

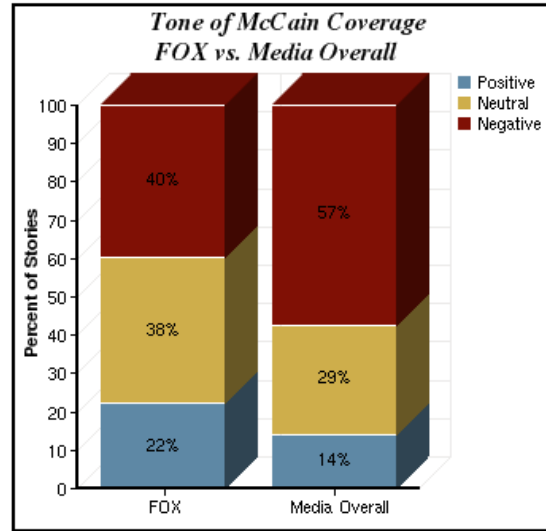


had vaulted him into the lead in most national polls. The media generally were also focused on Palin’s ability to energize the Republican base. But that week on MSNBC, McCain and Palin’s narratives were more negative than positive (for Palin overwhelmingly so) while Obama got more positive coverage overall.

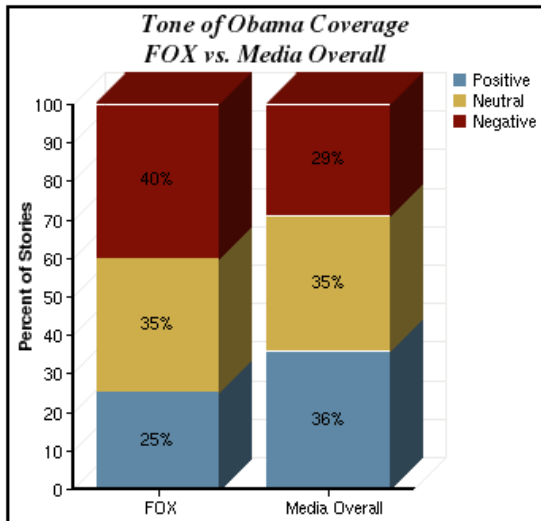
*The Fox News Channel*

In many ways, the data offer hard evidence to confirm the notion that, at least when it comes to politics, MSNBC is now a counterweight, or leftward leaning alternative, to the tone of coverage seen on another cable channel, Fox.

On the Fox News Channel, the coverage was both more negative toward Obama and more positive toward both McCain and Palin than we found in the press generally. That said, coverage of McCain was still more negative than positive on Fox News by a factor of roughly 2 to 1.



When it came to McCain, 40% of stories studied on Fox about the Republican nominee were clearly negative (compared with 57% in the press generally). Meanwhile, 22% of stories were positive, compared with 14% in the press generally.



For Obama, Fox was both less positive and more negative than the press generally or than any cable rival.

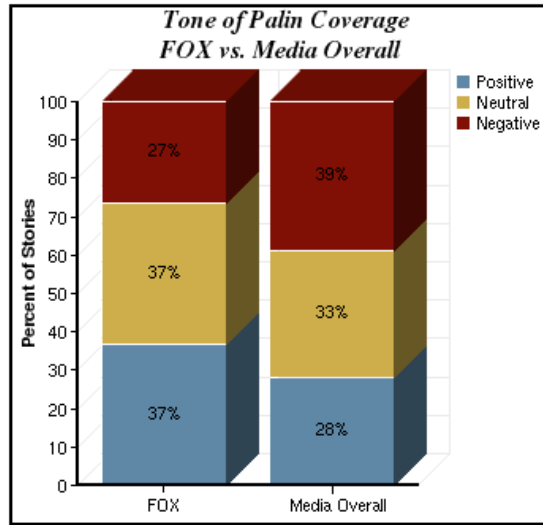
In all, 25% of Obama stories studied were positive on Fox, compared with 36% in the press overall. And 40% of stories were negative, compared with 29% in the press generally. Fox looked much more like other outlets in the percentage of stories that were mixed or neutral, 35% on Fox and the press overall both.

When it came to vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, Fox News also stood out. Here, unlike most news outlets, the portrayal was more positive than not—though not as positive as that found on NBC News. In all, 37% of Palin stories studied on Fox were positive compared with 28% in the press generally. Another 27% of the stories were

negative, less than the 39% found overall. And 37% of her coverage was neutral or mixed, compared with 33% overall.

Joe Biden, as in other outlets, received limited coverage on Fox and it ran more than 2 to 1 negative.

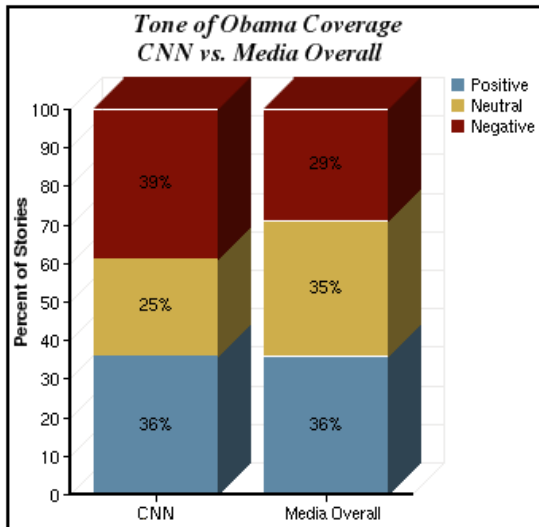
There are a few aspects of candidate coverage that highlight Fox’s differences with other outlets. One occurred the period from Sept. 15-23, when the impact of the economic meltdown on Wall Street was becoming clear and the political playing field began to shift toward Obama. On Fox, the assertions about the Democrat that week were much more negative (55%) than positive (15%).



During the same period, in the media generally, Obama’s positive coverage (35%) exceeded his negative coverage (30%)

*CNN*

If MSNBC and Fox offered rough mirror images of each other, the tone of CNN’s general election coverage stood somewhere in the middle.



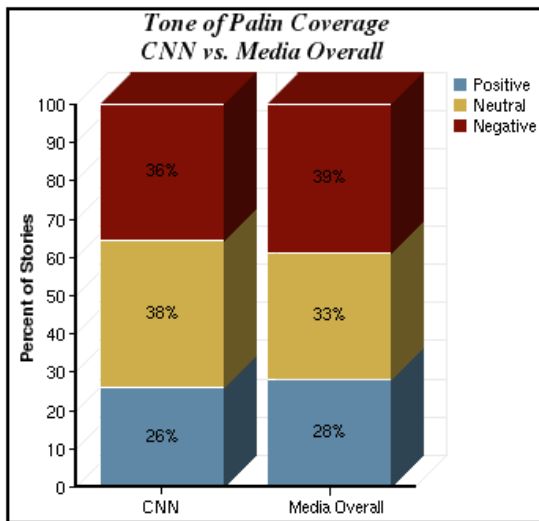
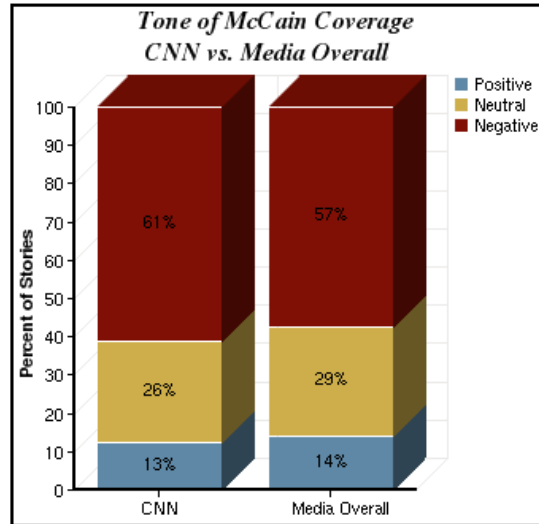
While the other two cable networks feature openly ideological hosts, CNN relies on a formula in which its prime time anchors—most notably Wolf Blitzer and Anderson Cooper—try to operate as non-partisan brokers. But it doesn’t mean the network lacks opinions.

