

Local TV News Coverage of the 2000 Primary Campaigns

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Most Americans say they get most of their news from local television. We analyzed the local news programs watched by most Americans to find out what news they received on the 2000 primary campaigns. We recorded and studied news broadcasts on 19 top-rated stations in 11 markets over 30 days. We found, for example, that during that period, the stations devoted a total of one hour and 59 minutes to political coverage. The average candidate sound bite was 10 seconds. 62 percent of the stories were focused on strategy/horserace; 21 concentrated on an issue; and 18% were an adwatch, mixture or other.

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Lear Center Campaign Media Monitoring Project ¹

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Summary

Background: In December 1998, the final report of a White House advisory panel known as the Gore Commission recommended that starting in 2000, television stations voluntarily air 5 minutes of “candidate centered discourse” each night, anywhere between 5:00pm and 11:30pm, during the last 30 days before an election. The Commission, co-chaired by CBS News President Leslie Moonves and political scientist Norman Ornstein, included a number of commercial broadcasters, lending industry credibility to the recommendation. A few broadcasting chains, including E. W. Scripps and Hearst-Argyle, replied with public commitments to the 5/30 target; most stations had no reaction.

What happened in the 2000 primaries? We surveyed 19 top-rated stations in 11 markets: Des Moines, Boston, Manchester, Los Angeles, New York, Cleveland, Dallas, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Philadelphia, and Charlotte. We analyzed tapes of all news programming between 5:00pm and 11:30pm in the 30 days before the primaries. We counted as candidate centered discourse (CCD) every second a candidate – for any level of office, local to Presidential – said anything on the news. If a candidate was shown speaking during a story about strategy, we counted as CCD the amount of time the candidate was actually speaking. However, to be as generous as possible, we counted as CCD the entire length of all issue, adwatch, or mixed issue/strategy stories, if 30% of the time was devoted to candidates speaking. Two kinds of stations turned up:

- **Typical stations**, represented by 16 stations in our sample, aired an average of 39 seconds a night of CCD. At the low end of this group were WFLA, Tampa, and WCAU, Philadelphia, which aired an average of 6 seconds a night; at the high end, WCBS New York City aired an average of 1 minute 49 seconds a night.
- **Atypical stations:** WEWS, an E. W. Scripps station in Cleveland, averaged 3 minutes 49 seconds of CCD a night. WCVB, a Hearst-Argyle station in Boston, averaged 4 minutes 19 seconds a night. These stations were rated number one in their respective markets before, during, and after the time period studied. The only other station to come close was WMUR, in Manchester, New Hampshire, averaging 3 minutes 12 seconds a night.

Beyond CCD, we also measured the total time the 19 stations devoted to political coverage; identified the focus of each story (issues, campaign strategy/horserace, adwatch, mix); measured sound bite length; and compared coverage of different candidates and different races. Some key findings:

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- **Total Time:** On average, the 16 stations devoted a 30-day total of 1 hour 59 minutes to political coverage (of which 19 minutes 26 seconds was candidate discourse). By comparison, WEWS aired 2 hours 50 minutes of political coverage (of which 1 hour 54 minutes was candidate discourse). WCVB aired a total of 5 hours 7 minutes of campaign stories (of which 2 hours 9 minutes was candidate discourse). WMUR aired 5 hours 59 seconds of campaign coverage (of which 1 hour 35 minutes was candidate discourse).
- **Content:** On average, 62% of the political stories airing on the 16 stations were strategy/horserace stories; 21% were issue stories; 18% were adwatch, mixture, or other. On WMUR, 69% were strategy; 10% were issues; 21% were adwatch, mixture, or other. On WEWS, 61% were coded as strategy; 35% as issues; 4% were adwatch, mixture, or other. On WCVB, 47% were strategy; 23% were issues; 30% were adwatch, mixture, or other.
- **Sound bites:** The average candidate sound bite on the 16 stations was 10 seconds. On WMUR it was 12.5 seconds. On WCVB, it was 14 seconds. On WEWS, it was 44.5 seconds.

Methodology

The sample for this study was comprised of 19 television stations from 11 markets across the country: WHO & KCCI in Des Moines, Iowa; WCVB in Boston, Massachusetts; WMUR in Manchester, New Hampshire; KABC & KNBC in Los Angeles, California; WCBS & WNBC in New York, New York; WEWS & WJW in Cleveland, Ohio; WFAA in Dallas, Texas; WFLA & WTVT in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida; KARE & WCCO in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; WPVI & WCAU in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and WSOC & WBTV in Charlotte, North Carolina. The stations chosen were the top two rated news stations in each market based on reports of Nielsen data from the final quarter of 1999.

Volunteers affiliated with a national group, the Alliance for Better Campaigns, recorded all news broadcasts between 5:00pm and 11:30pm, seven days a week. In some markets, the volunteers recorded the entire time period. In others, the volunteers recorded news programs and any special political programming that aired during the 5:00 to 11:30 time period. A professional monitoring company was used to supplement the volunteer taping when a particular day or individual newscast was missed. All taping was done during the 30 days prior to a state's primary election. The coding does not include election day coverage.

The tapes were then sent to USC Annenberg for coding. Six coders were trained and intercoder reliability was tested. Using components of variance analysis, the reliability (kappa) coefficients were in excess of .95 of all timed variables and above .78 for story frame variables throughout the coding process. The coding mechanism was designed to capture three main pieces of information.

Story Frame

Following the work of Cappella and Jamieson, the coders characterized the main "frame" for each story.²

Strategy: The story is concerned with who is winning or losing. Candidate statements and actions are interpreted with regard to their strategic intent. Examples include stories that use sports or war

² Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good, by Joseph N. Cappella and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Oxford University Press, 1997. See also "Where Was the Television News?" by Martin Kaplan and Matthew Hale in The 1998 Governor's Race, edited by G. C. Lubenow, Institute for Government Studies, UC Berkeley Press, 1999.

metaphors, or focus on the backstage machinations of the campaign, such as fundraising, ad buys, campaign tactics and “horserace” aspects.

Issue: The story is about the candidate’s issue positions and statements, or a more general story about important issues in the campaign. Examples of issues include the following: Specific issues such as education, taxes, abortion, campaign finance reform, race relations, prayer in school, national defense, or ballot initiatives; character issues such as candidate morality, biography, voting records, integrity, trust, or scandals; voter education pieces, such as stories that improve the understanding of voters as to where candidates stand on specific issues.

