Politics & poverty: Is the new media changing the message? An analysis of framing in new media news

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Politics & Poverty: Is the New Media Changing the Message?
An analysis of framing in new media news.

Abstract
Many media researchers have turned their attention to new media, specifically how the proliferation of blogs has changed the way media influences the public. Less attention has been paid to how blogs and blogs are changing the way news is framed and reported. In a preliminary case study two elements of political news reporting on blogs were explored: 1) Do political blogs focus more on insider information and process news than traditional media’s online news outlets? 2) What implications, if any, does this difference have on the value of the information in assisting the audience form opinions about public issues?

A content analysis of articles on four blogs hosted by Politico.com and articles from the New York Times online edition, found that during the time frame studied, the Politico blogs carried significantly more insider news than The New York Times, both in raw number of articles and as a percentage of total articles. Based on traditional models of media agenda-setting, as the public becomes more exposed to and more dependent on political blogs for their news, they may become more aware and concerned with process, insider information and scandals, while becoming less informed and less equipped to make judgments about candidates and legislation. This breakdown of news barriers by new media outlets needs to be further explored to understand how new media may impact political discourse and communication.

Building on this research, which suggests that blogs and new media may be changing news boundaries, the next stage of research will integrate textual analysis of news media frames with survey data of online news readers to better understand the ways in which various news sources affect knowledge and perceptions of social issues.

Blogs and the Power of the People
The proliferation of blogs has eliminated virtually all barriers to self-publication, creating a media environment where the citizen journalist is empowered to set his own agenda. "The Internet is the most democratizing innovation we’ve ever seen, more so even than the printing press." —Joe Trippi, Howard Dean campaign manager

The Death of Information
Both strategy news and metacoverage bring the behind-the-scenes operations of political figures and journalists to the general public. Metacoverage is news that reports on the relationships between political public relations and journalism.

Research Questions
This research will build on the literature suggesting that new media (i.e. blogs) are changing the landscape of political discourse, as well as my own research that suggests that both blogs and new media may be changing news boundaries.

Next Steps...
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Welfare Queens and Deadbeat Dads: How News Frames Affect Public Knowledge and Perceptions of Poverty and Welfare in the U.S.

Part I: News Frame Analysis
This research will build on the literature suggesting that new media (e.g., blogs) are changing the landscape of political discourse, as well as my own research that suggests that both blogs and new media may be changing news boundaries.

Research Questions:
RQ1: What are the common narrative frames of poverty and welfare issues?
RQ2: Are the frames of poverty and welfare presented in new media outlets similar or significantly different than those offered by traditional news outlets.

The findings of this research will be used to build my thesis research questions, hypotheses and survey questions.

Part II: Survey
Primary Research Questions
RQ1: Is there a relationship between a respondent's knowledge of poverty and welfare issues and the medium they predominately receive their news from?
RQ2: Is there a relationship between a respondent's perceptions of the causes of poverty and the medium or outlet that they predominately receive their news from?


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