Indeed one thing that stands out in CNN’s coverage is that more of the opinions expressed (whether by CNN staff or outsiders) on the channel were negative in tone than not. And CNN is the only one of the three cable news outlets studied in which all four candidates generated more negative than positive coverage.

Coverage of Barack Obama, for instance, was mixed and slightly more negative than positive, a contrast with the media overall. In all 36% of the Democrat's stories were positive, identical to the media generally. But 39% of Obama stories studied were negative, a full 10 percentage points higher than found in the press overall (29%).

That made Obama's coverage on CNN less negative than on Fox and less positive than on MSNBC.

The tone of CNN's coverage of McCain was also mainly negative. Stories about McCain were more than four to one negative (13% positive, 61% negative and 26% neutral.) That was very close to the media generally (14% positive, 57% negative and 29% neutral) and fell somewhere between its two competitors.



The same overall pattern held with Sarah Palin. On CNN, she garnered 36% negative coverage versus 26% positive and 38% neutral, again very close to the press generally (28% positive, 39% negative and 33% neutral). The Alaska Governor generated more positive attention on Fox and more negative coverage on MSNBC.

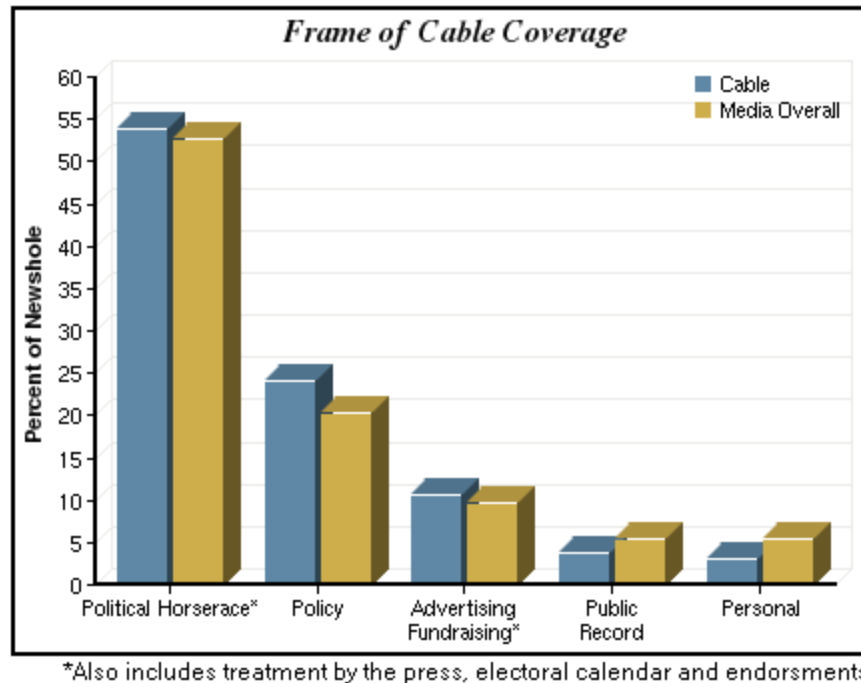
Biden had the lowest level of coverage and it was more negative than positive.

### *Cable News vs. Other Sectors*

Perhaps the aspect of campaign coverage that most distinguished the cable news sector was the sheer volume of attention paid to the presidential race. Fully 60% of all the cable news airtime examined in this report was devoted to the 2008 election. Overall, the percentage of newshole devoted to the campaign in the media generally was far less—only 38%. And no other sector came close to cable's level of interest in the race.

A look at the components of that extensive coverage reveals a few counter-intuitive findings about a medium that, on the surface, might seem to dwell heavily on the strategy and tactics of the race and the high-tech electoral maps. In terms of the frame of coverage, cable's overall attention to the horse race elements of the campaign (54% of the newshole) was virtually the same as the overall percentage for all media sectors

(53%). And in fact, cable spent a slightly higher percentage of its time (24% of newshole) on policy issues than the media overall, which devoted 20% of its newshole to policy debates.



### Network TV: A More Balanced Medium

If the cable channels are now offering three distinctly different perspectives on the race, that was much less so the case for the traditional three broadcast networks, ABC, CBS and NBC.

#### NBC

To begin with, whatever strategic approach might be at play at its cable sibling, it is not reflected in the tone of the coverage on NBC, the company’s broadcast news operation.

The data offer no hint of coverage being less favorable to Republicans, as seen on MSNBC. Actually, it was more favorable than the media generally toward both parties.

News reports have suggested that the differences in editorial approach have created tensions inside NBC Television<sup>2</sup>. Reportedly, some inside NBC News, including former anchor Tom Brokaw, were so concerned about the more ideological tone at MSNBC that shortly after the cable channel hired Air America star Rachel Maddow to

<sup>2</sup> Stelter, Brian, “MSNBC Takes Incendiary Hosts From Anchor Seat,” New York Times, Sept. 7, 2008

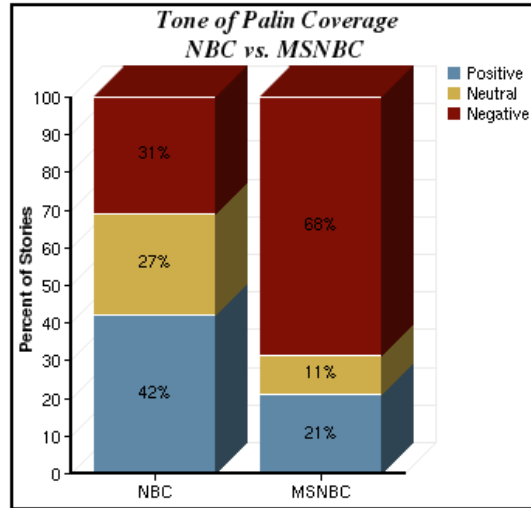


become a prime time host, they persuaded MSNBC to no longer allow talk show hosts Chris Matthews and Keith Olbermann to anchor their election night coverage.

