



**LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE OF THE 2004 CAMPAIGNS
AN ANALYSIS OF NIGHTLY BROADCASTS IN 11 MARKETS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These findings are based on an analysis of evening news broadcasts aired between 5:00 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. by 44 affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC in 11 markets during the 29-day period from October 4 to November 1, 2004. The markets are New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Dallas, Seattle, Miami, Denver, Orlando, Tampa, Dayton and Des Moines; they account for 23 percent of all television viewers in the country.

How much campaign coverage did these local television stations provide during the last month of the 2004 election campaign? Sixty-four percent of the 4,333 broadcasts captured contained at least one election story. A typical half-hour of news contained three minutes and 11 seconds of campaign coverage. An average campaign story was 86 seconds long, and an average candidate soundbite (which appeared in just 28 percent of the stories) was 12 seconds long.

How much of local stations' campaign coverage was devoted to local races? Presidential coverage dominated. Fifty-five percent of the broadcasts captured contained a presidential story. By contrast, just eight percent of those broadcasts contained a story about a local candidate race, which includes campaigns for the U.S. House, state senate or assembly, mayor or city council seat, judgeship, law enforcement posts, education-related offices, and regional and county offices. Eight times more coverage went to stories about accidental injuries, and 12 times more coverage to sports and weather, than to coverage of all local races combined. Nineteen percent of the stories focused on voting issues such as the location of polling stations,

absentee ballot information and reports on early voting efforts, as well as on national voting issues like potential voting irregularities. Just under five percent of the stories focused on local and statewide ballot initiatives.

How were election stories framed? Although the local stations were fairly diligent at providing viewers with information about where to vote and potential problems with the voting process, more stories focused on campaign strategy and the horserace (44 percent of the stories captured) than on campaign issues (32 percent). Adwatch stories made up less than one percent of all stories.

How did the amount of news coverage on local stations compare to the amount of paid political advertising they ran? The amount of time given to presidential news coverage was in most cases roughly equivalent to the amount of presidential advertising time, even in markets where the presidential race was competitive. By contrast, in races for the U.S. Senate, ads outnumbered news by as much as 17-to-one, and in U.S. House races by as much as seven-to-one.

How much special public affairs programming about the election did local stations air outside of regular news broadcasts? Although virtually every station in our study covered the vice-presidential and two presidential debates that occurred during the study period in their entirety, most stations provided little else in prime-time special election programming. Ninety-two percent of all special election programming captured was related to the presidential debates. We captured a total of only 23 minutes of “free air time” – time outside of regular news broadcasts. Some notable exceptions: KCCI, the CBS affiliate (Hearst) in Des Moines, aired an

hour-long program concerning a proposed merger of two Iowa counties; nine stations aired an hour-long Senate debate; some stations aired pre-election specials during the final week of the campaign.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report is released by the Lear Center Local News Archive (www.localnewsarchive.org), a collaboration between the USC Annenberg School for Communication's Norman Lear Center and the NewsLab of the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The principal investigators are Martin Kaplan, associate dean of the USC Annenberg School and director of its Norman Lear Center; Ken Goldstein, professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Director of the University of Wisconsin Center for the Study of Politics; and Matthew Hale, assistant professor in the Center for Public Service at Seton Hall University. The project is funded by a grant from The Joyce Foundation, with additional support from the Carnegie Corporation. In the four weeks preceding Election Day 2004 (October 4th to November 1st), project staff captured local news on the ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC affiliates in 11 markets; four of them large (New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Dallas), five mid-sized (Seattle, Tampa, Miami, Denver and Orlando) and two small (Dayton and Des Moines). This 11-market study of local news coverage of politics is the most in-depth research on individual markets ever conducted.

In addition, the project captured Spanish-language news on six local stations, plus national news on three English-language and two Spanish-language networks, for a parallel

study (done in partnership with the Pew Hispanic Center, directed by Roberto Suro) comparing campaign news in the two languages; see Appendix A for those local news findings.

The news programming was captured through a sophisticated market-based media server technology. Each day, digitally-recorded video was sent over the Internet to the NewsLab servers overnight. The NewsLab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (www.polisci.wisc.edu/newslab) is a unique state-of-the art facility that has the infrastructure, technical skill, and supervisory capability to capture, clip, code, analyze and archive any media in any market – domestic or international – in real time. Video can be gathered, digitized, sorted and archived automatically by the InfoSite system, a media analysis product of CommIT Technology Solutions of Madison, Wisconsin (www.commitonline.com). This system includes a variety of automatic validation checks to ensure superior coding reliability and logical consistency. With over a terabyte of storage, the NewsLab servers manage data, encode and archive video, and serve content through one of many custom media analysis tools, both internally, and to the rest of the world via the Internet. The NewsLab director is Erika Franklin Fowler. The University of Wisconsin Advertising Project (www.polisci.wisc.edu/tvadvertising) is also housed in the NewsLab facility, where it tracks real time political advertising flows across the nation.. Using this system, the NewsLab was able to create datasets in real time that were used in reports on campaign coverage.

