

LISTENER'S NEWS STORY PREFERENCE
IN THE LANSING, MICHIGAN MARKET

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THESIS



ABSTRACT

LISTENER'S NEWS STORY PREFERENCE IN THE LANSING, MICHIGAN MARKET

By

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The purpose of this study was to determine the news story preferences of a radio listening audience, and to further investigate the findings by checking with the radio news editors in the sample area. The investigation was aimed at discovering if the listeners chose a particular station because of its news content. The survey looked for group preferences in different types of news stories. And lastly the study proposed news stories not usually heard on radio to discover listener reaction.

A random sampling of the listeners in the Lansing, Michigan market was undertaken through telephone interviewing. A questionnaire containing thirty sample headlines was presented to each respondent by telephone. Respondents gave a "yes" or "no" answer as to whether or not they wanted to hear about the story. For comparison, the news editors in the market area were each presented with a similar set of headlines and asked which they would use.

The results were tabulated and the answers grouped by station of listenership, age, and sex. One of the surprises concerned editorializing. Eighty-four percent of the survey group wanted to hear editorials. Society items, such as those found in a newspaper society section, were the least requested. Only thirty-four percent of the respondents wanted to hear these items.

It was determined that the editors generally agreed with the listeners choices. It was noted that those editors who had been working in broadcast news in the market longest were the best judges of their audiences. There was a slight tendency for listeners to pick stations whose news editors agreed with their own preferences.

While this study points up some interesting findings in the preferences of radio listeners, it more importantly points up the need for this type of audience study to determine the wants and needs of a public that relies on the broadcast media for information.

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Television
and Radio, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State
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the Master of Arts degree.



Director of Thesis

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By
Charles W. Larsen

A THESIS

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Dedicated to my wife, Shelby.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem explored in this thesis is the relationship between the radio newsman's perception of the audience's interests and the actual interests of the audience.

In any communication system there are six essential ingredients: 1) the communication source; 2) the encoder; 3) the message; 4) the channel; 5) the decoder; and 6) the communication receiver.¹ In any mass medium, it is the encoder who acts as a gatekeeper to select certain of the sources to transmit to his receiver. In radio news, all of the events of the day are sources. The encoder is the radio news editor who selects some of these sources as his news stories for a particular newscast. The message is the news story prepared. The channel in this instance is the radio station and its transmission facilities. The decoder is the listener, who in turn is the receiver of the message. It is the selection process that the encoder utilizes in picking certain stories to use and the relationship of that selection to the receiver, that we are concerned with here.

While there have been some studies of the process through which editors make selections in a mass media

¹David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960, p. 32

situation, none have been conclusive. Research in this area is sorely lacking. A study entitled "Picture Selection: An Editorial Game,"¹ is probably one of the best on this subject.

In this study the authors presented a respondent with 60 pictures and 11 rank cards. The respondent was to rank the pictures which portrayed things he liked, or did not like, or neither. A group of newspaper picture editors were also asked to rank the pictures according to how they thought their readers would.

The correlation came out to .07 when the editor was told to rank as would an average reader. The correlation climbed to .24 when the editor was given a description of an average reader. And it soared to .75 when the editor was able to see what the reader did with another set of pictures on the ranking scale.

Some of the stories most liked in this study were a mother and her baby, the Kennedy family playing on the lawn, and a 101st birthday party. Stories least liked included pictures of dead American soldiers, Mussolini hanging by his feet, and dead bodies strewn over a jungle floor. The study concludes, "editors shouldn't just give hearts and flowers--but just a better feel for the audience's values to help in developing stronger theories about the editorial process."²

¹Malcolm S. MacLean and Anne Li-an Kao, "Picture Selection: An Editorial Game," Journalism Quarterly, 31:230-232 (Spring, 1963).

²Ibid., p. 231.

"An editor is constantly in the prediction business,"¹ according to this study. And so he is! And as shall be reported in the forthcoming pages, Lansing's news editors are only "fair" predictors of their audience's likes and dislikes.

The Roper study² regarding the preferences of mass media audiences says that the tendency over the past few years is towards more and more acceptance of editorials. The following survey will also touch on this subject to determine the acceptance of editorials among the listeners and news editors.

¹Ibid., p. 232.

²Roper Research Associates, Emerging Profiles of Television and Other Mass Media: Public Attitudes, 1959-1967. A report prepared for Television Information Office. New York: Television Information Office, 1967, pp. 18-19.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY

The intent of this survey was to interview radio listeners and news directors to determine what types of news stories they preferred. This was accomplished by selecting the listeners at random from the telephone book and then calling them. The radio station news directors were sent a mail questionnaire.

The telephone book sample was selected to get random selection of a sample group. Rather than questioning people in person, it was felt this telephone method allowed for the largest, most diverse sample possible.

To obtain typical news stories, several methods were used. Associated Press and United Press International wire copy were employed to gain sample statewide stories that would be used in radio news. To obtain sample stories of a local nature, area stations were monitored for a week to determine the types of local stories being aired. To obtain news stories not usually found on radio, the local newspapers were examined for stories that were not uncovered by the previous methods.

All of these stories were compiled on a master list. Each story was typed by category. Fifteen categories emerged from this process. Two representative stories were then selected from each category. This resulted in two accident stories, two society stories, two education stories, etc. Appendix X lists the categories and questions therein.

The next step required the writing of a summary headline for each story. Care was taken to word the headline to eliminate any association with a known (or real) story, but at the same time containing the essential elements of actual news stories. For this purpose some facts were made up to disguise the original story. For example, an original story that read, "State Representative Thomas Sharpe termed a recent civil rights march on the state capitol 'an outrage!'" would be reworded as "An attack was made on the current civil rights movement by an area state legislator." The essential story facts are there, but any specific mention of the original event was eliminated. The respondents were warned that the stories were "made-up" and not specific incidents. Handling the headlines in this manner helped eliminate any problems that might occur from using dated or timely stories. Also, if the respondent had heard a specific story, that fact would influence his answer one way or another.

The headline material was condensed into thirty sample headlines. This figure was selected as workable for a

telephone interview and because an average of two headlines in each category could be obtained within this number.

To achieve a random order, the headlines were drawn by lot for placement from one to thirty. This procedure was repeated three more times so that four different orderings could be achieved to eliminate any order bias. The first three forms were alternated among the telephone respondents. Of the one-hundred telephone respondents, thirty-three each were questioned using the first and second order. Thirty-four were questioned using the third order. The fourth-order was used for the news director's mail survey.

To select telephone numbers, the March, 1968, Lansing Area Telephone book¹ was used. Random numbers were picked for the column and line to be used on each page. If the interviewer found a business listing at that location on the page, he proceeded to the next residence listing. If the interviewer received no answer, a notation was made and the call was returned during the daytime. If no answer the second try, then that number was discarded. It was necessary to go through each page of the book twice to achieve the necessary number of "answering" numbers.

If the person answering was over twelve years old he was used for the survey. If under twelve, the child was asked

¹Directory contained listings for Lansing, East Lansing, Haslett and Okemos, Michigan. Copyright 1968, Michigan Bell Telephone Company, Lansing, Michigan.

if his mother or father was home. The person answering the telephone was used for the survey to keep the sample as random as possible. Only seven youngsters under twelve years of age were reached.

The evening hours were selected for calling in order to find as many members of the family home as possible. As it turned out, the number of women reached numbered 59, while 41 males were contacted.

The survey was conducted between 7:00 and 10:00 p. m. during the week of July 15-19, 1968. Call-backs to unanswered telephones were made the same week during the daytime. Three college students conducted the telephone questioning.

