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Internet Adoption and Integration by Network Television News (1997 to 2004)

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The focus of this study is broadcast network news and how the “big three” television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) responded to the Internet over an eight-year period of time, 1997 to 2004. The study measures the networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject and their incorporation of companion news websites into their respective nightly newscasts. Four Internet-related variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references were identified and utilized to examine whether changes exist in network coverage: a) over time; and b) relative to changes in the U.S. online population.

This study found that historical time was not a significant factor in predicting the inclusion of Internet-related news stories and website references in nightly newscasts. The U.S. online population also had no significant influence on the inclusion of such news stories or Web references. Significant differences were identified among the three networks’ coverage of the Internet and their inclusion of website references in nightly newscasts. The findings from this study suggest a series of missed opportunities for the networks to leverage the Internet during its formative years of 1997 to 2004 (as a news subject and as an extension of the newscasts) to benefit the newscasts and their audiences.

The Internet and in particular, network news websites, have not received the same attention in gatekeeping and agenda-setting studies as have traditional media. These online extensions of the newscasts warrant additional study based on behaviors reflecting increased online news consumption among the news audience.
INTERNET ADOPTION AND INTEGRATION BY NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS
(1997 TO 2004)

By

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DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Broadcast network television news and the Internet have formed a media partnership that can best be described as a companion relationship. In this context, this label is intended to refer to two distinct media outlets that assist one another in content dissemination; while both media outlets could work independently, their collective influence is stronger than their individual impacts. The convergence of telecommunications, media, and computing technologies has strengthened the strategic importance of the Internet in the success and even survival of many businesses, including network television broadcasters (Chan-Olmsted & Park, 2000). For broadcasters, the Internet provides the basis for a cross-platform media delivery system and a strategic marketing tool.

This study has two major purposes: first to measure the television networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject, and second to record how these same networks incorporated the Internet as a communication tool into their nightly newscasts. At the same time, the study provides a context in which this coverage and incorporation occurred. The chronology highlights milestones in the United States’ adoption and usage of the Internet.

These findings should reveal patterns that may exist in news coverage of the Internet, thus confirming or challenging previous research related to the selection of stories by established news organizations. These results will add to an existing body of literature while also exploring what appears to be a symbiotic relationship between the established networks and their online outlets.

The study’s time period, 1997 to 2004, is significant. By the end of 1997, each of the “big three” broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) had established an online news site
On average, 46 million Americans were accessing the Internet from either home or work (“Study puts U.S. online,” 1998). During this same year, major software companies, Netscape and Microsoft, upgraded their Internet Web browsers to facilitate easier Internet navigation and information retrieval (Booker, 1997; Levitt, 1997). This year also marked one of the first occasions (NASA’s Comet Hale-Bopp sighting) that demonstrated the Internet’s ability to transmit information to a large, far-reaching audience and attract measurable audience interest (Toner, 1997).

By 2004, the final year of the study, the U.S. online population averaged 191 million users (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press [Pew Research Center], 2004). E-commerce was setting new records for online purchases of goods and services (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). The Internet and mobile technologies were being heavily used in the U.S. presidential campaign (Dalrymple & Scheufele, 2007; Kiely, 2004; Simon, 2004). In December, the world was reminded of the Internet’s global reach when videos of the South Asian tsunami were disseminated online to a global audience (McCawley, 2005; Schwartz, 2004). In the aftermath of the devastation, the Internet was used as a tool to raise funds and support for the affected areas (Markon & Smith, 2004; Shane & Confessore, 2005).

In 2004, fresh attention and interest (following the burst of the 2000 dot-com bubble), (see “Dot-com Bubble Bursts – April 2000,” p. 48) were being directed at the World Wide Web under the label of Web 2.0. This term was coined to describe the second generation of the Web that was focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online (O’Reilly, 2005). Web 2.0 signaled the transition from static web pages to a more dynamic Web that was based on serving Web applications to users. Blogs, wikis, and Web services were identified as components of Web 2.0. Around this same time, a related term,
social media, was generating interest. Social media described Web-based platforms, applications and technologies that enabled people to interact socially with one another online; these outlets “enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Some of the most widely used examples of social media sites (SMS) and applications included: Friendster (2002), LinkedIn (2003), MySpace (2003), Flickr (2004), digg (2004), and similar sites that were based on user participation and user-generated content (UGC); this list would grow to include YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006), and Facebook (2004, 2005, 2006)¹, among others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

This study concludes at the end of 2004 before these “new” media (Levinson, 2009) widely influenced news audience behaviors and consumption patterns. Though outside the timeframe and scope of this study, the television networks’ response to Web 2.0 and social media will be discussed in Chapter 6, in the context of the networks’ adoption of recent technologies. In 2005, the networks began making significant changes to both their nightly newscasts and their websites, complicating side-by-side comparisons of their media messages and means of distribution. This is another reason to end the study in 2004.

In regards to the scope of the study, the big three broadcast networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC, were the focus of the research and subsequent analysis. The “fourth network,” Fox, was not included since it did not provide its audience with a nightly national news broadcast. Most Fox affiliates offered a nightly local news program; however, the lack of a national news program eliminated Fox from the study. On a related note, PBS was not included in the

¹ The social networking site Facebook, was originally released as a Harvard-only site in 2003. In 2004, the site was expanded to include high school networks. In 2005 the site was opened to all (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).
study since its nightly news program, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* \(^2\), is a 60-minute program that would not allow for direct comparison with the three networks’ respective 30-minute programs.

**Interactive Characteristics**

The Internet, with its unique capacity for interactivity and personalization, was inherently very different from the traditional broadcast media (Chan-Olmsted & Park, 2000). Cho (1999) argued that while broadcast television could be classified as a low interactive medium, the Internet was highly interactive, generating very different consumer responses when engaged with the medium. The networks worked to leverage this interactive potential. Online news stories shifted away from being direct translations of the televised newscast, text posted online – *shovelware*, and instead began to incorporate visual and aural aspects of the broadcast media into the online postings (duPlessis & Li, 2006). Video segments from the nightly newscasts were posted online, along with additional background information and context for televised news stories. Layers of searchability and linking hypertext properties were added to stories, features made possible on the Web (Maher, 1999). In the online medium, the linearity of the traditional broadcast was discarded; no longer was the audience held to a predetermined or imposed sense of order when accessing news events. The Web delivered a greater sense of control and immediacy, providing information often as events were unfolding. Although traditional broadcasting could provide a similar service with on-the-scene reporting, the Web’s ability to also provide simultaneous context and additional

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\(^2\) In 2009, the name of the program was changed to *PBS Newshour*. According to the show’s website, the name change was made to “reflect the program’s expanded role as the hub of news and public affairs programming on PBS both online and on the air” (Public Broadcasting Service, 2011).
outlets for story expansion, offered a more comprehensive degree of immediacy (Stovall, 2004).

One of the striking characteristics of the Web was its ability to foster communication within small, specialized interest groups; to provide greater choice and flexibility in content consumption (Dizard, 1994). Unlike legacy media (e.g. television, newspaper), which represented a one-to-many communication model in which information flowed from sources to audiences, online news could solicit feedback from users and promote interaction between sources and audiences (Ha, Dick, & Ryu, 2003). From a larger perspective, this ability suggested that information could be customized to meet the demands of a specific audience or audience member. No longer were audiences bound to the scripted delivery of news as decided by industry gatekeepers (see “Journalist as Gatekeeper,” p. 85) – rather, audience members gained the ability to select which news items they would like to pursue.

Globalization

During the mid-1990s when the networks went online, the Internet, as a communications medium, was involved in a breadth of daily activities – business, commerce, social interactions, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. An underlying characteristic of these activities was the Internet’s inherent interconnectivity – its ability to reduce distance and contribute to a sense of globalization among its users. For media companies, the Internet’s interconnectivity offered a desirable outlet for content and audience involvement.

Friedman (2000) recognized the development of an international system, globalization, following the Cold War and specifically, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The overarching feature of globalization, as identified by Friedman, was integration – the connectivity of peoples, opportunities, and threats. A similar sense of connectivity is the
essence of the Internet. Originally created to connect computers for data transfer, it evolved into a communications tool connecting individuals and transmitting information.

The Internet is an inherently global medium (Chyi & Sylvie, 2001) that presents to both media outlets and audiences alike access to content worldwide. Falk (1998) employed the term *boundary-transcending* in his discussion of globalization, suggesting that through technological changes, organizations increasingly extend beyond or “transcend national boundaries” (p. 288). In a similar capacity, the Internet has been the subject of repeated studies focused on its ability to reach broader media audiences on regional, national, and international levels using: online newspapers (Chyi & Sylvie, 2001), webcasts (Lin, 2004, 2006), blogs (Gomez, 2005; Wall, 2005). Yunker (2002) maintained that in order to seek long-term growth, companies are bound to go global; “if not just to expand market share but to prevent others from taking [their] market share” (p. 29). This idea of competition, which will be explored later, may have been a driving factor behind the television networks’ respective establishment of an online presence.

**Anytime, Anywhere**

Complementing the Internet’s characteristics of interactivity and globalization is its rhetorical promise of access anytime, anywhere. Innovators and early adopters\(^3\) of the Internet marveled at being able to access information and communicate from any connected computer, at any hour of the day. This promise of universal connectivity further developed with the expansion of wireless networks. Web-enabled cell phones, and later smart phones,

\(^3\) Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovation Theory (1995) presents a model that classifies adopters of innovations into various categories, based on the idea that certain individuals are inevitably more open to adaptation than others. The innovation adoption curve identifies five categories of adopters and the percentage of a population that falls within each: Innovators (2.5%), Early Adopters (13.5%), Early Majority (34%), Late Majority (34%), and Laggards (16%) (Rogers, 1995).
made the claim anywhere, anytime a reality. These mobile devices allowed users to cut the tether between their computers and the Internet, and access the Internet using pocket-sized devices that supported user connectivity on-the-go. Changes in how and where users connect to the Internet have influenced how and where news audiences access the news, a topic that will be discussed in Chapter 6.

**Internet v. World Wide Web**

Two key terms will be used throughout this study, *Internet* and *World Wide Web*, and require clarification. While these terms are often used as synonyms, they do refer to different aspects of electronic data communications network technology; a brief history of each is provided in Appendix A (see p. 261).

The term *Internet*, a shortening of internetworking, has been defined as a “network of networks” (Bruce, 2002; O’Reilly, 2006, Round 2: The Internet as Network of Networks section, para. 1). Originally created as a means to connect computers for data transfer, technological advances have expanded the list of activities that are associated with the term Internet. Such activities may include: electronic mail (email), online chat, Podcasts, mobile and wireless technologies, RSS⁴ or Web feeds.

In contrast, the *World Wide Web* (WWW or Web) is one of the services using the Internet (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000) and browsing or “surfing the Web” is a transparent way of navigating a significant part of the Internet (Falk, 1998). The *Web* refers to a system of interlinked, hypertext documents (i.e. Web pages) that are accessed via the Internet and are displayed through a Web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Netscape, Safari, Firefox).

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⁴ RSS: Really Simple Syndication; this activity allowed bloggers to automate the sharing of news and blog entries (Chadwick, 2006). Its use was adopted by news organizations including network newscasts as a means to “push” content out to online audience members.
browsers and the protocols they interpret (e.g. hypertext mark-up language – HTML) provide a graphical user interface that is easy to use and allows for the combination of text, graphics, and other multimedia elements (Falk, 1998). A website is a collection of Web pages and other digital assets that are interconnected. All publicly accessible websites are seen collectively as constituting the World Wide Web.

This study concentrates on the news websites established by three broadcast networks, so accordingly, the term Web will be used in all references to these news sites; while use of the term Internet will be reserved for instances that imply networked activities, including some Web 2.0 activities.

**Early News Online**

Before television networks ventured into the online arena and onto the Web, U.S. newspapers were already investigating online delivery vehicles. Electronic newspapers can be traced back to the 1970s (Gunter, 2003). During the 1980s, U.S. daily newspapers (“dailies”) explored different non-print delivery outlets, including videotext, teletex, audiotex, and fax (Boczkowski, 2004; Greer & Mensing, 2004), to ultimately launch the first Web-based newspapers in the mid-1990s (Gunter, 2003). These electronic alternatives were seen as developments that could become either competition for printed news or a potential solution to increasing industry concerns: rising newsprint costs, shifting demographics, and changing consumption habits (Boczkowski, 2004; Kawamoto, 2003). Other alternative outlets explored included: CD-ROM, fax, portable digital assistances, and electronic bulletin board systems (BBS).

During the early 1990s, online services were the focus of development efforts. Online newspaper content was text-based and relied upon electronic or online service providers such
as Prodigy, America Online, CompuServe, and Ziff Interchange for delivery (Boczkowski, 2004; Li, 2006). Personal computer users could subscribe to one of these services, and with the appropriate components installed (i.e. modem, communications software, and connection to a Touch-Tone telephone), could dial into an assortment of electronic services and a growing network of other computer users (Gunter, 2003).

Newspapers, eager to establish an online presence, formed strategic business partnerships with these online service providers (Heilbrunn, 1994). As would later be the case for several television networks that partnered with technology firms, symbiotic relationships were formed – the media outlets provided content and the service providers/technology firms provided a means of distribution. During 1994 and 1995, there was a rollout of several online newspapers: Prodigy carried online editions of the Tampa Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, and Newsday; America Online carried those of the San Jose Mercury News, the Chicago Tribune, and The New York Times; CompuServe carried the USA Today; and Ziff prepared its launch of an online edition of The Washington Post (Andelman, 1994; “N.Y. Times launches,” 1994; Rosenberg, 1993, 1994a, 1994b; Web, 1995). By the end of 1994, there were nearly sixty U.S. newspapers with sites on the Internet or available through dial-up services, such as those previously listed (Greer & Mensing, 2004). However, only a small percent of these Internet newspapers was accessible directly through the World Wide Web, without portals or online service providers.

Although the Web was created in 1991, two years later Web traffic on the Internet could be described as “still a barely discernible trickle, but the foundations for growth were in place” (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000, p. 233). Mosaic, the first graphical Web browser, was released in 1993 and served as the catalyst that made the Web take off in popularity. This
turning point eventually led newspapers and other media outlets to focus their online efforts on the Web (Abbate, 1999; Boczkowski, 2004; Carlson, 2003). The following year another Web browser, Netscape Navigator, was released and the resulting audience excitement over the pair of browsers left newspapers scrambling to establish Web-based outlets (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Boczkowski, 2004).

In their rush to establish an online “presence,” many newspapers launched their publications with “little direction and less knowledge about how online newspapers would meet a multiplicity of goals: building new readers and revenues, protecting the advertising base, and reducing the costs of production and distribution” (Bressers, 2006, p. 134). These challenges would remain with newspapers and later surface for other media outlets, including television networks, as their use of the Internet and Web developed.

Newspapers on the Internet reached critical mass in 1997; two-thirds of newspapers had their own websites (Garrison, 2001). The growth of online newspapers continued to accelerate; the following year 82 percent of newspapers were online (Garrison, 2001). In March 1998, there were 1,290 U.S. newspapers online and by September, the number reached 2,059; 60 percent growth in six months (Li, 2006). By 2004 the final year of this study, almost all U.S. newspapers had an online presence; there were over four thousand U.S. newspapers on the Web (Li, 2006).

Some have described publishing on the Web as “the most successful and enduring form of online newspaper publishing” (Greer & Mensing, 2006, p. 13). Online newspapers have become one of the mainstream media that news audiences rely on; they are typically more accessible, updated more frequently, and often richer in content than their print version (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999). Historically, television and radio surpassed newspaper as the most
immediate media for transmitting information, whereas print was able to convey larger quantities of news. However, the Web leveled the playing field, providing a hybrid communications medium that allows for the continuous update of content and the ability to convey large amounts of information (Gunter, 2003).

As online newspapers evolved, they have been the subjects of numerous studies focused on a variety of topics including: content (Chyi & Sylvie, 2001), story selection (Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000), use of technology (Dibean & Garrison, 2001), interactivity (Massey & Levy, 1999; Schultz, 1999; Zeng & Li, 2006), and potential revenue sources (Chyi, 2005; Chyi & Sylvie, 1998; Harper, 1996; Thompson & Wassmuth, 2001).

**Newscast Competition**

During the mid-1990s, while newspapers were migrating onto the Web, network television news was facing a triple threat: declining ratings, aging audiences, and increasing competition from cable outlets. These challenges continue to burden the networks as they enter the 2010s.

**Decreasing Audiences & Declining Ratings**

Historically considered the flagship of the network, the evening news has been steadily losing its audience for the last thirty years; audiences have decreased by approximately one million viewers a year (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011). Figure 1 (see p. 42) highlights the overall decline in evening news viewership from 1980 through 2010. Since 1980, the three network newscasts have lost about 28.9 million viewers or 55.5 percent of their audience (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011). In 2010, the total audience for these evening newscasts equaled approximately 23.2 million (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011).
In spite of declining viewership of the networks’ evening newscasts, survey data collected by the Pew Research Center, indicated that in 2006 the percentage of people watching television (from any news source) had experienced a slight increase (2 points) since 2000 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). Similarly, the same survey indicated that the amount of time people spent watching news (measured in minutes spent “yesterday,” as the survey phrases it) was up since 2000 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). These numbers suggest that network news faces challenges separate from televised news as a whole.

As further evidence of challenges facing the networks, Figure 2 (see p. 43) displays a long-term decline in the annual ratings for the ABC, CBS, and NBC newscasts from 1980 through 2010 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011). Annual reports focusing on these declining figures trigger regular discussions and headlines questioning the possible demise of the evening news (Ahlers, 2006). As part of a series of virtual roundtables focused on different media sectors published in the 2006 State of the News Media report, four news professionals were asked to share their opinions regarding the network newscast’s five-year future. Jeff Grainick, a 48-year veteran of broadcast who worked for each of the three networks, replied, “…I remain convinced that the economics of declining broadcast audiences and the power of local stations and station groups are going to mandate at some point that ‘news at the dinner hour’ disappear and be replaced by some other forms the networks will have to invent” (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2006, Network TV Introduction, Roundtable section, para. 4). In contrast, Andrew Tyndall, analyst and

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5 The State of the News Media is an annual report on the “health and status of American journalism” produced by the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism. Current and previous reports (the first report was published in 2004) are available online at http://stateofthemedia.org.
publisher of the *Tyndall Report*\(^6\) maintained, “I am absolutely confident that the evening newscast will be produced. I am not so confident that such a newscast will be the network’s ‘signature’ in the sense of its defining news product. Broadcast is more likely to be one medium among many for the network news divisions to disseminate their journalism” (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2006, Network TV Introduction, Roundtable section, para. 5). Tom Bettag, former executive producer of ABC’s *Nightline*, shared, “The death of the evening news was predicted with considerable certainty fifteen years ago. The three will live another five years. They still make a healthy profit, and they give the networks an identity that is essential” (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2006, Network TV Introduction, Roundtable section, para. 6). Finally, Neal Shapiro, former President of NBC News (2001-2005) proposed:

> In five years, I think you will see all three evening newscasts in existence although I think they will look a little different, perhaps a little less formal, with more clear pushes to the Internet. I think the evening newscasts are less a signature than they used to be, especially with the growth of the morning news segment. At the end of the day, the newscast leverages the infrastructure of each news division and with or without an evening newscast, these huge organizations still need to cover the news.

(Project for Journalism Excellence, 2006, Network TV Introduction, Roundtable section, para. 7)

As mentioned above, evening news is one part of a larger news entity within each of the networks, which includes morning news and news magazines. According to former CBS News President Andrew Heyward (1996-2005), the evening newscasts support the bigger

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\(^{6}\) The *Tyndall Report* (http://tyndallreport.com) monitors the weekday nightly newscasts of the three American broadcast television networks: ABC, CBS, NBC. Each day, Andrew Tyndall blogs the three newscasts. He has been monitoring television news since 1987.
moneymakers in the morning; “Evening news is not only viable, but critical to the mix” (Higgins, 2005, p. 14). The CBS Evening News, historically the third-place newscast, reaches about three times the audience of Fox News Channel’s highest-rated show (Higgins, 2005). Echoing the networks’ importance in message dissemination, Ted Koppel, former ABC Nightline anchor⁷, maintains, “If you really want to make a statement, you’ve still got to do it on one of the big three networks” (Frontline, 2006, Interviews Ted Koppel section, para. 23).

Despite its shrinking audience, each year networks generally coax more money out of advertisers for the viewers who do tune in. Nielsen Ad-Monitor estimated that evening-news ad sales totaled $466 million in 2004 (Higgins, 2005). That is just $12 million less than the $478 million in 1999 estimated by the annual State of the News Media report (Higgins, 2005). While network executives say those numbers are a bit high, they maintain that there has not been a major downturn in sales; in fact, in 2004 the evening news generated around 22 percent of broadcast-news revenues, up from 19 percent in 1999 (Higgins, 2005). These figures contribute to a network contradiction – audiences decreased and ratings declined, but newscast revenues increased.

**Network’s Aging Audience**

Evening newscasts tend to attract older audiences. Figure 3 (see p. 44) shows that the median age of nightly news viewers hovered around 60 during the mid-2000s (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). A 2004 survey conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism reported that a majority (56%) of U.S. adults age 65 and older regularly watch nightly network news. At the same time, only about a quarter of those between ages 30 and 49 (26%) are regular viewers of nightly network news; while only 18 percent of those under

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⁷ Nightline or ABC News Nightlight is a late-night news program broadcast by ABC that airs at 11:35 p.m. Ted Koppel was the anchor of this program for twenty-five years, from March 24, 1980 to November 22, 2005.
age 30 regularly watch these news programs (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004). According to these numbers, there is a generation gap within the network news audience.

Audience age translates to advertising revenue for networks. Network advertisers seek younger audiences because of anticipated increased returns from their advertising dollars. In younger audiences (i.e. 18 to 34 year olds), advertisers see viewers who while more difficult to reach, offer the potential for a lifetime of product purchasing (Elliott, 2005; Littlejohn, 2006). In contrast, the network news’ older-skewed audiences are perceived to produce less revenue. However, this approach neglects the spending power of an entire generation (Milne-Tyte, 2005). In 2006, the first post-war baby boomers turned 60; collectively boomers are the largest generation in American history, numbering 78 million and representing $2 trillion in annual spending power (CBS News, 2006a; Greene, 2006; Masters, 2006). An increasing number of cable networks (e.g. America One, AmericanLife TV Network) have begun targeting this audience creating dedicated programming blocks and actively seeking advertising partners to tap into this market (Littlejohn, 2006).

Although the network audience is older than advertisers’ target market, its members are healthier, wealthier, and living longer than ever before (CBS News, 2006b). Boomers are also far more loyal in their viewing habits (Masters, 2006); after all, this was the first generation that grew up with television. As Brian Williams, managing editor and anchor of the *NBC Nightly News* explained, another constant for this generation was “the network evening newscasts, programs that gave our nation a collective viewing experience every night” (Williams, 2006, p. 62). He continued, describing the newscasts’ audience in 2006, “Our audience today is smaller, but it is fiercely loyal and expects a serious newscast. …
Venerable names like Google [notwithstanding], the three network evening newscasts still represent the largest single news audience in the nation” (Williams, 2006, p. 62).

The loyalty and stability of the boomer audience present advertisers and networks with strategic opportunities. Advertisers can acknowledge this audience and tap into its tremendous spending power. Then, while continuing to serve the needs of this audience via televised broadcasts, networks can pursue younger audiences through alternative outlets, including online and mobile platforms. These alternative outlets could also be additional opportunities to reach the graying audience, as studies indicate that boomers are an increasing portion of the Web and mobile audiences (Pew Research Center, 2004).

According to a series of Pew Research Center (Pew) reports, by December 2009, 70 percent of U.S. adults age 50 to 64 reported going online, compared with 74 percent of the general population, and 38 percent of adults age 65 and older (Fox, 2010). Social networking among Internet users over the age of fifty nearly doubled, from 22 percent in April 2009 to 42 percent in May 2010 (Madden, 2010). During this same period, social networking use among Internet users ages 50 to 64 grew by 88 percent (from 25% to 47%) and a full 100 percent among those ages 65 and older (from 13% to 26%) (Madden, 2010). Mary Madden, Pew Senior Research Specialist and author of the referenced report explained:

While social media use has grown dramatically across all age groups, older users have been especially enthusiastic over the past year about embracing new networking tools. Although email continues to be the primary way that older users maintain contact with friends, families and colleagues, many users now rely on social network platforms to help manage their daily communications—sharing links, photos, videos, news and status updates with a growing network of contacts. (Madden, 2010, p. 2)
By 2010, 85 percent of all U.S. adults owned a mobile phone; among adults over the age of 50 the percentages remained in the high majority (86% among adults age 47 to 56, 84% among adults age 57 to 65, 68% among adults age 66 to 74), before dropping to 48 percent among those 75 and older (Zickuhr, 2011). The overall impact of these technological adoptions on the news audience’s behaviors and consumption patterns will be an area for future study.

**Cable News Outlets**

In addition to decreasing and aging audiences, and declining ratings, network news faced a marketplace challenge in the form of cable news. Cable news outlets and their 24-hour-a-day approach to reporting the news interrupted the monopoly once held on the television news audience by the “big three” broadcast networks. No longer was the audience dependent on the nightly 6:30 p.m. newscast for an accounting of the day’s events. The news cycle was shortened. According to a message posted to CBS’s *Public Eye* blog (2005), “if news happens at noon, savvy news consumers often know about it by 12:01, so by 6:30, they’ve already absorbed news analysis, talking head debates, and endless reports about the event” (Montopoli, 2005, para. 1).

By 2004 the final year of this study, the overall audience for cable television news had surpassed the audience for network television news by a narrow margin; 38 percent of Americans said they regularly watched cable news channels, compared with 34 percent who regularly watched the nightly news on one of the three major broadcast networks (Pew Research Center, 2004). By 2010, the percentage that regularly gets news from a cable channel increased only slightly to 39 percent, compared with 28 percent who regularly watched network news (Pew Research Center, 2010).
Types of News on Cable

The 2007 State of the News Media report identified three types of news on cable, serving what analyst Andrew Tyndall called, “three distinct sets of needs” (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007, Cable TV Intro section, para. 12).

The first type of news, News on Demand, provides the latest headlines available at any time during the 24-hour news cycle.

The second type, Crisis Coverage, supplies wall-to-wall, comprehensive, on-the-scene, constantly updated journalism on a handful of vital stories that occur each year (e.g. September 11th, Hurricane Katrina, or the invasion of Iraq). Cable news channels have seen their growth stimulated by major crises; viewers tune-in for the big events—often in huge numbers—and many of them begin to watch the channels more afterwards (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007).

The third type of news on cable, Prime-time Personality, News & Opinion Programming, encompasses the evening shows that include a mix of nightly-newscast-style headlines, opinionated commentary, newsmaker interviews, analysis, and true-crime celebrity programs. These are the shows that Fox News and other cable news networks have made into distinctive programs, not tied to breaking news, that people arrange their schedule to watch, so-called “appointment viewing.”

The top two cable news shows, The O’Reilly Factor and Hannity (formerly Hannity
& Colmes\textsuperscript{8}), are both broadcast on Fox News (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). As of April 2011, The O’Reilly Factor, broadcast at 8 p.m. had remained the number one show on cable for 125 months, since December 2000 (Ariens, 2011a).

**Brief History of Cable News**

A brief history of cable news is supplied in Appendix B (see p. 266) in order to provide a timeline for the networks’ evolving competition. This history highlights to creation of cable news outlets: CNN (1980), MSNBC (1996), and Fox News (1996). Since their respective formations, three cable news networks: CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, have competed for visibility and position with the news audience.

**The Networks Go Online**

In response to these changing and increasingly competitive environmental factors, the three networks invested in their respective futures through the creation of innovative content delivery outlets. During the early 1990s, television networks partnered with online service providers (e.g. America Online, Prodigy), to create symbiotic relationships in order to reach online audiences, similar to the relationships previously created between newspapers and service providers. The online environment provided the networks with additional portals or channels through which audience members could access the news product. By 1994, the networks had begun establishing Internet-based websites that were separate from the online service providers.

\textsuperscript{8} Hannity & Colmes was the longest-running primetime program on the Fox News channel (Stelter, 2008b). The live television show hosted by Sean Hannity and Alan Colmes aired at 9 p.m. from October 6, 1996 to January 9, 2009. Colmes left the show but remained a commentator on Fox News and host of a radio program on Fox News Radio (Calderone, 2008). On January 12, 2009, the new Hannity program featuring a single host debuted in the same 9 p.m. timeslot (Fox News, 2008).
CBS’s Online Launch

CBS was the first of the major networks to set up a dedicated website (http://www.cbs.com) on the Internet. The site branded, “CBS Eye on the Net,” launched in February 1995 offering information about entertainment, news, and sports programming, in addition to serving as a sales and marketing tool for the network (Berniker, 1995a). The CBS site offered many features not available on CBS’s partner site with Prodigy, including areas devoted to: CBS News (with news text updated hourly), CBS Sports (with behind-the-scenes info), David Letterman and Tom Snyder⁹, resources related to network marketing programs, and links to websites of CBS advertisers and affiliates (Schmuckler, 1995b). However, according to George Schweitzer, CBS executive vice president of marketing and communication, the website was not intended to compete with CBS’s Prodigy offerings; the CBS site was “…much more in-depth than what Prodigy was. Prodigy was our entry level. We will continue our Prodigy effort, but Prodigy hits one part of the online audience and the Internet’s reach is unlimited” (Mandese, 1995, p. 13).

For each of the three networks, the first several years of their respective online presence witnessed numerous revisions and re-brandings of their sites. By 1996, CBS had dedicated its network website (http://www.cbs.com) to promotional purposes while branching out into news coverage with its CBS News site (http://www.cbsnews.com) (Berniker, 1995b; Ross, 1996). This news site featured coverage of the 1996 U.S. presidential election, the first election promoted, reported, and dissected on the Web (Ross, 1996; Saunders, 1996). On election night, network and cable news websites competed with one

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⁹ Respective hosts of the Late Show with David Letterman, 11:35 p.m.-12:35 a.m., August 30, 1993 to present; and The Late, Late Show with Tom Snyder, 12:35 a.m.-1:35 a.m., January 9, 1995 to March 26, 1999.
another (and their broadcast counterparts) to provide their online audiences with timely election results, as quickly as the returns appeared on television (Angwin, 1996).

**CBS MarketWatch.com**

In 1997, CBS furthered its investment in the Web launching two new sites: CBS Sportsline.com and CBS MarketWatch.com (“As for its new series,” 1997). As its name suggested, CBS Sportsline.com (http://cbs.sportsline.com) was designed as a site devoted to sports information and merchandise, providing sports coverage from the television network (Bloomberg News, 1997). In 2007, this sports site included a sidebar labeled “Today on CBS” which provided users with links to CBS News (including links to headline stories) and CBS (including a list of network’s primetime programming and links to these programs’ sites).

CBS MarketWatch.com was the result of a partnership between the CBS News division and Data Broadcasting Corporation (DBC), a Wyoming-based company that sold financial and market information to individual investors (“CBS in cyberspace,” 1997). The joint venture formed to provide business and financial information via the Web to individual investors and business professionals (Bloomberg News, 1997).

CBS combined its news resources, sales, and marketing efforts with DBC’s existing website (http://www.marketwatch.com) and Internet technology (“As for its new series,” 1997; “CBS in cyberspace,” 1997). According to then CBS News President Andrew Heyward, “As the century turns, we have to find other ways to deliver the news, beyond the traditional ones” (“As for its new series,” 1997, CBS puts stock in Web section, para. 3). He suggested that the new site, “…is a way to [present] information that can’t be given over broadcast television” (Bloomberg News, 1997, para. 4).
CBS expected to generate most of the site’s revenue by selling advertising. It also planned to charge subscription fees for access to real-time stock quotes (Bloomberg News, 1997). However, there would be content on the site – stock prices, business news, and real-time financial data and analysis – available free of charge (“As for its new series,” 1997). The CBS marketed site successfully attracted visitors; in October 1998, the site attracted 2.2 million users (Fost, 1999a).

The site had a variety of online competition, including financial news websites created by organizations such as Dow Jones, CNN, and CNBC; general online services like America Online and Microsoft, which provided access to financial and business news and services; and websites aimed at satisfying business, finance, and investing needs, like TheStreet.com and Motley Fool (Gilpin, 1999). However, unlike many online companies, MarketWatch.com had a built-in cross-media marketing strategy: the site had a three-year commitment from CBS to provide it with $30 million worth of marketing on CBS-owned media (Fost, 1999a). In addition to this marketing agreement, MarketWatch.com was licensed to use the CBS name and logo, as well as its news content (Gilpin, 1999). Larry Kramer, MarketWatch CEO (also founder of the original MarketWatch.com and a former editor of the San Francisco Examiner) (Kurtz, 1999), recognized the significance of the cross-media promotion, “The broadcasters have been able to make their investments at least partly in the form of on-air promotions, which can help build brand-name recognition that helps sites stand out amid the clutter of the World Wide Web” (Barringer, 1999, para. 15).

For a period of time, CBS MarketWatch.com became a highly visible component of the CBS Evening News (see Chapter 5: Results, “Research Question 3,” p. 203). The nightly newscast included financial reports sponsored by MarketWatch.com and graphics that
included the website’s address. Embracing its cross-media promotional opportunities the partnership encouraged audiences from both platforms to seek information from the other. Details surrounding the 1999 IPO of MarketWatch.com, Inc., operator of CBS.MarketWatch.com, and its subsequent acquisitions, partnerships, and developments including a foray into television are presented in Appendix C (see p. 273).

In 2005, MarketWatch.com was at the center of a four-way bidding frenzy. The company was ultimately purchased by Dow Jones for $528 million, beating out competitors: The New York Times Company, Gannett Company, and then CBS parent company, Viacom Inc. (Dash, 2005; Deveney, 2005; Seelye, 2005). The Dow Jones purchase signaled the end of MarketWatch.com’s cross-media partnership with CBS; all references to CBS were removed from MarketWatch.com and the *CBS Evening News* no longer regularly included MarketWatch.com graphics and reports in its broadcast. In 2007, a search on CBSNews.com for the term “MarketWatch” resulted in a list of current news stories authored by MarketWatch; however, a search of the *CBS Evening News* transcripts revealed that MarketWatch.com reports and graphics have not been included in the newscast since the end of 2004.

**NBC’s Online Launch**

NBC launched its network website (http://www.nbc.com) in February 1995 as one component of a three-part strategy intended to broaden NBC’s reach into cyberspace (Schmuckler, 1995a). NBC’s initiative included the new website; an interactive Viewers’ Club – that took form in a weekly online newsletter (“Xtra”) emailed to audience members that offered behind-the-scenes information about NBC shows and upcoming events; and an
online merchandise service (NBC Store\textsuperscript{10}) available via NBC Online, the AOL partner site (Mandese, 1995; Schmuckler, 1995a).

The NBC website, which launched without advertising, was designed to take advantage of the Internet’s global reach to establish a site linked to one of the network’s most recognizable entertainment brands: The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (Mandese, 1995). Updated daily, the site\textsuperscript{11} featured highlights from each show including downloadable, full-motion comedy of the show’s opening monologue. The Tonight Show was selected for NBC’s online venture in part because NBC Productions owned the show and the network had direct control over the show’s license (Mandese, 1995).

**NBC and Microsoft Partner**

In 1995, NBC made a notable investment in its online future with the formation of a strategic partnership with software giant Microsoft. The alliance established the development of a range of multimedia products, including online services, software titles, and interactive television (Swisher, 1995). On the partnership, Bill Gates, then Chairman and CEO of Microsoft commented, “I’m a big believer that the interactive world can be very complementary with the broadcast world” (Landler, 1995a, para. 3); “We [Microsoft] feel that we can really contribute to developing new ways for consumers to get more from their [television] experience through interactivity, and we have only begun to tap the potential delivery of video to the personal computer to enrich the consumer experience” (Swisher, 1995, para. 5). NBC announced that the partnership would not “simply repurpose and

\textsuperscript{10} In 2010, the NBC Store linked to a site (http://www.nbcuniversalstore.com/) that sold merchandise related to various NBC programs (past and present).

\textsuperscript{11} In 2010 (following the show’s return to its 11:35 p.m.-12:35 a.m. timeslot on March 1, 2010), The Tonight Show with Jay Leno maintained a Web presence (http://www.nbc.com/The_Tonight_Show) accessible from the NBC home page. The site featured content repackaged from the nightly show (e.g. video clips of the monologue, Jaywalking segments), as well as, content developed specifically for access via the Internet (e.g. exclusive interview with guests, blogs maintained by returning show personalities).
promote [content] through The Microsoft Network,” according to Josh Grotstein, vice president and general manager of NBC Online Ventures, “We are going to create programming that viewers cannot see anywhere else” (Berniker, 1995c, para. 3).

**NBC News Online and MSNBC.com**

In the wake of this partnership, NBC News made its online debut (http://www.nbcnews.com) on August 24, 1995, along with the release of Microsoft’s Windows 95 operating system and the Microsoft Network (Gunther, 1995). Within a year, the news website evolved into a more inclusive Web presence based on NBC and Microsoft’s developing partnership.

On July 16, 1996, executives from NBC News and Microsoft joined forces to announce the launch of MSNBC Cable and MSNBC Internet (http://www.msnbc.com) (Landler, 1996a). From the start, MSNBC Cable and MSNBC Internet were managed as two separate entities; the cable channel based in New Jersey while the website was based at Microsoft’s headquarters in Redmond, Washington. The launch strategically positioned MSNBC Internet in direct competition with Web-based news services operated by existing news organizations (e.g. The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Time Warner and The San Jose (California) Mercury News) many of which charged users subscription fees for access to news (Lewis, 1996).

Employees at MSNBC Internet worked closely with employees of MSNBC Cable and NBC News, but the website had its own sales and production staffs, including: reporters, editors, producers, and photographers (Stelter, 2010b). The MSNBC website served as a kind of portal to all NBC news programs, including a link to the network’s Nightly News website,
the address of which had been updated from http://www.nbcnews.com to http://nightly.msnbc.com\textsuperscript{12}.

The Microsoft partnership contributed both strengths and weaknesses to NBC’s online venture. On the positive side, NBC’s exclusive deal with Microsoft made the network considerable money, more than $4 million, which underwrote the network’s costs of going online (Gunther, 1995). Similarly, Microsoft’s technical advantages over the other online services enabled NBC to immediately provide a graphically appealing site with multimedia content. However, on the down side, the partnership limited NBC’s online delivery of content to Microsoft outlets, potentially limiting NBC’s audience reach. Prior to the MSNBC Internet launch, NBC phased out its involvement with America Online and Prodigy, though the network maintained its main network site (http://www.nbc.com) on the Web to serve as a marketing tool for the network’s programs (Landler, 1995a; Swisher, 1995; Ross, 1996).

In December 2005, Microsoft and NBCUniversal dissolved their partnership in MSNBC Cable, NBC assuming control; however both organizations maintained their equal shares in MSNBC Internet\textsuperscript{13} (Carter, 2005).

