BROOKINGS/PEW RESEARCH CENTER FORUM

THE BIENNIAL PEW MEDIA SURVEY: HOW NEWS HABITS CHANGED IN 2004

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C O N T E N T S

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. NESSEN: Good morning. Welcome to the Brookings Institution and welcome to this morning's forum, at which the Pew Research Center's biennial survey of the media habits of Americans is being released and discussed. This survey of 3,000 Americans was conducted between April 19th and May 12th. And we want to give a special welcome this morning to those who are watching the forum on C-SPAN.

In case anyone here in the audience didn't get one, there are copies of the survey just outside--embargoed for 10 o'clock, and it is 10 o'clock, so the embargo has been lifted. For those of you who are watching at home, the results are available on the Pew Web site. You can link to it from the Brookings Web site. And also, by this afternoon, you'll find on the Brookings Web site a full transcript of this forum.

Our format this morning will be, first of all, Andy Kohut, the director of the Pew Research Center for People and the Press, will announce and explain the findings of the survey. And then our panel will offer their reflections on the results, their reactions, and will discuss the findings.

Our panel this morning consists of Steve Hess, who is a senior fellow here at Brookings, who spends much of his time analyzing and commenting on news media issues; Susan Page, the Washington bureau chief of USA Today; Tom Rosenstiel, director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism. And I'm Ron Nessen, journalist in residence at Brookings, and I'll be the moderator for this morning.

Obviously, our format will also include time for the audience to ask your questions and offer your comments.

So let's begin with Andy Kohut. Andy?

MR. KOHUT: I'm happy to be here to tell you about the Pew Audience Survey, a survey that we do once every two years. It's going to be a little bit of tell-and-show. I'm going to tell you about the major findings, at least from my point of view, and then show you just a few pictures to bring home the conclusions.

As Ron mentioned, this is our eighth survey on a series that goes back to 1990. Over that time, we've been chronicling the fragmentation of American news audiences in response to new technologies, but also in response to the sagging interest of younger generations of Americans in hard news.

Our headline today isn't about technology, nor is it about how younger people aren't interested in hard news; it's about the way news audiences are increasingly becoming politicized. We see this in their cable and news preferences and we see this in the distinctions they make and the credibility judgments that they give to various news organizations.

While news habits have been relatively stable in recent years--and the reference in this survey is mostly between the survey we conducted in 2004 and the surveys we've conducted in 2002 and 2000--we do see the cable news audience continues to grow modestly. In particular, Fox News has made significant gains in audience over this period, thanks to the increasing viewership of Republicans and conservatives. Fully 52 percent of the Fox News audience, the people who say that they're regular viewers of Fox News Channel, are political conservatives. That compares to only 40 percent who said that back in the year 2000. At the same time, CNN has a more Democratic-leaning audience than in the past.

The same pattern of politicalization is found in evaluations of media credibility. Republicans have become more distrustful of virtually all news organizations over the past four years, and especially over the past two years, while Democratic evaluations of the news media have mostly been unchanged.

Half as many Republicans as Democrats give the highest believability rating to a variety of well-known news organizations, including all three broadcast networks, NPR and The NewsHour, the New York Times, and each of the major news magazines. CNN's once-dominant credibility rating have slumped in recent years, mostly among Republicans and independents, and Fox News believability ratings have remained steady, but are markedly lower among Democrats and independents. Nonetheless, more people continue to say they believe all or most of what they hear on CNN than say that about Fox News.

Besides the politicalizing trend, there are a number of other things that I want to mention to you. First, a sizable number of Americans continue to seek out in-depth news. And while TV news remains dominant, as many as 4 in 10 Americans say they get more out of the news by hearing about it or reading the news than from video. This not only affects their readership of newspapers and magazines, but, also profoundly, it affects their choices of electronic news sources.

The durability of these serious news consumers is reflected in the steady numbers of Americans who are regular consumers of news from NPR, The NewsHour, C-SPAN, and magazines like The New Yorker and the Atlantic. These audiences have not increased in recent years--and they're small--but they have not suffered the long-term declines experienced by newspapers and broadcast news.

Our survey this year found Americans are spending somewhat more time with the news than they have in the past. Our interview begins by asking people what they did in the day prior to the interview. We found more minutes devoted this year by our average respondent to dealing with the news--listening to the news or following the news, especially television news. This probably reflects continuing high interest in the war in Iraq.

Interest in Iraq has also led to a sharp rise in the number of Americans who say they closely follow international news most of the time, not just when important news developments are breaking. More than 52 percent in this survey said that that was the case; that's up from 37 percent in 2002 and a comparable number in previous surveys.

Despite this finding, there's little indication in other questions in the survey that the core audience for international news is deeper or more diverse. It continues to be well-educated, middle-aged men and not much beyond that.

The online audience continues to grow. Twenty-nine percent of the people that we interviewed said they get news online three or more times a week; 25 percent say they regularly get news from an ISP--network or local television Web site, newspaper Web site, or an online magazine. That's getting reasonably close to the 36 percent who regularly watch one of the three network evening news broadcasts.

Online audiences are also becoming more diverse. While they continue to be better educated and mostly younger people, the age gap is different than it was in the past. A few years ago, the age gap was under-30/over-30. Now the age gap is

under-50/over-50. And the survey finds a quarter of African Americans regularly getting their news online, up from 15 percent just two years ago.

So, those are the major findings in this report. It's a very big survey. There's a lot of material there, but--the results that I put the most emphasis on.

Let me show you some of the pictures that support this notion, and then we'll get on with the discussion.

First, we see cable competition over the past six years. Fox is now at 25, CNN is at 22, and MSNBC is at 11. The slope of most of these lines, except for Fox, is down, and Fox is up.

Fox's gain reflects the fact that it has a strong Republican base. This is the trend in the percentage of Republicans who say they regularly watch Fox News--you can see it climb from 18 percent to 35 percent--and among Democrats, it's a little bit up, but mostly flat. And Republicans are falling away from CNN. At one point, if I'm reading this chart right from this angle, close to 38 percent -- 35 percent of Republicans said that they were viewers -- now down to 19 percent, and the Democratic numbers are higher, certainly more stable.

This partisan patterning doesn't only relate to Fox, it also relates to a variety of news sources. As you can see, in the second block of numbers, there's a big gap between the percentage of Republicans and Democrats who say they regularly watch CBS Evening News or ABC evening news--the gap is less for NBC. There's a big gap on NPR; 19 percent of Democrats say they regularly listen, and among Republicans it's 13 percent. And then O'Reilly and Limbaugh, obviously, get much more Republican audiences, almost exclusively Republican audiences.

