

Running head: EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL
NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

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by

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Running head: EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The widespread usage of the internet and online media has changed the relationship between reader and online news publication. Previous studies have found that the greater public is unwilling to pay for online media, especially online news.

This study explored how content angle, localized national news or standard national news, impacted audience perceptions of value, willingness to pay for online news, and likelihood to subscribe. A digital questionnaire was administered to 50 participants who were exposed to localized and standard versions of news stories and asked to make personal evaluations of the content and fictional news outlets.

The results of this study showed that content angle, localized national versus standard national, has a significant effect on perceived value of news content, but no impact on the perceived value of news outlet. Beyond analyzing content angle's effect on value perceptions, this study measured how content angle and commitment to local community affected willingness to pay and likelihood to subscribe. However, the effect of content angle on willingness to pay and likelihood to subscribe was not statistically significant. Further, the interaction between content angle and individual commitment to local community was also not statistically significant.

Introduction

As soon as the World Wide Web became available to the public, media outlets began to capitalize on the platform and unveil a new communication giant: online news. As traditional media outlets strategize how to maintain relevance in daily life in an age of technology and smartphones, online media presents unique benefits and challenges. The Internet has been praised as a vehicle to democratize information and increase political involvement among everyday citizens. News has never been so readily available and accessible. However, the problem lies in America's perceptions of the online platform. According to findings from previous research, online audiences do not seek out national news to the same degree that they seek out local, sports, and entertainment news (Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000; Tewksbury, 2003). As a result, smaller news organizations, like local media outlets, need to maximize their resources to create nationally-angled content that is appealing to their audience since national news is essential to informing a local community.

This serves local media outlets in their role as an informer and influencer of public opinion, as well as a draw for subscription services in an age of dwindling advertising and traditional subscription profit. Thus, this study aims to examine how different type of content—standard national content vs. localized national content influences audience perceptions of news value and further their intention to subscribe to the online content from local news outlets.

However, a disconnect exists between journalists' judgment of news value and audience perception of valuable news. Editors and reporters use guiding principles like negative news, frequency, unexpectedness, and negativity to determine what content is

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journalistically important (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). On the other hand, proximity and personal relevance are major factors motivating consumers' content selection (Schaudt & Carpenter, 2009; Harcup & O'neill, 2001; Liang, Lai, & Ku, 2006), and consumers cite their local newspaper as the most valued information source (Miller, Purcell, & Rosenstiel, 2012; Lee & Chyi, 2014).

Media audiences have a limited capacity to process information from messages (Lang, 2006). This study argues that tailoring and targeting are two ways to encourage message processing by increasing personal relevance of information for consumers. Indeed, the effects of localizing content to motivate cognition by increasing personal relevance through proximity has been previously studied by Cantelmo (1994); but was limited to recommendations for publicists. The main goal of this study is to examine how tailored online news content, specifically national news with a local angle, would influence readers cognitive perceptions and behavioral intention. In specific, this study will examine how localized content impacts perceived personal relevance to the news stories and then, how localized national news content influences media audiences' behavioral intention, that is, individual willingness to pay for the proposed content. Further, individual characteristics, primarily the value of localism, will be considered as a mediating variable which interacts with the type of media content to influence cognitive perceptions of the news values and behavioral intention to pay for the messages.

Overall, this study will serve to expand on motivated cognition research with a new application to news media and the findings of this study will provide insights to address the growing revenue problem that many local news outlets currently face.

Literature Review

Uses and Gratifications Theory

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Previous studies used the framework of the Uses and Gratifications theory (UGT) to explore questions about media use related to audience behavior such as why people use news media and what drives them to use certain platforms. UGT has five assumptions about the way the world, and the people in it, operate (Katz et al., 1973). The first looks at the audience as active consumers of media, as opposed to passive receivers (Katz et al., 1973). Secondly, the connection between need gratifications and media type is to be made by the audience (Katz et al., 1973). Thirdly, media exists in a world of nearly endless competitions for need satisfaction. The fourth assumption is that research must rely on consumers to communicate about choices and motivation (Katz et al., 1973). Finally, it is up to the audience, and the audience only, to assign value judgments to various media content (Katz et al., 1973). And, in general, previous studies using UGT as a theoretical framework are concerned with “the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones,” (Katz et al., 1973, p. 510).

For instance, Perse (1992) used three gratifications categories to examine how different motivations for watching local television news led to attention toward different parts of the newscast. Prior to this study, researchers identified three types of motivation for news watching: utilitarian (also known as information-seeking), entertainment, and to pass time (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). Further, Perse (1992) tested how motivations for watching local news differed as a function of individual need for cognition, which is defined as “the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking,” (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982, p. 116). The

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findings revealed that need for cognition was positively correlated with utilitarian local news viewing; and that both utilitarian viewing motives and need for cognition were positively related to attention to government reports during the newscast (Perse, 1992). This means that local TV users with a higher need for cognition were more likely to have information-driven motives for watching local news; and because of these factors, were more likely to pay attention to the government reports featured in the newscast (Perse, 1992). In contrast, those who watch the local newscast to pass time were less likely to pay attention to the government reports. Perse's (1992) study supported the theory that the reasons why users interact with news directly impacts what kinds of content they are interested in. Users with a greater enjoyment of complex thinking devote more attention to newscast segments that engage their mental facilities, whereas those who prefer the newscast to serve as a gentle distraction will not pay attention to more challenging segments. In fact, these lines of research are beneficial to the field of communication and journalism because such research provides insights from an audience perspective and helps journalists and media professionals understand how to better communicate essential information to users.

Uses and Gratifications for Online News

Though UGT has its roots in traditional media research, the theory's broad perspective and nearly limitless applications for research have provided an exciting new way to study the digital media environment.

For instance, Yang (2016) explored which qualities were most important in online news story selection. For traditional media users, like print newspaper readers, journalists provide cues to which stories warrant reader attention (Graber, 1984). Page positioning, headline size, photo inclusion, and font size are among the ways that news editors show

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readers which stories are most important. Online readers, however, must utilize other cues about what's worth reading with the absence of the traditional "front page," unrestricted photos, and standardized headline sizes; (Yang, 2016). When left to make their own judgments about the value of information, online consumers let personal interest guide story selection (Yang, 2016). Personal interest ranked as the top factor in story selection for online readers, followed by: story salience, personal relevance, social importance, and emotional appeal.

