

**Searching for Satisfaction:
How 20something Women Use Media to Get News and
Advertising Information**

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SEARCHING FOR SATISFACTION: HOW 20SOMETHING WOMEN USE MEDIA TO GET NEWS AND ADVERTISING INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

As traditional media companies struggle to maintain their current audience and attract young adults, it's imperative that providers understand how young women use media devices to get news and advertising information. This research addressed the issue through in-depth one-on-one interviews conducted with eight subjects in the Rochester, N.Y., area. Subjects kept media diaries for one week prior to the interviews. Subjects overwhelmingly preferred to get news through the Internet, choosing web sites that are updated frequently, offering a variety of information on many topics, along with blogs and video. In terms of gratifications and preferences for getting advertising information, subjects mostly ignored and avoided advertising on web sites as much as possible. Flyover and pre-roll video ads were the least objectionable, according to subjects. Advertisers should look for more opportunities for video ads on web sites, along with providing useful directories. Subjects also were asked to comment on two local print products and one web site produced by the *Democrat and Chronicle*, along with a national web site, ivillage.com. Subjects reacted more favorably to the products with local information, rather than the national web site.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how young women seek information and how they view existing web and print sources. The research will first answer the question: How do women ages 21 to 29, who are living independently from their parents and working full time, use electronic and print media and the Internet to seek and receive information such as news and advertisements? Second, the research will answer the question of what lessons are there for local media in any given market on how to reach women in this age group, through either specific products or web sites and various delivery methods?

The study will use the long interview methodology to interview women individually in their homes to see how they use media. A definition for “use” is to “scan” print media or “surf” television or the Internet. A definition for “news” includes topics such as government, public safety, education, health, lifestyle and sports, on three levels: community, national and international.

Studying the media usage habits of women ages 21 to 29 would fill a void in current research regarding women and media. This is an important topic to media companies, as women represent tremendous buying power, reportedly making 80 percent of purchase decisions in a household. Many traditional media are slowly losing ground with women, as women become more adept at using technology to meet their specific interests and needs.

While many studies have focused on media usage habits of the general population, few of them have focused on the differences between male and female usage, and even fewer have broken down the women into age demographic categories.

As the uses and gratification theory continues to be applied and evolve as new forms of media are introduced, my research should add to its evolution.

Chapter 1

The research questions tie directly into uses and gratifications theory. That theory assumes that “media and content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfactions (thus the audience is active and audience formation can be logically explained)” (McQuail, 2000, p. 387).

Another assumption of the uses and gratification approach is that “broadly speaking, personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors” (McQuail, 2000, p. 388). McQuail, who studied radio and TV programs in Britain, listed four types of media-person interactions, which capture the “most important media satisfactions”: diversion, personal relationship, personal identity and surveillance (McQuail, 2000, p. 388).

McQuail spent decades studying the concept of uses and gratifications theory. McQuail (1985) categorized the tasks of research under five headings:

- Media gratifications – their nature and substance: “What are gratifications or similar concepts of satisfaction use and so on? ... What gratification goes with what content? ...” (p. 163)
- Gratification and media use: “How do expectations relate to kind and amount of media use? ... How are expectations related to eventual satisfactions by way of media use?” (p. 164)
- Social origins and media use: “Do expressed gratifications vary with social background and current circumstances? ...” (p. 164)

- Gratifications and effects: “Do gratifications predict major effects on behavior, on learning or change in opinions, attitudes or the like? ...” (p. 164)
- The sequence-originations-motivations-media use-satisfactions-consequences/effects: “Can such sequences be empirically discovered or alternative orderings of the same elements? ...” (p. 164)

Ruggerio (2000) argued that the current theoretical models of uses and gratifications must be expanded due to the advent of the Internet. He argued that contemporary and future models must include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality and asynchronicity.

Ruggerio stated that “most U&G scholars agree that concepts such as *active* and *audience* will have to be revised when applied to Internet communication” (Ruggerio, 2000, p. 20). People use the Internet for various reasons, whether it be to surf the Internet for fun or to finish a task by going to a certain web site. Ruggerio cites research by S.S. Sundar in which Sundar contended that novices make different choices than experienced Internet users, particularly in matters such as attentiveness to sources in electronic news stories.

Because of the “novel informational characteristics of the Internet,” some media scholars argue that even the traditional audience concept must be radically amended, according to Ruggerio (Ruggerio, 2000, p. 20). He cited research by D. Abrahamson, who forecasted that the Internet would move “from a mass market medium to a ‘vehicle for the provision of very specific high-consumption audiences.’ ” He predicted a movement on the Internet similar to what happened in the 1960s where the audience fractionalized into smaller, elite audiences for consumer magazines.

Ruggerio also cited J. Newhagen and S. Rafaeli, who called for adopting a uses and gratifications approach to investigate the Internet. The pair focused on “five defining characteristics to see if users prefer the Internet due to these characteristics” (Ruggerio, 2000, p. 22). Those characteristics are multimedia, packet switching, hypertextuality, synchronicity and interactivity.

My research questions fall most directly into three of the tasks cited by McQuail (1985): gratifications and media use, social origins and media use, and gratifications and effects. In terms of the gratifications and media use task, my research will document the expectations that users have of various forms of media and look at how choices are made. Are choices tied into users’ expectations? And how are expectations related to eventual satisfaction of the usage of a particular medium?

In terms of social origins and media use, my research will explore how a subject’s education, profession and economic status affect her choices of media and usage of media.

In terms of gratifications and effects tasks, my research will examine what kinds of gratifications accompany what kinds of content and content delivery methods. Subjects will be asked questions regarding the type of satisfaction and depth of satisfaction that they get from various forms of media as they seek out news and useful information relevant to their daily lives.

In my research, I will also incorporate the “five defining characteristics” of the Internet as cited by Ruggerio (2000) to see if subjects favor the Internet over other media based on any of those characteristics.

1.1 Research on selection and usage of media for news and advertising

For this literature review, research has been subdivided into the following categories: media selection and usage; usage of traditional media versus the Internet; students and Internet usage; and audiences and interactive advertising.

It's important to examine previous research on how subjects have selected and used media to understand how those patterns may be different in 2008. With the tremendous growth of Internet usage, the usage of traditional media versus the Internet must be analyzed to determine how media usage habits are affected. The subject of students and Internet usage ties into the demographic of the subjects – women ages 21 to 29 – as habits acquired in college may impact current habits. Finally, the research proposal will focus on subjects' search for advertising information, and studying how audiences respond to interactive advertising will provide clues as to subjects' pursuit and satisfaction with interactive advertising.

1.1.1 Media selection and usage

Doris Graber (1988) found that psychological gratifications were the major reasons that a majority of a panel of 21 gave as their reasons for selecting news stories to which they paid attention. Selections such as human interest stories including crime, accidents and lifestyle fulfilled a recreational gratification. Stories also were selected because they related to a person's job or satisfied a person's need to feel like a good citizen, such as stories related to politics or civic issues.

Graber acknowledged that her evidence was indirect, that the motivations she described actually were the ones that produced the panelists' news-attention behavior. The evidence included self-reports (recorded in diaries), inferences from what panelists

said in various contexts, and on what panelists did in terms of story selection and attention to specific story features. Through questioning the panelists about their selections, why they did or did not select a story, what information they found helpful or not, and so on, a large amount of data was gathered. Patterns emerged, predictions were developed, and Graber checked the accuracy of these through follow-up interviews. “When most predictions prove reasonably accurate, we considered it confirmation that our appraisal of gratifications sought by various panelists had been accurate” (Graber, 1988, p. 130). Graber also validated her conclusions based on studies by other scholars that “revealed close correspondence between various life-styles and media use patterns” (Graber, 1988, p. 130).

Although numerous studies on uses and gratification of traditional media, such as newspapers and telephone, were conducted post-Graber, results seem outdated now due to the advent of the Internet and its strong growth in the 1990s and 21st century. This literature review therefore chose to focus on more recent studies that incorporate the Internet usage into the research on media usage.

One such study is that of Dimmick, Kline and Stafford (2000), which examined the gratification niches of personal e-mail and telephone. “The gratification niche of a medium can be defined by the breadth of gratifications obtained from a medium as well as its niche breadth on the gratification and gratification-opportunities dimensions, the degree of overlap with other media, and its superiority in gratifications and gratification opportunities over competing media” (Dimmick et al, 2000, p. 230-231). Forty-eight percent of those interviewed reported that they used the telephone less after they started using e-mail for personal purposes. While the two devices do compete, the analysis

showed that they are not close substitutes. The telephone fulfills more needs, but e-mail provides greater gratification opportunities.

The growth in usage of personal digital assistants (PDAs) inspired Trepte, Ranne and Becker (2003) to study the motives to adopt these new media devices. Trepte et al employed uses and gratification theory as a framework for defining early adopters' motives and needs. They suggested that three dimensions of new media use in the adoption phase: functional use and information, entertainment and play, and demonstration of status and lifestyle. Results from an online survey of 112 respondents found three main gratifications of PDA use: playful exploration, demonstration of status and function-related gratifications. The latter was the most important for the use and purchase of the PDA, followed by playful exploration, and then demonstration of status.

Taking a clue from early television studies, LaRose and Eastin (2004) cited studies that have expanded the list of gratifications derived from early television studies to apply to the unique facets of the Internet. These include gratification dimensions such as interpersonal communication, problem solving, persuading others, relationship maintenance, status seeking and personal insight. LaRose and Eastin advocated usage of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as a framework "for integrating uses and gratifications mechanisms with competing influences on individual media attendance" (LaRose and Eastin, 2004, p. 374). Media selection is affected by new media alternatives appearing, the disruption of personal routines, and a person's own beliefs about his/her ability to utilize alternative media channels. After that, repeated consumption becomes habitual and automatic as a person's attention turns elsewhere.

Peters, Rickes, Jockel, Von Criegern and Van Deursen (2006) replicated LaRose and Eastin's original study to validate the new model of media attendance but in a European environment, studying German Internet users. Although some questions in the original study were changed to capture the German language better, and some original questions were dropped or rephrased with a stronger focus, such as a stronger focus on status, the researchers concluded the measurement model was acceptable. The Peters et al research demonstrated that the proposed connection between uses and gratification theory and SCT was promising, especially when the strength of users' habits is integrated. In other words, a person whose Internet usage is strongly habitual is less likely to be thinking of desired outcomes when he/she goes to a certain site. Researchers must understand and take into account subjects' habits when examining expectations and outcomes.

Peters et al also studied users of cell phones who had extra mobile services such as sending and receiving color photos, sending and receiving e-mail and Internet capabilities (all services of General Packet Radio Services). The most significant predictor of GPRS usage was self-efficacy – the user had certain expected outcomes of the task and possessed the belief that he/she could do the task adequately. Peters et al called for alternative measurement and analysis of media usage as vital to determining which products and services people will actually use.

Thorson and Duffy (2007) in research for the Newspaper Association of America created a Media Choice Model to guide newspaper executives in doing “choice-based” research on audiences and to offer newspaper executives a guide to improve existing publications and web sites and developing new products. Thorson and Duffy posited that

every instance of media use is motivated by one of four communication needs: connectivity, information, entertainment and shopping. The pair noted that every communication medium has features that audiences may prefer – whether it be TV for sight, sound and movement or cell phones to connect with others at any time or place. Communication needs change depending on time and place. By adopting the Media Choice Model, Duffy and Thorson believe that newspapers can grow both audience and advertising revenues.

1.1.2 Students and Internet use

Several studies have focused on college students and their usage of media for news, primarily focused on the Internet. These studies are relevant to this research proposal as some subjects may be recent college graduates and/or may have developed media usage preferences during college that have carried on.

