

DECIDING WHAT IS NEWS NOW:
THE INTERNET'S IMPACT ON LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS
EDITORIAL DECISION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the Internet on the decision making process of story selection for television newscasts. Those newscasts have a predetermined length of time to them therefore limiting the number of stories that can be chosen for the broadcast. The newsroom employees responsible for selecting those stories have the ability to see if a story or topic is popular with their online audience by using their station's website analytics or social media platforms. The online popularity information plays a role in story selection, but the researcher found how that information is utilized varied from newsroom to newsroom.

To investigate the impact of the Internet on the story selection process, interviews were conducted with multiple newsroom managers of different size markets nationwide. Their response indicated online popularity is used during the editorial decision-making process but how it was used and how often it was not consistent to the group neither as a collective unit nor among small, medium, or large market sizes. The study also found while online popularity is used during the story selection process, the more traditional news value judgment is used when determining the lead story of a newscast.