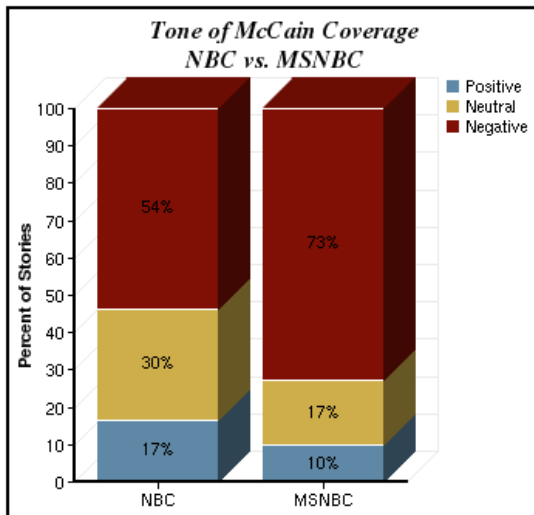
Whether viewers make a clear distinction between MSNBC and NBC is less clear. At the Republican convention, delegates on the floor even chanted “NBC” when Sarah Palin told them she was not running for vice president to please the media. (The network does market the two channels together in promotions and mixes personnel.)

But in the content studied both on NBC’s Nightly News with Brian Williams and the Today Show, there is a clear distinction between the broadcast and the cable content.

Rather than being more negative toward Republicans than the media generally, as was the case on MSNBC, NBC’s coverage was more positive towards all candidates.



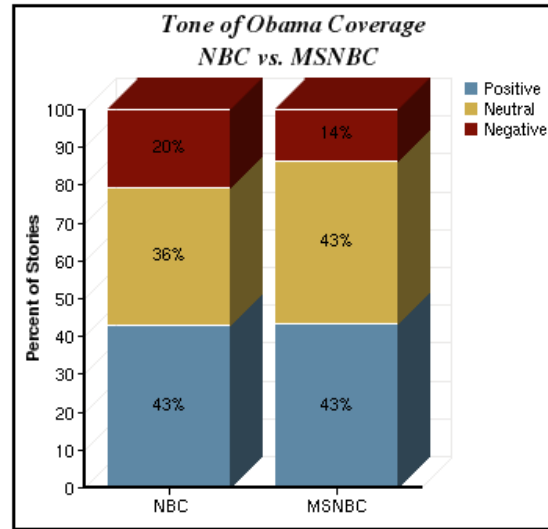
This was most notable in the coverage of Sarah Palin. Fully 42% of the Palin stories studied were positive on NBC. That is substantially more than the press generally (28%) or on cable sibling MSNBC (21%). It is also more positive than we found on Fox News, which was the next most positive in its coverage of Palin.



The differences are even more striking when looking at the negative coverage of Palin. On NBC, 31% of Palin stories were negative, fewer than we found generally (39%) and far fewer than on MSNBC (68%).

NBC also showed no unusual toughness on McCain. The coverage studied on NBC was similar to that of the press overall—slightly less negative (54% vs. 57%) and slightly more positive (17% positive vs. 14% in the press generally). But that stands in stark contrast to its cable sibling.

In its treatment of Obama, we saw a similar pattern, typical of other broadcast network news, of being more positive and less negative than the press in general. NBC was both more positive than the press generally toward the Democrat (43% positive vs. 36%) and less negative (20% vs. 29% overall). But it was still somewhat tougher on the Democrat than MSNBC (where 43% of stories were positive but only 14% were negative).



NBC was also somewhat more likely to frame stories around the horse race than others (64% of its stories vs. 53% for the press overall).

In all this, NBC was not strikingly dissimilar to its broadcast rivals. There are some differences, but they appear to suggest differences story by story, not toward any ideological pattern or appeal.

### CBS

CBS News coverage of this race may be most remembered for the interviews between anchor Katie Couric and vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, during which, by most accounts, Palin struggled with answers to some basic questions about policy and her record. The Couric interviews, an earlier PEJ report found, became a topic unto themselves in the rest of the media and were generally portrayed in a way that was unfavorable for Palin. Even Republican operatives and McCain aides tended in interviews to discount rather than defend Palin's performance.

But the data here also reveal some other distinguishing factors to CBS's coverage. The most noticeable, looking at both the CBS Evening News and the Early Show, is that more of the stories studied on CBS were mixed or neutral in tone. In all, 44% of all the campaign stories studied on CBS had a mixed tone, in contrast with 33% in the press overall. ABC (at 30%) and NBC (32%) were more typical.

That more neutral approach translated into fewer positive stories about all the candidates. It did not translate, to quite the same degree, into less negative coverage.

In all, for instance, just 21% of the Obama stories were positive (vs. 36% in the press generally). Just 8% of McCain stories were positive (vs. 14% generally). But the percentage of negative stories about both candidates was more typical.

It did translate into fewer stories of either a clearly negative or positive nature about Palin (21% positive for Palin vs. 28% generally and 32% negative vs. 39% overall).

When it came to policy, 30% of all CBS stories were focused on that topic. That is markedly more than the press overall (20%) or than NBC (22%), and the same as rival ABC (30%).

### *ABC*

ABC News was the first journalism organization to get an interview with Sarah Palin. By the time the last debate had ended, ABC would be the network that offered the toughest coverage of the Republican vice presidential nominee as well.

When it came to John McCain ABC's coverage mirrored that of the press generally.

But for Palin, more of its mix of stories proved negative than was true for either NBC or CBS. In all, 45% of its Plain stories were negative versus 30% on NBC and 31% of CBS (and 39% in the press overall). Given that it did somewhat fewer Palin stories, the actual number was similar to that on the other networks.

When it came to Obama, the mix of stories on ABC's Good Morning America and World News Tonight were more positive than the press overall (49% vs. 36%), on a par with NBC and higher than CBS (20%).

Only a few other items stand out about ABC's coverage, at least from the numbers. One is that more of its stories were framed as about policy (30%) than the press generally (20%) or than NBC (22%), and the same as CBS (30%).

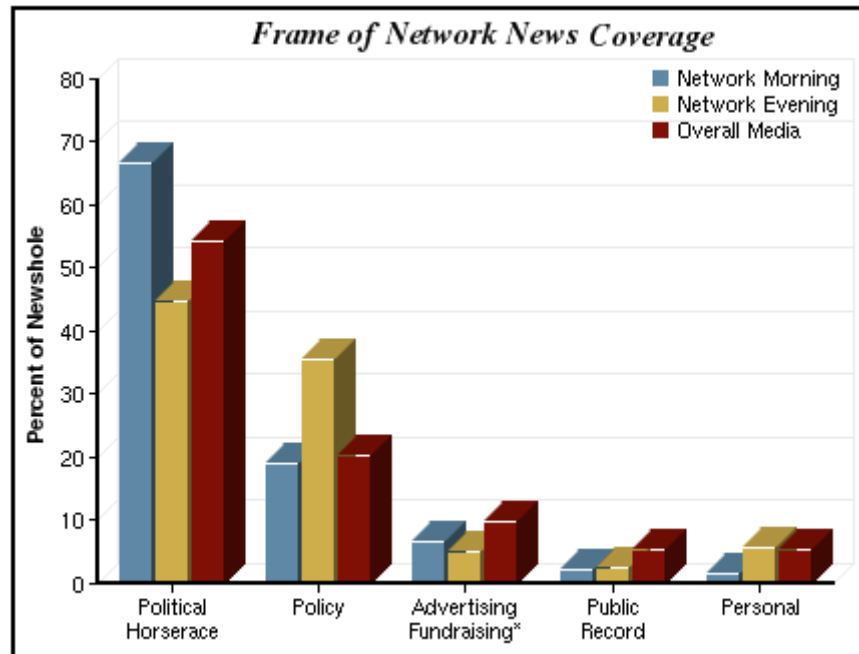
### *Network Morning vs. Evening*

The bigger differences in network television were, as we have seen over the years in our studies, between morning and evening news programs, even on the same network.