Diddi and LaRose (2006) surveyed 303 undergraduate students enrolled at a major Midwestern university and found that the most frequently consulted news source was the campus newspaper, followed by Internet portal sites, and late-night TV comedians. “Sources providing depth coverage of national and international events were seldom consulted, generally less than one day per week” (Diddi & LaRose, 2006, p. 201). In answering the question of why the Internet has not replaced conventional media even among the so-called Internet Generation, Diddi and LaRose cited habit strength. In their study, habit strength was a significant predictor of all types of news consumption. Diddi and LaRose noted that conventional news media refer audiences to their web sites for more information, while popular online sources get their information from conventional news sources. “So, perhaps new consumption patterns arise while old ones continue due

to persistent news habits and cross fertilization of those habits between media channels” (p. 205).

Diddi and LaRose wrote that emerging media consumption patterns suggested a need for improved measures of news knowledge. “Uses and gratifications associated with specific news sources, as opposed to one set of gratification items applied to news sources generally (as was the case here), might increase their predictive power” (p. 207).

The application of traditional gratification typologies may be useful in understanding and predicting Internet use, according to Tewksbury and Althaus (2000). The pair surveyed 520 college students via written questionnaires. Tewksbury and Althaus found that the use of the Web was purposeful and goal directed, as a uses and gratification theory would predict. There was a predictable pattern of correlations between the site-use factors and gratifications obtained. Entertainment and pastime gratifications were positively associated with the arts and sports factors. Issues and events gratification was positively related to use of news, sports and government/political sites.

The Internet also offers the opportunity to communicate with others. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) examined college students’ uses of the Internet from a uses and gratification perspective. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is communication facilitated by computer technologies and CMC-related activities include web browsing. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that information-seeking and interpersonal utility were linked to two opposing user profiles. Participants who were mobile, economically secure, satisfied with life, and who felt valued in interpersonal relationships preferred to use the Internet for its instrumental uses, such as information seeking. “Those who were less satisfied and who felt less valued in their face-to-face communication used the

Internet as a functional alternative to interpersonal communication or to fill time” (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000, p. 192). Web browsers were found to be people who thought the Internet saved them money (for example, reading newspapers for free online) and gave them information.

Al-Obaidi, Lamb-Williams and Mordas (2004) expected to find in a survey of 333 students at three Massachusetts colleges that the Internet would be the dominant medium used by college students; however, television was the preferred medium, followed by the Internet. Students chose easy access as their top reason for utilizing their chosen medium, followed by the fact that it simply fit best into their schedule.

1.1.3 Usage of traditional media versus the Internet

Several research studies have delved into the topic of what, if any, impact the Internet has had on traditional news media – newspapers and other print publications, local and network television, and radio. While traditional media have feared a mass migration from their work to the Internet, there are studies that are contradictory on that point.

Boyajy and Thorson (2007) performed a secondary analysis of data from two Biennial Media Consumption surveys conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. The secondary analysis showed that the Internet did not displace respondents’ usage of newspapers, TV or radio for news. Boyajy and Thorson cited the results of a study by Thorson, Duffy, Beaudoin and Shim (2005) regarding use of television, newspapers and the Internet showed a complementary relationship. “The more a person uses any of the media for information, the more they use the other media for information.

The more a person uses any of the media for entertainment, the more they use the other media for entertainment” (Boyajy & Thorson, 2007, p. 11).

Ahlers (2006) found no mass migration to the Internet from traditional media, with only 12 percent of adults in the U.S. being online-only news users. Twenty-two percent of the total adult population are multi-channel users of news, and two-thirds of the adult population either get news from online sites infrequently or not at all. Ahlers concluded that the latter group is unlikely to switch to online news consumption.

Ahlers also found that advertising with traditional media increased 15 percent between 1998 and 2004, despite two recessions during that time. Ahlers concluded that “The switching behaviors of the new consumer market will impact adversely on traditional media, but the impact is more properly characterized as pressure on the industry rather than a threat to its existence” (p. 45). Online markets actually are providing growth opportunities for traditional media, to leverage their brands and lure their customer bases into their own web sites.

But a study by Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) showed a clear displacement effect that the Internet had on television news, in a study of 211 respondents in Columbus, Ohio. Newspapers were also impacted, slightly less than television.

Dimmick et al used the theory of the niche to look at the competition between new media and older media. “The theory of the niche predicts that a new medium will compete with established media for consumer satisfaction, consumer time and advertising dollars” (Dimmick et al, 2004, p. 22). A new medium may replace or displace an older medium. Dimmick et al looked at gratification opportunities, defined as “properties of a medium that amplify or attenuate the opportunities for deriving gratification from a

medium...A medium that offers more of a given content type more often provides a greater array of gratification opportunities to the audience” (p. 22-23). Users of the Internet, cable TV and VCR get a wider range of content and more flexibility in accessing that content. Dimmick et al found that the Internet and traditional media were not close substitutes on the gratifications opportunities dimension. In fact, respondents rated the Internet superior to all daily news media except cable TV.

Flanigan and Metzger (2001) used a novel approach to compare how the Internet satisfies the same needs as traditional media. The pair theorized that as computers have evolved from work machines to machines that allow users to read a newspaper, play games, communicate with others, there may be marked shifts in perceptions of need satisfactions, with a blurring of entertainment and information needs.

Flanigan and Metzger surveyed 684 individuals (mostly college students) and found that the Internet’s functions of information retrieval and information-giving were used in ways similar to traditional media, while the Internet’s communication features aligned with those offered by the telephone and e-mail. The results showed that the people’s communications needs haven’t changed significantly due to the advent of the Internet, even if the means of fulfilling those needs has.

1.1.4 Interactive advertising

Information related to shopping can be a motivation to go online. Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) tested two assumptions: that people would actively surf the Internet to satisfy certain needs, and that different motivations for using the Internet would affect the level of interactivity on the web. The study used a two-dimensional concept of interactivity, defined as “the degree to which people engage in advertising processing by

actively interacting with advertising messages (human-message) and advertisers/consumers (human-human)” (Ko et al, 2005, p. 59). Testing their hypotheses on Korean and U.S. college students, researchers found, among other things, that “consumers who engage more in human-message and human-human interactions evaluate the Web site more positively, which leads to positive attitude toward brand and purchase intention; human-human interaction has a more significant effect on attitude toward the site than human-message interaction” (p. 66). Researchers stated that they might expect the paradigm of the Internet to shift from being an information source to a virtual communication tool. “Web sites should focus more on human-human interactive functions to generate more positive responses from consumers” (p. 67).

To help researchers better examine Internet advertising, Rodgers and Thorson (2000) proposed an interactive model of ad processing that researchers could use and test. The model assumes that “information processing in an interactive environment is dependent on both function and structure” (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000, p. 2). Researchers argued that Internet functions, which “operate conjointly with the user’s mode—ranging from highly goal-directed to playful—to influence the types of ads web users will attend to and process” (p. 2). Some variables, such as skill level and anxiety, are reasons to switch motives, and these variables can have either a deleterious or beneficial effect on how the ad is processed. The Interactive Advertising Model (IAM) suggests the interactivity will have a great impact on attitude and intent to purchase. The model also offers applications for testing if users with different motives are attracted to different formats or features of interactive ads.

1.2 Current state of the media industry:

The audience for traditional media sources continued to contract in 2006, according to the State of the News Media annual report (2007). Daily circulation for newspapers dropped almost 3 percent and Sunday circulation dropped almost 4 percent. Those numbers were similar to 2005. The news was worse for the 50 largest newspapers, which saw their circulation decline by about another 1 percent for both daily and Sunday.

Network evening news lost a million viewers, about the same number it has lost annually for the past 25 years. Local TV news also experienced rapid declines, in some cases in double digits. The online audience seeking news has stabilized, according to the report, with about 92 million people now going online for news. The report postulates that the spread of new mobile digital equipment may be contributing to that. Still, the report found that as alternative listening devices proliferate, “only 8 percent of MP3 owners listen to news podcast, 6 percent of cell phone owners get news on their phones, and 18.5 percent of owners of personal digital assistants get news from their PDAs” (Overview section, para. 20). The report also states that Internet radio may be gaining some force.

News about advertising revenue for newspapers also was negative, according to The State of the News Media report. Newspaper earnings fell in 2006 and the gains in online revenue are no longer enough to make up for the declines in advertising and circulation revenues. In local TV news, advertising revenues were projected to grow 10 percent. Projections for advertising revenue growth in network news also were positive. Online ad revenue for 2006 was projected to be another record-setting year, up past \$16 billion.

To capture more viewers online, newspapers are starting to dabble in offering social media opportunities (Toner, 2007). USA Today.com's redesign in March 2007 allows users to post comments to stories and rank the stories; other newspapers, such as the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, offer users the chance to post photos and other local information. By October 2007, more than 100,000 new users had signed up to USA Today.com and the web site had logged its one millionth comment. Overall site traffic was also up.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project has conducted several studies that looked at Internet and technology usage by men and women. A survey was designed to classify Americans into different groups of technology users, focusing on three dimensions of people's relationship to information and community technology (ICT) (Pew, 2007). Those dimensions were assets (usage of certain devices like cell phones); actions (such as downloading video or audio); and attitudes (how people see ICTs helping them to be more productive or keep up with family).

The study then sorted respondents into 10 groups of users of ICT, who fall into a framework of three categories: elite tech users (31 percent of American adults); middle-of-the-road users (20 percent) and few tech assets (49 percent). Of the elite tech users, 52 percent are women; of the middle-of-the-road users and those with few tech assets, 48 percent are women. Although the study didn't specifically ask respondents for their preferences of traditional media versus new media, it did probe attitudes and found that 67 percent of respondents liked having a variety of information available, with the list including TV news shows, newspapers and computer information services.

In terms of people's interest in getting news online, Pew (2006) found that the Internet is a primary news source for broadband users. "For broadband Internet users, online news is a more regular part of the daily news diet than is the local paper; it is nearly as much of a daily habit as is getting news from national TV newscasts and radio. For home dial-up users, however, online news is not as much an everyday activity" (Pew, 2006, p. i).

The Pew study found that age plays a key role in news consumption for broadband users. Forty-six percent of broadband users ages 18 to 35 get news online on an average day, compared to 40 percent of broadband users ages 36 to 50, and 43 percent of users over age 50. All of these figures are higher than news consumption by dial-up users.

"In terms of how the Internet rearranges news consumption patterns more broadly, the impact is greatest for the 'under age 36' age group. This age group is generally less news-hungry than older online users. They are particularly less likely to get news on the typical day from local TV, national TV, or local newspapers than older users. For broadband users, the only news source category where younger users trump older ones is for online news, although younger high-speed users are more likely to get news from a national paper than their counterparts in the age 36-50 group" (Pew, 2006, p. iii). It would appear that broadband users ages 18 to 35 are developing a new habit – going to the Internet for news, while eschewing traditional media.

Another Pew study (2006) found that 40 million Americans rely on the Internet as their primary source for news and information about science. Of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29, some 44 percent said they got most of their science news from the

Internet; 32 percent in that age group said television was their main source of news on science.

Pew (2005) found that Internet demographics had shifted since 2000. The findings included that young women (ages 18 to 29) are more likely to be online than men of that age, 89 percent to 80 percent. Black women are more likely than black men to be online, 60 percent to 50 percent. While unmarried men are more likely to be online than unmarried women, the opposite is true for married men and women. Men are more likely than women to use the Internet for online activities such as banking functions or gathering travel information, but women are catching up. Women are more robust e-mailers than men, and they value the Internet for enriching their relationships, while men value it for the breadth of experience it offers.