**ABC’s Online Launch**

ABC, like the other networks, partnered with an online service provider prior to establishing a separate Web presence; ABC’s partner was America Online and its site ABC Online (Ross, 1996). ABC’s cross-promotion of network programming and its online site was epitomized in the online area devoted to the 68th Academy Awards\textsuperscript{®} which the network

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\textsuperscript{13} In October 2010, The New York Times reported that NBCUniversal and Microsoft were in talks to rename the MSNBC website. As a “strictly objective news site” MSNBC Internet expressed a desire to distinguish itself from MSNBC Cable, often recognized for its liberal perspectives (Stelter, 2010b, para. 2). As of June 2011, msnbc.com remains the umbrella site linking to NBCUniversal properties, including MSNBC.
televised in February 1995 (Schmuckler, 1995c). The online area provided users with lists of nominees, photos, bios, video clips from previous Oscars® shows, trivia quizzes, and message boards (Vigoda, 1995). Opportunities for users to participate in message boards, bulletin boards, and live chat sessions helped set ABC Online apart from other news sites. These interactions led to the development of an active online community who returned to ABC Online, not to read the latest headlines, but to interact with other users (Gunther, 1995).

In July 1995, the Walt Disney Company announced that it would buy Capital Cities/ABC Inc. in what would be recognized as the second-biggest corporate takeover to date (O’Neal & Baker, 1995; Stein, 1995). The $19 billion purchase created the world’s largest entertainment company (“Mergers: Mine is,” 1995; Shales, 1995). Michael Eisner, then chairman of Disney, admitted that he bought ABC at the top of its game; “It sounds funny, but I’m thinking about the millennium change. I’ve got to protect the Disney brand well into the future” (O’Neal & Baker, 1995, Problems section, para. 1). This purchase provided opportunities for programming and content distribution for both sides of the merger including ABC and its news division.

**ABCNews.com**

ABC News was the first network news division to enter cyberspace in a major way when it launched *ABC News on Demand* via its service provider America Online in October 1994 (Gunther, 1995). However, the network’s long-term online news presence would be established three years later with the launch of ABCNews.com.

In April 1997, the Walt Disney Company purchased controlling interest in Starwave Corporation, a Seattle-based Internet publisher, with plans to partner in the launch of an
online news site (Bauder, 1997; Zuckerman, 1997). Said then ABC News President Roone Arledge (1977-1998):

We don’t want people to just read about the news. They can do that anywhere. We want them to be able to hear it, feel it, interact with it and use the technology to help them understand how it applies to their lives. (Mannes, 1997, para. 5)

Plans for the website evolved following ABC’s decision not to launch a 24-hour cable news network; “ABCNews.com, done right, makes cable unnecessary because it becomes your multimedia cable network,” said Jeff Gralnick head of the new site, “That is where this business is going” (Zuckerman, 1997, para. 8). Based on this approach, ABCNews.com positioned itself in direct competition with MSNBC’s online site (Bransten & Taylor, 1997). The new site was designed to employ all the resources of ABC News; ABC News correspondents would file print dispatches to the site and then participate in online chat sessions (Zuckerman, 1997). To ensure an audience early on, the new site was made available via America Online, which claimed to have 12 million visitors a day, and on the home page of Netscape, which reported an estimated 4 million daily visitors (Bauder, 1997; Zuckerman, 1997).

**ABC and Alternative Outlets: Push Channels, Portal Sites & Partners**

Following the launch of ABCNews.com the network explored additional delivery vehicles for its content.

**Push Channels: Netcaster**

ABC’s partnership with Netscape evolved with the August 1997 launch of Netscape’s *Netcaster*, a new Internet “push” technology (Kehoe, 1997). *Netcaster* dynamically delivered intranet and Internet information to user desktops; users could subscribe to a content
“channel” – a content source much like a broadcast television or radio channel – and receive content that they could view offline (Netscape, 2000). Netcaster’s push capabilities enabled users to receive constant information updates in the background while they were working on other tasks (Netscape, 2000). Netscape established co-marketing agreements with several publishing groups whose channels received “premier” billing – ABC News was one such channel – others included CNN, CBS Sportsline, Ziff-Davis and CNET (Bayers, 1997; Kehoe, 1997). Commenting on its list of partners Netscape vice president of product marketing Bob Lisbonne said, “We’re not seeking to establish exclusive relationships, because that’s not the way of the Net” (Bayers, 1997, para. 7). Lisbonne continued saying that Netscape had no intention of getting into the content game itself, relying instead on its twenty different content providers (Bayers, 1997).

**Portal Sites**

However within a year, push technology was considered a passing fad. In its place, portals, or gateway websites, became the latest trend (Andrews, 1997). The underlying idea was that users would become accustomed to a particular portal site and use it routinely as their entrée onto the Web (“Pushing at the portals,” 1998). Similar to push channels, portals were designed to make Web use simpler. In a marketplace crowded with search capabilities, messaging services, and other frequently used tools, portals were intended to make Web navigation easier. Like push channels, portals were designed to catch a user’s attention long enough to display a series of advertisements. Heading into 1998, Yahoo and America Online were the largest and most established portals; however, Netscape, Excite, and Infoseek were eager to join the market (“Pushing at the portals,” 1998). Netscape leveraged its partnerships with content providers, including ABC News, so when its *Netcenter* portal
(http://home.netscape.com) was launched, the portal had content to promote (Katz, 1998). As of July 1998, nearly half of Netscape’s estimated 70 million users used the Netscape Web page as their portal to other websites (Katz, 1998).

**Portal Partners**

The portal sites grew rapidly in viewership and market value. Media companies saw these portals as integrated networks of communication and entertainment – opportunities to reach a broader audience (Hansell, 1998b). The ability to funnel users to certain advertisers and content sites led NBC to partner with and eventually purchase Snap, a search and directory service, while keeping its other Internet activities, particularly its MSNBC news service separate (Hansell, 1998a, 2000; Katz, 1998); Disney elected to partner with Infoseek (Hansell, 1998b). Within a year, Disney had purchased Infoseek and had finalized plans for a new portal, the Go Network (http://www.go.com) (‘‘Disney names head,’’ 1999). The new portal was designed to feature ABCNews.com and ESPN.com – directing users to Disney-owned content (‘‘Disney, Infoseek get going,’’ 1998). ‘‘We have what is needed to compete [with other portals] because of the great depth in our brands and the great consumer loyalty to them,’’ said Eisner on the eve of the debut of Disney’s Go Network (Hansell, 2000, para. 2).

However, Eisner’s excitement was short-lived; not long after Go.com was launched Disney recognized that it would require a larger investment to compete with the existing portals (e.g. Yahoo, America Online) (Gentile, 2002). So in 2000, Disney repositioned Go.com to be an entertainment – and leisure-centric website (Gentile, 2002; ‘‘International eye,’’ 2000). In 2010, Go.com remains a visible component of Disney’s overall Web presence – it can be seen in Disney-owned Web addresses – entertainment, leisure, sports, and news
sites alike: Disney’s site for “all things Disney” (http://disney.go.com); the network’s main site (http://abc.go.com); ESPN (http://espn.go.com); and ABC News (http://abcnews.go.com).

Network News Online: Cross-Promotion, Synergy, Audiences

Following the networks’ establishment and early promotion of their respective news sites, one of their immediate challenges involved determining how to tap into the growing audience that was already accessing news online. In this context, the network sites were merely additional outlets in an increasingly crowded marketplace of online news sites. The networks’ strategy to develop an online audience began with the promotion of their websites within their existing television news audience. The networks’ attempted to leverage their credibility and brand loyalty within this audience in order to help build an audience base for the online news sites. Using these broadcast traits, the networks could set audience expectations as to the quality of the news content that would be provided online – or in fact independent of the delivery platform (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 2002).

To facilitate their online development, the networks created online media divisions. However, early in their history there was not always a clear understanding of what the relationship between the broadcast and digital media divisions would be. The online divisions were often perceived as competition or threats since they had the potential to easily “scoop” their broadcast counterparts by posting breaking news to websites ahead of the evening newscasts and often before networks were able to interrupt regularly scheduled broadcasts for “breaking news” bulletins. There was also underlying concern that if viewers began accessing news online, then they may not tune-in to the nightly newscast.
Over time, broadcast and online media increasingly worked in tandem, cross-fertilizing (or cross-promoting) each other – driving audience members back and forth between them (Kawamoto, 2003). Networks directed viewers to visit their websites for more information about news stories that did not fit into the newscast’s scheduled time slot. It was not uncommon to hear news anchors encouraging viewers to visit the newscast’s website, where they could find more information, as well as participate in electronic discussions, ask questions of experts, send email to the reporters, and so on. This became a positive way to develop audience relations and to “deepen the newscast or news hole” with content that did not make it on air, but had value to those viewers interested in learning more about a story (Bucy, 2004, p. 111).

Their was a mutually beneficial relationship – the news sites needed content, network reporters produced content that was not always televised, and the news sites provided alternative outlets for the content. While investigating Internet business models for broadcasters, specifically local television stations, Chan-Olmsted and Ha (2003) used the term “symbiotic relationship” to describe the strategic pairing of television and the Internet. The ultimate goal of employing multiple communication outlets was to generate synergy – and thus create the greatest persuasion effect (Caywood, Schultz, & Wang, 1991 as cited in Chang & Thorson, 2004). Synergy, defined as “the interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effect” (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997 as cited in Chang & Thorson, 2004, p. 75), was regularly employed in the discussion of the Internet and partnering media (Bucy, 2003; Chan-Olmsted & Park, 2000).
The networks benefited from their synergistic relationship with the Web. They not only generated an increased sense of brand loyalty, beneficial within the broadcast and online arenas (later to include mobile outlets), they also expanded their respective marketing bases. The online environment offered a variety of options for advertisers. On an ABC Web page designed to attract new sponsors, launched from ABCNews.com in May 2005, the network stated, “Advertisers may reach our valuable audience via placement in appropriate content areas, section sponsorships, email campaigns or through customized programs” (ABC News, n.d.). CBS included advertising as one of its three components in the CBSNews.com mission statement, also accessed online in May 2005:

- To be the 24-hour on-demand extension of the number one Broadcast Network.
- To provide advertisers with premium exclusive content and next-generation advertising models.
- To continue our leadership position as convergence and multiple-platform opportunities achieve critical mass (CBS News, n.d.).

Online, network sponsors could capitalize on the interactive nature of the Web linking users from the network sites to their own websites. The potential for audience click-through from a news site to a sponsor’s site was a win-win situation for the network and sponsor.

**Newscast Format and Alternative Delivery Options**

Recognizing the network news sites as synergistic or symbiotic extensions of the nightly newscasts, the format of these newscasts warrants mention. In the evening half-hour newscasts 14, audience members were presented with nineteen minutes 15 of news content that

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14 Daily news programs were fifteen-minutes in length until September 2, 1963, when the *CBS Evening News* became television’s first thirty-minute nightly news program (Shedden, 2006).
covered an array of national and international news events. Reports were generally brief and often provided enough information to tease a subject without providing considerable depth or detail. This was the format of the networks’ evening newscast in the mid-1990s when the news websites were launched. Without changing this format, the networks’ options for delivering additional news content to its audience were limited. Two options included: developing news stories into longer more in-depth reports for broadcast as part of the networks’ weekly news magazine programs (i.e. ABC: 20/20, CBS: 60 Minutes, NBC: Dateline NBC), or utilizing the Internet as a complementary or companion news delivery tool.

**Program Length and Broadcast Time**

Changes to the evening newscasts, including program length and broadcast time, have been proposed and dismissed since the late 1970s. In 1977, shortly after becoming ABC News president Roone Arledge proposed that the network’s struggling 6:00 p.m. newscast be moved to 10:30 p.m. (Kurtz, 1996). This idea was discarded and instead, Arledge created Nightline, which launched in 1980 and was celebrated for its investigative reports, day-in-the-life stories, and town meetings (Kurtz, 1996). Some twenty years later (1998), the frequency of news magazines being aired across the three networks along with the dwindling ratings for many prime-time programs seemed to suggest that the networks might be moving toward a prime-time news hour nearly every night of the week (Zoglin, McDowell, & Tynan, 1998). This “new” newscast could combine an evening-news-style wrap-up of the day’s events with the kind of feature segments and investigative pieces that then filled the

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15 The average duration of the nightly newscasts has decreased incrementally over time; in 1990 the average duration was twenty-one minutes, by 2000 the average had dropped to 18.8 minutes, and by 2010 the average had increased to 19.2 minutes (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011).
magazine shows (Zoglin et al., 1998). It was even suggested that such a program could (someday) replace the traditional evening newscast altogether (Zoglin et al., 1998). Although then CBS News president Andrew Heyward responded to this idea commenting, “A significant number of Americans are watching [the nightly news] and millions would be disappointed if it weren’t there. I see prime-time news as a supplement to the evening-news program, not a substitute” (Zoglin et al., 1998, para. 6). The idea of an hour-long prime-time newscast resurfaced in 2006, at a time when network prime-time programs were losing viewers and the cost of dramas and sitcoms was larger than ever; however, none of the networks chose to make the dramatic change (Poniewozik, 2006).

**Media Displacement**

Existing media have historically worried about being displaced by media innovations. When a new media activity is introduced into the marketplace, a corresponding reduction in the time spent with legacy media activities is expected (Kayany & Yelsma, 2000). Such was the general concern among existing media outlets surrounding the popular adoption of the Internet.

**Study of Media Displacement**

The media displacement model has been a subject of research revisited with the release of each new communication medium. When radio was introduced as a new medium, its impact on print media was studied based on an argument that broadcasting would mean the end of print media (Lazarsfeld, 1940). Similar studies were conducted for subsequent new technologies—television (Belson, 1961), cable television (Kaplan, 1978; Sparkes, 1983), video cassette recorder (VCR) (Harvey & Rothe, 1985; Henke & Donohue, 1989),
and more recently, the focus of this study, the Internet (Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001; Nie & Hillygus, 2002; Robinson, Barth, & Kohut, 1997; Wotring & Forrest, 1995).

Time spent on various media becomes an issue as the underlying assumption is that individuals have a limited amount of time that can be seen as a kind of social capital (Neuman, 1995). Thus, if an individual increases the amount of time spent with one medium, then logically, sacrifices will have to be made in other areas (Neuman, 1995).

According to Roper’s public opinion data, in 1937 just over 50 percent of the U.S. population identified that newspaper was their primary news source, but less than a decade later, radio had displaced newspapers becoming the primary news source among the majority of Americans (62%) (Basil, 1990). A second occurrence of media displacement was noted when television became the primary news source for 60 percent of the population in 1972 (Basil, 1990). In separate studies, Weiss and Robinson also observed media displacement by television. Weiss (1968) observed that the introduction of television into individuals’ schedules reduced the amount of time spent with other media. Similarly, Robinson (1981) reported that those who spent more time watching television spent less time with other media such as radio and non-media activities such as social visiting.

However, research findings have not consistently lent support for the displacement model (Jeong & Li, 2003). It is possible that the use of a new medium leads to no change or as Lee and Kuo (2002) suggested an “engagement effect,” an increase in time spent using existing media. Scholars who challenge the media displacement theory maintain that the use of one type of media does not necessarily replace the gratifications expected from other media (Adoni, 1995; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2000). Support for this concept, can be found in the literature focused on the media audience; audience members are seen as
active media consumers because their communication choices are based on the gratifications they seek and their beliefs that these choices will provide those gratifications (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

**Media Displacement and the Internet**

Focusing on the emergence of the Internet, some studies found examples of media displacement, while others challenge the idea. James, Wotring, and Forrest (1995) found that the use of online media affected time spent with other media such as television, telephone, and newspaper. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) noted that the Internet was used to get information more than books, magazines, television, newspapers, telephone, or face-to-face communication; they suggested that information seeking was by far the strongest motive for Internet use. Other online activities and their distinguishing characteristics will be discussed in Chapter 2 (see “America’s Online Activities,” p. 45). Additional support for the displacement theory suggested that time spent online is an asocial activity that competes with, rather than complements, face-to-face social interactions (Nie & Hillygus, 2002).

However, according to Stempel, Hargrove, and Bernt (2000), displacement is only one of many possible outcomes surrounding the emergence of the Internet. Contrary to the underlying premise of the displacement model, certain studies found support for a complementary relationship (increase-increase) between new and existing media. Robinson et al. (1997) found evidence of such a complementary or symbiotic relationship between the Internet and print media, where each medium seemed to reinforce the use of the other. Lee and Kuo (2002) found that a rise in Internet use was associated with an increase in newspaper reading and radio listening. Instead of media displacement, they suggested that the use of newspaper and radio were benefiting from Internet use; their explanation was focused on
certain characteristics of newspapers and radio, which make them more resistant to displacement (Lee & Kuo, 2002). Althaus and Tewksbury (2000) as well as Bromley and Bowles (1995) also suggested that people use online news to supplement, not replace their core news consumption. In 2006, findings from the Pew Research Center supported this reporting that the Web mainly served as a supplement to other [news] sources rather than a primary source of news; users who go online for news still spend more time getting news from other sources than they do getting news online (Pew Research Center, 2006). Additional studies suggested that people read online news to fill the gaps in their exposure to other media or, more likely, to monitor ongoing events (e.g. stock prices or sporting events) or breaking news (Tewksbury, 2002; Wu & Bechtel, 2002).

**Companion News Site**

Use of the Web alongside or in addition to traditional broadcast news reinforces the websites status as a complementary or companion news delivery tool. Recognizing that the format of the evening newscast has changed little in forty years, the networks’ use of the websites seems a more viable solution for the delivery of additional news content to audiences. As previously discussed, the broadcast networks have employed a variety of techniques to establish an online presence: partnering with service providers, establishing separate websites, and cross-promoting network programs and organizational properties to name a few. Part of the current study focuses on how networks incorporate the Internet into their nightly newscasts, so the potential for complementary relationships between media is one that will be discussed based on the findings of this study.

The term *companion* when used to reference a website that is associated with an existing media organization originated in this study. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*
defines companion as “one that accompanies another” or “one that is closely connected with something similar” (Companion, n.d.). Media displacement theory and some researchers speculate as to whether online sites will serve as a supplement or substitute for traditional news media. Some observers suggest the possibility of replacement among younger audiences (Dizard, 1994; Leo, 1997) and others predicting that news websites will augment traditional broadcasts, at least among “news junkies” (Davis & Owen, 1998). Unlike verbs such as “supplement” or “augment,” the term companion suggests a balanced or equal relationship between two entities in which neither is dominant. Although they fall under the same network umbrella and share content, an evening newscast and its website are separate entities that can be used by audiences either separately or in tandem. The term “collaborative” suggests that entities are together only for a specific occasion or short-lived activity. As previously mentioned, “symbiotic” has been used to describe the relationship between the Internet and television networks (Chan-Olmsted & Ha, 2003); however, there is an assumed degree of dissimilarity between the entities. While it can be argued that there is a distinction between the Internet and television, in the context of this study both are seen as media outlets used to communicate with audiences.

Effectively employing the Internet as a companion news delivery tool is expected to be a two-part process. First, the networks need to recognize the Internet as a subject worthy of news coverage. This recognition will help bolster the support and loyalty of Internet early adopters while also encouraging members of the television audience that the online medium is worthy of attention and pursuit. This should be detectable from the degree to which nightly news reports include or omit references in news stories to such topics as: increasing participation in online marketplaces, sizeable economic investments in the technology and
computer-support industries, as well as shifts that are occurring online within societal behaviors (i.e. the formation of virtual communities, online classrooms, and Internet dating). A related technique would be to incorporate the use of Internet-related terms into news stories, demystifying or normalizing Internet jargon, so such terms as information superhighway, online and dot-com begin to take on meaning within the television audience.

The second part of this process to utilize the Internet as a companion news outlet involves promoting the Internet as a communication device and encouraging news audiences to visit the networks’ news sites. This should be observable based on the networks inclusion or omission of website addresses or URLs (uniform resource locators)\textsuperscript{16} in their news stories, directing audience members where to go online. Similarly, Web addresses could be paired with invitations made by the anchor encouraging the audience to learn more about a particular news event or subject.

It should be noted that during the study’s timeframe (1997 to 2004), there will be occasions when developments related to the Internet will be considered newsworthy on their own merits, applying traditional news values (these news values are discussed in Chapter 3). These stories are helpful in providing a context for the study; their identification and inclusion will be discussed in Chapter 4: Methodology.

**Current Study**

This study measures the television networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject, and records how these same networks incorporated the Internet as a communication tool into their nightly newscasts. These findings should reveal patterns that may exist in news coverage of the Internet, thus confirming or challenging previous research related to the

\textsuperscript{16} URL (uniform resource locator) is the standard way to give the address of any resource on the Internet that is part of the World Wide Web (URL, n.d.).
selection of stories by established news organizations. These results will add to an existing body of literature, while also exploring what appears to be a companion relationship between the established networks and their online outlets.

In order to provide a context for this study and the subsequent discussion, Chapter 2 contains a chronology highlighting milestones in the U.S.’s adoption and usage of the Internet. This is followed in Chapter 3 by the theoretical basis for this study.
Figure 1. Evening news viewership in millions, all networks combined (ABC, CBS, NBC), 1980 to 2010.

Figure 2. Annual ratings for the ABC, CBS, and NBC nightly newscasts, 1980 to 2010.


Nielsen Media Research, provides the following explanation of a household rating.

A Household Rating is the estimate of the size of a television audience relative to the total universe, expressed as a percentage. As of September 20, 2004, there are an estimated 109.6 million television households in the U.S. A single national household ratings point represents 1%, or 1,096,000 households (Nielsen Media Research, Inc., n.d.).


Note: In December 2006, the median age of news viewers for three networks are as follows: ABC (60.2), CBS (60), and NBC (60.4).

CHAPTER 2
INTERNET HISTORY & ONLINE AMERICA

This chapter provides a context for the adoption of the Internet by a mainstream audience in the United States. A timeline of world and technological events provides perspective on the happenings of the time and some of the factors that influenced the Internet’s growth and adoption.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the study’s time period, 1997 to 2004, is significant. By the end of 1997, each of the “big three” broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) had established an online news site (Bransten & Taylor, 1997; Gunther, 1995; Ross, 1996). This study concludes at the end of 2004 before the Web-based applications and technologies associated with social media and Web 2.0 widely influenced news audience behaviors and consumption patterns. By 2005, the networks began making significant changes to both their nightly newscasts and their websites, complicating side-by-side comparisons of their media messages and their means of distribution.

America’s Online Activities

Throughout the eight-year period of the study, 1997 to 2004, Americans used the Internet as a source of communication, entertainment, transactions, and information (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004). A 2004 report published by the U.S. Department of Commerce indicated that the majority of Americans’ online activities could be classified within one of these four categories; based on the percentage of time spent by online users, “communication” was the mostly frequent activity. As quantified in the government report, this category included email and instant messaging. The next category, based on frequency of activity, was “information” which represented such activities as searching for product or
service information; getting news, weather, sports, or health information; or searching for a job. Third was “transactions,” which could include: purchasing products or services; banking online; trading stocks and bonds; or taking a course online. The final category, “entertainment,” suggested activities such as listening to radio stations; watching television programs or movies via the Internet; or playing games. The findings of Howard et al. (2001) maintained that Internet users felt that online tools improved the ways in which they participated in hobbies, managed finances, got information about health care, shopped, and generally learned about things.

**Timeline Events**

Parallels can be seen between the activities of the online population and events taking place around the world, as well as within the developments taking place in technology. Appendix D (see p. 278) contains a timeline of world and Internet/technological events, spanning from 1991, the year that saw the launch of the Web, to 2010. Highlights from the study’s eight-year timeframe follow.

By the end of 1997, scientists had cloned Dolly the sheep, China had resumed control of Hong Kong, the Mars Pathfinder was exploring the surface of Mars, and the world was remembering Princess Diana and Mother Teresa (CNN, 1997). This same year, computer software companies, Netscape and Microsoft released upgrades to their Web browsers; upgrades designed to facilitate easier Internet navigation and information retrieval (Booker, 1997; Levitt, 1997). In March, NASA’s website received over one million “hits” or unique visits in the course of one day, an unprecedented number of visitors to the site, as the Comet Hale-Bopp was spotted and images of the comet were made available on the website (Toner, 1997). This occasion was one of the first to demonstrate the Internet’s ability to communicate
information to a large, far-reaching audience and to attract such widespread, measurable audience interest (Toner, 1997).

In 1998, a year that included such world events as the Nagano Winter Olympics, peace in Northern Ireland, America’s bombing of Iraq, and John Glenn’s return to space, the Internet’s role as an outlet for information was recognized by the mainstream news outlets (CNN, 1998; International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2007). A posting on the Drudge Report website, a site begun in 1994 consisting primarily of links to online stories about politics and current events, triggered President Clinton’s admission of an affair with Monica Lewinsky (Grossman, 1998). When Hurricane Bonnie, a Category 3 hurricane, pounded the coast of North Carolina, The Charlotte Observer used a Web log (blog) to report the story of the storm (Scanlan, 2003). In addition to hard news stories, the Internet also served as a source of human interest stories; in June a Florida woman gave birth live online (Hamilton, 1998).

The U.S. Department of Commerce began tracking Internet sales in 1999; it called “e-commerce” a major indicator of the nation’s economic health (Clampet, 2000). In 1999, the four leading e-commerce brands were amazon.com, priceline.com, eBay, and E*trade. This same year, the “Melissa” computer virus was launched online causing more than $80 million in damage by disrupting personal computers and computer networks in business and government and infecting untold numbers of computers and computer networks (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001); the creator of the computer virus was later sentenced to 20 months in federal prison (BBC News, 1999b). Changing the focus to public health, Philip Morris chose to publish its admissions of health risks related to smoking on its company website (BBC News, 1999a). The use of the Internet to disseminate such significant
information suggests that the company recognized the outlet as a means of reaching a widespread audience. However, online 1999 was a year perhaps most well-remembered by the term “Y2K” an acronym for the “Year 2000” (Riordan, 1999). Concern revolved around how electronic devices, primarily computers, would or would not handle the transition from the year 1999 to 200017 (CNN, 1999b). Fortunately, the majority of these concerns were unwarranted, however, the anticipation of problems translated to money made by consultants hired to inspect and reinforce computer applications and networks (Strunsky, 2000).

Following the successful transition into the new century, little would prepare the Internet community for the events that would occur in 2000. Against a backdrop that included the announced merger of AOL and Time Warner, the elections of Russian President Putin and U.S. President G.W. Bush, and the Summer Olympics in Sydney, the online world experienced several attacks (CNN, 2000a; IOC, 2007). Major denials of service and cyber attacks against high profile websites occurred in February (CNN, 2000b), followed in May by the “Love Letter” worm which infected computers around the world, shutting down electronic communications for several hours and costing companies nearly $1 billion (Miastkowski, 2000).

**Dot-com Bubble Bursts – April 2000**

A major milestone in the Internet’s history occurred during the spring of 2000 – the “dot-com bubble” burst. The term “dot-com bubble” referred to a period of time (from Netscape’s initial public offering in 1995 to 2001, with a climax in 2000) during which stock

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17 The Y2K bug was a very common and a potentially serious glitch in older computer hardware and software that processed data that included dates and did not properly understand dates in the year 2000 and beyond. The systems only stored the last two digits of a date, and when year 2000 rolled around, these systems thought the year was 1900 (Y2K, n.d.).
18 The term “bubble” when it refers to a stock price that far exceeds its economic value, can be traced to a 1720 poem by Jonathan Swift written just after the stock price of the South Sea Company fell (Krueger, 2005).
markets around the world saw their value increase rapidly from investments in Internet start-ups (Grande, 2000; Naughton, 1999; Williamson, 2000). The bubble was marked by the founding and failure of many Web-based companies, often referred to as “dot-coms.” During this period, a combination of rapidly increasing stock prices, individual speculation in stocks, and widely available venture capital created an environment in which many of these businesses dismissed standard business models (Coggan, 1999). Instead, attention was focused on increasing market share at the expense of the bottom line. Rather than focus on profit or sales, attention was paid to new ways to measure success: page use, unique visitors, eyeballs\(^{19}\), “anything as long as it was growing” (Mann, 2000). Executives built these companies and became paper millionaires when they sold shares to the public (Beresford, 2000; Lynn, 2000).

Investors thought that the Internet would create a new economy and would revolutionize commerce. This idea was supported by reports of dot-coms generating enormous profits in short periods of time. In five years, Amazon.com effectively generated more revenue than Microsoft had over the course of 16 years. Similarly, the revenues of Internet start-up eToys exploded from $30,000 to $30 million in just one year (Mann, 2000). Such reports triggered many to invest – and in the case of eToys, this excitement made it an $11 billion company even though it was losing $2.46 on every dollar of sales (Mann, 2000). In March 2001, eToys collapsed, its $11 billion of market value gone (“Dot.com timeline,” 2002; Mann, 2000).

\(^{19}\) These terms refer to Web measurements. Web-based measures typically include: unique visitors, reach, length of stay, registered users, click-throughs and repeat visits. The two measures most watched by investment professionals include unique visitors and length of stay. The former is often referred to as eyeballs and the latter is often called “stickiness.” With these measures, professionals can find out how many eyeballs stick around long enough to actually make a financial transaction (Bontis, 2000).
On March 10, 2000, the Nasdaq Composite index peaked at an intra-day high of 5,132.52, and closed at an all-time high, 5,048.62 (Forman, 2004). Shortly after this peak, investors saw declining values as a sign that the dot-com bubble had burst, and professional and amateur investors alike, began selling anything Internet or technology related. Over the course of the next two and a half years the Nasdaq Composite index dropped from a peak of 5,048.86 to a low of 1,114.11\textsuperscript{20} for a 78 percent loss (Forman, 2004; Tseng, 2004). This loss translated to approximately $4.2 trillion of shareholder wealth (Rao & Scaruffi, 2011).

By mid-April 2000, technology stocks were dropping faster than they had grown (Coggan & Crooks, 2001). Paper millionaires were wiped out, stock offerings shelved, employee stock options rendered worthless, and dot-coms left bleeding cash (Woodward, 2000). The rise and fall of Internet stocks created and then destroyed $8 trillion of shareholder wealth (Krueger, 2005). During the 2000 dot-com frenzy, over 860 dot-com companies failed, the majority of these closures among e-commerce and content companies (43% and 25% respectively) (Chait, 2002).

The bubble burst and with it went the hopes of countless entrepreneurs who had hoped to cash in on the soaring financial markets going public or by selling their companies. Survivors of the bubble were companies that had followed a solid business model and had a long-term view (Woodward, 2000). Despite the many changes that the Internet had brought to American business, investors realized that the old rules of investment still applied even in the new technology-focused economy (Woodward, 2000). By the end of the year, investors

\textsuperscript{20} The Nasdaq Composite index recorded an intra-day low of 1,108.48 on October 10, 2002 (Tseng, 2004).
who had fed the bubble fled into blue-chip stocks\(^{21}\) that promised revenue and profits, not eyeballs and click-through rates (Woodward, 2000).

In hindsight, analysts say that the Internet excitement of the late 1990s was a giant bubble destined to burst. Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, wary of the Internet’s rapid growth, warned investors in January 1999 that investing in Internet stocks was like buying lottery tickets because the vast majority of Internet companies, he predicted, will fail (“Bubble 2.0,” 2005).

The bursting of the dot-com bubble marked the beginning of a lengthy recession\(^{22}\) that spanned into the early 2000s; soft markets and rising unemployment led the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates in hopes of reviving consumer spending (CNN, 2001b). In the years following the bubble, remaining online businesses continued to perform; however, investments and financial speculations into these companies slowed and did not return to the over-inflated levels of the late 1990s.

**Timeline Continues**

Headlines from the first eight months of 2001, included such items as the transfer of deposed Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to the United Nations tribunal at The Hague on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, the search for former Washington D.C. intern Chandra Levy, and the execution of Timothy McVeigh, six years after the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, which killed 168 people (CNN, 2001b).

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\(^{21}\) Blue-chip stock refers to a common stock of a nationally-known company whose value and dividends are reliable (Blue-chip stock, n.d.).

\(^{22}\) According to CNN Money, the most common definition of a recession is “two or more quarters of a shrinking economy” (CNN Money, 2001).
September 11, 2001

The timeline is now interrupted by the events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), a benchmark of sorts that has come to classify time as events that happened before 9/11 and those that happened after that fateful day. On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked America on U.S. soil, hijacking four commercial jet airliners and using them as weapons. Two of the planes (United Airlines Flight 175 and American Airlines Flight 11) were intentionally crashed into New York City’s World Trade Center (one plane into each tower), which resulted in the collapse of both buildings and extensive damages to surrounding buildings (CNN, 2001a). Hijackers of the third airliner (American Airlines Flight 77) crashed the plane into the Pentagon (CNN, 2001a). Passengers and crew of the fourth aircraft (United Airlines Flight 93) attempted to retake control of the airliner from the hijackers and in the process the plane crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania (CNN, 2001a). Nearly 3,000 people died as an immediate result of the terrorist attacks (Hirschkorn, 2003).

Americans turned to television for news of the attacks. By percentages, more people turned to cable news (45%) than network news (30%) or local television (17%) (Pew Research Center, 2001). During this crisis, radio, newspapers, and the Web all fell short of television as a source of news (Pew Research Center, 2001). According to a report by the Pew Research Center, even a large majority (88%) of online users turned to television (2001).

In the hours and days after the attacks, network television provided round-the-clock, commercial-free news coverage (Roberts, 2001). The cost of this coverage was estimated at $50 million to $75 million a day in advertising, or roughly $200 million to $300 million for
the first four days of coverage (McClellan, 2001). When asked about the financial impact to his network, David Westin, then president of the ABC news division responded, “We’ve been told by [Disney executives, the owners of ABC News] to spend the money we need to spend” (Roberts, 2001, para. 7). Similarly at CBS News, then president Andrew Heyward said, “We are committed to covering the story well, and won’t make any choices that shortchanges the public” (Roberts, 2001 para. 7). Then president of NBC News, Neal Shapiro, emphasized the cost advantage that comes from producing content for multiple outlets, “We have three networks—NBC, CNBC and MSNBC—over which to spread costs” (Roberts, 2001 para. 7).

On the day of the attacks, approximately 30 million Americans tried to access news online and roughly 43 percent were unable to connect due overburdened websites (Loechner, 2001). CNN.com, ABCNews.com, and NYTimes.com were all unavailable between 9 and 10 a.m.; MSNBC.com was available 22 percent of the time, and USAToday.com was accessible 18.2 percent of the time (Kerschbaumer, 2001; Walker, 2001). Internet performance increased throughout the day as additional server capacity was added and as news outlets streamlined their sites (Kerschbaumer, 2001). Some sites hurriedly rebuilt their home page and story templates – eliminating non-essential graphics and multimedia extras – in order to present users with a rudimentary but fast and functional site (Coates, 2001). Peter Dorogoff, director of communications for MSNBC.com described his site’s contingency plan for a “lite-site” or “ultra-lite-site” mode in cases of heavy traffic, “It [this process] strips all the heavy graphics… and gets down to a bare-bones, text-only mode” (Kerschbaumer, 2001,

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23 The first hijacker airliner crashed into the World Trade Center North Tower at 8:46 a.m. The second plane crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03 a.m. Within the hour, at 9:43 a.m. the third plane crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth and final plane crashed in a Pennslyvania field at 10:10 a.m. (CNN, 2001a).
Similarly, American Airlines and United Airlines dissolved their usual home pages and instead posted fast-loading, text-only pages displaying toll-free phone numbers that people could call for information (Walker, 2001).

Over time, the Web became a frequently used source of updates on the crisis; one-third of Americans – half of U.S. Web users – went online for updates (Pew Research Center, 2001). News sites used to measuring their site visits in the hundreds of thousands per hour were quickly measuring visits in terms of millions per hour. Jupiter Research reported that 11.7 million Americans visited news sites each day for a week after the attacks, double the previous average (Loechner, 2001). CNN.com topped the list with 4.6 million unique visitors a day (Loechner, 2001; “Web watch,” 2001); followed by MSNBC.com (4.2 million unique visitors), ABCNews.com (1.3 million unique visitors), NYTimes.com (1.1 million unique visitors), and CBS.com sites (1.0 million unique visitors) (“Web watch,” 2001). As these numbers suggest, each of these sites experienced a dramatic increase in the percentage of visitors to its site as compared to the previous week; percent change experienced in unique visitors to websites from 9/7/01 to 9/16/01: CNN.com, 264 percent; MSNBC.com, 182 percent; ABCNews.com, 362 percent; NYTimes.com, 71 percent; CBS.com sites, 174 percent (“Web watch,” 2001). These positive spikes were relatively short-lived.

In a 2002 year end report, Pew Research Center found that the public’s news habits had been largely unaffected by the September 11 attacks and subsequent war on terrorism (Pew Research Center, 2002a, 2002b). Levels of reading, watching and listening to the news were not much different than the levels recorded in the spring of 2000 (Pew Research Center, 2002a). Increases in overall Internet penetration slowed; the percentage of Americans that went online for news at least three times a week, was only 2 percent higher in 2002 compared
with 23 percent in 2000 (Pew Research Center, 2002a). However, the relative impact of online news remained substantial among users under age 30, where online news has a larger following than any other format except local television news (Pew Research Center, 2002a).

**Timeline Continues**

Following the attacks on America, the United States and an international coalition began air strikes on Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, in a mission to find and punish terrorists or “those harboring terrorists” (CNN, 2001b, War in Afghanistan section, para. 2). In an act of bioterrorism, major news outlets and government officials received letters that contained deadly anthrax spores (CNN, 2001b). From October 2 to November 20, 2001, investigators identified twenty-two cases of bioterrorism-related anthrax (Jernigan et al., 2002).

The next year, 2002, recorded the debut of the Euro currency, the Enron scandal, Russian hostages taken by Chechen rebels, serial sniper attacks in Washington, D.C., and the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah (CNN, 2002; IOC, 2007). On the technology front, the search engine, Google, introduced a beta version of its Google News service (Hansell, 2002). With this release, Google provided online audiences with an alternative to traditional news outlets. The computer-generated news site aggregated headlines from more than 4,500 English-language news sources worldwide, then grouped similar stories and displayed them together according to each audience member’s personalized interests (Google, Inc., n.d.).

The opening months of 2003 included the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster during its re-entry to the Earth’s atmosphere and the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom), followed by the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in Asia, and the U.S. Northeastern Blackout (CNN, 2003). During the early days of the 2003 war with Iraq,
Americans gravitated to websites of established institutions: first television news sites, then newspaper sites, then U.S. government sites, and then foreign news sites (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004). Traffic to major news websites soared during the opening weeks of the war; the Pew Internet and American Life Project (Pew Internet) reported that 77 percent of online Americans used the Internet in connection with the War in Iraq (Rainie, Fox, & Fallows, 2003). These users were going online to get information about the war, to learn and share differing opinions about the conflict, and to send and receive emails expressing their views and offering prayers (Rainie et al., 2003). While the majority of the U.S. online population continued to use traditional media outlets (e.g. television, newspaper, radio) to get most of their war news, 17 percent of online Americans said their principal source of information about the war was the Internet (Rainie et al., 2003). When asked why they went online for this news, the ability to get news from a variety of sources was the primary explanation provided, followed closely by the fact that the Internet offers up-to-the-minute news, and finally the ability to get points of view different from those found in traditional news media (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004).