In the late general election phase of campaign 2008, the three morning news shows (Today on NBC, Good Morning America on ABC and the Early Show on CBS) were less focused on policy, more focused on horse race. They also tended to be more negative in their coverage of the candidates than we found at night—in that regard more similar to the media overall. The data, in other words, belie any idea people might have that these shows are softer or easier on politicians.

In all, more than two-thirds of the coverage (67%) airing in the first half hour of the morning shows (the time period during which those programs most focused on traditional news) was focused on the horse race (who was ahead or behind, the tactics and strategy of the race). On the evening news, in contrast, that number was 45%, while the

media overall fell in between with 53%. On the flip side, 19% of morning show coverage was policy focused, as was 20% of media coverage overall, compared with nearly double that—36%—at night.



\*Also includes treatment by the press, electoral calendar and endorsements.

When it came to tone, the morning shows again tended to look more like the media overall than did evening newscasts. And that meant the evening newscasts, rather than their morning siblings, offered the more positive picture overall.

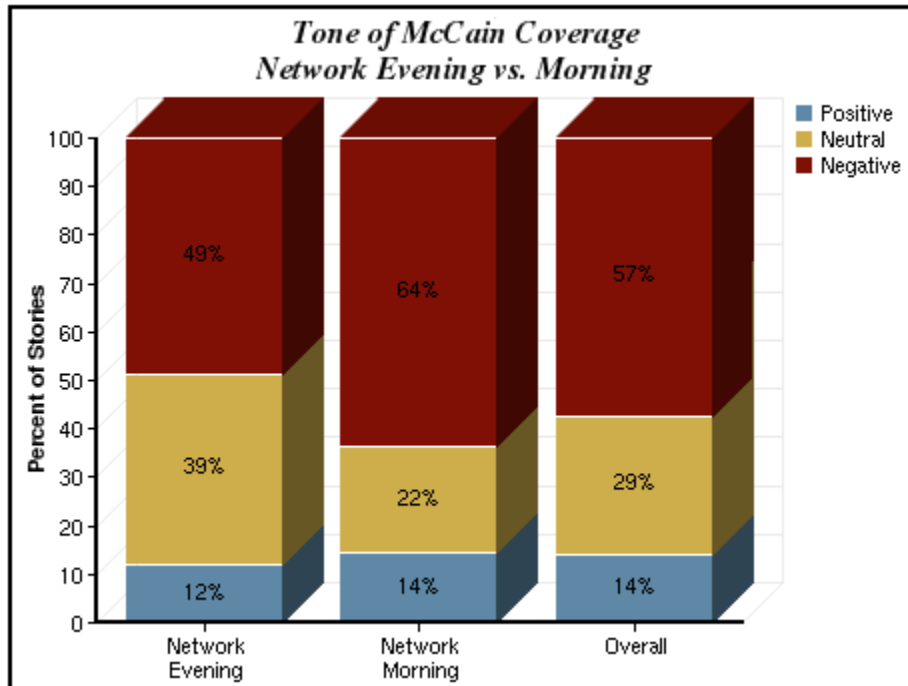
These evening newscasts were less likely than morning news or the media overall to run stories that were clearly negative (34%), and more likely to run stories that were neutral (41%). They were more typical in the percentage of positive stories (26%).

Morning news was identically positive in tone (26%), but almost one-third more negative—fully 44% of their coverage overall. A slightly higher share were neutral (31%).

That variance in tone between morning and evening news was most evident in the coverage of John McCain. Fully 63% of the morning news stories about McCain were negative in tone, higher than the press overall (57%).

At night, in contrast, McCain’s treatment on the networks was noticeably less negative in tone (49%). Overall, indeed, the nightly newscasts were the least negative medium in the tone of their coverage of McCain of any of those studied.

McCain’s coverage on the evening news also tended to be more neutral (39%) than in the morning, (22%) or in the press generally (29%).



The same was true for Sarah Palin. She received generally more negative coverage from morning network programs than evening newscasts. In the morning, 39% of Palin stories studied were negative, compared with 30% in the evening. Meanwhile, mornings were less likely to be neutral toward her (30% compared with 47% at night). The only break from this pattern was that morning shows were also more likely to run positive stories about Palin (32% in the morning vs. 23% at night). In all this, the morning shows resembled the media overall (28% positive, 39% negative, 33% neutral).

Sarah Palin was also a bigger story in the morning than in the evening. Fully 41% of all stories on the network morning shows focused in significant part (at least 25%) on Palin. That number was 27% in the evening. Joe Biden was also a bigger story in the morning than in the evening. He was a factor in 17% of morning stories, compared with 10% of those at night.

This less negative pattern we found on evening news versus morning also was true of coverage of Obama, though it was somewhat less pronounced. Not only was Obama coverage more negative in the mornings (29% morning shows, vs. 21% evenings), his coverage was also less positive (35% mornings vs. 39% evenings), and less neutral (36% vs. 40% at night). Here again, the morning shows were more similar to the media generally than were nightly news.

## Newspapers

The front page coverage of the 13 newspapers studied here tended to portray a more extreme version of the overall press treatment of both McCain and Obama. Coverage was more critical of John McCain and more favorable toward Barack Obama

than the media overall. When it came to Sarah Palin, it was somewhat more neutral, and less positive.

Indeed, of all the media sectors studied, John McCain received the most negative coverage in print. In all, 69% of the newspaper stories studied about McCain were clearly negative, while only 6% were positive, a ratio of about 11-to-1. (The press overall was 57% to 14%, a ratio of closer to 4-to-1.) Only MSNBC offered more negative coverage of the Republican nominee.

Newspaper front page coverage was also the place where we found the most positive coverage for Obama of any sector studied, though the level of negative coverage was fairly typical. Almost half (45%) of the newspapers stories about Obama were positive, compared with 36% in the media generally. Most of that difference came from fewer neutral stories—just 27% versus 35% in the media overall. Negative coverage was more similar, 27% versus 29% overall.

In short, newspaper front page stories about both presidential candidates tended to be more analytical than elsewhere in the media, perhaps in part because of their length, and that redounded to Obama's benefit and McCain's disadvantage.

This tendency toward analysis in print political coverage had less impact on Palin. Among front page stories where Palin was a significant presence, 23% were positive, compared with 28% in the media generally. And 41% of front page Palin stories were negative, roughly similar to the 39% generally.

As for Biden, the little coverage that he received was balanced evenly between positive and negative stories (25% positive, 50% neutral, and 25% negative). This was somewhat less negative than the coverage he received overall at 32% negative.