A Pew Internet Project data memo (2006) focused on podcast downloading. That memo stated that men are more likely than women to report downloading, 15 percent of men compared to 8 percent of women. Interestingly, that 8 percent was up from 5 percent who reported downloading from February to April 2006. Of respondents 18 to 29, 14 percent reported in August 2006 that they had downloaded a podcast, compared to just 10 percent from February to April of that same year. The increases in downloading podcasts within just a few months seemed to indicate a rapidly growing acceptance of the practice, perhaps in part to the increased ownership of an iPod or MP3 player, and/or due to the fact that the iTunes Music Store has incorporated an easy way for a casual user to sample, download and subscribe to free podcasts.

Another Pew Internet Project Data Memo (2005) found that Internet users ages 12-28 are more likely to instant message, play online games and create blogs than older

users, and users over age 28 but younger than age 70 are more likely to make travel reservations and bank online. The study noted that email is almost universally used among all age groups, but it's the 12- to 28-year-olds who most frequently use online applications that allow for the most creative, social and communicative uses. "Teens and Generation Y (ages 18-28) are significantly more likely than older users to send and receive instant messages, play online games, create blogs, download music and search for school information" (Pew, 2005, p. 2). Shopping online is equally popular with all Internet users except the very young (teens) and the older (70 and up).

Chapter 2

This chapter includes a description of the qualitative research techniques, the long interview research design, the role of the researcher, boundaries of the study, ethical considerations and verification of data.

2.1 The Qualitative Research Paradigm

Qualitative tradition has a long history in sociology and anthropology. (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991) While quantitative methods gained the majority of favor for a few decades after World War II, qualitative methodology is now seen as a key contributor to the social sciences. New research techniques have enhanced the standing of qualitative methodology and made it more useful to social sciences, particularly in the understanding of the role of media in individuals' lives and communities.

Creswell (2003) outlines the characteristics of qualitative research, including that it takes place in a natural setting such as a home or office; it uses methods that are humanistic and interactive; it is not tightly pre-figured but rather emergent; it is interpretative; it shuns micro-analysis in favor of a broad panoramic view of a central phenomenon; it acknowledges the researcher's biases, values and interests; and its reasoning is largely inductive, but uses inductive and deductive processes.

Qualitative studies are interpretive, as opposed to positivist or critical. "The aim of this paradigm is to understand how people in everyday natural settings create meaning and interpret the events of their world." (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 108) According to Wimmer & Dominick, interpretive researchers strive for depth in their studies and

believe that human beings cannot be pigeon-holed but are each fundamentally different. In contrasting the positivist versus interpretive paradigms, Wimmer & Dominick make the following distinctions: that the interpretive researcher “is an integral part of the data” (p. 109) as opposed to being separated from the data; that the interpretive research design can change or be adjusted throughout the research process, as opposed to having a set design determined before the study begins; interpretive research is done in the field, as opposed to a controlled setting; the researcher is the instrument and no other individual can substitute, as opposed to positivist research in which others could use the same instrument to gather data; and the interpretive researcher develops theories as they emerge from the research process, as opposed to testing existing theory.

McCracken (1988) outlines important differences between the qualitative and quantitative traditions. While the quantitative tradition focuses on defining precise categories prior to beginning the study, the qualitative tradition isolates and defines categories during the course of the research. In a qualitative study, questions are designed to cause the respondent more difficulty in answering, as opposed to quantitative questions that allow the respondent to answer with no ambiguity. While a quantitative project calls for a large number of respondents so generalizations to a larger population can be made; a qualitative project operates under the principle that “less is more” (p. 17), with the researcher working longer and more carefully with a small group of people, rather than working superficially with more subjects.

2.2 The Long Interview Research Design

This research project utilized the long interview process to enable the researcher to learn details about the subjects' use of media that the researcher could not personally witness because the activity is dispersed over place and time.

Lindlof (1995) cites seven basic objectives of qualitative interviewing:

- “learning about things that cannot be observed directly by other means;
- “understanding a social actor’s perspective;
- “inferring the communicative properties and processes of interpersonal relationship;
- “verifying, validating or commenting on data obtained from other sources;
- “testing hypotheses the researcher has developed;
- “eliciting the distinctive language – vocabularies, idioms, jargon, forms of speech—used by social actors in their natural settings;
- “achieving efficiency in collecting data.” (p. 166)

The first objective, “Learn about things that cannot be observed directly by other means,” is defined as giving the interviewer the opportunity to learn details that the researcher can’t witness because the action is dispersed over time, such as media usage. Interviewing can compensate for some deficits of observing. The second objective, “understand a social actor’s own perspective,” means that an interview allows the subject to account for and explain her behavior. The third objective, “infer the communicative properties and processes of interpersonal relationships,” means that the interviewer has the opportunity to cultivate the relationship to lead the subject to disclose information.

The fourth objective, “verifying, validating or commenting on data obtained from other sources,” allows the interviewer to ask questions related to data from other studies or from other subjects to see if a particular subject fits into that sphere. The fifth objective, “test hypotheses he or she has developed,” means the interviewer has the opportunity to verify his own hypotheses. The sixth objective, “elicit the distinctive language – vocabularies, idioms, jargon, forms of speech – used by social actors in their natural settings,” means the interviewer can be exposed to certain language that helps to interpret the scene. The seventh objective, “achieve efficiency in collecting data,” is based on the fact that long periods of observation may not be practical. (pp. 166-169)

McCracken (1988) outlines a four-step method of inquiry, used in this study. A circle of qualitative methods is divided into the following four quadrants:

- “review of analytic categories and interview design;
- “review of cultural categories and interview design;
- “interview procedures and the discovery of cultural categories;
- “interview analysis and the discovery of analytical categories.” (p. 29)

The “review of analytic categories and interview design” refers to the literature review, in which the researcher becomes the master of previous research and uses the information to design the interview questions. The “review of cultural categories and interview design” means the interviewer develops an awareness of his own personal experiences with the topic and then is able to distance himself from making certain assumptions during the interview process. The “interview procedures and the discovery of cultural categories” refers to constructing a questionnaire that allows for prompts to

elicit information from the subject. The “interview analysis and discovery of analytical categories” refers to determining themes from the interviews, analyzing those themes and then reaching conclusions. (pp.29-46)

2.3 The Researcher’s Role

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is as a kind of “ ‘instrument’ in the collection and analysis of data.” (McCracken, p. 18) The researcher uses his or her own intelligence and experience to listen to subjects, ask appropriate follow-up questions, then sort, winnow, organize and interpret the data. The researcher listens to the subject telling of her experiences, and then searches for matches in the researcher’s own experience for ideas and practices. If there is no match of experience in the researcher’s own life, then the process of imaginative reconstruction can be undertaken, in which the researcher allows these new ideas to live in her own mind as if they were natural assumptions. “Once these ideas have been properly ‘entertained,’ the investigator can ask: ‘What does the world look like when I hold these things to be true?’ ” (p. 20)

As researcher, I bring a background of 27 years of working full time in media, primarily in daily newspapers, but more recently in the area known as custom content. Custom content is defined as publications and web sites aimed at targeted demographics such as young adults in their 20s and 30s, Hispanics and women with children. As general manager of custom content for *The Democrat and Chronicle* in Rochester, N.Y., I am responsible for overseeing the production of a wide variety of publications and web sites. These include but are not limited to a free weekly entertainment publication aimed at adults in their 20s and 30s and its companion web site; a bi-monthly glossy magazine for women ages 25 to 45 and its companion web site; a web site aimed at 80,000 college

students in the Rochester region; two upscale glossy magazines aimed at an upper income demographic in Rochester and Canandaigua, N.Y., and a monthly tabloid aimed at Hispanics in the Rochester area.

Each publication and web site has a specific demographic target defined by various factors that may include age, ethnicity, gender, household income and home value.

Over the course of my career, I have been exposed to numerous market studies conducted by parent corporation Gannett, my former employer Knight Ridder, Scarborough and Media Audit. I also have conducted or observed interviews with numerous focus groups or reader panels. I have assisted in formulating questions for the aforementioned market research studies conducted by Gannett, and formulated questions for reader panels on a variety of topics. I believe these experiences enhanced my knowledge in leading open-ended interviews of the subjects and allowed me to probe more deeply into determining their reasons for using certain media and their preferences for the same.

As part of the research process, I fully disclosed to subjects my current status of employment and the involvement of my employer in the research study (funding of gift cards given to respondents at the end of the interview; the fact that my employer is reimbursing me for the college tuition to achieve my master's degree). I fully disclosed this information in the standard ethics protocol and consent form that each subject signed.

I was also able to quickly establish rapport with the subjects. I am used to interacting with women in their 20s as I currently have four women out of a staff of 15 in that category. I am also the stepmother of a 30-year-old female. "What the interviewer

wants to achieve is rapport with the interviewee, or the ability of both parties to empathize with each other's perspective." (Lindlof, p. 180) As someone who uses or has used a variety of media devices, including the Internet, an iPod, a Verizon Treo and a BlackBerry, I am familiar with the opportunity to obtain news and advertising information via these devices.

2.4 Bounding the Study

The following states the parameters of the study.

2.4.1 Setting

This study was conducted in the homes of the subjects, with one exception, so they could demonstrate their usage of media devices, and the researcher could better understand the setting and circumstances in which these devices are used. Only one subject was interviewed outside her home because she had just moved to a new residence and did not yet have Internet access. She was interviewed at a Panera Bread restaurant, which offered free wireless Internet access; the subject's laptop was utilized to view web sites.

2.4.2 Actors

The subjects of this study were eight women living in the Rochester, N.Y., metro area who fell into the age range of 22 to 29, not living with parents, and working full time. The women were all single, childless and had no children living in the household. Five of the women lived with their boyfriends or fiancés. To qualify, a subject had to own a home computer and spend at least three hours per week accessing the Internet on it; had to own a cell phone; had to own a TV; had to use either an iPod or PDA that had Internet access.

The study interviewed eight women. That number was chosen based on the principle that “ ‘less is more.’ It is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them.” (McCracken, p. 17) This study is exploratory and makes no claim to generalizability.

The women were recruited through a local organization called Rochester Area Twenty Somethings (RATS). RATS is a social organization with an electronic list serve with 3,000 members. Two e-mails to recruit subjects were sent out on the list serve. The first message sought women in the age range of 21 to 29 who met the aforementioned criteria. Subjects were offered a \$75 VISA gift card for participating in the research, to be given to them at the end of the interview session. When the majority of qualified respondents fell into the age range of 26 to 29, a second e-mail message was sent out specifically soliciting women in the age range of 21 to 25, to get younger potential subjects. No subjects who were age 21 responded to the e-mail and attempts by the researcher to utilize community contacts to find women of that age, who met the criteria, failed.

The age breakdown of the selected subjects was as follows: one age 22, two age 24, one age 25, one age 26, two age 27, and one age 29. One woman was Hispanic and one was part Native American. Attempts by the researcher to utilize community contacts to find a qualified subject who was African-American failed.

Seven of the subjects stated their personal income to be in the range of \$25,000 to \$50,000; one subject's income fell into the range of \$50,000 to \$75,000. Seven of the eight subjects rented apartments; one owned her home. Education level ranged from some college to a master's degree. Six of the women had a minimum of a bachelor's

degree; three of those were taking post-graduate courses. Occupations were as follows: music teacher for middle and high school students, two Information Technology support specialists, a customer service representative for a health insurance company, an elementary school counselor, a nurse practitioner, an administrative assistant at a local hospital and an editorial assistant for a magazine. Each woman was promised anonymity in reportings of the findings.