The first question posed was "Do you listen to radio at least once a day for news?" Sixteen people answered "no", to this question, the remaining one-hundred answered "yes". Only those answering "yes" were used for the complete survey. If the answer was "no", the survey stopped there. The wording of the telephone interview is contained in Appendix I.

Names of the respondents were not taken. This procedure was followed to achieve a high degree of cooperation, hoping that anonymity would make the answers as truthful as possible.

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

The raw figures compiled in this survey are massive and confusing. The only way to understand the significant facts is to break down the survey into simple percentages by question.

The following pages contain a question-by-question look at the findings. Each question is detailed and broken down by age, sex and radio station. The news editors opinions are also detailed by question.

While all one hundred respondents who said they listened at least once daily to radio for news were used, not all of the stations were included in the breakdown. Table 1 shows that the number of respondents for stations other than the top three, WJIM, WILS and WITL, would be insignificant. Their responses are counted in the sex and age breakdown, but not by station for that reason.

All percentages record those saying they would want to hear the story, or those editors who said they would use the item in their newscast.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE GROUP AND STATION

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
12-20	11	7		
20-40	19	24		
40-60	8	20		
60 and over	3	8		
Totals	41	59	100	

Station	Listeners		Editors
WJIM	41		2
WILS	24		4
WITL	15		1
OTHERS ¹	20		2

¹WVIC, WKAR, WJR, WJIM-FM, WILS-FM, WKAR-FM, WCER.

HEADLINE ONE

"A National political candidate visits the area."

TABLE 2

HEADLINE ONE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	73	71		
20-40	68	83		
40-60	75	90		
60 and over	67	63		
Totals	73	81	78	100

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	80	100
WILS	87	100
WITL	80	100

All of the news editors agreed that they would air this news story, while a good number of the listeners also wanted to hear about the candidate's visit.

One woman¹ said she could read about the visit in the paper and wouldn't want to hear it on radio. A news editor² answered that he would air the story, but wanted to know "who?"

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

²Jim Maxwell, news director for WITL.

Women were eight percent stronger in their favoritism for this story than were men, while the strongest age group was forty to sixty years. Those not of voting age and those sixty and over were less interested.

HEADLINE TWO

"A successful fund raising drive was climaxed last night by a charity ball."

TABLE 3

HEADLINE TWO

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	27	14		
20-40	16	25		
40-60	25	30		
60 and over	33	38		
Totals	29	27	28	11
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	34		0	
WILS	33		25	
WITL	27		0	

This is one of two society questions selected to see what response newspaper-type material would bring from a radio audience. Both questions fell far down the list of preferences.

This headline proved to be next to the least preferable among the women and close to that mark among the male listeners. Twenty to forty year old men liked the story the least. Sixty and over men and women gave this heading its highest rating. Only one of the nine news editors voted in its favor.

One woman¹ voted in favor of this study, but wanted to know "what the fund was for?" A man² answered "no," and then added "if broad public effect, then 'yes.'"

¹A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WKAR male listener.

HEADLINE THREE

"Fire caused \$3,000 damage to a local home."

TABLE 4

HEADLINE THREE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	73	86		
20-40	26	67		
40-60	63	60		
60 and over	67	75		
Totals	51	68	61	56

Station	Listeners		Editors
WJIM	73		50
WILS	54		75
WITL	87		100

Police beat news did well as a category, but this item fell to the bottom of that group. The small amount of damage and the fact that no one was injured makes it the least sensational of the category.

Two women voted in favor of this story, but for different reasons. One¹ said she would be interested because it "might be someone I know." The other² wanted to hear the story because she's "always interested in her neighbors."

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

Women in general showed much more interest in this story than men. Both male and female respondents in the twelve to twenty age group showed high interest, while twenty to forty year old males showed the least desire to hear this item. The news editors were divided, with five in favor of the story.

HEADLINE FOUR

"The number of polio cases reported in the area has increased recently."

TABLE 5

HEADLINE FOUR

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	86		
20-40	78	91		
40-60	75	90		
60 and over	67	75		
Totals	73	88	82	44
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	76		0	
WILS	83		50	
WITL	80		100	

Medical stories proved to be one of the most popular topics of the study, although this medical item was slightly below the other in the same category. Among the female listeners, this was the most popular news story. It was tied in tenth place among the male's most wanted stories.

One woman¹ summed up her sex's response best by commenting "put out the alert!" Women in all age groups liked this story more than their respective male counterparts. Women

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

twenty to forty years old had the highest rating with ninety-one percent wanting to hear the story. The news editors were split with slightly more against than for running the item.

HEADLINE FIVE

"The daughter of a prominent citizen was married."

TABLE 6

HEADLINE FIVE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	18	14		
20-40	21	13		
40-60	38	20		
60 and over	33	50		
Totals	24	20	22	0
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	17		0	
WILS	33		0	
WITL	47		0	

One respondent¹ said, "being a woman I will vote 'yes.'" But that reason was not enough to save this question from falling to the bottom of almost every list within this study. It ranked as the most "unwanted" story on both the male and female lists as well as the combined male-female chart. None of the news editors would have aired the story.

The only group showing great preference for this item were the women sixty and over. Half of this group wanted to hear the story, but that is not much of an endorsement as

¹A forty to sixty year old WITL female listener.

this same group showed a high preference for almost every story.

It should be remembered that this survey was undertaken in the summer of 1968, near the end of a presidential term that brought two daughters to the altar in complete public view.

HEADLINE SIX

"The county board of supervisors is undergoing reapportionment."

TABLE 7

HEADLINE SIX

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	55	29		
20-40	58	54		
40-60	63	70		
60 and over	33	63		
Totals	56	58	57	67
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	61		0	
WILS	58		75	
WITL	60		100	

Men and women came close in this answer with only two percent more women wanting to hear the story than men. Twelve to twenty year old females ranked the lowest vote for this headline, with the highest rating coming from forty to sixty year old women.

Two-thirds of the news editors would have aired the story.

One woman¹ credited this story with a popular complaint in this survey. She did not want to hear about it on radio because the same story would be "in the paper and on TV."

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

HEADLINE SEVEN

"An attack was made on the current civil rights movement by an area state legislator."

TABLE 8

HEADLINE SEVEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	86		
20-40	95	71		
40-60	88	70		
60 and over	67	50		
Totals	83	69	75	67
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	76		50	
WILS	88		75	
WITL	53		0	

The closeness of the two percentages in the civil rights stories bears mentioning. Seventy-five percent of the respondents wanted to hear this story, which could be termed an "anti-black" story. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents wanted to hear question seventeen, which could be termed "pro-black." Another story concerning civil rights ranked a sixty-eight percent mark. The latter story was "middle of the road" on civil rights.

Referring to this headline, it was fourteen percent more popular with the males than the females in the sample.

Ninety-five percent of the twenty to forty year old males wanted to hear this story. The lowest ratings were found in the sixty and over age group respondents.

Sampling two women who responded "no," one¹ said she "could read it in the paper," and the second² said she was "sick of hearing of it."

Two-thirds of the news editors would have used this news story in their newscast.

¹A twenty to forty year old WITL female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WILS female listener.

HEADLINE EIGHT

"An editorial on misappropriations in state government."

TABLE 9

HEADLINE EIGHT

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	57		
20-40	95	92		
40-60	100	85		
60 and over	67	63		
Totals	85	81	83	22
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	80		0	
WILS	92		50	
WITL	80		0	

This headline received the fourth highest male-female vote of confidence in the survey. From the findings we could conclude that the high rating comes from the fact that this item is an editorial, more than the particular content of the editorial message. When editorials were rated along with analysis, commentary and non-opinion stories, editorials came out a strong first in popularity. Of the six respondents taking time to comment on this item, all referred to the fact that it was an editorial, none to the editorial's topic.