For both candidates, much of the tonal balance seemed connected to coverage of the horserace rather than more policy-oriented pieces.

Fully 76% of the stories where McCain was a significant presence were focused on the horserace aspect of the campaign, and of those, only 5% were positive while 73% were negative.

Similarly, Obama fared better in the newspaper horserace stories than he did in newspaper stories overall. More than half of the horse race stories (53%) about Obama were positive, which was higher than the 45% of positive coverage he received in all newspaper stories and the 36% positive coverage he received in all media.

### *Topics*

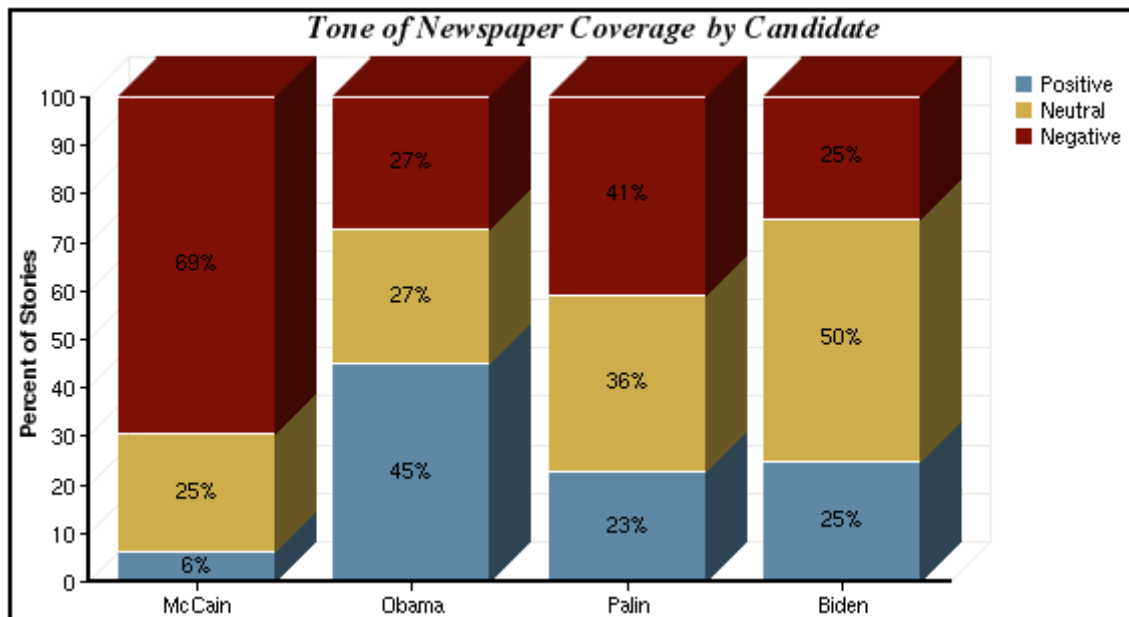
There were some subtle differences in the subject matter on newspaper front pages. While the percentage of coverage devoted to the horserace was similar to that of

the media overall (52% vs. 53% overall), newspapers stood out for devoting a larger portion of their front-page newshole to personal storylines and less to policy.

In the front pages studied, 9% of the coverage dealt with personal issues about the candidates, more than any other media sector and nearly double that of the media overall (5%).

Newspapers, in turn, devoted less space to policy stories than any other media sector during these six weeks of the general election period. Policy coverage made up 13% of newspaper stories compared to 20% of all campaign coverage in all outlets.

Part of the difference in policy coverage may be tied to the in-depth profiles of candidates that the newspapers ran. The second- and third-biggest storylines covered by newspapers during this time period were directly related to the backgrounds of the GOP candidates. For example, on October 5, the Washington Post ran a 4,700 word story on John McCain’s experience in Vietnam and how that ordeal has shaped his worldview. The Post ran another lengthy piece on McCain a week later which focused on the idea that he began conceiving his desire to be president while in the P.O.W. camp in Vietnam and how his cellmates ridiculed him at the time for it.



**Online: Polls and Horse Race Top the List**

The top news Web sites gave relatively less coverage to the campaign when compared with other media sectors.

On the five popular news Web sites that PEJ monitored (AOL, Yahoo, Google News, CNN.com, and MSNBC.com), one-quarter (25%) of the newshole was devoted to

covering the campaign, slightly more than newspapers (21%), but significantly less than the broadcast media sectors (cable TV devoted 60% of their newshole, network TV 41%, and radio news 47%.)<sup>3</sup>

*Tone*

The tone of Barack Obama’s online coverage closely resembled the tone of the coverage he received overall. Online, 37% of Obama’s stories were positive, 33% were neutral, and 30% were negative. These numbers are similar to those he received in all media with 36% positive, 35% neutral, and 29% negative.

John McCain, however, received more critical coverage online than in the media overall. Fully two-thirds of the online campaign stories about McCain were negative, which was significantly higher than the 57% in the media overall. Less than a tenth of online stories about McCain were positive (9%).

Sarah Palin’s online coverage was less neutral than it was in other media, meaning that she had a higher percentage of both positive and negative stories. Online, Palin received 32% positive coverage and 46% negative (21% was neutral), while the media overall gave Palin 28% positive, 33% neutral, and 39% negative.

*Topics*

<b>Frame of Online Coverage</b> Percent of Newshole	
	<u>Online</u>
Political Horserace	54.3
Policy	20.4
Advertising, Fundraising*	5.8
Public record	7.2
Personal	3.7

*\*Also includes treatment by the press, electoral calendar and endorsements.*

One-fifth of online coverage was focused on the policy elements of the campaign, which was the same as the media overall. Where the Web coverage differed was in focusing more on stories about the candidate’s public records and less on other types of political stories such as fundraising and advertisements.

Seven percent of the online coverage was about the public records and past histories of the candidates, compared to 5% of the overall coverage. There was slightly less personal coverage online (4% compared to 5% overall) and even less coverage of these other types of political stories (6% compared to 10%).

Looking at specific storylines, the Web sites studied here stood out for greater attention than other sectors to stories about the candidate’s latest standings in the polls.

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<sup>3</sup> The radio sample includes NPR’s morning edition and the radio news headlines from CBS and ABC. Talk radio programming is not included in this study.



These stories about presidential preferences accounted for 12% of the online coverage studied, versus 6% overall. No other media sector devoted even half as much of their campaign newshole to poll-focused stories. Web sites spent almost the exact amount of their reporting space on polls as they did on stories focused on the economy and the ongoing financial crisis together.

Other storylines that were followed online more so than in other sectors included the vice presidential debate and the question of voting irregularities. The October 2 debate between Biden and Palin was the focus of 11% of the online coverage and was the third most followed campaign story online. Voting issues and irregularities, such as questions surrounding the voter registration group ACORN, were the subject of 5% of the online coverage while it was about half that (2.5%) in the media overall.

## **Methodology**

The Color of News: How Different Media Have Covered the General Election is based on the aggregated data collected as part of the News Coverage Index from September 8 through October 16, 2008. This timeframe begins the Monday following the conclusion of the Republican National Convention and runs through the day after the final presidential debate between John McCain and Barack Obama.

