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COVERING POLITICS ON-AIR AND ONLINE

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FOREWORD

Covering Politics On-Air and Online stems from research that the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (APPC) conducted in partnership with the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF) and 10 local television stations in separate markets during the 2002 election season. The project was designed to explore how local broadcast news stations can best use the Internet in covering politics.

Local news media play an important role in covering the political process. News organizations have been working to develop the Internet as a news medium and as a means of communicating with the public. Their use of this new technology is shifting as the media and the public learn about and adapt to it.

In this report, news managers will find new information and data they can apply to their news coverage. Section I summarizes the findings. Section II describes ways the project participants found to present political information on the web effectively and use broadcast and Internet operations to enhance promotion of each other. The third section explores how stations can organize themselves to provide more effective web-based coverage and how they can ensure that it complements their on-air coverage. The report concludes with some compelling reasons the stations found for cross-media coverage of politics online and on the air.

We found that broadcast news stations can inform large segments of the public about breaking political news and then provide detailed information on their websites. The audience can seek out this additional information, which can include online ad watches or issue grids comparing the candidates' stances on key topics, on their own time and at their own pace. We also found that audiences will soak up this information and still return to broadcast coverage.

News managers are accustomed to producing news programming that draws and keeps a news audience, but the process of producing news online presents a unique set of challenges. Journalists participating in this project developed numerous creative ways of approaching the online news audience. If local news media can find effective ways to co-manage their on-air and online coverage of politics, the public will be the ultimate beneficiary.

One specific finding illustrates the opportunities that exist for local stations. We asked each station to put voter registration information for its state on its website and to alert its audience during broadcast news programs to pending state registration deadlines. The availability of this useful information, combined with effective on-air promotions, led to a significant rise in traffic to the stations' websites. Citizens who previously may not have thought to look for registration information

on a local news website altered their behavior when they became aware of new offerings.
This study reflects interests shared by RTNDF and APPC. RTNDF provides training programs, seminars, scholarship support and research in areas of critical concern to electronic news professionals and their audience. As the educational arm of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, RTNDF offers professional development opportunities for working and aspiring journalists and journalism educators.

APPC examines a number of public policy issues, which are organized into topic areas APPC has named Information and Society; Media and the Developing Mind; Media and the Dialogue of Democracy; and Health Communication. The Center conducts research and sponsors lectures and conferences in these areas.

We would like to thank The Pew Charitable Trusts and our project officer Sean Treglia for their vision and support of this innovative collaboration. Thanks also to the management and staff of the 10 stations that participated in this unique research project.

LOCAL TELEVISION **POLITICS** AND THE INTERNET: KEY FINDINGS

It's hard to imagine any two subjects that vex local television news directors more these days than politics and the Internet. Besieged by watchdog groups who complain that television isn't adequately informing voters and industry consultants who say that campaign coverage is not appealing to viewers, newsroom leaders sometimes seem unable to shape election coverage that satisfies anyone, let alone everyone. And torn between owners who view web operations as a financial drain and futurists who say the Internet soon will displace conventional media, news directors are equally overwhelmed as they try to determine how to exploit the new medium without cannibalizing their broadcasting business.

In 2002, the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation launched an experiment designed to address these two seemingly disparate challenges simultaneously. Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the project provided financial and technical support to help 10 television stations in diverse markets provide enhanced political information on their websites. The organizations hoped the project would improve political coverage and, in the process, offer clues as to how television news itself can thrive in the Internet era.

Only time will tell the full impact of the project. But several things are clear. The 10 stations succeeded in offering their viewers information that was broader, deeper and more useful than their traditional election-year fare. And although the project didn't absolutely prove that political websites are guaranteed financial winners, it did produce evidence that politics doesn't have to be a burden—and the Internet doesn't have to be a threat—to local television. Indeed, politics and the Internet may represent significant new opportunities for stations willing to invest time, energy and resources to improve web-based political coverage.

Along the way, the project shattered some conventional assumptions about politics, television and the Internet. And it left news directors with some solid models both for presenting political information on the web and for organizing their newsrooms to get the most out of the Internet.

> **The Internet may be a crucial tool in maintaining or expanding television's dominant position as a provider of political information.**

THE OPPORTUNITY

The stations and the researchers aimed to attract two distinct groups: older viewers, who already watch television in sizeable numbers but are less likely to use the Internet, and younger people, who don't watch much television news but use the Internet frequently. Telephone surveys conducted in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Minneapolis during the 2002 campaign season, as well as focus groups that were convened in Pittsburgh and Minneapolis, suggest that politics and the Internet hold keys to attracting both audiences.

Furthermore, the findings showed that a potentially significant audience exists for political news and that local television stations are in a good position to tap into this market:

- Despite common assumptions that political coverage leads to bad ratings, substantial numbers of people actually are interested in politics. For instance, 76 percent of older adults (people over age 55) and 57 percent of younger adults (18- to 34-year-olds) said they were likely or very likely to watch a scheduled political debate. Some people failed to follow through on those good intentions, but 55 percent of older adults and 37 percent of the younger adults subsequently reported that they had watched the debate. What's more, many younger adults who acknowledged that they aren't very engaged in politics said they expect to become more interested when they get married, have children and buy homes.

- Television stations have a strong claim to being the leading suppliers of political news. Some 40 percent of older adults currently use television as a main source of political information—more adults than look primarily to newspapers (37 percent). Among young adults (18-to 34-year-olds), a sizable number—33 percent—use television as a main source for political information; just 21 percent use newspapers.

- The Internet may be a crucial tool in maintaining or expanding television's dominant position as a provider of political information. In the surveys, almost 30 percent of older adults and 49 percent of younger adults expressed an interest in using the Internet to obtain political information. The two groups' motivations differed. Older people, who tend to be more engaged politically, said they are mainly drawn to the Internet by the promise of finding more detailed and comprehensive information than is available on the air. Young adults, however, increasingly look to the Internet for all kinds of information; although they tend to be less motivated to seek out political information in particular, stations may have to try reaching them online or risk not reaching them at all.

- Contrary to fears that the Internet may draw viewers away from television, surveys showed that use of both media rose during the 2002 campaign. The Annenberg survey showed that people who were high consumers of news viewed multiple media sources rather than limiting themselves to only one.

TAPPING THE INTERNET NEWS MARKET

Can local television seize the opportunity to develop the audience for online political news? The project produced mixed results:

- On the positive side, surveys showed that more than 71 percent of older adults

and more than 87 percent of younger adults recalled having seen a web address of some kind that was promoted during a local television broadcast. Clearly, on-air promotions do increase public awareness of television stations' websites.

- What's more, 44 percent of survey respondents who had used the Internet in the past actually visited a local broadcast news website. In part, the drop-off reflects the fact that a significant number of older viewers—24 percent—lack Internet access;* older viewers who do have Internet skills and access are among the most likely to visit websites that are promoted on the air. Stations face a different barrier in luring younger adults: Although Internet access is almost universal among this group, a sizable number lacked interest or simply forgot to visit a website they had seen promoted during a broadcast news program.

- Although the findings suggest that stations face big challenges attracting young adults to their political coverage, the opportunity to lure the younger set to high-quality news websites remains very real. Many younger viewers are unlikely to visit local broadcast websites but regularly use online newspapers as well as national news outlets such as CNN.com and MSNBC.com. And, many use the same sites every day, usually logging on from work. This pattern suggests that local broadcasters have a chance to gain a devoted following if they can persuade younger viewers to give their sites a try.

- Some evidence also indicates that stations can use online promotions to attract new viewers for their broadcasts. In online "pop-up" surveys, one in three people who used stations' political web pages said they had seen a story on the web that made them more likely to watch on-air coverage.

- Stations have their work cut out for them, though. Even though people list television and newspapers as their top two sources for political information, some focus group participants said they do not consider local broadcast news to be as reliable as newspapers.

- Other findings tended to offer encouragement to stations inclined to cover politics aggressively online and on the air. As the 2002 campaign progressed, Nielsen ratings generally edged upwards, as did use of the participating stations' web pages. And in a further indication that people valued stations' political websites, traffic on the stations' political web pages increased at a greater rate than on their home pages as the election approached.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Despite indications that television could use the Internet to attract new viewers and deepen the loyalty of existing ones, news directors have been slow to develop their newsrooms' Internet capabilities, partly because they are busy creating daily newscasts. But perhaps more important, the Internet remains for many television newspeople a starkly unfamiliar, even threatening, terrain—one that requires a way of thinking different from that generally
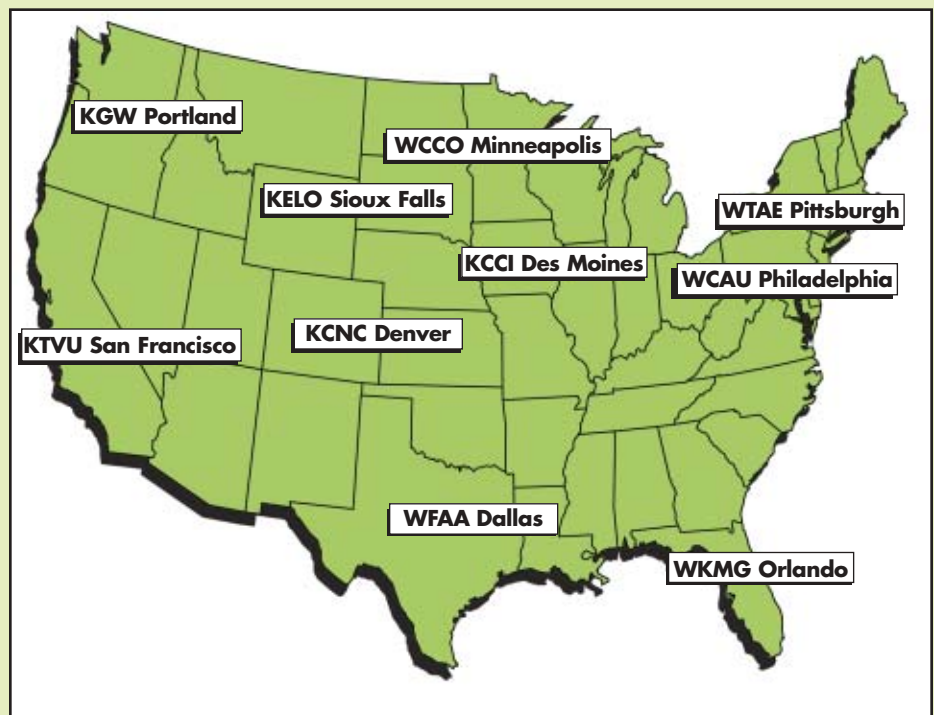
*Internet access via public libraries or other public sources is nearly universal in the markets surveyed. This statistic more accurately reflects the fact that many people don't know they have Internet access available to them.

Clearly, on-air promotions do increase public awareness of television stations' websites.

found in television newsrooms. News directors are used to attracting viewers at specific times, whereas the Internet is always on and always available. News directors work with a medium that presents information sequentially, one story at a time, while the Internet allows viewers to select what information they obtain and when they obtain it. And whereas the economics of "mass media" compels news directors to try

ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Covering Politics On-air and Online" was a collaboration between the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. Eager to promote the role of the press in nurturing a well-informed and politically engaged electorate, the three organizations share a conviction that the Internet offers unique opportunities to present political information in a format that is useful to potential voters.

Leading up to the project, scholars at Annenberg conducted a year-long nationwide survey and tested four features that appeared on political websites during the 2000 election season. The elements tested included issue grids, candidate biographies, ad watches and campaign finance information. As a part of this testing, researchers randomly assigned 944 participants in Eugene, Ore., to view a combination of 17 political website features, including sites produced by the Center for Public Integrity, the Center for Responsive Politics, the League of Women Voters and the *National Journal*. The researchers monitored how the participants used the sites, and participants filled out questionnaires before and after using the segments tested.

KGW Portland
WCCO Minneapolis
KELO Sioux Falls
WTAE Pittsburgh
KCCI Des Moines
WCAU Philadelphia
KCNC Denver
KTVU San Francisco
WFAA Dallas
WKMG Orlando

The 2000 election survey and experiment identified two types of citizens who face barriers to acquiring political information online: those with high Internet sophistication but a low level of political engagement (generally, younger users), and those with low Internet sophistication but a high degree of political engagement (generally, older users). The researchers found that the same approach to web design can help both groups use the Internet to obtain political information. With both groups, the more effective sites were those that displayed information in a same-page, side-by-side comparison format and that eschewed "bells and whistles" in favor of simple designs with conventional features.

Annenberg used the findings to design issue grid, biography, ad watch and campaign finance web page templates for the 2002 election, and it added new templates designed to give voters basic information, such as how to register to vote and where to find polling places. RTNDF then launched a search for local television stations willing to use

to attract and hold the largest possible audience at all times, the Internet is relatively inexpensive, decentralized and diffuse, so users tend to self-select into narrow groups with highly specific interests.

Overcoming these barriers could produce a significant increase in a station's audience. Academic research suggests that many Americans are detached or even feel alienated from the political system.

the templates and take other steps to beef up their online political coverage. After RTNDF solicited applications in markets thought likely to have newsworthy election contests, a selection committee picked 10 stations.* The panel considered stations' track records for aggressive political coverage, their commitment to maintaining strong websites, their ratings for news programming and whether management strongly supported the elections project.