With eighty-three percent of the survey wanting to hear this editorial, only twenty-two percent of the news editors would have used the item.

Two women having favorable responses to this question, said "I like editorials,"¹ and it "might help us to better judge people."² One³ respondent said he was not interested in editorials, while another⁴ said it should be "special programming." A news editor⁵ wanted to know "by whom?" before voting "yes." Another news editor⁶ voted "no" because it was an editorial.

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

³A twenty to forty year old WJIM male listener.

⁴A forty to sixty year old WKAR female listener.

⁵Jim Maxwell, news director for WITL.

⁶Carl Olson, news director for WKAR.

HEADLINE NINE

"A local resident has been elected community service director for the mid-Michigan area."

TABLE 10

HEADLINE NINE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	55	14		
20-40	53	46		
40-60	63	60		
60 and over	67	63		
Totals	56	49	52	33
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	66		0	
WILS	38		75	
WITL	80		0	

This headline was grouped in the "society" category, but did much better in popularity than the other social stories. Twelve to twenty year old female respondents wanted to hear this story least, while the sixty and over age group wanted to hear this story most. Males were more favorable toward this item than were the females. While fifty-two percent of the respondents wanted to know about this story, only thirty-three percent of the editors said they would have used it.

Sixty-six percent of the WJIM listeners wanted this story included in their newscast, but none of the WJIM editors would have used it. Thirty-eight percent of the WILS listeners liked this item and seventy-five percent of their editors would have used the story.

Throughout the survey many strange and unexplained comments were made by the respondents. A man¹ made such a comment regarding this headline when he said "might know!"

¹A sixty and above WITL male listener.

HEADLINE TEN

"An editorial on a recent Supreme Court decision
affecting the local area."

TABLE 11

HEADLINE TEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	71		
20-40	89	88		
40-60	100	85		
60 and over	100	88		
Totals	85	85	85	33
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	80		0	
WILS	96		75	
WITL	93		0	

Ranking third highest over-all, this headline ranked close to the other editorial in the survey. Eighty-five percent of the listeners wanted to hear this item, while only thirty-three percent of the news editors would have provided it. Interest rose with age, as the twelve to twenty year olds were less enthusiastic than were the sixty and over group.

On both editorial questions, the WILS listeners were highest in favor of the story. WILS is the only station in the local market providing regular editorials. It is not surprising that in both editorial examples the WILS news editors were the only ones consenting to air the item.

The comments surrounding this question were similar to question eight. Calls for "separate programming"¹ and "I'm not interested in editorials,"² rang out. There was an identification with the editorial writer. One WILS listener³ referred to the news director saying he "likes Runyon." A WITL listener⁴ referred to the same news director at the competing station by saying only "good old Bob!"

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM male listener.

³A twenty to forty year old WILS male listener.

⁴A forty to sixty year old WITL male listener.

HEADLINE ELEVEN

"City council will take up a group of re-zoning measures at their meeting tonight."

TABLE 12

HEADLINE ELEVEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	55	29		
20-40	58	50		
40-60	75	80		
60 and over	67	75		
Totals	68	61	64	33

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	59	0
WILS	75	50
WITL	67	100

Stories of city government action ranked lower than county or state government items. Men were more favorable toward this story than were the women. The forty to sixty year olds were more favorable than were the twelve to twenty age group. Only a third of the editors would say they wanted this story in their newscast.

Two respondents wanted to hear about the story only if it concerned their locale. One¹ said, "only if East Lansing,"

¹A sixty and over WJIM female listener.

while another¹ said "yes" "assuming it was about Meridian Township." One woman² said she wanted to hear about the story only "if it was an open meeting." Another woman³ voted "no" saying she would "listen after the fact."

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WKAR female listener.

³A sixty and over WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE TWELVE

"A local community college anthropologist has released findings of a study of Indian culture in the Upper Peninsula."

TABLE 13

HEADLINE TWELVE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	43		
20-40	68	29		
40-60	75	45		
60 and over	100	50		
Totals	71	39	52	22
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	46		0	
WILS	58		50	
WITL	60		0	

This story was created as an example of the numerous college press releases a news room is flooded with every day. The response level was higher than anticipated.

Forty-two percent more males wanted to hear about this story than did women. But while seventy-one percent of the men voted "yes," only twenty-two percent of the editors voted the same way.

Comments on this headline were varied. One woman¹ said

¹A forty to sixty year old WILS female listener.

she would "enjoy it thoroughly." Another¹ said she would like to hear it "very much." One respondent² said she wanted to hear the story because she "had an anthropology course." Still another woman³ did not want to hear it, but her "husband would." Comments of "can read it in the paper,"⁴ and "rather read it,"⁵ were popular throughout the study. One woman⁶ said she would only be interested if "it were somewhere else."

WVIC listeners voted highest for this story, but their news director would not have aired the material. Those with least interest were twenty to forty year old women.

¹A forty to sixty year old WITL female listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

³A twenty to forty year old female new to the area who did not know any call letters.

⁴A twenty to forty year old WITL female listener.

⁵A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

⁶A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE THIRTEEN

"A twelve-year old girl was killed when the car she was riding in went out of control on a curve, crashing into a tree."

TABLE 14

HEADLINE THIRTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	71		
20-40	37	63		
40-60	75	75		
60 and over	33	88		
Totals	51	71	63	67
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	73		100	
WILS	63		100	
WITL	60		0	

Eleven percent of the respondents took time out to comment on this headline. The majority of the comments were from those wanting to hear the headline.

One woman¹ wanted to "know who it was." Another² said she "didn't like it, but wanted to know." One woman³ said it might be "someone I know," while another⁴ said she didn't

¹A forty to sixty year old WITL female listener.

²A sixty and over WILS male listener.

³A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

⁴A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

"like to hear, but...." A respondent¹ said she was "concerned about teenage driving," and still another² said we "have to be told." One woman³ listener said only you "might know." Two respondents expressed disinterest. One⁴ said there were "too many, I lose interest." A WJIM listener⁵ said she was "tired of it." Two more comments were completely against the story. One⁶ said it was "better not to use," while the second⁷ said it was "sadistic."

Women scored this headline much higher than did the males in the survey. All of the editors from WJIM and WILS voted in favor of this headline, while none of the other editors voted favorably. Sixty and over women voted strongest, while the males in the same age group cast the least votes for this item. Twenty to forty year old males also showed disinterest.

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

³A forty to sixty year old WILS male listener.

⁴A sixty and over WJIM female listener.

⁵A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

⁶A forty to sixty year old WITL male listener.

⁷A twenty to forty year old WJIM male listener.

HEADLINE FOURTEEN

"County milkmen have walked off their jobs in a pay dispute."

TABLE 15

HEADLINE FOURTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	86		
20-40	68	58		
40-60	75	50		
60 and over	33	63		
Totals	66	59	62	67

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	56	50
WILS	79	75
WITL	47	100

While employment unrest stories rated fairly well with seventy-four percent voting in favor, this item rated lower than expected. With the prospect of milk scarcity and higher costs that could be assumed from this story, only fifty-nine percent of the females wanted to hear it and only slightly more, sixty-six percent of the males wanted to know about this matter. The least interested members of the survey in a milk strike were the sixty and over men. The twelve to twenty year old women were the most concerned. This was one of the few headlines in which there was a more favorable response from the news editors than the listeners.

HEADLINE FIFTEEN

"A leader of the local black community warns that both black and white Americans may be heading toward a confrontation."

TABLE 16

HEADLINE FIFTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	82	86		
20-40	79	75		
40-60	75	75		
60 and over	100	63		
Totals	80	75	77	100
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	76		100	
WILS	88		100	
WITL	87		100	

It seems that in the Lansing market the listeners would have little choice on this story, as all the news editors say they would air the item. Five percent more men than women voted in favor of the story.