Looking at the same data in terms of the news sources a different way, 44 percent of CNN's audience are self-described Democrats; 25 percent Republicans. For Fox News Channel, the numbers are just reversed--it's 41-29. But even more dramatically, 52 percent of Fox's audience is conservative compared to 36 percent for CNN, 33 percent for nightly network news.

Here's the trend in believability ratings. Reading across, the trend among Republicans for CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN, and MSNBC, all the numbers are down. For CBS, it's 27 to 15 from 2000 to 2004; for NBC, 29 to 16; and CCN, 33 to 26. Fox is the exception in this first row of three columns, with Republicans continuing to rate Fox at the same levels as they rated them earlier--in fact, a little bit higher. Clearly, we have this on more news organizations--the Republican numbers are all down. On the other side of the ledger here, among Democrats the numbers are pretty stable. They're down in some cases, but not systematically down. Republicans are putting less stock in virtually all media, save Fox.

But even so, the differences between CNN and Fox, even among Republicans, are not very great. Fox News Channel, 29 percent of Republicans say they give Fox the highest believability rating, compared to 26 for CNN. This is mostly a matter of Republicans looking at the media as less believable over time.

The same pattern is true for NPR, The NewsHour, and C-SPAN. And also, look at The Wall Street Journal. The Wall Street Journal numbers, inexplicably, have been going down, not only among Republicans, but also among Democrats--46 to 35 to 23, and among Democrats, 40 to 29.

While CNN's credibility has dropped, it continues to have the highest believability ratings of three of the four cable news networks. I don't know if we have CNBC. I think we just have those three.

Here's an earlier pattern that I was telling you about. As you can see, over the long term, between '96 and 2004, the audiences for most of the major categories of news have declined. For local television news, 65 percent in '96 down to 59 percent now; for network evening news, 42 to 34; and the pattern is the same in that first block. But then, if you go to National Public Radio, The NewsHour, C-SPAN, the literary magazines, the numbers are small, but really they're unchanged since the middle of the '90s--probably unchanged from a longer period than that.

And finally, I'll close with the Internet numbers. The percentage of people going online in 2000 was 54 percent; it's now at 66 percent. The percentage saying they get news online regularly--and we define that as three or more times a week--has gone up from 23 to 29. That's not nearly the proportionate increase that the 54 to 66 represents, or the absolute level of increase. And the important difference here is that blacks and Hispanics are catching up with whites in terms of using the Internet, and the age pattern is less skewed than it was just four years ago.

And Ron, I think I'm going to leave it at that.

MR. NESSEN: Okay. Thank you for the presentation, Andy. Why don't you sit over here and the panel will come up.

MR. KOHUT: Okay, sure.

MR. NESSEN: [Off-microphone.] Susan, you are the, sort of, representative of the news media on our panel this morning, so I thought I'd start with you and get your reactions to what Andy has found out [inaudible].

MS. PAGE: Well, first of all, I'd like to say how grateful we are to Andy for doing these polls because they're so interesting. I do wish you could find better news for those of us who are not Roger Ailes in your survey.

You know, since--here's what struck me most when I was reading through the survey last night. Since 2000, especially since the 2000 election, we've spent so much time covering the polarization of American politics--red states and blue states and the divide that just seems to get wider among Americans. And I think it is disheartening to see this polarization also affect attitudes toward the news media. We seem to be moving toward a world where conservatives are going to watch Fox TV and liberals will watch NPR, and people under 30 are going to get their news from Jon Stewart. I think this is worrisome in terms of having the conversations of democracy. If we can't agree on credible news sources, it seems to me, it's much harder to talk about any of the big issues that we need to talk about in this country.

The declining credibility that Andy found I thought was also discouraging. You know, we've had recent scandals in news coverage at The New York Times and at my own paper, but clearly the survey finds factors beyond those developments, harmful as they were, in people's attitudes toward trusting what they see on TV or read in newspapers. More than half say they often don't trust what news organizations say. That's a very high level of cynicism and distrust toward the news media.

There were just a couple things I thought, though, were encouraging. One is how interested I think Americans seems to be in the news, including, increasingly, in foreign news. And despite the very busy lives that Americans lead, the average American spends more than an hour a day watching the news or reading news organizations' publications. That seems to me to be quite a commitment on the part of Americans.

That gender and racial gaps are narrowing, especially in use of the Internet as a news source, is an encouraging thing.

And one interesting point I saw, the biggest bar to following the news was not that people were too busy to spend the time to do it. The biggest bar was that people did not feel they had enough background information to follow stories--42 percent said that.

MR. KOHUT: Correct.

MS. PAGE: You know, that is a fixable problem. If news organizations do more to include background and context in stories, there are people who I think are interested in the news but don't feel able to follow it now because of the confusing world we live in, because of the complicated stories that we're covering these days. There's a way to draw them into news coverage.

And obviously, news organizations need to do more to rebuild their credibility. At my newspaper, we're reexamining the use of anonymous sources, how can we limit anonymous sources while still covering the news. Also a greater willingness at my newspaper and other organizations to scrutinize their own reporters, as painful as that sometimes is.

MR. NESSEN: Susan, let me just come back to what you thought was good news about people reading papers. Fewer than half--42 percent of people read a daily newspaper; under 30, only 23 percent read a daily newspaper. Now, you're the Washington bureau chief for one of our three national newspapers. Why is that good news to you?

MS. PAGE: You know what I think is good news is that people are interested in following the news. And news delivery systems may change. We may--you know, USA Today has a newspaper, but it also has a Web site. And the way people get the news may be changing. The way they graze through the news through the day may different than in the 1950's, where maybe somebody read a morning newspaper at home every day. If people are curious about the news, the delivery system can follow.

MR. NESSEN: I want to come back to the use of the Internet in a minute, but I want to ask Steve Hess--Steve, you and I had a conversation earlier this week about how the ideological differences, party differences determine, according to Andy's findings, what people read and watch for their news. And you thought that this was moving toward a European model. Would you elaborate on that?

MR. HESS: Well, it may be moving to the way it was when I was a kid and first read newspapers. Go back 60 years--and we're in New York City now--and there are eight daily newspapers. And you want to look at my family, there was Uncle Simon. Uncle Simon was a tough fellow. He worked in the liquor business. And he read the Daily News and the Mirror, the two tabloids. I used to love to go to his house because it had the best comics. We used to call it "the funnies" then.

Then there was my Aunt Marcella. She was the radical in our family. She read PM -- that was the leftist paper. It wasn't much fun going to her house.