2.4.3 Events

Using the long interview qualitative research method, the focus of this study was how women ages 22 to 29 use media to get news and advertising information. The research suggests some answers to the question: How do women ages 22 to 29, who are living independently from their parents and working full time, use electronic and print media and the Internet to seek and receive information such as news and advertisements? Second, the research offers possible answers to the question: How can local media in any given market reach women in this age group, through either specific products or web sites and various delivery methods?

2.4.4 Processes

Particular attention was paid to gleaning information on the gratifications that the women receive from certain media and how that influences their usage of certain forms of media.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Subjects were given a written consent form that outlined the purpose of the study and how the findings would be compiled and utilized. Subjects were given clear and honest reasons as to why they were chosen for the study, the goals of the study and how

the interview would be conducted. (Lindlof, 1995) Each subject was given a copy of the transcript of the interview and a copy of the findings. Permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board to utilize human subjects. Per IRB standards, each subject was granted anonymity in the reporting of findings.

2.6 Data collection strategies

Data was collected in the summer of 2008 through long interviews of approximately two hours in length with each of eight subjects in their homes.

Prior to the interview, the subjects were asked to keep a media diary for one week in which they recorded their usage of media. A blank diary and media questionnaire were mailed to the subjects to be completed before the in-home interview took place.

Doris Graber (1998) utilized the technique of media diaries as part of studying how a panel of 21 selected news stories to pay attention to. She followed up with interviews with the panelists, questioning them about their selections. From there patterns emerged and predictions were developed.

The three-page media questionnaire focused on biographical information and questions on ownership and usage of media devices. The purpose of this questionnaire was to save time on the in-depth interview but still provide media usage information that the researcher could inquire about during that interview.

For the in-home interviews, a questionnaire was utilized to ensure that the same terrain was covered in the same order for each subject, while still allowing for the researcher to ask follow-up questions and probe more deeply with individual subjects. The researcher was able to take advantages of opportunities that presented themselves.

Following guidelines established by McCracken (1988), each question area had a set of grand-tour questions “to allow respondents to tell their own stories in their own terms.” (p. 34) The researcher then utilized the technique of “floating prompts” and finally “planned prompts” if needed to prompt the subject to offer more insights. (p. 35) Thus, care was taken to make sure that data were collected for categories and relationships previously deemed important, but also on categories and relationships not previously identified.

Interviewing women in their homes allowed the researcher to observe the women using media devices, such as a home computer, to access information from the Internet, to show favorite web sites, for example. It also allowed the researcher to question subjects on specific web sites that she wanted to garner feedback on. Only one subject was interviewed outside her home because she had just moved to a new residence and did not yet have Internet access. She was interviewed at a Panera Bread restaurant, which offered free wireless Internet access; the subject’s laptop was utilized.

2.7 Data analysis procedures

A tape recorder was used to record the interviews and all tapes were transcribed. The portions of transcriptions were sorted into appropriate categories and analyzed.

McCracken (1988) offered a five-stage process for analyzing data, which took the researcher from analysis of individual answers in transcripts through identifying themes within each interview, to finally taking themes from each interview and bringing them together into theses. This five-stage process was utilized in this research project.

2.8 Verification

To ensure validity, the researcher e-mailed to each subject a copy of her transcript to verify the accuracy of the document. Only two subjects made factual corrections, all of which were minor. The researcher also e-mailed the chapter on findings to subjects to verify its accuracy. Only one subject clarified a point in the findings; all other subjects viewed the findings related to them as accurate.

The chairman and members of the thesis committee acted as examiners throughout the process. The researcher also articulated bias in writing in the thesis proposal under the heading the “Researcher’s Role.” Wimmer and Dominick (2003) cite factors that help build credibility, including an audit trail – records of original data, field observations and notes for analysis; member checks – participants verify accuracy of researcher’s conclusions; and research team participation -- to raise questions of bias or misinterpretation. In this case, the thesis committee served the latter function.

2.9 Reporting the findings

McCracken (1988) offers seven conditions that qualitative data must meet in any explanation: it must be exact, economical, mutually consistent, externally consistent, unified, powerful and fertile. Because this research is focused on long interviews with subjects, the findings are presented in narrative form. Rich, thick description is used to document how subjects utilize media in their daily lives. A formal discussion offers insights into common themes that emerge in the data. Finally, the researcher offers implications for media companies that are trying to reach the audience of women in their 20s.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the findings of the research. Pseudonyms are used in reporting these findings.

3.1 Media preferences for news

Subjects used a variety of media to get news. Television and Internet were the overwhelming preferences. Television news consumption included both local newscasts and national programs, such as the Today show in the mornings on NBC, or cable programming, such as CNN, and local newscasts in the early evening or before going to bed. Six of the subjects regularly watched a TV newscast at some point during the day.

A typical scenario was that of Megan, a 25-year-old administrative assistant at a local hospital. Megan's diary showed that every weekday morning, she turned on the TV to the local ABC affiliate for 30 to 40 minutes. "I turn it on after I get out of the shower and try to catch news and the weather. More the weather, to see what to wear for the day. And then, random news stories from between then and when we leave in the morning." She also turns on Good Morning America on weekend mornings.

Only one subject preferred television over all other media for getting news. Leah, a 25-year-old music teacher, said, "If I am seeking news, I will always just turn the TV on. I can't ever think of a time I looked on the Internet." Leah said her primary interest was in local news. "Mostly I'm more interested in local news, and I'm sure this is true for a few people, that I'm just a little more discouraged with world news right now, so if I don't catch that, it's not the biggest worry for me."

Six of the eight subjects preferred the Internet for getting news. When asked about a favorite way to get news, Sarah, a 27-year-old Internet technology support specialist, said:

“My favorite is online because I can go through, quickly glance over. When I’m watching TV, I have to wait for them to get to a story. I can read CNN in five minutes, click on a link – they have a little summary – so I can go through much quicker, and if I carry a paper or magazines, it’s one more thing that I have to keep hold of. I’m not really great at that, so a little click, click, here and I’m good.”

Amy, a 22-year-old editorial assistant at a magazine, mentioned nymag.com as a favorite web site for news, citing the humor incorporated into the news and that the blogs are timely and updated frequently. She also cited CNN.com.

“I guess I would prefer getting my news via the Internet just because it’s um, it’s reacting as the news happens so it’s really easy to see, like I said with New York Mag they do the blog thing and they have like every half hour, hour or so updating, and you know if you check CNN and they’ll update what is going on, so for me it’s not necessarily about like reading every single article but, or I just like to know what’s going on as it happens kind of thing, so that’s why I prefer the Internet. I don’t really ever read the newspaper. Maybe like once a week or something like that, but, um, I prefer the Internet.”

Only one woman preferred to get news regularly through print products. Tracey, a 26-year-old nurse practitioner, reads both the local newspaper, the *Democrat and Chronicle*, and subscribes to *The Week*, a weekly newsmagazine. “I’m definitely a news junkie. I love reading the paper. I get the D&C. I don’t have a subscription but I either get it at the YMCA every day or at work.” She will buy the newspaper if she doesn’t go to the YMCA or her workplace. She also uses TV and Internet a few times per week for short time periods. She’ll catch early morning news on TV before going to the YMCA or

her workplace, and then watch a local newscast at 5 p.m. at home. She often checks MSN.com at work during her lunch hour.

Still, her preference for getting news is print.

“I often will read part of my magazine *The Week*; it usually takes me you know 4 or 5 days to read it because I’ll just read bits of it at a time. And I like newspapers just, I like the feel of looking, actually physically looking, through something, drinking my coffee. I use the computer because it’s easy, but it’s not my preferred method of getting the news. I’m kind of old-fashioned in that way. I also, it isn’t reflected in this media diary, but I usually also read *insider* magazine or *Free Time* (two local entertainment products). Usually I like to look at those and I read those pretty regularly as well.”

Tracey said she’s interested in both local and national news. Her parents believed it was important to be educated on what is going on in the world, and passed that on to their children. The family still debates politics and current events when they are together. Tracey said she reads *The Week* because it gives her both a liberal and a conservative viewpoint.

Tracey was unique in her habit of reading a daily newspaper. Sarah said she frequently buys the *Democrat and Chronicle* on Sundays for local news, in-depth news and advertising circulars and coupons. None of the subjects were frequent users of the newspaper’s web site. Media diaries showed that Lindsay, a 24-year-old technical support agent, checked DemocratandChronicle.com two times during the week, likewise for Megan.

Of the eight subjects, Tracey appeared to spend the most time on getting news. She said she has other friends who are as interested in news as she is, and others who are not, but she acknowledges “I am probably more interested in it than people my age.”

One subject was at the opposite end of the spectrum from Tracey. Erica, a 29-year-old customer service representative, showed no usage of media to get news over the course of the seven-day media diary. She listened to one local radio show for talk and music during one 30-minute period noted in her diary. “I don’t look at news that much, I find it just depressing,” she explained. Erica will on occasion seek out news if she hears about something that interests her. For example, she said a co-worker had told her about a high school classmate who was arrested, and Erica went to the web site of a local TV station, typed the classmate’s name into a search engine, and read the article that popped up.

Kate, a 27-year-old elementary school counselor, also cited negativity as a reason she avoids TV newscasts. “I absolutely hate watching the news on TV. I think it is negative. I think it just puts a downer on, I’m speaking specifically to the nightly news, like the six o’clock news.” If she wants to read news, she goes to the Internet.

3.1.2 Magazine readership

The subjects overall did not spend much time reading magazines. Five subjects subscribed to magazines. Other titles (besides *The Week*), included *Information Week*, *Cosmopolitan* (two subjects), *Every Day with Rachel Ray*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *Nylon*, *Esquire* and *Glamour*. Kate had friends and family who had given to her copies of *Real Simple*, *People* and various bridal magazines (to help her plan her wedding). “I stopped buying magazines to budget money better, so I just do it all online,” Kate said. Sarah said she doesn’t buy magazines because she thinks the information on a magazine’s web site is more timely. She will, however, browse magazine covers in a store, but then go to the web site for the information.

3.1.3 Electronic delivery of information

Only one subject, Lindsay, subscribed to podcasts. Three of the four to which she subscribes were related to her career field, technology – WebbAlert, Geekbrief.TV and Mactips&tricks. She also subscribes to the Dignation podcast. Digg.com is a web site where users submit content and then vote for stories they like. Top stories and videos, as determined by users, are placed higher on the site. Lindsay said the podcasts were her preferred way to get news.

“...because it’s something where you know they download to your computer, you have them, and you can watch them when you have the time to watch them. You know it’s not where you have to be in front of the television at a specific time of day or you know have a newspaper arrive and read it four days later when the news is old.”

Lindsay downloads the podcasts to her laptop and views them there. She does not own an MP3 player, but her boyfriend has an iPod, and they use that to view podcasts when they are out of town.

The majority of the subjects did not choose radio as a means to get news. Only two cited radio for news; both tuned in to get news and traffic information on their commutes to work.

While media companies have greatly increased the ways that users can get information via phone or BlackBerry-type devices or MP3 players, none of these women were using hand-held devices for that purpose. MP3 players were used exclusively for music, not for downloading podcasts. Phones were strictly for calls, shooting photos, and text messaging. Even if a phone was equipped to get the Internet, subjects said they either weren’t interested in using that feature, or did not want to pay more in their monthly phone bill in order to use it. Text messaging was limited to family and friends; two of the

subjects mentioned that they get a text message from Verizon when their bill is due. None received any text messages for news or advertising information. When asked if they would be interested in receiving text alerts for news or weather, reactions were mixed, ranging from wanting to know how to set it up, to concern that text messages would simply duplicate information already being e-mailed, to no interest in getting them.

