

# GATEKEEPING AND INTERNATIONAL DATELINES IN THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER: THE DECISION PROCESS

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the criteria and process used in gatekeepers' decisions at three major daily Ohio newspapers for choosing international stories. What qualifies these individuals to be gatekeepers and how are their daily decisions made? Why do they make the choices they make? And how are these gatekeepers determining the needs of the American public?

The gatekeeping process in choosing international stories at three Ohio newspapers – *The Columbus Dispatch*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland – is reviewed to determine what criteria are used in the selection process.

This study found that gatekeepers do follow a specific, though unwritten, process in the selection of stories. With a one month content analysis followed by observations and interviews of gatekeepers at the newspapers reviewed, it was learned that not just international coverage is shrinking but the entire newshole at these daily newspapers is becoming increasingly limited as today's newspapers work with less staff and space on the page. While international news may have been limited in the past for other reasons, this study presented documented reasons why world coverage today is decreasing in the daily newspaper.