We all read The New York Times because we pretended to be serious people. My father, who was a small businessman--had an automobile agency--he read the--what was it called? World Telegram, that was what it was. The World Telegram. We weren't rich enough to read the Herald Tribune, that was it. So he read the World Telegram. It was sort of a right paper. My mother was a Democrat, so she read the New York Post.

So we came--at least, I came from a place in which you really could sort out people's politics--political views and even their socioeconomic class--from the variety of daily newspapers that they were given. This, in effect, is a European model. If you're in Great Britain, if you're on the right, you're reading The Telegraph; if you're on the left, you're reading The Guardian. If you're in France, if you're on the left, you're reading Le Monde; if you're on the right, you're reading Figaro.

Now, I don't know, Andy, whether this is a blip or a trend. But I think there's going to be more of this, so it's at least a semi-trend, in which case it has implications, as Susan already mentioned, certainly worth talking about. I can think of about four reasons why we were moving in a situation where Republicans went to Fox and Democrats went to CNN, and Republicans went to talk radio and Democrats went to NPR, and The New Yorker and the National Review were steady. They weren't losing readership in the way that the so-called objective journalism was. I thought of four reasons. If I'm right, my colleagues may want to add to them.

I think, first of all, one is the influence of Rupert Murdoch. I think when there is a truly dominant--domineering, if you will, person, and he can convince his other colleagues in the news business that his business model of the news is making money, I think there may be others that will choose that model and move in that direction.

The second is, of course, with the daily newspapers and even your broadcast evening news losing the advantage of breaking news--they're not the place we go to tell us instantly—they have sought another justification for their existence--they, too, have moved more toward news analysis. So they are moving in the direction of opinionating in that way, too.

The third, which is part of the study, is the greater growth of the Internet, which provides, at the same time, a sort of pseudo-journalism--or every user a journalist--and that moves in that direction, too.

The fourth strikes me as the comfort of journalists with this model. And here, actually, I go back not to this study, but to the study that Andy and Tom put out a couple of weeks ago, where they were interviewing journalists rather than consumers. This was in March and April, where they interviewed 547 journalists. And here, I thought there was some very interesting questions that reflect on what we're talking about now.

For example, on the valid criticisms of the press, 64 percent of national reporters and 59 percent of local reporters saw this blurring of reporting and commentary and could say, yeah, people are right if they wish to criticize us for that. The ideological views of the reporters, 45 percent of national and 43 percent of local,

were far more fixed in that regard than previously perhaps they chose to be. The question of a credibility gap was very interesting because only 10 percent of younger reporters, or younger journalists, thought there was a credibility gap, and then this went up over time to 26 percent in middle age and 33 percent among older journalists. So it struck me that younger reporters, the ones who are going to be our future bureau chiefs, were not nearly as concerned about these sorts of things.

So at any rate, these four things, I thought, were creating a movement, or helping to create a movement that, if true, we're going to have to consider how people get the gestalt, the totality of their news, to know not just what interests them--you usually buy a paper because it agrees with you--but what doesn't necessarily interest them. Perhaps my Uncle Si and my Aunt Marcella did it by buying more than one paper at that time. So it's a question of the mix of media that people get, and here, I think, perhaps there is some room for hope in Andy's new figures.

MR. NESSEN: Tom, your organization promotes, as its name says, excellence in journalism. Now, you look at Andy's poll--

MR. ROSENSTIEL: We hope that's not a controversial position.

MR. NESSEN: Or an oxymoron.

You look at Andy's survey--53 percent overall say they don't trust the news media. Almost half, 48 percent, say the media is out of touch, which sort of ties in with your poll of a couple of weeks ago. When you look at the breakdown--Democrats, Republicans, all the different--network news, cable news, NPR, NewsHour, C-SPAN--there is no category in which at least half the people, the way the question was phrased, "believe all or most of" what they read or see.

How does that strike you when you're in the business of trying to promote excellence in journalism?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Well, actually, I don't find it to be troubling, I find it to be an interesting opportunity for journalists. Because we are past the age of what I would call "trust-me journalism," in which people would sit for half an hour, watch Walter Cronkite, and then he would announce at the end of the newscast, "That's the way it is." We are in the age in which people want to know why should I believe this? And the answer here is a new kind of objectivity that you might consider transparency. We as journalists need to show more about our sources and methods so that you can look into a piece of work as a consumer and say, "Who's the source, why is s/he reliable, why should I trust this, and how can I decide for myself what to think about it?" That's an opportunity that is a way out. There's a trail here you can see out of this mess that I think is clearer than it was some years ago.

There are some questions that intrigue me that Andy didn't touch on that I think I might want to just mention briefly.

Do people think that all the media are pretty much the same, or can they distinguish between better sources and more sources? Forty-five percent think it's all the same; 54 percent think that they can distinguish between good or bad news organizations. That's a challenge. Just barely half think that there's a difference between schlock and quality.

Fifty-five percent say they get their best understanding from seeing pictures and seeing the news for themselves.

There's a another question I think is very important here. "Since you started getting news online, are you using other sources more often, less often, or the same as you used to?" Seventy-one percent said they're using them the same, and 9 percent more often. So 80 percent there. This notion that the new media is going to cannibalize or destroy the old is not borne out in these numbers, and that's important.

Now, who is being cannibalized most? It's television. Forty-seven percent of the people who say they're using less media mentioned television as the source they're using less often.

I'd also add one other thing to counter that this is all good news for Roger Ailes--or CNN or MSNBC. If you look at the numbers closely, what people are saying is they want the news that they want when they want it. They want it on demand. The technology's moving that way. That's where the growth is--online, and some other sectors like targeted media, like ethnic media.

The technology that may get squeezed here is cable, because--it offers people the ability to sort of tune in when they want, but they have to watch what they call on TV "the wheel." If I want to see that story about--unless you want to see about Reagan right now, you have to wait. If I want to see that story about the bombing in wherever, I've got to wait until they get--and God forbid if you want to see a story that's not one of the four that they've designated as a key story that day.

Online, imagine the day not far away where ABC News doesn't have a cable network, but it has a Web site that is truly broadband, and I can watch the TV I want to watch when I want to watch it and the way I want to watch it at any time of the day. Cable may, in a decade, seem an antiquated, quaint technology that briefly had its

fling. And I would say, at the moment it's probably the shallowest product of the major media out there. You could look at this and say cable is rising; you could also look at this and say it's amazing that nightly news, which is on at the most inconvenient time possible, still has as many viewers who say they are regular viewers as does cable, which is on whenever you want it. And of course the ratings would speak even more positively for nightly news, because they've got 30 million, collectively, viewers every night versus about 6 for the four cable stations.