Only one subject cited RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feeds as a way to get news. However, subjects may have been getting the feeds through customized web pages such as myyahoo.com, but were unaware of the terminology “RSS feeds”. On the advance questionnaire, when subjects were asked if they were getting RSS feeds, all subjects except one answered no or were unsure. Leah answered yes, but then wrote that she was unsure how they worked. In the home interview, Lindsay stated she gets feeds from sources such as the BBC, *USA Today*, CNN, plus weather, horoscopes, Hollywood news and more, through her i-Google page. Kate has her computer set up with Yahoo as her home page and she said she always reads the headlines. “If there is something interesting, well, there’s always something interesting, so I’ll click on that and read more about that.”

Several of the women expressed an interest in news about celebrities, either reading it on news sites such as MSN.com or going to specific sites such as perezhilton.com or GoFugYourself.celebuzz.com, which are blogs about the latest celebrity shenanigans, with photos showing what celebrities are wearing.

3.2 Internet shopping

All subjects used the Internet to shop (both looking and buying) and to research products. Clothes shopping was a major interest, but subjects also used the Internet to research buying other products, including cars, an iPod, computer components and a food

processor. Tracey, the nurse practitioner, uses the Internet to buy items needed for her job at a nursing facility. Some subjects conducted their research online, but then went to a store to make the purchase or to see what merchandise the store had. For example, Old Navy is a favorite store for Erica. She will check online to see what's on sale, but then drive to the store. Leah subscribes to ConsumerReports.org for a small monthly fee (she estimated \$5) and had used that to research food processors. She then purchased the processor of her choice at a local store to save on shipping costs. Two of the women, Megan and Kate, were using the Internet to research many aspects of their wedding and to purchase items. Kate had recently purchased her wedding gown from jcrew.com. Megan was checking web sites related to wedding information, such as theknot.com and theamericanwedding.com, just about every day while she kept her media diary. The Knot offered information on wedding vendors, such as reception sites, by geographic region and also allowed users to share information with each other.

When asked about the positive qualities of the shopping web sites the subjects frequent, subjects cited such characteristics as searchability (by what sizes and colors were in stock), the ability to look at clothes through different views and zooming, and a "what's new" feature or the site being updated frequently with new merchandise.

They also used the Internet for price comparisons. Erica offered this example: "Sometimes I'll have Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Lowe's and Mr. Seconds or whatever all at once (on her computer screen); see if I'm looking for a patio set or paints or whatever, so I do tons of that."

The subjects all appeared to be price-conscious and voiced interest in wanting to get information on sales and deals. Six subjects subscribed to at least one e-mail

newsletter from national retailers. These included Bath and Body Works, One Hanes Place, Old Navy, Linens and Things, TigerDirect.com, Home Depot, Nordstrom, Barneys, Lane Bryant, JC Penney, Gateway, Dell, Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and others. While some subjects may not read the newsletter every time (and in fact more than one subject's inbox showed many unopened newsletters), they did not try to unsubscribe to them.

One subject, Erica, used the e-mails from her favorite store, Old Navy, to help her organize her shopping. For example, she said if she gets a newsletter that says tank tops are on sale, she will look at them online, write down what she likes, and then drive to the store, ask if the store carries those and then purchase what she likes. She said she hates shopping and this way "I am in and out of the store ... I hate going to the stores and shopping. I would rather do it here (at her computer), get (the) research done and then go to the store."

One subject, Kate, said she had not signed up for e-mail newsletters but received them occasionally from Ebay and found them annoying.

One subject received no e-mail newsletters. Leah, the school teacher, said she used to get e-mails from bands when she was in college but has since unsubscribed to them. She said she doesn't sign up for e-mails because she checks her personal e-mail only once a week during the school year.

The subjects were receiving few or no e-mail newsletters from Rochester area retailers. The few newsletters received included a women's clothing boutique, a paint-your-own pottery store and a spa. The majority of the subjects said they would like to get more such newsletters from local stores. Amy stated that if a Rochester-area store sent

her an e-mail about a sale or new items, “I think definitely that would swing me to take another visit.” Although Kate stated firmly that she did not want to receive e-mails from retailers, she cited two blogs (one by a Rochester-area woman) that she frequently reads; both feature new products that she might want to buy.

3.3 Reaction to Internet advertising

During the interviews, subjects were shown various examples of Internet advertising, primarily on the DemocratandChronicle.com web site, to get their reaction. In general, subjects said they ignore ads on web sites. They often find them annoying and they aren’t interested in the product or service advertised. In more than one case a subject said she would not have even noticed an ad if it had not been pointed out to her.

Kate expressed a fear about clicking on advertisements on web sites. “I know this is probably not true, but I feel that if I were to click on the advertisements, it will get spam on my computer. Because we have spam problems with our computers, so I would never click on an advertisement, ever.”

Leah stated that advertisements can deter her from returning to a web site, specifically citing one ad in particular.

“There’s one (ad) that’s been out lately that just drives me crazy. It’s like someone dancing, and it will be about like car insurance, and it just doesn’t make sense to me, and I find that really discouraging and distracting, and if I find a website that has too much of that, I tend to not go on it just because I feel like I can’t do what I want to do on the website. Um, but I don’t think from what I remember, I don’t think I’ve ever really been influenced enough or interested enough to go click on something and follow it. Plus I have found that the couple of times that I have done that, I end up getting a lot of pop-ups and weird stuff that are just too much of a hassle and too stressful.”

Only two subjects said they paid attention to banner ads on web sites. Megan, the bride-to-be, said:

“They catch my eye more and more now, because the cookies are imbedded in them so they can tell where I’ve been and they are putting up ads that I might want to see. So versus something where it used to be not related, now you know, a wedding web site is popping up at the bottom and I’m like, ‘Oh, I think I should probably look at that!’ So, now with the scanning in the computers, I do pay more attention to the banners than I used to.”

Sarah said that a gaming web site that she uses, pogo.com, encourages its users to click on ads to keep the games free, so she will click on those occasionally.

Other subjects ignored the ads.

Reactions to flyover ads ran the gamut from hatred to liking them to not being bothered by them. Most found them somewhat annoying. Viewing a flyover ad from a local realty agency on DemocratandChronicle.com, Leah noted: “This is the kind of one that I think, if I was going to put a level of annoyance on something, this is a very low level, but it’s at the point where I kind of feel like ‘Oh, how do I close that window?’ ” Sarah doesn’t mind a flyover ad if she was already planning to scroll over it, but she does not like them if she can’t figure out how to close them. If Megan knows that a flyover ad is on the site, she is not bothered by them but does not mouse over them. Amy, on the other hand, in viewing a flyover RocPets.com ad on DemocratandChronicle.com, said: “I like the fact that you can only, it only obtrudes or it only gets in the way of your viewing if you are scrolling over it, which is nice, ’cause then it’s not an overwhelming ad.”

Subjects were largely indifferent to video advertisements that “pre-roll” before a video story. Kate was the most vehemently opposed to them:

“I hate it! I find it annoying. I understand their purpose, I definitely understand their purpose, but to me, I am sort of like ‘commercials can stay on TV, I’m looking at a video.’ I hate looking at commercials before the video. I mean I still click on the videos. I watch the videos but I don’t like it.”

Most, however, simply saw the video advertisement as something to be endured in order to view the video. Tracey, who frequents MSN.com, noted that video clips on news stories or from the Today show always have a 30-second commercial at the beginning and she just sits through them. Lindsay was the most positive about them.

“As long as they’re kept short, you know you’re there to look at a video for what the video is about, not the ad that’s for it...I mean it’s a good way to throw an ad in there. Having the ad on like the side of the web page, I think would be a little bit more convenient because it gives the people a choice to if they want to click on it or if they’re going to be made to watch it before they actually get to see the video they want.”

Not all subjects were asked about video ads that play constantly on a site. Megan found those more annoying than pre-roll ads and said she had seen them on TheKnot.com. “I’d rather see (the video ad) and have it be gone, than have it there the whole time, because it’s annoying. Especially if you can’t find the mute button for them, they drive me crazy.”

Subjects were also asked about sponsored advertising links. To get feedback, subjects were shown sponsored links that popped up during a Google search for an item, such as women’s sandals. Most subjects were open to viewing them and clicking on them, if they fit the subject’s actual search or were a site name that the subject was familiar with. Some subjects were wary of clicking a sponsored link to a site they didn’t know. Kate said she never clicked on sponsored links although she acknowledged that they are not unlike other links that come up in a search. “I have no good reason.” She said

that even though Target.com came up as a sponsored link in a search on women's sandals, she would not click on that link, although she had no qualms about going directly to Target.com herself.

3.4 Usage of Internet classified advertising sites

Subjects also were asked about their usage of Craigslist, the Internet classified advertising site. Six said they had used it for a variety of tasks. Two had found their current apartments via a listing on Craigslist; one had just posted her current apartment because she was looking to move. Another had sold concert tickets on it; one subject had purchased a coffee table from a post, and another had bought a wireless card posted on it. Two said they liked the "Missed Connections" feature of the site, which is almost like a matchmaking service. User reaction to the site was uniformly positive, noting its organization and the fact that posting is free.

Subjects were familiar with classified ads on DemocratandChronicle.com and five said that they had used the site to look for apartments and/or jobs. Two subjects said they had found the site difficult to use. One subject noted that she liked how the newspaper's site was broken down into geographic regions and that a search could be narrowed, such as whether a landlord accepted dogs. Overall, though, subjects displayed a much higher level of enthusiasm for Craigslist than for DemocratandChronicle.com, talking about the variety of ways in which they had used Craigslist. One noted that Craigslist had many more apartment listings for Rochester's Park Avenue area, a popular neighborhood for 20somethings, than did the DemocratandChronicle.com. One subject said she had used the classifieds in the

print edition when she was apartment hunting but had not thought of going online to search.

3.5 Reactions to specific Democrat and Chronicle products

Subjects were shown and asked to give their reactions to three products produced by the *Democrat and Chronicle*: a glossy magazine called *her-Celebrating the women of Rochester*; a companion web site at herRochester.com and a weekly entertainment tabloid called *insider*.

3.5.1 Reaction to *her* magazine

Of the eight subjects, only two had seen copies of the magazine, *her-Celebrating the Women of Rochester*. One of them, along with a subject who said she didn't know the magazine existed, was receiving a weekly e-mail newsletter related to the magazine. Two subjects said they knew of the magazine's existence, but had never seen it.

The subjects were asked to page through the April/May 2008 edition and comment on what they found interesting. Topics of interest varied by subject but most expressed interest in articles on fashion, entrepreneurship and profiles of women. At the end of the discussion, all expressed that they were very or somewhat interested in the content; several commented on the fact that the magazine offered information focused on the Rochester-area. Leah summed up her feelings this way:

“I feel like (the magazine) stresses getting to know women in the area that are more independent and I have a sense of confidence in looking at it. It's a strong and positive message for women. So, I think I would probably look at it, knowing that and wanting to be a little bit more, I guess in contact with what is going on locally ... I like that it is local so that I could read an article and actually go to the place it might be talking about or maybe actually meet that person.”

3.5.2 Reaction to herRochester.com

After reviewing the magazine, the subjects were asked to review the web site herRochester.com. Only one subject had seen the web site before, but in a different format. (A redesign of the web site launched just prior to the interviews.) Subjects' comments included that the site was visually pleasing. Amy used the words "pretty and sophisticated." Subjects expressed interest in photo galleries, forums, bloggers, things to do and certain topic categories such as health and fitness and fashion. One subject said she prefers reading to watching videos; another expressed the opposite viewpoint.