The NewsLab system captured on average 93 percent of targeted broadcasts, a notably high rate. In 10 out of the 11 markets, the average station capture rate equaled or exceeded 90 percent. In one market – Orlando, Florida – the station capture rate for the ABC, CBS and Fox affiliates was just under

80 percent and the capture rate for WESH, the NBC affiliate, was 55 percent. As a consequence, specific findings for that market and WESH in particular should be viewed somewhat cautiously.¹ In addition to the four Orlando stations, two other stations had an overall capture rate of less than 90 percent: KTTV, the Fox affiliate in Los Angeles, and KCPQ, the Fox affiliate in Seattle. A full listing of each individual station capture rate can be found in Appendix B.

There is no reason to suspect that there are systematic differences between the overall findings about regularly scheduled news broadcasts reported here and the missing data. Even so, the findings in this report are based only on the broadcasts and campaign news stories actually watched and analyzed by project staff. The majority of the report contains overall percentages and averages which, given the high capture rate, are unlikely to be significantly affected by missing data. Television news broadcasts are often pre-empted or replaced by late-running sporting events, particularly on weekends. As a result, the number of broadcasts for each station is based on broadcasts where the regular news programs actually aired, not on the number of broadcasts a station would have aired without being pre-empted or replaced.

One area where missing data could conceivably affect findings is special election programming outside of regularly scheduled news broadcasts, such as town hall meetings, debates or free air time. It is possible that stations aired programming of this type that failed to be captured, in whole or in part, for technical reasons. For example, the Fox affiliate in Seattle, KCPQ, aired a special election program on October 26th hosted by the station's news anchors, but our data set captured only the beginning of the program. A further discussion of special programming appears later in this report; because of the random

¹ Prior to the release of this report, the WESH station manager contacted us to report that WESH aired a series of 5 to 8 minute mini-debates focusing on local and state candidates and ballot issues during their 5:30 pm broadcast. These aired in the 30 days leading to up to the election.

nature of programming missed, it is highly unlikely that a significant quantity of such programming fails to appear in this data set.

The coding instrument (see www.localnewsarchive.org) was designed to capture a wide variety of information about campaign news stories, such as:

- Total story length
- Date story aired
- Total number of candidate soundbites
- Length of candidate soundbites
- Station ownership
- Network affiliation
- Type of election (e.g., president, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, state assembly)
- Story frame (e.g., strategy, horserace coverage, issue-based coverage)

Overall, the study examined 4,333 news broadcasts, or 2,166 hours of local news programming, over a 29-day period. A total of 6,994 campaign news stories aired during these broadcasts. In addition to focusing on regularly scheduled news programs, researchers monitored all prime-time broadcasting in an effort to capture any special election programming (town-hall meetings, debates, free candidate air time) that aired in prime-time. A total of 231 hours of this special programming was captured in the study. Ninety-nine percent of it focused on a debate of some kind, and all but five percent of that was coverage of the three presidential-level debates that aired during the month monitored.

FINDINGS: HOW MUCH CAMPAIGN COVERAGE AIRED, AND WHAT RACES WERE COVERED?

Overall, almost two in three of all broadcasts captured (64 percent) contained at least one campaign story. This represents a significant increase from a 2002 Lear Center study (available at localnewsarchive.org), which found that just 44 percent of all captured broadcasts contained an election story. The primary reason for the increase was the presidential race, which dominated 2004 election news. Sixty-one percent of all campaign stories focused on the presidential contest. The 44 stations in the study devoted four-and-a-half times the number of stories to the presidential race as on all other local races combined. Presidential coverage dominated in all markets. The only market where presidential stories comprised less than 50 percent of all stories was Denver (45 percent). Three markets – New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia – devoted over 70 percent of their coverage to the presidential race. Fifty-five percent of all news broadcasts captured in the 11 markets contained at least one presidential story.

The stations devoted significantly less time to coverage of local races. Just eight percent of all broadcasts captured contained a story about a local election, which included campaigns for the U.S. House, state senate or assembly, mayor or city council seat, judgeship, law enforcement posts, education-related offices, and regional and county offices. Of these 417 local election stories, 60 percent focused on races for the House. Despite the fact that House races comprised the largest contingent of local race stories, the gap between House stories and presidential stories is astounding in many markets. Not one story about a race for the House appeared on local television news in Los Angeles during the study period. In Dayton, Ohio, presidential stories

outnumbered stories about House races by 34-to-one; in Philadelphia, by 33-to-one. The most coverage of House races in the markets studied was provided by Dallas stations, where there were several redistricted and competitive seats; even there, presidential stories outnumbered stories about House races by six-to-one.

All 11 markets had state senate and/or state assembly races to cover. Yet a total of only 70 stories – just one percent of all campaign stories captured – focused on these offices. The New York City market had the highest percentage of state senate and assembly stories, at 2.1 percent, followed by Miami at 1.9 percent. Yet the ratio of these stories to presidential stories was 37-to-one in New York and 27-to-one in Miami.

