Public Abstract

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The purpose of this research was to better understand how decisions about arts coverage are made at city and regional magazines and the value that these stories have to both the publications they appear in and the communities they are targeted toward. City and regional magazines, which cover specific areas and have more intimate relationships with their readers than, say, a national consumer magazine or arts periodical were chosen because of the unique opportunity afforded to them by their position as a cross between the community-oriented city newspaper and the glossy, in-depth monthly magazine. In discussing the arts, their value, and the ways in which they are covered with arts and culture editors and top editors at magazines from around the country, conclusions about the roles these magazines play and their importance to various levels of their communities were able to be drawn. This research approached the topic through the use of gatekeeping theory, which explains how media messages travel from their producers to their consumers. Fewer gatekeeping studies of magazines have been conducted than of newspapers, and few studies of arts journalism extend themselves beyond art criticism and newspaper arts sections. This study strays away from the topic of criticism and instead focuses on hallmarks of city magazine content such as front of book pieces, service packages, in-depth features and events coverage at five publications from five different parts of the country.