MR. HESS: But of course, a difference between cable and otherwise is in my house I get 77 channels and I have a very modest basic program. So you're not going just for news when you turn that thing on--it's basically an entertainment medium--and you're wandering through all of these things. And of course, on the news part, they now try to counter the Internet with this awful thing that runs across the bottom of the screen as well. I guess I'm not prepared yet to write the obituary for cable.

But of course you're right, there was a time, when we wanted the news, we waited till 6 o'clock. Then along came CNN and we got it on the hour. Now I don't watch CNN that much. If I want the news right away, I turn on the Internet. So there is that progression. But one thing--the difference, of course, which is a very nice difference—is that with the Internet, you're reading again. We've gone back to words.

MR. NESSEN: First of all, let me do one thing, which is, for those of you who don't spend their entire lives following closely the media business, Roger Ailes runs the Fox News Channel.

Now, do you have any reaction to the reaction to your survey?

MR. KOHUT: Yeah, I wanted to follow up on Steve's list of things that may be causing this politicalization. But first, a fact. This is a dramatic difference of--and we haven't published this, but we pulled together these numbers before I came over here. The first survey in this series was done in 1985 for the Los Angeles Times. Mr. Rosenstiel was the media critic at that point in time. And the difference between Republicans and Democrats in terms of their evaluations of the news organizations that we tested was about 6 percentage points. By the mid-1990s, it was 10 percentage points. And if you look in the--just a quick scan of the differences, the gaps between Republican views and Democratic views, it's now up to 16 percentage points.

So this is a process. And I think it reflects a couple of things beyond what Steve had to say. First of all, over this same period of time, we know that the public has become more suspicious of the news media generally, irrespective of the partisan points of view. The percentage of people who think the press usually gets the facts straight was 55 percent back in 1985; it's at best 35 percent in the most recent surveys.

A second element of this is political polarization. Our surveys have shown the extent to which Republicans and Democrats really have their guns drawn to a much greater extent than in the past.

But a third factor--and this is really what I wanted to address to you, Steve--is that this is a function of the media reaping what they've sown. And that is the cable news shows in particular have become increasingly contentious. We have these shout shows on every one of these networks, where you have one group of people who believe this and another group of people who believe something else, and they argue

with each other. And I think the audience has come to look at these programs and the news more generally as reflecting a point of view. I think this, more than anything else, has heightened this long process that we've been tracing since 1985.

MR. NESSEN: Let me ask you a question on that point. Could another reason be that the public is getting more conservative? I mean, are the blue states turning purple a little bit?

MR. KOHUT: Are the blue states--no. I mean, I think that in some ways the public is more liberal, in other ways it's more conservative. On social issues, the public is more liberal. If you look at attitudes toward homosexuality or a range of social issues, over this period of time there's more liberalism than there is conservatism. In other realms, in economic realms, it's more conservative. So I don't think that this reflects some--there have been some shifts in political values, but they're not all one way. What they are is we have more of a tension between the two.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: I would add another factor, which is that you have wings of one of the political parties actively trying to sort of discredit the press as liberal and then Rupert Murdoch and his organization sort of using that as a marketing device to attract audience. So you have this drum beat of critique that the mainstream press is liberal. So, you know, it's a sort of perfect synergy between a business operation that wants to use that to create a niche for itself and political figures, who they interview, who want to argue that to discredit a critical press. And that's worked very well.

MS. PAGE: I wonder--to ask the two analysts as opposed to the journalists on the panel--do you think that they're right? Is the press more biased now

than it was when the surveys started taking place? Is in fact the information the press gives less credible, less correct?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: You want me to take that first? Yes. I would argue that the press is demonstrably more liberal in the people who work there, because we can see that from a variety of surveys. Although they're predominantly moderate, there are more liberals and somewhat fewer conservatives in newsrooms, which may, some people argue, be a function of trying to attract greater diversity in the newsroom--to bring more minorities and women in, it's had the effect of liberalizing the newsroom somewhat.

But I think a more important factor, an equally important factor is that the press has become more interpretive, that as the news has become a commodity that's out there everywhere, news organizations feel that they need to add value to their news product the next morning or the next minute. And to do so, they are interpreting events more. So the public is rightly sensing "I'm getting more of what you think and, proportionally, somewhat less of what you know" in the coverage. And as Andy says, we are reaping what we're sowing.

MS. PAGE: Well, it's certainly true that when I started covering the White House in 1981, that Reagan would make an announcement and you'd cover that the first day, you did the congressional analysis the second day, you'd do an interpretive piece, analytical piece, for Sunday. You've got to do that all in the first afternoon now.

MR. NESSEN: There's no such thing as a first-day story anymore.

MR. HESS: Well, I wasn't going to do any more but give some of Andy and Tom's own figures, because they surprised me with the magnitude. This is the

question of conservatives and liberals in the newsroom as opposed to the general public. The general public, the report says, are 33 percent conservatives, but the national press, 7 percent. That is a growing--

MR. KOHUT: That's a problem.

MR. HESS: That's a problem. Liberals, the general public is 20 percent, and the national press is 34 percent. So these, I think, are the largest gap figures that I've ever seen.

MR. KOHUT: There's another element here, too, and that is, except in a number of periods of big stories, there's not enough news for all the media that's developed over the course of the '90s. And therefore, a lot of what we see, especially on television, and even in print, is goosed-up news to fill, really, a bigger news hole. I mean, the news holes have shrunk in newspapers for economic reasons, but if you look at the total news hole, it's a heck of a lot bigger than it once was because there's so many more news sources. And so therefore, the marketers--some of them are called editors and news producers--have to come up with ways of making this stuff attractive. And one of the ways they've made it attractive is to put spin on it and to put attitude on it, and that's why you have these differences, I think.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: I'd add one other thing to that. As you have this proliferation of outlets, each of these outlets has pressure on its audience because it's got more competition--which means pressure on revenues. So you have seen over this time, as there's more competition, cutting back on resources in these newsrooms. CNN produces just as much news as it did 10 years ago, but it's got 400 fewer people doing it.

And so that leads to further, sort of, stretching or goosing or adding things to the news, because you're actually covering fewer stories.

MR. NESSEN: I want to come back to something Susan alluded to, because I think it's some of the most amazing findings in here. Twenty-nine percent of the people you questioned went online at least three times a week for their news. That's up 15 times over 1995, when you started asking that question. But you drill down into the fine print, you'll find that the largest category of news people were looking for when they went on the Internet, 76 percent went for the weather. What is that all about?