The selection committee included the following people (job titles and affiliations reflect their status at the time the committee convened):

- Merrill Brown, former managing editor, MSNBC.com;
- Wayne Lynch, former vice president of news and programming, Newschannel 8, Washington, D.C.;
- Deborah Potter, executive director, NewsLab;
- Mark Stencel, vice president, multimedia and global ventures, Washingtonpost.com; and
- Elizabeth Wilner, deputy political director, ABCNEWS.

Annenberg and RTNDF convened participating stations for a formal kick-off meeting in Washington in early August 2002. Stations had to work hard to ramp up their coverage in time for the traditional Labor Day start of the campaign season.

In addition to presenting the political templates on their web pages, they had to give their web coverage the same brand (such as "Election 2002," "Decision 2002," or "Campaign 2002") as their on-air political coverage, create buttons or logos making their online political information accessible from their home pages, and regularly cross-promote their broadcast and web coverage. They also were required to conduct at least one online political "chat" during the campaign.

Each station received $70,000 to fund a full-time broadcast Internet producer and to cover other expenses associated with the project. Most used the funds to hire staff to help produce content for their political web pages. Some acquired hardware, including computers and video streaming equipment. The stations received substantial support and guidance from Charles Norton, a veteran local broadcast journalist with substantial Internet experience whom RTNDF hired as national editor for the project. RTNDF hired Christopher Conte, a former reporter and editor for the *Wall Street Journal*, to prepare this report based on interviews with participating station staff and research results provided by the Annenberg research team. Annenberg provided technical assistance and in some cases donated server space for

some of the stations' political web pages. Annenberg conducted extensive research during the project. Researchers convened focus groups in Minneapolis and Pittsburgh in October and November; supervised telephone surveys before and after the election in Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh; collected web traffic and Nielsen Rating data from participating stations; and required stations to run pop-up surveys on their websites three times during the campaign season. In addition, 92 undergraduates were assigned to monitor election coverage on various websites in each of the 10 markets throughout the campaign. (For more information on Annenberg's research findings and methods, see the Appendix.)

Shortly after the November election and television sweeps period, the stations sent representatives to a wrap-up meeting with RTNDF and the Annenberg researchers. At this meeting, the project participants discussed their activities in the project and the Annenberg research team presented preliminary results for the project. This report summarizes the data analysis conducted after the December meeting as well as work conducted throughout the full project cycle.

*Although the project began with 10 selected stations, one station discontinued participation in the project before the November 2002 election.

Many citizens rely on television as their primary source of news. Yet television does not foster active engagement; and it's difficult for voters to gather political information when they need it or control the pace at which they receive it. The Internet doesn't have these shortcomings because it is interactive and increases citizens' control over the time, place and pace of access to political information.

Idealism doesn't pay the bills, though. The Annenberg–RTNDF project investigated the possibility that enhanced online political coverage not only would strengthen democracy but also would make good business sense for local television. Although the project uncovered some evidence of an untapped market for improved political coverage, it didn't produce conclusive evidence that stations will be able to tap into it profitably. Media habits change slowly, and it may be unrealistic to expect that a change in coverage would produce dramatic effects in a single campaign season.

Page Views for the Home Pages of the Participating Stations
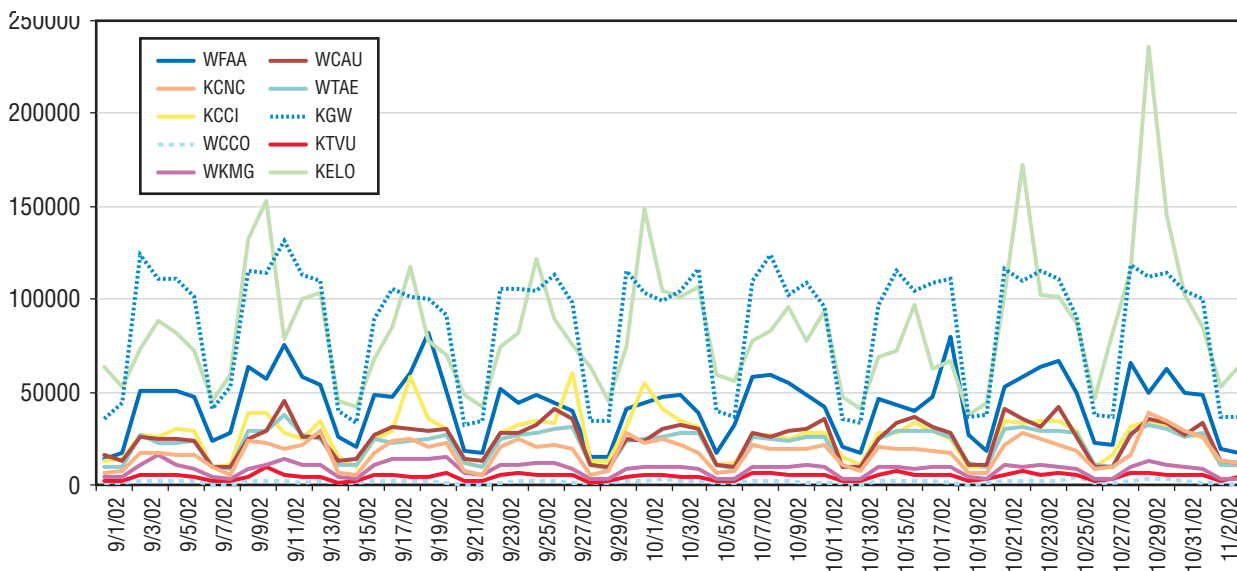
Graph 1. This graph depicts the number of page views each station's home page received during the project.

Ultimately, stations will have to decide for themselves whether political coverage in general, and web-based political coverage in particular, will pay off in their markets. Some may see great opportunity in seeking to become their communities' leading source for political news. Others may choose to carve out a different identity for themselves.

The next section discusses what RTNDF, Annenberg and the participating stations learned about the most effective ways to present political information on the web and to use broadcast and Internet operations to promote each other. Section III explores how stations can organize themselves to provide more effective web-based coverage and how they can ensure that it complements their on-air coverage. Finally, Section IV discusses some compelling reasons the participating stations found for cross-media coverage of politics online and on the air. 🖱

Page Views for the Politics Pages of the Participating Stations
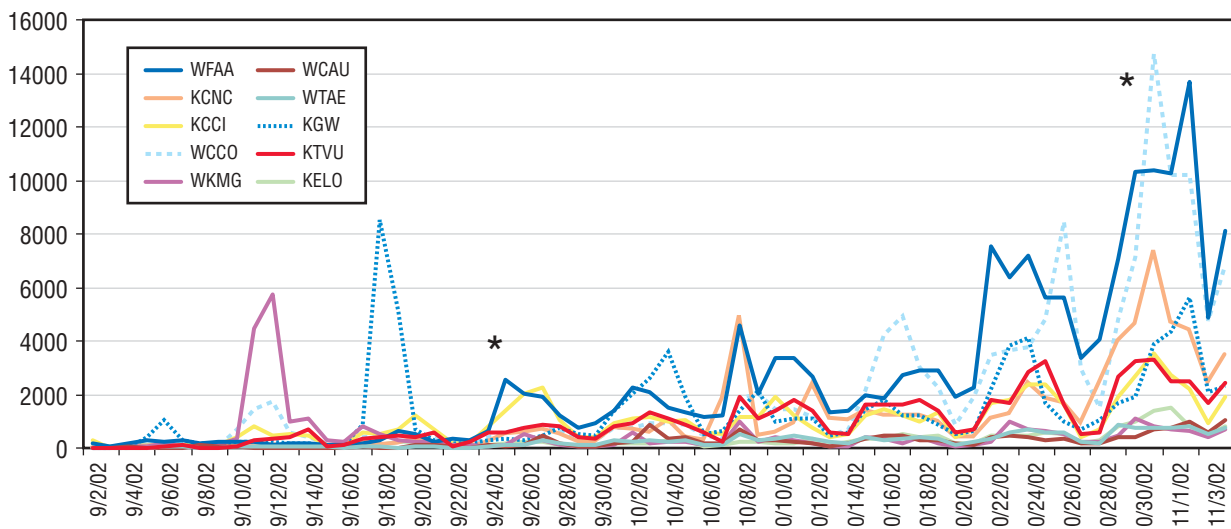
Graph 2. This graph depicts the number of page views the main politics page of each station received during the project.

* KCCI's traffic for 9/23 and 9/24 was 90,899 and 12,391, respectively, due to a direct link from the Drudge Report website to KCCI's politics page. KCCI's 10/29 traffic was 47,309, due in part to a presidential visit to neighboring South Dakota and Wellstone's memorial service in Minnesota. Those spikes were left off to keep the chart in scale.

SECTION II
DESIGNING EFFECTIVE **ONLINE** POLITICAL COVERAGE

If the findings from research leading up to the 2002 project could be summarized in one word, that word would be "simplicity." Focus groups with prospective voters clearly show that people learn more from—and prefer—easy-to-use websites that have simple designs and conventional features. Programmers and web enthusiasts may like fancy "bells and whistles," but most people just want to find information quickly and efficiently.

They favor straightforward tables and charts over dazzling color-coded tables and unconventional features such as online note-taking programs. And when it comes to political information, they prefer uncomplicated, single-page comparisons of candidates to more elaborate web pages that require users to jump between screens to compare candidates and their stands on various issues.

The good news for stations is that simplicity appeals not just to older web users, who tend to be less comfortable online, but also to younger people, who are generally adept at using the Internet. As Tom Smith, web managing editor for WKMG in Orlando, puts it, "I've had plenty of calls from people who complain they can't find something—but nobody has ever complained that the site is too easy to use."

In the 2002 project, stations sought to organize their basic political information into five categories: issues, biographies, ad and debate watches,

basic voter information and financial information. In each case, Annenberg provided templates that incorporated its previous findings about how this information can best be presented to web users.

THE TEMPLATES

Issue Grids. Almost 85 percent of survey respondents who voiced an interest in using the Internet to obtain political information said they were "very likely" or at least "somewhat likely" to seek information on where candidates stand on issues. Issue grids allow for detailed comparisons of candidates on various issues. Voters prefer grids that allow for side-by-side comparisons rather than those that require jumping from screen to screen to compare candidates. KTVU in Oakland, Calif., provided issue grids that gave voters an easy way to decide, before viewing the issue statements themselves, which candidates and which issues they wanted to compare (Figure 1).

Candidate Biographies. Nearly three out of every four people who want to use the Internet
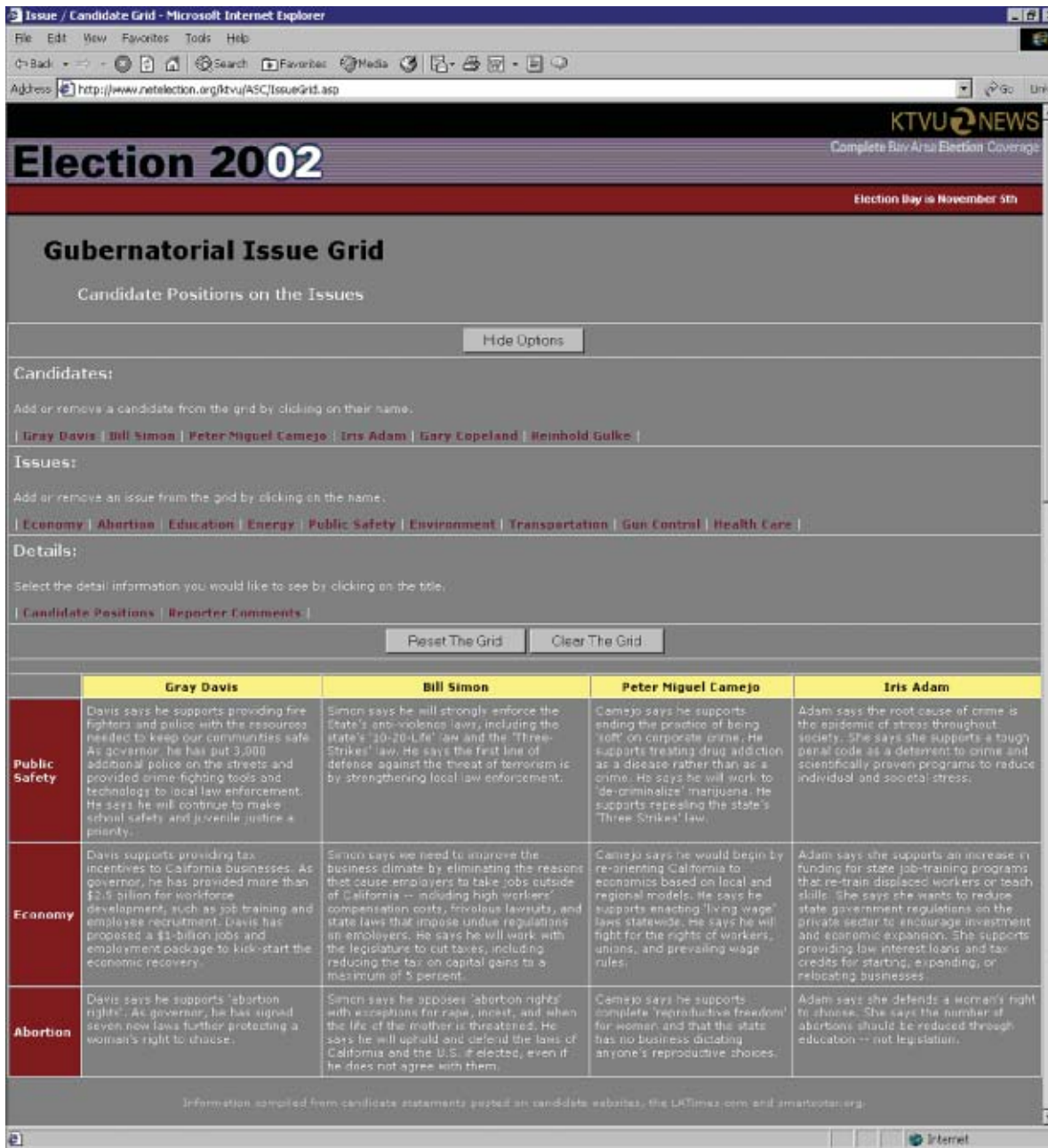
Figure 1. Issue grid from KTVU