Technological advancements changed the image of war seen in American homes. Improvements made since the first Gulf War with Iraq in 1991 allowed reporters to transmit live night footage of the initial “Shock and Awe” campaign in Baghdad and to provide running commentaries via satellite hook-ups. On the Internet, audience members were able to track the activities and commentaries of reporters, pundits, and personalities through personal blogs (Swartz, 2003). In addition to their brief appearances on the nightly newscasts, reporters used this online medium to present additional information to their audiences. ABCNews.com noted, “Blogs and other nontraditional news sites could be gaining ground
among digital information seekers because they offer views that are uniquely compelling, personal and sometimes completely overlooked by traditional outlets” (Eng, 2003, Make way for the Web section, para. 3). During early days of the war (March 2003), one of the most visited areas on Blogspot.com, a resource linking users to Web logs, was a blog entitled “Dear Raed,” a personal chronicle of life in Baghdad (“Baghdad blogger re-appears,” 2003). Enemy insurgents also used the Internet to reach an international audience, disseminating information in the forms of text and video messages. In 2004, terrorist groups showed the executions of U.S. hostages online (Lipton & Lichtblau, 2004).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, 2004 saw renewed interest and economic investment in the World Wide Web following the burst of the 2000 dot-com bubble (Song, 2010). O’Reilly’s (2005) term Web 2.0 described the “movement of one-way, mass communication to an interactive, personal communication medium” (Johnson, 2006, p. 24). Blogs, wikis\(^{24}\), and social networking sites were some of the technologies and communication tools that fell under the label of Web 2.0. The adoption of social media altered both how users interacted with the Web and how they communicated with one another. Web-based platforms, applications and technologies enabled people to interact within a variety of online communities; early examples of such social networking sites included: Friendster (2002) and MySpace (2003) – sites based on user participation and user-generated content (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

In 2004, headlines alerted the world to terrorist train bombings in Spain, the Summer Olympics in Athens, and the South Asia Tsunami (CNN, 2004a; IOC, 2007). In terms of technology, the Internet made news when it was employed as a fundraising tool following the

\(^{24}\) According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, a wiki is a “website that allows visitors to make changes, contributions, or corrections” (Wiki, n.d.).
Tsunami allowing members of the international community to rally online to provide necessary support to the decimated region (Boese, 2005).

Google, digital music, and blogs all boomed in 2004 (CNN, 2004a). Google Inc.’s unconventional IPO (initial public offering) gave investors a roller coaster ride before settling down and valuing the Internet search company in the billions of dollars (Lee, 2004). Apple’s iTunes sold its 100 millionth song in 2004, securing its position as the leading vendor of online music (“100M songs,” 2004). This same year, blogging25 became more visible in the mainstream media and served as a tool for media watchdogs – playing a role in the presidential election and in calling for a major media corporation to be accountable for its actions.

During the 2004 presidential campaign, for the first time, the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention credentialed a small number of bloggers to cover their nominating processes (Walton, 2004). Democratic hopeful Howard Dean embraced the Internet and with the help of his campaign manager and recognized “Internet guru” Joe Trippi, crafted what has been described as “an insurgent online campaign that led Howard Dean to early front-runner status in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination” (Singel, 2004, para. 2). Dean’s campaign was perhaps the best example of grassroots campaigning via the Internet; engaging the American public directly in the political process (Singel, 2004). By soliciting contributions online, most in small donations from individuals, the campaign shattered previous fundraising records for the Democratic presidential primary (Rampton, 2004). Unfortunately for Dean, the medium that had made him an early front-runner contributed to his withdrawal from the campaign following online

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sharing of a video clip featuring Dean addressing an audience after the Iowa caucuses – what would quickly become known as the “Dean Scream” (Rampton, 2004).

In 2004, the Internet’s accessibility to information was a valuable tool for individuals monitoring media outlets. This was the case when bloggers uncovered a document implicating CBS’s news magazine, 60 Minutes Wednesday, in airing forged documents relating to President G.W. Bush’s National Guard service (Farhi, 2006). This incident would contribute to CBS news anchor Dan Rather’s unexpected retirement (see “CBS: Rather, Schieffer, Couric, Pelley…,” p. 238 for additional details).

Having highlighted some of the major world and technological events of the study’s timeframe, focus now shifts to the U.S. online population. Parallels can be seen between the online population and the news events taking place around the world. Parallels can also be seen between the online population and technological developments. (See Appendix D for a timeline of world and Internet/technological events, p. 278.)

**U.S. Online Population**

A variety of research firms measure the volume of Americans using the Internet, and these figures tend to vary slightly among firms depending on the processes used and those individuals included in the counts. The values used in this study were collected by Nielsen//NetRatings, a subsidiary of Nielsen Media Research, the television ratings company. NetRatings, Inc. positions itself to provide, “the industry’s global standard for Internet and digital media measurement and analysis” (NetRatings, Inc., n.d.). In using values from one firm, longitudinal displays of population numbers should provide an accurate overview of trends and patterns seen within these numbers.
In this study, the term *online population* refers to members of the U.S. population who have used a computer capable of connecting to the Internet at either home or work. Nielsen//NetRatings measures the U.S. online population for these two locations (home and work) separately. For the purposes of this study, the home and work totals were combined, to achieve the most reliable sample of Internet users. It should be noted, however, that in combining these totals, there may be some Internet users who are counted twice, individuals who access the Internet at both home and at work. It is felt that on average the number of Internet users counted twice should remain consistent over time and therefore not negatively influence the overall trends in online population.

Figure 4 (see p. 66) presents the U.S. online population from 1997 to 2004 and reflects the overall increase in this population. The annual values used for this figure are presented in Table 1 (see p. 65). The only exception to the online population’s constant increase is 2001, when there was a relatively slight decrease (less than 1%) in the online population. Based on the quarterly values of the U.S. online population (1997 to 2004) presented in Table 2 (see p. 67), fluctuations in the online population can be tracked from the fourth quarter of 2000 through the third quarter of 2001. This variance, an overall decrease of 1.7 million from Q4 2000 to Q3 2001 could be attributed to the burst of the Internet bubble (April 2000) and the subsequent negative economic impact.

Figure 5 (see p. 68) presents the U.S. online population by quarter during the study’s time span and shows a pattern of overall growth in this population. By the end of 1997, 58.0 million Americans were using the Internet. Averages indicated that the amount of time spent online had reached 9.8 hours a week and the number of individuals participating in online retail had reached 8.7 million (Intelliquest, 1997). From the start of 1997 through the
third quarter of 2000, there appears to be a steady pattern of growth in the online population, peaking at 121.7 million users. Following the 2000/2001 drop in numbers, the online population gradually resumed its upward climb; however, it took over two years to return to the previous level of activity; by the fourth quarter of 2003 the online population had surpassed previous levels, reaching 131.6 million.

A record high of 192.7 million users was reached during the second quarter of 2004, following a six-month period of dramatic growth. During this time, cautious, yet renewed interest in Internet-related industries was growing, fueled in part by Google’s impending IPO. Also in 2004 as previously mentioned, the Internet played a major role in the reporting of war coverage from Iraq and in the U.S. Presidential campaign. The Pew Research Center identified that over 20 percent of all Internet users went online to get news or information about the 2004 campaign (Greenspan, 2004). Information relating to candidates’ positions on the issues was the top draw for online election news consumers (Pew Research Center, 2004).

**The Changing Online Audience**

As the online population increased, the demographics among these Internet users shifted; Table 3 (see p. 69) highlights the Internet’s growing diversity between 2000 and 2004. According to these data, Americans who went online tended to be young and well-educated (Pew Research Center, 2004). However, over the four-year time span, racial disparities in Internet use narrowed; in 2000, 55 percent of Whites and 52 percent of Hispanics went online compared with 38 percent of African-Americans. By 2002, the gap between ethnicities had narrowed, and two years later the difference was narrowed to five
points: 66 percent of Whites and Hispanics went online as compared to 61 percent of African-Americans.

Despite the improving percentages between ethnicities, differences in age and education among Internet users remained, as illustrated in Table 3 (see p. 69). Comparing the percentage of Internet usage across time and age groups, there is a marked difference; the older the age group, the lower the percentage of Internet users. Over the four-year period, each of the age groups experienced a percentage increase. The largest percentage change occurred within the 50 to 64 year old age group (19%), followed by the 30 to 49 year old age group (14%). Seniors (65+) and the 18 to 29 year old groups experienced the least amount of growth with only 6 and 8 percent change respectively.

The “youthfulness” of the Internet audience should appeal to the broadcast networks (and their advertisers) compared to the graying of its existing news audience (see “Network’s Aging Audience,” p. 14). In 2003, the average age of ABC’s World News Tonight viewer was 59.5, younger than CBS’s Evening News’ average age of 61.2 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004). Based on these numbers, the average news audience is approximately ten years older than network programming as a whole, for which the median age is 35.2 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004).

In terms of education, there appears to be a direct relationship between levels of education and Internet usage – college graduates go online more often (88%) than do individuals who have less than a high school education (27%). However, each of the academic groups showed a percentage growth between 2000 and 2004 (refer to p. 69).
Online News Audience

As the population of Internet users increased, so too did the population that regularly used the Internet as a source of news. By 2004, racial and ethnic differences among online news users were lessened; 29 percent of Whites, 25 percent of African-Americans, and 32 percent of Hispanics accessed news online (see Table 3, p. 69). Education remained the largest single factor that predicted online news use. Half of college graduates regularly use the Internet for news, compared with less than 18 percent of high school graduates and less than 10 percent of individuals who did not finish high school.

Internet News and Other Sources of News

The impact that Internet news consumption had on the use of other sources of news (i.e. television and newspaper) from 1995 to 2004 is represented in Table 4 (see p. 70). Among individuals who went online at least once a week for news, over 70 percent, reported that their usage of other news sources remained “about the same,” it had not been affected by the Internet, except for the year 2000. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, 2000 was the year when the Internet bubble burst and it seems likely that such a dramatic and rapidly developing phenomenon would prompt more usage of Internet and less of other news sources. This is echoed in the respondents’ decreased use of other sources of news in 2000, as compared with the other years presented.

Current Study

In light of the increasing U.S. online population and the expanding breadth of content available on the Internet, the broadcast networks had to establish an online presence to remain competitive in the evolving media landscape. This study focuses on a specific segment of the networks’ future – news in relation to the U.S.’s adoption of the Internet. It
measures the networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject, and records how these same networks incorporated the Internet as a communication tool into their nightly newscasts. The following chapter presents the theoretical basis for the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. population (Millions)</th>
<th>U.S. online population (Millions)</th>
<th>Percentage of the U.S. population using the Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>272.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>276.1</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>279.3</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>282.2</td>
<td>114.4</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>285.1</td>
<td>112.8</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>287.9</td>
<td>122.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>290.8</td>
<td>140.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>293.7</td>
<td>191.3</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* U.S. population data are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau. Population includes Armed Forces abroad. Data for the U.S. online population (1997-2004) are from Nielsen/NetRatings.
Figure 4. U.S. online population by year, 1997 to 2004.
## Table 2  U.S. online population by quarter, 1997 to 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter/Year</th>
<th>Online population (Millions)</th>
<th>Quarter/Year</th>
<th>Online population (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 1997</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>Q1 2001</td>
<td>109.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 1997</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>Q2 2001</td>
<td>113.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 1997</td>
<td>52.5*</td>
<td>Q3 2001</td>
<td>112.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 1997</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>Q4 2001</td>
<td>116.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 1998</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>Q1 2002</td>
<td>117.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 1998</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>Q2 2002</td>
<td>119.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 1998</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>Q3 2002</td>
<td>121.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 1998</td>
<td>74.0*</td>
<td>Q4 2002</td>
<td>131.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 1999</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>Q1 2003</td>
<td>133.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 1999</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>Q2 2003</td>
<td>134.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 1999</td>
<td>91.9*</td>
<td>Q3 2003</td>
<td>146.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 1999</td>
<td>99.4*</td>
<td>Q4 2003</td>
<td>157.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2000</td>
<td>108.1</td>
<td>Q1 2004</td>
<td>190.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 2000</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>Q2 2004</td>
<td>189.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 2000</td>
<td>121.7</td>
<td>Q3 2004</td>
<td>188.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2000</td>
<td>113.7</td>
<td>Q4 2004</td>
<td>193.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. All values except those marked are from Nielsen/NetRatings.

* Value is a mean value calculated by averaging the previous and next known population value.
Figure 5. U.S. online population by quarter, 1997 to 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Go online</th>
<th>Regularly go online for news*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000 (Percent)</td>
<td>2002 (Percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Percent of all Americans who go online for news three or more days per week.
Table 4  Consequences of getting news online: Impact on other sources of news, 1995 to 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More often</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some more or less</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Percentage)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: For the purposes of this table, “other sources of news” refers to television and newspaper. In 1995, when only 30 percent described themselves as going online at least once a week for news, the percentage of those saying their usage of other news sources is “about the same” is 76 percent, identical to the percentage in 1998 when 55 percent said they went online that often. Source: Pew Research Center, 2004.
CHAPTER 3

THEORY

The Changing Nature of News

Historically, asking the question “what is news?” would likely solicit a response that referenced an event as recounted in one of two primary outlets, print or broadcast (including radio and television), by a trained professional journalist. In 2011, the answer to this question is likely not as clear, as the number of news outlets has exploded to include the Internet, cable, and mobile technologies – and in many instances the trained journalist has been replaced by citizen journalists. Technology allows individuals to easily capture events as they unfold and then disseminate this information via the Internet to a global audience.

The images that defined the media coverage of the July 7, 2005 London terrorist bombings, which claimed more than fifty lives, came not from professional news crews but from citizens on-the-scene (Braiker, 2005; Van Natta & Sciolino, 2005). Commuters caught in the attacks used camera phones to take images that were relayed around the world – via the Web and television – providing hundreds of eyewitness pictures. This was a first for a major breaking news story (Owen, 2005).

Nearly two years later on April 16, 2007, similar cellular technology captured the sounds of gunfire on the Virginia Tech campus as a student gunman opened fire in an academic building ultimately killing thirty-two people and wounding as many (Broder, 2007; Durden, 2007). The cell phone video was uploaded to CNN’s iReport, an area on the news channel’s website launched in August 2006 where individuals can submit files, videos, and
story ideas (Palser, 2007). From there, the footage was broadcast on CNN and quickly picked up by other media outlets (Durden, 2007).

The availability of cameras built into cell phones, combined with “the ability to transmit pictures and text instantaneously, is enabling the world to view news with nearly the immediacy of a victim or eyewitness” (Noguchi, 2005, para. 2). Such occasions suggest that definitions of news and newsmakers should be adjusted to reflect technological and civic developments. This idea echoes Gans’ (1998) argument for the need to modernize journalism and better inform audiences to maximize democracy. In the interest of creating a better informed populous, Gans called for journalists to “find ways of reporting how citizens participate on issues” (1998, p. 10). Perhaps citizens’ use of technology is facilitating Gans’ theory.

On January 25, 2011, Egyptians calling for an end to President Hosni Mubarak’s 30-year rule captured the world’s attention with mass protests that were transmitted through first-hand accounts and cell phone footage via the Internet. Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter26, YouTube) and mobile devices provided protesters with a means to organize and mobilize (Preston, 2011). In response, the Egyptian government initially blocked Internet access and mobile communication but news of arrests and police actions continued to circulate online (D. Murphy, 2011; Samuel, 2011). As the protests continued, news organizations reporting on location were attacked by Egyptian authorities. According to The Washington Post’s foreign editor, Douglas Jehl, “It appears that journalists are being targeted by the Egyptian authorities in a deliberate campaign of intimidation aimed at quashing honest, independent reporting of a transformational event” (Peters & Goodman, 2011).

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26 Twitter kept supporters inside and outside Egypt updated on the situation using the search term #jan25 to post news (“Egypt protests,” 2011).
During these attacks, major news organizations relied on grainy amateur videos taken on the streets (Peters & Goodman, 2011). On February 11, 2011, President Mubarak stepped down. During the opening months of 2011, Internet and mobile technologies allowed global news audiences to focus attention on north-Africa and the Middle East, and witness revolution in action.

Across time, news has been studied according to the media outlets that deliver it: newspaper, radio, television, and now the Internet. The Internet has been the subject of increasing scholarly attention, as scholars: 1) attempt to apply traditional mass communication theories to the online outlet; and 2) debate whether traditional mass communication theories can be applied to this outlet – or if new media theories must be developed in order to study this medium.

Recognizing that the Internet is a growing subject of research, this study considers the medium as both a subject of news coverage and as a news outlet. These considerations are explored against the evolving backdrop of the Internet. This study does not attempt to redefine the journalist or identify the ideal news delivery platform, instead it looks at the evolution of one traditional outlet, network television news, to include the use of a complementary media platform. The implications of the networks’ changes will be identified and discussed. However first, this study will attempt to use traditional mass communication concepts to: 1) verify the newsworthiness of the Internet as a news subject; 2) identify the influences involved with selecting and shaping a news story (gatekeeping); and 3) explore the networks’ ability to direct audience attention and interest (agenda-setting).

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27 Inspired by Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution that began in December 2010 and led to the ousting of authoritarian president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011, a series of protests were held in North Africa and the Middle East, including: Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria (Leigh, 2011; Walt, 2011).
Newsworthiness of the Internet

In the previous chapters, the networks’ establishment of their respective online sites was presented, as well as the context of the Web’s growth and the Internet’s development. Prior to exploring the networks’ coverage of the Internet, it should first be established that the Internet is “newsworthy” – a subject worthy of news coverage. The measure used to make this determination is a series of news values originally proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). They maintained that the more an event satisfied particular conditions, the more likely it would be selected as news; the conditions included twelve factors: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to: elite nations and persons, reference to persons, and reference to something negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Over time, this list of twelve factors used to identify newsworthiness has evolved and been categorized (Gans, 1979; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001). Shoemaker et al. (1991) grouped the majority of factors into three general theoretical dimensions of newsworthiness: deviance, social significance, and contingent conditions (timeliness and proximity). Meanwhile, other studies have focused on specific factors within the list and measured their influence on mass media (Shoemaker, Chang, & Brendlinger, 1987). Straughan (1989) found that the news factors which influence journalists’ content selections also guide audiences in their allotment of attention given to news coverage – a characteristic that may help direct and even predict audience consumption in an online environment – a topic for future research.

The newsworthiness factors that will be used for the purposes of this study include: timeliness; proximity; importance or consequence; interest; conflict or controversy; and
sensationalism (including novelty and the unusual). These factors are interrelated and not independent of each other.

**Timeliness**

*Timeliness:* A defining characteristic of news that reflects recent events. As a qualifying characteristic timeliness can be used to refer to 1) breaking news – content that possesses a sense of urgency, or 2) a broader historical perspective – news stories that are more recent than previously broadcast content.

Iyengar (1991) categorized the framing of news into two distinct classifications: episodic and thematic. Episodic framing presents news as specific events, as compared to thematic framing, which places issues and events in some context. Wu and Bechtel (2002) employed these categories in their investigation into the types of stories and topics that attract users to the Web. Their findings indicated that users are interested in disruptive (i.e. timely or urgent) and episode-oriented news stories (Wu & Bechtel, 2002).

By its very nature, the Internet serves as an outlet providing users with access to breaking news and frequently updated content. Certain news sites, including MSNBC.com and *The New York Times* (NYTimes.com), highlight the content’s recency with time stamps accompanying each news story that reads “Updated: ## minutes ago” and “Last update: #:## AM/PM ET” respectively. Such time stamps promote the timeliness of the news and highlight the importance placed on the ability to provide up-to-date information to an audience.

Other studies have considered timeliness from a historical perspective. Tankard and Royal (2005) focused on the availability of information on the Web and found that timeliness is a strong predictor of the selection of information. Their results indicated that recent
information is more likely than older information to be transmitted (Tankard & Royal, 2005). In addition to these conclusions, the researchers also recognized that some news stories, specifically those not focused on breaking news, have a longer “shelf life” – a term that refers to news stories whose content is not date specific unlike those news stories which are only relevant for a limited period of time.

For example, in March 1999, the “Melissa virus,” a rapidly spreading computer virus was transmitted via email and disabled infected machines (Richtel, 1999). On the day of the “outbreak,” the television networks reported on this story during their nightly newscasts alerting audiences to the risks associated with the virus. This was a timely announcement; information presented to the audience pertained to a specific event that was time sensitive. Reporting the same story one week after-the-fact would be unnecessary – by that point the story was no longer considered breaking news.

The initial broadcast associated with this news story could be categorized as episodic, compared to a news story that focused on a declining trend in online shopping. E-commerce reports are available at the end of each fiscal quarter. However, these results are not considered urgent or breaking news to the majority of the news audience so, if the story was postponed to a later newscast, the story would still be relevant – it has a longer shelf life.

Both of these news stories likely wound up on the Web, where they were equally accessible – and accessed based on users’ choices. Similarly, the ability of the Web to easily archive news stories and support future searches of content prolongs the potential shelf life for both news stories.
Proximity

*Proximity:* A factor that pertains to an event’s *nearness* to the audience – whether in place, order, or occurrence. There has been debate as to whether or not proximity assures newsworthiness (Luttbeg, 1983); however, the interconnectivity and broad scope of the Internet expands the audience’s sense of place or proximity making this a moot factor.

On the morning of April 16, 2007, as a student gunman attacked students on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Virginia, reports of the incident led as breaking news across the Web. Across the country, Americans received updates of the unfolding events online as they happened. In the wake of the tragedy that killed thirty-two people, regardless of their physical proximity to the tragedy, citizens across the country banded together and mourned, becoming members, if only briefly, of the greater Hokie Nation.28

Commonly seen as a significant contributor to the globalization of culture and the economy (Halavais, 2000), the Internet is also seen as an inherently apolitical medium, unrestrained by national borders. Echoing this idea of a borderless environment, the Internet serves as a source of content not available in the mainstream media providing audiences with alternative points of view (Pew Internet, 2004).

Importance (or Consequence)

*Importance (or Consequence):* A trait that refers to the importance of a given piece of information. While this could be a considered a subjective characteristic, the expansive nature of the Internet allows for the visibility of more news stories. In preparation for a nightly newscast, networks develop many more stories than those that can be contained

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28 The Virginia Tech mascot is the *hokie*. Students, alumnae, and fans are referred to as members of the “Hokie Nation.”
within the nineteen minutes of the commercial broadcast; the Internet provides an outlet for the stories that do not air. Rather than narrowing the focus of news to prominent people, controversies, and unusual happenings, online journalists can present background information and stories that resonate within their audience. The ability to share greater amounts of information limits the filtering performed by journalists, while increasing the need for audience selectivity.

**Interest**

*Interest:* A factor suggesting that the culturally similar is likely to be selected as news because it fits into the audience’s frame of reference. As the number of Americans accessing the Internet continues to grow, so too does the variety of their online activities, including e-commerce and social networking, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see “America’s Online Activities,” p. 45 for a summary of the most popular online activities).

Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) found that greater individual control in online news usage, in this case print news versus online news, led audience members to focus on different kinds of information and consequently develop different perceptions of societal problems than print audiences. In an online environment, *interest* benefits from the ease of use and accessibility of content archives. The “interconnected information network” that is generated as newsrooms publish “up-to-the-minute stories supplemented with links to archived stories, databases of information, multimedia, and related websites different from their own” encourages audiences to access additional information (Thiel, 2004, p. 22).

**Conflict or Controversy**

*Conflict or Controversy:* Across its history, the Internet has been a source and focus of controversy. One of the persistent subjects of debate surrounding the Internet is the issue of
the “digital divide.” The technological digital divide has widened the gap between the “haves” and “have nots,” which in terms of the Internet can refer to either an access divide (Clark, Demont-Heinrich, & Webber, 2004; Gustafson, McTavish, & Stengle, 2005) or generational one (Loges & Jung, 2001; Paul & Stegbauer, 2005).

In order to take advantage of the resources available online, individuals have to be connected to the communication infrastructure available in their environment (Loges & Jung, 2001). The digital divide issue is not just a problem of individuals’ choices of having or not having connections to the technological network, nor is it the economic affordability of Internet services. It is an issue about how central the Internet is or could be in achieving various goals in individuals’ everyday lives, and how embedded the Internet is in the existing communication infrastructure of older and younger people (Gustafson et al., 2005; Loges & Jung, 2001).

Sensationalism (including novelty and the unusual)

Sensationalism (including novelty and the unusual): A factor suggesting that the most unexpected or rare events will have the greatest chance of being selected as news. While hard or serious news is recognized for its assumed ability to enhance the political and social knowledge of an audience by appealing to reason over emotion, sensationalism is characterized as content that amuses, titillates, and entertains (Carroll, 1989; Davie & Lee, 1995; Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 2001). A longitudinal study of network newscasts from the 1960s to 1990s indicated an increase in stories with undercurrents of sensationalism, including “crime, violence, disasters, sexual impropriety and other emotionally arousing elements” (Singer, 2006; Slattery, Doremus, & Marcus, 2001, p. 298). The Internet provides an outlet for both hard news and the sensational, sometimes within the same website, leading
to a blurring of the line between hard news and a celebrity-obsessed reporting. However, this is not unique to Internet – one has only to look to the networks’ bidding war for the first interview with “celebutante” Paris Hilton following her release from jail (Carter, 2007b, 2007c) to question if news in America, as a whole, has become too sensationalized. A similar question was raised following the debut of the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric (September 5, 2006) when much anticipated baby pictures of Suri Cruise, daughter to actors Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, were shown during the newscast in a segment called “CBS News Snapshots” (Ventre, 2006).

The popularity of YouTube.com and its viral videos, content usually shot by amateurs which gains widespread popularity through the process of Internet sharing, highlights the proliferation of the novel and unusual on the Internet (Kessler, 2007). With the assistance of high-powered search engines, even the most innocuous search can return results linking to the strange and atypical.

Based on the factors presented, the Internet as a subject is deemed newsworthy. However, just because a subject contains these factors of newsworthiness does not mean that it will be the focus of news coverage. News is not encyclopedic – it does not include comprehensive coverage of every topic. In this sense the news is not complete, it is selective.

Completeness of News

The completeness of news has been the focus of journalistic studies. McQuail (1992) stated that completeness “is usually thought to be a precondition of proper understanding of news, and the media generally promise completeness in the sense of a full range of information about significant events of the day” (p. 211 as cited in Tankard & Royal, 2005, p. 361). Danielson and Adams (1961) studied the completeness of newspaper coverage of the
1960 presidential election and crafted a baseline list of facts for which news stories could be examined. In their study of coverage of the 1972 Surgeon General’s report on television violence, Tankard and Showalter (1977) constructed an index of completeness by checking for presence or absence of certain characteristics pertaining to the report. These elements “were judged necessary for full reader understanding” of the Surgeon General’s report in their sample of articles drawn from national newspapers, state newspapers, and magazines (Tankard & Showalter, 1977, p. 295).

Completeness has also appeared within lists of characteristics or dimensions used to measure the credibility of news. In their study of the credibility of Internet information, Flanagin and Metzger (2000) characterized credibility as a multidimensional concept built from: believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness. Meyer’s (1988) index for newspaper believability was comprised of five dimensions: fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, and trustworthiness.

The elements that influence news selectivity shall be discussed following a brief profile of the “typical” newsmaker at work during the study’s timeframe.

**Newsmakers - Who constructs the news?**

The news media construct social accounts of events in the “real world” (Tuchman, 1978); and on a more granular level, journalists “compose the stories we call news” (Schudson, 1989, p. 264). The term journalist as used across time includes those who have editorial responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007).

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29 Tankard and Showalter (1977) sought the following three characteristics about the Surgeon General’s report in their efforts to measure completeness of coverage: 1) An indication that the results were partly based on experimental research; 2) An indication that the results were partly based on field studies; 3) Some mention of the controversy surrounding the formation of the committee (p. 295).
Profile of the U.S. Journalist in 2002

According to statistical profiles of the professional journalist, there have been few major changes within this population between 1992 and 2002. The following averages suggest that the majority of journalists are white, middle-aged men with most possessing some journalist training (Weaver et al., 2007). However, closer study of the data reveals larger trends in regard to age, ethnicity, and education.

The majority of full-time journalists in 2002 were concentrated in print media, particularly daily newspapers. The median age of these journalists was 41, a five-year increase in age from the 1992 median. As a percentage of all journalists in 2002, those aged 22 to 44 years declined significantly, compared with 1992 while journalists aged 45 to 54 years old increased significantly, reflecting the generation of maturing baby boomers.

Approximately one-third of journalists in 2002 were female, reflecting little increase from previous years. While there was an increase in women among journalists hired from 1998 to 2002, this increase was not reflected among female journalists with five or more years of experience.

There was slight growth in the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in journalism, from 8 percent in the early 1990s to 9.5 percent in 1992; however, among journalists hired between 1998 and 2002, the percentage of minorities was significantly higher (17%). Television had the highest proportions of minorities, weekly newspapers the lowest. Although these results suggest some progress in the recruitment of minorities, significant barriers face young journalists who want to advance in mainstream news organizations. Because there was very little growth in racial and minority diversity during the early 1990s, many of the most desirable jobs in journalism are held by people in their late 40s
or early 50s, who are years away from retirement. Without new growth in the field, there will be few opportunities for advancement over the next decade. In the meantime, the online arena could be a good outlet for journalists unable to crack into the traditional media.

Between the years of 1971 and 2002, the proportion of full-time journalists working for the mainstream news media with at least a college bachelor’s degree jumped from 58 percent to 89 percent, although the proportion of those college graduates with a journalism degree increased only slightly from 34 percent to 36 percent. However, if other communication-related majors (radio-television, telecommunications, mass communication, and communication) are added to journalism, then the percentage of college graduates who majored in any of these communication subjects increased from 41 percent to 50 percent by 2002. Over time, education has had less power as a predictor of news values as more and more journalists have earned at least a bachelor’s degree (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, 1996).

**Ideology & News Values**

Separate from this demographic profile, researchers have found an underlying ideology that provides a broader sense of identity unifying the profession at large. Russo (1998) maintained that journalists identify themselves more easily with the profession of journalism than with the medium or the media company that employs them (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, 1996). Continuing this train of thought, Deuze (2005) maintained that journalists feel that these news values provide legitimacy and credibility to their actions and profession.

This idea of a shared set of journalistic values has been the subject of comment and study for years with varying degrees of success in identifying a core set of values. Tuchman (1972) wrote that news judgment is “the sacred knowledge, the secret ability of the newsman
which differentiates him from other people” (p. 672). In an analysis of news photographs, Hall (1973) set forth the following explanation of news values and journalistic news sense:

“News values” are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society. All “true journalists” are supposed to possess it: few can or are willing to identify and define it. Journalists speak of “the news” as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if [that] which is the “most significant” news story, and [those] which “news angles” are most salient [(i.e. most prominent)] are divinely inspired. Yet of the millions of events which occur every day on the world, only a tiny portion ever becomes visible as “potential news stories,” and of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the day’s news in the news media. We appear to be dealing, then, with a “deep structure” whose function as a selective device is un-transparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it.

(p. 181)

Scholars have attempted to flesh out the idea of news values and in doing so have identified five “ideal-typical” journalistic traits or values: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics (Deuze, 2005, p. 446-447).

Elements of these traits are echoed in the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics (as adopted in September 1996), and its four supporting guidelines:

1) Seek truth and report it. Journalists should be honest, fair, courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information;

2) Minimize harm. Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect;
3) Act independently. Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public’s right to know;

4) Be accountable. Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other. (Society of Professional Journalists, 2007)

Reese (2001) suggested that the ideological perspective can be seen as a global factor of influence on journalistic decision-making processes – allowing analysis as to “how media symbolic content is connected with larger social interests” (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). Similarly, Schudson describes the occupational ideology of journalism as “cultural knowledge that constitutes ‘news judgment,’ rooted deeply in the communicators’ consciousness” (2001, p. 153). This consciousness is influenced by the journalist’s personal and professional experiences. This consciousness and the underlying news values will be considered as the journalist’s role as gatekeeper is next explored.

**Journalist as Gatekeeper**

The journalist’s self-perception as the one who decides what people need to know seems deeply ingrained (Singer, 1997). Janowitz (1975) suggested that the identification and dissemination of what is worth knowing is the journalist’s principal role in a democratic society in which information plays a key role.

Gatekeeping is the manner in which potential news messages are “winnowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are actually transmitted by the news media” (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Eunyi, & Wrigley, 2001, p. 233). This theory applies to both interpersonal and mass communication (Dimitrova, Connolly-Ahearn, Williams, Kaid, & Reid, 2003), and typically reflects that which is topical, proximate, timely, or relevant (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Social scientist Kurt Lewin (1947) was the first to use the term “gatekeeper” in
relation to a social system and specifically in regards to the individual who decides which of a certain commodity – materials, goods, and information – may enter the system (“Gatekeeping,” 2006). The subject of Lewin’s study – wives and mothers who decide which foods end up on the family’s dinner table (“Gatekeeping,” 2006; Parker, 2005).

White was the first to apply Lewin’s concept of gatekeeping to the field of journalism in his 1950 study of the selection of wire stories. When applied to the broad field of journalism, gatekeeping would come to identify someone who determines which news items flow through communication channels to the news audience, as part of a larger system of gates and decision points.

**Gatekeeping Research**

Early research into the field focused on the potential influence of the gatekeeper on content presented to an audience. During one of the first gatekeeping studies, White found that his subject’s news decisions regarding which wire stories were to be published, were “highly subjective”; in total, the subject, “Mr. Gates,” rejected roughly 90 percent of the wire service copy (White, 1950, p. 65). About one-third of the wire stories were rejected based on Mr. Gates’ personal feelings regarding the content’s importance, while the other two-thirds were rejected because either there was insufficient space for the story, or because a similar story had recently run (White, 1950). The model generated from this study gave researchers a conceptual structure that allowed for comparison between media content and “some measure of reality” (Reese & Ballinger, 2001, p. 64). When the original study was replicated seventeen years later, the results did not vary, Mr. Gates continued to select stories that he liked and which he believed his readers wanted (Snider, 1967). Similarly, an updated version of the original study, featuring Ms. Gates, was conducted in 1989, and those findings were
consistent with the original results, the gatekeeper maintained a “strong, critical interest in the content of the news” (Bleske, 1991, p. 78).

However in contrast to White’s findings, when Gieber (1956) studied the decisions made by sixteen wire editors in Wisconsin, his results did not reflect subjectivity. Gieber found that all wire editors selected news items in essentially the same way – the telegraph editor focused on the mechanical pressures of his work rather than the social meanings and impact of the news. Personal evaluations rarely influenced the selection process; the “values of his employer were an accepted part of the newsroom environment” (Gieber, 1964, p. 175). The telegraph editor was not practicing politics in selecting the news; he was performing a routine task. Gieber summarized, he was “concerned with goals of production, bureaucratic routine and interpersonal relations in the newsroom” (Gieber, 1964, p. 175).

**Gatekeeping Influence**

Based on the potential levels of subjectivity illustrated in these gatekeeping studies, it could be suggested that the biases of a relatively small number of individuals may seriously alter the way news audiences interpret the world around them (Dimitrova et al., 2003).

However, additional studies indicate that gatekeeping is actually a complex process, and that the biases of individual gatekeepers are mitigated by a number of factors.

Dimmick (1974) indicated that editors and reporters create a model over time of “what is news,” in order to ensure that their news decisions are correct. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) found that such factors as news values, objectivity, and organizational structure serve as “checks and balances” on individual biases. These checks and balances may explain why news decisions across media are often quite similar, despite the varying personalities and interests involved in making them (Riffe, Ellis, Rogers, Van Ommeren, & Woodman,
In one study, Foote and Steele (1986) identified that two of the three major networks shared the same lead story more than 90 percent of the time. Similarly, when other studies surveyed the three major networks, they found a common “mix” of stories, as well as specific stories (Riffe et al., 1986). This similarity in story selection may help to suggest that the three networks will address the subject of the Internet in similar fashions.

**Gatekeeping Across Media**

Early gatekeeping studies focused on newspaper newsrooms. However, since then, the theory has been used to describe news decisions in other media, including television at both the network and local levels (Berkowitz, 1990; Gant & Dimmick, 2000; Harmon, 1989; Riffe et al., 1986; Stempel, 1985). Cross-media studies have also been conducted seeking commonalities and differences among the media. One such study confirmed similarities among network newscasts, while also highlighting that news selection routines for networks are different from those of newspapers (Stempel, 1985). Abbott and Brassfield (1989) contrasted the gatekeeping behaviors of television and newspaper gatekeepers for printed news releases and found commonality suggesting that proximity (also referred to as the “localness” factor) is the single most important factor for story selection for both television and newspapers.

Based on the Internet’s seemingly unlimited news hole, Singer (1998) suggested a need for gatekeeping research on the role of online journalists. In a subsequent study of online versions of regional newspapers, Singer (2001) drew an analogy between gatekeeping and hyperlinking, suggesting that the online newspapers represented an “overwhelmingly local medium” that were “giving up a major portion of [their] traditional gatekeeping function,” by sending their readers, via hyperlinks, directly to the AP newswire website.
(Singer, 2001, p. 66). In contrast, Dimitrova et al. (2003) investigated how online news editors had redefined their role as news filters by providing not only text and graphics, but also hyperlinks to other relevant destinations. The results showed that very few of the links (4.1%) led to external sources, while the majority of the hyperlinks took the audience to related material located within the online newspaper’s own website. In this example, selecting which hyperlinks to include – and which to exclude – is an exercise of online newspapers’ gatekeeping function.

**Gatekeeping’s Other Participants**

The concept of gatekeeping is pervasive in the journalistic process. Beyond the journalist, there are multiple influences and levels of control involved in the role of gatekeeper during the creation and dissemination of news. Gans (1983) identified several major participants and interest groups in the “journalistic enterprise,” including: newsmakers (sources), news firms (business executives), news organizations (journalists), sponsors or advertisers, audiences (active, passive, and absent), government regulators, and media critics (Gans, 1983, p. 176). The premise set forth by Gans acknowledges that influence exists both inside and out of the journalistic process.

**Hierarchical Model of Gatekeeping**

Similar to Gans’ structure is the hierarchical model set forth by Shoemaker and Reese (1996) that categorizes five broad areas of influence that shape news story development: individual, media routines, organizational, extramedia, and ideological. Figure 6 (see p. 117) illustrates this hierarchical model. Within a contemporary newsroom, all five levels of influence are at work to varying degrees and are often in competition with one another for dominance on the media message generated. The levels serve as gates controlling what
information passes through Lewin’s communication channels to reach the news audience. In light of this study, special attention will be paid to the role of technology in each of these levels.

**Individual level**

Working from the center out, the *Individual level* focuses on factors intrinsic to the journalist or “correspondent,” the term most often used in broadcasting, during the time period of the study, such as personal and professional background, attitudes, values and beliefs (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Earlier in this chapter, a profile of the average journalist was provided, outlining demographic generalities.

In the contemporary newsroom, based on current hiring descriptions, it is assumed that the correspondent possesses some level of proficiency with technology: the ability to surf the Web for information and file reports via a computer system. With that profile in mind, the journalist’s use of the Internet as a resource tool is considered.

The Internet has become the dominant news-gathering resource (Garrison, 2001). It has made it possible for journalists to gather and disseminate news faster than ever before (Hellinger, 1998). Garrison (2001) found that while a little over half of journalists were relying on the Internet for newsgathering in 1994 that figure rose to more than 90 percent in 1999. Other studies found even more dramatic growth, with the number relying on the Internet soaring from 41 percent in 1994 to 96 percent in 2000 (Davenport, Fico, & Detwiler, 2001). Based on their survey findings of how journalists use the Internet, Ross and Middleberg (1999) argued, that “the practice of journalists, in how they research stories, has changed more in the 40-month period, than in the previous 40 years” (Ross & Middleberg, 1999 as cited in Johnson & Kelly, 2003, p. 116). In 2001, “The Seventh Annual Survey of
the Media in the Wired World” released its findings from a review of the online habits of more than five hundred newspaper, broadcast, and magazine journalists. Nearly all of the participants agreed “that the Internet had made their jobs easier and improved the quality of their work” (“Study: Reporters need,” 2001, p. 7). The survey also found that “many of the journalists lack training that could aid them in using the Web more efficiently and avoid ethical traps” (“Study: Reporters need,” 2001, p. 7). Singer (1996), writing about political communications by users of Prodigy and AOL, recognized that a journalist’s ethical responsibility increases upon entrance into the online world in which all participants could hide their identities. It is a responsibility that comes with “accountability in an anonymous realm, with a public commitment to acts that enhance conversation with context and meaning” (Singer, 1996, p. 105). Arant and Anderson (2001) sought comparisons between the ethical standards of existing media and online versions on this content. Although nearly all (98%) of the surveyed news professionals agreed that journalism ethics and standards should be the same whether producing for traditional or online outlets, the results reflected the opinion that these levels are not the same (Arant & Anderson, 2001).

