

Public Abstract
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The late 1990's represented a time of unprecedented economic growth. However, the economic bubble ultimately burst and the nation entered into a recession. Following the crash, there was speculation that the media were responsible irresponsible in their treatment of economic news and helped to inflate the economic bubble during the late 1990's.

This research was conducted with the intent of measuring the hypothesis that positive news about the economy outpaced negative news, even once the economy was in a decline.

A content analysis was employed to identify any change in tone as the economy began its downslide. Overall, 259 stories were collected from the NBC Nightly News and the Associated Press and evaluated based on their reference to the economy.

In both the NBC and AP sample, negative news outpaced positive news, but there were more neutral stories than either negative or positive stories. None of the measures of the hypothesis suggest that positive news about the economy outpaced negative news even once the economy was declining.

This research was meant to evaluate journalism intended for a mass consumer audience. The content analysis showed that the NBC Nightly News and the Associated Press were responsible in their treatment of economic news during the October 2000 through January 2001 timeframe.

Future research suggestions include a content analysis of business and financial journalism during the same timeframe to understand how different types of news organizations responded to the changing economic environment following the end of the economic boom.