to obtain political information are interested in finding biographical information about candidates. Research in 2000 showed that voters are equally satisfied with biographies that presented basic biographical information in a bulleted, résumé format and those that used brief paragraphs. KCCI in Des Moines devised a simple biographical format that outlined a candidate's personal, political and professional experience and presented up-to-date information on campaign finances, links to issue positions and contact information. And KGW in Portland, Ore., enhanced its candidate biographies with links to ad watches, news articles, endorsements and video
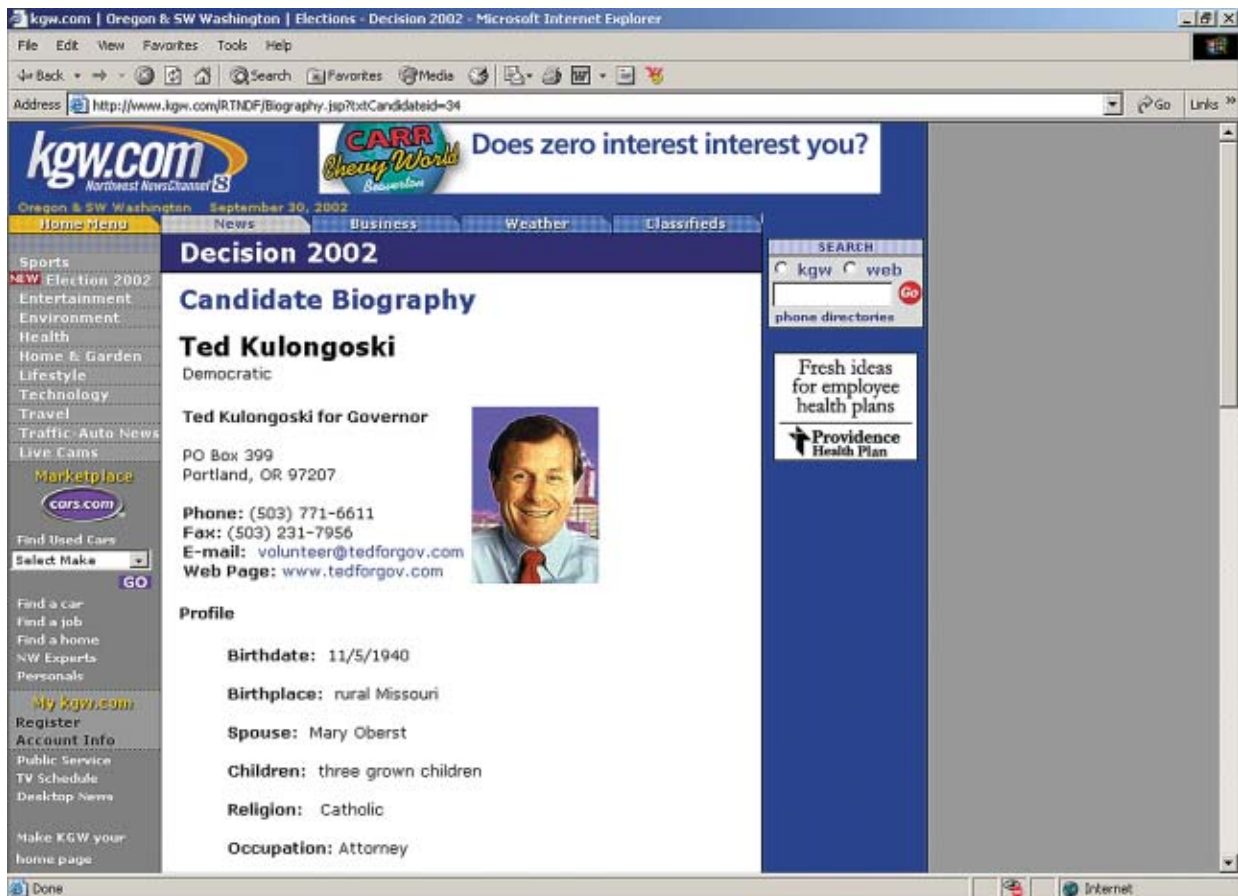
Figure 2. Candidate biography from KGW

clips of the candidates speaking on various issues (Figure 2).

Ad and Debate Watches. News stories evaluating the factual accuracy of claims made in political advertisements and debates are among the more popular forms of political coverage. That should come as no surprise. According to figures calculated by Annenberg from Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) data, candidates spent anywhere from about $6 to almost $20 per eligible voter on campaign advertising in the 10 markets that participated in the 2002 project. Much of this advertising was highly negative and laced with harsh accusations that even the most seasoned political observers had trouble sorting out.

Besides helping viewers find their way through this thicket, ad watches frequently impart more political information than other kinds of campaign reporting. They are particularly suited to presentation on the Internet, both because viewers have more time to absorb the information and because reporters can use hyperlinks to document their assessments of candidate claims. Minneapolis' WCCO and KCCI in Des Moines, among others, used the Internet effectively in ad watches. Their online offerings included visual images,
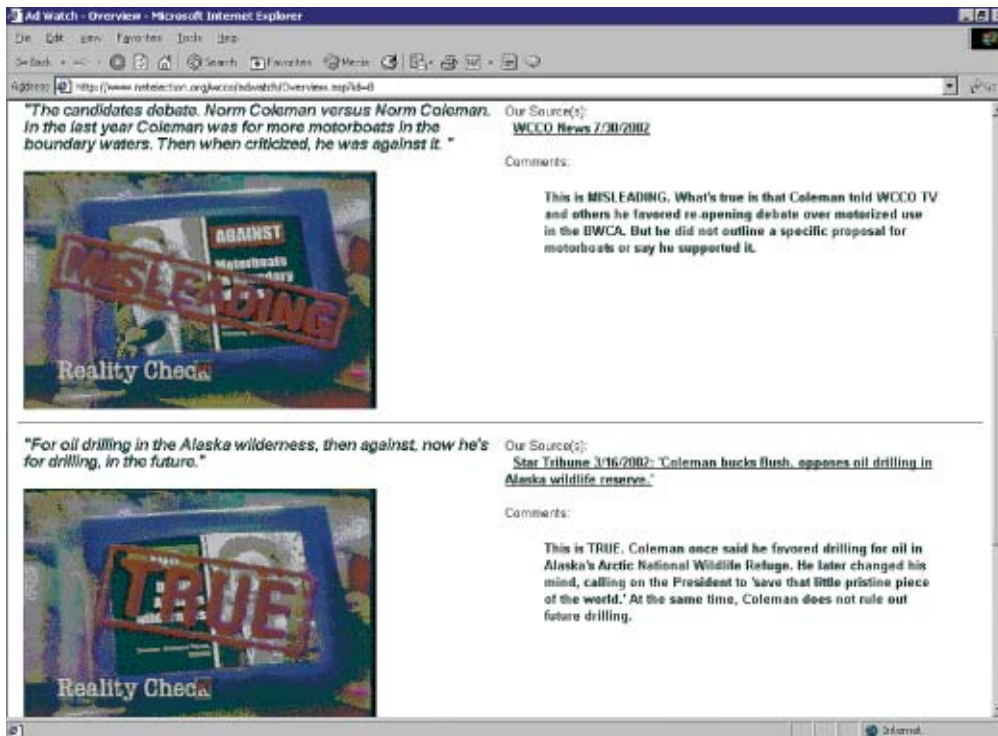
Figures 3 and 4. Ad watches from WCCO (top) and KCCI (bottom)

rated the accuracy of each claim and provided links to the sources for their critiques (Figures 3 and 4).

Campaign Finance Information. Annenberg modeled a web page that stations could use to track how much money different

Figure 5. Campaign finance information from KCNC

candidates raised, how much they spent and how much they had on hand at any given time. Stations could present the information using bar graphs, tables or both (Figure 5). Some stations supplemented the information. KCNC in Denver, for instance, listed major contributors.

Voter Information. Stations also used their websites to give citizens basic information on how to register to vote and find their polling places on Election Day. Dallas' WFAA, for instance, linked voters to the national Voter Registration Form, which allows citizens to register to vote from anywhere in the country. It also posted a sample voter registration card and explained how voters could use it to identify their polling places, precincts, congressional districts and state house and senate districts. And, mindful of how butterfly ballots and hanging chads turned

Florida's 2000 election into a debacle, Orlando's WKMG gave its web users background information about the voting machines used in different precincts (Figures 6 and 7).

FUTURE REFINEMENTS?

Although the templates were effective, the project did suggest some ways in which they could be refined for future years. A number of participants said, for instance, that the issue grids could be enhanced in ways that would better meet the needs of different audience segments. In focus group discussions, older web users said they wanted to be able to dig deeper—to use the issue summaries not as a final destination but rather as a jumping-off point to archived stories and other resources. Indeed, they wanted to have tools that would help them learn more about the issues themselves, not just about the candidates' positions, and
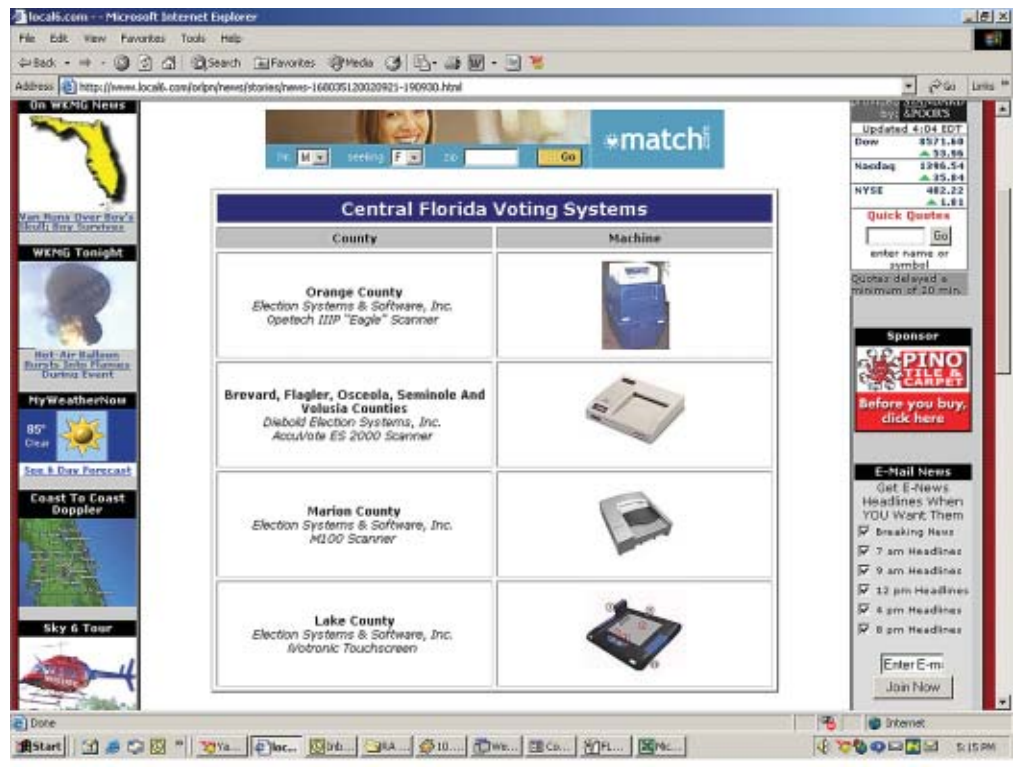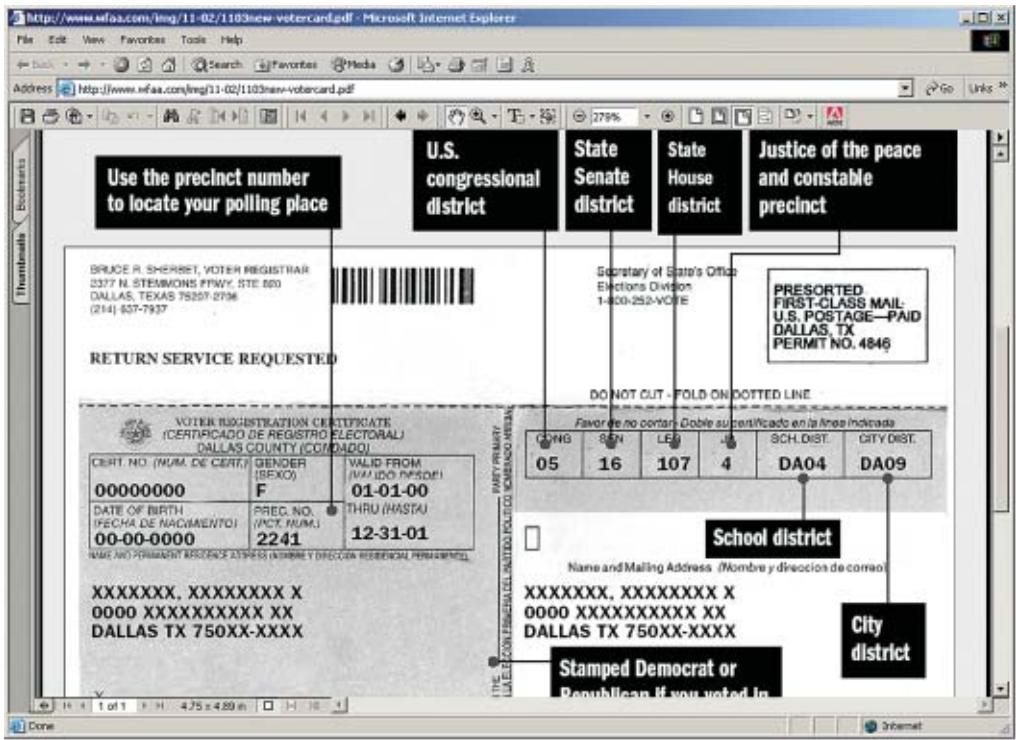
Figures 6 and 7. Voter information from WFAA (top) and WKMG (bottom)

they were willing to spend time looking through a website for such information. Younger web users, however, put a greater premium on simplicity. They want the information fast, and if they don't get it quickly, they'll move on.