Yet simultaneously, the Internet has strengthened the traditional watchdog functions of journalism, providing efficient ways to probe more deeply for information (Giles, 2000). The ability to search documents, compile background and historical context, and identify authoritative sources has expanded the journalist’s toolbox (Giles, 2000). This personal experience and interaction with computer technology likely generates a level of personal bias toward the Internet and its use as a communication research tool.
Media Routines level

The norms and practices used to report the news are at work in the model’s Media Routines level. These routines or practices are used as a matter of classification to evaluate the newsworthiness of a story. Classification or categorization involves value judgments as to which stories are worthy of inclusion and which are to be discarded (Tai & Chang, 2002, p. 254). News values are typically learned through both formal journalism education and in the field. Journalists employ these news values on a daily basis as they make decisions regarding news content. As previously discussed, Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified twelve values, or conditions that contribute to an event fulfilling the criteria of “news”; these dimensions contribute, either singly or in combination, to an event be considered as “newsworthy.” In his study of the journalism profession, Schudson (1989) comments that according to organizational theorists – “it does not matter who they [the reporters] are or where they come from; they will be socialized quickly into the values and routines in the daily rituals of journalism” (p. 15).

The influence of other media workers, such as an editor or news director, impacts the news story. Case studies of news production regularly note the effects of editorial intervention (Crouse, 1973, p. 186; Gitlin, 1980). However, studies rarely look at the relationship from the perspective of the editor. Most research focuses on the gathering of news rather than on its writing, editing, and rewriting (Schudson, 1989, p. 272).

One of the contested areas in the process of news making is the extent to which journalists and their news stories represent the needs or wants of the audiences (Tai & Chang, 2002, p. 252). As the front-line gatekeepers in the news production process, views from editors and news directors are vital in determining which news is eventually presented to the
audiences (Tai & Chang, 2002, p. 262). This relates to Giebler’s study of gatekeeping and his identified recognition that an employer’s values are an accepted part of the newsroom environment (see “Gatekeeping Research,” p. 86). Hirsch (1977) said the reasons offered by the wire editor in White’s study for rejecting stories were primarily based on professional norms – commonly held views in the news industry about whether a story is newsworthy (Cassidy, 2006). Hirsch concluded that these norms, which could also be termed routine forces, were a better explanation for the decisions made than White’s original conclusion that the wire editor was highly subjective. Routines establish a framework and boundaries for the behavior of journalists.

The Media Routines level also reflects such practices as how often news content is updated and in the online news environment, the frequency of posted updates, which ties into the earlier discussion of timeliness as a factor of newsworthiness.

**Organization level**

The *Organization level* addresses elements at work within the overall broadcasting network. The structure of a network and the role that the news division plays within the network figures into this level of influence. The economic demands, limitations, and resource availabilities of networks influence the media content produced (Altheide, 1976; Carroll, 1989). Larger, or more fiscally independent news divisions may possess resources that enable them to provide more in-depth coverage on global or complex news events. These larger divisions have more to gain in revenue and prestige from being more competitive. However, despite different functions served by the mass media, Hirsch found that the mass media “share many organizational similarities that outweigh many of the differences” (Hirsch, 1977, as quoted in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 107).
Altschull (1984) made a case for expecting news that reflects the ideology of its financiers, who for the three networks in this study are (as of June 2011): Disney, Inc. (ABC), CBS Inc. (CBS), and NBCUniversal, LLC. (NBC). Shoemaker (1988) proposed that the more a medium is funded by “commercial” sources, the more responsive it is to audiences and advertisers and the more competition will affect content. This idea is supported by the network news programs’ constant ratings competition.

Competition in the media landscape during the study’s time period frequently led to talk of convergence – alliances formed between competing newspapers and television stations to address a variety of technological, editorial, regulatory, and market-based challenges and opportunities (Dailey, Demo, & Spillman, 2005). The partnerships, some of which have existed for several years, were created as digital technology allowed journalists to produce news across several multimedia platforms at increasing speed. Convergence raised new challenges for networks, particularly as cross-promotion was the central focus for many efforts to date (Dailey, Demo, & Spillman, 2005; Ketterer, Weir, Smathers, & Back, 2004).

While examining the media landscape following trends of media concentration and conglomeration, McChesney (1999) argued that the claim that the media “give people what they want” is no more than a myth and is a hindrance to understanding the media system. Tai and Chang (2002) explored this concept and concluded that “corporate media, in their relentless pursuit of profit and market share, are rarely, if ever, passive servants of public demand” (p. 255). Subsequently, the media often opt for what has proven to be commercially successful in the past or that which has already been tested with competitors and proven marketable (Tai & Chang, 2002). This concept will be referenced during the discussion of
network competition as an expected driver encouraging network online development.

**Extramedia level**

Within the *Extramedia level*, influences such as other media outlets, government regulations, and the competitive pressures of the marketplace shape the news content. These competing factors affect the content being created and often direct the final choices made, including whether or not a particular news story is broadcast. As an example, in the 2000 U.S. Presidential election, the desire of each network to be the first to report the election winner led to a series of early and incorrect predictions of the winner. In a self-analysis of Election Night 2000, CBS News described the night’s environment as “a cauldron of competitive heat—heat that comes within each individual and within each network, all burning to be the best and to be first” (Mason, Frankovic, & Jamieson, 2001, p. 15). In efforts to prevent a similar situation during the 2004 election night coverage, the networks were circumspect in their reliance on exit polls and held off their announcement of a winner until the actual results were posted (Kurtz, 2004b).

Technological advances, including the Internet, fall within this extramedia level of influence. In general Americans bear an optimistic outlook when it comes to technology (Horrigan, 2003). A 2003 Pew Internet survey found that the majority (62%) of Americans say they generally like computers and technology, and two-thirds (67%) say they like the abundance of information available (Horrigan, 2003). Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovation theory as it relates to the adoption of innovation (here the Internet) is discussed following the final level of influence of the current model.
Ideological level

Finally, the outer ring of the hierarchical gatekeeping model, the *Ideological level*, encompasses societal elements at work. For the U.S., these include a free and democratic society, a capitalist-based economy, and a strong sense of individualism among its citizens. The composite of these characteristics is the environment into which the networks broadcast their media messages.

The influence of culture on message creation has both form and content. In light of America’s adoption and use of the Internet, this medium is a cultural influence in both form and content. The previous chapters discuss the Internet’s accessibility, globalization, and role in day-to-day activities, as well as in breaking news situations.

Given the potential levels of influence at work during the creation of network news, this study focuses on the Internet’s extramedia level of influence on news content. However, before the hypotheses and research questions of the study are reviewed, the networks’ ability to direct audience attention and interest via the theory of agenda-setting will be explored.

**Diffusion of Innovation**

As with the adoption of any new idea or new technology, the diffusion of the Internet among the U.S. population occurred over time. The adoption of new technologies, including the Internet, is often studied using Rogers’ (1995) Diffusion of Innovation theory. Rogers’ theory is a significant theoretical paradigm for the study of new media and changing media landscapes (Garrison, 2001; Hogg, Lomicky, & Hossain, 2008; Leung & Wei, 2000). By 2007, it was estimated that there were 600 diffusion publications by communication scholars (Rogers, Singhal, & Quinlan, 2009). Many of these focused on “diffusion as a communication process, independent of the type of innovations that are diffused” (Rogers et
al., 2009, p. 421). Though not used as one of the theoretical premises for the current study, Rogers’ theory warrants mention as it relates to the adoption of the Internet by the U.S. population.

According to Rogers (1995), diffusion is the “process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5). An innovation is “an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual” (Rogers, 1995, p. 11). Rogers noted that the decision to adopt or not to adopt an innovation is not an instantaneous act, but one that involves a process; the decision is an active information-seeking and information-processing behavior (Rogers, 1995; Rogers, 2003). Rogers’ model identified five sequential stages that occur in the process of adoption of innovations. They are: 1) knowledge about, or exposure to, the innovation; 2) formation of favorable or unfavorable attitudes, or persuasion; 3) a decision to adopt or reject; 4) implementation; and 5) confirmation-reinforcement (Rogers, 1995). The diffusion paradigm suggests that the distribution of an adopter population when plotted over time forms an S-shaped curve (Rogers, 1995; Rogers et al., 2009). Figure 7 (see p. 118) illustrates this curve. When plotted on a frequency basis, the number of adopters over time forms a normal, bell-shaped curve (Rogers et al., 2009). Along this curve, adopters are classified by innovativeness in one of five categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 1995). This adoption or innovation curve is presented along with the representative percentage of each adopter category in Figure 8 (see p. 119).

Those who study diffusion have described the concept of critical mass required for adoption of interactive innovations (Mahler & Rogers, 1999; Rogers, 1995). This unique quality occurs when a sufficient number of users have been reached to create a
“self-sustaining” rate of adoption (Rogers, 1995). Simply stated, there need to be enough users to make the innovation appealing and useful to other potential users. Mahler and Rogers (1996) found critical mass to occur most often at a 10 to 20 percent rate of adoption. After critical mass is achieved, the rate of adoption accelerates. According to values in Table 1 (see p. 65) the U.S. online population achieved this critical mass in 1997 with nearly 17 percent (16.9%) of the American population using the Internet.

Over the eight-year time period of this study, as the number of Internet users increases, it is anticipated that the networks will embrace the Internet technology in ways that could have been predicted by diffusion theory. The networks’ initial response to the Web involved partnering with service providers to create portals to news content that were later replaced with network newscast websites. The promotion of these sites occurred in their nightly newscasts. It is expected that over time, the extent to which the networks incorporate the new technologies into their traditional outlets should reflect the level of adoption in the U.S. of the new technologies.

**Disruptive Innovation**

After Rogers’ diffusion of innovation, Christensen’s model of disruptive innovation is a schema frequently used to explain how new *disruptive* innovations enter a marketplace. Disruptive Innovation is a model set forth by Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen. In his book, *The Innovator’s Dilemma* (1997), Christensen states that companies have two basic options when they seek to build new-growth businesses; these options involve what he labeled *sustaining innovations* and *disruptive innovations*. These companies can attempt to take an existing market from an entrenched competitor using sustaining technologies, or they can take on a competitor with disruptive innovations that either create
new markets or attract the low end of the incumbent’s customers. Figure 9 (see p. 120) illustrates Christensen’s model. Hirota (n.d.) explains:

The model shows that, as the performance demanded by the customers of an existing market increases over time, so does the performance provided within a technological paradigm. Often the performance improvement provided has a different trajectory to the trajectory of performance improvement demanded by the customers (see figure [p. 120]). When the trajectory slopes differ, and the performance provided exceeds performance demanded, new technologies that were only performance competitive in remote market niches may migrate into other customer markets. (Steps in disruptive innovation process section, para. 1)

According to Christensen (1997), a truly disruptive technology or innovation can be identified by three specific characteristics: they generally make possible the emergence of new markets, they appear to be financially unattractive to existing organizations, and they do not meet current customer needs. Since its debut in the late 1990s, the term disruptive innovation has been used to describe any innovation that improves a product or service in ways that the market does not expect, generally lowering prices or designing for a new audience. Examples of disruptive innovations include: digital media, which disrupted how audiences use CDs and DVDs; minicomputers, which disrupted use of mainframes; and podcasting, which disrupted broadcast, radio, and television, allowing users to time-shift their media consumption. The Internet has disrupted many fields including health, education, and communications.

In the context of this study, disruptive innovation can be used to help explain the networks’ foray into the Internet. As described in Chapter 1, by the mid 1990s, the networks
faced increased competition from cable outlets, declining ratings, and decreasing audiences. The Internet represented a disruptive innovation, an opportunity for the networks to extend their brand online (i.e. create a new market) in order to attract a new audience from among online users. The Internet disrupted how audiences received information and established new expectations for their ability to control their news consumption – anytime, anywhere.

**Agenda-setting**

Agenda-setting refers to the ability of a media organization to determine the important issues for debate or consideration. According to agenda-setting theory, audiences that are exposed to a certain media agenda will adjust their personal perceptions of issue importance in the direction corresponding to the amount of media attention devoted to those issues (Boyle, 2001). This transfer of perceived importance or *salience* from the news media to the public is “a key early step in the formation of public opinion” (McCombs, 2005, p. 544).

As it pertains to this study, agenda-setting suggests that when a network presents news items related to the Internet to its audience, the Internet as an issue should increase in the audience’s sense of importance. Similarly, if a network repeatedly includes references to its website during the news broadcast, then the audience should become predisposed to consider the site as an additional outlet of network news.

**Agenda-setting Research**

The basic premise for agenda-setting theory can be traced back to Lippmann (1922) who argued that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images of these events in our minds (Lippmann, 1922 as cited in Rogers, Dearing, & Bregman, 1993). Decades later, the underlying concept of agenda-setting was perhaps best
described by Cohen (1963), who commented that the press “may not be successful much of
the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers
what to think about” (Cohen, 1963 as cited in Rogers et al., 1993, p. 72).

However, it was not until McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) study of the media’s role in
the 1968 presidential election campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, that agenda-setting
became more than just a theoretical idea (Kosicki, 1993). Their results suggested “a strong
relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media…and
the judgments of voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics”
(McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 181). Correlation was found between the media agenda and the
public agenda; campaign issues such as foreign policy, law and order, and fiscal policy,
ranked similarly on both agendas (Rogers et al., 1993).

First- and second-level of agenda-setting

Since the seminal Chapel Hill study, more than 300 empirical studies on agenda-setting have
been conducted focused on “salience transfer,” the fundamental idea that, “elements
prominent in the mass media’s picture of the world influence the prominence of those
elements in the audience’s picture” (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000, p. 77).
Throughout the theory’s development, these elements have been mainly summarized into two
categories: the first level of agenda-setting (focus on issues or objects – object salience), and
the second level of agenda-setting (focus on issue attributes – attribute salience)
(2000) explained the distinction:

Beyond the agenda of objects there is another basic aspect of communication content
to consider. Each of these objects has numerous attributes, those characteristics and
traits that fill out the picture of each object. When mass media present an object, they also tell us something about the attributes of the object. Some attributes are emphasized, albeit to varying degrees. Others are mentioned only in passing. Many are ignored. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. Just as there is an agenda of public issues, political candidates, or some other set of objects, there also is an agenda of attributes for each object. Both the selection by journalists of objects for attention and the selection of attributes for detailing the picture of these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles. (p. 78)

The first-level of study was the starting point for agenda-setting research. The second-level of agenda-setting research was identified when “scholars began to ask how the various attributes of an issue can be transferred from the media to the public” (Lee, 2010, p. 761), and built on what already existed (Ghanem, 1997).

In the context of media messages, attributes have also been referred to as “the set of perspective or frames that journalists and the public employ to think about each object” (Ghanem, 1997, p. 5). Second-level agenda-setting suggests that “certain attributes depicted in the media message are accentuated over other elements, and in turn, the attributes depicted in the media influence the public’s perception of issues” (Lee, 2010, pp. 761-762).

Three Main Components of the Agenda-setting Process

Rogers and Dearing (1988) referred to agenda-setting in its broadest form as the “agenda-setting process” (p. 556). Within this process they identified the following three elements: media agenda-setting, public agenda-setting, and policy agenda-setting. Figure 10 (see p. 121) presents the elements, their interrelationships, and the potential outside influences on these agendas (personal experiences, media gatekeepers, and real-world
indicators of issue importance). Dearing and Rogers (1996) described the agenda-setting process as “an ongoing competition among proponents of a set of issues to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites” (p. 6). Media scholars have studied agenda-setting as it deals with each of these three areas.

Media Agenda-setting

Agenda-setting is considered to be a causal hypothesis, suggesting that media treatment of issues causes changes in public opinion or behavior (Kosicki, 1993; Ku, Kaid, & Pfau, 2003). Researchers studying agenda-setting tend to focus on the continuous changes within media agendas, and their subsequent impact on audience agendas, as well as other media agendas.

Roberts and McCombs (1994) found that the news agendas of different news organizations impact each other. Specifically, political advertising worked as an agenda-setter for both television news and newspaper coverage of the issues in the 1990 Texas gubernatorial election (Roberts & McCombs, 1994). Boyle’s research on the 1996 presidential campaign, sought to determine what – if any – intermedia agenda-setting influences existed between political television advertisements, three major newspapers, and television network newscasts (Boyle, 2001). The study found a significant impact of candidate television advertising on the agenda of newspaper and television news agendas. These results suggest that candidate-controlled messages, such as advertising, may be a strong factor in influencing media agendas (Boyle, 2001). The results also pointed to the importance of considering whether the candidate-controlled websites had a similarly strong relationship with the agendas of print and television news outlets.

To date, the majority of the research conducted on the intermedia agenda function has centered on existing (traditional) media, mainly newspapers and television. However, as use
of the Internet as a communication medium has grown, so too has the study of the Internet’s role in intermedia agenda-setting. Ku et al. (2003) conducted a study that examined how political campaign websites shape or interact with the existing news media’s agenda. Their results suggested that website campaigning can serve as a useful tool for effective public relations, since the campaign agenda of candidate websites became the subsequent agenda of the existing news media (Ku et al., 2003). Similarly, as website agendas are actively involved in the existing media agenda, candidate website agendas are more likely to be associated with the public agenda. Another theoretical implication regarding the agenda-setting function is that online users exposed to candidate websites are more likely to be exposed to the campaign agendas than traditional media users.

Public Agenda-setting

Following McComb’s and Shaw’s (1972) seminal study, most agenda-setting research focused on public agenda-setting – “the relationship between the news media’s ranking of issues (in amount and prominence of coverage) and the public ranking of the perceived importance of these same issues” (Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004, p. 257). Election campaigns served as the backdrop for many of the conducted studies, media messages presented during the campaign and voters’ perceptions of the key issues facing the public. A study of the 1996 presidential campaign found that late in the campaign there was consistency across media messages (such homogeneity in content will be discussed later in this chapter, see “Homogeneity of Message,” p. 107), influenced by campaign advertising and a kind of horse race coverage30 of the campaign (Boyle, 2001). Weaver et al. (2004) identified mixed results among a collection of public agenda-setting studies reviewed.

30 The phrase horse race coverage refers to news stories that focus on “who was winning, losing, or repositioning strategic plans during an election” (Boyle, 2001, p. 27).
Though mixed, on the whole, the results support a positive correlation, “often a casual relationship between media agendas and public agendas at the aggregate level, especially for relatively unobtrusive issues that do not directly impact the lives of the majority of the public, such as foreign policy and government scandal” (Weaver et al., 2004, p. 258). Such findings bring greater significance to the study of agenda-setting as they advise that media practices can affect audience behaviors.

According to McCombs (1997), “helping to achieve [a state of] consensus is one of mass communication’s most important contributions to building community” (p. 435). There is obvious significance in the media’s ability to shape the community agenda, particularly when this agenda has the potential for affecting a community’s attitude and subsequent actions toward an issue. Brewer and McCombs (1996) looked beyond the community’s agenda and identified success within a daily Texas newspaper’s day-to-day presentation of topics (from the agenda) to influence the community’s behavior toward issues affecting children. In this example, the media agenda became the public or community’s agenda which community members in turn translated into policy agenda (Brewer & McCombs, 1996).

In contrast to the previously described static designs, Funkhouser (1973) was able to show a rank-order correlation between media coverage and issue importance over a seven-year period. More recently, Iyengar and Simon (1993) focused on television news coverage during the first Gulf War31 and their results indicated that U.S. public opinion followed the course of the television news coverage. Collectively, these studies suggest that changes in audience attitudes can be fostered either longitudinally (over a period of time) or cross-sectionally at an isolated occurrence (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1990).

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31 The first Gulf War is also referred to as the Persian Gulf War. Led by the U.S. and supported by a United Nations coalition force, this war against Iraq lasted from August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991.
Policy Agenda-setting

Compared to public agenda-setting, there have been fewer studies that attempt to understand how the media help to shape the policy agendas of decision makers. Policy agenda-setting includes those studies that conceptualize the issue agenda of governmental bodies or elected officials as the main dependent variable of study (Kosicki, 1993). As this area of focus is not related to the current study, attention will move on to audience retention from online and traditional news sources.

**Audience Retention of News: Online v. Traditional Sources**

The introduction of new communication outlets brings with it comparative studies of audience learning and recall from the new and existing media outlets. Studies comparing online news with print (i.e. newspapers and magazines) identified a slight superiority of print (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2002; Sundar, Narayan, Obregon, & Uppal, 1998; Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000). Tewskbury and Althaus (2000) conducted an experiment to test recall of stories between The New York Times newspaper and website. Their results suggested that online readers had greater recall than newspaper readers of non-front section stories; “the mode of delivery had its greatest impact on the most prominent stories of the day” (Tewskbury & Althaus, 2000, p. 472). From these findings, they concluded that online news users are creating their own individual list of top stories (agenda) without as much influence from the news organization (media agenda). In this regard, the prominence of a particular news story online may be different from its print counterpart. Conway and Patterson (2008) conducted a related experiment to test viewer recall for journalist-determined television news compared with Internet news users. They found that “participants had a higher recall for the journalist-determined top stories in a television newscast when compared to online news”
(Conway & Patterson, 2008, p. 31). Based on these findings, a future area of research related to the current study might focus on audience recall of the top news items as identified in the nightly broadcast among users who exclusively consume their news online.

**Homogeneity of Message**

Across time, agenda-setting studies have found patterns of homogeneity (similarity or sameness) among the news media (McCombs, 2005). In an effort to compare news agenda across different media platforms, Yu and Aikat (2005) compared three different pairs of online sources: online newspapers (The New York Times and The Washington Post), online television (CNN and MSNBC), and online news services (Yahoo News and Google News). When they compared the outlets’ issue agendas across two weeks during 2004, Yu and Aikat (2005) found a pattern of redundancy. McCombs (2005) provides the following explanation of why homogeneity should be expected across media:

The pattern of news coverage that defines the media agenda results from the norms and traditions of journalism, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves, and the continuous interactions of news organizations with numerous sources and their agendas. And because journalists routinely look over their shoulders to validate their sense of news by observing the work of their colleagues, especially the work of elite members of the press, such as The New York Times, [The] Washington Post and national television networks, this stage includes intermedia agenda setting, the influence of the news media on each other. As a result of this elite leadership and the pervasive norms of professional journalism, among other factors, the news agenda, as we have already noted, is highly homogeneous across all the news media. (pp. 548-549)
Based on McCombs’ statement, in the current study we might expect that across the three networks there would be a similar line-up of news stories during their respective nightly newscasts.

**Agenda-setting and Priming**

An integral part of agenda-setting revolves around “how news reports portray, and how people understand, issues” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 17). Audiences consume information provided by the news media and store it in memory. By making some issues more salient (i.e. more accessible) in people’s minds through agenda-setting, media coverage can influence which attitudes people use to make political judgments (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Althaus & Kim, 2006). The second half of this statement refers to *priming* – the “activation of knowledge stored in long-term memory following exposure to a stimulus” (Althaus & Kim, 2006, p. 961).

In research focused on studying the dynamics of priming effects in real-world, complex information environments (versus a controlled environment), Althaus and Kim (2006) concluded that priming effects are not merely a function of changes in the volume of news coverage about a given topic as suggested by previous research (p. 971). Instead, the relationship between stimulus material and priming effects was more subtle. Within the study’s design, they found that recent exposure to relevant news content can generate priming effects, but cumulative exposure to relevant news tended to be a more important factor influencing the size of priming effects. The greater the cumulative exposure to relevant stimuli, the greater the likelihood that “mere mention” of relevant stimuli triggered priming of applicable attitudes, regardless of the amount of recent coverage in the news (Althaus & Kim, 2006, p. 973). These results are worthy of consideration as they may be relevant to the
current study’s focus on the networks’ inclusion of Internet references over a period of time. As related to the current study, the potential for repetition of references made to a network’s news website (over time) could generate a long-term memory (via constant exposure) and as expected via priming the audience could be predisposed to recognize a network news site as a valid news outlet.

**Agenda-setting, the Internet, and Audience Fragmentation?**

The Internet has changed the communication landscape and has been labeled by McCombs (2005) as “the new frontier for research” on traditional agenda-setting effects (p. 544). Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) compared whether readers of a national newspaper and its online version acquired different perceptions of the news agenda based on the media used. Their results indicated that there was a difference; the audience for each medium (printed newspaper and online newspaper) came away with different perceptions of the most important problems facing the country (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). Implications from this study suggest a potential for fragmentation within the news audience. Depending on the medium used, audience members can be selective about the news consumed and thereby create personalized information environments that reflect unique interests and may exclude newsworthy content.

In contrast to the patterns of homogeneity found in traditional media outlets, the vast array of websites on the Internet provides considerable diversity in the agendas being presented. There are more voices and agendas available to audiences online. According to McCombs (2005), via the Internet there are “many agendas in contemporary society and many more of these are now readily available to a large segment of the public” (p. 544). In such a crowded marketplace, the networks must distinguish themselves in order to attract and
Framework of this Study

Given the potential influences at work during the creation of network news, this study focuses on the networks’ organization level of influence and the Internet’s extramedia level of influence on news content. These levels are chosen in order to assess how the network newscasts’ leverage the Internet during the period of 1997 to 2004 (as a news subject and as an extension of the newscasts) to benefit both the newscasts and their audiences.

As indicated in the introduction, the scope of this study will be limited to how various predicting factors (historical time, broadcast network, and online population) affect the coverage and presentation of Internet-related news stories. The dependent variable in this study is the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet keyword references) in network nightly newscasts. Four components of this variable were used to identify and analyze Internet references – news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, and instances of Internet keywords, invitational reference, and URL references in newscasts. The independent variables are historical time, broadcast network (ABC, CBS, NBC), and online population.

The unit of analysis for this study is “news day”; in the network context, news day refers to a network’s nightly newscast. News stories were evaluated for certain variables (e.g. the number Internet keywords per news story), and then these results were collapsed to report totals for each newscast – or news day.

Dependent Variables

As previously stated, the dependent variable in this study is the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet keyword references) in network nightly newscasts. Four components
of this variable were used to identify and analyze Internet references: news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, and instances of Internet keywords, invitational reference, and URL references in newscasts.

*Internet keyword* refers to a series of terms used to identify news stories that contain references to the Internet. These terms include: information superhighway (a phrase used in the early to mid-1990s to refer to the Internet), Internet (meant to include: Internet page), Net, online, Web (meant to include: World Wide Web, website, and Web page), and dot-com (a term used to refer to a segment of the Internet industry). In addition to these terms, a search was conducted on the following Web domains: .com, .gov, .org, and .edu. The domain search identified instances of the networks’ respective news websites: ABCNews.com, CBSNews.com, and MSNBC.com in addition to other Web addresses included in the news stories. The results from this keyword search identified the news stories used for analysis using the remaining three variable components.

*News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference*, as its name suggests, measures the number of news stories that contain at least one Internet keyword within a network’s newscast on a specific news day.

*Invitational reference* measures the suggestions made by a network during its newscast encouraging the news audience to visit the network’s news website or participate in online activities. Examples of such appeals include: “Log on to our website for more information…,” “You can follow this story online at our website…,” “Visit our website to participate in an online debate on this topic…”

*URL reference* measures any website address or URL (uniform resource locator), included within a news story. The search of the following Web domains: .com, .gov, .org,
and .edu, resulted in news stories that include specific Web addresses. The inclusion of a Web address in a newscast has the potential to direct audience members to the mentioned website; this Web address could be the network’s news site or a non-network website.

**Independent Variables**

Historical time, broadcast network, and online population are the independent variables in this study. *Historical time* refers to a specific era in which there is an important change stemming from an extramedia phenomenon. As a variable, historical time was first analyzed by year and then for a more detailed analysis, by quarter. The *broadcast networks*: ABC, CBS, and NBC were used in this study based on their regularly scheduled, nightly, half-hour newscasts that are not dependent upon subscription to cable services. The *online population* refers to members of the U.S. population who have used a computer capable of connecting to the Internet either at home or at work.

**Research Hypotheses 1-4**

Historical time, represented as the duration of the study period, will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories in network nightly newscasts:

*Hypothesis 1*: The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

*Hypothesis 2*: The number of Internet keywords within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.
Hypothesis 3: The number of invitational Web references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

Hypothesis 4: The number of URL references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

These expectations are founded in Tankard and Royal’s (2005) research that used time as an encyclopedic element, and found that timeliness is a strong predictor of the selection of news. In the current study, time is used as a historical element – a variable that recognizes the passage of time (one year to the next) and allows for comparisons across and among the years.

Research Hypotheses 5-8

Based on the organizational level of elements at work within a broadcast network, including cross-platform and cross-programming promotions, it is expected that a difference exists among the networks’ coverage and use of the Internet. For example, as a network NBC has the ability to leverage the resources of MSNBC to augment the NBC Nightly News newscast. Similarly during the 1990s, CBS established a partnership between The CBS Evening News and MarketWatch, an additional source of news and financial information that was regularly included in the network’s nightly newscast through 2004. It is anticipated that each network’s unique positioning and partnerships will promote differences among the network’s coverage and use of the Internet.
It is expected that the broadcast network of the newscast will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories:

*Hypothesis 5:* There will be a difference among the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference across networks.

*Hypothesis 6:* There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain Internet keywords across networks.

*Hypothesis 7:* There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain invitational Web references across networks.

*Hypothesis 8:* There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain URL references across networks.

**Research Hypotheses 9-12**

Over time, the Internet has evolved into a medium that facilitates communications, business, and social interactions – in these capacities the Internet has become a commonly used tool within the daily lives of an increasing number of Americans.

In this study, the variables of historical time and online population are closely associated; as time passes the online population will increase, decrease or remain the same. Fluctuations in online populations are expected when population is examined at a granular
level, however, based on Rogers’ (1995) model of diffusion, it is expected that there will be an overall pattern of increase within the online population.

As the online population increases, the activities of these online users will generate economic, social, and communication trends that the networks will recognize and report on. These stories should be reflected in the network’s references to the Internet in a newscast. Similarly, as the online population increases, as a commercial enterprise, the networks will attempt to secure a foothold within the online population.

Thus, it is expected that U.S. online population will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories in network nightly newscasts:

*Hypothesis 9:* The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase as the online population grows.

*Hypothesis 10:* The number of Internet keywords included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.

*Hypothesis 11:* The number of invitational Web references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.

*Hypothesis 12:* The number of URL references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.
Research Questions

The data for this study were collected by news story and then collapsed into news day for hypothesis testing. Additional attention was paid to the news stories in the form of three research questions, which focused on the subject matter of the selected news stories. The research questions were intended to: 1) identify the primary and secondary news story topic of each news story, 2) identify news events that garner news stories across the three networks, and 3) analyze the frequent references made by CBS to cbs.marketwatch.com, its business and financial information website. The unit of analysis for the research questions is “news story,” referring to the individual packages or stories that make up a newscast or the previously used news day unit of analysis. News story allows for a more detailed-oriented unit of measure.

Research Question 1: What news topics are addressed in news stories that include Internet references?

Research Question 2: When do the networks report on the same news story? What kind of news story attracts this level of coverage?

Research Question 3: What proportion of the CBS Internet references is directed to cbs.marketwatch.com?
Figure 6. Shoemaker & Reese’s hierarchical model of the five levels of influence on media content.

*Source:* Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 64.
Figure 7. Rogers’ diffusion of innovation S-curve.

Source: Rogers, 1995, p. 11.
Figure 8. Rogers’ adoption / innovation curve.

Types of adopters classified by innovativeness and their location on the adoption curve.

Figure 9. Christensen’s disruptive innovation model.

Source: Christensen, 2009.
Figure 10. Three main components of the agenda-setting process: Media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

This chapter provides a general overview of the study’s methodology followed by detailed descriptions of the methods and measures of the dependent and independent variables used in this study. Content analysis was employed to measure a series of dependent variables that evaluate the inclusion of Internet references by news story or newscast respectively. The use of content analysis provides information about the amounts of coverage and some insights into the networks’ priorities (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In this context “Internet reference” represents a list of Internet keywords that were categorized for analysis. Time, broadcast network, and online population are the study’s independent variables.

Process Overview for Hypotheses

Network inclusion of Internet references was analyzed using content analysis. Three broadcast television networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC – were selected for study due to the availability of highly consistent and reliable data on television news coverage through the online Lexis-Nexis™ database. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Fox was not included in the study since it did not provide its audience with a nightly news broadcast.

The study’s time period, 1997 to 2004, is significant. By the end of 1997, each of the broadcast networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC – had established an online news presence in the form of ABCNews.com, CBSNews.com, and MSNBC.com respectively (Bransten & Taylor, 1997; Gunther, 1995; Ross, 1996). The study concludes in 2004, as the following year saw significant changes in the networks’ nightly newscasts and their websites, complicating side-by-side comparisons.
Using systematic random sampling, 732 days were selected from January 1997 to December 2004, which translated to 2,196 network newscasts (732 nights of coverage per network). The news stories within these selected newscasts were analyzed in search of Internet references. Figure 11 (see p. 124) outlines the process used to identify and measure news stories that contain at least one Internet reference (i.e. Internet keyword).

Using the online Lexis-Nexis™ database, the newscasts for a particular network, for example ABC, were searched for a series of Internet keywords. The result of this search was a list of ABC news stories that contained at least one of the identified Internet keywords. From this list of news stories, those that were part of a newscast on one of the 732 sample days were identified for analysis.

These news stories represented the ABC sample that would be used for analysis. From this sample the following measurements were made:

a) Number of news stories per newscast containing at least one Internet reference;

b) Number of Internet keywords per newscast;

c) Number of invitational references per newscast – meaning encouragement from a network to its news audience to visit the network’s news website or participate in online activities;

d) Number of URL references per newscast – the equivalent to a specific website address.

This process was repeated for each network and the values collected from these selection processes were used to analyze each network’s inclusion of Internet keyword references and to look for trends across the networks.
Figure 11. News story selection process.
Unit of Analysis

“News day” is the unit of analysis in this study; in the network context, news day refers to a network’s nightly newscast. News stories were evaluated for certain variables (e.g. the number Internet keywords per newscast), and then these results were collapsed to report totals for each newscast – or news day.

Using news day as the unit of analysis allowed patterns and trends across all three newscasts to be apparent. In addition, findings were reported by network to allow for discussions unique to each network, as well as the comparison of results among the three networks.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable in this study is the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in network nightly newscasts. Four components of this variable were used to identify and analyze Internet references: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references.

Internet keyword

Internet keyword refers to a series of terms used to identify news stories in the online Lexis-Nexis™ database. These terms include: information superhighway (a phrase used in the early to mid-1990s to refer to the Internet), Internet (meant to include: Internet page), Net, online, Web (meant to include: World Wide Web, website, and Web page), and dot-com (a term used to refer to a segment of the Internet industry). In addition to these terms, a search was conducted on the following Web domains: .com, .gov, .org, and .edu. The domain search identified instances of the networks’ respective news websites: ABCNews.com,
CBSNews.com, and MSNBC.com in addition to other Web addresses included in the news stories. These four Web domains include the majority of public Internet content referenced in the U.S. Commercial websites are typically registered within the .com domain, U.S. government agencies fall within .gov, non-profit organizations and industry groups utilize .org, and academic institutions are included in .edu (gTLD, 2001; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1999). This list of keywords was created for this study and is based on the author’s professional experience in the online industry and research conducted in preparation for this study. The author believes that this list encompasses the breadth of terminology used to refer to the Internet during the study’s time period.

The keywords were identified and evaluated within each news story on each news day within the sample. The totals for each news story were combined to present the total number of Internet keywords per network newscast. It is worth noting that the results from this keyword search identified the news stories that were used for further analysis using the remaining three variable components: news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, invitational references, and URL references.

**News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference**

This variable measures the number of news stories that contain at least one Internet reference within a network’s newscast on a specific news day. Internet reference was calculated using the values recorded during the measurement of Internet-related keywords.

**Invitational reference**

Invitational reference measures the suggestions made by a network during its newscast encouraging the news audience to visit the network’s news website or participate in online activities. Examples of such appeals include: “Log on to our website for more
information…,” “You can follow this story online at our website…,” “Visit our website to participate in an online debate on this topic…” As discussed within the organizational level of the hierarchical gatekeeping model (see “Organization level,” p. 93), networks possess the ability to cross-promote their various news outlets—television to Internet and Internet to television; invitational reference measures the first of these and quantifies how frequently each network utilizes this sort of cross-platform promotion.

The occurrences of invitational references were measured within each news story that contained an Internet keyword and these results were collapsed into the total number of invitational references per network newscast to support the use of news day as the unit of analysis.

URL reference

URL reference measures any website address or URL included within a news story. The search of the following Web domains: .com, .gov, .org, and .edu, resulted in news stories that include specific Web addresses. The inclusion of a Web address in a newscast has the potential to direct audience members to the mentioned website; this Web address could be the network’s news site or a non-network website.

The occurrences of URL references were measured within each news story that contained an Internet keyword and these results were collapsed into the total number of URL references per network newscast to support the use of news day as the unit of analysis.

Details of the Process

Newscasts

The nightly newscasts of ABC (World News Tonight), CBS (CBS Evening News), and NBC (NBC Nightly News) are the sources of data for this study. Although these news outlets are
not selected by probability sampling, they are reliable and sufficient sources for examining broadcast news coverage in the U.S. These newscasts provide regularly scheduled, nightly, half-hour broadcasts that are not dependent upon subscription to cable services. Historically, the 6:30 p.m. newscast is a regular part of the U.S. audience’s news consumption. These broadcasts are expected to provide a strong test for the research hypotheses.

Sample

Using systematic random sampling of every fourth day, a total of 732 news days were selected. Collectively, the sample represents eight years of network news coverage, January 4, 1997, to December 29, 2004. For each of these news days, data were collected for each of the three network newscasts.

News Story Transcripts

Transcripts of the three networks’ newscasts were searched using Internet keywords for news stories that included references to the Internet. The transcripts of these news stories were retrieved using the Guided News Search provided by the online Lexis-Nexis™ database (see Appendix E, p. 294, for detailed instructions of news story retrieval). Lexis-Nexis™ is one of the most widely used databases for the study of news content in the mass communication discipline. Using the following Internet keywords as search words in the full text of the transcripts, news stories were retrieved: information superhighway, Internet, Net, online, Web, dot-com, .com, .gov, .org, and .edu.

Each instance of these keywords was coded and an overall count provided for each news story. The data pertaining to each news story were then collapsed into summary data for the respective network’s newscast (news day). On a given day, there may be multiple news stories containing references made to the Internet within a particular network’s
newscast. While on the same news day, the other two networks’ newscasts may include no
news stories containing references to the Internet. The focus of this study is the presence or
absence of references to the Internet on select news days, across the three networks and by
the networks individually.