Adwatch: The story assesses the validity of claims made in candidate advertisements. If the story is about the strategy behind a series of ads or how one candidate attacks his or her opponent with ads, but does not assess the claims made in the ads, it would most likely not be considered an adwatch, but would most likely be coded as “strategy” instead.

Other: The story does not fall distinctly into one of the first three categories.

Mixture: The story is a clear “mixture” or combination of the Cappella and Jamieson categories. In most cases these stories were a combination of strategy and issues. For example, a story that focuses on the travel plans by George Bush but includes a substantive discussion of issues by John McCain would be coded as a mixture story.

Total Time

Using a stopwatch, coders recorded the total air time for each political story. Total time was calculated as starting with the introduction by the news anchor and concluding when the story switched to another political race or another type of story. We separated stories by races even if they followed directly after each other.

We also included stories that focused on the duties of a currently elected official who was running for higher office or re-election. For example, in Los Angeles, the District Attorney was running for re-election, so we included stories that discussed his handling of the Rampart police scandal even though they were only peripherally related to the campaign.

Candidate Centered Discourse

The Gore Commission does not provide a definition of candidate centered discourse. We attempted to construe CCD broadly, to give as much credit to different types of political reporting as possible.

At a minimum, CCD includes all of the time that candidates were broadcast speaking. However, in addition to measuring the amount of time candidates spoke, we included a measure of campaign story quality as well. One measure of higher quality is an increase in the number of stories that focus on campaign issues and a decrease in the number of stories that focus on the traditional “horserace” or strategic aspects of the campaign.

Thus, if a story was coded as either “issue based,” “adwatch,” “mixture,” or “other,” and 30% of the total story time was of candidates speaking, we gave the station CCD credit for the total story time. For example, if a 100 second story was coded as an issue story and 30 seconds of it was candidates speaking, the station would be credited with 100 seconds of CCD. If a 100 second story was coded as strategy and 30 seconds of it was candidates speaking, the station would be credited with 30 seconds of CCD.

While this system is admittedly somewhat arbitrary, it is important to remember that the combined objective of the Gore Commission recommendations is to improve both the quality and

quantity of political news coverage. In providing an accounting of political coverage, we have if anything erred on the side of giving stations more credit, rather than less credit, for what they offered to voters. By giving stations additional credit for issue, adwatch, other and even mixture stories, we believe we have measured both Gore Commission objectives.

In addition to these three main information areas of story frame, total time and CCD, we also collected data on which candidates spoke, the amount and length of sound bites, and what level of political race the stories focused on.

Who spoke?

The coders collected data on which candidates were shown speaking. We included separate categories for each of the four main Presidential candidates (Bush, McCain, Bradley, Gore) and used a combined category for all of the remaining Presidential candidates (Keyes, Buchanan, Forbes, Bauer, etc.). We also used composite categories for Congressional and Senate races, state level races, and local elections.

Number of sound bites

Coders tabulated the total number and length of sound bites in each story.

Race level

Each story was coded by level of campaign: Presidential, federal (Congress & Senate), state and local.

Results: Nationwide Findings

Overall we reviewed approximately 2,500 hours of local programming. Table one summarizes these results.

We examined a total of 1,551 political news stories. Strategy stories clearly dominated the local news coverage. Sixty-one percent of the stories focused on the strategic aspects of the campaigns. It is also important to note that an additional 137 stories (or 9%) were coded as a mixture between strategy and issues. This means that almost 70% percent of the stories included some direct reference to campaign strategy.

The Presidential race clearly dominated local news coverage. Seventy-five percent of the stories focused on the Presidential race. In contrast, only 15% percent focused on Congressional races and only 4% on state races. The smaller numbers for state and local races should be viewed with caution given that not all markets had local or state elections.

It is interesting to note that the amount of time each major candidate spoke is quite evenly dispersed. The two main republican candidates -- George Bush (85 minutes 40 seconds) and John McCain (82 minutes 14 seconds) received slightly more speaking time than the democratic candidates Bill Bradley (81 minutes 46 seconds) and Al Gore (79 minutes 33 seconds). On the strength of the New York Senate race and a significant amount of Congressional coverage in Ohio by WEWS, races for Congress received significantly more speaking time than any of the four major Presidential candidates (123 minutes and 18 seconds).

Nationwide, we found a total 1,551 stories, for a total of 45 hours 39 minutes of political coverage. Out of this, 10 hours 50 minutes was devoted to candidate centered discourse.

Table One: Nationwide Results

Story Frame	Nationwide	Number of Stories
% of Strategy Stories	61%	951
% of Issue Stories	20%	314
% of Adwatch, Other, & Mixture Stories	19%	286
Race Level		
Presidential	75%	1163
Congressional	15%	230
State	4%	63
Local	2%	35
General Campaign	4%	60
Speaking Time Totals		
George Bush	85 minutes 40 seconds	
John McCain	82 minutes 14 seconds	
Bill Bradley	81 minutes 46 seconds	
Al Gore	79 minutes 33 seconds	
Congress/Senate	123 minutes 18 seconds	
Total Campaign Time	45 hours 35 minutes	
Total CCD Time	10 hours 50 minutes	

WCVB, WEWS & WMUR vs. 16 Typical Stations:

Three stations -- WCVB in Boston, Massachusetts, WMUR in Manchester, New Hampshire, and WEWS in Cleveland, Ohio -- aired a great deal of political coverage. The quality of coverage provided by these stations was also far above the rest of the sample. The following section compares data from these 3 stations against data from the remaining 16 stations.

The block of 16 stations produced 1,192 stories for a total time of 31 hours 44 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 5 hours 11 minutes. The nightly average total time among the 16 stations was 4 minutes and 1 second; the nightly average for CCD was 39 seconds.

Seventy-three percent of these stations' stories concentrated on the Presidential campaign while 15% covered Congressional races. Sixty-two percent of these stories focused on strategy while 21% were on issues. Ten percent were coded as "other," and 8% were coded as mixture stories. Only 2 stories out of the total were coded as adwatch. The two Republican candidates received more total speaking time than the two Democratic candidates. Bush spoke for a total of 55 minutes 55 seconds and McCain spoke for a total of 50 minutes 40 seconds. Bradley spoke for 42 minutes 9 seconds and Gore spoke for 37 minutes 25 seconds. Congressional candidates spoke for 43 minutes 14 seconds on the 16 stations combined. These 16 stations aired a total of 1,517 sound bites spread out over 15,181 seconds for an average sound bite length of 10 seconds.

