A STUDY OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TV METEOROLOGISTS AND THEIR VIEWERS DURING SEVERE WEATHER BROADCASTS

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ABSTRACT

After the devastating tornadoes in Joplin, MO and in the Deep South in 2011, it seemed appropriate to look at the impact that broadcast meteorologists (and their TV coverage) have on their viewers during severe weather events. Broadcast meteorologists play a vital role in the severe weather warning process and in persuading the public to take the appropriate actions during severe weather. This research was done by developing a survey that addressed the following questions: 1) Is the media doing everything they can persuade viewers to take shelter and protect themselves and their property? 2) What do you do when a tornado warning is issued? 3) Is there anything broadcast meteorologists can do or say that will make you take immediate action during severe weather? The survey was disseminated through television markets in Missouri. The goal of this research was to find new, improved and different ways of “connecting” with viewing during severe weather coverage. After looking at the results, we want to see if there are specific words, images or anything else a broadcaster can do that will trigger a response by viewers to take cover. Hopefully the results and analyses from this survey will provide broadcast meteorologists with new and improved techniques to connect with the public and to assist them in making an informed decision during severe weather events.