MR. KOHUT: It's about the way people use the Internet and use other news sources to get information that they need to carry out their daily lives. I mean, a lot of the turn-on-the-news in the morning, I'm sure, is to watch Katie Couric or whoever is on these other networks, but a lot of it is also to hear what the weather's going to be like or, you know, what the traffic patterns are. I mean, people use the media to help manage their lives.

MR. NESSEN: Well, if three-quarters of the people are getting their news from the Internet, mostly weather, what does that do to your theory that, well, some of the shortcomings of print are going to be taken care of when people get more and more of their news online?

MS. PAGE: Well, you know, the weather is obviously important--USA Today in the forefront of covering the weather.

MR. KOHUT: I walked into that one.

MR. NESSEN: Everybody's a marketer, Andy.

MS. PAGE: You know, I actually--not to repeat myself, but I worry kind of less about news delivery systems than about credibility and about how journalists do their jobs. I think journalists are going to be around--and more important, not less important during the time I've been a journalist--because the world's gotten more confusing. We've gotten more integrated in a global way, so there's more imperative to cover things that happen abroad.

And, you know, maybe someday we'll all be reading newspapers off our BlackBerrys. And I find that not the worst thing in the world to imagine, although I like newspapers--I like the way they feel, I like getting up in the morning and having them at my doorstep. But I actually don't find the delivery system the critical debate to have. The critical debate to have is how do you inform people in a way they find credible, so that when we talk about what to do about, you know, the war in Iraq or health care coverage, we have a common basis of understanding to start that debate.

MR. HESS: Well, let me just get in on this. Because, you see, I think there is some very good news, in Andy's study, on the Internet. And it does relate to the question of the delivery system. It's not surprising that the use of the Internet is going up and up. Obviously, more and more are using it. But I know I wrote, certainly five or 10 years ago, that this was going to be another distinction between the haves and have-nots. The elites were going to use this and those that needed more education, that needed money to buy it and so forth, would be left behind again.

Now, the figures on African Americans and their use of the Internet is one of the most stunning pieces of this study. Now, it's not done in socioeconomic terms. You know, it doesn't distinguish between a poor African American and a rich African

American. But there's no question that in that very prominent minority group, they're moving along at even a more rapid rate in terms of using the Internet. And my initial worry I assume the same thing will happen then with Latinos. The delivery system is not going to make one more distinction between the haves and the have-nots--at least, that delivery system.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: I'd add one thing to that, too, which surprised me and was encouraging. People think of the Internet as a technology where you just drill down where you want to go. There are two questions in here that suggest it's more complicated than that. One was a question--I don't know where it is here, Andy, but do you, sort of, get incidental news, do you discover news that you weren't looking for.

MR. KOHUT: Bump into news.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Bump into news. And those numbers were high. And then the question of how many people Googled was lower than I would have expected. So people are maybe going for the weather, but then they're going to CNN or AOL or Yahoo! and they're scanning headlines and acquiring incidental news in the way that we have seen, particularly since the age of radio and then, particularly, television. And that is what creates that public space.

MR. KOHUT: Let me take that one step further, Tom, because I think that is the way a lot of people get news from the Internet. A lot of people go to USA Today online or nytimes.com, or washpost.com. What about the people who go to Matt Drudge or hatebush.com and give it the same weight as USA Today online or nytimes.com?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: The numbers show that, really, there are two Internets. One is the mass Internet, which is AOL and Yahoo! and USA Today, and that's where the numbers are big. The other Internet is that Internet of bloggers, the individual, independent--for some people, the more utopian vision of the Internet, the citizen journalists. The numbers there are not large. There are a lot of blogs. Most of them are very marginal in terms of their longevity and their audience. But they have an influence in the same way that opinion journalism--The Nation doesn't have a big circulation, but it has an influence. The National Review doesn't have a huge circulation, but it has an influence.

I think that's where the Drudges and the other blogs of the world will live. Although Drudge, at the moment, is largely a portal that just directs people to wire copy in other places. It's rare that he actually has anything that--

MR. NESSEN: Do you have any more details of Internet use?

MR. KOHUT: Well, what Tom's saying is-- We have a lot of details, I just can remember.

[Laughter.]

MR. KOHUT: What Tom is saying is true. There are two kinds of Internet users in terms of news. There's very high-intensity, and they are very well-versed in the news, they're good, strong news consumers. Then the vast majority of Internet news users, if they say they principally use the Internet, are very light news users. They're people who bump into the news, or they'll browse and just look at headlines and don't--these people don't have nearly the commitment to the news that

regular newspaper or network evening news audiences do. So you're right. There are probably two or three or maybe four kinds of Internet news users.

MS. PAGE: But bumping into the news is not really an Internet-only phenomenon. It's one of the reasons you want people to buy newspapers, is because they may buy it for the funnies or the sports or the weather page, but then they bump into the news you put on the front page or stories that they didn't expect to be interested in reading. So I think it's a good thing. I mean, I would like to advance the idea of Internet bumping.

MR. NESSEN: Let me suggest that we spend a few more minutes on one other topic, which is demographic differences--gender, race, income, age, and so forth--that showed up in Andy's poll, and then we'll go from there right to audience questions and comment.

Do you want to elaborate somewhat on that?

MR. KOHUT: Well, I think the most demographic difference in looking at the news is age. Younger people, the current generations of young people don't have as much of a news habit, don't enjoy the news as much as do older people. And it's not just a matter of, well, that's the way younger people have always been. Our center started off with an analysis that I wrote called "The Age of Indifference." And what it did was compare the generation of young people in the early 1990s with the generations of young people in the '40s, '50s, and '60s from Gallup data. And if you looked then at what young people knew about the news and how closely they followed the news, there was a little difference, but there weren't huge, yawning gaps in what older people knew

versus what younger people knew, and younger people were relatively good news consumers.

But ever since the '80s, really, especially in the '90s and especially with this next generation--I've lost the alphabet; I don't know whether we're on Y, C--Wherever we are, things are not getting better, they're getting worse. One of the simple questions that we have in the survey is "How much do you enjoy keeping up with the news?" And younger people don't enjoy it as much as older people.

In any event, I think that's the most important demographic difference. On every page of this report you can see it.

MR. NESSEN: What are the implications, Steve, of that?