All subjects said they were very or somewhat interested in the web site. Several said they would go back to it; some subjects book-marked it after reviewing it. Two offered that they would be more likely to use the web site than read the print edition; one because she didn't like clutter in her home, the other because she already uses the web a lot. Sarah said that she would visit the web site for "things to do" and the forums, but would read the magazine during her lunch hour.

3.5.3 Reaction to *insider*

All the subjects had seen and read *insider*, which is published weekly. One subject said she read it weekly; two said they read it every other week; the others read it occasionally or infrequently.

The calendar of things to do, coverage of upcoming events, profiles of young adults (20 questions), movie reviews, restaurant stories (two dining out for \$25), and restaurant coupons were the most frequently mentioned topics that subjects expressed interest in. A story that generated much interest among subjects was on a reporter who

tried to live for a week only on food purchased at a dollar store. Most subjects said they were “somewhat interested” in the content. Three subjects said they thought the content was aimed at women younger than them, women who would be more interested in bar hopping than they are.

3.6 Reaction to iVillage.com

Subjects were also shown the national web site iVillage.com and asked to comment on it. Four had seen it, although three of those said they had not looked at in the last two-three years. With the exception of celebrity gossip, there was no overall consensus on topics that the subjects were interested in. Topics of interest that subjects mentioned included diet, health, beauty, food, style, astrology, go green and weddings.

Three subjects said they would go back to the site, but two of those said it would be infrequently; others said they did not think they would go back or that the site was not aimed at them.

3.7 Summary

All subjects were frequent users of the Internet, for a variety of tasks, checking e-mail, shopping or browsing, interacting via Facebook, checking news updates, and so on. TV and the Internet were the overwhelming preferences for getting news for subjects. The Internet was used for specific purposes, and subjects mostly ignored advertising on the web; flyover and pre-roll video advertisements were the least objectionable. However, most subjects subscribed to e-mail newsletters (announcing sales, etc.) from national retailers and would be open to receiving similar communiqués from Rochester-area retailers. Subjects liked the local aspects of *her* magazine and herRochester.com, as opposed to the national web site, ivillage.com, aimed at women.

Chapter 4

The purpose of the study was to explore how young women use electronic, Internet and print media to seek and receive information such as news and advertisements in their homes and to record their reactions to existing products (web and print).

The second purpose was to determine what lessons there are for local media in any given market on how to reach women in this age group, through either specific products or web sites and various delivery methods.

This chapter examines the links between the findings and uses and gratifications theory. It also provides recommendations for media companies in how to engage 20something women as an audience for news and advertising information.

4.1 Uses and gratifications theory

The research questions tied directly into uses and gratifications theory. Following three of the five tasks that McQuail (1985) cited, the research looked at gratifications and media use, social origins and media use, and gratifications and effects.

4.1.1 Gratifications and media use

Six subjects preferred the Internet for getting news; one preferred TV and the other, print products. In citing the Internet, subjects expressed satisfaction with sites that are updated frequently and offer a variety of information on many topics, and offered blogs and video. The subject who received more gratification from print products also was a frequent user of MSN.com. That subject defined herself as a “news junkie” and as “old-fashioned” for liking to physically hold a newspaper or news magazine and read it while drinking her coffee. The eighth subject said she preferred TV for news, primarily

local news, and never went to the Internet for news. This appeared to be a long-held habit for her.

All subjects owned home computers, which was a requirement for the research. Seven owned laptop computers, which they could use all over their homes or take outside their homes, making portability a key part of their media usage.

In terms of gratifications and preferences for getting advertising information, subjects mostly ignored and avoided advertising on web sites as much as possible. Flyover and pre-roll video ads were the least objectionable, according to subjects.

4.1.2 Social origins and media use

The researcher asked subjects about their level of education, profession and economic status to see if any conclusions could be drawn regarding their choices of media and usage of media.

No clear patterns emerged. All subjects were avid users of the Internet in varying ways. The subject who did not have a bachelor's or associate degree was the least interested in news, and the subject with the most education (having completed her master's degree) appeared to be the most interested in news and preferred print as her delivery model. However, neither of those subjects cited their education as the reason for their choices. The former credited her lack of interest in news to finding it depressing, as did another subject (who was pursuing a master's degree) who gave the same reason for not watching news on television. The subject who preferred print media appeared to have the most interest in news and credited that interest to her upbringing and her parents instilling in her a sense of civic responsibility.

Level of income did not appear to affect choice or satisfaction with media. All but one subject made from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in income; the subject with the master's degree, who worked as a nurse practitioner, stated her income as between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and preferred print as a medium. Given that three subjects were in the process of earning their master's degree, no conclusion can be drawn that having a master's degree would then lean them toward preferring print as a medium. One could not conclude that once the subjects had a master's degree, their allegiance would switch to print.

Neither could one conclude that chosen profession affected choice and satisfaction of media. Two of the subjects preferring the Internet to get news worked in information technology; others worked as an elementary school counselor, a customer service representative for an insurance company, an administrative assistant at a medical center and an editorial assistant. The subject who preferred television worked as a music teacher; and the nurse practitioner preferred print.

Given the small sample size, it would be impossible to extrapolate any of these findings to a larger group.

4.1.3 Gratifications and effects

Subjects chose media that suited their needs at a certain moment in their daily routine. Morning TV news programs were turned on while subjects got ready for work, to catch news headlines and the weather forecast. They viewed TV while working out at their gym or turned it on in the early evening, again to catch up on the day's events.

Limited listening to the radio happened while driving to work, but subjects who did listen to the radio were interested in music and weather, not news. Only five subjects subscribed to magazines, preferring the web to print.

If the subjects worked in an office, they had ready access to the Internet throughout their day and would take breaks to view news sites or surf a shopping site. In the evenings, they might surf news and shopping sites as they watched their favorite TV programs and text messaged their friends. One subject, Erica, the only one who did not own a laptop, had her computer set up in her bedroom at a desk, right next to her television. “I think about 98 percent of the time, I have 2-3 different things going on,” she said. “As you can see, I have the TV and the computer right there, cell phone is right there. I text message quite a bit ... So yeah most of the time I have more than one thing going on. Very rarely do I have just one.”

In their uses and gratifications research on the Internet, J. Newhagen and S. Rafaeli focused on “five defining characteristics to see if users prefer the Internet due to these characteristics,” according to Ruggiero (Ruggiero, 2000. p. 22). The characteristics are multimedia; packet switching; hypertextuality; synchronicity and interactivity.

Multimedia is defined as computers integrating text, graphics, video, animation and sound. Packet switching refers to the technology of how information is transmitted via packets, data such as email and web pages. Hypertextuality is created by the hypertext markup language (HTML) that creates the links to information. Interactivity allows users to share information via text, photos and videos. Synchronicity means that users have the opportunity to retrieve information at their convenience and to store it, duplicate it, print it, share it and so on.

All subjects were frequent users of the Internet for a variety of tasks; during the research period, most accessed it daily for web sites or email usage. All subjects interacted with friends and family via Facebook and/or Myspace. Favorite (bookmarked)

web sites fulfilled the five defining characteristics. For example, a shopping web site such as www.nordstrom.com offers slide shows of fashions (multimedia); an email newsletter (packet switching); links to categories of clothing and other information (hypertextuality); the opportunity to order items and comment on blogs (interactivity); and the ability to place items in a shopping cart and retrieve them later (synchronicity).

In utilizing shopping web sites, subjects talked about the convenience of being able to find clothing in their size, do specific searches for certain items, peruse items on sale, and so on, without having to go to a store. Some subjects utilized the web to buy items, such as pants for tall women, which they could not find in local stores.

4.2 Reaction to existing media products

Subjects were shown three products produced by the *Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper company: a weekly entertainment tabloid aimed at young adults called *insider*, a bi-monthly women's magazine aimed at women ages 25 to 44 called *her-Celebrating the Women of Rochester*, and a web site affiliated with the magazine, www.herRochester.com. Subjects also viewed a national women's web site, www.ivillage.com, owned by NBC Universal.

All subjects were familiar with *insider*. Most were "somewhat interested in content" but some felt it was aimed at a younger, college-student audience. Reactions to *her* magazine and web site were largely favorable, with subjects expressing positive comments on the fact that the content is local and highlights local women. The web site, [ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com), garnered less positive reaction, with only three subjects expressing interest in returning to the site.

4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Media companies would be well advised to focus in on the 20something female demographic who are living independently from their parents and working full time. These women are career-oriented and focused on their futures as adults. They are seeking life partners and building their incomes. They are consumers of news and advertising information with an overwhelming preference for getting most, if not all, of this information online.

Uses and gratifications theory provided some insights into how 20something women use media devices to get news and advertising information. That theory assumes that “media and content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfactions” (McQuail, 2000, p. 387). McQuail found that personal utility was a “more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors” (McQuail, 2000, p. 388).

Viewing TV while getting ready for work or while at the gym was a convenient way to catch up on news. Surfing the web while taking a break at work also allowed subjects to learn the headlines of the day. The convenience of being able to seek out information in a format that fit a subject’s lifestyle was the main determinant in choosing the type of media device.

Subjects used certain media devices significantly less than one might expect for getting information. No subjects were downloading podcasts to MP3 devices, although one subject did download podcasts to her laptop; those podcasts were primarily focused on news about her career field of information technology.

Likewise, no subjects were connecting to the Internet via their cell phones. Some cited cost as a factor; others were not sure how the technology would work. Because subjects had not determined that MP3 devices or cell phones offered them the utility they were seeking, they continued to access the Internet via their computers. This could change, however, if cell phone fees come down or if subjects decide they need the convenience of Internet on their phones.

4.3.1 Focusing on the Internet

Using the Internet as a primary source of information gives these women control over their time and how they use their time. They are not ones to sit and watch local or national news on television for long periods of time. And when they actually do watch or listen to TV, they are more than likely doing something else at the same time – surfing or researching on the Internet, text messaging friends, working out at the gym or getting ready for work in the morning.

Their usage of print media – newspapers and magazines -- is limited. Newspaper editors should keep their core products focused on pleasing baby boomers and older readers, who have lifelong habits of reading newspapers. Redesigns and major content changes to attract a 20something audience no doubt will just make regular readers angry and do little to grow a 20something audience that is not inclined to purchase a newspaper, except perhaps on Sundays, when coupons and sales fliers may be a major attraction. To attract this audience, newspaper web sites need to focus on news and information of interest to this demographic – showing faces of people who look like them and are facing similar lifestyle issues – from serious issues such as getting ahead in their careers, managing their money and finding a life partner, to less serious-topics such as what to do

this weekend for fun or picking a restaurant for dinner. The site shouldn't be a regurgitation of news from the daily newspaper. The staff developing and working on the site should be of the same demographic as the audience, and their baby-boomer bosses should give them considerable say in the site development. Newspapers may want one site that appeals to their current boomer audience, and a separate site for younger adults.

Likewise, magazines should continue to focus on their core demographics for the same reasons, while aiming their web sites at a younger demographic. *Vogue* magazine's web site, www.vogue.tv, offers a place where users can shop by brand, trend, department and price. Videos tout products, giving a hip and sophisticated feel to the site.

While print products used to be cited as convenient for their portability, now laptops (which keep getting smaller, lighter and more powerful), along with cell phones, are the powerful information machines that offer thousands more bits of content, and more updated content, than print products.