Intercoder Reliability

The author and a trained assistant coded the content. Intercoder reliability for each variable
was assessed by using Scott’s pi, an agreement percentage statistic between the
measurements of the two coders. Twenty-five news stories from 2005, a year outside of the
study’s range, were used to avoid introducing bias toward news stories in the study. As a
result of clearly identified search criteria and careful oversight throughout the process,
intercoder reliability in all cases was very high and no term achieved less than a 100 percent
agreement or a Scott’s pi score of 1.00.32 Therefore, the data were sufficiently reliable for
analysis.

Independent Variables

Time, broadcast network, and online population are the independent variables in this
study.

Time

This study spans eight years, January 4, 1997, to December 29, 2004. Analysis of the data
was first done by year and then for a more detailed analysis, by quarter. Division of the year

32 Scott’s pi intercoder reliability coefficients for variables: Date, Network, Network Story Occurrence, Mention
into three-month periods allowed for interpretation and discussion that incorporated timely world and technological events that might have influenced the networks’ news coverage.

**Broadcast Network**

It is expected that the findings pertaining to each of the four variables used to identify and analyze Internet references within newscasts: Internet keywords, news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, invitational references, and URL references variables, shall vary across the three networks. Findings for each network will be analyzed in an effort to identify patterns within a network’s broadcasts over time and to allow for comparisons among the three networks.

**Online Population**

The online population refers to members of the U.S. population who have used a computer capable of connecting to the Internet either at home or at work. Coding for online population was adopted from Web data (http://www.nielsen-netrating.com), collected by Nielsen//NetRatings, a subsidiary of Nielsen Media Research.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (see “U.S. Online Population,” p. 59), this raw data measured “home” and “work” Internet users separately. For the purposes of this study, the home and work online populations were combined, to achieve the most reliable sample of Internet users. It should be noted that in combining these numbers, there might be some Internet users who were counted twice, those who access the Internet at home and at work. However, it was felt that the number of Internet users counted twice should remain consistent over time and therefore not negatively influence the overall trend in online population.
Restatement of Research Hypotheses

Time will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories in network nightly newscasts:

Hypothesis 1: The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

Hypothesis 2: The number of Internet keywords within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

Hypothesis 3: The number of invitational Web references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

Hypothesis 4: The number of URL references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

The broadcast network of the newscast will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories:

Hypothesis 5: There will be a difference among the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference across networks.

Hypothesis 6: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain Internet keywords across networks.
Hypothesis 7: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain invitational Web references across networks.

Hypothesis 8: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain URL references across networks.

U.S. online population will be a significant predictor on the inclusion of references made to the Internet (Internet references) in news stories in network nightly newscasts:

Hypothesis 9: The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase as the online population grows.

Hypothesis 10: The number of Internet keywords included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.

Hypothesis 11: The number of invitational Web references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.

Hypothesis 12: The number of URL references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows.

Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics were used to test Hypotheses 1 through 4. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test Hypotheses 5 through 8. Pearson correlations were conducted to test Hypotheses 9 through 12, which postulate bivariate relationships between four groups of
dependent variables (Internet keywords, news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, invitational references, and URL references) and the U.S. online population.

**Research Questions**

As previously discussed, the data for this study were collected by news story and collapsed into news day for hypothesis testing. Following this testing, additional attention was paid to the collected news stories. This took the form of three research questions, which focused on the subject matter of the retrieved news stories, with the intentions of:

1) identifying the primary and secondary news story topic of each news story, 2) identifying news events that garner news stories across the three networks, and 3) analyzing the frequent references made by CBS to cbs.marketwatch.com, its business and financial information website. A general overview of the methodology used for each research question is presented.

**Unit of Analysis for Research Questions**

“News story” is the unit of analysis for the research questions; news story refers to the individual packages or stories that make up a newscast or the previously used *news day* unit of analysis. News story allows for a more detailed-oriented unit of measure. A total of 607 news stories were selected and retrieved through the online Lexis-Nexis™ database, as previously described.

**Process Overview for Research Questions**

Research Question 1

R1: What news topics are addressed in news stories that include Internet references?
Figure 12 (see p. 135) outlines the process used to identify and categorize the news stories by topic, the focus of the first research question (R1). The news stories that contained at least one Internet keyword reference comprised the sample of news stories used in the classification of news story topics.

Each of these news stories was read in its entirety and using the fourteen dominant news subject categories created by Deutschmann (1959) and modified by Stempel (1988), a primary news story topic – the dominant subject of the news story was identified. When identifiable, a secondary news story topic – an underlying subject was recorded.
Figure 12. R1 process: News story topic categorization.
Unlike other studies that employ content analysis analyzing individual statements and sound bites (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2004), shots (Uribe & Gunter, 2007), or scenes within a news story (Choi & Lee, 2006), this study considered each news story as a whole before classifying it into one of fourteen categories. This less formal/rigid method relied upon intercoder reliability to ensure that consistency was used when categorizing the news stories.

**News Story Topic**

The topic of each news story was recorded based on a modified 14-item classification list originally developed by Stempel (1988) and used in previous communication research analyses. What follows is a list of the news story topics along with a brief description of each topic:

1) **Politics and Government Acts**: Government acts and politics at local, state, and national level;

2) **War and Defense**: War, defense, rebellion, homeland security, terrorism and terrorism court proceedings, military-related issues, military use of space (includes both foreign and domestic stories);

3) **Diplomacy, Foreign Relations, and Foreign Politics**: Foreign and/or domestic items dealing with official diplomacy, political issues, and foreign relations (includes the United Nations);

4) **Business and Economic Activity**: Foreign and domestic general economic activity, prices, money, labor, wages, and natural resources;

5) **Transportation and Travel**: Transportation and travel, including economic aspects;

6) **Crime**: All crime stories including criminal proceedings in court, excluding military-related and terrorism-related;
7) **Public Moral Issues**: Human relations and moral problems including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations, media content issues, religion, and civil court proceedings;

8) **Accidents and Disasters**: Man-made accidents and natural disasters involving injury, death, or serious damage;

9) **Science, Technology, and Invention**: Technology and science other than defense related and other than health and medicine;

10) **Public Health and Welfare**: Health, domestic public welfare, social and safety measures, education, welfare of children, marriage and marriage relations;

11) **Popular Amusements**: Entertainment and amusements, news page sports, television, radio, music, and classic arts;

12) **General Human Interest**: Human interest, weather, obituaries, animals, children, juvenile interest, and factoids;

13) **Network Promotion**: Self-promoting information about the sponsoring news channel such as future programming for this newscast or another network-sponsored program;

14) **News Tease**: Content presented before a commercial break that promotes an upcoming news story or general comments that direct the audience to check the Web for regular updates.

These fourteen topics were used to identify a primary and, when identifiable, a secondary news story topic. The main subject of the news story was identified as the primary news story topic. When the news story possessed an underlying subject, a secondary news story topic was identified.
Intercoder Reliability

The author and a trained assistant coded the content. Intercoder reliability for each news story topic was assessed using Scott’s pi, an agreement percentage statistic between the measurements of the two coders. Twenty-five news stories from 2005, a year outside of the study’s range, were used to avoid introducing bias toward news stories in the study. As a result of clearly identified search criteria and careful oversight throughout the process, intercoder reliability in all cases was very high and no term achieved less than a 90 percent agreement or a Scott’s pi score of .90. \(^{33}\) Therefore, the data were sufficiently reliable for analysis.

Research Question 2

R2: When do the networks report on the same news story? What kind of news story attracts this level of coverage?

Once each news story had been categorized by a primary, and where identifiable, a secondary news story topic, a comparison across networks on specific news days was conducted. Each news day was reviewed by network and any news stories that had the same news story topics (either primary or secondary) were flagged for further analysis.

When the same news story topic was identified across networks on a particular news day, the corresponding news stories were reviewed, in search of multi-network coverage of the same news subject – occasions when more than one network broadcast a news story (that contained reference to the Internet) on the same topic.

\(^{33}\) Scott’s pi intercoder reliability coefficients for variables: Agreement among primary news story topics (.95); Agreement among secondary news story topics (.90).
Research Question 3

R3: What proportion of the CBS Internet references is directed to cbs.marketwatch.com?

CBS news stories were subjected to another level of scrutiny and categorization – those news stories that contained reference to cbs.marketwatch.com and those that did not. The totals for each category were recorded and analysis made based on the research into CBS MarketWatch as outlined in Chapter 1 (see “CBS MarketWatch.com,” p. 21).

Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the research questions. To address the first research question, data were analyzed at the news story level and frequencies of the news story topics were measured. The second research question was addressed by a comparison of news stories by network on specific news days. The final research question was analyzed based on the news story data gathered specifically for the CBS news stories.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The findings are presented in two parts. The first consists of descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables. The second part presents the results of hypothesis testing, the research questions, and post-hoc analysis.

Descriptive Findings

Table 5 shows descriptive statistics for the four dependent variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references. Means and standard deviations are provided for each variable. Across the study’s eight-year period, when the three networks’ values are combined, the average number of Internet keywords within a newscast is 2.90 and the average number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference is less than one news story per newscast (0.83 news stories). The average number of invitational references per newscast is 0.09 references and the average number of Web addresses or URLs included within a newscast is 0.52 references.

Table 6 (see p. 142) shows that across the 732 news days in the sample, when the three networks’ values were combined, 370 of these days (50.5%) included at least one news story per newscast containing an Internet reference. On nearly 30 percent of the sample’s 732 news days (213 news days), CBS broadcast at least one news story that contained an Internet reference; this was the highest percentage among the three (CBS: 29.1%, NBC: 21.9%, and ABC: 16.8%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Internet keywords in a newscast</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all networks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of news stories per newscast containing an</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all networks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of invitational references in a newscast</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all networks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of URLs specified in a newscast</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all networks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6   Total news days with at least one news story per newscast containing an Internet reference (count and percentage of total news days) by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All Networks Combined</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>NBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of news days with at least one news story per newscast containing an Internet reference</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of the total number of news days with at least one news story per network containing an Internet reference</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The total number of news days in the sample is 732.
Over the study’s eight-year period, less than a third of each network’s total number of nightly newscasts included at least one news story containing an Internet reference.

Table 7 presents the frequencies of news days that included the minimum, one news story, to the maximum, nine news stories containing an Internet reference per newscast or news day, for all networks combined. The minimum value, one news story containing an Internet reference per news day, represents a majority (61.9%) of the 370 news days that contain such stories. News days that include more than one news story containing an Internet reference achieve a value of two to nine drawing from a combination of networks’ news stories. For example, on a certain news day, February 10, 2000, there were a total of nine news stories that contained Internet references broadcast across the three networks, ABC aired one, CBS six, and NBC two.

Looking at the individual networks that include an Internet-related news story reference among their respective news days (or newscasts), the majority of these newscasts contain only one such news story. Within this same group of news days, on a single day less than a quarter of each network’s newscasts aired two or three news stories containing an Internet reference. Only CBS broadcast more than three news stories containing Internet references on a given news day and this occurred only twice.

Table 8 (see p. 145) provides the frequencies of the following dependent variables: Internet keywords, invitational references, and URL references, by network. For all networks combined, across all the news stories containing an Internet keyword reference, there are 2,038 Internet keywords, 66 invitational references, and 247 URL references.
Table 7  Frequency of news days with the minimum to maximum number of news stories containing an Internet reference by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News days with “X” number of news stories</th>
<th>All Networks Combined</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>NBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 news story</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 news stories</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 news stories</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 news stories</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 news stories</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 news stories</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 news stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 news stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 news stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The sum of the columns for All Networks Combined equals 370 news days, the total number of news days with at least one news story containing an Internet reference (as expressed in Table 6, see p. 142). Similarly, the sum of the columns for ABC equals 123 news days, for CBS 213 news days, and for ABC 160 news days.
Table 8  
Frequencies of the dependent variables (Internet keywords, invitational references, URL references) by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All Networks Combined</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>NBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Internet keywords</td>
<td>2,038</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of invitational references</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of URL references</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The values in this table are distributed across the news stories containing Internet keyword references.*
No one network possessed the highest frequency for all of the variables: Internet keywords, invitational references, and URL references. Use of Internet keywords was fairly evenly distributed across the networks, each with over 30 percent of the total, listed in descending order: ABC (34.7%), NBC (34.2%), and CBS (31.1%). NBC included the most number of invitational references at 51.5%, followed by ABC (30.3%), and then CBS (18.2%). By a majority, CBS included the greatest number of URL references (54.7%), followed by NBC (28.3%), and then ABC (17.0%). These CBS URL references were analyzed in greater detail in Research Question 3 (see p. 203).

**Hypothesis Testing**

Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to test hypotheses in this study.

**Time**

Change over time was hypothesized as a significant predictor of the inclusion of Internet references as expressed through the following variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references. Four hypotheses were tested.

**Internet references**

*Hypothesis 1: The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase over time for the duration of the study period.*

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the passage of time and the number of news stories that contain references to the Internet (Internet reference) within a network’s newscast. However, the data collected show that the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference (three
networks combined) did not increase over time when examined by years (see Table 9, p. 151) and quarters (see Table 10, p. 152) for the eight-year period.

Figure 13 (see p. 153) illustrates the relationship between the dependent variable, the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference (three networks combined), and the independent variable, historical time; the relationship is not linear for the full eight years and the hypothesis is *not supported*.

The visual representation in Figure 13 shows an overall linear increase in the number of news stories per network newscast that contain an Internet reference (three networks combined) during the first three years of the study. A peak of almost two such news stories (1.78) per newscast is seen in the fourth quarter of 1999; to reach this peak, the number of news stories more than doubled from the third to fourth quarter of 1999. Looking at the Timeline of World and Internet/Technology Events (see Appendix D, p. 278), this period of time corresponds with seasonal holiday shopping\(^{34}\) and preparations for both “Y2K” and new millennium celebrations. This peak is followed by a steady decline through 2001 that continues into the first part of 2002. It should be noted that at its lowest point in 2001, the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference drops below the number of similar news stories in the first three years of the study. By the start of 2002, the values once again begin an overall upward trend, however the number never reaches the 1999 high.

**Internet keywords**

*Hypothesis 2: The number of Internet keywords within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.*

---

\(^{34}\) The U.S. Department of Commerce began tracking Internet sales in 1999; e-commerce was labeled “a major indicator of the nation’s economic health” (Shedden, 2004, New media timeline 1999 section, para. 7).
Hypothesis 2 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the passage of time and the use of Internet keywords in network newscasts. The data collected show that the number of Internet keywords within network newscasts (three networks combined) did not increase over time when examined by years (see Table 9, p. 151) and quarters (see Table 10, p. 152) for the eight-year period.

Figure 14 (see p. 154) illustrates the relationship between the number of Internet keywords within network newscasts (three networks combined), and historical time; the relationship is not linear for the full eight years and the hypothesis is not supported.

In the fourth quarter of 1999, the use of Internet keywords (when the network values are combined) spikes to an average high of ten Internet keywords per newscast. During the first half of 2000, this average drop to seven and continues a steady decline through 2001 to a low of less than one Internet keyword per newscast (Q4 2001: 0.35 Internet keywords per newscast). Across the next three years, the average fluctuates between values of less than one and three Internet keywords per network newscast.

Invitational references

Hypothesis 3: The number of invitational Web references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the passage of time and the inclusion of invitational Web references in network newscasts. The data collected show that the number of invitational Web references within network newscasts (three networks combined) did not increase over time when examined by years (see Table 9, p. 151) and quarters (see Table 10, p. 152) for the eight-year period.
Figure 15 (see p. 155) illustrates the relationship between the number of invitational Web references with network newscasts (three networks combined) and historical time; the relationship is not linear for the full eight years and the hypothesis is *not supported*.

The means calculated for this variable, when looking at the three networks combine, remained below one invitational Web reference per newscast. This suggests that the use of invitational Web references is not a consistent practice across the networks, so a more granular approach will be needed to identify patterns of use within each network. This will be addressed in Hypothesis 7, which compares invitational Web references across networks.

**URL references**

*Hypothesis 4: The number of URL references within network newscasts will increase over time for the duration of the study period.*

Hypothesis 4 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the passage of time and the inclusion of URL references or specific Web addresses in network newscasts. The data collected show that the number of URL references within network newscasts (three networks combined) did not increase over time when examined by years (see Table 9, p. 151) and quarters (see Table 10, p. 152) for the eight-year period.

Figure 16 (see p. 156) illustrates the relationship between the number of URL references within network newscasts (three networks combined) and historical time; the relationship is not linear for the full eight years and the hypothesis is *not supported*.

This figure also clearly illustrates that during the fourth quarter of 1999 and across 2000 the average number of URL references within network newscasts (three networks combined) was consistently one such reference. Hypothesis 8 will look at each network’s
average for the dependent variables; this network-specific view will allow for a more detailed analysis.
Table 9  Means of dependent variables for all networks combined by year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference</th>
<th>Number of Internet keywords in newscasts</th>
<th>Number of invitational references in newscasts</th>
<th>Number of URL references in newscasts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>.57</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>2.54</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10  Means of dependent variables for all networks combined by quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference</th>
<th>Number of Internet keywords in newscasts</th>
<th>Number of invitational references in newscasts</th>
<th>Number of URL references in newscasts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
Figure 13. News stories per network newscast (all networks combined) containing an Internet reference by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 14. Internet keywords in network newscasts (all networks combined) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 15. Invitational references in newscasts (all networks combined) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 16. URL references in newscasts (all networks combined) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Broadcast Network

Based on the organizational level elements at work within a broadcast network, including cross-platform and cross-programming promotions, it is expected that differences exist within each of three networks, which influence the media content produced. Findings for each network are being analyzed to identify patterns within each network’s broadcasts over time. Four hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance and descriptive statistics.

Internet references

Hypothesis 5: There will be a difference among the number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference across networks.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the individual networks and the number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference. As Table 11 shows (see p. 162), there is a significant difference by year in the number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference within each of the three networks, ABC (F = 7.53, p < .001), CBS (F = 4.11, p < .001), and NBC (F = 2.76, p < .01). Table 12 (see p. 163) presents the quarterly view of this information and indicates significant relationships for ABC (F = 3.20, p < .001) and CBS (F = 1.97, p < .001). Hypothesis 5 was supported when studied by year and was supported for two out of three relationships when tested by quarter.

Figure 17 (see p. 164) presents the calculated means of the three networks plotted by quarter; this figure provides a visual comparison of the networks’ newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference. Although each network presents a unique series of values, there is a fluctuating trend that can be identified. In general, there is a gradual increase in values (i.e. the number of newscasts per network containing news stories that
include an Internet reference) seen across the first three years of the study, followed by peaks in the fourth quarter of 1999 and first part of 2000. Following these peaks, the networks’ values drop off and in late 2001 begin another gradual increase.

The quarterly means for each network are presented in separate figures for isolated review. In Figure 18 (see p. 165), ABC’s 1999 and 2000 peaks are obvious and seen to be considerably greater than ABC’s values throughout the rest of the study. In comparison, Figure 19 (see p. 166) illustrates CBS’s fluctuations in value; however, these values are generally at a higher level than ABC throughout the eight-year period. In Figure 20 (see p. 167), NBC’s values show that the variances in values are not as dramatic from quarter to quarter, as compared to those of the other networks.

**Internet keywords**

*Hypothesis 6: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain Internet keywords across networks.*

Hypothesis 6 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the individual networks and the use of Internet keywords in newscasts. As Table 13 shows (see p. 168), there is a significant difference by year in the number of Internet keywords in news stories within each of the three networks, ABC ($F = 8.89$, $p < .001$), CBS ($F = 3.56$, $p < .001$), and NBC ($F = 4.23$, $p < .001$). The quarterly view of this information, in Table 14 (see p. 169), indicates significant relationships for ABC ($F = 3.34$, $p < .001$) and NBC ($F = 2.11$, $p < .001$). Hypothesis 6 was supported when studied by year and was supported for two out of three relationships when tested by quarter.

In Figure 21 (see p. 170), the calculated means of the three networks are plotted by quarter providing a visual comparison of the networks’ use of Internet keywords in their
A fluctuating trend in the number of Internet keywords is present, similar to the trend seen in networks’ values for newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference. This is not an unexpected observation, since Internet keywords were used to identify the news stories used in the study (refer to Figure 11 see p. 124 for a review the process used in news story selection).

Looking specifically at ABC’s use of Internet keywords in newscasts (see Figure 22, p. 171), values prior to ABC’s peak (5.04) in the fourth quarter of 1999 fluctuated between 0.0 and 2.43. A smaller peak (4.35) occurred during the second quarter of 2000. However, after this second peak, ABC’s use of Internet keywords rapidly declined and beginning in 2001, the average reached 1.0 only once, remaining below 1.0 for the remainder of the study. In comparison, CBS’s use of Internet keywords was overall more consistent across the study’s eight-year period (see Figure 23, p. 172). CBS’s values do not match the highs of ABC; however, CBS does present more quarters above 1.0 than ABC. Figure 24 (see p. 173) reflects an increase in Internet keywords in the end of 1999 and similar to its competitors a subsequent decline in 2001. NBC’s use of Internet keywords increased the most significantly from the start of the study to its conclusion eight years later: NBC: 0.36 (1997 Q1) increased to 2.30 (2004 Q4); ABC: 0.00 (1997 Q1) increased to 0.30 (2004 Q4); CBS: 0.23 (1997 Q1) increased to 0.52 (2004 Q4).

Invitational references

Hypothesis 7: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain invitational Web references across networks.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the individual networks and the inclusion of invitational references in newscasts. Table 15 (see
p. 174) shows that there is a significant difference by year in the invitational references within each of the three networks, for only one network, ABC (F = 3.95, p < .001). Table 16 (see p. 175) presents the quarterly view of this data and shows a significant relationship for NBC (F = 2.33, p < .001). Hypothesis 7 was supported for one out of three relationships when tested by both year and quarter.

In Figure 25 (see p. 176), the low number and absence of invitational references used by each network is clearly visible; only once did a network’s value exceed 0.20 (NBC: 0.30 (2000 Q4)). The granular views provided by Figure 26 (see p. 177) and Figure 27 (see p. 178) show that the majority of quarters for both ABC (66%) and CBS (69%) did not include an invitational reference; NBC’s percentage of quarters that did not include an invitational reference was 44 percent (see Figure 28, p. 179).

URL references

Hypothesis 8: There will be a difference among the number of newscasts that contain URL references across networks.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the individual networks and the inclusion of URL references in newscasts. Table 17 (see p. 180) shows there is a significant difference by year in the number of URL references in news stories within each of the three networks, ABC (F = 6.55, p < .001), CBS (F = 3.68, p < .001), and NBC (F = 3.79, p < .001). The quarterly view of this information, in Table 18 (see p. 181) indicates significant relationships for ABC (F = 2.06, p < .001) and CBS (F = 1.83, p < .001). Hypothesis 8 was supported when studied by year and was supported for two out of three relationships when tested by quarter.
The visual representation of the networks’ use of URL references in Figure 29 (see p. 182) presents three lines that overlap on occasion; however, each network’s line follows a distinct path. Looking at Figure 30 (see p. 183), ABC’s nearly non-existent use of URL references is obvious, with the exception of a peak during 1999 and 2000. Based on Figure 31 (p. 184), CBS’s use of URL references, while minimal, appears more consistent than ABC across the eight-year period and greater than NBC’s use (see Figure 32, p. 185).
Table 11  One-way analyses of variance for newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference by year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ABC Mean</th>
<th>CBS Mean</th>
<th>NBC Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
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<td>1998</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<td>.36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\[ F = 7.53 \quad \quad \quad F = 4.11 \quad \quad \quad F = 2.76 \]
\[ df = 7, 724 \quad \quad \quad df = 7, 724 \quad \quad \quad df = 7, 724 \]
\[ p < .001 \quad \quad \quad p < .001 \quad \quad \quad p < .01 \]
Table 12  One-way analyses of variance for newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference by quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>CBS Mean</td>
<td>NBC Mean</td>
<td>ABC Mean</td>
<td>CBS Mean</td>
<td>NBC Mean</td>
<td>ABC Mean</td>
<td>CBS Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>.23</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( F = 3.20 \)  
\( df = 31, 700 \)  
\( p < .001 \)

\( F = 1.97 \)  
\( df = 31, 700 \)  
\( p < .001 \)

\( F = 1.25 \)  
\( df = 31, 700 \)  
\( p < ns \)
Figure 17. Newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference (all networks) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 18. ABC newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 19. CBS newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 20. NBC newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Table 13  
One-way analyses of variance for Internet keywords in newscasts by year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ABC Mean</th>
<th>CBS Mean</th>
<th>NBC Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>2004</td>
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$F = 8.89$  \hspace{1cm}  $F = 3.56$  \hspace{1cm}  $F = 4.23$

$df = 7, 724$ \hspace{1cm}  $df = 7, 724$ \hspace{1cm}  $df = 7, 724$

$p < .001$ \hspace{1cm}  $p < .001$ \hspace{1cm}  $p < .001$
Table 14  One-way analyses of variance for Internet keywords in newscasts by quarter.

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<th>CBS Mean</th>
<th>NBC Mean</th>
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F = 3.34  df = 31, 700  p < .001
F = 1.33  df = 31, 700  p < ns
F = 2.11  df = 31, 700  p < .001
Figure 21. Network use of Internet keywords in newscasts (all networks) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 22. ABC’s use of Internet keywords in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 23. CBS’s use of Internet keywords in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 24. NBC’s use of Internet keywords in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Table 15  One-way analyses of variance for invitational references in newscasts by year.

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\[ F = 3.95 \quad df = 7, 724 \quad p < .001 \]
\[ F = 1.07 \quad df = 7, 724 \quad p < ns \]
\[ F = 1.70 \quad df = 7, 724 \quad p < ns \]
Table 16 One-way analyses of variance for invitational references in newscasts by quarter.

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\[ F = 1.56 \quad df = 31, 700 \quad p < ns \]

\[ F = 1.39 \quad df = 31, 700 \quad p < ns \]

\[ F = 2.33 \quad df = 31, 700 \quad p < .001 \]
Figure 25. Network use of invitational references in newscasts (all networks) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 26. ABC’s use of invitational references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 27. CBS’s use of invitational references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 28. NBC’s use of invitational references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Table 17  One-way analyses of variance for URL references in newscasts by year.

<table>
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<th>NBC Mean</th>
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\[ F = 3.79 \quad df = 7, 724 \quad p < .001 \]
Table 18  One-way analyses of variance for URL references in newscasts by quarter.

Number of specific URL references in newscasts

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$F = 2.06$  
$df = 31, 700$  
$p < .001$

$F = 1.83$  
$df = 31, 700$  
$p < .005$

$F = 1.46$  
$df = 31, 700$  
$p < ns$
Figure 29. Network use of URL references in newscasts (all networks) by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 30. ABC’s use of URL references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 31. CBS’s use of URL references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Figure 32. NBC’s use of URL references in newscasts by quarter, 1997 to 2004.
Online population

The assumption was made that the U.S. online population would increase over time. Based on this assumption, online population was hypothesized as a significant predictor of the inclusion of Internet references as expressed through the following variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references. Data from both the online population and the dependent variables were entered first by year and then for a more detailed analysis, by quarter. Four hypotheses were tested using bivariate correlations to understand the relationships between variables.

News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference

Hypothesis 9: The number of news stories per network newscast containing an Internet reference will increase as the online population grows.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between online population and the number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference.

As Tables 19 and 20 show (see p. 190 and 191), there is no significant relationship between online population and the number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference. When the news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference for all three networks are combined, Table 19 shows that there is no significant relationship and this finding is echoed in the results for each network individually, as seen in Table 20. Hypothesis 9 was not supported.

Table 19 shows significant relationships among the news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference for all three networks combined and the other variables:
Internet keywords ($r = .79$, $p < .01$), invitational references ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), and URL references ($r = .56$, $p < .01$).

Table 20 (see p. 191) shows significant relationships among the networks’ news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference. ABC news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference has a positive relationship with CBS’s news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference ($r = .15$, $p < .01$), a similar relationship exists between ABC and NBC ($r = .12$, $p < .01$), as well as between CBS and NBC ($r = .17$, $p < .01$).

Internet keywords

_Hypothesis 10: The number of Internet keywords included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows._

Hypothesis 10 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between online population and the number of Internet keywords used in television newscasts.

Table 19 (see p. 190) shows that there is no significant relationship between online population and the use of Internet keywords in newscasts, when the news stories of all three networks are combined. This finding remains true when the networks are analyzed individually as seen in Table 20 (see p. 191). Hypothesis 10 was not supported.

Table 19 shows significant relationships among the news stories that use Internet keywords for all three networks combined and two of the other variables: invitational references ($r = .27$, $p < .01$) and URL references ($r = .55$, $p < .01$).

In Table 20, significant relationships are present between ABC and the other two networks. ABC’s use of Internet keywords is positively related to the use of such terms by CBS ($r = .13$, $p < .01$) and NBC ($r = .17$, $p < .01$).
Table 20 shows that there are strong, positive relationships between each network’s news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference and their respective use of Internet keywords in these news stories, ABC (r = .79, p < .01), CBS (r = .70, p < .01), and NBC (r = .82, p < .01).

Invitational references

_Hypothesis 11: The number of invitational Web references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows._

Hypothesis 11 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between online population and the number of invitational Web references included in television newscasts.

As Tables 19 and 21 show (see p. 190 and 192), there is no significant relationship between online population and the number of invitational Web references included in television newscasts. When the news stories that contain invitational Web references for all three networks are combined, Table 19 shows that there is no significant relationship and this finding is mirrored in the results for each network individually, as seen in Table 21. Hypothesis 11 was not supported.

Table 19 shows a significant relationship between the news stories that use Internet-related terms for all three networks combined and URL references (r = .36, p < .01).

URL references

_Hypothesis 12: The number of URL references included in network newscasts will increase as the online population grows._

Hypothesis 12 predicted that there would be a positive relationship between online population and the number of URL references used in television newscasts.
Table 19 (see p. 190) shows that there is no significant relationship between online population and the inclusion of URL references in newscasts, when the news stories of all three networks are combined. This finding remains true when the networks are analyzed individually as seen in Table 21 (see p. 192). Hypothesis 12 was not supported.

In Table 21, a significant relationship is present between ABC’s inclusion of URL references and NBC’s inclusion of URL references ($r = .13, p < .01$).

Table 21 also shows that there are positive relationships between each network’s use of invitational references and their respective inclusion of URL references in news stories, ABC ($r = .51, p < .01$), CBS ($r = .14, p < .01$), and NBC ($r = .51, p < .01$).
Table 19  Pearson correlation coefficients for online population and variables (all networks combined).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Online population</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference in all newscasts combined</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.79&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.36&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.56&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Internet keywords in all newscasts combined</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.55&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Invitational references in all newscasts combined</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>.36&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. URL references in all newscasts combined</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> p < .01.
Table 20   Pearson correlation coefficients for online population and reference to the Internet by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference by network</th>
<th>Internet keywords in newscast by network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Online population</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference in ABC newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.15&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference in CBS newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.17&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference in NBC newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(732)</td>
<td>(732)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Internet keywords in ABC newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(732)</td>
<td>(732)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Internet keywords in CBS newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(732)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Internet keywords in NBC newscast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> p < .01.
Table 21  Pearson correlation coefficients for online population and invitational references and the number of URLs in newscasts by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Invitational references in newscast by network</th>
<th>Specific URL references in newscast by network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Online population</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Invitational references in</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC newscasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Invitational references in</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS newscasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Invitational references in</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC newscasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. URL references in ABC newscasts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. URL references in CBS newscasts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. URL references in NBC newscasts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. $p < .01$.
* Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.
Research Questions

The data for this study were collected by news story and collapsed into news day for the hypothesis testing. Additional attention was paid to the news stories in the form of three research questions, which focused on the subject matter of the selected news stories. The research questions were intended to: 1) identify the primary and secondary news story topic of each news story, 2) identify news events that garner news stories across the three networks, and 3) analyze the frequent references made by CBS to cbs.marketwatch.com, its business and financial information website. Descriptive statistics were used to address each research question.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What news topics are addressed in news stories that include Internet references?

Table 22 (see p. 195) shows the frequency by network of the fourteen news story topics that were used to categorize the primary news story topic, the main subject of each news story. Figure 33 (see p. 196) shows the distribution of percentages of the primary news story topics for all networks combined. As represented in Table 23 (see p. 198), the top six news story topics and their respective percentages in descending order are: Economy & Business (42%), Science, Technology & Invention (16%), Politics & Government Acts (9%), General Human Interest (7%), War & Defense (5%), and Crime (5%), a description of each of these topics can be found on page 136. Figure 34 (see p. 197) shows a visual comparison of the news story topics by network.

Table 23 (see p. 198) shows the most frequent primary news story topic by network. Figure 35 (see p. 199) presents this data visually. For all three of the networks, the most
frequent primary news story topic is Economy & Business. However, when CBS news stories containing cbs.marketwatch.com references are removed from the sample, CBS’s primary news story topic is Science, Technology & Invention. The CBS references to cbs.marketwatch.com are discussed in Research Question 3 (see p. 203).
Table 22  
Frequencies of primary News Story Topics by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary News Story Topic</th>
<th>Networks Combined News Stories</th>
<th>ABC News Stories</th>
<th>CBS News Stories</th>
<th>NBC News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Government Acts</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War &amp; Defense</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy &amp; Foreign Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Business</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>152*</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Travel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Moral Issues</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents &amp; Disasters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Technology, &amp; Invention</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health &amp; Welfare</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Human Interest</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Promotion</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Tease</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Number of News Stories             | 607                           | 152              | 256              | 199              |

Note. * This value includes 122 references to cbs.marketwatch.com; excluding these references from the count, there are 30 CBS news stories whose primary news story topic is “Economy & Business.”
Figure 33. Primary News Story Topics, all networks combined.

In this figure, “Other” consists of the following primary news story topics which each represent less than 2 percent of the news stories, Entertainment, Transportation & Travel, Diplomacy & Foreign Relations, Accidents & Disasters.
Figure 34. Primary News Story Topics, by network.

Note. The CBS value for “Economy & Business” does not include news stories containing reference to cbs.marketwatch.com.
Table 23  Most frequent primary News Story Topics by network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary News Story Topic</th>
<th>ABC News Stories</th>
<th>CBS News Stories</th>
<th>NBC News Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Government Acts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War &amp; Defense</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Business</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30*</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Technology &amp; Invention</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Human Interest</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The total number of news stories for each network is as follows: ABC (152), CBS (256), and NBC (199).
* This value does not include references to cbs.marketwatch.com (see “Research Question 3,” p. 203).
Figure 35. Most frequent primary News Story Topics by network.

*Note.* The CBS value for “Economy & Business” does not include news stories containing reference to cbs.marketwatch.com (see “Research Question 3,” p. 203).
Research Question 2

Research Question 2: When do the networks report on the same news story? What kind of news story garners this level of coverage?

Table 24 shows how infrequently across the eight-year period all three networks covered the same Internet-related news story. Of the study’s 607 news stories containing an Internet reference, on only ten occasions were the same news events covered by all three networks. The thirty resulting news stories (three networks multiplied by one news story per network, the result multiplied by ten news stories) represent less than 5 percent (4.9%) of all the news stories within the sample.

Identifying occasions where two of the three networks covered the same news event, there were thirty-five instances, almost 12 percent of the overall sample of news stories (11.5%).

Table 25 (see p. 202) lists the headlines of the ten Internet-related news events that received coverage across the three networks. In these news stories, the Internet is portrayed in a variety of lights: as a communication tool, a source of information or file transfers, a retail outlet, and a medium in need of protection.
Table 24  Frequency of networks covering the same news story on the same news day by year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Networks</th>
<th>ABC and CBS</th>
<th>ABC and NBC</th>
<th>CBS and NBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 10  12  9  14

Note. This table is based on the news stories that were identified and retrieved for this study based on their inclusion of an Internet reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>News Story Headline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>02/23/1999</td>
<td>Racist groups using Internet to spread message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/13/1999</td>
<td>Philip Morris publishes admissions of health risks of smoking on website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/26/1999</td>
<td>Store and online retailers expect big spending by consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>02/10/2000</td>
<td>Investigations into this week’s website cyber-attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/24/2000</td>
<td>E-tailers may not have a good holiday season this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>02/12/2001</td>
<td>Federal Appeals Court rules against Napster today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03/20/2001</td>
<td>Two New York men arrested in Internet identity theft scam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07/30/2001</td>
<td>Officials warn of contagious computer worm called Code Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>01/25/2003</td>
<td>Virus attacks Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>09/20/2004</td>
<td>American hostage Eugene Armstrong beheaded by terrorist group on Internet video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table is based on the news stories that were identified and retrieved for this study based on their inclusion of an Internet reference.
Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What proportion of the CBS Internet references is directed to cbs.marketwatch.com?

CBS had a total of 256 news stories and of these, 123 (48.0%) were news stories that included references to cbs.marketwatch.com. Table 26 shows the influence of these references on the other dependent variables.

When users visit http://cbs.marketwatch.com, they are automatically redirected to http://www.marketwatch.com, a website designed to provide business and financial information to individual investors and business professionals (Bloomberg News, 1997) (see “CBS MarketWatch.com,” p. 21 for additional information on cbs.marketwatch.com).

The inclusion of CBS news stories containing URL references to the business and financial-oriented site skewed the study’s raw data. The inclusion of these news stories boosted the overall number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, Internet keywords, and URL references.
Table 26  Frequency of Dependent Variables and CBS News Stories (including and not including references to cbs.marketwatch.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CBS Subtotal</th>
<th>CBS Subtotal</th>
<th>CBS Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes references to cbs.marketwatch.com</td>
<td>Does not include references to cbs.marketwatch.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News stories per newscast containing an Internet reference</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(48%)</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Internet keywords</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30%)</td>
<td>(70%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of invitational references</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>(83%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of URL references</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(83%)</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-hoc Analysis

This study hypothesized an increase over time in four Internet variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references. As a post-hoc analysis, time was divided into two periods, Time 1 (T1): 1997 to 2000 and Time 2 (T2): 2001 to 2004, and the relationships between the online population and the number of news stories containing Internet references tested based on this division of time. The division was based on the decreases in values seen in Table 9 (see p. 151) between 2000 and 2001.

Table 27 (see p. 206) shows some of these relationships to be significant; Figure 36 (see p. 207) presents a visual representation of the relationships being tested. The strongest relationship (E) between Time 1 and Time 2 is online population (r = .92, p < .01).

Another strong relationship (C) is present between the online population at Time 1 and news stories containing Internet references during the same time period (r = .81, p < .01). This is in keeping with the relationship between the online population over time and the number of newscasts containing network news stories that include an Internet reference by quarter for all eight years (r = .79, p < .01) shown in Table 19 (see p. 190).

A similarly strong relationship (D) between the online population at Time 2 and news stories containing Internet references at Time 2, is expected and yet not present (r = .36, p < .01). This weak relationship suggests that networks did not increase the number of news stories relating to the Internet in proportion to the increasing online population.
Table 27  Pearson correlation coefficients for online population (T1 & T2) and number of news stories containing Internet references (T1 & T2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Online population, (T1)</td>
<td>(0.81^a) (16)</td>
<td>(0.92^a) (16)</td>
<td>(0.21) (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. News stories containing Internet references, (T1)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
<td>(0.84^a) (16)</td>
<td>(0.22) (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Online population, (T2)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
<td>(0.36) (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. News stories containing Internet references, (T2)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
<td>- (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \(p < .01\)


The number of news stories containing Internet references equals the sum of all news stories containing Internet references in the respective 4-year period.
Figure 36. Bivariate relationships between online population (T1 & T2) and number of news stories containing Internet references (T1 & T2).