Most focus group participants said they would prefer reading the candidates' own words— that is, having issue grids use the first person.

The solution may be more of what web designers call layering—that is, the development of grids that are even simpler but include links that enable those who are interested in more information to go deeper and deeper into the subject.

Web users also suggested a different journalistic approach to the issue grids. The stations generally adopted a detached, journalistic tone in the grids, describing candidates' positions in the third person. But most focus group participants said they would prefer reading the candidates' own words—that is, having issue grids use the first person. This preference appears to reflect a belief that reporters might have hidden biases that would lead them to misrepresent candidates' positions. Users didn't want to banish reporters from the issue grids entirely, however. Instead, they suggested adding links within the grids that would open pages in which reporters would examine whether candidates' statements are accurate and consistent with what they have said and done elsewhere.

The Internet is a particularly effective tool for such reality checking because reporters can link web users to the sources they use in judging candidates' credibility. Stations that participated in the 2002 project largely agreed on the value of such features, even though they are time-consuming to produce and require experienced reporters. (Some newspeople did say it's getting easier to analyze campaign advertisements because more and more candidates, aware that reporters will be scrutinizing their claims, are prepared to provide their documentation by the time their ads are aired).

Ad watches aren't the answer to all the journalistic challenges posed by political adver-

tising, though. Stations also must grapple with how to address subtle messages that aren't subject to true–false tests. KGW in Portland dealt with this problem by using a political consultant who would explain the motives and strategies underlying such ads, while KCNC in Denver examined the tone and atmospherics surrounding ads in a discussion that ran as part of its live election night "webcast." KELO in Sioux Falls, S.D., whose market spans four states and numerous local jurisdictions, identified a different problem: Candidates often use different ads or modify the same ads, depending on where they will air. The variation in ads, which may raise questions of emphasis rather than factual accuracy, can shed light on candidates' strategies and on how they may try to manipulate public opinion—matters conventional ad watches weren't designed to address.

The biggest problem, however, may be that political advertising swamps news coverage. In some markets, political advertising crowds out all commercials in the days leading up to the election. Stations lack the resources to review them all, and ad watches that run once or twice have little chance to make a lasting impression amid the constant repetition of the ads themselves. The Internet does give stations at least some ability to archive the stories for viewing throughout the campaign season. But ad watching cannot solve a problem like the one KTVU faced in California, where the incumbent gubernatorial candidate so outspent his rival on ads that the station found it a challenge to analyze ads systematically without sacrificing balance in its coverage.

One answer lies in greater scrutiny of campaign finance. Enterprising reporters can turn to a number of useful sources for infor-

mation on this issue, especially concerning candidates for federal office. During the project, Annenberg provided stations with information on campaign ad spending from the Campaign Media Analysis Group. Unfortunately, CMAG charges for this information, and the price tag is higher than most stations consider affordable. However, the Federal Elections Commission lists candidates' campaign contributions and provides data at no charge. Also available free of charge is a wealth of data from the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan, non-profit research group based in Washington, D.C. Its website, opensecrets.org, tracks how much money candidates have spent, how much they have on hand, and the source of these funds by sector.

CMAG, the FEC and opensecrets.org all provide information on candidates for federal office. The availability of timely information on candidates for state office varies from state to state. In some markets, stations could refer web visitors to good independent sources; KCCI in Des Moines, for instance, included a link on its website to Money and Politics Iowa, a nonprofit organization funded by the Joyce Foundation. In other markets, though, reporters face an uphill struggle getting solid information.

But even when information on such candidates is fairly accessible, many stations would concede that the quality of coverage of campaign finance issues falls short of ideal. Like advertising, campaign finance is a complex subject that can be difficult to cover on television. During the project, few stations felt they could spare experienced reporters—and give them enough time—to prepare stories that went beyond simply presenting the raw data to offer meaningful analysis (by examining

particular sources of campaign funds and correlating contributions with candidates' positions on issues, for instance).

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY

A website with all the political information in the world is worthless if web users can't find the information. That may seem obvious, but it is a point seemingly lost on many web designers. These sites frequently are so packed with headlines, directories, lists of stories, hyperlinks and advertisements that they often drive away casual visitors.

The tendency to clutter seems to have many causes. Web designers, unsure of how to hold onto a splintering audience, seem eager to develop pages that are all things to all people. They also may be eager to demonstrate their encyclopedic range of talents. Whatever the reason, home pages that are overcrowded fail to meet one of journalism's most basic responsibilities—to sift through all the news and make editorial judgments about what information people most need to receive.

It is difficult to overestimate how much web users appreciate websites that compile information into simple, easy-to-use packages. One of the more successful political web pages produced last year by KELO in Sioux Falls, for instance, was "Kids Voting," a bare-bones page originally designed for children. Kids Voting simply listed on one page the candidates for each major office, along with a photograph and a link that would call up a box summarizing his or her background and campaign themes. Jeremy Moser, the web producer, said the page proved popular with adults as well as children, demonstrating the value of consolidating political information and giving web users an easy point of entry to it (Figure 8).

Web users appreciate websites that compile information into simple, easy-to-use packages.

To attract viewers to their politics pages, the stations participating in the 2002 project all designed special politics logos that ran on their home pages.

Figure 8. KELO's Kids Voting section proved popular with adults too

To attract viewers to their politics pages, the stations participating in the 2002 project all designed special politics logos that ran on their home pages. WFAA in Dallas, KCNC in Denver and KGW in Portland had particularly engaging ones (Figure 9). The new icons undoubtedly helped users find political information, but they had to compete with—and in at least some cases weren't that different from—numerous other home-page buttons linking viewers to everything from wedding announcements to advertising.

Better design may not be the whole solution to this problem, but KTVU, for one, believed it was an important part of the answer. The Oakland station created a political web presence that was unusually easy to navigate and friendly to the eye. Directories that ran down the left side of its main politics page provided easy links to the various resources compiled during the project. Rather than cram

the page full of the latest wire-service stories, the site gave users a link they could use to call up the latest news from the wires. That approach enabled the station to reserve space on its main politics page for the stories it most wanted viewers to see—mainly a series of in-depth issue pieces prepared by political editor Randy Shandobil. Each story had a provocative headline and an eye-catching picture to arouse the reader's interest. And, perhaps most important, each story stood out because it was surrounded by something rarely seen on television news web pages—white space (Figure 10).

"Newspeople don't have a sense of design," explains Gabriel Crow, KTVU's web designer. "They're interested in information, information, information. They don't understand the value of white space." Overcrowded websites, Crow argues, are like text that has no space between words:
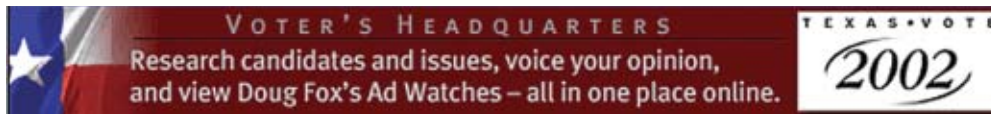
Figure 9. Political logos from WFAA (top), KGW (left), and KCNC (right)

They are so packed with information that the mind can't comprehend what it sees. Sites that are less chaotic are more accessible and easier to absorb–and more likely to make a lasting impression. "Most people are very visual," Crow says. "If they remember the framework or design around information they receive, they're more likely to remember where they saw the information."

KTVU's pages were, in part, a product of lucky timing. The politics project came at a time of transition for the station's web operations, leaving producer Roland DeWolk free to develop the station's pages from scratch rather than fit them into a pre-existing format. But many of KTVU's design ideas can be achieved on websites with more typical web layouts. Belo-owned WFAA and KGW, for instance, skillfully used their format to highlight key stories and draw readers deeper both into their sites and into their broadcast programming.

The Belo format makes more use of white space than many sites do, and it organizes its material into a manageable number of categories, much the way a newspaper might have separate sections. The centerpiece of the format is a feature known as a "poster"—an eye-catching piece of prime web space at the top of each page. The poster is the equivalent of a newspaper's top headline—it's big

enough and colorful enough to draw in viewers' eyes immediately. Moreover, it is large enough to include hyperlinks, thereby enabling the station to highlight the day's biggest story and provide links to complete stories, sidebars, graphical presentations and background resources (Figure 11).

CROSS-PROMOTION

Stations experimented with a variety of techniques for promoting their web-based political coverage and using it to promote their broadcast programming. Some offered on-air "tutorials" in which reporters, producers or webmasters appeared on camera to demonstrate the features available on election websites and how to use them. Annenberg's researchers believe this approach to promotion is especially effective with older viewers, who tend to be uncomfortable with the Internet. For viewers who are familiar with the Internet, some stations made generalized references during their broadcasts to their web-based political coverage, whereas others frequently urged viewers to follow up on specific stories by going online.

It is difficult to gauge the exact impact of promotions because countless factors influence broadcast viewership and web traffic from day to day. What's more, many stations aired cross-promotions almost every day, making it difficult to identify the

Overcrowded websites...are like text that has no space between words: They are so packed with information that the mind can't comprehend what it sees.

Figure 10. KTVU's simply designed politics page

effects of a cross-promotion on a particular day. Still, some lessons emerge from an analysis of the various cross-promotional activities. Tutorials that were aired in prominent time slots and that appeared more than once led to immediate increases in web traffic, provided they were run during evening broadcasts Monday through Thursday. Promotions that ran on Fridays or weekend days were less effective because web traffic and broadcast ratings typically drop sharply on those days. Still, cross-promotions may build momentum and contribute to higher traffic over time, regardless of the day of the week that the promotions air. Despite the lack of a substantial next-day increase in many instances, a noticeable increase in election traffic often occurred for the entire week after a particular cross-promotion ran. The evidence also suggests that stations can boost web traffic by linking promotions to actual events, such as voter registration or

early voting deadlines. Most of the stations experienced significantly higher traffic on their election pages the day before voter registration deadlines, for instance. Evidently, people logged on to the websites to download voter registration forms. Because voters generally wouldn't think of local broadcast websites as places to go to register to vote, it's likely that cross-promotion played an important role in attracting people to the sites.

Good timing and presentation can help, but the best form of promotion ultimately may be to shape on-air and online coverage so that they constantly reinforce each other. Belo stations have made an art of this. In the days surrounding an October gubernatorial debate in Texas, for instance, WFAA used the poster not only to highlight the news but also to draw viewers deeper into its political web coverage while enticing them to watch broadcast
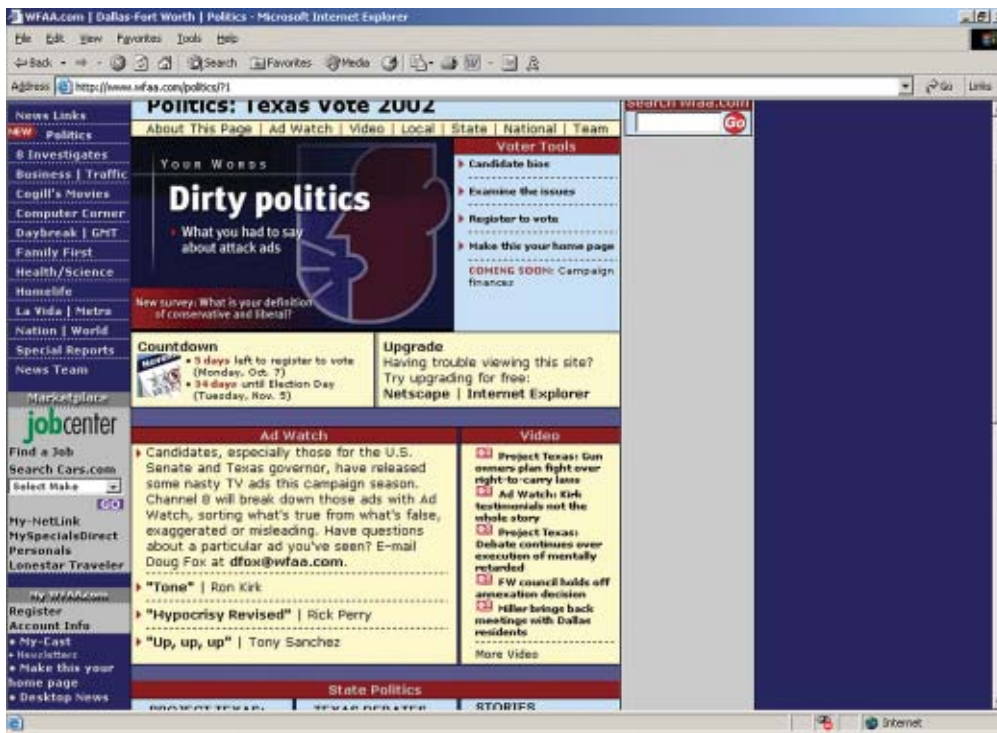
Figure 11. WFAA's politics page, featuring a graphical poster

programming. Before the debate, for instance, the station developed a poster touting the coming televised coverage (which appeared on WFAA's cable affiliate). The poster included links to the relevant candidate biographies and issue summaries, adding to the relevance of the background political data and increasing the chances that web users—including those who otherwise might not be motivated to click on the politics logo—would see it. The day of the debate, web news editor Gretchen Perrenot gave the political coverage an extra boost by preparing "teases" for evening news shows telling viewers what they could find online. Then, as the debate drew near, the station used the politics poster on its home page as well, reaching as broad a swath of its web viewers as possible. This approach put the candidate biographies and issue grids just one click away from the station's home page.