4.3.2 Obstacles for advertisers

The conundrum for advertisers is how best to reach these women electronically. The research showed that the women mostly ignored traditional forms of advertising on web sites such as banner ads and fixed ads. Flyover ads were distasteful to some subjects but tolerated by others. The least distasteful form of advertising was pre-roll video advertisements placed before a video. Because subjects are used to watching TV commercials, most tended to tolerate these. Advertisers should look for more opportunities for video ads on web sites but should be careful that free-standing video ads offer the opportunity for a subject to turn them off or mute them. Local media need to be more creative in offering options to advertisers. For example, online directories of

services, such as offered on theknot.com, are a way for advertisers to present information in a form that is unobtrusive but targeted to a specific audience.

While national retailers have become much more involved in web advertising, e-mail newsletters and text messaging as ways to reach their target audiences, local and regional retailers have been less inclined, tending to still rely on traditional print, TV and radio to reach customers. This research shows, however, that 20something women are interested in purchasing wares at local stores. Subjects were receiving few or no e-mail newsletters from Rochester-area retailers but the majority of the subjects said they would be interested in that form of communication. Another opportunity exists in blogs that retailers could sponsor on the web sites of local media in which retailers could show photographs and blog about new products, sale items, etc. Sending text messages to subjects is another opportunity to alert them to new merchandise in stores or sales. All subjects used text messaging; some paid a set fee for unlimited text messages. Finding the right frequency of text alerts and e-mail newsletters so subjects don't get annoyed by too many communiqués would be key.

As pricing for more sophisticated cell phones and hand-held devices comes down, 20something women will be more likely to use these devices to connect to the Internet. Several subjects cited price as the reason that they did not utilize the Internet on their cell phones; however, one subject stated that she and her boyfriend used his I-phone to connect to the Internet and she hoped to purchase an I-phone soon. Local media companies should educate their advertisers (many of whom may be baby boomers or older and less technologically savvy) about the ways to reach this audience.

4.3.3 Targeted web sites

Local media companies also need to offer web sites of interest to these women. The herRochester.com cite received positive reaction from subjects, who specifically liked the fact that information on local women was offered, as compared to ivillage.com, a national web site aimed at women. While herRochester.com offered a variety of local lifestyle information, there is also an opportunity for more narrowly focused web sites or silos for women at a certain life stage. One opportunity is for brides-to-be. Two of the subjects were engaged, and were perusing national wedding sites for information on products and local services, such as wedding reception sites. These national sites offer discussion forums where brides-to-be and the recently married can share information. Having a local web site, with ads and directory listings from local stores and discussion forums from area brides (rather than brides from around the country) could be attractive to these women. One subject, Kate, stated in a follow-up e-mail to the researcher that she purchased “save-the-date” notices, invitations and other articles from advertisements viewed on national wedding web sites.

Another key lifestyle stage for 20something women is that they are in the process of acquiring items for their households, such as furniture, appliances (small and large) and electronic devices – flat-screen TVs, stereo systems, computer games and so on. Because 20somethings are surrounded by messages from national media, local retailers need to find better ways to compete with the Best Buys and Home Depots of the world. E-mail newsletters, text-messaging and directory advertisements on web sites with a specific local focus could be helpful. Although these subjects did not currently have large incomes, they are starting out in their careers and have the potential for their income to

grow over time. As they choose a life partner, the couple's combined income will allow them to increase their buying power. And, as women make 80 percent of the buying decisions in a household, it's imperative that local advertisers find a way to reach these women.

As stated before, these women are budget conscious. Local media could help women manage their finances through a web site or silo that assists them with budgeting, credit card debt management, investment advice and so on.

With all web efforts, interactivity is key. Subjects showed that they want to be in control of their lives and how they use media to get the information that they need. They want to be able to connect to other women like them and get information from sources that they trust. They want to feel part of a community, as evidenced by their high interest in social networking sites such as Facebook. These characteristics should spur media organizations to find ways to bring these women together through the Internet to learn, discuss and share information on common topics such as personal finance, career advancement, environmental issues, personal safety, shopping (where to get great buys) and so on. While Facebook and MySpace postings tend to focus on the personal lives of its posters, there is a void in ways to bring young women together to talk about more substantive issues tied into local news, such as neighborhood crime, dealing with job layoffs or downsizing, funding issues for local school districts (which affect women teaching in those districts) and so on. Creating opportunities for women to get involved in community discussions via online could whet their appetite for seeking more local news from traditional media and possibly spur them to become active in community issues.

The opportunity to reach 20something women via podcasting is worth experimenting with. Although only one subject downloaded podcasts (to her computer), a Pew Internet Project data memo (2006) showed an increase within five months time in the number of people ages 18 to 29 who downloaded a podcast. As more women purchase MP3 players or get comfortable with the technology, that number is expected to increase.

4.3.4. Television challenges

Local television stations have an opportunity to reach 20something women via the web by offering a local newscast that mimics the cheekiness of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* or *The Colbert Report*. With more consumers turning to the web for television shows, TV stations should consider such a show as web-only, perhaps a 15-minute weekly show featuring a local comedian. This is also an option for newspapers, many of which have invested heavily in shooting videos for their web sites in recent years.

4.3.5 Democrat and Chronicle products

Based on the positive reaction to the magazine *her-Celebrating the Women of Rochester* and the herRochester.com web site, there is clearly interest in local lifestyle information for women in their 20s. Given the women's high penchant for the Internet and low rate of regular magazine reading, building up the web site for this audience should be a higher priority than getting the magazine into the hands of these women.

Reviews of the *insider* tabloid showed confusion among the women as to the target demographic. Several subjects believed the content was aimed more at a younger, partying, bar-hopping crowd. Still, there was high interest in topics related to things to

do, profiles of young adults, and eating out. No subjects consistently read the publication week-to-week. While the publication's accompanying web site was not tested as a part of this research because it was undergoing a redesign, there are opportunities to reach this audience consistently via the Internet. *Insider* editors should explore a weekly e-mail newsletter touting "things to do this weekend" to this audience and directing them to other content, such as restaurant reviews and profiles of young adults, on the site.

4.3.6 Implications for democracy

Overall, subjects spent a relatively small amount of time focusing on traditional news stories via any media source. An exception was the nurse practitioner who credited her parents for instilling in her a sense of civic responsibility for keeping up with current events. Media companies that consider it their mission to uphold democracy would be well advised to search for ways to engage young adults in civic life and thus increase their appetite for harder-edged news on a local, national and international level. While the recent presidential election caught the interest of a wide age spectrum, these elections only occur every four years, so media companies need to find ways to capture the interest of 20something adults in the years between elections.

Media companies should explore tactics, similar to some mentioned previously in this chapter such as blogs and forums, in covering news in a way that young adults will pay attention to. Talking to young women to find out their interests in content and determining the best modes of delivery will be key. Two subjects in this study said that they found news coverage to be "depressing" and thus avoided it. Media companies must delve into why subjects have that impression and how to counter that.

Nearly 20 years ago, MTV first engaged young voters with its “Rock the Vote” campaign that continues today. Media companies could examine what makes that effort successful and see how those can be applied to producing local news coverage on multiple platforms that would appeal to 20something women. More research and experimentation by media companies will be vital to figuring out the answer.

Chapter 5

This chapter states suggestions for future research. This study was limited to interviews with eight female subjects in their 20s, in an effort to get deep lifestyle information, which could then be used to develop ideas for broader study related to how these women use media devices to access news and advertising information. This demographic is important to media companies, as women represent tremendous buying power, and many traditional media companies are slowly losing ground with women.

5.1 Future research

Career-oriented women in their 20s, who live independently from their parents and have no children, is an attractive demographic to media and advertisers. Researchers should continue to study the lifestyle and media habits of these women to find ways for local media to reach them more effectively. Topics of future research could focus on such areas as how women share opinions and recommendations with friends and family on products and retailers and the role that social networking plays in that; why these women seem to lag behind men in their usage of personal technology and how media can increase that usage; deeper research into what news and lifestyle topics are of high interest to these women; and more sophisticated testing of advertising methods to see how these women react to them. Larger-scale studies should be conducted to create opportunities for more generalizability from results.

Appendix

Appendix 1 -- Letter of consent

STANDARD ETHICS PROTOCOL AND CONSENT FORM

Hello, my name is Jane Sutter Brandt. I am a graduate student at Missouri University and I am conducting a research project for my thesis on how women in their 20s use media to get news and advertising information. You were chosen for this study because you fit the following criteria:

- You are a female ages 21 to 29.
- You live in the Rochester, N.Y., metro area.
- You live independently of your parents.
- You do not have children nor do you have children living in your home.
- You work full time.
- You own a home computer and spend at least three hours per week accessing the Internet.
- You own a cell phone.
- You own a TV.
- You own an Ipod or you own a PDA (Treo, Blackberry, etc.) that has Internet access.

If you have any questions, I can be contacted through email at jeb5f9@mizzou.edu or at my home, 585-249-7612; my workplace, 585-258-9876; or my cell phone, 585-217-3132.

During the course of this research, if you have any questions or concerns about the project that you would like to convey to an informed individual who is not affiliated with the research process, you may contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at Missouri University by phone at 573-882-9585.

Thank you for the willingness to participate in this research project. Your participation is very much appreciated. Before we start the interview, I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have several very definite rights.

First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

In reporting the findings of this research study, your real name will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be assigned to your answers.

You will be given a copy of the transcript of our interview and a copy of the findings.

As part of the research process, you will be asked to do the following:

Fill out a media diary: Over the course of seven days, you are asked to record the dates, times, and other relevant information regarding media usage to get news and advertising information. The amount of time this activity takes will be dependent on the amount of media usage, but is estimated to take no more than 30 minutes per day.

Complete a written survey: Prior to the interview with the researcher, you will be asked to take a written survey to get demographic data and learn more about your media usage habits. This survey is estimated to take 10 minutes to complete.

In-depth interview: The researcher will interview you in your home about your media usage habits. As part of the interview, you will be asked to show me on your home computer various web sites that you frequent to get news and advertising information. The interview is estimated to take approximately two hours.

About the researcher: I am employed full time as the general manager of custom content at the Democrat and Chronicle newspaper. This research project is part of my graduation requirement for a master's degree in media management from Missouri University.

The topic of this research project is my idea and was not suggested by my employer, but is supported by my employer. I currently participate in the Democrat and Chronicle's tuition reimbursement program, in which tuition for my degree program is reimbursed if my course subjects and grades meet certain requirements. The Democrat and Chronicle also is paying for the \$75 VISA gift card that will be given to you at the end of the in-home interview.

I would appreciate it if you would sign this form to show that I have read its contents to you.

(Signature)_____

(Print name)_____

(Today's date)_____

Appendix 2 -- Diary form

Jane Brandt

Media Diary

Please complete the following diary for seven days. Briefly note the type of media usage device used and what you did with it to get news or advertising information. For example, you may have used a computer to access CNN.com to get news. Devices to be noted include, but are not limited to, computer (Internet), Ipod, PDA (such as Treo or Blackberry), TV, newspapers, magazines. If you have any questions during the process, please contact me via email at jeb5f9@mizzou.edu, or by phone at my home, 585-249-7612; my workplace, 585-258-9876; or cell, 585-217-3132.

DATE	TYPE OF DEVICE	HOW USED	TIME SPENT
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MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at jeb5f9@mizzou.edu or by phone at my home, 585-249-7612; my workplace, 585-258-9876, or my cell phone, 585-217-3132.

