



News, Improved

How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change

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Methodological Report

Journalists Training Survey II

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates
for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

November 2006

The Journalists Training survey, sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is based on telephone interviews with 2,025 news executives and news staffers and was conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Specifically, PSRAI interviewed 741 news executives from eleven different media categories: daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, ethnic newspapers, national television networks, cable TV networks, local television stations, national radio networks, local radio stations, news magazines, wire services, and Internet news web sites.¹ PSRAI also interviewed 1,284 news staffers in these same media categories.

Interviewing was conducted using a dual-mode approach allowing respondents to participate either by conducting a telephone interview or by completing the survey online. Executive interviews were completed from September 5 to November 6, 2006 and staffer interviews were conducted from September 5 to November 16, 2006.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted by elite interviewers at Princeton Data Source. Respondents were sent advance letters in the mail explaining the purpose of the study and encouraging their participation. The advance letters included a web address and password so people could complete the interview online. A follow-up email was also sent to everyone in the sample who had a valid email address. Advance letters were sent in two waves to ease administration and to help time initial phone calls.

National television networks, Cable TV networks, local TV stations, national radio networks, local radio stations, news magazines, wire services and Internet news web sites were included in the first wave, for which advanced letters were mailed on Thursday, August 31, 2006. Email reminders were sent on Wednesday, September 6, 2006 to those in this first wave who had not yet completed the survey. Phone interviewing for those

¹ Specific media categories, for example, daily newspapers, local TV stations, and local radio stations were stratified by organization size to ensure the sample included a wide range of organizations.



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who had not yet completed the survey and did not receive an email reminder began on Thursday, September 7, 2006 – a week after the mailing of the advance letters. Calling for the remainder of this first batch began on Monday, September 11, 2006.

Daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, and ethnic newspapers were included in the second group, for which advanced letters were mailed on Thursday, September 7, 2006. Email reminders were sent on Wednesday, September 13, 2006 to those in this second wave who had not yet completed the survey. Phone interviewing for those who had not yet completed the survey and did not receive an email reminder began on Thursday, September 14, 2006 – a week after the mailing of the advance letters. Calling for the remainder of this second batch began on Monday, September 18, 2006.

Quota tracking and progress were monitored daily. Additional or replacement sample was released as necessary.

Interviewers made up to 20 calls to respondents to complete an interview. Interviewers were available to conduct interviews during the regular workday or in the evening and on weekends as necessary. Interviewers accommodated respondents' schedules and arranged appointments. In addition, respondents were given a toll-free phone number to call to schedule an appointment or complete an interview at their convenience.



Sampling

Independent samples were drawn from each of the 11 media groups. Sampling procedures are detailed below.

Daily Newspapers

The Daily Newspaper sample frame was defined as all daily newspapers with a daily circulation of 15,000 or more that were listed in the most recent version of *Bacons Media Source*. Newspapers that qualified for the Ethnic media group were excluded. The Daily Newspaper group was first divided into 3 strata based on circulation. Stratum 1 consisted of the top 12 circulated newspapers. Stratum 2 consisted of the remaining 88 organizations that rounded out the top 100 newspapers. Stratum 3 consisted of all other daily newspapers with a minimum circulation of 15,000. The entire frame included 665 newspapers.

Table 1 shows the target completes for the daily newspaper strata. In order to fill the quotas as closely as possible, we started by sampling one executive and twelve staffers at random from each organization in stratum 1. For stratum 2, we drew one executive and six staffers at random from each organization. For stratum 3, we first drew a random sample of organizations from the 565 total in the stratum. Then from that sample, we drew one executive and two staffers at random from each of the selected organizations. News Executives included people with the following titles: managing editor; assistant/deputy managing editor; executive editor; editor-in-chief; and editor.

Table 1 : Daily Newspaper Sample Quotas

	<u>Orgs</u>	<u>Execs</u>	<u>Staffers</u>
Stratum 1- Daily Papers - Top 12	12	12	70
Stratum 2 - Daily Papers - 13-100	88	88	259
Stratum 3 - Daily Papers - 101+	250	250	246
Daily Newspapers Total	350	350	575

Weekly Newspapers

The Weekly Newspaper sample frame was defined as all weekly newspapers with 15,000+ circulation listed in *Bacons Media Source*. Newspapers that qualified for the Ethnic media group were excluded. Additionally, special papers, such as ethnic, religious, military, and alternative weeklies were also excluded from the sample frame. The sample frame included 478 newspapers from which a random sample of organizations was drawn. Executives and staffers were then randomly selected from the sampled newspapers.