Presidential dominance extended to races for the U.S. Senate as well. Ten of the 11 markets had a race for Senate, yet just six percent of all broadcasts captured in these markets had a story about a Senate race. In Los Angeles, a total of two stories about the Senate race aired during the broadcasts captured. This means that collectively Los Angeles stations devoted less time to the Senate race in a month than they collectively gave to teasers and bumper music in a single night. The pattern improved slightly in markets where the Senate race was competitive. For example, in Denver, home to a highly competitive Senate race, 12 percent of the broadcasts contained a story about the race. Even so, the Denver stations devoted about six times more coverage to crime, and twice as much time to accidental injuries, than to coverage of the Senate race on local news.²

² Two stations in Denver – KCNC, the CBS O&O, and KUSA, the NBC affiliate (Gannett) -- aired an hour-long Senate debate in prime-time.

The race for Governor in Seattle was one of the closest in recent history, yet just five percent of the broadcasts captured had a story about the gubernatorial race. The Seattle stations devoted 14 times more coverage to teasers and bumper music than they devoted to the gubernatorial race in their local news programs.³

While it is clear that the stations devoted little time to coverage of non-presidential candidates, they did devote a significant amount of time to stories about voting issues. Nineteen percent of all political stories in the sample focused on local voting issues, such as the location of polling stations, absentee ballot information and reports on early voting efforts, as well as on national voting issues like potential voting irregularities. Stories about voting issues were in fact the second most common type of election story, after coverage of the Presidential race.

Non-candidate races – stories about ballot or bond initiatives – accounted for about four-and-a-half percent of all campaign stories captured in the 11 markets. Dallas stations nearly doubled that, with most of those stories about a local referendum on a new Cowboys football stadium. In Los Angeles, just over 11 percent of all campaign stories captured were about ballot or bond initiatives. Nine out of ten Los Angeles initiative stories were about statewide referenda, such as a bond for stem cell research and amendments to the three-strikes law. Of all the ballot or bond initiative stories captured, slightly more than half focused on local, rather than statewide initiatives.

A typical half-hour of local news included these elements:

³ One Seattle station (KIRO, CBS, Cox) aired an hour-long gubernatorial debate in prime-time.

- Advertising: 8 minutes 51 seconds
- Sports and weather: 6 minutes 21 seconds
- Elections: 3 minutes 11 seconds
 - Presidential coverage: 2 minutes
 - Non-candidate coverage (initiatives, referenda): 45 seconds
 - All other races (local, state, federal): 30 seconds
- Crime: 2 minutes 34 seconds
- Local interest: 1 minute 56 seconds
- Teasers, intros, music: 1 minute 43 seconds
- Health: 1 minute 22 seconds
- Other: 1 minute 12 seconds
- Unintentional injury: 55 seconds
- Business/economy: 47 seconds
- Government (non-election coverage): 28 seconds
- Iraq: 25 seconds
- Foreign policy: 13 seconds

FINDINGS: WHAT TYPE OF CAMPAIGN COVERAGE AIRED?

More election coverage focused on campaign strategy and the horserace than on campaign issues. Overall 44 percent of the stories focused on strategy or the horserace, and 32 percent focused on campaign issues. A total of 64 stories out of 6,992 (just under one percent) were coded as critiquing candidate advertisements. About two-and-a-half percent of the stories

focused on personal characteristics of the candidates. Twenty-two percent were coded as “other;” the large majority of these stories were about voting issues or the process of voting.

Fifty-seven percent of the presidential stories, and 61 percent of the stories about Senate races, focused on strategy or the horserace. By contrast, 46 percent of the stories about House races focused on strategy or the horserace. Stories about House races were somewhat more likely to focus on issues than either presidential or Senate race stories. Thirty-three percent of House stories focused on issues, compared to 30 percent for presidential stories, and just 27 percent for Senate stories. Issue-focused stories actually outnumber stories focusing on strategy or the horserace in the comparatively rare stories about local races, such as state senate or assembly, mayor or city council seat, judgeship, law enforcement posts, education-related offices, and regional and county offices. In these stories, 37 percent focused on issues, and just 33 percent focused on strategy or the horserace. These results clearly indicate that stations have the capacity to focus election coverage on issues instead of strategy; they simply choose not to do so for the top of the ticket races.

A similar pattern – the more local the race, the greater the opportunity for substance – appears when comparing the average length of campaign stories. The average length of all campaign stories for all races was 86 seconds. The average length for a presidential story was just under 88 seconds. For a Senate race story, it was 93 seconds. The average length of a local races story – which includes House, state senate or assembly, mayor or city council seat, judgeship, law enforcement posts, education-related offices, and regional and county offices – was 99 seconds. Interestingly, it was stories about state assembly, mayors and regional offices

that were the longest; stories about these races had an average length of around 120 seconds. Unfortunately, these three offices where longer stories did appear accounted for less than one-and-a-half percent of all stories.

The average length of a candidate soundbite was 12 seconds. Segmenting this by the level of race shows the same pattern as story focus and story length: in this case, the more local the race, the greater opportunity for candidate discourse. The average length of a presidential candidate soundbite was 10.3 seconds. The average length of a soundbite for a Senate candidate was 14.5 seconds; the average length of a soundbite for a House candidate was more than double that of a presidential candidate, or 22.3 seconds. House and Senate candidates were rarely given the opportunity to provide soundbites.