For an accurate account of the chronology of the general election, the period studied has been broken into six distinct phases. These phases have been dictated by the timing of campaign events. Therefore, some of these phases do not correspond with a typical calendar week.

The complete methodology of the PEJ's News Coverage Index is available [here](#).

In addition to the coding already conducted as part of PEJ's weekly reports, researchers conducted secondary coding of many of the campaign-focused stories for tone. Details of that process are below.

### **PEJ's News Coverage Index**

Examining the news agenda of 48 different outlets in five media sectors, including newspapers, online, network TV, cable TV, and radio, the NCI is designed to provide news consumers, journalists and researchers with hard data about what stories and topics the media are covering, the trajectories of major stories and differences among news platforms.

Following a rotation system, PEJ monitors 48 different news outlets each week: 34 or 35 outlets each weekday as well as 7 newspapers each Sunday.

The list of outlets and rotation is as follows:

#### **Newspapers (13 in all, Sun-Fri)**

*The New York Times* every day

Coded two out of these four every day

*The Washington Post*

*Los Angeles Times*

*USA Today*

*The Wall Street Journal*

Coded two out of these four every day

*Philadelphia Inquirer*

*Chicago Tribune*

*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

*San Francisco Chronicle*

Coded 2 out of these 4 every day

*New Hampshire Union-Leader*

*MetroWest Daily News*

*The Gazette (Colorado Springs)*

*Modesto Bee*

**Web sites (Five in all, Mon-Fri)**

CNN.com

Yahoo News

MSNBC.com

Google News

AOL News

**Network TV (Seven in all, Mon-Fri)**

Morning shows

ABC – Good Morning America

CBS – Early Show

NBC – Today

Evening news

ABC – World News Tonight

CBS – CBS Evening News

NBC – NBC Nightly News

PBS – Newshour with Jim Lehrer (Rotated daily between the first 30 minutes and the second 30 minutes)

**Cable TV (Fifteen in all, Mon-Fri)**

Daytime (2:00 to 2:30 pm) coded 2 out of 3 every day

CNN

Fox News

MSNBC

Nighttime CNN – coded 3 out of the 4 every day

Situation Room (6 pm)

Lou Dobbs Tonight

CNN Election Center

Anderson Cooper 360

Nighttime Fox News – coded 3 out of the 4 every day

Special Report w/ Brit Hume

Fox Report w/ Shepard Smith

O'Reilly Factor  
Hannity & Colmes

Nighttime MSNBC – coded 2 out of the 4 every day

Race for the White House  
Hardball (7 pm)  
Countdown w/ Keith Olbermann  
Rachel Maddow

**Radio (Six in all, Mon-Fri)**

ABC Radio headlines at 9am and 5pm  
CBS Radio headlines at 9am and 5pm  
NPR Morning Edition every day (Rotated daily between the first 30 minutes of the first hour and first 30 minutes of the second hour)

Talk Radio

Rush Limbaugh every other day

One out of two additional conservatives each day  
Sean Hannity  
Michael Savage

One out of two liberals each day  
Ed Schultz  
Randi Rhodes

From that content, PEJ analyzes all stories with a national or international focus that appear as follows:

- On the front page of newspapers
- In the entirety of commercial network evening newscasts and syndicated radio headlines
- During the first 30 minutes of network morning news, all cable programs, and talk radio programs
- During a thirty minute segment (rotated daily) of the PBS evening news and NPR's Morning Edition
- As one of the top 5 stories on each Web site at the time of capture

**Capture and Retrieval**

All outlets included in the weekly index are captured and included in PEJ's media archive.

For newspapers that are available in print in the Washington, D.C. area, we have hard copies delivered to our office each day. For newspapers that are not available for

delivery, digital editions of the paper are retrieved either through the newspaper's own Web site, or through the use of digital delivery services such as [pressdisplay.com](http://pressdisplay.com) and [newsstand.com](http://newsstand.com). When necessary, the text of articles are supplemented by the archives available in the LexisNexis computer database.

Radio programs are captured through online streams of the shows. Using automated software, we record several local affiliates that air the program in various markets throughout the country. The purpose of this method is to ensure that we have a version of the program in case one of the streams is unavailable on a particular day, and so that we record the show in a manner that represents the way a typical listener would hear the program with commercials and newsbreaks.

Online websites are captured manually by a member of PEJ's staff. The capture time is rotated daily between 9 am ET and 4 pm ET. The home pages and pages with the top articles for all five sites are saved so that when we reference the material, the format is the same as it appeared online at the time of capture.

Finally, all television shows are recorded digitally and archived for coding purposes. PEJ is a subscriber to DirectTV satellite service and all programs are recorded onto multiple TiVo recording units before being burned onto DVDs for archival purposes.

All television and radio programs are then coded by a member of PEJ's staff who watches or listens to the archived version of the program.

### **Coding Team & Process for Weekly Index Coding**

The data in this study derived from PEJ's regular Index coding was created by PEJ's team of 14 trained coders. We have tested all of the variables derived from the regular weekly Index coding and all the variables reached a level of agreement of 80% or higher. For specific information about those tests, see the [methodology section](#) for the NCI.

A majority of the codes and variables used in this study come out of the coding protocol created for the weekly Campaign Coverage Index which PEJ has been issuing throughout 2008. For the variables of frame/campaign topic, significant presence, and lead newsmaker, the data came from all campaign stories that appeared in PEJ's weekly coding. The specific description of those variables can be found [here](#).

### **Additional Coding of Campaign Stories for Tone**

Between September 8 and October 16, the PEJ's overall Index included 2,412 campaign stories. To measure the tone of the campaign coverage of the major presidential and vice presidential candidates, PEJ's researchers conducted additional coding on a sample of the campaign stories that appeared in our weekly indexes.

### **Sample Selection**

Stories in the NCI are considered to be about the presidential election if 50% or more of the story was devoted to discussion of the on-going presidential campaign. To analyze

stories about tone about a given candidate, only stories in which at least one of the four major presidential and vice presidential candidates (John McCain, Barack Obama, Sarah Palin, and Joe Biden) were a lead newsmaker were included. For a candidate to be considered a lead newsmaker, they must be featured in at least 50% of the time or space that makes up that story.

Two categories of stories were excluded from the sample. Talk radio stories, which are part of PEJ's regular NCI, were not included in this campaign study of tone. Broadcast stories that were 30 seconds or less were also excluded.

PEJ conducted further sampling on the selected stories. This was done by arranging the stories from each outlet in chronological order and randomly selecting a first story. We then selected every-other story within each outlet to arrive at the final sample.

This process resulted in 857 total stories from 43 different media outlets. These included 72 newspaper stories, 78 stories from news websites, 213 stories from network TV, 448 from cable TV, and 46 from radio programs.

### **Coding Design**

The specific analysis of tone was conducted on the subset of campaign stories that was described above. The method of measuring tone was the same that had been used in previous PEJ studies.

### **Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was the story. Each story was coded for tone for each of the four politicians followed in the study. If a candidate did not appear in at least 25% of the story, they were not considered a significant figure in the story and were therefore coded as "n/a" for not having a significant presence.