Three stations, WCVB, WMUR & WEWS produced more stories of high quality than the other 16 stations.

WCVB aired 129 campaign stories, for a total time of 5 hours 7 minutes, 2 hours 9 minutes of which was CCD. WCVB averaged 10 minutes 13 seconds of coverage per night and 4 minutes 19 seconds per night of CCD. The station's average amount of CCD increased to 4 minutes 56 seconds

when only weeknights, and not weekends, were included in the calculation. The average length of a WCVB sound bite was 14.1 seconds.

WMUR aired 158 stories for a total time of 5 hours 54 minutes, 1 hour 35 minutes of which was CCD. WMUR averaged 11 minutes 49 seconds of coverage per night and 3 minutes 12 seconds per night of CCD. The station's average amount of CCD increases to 3 minutes 45 seconds when only weeknights, and not weekends, were included. The average length of a WMUR sound bite was 12.50 seconds.

WEWS aired 72 campaign stories, for a total time of 2 hours 50 minutes, 1 hour 54 minutes of which was CCD. WEWS averaged 5 minutes 39 seconds of coverage per night and 3 minutes 49 seconds per night of CCD. The station's average amount of CCD increased to 4 minutes 36 seconds when only weeknights, and not weekends, were included in the calculation. The average length of a WCVB sound bite was 44.5 seconds, easily the longest in our sample.

The strategy/issue mix for WCVB and WEWS also compares favorably to the typical 16 stations. WCVB had one of the most balanced mix in the sample, with 47% of its stories focusing on strategy, 23% on issues, and 30% coded as adwatch, mixture or other. Sixty-one percent of WEWS stories focused on strategy, 35% on issues, and 4% were coded as adwatch, other or mixture. Both stations also covered more Congressional/Senate races than the remaining 16 stations. Twenty-one percent of WCVB stories covered Congressional/Senate races. Thirty-two percent of the WEWS stories focused on Congressional/Senate races. Eleven percent of the stories from the other 16 stations concentrated on Congressional/Senate races.

The strategy/issue mix for WMUR is more similar to a typical station. Sixty-nine percent of WMUR stories were devoted to strategy, while only 10% focused on issues. Twelve percent of WMUR stories were coded as mixture, and 9% were coded as other. The Presidential race also dominated the WMUR coverage with 98% of the stories focusing on it.

Interestingly, both WCVB and WEWS gave more speaking time to the Democratic candidates than to the Republican candidates. WEWS in particular gave more speaking time to Congressional candidates. In fact, WEWS gave nearly twice the amount of speaking time to Congressional candidates than the other 16 stations combined (77 minutes 26 seconds to 43 minutes 14 seconds).

WMUR gave the most total speaking time to the "other" Presidential candidates (27 minutes 6 seconds). WMUR gave more speaking time to the two frontrunners, Al Gore (16 minutes 2 seconds) and George Bush (13 minutes 19 seconds), than to the challengers, Bill Bradley (12 minutes 59 seconds) and John McCain (10 minutes 41 seconds).

Table Two: WCVB, WMUR & WEWS vs. 16 Typical Stations

Story Frame	WCVB (129)	WMUR (158)	WEWS (72)	16 Typical Stations (1192)
% of Strategy Stories	47%	69%	61%	62%
% of Issue Stories	23%	10%	35%	21%
% of Adwatch, Other, & Mixture Stories	30%	21%	4%	18%
Race Level				
Presidential	78%	98%	61%	73%
Congressional	21%	2%	32%	15%
State	1%	0%	0%	5%
Local	0%	0%	6%	3%
General Campaign	1%	0%	1%	5%
Speaking Time Totals				
George Bush	14 min. 34 sec.	13 min. 19 sec.	1 min. 52 sec.	55 min. 55 sec.
John McCain	19 min. 18 sec.	12 min. 59 sec.	1 min. 35 sec.	50 min. 40 sec.
Bill Bradley	20 min. 54 sec.	13 min. 19 sec.	5 min. 44 sec.	42 min. 9 sec.
Al Gore	20 min. 13 sec.	16 min. 2 sec.	5 min. 53 sec.	37 min. 2 sec.
Other Presidential	9 min. 36 sec.	27 min. 6 sec.	4 min. 28 sec.	9 min. 17 sec.
Congress	2 min. 22 sec.	16 sec.	77 min. 26 sec.	43 min. 14 sec.
Total Campaign Time	5 hr. 7 min.	5 hr. 54 min.	2 hr. 50 min.	1 hr. 59 min*
Total CCD Time	2 hr. 9 min.	1 hr. 35 min.	1 hr. 54 min.	19 min. 26 sec.*
Nightly Average Total Time	10 min. 13 sec.	11 min. 49 sec.	5 min. 39 sec.	4 min. 1 sec.
Nightly Average CCD	4 min. 19 sec.	3 min. 12 sec.	3 min. 49 sec.	39 sec.
Average Sound Bite Length	14 sec.	12.5 sec.	44.5 sec.	10 sec.

* Averages for 16 stations, not gross totals

Station by Station Review

Des Moines, Iowa

The two Iowa stations included in the study were KCCI, a CBS affiliate owned by Hearst-Argyle, and WHO, an NBC affiliate owned by the New York Times. Both stations benefited from Iowa's position as having the first actual vote of the primary season. The taping of the Iowa stations was done by Power Television, a professional firm, and included only specific news stories instead of entire broadcasts. At least one full debate was aired on KCCI. This time is not included in these results.

Of the stories on KCCI, there were 70 political stories for a total time of 3 hours. The total amount of CCD was 28 minutes 22 seconds. The nightly average total time was 6 minutes. The nightly average of CCD was 57 seconds.