In the 11 markets studied, the presidential candidates received eight times as many soundbites, and five times as much soundbite time, as all House candidates combined. For the most part, the same picture appears when comparing presidential race soundbites to all other candidates within individual markets. In eight markets the candidates for president and vice president received more total soundbite time than all other candidates combined. The three markets where all other candidates combined actually spoke more than the presidential candidates – Tampa, Miami, and Dayton – were all hotly contested markets in the presidential race.

FINDINGS: HOW DID DIFFERENT MARKETS AND STATIONS COMPARE ON LOCAL RACE COVERAGE?

That a campaign is going on is usually not enough to get a race covered; to give it airtime, a station must find it newsworthy, which usually means finding it competitive. For example, Dallas had several redistricted and competitive House races. As a result, 13 percent of the stories in the Dallas market were about local races, significantly more than any other market. In particular, two Dallas stations, KXAS, the NBC affiliate in Dallas (an NBC O&O), and WFAA, the ABC affiliate in Dallas (Belo), devoted more than 15 percent of their campaign stories to local races, and KTVT, the CBS affiliate (Viacom) spent 13 percent of its campaign story airtime on local races

Even in markets without a wealth of competitive local races, some stations were able to devote significantly more time to local races than their competitors. For example, the CBS affiliate in Des Moines, KCCI (Hearst-Argyle), focused 11 percent of its stories on local races, while its closest market competitor devoted just three percent to local campaigns, and one Des Moines station failed to air a single story about a local race. Thirteen percent of the stories on the NBC affiliate in Denver, KUSA (Gannett), were about local races, more than double their nearest competitor in that market. Similarly, 12 percent of the stories airing on the CBS O&O in New York, WCBS (Viacom), were about local races, almost twice the amount of local race coverage as their nearest competitor.

Even if coverage of local races depends to some extent on the competitiveness of the local races, how stories are framed does not. Some markets and stations seem to cover issues

significantly more than others. Tampa was the only market where issue stories (averaging 41 percent) outnumbered strategy/horserace stories (averaging 35 percent). Three of the four Tampa stations – WTSP (CBS, Gannett), WTVT (FOX O&O), and WFLA (NBC, Media General) – aired more issue stories than strategy stories; WFTS, the ABC affiliate (Scripps), aired an equal number of strategy and issue stories. In Orlando⁴ and Dayton, strategy stories captured outnumbered issue stories by only two percent. In Orlando, two stations – WKMG (CBS, Post-Newsweek), and WESH (NBC, Hearst-Argyle) aired more issues stories than strategy stories, while the other two stations focused more on strategy. Similarly, in Dayton two stations – WDTN (ABC, LIN TV), and WKEF (NBC, Sinclair) – aired more issue stories than strategy stories, and the two other stations focused more on strategy.

All of the other markets had at least a ten percentage point gap in favor of strategy stories. Yet even in these markets, some stations focused significantly more of their coverage on issues than all others. In Philadelphia, two stations had close to a 20 percentage point gap, and one approached a 30 point gap.⁵ In New York, issue stories on WNBC (NBC O&O) outnumbered strategy stories by almost 15 percentage points. By contrast, strategy stories outnumbered issues stories on WCBS, the CBS O&O, by 40 percentage points. KING, the NBC affiliate (Belo) in Seattle, had only a four percent gap in favor of strategy, while two stations had over a 20 point difference, and one had a 30 point difference. In Dallas, WFAA, the ABC affiliate (Belo), only had a two percentage point gap in favor of strategy, while the other stations had at least a 10 point gap. In Des Moines, KCCI, the CBS affiliate (Hearst), also had only a two

⁴ The overall capture rate in Orlando was less than 75 percent, and the capture rate for WESH was less than 60 percent. Consequently, these results should be viewed with some caution.

⁵ While a majority of the Fox affiliate's stories were issue-focused, that station broadcast only 21 campaign stories, compared to the average 177 stories of the other affiliates in the market.

percentage point gap, while WOI, the ABC affiliate (Citadel), had a 34 point gap. In Los Angeles, on KCBS, the CBS O&O, strategy stories outnumbered issues stories by only one percentage point, while strategy stories trumped issues stories on KABC, the ABC O&O, by 33 percentage points. In Denver, strategy stories outnumbered issues stories by at least 11, and as much as 24, percentage points. Similarly, in Miami the range was 12 to 20 percentage points in favor of strategy stories

Another way of comparing and grouping stations is by whether or not they took a public pledge to provide candidates with free air-time. Twenty of the 44 stations in our sample made that commitment. We compared these two groups in terms of the percentage of stories devoted to issues, the average amount of total election coverage per station, the percentage of locally focused stories and the total number of stories. The only notable difference between the two groups was on the percentage of stories focusing on local races. On average, the 20 stations that took the pledge to provide free air time devoted seven percent of their stories to local races. The 24 stations that did not take the pledge averaged just four percent. This proved to be statistically significant ($p = .016$).

In addition to providing the individual station capture rate for each station, Appendix B contains findings on the average length of a campaign story, the percentage of stories about issues and the percentage of stories about local races.