MR. HESS: I worry, because, of course, these things relate to voting as well. And we used to always say young people didn't vote very heavily, but they'll start voting when they go to their first PTA meeting, when they've got that first kid in first grade, that sort of thing, and they take a civic responsibility, too. Maybe, though, it's a factor of their knowledge otherwise and their interests and so forth. So I think this bodes not well for a greater civic responsibility that, of course, will most simply be shown at the ballot box. It's another place to worry.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: The Internet, of course, is the one place where news usage is a little closer between younger and older, and it then offers that promise that if that becomes the delivery system, maybe there'll be a change.

MR. NESSEN: Susan, the USA Today daily newspaper, national newspaper--what do you consciously do every day that you're the bureau chief here to try to make the paper--or news--more appealing, attractive to younger readers?

MS. PAGE: Well, attracting younger readers is something that we think about a lot, as do other news organizations. One of the things that we've tried to do is to have coverage that's connected to people's lives. You know, one of the things that the survey showed was, I think, just over 40 percent said the news media's out of touch. So, you know, that means coverage of popular culture and health care and education, drug abuse--issues that really are where people live their lives, as well as what the president's doing and what Congress is passing. So that would be one way that we're trying to address that age gap that Andy found.

MR. NESSEN: Anything else to say before we go to questions?

All right, your turn. And we have some folks with microphones. If you raise your hand, you'll be recognized; then you can stand up and wait for the mike to reach you. I think right over here we'll start.

QUESTION: Hi, I'm Celia Wexler with Common Cause. You mentioned the concern you have about journalists and their political stance. But shouldn't there be an equal concern or more concern about the political stance of the owners of media outlets? And the second part to that question, what's the impact of media consolidation on all of this? You know, you mentioned the fact that in New York City there used to be eight newspapers, all independently owned. What happens if we have lots of outlets of information, but they're owned by a handful of companies? Which is where we are right now.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: We're there. I mean, the paradox is that we have more outlets but actually fewer owners.

The political ideology of most of these companies is profit.

[Laughter.]

MR. ROSENSTIEL: There are--Rupert Murdoch is probably a throwback, in many ways, to the halcyon days of Steve's youth in New York City, where the publisher tried to, you know, change the city and make a lot of money at the same time.

One could say, well, this is good, they should be concerned about this, they should be connected to community. But if the owners become so large that they are one of four or five in the country, they're not--it's not a community they're talking about, it's a world and a world ideology.

In my experience, the values of an owner come into play in how much money they're willing to vote to their news organization, what's the profit margin that they're going to demand, what kind of people do they name editor. I've never had a publisher come into the newsroom and tell me how to change a lead. But they do hire the boss, and that makes a big difference.

MR. HESS: I totally agree. I keep looking, we all keep looking for these unholy alliances. They now own all sorts of things--motion pictures and theme parks and whatnot. What's the so-called synergy? How are they plugging their products and so forth? What pressures are they bringing on their reporters to say something or not say something? It's either so subtle that I rarely see it, but it doesn't show up that often, really. And part of the reason it doesn't show up that often is we're all ready to shout and scream if we see it. And that's the worse thing somebody can have if they're trying to make a profit, is somebody saying, my God, you are greedy and you have done something underhanded.

So I think we should keep aware and keep looking. But I'm always surprised at how seldom I see these sorts of things that I thought were going to be a natural outcome of conglomeratization.

MR. KOHUT: Could I respond to that? I did a survey with Columbia Journalism Review when Dave Laventhal was the editor/publisher. And it was a confidential survey of people in news organizations, both local and national. And we asked people if they had ever been asked to spike stories, to not do stories. And we pursued the motivations for being asked to spike a story. And we didn't find any significant number of reporters or news producers in broadcast saying that their bosses had told them to spike stories because of conflict of interest. But what was reported most widely, these reporters and producers said they were often discouraged from doing important stories because they were thought to not have commercial appeal.

So it wasn't a matter of the boss saying, well, this is really going to hurt old corporate if we put this one out, but more about here's an important piece of news that, you know, it's really going to turn the audience off.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Two quick things on this. One is in the journalist survey, we did see a high level of--about a third of broadcast journalists said that they had been encouraged to do certain stories or not do certain stories because of advertisers. And that number is, I think, growing.

MR. NESSEN: Is that mostly local papers?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Television.

MR. KOHUT: Local television.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: And we all do know that there has been--I don't know whether you call it "synergy" or just "promotion" in the case of Dateline and some other programs devoting a lot of time to entertainment reality programming that happen to be on their network. And they don't seem to actually be shamed by Steve Hess or others saying, What the heck--

MR. HESS: Well, switch from the commercial side to the political side and you may see something different. Now, my own work in this goes way back. But the first study I did of the Washington reporters, which came out in 1981, was a follow-up, if you will, of something Leo Rosten had done in 1936. Now, in 1936 there were all these wonderful little independent papers, and wow, were they under the gun of their publishers and their editors. I did not find that in the same way when we were starting to get groups coming in.

So there may be a distinction, if you will--maybe it's not even an honorable distinction--between commercial pressure and political pressure.

MS. PAGE: Although I do think the threat is not that a publisher will urge you to cover something because they're a big advertiser. I think the threat is that you won't cover something because it's difficult, it will take a lot of resources, it won't sell any papers. I mean, I think that is the real threat.

MR. NESSEN: Other questions?

QUESTION: I'm Charlie Clark with the Association of Governing Boards. I just wanted to get your analysis of the defection of the Republican viewers from CNN toward Fox that has made Fox the number-one cable. Is that attributable more to some biases or errors that the CNN people have made, or is it more just sort of a

political phenomenon of more conservatives just wanting their sort of true-believer home base?

MR. KOHUT: I don't know. I don't have a good answer for that. It's probably a little bit of both. What do you think, Tom?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Well, I mean, I think that you've had Fox basically saying come hither, you know, and some people have come hither. You've got Republicans--some Republican politicians kind of beating on this drum. And then you've got the things we were talking about before, which is a thinning product and a more interpretive product and maybe a product that's goosed up a little bit.

You know, if you're over-covering Laci Petersen or Kobe Bryant, I don't think it's about your politics that is bothering people.

MR. HESS: I can give you a real survey, because I've got three sons. One son who's a conservative, he watches Fox; and one who's a liberal watches CNN; and the third, who's nonpartisan, tends not to watch either. And the answer is, that's where they're comfortable. They really are--particularly the conservative one, he is so comfortable watching Fox. Well, he happens to do a lot of other reading as well--he's a professor--but nevertheless, I think that's basically it. People feel comfortable with what they're hearing because it agrees with them.