Within the framework of UGT, motivations to use media have been grouped into three main categories: utilitarian, entertainment, and to pass time (Palmgreen et al., 1980; Rubin et al. 1985). While these three groups provided a sound framework for traditional media studies, online media use is explained with more expanded categories of media use motivation to reflect the new possibilities of the Internet. These included: type and content of website, age, education level, comfort with the Internet, and perceived superiority of the Internet.

For instance, the gratifications users seek can determine which types of websites they use. A study monitoring real-time Internet browsing found that professional, specialized, and general information websites were the most commonly browsed website types, and the specific website used could be predicted by which type of information or experience gratification that user sought (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). Additionally, gratification type can predict what type of content users will look at on these websites. For example, consumers read general social news to keep up with their community, increase status as a knowledgeable community member, and create feelings of involvement with something outside their daily life (Zhang & Zhang, 2013).

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The digital realm also gave birth to aggregated news platforms. These websites, Yahoo! News as an example, pull content generated by online newspapers, broadcast stations, and other media groups and present the information through a single interface. The growth of news aggregator sites has provided an additional dimension to UGT's application to digital news because aggregate sites themselves employ selective scanning when choosing which stories to bring into their interface. When people use these aggregate websites, the website serves as a cue to show which content is most important based on what content it pulled from other platforms. When people use an aggregate site, they are strongly driven by information motives, but are not in search of opinion (Lee & Chyi, 2015). This further demonstrates that website type and website content are inter-related fields that can each be predicted by gratifications sought.

One particular group stands out when looking at aggregate website use: college students (Lee & Chyi, 2015). College students emerge, in general, as a leader in Internet use; so, it is no surprise that this demographic is a more prominent user of online news platforms, as well (Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Ha and Zhang, 2017; Miller, Purcell, & Rosenstiel, 2012). Online news consumers tend to share other tendencies beside age. Consumers of online media tend to have a high need for information, control, or entertainment (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000); or have high surveillance motivations (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Diddi & LaRose; 2006).

While age group contributes to use of online platforms, age and education have a relationship with the types of motivations people have when they use news media. Older and/or more educated consumers were more likely to use news for information and opinion purposes, whereas younger and/or less educated audiences were more likely to be entertainment- and socially-motivated (Lee, 2013). However, the rise of aggregate news

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websites used by a younger audience for information-driven motivations further suggests that the traditional segregation of uses and gratifications has become more complicated as the digital world develops.

One such way that uses and gratifications has evolved in the age of technology is through gratifications opportunity measurements. Gratifications opportunity measures the opportunities for content, time, and space that a medium offers. When looking at the realm of gratifications opportunities, the Internet emerges as superior because it offers the broadest user experience (Dimmick et al., 2004) Though more opportunities are being offered, there is still a finite amount of consumer time, consumer satisfaction, and available advertising dollars in the media industry (Singer, 2001). Online and traditional media must compete for these resources (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2004) without cannibalizing their own products. In response to a changing market, many legacy outlets have expanded their content online and to social media platforms. Competing too directly through traditional or online avenues can accidentally diminish the success of their counterpart content. This problem has been partially resolved by the print industry, who has decided that while the Internet offers more gratifications, online newspapers are considered supplemental to their print counterparts (Ha & Zhang, 2017; Singer, 2001). In many cases, the online newspaper is even regarded as a secondary product (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Ha & Zhang, 2017).

As seen through the lens of print newspapers, traditional media maintains a firm grip despite the growing popularity of the web. Legacy media has found a way to maintain relevance while still prioritizing traditional content through the creation of secondary web products. This further supports that online news is supplemental to traditional media (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Diddi & LaRose,

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2006; Lee & Chyi, 2015), even though previous research has argued for a competitive displacement relationship between the two (Ha & Fang, 2012).

Research through UGT has shown that people use traditional and online media differently. Though they can be said to be two sides to the same coin, each functions as a distinct product with different gratifications and uses. In reaction to the growth of a new media field, many legacy media groups have chosen to cautiously approach digital media as a secondary product to their traditional content. With all of this in mind, it is no surprise that many consumers have different associations of value with traditional media and with online media.

News Value's Role in Content Selection

Value, using a mathematical definition, refers to “estimates of the parameters of the possible price distribution for the subject property as of a given date,” (Kummerow, 2002). The common dictionary definition expands value beyond a mathematical approach: “the monetary worth of something; relative worth, utility, or importance,” (Value, n.d.).

Media organizations and audiences determine whether or not content is valuable in different ways. Galtung and Ruge (1965) pioneered research on how journalists determine what types of content will be promoted based on certain news values. Primary value characteristics included frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite persons or nation, and negative news. Though this research constitutes an incredibly important discovery, these value characteristics served as guidelines for traditional media that has limited air time or print space. Online media does not need to abide by these value characteristics. Schaudt and Carpenter (2009) found that proximity was present in 76% of

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online stories from their study, and was also the most preferred news value by readers. Yang and Cannon (2017) found similar results concerning the frequency of proximity as a top news value when looking at the content on Chinese publications' WeChat accounts. "To compensate for ambiguous definitions of news, journalists have relied on news values such as proximity and timeliness to guide their story selection, but today online readers are increasingly influencing what stories are featured more prominently on the home page," (Schaudt & Carpenter, 2009, p. 17).

As mentioned by Schaudt and Carpenter (2009), online readers have more power to influence where content appears. Readers determine the value of stories based on perceived credibility of sources (Abdulla, et al., 2002), personal relevance (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Liang, Lai, & Ku, 2006), and personal interest (Yang, 2016). Further, younger generations are less likely to read newspaper or watch broadcast news than older generations (Tewksbury, 2003), and political and national news interest increase as age increases (Bennett, 2000). Based on these two pieces of information, it is not surprising that online readers are less likely to read national or political news; and when they do, they spend less time on these topics compared to other topics (Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000).

What's more, people do not accurately report the time spent with national, political, or international news content. Though readers may not self-identify a distinct disinterest in national news, their self-reports are not entirely accurate. In one study, 67.5% of online news consumers self-reported regular consumption of national political news, but less than 30% actually read articles on those topics during a two-month period (Tewksbury, 2003).

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Further, only one-third of news published by mass media was perceived as noteworthy by the general population (Lee & Chyi, 2014). Local news was perceived the most favorably out of the studied news medias with 43% of the content deemed as noteworthy by participants (Lee & Chyi, 2014). Noteworthiness, in turn, is a predictor for news enjoyment, newspaper and television use, and willingness to pay for news (Lee & Chyi, 2014).