Coders then determined the tone of the story as a whole for each candidate who was a significant presence.

### **Tone Variable**

The tone variable measures whether a story's tone is constructed in a way, via use of quotes, assertions, or innuendo, which results in positive, neutral, or negative coverage for the primary figure as it relates to the topic of the story. While reading or listening to a story, coders tallied up all the comments that have either a negative or positive tone to the reporting. Direct and indirect quotes were counted along with assertions made by journalists themselves.

In order for a story to be coded as either "positive" or "negative," it must have either 1.5 times the amount of positive comments to negative comments, or 1.5 times the amount of negative comments to positive comments (with an exception for 2 to 3, which is coded as "neutral"). If the headline or lead has a positive or negative tone, it was counted twice into the total value. Also counted twice for tone were the first three paragraphs or first four sentences, whichever came first.

Any story where the ratio of positive to negative comments was less than 1.5 to 1 was considered a “neutral” story.

In some previous studies, PEJ used a ratio of 2 to 1 instead of 1.5 to 1 in determining the overall tone of news stories.

The 2:1 ratio makes sets the bar even higher for a story to be coded as either positive or negative overall. As we entered the 2008 election campaign, PEJ reviewed and retested both the 2:1 ratio and the 1:5 to 1 ratio. We also consulted with academics of content analysis. First, we found only minor shifts in the overall outcome of stories. Indeed, in past content studies where we coded using both ratios, the overall relationship of positive to negative stories changed very little. The bigger difference was in an increase in mixed or neutral stories. In our pre-tests in 2007, the Project felt that the 1.5 to 1 ratio more precisely represented the overall tone of the stories. The academics consulted concurred.

Still, in making comparisons to previous years, it is important to note the different measures used. The 1.5 to 1 ratio was used in our previous 2007 study about the [Invisible Primary](#) season. The 2 to 1 ratio was used in PEJ’s 2004 report called [The Debate Effect](#) and the 2001 report on coverage of George W. Bush’s first [100 days in office](#).

#### **Coding Team & Process for Specific Campaign-related Tone Coding**

A team of five of PEJ’s experienced coders worked with a coding administrator in order to complete the specific tone coding for the campaign stories. Of the five coders, all but one had previously coded for tone in a previous [PEJ campaign study](#).

The previous study that PEJ conducted in October 2007 using the same process for determining tone had a rate of agreement for intercoder reliability of 86%.

For this study, each of the five coders were trained (or re-trained) on the tone coding methodology and then were given the same set of 40 stories to code for tone for each of the four candidates. The rate of intercoder reliability agreement was 81%.

**Topline**  
**The Color of News: How Different Media Have Covered the General Election**  
 Project for Excellence in Journalism

<b>Amount of News Coverage by Outlet</b>									
<b>Percent of Campaign Stories Where Each Candidate was a Significant Presence</b>									
September 8 - October 16, 2008									
Candidate	All Media	Newspapers	Online	Network Morning TV	Network Evening TV	Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)	ABC total	NBC total	CBS Total
Obama	62.4%	63.5%	60.8%	60.3%	63.1%	61.7%	64.1%	65.7%	56.4%
Biden	9.3	11.2	13.8	16.8	10.0	13.3	10.7	14.8	13.8
McCain	62.4	65.3%	60.8	60.8	67.5	64.2	64.9	71.6	56.9
Palin	28.4	25.9	32.0	40.5	27.3	33.7	44.3	34.3	34.3

<b>Amount of News Coverage by Outlet</b>							
<b>Percent of Campaign Stories Where Each Candidate was a Significant Presence</b>							
September 8 - October 16, 2008							
Candidate	Cable Total	Cable Daytime	Cable Evening	CNN Total	MSNBC total	Fox News Total	Radio (Excluding Talk)
Obama	64.0%	62.1%	64.4%	69.0%	60.6%	66.0%	58.0%
Biden	7.4	7.7	7.4	8.2	8.2	6.6	7.5
McCain	64.1	61.5	64.6	72.8	69.9	59.4	58.6
Palin	25.8	26.7	25.6	27.0	28.8	27.0	28.7

N=2,412 campaign stories

A candidate is considered a significant presence if 25% or more of the story is about him or her.



**Tone of Campaign Coverage by Outlet**  
**Percent of Campaign Stories with a Tone**  
 September 8 - October 16, 2008

		Overall		Newspapers		Online		Network Morning TV		Network Evening TV		Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)		ABC total		NBC total		CBS Total	
Candidate	Tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone
Obama	positive	209	35.8%	23	45.1%	20	37.0%	19	34.5%	27	38.6%	46	36.8%	18	48.6%	19	43.2%	9	20.5%
	neutral	204	35.0	14	27.5	18	33.3	20	36.4	28	40.0	48	38.4	9	24.3	16	36.4	23	52.3
	negative	170	29.2	14	27.5	16	29.6	16	29.1	15	21.4	31	24.8	10	27.0	9	20.5	12	27.3
Biden	positive	28	24.8	3	25.0	4	25.0	4	23.5	4	40.0	8	29.6	1	20.0	3	30.0	4	33.3
	neutral	49	43.4	6	50.0	6	37.5	8	47.1	4	40.0	12	44.4	3	60.0	4	40.0	5	41.7
	negative	36	31.9	3	25.0	6	37.5	5	29.4	2	20.0	7	25.9	1	20.0	3	30.0	3	25.0
McCain	positive	84	14.2	3	6.1	5	9.3	9	14.3	9	12.2	18	13.1	5	14.7	9	16.7	4	8.2
	neutral	169	28.5	12	24.5	13	24.1	14	22.2	29	39.2	43	31.4	10	29.4	16	29.6	17	34.7
	negative	340	57.3	34	69.4	36	66.7	40	63.5	36	48.6	76	55.5	19	55.9	29	53.7	28	57.1
Palin	positive	77	28.2	5	22.7	9	32.1	14	31.8	7	23.3	21	28.4	4	20.0	11	42.3	6	21.4
	neutral	90	33.0	8	36.4	6	21.4	13	29.5	14	46.7	27	36.5	7	35.0	7	26.9	13	46.4
	negative	106	38.8	9	40.9	13	46.4	17	38.6	9	30.0	26	35.1%	9	45.0	8	30.8	9	32.1
All Candidates Combined	positive	398	25.5%	34	25.4%	38	25.0%	46	25.7%	47	25.5%	93	25.6%	28	29.2%	42	31.3%	23	17.3%
	neutral	512	32.8	40	29.9	43	28.3	55	30.7	75	40.8	130	35.8	29	30.2	43	32.1	58	43.6
	negative	652	41.7	60	44.8	71	46.7	78	43.6	62	33.7	140	38.6	39	40.6	49	36.6	52	39.1

Stories where a candidate was not a significant presence were excluded from this table.