FINDINGS: HOW DID CAMPAIGN NEWS COMPARE TO CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING?

Using data collected by the Wisconsin Advertising Project (www.polisci.wisc.edu/tvadvertising) we were able to compare the amount of election news coverage to the amount of paid advertising that aired from 5:00 to 11:30 pm. All paid political advertising is counted, regardless of its sponsor. The comparisons below include all broadcasts from October 4 to October 31, 2004. Comparisons are only possible for federal offices. For further detail, see Appendix C.

At the presidential level, in the eight of our 11 markets where presidential ads ran, the ratio of presidential news time to presidential race advertising time on the news was about one-to-one.⁶ Even in the four markets considered presidential toss-ups, the amount of advertising time was only slightly more than the amount of news time. It is important to remember, however, that advertising is not confined to prime-time programming, and that the total amount of presidential ads dramatically outweighs total presidential news coverage.

A different story appears when looking at U.S. Senate and House races. Regardless of how competitive the elections were,⁷ advertising was dramatically more prevalent than election news. In the ten markets with a Senate race, the ratio of advertising to news time was six-to-one. This ratio shrinks slightly to just under five-to-one in Denver, Tampa, Miami and Orlando, where there were highly competitive Senate races. In the three markets where Senate races were

⁶ No presidential ads aired in Los Angeles, New York or Dallas.

⁷ Determinations of competitiveness are based on the Cook Report www.cookpolitical.com using October 26, 2004 ratings.

marginally competitive (Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Seattle) the ratio of ads to news skyrockets to 17-to-one. It is likely that the stations in these markets did not view those three races as truly competitive, but that risk-adverse candidates took no chances. The ads-to-news ratio was about six-to-one in the three markets that were clearly not competitive (New York, Dayton, and Des Moines), where both news stations and candidates decided that publicizing the races was not worth the effort.

For House races, the 11-market average of ad time to news time was about six-to-one. This ratio remained approximately the same in markets with races considered tossup, likely or leaning. In the four markets where House races were regarded as noncompetitive (Dayton, Miami, Los Angeles, and Orlando), where neither candidates nor stations made much of an effort to publicize or cover the campaigns, the ratio of ad to news time drops to about one-and-a-half to one.

FINDINGS: WHAT SPECIAL POLITICAL PROGRAMMING AIRED ON LOCAL STATIONS OUTSIDE THE NEWS?

In addition to analyzing election coverage during local news broadcasts, we also monitored other prime-time election coverage that aired, noting the race involved, the length of the special coverage and its format. This type of coverage includes debates, debate preview shows, debate wrap-up shows, town hall meetings and any free air time given candidates outside of regular news broadcasts. As noted above, these findings should be viewed with some caution, as they result only from the data captured. It is possible that stations aired special election

programming during the small amount of non-news programming that we were unable to capture.

The 44 stations in our sample aired a total of 231 hours of this type of programming.⁸ Ninety-seven percent of it was debate-related. As with news coverage, the presidential debates dominated special election programming. About 212 hours (92 percent) of all special election programming focused on either the vice presidential or the two presidential debates that aired during the month we captured broadcasts. Simply airing these three debates accounted for 76 percent (nearly 175 hours) of all special programming time. Presidential debate preview shows accounted for about one percent (one and one-half hours), and post-debate wrap-ups accounted for 15 percent (about 35 hours).

Nine stations in our sample aired an hour-long Senate debate during our captured broadcasts.⁹ These stations were in Tampa (WFLA,¹⁰ NBC, Media General; and WTSP, CBS, Gannett); Denver (KCNC, CBS, Viacom; and KUSA, NBC, Gannett); Philadelphia (KYW, CBS, Viacom; and WCAU, NBC O&O); Miami (WFOR, CBS, Viacom; and WTVJ, NBC O&O); and Seattle (KING, NBC, Belo).

Only two stations in our sample aired debates or joint appearances with House candidates during prime-time. KCCI, the CBS affiliate in Des Moines (Hearst) aired an hour-long debate/joint appearance with two House candidates, and KUSA, the NBC affiliate (Gannett)

⁸ All of the stations in our sample aired network and nationally-syndicated programs, ranging from news magazines like *60 Minutes* and *Nightline*, to entertainment shows like *Access Hollywood* and *Entertainment Tonight*, whose content sometimes dealt with campaigns. A total of 27 hours of non-local programming with election-related content of this type was captured; it is not a part of this analysis.

⁹ WESH (Orlando, NBC, Hearst) aired an hour-long Senate Debate that we did not capture.

¹⁰ We captured two hour-long Senate debates on WFLA; the other stations aired one Senate debate each.

aired a five-minute “mini-debate” segment with House candidates. KCPQ, the Fox affiliate in Seattle (Tribune) also aired a brief mini-debate segment on Seattle ballot propositions. Other non-presidential candidate debates captured include an hour long gubernatorial debate aired on KIRO, the CBS affiliate (Cox) in Seattle.

Two stations in our sample aired significant and unique election-focused programming. An hour-long program concerning a proposed county merger in Des Moines, Iowa, aired on KCCI, the CBS affiliate (Hearst). The only instance of a town-hall meeting that was captured was a 30-minute program that aired on WPVI, the ABC O&O in Philadelphia, immediately after a presidential debate.