Note. Significant relationships are marked with an asterisk (*).

The values for each relationship tested are as follows:

A. \( r = .21, \text{ ns} \)
B. \( r = .84, p < .01 \)
C. \( r = .81, p < .01 \)
D. \( r = .36, \text{ ns} \)
E. \( r = .92, p < .01 \)
F. \( r = .22, \text{ ns} \)
Summary

When tested by year and quarter, no significant relationships were identified between Internet references in network news stories and time. Specifically, when the news stories of all three networks were combined, the number of newscasts containing: news stories per newscast that included an Internet reference (Hypothesis 1), Internet keywords (Hypothesis 2), invitational references (Hypothesis 3), and URL references (Hypothesis 4), did not increase over time for the duration of the study period. None of these relationships were linear for the full eight years, so the first four hypotheses were not supported.

The newscasts were studied by network, which provided mixed results. Hypothesis 5 was largely supported – a difference was seen between the networks’ news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, by year and quarterly for two of the three networks, ABC and CBS. Hypothesis 6 was largely supported – a difference was seen between the networks’ newscasts containing Internet keywords, by year and quarterly for two of the three networks, ABC and NBC. Hypothesis 7 was partially supported – a difference was seen between the networks’ newscasts containing invitational references, by year and quarterly for one of the three networks, NBC. Hypothesis 8 was largely supported – a difference was seen between the networks’ newscasts containing URL references, by year and quarterly for two of the three networks, ABC and CBS.

Finally, when online population was used to test the Internet references, no significant results were collected. Hypothesis 9 was not supported – online population had no significant relationship with the number of news stories per newscast containing
an Internet reference. Hypothesis 10 was not supported – online population had no significant relationship with the number of Internet keywords used in newscasts. Hypothesis 11 was not supported – online population had no significant relationship with the number of invitational references used in newscasts. Hypothesis 12 was not supported – online population had no significant relationship with the number of URL references used in newscasts.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a high-level overview of the study’s purpose and findings followed by an in-depth discussion of the results’ significance. Next, an update is provided for each of the television networks highlighting some of the changes that have occurred since 2004; changes that have impacted the news product and reflect how the networks have responded to technological advances. The chapter concludes with a review of the study’s limitations and areas of future research.

Overview

The focus of this study is network news and how the “big three” broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) responded to the Internet over an eight-year period of time, 1997 to 2004. The study measures the networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject and their incorporation of companion news websites into their respective nightly newscasts. Four Internet-related variables: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords35; c) invitational references; and d) URL references were identified and utilized to examine whether changes exist in network coverage: a) over time; and b) relative to changes in the U.S. online population.

Traditional mass communication concepts are used to: verify the newsworthiness of the Internet as a news subject; identify the influences involved with selecting and shaping a news story (gatekeeping); and explore the networks’ ability to direct audience attention and interest (agenda-setting). Within the broad scope of gatekeeping, this study explores the

35 The following Internet keywords were used as search words in the full text of the newscasts’ transcripts: information superhighway, Internet, Net, online, Web, dot-com, .com, .gov, .org, and .edu. From the pool of news stories that contained one or more instance of these terms, the study’s sample was selected. For additional information about these terms, refer to “Dependent Variables,” see p. 110.
organization and extramedia levels of influence, which include influences such as organizational structure, other media outlets, competitive pressures of the marketplace, and technological advances (diffusion of innovation and disruptive innovation) – each an influence that can contribute to the shaping of news content. In regards to the agenda-setting theory, the transfer of salience from the news media to its audience and other media agendas (media agenda-setting) is the primary area of interest.

**Overview: Method & Results**

The study’s methodology employs content analysis of a random sample of newscast transcripts that spans an eight-year period from 1997 to 2004, and focuses on three broadcast networks nightly news: ABC, CBS, and NBC. The 732 day sample translated to 2,196 network newscasts (732 nights of coverage per network). A total of 607 news stories within these selected newscasts were evaluated for certain variables (e.g. the number of Internet keywords per news story), and then these results were collapsed to report totals for each newscast – or news day\(^\text{36}\).

Using “news day” as the unit of analysis, the study examines the networks’ inclusion of news stories that contain references to the Internet (Internet keyword references). Four components of this variable were used to identify and analyze Internet references: a) news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference; b) Internet keywords; c) invitational references; and d) URL references. Time, broadcast network, and online population served as the study’s independent variables.

\(^{36}\) In the network context, *news day* refers to a network’s nightly newscast.
Time

Time is used as a historical element – a variable that recognizes the passage of time (one year to the next) and allows for comparisons across and among the years. When studied across time, tested by year and then for a more detailed analysis by quarter (1997 to 2004), no significant relationships were identified between Internet references in network news stories and time. Specifically, when the news stories of all three networks were combined, the number of newscasts containing: a) news stories that included an Internet reference (Hypothesis 1); b) Internet keywords (Hypothesis 2); c) invitational references (Hypothesis 3); and d) URL references (Hypothesis 4), did not significantly increase over time for the duration of the study period. The relationships found between time and the Internet references were not linear for the entire eight years, so the corresponding hypotheses were not supported.

Network

When comparing networks to each other, a significant difference was seen among the newscasts’ news stories containing an Internet reference when analyzed by year (Hypothesis 5). The results from the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) used to test the equality of the network means captured these differences. When analyzed by year, significant differences were found among the three networks: ABC (F = 7.53, p < .001), CBS (F = 4.11, p < .001), and NBC (F = 2.76, p < .01) (see Table 11, p. 162). When analyzed by quarter, two networks reflected a significant difference: ABC (F = 3.20, p < .001) and CBS (F = 1.97, p < .001) (see Table 12, p. 163). When plotted, the calculated means for each network by quarter present a fluctuating trend (see Figure 17, p. 164). In general, across the first three years of the study, a gradual increase per network is seen in the number of newscasts per
network containing news stories that include an Internet reference. Peaks in the fourth quarter of 1999 and first part of 2000 follow this period. These are followed by drops in the networks’ values, that begin another gradual increase in late 2001.

A significant difference was seen in the number of Internet keywords in news stories within each of the three networks when analyzed by year (Hypothesis 6). Using one-way ANOVA, each of the networks reflected a positive relationship when analyzed by year: ABC (F = 8.89, p < .001), CBS (F = 3.56, p < .001), and NBC (F = 4.23, p < .001). When analyzed by quarter, two of the networks reflected a significant relationship: ABC (F = 3.34, p < .001) and NBC (F = 2.11, p < .001). The visual presentation of network means by quarter (see Figure 21, p. 170) presents a fluctuating trend similar to that seen in the networks’ values for newscasts containing news stories that include an Internet reference. This similarity is not unexpected, since Internet keywords were used to quantify Internet references.

A significant difference was seen by year in the invitational references in news stories of only one network: ABC (F = 3.95, p < .001) and when analyzed by quarter, only NBC reflected a significant relationship: NBC (F = 2.33, p < .001) (Hypothesis 7). Visual representation of the network means (see Figure 25, p. 176) clearly indicates the low number and absence of invitational references used by each network.

A significant difference was seen by year in the number of URL references in news stories within each of the three networks: ABC (F = 6.55, p < .001), CBS (F = 3.68, p < .001), and NBC (F = 3.79, p < .001) (Hypothesis 8). When analyzed by quarter, two of the three networks reflected significant relationships: ABC (F = 2.06, p < .001) and CBS (F = 1.83, p < .001). The visual representation of the network averages presents three distinct paths that intersect on occasion (see Figure 29, p. 182). ABC’s nearly non-existent use of
URL references is obvious, with the exception of a peak during 1999 and 2000. CBS’s use of URL references, while minimal, appears more consistent than ABC across the eight-year period and greater than NBC’s use.

Online Population

When online population was used to test the Internet references, no significant results were collected. Specifically, when the news stories of all three networks were combined and analyzed across the eight-year period, online population had no significant relationship with the number of newscasts containing: a) news stories that included an Internet reference (Hypothesis 9); b) Internet keywords (Hypothesis 10); c) invitational references (Hypothesis 11); and d) URL references (Hypothesis 12).

These hypotheses were based on an expected increase within the U.S. online population over time. Overall, an increase in the online population was realized and the percentage of Americans using the Internet more than tripled from 1997 (16.9%) to 2004 (65.1%). However, this increase was not linear across the full eight-year period. Referring to Table 1 (see p. 65), 2001 reflects a 1 percent decrease in the online population from the previous year: 2000 (40.5%), 2001 (39.6%). The overall increase resumed in 2002 when the percentage surpassed 42 percent (42.6%). A review of the online population by quarter shows that the decrease occurred between Q4 2000 and Q3 2001 (see Table 2, p. 67).

In an effort to understand the impact of the decrease in online population, post-hoc analysis divided time into two categories, Time 1: 1997 to 2000 and Time 2: 2001 to 2004. Within these categories, the relationships between the online population and the number of news stories containing Internet references were tested. A significant relationship was only found during the first half of the study, Time 1: 1997 to 2000 (see Figure 36, p. 207).
Significance

Although many of the study’s results were not anticipated and most of the hypotheses were not proven, the results are valuable and contribute to a better understanding of network news in the changing media landscape.

Coverage of the Internet as a news subject

Neither time nor online population influenced the networks’ coverage of the Internet as a news subject across the full eight-year time period.

It was predicted that over time the number of news stories containing an Internet reference would increase. In Chapter 3, factors from Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) list of news values were used to identify the Internet as a newsworthy subject. However, as stated at the time, just because a subject is classified as newsworthy it does not automatically warrant news coverage. Including reports on national, international, and breaking news, the news hole for network news is small and competitive – on average nineteen minutes of news content during a thirty-minute broadcast. As a subject, the Internet has to compete with every other news story for airtime. Based on the limited inclusion of news stories containing an Internet reference, it can be concluded that other subjects were deemed more newsworthy at the time.

Headlines across the eight-year study were dominated by: war, September 11, economics, and politics. As a subject of news coverage, the Internet was included on occasion, but not on a regular basis. Internet-related events that received network news coverage included but were not limited to: computer viruses, the dot-com bubble burst, and major technology releases (e.g. iTunes, iPod). News stories focused on the Internet often pertained to a societal habit or behavior that developed through use of some aspect of the
technology, such as e-commerce or online dating. These behaviors are typically not isolated events and rarely breaking news, so in terms of news coverage the stories may be considered soft news (as opposed to hard news) and have a longer shelf life – suggesting that there is no rush to broadcast and that these stories may find better outlet on the network’s news site.

Looking at Figure 13 (see p. 153), the values presented reflect a minor increase in Internet references when comparing values from the study’s beginning (1997) and end (2004). However, the values are so small – reflecting on average across the networks less than one news story per newscast – that the increase is negligible. Perhaps more important than the slight increase are the peaks reflected in the same figure that occurred across the study. The largest peak represents the greatest number of news stories per newscast containing an Internet reference, which occurred in the fourth quarter of 1999 and remained comparatively high across the first half of 2000. This peak was the equivalent of on average more than one news story (1.78) per newscast. Events occurring at this time included: holiday shopping (e-commerce), “Y2K” and new millennium preparations.

It was also predicted that as the online population increased (over time), the number of news stories containing in Internet reference would increase. This prediction was based on a two-fold idea that as the overall number of people using the Internet increased, so too would their activities and lives be increasingly impacted by the Internet. Then, as use of the Internet became more pervasive, its use would intersect with events covered by the news. In related thinking, it was anticipated that as use of the Internet grew, the networks would report on Internet-related topics in efforts to appeal to the growing online population. This rationale is perhaps better suited to morning news programs versus the evening newscasts. The
morning shows have considerably more time to fill\textsuperscript{37} and provide a broader mix of news stories, including: hard news, soft news, and special interest.

The eight-year growth in the online population was significant in both size (reaching 65.1\% in 2004) and the cross-section of users reached (refer to Table 3, see p. 69, for demographic information of the online population), that to ignore or disregard the trend was a missed opportunity for attracting new audience members. Network news had the opportunity to acknowledge this growing population and target it through a series of news stories or a recurring feature – as is regularly done under a special headline (e.g. “Profile America,” “Money in America”) – focused on the Internet or a particular aspect of Internet use. Such a series could have generated particular interest among the online population and drawn users to the newscast. Based on the steadily declining size of the network news audience, such targeted coverage may have attracted members from the online population, who tend to skew younger than the average network news audience, augmenting the newscast’s audience, if only briefly. This was a marketing opportunity for both networks and advertisers to reach a younger demographic.

Another incentive to include Internet-related coverage is based on the inherently competitive nature of network news. Such a series while attracting a younger audience could also help distinguish one network from the others. The content presented across the three newscasts is generally so similar that the inclusion of special features is one way that a newscast can differentiate itself from the competition. This relates to the study’s next area of focus, the promotion of the network news site through the nightly newscast.

\textsuperscript{37} The duration of the network morning news programs vary per network. ABC’s \textit{Good Morning America} broadcasts for two hours daily; CBS’s \textit{The Early Show} also broadcasts for two hours; NBC’s \textit{TODAY} show broadcasts for three to four hours during the week and one to two hours on weekends, depending on the market.
Although results from the full eight-year period do not indicate a significant relationship, the division of time into two periods – Time 1 (1997 to 2000) and Time 2 (2001 to 2004) – suggests something different. A significant relationship was identified between online populations and news stories containing Internet references during Time 1, but not Time 2. This significance suggests that an event or series of events impacted some aspect of the news making process to influence the volume of news stories containing Internet references. There are a series of national events that took place in 2000 and 2001 that could have contributed to this shift including: the dot-com bubble burst (April 2000) and the subsequent multi-year recession, the inauguration of President George W. Bush (January 2001) and the related change of administration, and the events of September 11, 2001 that impacted many facets of life including: security and economics.\footnote{The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) was not impacted by the burst of the dot-com bubble; however, it was hit by the events of September 11, 2001. Financial markets did not open that day and remained closed for four trading days. When the DJIA resumed trading on September 17, 2001, it suffered its biggest one-day point loss (Twin, 2006). That week the DJIA suffered its biggest one-week loss in history to date, -14.3 (Index history, n.d.).}

**Inclusion of the Network News Site in Newscast**

Neither time nor online population influenced the networks’ direction of users to their respective news websites across the full eight-year time period. The study expected that the networks would increasingly direct audiences to their respective news websites based over time and based on an increasing online population. These seemed like logical predictions based on the value that the Internet could offer the newscast and the network. That this did not occur represents a series of missed opportunities to further the network brand and develop cross-platform marketing opportunities.
Directing news audiences from the nightly newscast to the companion news site would provide a network with the opportunity to strengthen the newscast’s brand and reinforce this brand in the online marketplace. It would also direct the audience to additional advertising, foster cross-platform opportunities, and expand the network’s news hole. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, network news audiences are generally loyal, so a newscast’s promotion of its companion website would likely be well received among the existing news audience.

By not proactively staking their claim to their audience’s attention in the online news arena, the networks potentially sacrificed their audience members’ online attention and advertising hits. In the early years of the news sites, the networks had the opportunity to help audiences establish and develop their online news habits – directing users where to go and promoting the frequency of sites’ updates. The failure to do this permitted audiences to seek online news elsewhere in a landscape of competing sources.

Historically, five sites dominated online news: Yahoo (http://news.yahoo.com), CNN, Google (http://news.google.com), AOL News, and MSNBC. Three of these sites, Yahoo, Google, and AOL News, are classified as aggregator sites, drawing their content from a variety of sources: local, national, and international. The popularity of such sites that deliver news items and individual news stories from multiple news sources exacerbates the networks’ desire to establish a branded online presence. Second in popularity behind news aggregators are television news websites, including both broadcast and cable (Rainie & Purcell, 2010). ABCNews.com and CBSNews.com historically rank within the top fifteen visited news websites (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2008).

Companion news sites also provided the networks with the opportunity to expand
their respective news holes, to share more news content with the audience. As previously mentioned, the nightly broadcast news hole is small, on average nineteen minutes. In comparison, the news website provides virtually unlimited space for news content – and supports content updates throughout the day. For network news already facing competition from 24-hour a day cable news outlets, the companion website seems like a welcomed outlet. The online space provides the networks with an outlet for breaking news and regular updates throughout the day. The study’s results suggest that the networks did not leverage this outlet as readily as they might have by promoting it in their nightly newscasts.

Over time, the news audience changed how and where it consumed news with an increasing percent accessing news online. An increased availability of broadband at home and at work created a population of “news grazers.” These audience members get their online news sporadically and periodically throughout the day versus a period of dedicated time in the morning or around the dinner hour (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). Former CBS Anchor Katie Couric discussed this shift in audience behavior in a December 2010 interview with digital analyst and new media author Brian Solis:

…traditional media, media in and of itself isn’t enough. You know that we can’t expect people, given their lifestyles, given the way they consume news and information to be gathered around the television set like people were when I was little, watching Walter Cronkite39 or Huntley and Brinkley40 or even Tom Brokaw and Peter Jennings and Dan Rather, that we had to reach out to people and become much more available to them. (Solis, 2010)

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40 Anchored by Chet Huntley and David Brinkley, *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* was NBC’s evening news program, 1956-1970. Following Huntley’s retirement, the program was renamed *The NBC Nightly News*. Brinkley worked as co-anchor or commentator for the nightly news until his departure for ABC in 1981.
Maintaining a news site is part of the solution, but each network must do more to establish itself as the audience’s preferred online source of news. Data gathered from a 2010 Pew Internet report indicated that 71 percent of Internet users, or 53 percent of all American adults got news online and of that group, only 35 percent reported to have a favorite news website (Rainie & Purcell, 2010). Most users (57%) usually rely on two to five websites, spending approximately 3 minutes per news site (3:04) (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2010). The fact that users graze across multiple sites makes it more challenging for networks to establish an online brand, their news product becomes “more of a commodity and less of a part of a ‘package’ of stories that is put together by a team of editors with a special ‘branded’ character” (Rainie & Purcell, 2010, Consumer attitudes toward advertisements section, para. 6).

Outside of the study’s timeline, NBC anchor Brian Williams and former CBS anchor Katie Couric worked to promote the network brand and personalize their respective network experience. Each produced blogs advertised as a behind-the-scenes look at the newscast: NBC’s The Daily Nightly launched in 2005; and Couric’s Couric & Company was available for the duration of her time at CBS, from 2006 until her departure in May 2011. Beginning in May 2011, a television commercial for the “NBC Nightly News iPad app” aired at the conclusion of the Nightly News. In the commercial Brian Williams with iPad in hand and app displayed, addresses the audience:

This app is the equivalent of our entire newsroom in an iPad. … Everywhere we go, everything we do is right here. … We’re on TV, DVR, the Web, and now the iPad app adds another front that gives ‘Nightly News’ complete, on-demand portability. (Bergman, 2011, para. 3)
This commercial captures the essence of what this study expected to see – cross-promotion between the newscasts and their online content. Results indicate that neither the passage of time nor online population predicted a relationship with networks directing their audiences to the news sights. This was a missed opportunity for maintaining existing and gaining new audiences. In a positive step, each of the networks offers an app for iPad and tablet devices. These apps are examples of the latest in the networks’ use of Internet technologies to deliver news how and where audiences want to receive content. The networks’ use of new technologies including mobile devices and social media is discussed later in the chapter following an update of the networks since the study’s conclusion in 2004.

**Advertising to the News Audience: The Chase is On**

Since their initial news sites launched in the 1990s, one of the greatest challenges facing the networks was the development of an advertising model suited to the Web and later mobile-based news delivery. The underlying question is: what model of online advertising could achieve ad revenue similar to broadcast profits? The short answer, none. The news audience interacted with the news websites differently than the traditional broadcasts; online, the audience had a shorter attention span and was used to seeking information rather than having it presented in the newscast’s prepackaged format. The bulk of online advertising could be compared to Yellow Page listings (excluding video ads) – audiences were looking for goods or services or researching a topic (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007). This behavior suited websites like Google and Yahoo, those for which search was part of the advertising structure; but problematic for news websites where ads were incidental to the reason audiences visited (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007).

Recognizing the differences in behaviors of online and broadcast news audiences,
advertisers continued to experiment with different kinds of ads, including search ads, display ads, and classified ads. Advertisers responded to technological advances on the Web, most recently the increase in broadband, and have subsequently increased their use of video advertisements shown as pre-roll before an online network video. The strategy being to advertise to a “captive audience” thanks to the audience’s inability to fast-forward through or skip the 15 to 30 second advertisement(s).

Broadcast networks are dependent on advertisers’ dollars as their primary revenue stream. Unlike the cable television subscription model, that brings revenue through both subscriber packages (fee) and advertising, the broadcast networks have only the advertising stream from which to generate a profit. Despite this challenge, networks have continued to provide their content free of charge. This differs from some media outlets; certain newspapers (e.g. The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times) have transferred their subscription model to their online content. Other outlets have created a pay wall around premium content, requiring user payment before access is granted. The networks have been wary to introduce such barriers to their content. The establishment of pay content for network news would be a paradigm shift away from the general public’s attitude that the “Web is free.” What is ignored in this statement are the access/subscriber fees that are paid to internet service providers. So although the Web is not free, the networks recognize that their audience has alternative news sources from which they can seek their news. So to date, networks have not adopted a subscription or pay model for content. This brings the challenge back to finding a profitable advertising model that separates advertising from news (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011). The cross-platform advertising opportunities that the Internet
afforded should have been incentive for the networks to make a point of promoting their news sites through the nightly newscasts.

**Cross-promotion to cross-platform**

In addition to driving audience members to commercial messages, the companion news sites provided marketing opportunities for other network programming. The ability to use the news site to focus audience attention on other network shows or those owned by the larger parent company is a win-win situation for the network. This synergistic strategy provides the ability to a) inform the news audience; b) develop the newscast’s recognition among this audience; and c) promote other network programs under the guise of expanding the audience’s viewing experience. This strategy expands the reach of the network.

The networks also experimented with varying advertising models. In 2004, NBC and ABC responded to this ongoing advertising challenge with cross-promotion opportunities. Each network sold bundles of advertising that would appear across programs and in the case of NBC, across networks. NBC leveraged its cable connections offering advertisers space on NBC, MSNBC, msnbc.com. According to Mary Paris, director of business development and cross-media sales for MSNBC.com, the number of cross-media packages increased 10 percent during the 2004 upfronts\(^{41}\) compared to the previous year (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2005). For ABC, the cross-promotion came in the form of Disney ad sales. This technique of cross-promotion leverages assets of the mega-media conglomerations (NBCUniversal, Disney) and highlights the power behind diversified interests. For NBC, this is easy and expected since its parent company NBCUniversal (following the Comcast

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\(^{41}\) A television upfront is a meeting hosted by television executives held at the start of important advertising sales period attended by press and advertisers. During this meeting, networks announce their fall primetime schedules. Advertisers are typically allowed to by commercial air time “up front,” or several months before the season begins.
acquisition) owns and operates multiple cable channels.

With the advent of Web 2.0 and the additional outlets that this affords broadcasters and advertisers (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs), cross-platform advertising is being explored. Such a bundle could offer advertisers the opportunity to reach the news audience through the networks’ three screens: television, computer/Internet, and cell phone. A cross-platform campaign could utilize the strengths that each screen affords. For example, according to a 2009 Nielsen study, television can deliver the “call-to-action” via advertising, while the Internet can “provide a convenient venue for the action, and enable the consumer to get more information about or actually purchase a product or service” (O’Hara, 2009, Implications for marketers section, para. 2). The mobility of cell phones brings these messages to the street. Advertising that elects to take advantage of linking these platforms can generate a broader brand or product awareness.

Differences among networks

Based on the factors (organization level elements) at work within a broadcast network, including cross-platform and cross-programming promotions, it was expected that differences existed within each of the three networks, influencing the news content produced. As predicted, differences were identified among the three networks’ coverage of the Internet and their inclusion of website references in the nightly newscasts.

To varying degrees the newscasts of each network included Internet references within their news stories across the study’s timeframe. It would be surprising if the networks did not include Internet references across an eight-year period, given the study’s duration, the pervasive nature of the Internet in contemporary life, and the investments made in the newscasts’ companion news sites. The fact that the newscasts included Internet references
supports the newsworthiness of the Internet as a subject. The variance in coverage across networks highlights the networks’ differences and the influences at work in crafting the news message.

The hierarchical model of gatekeeping identifies the levels of influences that can impact the news (refer to Chapter 3, Figure 6, see p. 117). Within this model, the organization level includes the elements at work within the overall broadcasting network. Network ownership is one of the most far-reaching factors of influence. The parent companies for the three networks (as of June 2011) are each mega-media conglomerations with investments in diverse portfolios (including media and non-media investments): Disney, Inc. (ABC); CBS Corp. (CBS); NBCUniversal, LLC (NBC). The inherent organizational differences of these companies, including the priority and role of news in the organization impact the news product.

In 1997 when the study began, ABC News was acclimating to Disney’s acquisition of its parent company, Capital Cities/ABC. News was one division among the varied interests and investments in the vast Disney empire. Over the course of the study, ABC News was largely profitable, contributing to Disney’s bottom-line. However, over time, priorities and interests changed. In 2010, critics were questioning not if Disney would part with ABC but when, to allow the media and entertainment giant to focus its attention on its cable investments (Friedman, 2010). The NBC and Microsoft partnership that formed MSNBC Cable dissolved in 2005 and NBC assumed full control – a change that inevitably impacted the entire NBC News division, including the NBC Nightly News.

Leadership within the news divisions impacts the news message. Since the conclusion of the study in 2004, each network has experienced significant changes in the leadership of
its news division – both visible and behind-the-scenes. Each of the networks has experienced at least one change in anchor – a position that is visible to the news audience and that impacts the tone and delivery of the newscast. The anchor is usually also the managing editor of the newscast, so the impact that this or these individual(s) has on the newscast is significant.

CBS hoped that Katie Couric’s arrival at the anchor desk (September 2006) would buoy audiences and the newscast’s ratings following Dan Rather’s retirement. A short-lived increase in audience and ratings was experienced before the *Evening News* returned to its perennial third place spot behind NBC and ABC. Additional details surrounding this transition are provided later in the chapter. Couric’s personal interest in health-related subjects saw an increase in the amount of health coverage during her tenure at CBS. In her position, she helped to set the agenda for the newscast (as all anchors do). Behind-the-scenes, the leadership at each of the networks has also experienced significant changes since the study’s conclusion. These changes are summarized later in the chapter to allow for the discussion of their impact to continue and to provide an up-to-date profile of the networks (see “The Changing Faces of Network News Since 2004…,” p. 231).

In addition to the influences of the organization level are the influences found within the extramedia level – the competitive marketplace and technological advancements.

Encouraged by the race for ratings and audience (though the thirty-year decline suggests that this might be a futile exercise) and the advertising dollars that accompany these measures, the networks are in constant competition with one another. Against a media landscape that includes additional competition from cable news channels and online outlets, the networks must work even harder to maintain their audience.
Any and all of these factors impact the news agenda that is being crafted. Returning the focus to the inclusion of Internet references in news stories and newscasts, another likely driver is the investment and efforts that networks made towards their respective news sites including the strategic partnerships that the networks made. In Chapter 1, CBS’s partnership with MarketWatch was described; this partnership provided CBS News with prepackaged financial information for the nightly newscast and its audience with access to additional financial information on the CBS MarketWatch website. Research Question 3 (see p. 203) focused on the frequency of references to cbs.marketwatch.com. Results found that nearly 50 percent (48%) of all CBS news stories containing an Internet reference, referred to cbs.marketwatch.com. When users visited this website, they were automatically redirected to http://www.marketwatch.com, a website designed to provide business and financial information to individual investors and business professionals (Bloomberg News, 1997). However, in directing audiences to the MarketWatch site, CBS steered its audience away from the CBS News site – a loss for CBS in potential advertising revenue.

The partnership between NBC and Microsoft launched MSNBC Online in 1996. The joint partnership in and ownership of this site sets it apart from the other news sites in terms of how it is managed and how content is produced. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the website is based at Microsoft’s headquarters in Redmond, Washington and has its own sales and production staffs separate from the staffs of *NBC Nightly News* and MSNBC Cable. The MSNBC website serves as a kind of portal to all NBC news programs[^42], including a link to the network’s *Nightly News* website. The broad reach of the MSNBC website (across NBC

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[^42]: In June 2011, links from MSNBC.com to other NBC-owned programs included: *TODAY*, *Nightly News*, *Meet the Press*, *Dateline*, *Morning Joe*, *Hardball*, *The Last Word*, *Maddow*, *ed*, and msnbc tv (MSNBC Cable). The links were all presented in the same font size and in the same area of the web page, giving each link equal prominence.
news programs) benefits the site in terms of increased traffic to the site. Rather than advertising multiple program websites, multiple shows direct users to a single address – a single URL. While this URL is easy for audience members to remember and allows for cross-program and cross-platform advertising opportunities, there is a risk that users seeking a particular program’s website may not reach that destination, distracted en route by information found on the MSNBC.com home page. To help combat this potential behavior, *Nightly News* must not only distinguish itself from its network competitors, it must also set itself apart from its NBC cohorts.

The difference in inclusion of Internet references reflects a difference in news agenda across networks. The news agenda reflects information that is timely and topical. Based on the limited time available in a nightly newscast, homogeneity or similarity among the top news stories is not unexpected. However, this places additional audience and advertising importance on issues and special features that networks choose to broadcast outside of the top news events. Each network has its own agenda; ABC presents “Made in America” and “Person of the Week,” CBS includes “HealthWatch” and “MoneyWatch,” and NBC offers “Making a Difference” and “Our Planet” to name a few of the network-specific special features (as of June 2011). These features are also included on the network websites typically with additional information or resources available for users.

**Descriptive Findings: News Stories**

Research Question 1 (see p. 193) focused on the news topics addressed in news stories that include Internet references. This analysis used Stempel’s (1988) fourteen dominant news subject categories to identify a primary news story topic – the dominant subject of the news story. As presented in Table 22 (see p. 195), the top six news story topics and their respective
percentages in descending order are: Economy & Business (42%), Science, Technology & Invention (16%), Politics & Government Acts (9%), General Human Interest (7%), War & Defense (5%), and Crime (5%).

Research Question 2 (see p. 200) focused on instances when multiple networks reported on the same Internet-related event on the same day. Results showed that on very few occasions, less than 5 percent (4.4%) of the study’s sample, did all three networks cover the same Internet-related event. In comparison, two of the three networks reported the same Internet-related news story on nearly 15 percent (14.5%) of the overall sample. The news stories that garnered attention from all three networks portrayed the Internet in a variety of lights: as a communications tool, a source of information or file transfers, a retail outlet, and a medium in need of protection; refer to (Table 25, see p. 202) for a list of the headlines of these news stories.

The presence or lack of invitational references reflects a difference in priorities and marketing strategies. What is perhaps most surprising looking across the study’s results is the lack of a champion for the Internet. None of the networks took the lead in consistently directing audiences to its website. This was a missed opportunity in terms of defining the audience’s expectations online, in marketing the breadth of the network’s reach – growing from broadcast to a combination of broadcast and online. This was a missed opportunity for one network to set itself apart from the others in terms of technology and Internet behaviors – setting the bar for the other networks.

Instead of embracing the opportunities that the Web provided – platform for content, connectivity with the audience, and advertising potential – the networks assumed a reactive or responsive role. The networks responded to changes in the landscape – evolving from
shovelware\textsuperscript{43} to graphic-based websites to featuring interactive elements to most recently leveraging the newscasts’ video capabilities (this based largely in part to the availability of stronger and faster Internet connections). The networks’ behavior was reactive versus proactive. The networks’ use of technology has continued to develop as new technologies have been released and trends recognized in users’ behaviors.

This study provides a longitudinal perspective of an eight-year period of the time in the networks’ histories. Since 2004, technological updates and advancements have expanded the networks’ Internet profile and use of technology to reach the news audience and disseminate news. In order to broaden the discussion to include these advancements, it is necessary to recognize the major changes that each network has experienced since 2004.

\textbf{The Changing Faces of Network News Since 2004 (as of June 2011)}

Since the study’s conclusion in 2004, each network has faced internal changes that impacted to varying degrees the news division and the news product. Some of the transitions were planned while others were abrupt and unexpected. The public face of the nightly news has changed at each of the networks since December 2004. In addition, each network has undergone a change in management with the respective installments of new news division presidents. For two of the networks, changes were experienced at the organizational level making headlines and potentially changing the role of news within the networks. These changes are noteworthy as the decision-makers involved with crafting the news message from the anchor desk to the boardroom influence the media message. Their influences impact

\textsuperscript{43} In Chapter 1, the term shovelware was used to describe online network content that was a direct translation from a televised newscast. The term can also describe print content that has been “shoveled” from a newspaper’s print edition to the newspaper’s website.
the audience, whose viewership translates to ratings, which in turn translates to advertising dollars. A brief synopsis of the changes follows.

**NBC: Brokaw, Williams / Shapiro, Capus / NBC Universal, Comcast**

In April 2004, NBC announced that Tom Brokaw, long-time anchor of the *NBC Nightly News*, would be retiring at the end of the year (CNN, 2004b; MSNBC, 2004a). The publicized timeline provided NBC with the opportunity to promote the transition from Brokaw to the next generation of newscaster, his heir apparent, Brian Williams. The time also permitted NBC to tailor a departure celebration befitting Brokaw’s successful, twenty-plus year career at the network.

Williams, anchor of a nightly news program carried on MSNBC and CNBC, had been named Brokaw’s successor two years earlier in May 2002 (CNN, 2004b; MSNBC, 2004a). So as expected, on December 5, 2004, Williams stepped into the roles of anchor and managing editor following Brokaw’s final newscast (MSNBC, n.d.). NBC’s investment in a future with Williams highlighted the network’s commitment to stay with nightly news broadcasts, something that had been questioned in preceding years by many industry insiders based on declining ratings and an aging news audience (MSNBC, 2004c).

In his position as anchor, Williams has embraced multiplatform delivery of NBC news content – anytime, anywhere. Illustrating his comfort with online media platforms, Williams podcasts and blogs on a regular basis. When asked about these activities in an April 2006 interview with *Newsweek*, NBC News president Steve Capus commented of Williams, “He’s redefined what the [anchor] role is. He’s not just about going on TV at 6:30. He now reaches a set of viewers who aren’t necessarily watching ‘Nightly News’” (Roberts, 2006, para. 7). To facilitate this communication, a NBC website (later turned blog), entitled *The
Daily Nightly (http://dailynightly.msnbc.com), was established on May 31, 2005, with the expressed purpose “to provide a narrative of the broadcast day and a window into the editorial process at *NBC Nightly News*” including contributions from Williams and NBC News correspondents (MSNBC, n.d.). These additional content offerings are promoted during the nightly newscast and heavily advertised on the *Nightly News*’ website, http://nightly.msnbc.com.

Named NBC News president in November 2005, Steve Capus, a veteran NBC News producer and senior vice president of the news division, filled the vacancy left by Neal Shapiro (MSNBC, 2005a; Steinberg, 2005). Shapiro had served as NBC News president since June 2001 and oversaw the smooth transition of anchormen from Brokaw to Williams (CBC Arts, 2005). Once installed in the presidency, Capus summarized his mandate in the position as one “to keep the division moving forward during swiftly changing times” (MSNBC, 2005b, para. 5).

In late 2007, *Nightly News* unveiled its renovated studio – a visible sign of large changes taking place within the network. In an interview discussing these changes, Williams remarked:

This building [NBC Studios, New York] is becoming the global headquarters for the network. We’re bringing in everybody from MSNBC so all of us – Channel 4, Telemundo, the division that puts out our newsfeed – *News Channels* are going to be under one roof. … MSNBC is going to be next to *Nightly News* in the newsroom which, to quote John F. Kennedy, a rising tide lifts all boats. This is going to be fantastic. They are populated with some really aggressive young talent. To combine

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44 Channel 4, WNBC, is the NBC affiliate based in New York City, New York.  
45 Telemundo, owned by NBCUniversal, is the second-largest Spanish-language content producer in the world (Galán Entertainment, 2006).
these families – I think they should have been combined all along – necessitated the blowing up of walls and breaking down of barriers both literal and figurative. This whole redesign meant we had to have a new set and no one here objected to that. Over my shoulder in certain shots you’re going to see the entire gathered collective family of NBC. (Clehane, 2007, Speaking of change section, para. 1)

Finally, when asked if these changes would carry-over into the newscast, Williams responded:

No. We’re not going to let form drive function. Beyond a new set of graphics and the shot over my shoulder that will look different, Alex [Wallace, the newscast’s executive producer] and I are so respectful and mindful of the fact that these audiences are used to a certain look and feel. Nothing is broken, so we don’t want to go fixing things that don’t need it. (Clehane, 2007, Anything changing content-wise section, para. 1)

NBC ended 2007 in the number one position among the network newscasts, winning the November ratings period and remained there through December (Kurtz, 2008; Wilner, 2007). The following February, NBC won the critical sweeps46 period; Williams averaged 9.5 million viewers compared to ABC’s (Gibson’s) 9.3 million; CBS (Couric) trailed with just under 7 million (Kurtz, 2008). Evening news viewers tend to be fairly loyal to their anchors, which make it challenging to try to explain any swings in viewership from month to month. While NBC’s margin of victory was small, the numbers were considered significant by the industry and advertisers (Steinberg, 2007).

During his tenure as President of NBC News, Steve Capus witnessed a change in

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46 Sweeps are designated months during the year (February, May, July, and December), which are regarded by advertisers and the networks as a bellwether of the broadcasts’ fortunes (Steinberg, 2007; TV ratings, n.d.).
ownership that had the potential to change the fundamentals of NBC broadcasting. In December 2009, Comcast, the U.S.’s largest provider of cable and residential Internet, announced that after months of negotiations, an agreement had been reached allowing Comcast to acquire NBC Universal from the General Electric Company (GE). The $30 billion agreement would create a joint venture, Comcast owning 51 percent and GE owning 49 percent (Hamill, 2011a, 2011b). In a joint statement announcing the deal, Comcast Chairman and CEO, Brian Roberts, said the deal was “a perfect fit for Comcast and will allow us to become a leader in the development and distribution of multiplatform ‘anytime, anywhere’ media that American consumers are demanding” (Arango, 2009, para. 5).

When asked in a CNBC interview what precipitated the sale, GE Chairman and CEO, Jeffrey Immelt responded:

The world’s different today than it was two years ago, or five years ago, or ten years ago, GE’s got immense opportunities to invest in high tech infrastructure businesses around the world, we want to capitalize on that, at the same time, we want to create value with NBC Universal. We think that merging with Brian’s content assets gives us more cable, more digital. I think if you think of NBCU in context, we went from 100 percent of NBC, to 80 percent of NBC Universal a more valuable entity, now we’re going to go from 80 percent to 49 percent, again, of something that’s more valuable. So I think that the GE investors win twice. I think they win from a capital allocations standpoint and they win by creating something more valuable with Brian [Comcast]. (CNBC Video, 2009)
Justice in January 2011, the deal was finalized and the newly created joint venture called NBCUniversal, LLC (Hamill, 2011b). Its assets included NBC broadcast stations, cable channels like Bravo, USA and E!, the Universal movie studio as well as theme parks among other assets. Following the launch, Roberts said that the transaction created “the ideal entertainment and distribution company” (Hamill, 2011b, para. 7). Immelt added that the deal “allows GE to continue sharing in NBCU’s growth while also providing significant cash to invest in our high-technology infrastructure businesses” (Hamill, 2011b, para. 7). The lucrative merger potentially provides a wealth of content to Comcast’s 23 million video subscribers and nearly 17 million Internet subscribers (Adegoke & Levine, 2011). The Philadelphia-based company aims to deliver this content across three screens: television, computer, and cell phone, in response to its audience’s changing viewing habits. When asked about the future of NBC broadcasting, Immelt replied:

The future of broadcast is also about great content and having good people in the enterprise developing content and I still think there are ways to be monetized broadly across platforms. One thing that Jeff Zucker [head of NBC Universal] has done such a great job of is getting people to play across all of the different platforms inside NBC Universal and now the ability do that within Comcast as well is going to be really important for how the value’s created for both employees and investors over time. (CNBC Video, 2009)

Zucker will stay on as chief executive of the new NBCUniversal and report to the chief operating officer of Comcast, Steve Burke (Arango, 2009). In a released statement Zucker called the deal the “start of a new era” for NBC (Arango, 2009, para. 7).