Ninety-six percent of the KCCI stories focused on the Presidential race. Forty-three percent concentrated on strategy. Sixteen percent were focused on issues. Thirty percent of the stories were coded as a mixture of strategy and issues. Eleven percent were coded as other. This spread of strategy and issues was one of the most substantive in our sample. Bill Bradley received the most speaking time with a total of 608 seconds. John McCain, who chose not to compete in Iowa, was shown speaking for only 27 seconds. KCCI aired 145 sound bites spread over a total of 1,357 seconds for an average sound bite length of 9.35 seconds.

WHO aired a total of 69 stories for a total time of 2 hours 13 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 29 minutes 8 seconds. The nightly average total time was 4 minutes 27 seconds. The nightly average of CCD was 58 seconds.

Ninety-seven percent of the stories on WHO were on the Presidential race. Like KCCI, WHO also had one of the most substantive strategy/issue mixes in our sample. Forty-five percent of the stories were about strategy and 12% concentrated on issues. Twenty-nine percent of the stories were coded as a mixture between strategy and issue. The remaining stories (15%) were coded as other. Bill Bradley again received the most amount of speaking time with 685 seconds. WHO aired a total of 102 sound bites over 1,096 seconds for an average sound bite length of 10.7 seconds.

Boston, Massachusetts/Manchester, New Hampshire

Two stations, which covered New Hampshire's first in the nation primary -- WCVB in Boston, Massachusetts, and WMUR in Manchester, New Hampshire -- were included in our study. WCVB is an ABC affiliate owned by Hearst-Argyle. WMUR is also an ABC affiliate owned by IMES Communications. While both stations clearly benefited from the intense national coverage of the New Hampshire primary, WCVB stands out as the best station in our sample. WCVB used a variety of formats, ranging from interviews to issues analysis to airing extended candidate speaking clips, in their effort to reach the 5/30 standard.

WCVB aired 129 campaign stories for a total time of 5 hours 7 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 2 hours 9 minutes. The nightly average total time for WCVB was 10 minutes 13 seconds. The nightly average CCD was 4 minutes 19 seconds. If we just look at weeknights, the nightly average total time for WCVB jumps to 11 minutes 24 seconds and the nightly CCD average climbs to 4 minutes 56 seconds.

Seventy-eight percent of WCVB stories were about the Presidential race while 21% focused on Congressional/Senate races. WCVB also had one of the best strategy/issue combinations in the sample. Forty-seven percent of the stories were coded as strategy. Twenty-two percent of the stories were coded as issue. WCVB also had 17% of their stories coded as a mixture of strategy and

issue stories. Many of these mixture stories combined extensive interviews based on issues with discussions of candidate tactics or travel. WCVB also spaced candidate sound bites fairly evenly across the four main Presidential candidates. Bill Bradley received the most speaking time with 1,254 seconds, followed closely by Al Gore (1,213) and John McCain (1,158). George Bush received slightly less with 874 seconds. WCVB aired a total of 373 sound bites spread out over 5,243 seconds for an average sound bite length of 14.1 seconds.

WMUR aired a total of 158 stories for a total time of 5 hours 54 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 1 hour 35 minutes. The nightly average total time was 11 minutes 49 seconds. The nightly average for CCD was 3 minutes 12 seconds.

Ninety-eight percent of the WMUR stories concentrated on the Presidential race. Sixty-nine percent of the stories focused on strategy. WMUR had a relatively even mix between issue stories (10%), mixture stories (12%) and stories coded as "other" (9%). Interestingly, the "other" Presidential candidates including Steve Forbes, Alan Keyes and Gary Bauer received as a group more speaking time than any of the major candidates with 1,626 seconds. Al Gore led the main Presidential candidates with 962 seconds. WMUR aired a total of 388 sound bites spread over 4,851 seconds for an average sound bite length of 12.5 seconds.

Los Angeles, California

The two stations monitored in Los Angeles were KABC and KNBC. Both stations are network owned and operated. The race in California included several ballot propositions and a race for District Attorney. Los Angeles was also in the midst of the Rampart police corruption scandal so current DA Gil Garcetti received a fair amount of non-campaign related coverage.

KABC aired a total of 77 stories for a total time of 2 hours 9 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 22 minutes 48 seconds. The daily average total time for KABC was 4 minutes 18 seconds. The daily average amount of CCD was 46 seconds.

Seventy-eight percent of KABC stories were about the Presidential race. Sixty-six percent focused on strategy while 27% focused exclusively on issues. John McCain received the most air time with a total of 445 seconds. Bill Bradley received the least amount of air time with 118 seconds. KABC aired 117 sound bites which accounted for 1196 seconds of candidate speaking time or an average sound bite length of 10.2 seconds.

KNBC aired a total of 71 stories for a total time of 1 hour 48 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 11 minutes 55 seconds. The daily average total time for KNBC was 3 minutes 36 seconds. The daily average amount of CCD was 24 seconds.

Eighty percent of KNBC stories covered the Presidential race. Sixty-one percent focused on strategy, while 16% were about issues. Twenty-four percent of the stories were coded as either other or mixture stories. George Bush received the most amount of speaking time with 180 seconds. Al Gore received the least amount of speaking time with just 70 seconds. KNBC aired a total of 82 sound bites which accounted for 638 seconds of candidate speaking time or an average sound bite length of 7.8 seconds.

New York, New York

The two stations monitored in New York were WCBS and WNBC, both of which are network owned and operated. The dominant factor in this race was the Clinton/Giuliani Senate race. Mayor Giuliani was counted as a candidate despite his eventual departure from the race. The time he was shown as mayor and not as candidate was also counted as candidate discourse. The two exceptions were on the days of the Amadou Diallo and Abner Louima verdicts, when both

stations provided virtually blanket coverage. This coverage was recorded as a special event and not included in the overall totals.

WCBS aired a total of 109 stories for a total time of 3 hours 20 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 54 minutes 33 seconds. WCBS therefore aired an average of 6 minutes 39 seconds per night. The average amount of CCD was 1 minute 49 seconds.

Forty-nine percent of the WCBS stories focused on the Presidential race. An equal percentage of stories focused on the Congressional/Senate races (almost exclusively because of Clinton/Giuliani and Giuliani as mayor). Sixty-two percent of WCBS stories were about strategy, while 26% focused on issues. The Clinton/Giuliani race received the most speaking time with the two candidates getting the vast majority of 1,069 seconds. WCBS aired a total of 227 sound bites which accounted for 2,458 seconds of speaking time or an average sound bite length of 10.82 seconds.