Audience Perception of the Value of News Content

While use of and preference for online news has grown in the last decade, users have different association of value with online news. One of which is the perceived monetary worth of online news services. Many consumers express a preference for traditional news media. This can be based on greater enjoyment (Chyi, 2012), satisfaction (Chyi & Lasorsa, 2002), and utility (De Waal, Schönbach, & Lauf, 2005).

Of the 72% of the United States adult population that are regular consumers of local news, the majority of this group places the most value in their local print newspaper (Miller et al., 2012). This is especially true for those older than 40 years old (Miller et al., 2012). Many local newspapers operate a supplemental digital platform for consumers to use, but only 23% of regular local news consumers use these platforms for local content (Miller et al., 2012). This goes to show that even when a traditional outlet is considered valuable by consumers, its online presence may not be.

Perceived monetary value and behavioral intention can be measured through willingness to pay. Willingness to pay is not standard across audiences, but is influenced by age, income and familiarity with technology, as well as other factors.

While younger audiences tend to be the heaviest users of online media, research presents contradictory findings on how age influences willingness to pay for online news.

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Some researchers have found that younger audiences were more likely to pay for online news (Chyi, 2005, 2012; Goyanes, 2014). However, another study found that older audiences were more likely to subscribe to online news platforms (Goyanes, 2015). In addition, those with incomes greater than \$150,000 were more likely to subscribe to online services (Goyanes, 2014).

Familiarity with the technology was another predictor of willingness to pay. Moderate users of Twitter displayed a higher willingness to pay for online news than both nonusers and heavy users (Goyanes, 2014). This suggests that those who knew how to navigate digital spaces felt comfortable paying for online news, but those with greater experience were less inclined to pay potentially due to a greater understanding of how to find free alternatives. In a similar vein, those who had previously purchased digital products like music, TV, or video games were also more likely to pay for online content (Goyanes, 2014). Other significant predictors of willingness to pay included regular news consumers, print subscribers, or those who have a high interest in news (Chyi, 2012; Goyanes, 2015).

At the very base of exploration into the problem of increasing audiences' perceived value of online content is acknowledging that the general public is unwilling to pay for online news (Chyi, 2005; Goyanes, 2015). This firm unwillingness to pay for online content is a direct reflection of the lack of value associated with digital media. Many users believe they can find suitable, free alternatives elsewhere; and are only willing to pay for content if they deem it to be highly specialized without suitable alternatives (Chyi, 2005). The web is saturated with alternatives offering similar information, which leaves little incentive for audiences to spend money on content that can be located for free elsewhere. The opportunity to increase willingness to pay lies in

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creating specialized content that audiences believe is exclusive and personally valuable to their lives. The challenge lies in creating personally relevant content that the audience also recognizes is personally valuable and worthy of attention.

Increasing Message Elaboration through Targeting and Tailoring

When audiences determine what types of content are worth spending time reading, watching, or listening to, they are making value judgements about the information being presented. The Elaboration Likelihood Model suggests that individuals display different levels of willingness to mentally engage with different types of messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In general, message elaboration varies as a function of motivational variables, such as personal relevance (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Specifically, increasing the amount of personal relevance a piece of information has is an especially efficient way to also increase the likelihood that an individual will mentally engage with that information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This study argues that personal relevance can be increased through the process of tailoring or targeting messages.

Targeting and Tailoring. Targeting refers to customizing messages to shared characteristics of population subgroups (Schmid, Rivers, Latimer, & Salovey, 2008). Targeting can use psychosocial demographic variables like income, gender, personality, opinions, lifestyles, and interests, to group individuals together (Schmid et al., 2008); and operates on the assumption that group members possessing enough similar characteristics and motivations will be influenced by the same message (Schmid et al., 2008). Tailoring, on the other hand, involves more personalization than targeting, and is often characterized by adding an individual's name to communication materials (Schmid et al., 2008). Both tailoring and targeting serve to encourage cognition and modify behavior in individuals. A line of research found tailored nonsmoking guides were rated more

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favorably by smokers than non-tailored guides (Rimer, Orleans, Fleisher, Cristinzio, Resch, Telepchak, & Keintz, 1994). In this study, participants with tailored guides read more of their guides and were also more likely to reread them, compared to the control group (Rimer et al., 1994). Additionally, tailored nonsmoking guides produced greater behavior modification from participants (Rimer et al., 1994).

Traditional journalists have also found success using tailoring. By offering content with the ability to be personalized, fifteen editors in Singer's (2006) study experienced "phenomenal" success with audience engagement after tailoring their online content. The online content included personalizable features focused on political information like interactive maps based on ZIP code, candidate match capabilities, and online polls. While the editors in Singer's (2006) study focused on making politics more interactive, Singer (2001) had previously observed that many editors were actually "abandoning their role as gatekeepers of national and international information by emphasizing local content on their sites," (Singer, 2006, p. 268). Emphasizing local content increases personal relevance by narrowing down the targeted demographic that an outlet wants to appeal to. To further narrow the intended audience of information, cultural targeting can be used.

Cultural Tailoring. Cultural tailoring or targeting both use sociocultural traditions and perspectives to encourage change in a population through behavioral intention, behavioral change, or knowledge retention. Research by Huang and Shen (2016) developed a framework for developing a culturally tailored message to reach a specific population. They found that deep tailoring, or tailoring that takes cultural values, norms, and religious beliefs into account has a more significant influence on persuasion than surface tailoring related to diet, language, or risk statistics (Huang & Shen, 2016).

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Tailoring sexual health brochures to reflect socioeconomic perceptions of at-risk men was found to increase the participant's perceptions of behavioral control and promote safe sex (Janssen, de Wit, Hospers, Stroebe, & Kok, 2004). Tailoring recipes and food-use tips for low-income households who use food pantries positively influenced consumption of fresh vegetables (Clarke, Evans, & Hovy, 2011). Additionally, deep tailoring that addressed subjective norms of young adults were found to more persuasively promote oral health than standard messages (Anderson, Noar, & Rogers, 2013). Health communication has expanded in recent decades to include greater efforts focused on digital health communication.