The cross-promotion continued after the debate, too. Almost as soon as the candidates stopped speaking, the station put up a new poster touting a "debate watch" that the station's reporters were preparing for the next day. The station also posted questions asking viewers to identify issues they thought the candidates had failed to address. The viewer responses became fodder for another posting in the days leading up to a second debate a few weeks later, continuing the cycle of information from the web to broadcast and back to the web.

All of this success was made possible by a format that, although standardized, allowed some flexibility and, perhaps most important, enabled journalists to highlight their biggest story in an eye-catching way. Good graphics, smart packaging and effective cross-promotion gave viewers ample reason to visit WFAA's website and watch its broadcast coverage. The station's

Good timing and presentation can help, but the best form of promotion ultimately may be to shape on-air and online coverage so that they constantly reinforce each other.

hard work paid off. In August, before it unveiled the Annenberg templates, WFAA's politics pages had just 4,108 page views, compared to 1.4 million for its home page. But by October, politics page views had jumped to more than 127,000, even while home page views had dropped slightly.

CHATS

Although the templates formed the heart of the Annenberg–RTNDF project. Stations also conducted live chats to draw web users to their political coverage—and into the political process.

KCNC in Denver held its chats in conjunction with free airtime that the station gave candidates to address voters directly. After delivering a statement during an evening news program, a candidate would sit down to "chat" with viewers. "This gave many people the only opportunity they had to talk directly with the candidates," notes KCNC webmaster Jesse Sarles. The direct move from broadcast to Internet also gave television viewers a powerful incentive to go online.

KCNC archived its online chats and its free candidate airtime segments, enabling users who missed these events to catch up on them at their convenience. Busy schedules make it difficult for many people to participate in chats, and technological limitations make it difficult to host chats with a large number of people, so such archiving made these events available to a larger audience.

WKMG was particularly inventive in seeking ways to encourage live interaction via the Internet. It, too, conducted live web chats with candidates; to draw people into the discussions, it held some chats in its newsroom in sight of viewers watching

nightly news shows. The station also enabled viewers to watch the candidates via live video while they read the candidates' answers in text. In one of the project's boldest experiments, the Orlando station conducted a live chat while providing real-time video coverage of a congressional debate over the Internet. **WKMG actually streamed the debate online a few days before running it on the air.** Online viewers could watch the debate on a screen that also provided links to background information on the candidates and the issues, "truth watches" on the campaign advertising and the text of the running chat itself. During the debate, WKMG's web managing editor Tom Smith sat with his laptop computer at the table with other panelists, relaying questions from the chat group to the candidates (Figure 12).

Although KCNC's and WKMG's chats showed that stations can use the Internet to bring viewers into newsrooms and into direct contact with candidates, most stations found chats to be problematic. For one thing, viewers didn't show a great deal of interest in them. Even at KCNC and WKMG, the most successful chats attracted 25 or fewer people. If you subtract campaign supporters planted by candidates to ask friendly questions and the handful of "flamers" who are more interested in tossing rhetorical bombs than having a genuine dialogue, the number of serious participants was even smaller than that. "We want to have interactivity, but we don't think chats are the way to do it," says KELO's Jeremy Moser, summarizing the views of many project participants.

Archiving transcripts from chats, on the other hand, may have value. KCNC, for example, had daily traffic to its archived
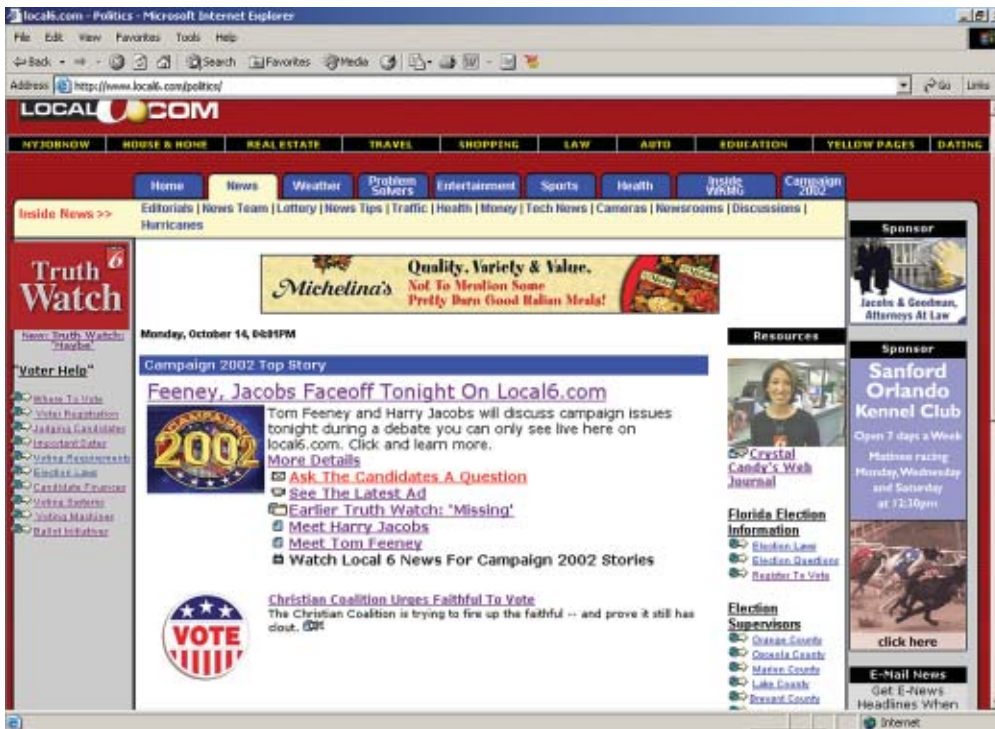
Figure 12. WKMG conducted a live chat during a candidates debate

chats throughout the month of October, recording as many as 135 page views on a single day (October 30).

Finally, successful chats don't happen all at once. It takes time, experience and commitment. The key is to build a sense of community among chat participants over time, argues Rex Sorgatz, interactive director for Internet Broadcasting Systems, Inc. Throwing a group of strangers together at the last minute for an unfocused, one-time conversation isn't likely to produce a meaningful exchange, he says. The results are much better if members of a group already know each other and already have established expectations about behavior.

But how do you build such a sense of fellowship? Sorgatz believes technology might help: Stations could require chat participants to show their faces via video connections on computer screens. If people knew their pictures would show up in chat rooms in addition to their words, mischievous ones might behave better and everyone might develop a greater sense of kinship and responsibility toward the group, he suggests. But even with that result, chats probably still would require something that stations find in short supply—adequate staff and a lot of time.

POLLS, QUIZZES AND BULLETIN BOARDS

Many television stations and Internet news services love instant polls, seeing them as an easy way to use the interactive nature of the web to engage viewers. But Annenberg researchers believe that the disadvantages of unscientific polling, which relies on a self-selected group of respondents, outweigh the possible gains. Such polls often mislead viewers, who tend to assume they

reflect overall public opinion when in fact they depict only the views of an unrepresentative group.

Despite this problem, the search for ways to give viewers or web users an instantaneous gauge of their views goes on. Success, however, remains elusive. For the 2002 campaign, for instance, KELO in Sioux Falls developed a new tool that used flash technology to let viewers register their ever-changing reactions to events in real time. The cumulative results of various individual ratings would then show up on-screen as a graph that would fluctuate as people's opinions changed. The idea was to show how people were swayed—what issues or rhetoric moved them, for instance—during a speech or debate.

The tool didn't work well for KELO, though. Developed late in the campaign, it didn't get a test run until President Bush delivered a speech shortly before Election Day. The station allowed 100 viewers to register their views continually during the president's speech. However, because most of the participants' minds were made up at the outset, their gauges immediately registered strongly in favor or strongly against and didn't change throughout the speech. The few viewers whose opinions did fluctuate tended to cancel each other out, so the participants' opinion of the president held virtually steady from beginning to end. A second test wasn't successful either, and the experiment was the subject of polarized discussion at the project's wrap-up meeting in December.

KCCI experimented with a different approach. Avoiding the issue of self-selected polling, the Des Moines station used similar technology to quiz web users on their political knowledge. Viewers could call up a series of questions, give their answers, and immediately see both the correct answer and how many other people participating in the quiz answered correctly. Tad Davis, KCCI's webmaster, estimates that about half of KCCI's

Archived Chat Traffic, KCNC
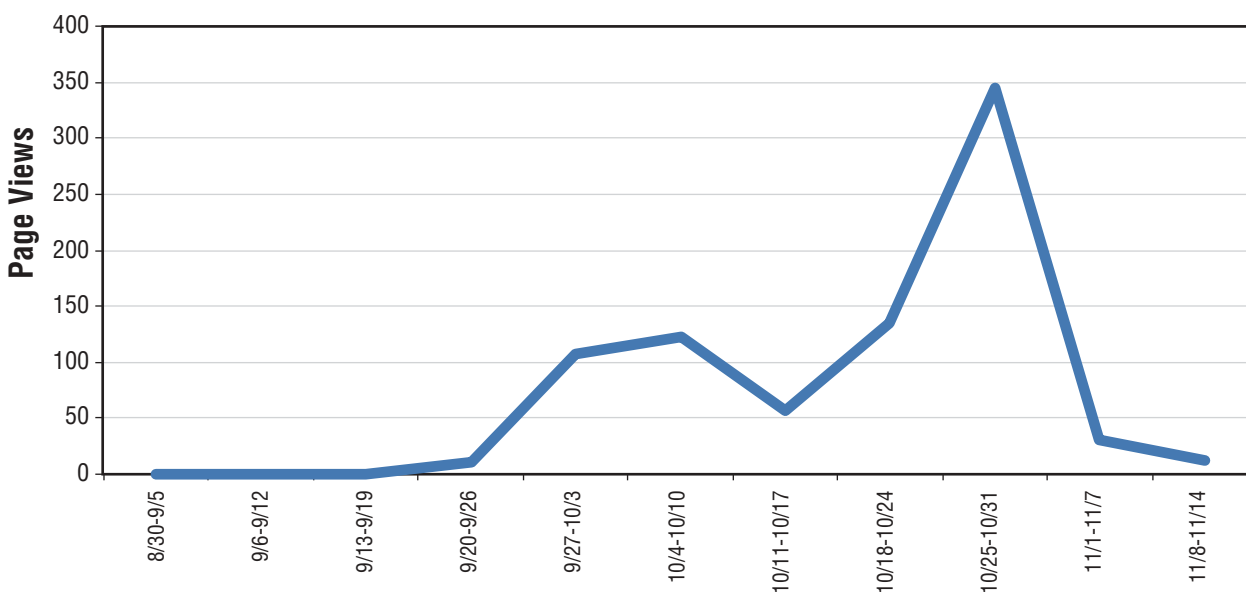
Graph 3. This graph depicts the number of page views the archived chat section of KCNC's website received during the project.

Figure 13. KCNC's election night webcast targeted a younger audience

web audience consisted of "political junkies," whereas the other half consisted of people who weren't deeply interested in politics. "Quizzes are a way to get the 50 percent who are less engaged," he says. In the future, stations could increase the educational value of quizzes by building in links from the answers to archived stories, candidate biographies, issue grids or other relevant resources on their politics pages.

Another way to engage the audience electronically—one that also allows for a form of dialogue without being as labor-intensive as a chat—is to operate an electronic bulletin board. Unlike chats, bulletin boards are mostly one-way communications, from viewers to a central collection point at the station. But they have a number of advantages. They usually are open-ended rather than limited to specific time periods; as a result, more viewers can

participate, and those who do send in comments have more time to think before submitting them. Rather than tie up a specific time to tend to a chat, a reporter or producer can review the submissions on his or her own schedule. And there's less uncertainty about the meaning of the results: The comments are simply the views of some people who wished to mount the electronic soap box and speak out— nothing more, nothing less.

As noted previously, WFAA used this device effectively during the campaign, prompting discussion of such topics as "What Is a Conservative?" and "What Is a Liberal?" WCCO in Minneapolis demonstrated the value of providing people with such a sounding board: When incumbent senator Paul Wellstone died in a plane crash, the station's website became a forum and outlet for voters' grief.

CASTING THE NET

Another interesting idea came from KCNC in Denver, which presented an election night webcast: 4.5 hours of live election coverage available only on the Internet. The unique event combined the expansive quality of the Internet with the immediacy of television, in the process stretching the boundaries of both media. (Figure 13). WFAA in Dallas also featured an election night webcast (Figure 14).