One female respondent¹ said only that it "should be stopped," although she did not clarify what should be stopped.

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

All age groups were close in their voting for this story, with the greatest diversification coming in the sixty and over group where the highest and lowest percentages were recorded. More male sixty and over respondents wanted this story than did their female counterparts.

HEADLINE SIXTEEN

"Lansing's Mayor has proposed a record budget for this fiscal year."

TABLE 17

HEADLINE SIXTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	57		
20-40	53	83		
40-60	88	85		
60 and over	33	63		
Totals	76	78	77	100
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	80		100	
WILS	79		100	
WITL	80		100	

A matter ultimately concerning the tax dollar was met with almost equal response among the sexes. The forty to sixty year old age group expressed the most interest. Again, on this story the listener would have little choice as the editors agreed in its favor one-hundred percent.

HEADLINE SEVENTEEN

"A program of cancer research is beginning at a local hospital."

TABLE 18

HEADLINE SEVENTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	91	86		
20-40	84	79		
40-60	100	90		
60 and over	67	88		
Totals	88	85	86	44
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	85		0	
WILS	92		50	
WITL	87		100	

A school teacher¹ said her "father died of cancer," so she was concerned with this story. This headline rated high in all age groups, but highest in the forty to sixty year old group. The twenty to forty year old respondents and the sixty and over listeners were the least interested. Men were slightly more interested than women, while close to half of the editors would have used this story.

This story tied with an education story for the highest over-all percentage. In the topic break-down educational and medical stories were the highest in popularity.

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

HEADLINE EIGHTEEN

"A humorous story about a boy and his dog."

TABLE 19

HEADLINE EIGHTEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	27	14		
20-40	68	67		
40-60	75	85		
60 and over	100	63		
Totals	61	66	64	11
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	63		0	
WILS	67		25	
WITL	73		0	

This story was included as an example of a "kicker" or "humorous end" to the newscast. This type of story is used by many to show that not all the news is "bad news."

This story tied with traffic death in popularity, far down the list of story desirability. Five percent more women than men wanted to hear about this story. Twelve to twenty year old females were the most disinterested and sixty and over males were the most interested. Only one news editor would have aired the piece.

If this story was somewhat less than enthusiastic in voting response, it did set a record in comment with fourteen

percent of the respondents taking time to speak out. Almost all of those commenting carried the same theme, saying that this type of story is needed to balance out the newscast.

A WJR listener¹ said you "need this sometimes." Another respondent² said she "liked to hear light stories." You "need stuff like that,"³ was one respondents reply. One woman⁴ said simply "happy," while another⁵ said "all of us like to hear this." One listener⁶ said it was "nice, makes things seem brighter." "It would be nice," was a WILS listener's⁷ answer. Comments of "good, real good,"⁸ and "nice to hear,"⁹ were also popular among the sample. A WKAR-FM listener¹⁰ said it would "counteract" the rest of the news. One woman¹¹ said it puts "spark in the news," while another¹²

¹A forty to sixty year old WJR female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

³A twenty to forty year old WILS female listener.

⁴A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

⁵A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

⁶A twenty to forty year old WILS female listener.

⁷A sixty and over WILS female listener.

⁸A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

⁹A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

¹⁰A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

¹¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

¹²A sixty and over WJIM female listener.

said it was "light and interesting." A WKAR listener¹ said "yes" and termed it a "teaser." A WJIM respondent² said she would want to hear the story, "only if I had time."

It is noteworthy that all of those making comments were female. Although most of the comments are favorable, in the total voting, this story was popular with only sixty-four percent of the respondents and only eleven percent of the editors.

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE NINETEEN

"A commentary on recent city planning board decisions."

TABLE 20

HEADLINE NINETEEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	27	29		
20-40	68	50		
40-60	63	65		
60 and over	33	38		
Totals	54	51	52	22
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	51		0	
WILS	46		50	
WITL	67		0	

Further research would be needed to determine whether this story ranked as it did because it concerns city government or because it is a commentary. The facts gathered in this survey are inconclusive.

About half of the total respondents voted in favor of this story while about one-fifth of the news editors would have aired the item. The news editors voting in favor of this commentary are from WILS again, the only station programming regular editorials in the local market.

The twelve to twenty year old age group showed the least interest while the forty to sixty year olds showed the most interest.

One woman¹ cast a "yes" vote for the story saying we're "all civic minded." A news editor² voted "no" saying his decision was because it was a commentary.

¹A forty to sixty year old WILS-FM female listener.

²Jim Maxwell, news director for WITL.

HEADLINE TWENTY

"Area teachers are continuing to bargain with school officials in hopes of settling their contract differences before this fall."

TABLE 21

HEADLINE TWENTY

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	91	86		
20-40	95	96		
40-60	88	80		
60 and over	67	50		
Totals	90	83	86	89
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	88		50	
WILS	88		100	
WITL	80		100	

This headline brought a vote that tied for the highest popularity. While bringing a high vote from all areas, this question brought no comment. Men were seven percent more in favor of this item than women. Age groups twelve through sixty showed about equal interest, but the sixty and over group showed a markedly lower interest in this situation.

It was seldom in this survey that the news editors came near the response of the listeners, but this is one exception. Eighty-six percent of the listeners wanted this story and

eighty-nine percent of the editors said they would air it.

As was previously stated, education stories seemed to have almost general appeal and are one of the top rated topics.

HEADLINE TWENTY-ONE

"A grand jury investigation is probing into mental health practices in the county."

TABLE 22

HEADLINE TWENTY-ONE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	82	57		
20-40	89	75		
40-60	100	75		
60 and over	100	75		
Totals	90	73	80	78

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	73	0
WILS	83	100
WITL	87	100

Two of those commenting felt this story was more for a newspaper than radio. One¹ said she would "rather read it," while the other² said she could "read it in the paper." One woman³ voted in favor of this story saying only, "good!"

Men were more in favor of this item than were women, by seventeen percent. This story was tied as most popular

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

³A sixty and over WITL female listener.

among males. The respondents forty and over were most in favor of this story, while the twelve to twenty year old females were least in favor.

Only two news editors said they would not choose this story for inclusion in their newscast.

HEADLINE TWENTY-TWO

"The Michigan weekend highway traffic death toll
stands at twenty."

TABLE 23

HEADLINE TWENTY-TWO

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	73	71		
20-40	53	63		
40-60	75	60		
60 and over	67	88		
Totals	63	64	64	44

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	66	0
WILS	63	100
WITL	87	0

This headline gained within one percent the same response as question thirteen, which also concerned traffic death. Sixty-four percent of the listeners wanted to hear about this story, one¹ saying "it may be someone I know," and another² saying she doesn't "like it but it should be heard." Another listener³ took the opposite tact saying we "could eliminate"

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM-FM female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WILS female listener.

³A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

this type of story from the newscast. The WILS news editors were the only ones listing this story as one they would use. Editors from the other stations voted against its use. Sixty and over females were most in favor of this story while twenty to forty year old males were least favorable.

HEADLINE TWENTY-THREE

"Unemployment rates for this month are up slightly
from a year ago."

TABLE 24

HEADLINE TWENTY-THREE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	82	14		
20-40	74	42		
40-60	63	55		
60 and over	67	63		
Totals	73	44	56	44
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	44		0	
WILS	75		50	
WITL	73		100	

This headline brought a wide division among the sexes. Men favored this story twenty-nine percent more than did the women. One woman¹ commented "they just lie around and don't work." The twelve to twenty age group brought the extremes recorded in the male-female division. The young females were least interested while their male counterparts were the most interested of any group.

The news editors again split with forty-four percent willing to use this story.

¹A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE TWENTY-FOUR

"New educational programs are being readied for next fall's opening of school."