Tailoring on the Web. The relationship between information giver and information receiver has become more complicated with the emergence of online media. Websites allow users to employ selective scanning methods to choose relevant media. This selective exposure often makes it easier to people to ignore information that may evoke negative emotions like fear or anger, which is especially relevant to health communication concerning risk and necessary behavior modification for a healthy life. In healthcare, tailoring has been used online to increase elaboration of health messages, especially those concerning risk perception. Tailored information delivered via an adaptive educational site increased teen elaboration on messages related to sexual health and decision making, even when controlled for need for cognition and situation motivation (Cortese & Lustria, 2012). Researchers also studied the effects of targeted and tailored web-based messages on Hispanics' risk perception and behavioral intention in regard to kidney disease. Tailored messages produced the highest perceived susceptibility to kidney disease, but did not have a noticeably greater effect on behavioral intention compared to the control groups (Roberto, Krieger, & Beam, 2009).

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Selective exposure presents a large problem in journalism, as people can choose which types of stories they want to read. This can lead to carefully cultivated “echo-chambers” on social and digital media, where an individual’s political bias determines what content they see. However, in weighing personal importance against perceived political bias of news outlets, participants were actually more likely to view stories with strong topic relevance regardless of the perceived bias of the media covering the story (Mummolo, 2016). Years earlier, Kim (2008) examined how consumption of traditional broadcast media influenced news-based web use patterns among American adults. This study found that regardless of traditional news media’s coverage of a topic, participants displayed “strong effects of personal issue importance when selecting information on the Web,” (Kim, 2008, p. 600). Both these lines of research emphasize the pronounced effect of personal relevance on online news selection over secondary characteristics like political partisanship or topic coverage by legacy media.

Tailoring in News. Personal relevance continues to reign as the most effective method for increasing elaboration likelihood in journalistic and general media. In journalism, specifically, Carpentier (2009) studied how extrinsic goals can increase personal interest in otherwise irrelevant information by priming existing knowledge about the information. By priming readers with a suggestion that engaging in the task would be beneficial for reasons beyond personal fulfillment, Carpentier (2009) found that reader attention to the information, as well as the processing of that information, increased.

Localizing content is another effective way to increase personal relevance of information and encourage readers to process the information more deeply. Cantelmo (1994) recommended localizing publicity materials to introduce special interest, and make the materials more useable by media in specific geographic communities. While

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this study outlines how to deliver information to editors, the editors in this study are also consumers of data. They choose which materials are worth investing time into. In this way, the relationship between publicists and media editors is much like the one between those editors and the public.

Tailoring and targeting research has heavily examined healthcare communication, but has just begun entering the world of mass media or digital media. Due to this gap in research, this study will explore how tailoring of national news, through localization, affects consumer value perceptions and behavioral intention.

Taking into consideration that most people view their local news outlet as the most valuable source of information (Miller et al., 2012; Lee & Chyi, 2014), and cite personal relevance as a prominent factor in news story selection (Harcup & O’neill, 2001; Liang, Lai, & Ku, 2006), this study proposes that using a local angle on national news content will serve to increase personal relevance for readers. National news content is being used as a baseline due to the real-world importance of the content, and also for the previously identified disinterest in national news content among online readers.

H1: Online news using localized national content would have greater perceived personal relevance compared to standardized online national news content.

By increasing personal relevance through localism, as explored by Cantelmo (1994) and Schaudt and Carpenter (2009), newspapers may be able to encourage readers to process that information because it is perceived as being more important to the individual. Value can be based on perceptions that the information is significant knowledge that serves the reader in their daily life, or it can be based upon perceptions of the monetary worth of the content. Traditional media is often preferred to online media

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(Chyi & Lasorsa, 2002; De Waal, Schönbach, & Lauf, 2005; Chyi, 2012;), and even the vast majority of avid local news consumers do not actively use the online content provided by the outlet (Miller et al., 2012).

The perceived financial value of content is different than the behavioral intention to pay for content. By measuring perceived financial value of content in terms of willingness to pay, the behavioral intention of subjects can be quantified. Research has shown that most people are unwilling to pay for online content (Chyi, 2005; Goyanes, 2015), even when they think the content is important. This is because many individuals feel they can find free alternatives elsewhere (Chyi, 2005). However, specialized and exclusive content is seen as an exception (Chyi, 2005). Adding a local angle to national news may serve as the specialized and exclusive content needed to rid a media outlet of free, suitable alternatives. If localizing national news content is truly going to make an impact on the field of journalism, the perceived value increase must also translate into an increased willingness to pay for an outlet's online content. However, there is no empirical evidence to show whether increased value would include intention to pay for the content. Thus, research question 1 was asked:

RQ1: How would type of online news content (localized vs. standard) influence willingness to pay for news content?

Lastly, this study argues that the level of personal relevance will impact the processing of the news value of the content and the level of personal relevance will be influenced by their generic interest in their local community. Personal interest has been shown to be an important factor in story selection (Carpentier, 2009; Yang, 2016), thus, the following hypothesis was proposed.

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H2: There would be an interaction between news type and individual level of value of localism to influence the level of perceived value of the news.

RQ2: How does news type and individual level of value of localism interact with and influence the willingness to pay for the content?

Methods

Experiment design and stimuli

This study employs an experiment with a 2 (content angle: localized vs standardized) x 2 (individual difference: low vs. high in local value) mixed subject factorial design.

Content type was a within subjects factor while interest in local community was a between subjects factor. For the experiment, the researcher created a set of 6 news stimuli reflecting 6 different topics including business, politics, education, foreign policy, environmentalism and agriculture. Each of the 6 stories was edited into two version-- nationally-angled (standardized), locally-angled (localized). Stories in different version were identical in topic and similar in length, and differed only in the angle of the content. All stimuli used maintained the same length and tone, and made sure that the manipulation took place in the first paragraph of the story to account for those who did not choose to read the entire stimuli. Each participant was exposed to a total of 6 stories in which half of them were nationally-angled (standardized) news stories whereas the other half were locally-angled (localized) news stories. The presentation of the news stories was completely randomized.

Independent Variable

Content angle. There were two levels of content angles for national news: standard or localized. These stories addressed fictional United States current events.

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Standardized national content addressed what is happening and how it applies to the entire United States. Localized national content addressed what is happening in the United States and was also applied to the Columbia community.