**Tone of Campaign Coverage by Outlet**  
**Percent of Campaign Stories with a Tone**  
September 8 - October 16, 2008

		Cable Total		Cable Daytime		Cable Evening		CNN Total		MSNBC total		Fox News Total		Radio (Excluding Talk)	
Candidate	Tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone
Obama	positive	104	33.8%	8	18.2%	95	36.1%	43	36.1%	32	43.2%	29	25.2%	13	39.4%
	neutral	102	33.1	20	45.5	82	31.2	30	25.2	32	43.2	40	34.8	15	45.5
	negative	102	33.1	16	36.4	86	32.7	46	38.7	10	13.5	46	40.0	5	15.2
Biden	positive	10	20.4	3	37.5	7	17.1	5	26.3	2	15.4	3	17.7	2	33.3
	neutral	21	42.9	3	37.5	18	43.9	7	36.8	7	53.9	7	41.2	2	33.3
	negative	18	36.7	2	25.0	16	39.0	7	36.8	4	30.8	7	41.2	2	33.3
McCain	positive	47	15.3	13	31.0	34	12.8	15	12.6	8	9.9	24	22.2	9	30.0
	neutral	86	27.9	15	35.7	71	26.8	31	26.1	14	17.3	41	38.0	9	30.0
	negative	175	56.82	14	33.3	160	60.4	73	61.3	59	72.8	43	39.8	12	40.0
Palin	positive	37	28.7	8	40.0	29	26.6	11	26.2	8	21.1	18	36.7	3	25.0
	neutral	38	29.5	8	40.0	30	27.5	16	38.1	4	10.5	18	36.7	6	50.0
	negative	54	41.9	4	20.0	50	45.9	15	35.7	26	68.4	13	26.5	3	25.0
All Candidates Combined	positive	198	24.9%	32	28.1%	165	24.3%	74	24.7%	50	24.3%	74	25.6%	27	33.3%
	neutral	247	31.1	46	40.4	201	29.6	84	28.1	57	27.7	106	36.7	32	39.5
	negative	349	44.0	36	31.6	312	46.0	141	47.2	99	48.1	109	37.7	22	27.2

Stories where a candidate was not a significant presence were excluded from this table.

<b>Frame of Campaign Coverage</b>									
<b>Percent of Campaign Newshole</b>									
September 8 – October 16, 2008									
	Overall	Newspapers	Online	Network Morning TV	Network Evening TV	Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)	ABC total	NBC total	CBS Total
Political Horserace	52.7%	52.3%	54.3%	66.6%	44.7%	56.2%	51.8%	63.5%	52.3%
Ads, Fundraising*	9.8	12.2	5.8	6.7	5.2	6.0	6.5	4.8	6.8
Public Record	5.5	6.9	7.2	2.1	2.5	2.3	1.2	3.8	1.6
Policy	20.4	12.6	20.4	19.1	35.6	27.0	29.6	22.3	29.6
Personal	5.4	9.2	3.7	1.6	5.8	3.6	2.3	2.8	5.5
Other	6.3	6.8	8.7	3.9	6.2	5.0	8.6	2.9	4.3

<b>Frame of Campaign Coverage</b>							
<b>Percent of Campaign Newshole</b>							
September 8 – October 16, 2008							
	Cable Total	Cable Daytime	Cable Evening	CNN Total	MSNBC total	Fox News Total	Radio (Excluding Talk)
Political Horserace	53.8%	62.1%	52.6%	56.9%	53.9%	51.3%	51.3%
Ads, Fundraising*	10.7	6.8	11.4	7.9	9.3	14.7	3.8
Public Record	3.8	3.2	3.9	3.7	6.6	1.4	4.9
Policy	24.2	20.2	25.0	24.2	27.2	21.7	25.9
Personal	3.1	3.6	3.0	2.1	2.0	5.1	4.9
Other	4.4	4.2	4.0	5.1	1.1	5.8	9.2

\*Also includes stories about the treatment of candidates by the press, the electoral calendar, and endorsements.

**Top Storylines by Media Outlet  
Percent of Campaign Newshole  
September 8 – October 16, 2008**

rank	Overall		Newspapers		Online		Cable Total		Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)		Network Morning TV		Network Evening TV	
	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole
1	Economy and Financial Crisis	18.4%	Economy and Financial Crisis	10.6%	McCain v Obama polls	12.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	27.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	22.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.2%	Economy and Financial Crisis	24.01%
2	VP Debate	8.1	VP Debate	10.1%	Economy and Financial Crisis	12.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.9	VP Debate	8.3	VP Debate	10.9	VP Debate	5.4
3	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.8	Public Record for Palin	7.5	VP Debate	11.1	VP Debate	5.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.9	Attacks by McCain Camp	9.9	Palin CBS Interview	5.2
4	Attacks by McCain Camp	5.3	Profile of McCain	6.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	4.4	Palin ABC Interview	5.0	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	6.6	Palin ABC Interview	4.9
5	Public Record for Palin	4.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	6.0	Public Record for Palin	5.7	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	3.8	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	4.7	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	3.7
6	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.0	McCain Suspends Campaign	5.5	McCain Suspends Campaign	5.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.2	Palin ABC Interview	5.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.3
7	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	3.9	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	4.4	Voting Irregularities	5.4	McCain Suspends Campaign	3.1	Swing States	3.4	Swing States	3.9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.2
8	Swing States	3.5	Swing States	4.4	Swing States	3.7	Public Record for Palin	2.7	Palin CBS Interview	3.3	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.5	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.1
9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.3	Palin Nominated for VP	3.5	Swing States	2.7	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.3	Public Record for Palin	3.5	Swing States	2.9
10	Voting Irregularities	2.5	Profile of Obama	3.2	Health Care as an Issue	2.6	Palin Nominated for VP	2.4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	2.7

**Top Storylines by Media Outlet  
Percent of Campaign Newshole  
September 8 – October 16, 2008**

rank	ABC Total		CBS total		NBC total		CNN total		Fox News total		MSNBC total	
	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole
1	Economy and Financial Crisis	22.7%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.8%	Economy and Financial Crisis	23.1%	Economy and Financial Crisis	28.8%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.6%	Economy and Financial Crisis	32.8%
2	Attacks by McCain Camp	9.6	VP Debate	8.8	VP Debate	6.7	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.3	VP Debate	5.2	Attacks by McCain Camp	10.0
3	VP Debate	9.5	Palin CBS Interview	8.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.6	VP Debate	4.4	Attacks by McCain Camp	4.9	VP Debate	7.0
4	Palin ABC Interview	9.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	5.2	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.2	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	4.8	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	5.0
5	Swing States	6.1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	4.7	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	4.6	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	4.1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	3.9	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.2
6	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	5.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	4.5	Swing States	3.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.6	Public Record for Palin	3.6
7	Palin and Women Voters	3.4	Palin Nominated for VP	3.4	Public Record for Palin	4.4	Voting Irregularities	3.4	Palin Nominated for VP	3.4	Attacks by Obama Camp	3.6
8	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.1	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.0	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	3.3	McCain Suspends Campaign	3.3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pres Debate	3.4
9	McCain vs Obama Polls	2.8	Health Care as Issue	2.9	Swing States	4.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	2.9	O'Reilly Interviews Obama	2.8	Swing States	2.0
10	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pres Debate	2.7	Palin ABC Interview	2.8	Palin ABC Interview	3.8	Palin ABC Interview	2.9	Obama Relationship w/ Ayers	2.8	Palin Nominated for VP	1.8