Our sample contained 23 minutes of free air time that aired outside of regular news broadcasts. The Fox affiliates in Seattle (Tribune), Dallas (Fox O&O) and New York (Fox O&O) aired a total of seven brief segments (around 40 seconds each) on the presidential race. The ABC affiliate in Des Moines (Citadel) aired three longer segments (almost six minutes each). Two focused on the Senate race, and one on a House race. NBC’s Seattle affiliate (Belo) aired one segment on the gubernatorial race, which was just over one minute in length.

A few other stations aired other forms of prime-time election coverage. As noted above, KCPQ, the Fox affiliate in Seattle (Tribune) appears to have aired a special programming segment that was not captured. Other significant special programming examples captured include these:

- WCAU (NBC O&O, Philadelphia) aired an hour long pre-election special.

- WTVJ (NBC O&O, Miami) aired two separate pre-election specials during the final week of the campaign. One was an hour-long broadcast focusing on various races, and a second was a 30 minute special on various races and voting procedures.
- KUSA (Denver, Gannett) aired an hour-long program focusing on House races.
- KNBC (NBC O&O, Los Angeles) aired a 30 minute program providing descriptions of ballot initiatives, and a 30 minute program focusing on the Latino vote.¹¹
- WPVI (ABC O&O, Philadelphia) aired a 30 minute pre-election program focusing on the presidential race.

¹¹ KXAS, the NBC O&O in Dallas, also aired a shortened version of a Latino vote special.

APPENDIX A

SPANISH-LANGUAGE LOCAL NEWS

Local news comparisons of English- and Spanish-language coverage are based on an analysis of all evening news broadcasts aired between 5:00 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. by the local affiliates of ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, Telemundo, and Univision in three markets (Los Angeles, New York and Miami) from October 4 to November 1, 2004. The Spanish-language local stations were KMEX (Univision) and KVEA (Telemundo) in Los Angeles; WLTV (Univision) and WSCV (Telemundo) in Miami; and WXTV (Univision) and WNJU (Telemundo) in New York. The project was funded by a grant from The Pew Hispanic Center, which is directed by Roberto Suro.

How much election coverage aired on English- and Spanish-language local news?

English-language stations averaged more campaign stories, longer campaign stories and contained more candidate soundbites than Spanish-language stations.

A total of 2,724 stories were captured and analyzed in the three markets. Of these, 1,942 aired on the 12 English-language stations, and 782 aired on the six Spanish-language stations. Of the three markets, Miami was the only one considered to be competitive in the presidential race. Florida also had a highly competitive race for the US Senate. As a result, 49 percent of all English-language stories, and 43 percent of all Spanish-language stories, aired in Miami.

In New York, Los Angeles, and Miami, English-language stations devoted more news time to elections than Spanish-language stations. Election-focused news comprised 11.2 percent of all English-language news and 9.5 percent of all Spanish language news aired by local affiliates.

The amount of election coverage, however, varied significantly by market. In New York and Miami, the percentage of all news devoted to elections was almost identical regardless of language. Nine percent of all news captured on both English- and Spanish-language stations in New York was devoted to elections. This means that a New York viewer would see two minutes 36 seconds of election coverage in a typical half-hour news broadcast in either English or Spanish. In Miami, the English-language stations devoted slightly more of their news to elections (15 percent) than the Spanish-language stations (14 percent). This equals four minutes 37 seconds of election coverage in a typical English-language broadcast, and four minutes five seconds in a typical Spanish-language broadcast. In Los Angeles, the English-language stations devoted nine percent of their news time to elections, compared to just six percent on the Spanish-language stations. English-language viewers in Los Angeles would therefore see an average of two minutes 43 seconds of coverage in a typical broadcast, compared to one minute 54 seconds on a typical Spanish-language broadcast.

How much local stations' campaign coverage was devoted to local races?

Presidential coverage dominated in both Spanish and English. Sixty-four percent of the English-language campaign stories, and 67 percent of the Spanish-language campaign stories, focused on the presidential race. Only six percent of the English-language campaign stories, and just three

percent of the campaign stories on the Spanish-language stations, focused on local races, such as those for the U.S. House, State Senate, State Assembly, mayor, courts, law enforcement, education-related offices, and other regional offices.

Despite the fact that the Miami market was significantly more competitive at the top of the ticket than New York or Los Angeles, most of the local race coverage in both languages came from Miami. Out of a total of 107 English-language stories about local races, 70 percent aired in Miami. Similarly, out of the 26 Spanish-language stories about local races, 73 percent aired in Miami. Much of this was driven by coverage of the Miami mayoral race, which accounted for about 20 percent of all English-language stories about local races, but 65 percent of all Spanish-language stories about local races.

The English-language stations devoted four percent of their election coverage to ballot and bond initiatives. The Spanish-language stations were slightly higher, devoting five percent of their coverage to ballot or bond initiatives. As with local race coverage, most of this coverage aired in a single market, Los Angeles, which aired 71 percent of ballot or bond initiative stories in both languages. Virtually all of this coverage centered on statewide proposition such as those concerning stem-cell research and amendments to the three-strikes law.

