

Public Abstract
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Journalism
Small Newspapers, Big Changes: Awareness of Market Driven
Journalism and Consequences for Community Newspapers
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This study examines the attitudes of journalists at small newspapers toward market-driven journalism.

The researcher queried 29 journalists at nine community newspapers throughout Missouri. The study presents the relevant verbatim responses of those journalists, as well as pertinent community information, census data and an examination of newspaper content. The study relates the journalists' understanding of market-driven journalism, its relationship with audience diversity, and the extent to which market considerations are reflected in the content of their newspapers.

The author employed qualitative method using several data sets (interviews, official census data, state and county data and newspaper content) to examine the possible relationship among certain phenomena related to the question of market-driven journalism at small newspapers. Preliminary work resulted in the following set of interrelated research questions: how, if at all, is the concept of "market-driven journalism" understood by editorial employees at community newspapers; to what extent do financial considerations guide their newspapers' coverage of their communities, and how well does the actual content of the newspapers reflect the composition and concerns of the respective communities?

The study concludes that journalists at small newspapers do have an understanding of the impact of market-driven journalism even when they do not identify it by that term, that financial considerations do have an impact on news coverage by these newspapers to varying degrees depending on the resources of the newspaper, and that community newspapers do not always adequately represent the composition of their communities, particularly new and growing population segments.