MR. NESSEN: Well, let me cite one of your numbers and see if you can explain this. It's about this question: If you look at Fox and you ask them the question "Do you believe all or most of what you see on Fox?" 29 percent--only 29 percent--of Republicans believe all or most of what they see on Fox. Twenty-four percent--not

really that much difference--of Democrats believe all or most of what they see on Fox. I don't get that.

MR. KOHUT: What this survey shows is that Republicans are an increasingly cynical lot when it comes to the media. I mean, the Fox number is no different than it had been in previous surveys, but all of the other numbers, the numbers for other news organizations, are markedly lower. Republicans are looking at the media with a very jaundiced eye. And you know, it could go to your interpretation, that watching Fox and seeing Krauthammer, someone speaking from a conservative point of view, is comforting. But certainly, that 29 percent giving Fox a high rating is nothing to shout about.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: If you don't believe these guys, you might as well listen to people who you agree with who you don't believe.

[Laughter.]

MR. HESS: And the figure, Andy, of course, which is most stunning is The Wall Street Journal.

MR. KOHUT: Yeah. I don't understand the Wall Street Journal numbers in this survey. We've had three successive surveys--The Wall Street Journal, when we first started doing this, had a believability rating that was way up here. Each survey, it's come down, and I don't understand why. Certainly it's come down among the Republicans as well as Democrats and independents. It can't be a case of The Wall Street Journal editorial page seeming less conservative. I mean, it seems unchanged to me.

MR. NESSEN: Well, interesting on that same chart--only 26 percent of Republicans believe CNN. Only 24 percent of Democrats believe Fox. So it's almost a perfect balance. But only 15 percent of Republicans believe NPR. NPR is the one that Democrats really seem to--

MR. KOHUT: That's where the huge gap is.

MR. HESS: But the listenership to NPR was not really like that at all. It was rather balanced, if I remember correctly.

MR. KOHUT: More balanced. More balanced, yes. Right.

MR. NESSEN: Other questions?

QUESTION: My name is Cliff Kincaid, with Accuracy In Media. Isn't this polarization of the media and the rise of Fox News not a reflection of cynicism, but a healthy development? Because it shows that Republicans and conservatives are finally--they finally have an alternative to--and they are finally putting their money where their mouth is in terms of an awareness of the liberal media bias that was always there, but they never had any alternative to. And they had previously thought, well, this really isn't liberal because it was depicted, as Walter Cronkite said, as the way the news is, this is the way it is. And now they have an alternative way of looking at that. And they're realizing that it wasn't strictly objective news reporting, but it was always presented with what Tom Rosenstiel called "interpretive reporting."

But this has been what has been taught in journalism for decades. When I took journalism back in the late '70s, my college textbook was "Interpretive Reporting" by Curtis MacDougall. This is what journalists have been taught for years. And so when you have predominantly liberals going into that profession, you're going to have

the bias. The public is becoming aware of it. And yet, the response of the media, as Tom Rosenstiel has pointed out, is to complicate or compound the problem by hiring even more liberals in the name of "diversity."

So to Mr. Kohut, two years from now aren't we going to see, most likely, further polarization of the media, but isn't that really a good thing?

MR. KOHUT: Well, I don't do good things or bad things. I just report these surveys. But I think in one respect what you're saying is true, that the Republicans and conservatives now have a place where they are more comfortable than was the case five or six years ago. But even so, they're not doing back-flips over Fox News, either, just quoting the numbers that Ron referenced.

MR. ROSENSTIEL: I would add one other thing about the European model question, and that is that I think--you know, it can work in electronic or broadcast, but the economics of newspapers today, there's one newspaper in most towns. And it's a problem, I think, if you say, well, Toledo's going to have a conservative news slant and Cleveland's going to have a liberal news slant. I mean, what do you do if you happen to be a conservative in Cleveland if the newspaper is slanting everything for the left? They can do that in geographically small countries, like France, where there's a lot of national newspapers and everybody reads those. But we're a different country with a different economic basis for our journalism. Most of the money comes from advertising, not from circulation--unlike in Europe.

So this can work, I think, on television, where you've got many choices in each town. But I don't see--I see this as much more problematic with print.

MS. PAGE: And while people say they believe their local news more, it's in fact local newspapers that are usually driving local coverage, particularly of things like government and school systems.

MR. NESSEN: The local newspaper's probably the only news organization at the zoning commission meeting.

MS. PAGE: That's right. So if they either don't cover that story or they cover it and you don't believe it, I think that's quite alarming. It's different than the debate between Fox and MSNBC and CNN.

MR. HESS: My response to the question of bias--and I've tried to measure this, too--that when you're talking about politics, objective journalists come work very hard to balance a story between Republicans and Democrats. I mean, I've measured that, even. There tends to be some slight difference about whether you're in the majority or the minority party, of course--you've got to cover the majority a little more.

The problem on this question of bias, where it does slip in, is, of course, that they all otherwise agree on social issues, not on political issues. And as social issues get political, this shows up. And of course, the newsrooms try very hard--or they're supposed to--to reach some forms of diversity, but those that they bring in from diverse groups also come from Ivy League schools as well. So that when you look at issues like abortion or homosexuality, they cover it or don't cover it because, of course, everybody they know has that position and it never enters their mind to do the same sort of balance that they are very scrupulous about doing when they're on a political story.

MR. NESSEN: We'll take two or three or four more questions.

QUESTION: I'm Bob Constantini, a free-lance journalist who does work in various media.

A personal anecdote, if I might for a moment. Just the other day, for a particularly parental reason, I happened to ask both of my daughters where they get their news. And one has just finished her freshman year in college; the other will enter high school in September. And of course in unison, they both said "the Internet." And I've decided I'm coming down on the happy side of my reaction to that, because, as Stephen said, they are at least reading the news again, they're getting more in-depth coverage for the stories that they do read, and they can click and find more information.

My question is, a whole generation is growing up and coming of age, and coming of voting age, that likes getting its news instantly on the Internet, likes reading USA Today for nothing--for free on the Internet. May not want to spend 50 cents or 35 cents to get a newspaper, or for the news. Is the economic model starting to catch up with this generation that is used to just finding it out on the Internet without any trouble, without any dollars or cents?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: This is the $40 billion question. Most major newspapers--or a lot of newspaper in the country today have more readers online than they do in print. And those papers are making money, they're beginning to turn the corner and make money online, but that's only if they don't amortize all the print people who are producing the copy for it. If we discover a mechanism or a model by which you can make 20 percent profit, which is what the newspaper industry averages, online, then everything's going to be great. But if it turns out that online makes 10 percent profit,

then we're going to have half as many people in America's newsrooms, in print. If it turns out they make 7 percent profit, like a supermarket--this is a huge question.