While local stations in both languages largely failed to cover local races, in general they did provide a fair amount of coverage about voting issues, such as polling locations, registration procedures and the potential for voting irregularities. Nineteen percent of all English-language stories, and 21 percent of all Spanish-language stories, focused on voting issues. In Los Angeles and New York, the Spanish-language stations aired more stories about voting issues than the

English-language stations. Just ten percent of the English-language stories in Los Angeles focused on voting issues. By contrast, 33 percent of the Spanish-language stories in Los Angeles focused on voting issues. In New York, 11 percent of the English-language and 19 percent of the Spanish-language stories focused on voting issues. The breakdown in Miami was reversed, as 27 percent of the English-language stories focused on voting issues compared to 17 percent of the Spanish-language stories.

How much local election coverage focused on campaign issues or critiqued candidate advertising? Forty-five percent of the English-language campaign stories, and 53 percent of the Spanish-language stories, focused on strategy or the horserace. Local stations in both languages proved fairly diligent at providing viewers with information about where to vote and about potential problems with the voting process. Twenty-one percent of all stories focused on these types of voting issues. Thirty percent of the English-language stories, and 21 percent of the Spanish language stories, focused on issues.

How long were election stories on local news? The average length of an English-language story was one minute 43 seconds. The average length of a Spanish-language story was one minute 18 seconds. Los Angeles had the lowest average story length in both Spanish and English. An average English-language story in Los Angeles was one minute 38 seconds, while an average Spanish-language story in Los Angeles was one minute seven seconds. New York ranked second in average story length in both languages, with an English-language average of one minute 44 seconds, and a Spanish-language average of one minute 21 seconds. Miami had the longest average story length in both languages, although Miami stories were only slightly

longer than those in New York. An average English-language story in Miami was one minute 45 seconds, compared to one minute 23 seconds on Miami's Spanish-language stations.

How long were candidate soundbites on local news? The average length of a candidate soundbite on the English-language stations was 12 seconds, compared to 10 seconds for an average Spanish-language soundbite. Overall the difference between markets was quite small; no more than five seconds separated the highest market from the lowest in either language. Even so, the same type of market consistency appears. In both languages, Miami had the highest average soundbite, followed by Los Angeles and then New York.

A different pattern appears when we compare the percentage of election stories that contained at least one soundbite. Around 40 percent of stories on English-language stations in New York and Los Angeles contained at least one candidate soundbite. In both markets this was significantly higher than the Spanish-language stations. Just six percent of the Spanish-language stations in Los Angeles, and 12 percent of the Spanish-language stories in New York, contained a candidate soundbite. In Miami, the differences were less dramatic. Twenty-five percent of the English-language stories contained a soundbite, compared to 19 percent of the Spanish-language stories.