Interest in local community. Interest in local community was conceptualized as the degree to which persons express a commitment, attachment or relationship with their identified geographic surroundings including the people, structures, policies and norms. Interest in local community served as an indicator for vested interest in local community and thus likelihood to have a personal interest in news with a local angle. Local interest in community was measured using a modified version of a research instrument developed to test community commitment to tourism (T. Lee, 2013). The measure evaluated the level of an individual's relationship with their community by asking questions using a total of 3 items about volunteering (such as *Do you volunteer with any local nonprofits?*), a total of 3 items about political action (such as *Do you regularly vote in local and/or state elections?*), a total of 4 items about consumer habits (such as *Is shopping local important to you?*), a total of 4 items about readership of local outlets (such as *Do you regularly consume local news? Do you subscribe to a local newspaper?*), and a total of 4 items about personal feelings (such as *Is your community important to you? Do you participate in any social groups or clubs within your community outside of work?*). Each question was answered on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 serving as the highest answer and 1 as the lowest. Based on their answers, participants were divided into high and low localism value groups. Each participants' Likert answers, taken as the numeric value representing their answer on a scale of 1-5, were tallied up to create an aggregate score for their answer to all 18 interest in local community questions. The total possible range for answers was 18-90, and the actual range was 47-75. Participants who had an

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aggregate score of 60 points or higher were grouped as high level of local value (N=26) and those who scored under 40 points were grouped as low level of local value (N=24). The 60 point cutoff mark means the average answer for a high level participant was a positive or strong inclination toward local activity and commitment based on the 5-point scale.

Dependent Variable

Perceived value of content. Perceived value of content was conceptualized through the five-point Likert scale instrument developed by Johnson and Kaye (2000). Perceived value of content was measured by asking participants to respond to a four-item survey assessing the general credibility of the content. This four-item instrument asked participants to assess the degree of believability (*This content is believable.*), fairness (*This content is fair.*), accuracy (*This content is accurate.*), and depth (*This content provides a thorough explanation of the issue.*) of each stimulus with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest (Johnson & Kaye, 2000). A reliability measure was computed for each of the stimuli to account for changes in content angle and content topic. The reliability ranged from a low of Cronbach's $\alpha = .720$ (Foreign Policy – National angle) to a high of Cronbach's $\alpha = .928$ (Foreign Policy – Local angle).

Perceived value of outlet. Similarly to perceived value of content, participants answered value questions following completion of all 6 stimuli. These questions asked participants to first evaluate the content from outlet A and then from outlet B. Participants responded to a 12-item survey using a five-point Likert scale designed by Gaziano and McGrath (1986). For this Likert scale, 5 served as the highest value and 1 served as the lowest. This 12-item survey measured participants' perceptions that each outlet was: fair, unbiased, tells the whole story, accurate, respects people's privacy,

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watches out for people's interests, concerned with the community's well-being, separates fact and opinion, can be trusted, concerned about the public interest, factual, and had well-trained reporters (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986). Reliability was computed for the Outlet A/National (Cronbach's $\alpha = .910$) and for Outlet B/Local (Cronbach's $\alpha = .930$). Outlets A and B's aggregate scores were interpreted to determine how content angle interacts with value perceptions for news organizations, as opposed to individual stories.

Intention to pay. Intention to pay was defined as the extent which participants displayed willingness to pay (WTP) for online services which provide news content. WTP was measured by asking experiment participants if they would willing to pay for digital content from outlets A and B; and if so, how much money they would be willing to pay for a monthly digital subscription for online news content offered by imaginary outlets A and B. Chyi's (2005) instrument was used as the base, and asked participants of their likelihood to pay for online content from outlet A or B in the future using a four-point Likert scale with 4 as a high likelihood. The second portion, the specific dollar amount, was assessed using a modified version of Palmatier, Scheer, and Steenkamp's (2007) price for premium instrument. The question asked respondents how much they would be willing to pay for content from outlet A and content from outlet B. Outlet A served as the premium content used in the model, whereas outlet B served as the standardized content. Participants had the ability to respond with a number between 0 and 25 United States dollars with options increasing by 50 cent increments for each outlet.

Participants

A total of 50 adults (over 18 years old) who reside in the Columbia area were recruited for the study. Qualified participants were those who consider Columbia to be their primary community. For instance, participants must have lived in Columbia for one or

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more years, have a full-time residency in Columbia, and have a full or part-time job meaning 20 or more hours per week. This provision excluded many college students who did not attend high school in the area.

Using the researcher's hyperlocal background and community connections, Facebook served as the primary spot to target participants. The researcher personally asked relevant human connections to share the survey with a call-to-action in order to have the survey shared to a much larger demographic.

Procedure

This experiment took place online, and participants used a survey format to record answers. Participants started by reading and agreeing to an informed consent form. Following their agreement, the first questionnaire evaluating individual levels of interest in local community began. After the primary questionnaire was completed, participants moved on to the second portion of the experiment. The first story stimuli appeared for participants to read. Following the stimuli, a short survey using a 5-point Likert scale assessed perceptions of credibility, accuracy, value to community and likelihood to subscribe to the outlet. This pattern repeated for each of the 6 story sets; with the stories alternating between local and national angles. Locally-angled stories were denoted by the letter A and nationally-angled stories by the letter B. Once the participant had completed the 6 stories, another survey appeared asking the participant to evaluate group A and B on the basis of credibility, accuracy, likelihood to subscribe to fee-based online services, and perceived value. The last part of the experiment involved participants answering demographic questions.

Results

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In order to explore Hypotheses 1-2 and Research Questions 1-2, a 2 (content angle) x 2 (interest in local community) repeated measures ANOVA was performed to measure the effects on my dependent variables: perceived value of content, perceived value of outlet, and willingness to pay. Since willingness to pay included both likelihood to subscribe and a dollar measure of how much an individual would be willing to pay for a subscription, these two branches of willingness to pay were measured in separate repeated measure ANOVAs.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis in this study predicted that online news that featured a hyperlocal angle on a national topic would be perceived as more personally relevant to news readers than the same national news without any local context.

There was a significant main effect of content angle on audience perceptions of content value ($F(1,48) = 8.573, p < .01$). The results showed that participants reported a higher perceived value for localized news content ($M=3.50, SD=.53$) than national news ($M=3.31, SD=.49$).

The effect of content angle on audience perceptions of outlet value was found to be approaching statistical significance ($F(1,48) = 3.06, p = .87$). The news outlet representing localized news had higher a higher perceived value ($M=3.45, SD=.55$) than the news outlet representing national news did ($M=3.32, SD=.50$).

Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 explored how localized national news and standard national news affects willingness to pay for online news subscriptions, that is, if adding a

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hyperlocal angle on a national news story make consumers more willing to pay for news because it increases personal relevance.

