

The impact of local television in today's society

[Media](#), [Television](#)



Local Television in Today's Society Since the early 1940's, it has been clearly evident that television has played a crucial role in the way people receive and perceive news media on a day to day basis. According to State of the News Media, viewership and ratings have drastically changed over the years and as of 2012, it is suggested that it is in large part due to the pressing and irreversible shift towards social media.

Now our country not only relies on our friendly local newscasters to fill us in on the weather or breaking news first thing in the morning, but also on the latest KRQE tweet on Twitter or status update on Facebook. Our world is turning digital and as hard as many may try to stop it, there is no denying that a future in news will rely heavily on the efficiency and effectiveness of social media. So where does this leave our local television stations and ultimately, how will this digital frenzy effect their overall viewership, ratings and longevity?

This is the prominent concern in our local news media world today and a question that must be discussed and actively researched to ensure the future of local television news. Throughout the course of this semester, the students in this Media Management course have had the opportunity to pick the brains of various news anchors, producers, directors, and Journalists to question and investigate this shift from both print media and local television, to our growing reliance on internet and various social networking sites.

Each of our guests was forced to explore the same question: In a time of slipping credibility and growing opinion, how do you succeed in the digital era while maintaining values and traditions of great Journalism that rough

us here in the first place? With no surprise, each speaker responded with a similar statement. The gist being that as a society, we must, as a whole, focus on seeking the truth behind any story. We must provide valid, reliable and timely information that pertains and relates to the lives of every member in our community and remain a trustworthy source of news for years to come.

We must place precedence on socialresponsibility. Seems a lot easier said than done considering there has been a noticeable decline in local TV news viewership since 2007. And lthough there was a slight increase in 2011, the mostly steady decline has been cause for great concern in the news world. While reading the substantial amount of information that State of the News Media provided on this issue, it was apparent that network and local stations alike are predominantly losing viewers (or in some rare cases reaching a time of stabilization) in both primetime television spots as well as in nontraditional time slots.

The research suggests that although there is the occasional increase in viewers during times of national or worldwide distress, there is indeed a uantitative measure proving simply a sta bilization ot local news audiences in specific time slots (no increase) versus the drastic decline that was evident beginning in 2007. However, this 'improvement' was not substantial enough to propose that local TV news has entered a period of new audience growth. According to SNM, " viewership of network affiliates was up for newscasts in both the morning (5 to 7 a. m.) and late evening (11 p. m. when averaged across all sweeps periods studied. In the early evening time slot (5 to 7 p. m.

, viewership was down slightly. " Delving a little deeper into the sweeps periods offered a clue to at least one reason behind the improvement - there has been higher interest in the news (for example the coverage of the chaos, rebellion, and distress surrounding Egypt and Libya earlier in the year or the 2012 Presidential election.) But breaking news or continuous coverage of a significant event may not always dominate the airwaves considering there are times when news is slow and not as easily accessible.

At that point reporters must rely on their own investigative skills and creative thinking to find their own stories to dissect and examine. These facts were reiterated by a large number of our guest speakers in class including Alex Tomlin, Bill Anderson, Doug Fernandez and Jessica Garrate. They all made it a clear point to discuss the importance of understanding the average news consumers' daily routine, the most critical time of day that any one individual can be reached and what it is that truly attracts a news consumer to a particular station. That is indeed the key to success for any local station.

Understand the consumer and their wants and needs, take initiative on finding imperative stories regarding our community, and consistently provide viewers with the most up to date and relevant news possible while maintaining a good reputation by being credible, reliable and original. In today's news world, this in many instances means jumping on that social media bandwagon and making the decision to provide consumers with play by plays via the internet. " Almost every station in the country now has a Facebook page, according to the annual RTDNA/Hofstra survey, and almost

90% have at least one Twitter feed. (SNM, 2012) This move to digital news has proven to be in some cases effective, and in others somewhat irrelevant to the success of local stations (or newspapers) as mentioned by Bill Anderson, general manager of KRQE, and Dan Mayfield, Sr. writer for NM Business Weekly. However, although results of viewer increase due to social media is not definitive; it has great potential to become a positive influence for any news team because social media can encourage consumers to sample any station's newscast.

And once that seed has been planted, it becomes the responsibility of the news team to deliver a quality show that maintains that viewers' interest. Alex Tomlin, news reporter and correspondent for KRQE, discussed in great detail the value of delivering hard and entertaining news, without focusing on the trend of social media. She mentioned briefly how a reliance on networking sites is viewed in the news world as a method of being lazy and therefore unreliable because it is difficult to attribute any fact to the alleged statements being made.