KCNC aimed their webcast at younger people, who rarely tune into television at all, let alone on Election Night. Aware that on-air promotions probably would miss much of the target audience, the station promoted the event by distributing fliers on college campuses and taking out advertisements in student newspapers urging students to "tune in" from a place they were likely to be on Election Night—their computers. The program featured guests likely to appeal to the younger set—young Republicans, young Democrats and local cultural celebrities. And it came in a form that multi-tasking young people would appreciate; rather than demanding their undivided attention, as television does, it let them "watch" KCNC's coverage while participating in a chat set up by the station or doing any of a slew of other things—from instant messaging to homework.

At first blush, the webcast itself may sound like nothing new—an anchor sitting in a studio talked with a series of guests and occasionally broke away for news updates from the field. But, in fact, the event was quite different from the usual Election Night fare. Instead of jumping repeatedly

KCNC aimed the webcast at younger people, who rarely tune into television at all, let alone on Election Night.
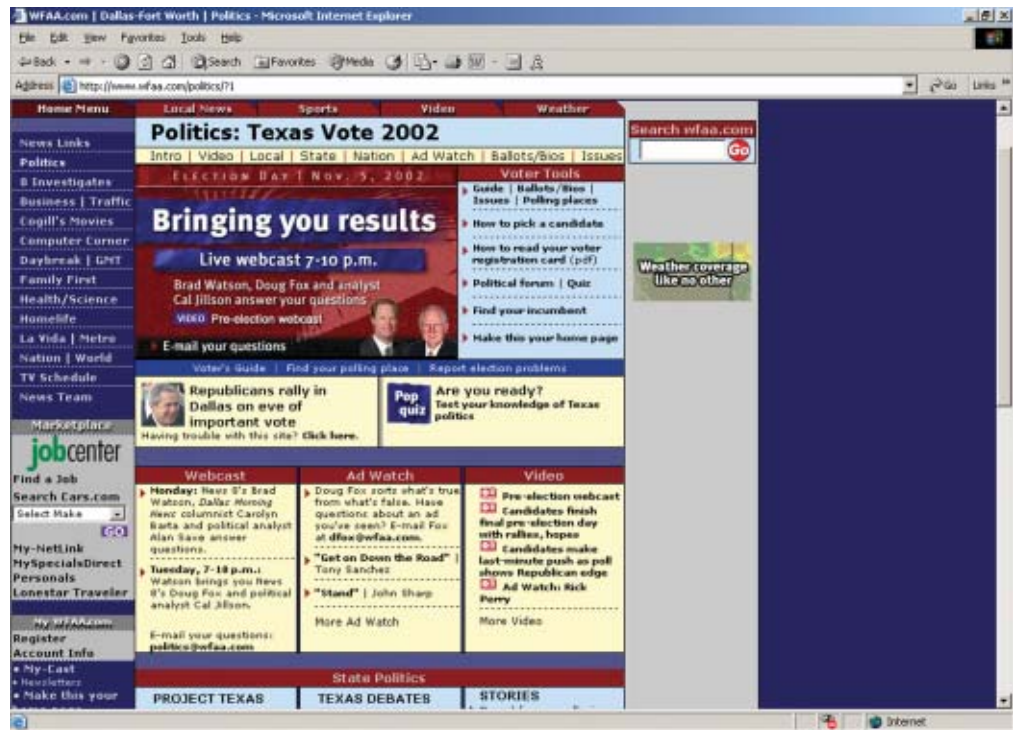
Figure 14. WFAA's election night webcast featured in-depth political discussion

between various campaign headquarters and waiting for returns, the KCNC webcast featured sustained discussion about politics from passionate observers rather than direct participants in campaigns. In an atmosphere that resembled a viewer's living room more than the fancy ballrooms full of political supporters and balloons, the station's guests talked politics in terms almost entirely free of the posturing and polarizing tones that repel many people from politics. "The webcast is everything you don't get with a broadcast," according to Libby Gardner, the producer. "It is an ongoing conversation."

SECTION III
LESSONS **LEARNED**

It doesn't necessarily take deep pockets to produce the kind of political coverage described in this report. The participating stations spent $70,000 each to hire producers, reporters and interns to do the basic research and, in some cases, to acquire new equipment and computer software. That enabled them to overcome some of the staffing obstacles that traditionally keep stations from providing such web-based coverage, and to compile basic political information that wasn't necessarily tied to nightly news stories. It also enabled them to find the technical staff to keep sophisticated websites running smoothly and to invest in needed hardware—including the tools to stream video, television's signature product, over the Internet.

Building an effective web presence requires more than money or equipment, though. The local television stations that participated in the Annenberg–RTNDF project also had to address difficult questions about the composition of their staffs, the structure of their newsrooms, the changing nature of their audience, and the unique capacities of the Internet. They may not have come up with the final answers, but they did produce some useful suggestions.

Diversify Staff. Web-based coverage requires a broader set of skills than are found in typical television newsrooms today. First, stations need good political reporters who have the research skills to produce the basic information contained in issue grids, candidate biographies, ad watches and the other political templates.

Unfortunately, many stations today lack the staff to do that job—as demonstrated by the fact that many of the stations participating in the 2002 project hired temporary staff.

The staffing problem reflects the fact that television stations tend to marshal all of their resources to creating daily newscasts and covering breaking news. In addition, in most stations reporters are not assigned to regular beats (such as local politics), making it a challenge to develop expertise and sources. Furthermore, the nature of the business means many reporters do not have an opportunity to put down roots in a community before moving on to the next job.

Besides needing reporters with research skills, stations need ones who can write freestanding

text rather than scripts meant to run with video, who can do so succinctly without sacrificing accuracy, and who know how to meet web users' demands both for brevity and for opportunities to dig deeper into various topics through hyperlinks. Stations also need designers who can convey information in visually appealing ways and give users ways to interact with websites. And they need people with the technical abilities to keep programs and servers operating smoothly.

At KTVU in Oakland, producer Roland De Wolk managed to amass these diverse skills in the team he assembled for the politics project. De Wolk himself exemplifies the team's interdisciplinary nature. A former newspaperman, he switched to television journalism about a decade ago and teaches a course on web journalism at San Francisco State University. Sara Needham, who produced much of the original text for the station's political web pages, also brought a wide range of skills to the project. As a student of documentary filmmaking at Berkeley, she took classes not only in film but also in broadcast and print journalism. Gabriel Crow, the webmaster, brought both technology skills and a strong aesthetic sensibility he may have acquired originally from his parents, both of whom were graphic designers. The fourth member of the team, Jim Vargas, was a longtime television journalist.

Stations shouldn't underestimate the value of a good technology person. Stations with good in-house technology capabilities invariably had an easier time incorporating the Annenberg templates into their websites. And good "techies" saved stations a lot of money. For instance, off-the-shelf hardware to digitize video for streaming over the Internet can cost $15,000 or more, but the in-house technical staff at KELO did the job for just $1,600 by dusting off an old video player and buying a new video monitor, video card and software. Similarly, when KTVU webmaster Crow learned that the Oakland station had no way to stream its own video over the Internet, he poked around storage rooms and found a computer he could adapt to that purpose at virtually no cost.

Give Web Operations Some Independence. A good web team cannot realize its full potential unless it has some freedom to set its own agenda. News directors, understandably preoccupied with creating daily broadcast news programs, typically are inclined to use their stations' websites as little more than tools for promoting on-air stories and providing breaking-news coverage between broadcasts. That approach may help keep the costs of the websites down, because one qualified webmaster can "repurpose" a station's news stories and, by rounding them out with wire stories, maintain a respectable website. But the approach leaves little room for innovation.

In 1999, the Belo Corporation moved control over its stations' websites from the individual media outlets, including WFAA and the *Dallas Morning News*, and consolidated them under a new, wholly owned subsidiary called Belo Interactive. Chris Kelley, editor of the consolidated web operation, says the goal was to unleash creativity by removing web operations from the constraints imposed by conventional media thinking. "A news director always will say, 'If it doesn't have pictures, don't bother,' and a newspaper editor will say, 'If it doesn't have a strong

Stations need designers who can convey information in visually appealing ways and give users ways to interact with websites.

Stations are more likely to achieve synergies between their web and broadcast operations when the people involved in both activities work closely together.

narrative, I'm not interested,'" Kelley explains. "But web people say, 'Give us all of it—we can do something with it.'"

Since the reorganization, Belo websites have produced a great deal of original material for the web. They created an "ozone primer" that WFAA's weatherman touted on air, a database that helped viewers sort out a tangled web of sex-abuse cases, a timeline for a complex interactive story about police corruption, an array of web links and documents that helped television viewers delve more deeply into a complicated health story, and the 2002 political pages created with RTNDF and Annenberg.

KTVU's Gabriel Crow could be the poster boy for Kelley's theories. Crow's ideas about how the station could use the Internet far exceeded what the station could accomplish in one campaign season. Among the projects the station didn't get to try was to create a "comic watch," an annotated discussion of political cartoons similar to ad watches or debate watches. Comic watches would have turned one of the most eye-catching forms of political dialogue (who doesn't pause to look at cartoons?) into opportunities for political education. Cartoons are too static and, possibly, too visually detailed for television, but they would be ideal for the web.

Crow also wanted to create a timeline that would enable web users to call up previous versions of KTVU web pages to trace the evolution of political campaigns. Besides offering web users a more interesting way to look back than simply scrolling through lists of archived stories, the timeline could increase web users' attachment to KTVU by encouraging them to relive history through them—much the way newspapers sometimes publish compilations of front pages from important days in history.

Bring Web Staff Into the Loop. Web teams need a measure of independence to thrive, but they also must be an integral part of the newsroom. That's partly because they need the strong support of news directors and general managers. Organizers of the Annenberg–RTNDF project noted that the degree of management support went a long way toward determining which stations had the most success in mounting their web-based political coverage.

Moreover, stations are more likely to achieve synergies between their web and broadcast operations when the people involved in both activities work closely together. One of the first moves Belo's Kelley made when he took charge of WFAA's website was to move the station's web staff out of a separate office that was one floor down from the station's newsroom (and right next to its loading dock). Today, the web producers sit in WFAA's newsroom among its broadcast reporters and producers. They also attend the station's regular story meetings, often playing a central role. To an outside observer, they are indistinguishable from the broadcast staff.

Closer physical proximity has led to more cooperative working arrangements. In the past, WFAA's broadcast reporters and producers often considered the web a nuisance. Web producers always seemed to pester them for scripts and ask them to provide additional information, notes political reporter Gary Reaves, and they always seemed to tinker with stories after they aired, putting on new leads and adding new information from wire services and other sources in ways that left on-air

reporters feeling they had lost control of their own stories. Such complaints have diminished now that the two sides work more closely together. Reaves and other reporters see that the web can be a valuable outlet—especially for materials they can't squeeze into their time-constrained broadcast stories. And they have come to understand that their stories have to be updated to keep them fresh for web viewers who log on between broadcasts.

Stations like WFAA, of course, have more resources than many local stations. Belo Interactive has a staff of about 36, four of whom are assigned full-time to WFAA.com. But the same principles that guide it—independence, strong management support and close proximity to broadcast operations—also can be seen in some smaller stations.

At WKMG in Orlando, for instance, the website is a one-person show. But that one person—Tom Smith, the managing editor—has a degree of independence because he works for Internet Broadcasting Systems Inc., the station's web services provider, rather than for WKMG itself. Smith also has the strong backing of news director Skip Valet, an unabashed Internet enthusiast. And, perhaps most important, Smith works closely with broadcast reporters and producers. Sitting just in front of the station's "Breaking News Center" on a raised platform, he often is the first to hear scanners bark out breaking news stories. He also picks up important developments by scanning the web, looking especially at websites maintained by major area employers and passing on the information to reporters so they'll have a leg up on the competition. Reporters, in turn, keep Smith in the loop, often enabling him to break important stories on the WKMG website. Smith takes it as a personal failure if WKMG is beaten on a story or, even worse, if a viewer who comes to the website after seeing a story on the air can't find it along with useful additional information.

Smith also plays a substantial role in WKMG's broadcast activities. He periodically appears on the air to tell viewers what's on the website and how to find it, and he served as a panelist during a candidates' debate, relaying questions viewers sent to his laptop computer. He sometimes could be seen in the background conducting live chats with candidates during regular news programs. And when reporters deliver stand-up stories from the newsroom, they often stand right beside Smith, subtly reinforcing his central role in the station's total news programming.

Get Broadcast Reporters More Involved With the Web. Secretly—or not so secretly, in some cases—many a television webmaster wishes management would tell reporters to write for the web as well as prepare news packages for broadcast. Tad Davis, who runs the website for KCCI in Des Moines, for instance, believes reporters should be issued laptop computers so they can file from the field during downtime or even when traveling to or from news events. Some stations already require reporters to do double duty, and others are thinking about the idea. But in many other cases, managers are hoping that a new generation of reporters will gravitate naturally toward the web and that other, older reporters will eventually follow their lead.

In the meantime, stations can break the ice relatively easily. During the 2002

During the 2002 campaign, WCCO in Minneapolis placed on its website the full, unedited video of interviews that reporter Pat Kessler conducted with U.S. senatorial candidates.

Figure 15. KTVU's stream of the Gray Davis satire video was a major draw

campaign, WCCO in Minneapolis placed on its website the full, unedited video of interviews that reporter Pat Kessler conducted with U.S. senatorial candidates.

The idea required no extra effort by Kessler, and it gave web users an opportunity to take a closer look at the candidates than Kessler could give them in a time-restricted news segment. It also enabled web users to judge for themselves the accuracy and reliability of Kessler's stories.