TABLE 25

HEADLINE TWENTY-FOUR

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	73	57		
20-40	84	88		
40-60	88	100		
60 and over	33	63		
Totals	78	85	82	56
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	80		0	
WILS	88		75	
WITL	93		100	

One woman¹ was interested in this story because she is a "school teacher." But this woman would not have heard the story as her news director² would only carry the story "if it was statewide, not local." Overall, educational stories rated very well and this was no exception. Eighty-two percent of the respondents wanted to hear this story. The twelve to twenty year old group would be directly involved in any new

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

²Carl Olson, news director for WKAR.

programs, for the most part, but they registered the lowest rating for this story. The highest ratings came in the twenty to sixty year old grouping. Fifty-six percent of the news editors said they would air the material.

HEADLINE TWENTY-FIVE

"A speech condemning riots was given at a meeting of an educational conference on riots at MSU."

TABLE 26

HEADLINE TWENTY-FIVE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	73	71		
20-40	89	54		
40-60	50	60		
60 and over	100	25		
Totals	73	64	68	67
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	56		0	
WILS	96		75	
WITL	53		100	

Men favored this story more than women by only nine percent. The news editors concurred with the listeners, sixty-eight percent of the listeners voted for this story, while sixty-seven percent of the editors did likewise.

The sixty and over age group provided the extremes in voting. The males in this group voted one-hundred percent in favor of hearing the story while the females voted only twenty-five percent in favor of the story.

One woman¹ said she "wanted to be informed." Another² took the opposite view saying, "the less we hear about riots, the less we will have."

¹A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE TWENTY-SIX

"A sixteen-year old youth is being arraigned in the shooting of an eight-year old girl."

TABLE 27

HEADLINE TWENTY-SIX

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	91	100		
20-40	58	83		
40-60	88	60		
60 and over	33	63		
Totals	71	75	73	33
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	83		50	
WILS	75		50	
WITL	80		0	

The highest scoring of the police beat items, this headline was chosen by seventy-three percent of the respondents. While sex made little difference in responses, age did. Two-thirds more twelve to twenty year old women wanted to hear this story than did sixty and over males. Only one-third of the news editors would have aired the story.

Comments came on both sides. One listener¹ said we're "all interested in this story," while another² said, she

¹A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

"didn't like it, but it should be known if it happens."

Those opposed to this type of story said there was "too much"¹ of this thing reported, another² said the "less of this publicized, the less violence there would be." One woman³ felt that "police should handle this and keep it out of the news."

¹A sixty and over WITL male listener.

²A forty to sixty year old WKAR-FM female listener.

³A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE TWENTY-SEVEN

"A local youth has died in Vietnam combat action."

TABLE 28

HEADLINE TWENTY-SEVEN

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	91	71		
20-40	63	79		
40-60	88	85		
60 and over	100	75		
Totals	78	80	79	56

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	85	50
WILS	96	100
WITL	93	0

War death stories ranked above traffic death and police beat stories by topic. Males and female respondents were close in their agreement as four-fifths wanted to hear the story. Fifty-six percent of the editors would have used it.

There was indication from the comments that while the majority wanted to hear this story, they did not want to hear a long list of names from an entire area or state. One man¹ said he wanted to hear the story, but "don't tell

¹A forty to sixty year old WITL male listener.

us all of them." A woman¹ also voted for the story but said, "not so many dead in the nation."

WILS listeners voted the highest rating for this story and their news editors were the only ones completely in agreement on airing the story.

¹A forty to sixty year old WJIM female listener.

HEADLINE TWENTY-EIGHT

"A change in interest rates has been announced by several local banks."

TABLE 29

HEADLINE TWENTY-EIGHT

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	55	29		
20-40	84	63		
40-60	63	80		
60 and over	100	75		
Totals	73	51	69	78

Station	Listeners	Editors
WJIM	66	0
WILS	83	100
WITL	53	100

It was the males who voted three-quarters in favor of the story as compared to only half of the women. One man¹ said he wanted to hear about this story because, he "works in a bank." The twelve to twenty year old age group was least interested while the forty to sixty year old group was most interested. It is seldom in this survey that the editors are more in favor of a story than the listeners, but this is one of those times. Four-fifths of the editors were favorable while only sixty-nine percent of the listeners voted "yes."

¹A twenty to forty year old WILS male listener.

HEADLINE TWENTY-NINE

"An analysis of the primary election and
its probable outcome."

TABLE 30

HEADLINE TWENTY-NINE

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	64	100		
20-40	84	67		
40-60	63	60		
60 and over	100	63		
Totals	76	68	71	67
Station	Listeners		Editors	
WJIM	68		0	
WILS	75		75	
WITL	67		100	

Seventy-one percent of the respondents wanted to hear this story. Eight percent more men wanted this story than did women. The lowest group in popularity was women forty to sixty years old. Twelve to twenty year old females and sixty and over males were the most interested in this story.

Two-thirds of the news editors wanted to use this analysis piece, but as one listener¹ put it, it's "dry."

¹A sixty and over WILS female listener.

HEADLINE THIRTY

"Three workmen were injured in a construction accident."

TABLE 31

HEADLINE THIRTY

Age Group	Listeners			Editors
	Male	Female	Total	
	-----Percent-----			
12-20	91	86		
20-40	32	42		
40-60	100	70		
60 and over	67	88		
Totals	63	63	63	56

Station	Listeners		Editors
WJIM	71		50
WILS	67		100
WITL	87		0

Men and women agreed perfectly on this answer. Sixty-three percent of each sex wanted to hear this story. The age group responses gave no clear pattern on this particular headline. Thirty-two percent of the twenty to forty year old males wanted to hear the story while one-hundred percent of the forty to sixty year old males wanted to hear it. Just over half of the news editors were in favor of using this item.

One respondent commented on this headline. She¹ said she "works in a hospital" and therefore would be interested.

¹A twenty to forty year old WILS female listener.

Only two-thirds of the WILS listeners wanted to hear the story, but all of the news editors responding to the survey from WILS would have used the item.

Several of the respondents made general comments upon completion of the question period. One woman¹ said she gets most of her news from WJIM-TV, listening to, not watching the television set. She felt that local television news shows contained nothing that you needed to watch in order to understand. Another² commented that although her answers were as general as possible, she would listen to stories at one time of the day that she would not care about at another time.

Two respondents made a general comment about radio news as compared to newspapers. A WILS-FM listener³ said she "wants things in the paper left off radio so she can concentrate on national news." Another woman⁴ responded "no" to every question, stating "you can get all that in the paper."

A WILS listener⁵ said she "hates the music," and thinks it an "insult to anyone like Runyon."⁶

One woman⁷ made her own conclusion about the survey result by saying upon completion, "does that show I'm morbid?"

¹A twenty to forty year old WKAR female listener.

²A twenty to forty year old WILS male listener.

³A forty to sixty year old WILS-FM female listener.

⁴A sixty and over WJR female listener.

⁵A sixty and over WILS female listener.

⁶Referring to Bob Runyon, WILS news director.

⁷A twenty to forty year old WJIM female listener.

It is interesting to note that while we asked the respondents for a "local station," six of the sample gave us WJR, Detroit, a 50,000 watt station.

It is also interesting to note the close similarity between the random sample conducted in this survey and the results of a rating survey taken about the same time (Table 32). Although the credibility of a rating service sample can be debated, and the general rating may not be the same as the news rating, it does lend some degree of validity to this study by closely aligning itself with the findings herein.