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Ethnic Newspapers

The Ethnic Newspapers sample frame was defined as all weekly or daily ethnic newspapers with a circulation of 15,000+ listed in *Bacons Media Source*. The sample frame included 385 newspapers from which a random sample was drawn. Executives and staffers were then drawn at random from the sampled newspapers.

Local TV stations

The Local TV sample frame was defined as all local television stations in *Bacons Media Source* that had listing for a News Director. The sample was stratified by MSA. Stations in the top 50 MSAs were put in one stratum and the remaining stations were put in the other stratum. Additionally, target quotas were set for Spanish speaking stations. The sample frame included a total of 698 stations, 60 of which were identified as Spanish-speaking. Random sample for Spanish and non-Spanish stations were drawn from this frame. Executives and staffers were selected at random from the sampled organizations.

National TV Networks

Six networks were included in the National Television Networks sample frame: ABC; CBS; NBC; PBS; Telemundo and Univision. Executives and staffers were drawn at random from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*. Staff of news broadcasts as well as regularly schedules public affairs programming (e.g., *Nightline*, *Frontline*) were included in the sample. The sample frame included only each network's own news operations and not independent newsrooms or news programs operated by affiliate stations.

Cable TV Networks

Five cable networks were included in the Cable Television Networks sample frame: CNN; CNN Headline News; MSNBC; CNBC and Fox News Channel. Executives and staffers were drawn at random from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*.

Local Radio Stations

The sample frame for Local Radio Stations was defined as all local radio stations listed in *Bacons Media Source* that had a listing for a News Director. A total of 833 stations were included in the frame. The sample was stratified by MSA with the stations in the top 50 MSAs separated from stations in other areas. A random sample was drawn from the listed stations. Executives and staffers were selected at random from the sampled stations.

National Radio Networks

Six national radio networks were included in this sample frame: ABC; AP Broadcast; CBS; NBC; NPR; and USA Radio Network. Samples of executives and staffers were drawn randomly from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*. The sample frame included only the networks' own news operations and not independent newsrooms or news programs operated by affiliate stations.



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News Web Sites

The News Web Sites sample frame included 15 organizations listed in Table 2. The 15 news web sites were the top visited news sites with unique monthly visitors, as determined by comparing comScore and Nielsen/NetRatings market research results. Samples of executives and staffers were drawn at random from those top organizations from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*.

Table 2: News Web Site Sample Frame

ABCNews.com	The Christian Science Monitor
AOL.com	The New York Times
CBSNews.com	The Wall Street Journal Online
CNN.com	Time.com
foxnews.com	USATODAY.com
latimes.com	washingtonpost.com
MSNBC.com	Yahoo! News
Slate	

News Magazines

Three news magazines were included in the News Magazine sample frame: *Newsweek*; *Time* and *U.S. News and World Report*. Executives and staffers were drawn at random from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*.

Wire Services

Three wire services were included in the Wire Services sample frame: *Associated Press*; *Bloomberg News* and *Reuters America*. Executives and staffers were drawn at random from those listed in *Bacons Media Source*.



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Data Weighting

The data were weighted to make the final executive and staffer samples more representative of their target populations and more comparable to each other. Both samples were weighted so that the distribution of the 11 media types matched the estimated staffer population distribution. The staffer population distribution was estimated by taking the product of two figures: [a] the number of organizations in each media type and [b] the estimated number of staffers in each media type organization.