In an interview with TVNewser in February 2011, NBC News President Steve Capus
said things at NBC News have not changed since the acquisition. Capus commented:

What we do on a daily basis is guided by the news…There’s no one dictating what we do on a daily basis, or anything like that. What you see is, I think, very strong support from the new owners for a news division that has a unique success story in American journalism. (Krinsky, 2011, para. 9)

When asked specifically about the relevancy and role of the nightly newscast in the current media landscape, Capus responded:

I think that *Nightly News* is a broadcast that will always and should always have a home on the network. … [He continued,] it performs a vital service to the country…[The ratings] demonstrate that the audience still has very high expectations of us. (Krinsky, 2011, para. 2)

At the time of these comments, NBC Nightly News was reporting on the political upheaval in Egypt, and drawing its best ratings in more than six years, averaging 11.29 million viewers during the week of January 31, 2011 (Krinsky, 2011). Across the news division, NBC News held the highest ratings in three key categories: evening news (*Nightly News*), morning news (*TODAY*), and Sunday morning talk (*Meet the Press*) (Krinsky, 2011). Capus continued:

You’ve got to try and stay relevant for your audience and in order to do that, you have to have a healthy respect for what they expect of you. And you have to continue to invest in quality, unique journalism. And that’s as simple as the playbook gets for us. (Krinsky, 2011, para. 5)
At CBS, 2005 was a year of pivotal changes. Dan Rather, the face of the *CBS Evening News* for nearly twenty-five years, announced on November 23, 2004 that he would be leaving the anchor desk in March 2005 (Johnson, 2004). However, unlike Brokaw’s departure, Rather’s final months on the air would be full of controversy and chaos. Rather’s reputation had been damaged by an ill-fated report on *60 Minutes Wednesday* about President G.W. Bush’s National Guard service that turned out to be based on forged documents (CBS News, 2004a). Following an internal investigation of the incident, Rather was allowed to remain at the network; however, four other CBS employees who worked on the show were fired (CBC Arts, 2006). Rather’s reputation did not recover and despite his plans to continue working for the network in other capacities (MSNBC, 2004b), as of June 20, 2006, CBS announced that Rather had agreed to retire, leaving after a forty-four year career with the network (CBC Arts, 2006).

Following Rather’s 2005 departure, Bob Schieffer, anchor and moderator of CBS’s Sunday morning program *Face the Nation*, served as interim anchor of the *CBS Evening News* for over a year (Susman, 2005). During this time, Schieffer changed the rigid formula of the nightly newscast; his delivery of the news was done in a conversational style with his own views often interjected, which was in steep contrast to Rather’s previous style and tone of delivery (Kurtz, 2005). These changes brought positive, measurable results for the newscast – the *CBS Evening News* achieved the status of being the only network to gain viewers during 2005 (CBS News, 2006d). Similarly, under Schieffer, CBS edged past ABC in ratings and into second place (behind NBC), for the first time since 2001 (Elber, 2006). This was a short-lived victory, but one that drew attention to the network’s newscast.
Following much speculation, it was announced on April 5, 2006 that Katie Couric would leave her position as co-host of NBC’s *TODAY* show after fifteen years to assume the roles of anchor and managing editor of the *CBS Evening News with Katie Couric* (CBS News, 2006c). With her inaugural newscast, Couric made history as the first female solo anchor of a network evening news broadcast47 (CBS News, 2006b). Prior to her September 5th debut, Couric conducted a summer tour of several U.S. cities in which she informally met with viewers and listened to their comments on the future of the newscast (MSNBC, 2006). This cross-country campaign provided Couric with opportunities to persuade news audiences to try the CBS broadcast (MSNBC, 2006).

Amidst the transitions taking place in front of the camera, the structure of CBS News’ parent company, Viacom, changed. In June 2005, the Viacom board of directors approved the split of the company into two publicly traded companies, one focused on broadcast television and the other on cable networks (Arak, 2005). The existing company (Viacom) changed its name to the CBS Corporation and was headed by Leslie “Les” Moonves, longtime television executive and co-president of Viacom; its assets included CBS, UPN, Showtime, Infinity Broadcasting, Viacom Outdoor, and Paramount’s television studio (Arak, 2005). The new Viacom became a spin-off headed by Tom Freston48, the longtime chief of MTV and co-president of Viacom (Klaassen, 2006). The two new companies began trading on January 3, 2006 (Manly, 2006).

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47 Couric served as the only solo female news anchor in the U.S. from September 5, 2006, until December 21, 2009, when Diane Sawyer assumed the anchor desk at ABC.

48 After nine months in the position, Chairman Sumner Redstone announced that Philippe Dauman would replace Freston as Viacom CEO. According to Redstone, “Viacom is extremely strong, and unique entertainment brands resonate with the audience that is defining the digital revolution. With the split we created a more focused, a more nimble company, poised to take advantage of all of these opportunities but now we need to do it… Now we need to be more aggressive in doing it” (Klaassen, 2006, para. 3).
During this period, leadership of CBS News also experienced change. On November 7, 2005, Sean McManus, President of CBS Sports assumed the presidency of CBS News from Andrew Heyward who held the position for ten years (CBS News, 2005b). McManus focused on rebuilding the news organization and voiced his certainty that the network could compete journalistically and in the ratings against NBC and ABC (Bauder, 2006). McManus began his tenure with a strong Web presence already in place, a legacy of Heyward’s leadership. In July 2005, CBS announced a major expansion and re-launch of CBSNews.com, creating a 24-hour, multi-platform digital news network, bypassing cable television in favor of the nation’s fastest-growing distribution system – broadband (CBS Digital Media, 2005). “We’re going to a 24-hour mentality. This represents a philosophical shift for CBS News,” declared Heyward (Lieberman & Johnson, 2005, para. 2). During the announcement, Larry Kramer, President of CBS Digital Media, explained:

This major expansion of CBSNews.com is designed to capture an audience that is increasingly looking for news and information at all times of the day, not just during scheduled periods, and using the Internet for that purpose. … Every component of this re-launch – including greatly enhanced video streaming capabilities, more on-demand features and greater participation from the CBS News correspondents and producers who will also be reporting directly for the web – will dramatically improve the content, delivery and navigation of the website. I’m confident that with the unparalleled excellence that is CBS News and its people, CBSNews.com will become the premier news destination site in what has become a 24-hour information world. (CBS Digital Media, 2005, para. 5)
Developments to the CBS News website continued as preparations were made for Katie Couric’s scheduled September 2006 debut. CBS announced that it would be the first network to offer a live simulcast of its evening news broadcast on the Internet (Dube, 2006). Similarly, the website received a facelift and re-branding, with a new tag line, “CBS News: See it now. Anytime. Anywhere.” an allusion to the connectivity features available to the online news audience.49

Couric’s inaugural newscast on September 5, 2006 captured the top spot in the ratings, with an audience of 13.59 million viewers (Romano, 2006). This was the *Evening News*’ largest audience since its 1988 broadcasts during the Nagano Winter Olympics (Steinberg, 2006b). On the night of Couric’s debut, *NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams* placed second with 7.76 million viewers and *ABC World News with Charles Gibson* was a close third with 7.58 million viewers (Romano, 2006; Steinberg, 2006b). CBS remained in the top position for two weeks, before NBC retook the top spot; NBC with 8.1 million viewers, followed by CBS with 7.6 million viewers, and ABC with 7.5 million viewers (Consoli, 2006).

CBS slipped into third place and remained there throughout 2007. Couric spent this first year, making changes to the nightly newscast to enliven the newscast with some of her trademark early-morning personality; when this did not increase ratings, she returned to a more traditional newscast (Carter, 2007a). By the first week of the crucial May 2007 sweeps period, *Evening News* drew just 6 million viewers, its lowest ratings since 1987 (Johnson, 2006).

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49 CBS announced that accompanying Couric’s September 2006 debut on air, the following online features would be launched: “Couric & Company” a blog exploring the day’s news through links to exclusive, free video, and contributions from CBS News correspondents around the world; “Eye to Eye” a daily, on-demand Web-exclusive feature hosted by Couric offering extended interviews with top newsmakers; “CBS News First Look with Katie Couric” a Web-exclusive rundown of the stories being considered for coverage on that night’s broadcast; “Katie Couric’s Notebook” a one-minute look at a top story or issue by Couric (Dube, 2006).
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In comparison, *ABC World News* scored 8 million viewers – the ninth time in 13 weeks that it had beaten *NBC Nightly News*, which drew 7.5 million viewers (Johnson, 2007). Couric and her new executive producer, network and cable news veteran, Rick Kaplan, focused on returning to a more traditional, hard-news broadcast (Johnson, 2007).

When asked why Couric’s changes to the newscast didn’t resonate with audiences, Kaplan responded that the show tried a lot of things when Couric was hired, and that they “probably tried too many things at once” (Moore, 2007, para. 12). In response to a similar question Couric answered, “Evening news viewers are very traditional and set in their ways, and I think it can be unsettling to have a new person there. I think it just requires some time” (Johnson, 2007, para. 8).

Despite efforts to return the newscast to a more traditional broadcast, the ratings did not improve. In September 2007, Couric traveled to Iraq and Syria and her audience fell below 5.5 million (Bauder, 2007). According to CBS News President Sean McManus:

> We never expected it [Couric’s Middle Eastern coverage] to do well in the ratings and it didn’t. We knew that this was a long-term commitment to Katie and the show and we really felt it was important to establish our reporting there [Iraq and Syria].

(Bauder, 2007, para. 5)

By the end of the year, CBS had lost 1.1 million viewers – the largest drop of any network newscast over 2007 (Wilner, 2007).

With few exceptions, the *Evening News* remained in third place and continued to lose viewers at a faster pace than the other networks. On February 8, 2011, Les Moonves, President and CEO of the CBS Corporation made an announcement that had the potential and promise to change the future of CBS News. Sean McManus, President of both CBS News
and CBS Sports was being moved to a newly created position, Chairman of CBS Sports, and leadership of the news division would be divided between two men, Jeff Fager and David Rhodes (CBS News, 2011a; Powers, 2011). Fager, the executive producer of *60 Minutes*, was promoted to the newly created position of Chairman of CBS News, and Rhodes, most recently the head of U.S. television operations for Bloomberg, was named President of CBS News (Powers, 2011). In his new role as chairman, Fager reports to Moonves and guides the overall editorial direction, content and quality of all CBS News broadcasts, both on-air and online. As president of the division, Rhodes reports to Fager and runs the operations of CBS News on a day-to-day basis, taking charge of all coverage and staffing. On the appointments effective February 22, 2011, Moonves commented:

> In these two great news professionals, we get the best of both worlds: the quintessential insider with deep knowledge of the business and all the moving parts at CBS News, as well as a dynamic young executive with strong news management experience and a tough, fresh point of view. [He continued,] they will inherit a proud and dedicated organization that has been well positioned for success in the future by their predecessor. Together, they make the ultimate winning team. (Powers, 2011, para. 4)

The new leadership team would soon weather a more visible change at CBS News, Couric’s departure. Following considerable speculation regarding her future at the network, Couric announced in the April 26, 2011 issue of *People* magazine that she would be leaving the *CBS Evening News*. Couric shared:

> I have decided to step down from the *CBS Evening News*. I’m really proud of the talented team on the *CBS Evening News* and the award-winning work we’ve been
able to do in the past five years in addition to the reporting I’ve done for *60 Minutes* and *CBS Sunday Morning*. In making the decision to move on, I know the *Evening News* will be in great hands, but I am excited about the future. (Dennis, 2011, para. 2)

CBS News responded, “There’s a lot to be proud of during Katie Couric’s time at the *CBS Evening News*. CBS News, like Katie herself, is looking forward to the next chapter” (CBS Interactive, 2011a, para. 4). In stark contrast to the fanfare that heralded Couric’s arrival, Couric’s final newscast aired on May 19, 2011 with a five-minute highlights reel featuring memorable moments from Couric’s time as anchor set to an arrangement of the Beatles song “In My Life” (Stanley, 2011).

Scott Pelley, a veteran CBS reporter, and *60 Minutes* contributor, assumed the anchor desk on June 6, 2011 (CBS News, 2011b) with the support of CBS News leadership, said Fager, “We like to think of CBS News as the ‘reporter’s network’ and I can’t think of anybody in this business better suited for the anchor chair than Scott” (CBS Interactive, 2011b, para. 2). Rhodes commented:

Scott is the ideal journalist to lead this broadcast. We’re very proud to have him guiding this news organization’s reporting each and every evening. He has a body of work few in the business can claim and will help us grow CBS News now and in the future. (CBS Interactive, 2011b, para. 3)

On a news set that included a world map, a replica of the one used on Walter Cronkite’s *Evening News*, Pelley conducted his first newscast on June 6, 2011 (Ariens, 2011b). Pelley’s first week behind the anchor desk left CBS in the same position it had been in during the tenures of Schieffer and Couric, in third place. The *CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley* averaged 5.7 million viewers during its first week (Gutherie, 2011). This in

ABC: Jennings, Vargas & Woodruff, Gibson, Sawyer; Westin, Sherwood

At the conclusion of the April 5, 2005 broadcast of World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, the ABC news anchor announced via a taped message that he had been diagnosed with lung cancer. This message was the last time Jennings would appear on television, although he continued to contribute to the newscast behind the scenes as his health permitted (ABC News, 2005a; CBS News, 2005a). In response to Jennings’ illness and subsequent absence from the news desk, ABC crafted a temporary solution alternately rotating Good Morning America’s Charles Gibson and Diane Sawyer, and 20/20’s Elizabeth Vargas into the anchor position. Four months later on August 7, 2005, Jennings died from the disease (ABC News, 2005a). Jennings’ career at ABC spanned more than forty years with twenty-two of those spent serving as anchor and senior editor of the nightly newscast (ABC News, 2005a). Following Jennings’ untimely death, outside of removing Jennings’ name from the newscast, changing the title to World News Tonight (August 15, 2005), no immediate public announcements were made by the network as to what would be done to permanently fill the anchor position (Johnson, 2005).

In December 2005, ABC announced that Elizabeth Vargas and the weekend World News Tonight anchor, Bob Woodruff, would co-anchor the daily newscast (ABC News, 2005b). This decision marked the first co-anchors of an evening newscast since CBS’s brief trial of the concept in the 1990s featuring Dan Rather and Connie Chung (CBS News, 2005c). According to ABC News President David Westin:
Elizabeth and Bob together will be the anchors for this new broadcast and digital age of *World News Tonight*. Their experience as journalists, their familiarity to our audiences, and their commitment to gathering and delivering the news anywhere, anytime and in every way make them the right team to take us forward for the new generation. (CBS News, 2005c, para. 9)

The co-anchor paradigm was intended to draw new viewers to the evening news, welcoming a younger generation via younger anchors, both were under the age of 45 at the time of the first broadcast (Steinberg, 2006a).

ABC also announced that *World News Tonight* would become the first newscast to broadcast live each night in three time zones, including the West Coast, in addition to a daily webcast of the day’s top stories (CBS News, 2005c). Prior to her first broadcast as co-anchor, Vargas appeared live online at ABC.go.com in streaming video with a preview of the newscast. When asked by *Newsweek* about the newscast’s use of the online platform, Vargas responded, “The reason why we are starting a Webcast is because we want to reach consumers who use different technology” (Roberts, 2006, para. 7).

This ABC News online presence continued to expand to include streaming video of the nightly newscasts in their entirety (as well as other ABC programs), podcasts, and *ABC News Now*, the “Internet’s only 24/7 broadband video news channel, delivering live breaking news events, hourly news briefs and original reports from ABC News correspondents.” In 2006, ABC advertised on its website, “3 Easy Ways to Get *ABC News Now*” – content was

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50 Webcasting refers to sending audio and/or video live over the Internet. It is often thought of as broadcasting over the Internet (Webcast, n.d.).

51 A podcast is a media file that is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds, for playback on portable media players and personal computers (Podcast, n.d.).
available for television (via cable or satellite), online, and mobile devices (phones and PDAs).

However, the tenure of the ABC co-anchors was short-lived. On January 29, 2006, while embedded with the U.S. Army’s 4th Infantry Division in Iraq, reporting on the war, Woodruff and his cameraman were seriously injured when their convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) (ABC News, 2006a). Woodruff’s severe head injuries and rehabilitation left him hospitalized for several months (ABC News, 2006b), during which time a pregnant Vargas stepped up and filled the role as anchor. However, on May 23, 2006, Vargas announced that she had chosen to step down from the anchor position to take maternity leave and later to return to her previous position as co-anchor of 20/20 and ABC News specials (ABC News, 2006c).

Without an anchor for the second time in two years, ABC scrapped the co-host experiment, returning to the traditional format of a solo newscaster. Their choice for this role, effective May 29, 2006, was Charles Gibson under an abbreviated title World News with Charles Gibson (ABC News, 2006c). When asked about his new role, Gibson, a veteran journalist, commented that he hoped to bring stability to the tumultuous environment, “If I can do anything, it’s just to stabilize the broadcast and calm everybody down” (Braiker, 2006, para. 9). His traditional approach and experience proved valuable to the network during a time when the three networks were vying for position following their respective changes. ABC started 2007 in first place and remained there for most of the year. Audiences responded favorably to Gibson’s relaxed style at the news desk (Kurtz, 2007). The oldest of the three network anchors, Gibson was part of the older generation that remained the most devoted to the evening news, although he was also successful in attracting the coveted 25 to
Gibson served as anchor for three years before announcing in September 2009 that he would be stepping down effective at the end of the year (Politico, 2009).

Gibson’s former *Good Morning America* co-host, Diane Sawyer, was selected as his replacement. Aware of the attention and hype that surrounded Couric’s shift from the *TODAY* show to the CBS anchor desk, Sawyer and Gibson granted no interviews during the transition period. However in a released statement Sawyer acknowledged, “There is no one like Charlie Gibson and it is an enormous honor to be asked to join the terrific broadcast he and the great team of journalists have built at ‘World News’” (Mayerowitz, 2009, para. 10). In this statement, she also praised the “incredibly smart, talented and dedicated team” at *Good Morning America* (Kurtz, 2009, para. 10).

Sawyer’s arrival at the anchor desk was a change seen as one that could shake up the evening news race. In 2009, Williams drew an average of 8.6 million viewers, Gibson 7.7 million, and Couric 5.9 million (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2010). Following Sawyer’s first newscast on December 21, 2009, ABC experienced an 8 percent growth in its audience averaging 8.8 million viewers during her first month (Susman, 2010). ABC consistently remained in second place among the networks behind NBC, with a few exceptions when it took the top spot (HuffPost Media, 2011). By the end of 2010, in keeping with the thirty year trend of a declining news audience, ABC’s audience dropped by 3.9 percent to 7.43 million viewers, a decline greater than NBC’s 1.4 percent loss (total viewers: 8.5 million) and less than CBS’s 5.5 percent drop (total viewers: 5.65 million) (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2011).
Amidst the race for ratings, the ABC News division experienced what ABC News President David Westin labeled a “fundamental transformation” (Stelter, 2010a, para. 5). By April 2010, the news division had concluded a series of layoffs and buyouts that cut 400 jobs, roughly 25 percent of the division (Deggans, 2010; Stelter, 2010a). According to Westin, the cuts were triggered by changes in “our business and its economics” (Rice, 2010, para. 2). For remaining staffers, the cuts translated to merging show staffs and developing “digital journalists” – journalists expected to write, report, and record footage for stories on their own (Deggans, 2010, para. 4). In an email message sent to staff following the cuts, titled “Transformation,” Westin said that the news division was “now prepared for the future – prepared first and foremost editorially and creatively but also prepared economically and technically” (Stelter, 2010a, para. 4).

Later the same year in the wake of the cuts, Westin announced in a staff email his plans to step down as ABC News president following fourteen years in the position. In his email Westin stated:

I’ve always admired those few who know when it’s time to move on. This is the right time for me. Over the last nine months, we’ve put in place new anchors on all of our programs. At the same time, we went through a very difficult transformation made necessary by changes in our business and its economics. I am confident ABC News is better positioned for the future than it has been at any time since I came here in March of 1997. (Allen, 2010, para. 9)
Ben Sherwood, a former ABC and NBC producer who left ABC in 2006 to author a novel, was selected to fill the position beginning December 6, 2010. On the selection, Anne Sweeney, Sherwood’s boss and President of the Disney/ABC Television Group commented, “Ben’s experience with hard news was especially attractive to me. He knows this organization and is about to be reacquainted with a version of this organization that he hasn’t seen” (Bauder, 2010, para. 6). On returning to a much smaller news division, Sherwood observed:

The company that I’m coming back to is very different from the one I left four years ago, [adding that the 25 percent staff cuts was] obviously a very painful experience. But I think that ABC News is ready for a future that requires faster adaptability, more nimbleness, more speed and more flexibility. (Guthrie, 2010, para. 3)

**Post-Change Focus**

The aforementioned network changes are important and worth noting as the decision-makers from the anchor desk to the organizational boardroom influence the news product. The net result of these influences will be measured in the news audience moving forward. Amidst these internal changes, the networks maintained a two-part focus: preserve the existing news audience despite technologically driven changes in the audience’s viewing habits, and develop advertising revenues. The networks continued to use the Internet as a companion tool, investing resources (time and money) in this outlet for content and as an alternative means to reach their news audience. Recognizing the changes within its audience, each of the networks has begun employing select Web 2.0 platforms to expand their reach.

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Reaching the Audience: On the Go and 2.0

The ability to receive news anywhere and at anytime gives the audience control. Thanks to the Web, the news audience hasn’t been tied to the nightly newscast for years. Mobile technologies have the opportunity to permanently change the relationship between audience and news. One of the networks’ underlying challenges was to reach the news audience where it is located, whether in front of a television, online, or on-the-go connected via a cell phone. Recognizing this trend and the increasing amount of time audiences spend using social media, the networks created social media profiles and encourage audience members to Like, Follow, and Subscribe accordingly (references to Facebook, Twitter, and RSS feeds). Attention paid to these platforms reflects an effort on behalf of the networks to seek out the news audience where it is and provide content there.

Critics of the networks have maintained that such a shift is necessary to ensure the networks’ longevity. Rather than focus on the business of broadcasting, it has been suggested that the networks focus on being video newsgathering organizations and delivering this content to audiences via the many delivery platforms, only one of which is broadcast television. The measure of their potential in this scenario is their total audience across multiple platforms — from Web sites to podcasts, to viral online distribution to mobile networks (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2008). While perhaps practical, it is unlikely that the networks will fully embrace this suggestion forsaking the networks’ legacy of broadcasting. However, the networks’ use of social media and the creation of additional channels for their content suggests that the networks recognize the shifts within their audiences’ news consumption behaviors and their willingness to respond.
Couric’s 2010 interview touches upon this idea of pushing content to audiences in a discussion of connecting news stories with existing communities:

That’s been a big push on part of what I’m doing here [at CBS News], …what I said earlier people aren’t in front of their televisions at 6:30, that there may be critically important information that we need to push out to different communities, whether it’s a cancer community about a new CT scan for lung cancer or a new treatment or a clinical trial or something about heart disease. You know I’m really interested in medical news just because of my personal experiences. So, it’s really about getting it to them, not getting them to you because those days are over… any tools that we have to do this are great. (Solis, 2010)

The tools that Couric and CBS have chosen to utilize include: Facebook, Twitter, RSS feeds, YouTube channels, a series of blogs, and video podcasts. Likewise, a visit to ABCNews.com promotes: iPad App, Facebook, Twitter, mobile, blogs, emails & news alerts, Message Boards, and RSS Headlines; while NBC’s site promotes its Nightly News app, Facebook, Twitter, and the “Daily Nightly” blog.

However, with so many delivery options available, critics must question whether the networks are serving or confusing their audience. No longer do the networks rely on a single website to establish its online presence, rather they attempt to seek their audience via the audience’s outlets of choice. Is it possible to maintain a singular point of view and brand with so many potentially competing outlets and messages? Are the networks spreading themselves too thin, sacrificing newsgathering for news dissemination? Are these messages disseminated from a singular point and with a singular voice? Tracking these outlets managed by a single
network and comparing the messages presented could be an interesting area for future research.

The Audience’s Choice: News Personalization

The networks are competing with a growing behavior and developing trend among audiences to search for specific terms or topics rather than browsing news sites. Audiences are moving toward more directed and personalized news exposure. According to the Pew Research Center, 28 percent of Internet users have customized their browser’s home page to include news from sources and on topics that particularly interest them (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010). The ability to be selective allows users greater freedom to set their own news agenda – this process is called news personalization (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). From this ability to self-select a news agenda, debate has emerged questioning how the medium will impact overall knowledge of traditional hard news and public affairs stories (Conway & Patterson, 2008). The benefit or risk of knowing a great deal about very few subjects (i.e. depth but no breadth), while enjoying the freedom to focus on select information that is self-selected as the most relevant to a user’s life (Sunstein, 2001; Iyengar, 2001; Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002).

Users are seeking information on demand from media platforms and outlets that can tell them what they want to know when they want to know it. Increasingly, these searches are being done via search (e.g. Google, Yahoo-Bing53) and social networking (e.g. Facebook) sites. A May 2011 study released by the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism highlighted Facebook’s influence on what news gets read online as people use the social networking website to share and recommend content (Liedtke, 2011). The referrals

53 Yahoo and Microsoft’s Bing search engine formed an alliance in the fall of 2009.
typically came from links posted by friends on the site or from the ubiquitous “Like” buttons, which Facebook encourages other websites to place alongside their content. According to the study, 37 percent of Internet users have “contributed to the creation of news, commented about it, or disseminated it via postings on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter” (Purcell et al., 2010, p. 2). People have also used “their social networks and social networking technology to filter, assess, and react to news” (Purcell et al., 2010, p. 2). Email and other tools are used to share stories and comment on them; among those who get news online, 75 percent get news forwarded through email or posts on social networking sites and 52 percent share links to news with others via those means (Purcell et al., 2010). The Facebook effect is small compared with Google’s influence. According to the Pew Research Center’s report, Google’s search engine supplies about 30 percent of traffic to the top news sites (Liedtke, 2011). Facebook and other sharing sites and tools empower audience members to rely on their online social circles to point out interesting content, compared with Google’s automated formula to help people find news.

In the past, networks used text messages to push content to its audience via pagers and cell phones. However, technological advancements in mobile technologies and declining costs have resulted in an increased popularity of smart phones and Internet access on the go – increasing the networks’ mobile audience. In 2011, 85 percent of Americans age 18 and over own a cell phone (Zickuhr, 2011); the same study reported that 33 percent of Americans cell phone owners access news on their cell phones, a growth from 6 percent in 2006 (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2007, 2011). The portability and connectedness that the mobile device affords brings to life the long held promise of news, “anytime, anywhere.”

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54 A smart phone is a cellular telephone with built-in applications and Internet access. Smart phones typically provide digital voice service, as well as text messaging, email, Web browsing, and camera capabilities (still and video), among their many features.
mobile platform provides networks with the ability to send alerts and expand their push of content (text and video) out to the news audience. Rather than creating a newscast and waiting for audiences to tune in, portions of the newscast are packaged as videos and posted online, breaking news is tweeted, news items are received via email and mobile devices – the content is pushed out to the audience.

This is what happened on the evening of May 2, 2011 when breaking news of terrorist Osama bin Laden’s death by U.S. forces was pushed to mobile devices. For fans at the New York Mets/Philadelphia Phillies baseball game, cell phones began lighting up at the bottom of the eighth inning (W. Murphy, 2011). By the top of the ninth, fans that realized what was happening:

…started to stir, and were soon jubilantly waving their phones—displaying pictures of bin Laden, with headlines about his death—in the air. No announcement was played over the public-address system, but, by the time the Mets second baseman Daniel Murphy was at bat, the entire stadium was exploding with chants of “U-S-A!” (Denby, 2011, para. 1)

Concluding Thoughts

Results from the current study indicate a series of missed opportunities for the networks to leverage the Internet during the period of 1997 to 2004 (as a news subject and as an extension of the newscasts) to benefit both the newscasts and their audiences. Since the study’s conclusion, each of the networks has continued to invest in its companion website and further develop the newscast’s online presence. One component of this online presence is the availability of the entire nightly newscast to be viewed by users as streaming video outside of the usual 6:30 p.m. timeframe. In a media landscape that provides users with
countless choices for news content, the networks contribute this version of their broadcast newscasts for user consideration. The newscast is part of the network’s larger daily offering of news stories available on the news site.

The production of the nightly newscast (for broadcast and online consumption) and the additional news stories represents traditional media theories at work. Specifically, the networks continue to serve as gatekeepers selecting which news subjects to cover and present to the audience. In doing so, the networks create a media agenda to be transferred to the public. Users who view the newscast online are exposed to the same media agenda that is presented to the broadcast audience.

Even without viewing the newscast, visitors to the newscast’s website are exposed to the media agenda. The agenda is present in the selection of news stories that were chosen to post online – news stories created by network reporters, thus influenced by network journalistic practices. Users who seek and access news from news aggregator sites are exposed to a patchwork of media agendas, each news story a piece of the larger agenda set forth by the producing news outlet.

Since the conclusion of the study, in addition to developing their respective news site, each of the networks has adopted an assortment of Web 2.0 technologies (i.e. Facebook, Twitter). The networks have used these portals as means to reach the news audience where it is and disseminate the news (and advertising) product. Through their regular use of these outlets, the networks seem to be responding to evolving technologies rapidly and proactively; however, without research to support this statement, this remains speculation.

Internet trends move quickly within the networked audience of users, and in order to leverage these trends to their advantage – disseminating news (and advertising), the networks
must assume a proactive response to change. Given the evolving/changing nature of contemporary news – how news outlets present the news and how audiences consume the news – it is a field that warrants additional and continual study. However, this highlights the underlying challenge present to academic study – the speed at which new technologies and trends are adopted and the lag that accompanies research.

**Limitations**

When using a sample of data (here every fourth news day), it is understood that not all major news stories will fall within the sample of news days. In fact, when the headlines of the news stories covered by all networks were reviewed (see Table 25, p. 202) this list does not include mention of two major Internet developments, the late-1999 dot-com boom and the 2000 dot-com burst. These events had a global impact and influenced economic and social aspects of life for many individuals, so it is surprising that the study’s sample did not include these events. These absences suggest that the sample should be expanded in an effort to capture these news items as well as other Internet-related events that may have been omitted.

Results determined that over the study’s first four years from 1997 to 2000, the networks increased their overall references to the Internet and to their respective online news sites. But as this study did not capture audience consumption patterns or audience expectations, audience visits to the Internet could not be compared to the number of references made.

The quantitative nature of this study provided a partial image of the networks’ activities. As Shoemaker and Reese (1996) maintained, the use of content analysis provides information about the *amounts* of coverage and some insights into the networks’ priorities. A
qualitative aspect is introduced to the study on a cursory level with reference to the Timeline of World and Internet/Technology Events (see Appendix D, p. 278). The timeline provides context to the online population and the U.S. mainstream’s adoption of the Internet. Similarly, information supplied by the networks on their websites and through interviews and personal correspondence enriches the profile of each network. Additional qualitative elements would bring additional layers of richness and detail to the current findings.

Future Research

The data collected show a sharp increase in Internet-related variables in the fourth quarter of 1999 followed by a sharp decrease in 2000. Despite a gradual increase following the drop, variable values do not return to their previous high by the end of 2004. The period of time immediately surrounding this peak (1999 to 2000) warrants detailed study to identify the influences that triggered this dramatic change.

In Chapter 1 the term “companion” is introduced, to reference a website that is associated with an existing media organization. In this context, this label refers to two distinct media outlets that assist one another in content dissemination; while both media outlets could work independently, their collective influence is stronger than their individual impacts. The study was not designed to explore this concept. Research into this concept could provide a new classification of media partnership.

In order to provide a qualitative perspective on the distribution of network news via broadcast and online outlets, on-site newsroom observations and in-depth interviews with network decision-makers would be appropriate.

Throughout the study mentions of possible areas of future research were made. These included focusing on the impact of mobile technologies on news audiences’ behaviors and
consumption patterns. On a related note, the increased use of Web 2.0 portals suggests habits and behaviors to investigate. Questions to pursue could include: Are the networks seeing measurable benefits to their investments? Has the networks’ use of Web 2.0 expanded its audience, particularly among the sought-after younger demographics? How have these technologies, which deliver information in short, fast bursts of data impacted the media routines at work within the networks? How have the networks incorporated advertising into these new portals? What are the networks’ strategies for responding and to future technological advancements? There are obviously many aspects of the networks’ Internet presence to be explored.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: Brief History of the Internet and World Wide Web
The Creation of ARPANET

The history of the Internet can be traced back to 1957 and Russia’s successful launch of Sputnik I, an event that surprised and stunned America (Bruce, 2002; Hafner & Lyon, 1996). In an endeavor to avoid such surprises in the future, the U.S. formed the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) within the Department of Defense and tasked the agency with the mission to apply state-of-the-art technology to U.S. defense efforts (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000). Over time, ARPA’s focus would shift from space, ballistic missiles, and nuclear test monitoring to advanced computing (Bruce, 2002). Research conducted in the early 1960s resulted in such major developments as the ability to send information by breaking up a message into “packages” and sending these separately for reassembly at the destination and the development of the first “wide area network” (WAN), linking two computers located geographically across the country (Berkley and MIT) (Bruce, 2002).

In 1969, ARPA’s efforts resulted in the first computer network system, ARPANET – a system that linked two computers and allowed for the transfer of data and files between the two machines (Bruce, 2002; Chadwick, 2006). In October, students from UCLA successfully logged into a computer at Stanford and were able to access databases and send data via this network system (Hafner & Lyon, 1996). Developments continued on software that would expand the network’s capabilities and by December 1971, ARPANET linked twenty-three host computers to one another (Hafner & Lyon, 1996).

From ARPANET to the Internet

In 1972, at the first International Conference on Computers and Communication held in Washington D.C., ARPANET went public and triggered the development of similar yet non-compatible networks (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000). ARPA scientists demonstrated the
system in operation, linking computers together from forty different locations (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000). While other members of the scientific community launched additional research and the creation of other networks, ARPA worked to refine its system and expand its capabilities. In 1972, ARPA successfully employed a new program to allow the sending of messages over ARPANET, allowing direct person-to-person communication – the first email (Hafner & Lyon, 1996). A decade later in 1982, ARPANET, the backbone of all networks adopted a standard protocol, transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP), which allowed different networks to communicate with each other – and the Internet was born (Chadwick, 2006; Gillies & Cailliau, 2000).

The Internet and the Information Age

The evolution of the Internet occurred during a period of time commonly referred to as the Information Age (Bruce, 2002). During this period of time, modern developed countries began using the term information society to emphasize that information in these economies is a key factor in the success of organizations, institutions, governments, businesses, and individuals (Bruce, 2002).

The term information superhighway gained visibility in a speech given by then Vice President Al Gore (Bruce, 2002). Gore’s High Performance Computing Act was intended to provide funds for further research into computing and improving the infrastructure of the Internet’s U.S. structure (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000). The term was used to characterize the Internet because it provided a connection for promoting the benefits of the Internet to a

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55 In 1974, Stanford opened Telenet (not to be confused with Telnet, a program for remote logins), a commercial version of ARPANET. Telenet was the first openly accessible public “packet data service” (Hafner & Lyon, 1996). In 1976, a Unix-to-Unix protocol was developed by AT&T Bell laboratories and was freely distributed to all Unix computer users (since Unix was the main operating system employed by universities, this opened up networking to the broader academic community) (Gillies & Cailliau, 2000). In 1979, Usenet was established, an open system focusing on email communication and devoted to “newsgroups” opened, and remains an active system today (Dominick, Messere, & Sherman, 2008).
growing user base (Bruce, 2002). The term emphasized the view that the Internet connected people to the information that they need (Bruce, 2002).

From its start in the early 1980s, the Internet was surrounded by increasing challenges: there were more computer hosts linked to the Net than had been originally envisioned, and the volume of traffic per host was much larger than expected, due primarily to the success of email (Anderson, Bikson, Law, & Mitchell, 2005). In spite of critics’ predictions that the Internet would collapse due to its own success, the Net continued to grow, primarily driven by government and academic communities (Bruce, 2002). It should be noted that in 1990, ARPANET, stripped of its military research functions in 1983, became a victim of its own success and the network was shut down – replaced by the Internet (Chadwick, 2006; Gillies & Cailliau, 2000).

The World Wide Web (WWW)

The concept of the World Wide Web was designed in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee and scientists at CERN (Geneva), Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire56, who were interested in making easier retrieval of research documentation (December, 2005). A year later, Berners-Lee had developed a “browser/editor” program and had coined the name World Wide Web as a name for the program.

The World Wide Web is a network of sites that can be searched and retrieved by a special protocol known as hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP). The protocol simplified the writing of addresses and automatically searched the Internet for the address indicated and automatically called up the document for viewing.

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In 1991, Berners-Lee and CERN, the European Center for High Energy Physics, released the World Wide Web (Web), an event that would introduce a worldwide user audience to the online medium (Bruce, 2002). When asked to explain the difference between the Internet and the Web, Berners-Lee provided the following response:

The Web is an abstract (imaginary) space of information. On the Net [Internet], you find computers—on the Web, you find document[s], sounds, videos, information. On the Net, the connections are cables between computers; on the Web, connections are hypertext\textsuperscript{57} links. The Web exists because of programs which communicate between computers on the Net. The Web could not be without the Net. The Web made the Net useful because people are really interested in information (not to mention knowledge and wisdom!) and don’t really want to have to know about computers and cables. (Griffiths, 2002, The World Wide Web WWW section, para. 4)

By the mid-1990s, Americans were using the connection to access content on the Web at both home and work. Access to the Internet and its content was no longer reserved for government and academic communities.

\textsuperscript{57} The term “hypertext” was coined by Ted Nelson in 1965 to characterize text that is not constrained to be sequential. Hypertext links documents to form a network of relationships that presents opportunities for extending and augmenting the meaning of one text with links to other texts (December, 2005).
APPENDIX B: Brief History of Cable News (CNN, MSNBC, Fox News)
A brief history of cable news is supplied in order to provide a timeline for the networks’ evolving competition. Since their respective formations, three cable news networks: CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, have competed for visibility and position within the news audience.