WKMG in Orlando, meanwhile, ran a web journal, or "blog," written by reporter Crystal Candy. This project did require some extra work, but the informal style—blogs are a lot like letters home—made the epistles easier to write than news stories. Candy got a chance to share information and impressions that she couldn't fit into regular stories, and she also got an opportunity to increase rapport with prospective viewers.

Webmasters gain some of their most important contributions just by sensitizing reporters to the capacity of the web and the nature of the web audience. While collecting information for a profile of California governor Gray Davis, KTVU political editor Randy Shandobil stumbled upon an eight-minute video in which the candidate's staff made light of his legendary stiffness. Shandobil thought the tape was only worth a brief mention in his story, but producer Roland De Wolk immediately saw fodder for the website. The station made the full video available online, and it quickly became a major draw for the website, offering viewers some good fun and insights into an otherwise stage-managed campaign (Figure 15).

Some of the best examples of involvement by broadcast journalists in the web don't involve political coverage, though. At WFAA in Dallas, perhaps the most enthusiastic contributor to the web is Valerie

Williams, an investigative reporter. Some of Williams' stories have had great impact, as demonstrated by the traffic they generate for the station's website. A health-related story in the spring of 2002 prompted tens of thousands of page views—on one day alone, the total reached 35,000. Knowing that she can't possibly answer all the queries her stories produce, Williams routinely prepares links and other materials for the website, making sure the station's web team has them in hand when her stories hit the air.

In South Dakota, meanwhile, the weather-reporting team at KELO demonstrates one of the best examples of what a broadcast staff can do with the web—even at a small station. Weather is big news in South Dakota, and the team is busy. It produces weather segments for six newscasts each day, frequently prepares special news segments for the nightly news, writes regular "homecasts" sent to web users via e-mail, and produces a good number of half-hour specials as well. In spite of that workload, the weather team takes an active interest in the web. One weatherman, in fact, maintains his own weather-related web page, which is full of information.

WFAA's Williams and the weather team at KELO deal with very different material, but they have some things in common: They care passionately about the subjects they cover, and their stations encourage them to spend a great deal of time digging deeply into what they cover. Therein may lie a lesson: If the web is about giving television viewers a chance to dig deeper and learn more, and if stations truly want their broadcast staff to produce more for the web,

then they have to give reporters a working environment something like the one Williams and KELO's weather team enjoy—one that allows them more time and perhaps encourages them to concentrate their efforts. It's easy to imagine how stations could create a comparable environment for political coverage. Many stations that participated in the 2002 Annenberg–RTNDF project relied on part-time interns to produce their 2002 politics web pages, but an alternate model would resemble KELO's weather team: Full-time reporters would cover politics during the campaign season and move seamlessly to covering government the rest of the year. In the process, they would track whether politicians fulfill campaign promises after they are elected and demonstrate how policy battles translate into political campaigns. The public would benefit by seeing the connection between politics, governance and daily life more clearly.

Is full-time on-air and online political coverage too much to expect of local television? It certainly would require a bigger commitment than many stations are making today. Stations have small staffs and big news holes, and the unpredictable ebb and flow of events requires reporters who are agile and adaptable. But KELO news director Mark Millage nevertheless believes stations could move more toward organizing their reporting staff into beats. KELO, for instance, has in addition to its weather team a health specialist and a reporter who concentrates on legislative coverage. "If a reporter builds up expertise, he has better contacts, and that leads to better stories," Millage explains. It also might lead to better websites and greater synergy between on-air and online coverage.

The unpredictable ebb and flow of events requires reporters who are agile and adaptable.

SECTION IV
WHY THE INTERNET?
WHY POLITICS?

The "Covering Politics On-Air and Online" project gave local television stations good reason to strengthen their coverage of politics. The Annenberg–RTNDF project showed that many audience members are interested in political information on air and are willing to go online to find more. Contrary to broadcaster fears, it also demonstrated that the Internet does not steal viewers from television, at least when it comes to political news. And it established that local political coverage can help build an audience when done well. Indeed, solid election coverage can build audience throughout the fall and give a bump in ratings in the early part of the crucial November sweeps.

The project also demonstrated a number of practical strategies by which local stations can use the Internet to improve their political coverage. The five templates—issue grids, biographies, ad and debate watches, campaign finance data and basic voter information—all proved manageable to produce and useful to prospective voters. What's more, the project showed that stations can reach both older and younger audience members with the same basic web design and features. And it suggested that stations are well-positioned to market their political web pages: Older and younger audience members are familiar with local broadcast news websites, a fair number report visiting those sites, and cross-promotional efforts seem to pay off, especially when tied to events like voter registration deadlines or when longer tutorials are aired. Clearly, well-designed politics pages with helpful information for voters can be assets for local news stations.

Will local television stations pursue online political coverage more aggressively in the future—especially if they have to pay for the effort themselves? The conventional wisdom holds that they won't step up their web-based efforts unless someone finally finds the elusive formula for turning a profit on the Internet. Perhaps ratings and web traffic data eventually will offer general managers some encouragement in that regard. But stations have compelling reasons to push ahead regardless of what short-term balance sheets show.

First, stations need to hedge their bets in an uncertain media environment. Amid all the technological change of recent years, it's unclear where tomorrow's audience will be. As WKMG news director Skip Valet sees it, people increasingly will get information from multiple sources, and news organizations must be able to reach them on all fronts or risk not reaching them at all. That's why WKMG owns a radio station that broadcasts the audio portion of its television programming around the clock; aggressively updates its website with breaking news throughout the day; sends viewers headlines via e-mail at various intervals during the day; and gives Tom Smith, the managing editor of its website, a prominent place in the newsroom and, frequently, in its news broadcasts. And it's why KELO in Sioux Falls makes all of its regular news programs available on the Internet even though it can't run advertising there. "The web is an important part of reaching people," explains KELO general manager Mark Antonitis. "We're in the information business, and how we reach them is a lot less important than that we reach them one way or another."

Second, stations may have a particular incentive to plant their flags on the web because that's where a growing part of tomorrow's audience will be. WFAA in Dallas has found, for instance, that fully half of its web users are not watching its broadcast programs at all, suggesting that the web represents a significant opportunity to reach a new audience. It's a demographic group—young, well-educated and technologically sophisticated—that any station would be happy to attract. But it's also a group that may be difficult to reach over the airwaves. That's why Denver's KCNC, when it decided to deliver live Election Night programming via the Internet, didn't rely solely on broadcast

promotions to help build an audience, but also handed out fliers touting the event on local college campuses and advertised it in school newspapers.

TEN STEPS TO BETTER BROADCAST–INTERNET NEWS MANAGEMENT

- Communicate: Make sure everyone from the top down understands the value of an aggressive web operation and how it can enhance a station's role as a news provider.

- Hold regular editorial meetings between broadcast and web staff to make sure everyone really is on the "same page."

- Make sure the general manager and department heads, particularly in marketing and information technology, are brought into the early planning stages so the project is well-supported outside the newsroom.

- Help broadcast producers understand the value of the web to their work. Emphasize using the web as a tool to expand their coverage beyond the usual 1:30 offering in newscasts.

- Establish a broadly defined "political" beat before "horse race" coverage takes over. And when the election is over, use it to cover governance—that is, to track whether elected leaders keep commitments they made on the campaign trail. This will strengthen your coverage of politics and government.

- Look for opportunities to use the web in other content areas. For example, if your news department has an ongoing crisis (e.g., wildfires, floods, other natural disasters), templates and web pages can be adapted for these kinds of stories.

- Use the web to reinforce your news department's brand.

- Show reporters that the web is a new opportunity, not an added burden—one that will enhance their credibility as journalists. But stress that they must become personally involved in shaping their stories for the web to achieve this goal.

- Tell broadcast viewers about your web efforts. And show them, too, by visually integrating the web into your newscasts.

- Look for opportunities to partner with other news outlets on your web and broadcast efforts.

Stations may have a particular incentive to plant their flags on the web because that's where a growing part of tomorrow's audience will be.

Third, stations reap significant though intangible benefits from being recognized as leaders in technology and political coverage. Just as having Doppler radar or a traffic helicopter brings a station a certain cachet, an innovative website can brand a station as progressive. That's why WKMG anchor Lauren Perkins described the station as "first in technology" when she promoted its live candidates' debate webcast and web chat in October. It's also why KCNC gave candidates two minutes of free airtime and took advantage of their presence in its studios to offer the public a chance to join a live Internet chat with them. "It's an extension of our brand, and an enhancement of our core brand," explains general manager Walt DeHaven. "What's more," he notes, "it is an important public service—one that "will be appreciated in the long run."

DeHaven, for one, isn't concerned about television's troubles turning a profit on the Internet. "We're still at the stage that we don't know what it [the Internet] is, but we know we have to be there," he says. "If we build a compelling product, the byproduct eventually will be more money."

And what about the future of political coverage on the air? "It's information that appeals to a passionate segment of our core audience," notes the KCNC general manager. Maria Reitan, news director at WCCO in Minneapolis, agrees. "Politics is one of the most impactfull things we report on," she says. "If we key on what people care about when we report on it, we can get [good] ratings."

How? In many ways, the answer lies beyond the scope of the 2002 Annenberg–RTNDF project. The project focused on showing stations new ways to organize and present

political information in a convenient, serviceable way on the Internet, not how to improve on-air political coverage. To some, this was a flaw in the project. Kristine Strain, KCNC's managing editor, noted that the web templates were "very intellectual and very informative, but not very marketable" because they were heavy with text and lacked the two qualities that most distinguish television: good storytelling and compelling pictures. Strain's point reinforces the importance of pairing on-air and online coverage. On-air coverage remains essential because it can do at least two things better than web-based coverage: It can reach unmotivated people who otherwise would never seek out political information (or become politically engaged) on their own, and it can dramatize in human ways what's at stake in political decision making.

That isn't to say on-air political coverage is easy. To the contrary. The job is difficult even in a politically energized market like Des Moines, notes Dave Busiek, news director at KCCI. "Politics is hard to cover because it's dry," he says. "Even in a state like Iowa, it's hard to do coverage that is interesting and relevant." Angie Kucharski, news director at KCNC in Denver, agrees. "Covering politics for television is harder than covering breaking news stories that have lots of pictures," she says.

KTVU's political editor, Randy Shandobil, agrees that politics isn't easy to cover— because it mostly involves abstractions. Television compounds the problem when it cuts corners, such as by sending general assignment reporters to cover canned political events and giving them just a few hours to produce their news packages. With that low level of commitment, in those cases the stations get exactly what they pay for: dull stories that feature talking heads or staged

media events that almost completely lack the human element.

But Shandobil believes politics can be made relevant with a little time and effort. He proved his point at KTVU, where he prepared a series of highly absorbing political stories leading up to the 2002 elections. Instead of relying on experts, he built his pieces around ordinary people, letting them frame the questions that Shandobil subsequently posed to candidates. And his stories showed those ordinary people in action—a story on education featured a teacher and showed her at work in her classroom, for instance. A story on crime focused on a mother who had to walk her young children past drug dealers on the way to school.

KTVU gave Shandobil a lot of time to prepare his stories and to present them. Instead of the standard minute and a half, some of his pieces ran more than five minutes. But KTVU's news director at the time, Andrew Finlayson, believed they deserved such treatment. "A story should be as long as it is good," he says. The risk appeared to pay off. In October, KTVU aired two Shandobil candidate profiles during newscasts that immediately followed World Series games. The broadcasts, Finlayson noted, held a substantial share of the baseball audience.

PULLING IT ALL **TOGETHER**

The data gathered in this project suggest that the future of online and on-air politics is promising. Contrary to the concerns of some broadcasters, the Internet does not steal viewers from television, at least in the context of political news. The project found that on-air political coverage, when done well, is a good fit with local news. Indeed, solid election coverage can give a boost to ratings in the early part of the crucial November sweeps.

On the Internet front, we found that both older and younger audience members are familiar with local broadcast news websites and that a fair number report visiting those sites. Cross-promotional efforts seem to pay off, especially when tied to events like voter registration deadlines or when instructive tutorials are aired. Audience members are interested in political information and many are willing to go online to find it. Moreover, it is possible to reach both older and younger audience members with the same basic web design and features. A well-designed politics page with helpful information for voters can be an asset for local news stations.

Although the Annenberg–RTNDF project focused on how stations could use the Internet to improve their political coverage, it also reaffirmed the importance of what television stations have always done best. Stations that are inclined to step up their political coverage in 2004 and beyond will have more tools than ever, including the models developed by Annenberg and RTNDF and the experiences of the "Class of 2002." As always, the key is for stations to invest the time, energy and resources needed to do the job right.

APPENDIX

Further information about some of Annenberg's research findings and methods.

A. FOCUS GROUPS

Methodology

The Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) conducted focus groups in two cities in October and November 2002. In Minneapolis, the APPC met five times with a group of older participants, who ranged in age from 61 to 76; the group met four times before the election and once after. In Minneapolis, the APPC also conducted focus groups four times before the election and once after with a younger group of people, who ranged in age from 23 to 31. In addition to the Minneapolis focus groups, the APPC ran one focus group in Pittsburgh with adults ages 61 to 79. This group met once before the election and once after.

All subjects were selected from a convenience sample (people known to the researchers). The organizer of the local groups had some connection to researchers at the APPC, although none of the focus group participants were aware of the full objectives of the study. The older participants met the criteria of being high consumers of political information who had little Internet savvy. The younger group had high Internet savvy but were low consumers of political information. They were selected through a screening questionnaire. Participants were part of intact social groups; one was affiliated with a church, another was an existing group of friends. Each Minneapolis subject received $100 for participation, and each Pittsburgh subject received $20. The group members who hosted the focus groups in their homes received a higher stipend.