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL STATION COMPARISONS

| Market | Station | Network | Owner | Video Capture | Average Campaign | % of Stories | % of Stories |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| (DMA) | call letters | Affiliation | Name | Rate | Story Length (sec) | About Local Races | About Issues |
| Dallas (7) | WFAA | ABC | BELO | 95.8% | 102 | 15% | 41% |
| Dallas (7) | KTVT | CBS | VIACOM | 95.8% | 86 | 13% | 29% |
| Dallas (7) | KDFW | FOX | FOX | 96.0% | 75 | 9% | 34% |
| Dallas (7) | KXAS | NBC | NBC | 96.0% | 82 | 17% | 30% |
| Dayton (65) | WDTN | ABC | LIN TV | 92.8% | 90 | 6% | 38% |
| Dayton (65) | WHIO | CBS | COX | 89.9% | 58 | 4% | 33% |
| Dayton (65) | WRGT | FOX | SINCLAIR | 92.6% | 78 | 3% | 38% |
| Dayton (65) | WKEF | NBC | SINCLAIR | 92.0% | 68 | 2% | 37% |
| Denver (18) | KMGH | ABC | MCGRAW | 91.0% | 62 | 3% | 27% |
| Denver (18) | KCNC | CBS | VIACOM | 93.1% | 71 | 6% | 29% |
| Denver (18) | KDVR | FOX | FOX | 93.1% | 62 | 1% | 24% |
| Denver (18) | KUSA | NBC | GANNETT | 93.1% | 76 | 13% | 28% |
| Des Moines (73) | WOI | ABC | CITADEL | 100.0% | 78 | 1% | 24% |
| Des Moines (73) | KCCI | CBS | HEARST | 100.0% | 81 | 11% | 36% |
| Des Moines (73) | KDSM | FOX | SINCLAIR | 100.0% | 71 | 0% | 34% |
| Des Moines (73) | WHO | NBC | NY TIMES | 100.0% | 66 | 3% | 32% |
| Los Angeles (2) | KABC | ABC | ABC | 99.7% | 105 | 2% | 32% |
| Los Angeles (2) | KCBS | CBS | VIACOM | 100.0% | 101 | 1% | 43% |
| Los Angeles (2) | KTTV | FOX | FOX | 76.7% | 90 | 3% | 37% |
| Los Angeles (2) | KNBC | NBC | NBC | 100.0% | 94 | 1% | 36% |
| Miami (15) | WPLG | ABC | POST-NEWSWEEK | 98.9% | 103 | 12% | 28% |
| Miami (15) | WFOR | CBS | VIACOM | 98.9% | 97 | 9% | 25% |
| Miami (15) | WSVN | FOX | SUNBEAM | 98.9% | 138 | 2% | 23% |
| Miami (15) | WTVJ | NBC | NBC | 92.0% | 92 | 6% | 24% |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|-----|---------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| New York (1) | WABC | ABC | ABC | 99.7% | 98 | 3% | 31% |
| New York (1) | WCBS | CBS | VIACOM | 99.5% | 105 | 12% | 21% |
| New York (1) | WNYW | FOX | FOX | 99.7% | 67 | 2% | 29% |
| New York (1) | WNBC | NBC | NBC | 99.5% | 142 | 6% | 50% |
| Orlando (20) | WFTV | ABC | COX | 79.3% | 76 | 4% | 31% |
| Orlando (20) | WKMG | CBS | POST-NEWSWEEK | 79.3% | 71 | 7% | 39% |
| Orlando (20) | WOFL | FOX | FOX | 79.3% | 74 | 1% | 24% |
| Orlando (20) | WESH | NBC | HEARST | 55.2% | 103 | 10% | 52% |
| Philadelphia (4) | WPVI | ABC | ABC | 100.0% | 70 | 7% | 27% |
| Philadelphia (4) | KYW | CBS | VIACOM | 100.0% | 81 | 2% | 28% |
| Philadelphia (4) | WTFX | FOX | FOX | 100.0% | 100 | 0% | 57% |
| Philadelphia (4) | WCAU | NBC | NBC | 100.0% | 69 | 2% | 22% |
| Seattle (12) | KOMO | ABC | FISHER | 89.7% | 68 | 6% | 23% |
| Seattle (12) | KIRO | CBS | COX | 92.0% | 56 | 9% | 15% |
| Seattle (12) | KCPQ | FOX | TRIBUNE | 84.6% | 79 | 1% | 31% |
| Seattle (12) | KING | NBC | BELO | 92.0% | 82 | 7% | 40% |
| Tampa (14) | WFTS | ABC | SCRIPPS | 82.8% | 111 | 6% | 40% |
| Tampa (14) | WTSP | CBS | GANNETT | 93.1% | 107 | 1% | 41% |
| Tampa (14) | WTVT | FOX | FOX | 92.3% | 103 | 5% | 46% |
| Tampa (14) | WFLA | NBC | MEDIA GENERAL | 93.1% | 105 | 7% | 36% |
| All Station Average | | | | 93.1% | 86 | 5% | 32.8% |

APPENDIX C

AD TIME COMPARED TO NEWS TIME*

5:00-11:30 pm, Oct 1 – Oct 31, 2004, 4 Stations Per Market

Presidential Coverage

| Markets | Ad Time | News Time | Ratio of Ad to News Time |
|---|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| All markets (Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Des Moines, LA, Miami, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Seattle, Tampa) | 70.1 hours | 95.2 hours | 0.74:1 |
| Toss-ups (Dayton, Des Moines, Miami, Orlando, Philadelphia, Tampa) | 60.5 hours | 54.9 hours | 1.1:1 |
| Likely or leaning (Denver and Seattle) | 9.5 hours | 11.8 hours | 0.81:1 |
| Toss-ups + likely or leaning (Dayton, Des Moines, Miami, Orlando, Philadelphia, Tampa, Denver and Seattle) | 70.1 hours | 66.7 hours | 1.05:1 |

Senate Coverage

| Markets | Ad Time | News Time | Ratio of Ad to News Time |
|--|------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| All markets with a Senate race (Dayton, Denver, Des Moines, LA, Miami, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Seattle, Tampa) | 34.1 hours | 5.6 hours | 6:1 |
| Toss-ups (Denver, Miami, Orlando, Tampa) | 21.2 hours | 4.4 hours | 4.8:1 |
| Likely or leaning (LA, Philadelphia, Seattle) | 8.2 hours | 28.3 minutes | 17.4:1 |
| Markets with noncompetitive Senate race (Dayton, Des Moines, New York) | 4.6 hours | 43.7 minutes | 6.4: 1 |

House Coverage

| Markets | Ad Time | News Time | Ratio of Ad to News Time |
|---|------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| All markets (Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Des Moines, LA, Miami, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Seattle, Tampa) | 34.2 hours | 5.9 hours | 5.7:1 |
| Toss-ups (Dallas, Denver, New York, Seattle) | 19.6 hours | 3.1 hours | 6.2:1 |
| Likely or leaning (Des Moines, Philadelphia, Tampa) | 13.4 hours | 1.9 hours | 6.7:1 |
| Markets with noncompetitive House race (Dayton, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando) | 1.2 hours | 50.1 minutes | 1.4: 1 |

*Data on competitiveness comes from the 10/29/04 Cook Political Report:
cookpolitical.com/races/presidential/current.php