The estimated staff size for each organization type was taken from D2 of the Executives questionnaire. Generally, the average (arithmetic mean) of the D2 responses was taken as an estimate for typical staff size. However, there were some exceptions. Only one Executive interview was completed for the Cable TV Networks segment. Instead of using that one case as estimate for typical staff size, we averaged that case with the 11 cases from the 2001 survey to get an average staff size of 686. The arithmetic mean was also not used as a staff size estimate for the Ethnic Media segment. The D2 responses from the Ethnic Media Executives were skewed with some cases reporting very large staff sizes. To prevent these cases from skewing the typical staff size estimate, we used a percentile rather than the arithmetic mean. We chose the 82nd percentile because in 2001 when the data were not so skewed, this is the percentile that matched up closely with the arithmetic mean. This percentile gave a typical staff size of 25, which is more reasonable than the arithmetic mean of 50. Additionally, wire services were assigned a typical staff size identical to news magazines, as was done in 2001.

Table 3 shows the computation of the target staffer distribution across media type categories that was used as a weighting parameter for both the Staffer and Executive datasets.



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Table 3 : Target Media Type Distribution for Weighting

Media Type Categories	Size of Universe (for Organization)	Typical Staff Size	Estimated Size of Universe	Estimated Universe Distribution [TARGET]
Daily Newspapers - Top 12	12	572	6864	5.2%
Daily Newspapers - 13-100	88	221	19448	14.8%
Daily Newspapers - not top 100	565	54	30510	23.2%
Weekly Newspapers	478	14	6692	5.1%
Ethnic Newspapers	385	25	9625	7.3%
Local TV Stations - top 50 MSA	279	93	25947	19.7%
Local TV Stations - not top 50 MSA	419	36	15084	11.5%
National TV Networks	6	402	2412	1.8%
Cable TV Networks	5	686	3428	2.6%
Local Radio Stations - top 50 MSA	370	14	5180	3.9%
Local Radio Stations - not top 50 MSA	463	5	2315	1.8%
National Radio Networks	6	187	1122	0.9%
News Web Sites	15	79	1185	0.9%
News Magazines	3	300	900	0.7%
Wire Services	3	300	900	0.7%

Separate weights were computed for the Executive and the Staffer samples so that the Media Type distributions for both samples would be the same.

Table 4 : Final Weights

Media Type Categories	Executive Interviews	Executive Weights	Staffer Interviews	Staffer Weights
Daily Newspapers - Top 12	9	21.08	64	3.94
Daily Newspapers - 13-100	81	6.64	292	2.45
Daily Newspapers - not top 100	241	3.50	270	4.15
Weekly Newspapers	51	3.63	50	4.91
Ethnic Newspapers	25	10.64	25	14.14
Local TV Stations - top 50 MSA	73	9.83	123	7.75
Local TV Stations - not top 50 MSA	137	3.04	246	2.25
National TV Networks	4	16.67	24	3.69
Cable TV Networks	1	94.78	15	8.39
Local Radio Stations - top 50 MSA	38	3.77	39	4.88
Local Radio Stations - not top 50 MSA	64	1.00	84	1.00
National Radio Networks	3	10.34	6	6.87
News Web Sites	8	4.10	31	1.40
News Magazines	3	8.29	6	5.51
Wire Services	3	8.29	9	3.67



Sample Disposition and Outcome Rates

Table 5 reports the disposition of all sampled telephone numbers ever dialed. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI, it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made – of 93 percent for the news executives sample, 86 percent for the news staffers sample.

Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused – of 59 percent for the news executives sample, 58 percent for the news staffers sample.

Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed – of 96 percent for the news executives sample, 98 percent for the news staffers sample.

Thus, the response rate for this survey was 53 percent for the news executives sample, 49 percent for the news staffers sample.



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Table 5: Sample Disposition

Executives	Staffers	
1485	2975	Total Numbers Dialed
51	303	Resp. no longer with company
3		Computer/Fax
16	46	Other Not-Working
1415	2626	Working numbers
95.3%	88.3%	Working Rate
2	5	No Answer
1	4	Busy
31	41	Answering Machine
49	262	Callbacks
16	36	Non-Contacts after determined eligible
1316	2278	Contacted numbers
93.0%	86.7%	Contact Rate
540	957	Refusal
776	1321	Cooperating numbers
59.0%	58.0%	Cooperation Rate
3	12	Language Barrier
0	1	Over Quota
773	1308	Eligible numbers
99.6%	99.0%	Eligibility Rate
32	24	Interrupted
741	1284	Completes
95.9%	98.2%	Completion Rate
52.6%	49.4%	Response Rate