The first and last of the Minneapolis focus groups (for the older and younger groups) were led by an APPC researcher. The sessions in between were led by a focus group member who hosted the meetings. The hosts received the focus group questions two days in advance via e-mail. The sessions were monitored by an APPC researcher on speakerphone.

Each focus group was audio and video recorded for research purposes. In total, the APPC collected 12 hours of focus group tapes for study. The tapes were then transcribed and analyzed independently by three APPC researchers for key points. The researchers then met to assess the tapes and reach a consensus on the key points.

Limitations

Focus groups are a nongeneralizable research methodology. The APPC does not suggest that the participants in the focus groups were representative of all individuals in either their age group or geographic area or any other group in the United States. The questions asked were nonpartisan in nature and referred mostly to general sentiments about politics and ways of

gathering information. It is possible that political affiliation may have affected some of the answers, but such questions were outside of the scope of this research project. In addition, group dynamics may affect the type of comments made in a focus group. Nevertheless, insights gained from qualitative methodology can be suggestive especially when paired with findings from quantitative methodologies.

Findings

- Local broadcast news stations have not done enough to brand themslves as locations for political news.

- Viewers are familiar with the existence of station websites.

- Older and younger participants feel that broadcast stations are not doing enough to keep information on sites "fresh."

- Younger participants begin paying attention to election information closer to Election Day than do older viewers.

- Older and younger viewers like a grid format for displaying information about candidate positions.

- Older and younger viewers wanted journalists to provide a location for candidates to speak for themselves, but they also wanted the journalists to weigh in on the accuracy of the claims candidates made.

- Older participants appreciate the opportunity to "dig deeper" with archived files.

- Younger participants check news regularly and are loyal to sites.

- Younger participants do not feel engaged in politics but anticipate that they will when they get married, have children and buy homes.

- Older participants preferred simple site design without clutter and flashing ads.

- Younger participants appreciated simple design that allowed them to find information easily.

- Older and younger participants were suspicious of sites that required registration.

- Older and younger participants were irritated by pop-up ads.

- Older viewers liked ad watches, campaign finance information and endorsements of candidates.

B. POP-UP SURVEYS

Methodology

The pop-up surveys ran on three separate occasions on each station's website. Two occasions were during anticipated high-traffic days—such as during a debate—and the final occasion was on Election Day. The surveys ran for a 24-hour time period, from 5 p.m. to 5 p.m. the following day. On Election Day, the pop-ups ran for a 31-hour period, from 10 a.m. on Tuesday, November 5, to 5 p.m. the following day.

In total, 31,083 users across all 10 markets completed the survey.

The survey asked five questions:

1) How often do you watch each of the following local television news channels for political news?
   - Very frequently (more than once a week)
   - Frequently (once a week)
   - Occasionally (1-3 times a month)
   - Rarely (less than monthly)
   - Almost never/never

(Note: This item represented two questions; it was asked of both the partner station and its main competitor.)

2) Has any story you have seen on this website increased the likelihood of you watching [partner station] since September 1?
- Yes
- No

3) Have you looked at political information on this site?
- Yes
- No

4) How helpful have you found the political information you viewed on this site?
- Very helpful
- Fairly helpful
- Not very helpful
- Not at all helpful
- Didn't view political information on this site

Statistical analysis was conducted on the data to determine users' media use habits and feelings about partner station content.

Limitations

The main limitation of this methodology was that the sample was self-selecting, meaning that respondents were not picked randomly. Without a random sample, it can be difficult to draw concrete conclusions from pop-up survey questions. However, the surveys do serve as a useful complement to and are consistent with the phone survey.

Findings

Migration from the web to broadcast television is significant.

- When asked if any story seen on the website made the user more likely to watch the television news broadcast, nearly one in three users (32.7%) answered yes. This evidence indicates that users are indeed migrating from the web to broadcast.

Satisfaction with the political sections of the stations' websites was high.

- Only 11.8% of respondents cited dissatisfaction with the politics sections of the websites; 23.7% of respondents found the political information "very helpful," and 40.0% found it "fairly helpful." Almost one-quarter of respondents (24.5%) had not yet viewed political information on the site.

C. PHONE SURVEY

As a component of the "Covering Politics On-Air and Online" project, telephone surveys were conducted in Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The surveys employed a random-digit-dialing procedure and measured local political knowledge, media-use habits, and demographics. The sampling frame consisted of households in each Designated Market Area (DMA) confined to the state boundaries. The survey was conducted in two waves: The pre-wave was in the field from September 6, 2002, until October 1, 2002, and the post-wave was in the field from November 11, 2002, until December 12, 2002. Respondents were United States citizens over the age of 18. The survey was designed as a panel, meaning pre-wave respondents were re-contacted to answer the post-wave. The surveys took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The response rates and sample sizes for each city and wave are summarized in the table.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE, RESPONSE RATES AND RE-CONTACT RATES

	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Minneapolis
Pre-Wave Sample Size	1,449	1,393	1,354
Pre-Wave Response Rate	20.3%	24.7%	33.4%
Post-Wave Sample Size	920	723	761
Post Wave Re-Contact Rate	71.2%	62.7%	65.8%

Our analyses here averaged the responses from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Minneapolis. While these markets did differ in some respects, the responses to the following questions were similar enough to aggregate for presentation purposes.

The following questions are drawn from the complete list of questions asked in the telephone surveys. The accompanying responses are presented here to support several points made in the first two sections of this report. The data are weighted by age, race and gender to more accurately reflect the population. The responses shown here are for those respondents who were included in both the pre-wave and the post-wave in order to facilitate more accurate comparison between tables.

MEDIA USE

1) "Do you have access to a computer?" (pre-wave)

	Yes, have computer access
18-34-year-olds	96%
35-54-year-olds	95%
55-year-olds and above	75%
Total	89%

2) "Have you ever used the Internet?" (pre-wave)

	Had used Internet
18-34-year-olds	91%
35-54-year-olds	83%
55-year-olds and above	50%
Total	75%

3) "I am going to read you a list of activities available on the Internet. For each one, please tell me if you did that activity on the Internet in the last 30 days." (post-wave)

Activity	% of total respondents answering yes
Visited a chat room	6
Used e-mail	62
Made a purchase for personal or business use	30
Played games online	15
Obtained the latest news/current events	39
Looked for employment	13
Visited a national TV network	18
Listened to the radio	15
Obtained information about the upcoming election	19
Looked for a weather report	40

4) "Next, I would like to talk to you about newspapers. How often, if at all, do you read (respondents were asked about a local newspaper and a national newspaper)? Would that be regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?" (pre-wave)

	Read printed local newspaper sometimes or regularly	Read printed national newspaper sometimes or regularly
18-34-year-olds	78%	33%
35-54-year-olds	83%	37%
55-year-olds and above	88%	37%
Total	83%	36%

Of those individuals who said they had used the Internet, the following question was asked:

5) "How often, if at all, do you read (respondents were asked about a local newspaper online and a national newspaper online)? Would that be regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?" (pre-wave)

	Read online local newspaper sometimes or regularly	Read online national newspaper sometimes or regularly
18-34-year-olds	35%	31%
35-54-year-olds	33%	26%
55-year-olds and above	30%	26%
Total	33%	28%

6) "Now I'd like you to think about broadcasts you may watch on television. How many days in the past week, if at all, did you watch the national news on television? Your local news on television?" (post-wave)

	Average number of days watching national news	Average number of days watching local news
18-34-year-olds	4.2	3.9
35-54-year-olds	4.4	4.5
55-year-olds and above	5.4	5.4
Total	4.6	4.6

7) "Sometimes local television news tells you how to log on to their websites. They do this by showing the letters of the website being typed on a computer screen or by mentioning the name of the website. Often this website is identified by the newscaster who will say "WWW - dot" and then the name of the website. Have you ever seen a local broadcast television station website address shown or mentioned on the local TV news?" (pre-wave)

	Yes, have seen web address on local TV news
18-34-year-olds	87%
35-54-year-olds	86%
55-year-olds and above	72%
Total	79%

8) "Have you ever visited the Internet website called_____?" (Participants were asked specifically about the main local news broadcast websites) (pre-wave)

	Yes, have visited a local news broadcast website
18-34 year olds	56%
35-54 year olds	51%
55-year-olds and above	24%
Total	44%

ELECTION INFORMATION

9) *Pre-wave question*: "In the past two weeks, how much attention, if at all, have you paid to stories about the election campaign for governor on the local news you watch on television? Would you say a great deal of attention, some, not too much, or none at all?"
Post-wave question: "In the two weeks prior to the election, how much attention, if at all, have you paid to stories about the election campaign for governor on the local news you watch on television? Would you say a great deal of attention, some, not too much, or none at all?"

	Paid a great deal or some attention (pre-wave)	Paid a great deal or some attention (post-wave)
18-34-year-olds	37%	63%
35-54-year-olds	54%	69%
55-year-olds and above	64%	67%
Total	52%	67%

10) "Which one source, if any, did you use the most to gather information about the election campaigns for governor or senator?" (pre-wave)

	Television as main source	Newspaper as main source	Online as main source*
18-34-year-olds	33%	21%	7%
35-54-year-olds	34%	32%	4%
55-year-olds and above	41%	37%	1%
Total	35%	30%	4%

* Including online newspaper, online radio, online television broadcast, and other online sources

11) "If you knew there was political information online, and could get it, would you use the Internet to get political information?" (pre-wave)

	Yes, would use the Internet to get political information
18-34-year-olds	49%
35-54-year-olds	46%
55-year-olds and above	30%
Total	40%

Of those individuals who said they would use the Internet to get political information online, the following question was asked:

12) "Now I am going to describe some ways that the Internet might provide some information about the upcoming election in November. Regardless of whether or not you currently use the Internet, for each item I mention, please tell me how likely you would be to use the Internet to find out the information I mention, if you knew it was possible to do so. Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to use the Internet to:" (pre-wave)

Respondents saying "somewhat likely" "very likely"	18-34-year-olds	35-54-year-olds	55-year-olds and or above	Total
Find a candidate's stance on specific issues online	90%	84%	80%	85%
Find information about the candidate's background online	77%	70%	74%	73%
Check the accuracy of facts in a candidate's advertisements or debates online	70%	68%	70%	69%
Find campaign finance information online	35%	43%	52%	42%
Find out how to register to vote online	34%	23%	25%	28%

* The total includes only those individuals that answered both the website question and the age question

DEBATES

13) Pre-wave question: "How likely are you to watch a debate among the candidates for governor or senator? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?" Post-wave question: "Did you watch any debates for the election for governor or senator?"

	"Somewhat" or "very likely" to watch a debate	Watched a debate
18-34 year olds	57%	37%
35-54 year olds	68%	46%
55-year-olds and above	77%	55%
Total	67%	46%

14) "Did the debate make you more likely to vote in the upcoming election, less likely to vote, or did it not make any difference in your decision whether or not to vote?" (post-wave)

More likely	24%
No difference	74%
Less likely	3%

ELECTION NIGHT

15) "Did you go online or visit any websites to check the status of voting results on Election night, November 5? Did you watch television news to check the status of voting results on Election night, November 5?" (post-wave)

	Went online	Watched television
18-34-year-olds	9%	65%
35-54-year-olds	8%	69%
55-year-olds and above	4%	72%
Total	7%	68%

Of those respondents who identified that they watched television to check the status of voting results on Election night, the following question was asked:

16) "Did you watch your local television news, national television news, or both to check the status of voting results on election night?" (post-wave)

	Local television news	National television news	Both local and national television news
18-34-year-olds	46%	8%	47%
35-54-year-olds	38%	7%	55%
55-year-olds and above	29%	8%	63%
Total	37%	8%	55%

AD WATCHING/FACT CHECKING

17) "Do you recall seeing or hearing any advertisements for political candidates on television or on the radio for the election campaign for governor?" (post-wave)

	% answering yes
18-34-year-olds	91
35-54-year-olds	93
55-year-olds and above	93
Total	92

18) "Have you ever seen anything in newspapers, on TV, or on the Internet that told you about the accuracy of a political advertisement?" (post-wave)

	% answering yes
18-34-year-olds	51
35-54-year-olds	57
55-year-olds and above	54
Total	53

Of those respondents who reported having seen something that told them about the accuracy of a political advertisement, the following question was asked:

19) "Was this analysis of the political advertisement useful to you or not?" (post-wave)

	% answering yes
18-34-year-olds	39
35-54-year-olds	48
55-year-olds and above	51
Total	46

Of those respondents who reported having seen something that told them about the accuracy of a political advertisement, the following question was asked:

20) "Now I'd like you to tell me if you think this analysis was fair or biased. To do so, please use a scale from 1 to 7 where a 7 means that you think the analysis was completely fair and a 1 means that you felt the analysis was completely biased. Of course, you may use any number between 7 and 1 as you see fit." (post-wave)

	Average rating of fair/bias
18-34-year-olds	4.3
35-54-year-olds	4.3
55-year-olds and above	4.6
Total	4.4

Of those respondents who reported having seen something that told them about the accuracy of a political advertisement, the following question was asked:

21) "Did the analysis make you more likely to support a particular candidate, less likely to support a particular candidate, or did it not make any difference to you in whether or not you would support a particular candidate?" (post-wave)

More likely	16%
No difference	74%
Less likely	10%