WNBC aired 90 stories for a total time of 3 hours 16 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 37 minutes 51 seconds. WNBC averaged a total time of 6 minutes 32 seconds per night. The average amount of CCD per night was 1 minute 16 seconds.

Forty-nine percent of the WNBC stories focused on the Presidential race while 44% covered mainly the Clinton/Giuliani race, which again received the most sound bites, with 682 seconds of time. WNBC aired 183 sound bites spread across 2,022 seconds of candidate speaking time for an average sound bite length of 11.04 seconds.

Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland is a picture of two extremes. WEWS, an E.W. Scripps station, provided some of the best coverage in the nation. WJW, a Fox affiliate, provided some of the least. WEWS made a commitment to try to reach the 5/30 standard, and they came quite close, especially during weekday coverage. The format used by WEWS was to provide all candidates with subjects, including social security, health care, and school vouchers. The candidates were then free to speak on these topics. The majority of the speakers were running for Congressional or state office, although some Presidential candidates took advantage of the WEWS programming. WEWS aired these programs during the 5:00pm news hour. They also aired some of the segments during the 12:00 noon news which unfortunately falls outside of the 5/30 window of time. WEWS also did not air these segments on weekends. If we included the special segments during the 12:00 noon news and if WEWS had been able to air evening segments on weekends, they most likely would have surpassed the 5/30 standard. It is also interesting to note that the total amount of time WEWS gave to political coverage is only slightly more than that of New York. The key difference, of course, is that WEWS used more of that time to allow candidates to speak directly to voters. The breakdown for WEWS is as follows:

WEWS aired 72 stories for a total time of 2 hours 50 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 1 hour 54 minutes. The nightly average total time for WEWS was 5 minutes 39 seconds, with a nightly average of 3 minutes 49 seconds for CCD. If we count only weeknights, the nightly average of CCD rises to 4 minutes 36 seconds and over 6 minutes of total coverage per night.

Sixty-one percent of WEWS stories were about the Presidential race, while 32% focused on Congressional/Senate races. Sixty-one percent of the stories focused on strategy while 35% concentrated on issues. The various Congressional/Senate candidates received the bulk of the speaking time (4,646 seconds), almost all within the WEWS 5/30 format. Because of the WEWS 5/30 format the average length of a WEWS sound bite was 44.5 seconds, easily the highest in the sample.

In the months of January, February and March, WEWS at 5:00pm was the ratings leader. The ratings dropped slightly (1.2 share points) from January to February and another share point in March after the election was over.³

Political coverage by WJW in Cleveland was significantly less than WEWS. WJW aired a total of 70 stories for a total time of 1 hour 25 minutes of political coverage. The amount of CCD was just 12 minutes 1 second. The nightly average for total time was 2 minutes 51 seconds, while the nightly average for CCD was 24 seconds.

Seventy-three percent of the stories covered the Presidential race, while 10% of WJW stories were general campaign stories. Seven percent of WJW stories focused on Congress, and another 7% concentrated on local races. The remaining 3% were about state races. Eighty-three percent of the stories were on strategy, while 11% focused on issues. John McCain received the most speaking time with 239 seconds. WJW aired a total of 72 sound bites over a total of 700 seconds for an average sound bite length of 9.7 seconds.

Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida

The stations monitored in the Tampa-St. Petersburg market were WFLA, owned by Media General, and the Fox affiliate WTVT. The Florida primary occurred on March 14th, well after the nominations had been decided. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the market as a whole aired significantly less CCD than any other market in the pilot study.

WFLA aired 65 stories for a total time of 1 hour 33 minutes. The total CCD was just 3 minutes 4 seconds. This is less total CCD than what WEWS, WMUR or WCVB averaged in just one day. The nightly average was 3 minutes 5 seconds. The nightly average for CCD was just 6 seconds per night.

Eighty percent of the stories focused on the Presidential race, while just 2% covered Congressional/Senate races. WFLA did air a series of interviews with voters about specific issues which accounted for all the general campaign interest stories (12%). Seventy-one percent were stories about strategy while 19% focused on issues. John McCain received the most sound bites with 77 seconds. WFLA aired just 26 sound bites spread out over 184 seconds for an average of 7 seconds per sound bite.

WTVT aired 79 stories for a total of 2 hours. The total CCD was 16 minutes and 1 second. The nightly average total time was 4 minutes. The nightly average for CCD was 32 seconds.

The vast majority of WTVT stories focused on the Presidential race (95%), one of the highest race concentrations in our sample. The large majority of WTVT stories (89%) were devoted to strategy. John McCain received the most time with a total of 395 seconds. WTVT aired 83 sound bites spread over 961 seconds for an average sound bite length of 11.57 seconds.

Dallas, Texas

The primary in Texas was held on March 14th, again after the nominations had effectively been decided. Unlike the Tampa-St. Petersburg market, with a primary on the same day, the Dallas market provided a great deal of total coverage, if not CCD. The primary factor in this coverage, of course, was the fact that Texas Governor George Bush is running for President. Governor Bush dominated coverage in Dallas; according to one coder, "Bush seemed to get coverage even when the main focus of the story was other candidates."

³ Ratings data for January, February and March supplied by Nielsen Media Research.

We only have data from one Dallas station, WFAA, an ABC affiliate owned by A.G. Belo. We intended to cover KXAS in Dallas also, but a taping error caused us to miss all of the 6:00pm news programs on KXAS, making the data incomplete and unreliable. The data we do have on KXAS indicates they air slightly less political coverage than WFAA.

WFAA aired 106 political stories for a total time of 3 hours 46 minutes, one of the highest totals in the study sample. The total amount of CCD, however, was only 30 minutes 50 seconds. The average nightly total time was 7 minutes 31 seconds. The average nightly CCD was 1 minute 2 seconds.

Ninety percent of the WFAA stories concentrated on the Presidential race. This number includes stories on Governor Bush's duties as Governor. Sixty-four percent of the stories discussed strategy, while 22% focused on issues. Governor Bush received the most speaking time with 753 seconds. WFAA aired 189 sound bites spread out over 1,733 seconds for an average sound bite length of 9.16 seconds.