The main effect of online news content on likelihood to subscribe was not statistically significant ($F(1,48) = .001, p > .05$). The results of means showed that the national news outlet ($M=1.54, SD=.813$) and the localized news outlet ($M=1.54, SD=.706$) received the same average likelihood to subscribe from participants.

Further, the main effect of the type of news content was not statistically significant on willingness to pay when measured in dollars ($F(1, 48) = 1.61, p > .05$). The results of the means showed that individuals were willing to pay a higher dollar amount for localized news content ($M=7.16, SD=8.5$) than national news content ($M=6.4, SD=8.68$), when they were willing to pay at all.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis proposed the prediction that content angle and individual value of localism would interact to influence how valuable readers perceived the news to be. That is, this hypothesis asks if individual differences- the level of commitment to their local community- would result in different levels of perception of the news content due to their level of commitment.

The interaction of content angle and localism on content perceptions of news value was not statistically significant ($F(1, 48) = .629, p > .05$). The results of the means showed a very slight variation in outcomes for the four different pairings. Those high in localism exposed to local content had the highest perception of news value ($M=3.56, SD=.59$) followed by: those low in localism exposed to local content ($M=3.46, SD=.47$), those low in localism exposed to national content ($M=3.31, SD=.58$), and those high in localism exposed to national content ($M=3.31, SD=.39$).

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And, for perceived value of outlet, the result was not statistically significant ($F(1, 48) = .021, p > .05$). The results of the means for the four pairings Results of the means for perceived value of outlet showed that those high in localism exposed to a local outlet had the highest perception of outlet value ($M=3.53, SD=.62$), followed by: those high in localism exposed to a national outlet ($M=3.41, SD=.54$), those low in localism exposed to a local outlet ($M=3.36, SD=.45$), and those low in localism exposed to a national outlet ($M=3.22, SD=.43$).

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked if people's personal feelings about their local community and their dedication to their local community would interact with the content type and influence how much they're willing to pay for localized news content.

News type and individual level of localism did not have a statistically significant effect on willingness to pay for news. When looking at likelihood to subscribe, there was no statistically significant effect ($F(1,48) = .408, p > .05$). The results of the means showed that those low in localism were more willing to pay for national-based news ($M=1.63, SD=.824$) than for hyperlocalized news ($M=1.54, SD=.658$). Though those high in localism were less willing to pay for national-based news ($M=1.46, SD=.811$), they were the same willingness to pay for hyperlocalized news as the low in localism group ($M=1.54, SD=.761$).

Also, there was no statistically significant effect between content angle and local value on willingness to pay in terms of dollar amount ($F(1,48) = .035, p > .05$). The results of the means show those high in localism were willing to pay more for both national-based ($M=7.47, SD=10.81$) and hyperlocalized ($M=8.04, SD=11.07$) news than the low in localism group ($M=5.43, SD=5.57$)($M=6.19, SD=4.39$).

Discussion

This study was designed to explore how content type and individuals' localism impacts the series of outcome variables. Somewhat, this study aimed to explore how local online newspapers can increase subscription revenue through the way they report on national news. It was hypothesized that having a hyperlocal context added to national news content would make the news, and the outlet producing the news, seem more valuable to readers because it would increase the personal relevance of the news they were reading if they could understand how it would impact their local community. If the news and news organization were deemed more valuable for providing that context and service to their community, this study predicted that they'd be more likely to pay for news content and display a higher willingness to pay for an online subscription. A key factor that needed to be accounted for in this exploration is how individuals have different feelings about their community. Someone who is really invested in their community may be more willing to pay for an online news subscription than someone who doesn't feel as invested.

For the purpose of this study, these questions were explored in an online experiment through the lens of how content angle and level of localism impacted both perceptions of value and willingness to pay. Overall, the findings of this study did reveal that individuals perceive hyperlocalized news, and news organizations that provide that local context, as being more valuable to both themselves and their community than they perceive national news and news outlets to be.

Though the hyperlocalized news and news outlet was perceived to be slightly more valuable, that value did not translate to a willingness to pay or a likelihood to

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subscribe. This finding is consistent with the conclusion of prior studies (Chyi, 2005; Goyanes, 2015), that is, people are simply unwilling to pay for online products. Though Chyi (2005) did find that specialized news products could serve as an exception to this general rule, a local angle was not enough for the overall audience to deem the news content as worthy of paying for.

Individual differences resulting in personal interest in the local community also did not have a statistically significant impact on willingness to pay. When examining the individual answers to how much a participant would be willing to pay for news, commitment to local community did not serve as a notable factor. Instead, those who were already willing to pay for digital subscriptions were willing to pay even more for the hyperlocal version. This is in line with the prior research done by Goyanes (2014), finding that those who already paid for television, gaming or other online services were overall more willing to pay for digital services as a whole.

This study did have several limitations and weaknesses. The first weakness is the limited number of sample - 50 people completed the survey. The survey was quite lengthy and did require a fair amount of reading. Additionally, this study was conducted in Columbia, Missouri; which is oversaturated with journalists and news outlets due to the Missouri School of Journalism and other factors. Lastly, this survey was distributed primarily through social media. The findings may not best represent Columbia as a whole, or other areas of the country with different attitudes.

Based on the results from this study, adding a local context to national news stories is not how local online newspapers are going to increase their revenue and subscriptions. That's not to say that local journalists shouldn't do the work of adding a

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personal relevance layer to these national news stories produced by the Associated Press or other conglomerates. It simply means that this isn't the way they'll make money.

Building off of this research, it would be interesting to explore how other factors like type of information (high school sports, community calendars, special editions) could increase overall willingness to pay for online news.

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Appendix-Stimuli

Topic: Policy
Angle: National

Congress approves bill to fund infrastructure

After four months of deliberation on the federal budget, Congress has approved an additional \$15 billion in discretionary spending to be used for infrastructure development in the Midwest.

The report, released Monday, contains a further breakdown of the infrastructure budget. Nearly 70 percent of the funds will be used for highway development and expansion, including adding new lanes, bridge and overpass repair and other traffic projects.

Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) sponsored the bill.

“This is a huge accomplishment for our citizens residing in the Midwest,” Baldwin said. “States located in the heart of our country are often hit with many different types of severe weather or seasonal shifts that cause damage to our roadways.”

The bill is not without criticism. According to national data, populations in Midwestern states are growing at a rate of 0.1 percent, far behind the national average of 0.7 percent.

