

EXPERIMENTING WITH AUDIENCE INTERACTION: TELEVISION NEWS EFFORTS TO INVITE AUDIENCES INTO THE BROADCAST

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the concept of interactive and participatory journalism in television news through the lens of Gatekeeping Theory. It aims to shine a light on newsrooms that have been early adaptors in the trends and technologies of interactive content between journalists and their audiences and to explore what the managers and employees of those newsrooms believe has been successful, what has not been successful and what other journalists can learn from their experiences.

The researcher employed in depth interviews with 12 employees in 3 newsrooms in the U.S. The interviewees included general managers, news directors, anchors and digital producers. The research identified three major themes that contributed to the success of exploratory interactive efforts: newsroom culture, a focus on the audience, and finding balance. Each of these themes ultimately serves the same goal of the survival of television news in a rapidly changing media landscape. This research will expand the field of knowledge of interactive journalism, and it has valuable information for professional journalists who hope to incorporate interactive efforts into their work.