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

Analysis of the Minneapolis market suffers from missing data and from peculiarities of the Minnesota political system. The two stations analyzed were WCCO, a Paramount/CBS owned station, and KARE, a Gannet owned NBC affiliate.⁴

Unlike other states, Minnesota has two separate elections, one on March 7th and another on March 12th. As a result Minnesota has two different 30 day time periods before each election. The results reported here are for the 30 days prior to the March 12th election, which were more favorable to the station.

The Governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, clearly dominates the political landscape. Both stations gave a great deal of coverage to the activities of the Governor. For our purposes, however, the majority of the Ventura coverage was not counted, since he is not currently running for office. We did count stories with Governor Ventura in them, but only when they were related to a campaign or election. This includes, for example, stories with him commenting on the race for President or his battles with the Reform Party. The results for Minneapolis are presented below.

WCCO aired 66 political stories for a total time of 1 hour 32 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 11 minutes 39 seconds. The average nightly total time was 3 minutes 4 seconds. The average nightly CCD was 23 seconds.

Seventy-six percent of the WCCO stories concentrated on the Presidential race. Fourteen percent were coded as other, while 9% were coded as mixture. Only 3 % of WCCO stories focused on issues. Al Gore received the most speaking time with 188 seconds. WCCO aired 42 sound bites spread out over 518 seconds for an average sound bite length of 12.3 seconds.

KARE aired 63 stories for a total on 1 hour and 2 minutes. The total CCD was 4 minutes and 59 seconds. The nightly average total time was 2 minutes and 5 seconds. The nightly average for CCD was 10 seconds.

Seventy percent of KARE stories focused on the Presidential race. Fourteen percent of the stories focused on Congressional races. Thirteen percent of the stories were coded as having a general focus, many of which were about the Reform Party issues. Seventy-one percent of the

⁴ Due to a taping error, the WCCO 10:00pm news on February 17th was missed. To compensate, the highest daily totals of CCD and total time aired during the 10:00pm news was added to the data. For KARE the entire days of February 16th and March 5th were missed. To compensate, the highest weekday totals of CCD and total time from KARE were added to compensate for February 16th and the highest weekend totals were added to compensate for March 5th. Despite these conservative corrections the reader is cautioned that the times may not be completely accurate.

stories focused on strategy, while 25% were framed as “other,” again much of this due to reform party stories. Al Gore received the most time with a total of 109 seconds. KARE aired 39 sound bites spread over 299 seconds for an average sound bite length of 7.66 seconds.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The primary in Philadelphia took place on April 4th, long after the nominations were locked up. As a result, the coverage in Philadelphia is among the least in the nation. Pennsylvania, however, did have a highly competitive Senate race which received coverage in the market. The two stations monitored were WPVI, an ABC owned and operated station, and WCAU, an NBC owned and operated station.

WPVI aired a one hour-long debate between Senate candidates, during the monitoring period. This time was considered special programming and not part of the figures below. Even if the debate were added into the WPVI totals it would not meet the 5/30 standard.

WPVI aired 57 political stories for a total time of 1 hour 17 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 17 minutes 40 seconds. The nightly average for total time was 2 minutes 35 seconds. The nightly average for CCD was 35 seconds.

Fifty-six percent of the stories WPVI aired were devoted to the Presidential race. Thirty-two percent focused on the Senate race. Sixty-five percent of the stories covered strategy, while 14% focused on issues and 14% were coded as other. The other stories were often on preparations for the Republican Convention. The candidates for Senate received the most speaking time, a total of 283 seconds. WPVI aired 63 sound bites spread over 764 seconds for an average sound bite length of 12.1 seconds.

WCAU aired a series of lengthy Senate candidate forums. These forums aired during the 4:00pm news hour. Consequently, they are not counted towards the totals below.

WCAU aired a total of 31 stories for a total time of just 39 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 2 minutes 45 seconds. The nightly average for total time was 1 minute 17 seconds and the nightly CCD average was just 6 seconds.

Eighty-one percent of the total WCAU stories were on the Presidential race, while 16% of the stories covered the Senate race. Sixty-one percent of the stories concentrated on strategy while 26% focused on issues. The remaining 13 percent were coded as “other.” Bill Bradley received the greatest amount of speaking time, most of which came when he dropped out of the race. WCAU aired a total of 20 sound bites spread over 165 seconds of speaking time for an average sound bite length of 8.3 seconds.

Charlotte, North Carolina

The North Carolina primary was held on May 2nd and is the latest in our sample. The stations monitored were WSOC, an ABC affiliate owned by Cox Broadcasting and WBTV, a CBS affiliate owned by Jefferson-Pilot Communications. Both stations generally aired shorter stories compared to the rest of our sample.

With the Presidential nominations long ago decided, the Charlotte stations switched much of their coverage to the race for Governor and Congressional races. The Charlotte stations claim that they cover both South and North Carolina. Both stations provided extensive coverage on the South Carolina flag issue. Our monitoring period for Charlotte also coincided with much of the major happenings in the Elian Gonzalez case. The stations covered local politicians’ reactions to the Gonzalez case. As a result, the Charlotte market shows some of the best strategy/issue mixes in our sample. The breakdowns for both stations are as follows:

WSOC aired 64 political stories for a total time of 46 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 4 minutes 36 seconds. The nightly average was 1 minute 32 seconds. The nightly CCD average was 9 seconds. Fifty-eight percent of the stories were devoted to the Presidential race. Twenty percent covered state races and 14% covered Congressional races.

Forty-eight percent of the stories were about strategy, and 34% focused on issues. The remaining 17% were coded as adwatch, other or mixture. WSOC gave Congressional candidates more sound bite time than any other category with 101 seconds. The average length of a sound bite was 9.3 seconds.

WBTW aired 105 stories for a total time of 1 hour 59 minutes. The total amount of CCD was 22 minutes 48 seconds. The nightly average was 3 minutes and 57 seconds. The nightly average for CCD was 46 seconds. Fifty-two percent of the stories were about the Presidential race. Twenty-seven percent concentrated on state races, and 13% covered Congressional races.

Only 38% of the WBTW stories focused on strategy. Forty-two percent featured issues, and 20% were coded as adwatch, other or mixture. WBTW is the only station in our sample where more stories were coded as issue than strategy. Candidates for state offices received the most speaking time, with 526 seconds. The average length of a WBTW sound bite was 8.3 seconds.