TABLE 32
MARKET RATINGS

	Rating ¹ Shares	Thesis
	-----Percent-----	
WJIM	30	41
WILS	25	24
WITL	17	15
WVIC	--	3
WKAR	--	4
WJR	7	6
WJIM-FM	--	3
WILS-FM	--	1
WCER	5	1
WKAR-FM	--	1
OTHER	--	1

¹Pulse February-March 1968 share of Lansing market. Information obtained from interview with WILS Program Director Eric Furseth.

Among the male respondents, question number five was the least wanted. It concerned the marriage of the daughter of a prominent citizen. The males found headlines number twenty and twenty-one the most popular. They concerned the bargaining activities of area teachers and the grand jury mental health investigation.

Women on the other hand, found headline number four the most interesting. It concerned the increased number of polio cases. It might be thought that women are more marriage conscious than men. But according to this study, the story about the marriage of a prominent citizen's daughter ranked at the bottom of the female list as it also did with the men.

When you combine the male-female results, it is no surprise the marriage headline came out least popular. The male-female most wanted category went to two headlines. Numbers seventeen and twenty about cancer research and teacher bargaining were the most wanted overall.

The news editors agreed with the listeners on the least wanted story. Not a single editor said he would have picked that story for his newscast. There were three headlines the nine editors agreed they would have used. They were numbers one, fifteen and sixteen, about the national political candidate, the black leader's warning, and the mayor's record budget. These three headlines ranked 9, 10 and 11th on the respondents list of popularity.

From the foregoing information we might conclude that while there is agreement on what is not wanted included in the newscast, there is less agreement on what is wanted.

Out of the one-hundred respondents, the average respondent wanted to hear 20.1 of the 30 headlines. WKAR-FM listeners wanted to hear 24 of the stories, while on the other end, the WJIM-FM listeners wanted to hear about only 14.3 of the stories. This would follow logically since WKAR-FM is the most information oriented station in the survey and WJIM-FM is the least information oriented station. Men had slightly broader interests than women. Women wanted to hear more about 19.8 of the stories while men wanted more information about 20.6 of the stories.

The news editors said they would have used only 15.7 of the 30 stories. Their use of fewer stories could reflect their regular decision-making process of eliminating stories due to time limitations.

Among the one-hundred respondents, there were two who said they wanted to hear every story and one who said she did not want to hear any.

In the breakdown by topic, most of the respondents wanted to hear stories about education and medicine. The least-liked category turned out to be society stories. In overall headings, community problems ranked highest with people and places at the bottom. The male-female breakdown agreed with the total, except the females found tragedy more popular than community problems when compared to the entire sample.

The separation between opinion and non-opinion stories was amazingly small. In all groups only a few percentage points were found between the opinion and non-opinion stories.

The news editors and listeners were reasonably close on agreement regarding most headlines. The widest difference came on headline number eight. Only two of the nine news editors would have used the editorial about misappropriations in state government. But 83% of the listeners wanted to hear the editorial.

On headlines number thirteen, fourteen and twenty-five, the news editors and listeners agreed most closely. These stories involved the twelve-year old traffic fatality, the county milkmen's dispute, and the speech condemning riots. Six of the editors would have carried the story in each case and 63, 62 and 68% of the listeners respectively wanted to hear each story.

If you assume that in order to make the right decision, the news editor has to predict what the majority of his audience will say, you discover some interesting findings.

On the high correspondence side, we have the WILS News Director, Bob Runyon. He predicted what the majority of the respondents listing his station would want. In only three out of thirty headlines did he go against the majority of those WILS listeners. He would have aired one story his audience did not want and he would have not aired two others that the majority of his audience wanted.

On the low correspondence side, we have reporter, Bill Applegate, for WJIM. In only eleven of the thirty cases did he predict what the majority of his audience wanted. He would have only aired seven of the stories while his listeners would have wanted to hear 20.1 of them.

In the first example, you could conclude that being the newsman having spent the longest time at his job, he should know his audience better. That conclusion probably has some merit, but could not be definitely proved here.

The three editors with the highest correspondence were Bob Runyon, Jim LaRoue and Carl Olson. All of these people have been in Lansing broadcast news for several years. The lowest correspondence came from Bill Applegate, Andy Such and Jim Mitchell, all of whom have arrived on the scene within the last year or so. This further evidence seems to back up the "experience" theory about audience prediction.

While it was discovered that those wanting the most stories listened to the station providing the most information, it was also found out that the news editors could predict their own audience better than the entire population. On an average, the news editors predicted what their listeners wanted to hear with 70% accuracy. But comparing their decisions against the entire sample, their accuracy lowers to only 60%. Although not conclusive, it could be assumed that either the editors have a feeling of what their listeners want, or that the listeners tune in the station most closely

providing what they want to hear. It would seem most likely that the true answer would incorporate a little of both concepts. There is also the possibility that a station "teaches" its audience what is "appropriate" radio news.

On examining intra-station policy decisions, WILS gives us the best basis for study. The news director and three editors at WILS responded to the questionnaire.

Ten out of thirty times all the WILS editors agreed to use a story. Only once, however, did all four agree not to use a particular story.

From WJIM two replies were received. Nineteen times the two editors agreed not to use a story, and only agreed to use a particular story four times.

There was only one headline on which all nine Lansing editors agreed not to air the story. Three headlines were unanimously agreed upon by the same group to be aired.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

It was determined that opinions were as welcomed as completely unbiased accounts. It was also determined that there is a slight tendency for the listener to tune to the station most closely aligned with their news interests. Editors likewise seem to be able to pick their audience's responses out of the entire population. More experienced editors can do this better than the more recent professional. It was determined that those stories usually heard on radio were requested more often than those stories not usually heard on radio. People are either getting what they want on radio or they are so indoctrinated they want what they get. The most requested stories were those which could directly affect the individual. Education and medicine have some effect on everyone. The editors preferred the national political candidate's visit, a black leader's warning and the mayor's budget. These stories, while important, will have only indirect effects on the listener. Tragic news of accidents or fires were not listed at the top of the preference orders of either the editors or listeners. However,

a monitoring of newscasts will quite often find such stories leading off the summary.

It is seldom that one can say his job is complete and there is nothing more to be done. Few tasks in this life are so simple as to have a final conclusion.

So is the case with this thesis study of listeners news preferences. The project was started with the hope in mind that some definite conclusions could be reached. As the study proceeded it became clear that this was only the ground work for a much larger task.

This study was able to bring together only nine of Lansing's seventeen news editors. To bear complete credibility the survey should receive the cooperation of all the editors in the market.

Although one-hundred respondents worked well for this survey, to be complete the study should include a larger number, so the statistics would be reliable even in the smallest subdivision.

There are many more questions that could have been added to the survey. However, any longer period of questioning would have tried the respondent's patience to a possible breaking point. It took a minimum of five minutes for each telephone call, and any longer would have lost the cooperation of those answering.

A larger sampling area, possibly several markets, would have eliminated any peculiarities of the Lansing situation.

The problem of determining whether or not a headline received its vote for the content or for its opinion basis was hard to determine. A series of similar or identical questions would have solved this problem.

From researching similar studies it was discovered that surveys of this type are few and far between. More information is needed in the area of what listeners want to hear in news programming. Editors try to second guess their audience, many times without any real basis for their decisions.

Only with an accurate idea of what the listener wants to hear can news stories be successfully selected, balancing the listeners wants with what the editor thinks the listener "ought" to hear.

It is with studies of this type, providing significant feedback, that broadcast journalism may be refined.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

TELEPHONE QUESTIONING WORDING

Hello, I'm Charles Larsen and we're taking a survey for thesis research for the Television-Radio Department at Michigan State University. If I could have a moment of your time I would like to ask you a few short questions about radio news.

First, do you listen to radio at least once a day for news? Secondly, which local radio station do you usually listen to for news?