“In an era of growing fiscally conservative thought, this allotment of federal funding is unnecessary. We need to focus on reducing the national debt,” Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) said.

Congress will release a full list of sponsored infrastructure projects on July 31.

Topic: Policy
Angle: Hyperlocal

Columbia to receive I-70 to U.S. 63 highway connector

After four months of deliberation on the federal budget, Congress has approved an additional \$15 billion in discretionary spending to be used for infrastructure development in the Midwest. Missouri projects include improvements to I-70, I-44 and I-55. Columbia is expected to receive a highway connector linking I-70 and U.S. 63. Groundbreaking is set to begin September 1, and the connector is scheduled to open June 2019.

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Congress will release a full list of sponsored infrastructure projects July 31.

Topic: Business
Angle: National

Anheuser-Busch to move corporate headquarters back to St. Louis

In a press conference Thursday evening, Anheuser-Busch President and CEO João Castro Neves announced the company will be moving its headquarters from Leuven, Belgium to St. Louis.

The company originally moved its headquarters to Belgium in 2008 after being bought out by international brewing company InBev SA.

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“Our primary goal following the acquisition of Anheuser-Busch was to expand the Budweiser brand into emerging markets like China, Russia and Brazil,” Castro Neves said. “However, beer consumption is at an all-time high in North America; and we believe it’s time to return Anheuser-Busch’s corporate operations to its St. Louis roots.”

InBev, the maker of other iconic beer brands such as Stella Artois and Beck’s, will continue operations for its other companies at its corporate headquarters in Leuven. Anheuser-Busch will be the only InBev company moving to the United States.

“As a corporation, InBev is excited to see the Anheuser-Busch brand re-establish its American legacy,” Castro Neves said.

This announcement comes as a surprise to some former Anheuser-Busch board members. The disagreement between InBev and Anheuser-Busch prompted InBev to remove all 13 board members from Anheuser-Busch.

“Anheuser-Busch is an American company at its core,” former CEO August A. Busch IV said. “Former members of the board feared for the cutbacks in jobs for our St. Louis community, and the possible downturn for our investors. Overall, I think we’re happy to see the company returning to St. Louis, but wish it had never moved in the first place.”

The anticipated ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for February 2019, pending InBev board approval.

Topic: Business

Angle: Hyperlocal

1,000 local jobs to be created after Anheuser-Busch headquarter move

In a press conference Thursday evening, Anheuser-Busch President and CEO João Castro Neves announced the company will be moving its headquarters from Leuven, Belgium to St. Louis.

The move will generate 1,000 new jobs in the St. Louis, Columbia and central Missouri area over the next two years. As Anheuser-Busch makes this transition, the company has announced it will be collaborating with Missouri nonprofits and colleges to provide opportunities to Missourians.

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Topic: Education

Angle: National

New STAR Act limits elementary school class sizes

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

Elementary school administrators across the United States will be moving to cap class size for kindergarten through 3rd grade at 20 students per teacher over the next decade. The program, colloquially named the STAR Act, is based on research results from Tennessee's Project STAR. STAR, or Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio, works to maximize student potential by removing the learning barrier of overcrowded classrooms.

The STAR Act pilot program will begin implementation at the start of the 2019-2020 school year in 12 states. Additional funding for teaching staff and new schools will come from the ongoing state-funded education taxes in place.

"Removing barriers to student success in our public schools is of great concern to the Trump administration. We are always looking for ways to increase student achievement on a national scale," Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos said in an interview Tuesday.

The National Education Association released a statement today praising the STAR Act.

"The NEA fully supports the STAR Act. Our children deserve more individualized attention from their teachers and other public school officials; and our teachers deserve more time to devote to each student. It's time our government stops treating education as a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and starts addressing ongoing problems like overcrowding and lack of resources," the press release said.

Topic: Education
Angle: Hyperlocal

Columbia elementary schools to cap class sizes over next three years

Missouri has been chosen as one of 12 pilot states for a new elementary education program to limit classroom overcrowding.

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Columbia Public Schools will implement the program in all open and operating elementary schools in three phases. The first set of schools will begin the 20-student limit for the 2019-2020 school year; the second set for the 2020-2021 school year; and the third set for the 2021-2022 school year.

Additional funding for teaching staff and new schools will come from the ongoing state-funded education taxes in place.

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Topic: Environmentalism
Angle: National

Deer populations likely to decline with return of predatory species

Predatory species that eat deer are making a comeback nationwide. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Monday the nation is seeing an increase in gray wolves, coyotes and mountain lion populations are all growing in numbers.

"This is a really exciting development," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Director Greg Sheehan said. "Deer have long been considered a nuisance and a danger to highway safety, as well as to crop

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

production. The return of these predators means we'll hopefully see fewer deer-related accidents and less crop damage."

In 2012, there were 1.23 million deer-vehicle crashes, a six percent increase from 2000.

Nationally, \$3 billion is spent in an effort to reduce and manage the number of deer-vehicle collisions.

"Deer are a huge threat to roadway safety," biologist Will Farner said. "You're most likely to see accidents between May and November because that's when deer are mating and stocking up on food for the winter."

Estimates put the white-tail deer population at about 30 million across the United States, but populations are more dense in the southern states. Many of these agriculture-based communities must use deer management practices to prevent the animals from destroying crops.

"Your average deer needs eight to 10 pounds of food per day in every other season than winter," Alabama Department of Conservation Commissioner Christopher Blankenship said. "When you consider how many pounds of crops a small community of deer can eat over the course of a harvest season, the result is a sizable loss of income for farmers."

Topic: Environmentalism

Angle: Hyperlocal

Missouri hunting regulations likely to change in response to deer population decline

Predatory species that eat deer are making a comeback nationwide. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Monday the nation is seeing an increase in gray wolves, coyotes and mountain lion populations are all growing in numbers. Due to the increase in predatory species populations nationwide and specifically in Missouri, the Missouri Department of Conservation will be reviewing all current deer-hunting regulations and practices over the next year.

"Our current hunting regulations are in place to ensure the white-tail deer population remains under control in Missouri," Missouri Department of Conservation Conservation Agent Michael Abdon said. "However, the return of the deer's natural predators means we may need to scale back on human predatory practices like hunting."

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Topic: Foreign Policy

Angle: National

US to end embargo against Cuba

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

After nearly 60 years, Congress and President Donald Trump have jointly decided to end the embargo against Cuba. Though the Obama administration relaxed portions of the embargo, the Trump administration previously restricted the relaxed restrictions.