Table 3: Station by Station Analysis

	Los Angeles		New York		Cleveland		Twin Cities (30 days from 3/11)		Tampa	
	KABC (77)	KNBC (71)	WCBS (109)	WNBC (90)	WEWS (72)	WJW (70)	WCCO (65)	KARE (63)	WFLA (65)	WTVT (79)
% Strategy	66%	61%	62%	58%	61%	83%	74%	71%	71%	89%
% Issue	27%	16%	26%	34%	35%	11%	3%	3%	19%	6%
% Adwatch, Other, Mixture	7%	24%	13%	8%	4%	6%	23%	25%	11%	5%
Presidential	78%	80%	49%	49%	61%	73%	76%	70%	80%	97%
Congress	4%	6%	49%	44%	32%	7%	9%	14%	2%	3%
State	8%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%	0%	0%	1%
Local	8%	10%	0%	0%	6%	7%	2%	3%	6%	0%
General	3%	1%	3%	7%	1%	10%	8%	13%	12%	0%
G. Bush *	392	180	481	324	112	195	62	44	49	383
J. McCain *	445	164	388	495	95	239	68	46	77	395
B. Bradley *	118	133	319	192	344	61	53	31	20	79
A. Gore *	135	70	210	298	353	70	175	109	38	55
Congress *	0	25	1,069	682	4646	92	58	0	0	0
Total Time	2:09	1:48	3:20	3:16	2:50	1:25	1:32	1:02	1:33	2:00
Total CCD	22 min. 48 sec.	11min 55 sec.	54 min. 33 sec.	37 min. 51 sec.	1 hr. 54 min.	12 min 1 sec.	11 min. 34 sec.	4 min. 59 sec.	3 min. 4 sec.	16 min. 1 sec.
Nightly Avg. Total Time	4 min. 18 sec.	3 min. 36 sec.	6 min. 39 sec.	6 min. 32 sec.	5 min. 39 sec.	2 min. 51 sec.	3 min. 4 sec.	2 min. 5 sec.	3 min. 5 sec.	4 min. 0 sec.
Nightly Avg. CCD	46 sec.	24 sec.	1 min. 49 sec.	1 min. 16 sec.	3 min. 49 sec.	24 sec.	23 sec.	10 sec.	6 sec.	32 sec.
Avg. sound bite length	10.2 sec	7.8 sec.	10.8 sec.	12.0 sec.	44.5 sec.	9.7 sec.	12.5 sec.	7.6 sec.	7.0 sec.	11.5 sec.

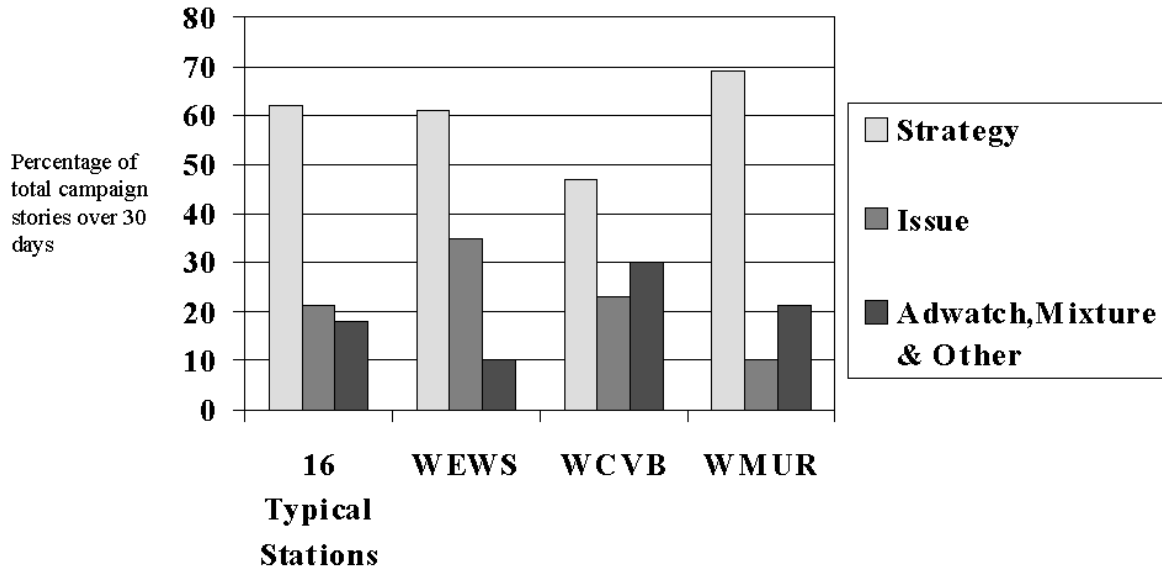
* in seconds

Table 3: Station by Station Analysis (continued)

	Dallas	Boston/ Manchester	Philadelphia (without specials)		Des Moines		Charlotte	
	WCVB (129)	WMUR (158)	WPVI (57)	WCAU (31)	WHO (69)	KCCI (70)	WSOC (64)	WBTV (105)
% Strategy	47%	69%	65%	61%	45%	43%	48%	38%
% Issue	23%	10%	14%	26%	12%	16%	34%	42%
% Adwatch, Other, Mixture	30%	21%	21%	13%	44%	41%	17%	20%
Presidential	78%	98%	56%	80%	97%	96%	58%	52%
Congress	21%	1%	32%	16%	3%	4%	14%	13%
State	1%	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%	20%	27%
Local	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
General	1%	0%	9%	3%	0%	0%	6%	8%
G. Bush *	874	799	98	26	61	143	15	140
J. McCain *	1,158	641	116	20	41	27	33	14
B. Bradley *	1,254	779	78	56	685	608	0	0
A. Gore *	1,213	962	186	47	233	312	11	73
Congress *	142	16	283	16	0	23	101	171
Total Time	5:07	5:54	1:17	0:39	2:13	3:00	0:46	1:59
Total CCD	2 hr. 9 min.	1 hr. 35 min.	17 min. 40 sec.	2 min. 45 sec.	29 min. 8 sec.	28 min. 22 sec.	4 min. 36 sec.	22 min. 48 sec.
Nightly Avg. Total Time	10 min. 13 sec.	11 min. 49 sec.	2 min. 35 sec.	1 min. 17 sec.	4 min. 27 sec.	6 min.	1 min. 32 sec.	3 min. 57 sec.
Nightly Avg. CCD	4 min. 19 sec.	3 min. 12 sec.	35 sec.	6 sec.	58 sec.	57 sec.	9 sec.	46 sec.
Avg. Sound Bite Length	14 sec.	12.5 sec.	12.1 sec.	6 sec.	10.7 sec.	9.3 sec.	9.3 sec.	8.3 sec.