Now I'm going to read some news stories. These stories are made-up and did not really happen, but for the purposes of this interview, we'll assume that all of the following events did happen today in the greater Lansing area. Because of the limited time requirements of radio newscasts not all of these stories could be used on a single newscast, so I want you to tell me after each story if you would want to hear about it. Please answer "yes" or "no."

1. A national political candidate visits the area.
2. A successful fund raising drive was climaxed last night by a charity ball.
3. Fire caused \$3,000. damage to a local home.

4. The number of polio cases reported in the area has increased recently.

5. The daughter of a prominent citizen was married.

6. The county board of supervisors is undergoing reapportionment.

7. An attack was made on the current civil rights movement by an area state legislator.

8. An editorial on mis-appropriations in state government.

9. A local resident has been elected community service director for the mid-Michigan area.

10. An editorial on a recent supreme court decision affecting the local area.

11. City council will take up a group of re-zoning measures at their meeting tonight.

12. A local community college anthropologist has released findings of a study of Indian culture in the upper peninsula.

13. A twelve-year old girl was killed when the car she was riding in went out of control on a curve, crashing into a tree.

14. County milkmen have walked off their jobs in a pay dispute.

15. A leader of the local black community warns that both black and white Americans may be heading toward a confrontation.

16. Lansing's Mayor has proposed a record budget for this fiscal year.

17. A program of cancer research is beginning at a local hospital.

18. A humorous story about a boy and his dog.

19. A commentary on recent city planning board decisions.

20. Area teachers are continuing to bargain with school officials in hopes of settling their contract differences before this fall.

21. A grand jury investigation is probing into mental health practices in the county.

22. The Michigan weekend highway traffic death toll stands at twenty.

23. Unemployment rates for this month are up slightly from a year ago.

24. New educational programs are being readied for next fall's opening of school.

25. A speech condemning riots was given at a meeting of an educational conference on riots at MSU.

26. A sixteen-year old youth is being arraigned in the shooting of an eight-year old girl.

27. A local youth has died in Vietnam combat action.

28. A change in interest rates has been announced by several local banks.

29. An analysis of the primary election and its probable outcome.

30. Three workmen were injured in a construction accident.

For the purposes of classifying these answers by age, please tell me if you are between twelve and twenty, twenty and forty, forty and sixty or sixty and above.

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX II

EDITORS' QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUCTIONS

TO: Lansing News Editors

FROM: Charles Larsen
MSU Graduate Student
Television-Radio Dept.

I am taking a survey of the Lansing radio audience for my thesis project at MSU. As a part of my project I am asking the assistance of the radio news editors in Lansing.

It would be most helpful to my survey if you would take a moment and check yes or no after each headline on the attached sheet. These stories are made up and did not really happen, but for the purpose of my survey we'll assume that all of the events did happen today in the greater Lansing area. Remembering the limited time requirements of radio newscasts and the fact that not all of these stories could be used on a single newscast, I want you to check yes or no if you would use the story on a newscast you were editing for your station.

I have enclosed an envelope for your convenience in returning the attached sheet to me.

If you would be interested in receiving the results of my survey, please make a note to that effect on the back of the attached sheet.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

APPENDIX III

STATIONS

<u>NEWS EMPHASIS</u>	<u>CALL LETTERS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MUSIC FORMAT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOURS * ON AIR DAILY</u>
Average	WJIM	Lansing	Rock & Roll	24 Hours
Average	WILS	Lansing	Rock & Roll	24 Hours
Average	WITL	Lansing	Country & Western	Daylight
Average	WVIC	East Lansing	Easy Listening	Daylight
Extensive	WKAR	East Lansing	Educational	18 Hours
Average	WJR	Detroit	Middle of the Road	24 Hours
Minimal	WJIM-FM	Lansing	Easy Listening	18 Hours
Minimal	WILS-FM	Lansing	Easy Listening	18 Hours
Average	WCER	Charlotte	Middle of the Road	Daylight
Extensive	WKAR-FM	East Lansing	Educational	18 Hours

* Average number of hours daily. Daylight refers to stations operating only during daylight hours. This length of time would vary during different times of the year.

APPENDIX IV

RESPONDENT DISTRIBUTION BY STATION

	<u>WJIM</u>	<u>WILS</u>	<u>WITL</u>	<u>WVIC</u>	<u>WKAR</u>	<u>OTHER*</u>
MALE	16	10	5	3	2	5
FEMALE	25	14	10	-	2	8
	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	41	24	15	3	4	13

* other:

	<u>WJR</u>	<u>WJIM-FM</u>	<u>WILS-FM</u>	<u>WCER</u>	<u>WKAR-FM</u>	<u>OTHER*</u>
MALE	4	1	-	-	-	-
FEMALE	2	2	1	1	1	1
	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	6	3	1	1	1	1

* other: a female respondent new to the area who didn't know any station call letters.

APPENDIX V

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY STATION,
AGE GROUP AND SEX

	<u>WJIM</u>	<u>WILS</u>	<u>WITL</u>	<u>WVIC</u>
MALE				
12-20	8	2	0	0
MALE				
20-40	5	4	1	3
MALE				
40-60	2	3	3	0
MALE				
60 & over	1	1	1	0
FEMALE				
12-20	5	1	0	0
FEMALE				
20-40	11	6	4	0
FEMALE				
40-60	7	4	4	0
FEMALE				
60 & over	2	3	2	0
TOTAL				
MALE	16	10	5	3
TOTAL				
FEMALE	25	14	10	0
TOTAL	41	24	15	3

continued

	<u>WKAR</u>	<u>WJR</u>	<u>WJIM-FM</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
MALE				
12-20	0	1	0	0
MALE				
20-40	2	3	1	0
MALE				
40-60	0	0	0	0
MALE				
60 & over	0	0	0	0
FEMALE				
12-20	0	0	0	1
FEMALE				
20-40	1	0	1	1
FEMALE				
40-60	1	1	1	2
FEMALE				
60 & over	0	1	0	0
TOTAL				
MALE	2	4	1	0
TOTAL				
FEMALE	2	2	2	4
TOTAL				
TOTAL	4	6	3	4

APPENDIX VI

TOTAL RESPONDENTS IN FAVOR OF
PARTICULAR HEADLINES

100 Respondents Total

1. "A national political candidate visits the area."	78
2. "A successful fund raising drive was climaxed last night by a charity ball."	28
3. "Fire caused \$3,000. damage to a local home."	61
4. "The number of polio cases reported in the area has increased recently."	82
5. "The daughter of a prominent citizen was married."	22
6. "The county board of supervisors is undergoing reapportionment."	57
7. "An attack was made on the current civil rights movement by an area state legislator."	75
8. "An editorial on mis-appropriations in state government."	83
9. "A local resident has been elected community service director for the mid-Michigan area."	52
10. "An editorial on a recent supreme court decision affecting the local area."	85
11. "City council will take up a group of rezoning measures at their meeting tonight."	64
12. "A local community college anthropologist has released findings of a study of Indian culture in the upper peninsula."	52
13. "A twelve-year old girl was killed when the car she was riding in went out of control on a curve, crashing into a tree."	63
14. "County milkmen have walked off their jobs in a pay dispute."	62

continued

15. "A leader of the local black community warns that both black and white Americans may be heading toward a confrontation." 77
16. "Lansing's mayor has proposed a record budget for this fiscal year." 77
17. "A program of cancer research is beginning at a local hospital." 86
18. "A humorous story about a boy and his dog." 64
19. "A commentary on recent city planning board decisions." 52
20. "Area teachers are continuing to bargain with school officials in hopes of settling their contract differences before this fall." 86
21. "A grand jury investigation is probing into mental health practices in the county." 80
22. "The Michigan weekend highway traffic death toll stands at twenty." 64
23. "Unemployment rates for this month are up slightly from a year ago." 56
24. "New educational programs are being readied for next fall's opening of school." 82
25. "A speech condemning riots was given at a meeting of an educational conference on riots at M.S.U." 68
26. "A sixteen year old youth is being arraigned in the shooting of an eight year old girl." 73
27. "A local youth has died in Vietnam combat action." 79
28. "A change in interest rates has been announced by several local banks." 69
29. "An analysis of the primary election and its probable outcome." 71
30. "Three workmen were injured in a construction accident." 63