Biography of subject

Name

Date of birth

Marital status

Own or rent

Education level

High school graduate

Some college

Bachelor's degree

Post graduate

Occupation:

Approximate annual personal income:

<\$25,000

Between \$25,000 to \$50,000

Between \$50,000 to \$75,000

Between \$75,000 to \$100,000

Over \$100,000

I'd like to ask you some questions about the type of media devices you own and how you use them:

Does your home computer have broadband access such as Roadrunner or is it a dial-up service?

Do you own an Ipod?

What kinds of things do you have on your Ipod, such as music and podcasts?

Do you have a landline phone at home?

Do you own a cell phone?

If yes, what special features does it have, such as Internet access and/or a camera?

Do you own a Blackberry, Verizon Treo or some other type of PDA?

If yes, what features do you use on it, such as email, calendar and Internet?

Obtaining news

I'd like to ask you some questions regarding how you get news. I'm defining news as information about local and regional events, national and international events; information on other topics such as health and beauty, fitness and exercise, fashion, business and finance, sports and things to do:

TV:

Do you watch any local TV news shows?

If yes, which shows and how often?

Do you watch any network or cable TV shows to get news?

If yes, which ones and how often? (Can prompt for shows such as the Daily show, Steven Colbert, The Today Show, CNN Headline News, etc)

Newspapers:

Do you read any print newspapers?

If yes, which ones and how often?

Do you subscribe to any papers; if not, where do you get them to read?

Magazines:

Do you subscribe to any magazines?

If yes, which ones?

Radio:

Do you listen to any radio stations regularly to get news?

If yes, which ones and how often?

Web sites:

Do you go to any web sites to get news?

If yes, which ones and how often?

RSS (Really Simple Syndicate) feeds:

Do you receive RSS feeds to get news?

If yes, which ones?

Email newsletters:

Do you get any newsletters with news information emailed to you from web sites?

If yes, which ones and how often do they come?

Text alerts:

Do you get any text alerts about news?

If yes, what type of alerts and from what source?

Podcasts:

Do you subscribe to or listen to any podcasts?

If yes, what ones and how frequently to you download them?

Appendix 4 -- Long interview questionnaire

QUESTIONS FOR IN-HOME INTERVIEW

Let's start by looking over your media diary. I'd like you to tell me about your daily habits for getting news – tell me about any TV shows you watch, any radio stations you listen to, any web sites you check, any newspapers you read. As you talk about them, tell me why you use them and what you like about them.

(If respondent uses web sites, she will be asked to look those over and talk about what she likes and dislikes about them. If she uses RSS feeds, she will be asked to show the site where those are set up and talk about her choices. If she gets e-mail newsletters, she will be asked to show those and talk about what she likes and dislikes about them.)

Overall preferences for getting news

Of the various ways that you get news, do you have a particular one that you prefer above the others?

If yes, why do you prefer that particular medium?

Within the past two years, have you increased your usage of the Internet to get news and advertising information?

If yes, do you find yourself using other forms of media less often now because of the Internet?

If yes, which forms of media are you using less often and why?

Do you use some forms of media simultaneously – for example, do you use text message while watching television? If yes, can you give me some examples of how you multi-task.

Shopping and advertisements

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about how you shop and get information to make decisions about things to buy.

How influential do you think media advertising is on items that you buy?

If you read newspapers, do you look at the advertisements or shopping inserts?

If yes, what types of ads most interest you?

Do you ever see an ad in a newspaper or shopping insert and then go to the store to shop?

If yes, can you give me some examples of when you've done this?

If you read magazines, do you look at the advertisements?

If yes, what types of ads are of most interest to you?

Do you ever see an ad in a magazine and then go to the store to shop?

If yes, can you give me some examples of when you've done that?

Have you ever heard an ad on the radio that prompted you to go to a store and shop?

If yes, can you give me some examples of when you've done that?

Do you ever see an ad on TV and then go to the store to shop?

If yes, can you give me some examples of when you've done that?

Of newspapers, magazines, TV and radio, for which one do you think you pay the most attention to advertising?

Why did you pick that one?

Internet shopping

Do you ever purchase items online?

If yes, tell me what kinds of things you buy, such as clothing, books, and so on.

How often would you say that you purchase things online (weekly, monthly)?

When was the last time you purchased something online and what did you buy?

Of the web sites that you have used for shopping, do you have any favorites?

What makes them your favorites?

Could you show me those sites now and tell me about them? (Prompt for answers to questions like – do you like the format of the site; what information on the site is of interest to you, etc.

Have you ever used online classified ads like Craigslist to look for an item you wanted to buy?

If yes, what items were you seeking and did you buy anything?

Was it a satisfactory experience?

If yes, what made it satisfactory?

Have you ever looked at classified ads on DemocratandChronicle.com?

If yes, what items were you seeking and did you buy anything?

Was it a satisfactory experience?

Do you use the Internet to research products before buying them?

If yes, give me an example of a product you recently researched online and how you did it.

Have you ever seen an ad in a newspaper or a magazine and then gone online to a web site for more information?

Do you get any email alerts or e-newsletters from retailers like Amazon.com or Borders Books and Music about special sales, deals or coupons?

If yes, what alerts do you get?

Can you show me these on your computer now?

Do you ever act on information from an email, such as ordering an item or going to the store to use the coupon or check out the sale?

If yes, can you give me an example of when you've done this?

Do you get any emails like this from local Rochester stores?

If yes, can you show me one of those?

If you could get a weekly email about sales and deals at local stores in Rochester, would you read it?

What specific stores would you like included in that?

(If the subject names all national chain stores, I'll prompt for independent retailers, such as local music stores or clothing stores.)

Do you ever look at advertisements on web sites that you frequent?

Do you ever click on advertisements on web sites?

If yes, can you give me some examples of when you've done this?

Now I'd like to show you some different types of advertisements on the Internet and get your reaction to them. Specifically, I'd like to know if the format of the ads gives you a positive or a negative experience.

(Here, I will show them these various forms of advertising to get their reaction.)

Video pre-roll advertisement:

What do you think of an advertisement that comes before you can watch the video?

Video overlay advertisement:

What do you think of this type of advertisement that allows you to still watch the video while the advertisement is overlaid on it?

Flyovers:

What do you think of an advertisement that expands when you mouse over it?

Banner ads:

Do you read these ads and do you ever click on them?

Sponsored links:

When you do a search on Google, do you ever click on the sponsored links?

Hyperlink ads:

When you are reading an article on a web site, do you ever click on words that are hot-linked to a sponsored web site?

Influence of friends and family

When you are seeking information about where to buy a product, do you consult with friends or family members?

If yes, would you say you consult with them frequently or in frequently?

How important are their recommendations to you? Would you say they are very important, somewhat important, or not important at all?

Do you participate in any social networking sites, such as Facebook or Myspace?

If yes, would you please show me your personal page?

Do you use the site to communicate with your friends, or are you more likely to email them directly or call them?

Do you ever look at the ads on the site?

If yes, what types of ads are of interest to you?

Questions about specific publications and web sites

Now, I'd like to show you some specific publications and web sites and ask you some questions about them.

Questions about *Insider* (free entertainment weekly in Rochester aimed at people in their 20s and 30s)

Do you ever read the *insider*? (Hand subject a copy.)

If yes, how often do you read it (weekly, every few weeks, monthly, etc?)

When you read it, what do you find of interest to you?

(Prompts: movie reviews, restaurant profiles, profiles of interesting young adults, musicians and bands playing in the area, things to do)

Would you say this publication has content that you are very interested in, somewhat interested in, or of little interest to you?

(If somewhat or of little interest, ask are there other types of content that she would like to see.)

Do you think the content of insider is aimed at someone like you?

If not, who do you think the content is aimed at?

Now, I'd like you to take the copy that I gave you and spend a few minutes looking through it. After you've done that, I'd like you to tell me what articles or features in this particular issue you found to be of interest to you.

(After subject has looked through the publication, subject will be prompted to talk about what she found of interest, both editorial and advertisements, and why.)

"her – Celebrating the Women of Rochester" Magazine (bi-monthly magazine aimed at women ages 25 to 45)

Do you ever read this magazine? (Hand subject a copy.)

If yes, how often do you read it (bi-monthly, occasionally?)

When you read it, what do you find of interest to you?

(Prompts: fashion articles, article on makeovers, profiles of women, articles on food and home, photos of women at events, advertisements)

Would you say this publication has content that you are very interested in, somewhat interested in, or of little interest to you?

(If somewhat or of little interest, ask are there other types of content that she would like to see.)

Do you think the content of *her* magazine is aimed at someone like you?

If not, who do you think the content is aimed at?

Now, I'd like you to take the copy that I gave you and spend a few minutes looking through it. After you've done that, I'd like you to tell me what articles or features in this particular issue you found to be of interest to you.

(After subject has looked through the publication, subject will be prompted to talk about what she found of interest and why, including editorial and advertisements.)

Have you ever seen the web site herRochester.com?

If yes, how often do you go to the site?

What types of content do you look for on the site?

I'd like to have you look at the site on your computer now and spend a few minutes looking at it. I'd like you to click on things that you are interested in, while I watch you.

(Follow-up questions will focus on asking why the subject clicked on what she did. Such as "I see you clicked on the article about X or the photo gallery on Y, can you tell me why you did that?")

Did you find this site to be one that you are highly interested in, somewhat interested in, or of very little interest to you?

Do you think this site is aimed at someone like you?

If not, who do you think is aimed at?

For information similar to what *her* magazine offers, if that information is of interest to you, would you rather get that type of information through a publication or a web site, or would you look at both?

Ivillage.com (web site owned by NBC Universal and targeted to women)

Now, I'd like to show you a national web site for women called ivillage.com.

Have you ever seen this web site?

If yes, how often do you go to it?

If yes, what types of content do you look for on the site?

I'd like to have you look at the site on your computer now and spend a few minutes looking at it. I'd like you to click on things that you are interested in, while I watch you.

(Follow-up questions will focus on asking why the subject clicked on what she did. Such as "I see you clicked on the article about X or the video on Y, can you tell me why you did that?")

Did you find this site to be one that you are highly interested in, somewhat interested in, or of very little interest to you?

Do you think this site is aimed at someone like you?

If not, who do you think it's aimed at?

Now I'd like you to show me some of the web sites that you have bookmarked that you go to for information on things that are of interest to you. I'd like you to show me around these sites and tell me why you like them.

(Follow-up questions will focus on asking why the subject likes the sites, what are the features that appeal to her, and whether she looks at the advertisements on the sites.)

Thank you so much for spending time with me today. In the coming days or weeks, if you think of anything that you would like to tell me that we didn't talk about, please feel free to call me or email me with your thoughts. (I will give the subject my phone and email address.)

Appendix 5 – IRB approval letter



[Main Menu](#) | [IRB Forms](#) | [My Saved IRB Projects](#)
[Document Storage](#) | [Training](#) | [My Info](#) | [Logout](#)

Saved Projects

IRB #	Title	Type of Submission	Project Status	
1099117		Campus IRB Application		Project Forms Uploaded Docs Comments
1114458		Campus IRB Expedited or Full Board Application		Project Forms Uploaded Docs Comments
1114958	Searching for Satisfaction: How 20something Women Use Media to Get News and Advertising Information	Campus IRB Expedited or Full Board Application	Approved Active Exempt	Project Forms Uploaded Docs Comments

Notice: You will automatically be logged off after approximately 2 hours of inactivity. ([more info](#))

Contact your [IRB Office](#) if you need assistance. If you are having a technical problem or would like to send feedback, please click [here](#).
 This product works best with Internet Explorer 6.0 or greater for PC; Firefox 1.0 or greater for PC/Mac.

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