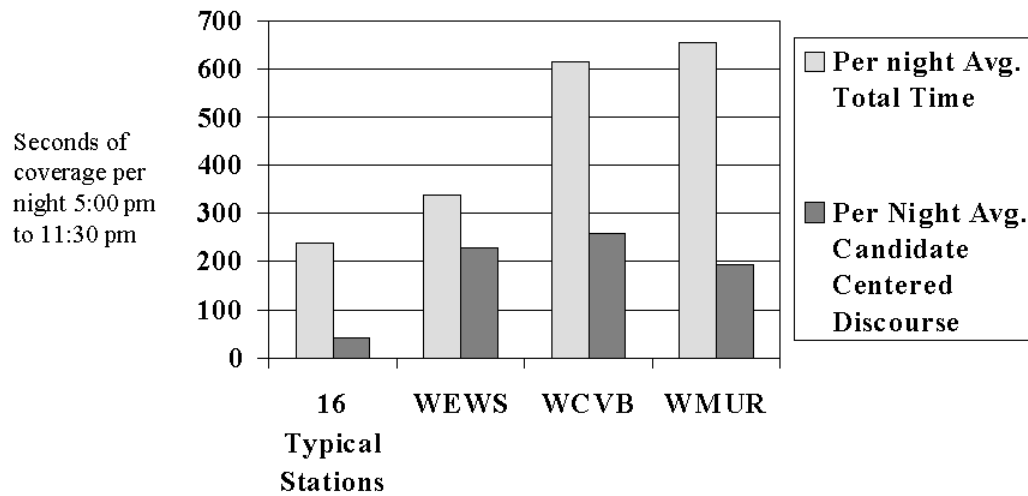
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WCVB, WMUR & WEWS vs. 16 Typical Stations Story Frame



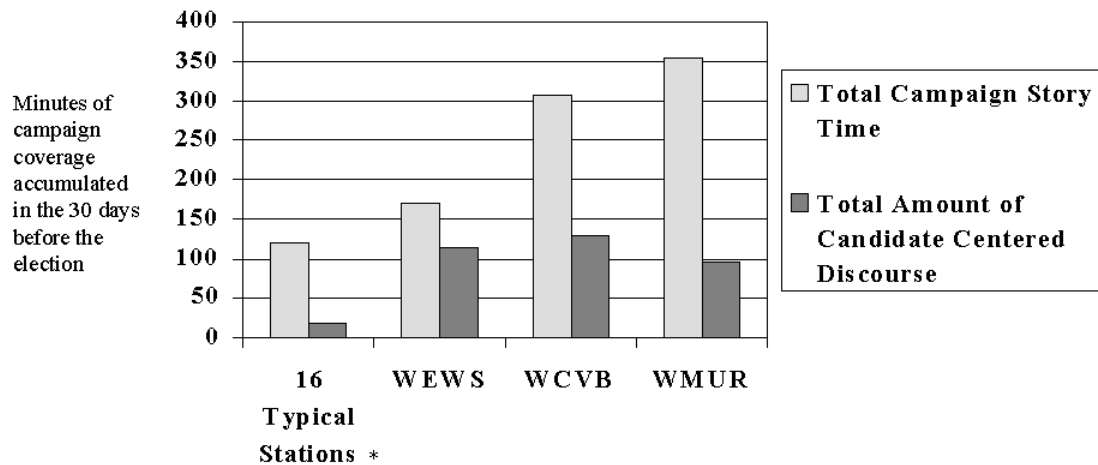
Source: The Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication

**WCVB, WMUR & WEWS vs. 16 Typical Stations:
 Nightly Average Total Campaign Story Time &
 Candidate Centered Discourse**



Source: The Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication

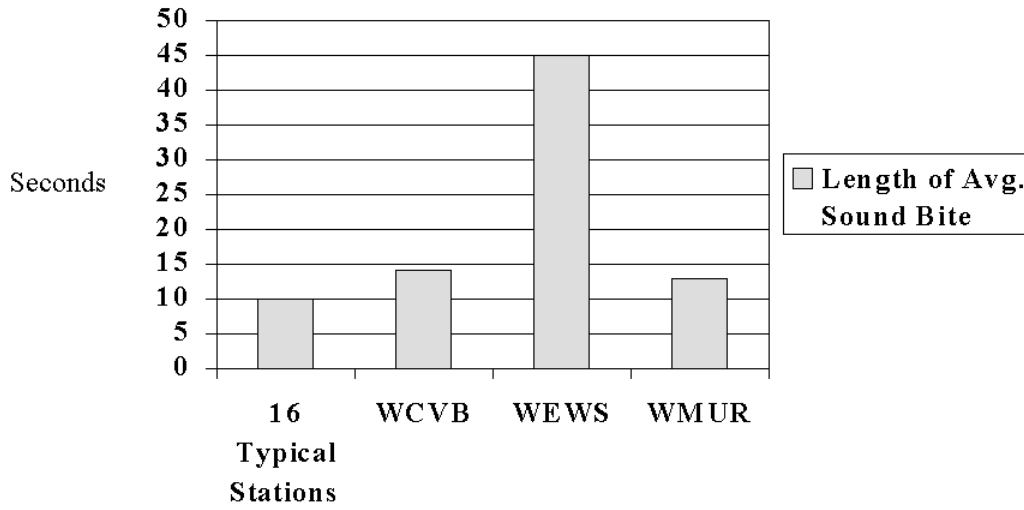
WCVB, WMUR & WEWS vs. 16 Typical Stations: Cumulative Campaign Time and Cumulative Candidate Centered Discourse



* The figures for the 16 other stations are averages for all 16 stations, not gross amounts combined.

Source: The Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication

WCVB, WMUR & WEWS vs. 16 Typical Stations: Length of Average Sound Bite



Source: The Norman Lear Center at the USC
Annenberg School for Communication