APPENDIX VII

**RESPONDENTS IN FAVOR OF
HEADLINES BY SEX**

	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Total	(41)	(59)
1.	30	48
2.	12	16
3.	21	40
4.	30	52
5.	10	12
6.	23	34
7.	34	41
8.	35	48
9.	23	29
10.	35	50
11.	28	36
12.	29	23
13.	21	42
14.	27	33
15.	33	44
16.	31	46
17.	36	50
18.	25	39
19.	22	30
20.	37	49

continued

	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Total	(41)	(59)
21.	37	43
22.	26	38
23.	30	26
24.	32	50
25.	30	38
26.	29	44
27.	32	47
28.	30	39
29.	31	30
30.	26	37

APPENDIX VIII

RESPONDENTS IN FAVOR OF
HEADLINES BY AGE

	<u>12-20</u>	<u>20-40</u>	<u>40-60</u>	<u>60 & over</u>
Total	(18)	(43)	(28)	(11)
1.	13	34	24	7
2.	4	14	8	4
3.	14	22	17	8
4.	13	37	24	8
5.	3	7	7	5
6.	8	19	19	6
7.	13	35	21	6
8.	11	40	25	7
9.	9	21	17	7
10.	12	38	25	10
11.	8	26	6	8
12.	10	20	15	7
13.	12	22	21	8
14.	13	28	17	6
15.	15	32	21	8
16.	11	36	24	6
17.	16	35	26	9
18.	4	28	23	8
19.	5	25	18	4
20.	16	41	23	6

continued

	<u>12-20</u>	<u>20-40</u>	<u>40-60</u>	<u>60 & over</u>
Total	(18)	(43)	(28)	(11)
21.	13	40	23	9
22.	13	25	18	8
23.	10	24	16	6
24.	13	37	27	6
25.	13	29	15	9
26.	17	31	20	6
27.	15	31	24	9
28.	8	31	21	9
29.	14	32	17	8
30.	16	16	22	9

APPENDIX IX

**RESPONDENTS IN FAVOR OF
HEADLINES BY STATION**

	<u>WJIM</u>	<u>WILS</u>	<u>WITL</u>	<u>WVIC</u>
Total	(41)	(24)	(15)	(3)
1.	33	21	12	2
2.	14	8	4	1
3.	30	13	13	2
4.	31	20	12	3
5.	7	8	7	0
6.	25	14	9	2
7.	31	21	8	3
8.	33	22	12	3
9.	27	9	12	2
10.	33	23	14	3
11.	24	18	10	3
12.	19	14	9	2
13.	31	15	9	0
14.	23	19	7	2
15.	31	21	13	3
16.	33	21	12	2
17.	35	22	13	3
18.	26	16	11	3
19.	21	11	10	1
20.	36	21	12	3

continued

	<u>WJIM</u>	<u>WILS</u>	<u>WITL</u>	<u>WVIC</u>
Total	(41)	(24)	(15)	(3)
21.	30	20	13	3
22.	27	15	13	2
23.	18	18	11	2
24.	33	21	14	3
25.	23	23	8	3
26.	34	18	12	2
27.	35	23	14	2
28.	27	20	8	2
29.	28	18	10	3
30.	29	16	13	0

	<u>WKAR</u>	<u>WJR</u>	<u>WJIM-FM</u>	<u>OTHERS</u> ¹
Total	(4)	(3)	(2)	(4)
1.	3	3	1	3
2.	0	0	0	1
3.	0	1	1	1
4.	4	5	3	4
5.	0	0	0	0
6.	3	3	0	1
7.	4	4	2	2
8.	3	5	2	3
9.	0	1	1	0

continued

¹WILS-FM, WCER, WKAR-FM and a female respondent new to the market who didn't know any call letters.

	<u>WKAR</u>	<u>WJR</u>	<u>WJIM-FM</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
Total	(4)	(3)	(2)	(4)
10.	2	3	2	3
11.	3	5	1	1
12.	2	3	1	2
13.	1	1	3	3
14.	3	5	1	2
15.	4	3	0	2
16.	4	4	1	2
17.	3	4	2	4
18.	2	2	3	1
19.	3	2	1	3
20.	4	3	1	4
21.	4	5	2	3
22.	1	2	3	3
23.	3	2	1	1
24.	2	4	2	3
25.	3	4	2	4
26.	2	1	2	2
27.	0	1	2	2
28.	4	5	1	2
29.	3	4	1	4
30.	2	0	2	1

APPENDIX XII

QUESTIONS BY TOPIC

	<u>Question Number</u>
I. Tragedy	
A. Police beat	3, 26 & 30
B. Traffic death	13 & 22
C. War death	27
II. Government	
A. City	11 & 19
B. County	6 & 21
C. State	8 & 10
D. Election	1 & 29
III. Community Problems	
A. Education	20 & 24
B. Medicine	4 & 17
C. Science	12
D. Economic	16 & 28
E. Employment	14 & 23
F. Civil unrest	7, 15 & 25
IV. People & Places	
A. Society	2, 5 & 9
B. Humor	18

continued

Question Number

I. Opinion

A. Editorial

8 & 10

B. Commentary

19

C. Analysis

29

II. Non-Opinion

APPENDIX XIV

TOTAL RESPONSES BY TOPIC

I. Tragedy	70%	
A. Police beat		66%
B. Traffic death		64%
C. War death		79%
II. Government	72%	
A. City		58%
B. County		69%
C. State		84%
D. Election		75%
III. Community Problems	73%	
A. Education		84%
B. Medicine		84%
C. Science		52%
D. Economic		73%
E. Employment		74%
F. Civil unrest		73%
IV. People & Places	49%	
A. Society		34%
B. Humor		64%

continued

I. Opinion	66%	
A. Editorial		80%
B. Commentary		51%
C. Analysis		68%
II. Non-Opinion	67%	

I. Opinion	71%	
A. Editorial		89%
B. Commentary		64%
C. Analysis		61%
II. Non-Opinion	70%	

I. Opinion	74%
A. Editorial	87%
B. Commentary	67%
C. Analysis	67%
II. Non-Opinion	72%

APPENDIX XV

NEWS EDITORS RESPONSES

	Jim LaRoue WILS	Bob Runyon WILS N.D.	Paul Wisenfeld WILS	Chuck Patyk WILS	Carl Olson WKAR N.D.	Jim Mitchell WVIC N.D.	Jim Maxwell WITL N.D.	Andy Such WJIM	Bill Applegate WJIM	Totals
1.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9
2.	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
3.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	5
4.	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	4
5.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
6.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	6
7.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	6
8.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	2
9.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	3
10.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	3
11.	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
12.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	2
13.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	6
14.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6
15.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9
16.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9
17.	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	4
18.	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
19.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	2
20.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	8

continued

	Jim LaRoue WILS	Bob Runyon WILS N.D.	Paul Wisenfeld WILS	Chuck Patyk WILS	Carl Olson WKAR N.D.	Jim Mitchell WVIC N.D.	Jim Maxwell WITL N.D.	Andy Such WJIM	Bill Applegate WJIM	Totals
21.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	7
22.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	4
23.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	4
24.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	5
25.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	6
26.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	3
27.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	5
28.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	7
29.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	6
30.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	5

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