After a team of economists presented the projected increase in U.S. exports and the gross domestic product to President Trump, the administration began moving to relax restrictions with the goal of ending the embargo over the next five years.

Proponents of the embargo argue that Cuba has not met the U.S. conditions for lifting the embargo, including transitioning to democracy and improving human rights. While opponents of the Cuba embargo argue that the sanctions harm the U.S. economy and Cuban citizens, and prevent opportunities to promote change and democracy in Cuba.

“Making America great again begins with strengthening our U.S.-made exports and increasing our GDP,” President Trump said in a press conference at the White House on Tuesday. “America stands to gain billions by ending the embargo, and we need to stop punishing successful Americans who are looking to invest overseas.”

Trump and members of his administration will attend a summit with Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel and other top Cuban officials to further discuss U.S.-Cuban relations in November.

Topic: Foreign Policy
Angle: Hyperlocal

Agricultural exports expected to increase following end of Cuban embargo

After nearly 60 years, Congress and President Donald Trump have jointly decided to end the embargo against Cuba. Agriculture exports are expected to increase; and farmers will likely see a rise in profit in the next two to three years as a result of the embargo lift. The positive impact on the national gross domestic product will bring a significant bump to farm-based and rural economies around mid-Missouri.

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Topic: Environmentalism
Angle: Hyperlocal

Hospitals working to reduce maternal mortality one year after study

One year after NPR and ProPublica released their findings from a six-month investigation into maternal death rates in the U.S., hospitals and government agencies are seeking to rectify the situation.

A 2014 study from the Institute of Medicine found that the U.S.’s national maternal death rate during labor and delivery was far greater than the rates of other developed nations. NPR and ProPublica teamed up in May 2017 to elaborate on the key components contributing to the above-average maternal mortality rates in the U.S.

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

First, only six percent of state and federal block grants devoted to maternal-fetal health go toward the health of the mother. Second, not all medical programs require doctors pursuing a maternal-fetal specialty to spend time in the labor-delivery unit. Finally, hospital protocol for maternal emergencies are “wildly inconsistent” across the nation and many intensive care units are “woefully” underprepared to deal with complications.

Since the results were released to the public, hospitals around the country have taken steps to reduce maternal fatalities. A new national standard requires 10 percent of maternal-fetal block grants now be directed toward maternal health, with the strong suggestion that more funding be allocated. Additionally, internal reviews into medical programs from leading universities has virtually eliminated the option to become a maternal-fetal specialist without spending time in the labor-delivery unit. The National Institute for Maternal Health formed in January 2018, and will hold its first national conference in December to address labor and delivery practices.

“While the information from the study was shocking and upsetting, the medical field is making leaps and bounds for maternal health because of it,” National institute for Maternal Health Communications Director Bella Becknit said. “Our goal is to bring maternal mortality to a normal rate for a developed country and then work on reducing it.”

Topic: Environmentalism
Angle: Hyperlocal

University of Missouri Healthcare System implementing changes to reduce maternal mortality rate

In May 2017, NPR and ProPublica released their findings from a six-month investigation into maternal death rates in the U.S. The results shocked America and officials in the healthcare field. University of Missouri Healthcare System has since implemented changes to reduce maternal deaths in its hospitals. In addition to keeping up with new regulations, the health care system has invested nearly \$2 million in training, seminars and reviewing of maternal labor and delivery practices and complications.

“Our goal is to provide every woman who comes into our hospitals for delivery with the best care available,” Theresa Snow, Corporate Director of Strategic Communications for University Hospital, said. “This is an opportunity for our hospitals to develop better protocols, as well as work more closely with doulas and midwives to follow women’s birth plans.”

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Appendix-Questionnaire

Introductory Questions

Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes (1) No (2)

Do you consider Columbia to be your primary community and/or residency?

Yes (1) No (2)

Have you lived in Columbia for at least one full year?

Yes (1) No (2)

Do you have a full or part-time (minimum 20 hours per week) job in Columbia?

Yes (1) No (2) I don't work because I stay at home/am retired/other (3)

Do you volunteer with any local nonprofits?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you volunteer with any education-connected groups like PTA or booster club?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you volunteer with or donate to any local political groups?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you donate to local charities?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you vote in local elections?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you vote in state elections?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you participate in any local or state-wide political groups?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you participate in any social groups or clubs within your community outside of work?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you visit the farmer's market or any other local markets/vendor fairs?

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you leave reviews of local businesses online (Facebook, Yelp, Google, etc)?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you consume local news?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you subscribe to a local newspaper or local magazine?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you follow any local news organizations on social media?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Do you discuss local news amongst friends and/or family?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Always (5)

Shopping local is important to me.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Local community is important to me.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

I feel a sense of pride for my local community.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

I feel a sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of my local community.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Do you own a small business or sell local goods?

Not at all (1) No, but I'd like to in the future. (2) Yes, I have in the past but not currently. (3) Yes (4)

Content Value Questions

This content is believable.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This content is fair.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

This content is accurate.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This content provides a thorough explanation of the issue.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Outlet Value Questions

This news organization is fair.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization is unbiased.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization tells the whole story.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization is accurate.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization respects people's privacy.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization watches out for people's interests.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization is concerned with the community's well-being.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization separates fact from opinion.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization can be trusted.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization is concerned about the public interest.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization is factual.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

This news organization has well-trained reporters.

EFFECT OF LOCALIZED NATIONAL NEWS ON AUDIENCE VALUE PERCEPTION

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neutral (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Likelihood to Subscribe and Willingness to Pay Questions

How likely would you be to pay for digital content from [The Missouri Daily Times/The Columbia Chronicle]?

Not likely (1) Neither likely nor unlikely (2) Somewhat likely (3) Likely (4)

How much money would you be willing to pay for a monthly digital subscription for online news content offered by [The Missouri Daily Times/The Columbia Chronicle]?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Please select an amount (\$USD) ()	
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Demographic Questions

How old are you?

What is your education level?

Some high school (1) High school (2) Some college or technical/trade school (3) College or technical/trade school (4) Graduate school (5)

What is your combined household income level?

Under \$29,999 (1) \$30,000-\$49,000 (2) \$50,000-\$99,000 (3) \$100,000-\$249,000 (4) \$250,000+ (5)

What is your gender?

Male (1) Female (2) Other (3) Prefer not to answer (4)