Cable News Network (CNN)

In 1980, media magnate Ted Turner launched the Cable News Network (CNN), gradually setting up news bureaus across the U.S., and then around the world (Gomery, n.d.). CNN’s early competition came from Satellite News Channel (SNC), a joint venture of Group W Westinghouse and ABC (Gomery, n.d.). Two years later, in an effort to establish dominance, Turner originated a second CNN service, Headline News. CNN and SNC competed with one another throughout 1982 and most of 1983 until Westinghouse and ABC sold their news venture to Turner in late 1983, effectively eliminating competition for CNN in the U.S. (Gomery, n.d.). With domestic cable competition eliminated, CNN took off. In 1985, the network reached in excess of 30 million homes in the U.S. and claimed its first profit, while continuing to establish additional international bureaus (Gomery, n.d.). Four year later, CNN was being broadcast in sixty-five countries (Gomery, n.d.).

One of the major milestones in CNN’s history, and in fact the larger news industry’s history, occurred in 1991. During the opening days of Operation Desert Storm, CNN was the only television network operating live on-location in Iraq (Gomery, n.d.). Tuned in to CNN, Americans watched bombs descending on Baghdad in real time (Smith, 1999). CNN’s virtually 24/7 coverage of the conflict permanently changed the nature of news media; that event marked the advent of the 24-hour news cycle (Macklin, 2004). Gone were the days of
news being delivered in the morning paper and the evening newscasts (local and national); the news was now all day, every day (Macklin, 2004).

CNN’s success inevitably generated competitors. By the end of 1995, three new 24-hour news services had been proposed. Microsoft announced it would partner with NBC to form MSNBC. Similarly, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, Inc. (News Corp), and Capital Cities/ABC\textsuperscript{58} each promised future 24-hour news services to challenge CNN around the world (Gomery, n.d.).

Aside: Ownership and Deregulation

The same year, 1995, witnessed the start of historic changes in ownership among the country’s largest media companies. CNN, along with Turner’s other media investments were sold to mega-media giant Time Warner (Landler, 1995b). In anticipation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Walt Disney Co. acquired Capital Cities/ABC and its various media assets for $19 billion, the second largest corporate takeover in history to date (Chan-Olmsted, 1998). The telecommunications act championed ownership deregulation, including the relaxation of many cross-ownership rules, making the integration of firms from different industries possible. For $5.4 billion, Westinghouse Electric Corp. acquired CBS Inc. (Stein, 1995). This transaction combined the CBS radio and television networks and broadcast-programming operations with Westinghouse’s Group W broadcasting subsidiary to create the nation’s largest broadcast company (Dow Jones, 1995).

\textsuperscript{58} The proposed 24-hour ABC News channel was never realized (see ABCNews.com, p. 27) (Leitch, 1995; Schlosser, 2001).
MSNBC Cable (and MSNBC Internet)

On July 15, 1996, MSNBC Cable and MSNBC Internet (msnbc.com) were launched as partnerships between software giant, Microsoft and General Electric’s NBC unit (Landler, 1996a). Seeking a primary news provider for its online services, the Microsoft Network (MSN), Microsoft partnered with NBC (Murphy, 1996). Microsoft invested $220 million for a 50 percent share of the cable channel and Web enterprise (Rothenberg, 1998). The partnership provided NBC with an opportunity to expand its brand across multiple distribution platforms: broadcast, cable, and the Web. Thomas Rogers, president of NBC Cable and the NBC executive responsible for the partnership, explained, “The strategy was to use the network [MSNBC] to create a brand presence for us in this convergence world” (Rothenberg, 1998, Networks or search engines section, para. 8).

The cable network debuted with plans to produce fourteen hours of original programming a day and eventually work up to an around-the-clock schedule (“Around the dial,” 1996; Haring, 1996; Taylor & Flores, 1996). NBC News made considerable efforts to brand MSNBC (Cable and Internet) as an extension of the broadcast division. Under then NBC News President Andrew Lack’s direction, NBC offered its news talent including Katie Couric, Jane Pauley, Brian Williams, and Tom Brokaw as regular contributors to MSNBC Cable (Siklos & Cortese, 1998).

A distinguishing characteristic of the cable network was its integration of television programming and computer information. Per its design, television viewers were able to watch a story on MSNBC Cable and then turn to MSNBC Internet for more detailed programming or enter a live chat room to discuss what was seen on air (Binaco, 1996). On the day of the first broadcast, Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw entered an interview with
President Bill Clinton with more than 50,000 questions at his disposal submitted by Web users around the world via MSNBC.com (Binaco, 1996). Following Clinton’s appearance on MSNBC Cable, viewers could go online to MSNBC Internet (http://www.msnbc.com) to participate in an after-show discussion with White House communications director Donald Baer and telecommunications adviser Greg Simon (Evenson, 1996). This was the first of many aggressively promoted connections between MSNBC Cable and MSNBC Internet (Creedy, 1996).

However, despite its enthusiastic start, ratings for MSNBC consistently landed the cable network in third place behind CNN and Fox News (Project of Journalism Excellence, 2004). By 2001, struggling to escape third position, MSNBC mimicked Fox News Channel’s strategy and adopted opinion-based programming; the liberal perspectives added to MSNBC’s lineup boosted ratings but not enough to beat its competition (Stelter, 2008a; Project of Journalism Excellence, 2004).

On December 23, 2005, Microsoft and NBC announced that their joint-partnership in MSNBC Cable was ending; NBC would immediately acquire an additional 32 percent of the channel and controlling interest, then over a two-year period complete control (Carter, 2005; NBC News, 2005). Despite their cable-related split, both organizations maintained their equal shares in MSNBC Internet (Carter, 2005).

On NBCUniversal’s site, the MSNBC Cable and MSNBC Internet are described as follows (June 2011):

MSNBC defines news for the next generation with world-class reporting and a full schedule of live news coverage, political analysis and award-winning documentary programming — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. MSNBC’s home on the Internet
is msnbc.com. Msnbc.com delivers a fuller spectrum of news. Drawing on its award-winning original journalism, NBC News heritage, trusted sources and Microsoft’s advanced technologies, the site presents compelling, diverse and visually-engaging stories on the consumer’s platform of choice. (NBCUniversal Media Village, 2011, para. 1)

Fox News Channel (Fox News)

In January 1996, Rupert Murdoch, the Chairman and CEO of mega-media conglomeration News Corp, announced his intention to create a 24-hour news channel (Carter, 1996). According to The New York Times, the announcement “generated more skepticism than the earlier announcements because unlike NBC or ABC, he [Murdoch] is starting up a news channel without an existing network news division” (Carter, 1996, para. 13). At the time of Murdoch’s announcement, the Fox news service consisted of a small staff that provided reports for affiliates of News Corp’s network (Carter, 1996).

Murdoch selected Roger Ailes, the former president of CNBC, to serve as chairman of the new channel (Landler, 1996b). When asked before its launch about the cable channel’s content, Ailes responded, “We’ll have more live news and produced programming than either CNN or MSNBC when we launch,” (“Fox to start,” 1996, para. 5). He also expressed that the Fox channel would be more “balanced” in its reporting compared to the other networks, and that any programs featuring commentary, analysis or debate would be labeled as opinion programming, to clearly distinguish them from straight news reporting (“Fox to start,” 1996, para. 5).

On October 7, 1996, the Fox News Channel launched and competition in the now three-way cable news arena began. Shortly after their launches in 1996, Fox News was
available in 21 million homes, and MSNBC in 33 million (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004). CNN, meanwhile, was already available in 72 million homes. By 2003, the numbers were much closer, with CNN available in 86 million homes, Fox News in 80 million, and MSNBC in 76 million (Project for Journalism Excellence, 2004).

Critics of the Fox network asserted that Fox News promoted a conservative agenda (Kurtz, 2004a). In response, Fox News maintained that its political commentary and news reporting work separately and independently of one another (Memmott, 2004). Murdoch and Ailes highlighted their desire to provide “fair and balanced” reporting (Mifflin, 1996, para. 5). At a cocktail party celebrating the launch of Fox News, Murdoch gave a brief speech in which he said that while “it’s important to be first’ in reporting news, ‘it’s more important to be fair’” (Mifflin, 1996, para. 6).
APPENDIX C: Marketwatch.com, Inc.: IPO, Acquisitions, Partnerships
MarketWatch.com, Inc., operator of CBS.MarketWatch.com, went public in January 1999 in one of the year’s most spectacular initial public offerings, gaining 474 percent ($17 to $130) on its first day of trading (Fost, 1999b). By the end of the year, the stock had settled at $39, a 70 percent drop from its peak (Fost, 1999b). The company’s CEO maintained that going public not only provided capital but also gave MarketWatch more credibility; “That’s what counts,” said Larry Kramer, in terms of maintaining a following among Web users (Luh, 1999, para. 12). Following the initial public offering (IPO), CBS and DBC each retained 38.3 percent stake of MarketWatch.com (Bloomberg News, 1998).

Shortly after going public (April 1999), MarketWatch.com purchased Minneapolis-based BigCharts, Inc., one of the top-ten trafficked financial sites on the Web and a provider of data-driven online financial content for investors (“MarketWatch.com to acquire,” 1999; Wieffering, 1999). According to MarketWatch.com, for $166 million in cash and stocks, the acquisition enabled MarketWatch.com to increase the number and quality of the financial tools it provided investors, thus enhancing its position as a branded website for “real-time business news and financial programming” (“MarketWatch.com to acquire,” 1999, para. 3). Kramer echoed this message,

They [BigCharts] add value to information through packaging and interactive tools. MarketWatch.com, on the other hand, produces the fastest and best financial news on the Internet. Both of us are at the top of the game, and we believe that each of us can contribute exactly what the other needs to be even better. (“MarketWatch.com to acquire,” 1999, para. 5)

In addition to its online developments, MarketWatch.com ventured into television programming. In response to TheStreet.com’s launch of a half-hour financial program on Fox
News Channel in 1999, MarketWatch.com debuted its own weekly syndicated program (Fost, 1999b; Piskora, 1999). The press release announcing the half-hour financial news magazine’s launch described *CBS MarketWatch Weekend* as “lively and fast-paced, designed to give viewers a preview of the financial markets in the coming week, and cover topics such as market trends, personal finance, and Internet news” (MarketWatch.com, 1999, para. 2). According to Kramer, “This show is proof that convergence is happening for CBS and its Internet partners” (MarketWatch.com, 1999, para. 4). He continued:

> With the debut of CBS MarketWatch Weekend, we are extending our reach and brand into yet another medium. The way the CBS owned-and-operated stations and advertisers have responded to this innovative concept for a television show signals our developing position as a dominant source for financial news. (MarketWatch.com, 1999, para. 4)

In an effort to strengthen the connection between the website and the show, correspondents answered questions posted by visitors to CBS MarketWatch.com (MarketWatch.com, 1999). In 2003, *CBS MarketWatch Weekend* celebrated its 200th edition; television at MarketWatch.com had plenty of reason to celebrate the milestone: 200 consecutive shows, clearance in all major U.S. markets\(^59\), an audience of nearly one million viewers, and enthusiastic advertiser support (MarketWatch.com, 2003).

Another significant milestone in MarketWatch.com’s history occurred in 1999, when Pearson and DBC joined forces (Larsen, 1999). The deal linked two top media companies, Pearson, owners of the *Financial Times* (FT), and CBS via their financial information websites (Meares, 1999). As a result of the transaction, Pearson and MarketWatch.com

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\(^{59}\) In television broadcasting, the term *clearance* refers to a station’s agreement to carry a particular program (Clearance, n.d.).
formed a marketing alliance to cross-promote MarketWatch.com and ft.com, the FT’s own
website, in the U.S. and Europe (Larsen, 1999). The partnership benefited both sites as
MarketWatch.com was eager to expand into Europe, while ft.com wanted to build its
user-base in the U.S. (Larsen, 1999). Stephen Hill, chief executive of FT, said the two
companies were distinctive and provided complementary products - MarketWatch.com
offered immediate information for investors while ft.com supplied broader business
information, as well as in-depth analysis (Larsen, 1999; Meares, 1999).

For a period of time, CBS MarketWatch.com became a highly visible component of
the CBS Evening News (see Chapter 5: Results, “Research Question 3,” p. 203). The nightly
newscast included financial reports sponsored by MarketWatch.com and graphics that
included the website’s address. Embracing its cross-media promotional opportunities, the
partnership encouraged audiences from both platforms to seek information from the other.

In 2005, MarketWatch.com was at the center of a four-way bidding frenzy. The
company was ultimately purchased by Dow Jones for $528 million, beating out competitors:
The New York Times Company, Gannett Company, and then CBS parent company, Viacom
Inc. (Dash, 2005; Deveney, 2005; Seelye, 2005). The need for additional online advertising
space was one of the factors behind Dow Jones’ bid (Dash, 2005). The MarketWatch.com
deal tripled Dow Jones’ online reach to approximately nine million unique visitors, while
giving it more personal finance content, popular with advertisers (Dash, 2005). Perhaps more
importantly, the mostly free MarketWatch.com allowed Dow Jones to gain a greater share of
the booming advertising market beyond its existing Wall Street Journal Online site
(http://www.wsj.com), a “walled” site that allowed access to content through a paid
subscription model (Dash, 2005). Following the purchase, Kramer shared this statement on
CBS MarketWatch.com, “Joining Dow Jones is a great next step for MarketWatch. Being part of one of the most respected media conglomerates in the world gives us a terrific platform to grow our business and compete with the largest media companies” (CBS News, 2004b, para. 5). Peter R. Kann, Chairman and CEO of Dow Jones, added that he had “high anticipation of what we can achieve together to benefit our readers and our customers” (CBS News, 2004b, para. 6).

The Dow Jones purchase signaled the end of MarketWatch.com’s cross-media partnership with CBS; all references to CBS were removed from MarketWatch.com and the CBS Evening News no longer regularly included MarketWatch.com graphics and reports in its broadcast. In 2007, a search on CBSNews.com for the term “MarketWatch” resulted in a list of current news stories authored by MarketWatch; however, a search of the CBS Evening News transcripts revealed that MarketWatch.com reports and graphics have not been included in the newscast since the end of 2004.
APPENDIX D: Timeline of World and Internet/Technology Events (1991 to 2010)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Events</th>
<th>Internet &amp; Technology Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1991</strong></td>
<td><strong>1991</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16/91: Iraq is attacked by United Nations (U.N.) forces</td>
<td>8/6/91: World Wide Web is released by Tim Berners-Lee and CERN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27/91: Kuwait is liberated, and a ceasefire is declared</td>
<td>Gopher Internet navigation system is released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/3/91: Rodney King beaten by four white police officers in Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>An early Internet search program called WAIS (Wide-Area Information Server) is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/91: Yugoslavia falls apart. Croatia and Slovenia seceded. Yugoslav army’s “ethnic cleansing” in Croatia until 1/92 when a U.N. supervised ceasefire takes place. 25,000 killed.</td>
<td>9/91: An early version of Linux is released on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/91: Tailhook Association scandal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soviet Union dissolved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earvin “Magic” Johnson tests HIV positive</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: Ted Turner (Media Mogul)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1992</strong></td>
<td><strong>1992</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI Olympic Winter Games: Albertville, France. XXV Olympia (Summer Games): Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>1/92: Internet Society (ISOC), an international organization for coordination of the Internet, is founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/22/92: Johnny Carson retires (<em>Tonight Show</em>)</td>
<td>12/92: A mobile phone in the United Kingdom receives one of the first text messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/24/92: Hurricane Andrew hits Florida</td>
<td>Example of new media sites launched during 1992:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/92: U.S. Presidential Campaign (William “Bill” J. Clinton)</td>
<td>• <em>CNN Newsroom, 10/92</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/20/92: Fire blazes through Windsor Castle</td>
<td>First use of the phrase “surfing the net” by Jean Armour Polly</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: Bill Clinton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/19/93: Waco Cult siege</td>
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<td>NAFTA ratified</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. warships sent to Haiti to enforce U.N. trade sanctions against the military-led regime in Haiti</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person(s) of the Year: The Peacemakers (Yitzhak Rabin, Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk, Yasser Arafat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1/17/94: Southern California Earthquake</td>
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<td></td>
<td>XVII Olympic Winter Games: Lillehammer, Norway</td>
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<td>Civil War in Rwanda</td>
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<td>Israel and the Vatican begin diplomatic relations</td>
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<td>Major League Baseball players strike, World Series canceled</td>
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<td>Whitewater Scandal investigated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/94: Chunnel opens, bridging England and France</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6/17/94: O.J. Simpson flees from police in his white Ford Bronco, in a low speed chase</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. East Coast ice storm</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: Pope John Paul II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1995

1/17/95: Japan’s Kobe Earthquake
4/19/95: Oklahoma City Federal Building bombed
6/2/95: Capt. Scott O’Grady shot down over Bosnia
10/4/95: O.J. Simpson found innocent. He was later found liable in a second trial.

Ebola Virus kills 244 Africans in Zaire, Central Africa

Time Person of the Year: Newt Gingrich

1995

Dial-up services begin offering access to the Internet in addition to their own services
RealAudio, an audio streaming technology, lets the Internet hear in near real-time

7/17/96: TWA Flight 800 crash

1996

4/3/96: Unabomber suspect arrested
6/27/96: The controversial U.S. Communications Decency Act (CDA) becomes law in the U.S. in order to prohibit distribution of indecent materials over the Internet. (Supreme Court unanimously rules most of it unconstitutional in 1997.)

Examples of new media sites launched during 1995:
• CBS network
• NBC network, 8/95
• CNN, 8/95
• Amazon.com, 7/95
• eBay.com, 9/95
1996

XXVI Olympia (Summer Games): Atlanta, U.S.

7/27/96: Centennial Olympic Park bombing

British Monarchy Divorces: Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson divorce. Prince Charles and Princess Diana divorce.


12/25/96: JonBenet Ramsey murder

Time Person of the Year: Dr. David Ho (AIDS Researcher)

2/8/96: After Clinton signs the Telecommunications Act, a 48-hour protest is staged against a controversial section of the act that limits Internet access to minors.

8/7/96: America Online goes offline for 18 hours. Customers around the world are left without news, email, and other services.

8/96: Browser Wars: Microsoft releases Explorer 3.0 Web browser; Netscape launches Navigator 3.0 Web browser

11/96: Mirablis introduces ICQ, a free instant messaging utility

Examples of new media sites launched during 1996:
• The New York Times, 1/96
• Wall Street Journal, 4/96
• The Washington Post, 6/96
• MSNBC, 7/96

The Internet2 (Abilene) Project is announced. Internet2 develops and deploys advanced network applications and technologies for research and higher education.

Palm Pilot 1000 is introduced. It is the first personal digital assistant (PDA) to achieve popular success.

Flash 1.0 adds interactive animations to web pages (used by: Disney, MSN)

1997

2/97: Scientists clone Dolly the sheep

3/27/97: Heaven’s Gate Cult mass suicide

7/1/97: China resumes control of Hong Kong

8/31/97: Remembering Princess Diana

3/28/97: NASA website gets over 1 million hits in a day as Comet Hale-Bopp is spotted

8/97: Netscape launches Navigator 4.0 Web browser
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/5/97</td>
<td>Remembering Mother Teresa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mars Pathfinder lands on Mars</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: Andy Grove (Intel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/97</td>
<td>CompuServe sold to AOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/97</td>
<td>Microsoft releases Explorer 4.0 Web browser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/97</td>
<td>Microsoft releases Explorer 4.0 Web browser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/97</td>
<td>Microsoft releases Explorer 4.0 Web browser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/98</td>
<td>Clinton admits to Lewinsky affair after the Drudge Report (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>breaks the news</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XVIII Olympic Winter Games: Nagano, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/10/98</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/24/98</td>
<td>Shooting at the U.S. Capitol Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>America bombs Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Glenn returns to space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Home Run Chase: Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa both chase the homerun</td>
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<td></td>
<td>record set by Roger Maris in 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swissair crash off the coast of Nova Scotia (no survivors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person(s) of the Year:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Clinton &amp; Kenneth “Ken” Starr (Special Prosecutor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/98</td>
<td>U.S. Justice Department sues Microsoft, accusing it of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monopolistic practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/10/98</td>
<td>Florida woman gives birth live on the Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/98</td>
<td>Microsoft releases Windows 98 operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/98</td>
<td>Microsoft releases Windows 98 operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/98</td>
<td>Apple computer begins selling its new iMac (Internet Mac) computer</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/98</td>
<td><em>The Charlotte Observer</em> uses a weblog to report the story of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hurricane Bonnie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/4/98</td>
<td>Google is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/98</td>
<td>Graphic details of Ken Starr’s report reignite debate over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>censorship on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13/98</td>
<td><em>The New York Times</em> website defaced by Hacking For Girliez</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(HFG) hacktivists</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Netscape releases the source code for its Navigator browser to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/24/98</td>
<td>AOL announces that it will acquire Netscape. AOL will also enter into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a strategic alliance with Sun Microsystems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>284</td>
<td>Clinton acquitted of impeachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/20/99</td>
<td>Columbine H.S. shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/18/99</td>
<td>JFK Jr. plane crash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elian Gonzales custody battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/99</td>
<td>EgyptAir Flight 990 disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y2K scare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: Jeff Bezos (Amazon.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/99</td>
<td>Second generation of the Apple iMac computer is introduced (five translucent colors: red, orange, purple, green and original blue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/23/99</td>
<td>Hate groups use the Internet to spread message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/99</td>
<td>Melissa computer virus spreads via email attachments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC3 releases Web Content Accessibility Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/99</td>
<td>Napster launched offering peer-to-peer MP3 file sharing (site operated June 1999 to July 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13/99</td>
<td>Philip Morris publishes admissions of health risks of smoking on its website</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/99</td>
<td>Clinton calls for online drug site regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Department of Commerce begins tracking Internet sales. They call e-commerce “a major indicator of the nation’s economic health.” In 1999 the four leading e-commerce brands are amazon.com, priceline.com, eBay and E-trade. (Shedden, 2004, <em>New media timeline 1999 section</em>, para. 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/01/00</td>
<td>The New Millennium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10/00</td>
<td>AOL and Time Warner to merge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putin elected as Russian President</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mad Cow Disease alarms Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXVII Olympia (Summer Games): Sydney, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/00</td>
<td>Major denial of service, cyber-attack against high profile websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/00</td>
<td>Love Letter worm infects computers around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/00</td>
<td>Dot.com Bubble busts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/23/00</td>
<td>New FBI computer system, Carnivore, leaves privacy advocates worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Board of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) approves seven new website domain names: .biz, .info, .name, .pro, .museum, aero, and .coop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC3 releases Authoring Tools Accessibility Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>U.S. Presidential Campaign (George W. Bush)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earthquake in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Genome Sequence revealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Year: George W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time</em> Person of the Century: Albert Einstein (Runners-up: Franklin Roosevelt &amp; Mohandas Gandhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Wikipedia founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1/01: Wikipedia founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/1/01: AOL-Time Warner merge approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/20/01: Two New York men arrested in Internet identity theft scam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/16/01: Anti-virus experts begin hearing reports about the Code Red worm and SirCam virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/24/01: Charitable websites thought to be linked to the money trail of terrorists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/01: Apple releases iPod, hard drive-based MP3 digital audio player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Napster ordered to block copyrighted music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euro currency debuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XIX Olympic Winter Games: Salt Lake City, U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/22/02: Remembering Daniel Pearl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enron Scandal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chechen rebels take hostages in Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendster launched</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2002

10/02: Serial sniper attacks in Washington, D.C., MD, and VA

_Time_ Person(s) of the Year:
The Whistleblowers (Cynthia Cooper, Worldcom; Coleen Rowley, FBI; Sherron Watkins, Enron)

2003

2/01/03: Space Shuttle Columbia disaster

3/12/03: Recovery of Elizabeth Smart

3/19/03: U.S. invades Iraq

SARS

8/14/03: U.S. Northeastern Blackout

10/7/03: California gubernatorial recall

_Time_ Person of the Year:
The American Soldier

2004

1/3/04: Mars Rover mission

4/5/04: Train bombings in Spain

6/5/04: Remembering Ronald Reagan

XXVIII Olympia (Summer Games): Athens, Greece

1/19/04: Howard Dean “Dean Scream” following Iowa caucuses spread online

4/19/04: Google, Inc. announces IPO

3/03: First fully reader-funded journalist blogger reports from Iraq

4/28/03: Apple launches iTunes

6/26/03: Computer users who download and swap music are targeted by the recording industry for piracy

8/03: Sobig.F worm infects computers around the world

“AOL” removed from name of AOL Time Warner

World Summit on the Information Society

11/03: Congress passes anti-span legislation

12/03: Telephone calls made via the Internet

Web 2.0 introduced. Examples of Web 2.0 sites launched:
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Atlantic Hurricane season</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/11/04: Execution of American hostage Nick Berg by al-Qaeda members shown on Islamic militant website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/04: U.S. Presidential Campaign (George W. Bush)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/04: iMac G5 is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/26/04: Indian Ocean earthquake and South Asian Tsunami</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/04: CBS document scandal uncovered by bloggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Person of the Year: George W. Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/20/04: American hostage Eugene Armstrong beheaded by terrorist group on Internet video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/04: Web 2.0 Conference focus: emerging business and technology developments on the Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/04: Media Bloggers Association (MBA) founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/9/04: Mozilla’s open source web browser Firefox 1.0 is released</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Examples of Web 2.0 sites launched:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• digg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Facebook</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Flickr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Napster relaunches a pay site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2005: YouTube.com launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asian Tsunami aftermath</td>
<td></td>
<td>6/28/05: Google Earth launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/30/05: Iraqi elections (National Assembly)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/12/05: CBS News begins its new blog,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/5/05: Terri Schiavo debate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/2/05: Remembering Pope John Paul II</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/7/05: Remembering Peter Jennings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/31/05: “Deep Throat” Mark Felt revealed</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/14/05: Gaza withdrawal: Israeli pullout, ending 38 years of occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/7/05: London subway bombings</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/05: YouTube.com launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/7/05: Remembering Peter Jennings</td>
<td></td>
<td>6/28/05: Google Earth launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/14/05: Gaza withdrawal: Israeli pullout, ending 38 years of occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/12/05: CBS News begins its new blog,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2005**

8/29/05: Hurricane Katrina makes landfall on U.S. Gulf Coast (140 mph)

10/19/05: Saddam Hussein trial begins

10/28/05: I. “Scooter” Libby indicted

11/9/05: Jordan hotels bombed

*Time Person of the Year:*
You. Yes, you. You control the Information Age. Welcome to your world.

**2006**

XX Olympic Winter Games: Turino, Italy

1/5/06: Sago Mine disaster, WV

1/29/06: Bob Woodruff and cameraman critically injured by IED (Improvised Explosive Device) in Iraq

5/25/06: Enron trial verdict: Guilty (K. Lay)

7/11/06: Mumbai, India train blasts

7/12/06: Israel-Hezbollah war

8/2/06: U.S. tainted spinach: E. coli

9/4/06: Remembering “Crocodile Hunter” Steve Irwin

10/2/06: Amish school shooting, PA

10/9/06: North Korea nuclear test

11/5/06: Saddam Hussein trial verdict: Guilty

11/7/06: Democrats win mid-term elections. Nancy Pelosi (CA-D) elected first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

11/23/06: Ex-Russian spy poisoned: Polonium-210

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**2005**

10/19/05: Saddam Hussein trial begins

10/28/05: I. “Scooter” Libby indicted

11/9/05: Jordan hotels bombed

**2006**

1/3/06: ABC News blog, *The World Newser* launched

3/06: Twitter launched

8/4/06: Gov. George Allen (VA-R) racist remarks spread via YouTube

8/14/06: Gov. George Allen (VA-R) racist remarks spread via YouTube

100 millionth account created on MySpace

10/06: Google acquires YouTube for $1.65 billion in stocks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Person(s) of the Year:</td>
<td>The Good Samaritans: Bill Gates, Bono, Melinda Gates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/16/07: Virginia Tech massacre</td>
<td>5/24/07: 50th anniversary of first digital image (AP &amp; Kodak camera)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/07: Disappearance of British girl Madeline McCann</td>
<td>6/29/07: Apple iPhone is released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/07: Mattel toy recall (high levels of lead in Chinese-made toys)</td>
<td>9/28/07: Bloggers reporting from Burma during military crackdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/1/07:Collapse of Minneapolis bridge</td>
<td>12/07: British monarchy launches a YouTube channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/07:Protests in Myanmar</td>
<td>10th anniversary of blogging. Technorati reports tracking 112M+ blogs worldwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20/07: “Jena 6” demonstrations in Louisiana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/07: Al Gore wins 2007 Nobel Peace Prize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/27/07: U.S. housing market in crisis, spiking foreclosure rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/27/07: Remembering former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Person of the Year:</td>
<td>Vladimir Putin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/19/08: Cuba’s Fidel Castro steps down</td>
<td>World Internet population surpasses 1.5B; China’s Internet population is the largest (250M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/2/08: Dmitry Medvedev elected Russian president</td>
<td>Neilsen Mobile declares mobile Web has met critical mass for advertising; U.S. has 95M mobile Internet subscribers and 40M active users. <em>(Nielsen Mobile, 2008)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12/08: Gov. Eliot Spitzer (NY-D) resigns</td>
<td>Twitter following explodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2/08: Cyclone strikes Myanmar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/08: China earthquake: 7.9</td>
<td>Microsoft attempts to buy Yahoo search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/08: U.S. gas prices reach record levels</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6/13/08: Remembering Tim Russert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>XXIX Olympiad (Summer Games): Beijing, China</strong></td>
<td>Obama campaign leverages Web 2.0 technology: Facebook, MySpace, YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8/07/08:</strong> Russian-Georgian week-long conflict</td>
<td>Sony’s Blu-Rays discs win out over Toshiba’s HD DVDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8/16/08:</strong> U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps wins 8 gold medals</td>
<td>Apple releases “App Store.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8/16/08:</strong> U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps wins 8 gold medals</td>
<td>10M applications (apps) downloaded in the first weekend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9/08:</strong> Wall Street crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9/08:</strong> Hurricane season (Gustav, Ike make landfall)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11/08:</strong> U.S. Presidential Campaign (Barack H. Obama)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11/26/08:</strong> Terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12/9/08:</strong> Governor Rod Blagojevich (IL-D) arrested for corruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12/26/08:</strong> Israeli Air strikes on Gaza</td>
<td><strong>Time</strong> Person of the Year: Barack Obama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1/15/09:</strong> US Airways lands in the Hudson River</td>
<td><strong>3/09:</strong> <em>The Seattle Post-Intelligencer</em> moves entirely online (first daily newspaper to do so)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2/17/09:</strong> U.S. $787 billion stimulus bill signed into law</td>
<td><strong>3/09:</strong> Koobface computer worm steals info from social media users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5/31/09:</strong> Air France Flight 447 crashes into the Atlantic Ocean (no survivors)</td>
<td><strong>4/16/09:</strong> Actor Ashton Kutcher becomes first on Twitter to have 1M followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6/11/09:</strong> World Health Organization: swine flu (H1N1 virus) labeled global pandemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6/13/09:</strong> Protests following Iranian presidential election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6/17/09:</strong> Remembering Walter Cronkite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6/25/09:</strong> Remembering Michael Jackson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/29/09</td>
<td>Bernard Madoff sentenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30/09</td>
<td>U.S. hands over security of Iraqi towns and cities to Iraqi forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/8/09</td>
<td>U.S. Supreme Court justice Elena Kagan sworn in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/25/09</td>
<td>Remembering Sen. Edward Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9/09</td>
<td>Obama wins Nobel Peace Prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5/09</td>
<td>Fort Hood, TX gunman attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/27/09</td>
<td>Tiger Woods scandal begins (car accident)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7/09</td>
<td>U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/25/09</td>
<td>Terrorist attempt by “underwear bomber”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/12/10</td>
<td>Haiti earthquake: 7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21/10</td>
<td>Icelandic volcano erupts interrupting European air travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/20/10</td>
<td>BP oil rig explosion in Gulf of Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/10</td>
<td>American combat mission in Iraq ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13/10</td>
<td>Trapped Chilean miners rescued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/10</td>
<td>Tensions flare between North Korea and South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/22/10</td>
<td>U.S. military’s “Don’t ask, don’t tell” law repealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>Apple unveiled iPad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Facebook topped Google to become the most visited U.S. site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/8/10</td>
<td>Apple unveils iPhone 4. Smart phone competitors include: Blackberry, Droid, HTC Evo, Samsung Galaxy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/25/10</td>
<td>WikiLeaks releases U.S. military documents online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>FCC adopts rules to guide Web usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook privacy adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proliferation of apps for mobile and tablet devices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information for this Appendix was drawn from the following sources and network news transcripts retrieved from Lexis-Nexis™:


APPENDIX E: Selection of Television News Stories
Selection of Television News Stories on Lexis-Nexis™

1. Go to http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe
2. Select Guided News Search.
3. Select “News Transcripts” from the drop-down list under news category.
4. Select the network’s transcripts from the drop-down under news source (‘‘ABC News Transcripts,’’ ‘‘CBS News Transcripts,’’ ‘‘NBC News Transcripts’’).
5. Type the Internet keywords under search terms (‘‘Internet,’’ ‘‘online,’’ ‘‘web,’’ ‘‘Information superhighway,’’ ‘‘dot-com,’’ ‘‘.com,’’ ‘‘.org,’’ ‘‘.gov,’’ ‘‘.edu’’).
   
   Note: Only three terms can be used in a search at once, so this step must be repeated in order to search for the complete list of terms.
6. Enter “January 1, 1997 to December 31, 2004” under the date range.
7. Once the list of news stories has been created in Lexis-Nexis™, mark the news stories from the news days sample, every fourth day, and retrieve these transcripts for analysis.
APPENDIX F: Codebook for Quantitative Content Analysis
CODEBOOK: News Story Analysis

General Rules for Coding:

- In the header of each transcript, the “Show” title should be one of the following: ABC: World News Tonight, CBS: CBS Evening News, NBC: NBC Nightly News. Remove any news stories that are from any other program.

- The analysis should be done on the “Body” of the news story, any terms that appear in the Headline, should not be included in the count. All “spoken” or non-parenthetical words should be considered.

- Dot-com companies whose name and therefore website are read aloud during the newscast, for example: ebay.com, will be counted as an instance of “.com” and included in the “url reference” count.

- Do not include references to America Online in the count of “online.”
VARIABLES

NEWS STORY ID
There is a unique News Story ID that is assigned to each news story. This ID is created as a composite of each news story’s date, network, and network story occurrence. This alpha-numeric ID will be assigned by a principal investigator.

DATE
Date refers to the date on which the news story was broadcast. Record the date listed in the header of each transcript.

NETWORK
Network refers to the television network on which the news story was broadcast. Record the network (A = ABC, C = CBS, N = NBC) listed in the header of each transcript.

NETWORK STORY OCCURRENCE
Network Story Occurrence refers to a unique number that is assigned to each news story broadcast on a single network on the same news day. This number does not pertain to the order in which the news stories were aired.

First, record the network story occurrence in the upper right-hand corner of the transcript and then record this value on your coding sheet for that news story. You should code each news story with a network story occurrence, regardless if there is only one news story for each network for that news day.

Here is an example: On a given day, the first ABC news story in the collection of transcripts should be labeled “1,” if there is a second ABC news story it would be labeled “2.” On the same day, the first CBS news story would be labeled “1” and the first NBC news story also labeled “1.” Any subsequent news stories from either network aired on the same day, are incrementally labeled, 2, 3, 4 and so on.

INTERNET KEYWORDS
Record the total number of instances that the following terms occur within each news story.

- Internet (includes Net and Internet page)
- Online
- Web (includes World Wide Web, website, and Web page)
- Dot-com
- Information superhighway
- Network news site
  - ABCNews.com or abc.com*
  - CBSNews.com or cbs.com*
  - MSNBC.com or nbc.com*
  - cbs.marketwatch.com
- * These Web addresses (urls) can refer to a specific website or can be included in an email address for a particular network.
URL REFERENCES

URL References refers to any Web address (Web link or url) included in the news story (i.e. those Web addresses listed under Internet-related terms). Record the total number of these Web addresses. If the same Web address is mentioned multiple times within one news story, count each instance individually and include these in the total.

INVITATIONAL REFERENCES

Invitational References refer to any phrases used which encourage audience members to visit a website or to participate in online activities. Examples of such references are provided below.

- You can debate this at our website…
- You can log on to the website…
- Visit our website…

Record the total number of these references within each news story.

NEWS STORY TOPIC

News Story Topic refers the subject of the news story. A list of the fourteen news story topics is presented below along with a brief description of the kinds of news stories that may be classified within each category.

A Primary News Story Topic and when appropriate and Secondary News Story Topic are to be recorded. The main subject of the news story should be identified as the primary news story topic. When the news story possesses an underlying subject, a secondary news story topic should be identified.

Record the Primary News Story Topic by recording a “1” under the corresponding topic heading. Then if appropriate, record the news story’s Secondary News Story Topic by recording a “2” under the corresponding topic heading.

2. War and Defense: War, defense, rebellion, homeland security, terrorism and terrorism court proceedings, military-related issues, military use of space. Includes both foreign and domestic stories.
3. Diplomacy, Foreign Relations, and Foreign Politics: Foreign and/or domestic items dealing with official diplomacy, political issues, and foreign relations. Includes the United Nations.
5. Transportation and Travel: Transportation and travel, including economic aspects.
7. **Public Moral Issues**: Human relations and moral problems including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations, media content issues, religion, and civil court proceedings.

8. **Accidents and Disasters**: Man-made accidents and natural disasters involving injury, death, or serious damage.

9. **Science, Technology, and Invention**: Technology and science other than defense related and other than health and medicine.

10. **Public Health and Welfare**: Health, domestic public welfare, social and safety measures, education, welfare of children, marriage and marriage relations.

11. **Popular Amusements**: Entertainment and amusements, news page sports, television, radio, music, and classic arts.

12. **General Human Interest**: Human interest, weather, obituaries, animals, children, juvenile interest, and factoids.

13. **Network Promotion**: Self-promoting information about the sponsoring news channel such as future programming for this newscast or another network sponsored program.

14. **News Tease**: Content presented before a commercial break that promotes an upcoming news story. General comments that direct the audience to check the Web for regular updates.
APPENDIX G: Coding Sheet for Quantitative Content Analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Story Topics</th>
<th>Network Story Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Tease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Promotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Human Interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusements</td>
<td>Entertainment &amp; Popular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health &amp; Welfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invention</td>
<td>Science, Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents &amp; Disasters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Moral Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Foreign Relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War &amp; Disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Gov't Acts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Invitational References
# Un References
dailymarketwatch.com
Network news site
Information superhighway
dol.com
Web's web site
Online
Internet
Network Story Occurrence
Network
Date
REFERENCES


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Williamson, D. A. (2000, April 17). The net effect; Economic growth has been fueled by Internet mania – but can it continue? *Advertising Age*.


BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

KATHERINE A. HUGHES

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KatherineAHughes@gmail.com

EDUCATION

M.S.  Television/Radio/Film, Syracuse University, 1995.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, James Madison University, 2005-2011.

Instructor of Record, Designing Interactivity, Syracuse University, 2003-2005.

Teaching Assistant, Designing Interactivity (Professor Stephen Masiclat), Syracuse University, 2003.

Teaching Assistant, Communication in Society (Dr. Sharon Hollenback), Syracuse University, 2002.

Teaching Assistant, Television/Radio/Film Department (Dr. Michael Schoonmaker), Syracuse University, 1995.

Teaching Assistant, Communicating with Computers (Dr. Joan Deppa), Syracuse University, 1995.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE


CONFERENCE PAPERS


CONFERENCE PANELS


AWARDS AND HONORS

Graduate School, Outstanding T.A. Award 2004-2005, Syracuse University, 2005.

Graduate School, Certificate in University Teaching, Syracuse University, 2005.