One of the things we found in the journalist survey was that, although the growth in circulation or in audience isn't online, they're more prone to have suffered layoffs in the last two years online. Why? Because if you're having pressure on the organization, you're going to push people out in the place that is making the least amount of money. And that's what's going on.

MR. KOHUT: But the potential's there, Tom. I was struck in this survey and other surveys that we've done that branding matters. I mean, people are going to their news sources, whether they're network news pages or major newspaper pages, in droves relative to Internet-only sites, which attract a very small slice of the Internet traffic.

MR. NESSEN: Let me follow up or just expand a little bit on this question about his daughter and other young people. You did a poll that just fascinated me, after the last election. And you found that half the people under 30 got news, what they called news, that helped them make up their mind who to vote for from Letterman, Leno, Saturday Night Live, MTV, Politically Incorrect, and so forth. Do you see any of that in this poll? I know you didn't deal directly with it.

MR. KOHUT: Well, we dealt with that earlier in the year, and the percentage of young people who are using The Daily Show and Saturday Night Live as a primary source of information about the campaign is at least as great as it was four years ago, in some respects greater. But when you look at these people who say that they

mostly look at Letterman or mostly look at Jon Stewart, you find out what they know, they don't know a whole heck of a lot.

MR. NESSEN: Do they vote?

MR. KOHUT: Well, we'll be telling you more about that. Probably at very low levels.

MR. NESSEN: Other questions?

QUESTION: I'm Diane Perlman, chair of the Committee on Global Violence and Security for a division of the American Psychological Association.

Susan, you said that the news spends a lot of time covering polarization, and Andrew, you talked about the shouting match. I think, more than that, that the formula that these shows use fuels polarization in a way that's very problematic and unhealthy. It creates an illusion that there's a two-dimensional world and there are two sides to everything and they have a left-right food fight and you have to figure out who's right or wrong. And it's often mean-spirited and it's very flat and I think it doesn't support the public in thinking about issues in ways that are more realistic.

There are ways of thinking--I've written about the psychology of terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Before the war, I was trying to get better guests, like Chris Matthews--I watch all these shows. And Chris Matthews was asking everyone wasn't the war going to create more terrorism. And people would say with absolute certainty, they would answer completely outside their area of expertise--I mean they've never read about, they've never studied. So I was trying to get, like, Robert J. Lifton on, who's spent decades writing about cycles of violence, and other real experts who understand these in-depth. You know, reducing terrorism has nothing to do with left or

right. You know, and he was predicting, you know, create atrocity-producing situations--everything that's happening, basically, my colleagues were predicting. And it was hard to get these people on these shows. Like the booker would say, well, is he anti-war? I'd say no, no, no, that's not the point.

So is there--and I think it can be entertaining and interesting, and the guests can be compelling. But I think it's really part of the problem. Do you have any ideas of how we can get better--you know, positions that transcend left and right on these shows?

MR. KOHUT: You know, it's funny. Even if you got them on the show, I don't know what would happen. I've only gone on Crossfire once. My wife begged me not to go.

MR. NESSEN: She was right.

MR. KOHUT: But the subject was a good subject, an interesting subject, and the other person was John Anderson [sp], a person that I respected. I found, within three minutes, we were shouting at each other. It was a situation as if the hosts were like picadors. They were picking us till we got shouting at each other. And then the problem was, after five minutes, I realized I was having a good time, so I never went back again.

So I sympathize with you. One session we did last year, Marvin Kalb and I, on bioterrorism, and we had an expert on bioterrorism as part of the panel. And he explained how he sort of got pushed out of the conversation because there was always someone there who was going to take a stronger, more dynamic stand, when all he could say was "I don't know."

So it's the nature of these programs. Keep fighting for that. But it's an uphill fight, really.

I would add one other thing. The reason you see these programs in such quantity is they're cheap to produce. They don't have huge audiences, but they can do rather well given the cost structure of what it takes to put them on with relatively small audiences.

MS. PAGE: And I've long thought that the real bias in the news media is not a liberal-conservative bias, although obviously a lot of conservatives in particular believe that. It's a bias for simplicity over complexity and for black-and-white over gray and for, you know, conflict over resolution. And, you know, that's true across the board.

MR. NESSEN: Well, many of these bookers for those shows, in their Rolodexes, they--you know, you say the booker said is he anti-war--they list people by, you know, what they're predictably going to take a position on, on the program.

MR. KOHUT: The good news is that there are a lot of alternatives. And as I was saying during the presentation, the audience for more serious in-depth news hasn't changed much over the last 10 years or eight years. And the emergence of these shout shows hasn't drowned out the size of the C-SPAN audience or the Public Broadcasting audience. So for people who want alternatives there are places for them to go in this very diverse media landscape. But for the average viewer, the most visible places are the places where there's lots of shouting and not a heck of a lot of nuance and never "I don't know."

MR. NESSEN: Last question.

QUESTION: I wonder if you could explain why it's so difficult to get the ethics codes for TV stations. I've had no problem with New York Times, Wall Street Journal, many local papers. But you go to the major networks, they won't give you their codes of conduct. Many local stations don't have them; they just put up the [inaudible] or the Society of Professional Journalists ethics codes. But these are significant statements. They profess them--some of them are very, when you actually look at them, you get them from reporters who are willing to share them, they're lofty ethical statements, but they won't release them publicly. And I wonder why that is.

Just one bizarre thing. Generally I found the newspapers more accommodating. But one day I went to the Newseum, you know, the old Newseum. On one wall, they had the First Amendment, and the others, all these wonderful ethics statements for newspapers. I don't know if you've been to the Newseum. I wanted to get a copy of them. I remember I went to the store next-door--they didn't have them. Then I spent an hour copying all of them down. And I couldn't believe this: The head of public relations for the Newseum came down and told me that I could not copy those statements off the wall--these are major newspapers--because they did not have permission to have those publicized.

These were obsolete statements, ethics statements of newspapers, and they did not want them publicized. She asked me to stop, leave, and not write those down. Which I really thought was an amazing statement.

But why is there such difficulty?

MR. ROSENSTIEL: Go to the AS&E Web site and get the ethics codes of most newspapers free. I don't know. I don't have the answer to that.

MR. HESS: I've never had any trouble getting them, frankly, so I don't know.

MR. NESSEN: Thank you, all. Andy, it's an amazingly rich study. I mean, you can sit down and really drill down in this, and there's a tremendous amount of information here.

And thank you to the panel for your many insights and personal experiences and observations.

And thank you for coming.

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